

2SLGBTQIA+

ALLYSHIP

A GUIDE



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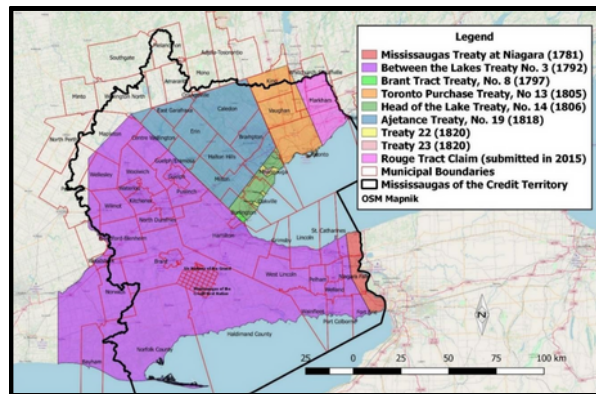
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THINGS TO NOTE

This resource guide was developed by Andrea Moreau, Olivia Martel-Fauteux, and ZhiTao (Jonathan) Fang, as part of an undergraduate course at the University of Guelph in Winter 2021. It was last updated in 2025 by the Youth Wellness Hubs Ontario Waterloo Wellington team.

While this allyship guide was carefully created through examination of scholarly and community resources, what is considered effective allyship continues to evolve and grow along with the 2SLGBTQIA+ community itself. Thus, some of the information within this booklet may eventually become outdated or unhelpful. It is important to actively consult new, additional resources to ensure one's allyship remains up to date. Additionally, this booklet is only a starting point for 2SLGBTQIA+ allyship. The 2SLGBTQIA+ community is vast and diverse: do not assume everyone within it thinks the same or desires the same type of allyship. Person-by-person conversations are always the most productive form of allyship.

Due to space limitations, as well as accessibility considerations, in-text citations are not used in this document. Instead, a comprehensive reference list, which lists all resources used to compile the information in this booklet, is found at the very end of the guide.



LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We acknowledge that Youth Wellness Hubs - Wellington Guelph's (YWHO-WG) many locations are situated on the Haldimand Tract (1784), the homeland of the Neutral, Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, Odawa, Petun, and Mississaugas of the Credit First Nations, on land governed by the Ajetance Treaty 19, Between the Lakes Treaty 3, and Treaty 4: Crown Grant to the Six Nations. As we recognize the historical and ongoing mistreatment, oppression, and injustices faced by First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples, we also name that many Indigenous 2SLGBTQIA+ people have experienced additional layers of erasure, violence, and exclusion due to colonialism. Two-Spirit identities, which have existed long before colonization, continue to be vital sources of strength, culture, and community.

At YWHO-WG, we are committed to building relationships, fostering trust, and creating opportunities within our hubs that uplift Indigenous youth - including Two-Spirit youth - and all First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities. We ground this work in intersectionality, recognizing that allyship means standing with Indigenous peoples and 2SLGBTQIA+ communities in their distinct and connected struggles for safety, belonging, and self-determination. We are taking small but meaningful steps toward Indigenous Reconciliation through ongoing education, reflection, and action. YWHO-WG remains accountable to these commitments as we work to co-create spaces that are safe, inclusive, and affirming for all.

INTRODUCTION

You have no doubt come across 2SLGBTQIA+ news and media throughout your life, especially in the last several years as queer visibility and equality increases. You may even know someone who identifies as a part of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community - in fact, roughly **one out of every ten individuals in Canada identify as a member of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community**. You may even be a part of the community or questioning your identity yourself.



This booklet will walk you through 2SLGBTQIA+ history, common misconceptions, and the oppression the community has faced and continues to face, with the goal of helping you to **become a better, more effective ally**. This booklet also contains a variety of activities and exercises to apply what you learn, in addition to resources on 2SLGBTQIA+ allyship and support located in the Guelph-Wellington region and beyond!

Key Terms

Read through these key 2SLGBTQIA+ definitions before continuing on to the rest of the booklet!

ALLY

Someone who supports 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals by listening, learning, and advocating for equity.

AROMANTIC

This is a scale for people who experience little or no romantic attraction. Aromantic people may or may not also identify as asexual.

ASEXUAL

This is a scale for people who experience little or no sexual attraction. It looks and feels different for everyone.

CISGENDER

Someone whose gender identity is the same as the sex they were assigned at birth.

CISNORMATIVITY

The assumption that being cisgender is “normal”, or the default.

CONSENSUAL ALLYSHIP

Taking guidance from the community/individual you wish to be an ally to about the types of allyship they desire.

GENDER EXPRESSION

How someone shows their gender to the world through things like clothes, voice and behaviour.

GENDER EXPANSIVE

A broad term for gender identities and expressions that stretch beyond traditional ideas of gender.

GENDER IDENTITY

How someone understands and experiences their own gender internally.

HETERONORMATIVITY

The belief that heterosexuality is the “default” or “normal,” and that everyone should be straight.

INTERSECTIONALITY

The idea that people have many identities (e.g., race, gender, disability) that overlap and shape how they experience the world, including systems of privilege and oppression.

INTERSEX

A person born with physical or genetic traits that don't fit typical definitions of “male” or “female.”

MARGINALIZATION

When an individual or community and their experiences are treated as invalid or insignificant, they are often denied equal access to rights, opportunities, and resources.

MICROAGGRESSIONS

Unintentional everyday comments or actions that may seem small but carry harmful stereotypes or assumptions.

NONBINARY

A term for people whose gender identity doesn't fit strictly into “male” or “female.” Some folks identify as both, neither, a mix, or something entirely different.

OPPRESSION

When a person or group in a position of power uses their privilege to subject others to hurtful and unfair treatment.

PANSEXUAL

Someone who is attracted to people of all genders. Pansexuality recognizes that gender is not the only factor in attraction.

