

# Assessing queer, trans, and non-monogamous youths' experiences in a community-based research project on gender equity

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## Abstract

**Background:** Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) centres the living experiences of youth, integrating them into health research processes to produce actionable findings. Our study has built a YPAR project that engages queer, trans, and non-monogamous young women and non-binary youth (YWNB) ages 19-29 in British Columbia, Canada to explore perceptions of measures of gender equity in relationships.

**Objectives:** We share an assessment of how our YPAR approach impacted youth study members.

**Methods:** Youth were engaged through May 2022 – March 2023. Three Youth Research Associates (YRAs) (core members of the research team) completed a qualitative reflection on their participation. Ten Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) members (advisors on study processes/analysis during bi-monthly meetings) completed a mixed-methods questionnaire following five committee meetings assessing whether they felt heard, valued, and prepared to participate.

**Results:** YRAs reported feeling valued and supported through training, data collection, and analysis. They identified the importance of ongoing training as their roles evolved. YAC members felt well prepared for their role and described meetings as a safe and productive place for dialogue. Meetings were considered too short and infrequent, highlighting the limits budget and pace of data collection placed on engagement. YAC members' reasons for participating included gaining research experience, honoraria, curiosity about the research topic, and community building.

**Conclusions:** This assessment offers insight into successful implementation of a YPAR approach with queer, trans, and/or non-monogamous YWNB, providing a roadmap for health researchers to build projects wherein a diversity of youth feel valued and supported.

**KEYWORDS:** Community-Based Participatory Research, Youth participatory action research, YPAR, LGBTQ+ youth, Power sharing, Relationship equity, Community health partnerships

## Introduction

Despite best intentions, health research can be harmful, especially when done within communities facing systemic marginalization and discrimination, like queer, trans, and consensually non-monogamous<sup>1</sup> young women and non-binary youth.<sup>1-3</sup> If care is not taken, research risks reinforcing negative stereotypes and being extractive, (re)-traumatizing, and draining to the communities it is intended to impact positively.<sup>1,2</sup> Historically, researchers have treated queer and trans people as anomalies to be fixed – due either to illness or developmental issues – reinforcing stigmatizing beliefs and behaviours that perpetuate health inequities.<sup>4,5</sup> Youth, in particular, have been excluded from the research that impacts their lives. To redress these inequities, a growing body of community-based research acknowledges the benefit of bringing youth into health research teams.<sup>6,7</sup>

Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) is one such community-based research approach, characterized by three foundational theoretical pillars: (1) grounding in youths' lived and living experiences<sup>2</sup> and contexts to create relevant inquiry, (2) engagement with youth as collaborators and partners throughout research and (3) grounding in action and disrupting existing systems of oppression.<sup>8,9</sup> YPAR aims to transcend traditional research practices that focus on sharing research outputs within the academy and instead uses research findings and processes to drive transformations within communities, organizations, and research participants themselves to reflect the experiences of the youth most impacted by the research.<sup>8,10-12</sup> YPAR can improve the validity of research findings by including “insider” perspectives that may be

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<sup>1</sup> Consensual non-monogamy is a broad term used to describe intimate, sexual, and/or romantic relationship dynamics wherein more than two people involved and all parties consent to the arrangement (Hamilton et al., 2021)

<sup>2</sup> Lived and living experiences refer to an individual's direct experiences, perspectives, choices, and the resulting knowledge they acquire based on their intersecting identities. We use both terms to refer to youths' past experiences (lived), as well as those they may be continuing to experience (living).

invisible to adults or those outside community.<sup>13</sup> Beyond enriching the applicability and validity of research, YPAR has been shown to have positive outcomes for the youth engaged, like advancing research and leadership skills, increasing community connection, and promoting strategic thinking.<sup>11,14-16</sup> Data suggest that community engagement, empowerment, and critical consciousness are inter-related for queer youth in particular.<sup>17</sup>

To build successful, meaningful YPAR partnerships, past projects have highlighted best practice principles. First, teams must provide appropriate training and supportive infrastructure to ensure youth have the tools to participate.<sup>10,18</sup> These need to be engaging, compensated, and relevant to youth study members. Secondly, building trusting relationships is central,<sup>18,19</sup> including getting to know research partners personally outside their research role parameters.<sup>20</sup> Active efforts to dismantle power differentials within the research team are also essential to a successful YPAR research project,<sup>13,18,19</sup> especially considering the cultural power imbued to academic researchers, given their age and institutional roles. In practice, this means working towards shared decision-making by taking youth feedback seriously and engaging in dialogue around decisions.<sup>8,13</sup> Similarly, accessibility must guide efforts to engage youth through flexibility in how youth can participate, respecting that youth have many competing priorities for their time.<sup>8,10,18</sup> Finally, centering transparency and open communication helps create successful, trusting partnerships – which includes clearly outlining youths’ roles, decision-making power, and compensation.<sup>18</sup>

While YPAR is a growing field, young people’s navigation of healthy, equitable relationships is under-researched, especially those who live outside of cisgender, heterosexual and monogamous norms. Gender inequity in relationships, which we conceptualize as unequal power dynamics rooted in socially and systemically constructed understandings of gender roles,

is an important determinant of health for young people, with the potential to impact their sexual and reproductive health.<sup>21-24</sup> Young people are increasingly interrogating their understandings of sexuality and gender,<sup>25,26</sup> and diverse consensually non-monogamous relationship dynamics are becoming increasingly visible.<sup>27</sup> Considering this, efforts that meaningfully engage queer, trans, and non-monogamous young women and non-binary youth in health research are essential. Engaged research is particularly important for communities whose genders and sexualities resist heterosexual and cisgender norms, as identity-describing language is dynamic within these communities.<sup>29-31</sup> Previous studies have partnered with queer and trans youth as advisors,<sup>32</sup> but there is a gap in further integrating youth with diverse genders, sexualities, and relationship types. For studies that have partnered with queer and trans youth across the research process, assessments of their youth engagement methods are limited to qualitative responses<sup>19</sup> or missing altogether.<sup>33</sup> Further, while there has been a recent expansion in research examining non-monogamous relationship structures,<sup>34</sup> much of the narrative remains pathologizing<sup>35</sup> and YPAR with people in consensually non-monogamous relationships is almost non-existent.

