

Grace Holwell Student Representative

Term: 2024-2025 (1st term)
Region: Capital

Biography



Grace Holwell is a settler living on Treaty 1 territory in Manitoba and working towards her Master of Social Work degree at the University of Manitoba (UM). Grace grew up near the ocean in Halifax, Nova Scotia, on the ancestral lands of the Mi'kmaq people. Her main area of interest includes examining the many intersections of sexual, reproductive, and gender-affirming health, specifically 2SLGBTQIA+ health. Grace is working towards the goal of making sexual health anti-oppressive, decolonial, sex-positive, pro-choice, accessible, non-judgmental, and free from violence. When not volunteering or being immersed in research, Grace enjoys baking, spending time with loved ones, and cuddling her cat, Dodger.

Grace discovered her passion for equitable and safe healthcare while volunteering for organizations throughout and after her undergrad that promoted social justice, such as the Sexual Health Resource Centre at Acadia University and the Halifax Sexual Health Centre. Grace was also afforded the opportunity to be on the Youth Advocacy Network for Action Now Atlantic, where she worked on a campaign promoting sexual violence prevention, education, and response in post-secondary campuses in Atlantic Canada. Currently, Grace sits on the Board of Directors for the South Shore Sexual Centre as Vice Chair, overseeing the organization's policy adherence, financial management, and assessment of long-term goals. As the Knowledge, Translation, and Exchange Strategist for the Village Lab at UM, Grace works to bridge the gap between the Village Lab's research and the wider community to improve the health and well-being of marginalized and equity-seeking populations in HIV/STBBI testing and harm reduction in Manitoba.

Recently, Grace completed her first practicum at Wolseley Elm under the supervision of Thomas Wardell. In this role, she worked with a range of clients, mainly those in the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, providing counselling and resources. Grace gained insights into the ethical considerations of private practice, managed ethical dilemmas, engaged in different treatment modalities (individual, couple, and group), and learned how to conduct anti-oppressive practice. As a lifelong learner, Grace is eager to begin her second practicum placement at the Sexual Violence Resource Centre on the UM campus.

As a member of the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community, Grace values MCSW's work and especially appreciates its commitment to social justice. Grace's vision for board membership is to uphold social work values, ensuring practice remains ethical, equitable, inclusive, and accountable. Grace is particularly interested in addressing gaps in knowledge to support ethical social work practice.