SEX ASSIGNED AT BIRTH

The label (such as “male” or “female”) given to someone at birth, based on physical anatomy. This may or may not align with someone's gender identity.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Describes who someone is romantically and/or sexually attracted to.

TRANSGENDER

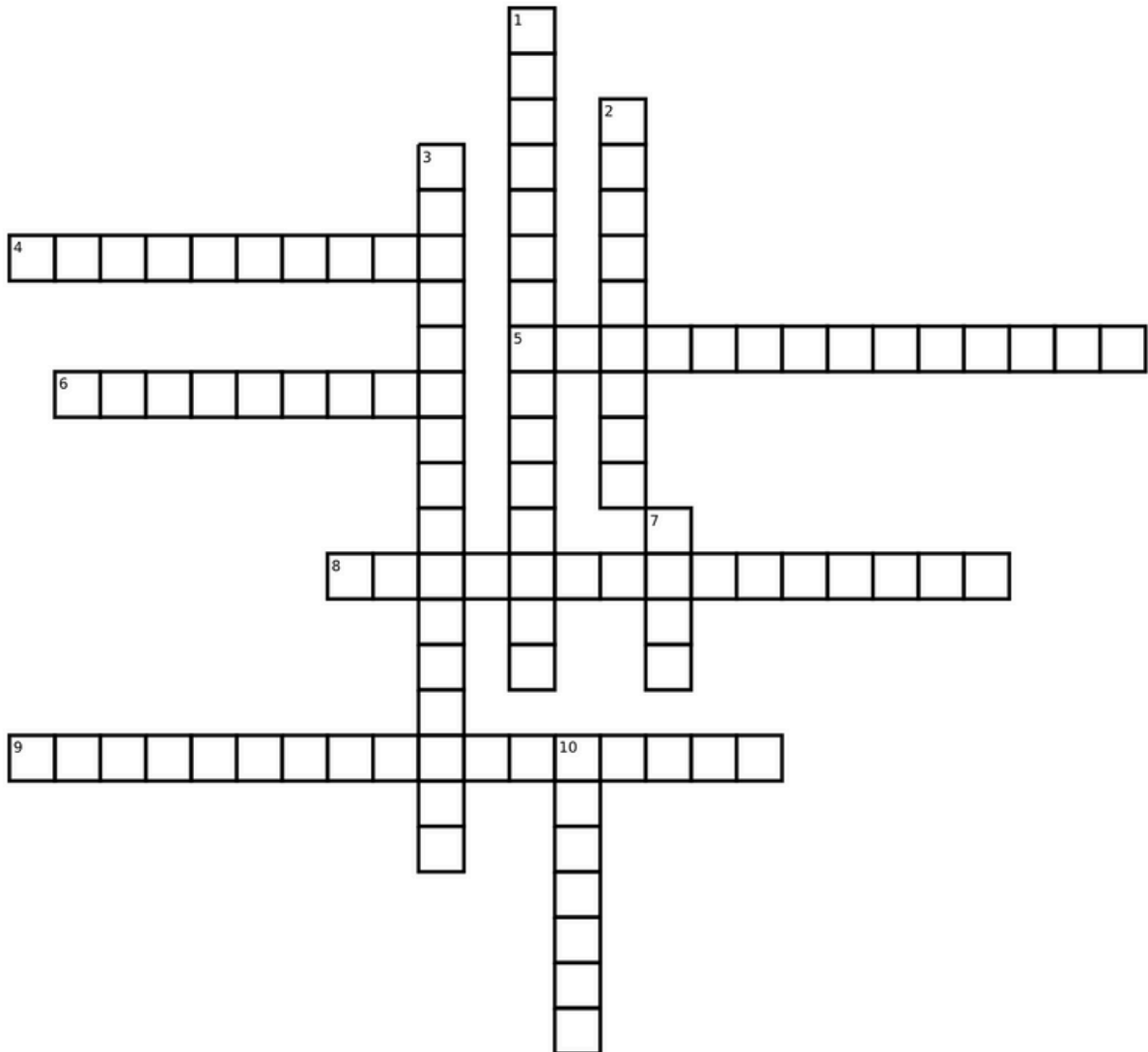
Someone whose gender identity is different from their sex assigned at birth. Trans people may or may not choose to transition socially or medically

TWO-SPIRIT

A cultural and spiritual identity held by some Indigenous people that encompasses gender, sexuality, and community roles.

CROSSWORD

Test your new knowledge with this crossword on key terms!



DOWN:

1. Subtle, often unintentional, remarks or actions that are hurtful.
2. Someone whose gender is outside the male/female binary.
3. The way someone outwardly shows their gender.
7. A person who supports and advocates for the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.
10. Someone who experiences little-to-no sexual attraction.

ACROSS:

4. When someone is treated unfairly due to their identity.
5. The internal sense of your gender, such as being a man, woman, both, or neither.
6. Having a gender identity that matches the sex assigned at birth.
8. Being pushed to the edge of society or excluded.
9. When a person holds overlapping identities that shape their experience.

WHAT IS ALLYSHIP?

The best way to promote inclusion and diversity in our society is to become an **ally** to the queer community. An ally is someone who **utilizes their privilege to promote the inclusion of a marginalized group actively**.

In this booklet's case, allyship involves **advocating for the rights of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community**. An ally is typically someone who is not a part of the community, but you can also be an ally to 2SLGBTQIA+ folks if you are within the community yourself, as it encompasses so many diverse identities.

Being an ally is a lifelong process. Being a good ally does not mean you will never make a mistake. It's okay to feel overwhelmed by the amount you still have to learn and the rapid evolution of 2SLGBTQIA+ language and allyship, but you're on the right track. Just reading this booklet means you care enough to do better!





WHO IS THE 2SLGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY?