Our research seeks to bridge this gap, providing a mixed-methods assessment of a YPAR project that partners with queer, trans, and/or non-monogamous young women and non-binary youth. We present data sharing youth study members' perspectives of our YPAR approach and assessment of whether they feel heard, valued, and ready to participate. We share our findings to support others in undertaking YPAR that centres meaningful engagement of queer, gender-diverse, and non-monogamous youth, specifically young women and non-binary youth.

## Methods

### The RE-IMAGYN BC Study

The Relationship Equity and Intersectional Measurement Among Gender-inclusive YouNg people in BC (RE-IMAGYN BC) study uses a YPAR approach to discover how young women and non-binary youth in non-heterosexual and/or non-monogamous relationships understand existing measures of gender equity in their relationships. This research was done in partnership with two community-based organizations in BC: (1) YouthCO, a youth-led organization aiming to reduce the impact of HIV and Hepatitis C stigma on youth in BC and (2) Afro-Canadian Positive Network of BC, an organization dedicated to providing culturally relevant HIV and social support to African newcomers to BC.

A detailed description of the RE-IMAGYN BC protocol has been published.<sup>36</sup> Our YPAR approach engaged youth in two ways: three Youth Research Associates (YRAs), who were hired members of the core research team, and a Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) composed of 10 youth, who gathered at regular intervals to advise on the study research methods and analysis. Table 1 describes how we operationalized YPAR best practice principles described above in our study with respect to both the YRAs and YAC.

**[Table 1: Operationalizing Youth Participatory Action Research Principles in the RE-IMAGYN BC Study]**

To prepare for their role, YRAs completed an 8-hour virtual training over four sessions (Table 2), rooted in learnings from 10 years of community-based research led by team member AK. YRAs also completed the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans training. YRAs provided feedback and revisions on study materials, recruited through



their personal networks, conducted pilot interviews with each other and interviews with participants, attended regular team meetings to discuss interview processes progress, co-facilitated YAC meetings, and engaged in reflexive data analysis. They continue to support knowledge mobilization, including co-leading manuscript development. All three YRAs are included as co-authors (authors GYL, CH, and TN) , with CH as co-first author of this manuscript.

YRAs were compensated at \$50 per completed interview and \$25 per hour for other study-related activities. Rates were based on recommendations from the BC Centre for Disease Control,<sup>41</sup> previous community-based research led by author AK, and they were designed to be above a living wage in Vancouver, Canada.

#### **[Table 2: Youth Research Associate Qualitative Research Training Activities]**

YAC members were engaged as advisors, with institutional policy allowing a maximum cumulative \$500 per year per member. They attended five two-hour virtual meetings throughout the study, receiving a \$50 honorarium for each meeting. Each meeting included an opening check-in, study updates, a short didactic presentation on relevant research principles, and discussion (break out rooms or round table) on the topic(s) of the meeting, described in Table 3.

#### **[Table 3: Youth Advisory Committee Meeting Objectives and Pre-work]**

We assessed the YRAs' and YAC members' experiences of our youth engagement approach using mixed methods, allowing us to enrich our quantitative findings with context and suggestions for improvement from our qualitative findings.

### **Eligibility and recruitment**

We recruited three YRAs to conduct interviews who were young women (cis- and trans-inclusive) or non-binary youth ages 16-29 living in BC. There were 37 applicants. The selected YRAs (authors GYL, CH, and TN) were diverse across gender identity, location in BC, academic and career background, and ethnicity, demonstrating excellent communication skills, commitment to their communities, and critical self-reflection. YRAs were hired through Simon Fraser University in a Research Assistant position with flexible contracts that allowed them to report varying hours worked throughout the study.

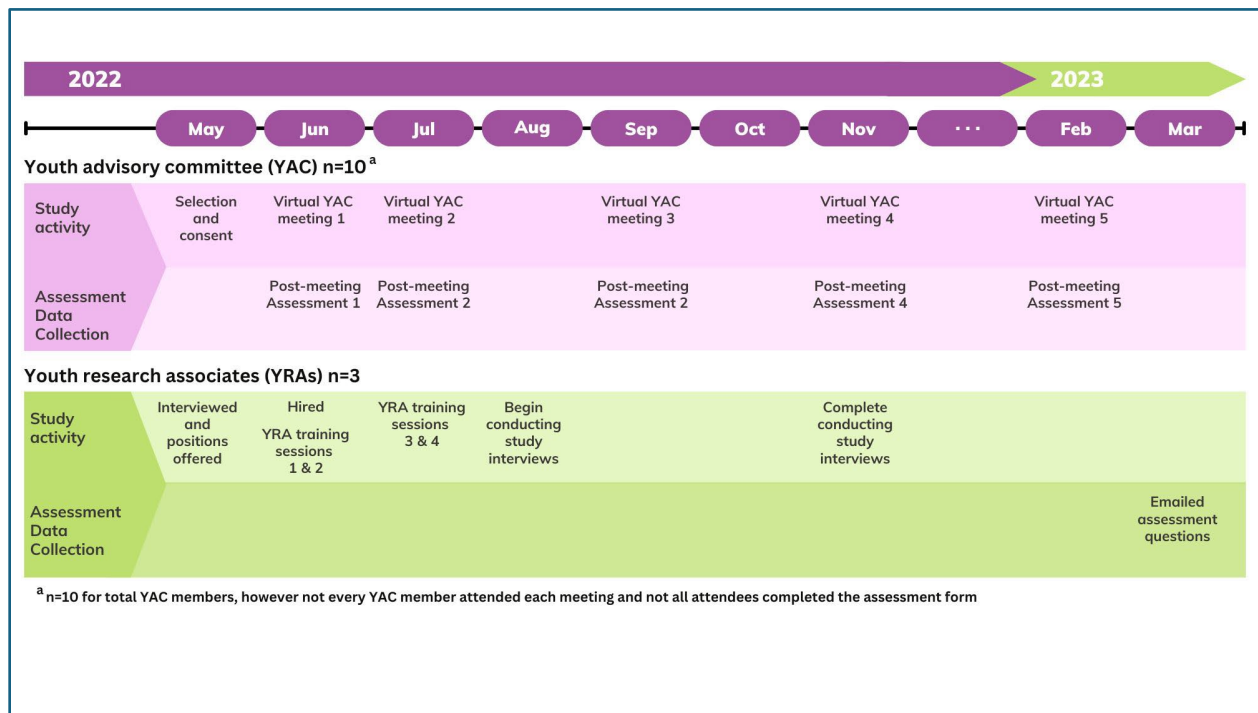
YAC members were recruited from the pool of YRA applicants. Youth were eligible if they were living in BC, aged 16-29, and interested in gender and relationship equity and health. We offered positions to everyone who completed an interview and expressed interest. Recognizing the historical and ongoing barriers Indigenous youth face in participating in research, including mistrust and harm due to colonial research practices and exclusion, several strategies were implemented to include Indigenous youth. Such efforts included active community recruitment through the Urban Native Youth Society, aiming to build relationships within spaces where Indigenous youth already felt connected and represented, and curated social media posts to reach and encourage Indigenous youth to participate. Each YAC member met with a study team member to complete the audio-recorded consent for the YAC assessment and ask any questions

