

Enhancing access to services for gbMSM: A decision-making guide to self-assess access to health services for gbMSM, based on a Community-Based Participatory Research



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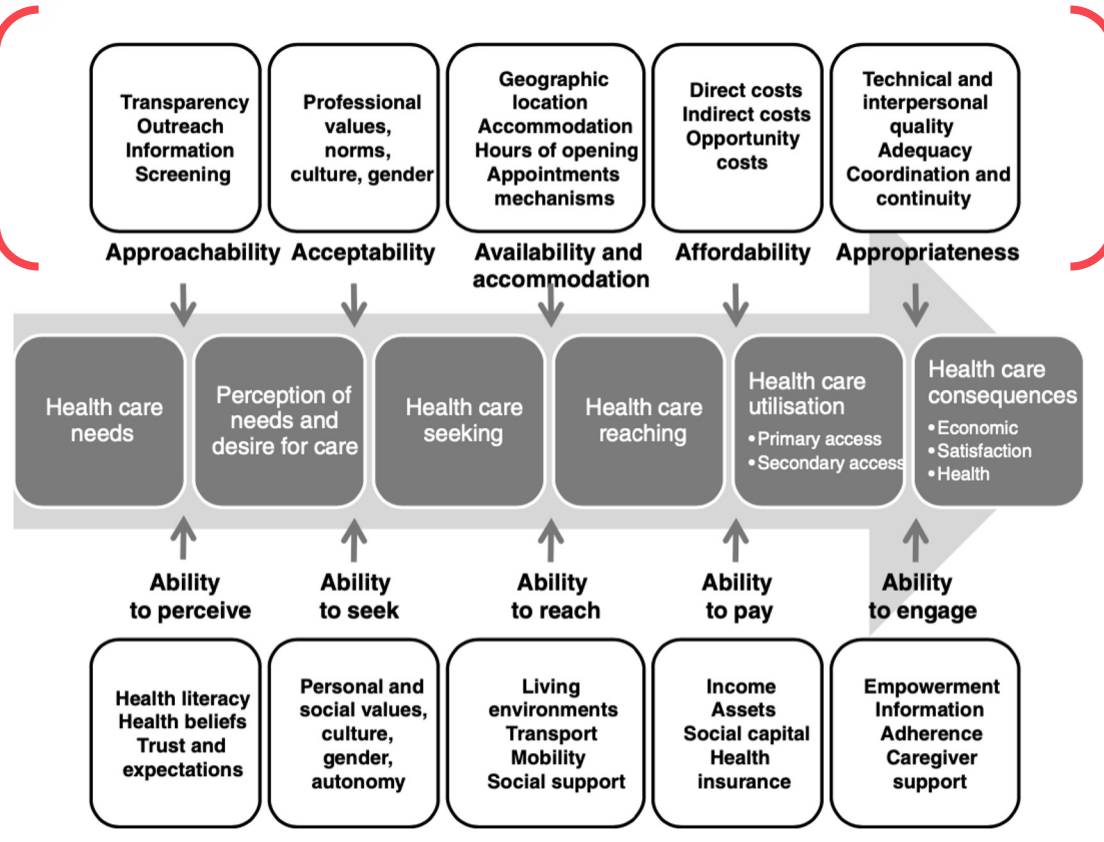
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Background

A **decision-making guide** has been developed and validated to help organizations monitor access to their services for gbMSM, make informed decisions and establish an action plan accordingly.