2SLGBTQIA+ is an umbrella term that represents a wide range of sexual orientations, gender identities, gender expressions, and intersex variations. The acronym stands for “**Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and asexual**”, which encompasses some - but not all - of the identities within the 2SLGBTQIA+ community (also known as the **queer community**). **The plus sign (+) is used to represent the diversity of this community** beyond those currently listed in the acronym. Together, the 2SLGBTQIA+ community reflects a **broad spectrum of human diversity** in how people understand and express themselves, form relationships, and experience gender and attraction.

KEY FACTS

- **1 in 25** people living in Canada identify as a member of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.
- **13%** of hate crimes in Canada are motivated by 2SLGBTQIA+ hatred.
- **70%** of transgender youth in Canada have faced discrimination.
- Gay, lesbian, and bisexual people are **2x more likely** to experience violent attacks than heterosexual Canadians.
- Queer youth are almost **3x more likely** to consider self-harm and suicide.

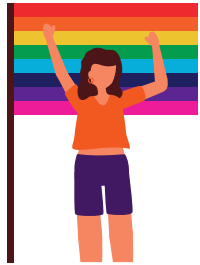
Because of the discrimination queer people continue to face, being an ally is necessary and important.

2SLGBTQIA+ HISTORY TIMELINE



1969: STONEWALL RIOTS

The Stonewall riots in Manhattan were led by Black and Latina trans women; and were a pivotal moment in the fight for 2SLGBTQIA+ rights in North America. Today's Pride events originated from these riots and the work of QTBIPOC (Queer, Trans, Black Indigenous People of colour) folks.



1973: FIRST PRIDE MARCHES IN CANADA

The first Pride demonstrations took place in several large Canadian cities.

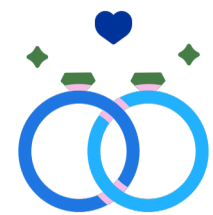
1983: HIV/AIDS CRISIS

1983 marked the first case of AIDS in Canada. HIV/AIDS disproportionately impacts marginalized folks (specifically queer men and Indigenous people). The work of 2SLGBTQIA+ HIV/AIDS activists led to the availability of treatments today.



2005: MARRIAGE EQUALITY

Bill C-38 legalized same-sex marriage in Canada.



2017: X GENDER MARKER

The choice of an "X" or "unspecified" gender marker on legal documentation (such as passports) became an option for nonbinary individuals.



PRE-COLONIZATION

2SLGBTQIA+ folks have always existed. Prior to colonization, non-cisgender and non-heterosexual identities were common and respected by Indigenous communities.

1969: DECRIMINALIZATION

Being queer was decriminalized in Canada in 1969. Prior to this, men who had sex with men could face life in prison.

1971: FIRST GAY RIGHTS PROTESTS IN CANADA

Roughly 100 people gathered at Parliament Hill in Ottawa to protest against systemic discrimination faced by 2SLGBTQIA+ folks. A smaller protest also occurred in Vancouver.

1981: BATHHOUSE RAIDS

Toronto police raided 4 bathhouses that were considered safe spaces for the 2SLGBTQIA+ community and arrested nearly 300 gay men, sparking protests. Similar raids occurred across Canada up until the early 2000s, and discrimination by law enforcement against the 2SLGBTQIA+ community is still an ongoing concern.



1995: SUPREME COURT RULING

The Supreme Court of Canada ruled that sexual orientation was included in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.



2009: FIRST TRANS PRIDE MARCH

The first Trans March took place in Toronto.

2017: BILL-C16

The Canadian Human Rights Act was amended to protect against discrimination on the basis of gender identity and expression.



A horizontal brushstroke in the colors of the rainbow (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple) with a textured, painterly appearance.

**SEXUAL
ORIENTATION**

&

A stylized silhouette of a human brain, filled with various colors including yellow, red, purple, green, and orange, with white outlines for the gyri and sulci.

**GENDER
IDENTITY**

Sexual Orientation

When you read the words "sexual orientation", what comes to your mind? Take a minute to think about what words, ideas, or thoughts you associate with the term.

Sexual orientation basics

- Sexual orientation involves several **different forms of attraction**.
- **Sexual attraction** involves who folks want to be sexually intimate with, and includes who you find physically attractive.
- **Romantic attraction** involves who someone is romantically interested in (for example, who folks want to be in a relationship with).



Things to remember



- **Sexual orientation is not a binary.**
 - There are more possibilities than just being attracted to only the opposite sex or only the same sex.
 - Instead, think of sexual orientation as a **spectrum**, meaning that there are dozens of possible sexual orientations (some of which are explained later on).
- **Sexual orientation is fluid.**
 - What types of people someone is attracted to may change throughout their lives.
- The sexual orientation **labels people choose are personal**, and some folks might not use a label at all, so **never assume** someone's orientation.

Gender



Sex assigned at birth

- **Sex assigned at birth** refers to the sex that your doctor assigns you immediately after you are born.
 - This is associated with biological characteristics, such as reproductive organs (genitals) and chromosomes.
- **Intersex** people are born with internal or external sexual or reproductive anatomy that cannot be described as exclusively male or female.

Gender basics

- **Gender** refers to the set of behaviours and attributes that are typically associated with someone's sex assigned at birth.
- **Gender is a social construct.**
 - It was created by cultural ideas like the gender binary, and is not based on biology.
- **Traditional gender roles** expect women and men to act a certain way.
 - People do not need to follow these roles and can **express their gender in any way they want!**



Gender Identity and Expression

When you read the terms "gender identity" and "gender expression", what comes to your mind? Do they mean different things? Are they the same? Take a minute to think about it before continuing.