prior to participation. We obtained Institutional Review Board approval from harmonized ethics boards of Simon Fraser University and the University of British Columbia for the YAC assessment.

## Data Collection

### *YRA assessment*

Figure 1 describes key study activities and data collection dates. Open-ended questions were used to evaluate the perceptions of YRAs regarding our youth engagement approach. The questions, sent by email, included: (1) what went well, (2) did you feel prepared/were there areas you felt unprepared for, and (3) what could we do better or change for future YPAR? The YRA assessment was led by author CH, one of the YRAs. As part of the data collection process, YRAs were informed that their responses would be incorporated into an academic paper, and they reviewed the results as co-authors on this paper. YRA responses were identifiable by author CH.



## Figure 1: Key Study Activities and Assessment Data Collection Timeline

### *YAC assessment*

YAC members were asked via email to fill out a post-meeting short form<sup>42</sup> hosted on REDCap (Research Electronic Data Capture, a secure web-based platform for data collection)<sup>43,44</sup> assessing their experience on the YAC. The YAC members' experiences were examined using a Likert scale questionnaire, ranging from 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree. A Likert scale ranging from 1=unsatisfactory to 5=ideal was used to assess the management and quality of meetings. Open-ended questions provided space for feedback and elaboration on responses, as well as space to describe why they were motivated to participate in the RE-IMAGYN BC study (Table 4).

### [Table 4: Youth Advisory Committee Qualitative Assessment Questions]

### **Analysis**

Quantitative YAC responses were summarized using descriptive statistics. Median and Interquartile range were used to describe these data due to the small sample size, wherein one outlier can skew the mean and standard deviation. Qualitative responses from the YAC were analyzed using content analysis, collaboratively organized by the two lead authors. Open responses across YAC meetings were compiled and coded according to frequency of topic mention. The responses were compiled, and inductive analysis was used to explore the responses both across meetings and within meetings. The two lead authors individually reviewed the responses and then collaboratively coded by what was working, what needed improvement, and

where YAC members had mixed opinions. Deductive analysis was also used to understand what motivated youth to participate in our committee, specifically examining the content of questions 1, 12, and 13 outlined in Table 4. Qualitative responses from the YRAs were collected, coded, and summarized by co-lead author CH then verified by the other two YRAs (GYL,TN) to ensure the approach and summary resonated with their responses.

## Results

### *Sample Characteristics*

Youth engaged in our study included three YRAs and 10 YAC members, ages 19 to 29. While sharing the specific demographic breakdown risks identification due to the sample size, some key elements of the youth study team members can be shared. Youth were diverse across gender identity and sexuality, with strong representation from non-binary, trans, and queer communities. We collected limited data on race and ethnicity, however the YAC did include African, Caribbean, and/or Black youth and Indigenous youth, as well as youth who identified as a newcomer, refugee or immigrant. Importantly, the YAC also included youth with varied life experiences, including navigating non-monogamous relationship dynamics, current/previous sex work, and current/previous substance use. Our sample included youth from Metro Vancouver, Vancouver Island, Northern communities, and the interior of BC.<sup>3</sup> This regional diversity was an important equity consideration, as much research in BC is focused urban areas, particularly in the greater Vancouver area. The YRAs hired were either currently enrolled in undergraduate studies

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<sup>3</sup> For ease of understanding, we use the colonial English names for these regions. However, the many Indigenous peoples across BC also have names for these places. We encourage you to learn more about the through the [First Peoples Map of BC](#).

or recently graduated, with backgrounds in psychology, journalism, community organizing, and disability justice, but no previous health research experience.

#### *YRA assessment*

Overall, the YRAs reported a positive experience throughout training and data collection, analysis, and writing activities. The YRAs felt treated fairly throughout the study, with their lived experiences and perspectives valued. The training sessions were useful, particularly when recorded, and the availability of multiple ways to respond to training questions was appreciated. YRAs valued the flexibility in scheduling; noting that sharing their calendars with the study coordinator, who scheduled meetings and assigned participants based on availability, eased participation and connection to the team. Further, they appreciated the learning and leadership opportunities that arose – like leading YAC meetings or co-authoring manuscripts.

The YRAs also made recommendations for improvement regarding the early stages of the study and training. They suggested more materials about the study background for asynchronous review before training sessions (with compensation for the additional review time required). They also advised that integrating a mock interview conducted by the study team into the training would provide a clear model for correct administration of a semi-structured interview, easing concerns about how to interview correctly. Finally, the YRAs emphasized the need for ongoing training throughout the study phases as their roles evolved, for example, additional formalized training to support knowledge mobilization efforts like paper writing.

#### *YAC Assessment*

Responses to the YAC assessment quantitative questions are summarized in Table 5. Meeting 4 was not included due to low response rate. Across meetings, the YAC assessment illustrates that YAC members felt confident about their roles and responsibilities and that their views were heard, respected, and valued. Results showed lower endorsement of items concerning the management of the YAC, specifically around meeting timing and duration. Meetings 1 (study introduction/discussing gender equity measures) and 3 (introducing and beginning qualitative data analysis) were both scored particularly low. However, overall leadership and communication had high endorsement across meetings. There was a decline in attendance and assessment completion as the study progressed, with the last three meetings including approximately half the members.

