

CONVERGE COVID-19 Working Groups for Public Health and Social Sciences Research

Research Agenda-Setting Paper

This paper was written to help advance convergence-oriented research in the hazards and disaster field. It highlights areas where additional research could contribute new knowledge to the response to and recovery from the pandemic and other disasters yet to come. Questions about the research topics and ethical and methodological issues highlighted here should be directed to the authors who contributed to this paper.

Working Group Name:

LGBTIQ and Other Sexual and Gender Minority Lives and COVID-19

Working Group Description:

The focus of this Working Group is to examine the impact of COVID-19 as a pandemic in the lives of *lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and queer (LGBTIQ) and other sexual and gender minority (SGM) individuals. We are particularly interested in access to medical, community, and disaster ministry resources. We are also interested in intersecting vectors of identity that may compound vulnerability and/or contribute to capacity-building in LGBTIQ and Other SGM lives and communities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Priority Research Topics and Specific Research Questions:

Priority Research Topics	Potential Research Questions
1. LGBTIQ+/SGM community data in public health and related crises decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What kinds of data are needed for LGBTIQ+/SGM communities to influence effective public health decisions? • If mandated actors continue to refuse or neglect collecting data, can LGBTIQ+/SGM community serving organizations and communities be supported to collect and analyze their own data?
2. LGBTIQ+/SGM people of color & COVID-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are LGBTIQ+/SGM POC getting access to testing, PPE, & hospitalization? • What resources are being provided for indigenous, and/or Native peoples? • Is there systemic racism against LGBTIQ+/SGM POC by LGBTIQ+/SGM?
3. Community-based response as temporary or ongoing dimension when relief and recovery systems do not address the rights, needs, and strengths of LGBTIQ+/SGM people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do informal networks and chosen family function as support mechanisms in everyday and in crises? • What are the capacities and constraints of informal networks and chosen family as support mechanisms in crises? • In what ways (if any) can the official humanitarian system safely interface with community-based response such as informal networks and chosen family?

4. Potential for increased gender based violence (GBV) facing LGBTIQ+/SGM people during COVID-19 and other crises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the drivers of GBV perpetrated against LGBTIQ+/SGM people in crises such as COVID-19? • To what extent do existing GBV support services address the needs of LGBTIQ+/SGM people? • How can existing services be adapted or what new services can be created to address unmet needs safely and effectively?
5. Exploring the experiences of rural and urban LGBTIQ+/SGM during COVID-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How has COVID-19 impacted rural and urban queers differently? • Are rural queers more equipped and resilient to deal with a type of disaster that causes a breakdown in social structure?
6. The impact of US COVID-19 based border closings for LGBTIQ+/SGM immigrants seeking political asylum from persecution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can scholars advocate for SOGIESC immigrants seeking asylum from persecution during the indeterminacy of border closings amidst COVID-19?

Ethical / Methodological Considerations:

Our Working Group grappled with ethical issues of language and terms. We began a list of cross-cultural terms and determined that no specific terminology was exhaustive enough to be considered truly inclusive. We acknowledge that SOGIESC (Sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, sex characteristics) is probably most accurate but still fraught with exclusion as it is predicated on the English language. Such a language disparity inherently replicates colonial power and maintenance of the status quo in research generally. We also discussed the limitations of depending on snowball sampling as a methodology given the potential homogeneity of such a sample, and failure of such a sample to be generalizable given variations of race, ethnicity, language, gender, sex, class, region etc. An ongoing methodological issue for researchers has been access to such a hidden population given potential consequences to the subjects in self-identifying. Ironically, as we submit this agenda, it has only been four days since the U.S. Supreme Court determined it illegal to fire an employee based on such a status. As we determined our future beyond this agenda, we began thinking about the benefit to the research population by engaging in more international collaboration and more specifically, including more researchers who are Indigenous, Native, and People of Color. Finally, we addressed Participatory Action Research and Queer Methods as a counter to many primary methodological approaches, to emphasize voices from the gaps to include people of color, women, trans, intersex, poor, and disabled SOGIESC persons.

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