Gender identity

- Gender identity is how an individual experiences and understands their own gender.
- Some people are **cisgender**, meaning their gender identity is the same as their sex assigned at birth.
- Some people are **transgender**, meaning their gender identities are different than their sex assigned at birth.
- **Nonbinary** people do not identify exclusively as male or female.
 - Some folks may identify as being both a girl and a boy at the same time, or a fluctuation of the two, while some identify with being neither.
- **Androgynous** describes a person's appearance, behaviour or gender expression that may blend or fluctuate between masculine and feminine traits



Gender expression

- Gender expression is how someone expresses or presents their gender.
 - Gender can be expressed through clothing, hairstyles, behaviour, and more!
- Gender identity and expression are different.
 - Which gender you identify as does **not** dictate how you express yourself.
 - For example, boys might want to wear dresses; nonbinary people may present feminine, masculine, or androgynous.
- It is important not to assume someone's identity based on how they sound, look, or dress.



Two-Spirit



For a more detailed look at Two-Spirit people and their history, as well as ways to be an effective ally, please take a look at Egale's Two-Spirit Ally Ambassador Guide located in the Resources section.

What is Two-Spirit?

- **Two-Spirit** is an English translation of the Anishinaabemowin term **niizh manidoowag**, meaning to have both masculine and feminine spirits.
- The term Two-Spirit was coined in 1990. It refers to a **third gender role** that was an accepted and important part of many Indigenous cultures within North America.
- Can additionally be used as an **umbrella term for Indigenous folk who are also part of the LGBTQIA+ community**.
- Specific definitions vary depending on the community examined.

Why is it important?

- **Prior to colonization**, Two-Spirit people were held in high regard in Indigenous communities.
- They often **performed roles associated with both men and women**, such as being warriors and medicine people simultaneously.
- The term is a way to **center Indigenous voices and experiences** and honour tradition.

Things to remember

- **Only Indigenous folk can label themselves as Two-Spirit.**
- **Learn and remember the history of violent colonialism** faced by the Two-Spirit community.
- **Intentionally include Indigenous stories, voices, and people in your allyship** toward queer people and communities.
- **Two-Spirit is not a universal Indigenous identity**, it varies by nation and tradition.

Take a look at this page to learn about some different sexual orientations and gender identities. There are also flags associated with each identity: flags are used to promote solidarity within communities!

SEXUAL ORIENTATIONS



QUEER

An umbrella term for people who do not identify as straight.



GAY

Someone who is attracted to people of the same gender. Usually used by men.



LESBIAN

A woman/nonbinary person who is attracted to women.



BISEXUAL

Someone who is attracted to people of the same and different gender.



PANSEXUAL

Someone who is attracted to folks regardless of their gender identity.



ASEXUAL

Someone who does not experience sexual attraction to anyone.



AROMANTIC

Someone who does not experience romantic attraction to anyone.

GENDER IDENTITIES



TRANSGENDER

Someone whose gender identity is different from their sex assigned at birth.



NONBINARY

A general term for someone who does not identify as exclusively male or female.



GENDERQUEER

Someone whose gender is not within the gender binary of male or female.



GENDERFLUID

Someone with a changing gender identity. They may feel like a man one day, and a woman the next.



AGENDER

Someone who does not identify with a gender, or whose gender identity is neutral.



INTERSEX

Someone with sexual/reproductive anatomy that is not exclusively male or female.



COMING OUT



COMING OUT

Coming out of the closet, or just coming out, describes when someone in the 2SLGBTQIA+ community self-discloses their sexual orientation or gender identity to someone.

Why is coming out important?

- It allows many 2SLGBTQIA+ folk to **feel fully like themselves** around people who are important to them.
- It allows 2SLGBTQIA+ folk to **feel more secure** about their identities, leading to **enhanced self-esteem** and **better mental health**.

Coming out experiences vary

- **Not every 2SLGBTQIA+ person has the same experience with coming out.** Potential benefits are **only present when someone receives social support** after coming out.
- **Some folks have to conceal their identities** to protect themselves from violence, homelessness, and ostracization.
- **Remember that coming out is personal and every person should be treated uniquely.**
- **Not every 2SLGBTQIA+ person chooses to come out.** Nor is coming out necessary to be a part of/identify with the community

The coming out experience

- It is common to think of coming out as a one-time experience, however, **people in the 2SLGBTQIA+ community have to come out multiple times.**
- **Only 23% of lesbian, gay, and bisexual people are out to everyone** in their lives.
- **Coming out can be a life-long process**, where 2SLGBTQIA+ people have to assess each environment they are in as supportive or unsupportive.

Being an ally when a friend or family member comes out to you is one of the most important parts of 2SLGBTQIA+ allyship!



COMING OUT

AS TRANSGENDER AND NONBINARY

What's it like?



- Many (but not all!) trans and nonbinary folk struggle with **gender dysphoria**: discomfort due to being perceived by themselves/others as a gender they do not identify as.
- Some folks may **transition**: meaning they **change their names, pronouns**, and/or **physical appearance** to align more with their gender identity.
- Transitioning can lead to **gender euphoria**: happiness due to expressing oneself and being perceived as the gender one identifies with.
- Some folks choose to **medically transition** which can include **gender-affirming surgeries** (such as removing or adding breasts) and **hormone replacement therapy** (taking hormones that can help folks gain physical characteristics associated with their gender identity).
- Some transitioned trans folks may **pass**, meaning they are perceived by society as the gender they identify with.

Key points

- Trans people **do not need to come out** if they feel safer not doing so.
- Trans people **do not need to pass** for their identities to be valid.
- **Ask for someone's pronouns** rather than assuming.
- Using trans/nonbinary folks' **pronouns** and **chosen names** is essential in helping them feel safe and respected.
- If you accidentally use the wrong name or pronoun, **apologize and move on.**



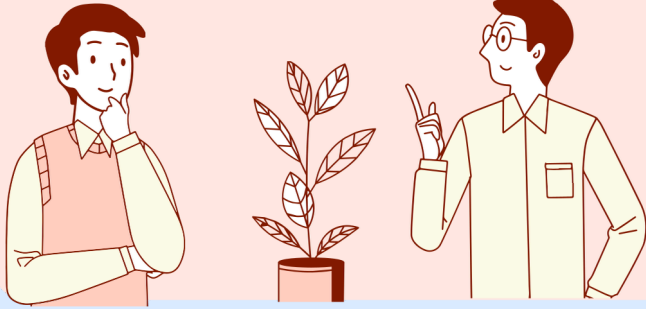
See the “Why Language Matters” section to learn more about pronouns, as well as the “Resources” section for information on organizations that can help trans and nonbinary folks in their coming out and transitioning journeys!