**[Table 5: Quantitative Youth Advisory Committee Assessment Responses over time]**

The open-response questions, summarized in Table 6, provide data that validate and deepen the quantitative findings. We organized responses into four main topics: 1) creating comfortable and safe spaces for dialogue, 2) planning the timing of our meetings, 3) clarifying roles within the study, and 4) reasons why youth participate in the RE-IMAGYN BC study (Table 4). These qualitative results clarified that meetings were considered too short on time and too infrequent. Additionally, they added context to their positive quantitative responses pertaining to being heard, describing how the group dynamics and diversity of the YAC supported their comfort expressing themselves. For example, one participant stated:

*“I did have some reservations as I am new here and are not familiar with much of the lingo or culture. I was scared if my views would be respected and vice versa. However, after the introduction of all the wonderful team members on the committee my reservations disappeared as all members were so welcoming and kind.” - YAC member*

The open-ended responses also highlighted some hesitation from YAC members about the usefulness of their own individual contributions, which was not reflected in the quantitative responses. One YAC member described struggling with their positionality within the research study, stating that:

*“As a cis gendered person I wasn't sure if I should use my voice over others or not.” -YAC member*

The qualitative responses also provided important context into why youth decided to participate in our study, reflecting motivations both related to their personal benefit (e.g., receiving an honorarium, gaining research experience, learning more about a topic interesting to them) and a desire to positively impact their communities. For example, one participant described:

*“I'm really invested in helping improve health outcomes for my demographic, especially trans folks. Supporting this study seems like a really good way to do that. I'm also really interested in knowing about and being involved in work that's being done to that end; I have a personal stake, but I also really care about making things better.” – YAC member*



**[Table 6: Qualitative Youth Advisory Committee Assessment Response Main Topics and Learnings]**

**Discussion**

Our mixed-method findings show how young women and non-binary youth engaged in our study were impacted by our YPAR approach, specifically whether they felt heard, valued, and prepared to participate. Overall, youth reported positive experiences in the study, reporting high scores across items specific to their experience within the YAC (e.g., “I feel that my views are respected and valued”), reflecting the strengths of our youth engagement approach. Quantitative responses from YAC members showed that they felt confident in participating and the YAC was a good use of their time, though they felt that the meetings were too short and too far apart. YRAs also described feeling supported throughout the study. These overarching positive experiences signal that our implementation of best practice principles has helped us realize the theoretical foundations of YPAR: centring youths’ lived experiences, integrating youth throughout the study, and creating actionable research.<sup>8,9</sup>

Our findings from both the YAC and YRAs show that they had enough support and information to participate meaningfully, demonstrating the importance of comprehensive training for the youth engaged in our study. This is consistent with learnings from other YPAR projects.<sup>10,18</sup> While YRAs reported feeling broadly supported, their suggestions for capacity building indicate opportunities to enrich future trainings. They also show the vital importance of ongoing training, especially as YRAs’ roles evolve. Additionally, the YAC members indicated that gaining research experience and skills was an important factor in study participation, pointing to the importance of balancing youth feedback with skill building during meetings. For

researchers looking to build YPAR teams, these findings demonstrate the importance of ongoing, formalized capacity building, particularly as youth study members' roles shift throughout the study.

Considering the positive scores from the YAC members indicating that they felt heard, had the opportunity to express their opinions, and felt that YAC was a good use of their time, these findings suggest that YAC members felt supported in the time that was available, but were eager for more opportunities to contribute. These findings are similar to another YAC assessment with marginalized youth, where satisfaction was lower, while responses about feeling comfortable, supported, and heard were higher.<sup>18</sup> In our study, meetings 1 (study introduction/discussing gender equity measures) and 3 (qualitative data analysis) were scored especially low, indicating that more time was needed for these topics. Future research would benefit from dedicating the entire first meeting to introductions, study background, and relationship building. Additionally, multiple meetings focused on learning about and conducting data analysis would facilitate a more fulsome exploration of these topics and co-development of themes.

The long lead time between each meeting may have decreased the YAC attendance as the study progressed. While we attempted to address these concerns by being responsive to YAC members' other commitments when scheduling meetings and providing one-on-one opportunities to account for missed meetings, these efforts were limited by budget and the pace of data collection. Further, our institution limits the honorarium that can be given to an individual to \$500 per annum, before it is required to hire the individual as an institutional employee. Our retention challenges emphasize the need to imagine more ways that advisory committees can be actively involved in research, even as studies move through data collection. They also emphasize the need to budget funds for more frequent advisory committee meetings

when applying for YPAR project funding, as well as highlight systemic and institutional barriers that limit engagement.

Our youth emphasized that fair monetary compensation is important for their participation, consistent with best practice recommendations within YPAR.<sup>18,19</sup> We centered principles of transparency to discuss compensation – attempting to clearly communicate youths’ roles within the study and compensation policies. Especially for the YRAs, whose role was dynamic throughout, we reached an agreement that allowed us to work within our budget, while ensuring that the YRAs felt like their time and expertise were valued.

Finally, the youth engaged in our study listed the importance of community involvement – either becoming more connected or making a positive impact – to their participation. These responses affirmed our dedication to ensuring that youth engaged in our study could connect with each other beyond the parameters of the research and have guided our future research and knowledge mobilization. The desire for youth to positively impact their community also highlights the importance of building relationships with community members and community-based organizations when creating YPAR projects, to create action-oriented research driven by community priorities. This is especially important given the connection between empowerment, community engagement and critical consciousness for queer and trans youth.<sup>17</sup> Further, while previous YPAR projects have assessed or reflected on their engagement with queer and trans youth,<sup>19,32</sup> the current study is the only one to the authors’ knowledge that engages non-monogamous youth within a YPAR framework to shape the research that impacts their lives. This speaks to a need for more inclusive participatory action research that centres the priorities of youth not just in the research undertaken with their communities, but also for how they engage with the study.