Supply-side
(Service providers)



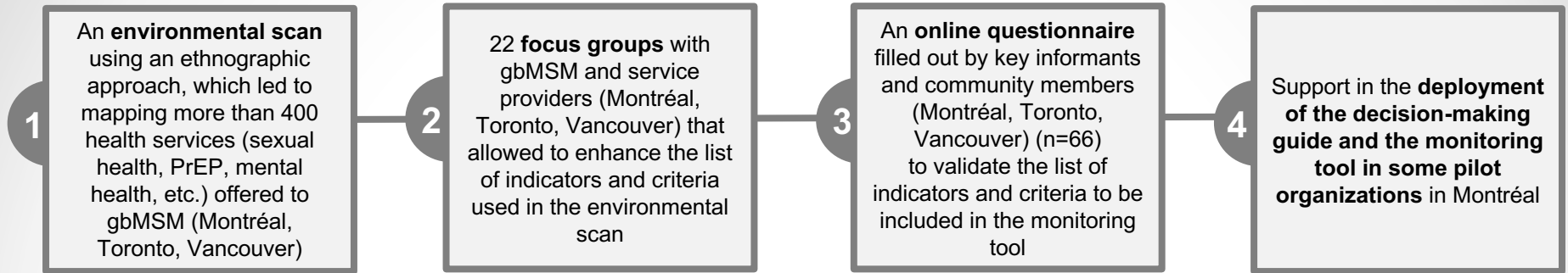
Demand-side
(gbMSM)

The approach is based on a framework by **Lévesque, Harris and Russell (2013)**, characterizing access to services using 5 dimensions targeting changes on the intra and interorganizational level (service providers).



Methods

Between 2016 and 2021, a **four-step process** has led to the development and validation of a decision-making guide and a monitoring tool for service providers to assess access to their services for gbMSM:



Description of the decision-making guide

Guide objectives. To mobilize the knowledge generated through the Mobilise! project in order to improve access to preventive services for cis or trans gbMSM men.

More specifically, the guide aims:

1. To describe the methodology used to characterize access to health care services for gbMSM in a given region to guide the replication of an environmental scan
2. To facilitate the characterization of access to health care services in a given organization, through the use of a monitoring tool that allows:
 - a. To make a judgment on this access
 - b. To assist in decision-making about priorities for action
 - c. To conduct evaluative monitoring to ensure the implementation of priorities for action.
3. To present knowledge transfer methods aimed at fostering dialogue and structural mobilization on issues of access to health care services for gbMSM.

Who is the guide intended for? The various stakeholders in the health and social services network (public, private and community organizations).

The decision-making guide regarding access to health services is divided in **4 modules**.

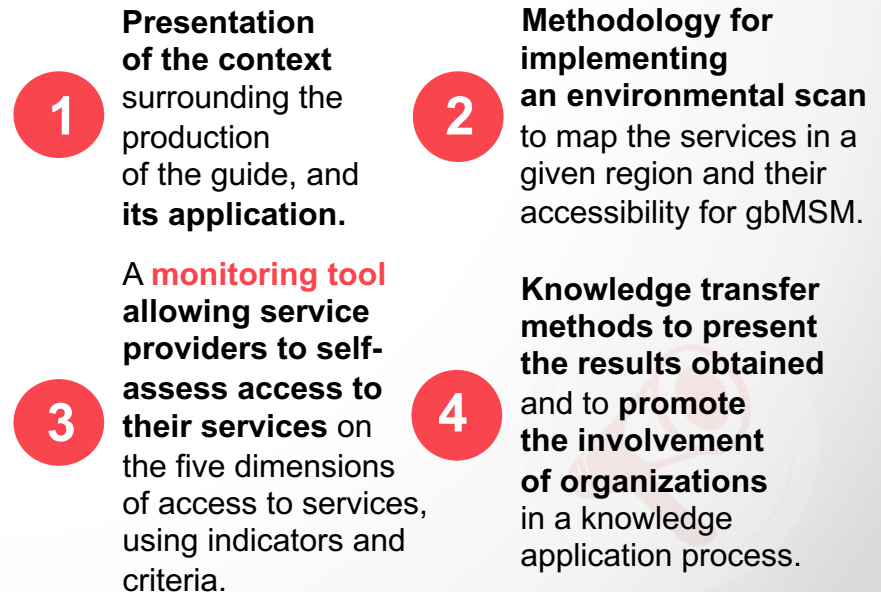


TABLE 1. Indicators for access to health services for gbMSM in the monitoring tool

The data is the result of an online expert consultation with key informants, including service providers and members of the gbMSM community.