Interactive Activity

Keeping in mind what you've learned, read the following comic of someone coming out to their friend, and think about what they did well and what they could have done better.

Hey, can I tell you something important?

Sure! What is it?



Well...I'm bisexual.

Oh, that doesn't matter to me. I actually kind of had a feeling.



Oh, okay...

Can I tell anyone else we both know?



...I think I'll tell them when I'm ready later.

Got it. By the way, this doesn't mean you have a crush on me, does it?



In the space below, write 1-3 things the person on the right did correctly, and 1-3 things they did incorrectly. With the remaining space, write how you would have reacted in a similar situation if a close friend came out.

How to Be Supportive When Someone Comes Out To You

Actively Listen

Making eye contact and utilizing **facial expressions and gestures** shows that you are **paying full attention** to this important moment. **Asking questions regarding what your friend wants you to do with this information** is also important (for example, can you tell others?). Finally, if someone comes out as trans or nonbinary, **ask them what pronouns or names** they want you to use for them.



Recognize the Moment's Importance

Show that you understand how important this moment is: thank them for trusting you and tell them how grateful you are they shared this information with you.

Provide Support

Use supportive and loving language so they know you are okay with this and are there for them. If needed, **ask them if they want extra support.** Check out the resources at the end of this booklet for ideas on what to provide to your loved one!



Continue Being There for Them

Coming out is sometimes a life-long process. **Appreciate that they might need extra love** beyond the initial conversation. Make an effort to include them in your activities online and off to reduce potential feelings of isolation. (But if they need space, that's valid too!)

Common Mistakes to Avoid

Don't Tell Anybody Else Without Permission

Just because someone came out to you, **does not mean they are out to everybody in their life**. Keep it to yourself unless explicitly told otherwise!



Don't Question It

Queer people often deliberate on their identities for a long time before feeling confident enough to come out. Additionally, it's important to note that if one's identity changes over time, both current and past identities are still valid.

Don't Downplay the Significance

Coming out requires a lot of courage (and trust in you!), so statements such as "I always knew you were gay" or not taking the situation seriously can be disempowering and invalidating.



Don't Treat Them Any Different

Regardless of their identity, they are still the same person! Avoid treating them differently just because they are queer (or assuming they can represent the entire queer community themselves). For example, do not immediately ask if they consume stereotypically queer media.

Gender Affirming Care

What is Gender Affirming Care?

Gender-affirming care refers to anything that helps someone feel more at home in their body, identity, or expression. It looks different for everyone and may or may not involve medical care.

Examples include:

- Choosing a name or pronouns
- Clothing and style
- Haircuts
- Voice work
- Using binders or padding
- Medical care (if desired)



Myth: Only folks who identify as trans need gender affirming care.

**This is NOT true!
Gender affirming care is for everyone.**

Myth: People need surgery to be ‘truly’ transgender.

NOT true! Many who are trans never pursue medical procedures.

Myth: Trans people should try to “pass” as cisgender.

Not everyone wants to “pass”, and no one should have to.

What Allies Should Know

- Gender affirming care does not mean just surgeries or hormones
- It includes names, pronouns, clothes, hair, voice, etc.
- Cisgender folks use gender affirming care too!
- Everyone’s path is different and it is essential to respect all choices
- Don’t ask about someone’s body or medical history
- Access to care can be life-saving
- Support, don’t judge



OPPRESSION



What does it look like, and how can we fight it?

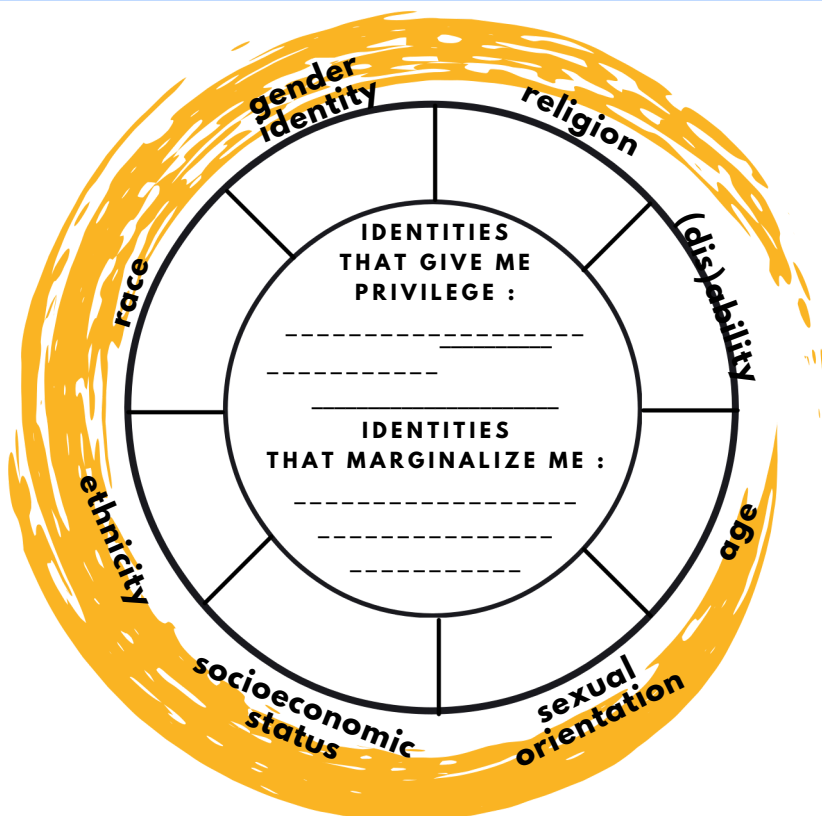


Intersectionality

Intersectionality acknowledges that we all possess multi-dimensional identities, which shape our lived experiences. It allows us to understand that a **single individual might be privileged within some social situations, but oppressed in others**. For example, a white queer person experiences homophobia, but does not experience racism, while a Black queer person experiences both.