## Limitations

There are limitations of this assessment. Firstly, while youth members appreciated the diversity of the team, we had some important gaps. We recruited many young women and non-binary youth in the interior, north, and lower mainland of BC, but only one YAC member from Vancouver Island. Similarly, while we had many ciswomen and non-binary youth involved in our study, we had fewer trans women. This may be due to our reliance on social media and word of mouth. Using social media for participant recruitment may have excluded youth with limited internet access or lower online engagement, and algorithmic biases could have further limited who saw the recruitment posts. Moreover, word-of-mouth recruitment may have contributed to homogeneity among participants.

Additionally, we had difficulty recruiting Indigenous youth to our study. Canada's historical and ongoing colonial practices have created mistrust in health and research systems that continue to harm Indigenous people through lack of care, experiences of discrimination, and extractive research practices.<sup>45,46</sup> Our primary recruitment methods ~~through social media and word-of-mouth~~ did not yield any applications for either the YAC or YRA positions from Indigenous youth. It was a priority for us to include Indigenous voices in this work, so it was our responsibility to show up for Indigenous youth and demonstrate our commitment to relationship building. Working with the Urban Native Youth Association, we attended their programming to meet Indigenous youth in person, introduce ourselves, get to know them, and share our research opportunity with anyone who felt comfortable. This process yielded one additional application from an Indigenous youth to join the YAC and was a critical lesson in the importance of showing

up in person, especially when partnering with groups who have experienced harm at the hands of researchers before. Additionally, author ST, an Indigenous Master's student supporting the study, continues to encourage and lead the team in applying decolonial frameworks into our approach.

### Conclusions

Our youth engagement process yielded a diverse team of youth across BC who are actively supporting the RE-IMAGYN BC study procedures, both as YRAs and YAC members. From the YAC assessment and YRA feedback, we learned that our team felt welcomed and supported within the study. Specifically for our YAC, our mixed-methods approach to assessment meant that we could quantitatively assess the quality of our YAC, but also understand the context of their responses and receive feedback for improvement. We sought to build authentic relationships with queer, trans, and non-monogamous young women and non-binary youth and provide opportunities for shared decision-making power. Our work provides a roadmap for health researchers committed to integrating equity, diversity and inclusion principles to build projects that engage successfully with a diversity of young people, particularly marginalized youth. In doing so, researchers can work in partnership with youth to address health inequities and priorities most important to their communities.

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**Authorship contribution statement:**

*ZO: Conceptualization, methodology, data curation, formal analysis, investigation, project administration, writing – original draft, writing – review & editing; CH: Conceptualization, data curation, formal analysis, investigation, writing – original draft, writing – review & editing; SS: investigation, project administration, writing – review & editing; TN: Conceptualization, writing – review & editing, GYL: Conceptualization, writing – review & editing; ST: Conceptualization, writing – review & editing; AR: Conceptualization, writing – review & editing, AK: Conceptualization, supervision, resources, writing – review & editing, funding acquisition; KC: Conceptualization, methodology, investigation, supervision, writing – review & editing, funding acquisition*

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**Informed consent statements:** All members of the youth advisory committee completed an audio-recorded consent with a research team member prior to the first youth advisory committee meeting.

**Data availability:** The authors do not have permission to share data.

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**Table 1: Operationalizing Youth Participatory Action Research Principles in the Relationship Equity and Intersectional Measurement Among Gender-inclusive YouNg people in BC (RE-IMAGYN BC) Study**

| Youth Participatory Action Research Principle                                                                     | Youth Research Associates (YRAs)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Youth Advisory Committee (YAC)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Capacity building and support throughout the study – giving youth the tools they need to meaningfully participate | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Four synchronous training sessions with accompanying asynchronous materials</li> <li>• Pilot interviews with each other and study staff, giving the YRAs the opportunity to practice their interviewing skills and view the process through the eyes of a participant.</li> <li>• Throughout the study, the core study team met every two weeks to check-in. The purpose of this meeting shifted as the study progressed: the initial meetings provided a forum for the YRAs to discuss interview progress and challenges, as well as for the study team to provide feedback and tips as the interviews were underway. In later stages of the study, this meeting was a space for analyzing data, providing feedback on grant applications or manuscripts, and discussing other study progress.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each meeting included pre-work reading (provided one week prior to the meeting) and a didactic portion on topics relevant to the meeting topic so that YAC members are prepared to give meaningful feedback.</li> <li>• Initial meeting also included overview training about the project and foundational concepts related to gender and equity measurement.</li> </ul> |
| Relationship building                                                                                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During the team onboarding and training, time during each session meeting was dedicated to a roundtable check-in</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each meeting opened with a check-in, reminder of name and</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

**Table 1: Operationalizing Youth Participatory Action Research Principles in the Relationship Equity and Intersectional Measurement Among Gender-inclusive YouNg people in BC (RE-IMAGYN BC) Study**

| Youth Participatory Action Research Principle | Youth Research Associates (YRAs)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Youth Advisory Committee (YAC)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                               | <p>and icebreaker, chosen specifically to get to know each team member's personality better (e.g., "if you were an animal, what would you be and why", or "share your most used emoji"). Further, time was protected for YRAs to spend time in breakout rooms together without the rest of the staff. Topics of discussion were suggested, but the time was completely guided by the YRAs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Team check-in meetings were an important space for building relationships, offering time to check-in emotionally, share exciting news, and learn more about each other. The beginning of each meeting is protected for check-in time, where team members are invited to show up honestly with how they are feeling if they are comfortable.</li> </ul> | <p>pronouns, and ice-breaker.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The study coordinator worked to build individual relationships with each of the YAC members. She met with each YAC member one-on-one before they joined the YAC and was available for individual debriefs after each meeting.</li> </ul> |
| Dismantling power differentials               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During training, YRAs' expertise is centered by integrating YRA-led discussion about what they already know about the topics and skills</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• YAC members decided on the community guidelines, deciding we would root decisions in</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                            |

