Diversity Statistics for Ontario and Canada

Source: Achieving Cultural Competence: A Diversity Tool Kit, 2008
Ontario Ministry of Children & Youth Services

Canada – and Ontario in particular – is distinguished as one of the most diverse and cosmopolitan areas of the world. The demographic reality of Ontario compels human service providers to consider and integrate the needs of diverse communities into their services and programs.

Canada Is A Diverse Nation, And Ontario Leads The Way

Racial/Cultural/Linguistic Diversity
- Canadians reported more than 200 different ethnic origins, and more than 100 languages in completing the census*
- 1 in 5 people in Canada was born in another country, the highest percentage it has been for 75 years**
- 60% of foreign-born Canadians come from Asia and the Middle East**
- The three largest visible minority groups in Canada are Chinese, South Asian and Black**
- 32% of Canadians speak a language other than English at home, with the largest language groups being Chinese, Italian, Punjabi and Spanish**
- The foreign-born population grew four times faster than the Canadian-born population between 2001-2006 (13.6% compared to 3.3%)**
- In Ontario, 28% of the population are immigrants, the highest percentage in the country**
- Of the children and youth population living in Ontario, 37% are immigrant, 4% are francophone and 2.5% are Aboriginal*
- Half of Toronto’s residents were born outside Canada, a higher percentage than New York City or London (National Post, December 28, 2007)

Aboriginal People
- In Canada, the Aboriginal population increased to 3.8% of total (from 3.3% in 2001)**
- 1.2 million people in Canada identify themselves as Aboriginal**
- More than 60 different Aboriginal languages are spoken in Canada**
- Almost half of Aboriginal people in Canada are ages 24 and under**
- Almost half of First Nations people in Canada live in urban areas: the number living on reserves continues to drop**

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered People
- 10% of the general population is estimated to be lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgendered (LGBT) (Toronto Public Health, 2001)
- 0.5% of couples said they were living in a homosexual relationships (although this figure does not reflect the segment of the gay population that is not in a long-term relationship)*

Note: The ‘T’ in LGBT is now commonly understood to also include: transsexual, Two-spirited (a positive First Nations term for people who are born with characteristics of both sexes), queer, gender questioning, gender variant and intersexed.

Disabilities
• 13.5% of people in Ontario live with disabilities*
• 1 in 10 people in Canada have some degree of hearing loss (Canadian Hearing Society)

*Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2001
**Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2006

IMPACT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL DISPARITIES

Research has established that social and economic barriers – such as poverty, social exclusion, job security and level of education – are equally or more important to a person’s health status than personal health behaviours or medical care\(^1\). These factors, known as social determinants of health, have a significant impact on one’s wellbeing. Marginalized groups such as immigrants, Aboriginal people, single parent families and the poor experience a significant number of these barriers. Licensed residential settings should set clear strategies to reduce inequities in service delivery and outcomes related to factors such as race, gender, ethnicity, ability and sexual orientation.

Marginalized Populations Have Poorer Health Outcomes
• People living in poverty experience poorer health in almost all health areas including mental health, substance abuse or addiction\(^2\)
• Recent immigrants from non-European countries are twice as likely as Canadian-born residents to report deterioration in their health over an eight-year period\(^3\)
• Aboriginal youth suicide rates are about six times higher than for the general population\(^4\)
• 22% of homosexuals and bisexuals report that they had unmet health care need in 2003, nearly twice the proportion of heterosexuals\(^5\)
• Social exclusion is associated with increased rates of premature death, depression, higher levels of pregnancy complications and higher levels of disability from chronic illness\(^6\)

Minority populations Are More Likely To Live In Poverty
• Aboriginal, visible minority and children with disabilities are more likely to be poor\(^7\)
• Poverty rates for immigrants that had been in Canada less than five years doubled between 1980 and 1995\(^8\)
• Aboriginal people and racialized groups are three times more likely than the average Canadian to be employed, despite the high credentials of many immigrants\(^9\)
• The median pre-tax income of all persons indicating Aboriginal identity was $13,526, or 61% of the median income for all Canadians\(^10\)
• LGBT youth are disproportionately represented among homeless youth: about 40% of homeless youth in Toronto are LGBT\(^11\)
• 31% of people with disabilities live in poverty\(^12\)
• The unemployment rate for women with disabilities is 74%\(^13\)

Aboriginal Children Have Unique Challenges
• 52% of Aboriginal children live in poverty\(^7\)
• Aboriginal children are more than four times likely to be hungry\(^7\)
• Aboriginal children have a disability rate that is more than twice the national average\(^7\)
• Twice as many Aboriginal children live in lone-parent families as do non-Aboriginal children\(^7\)