There is immense diversity within the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, and folks with multi-minority identities, such as QTBIPOC (Queer, Trans, Black, Indigenous, People of Colour), experience heightened oppression. Examining our own privileges is an essential part of learning to engage in effective allyship.

Take a look at the graphic below and fill in each of the 8 sections with your own identities. Use the middle of the circle to reflect on these identities. How might some identities give you privilege, and how might others marginalize you?



Minority Stress & Strength

Homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia are experienced by 2SLGBTQIA+ people at their schools, workplaces, the healthcare system, and even in their own homes.

Individuals or groups who are the victims of oppression face **minority stress**: ongoing mistreatment puts them at an increased risk of overall poor well-being. In the case of 2SLGBTQIA+ folks, oppression can put them at an **increased risk of homelessness, unemployment, social isolation, poor educational outcomes, and mental and physical health issues.**

ANTI-2SLGBTQ+ OPPRESSION IN CANADA



64% of 2SLGBTQIA+ students feel unsafe at school.



25-40% of homeless youth are part of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.



90% of trans employees and 47% of queer employees have experienced workplace discrimination.



2SLGBTQIA+ youth face a risk of substance abuse that is 14x higher than their heterosexual and cisgender peers.

If you or somebody you know is struggling with any of these issues, please see the Resources section of this booklet.

Despite this adversity, **2SLGBTQIA+ folks are amazingly resilient** and able to overcome minority stress through developing a sense of pride in their identity and getting support from others in the community. This is called minority strength.

As an ally, **you can help 2SLGBTQIA+ folks develop minority strength by standing up against homophobia, biphobia and transphobia!**



Microaggressions

What are microaggressions?

- Brief and sometimes unintentional discriminatory remarks or actions.
- Less aggressive, but **occur more commonly** than other forms of discrimination.
- Often go unnoticed by those unaffected by the remarks, **making targeted folks fearful to speak up.**
- Often take the form of **heteronormativity** and **cisnormativity** through making assumptions about someone's sexual orientation or gender identity.

Examples

The illustration depicts five scenarios of microaggressions against LGBTQIA+ individuals. 1. A person in a wheelchair is asked, "I know you're nonbinary, but are you actually a boy or a girl?". 2. A couple is asked, "So, who's the man in the relationship?". 3. A person holding a rainbow flag is told, "You're not bisexual, you have a girlfriend.". 4. A woman in a hijab is told, "You don't look gay.". 5. A person holding a transgender flag is asked, "Are you sure you're asexual? maybe you just haven't found 'the one' yet.". 6. A woman is told, "Wow, you're so pretty for a trans girl!".

Take a moment to think about why each of these remarks are hurtful, and try to be more mindful regarding microaggressions.

So what?

Microaggressions spread the belief that 2SLGBTQIA+ identities are abnormal, which can lead to more severe forms of oppression. Many 2SLGBTQIA+ people struggle with **internalized homophobia/transphobia**, meaning that they worry that something is wrong with them and feel pressure to hide their identity from themselves and others. Avoiding the use of microaggressions or addressing when someone else uses them is a meaningful way to be an ally.

Inclusive

Language

**WHAT IS IT, AND WHY
DOES IT MATTER?**

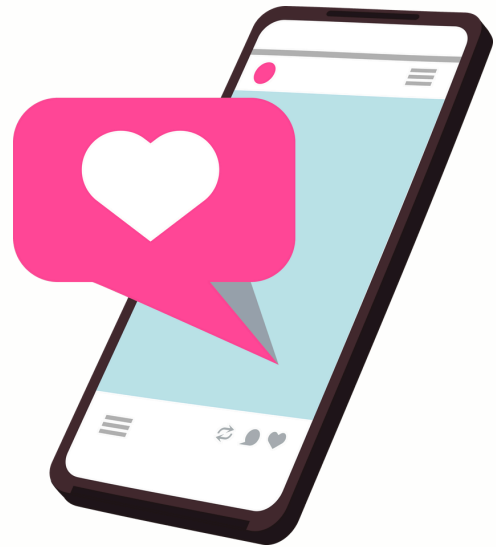


Inclusive Language

Inclusive language is one of the most powerful tools that allies can use to affirm the identities of 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals. Inclusive language is about respect. It helps people feel seen and safe.

What makes language inclusive?

- It includes and affirms 2SLGBTQIA+ identities.
- It avoids assumptions about someone's gender, identity, or relationships.
- It never uses slurs or language that puts people down.
- It does not frame 2SLGBTQIA+ as abnormal.



When should I use it?

- **Always!** Even when you're not around any 2SLGBTQIA+ folks that you know of.
- In the classroom
- In casual conversations
- When meeting new people
- When posting online
- In your workplace

A reminder

The words we use are constantly evolving. What feels respectful and affirming to one person might not feel that way to someone else. For example, the word “queer” was once used as a slur against 2SLGBTQIA+ people. Today, many have reclaimed it as a powerful, flexible identity, especially folks who don't feel fully represented by labels like gay, bi, or trans. But not everyone is comfortable with it, and that's okay too.

See the Resources section for more information and help on inclusive language.

Language Changes to Make

These small changes in the vocabulary you use can have hugely positive implications!

Change this:

To this:

Why?

"guys"

"ladies and gentlemen"

"folks"

This includes people who do not identify as male or female.