**Table 1: Operationalizing Youth Participatory Action Research Principles in the Relationship Equity and Intersectional Measurement Among Gender-inclusive YouNg people in BC (RE-IMAGYN BC) Study**

| Youth Participatory Action Research Principle | Youth Research Associates (YRAs)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Youth Advisory Committee (YAC)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                               | <p>they already bring to this work. YRAs also steered topics in the later sessions, with dedicated time to discuss issues that are important to them (e.g., dedicated time to discuss what to do if a participant expresses transphobic or racist beliefs).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decisions about the study are discussed during bi-weekly team meetings, with ample time for YRA input – for example, YRAs made decisions around how to shape the cognitive interview discussion guide.</li> <li>• YRAs are involved in hiring decisions for new team members (e.g., practicum students), participating in interviews and coming to a consensus with other study team members on the best fit for the team.</li> </ul> | <p>consensus, spending time to discuss multiple perspectives to facilitate this.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The space was preserved as a youth only space with a youth study team member facilitating – with any older study team members only attending when necessary and with notice to YAC members.</li> </ul> |

**Table 1: Operationalizing Youth Participatory Action Research Principles in the Relationship Equity and Intersectional Measurement Among Gender-inclusive YouNg people in BC (RE-IMAGYN BC) Study**

| Youth Participatory Action Research Principle | Youth Research Associates (YRAs)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Youth Advisory Committee (YAC)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Accessibility/meeting youth where they're at  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In lieu of a traditional submission of a cover letter and resume, interested applicants were provided with an application form with a series of guiding questions, with the intention of creating an application process inclusive to those without previous experience in formal hiring processes.</li> <li>• Multiple communication media are used to keep in touch as a team beyond email, including platforms preferred by the YRAs, like text and Discord, an instant messaging app and place to build virtual community.</li> <li>• Training sessions and team meetings are scheduled based on youth availability, often being held outside of the regular 9:00 am – 5:00 pm workday to accommodate YRAs' other responsibilities and activities</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexibility scheduling helped support youth to continue to participate - Before each meeting, the YAC members provided their availability to the study coordinator for the upcoming meeting, who then scheduled the next meeting based on the highest attendance</li> <li>• YAC members were encouraged to take a break at any time if any topics and/or activities were activating or caused discomfort. In the spirit of ongoing consent, they were reminded that they were free to withdraw as a member of the YAC with no consequences at any time.</li> <li>• YAC members appreciated multiple methods of providing feedback, including via group discussion, breakout rooms, and a virtual whiteboard</li> </ul> |

**Table 1: Operationalizing Youth Participatory Action Research Principles in the Relationship Equity and Intersectional Measurement Among Gender-inclusive YouNg people in BC (RE-IMAGYN BC) Study**

| Youth Participatory Action Research Principle | Youth Research Associates (YRAs)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Youth Advisory Committee (YAC)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | software. Further, YAC members were not restricted to providing feedback within the meeting, often adding thoughts to the virtual whiteboard after the meeting.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Transparency and open communication           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research coordinator and Principal Investigator were accessible through email or text for feedback or debrief when needed.</li> <li>• Conversations about compensation were open and flexible. YRAs were compensated \$50 per interview and \$25 per each hour of meeting. For compensation for leading writing, YRAs and study team agreed that the benefits of career development for first authorship on a paper and budget limitations meant that solo writing time would be voluntary. Regular check-ins that focused on writing activities were compensated at \$25 per hour. This was framed as an open discussion that could be</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each YAC meeting had time dedicated to study updates, in which the places where previous YAC feedback was integrated into the study protocol was presented back to the YAC members. + explaining decision making in general</li> <li>• Open lines of communication were emphasized and welcomeness to feedback on our methods explicitly stated. YAC members were also provided contact information for the PIs and encouraged to reach out with any concerns they were uncomfortable bringing to the study coordinator.</li> </ul> |

| <b>Table 1: Operationalizing Youth Participatory Action Research Principles in the Relationship Equity and Intersectional Measurement Among Gender-inclusive YouNg people in BC (RE-IMAGYN BC) Study</b> |                                                                                                                                |                                       |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>Youth Participatory Action Research Principle</b>                                                                                                                                                     | <b>Youth Research Associates (YRAs)</b>                                                                                        | <b>Youth Advisory Committee (YAC)</b> |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                          | re-visited with acquisition of additional funding or if the YRAs were finding they were investing more hours than anticipated. |                                       |



| <b>Table 2: Youth Research Associate (YRA) Qualitative Research Training Activities</b> |                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                         | <b>Main topics</b>                           | <b>Learning Outcomes</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <b>Activities</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Session 1</b>                                                                        | Intro and study background                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify members of the team</li> <li>Understand study objectives and rationale</li> <li>Understand gender equity and its measurement</li> </ul>                                                                                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Opening with study Indigenous Elder</li> <li>Introductions and ice-breakers</li> <li>Overview of sex and gender, gender equity and its measurement</li> <li>YRA-only breakout room to get to know each other</li> </ul>                                             |
| <b>Session 2</b>                                                                        | Study Methods                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand what qualitative research is and what questions it answers</li> <li>Identify and mitigate bias in data collection</li> <li>Understand the cognitive interview process</li> <li>Apply knowledge about the study and gender equity</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Elevator pitches practicing explaining the study</li> <li>Overview of qualitative research methods and the study's data collection methods</li> <li>Discussion of existing measures of gender equity, virtual whiteboard session to inform study methods</li> </ul> |
| <b>Session 3</b>                                                                        | Logistics of the job and Interviewing skills | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand the logistics of the YRA role, including study ethics and consent, different YRA activities, and compensation rate and process</li> <li>Understand what to expect from interviews and prepare for challenging situations</li> </ul>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overview of YRA role and interview processes</li> <li>Discussion of challenging situations and brainstorming best responses with experienced peer research associate</li> </ul>                                                                                     |
| <b>Session 4</b>                                                                        | Safety, self-care, and wrap up               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand who to go to for help</li> <li>Understand study practices for how we keep ourselves and interviewees safe</li> </ul>                                                                                                                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Breakout room consenting practice and workshop of the consent form</li> <li>Overview of safety measures of the study and principles of self-care</li> <li>Inventory of self-care practices, discussion of boundaries and activators</li> </ul>                      |