Level of importance to characterize access to a service

1 = Not important to 10 = Essential
Mean ± standard deviation

1.	Use of information and communication technologies (ICT) to promote services or disseminate information	8,18 ± 1,938
2.	Use of non-ICT information and communication tools to promote services or disseminate information	7,48 ± 2,027
3.	Existence and quality of information that helps people recognize they need and deserve health services	8,28 ± 2,059
4.	Geographical scope and coverage of tools promoting the services or disseminating prevention information	8,27 ± 1,819
5.	Conditions or measures to preserve anonymity or confidentiality about sexual orientation or HIV status	9,05 ± 1,641
6.	Inclusive and anti-oppressive approach that's welcoming of sexual, gender, racial and other diversities	9,25 ± 1,418
7.	Explicit information on the targeted clientele and the eligibility criteria	8,11 ± 1,681
8.	Information about the organization's capacity to respond to needs through the services offered	7,95 ± 1,807
9.	Availability and quality of information about how to access the service (appointments, wait times, etc.)	8,77 ± 1,476
10.	Range of ways to contact or access services	8,61 ± 1,534
11.	Ease of geographical and physical access	8,88 ± 1,733
12.	Coverage and scope of the service offer	8,41 ± 1,847
13.	Strategies to help users access the service at no cost or at a reduced cost	8,89 ± 1,792
14.	Minimal direct and indirect costs to use the service	8,42 ± 2,146
15.	Adaptation of services – tailored to needs	8,63 ± 1,577
16.	Service corridors between organizations	8,07 ± 2,053
17.	Staff members' skills and expertise, quality of equipment	8,86 ± 1,773
18.	Staff training and capacity-building	8,70 ± 1,755
19.	Consideration of ministerial norms, agreements and standards in order to optimize access to services	7,96 ± 1,778
20.	Integrated and holistic approach within the organization	8,45 ± 1,768
21.	Service corridors within the organization	8,26 ± 2,076
22.	Conditions and measures to foster user retention with regard to services and care	8,13 ± 1,864
23.	Patient retention and empowerment measures	8,04 ± 1,742
24.	Consideration of user satisfaction and assessment to improve the service	8,58 ± 1,853

Monitoring tool for service providers

The monitoring tool is a **self-assessment tool** to initiate a reflection on the courses of action to be taken within one's organization to improve access to its services for gbMSM men. The assessment process can also be an indirect opportunity to strengthen intra- and inter-organizational partnerships.

The tool includes **24 indicators** of access to services (see TABLE 1), which are **characterized by distinct criteria**.

1 **Firstly**, for each criterion of a given indicator, organizations are asked to position themselves as to what needs to be improved or integrated into the organization, using the following scale:

- The organization already does it
- The organization does it, but it should be improved
- The organization does not do it, but it should be integrated
- Not applicable or irrelevant to the organization

2

Secondly, organizations are asked to establish priorities for action based on a level of importance ranging from 1 to 5, previously associated with each criterion. The weighting is the result of the online expert consultation process.

The criteria considered essential are the most important to integrate into services and within the organization because of the benefits they could generate in improving access to services.

1	2	3	4	5
Less essential			Essential	

3

Thirdly, organizations are asked to complete a form available at the end of the tool, which makes it possible to assess the results obtained and to help prioritize the actions to be implemented in order to promote access to its services.

Conclusion

We are currently reviewing the guide with the support of external committees including the *ministère de la Santé et des Services Sociaux* (MSSS) and the *Direction régionale de la santé publique* (DRSP). When released, the guide will be available in French and then translated into English. The guide will be available on the projetmobilise.org website in the **fall of 2022**.

The decision-making guide is a **self-directed methodological and evaluative tool** for improving access to preventive services for cis or trans gbMSM men. The guide can be scaled up for application to other populations, other health care services, or other provinces, while taking into consideration the contexts in which health care services take place.

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