"boyfriend/girlfriend"

"husband/wife"

"partner"

"spouse"

We use these terms when the gender identity of someone's significant other is not known.

"preferred pronouns"

"pronouns"

Using somebody's correct pronouns is not a choice, but a way to give them the basic respect that we all deserve.

"sexual preference"

"gay lifestyle"

"sexual orientation"

It is not a choice to be 2SLGBTQIA+.

"homosexuality"

"transgendered"

"transgenderism"

lesbianism"

"hermaphrodite"

"being gay"

"transgender"

"being transgender"

"being a lesbian"

"intersex"

These terms stigmatize 2SLGBTQIA+ folks, and imply that their identity is a condition that can/should be changed.

"transsexual"

"sex change"

"transgender"

"gender-affirming surgery"

These terms imply that trans people need certain surgeries in order to be valid. Surgery is not always accessible or part of everyone's transition.

Pronouns

Once someone has shared their pronouns with you, always use them and **refrain from questioning the validity of their pronouns or gender identity**. Some people may use pronouns you've never heard before, but it is essential to learn how to use them properly to respect individuals' identities and make them feel comfortable.

Neopronouns

- Gender-neutral pronouns beyond “they/them”
- Created for people whose gender doesn't fit terms like “he” or “she”
- Reflects the wide spectrum of non-binary gender identities and experiences.
- Neopronouns aren't new, "ze" was coined in 1864!
- The key point is that language should adapt to fit people, not the other way around



Check out the chart below to learn how to use some common pronouns!

SUBJECTIVE	OBJECTIVE	POSSESSIVE ADJECTIVE	POSSESSIVE PRONOUN	REFLEXIVE
They	Them	Their	Theirs	Themselves
She	Her	Her	Hers	Herself
He	Him	His	His	Himself
Ze	Zir	Zir	Zirs	Zirself
Ey	Em	Eir	Eirs	Eirself
Sie	Hir	Hir	Hirs	Hirself
Xe	Xem	Xir	Xirs	Xirself

Interactive Activity

Hi, I'm Mike! I haven't seen you before, are you a new hire?

I am! My name is Drew and I use they/them pronouns.

They/them pronouns are plural. You're one person, so it wouldn't be grammatically correct for me to call you that.

I understand that it might be confusing, but I identify as nonbinary and those are my pronouns. My comfort is more important than grammar.



Oh! Somebody left their bottle in the office, I better go see whose it is.

Um... do you see what you did there? You just used they/them pronouns for one person.

You're right... I'm sorry, Drew. I will use they/them pronouns for you. Can we start over? I'm Mike and my pronouns are he/him.

It's nice to meet you Mike. I look forward to working with you!



Fill in the blanks to help Mike talk about his new friend Drew!

"I met someone new at work today. _____ name is Drew, and _____ are nonbinary. I'm excited to get to know _____ better!"

Now fill in the blanks to help Drew talk about their new friend Mike!

"I met someone new at work today. _____ name is Mike, and _____ had never heard about they/them pronouns before. We got off on the wrong foot at first, but I think I'm going to get along well with _____."

Allyship Tips

WHEN should you help?

HOW should you help?



Allyship - The Basics

Now that you know more about the community, you might want to start raising awareness of the prejudice the 2SLGBTQIA+ community faces, as well as help them in their fight for equality. In this section, we will cover the key concepts behind allyship and how you can be an effective ally!

Consensual allyship

- **Not all members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community wish to be advocated for** as they may feel misrepresented by well-meaning allies.
- When in doubt, **always ask before carrying out allyship activities** - and ask *how* this allyship should be carried out.
- **Never speak over** those within the community!



Calling in VS. calling out

- **Calling out:** explicitly and publically calling out the person who committed problematic behaviour so that they are made aware of the consequences.
- **Calling in:** privately discussing a person's behavior and the consequences of their actions with patience. This approach should be made when mistakes were unintentional, when the person is emotionally sensitive, or when calling out may lead to defensiveness.



Allyship approaches

- **Standing in front:** when allies use their privilege to shield those who are at risk of harm, this should be used sparingly to prevent speaking over community members.
- **Standing beside:** using one's presence to provide assurance, support, and ongoing collaboration.
- **Standing behind:** when allies follow the lead of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community and carry out allyship activities according to the needs of the community.



Allyship: Do's and Don'ts

What should you do and avoid as an ally to the 2SLGBTQIA+ community? Below are some of the basic do's and don'ts to keep in mind as you navigate through your allyship journey.

- ✔ **DO:** recognize the diversity within the 2SLGBTQIA+ community as well as the intersectionality of multiple identities.
- ✘ **DON'T:** ignore multi-minority groups within the community when practicing 2SLGBTQIA+ allyship, and don't generalize the entire community.
- ✔ **DO:** ask people their pronouns and how they would like to be addressed and respect these pronouns/labels when told.
- ✘ **DON'T:** make assumptions about someone's sexual orientation, gender identity, or pronoun use, or question them when told.
- ✔ **DO:** recognize that some people consider themselves fluid when it comes to sexual orientation and gender expression.
- ✘ **DON'T:** assume that all members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community identify with a predetermined sexual orientation or gender expression.
- ✔ **DO:** Apologize and take responsibility when told you made a mistake (such as a microaggression).
- ✘ **DON'T:** Get defensive or angry when called out or called in regarding problematic behaviour.
- ✔ **DO:** Recognize and call out or call in problematic behaviour whenever possible or appropriate.
- ✘ **DON'T:** Become a bystander to non-inclusive language, discrimination, or microaggressions.

Now that you have the basic knowledge of what an effective ally looks like, check out the resources section to get involved and stay informed!

Thank you for taking the time to learn about allyship!

Here is some of the artwork done by the youth in our Out n' About working group! Learn more about it at YWHO-WG Hubs!