|  |  |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                    |
|--|--|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Understand YRA role in the next steps in the study</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Next steps and graduation</li><li>• Training closing with study Indigenous Elder</li></ul> |
|--|--|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

| Table 3: Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) Meeting Objectives and Pre-work |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                         | Objectives                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Pre-work documents                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Meeting 1                                                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce study team, objectives, and rationale</li> <li>• Understand gender equity and its measurement</li> <li>• Explore YAC perceptions of gender equity in relationships</li> <li>• Identify which gender and relationship equity measures to use in the cognitive interviews</li> </ul>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to different types of existing gender and relationship equity measures</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Meeting 2                                                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop community guidelines</li> <li>• Discuss cognitive interview guide</li> <li>• Review and refine study recruitment materials</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflection questions for developing community guidelines</li> <li>• Draft cognitive interview guide</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Meeting 3                                                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to qualitative data analysis and our thematic analysis approach</li> <li>• Discuss initial reactions to interview excerpts pertaining to youths' definitions of gender equity</li> <li>• Begin organizing/sorting existing codes to inform next stages of data analysis</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interview excerpts focusing on <i>gender equity in relationships</i> and <i>power in relationships</i>.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Meeting 4                                                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss initial reactions to interview excerpts pertaining to improving gender and relationship equity measurement</li> <li>• Identify key themes and considerations for developing recommendations for improved measurement</li> </ul>                                                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interview excerpts focusing on respondents' feedback on the current measurement of gender and relationship equity</li> <li>• Study thematic analysis codebook</li> </ul>                                                                                                                 |
| Meeting 5                                                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refine recommendations for improving gender and relationship equity measurement</li> <li>• Introduce Knowledge Translation and preview of future work to develop a new scale to measure gender and relationship equity among youth</li> </ul>                                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chart of all the scale items used in the interviews with identified issues, recommendations for improvement, and supporting quotes for each one</li> <li>• Initial domains and example items for developing a new scale to measure gender and relationship equity among youth</li> </ul> |

| <b>Table 4: Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) Qualitative Post-Meeting Assessment Questions</b>                                                                                                                                                                           |                                          |   |   |   |   |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| Questions <sup>a</sup>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Included in YAC Post-Meeting Assessment? |   |   |   |   |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | 1                                        | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Thinking back to when you were first invited to participate in the YAC what was the biggest factor in your decision to say yes? Please elaborate.                                                                                                                      | ✓                                        |   |   |   |   |
| Thinking back to when you were first invited to participate in the youth advisory committee, did you have any reservations, concerns or hesitation at that time about the merits of this group or whether it would be a worthwhile endeavor for you? Please elaborate. | ✓                                        |   |   |   |   |
| At this early evaluation period, do you still have those initial concerns or reservations, or any new concerns, about the youth advisory committee? Please elaborate.                                                                                                  | ✓                                        |   |   |   |   |
| At this evaluation period, do you still have any initial concerns or reservations identified in the first survey, or any new concerns, about the youth advisory committee? Please elaborate.                                                                           |                                          | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| For you personally what, if anything, would you say is working well for this committee?                                                                                                                                                                                | ✓                                        | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| For you personally what, if anything, would you say is NOT working well for this committee?                                                                                                                                                                            | ✓                                        | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Do you have any feedback you would like share regarding the application process?                                                                                                                                                                                       | ✓                                        |   |   |   |   |
| Do you have any feedback you would like to share regarding the consenting procedure?                                                                                                                                                                                   | ✓                                        |   |   |   |   |
| Do you have any feedback you would like share regarding the evaluation process?                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                          | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Please feel free to elaborate on any of your choices if you would like to. (regarding quantitative responses)                                                                                                                                                          | ✓                                        | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Have you noticed any challenging aspects of working with researchers? Please elaborate, including what could alleviate these issues.                                                                                                                                   | ✓                                        | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

|                                                                                                                                                  |   |   |   |   |   |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| How many YAC meetings did you attend? What factors played the biggest role in whether you attended?                                              |   |   |   |   | ✓ |
| Would you be interested in participating in future YAC opportunities? What factors most impact this decision (think both benefits and barriers)? |   |   |   |   | ✓ |
| What would you change about the YAC if you were to participate again in the future?                                                              |   |   |   |   | ✓ |
| Any other comments or suggestions?                                                                                                               | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| <sup>a</sup> Questions are listed in the order in which they appeared within the assessment.                                                     |   |   |   |   |   |