Stay Connected

 www.thegrovehubs.ca

 @thegrovehubs

 @thegrovehubs

Resources

2SLGBTQIA+ Healthcare

ACCKWA (AIDS Committee of Cambridge, Kitchener, Waterloo and Area) A non-profit organization located in Kitchener that provides support to those affected by or at risk of HIV/AIDS. Their Youth Sexual Health Department provides resources, support and education that is inclusive of 2SLGBTQIA+ youth. acckwa.com, 519-570-3687

SHORE Centre

Provides inclusive, trauma-informed sexual and reproductive health care that centers choice, autonomy, and dignity, offering abortion access, gender-affirming care, and community education in a space where everyone is seen, heard, and respected.

HIVE Health Services

Offers compassionate, specialized care for people living with HIV and those seeking gender affirming support. Provide wraparound services including STI testing, hormone therapy, mental health counselling, and system navigation.

Gender Affirm Guelph

Services include hormone therapy, puberty suppression, surgical referrals, post-operative care, emotional support, and injection training—all centred on affirming each individual's gender journey.

OK2BME

The OK2BME program is operated by Camino Wellbeing + Mental Health. OK2BME is a set of supportive, confidential services for 2SLGBTQIA+ kids, teens, and adults, as well as those wondering about their sexuality or gender identity. OK2BME's services include counselling (individual, partnered, family), youth groups, education, and more.

Rainbow Health Ontario

RHO provides training to help healthcare providers offer clinically and culturally competent care to 2SLGBTQIA+ service users. They also support system change through resources, policy input, research, and Canada's largest 2SLGBTQIA+ health conference.

Trans Care BC

Trans Care BC connects trans people, their loved ones and clinicians with information, education, training and support.

2SLGBTQIA+ Hotlines

LGBT Youthline

Offers free support through our Ontario-wide 2SLGBTQIA+ peer-support HelpLine.

Trans Lifeline

Emergency hotline for members of the trans community that offer direct financial and/or emotional support to those in need.

translifeline.org, 877-300-6366

2SLGBTQIA+ Housing Support

Friends of Ruby

Toronto-based organization that provides housing and social support services specific to 2SLGBTQIA+ youth aged 16-29. friendsofruby.ca, 416-359-0237

Wyndham House

Guelph-based organization that provides 2SLGBTQ+ inclusive housing and social supports for youth aged 16-25, as well as educational alternatives.

wyndhamhouse.org 519-837-3892 (Emergency shelter) 519-822-2768 (Youth services hub)

YWCA Kitchener Waterloo Emergency Shelter

Provides emergency housing for cis and trans women and nonbinary people ages 16 and up.

ywcakw.on.ca/emergency-shelter, 519-744-6507x211

Allyship Training

Pride at Work Canada

Empower employers to build workplaces that celebrate all employees, regardless of their gender expression, gender identity, and sexual orientation.

Families in TRANSition Guidebook

A Resource Guide for Parents of Trans Youth is the first comprehensive Canadian publication to address the needs of parents and families supporting their trans children.

Resources

Coming Out Support

OUTline

The U of G's online chat resource for youth to talk through 2SLGBTQ+ issues and experiences, including coming out.

uoguelph.ca/studentexperience/OUTline

PFLAG Canada

A non-profit organization that provides peer support to the families and friends of 2SLGBTQIA+ folks. The local chapter is PFLAG Waterloo, Wellington and Perth Region.

The Trevor Project Handbook

A handbook that helps queer youth understand and accept their identities.

thetrevorproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Coming-Out-Handbook.

General Support and 2SLGBTQIA+ Advocacy

EGALE Canada

Committed to achieving equity for 2SLGBTQIA+ folks. Their website includes training and action-plans to help reduce discrimination in schools and workplaces.

Guelph Resource Centre for Gender Empowerment and Diversity

Guelph-based organization advocating for equity for gender minority folks in Guelph, including women, trans and nonbinary people. grecged.com

Out on the Shelf Guelph

Provides a wide variety of resources and books to the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. They also host events and workshops. outontheshelf.com

SPECTRUM Waterloo Region

Located in Kitchener offering events, resources, social groups and peer support. Check out their directory "The Rainbow Pages" for an in-depth list of relevant 2SLGBTQIA+ groups and events in the Waterloo- Wellington area. ourspectrum.com, 226-779-9695

Two-Spirit Info and Allyship

Indigenous Student Centre

Provides support, opportunities to meet with Elders, as well as events focusing on the Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+ community.

indigenous.student@uoguelph.ca
uoguelph.ca/studentexperience/isc

Two-Spirit & Indigenous LGBTQIA Mentors, Elders & Grandparents Support Circle

A support circle that provides peer support and self-affirming access to Indigenous culture, led by Two-Spirit and 2SLGBTQIA+ Indigenous youth, and open to Indigenous community allies.

nativeyouthsexualhealth.com/supportcircle.html

Two-Spirit Allyship & Ambassador Guide

Discusses Two-Spirit and Indigenous history, and how colonialism negatively impacted these communities. It also explains how best to be an ally to Two-Spirit people. egale.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Two-Spirit-Ally-Ambassador-Guide-FINAL.pdf

BIPOC-Specific Resources

Black Queer Network

Working towards eradicating homophobia and racism within a systematic context.

blackqueernetwork.ca

Guelph QTPOC

Student-run group for University of Guelph and/or people of colour. QTPOC@uoguelph.ca

QTPOC KW

Situated in Waterloo, QTPOC KW hosts monthly events for queer BIPOC folk to foster more resilience and nurturing in the community.

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Next Steps

Refresh and review the concepts and terminologies associated with 2SLGBTQIA+ Allyship

Don't make assumptions, always ask someone what their pronouns are

Practice effective allyship techniques such as calling in vs. calling out in real world settings

Check out the resources page in this booklet, learn more about 2SLGBTQIA+ allyship

Scan me!!!