| <b>Table 5: Quantitative Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) Post-Meeting Assessment Responses over time</b>               |                            |                            |                            |                            |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>YAC Assessment questions<sup>a</sup></b>                                                                           | <b>Meeting 1<br/>(n=9)</b> | <b>Meeting 2<br/>(n=5)</b> | <b>Meeting 3<br/>(n=5)</b> | <b>Meeting 5<br/>(n=4)</b> |
|                                                                                                                       | <b>Median<br/>[IQR]</b>    | <b>Median<br/>[IQR]</b>    | <b>Median<br/>[IQR]</b>    | <b>Median<br/>[IQR]</b>    |
| I understand the purpose of the YAC                                                                                   | 5 [5-4]                    | 5 [5-4]                    | 5 [5-4]                    | 4.5 [5-4]                  |
| I understand my role on the YAC                                                                                       | 5 [5-4]                    | 5 [5-4]                    | 5 [5-4]                    | 5 [5-4.75]                 |
| The supports I need to participate in the YAC are available to me (e.g., computer, internet, preparation for meeting) | 5 [5-5]                    | 5 [5-5]                    | 5 [5-5]                    | 5 [5-5]                    |
| I have enough information to contribute to the topics being discussed                                                 | 4 [5-4]                    | 5 [5-5]                    | 5 [5-5]                    | 4.5 [5-4]                  |
| I feel confident contributing to the discussion                                                                       | 4 [5-4]                    | 5 [5-5]                    | 5 [5-4]                    | 5 [5-4.75]                 |
| I have the opportunity to express my opinions when I have something to say                                            | 5 [5-4]                    | 5 [5-5]                    | 5 [5-5]                    | 5 [5-5]                    |
| I feel that my views are heard                                                                                        | 5 [5-5]                    | 5 [5-5]                    | 5 [5-5]                    | 5 [5-4.75]                 |
| I feel that my views are respected and valued                                                                         | 5 [5-4]                    | 5 [5-5]                    | 5 [5-5]                    | 5 [5-5]                    |
| It is clear when and why my opinions are being sought                                                                 | 5 [5-5]                    | 5 [5-5]                    | 5 [5-5]                    | 4.5 [5-4]                  |
| If there are differences of opinion or disagreements, they are handled appropriately                                  | 5 [5-4]                    | 4 [4-4]                    | 5 [5-4]                    | 5 [5-4.75]                 |
| I feel the YAC is a good use of my time                                                                               | 5 [5-5]                    | 5 [5-5]                    | 5 [5-5]                    | 4 [4.25-4]                 |
| If we needed members, I would be comfortable recommending the YAC to a colleague or friend                            | 5 [5-5]                    | 5 [5-3]                    | 5 [5-4]                    | 4.5 [5-3.75]               |
| I think the YAC will make a difference in gender equity and health research for gender and sexual minority youth      | 5 [5-4]                    | 5 [5-5]                    | 5 [5-4]                    | 4.5 [5-4]                  |
| I am confident that the YAC will yield the desired outcomes                                                           | 5 [5-3]                    | 4 [5-4]                    | 3 [4-3]                    | 4.5 [5-3.75]               |
| <b>Please rate the quality of the following aspects of the YAC and its management<sup>b</sup></b>                     | <b>Meeting 1<br/>(n=9)</b> | <b>Meeting 2<br/>(n=5)</b> | <b>Meeting 3<br/>(n=5)</b> | <b>Meeting 5<br/>(n=4)</b> |
|                                                                                                                       | <b>Median<br/>[IQR]</b>    | <b>Median<br/>[IQR]</b>    | <b>Median<br/>[IQR]</b>    | <b>Median<br/>[IQR]</b>    |
| The overall scope of the YAC (what we are trying to achieve and the boundaries of the group)                          | 4 [4-4]                    | 4 [5-4]                    | 4 [4-3]                    | 4 [4.25-4]                 |

| <b>Table 5: Quantitative Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) Post-Meeting Assessment Responses over time</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                            |                            |                            |                            |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>YAC Assessment questions<sup>a</sup></b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <b>Meeting 1<br/>(n=9)</b> | <b>Meeting 2<br/>(n=5)</b> | <b>Meeting 3<br/>(n=5)</b> | <b>Meeting 5<br/>(n=4)</b> |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <b>Median<br/>[IQR]</b>    | <b>Median<br/>[IQR]</b>    | <b>Median<br/>[IQR]</b>    | <b>Median<br/>[IQR]</b>    |
| The frequency of the meetings                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | 3 [4-3]                    | 5 [5-4]                    | 3 [4-3]                    | 3 [3.5-2.75]               |
| The amount of time during the meetings to discuss items                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 3 [3-2]                    | 4 [5-4]                    | 2 [3-2]                    | 3.5 [4.25-2.75]            |
| The overall leadership or management of the meetings                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | 4 [5-4]                    | 5 [5-4]                    | 5 [5-4]                    | 5 [5-5]                    |
| The amount of time provided to review all communication and materials                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | 4 [5-4]                    | 5 [5-4]                    | 4 [5-4]                    | 4.5 [5-4]                  |
| Follow-up and communication after each meeting                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 4 [5-4]                    | 5 [5-5]                    | 5 [5-5]                    | 5 [5-4.75]                 |
| Meeting 4 has been excluded due to a low response rate. A higher score indicates a more favourable score for both question sets. <sup>a</sup> Question set 1 scores were calculated from responses 1=Strongly disagree, 2=Somewhat disagree, 3=Neither agree nor disagree, 4=Somewhat agree, 5=Strongly agree. <sup>b</sup> Question set 2 scores were calculated from responses 1=Unacceptable, 2=less than ideal, 3=neutral, 4=very good, and 5=ideal. |                            |                            |                            |                            |

| Table 6: Qualitative Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) Post-Meeting Assessment Response Main Topics and Learnings |                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Topics                                                                                                         | Main points                                                                                                                                                             | Supportive quotes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Creating comfortable and safe space for dialogue                                                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taking space and making space</li> <li>• Flexibility in feedback</li> <li>• Diversity in the group</li> </ul>                  | <p><i>“The positive environment, the conversation build-up, the collective work to fill in or validate someone’s point. That worked really well.”</i></p> <p><i>“I think this committee is really good at creating a safe space where we are able to share our thoughts. I feel very comfortable around the study staff.”</i></p>                                  |
| Planning the timing of our meetings                                                                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Too much content</li> <li>• Spaced too far apart</li> <li>• Flexibility in scheduling helped experience</li> </ul>             | <p><i>“The only thing I worry about is the time frame of the meetings as sometimes they feel a bit far apart, additionally it often feels like we’re running out of time during the meeting”</i></p> <p><i>“Sometimes it feels like we are trying to fit too much within one meeting”</i></p>                                                                      |
| Clarifying roles within the study                                                                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Worry about how much they have to offer</li> <li>• Uncertain about topic</li> </ul>                                            | <p><i>“Concerned about whether I’d be of any actual help or if I could properly contribute valuable insight”</i></p> <p><i>“Feeling less certain about the extent of our role and responsibilities as a committee. Still, I’m sure as things pick up over the coming meetings that feeling will dissipate.”</i></p>                                                |
| Reasons why youth participate in                                                                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research experience</li> <li>• Impact on their community</li> <li>• Curiosity about the topic</li> <li>• Honorarium</li> </ul> | <p><i>“I’m really invested in helping improve health outcomes for my demographic, especially trans folks. Supporting this study seems like a really good way to do that. I’m also really interested in knowing about and being involved in work that’s being done to that end; I have a personal stake but I also really care about making things better.”</i></p> |



|  |  |                                                                                                                                                            |
|--|--|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  |  | <i>“I think the fact that this research would pave the way for further gender studies for women and queer folks was my driving force.”<sup>5</sup> (5)</i> |
|--|--|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|