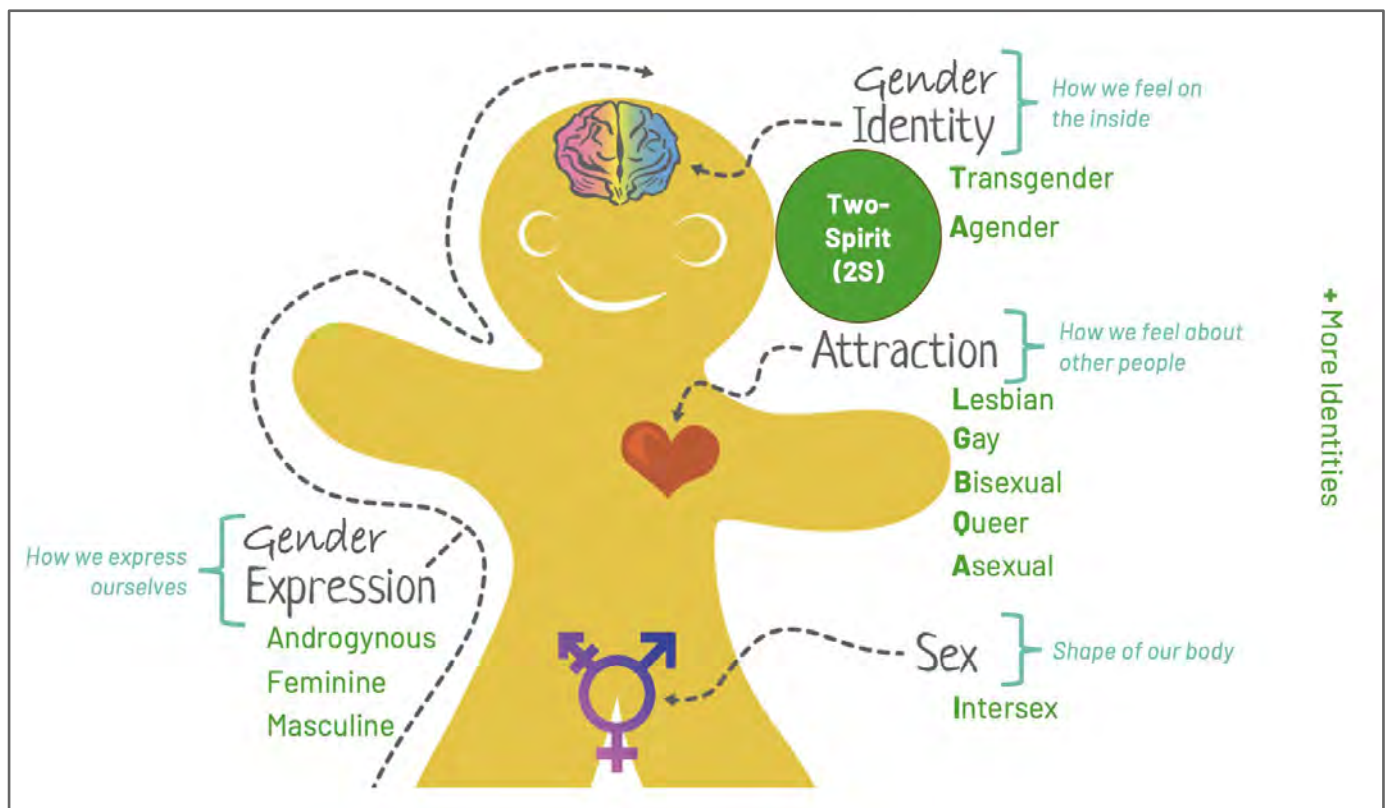




Do you know what 2SLGBTQIA+ means?

Some people feel confused by the letters 2SLGBTQIA+, because they don't know what all of them mean - it can feel overwhelming! In this handout, we break down what the letters stand for and the meaning of each word, so it's easier to understand. Many people think that the letters are all about the same thing, but really it's four (4) different topics, which you can see in the cartoon. To listen to this information, please click on these videos:

- **Two-Spirit** (7 minutes): <https://youtu.be/A4lBibGzUnE>
- **Attraction** (3.5 minutes): <https://youtu.be/LLmrBGrUy-w>
- **Gender Identity** (4 minutes): <https://youtu.be/YSuJ700Mo3I>



1. **Two-Spirit (2S)** is a cultural and spiritual identity used by some Indigenous people to describe diversity in gender and attraction. In the 1990s, a group of Indigenous people from nations across Canada and the United States came up with the word to take back their traditional words, stories, and roles from the harms of colonization.
2. **Attraction** is about who we're attracted to romantically or have special feelings for. Many people are attracted to people of a different gender (a man liking a woman or a woman liking a man - also called "straight"). Some are attracted to people of the same gender (a woman liking a woman - "**lesbian (L)**" or a man liking a man - "**gay (G)**"), and some might be attracted to people of two or more genders ("**bisexual (B)**" or "**queer (Q)**"). And some people might not have feelings for anyone ("**asexual (A)**"), and that's okay too.
3. **Sex at Birth**: When we're born, doctors look at our bodies, especially genitals, to decide if we're female or male. Most of the time, they say we're either female or male, but some people have bodies that are different from what is usual, which we call "**intersex (I)**."
4. **Gender Identity** is about how we feel inside, whether we feel like a boy/man or a girl/woman, or something else altogether. Even though someone might have been thought to be a boy or a girl at birth based on their bodies, they might not feel that way on the inside - we call these people "**transgender (T)**." Some people might feel like they're both a boy and a girl, or they might not feel like a boy or a girl at all ("**agender (A)**"). It's about how they see themselves.
5. **Gender Expression** is about how we show our gender to others through things like our clothes, hairstyles, and the way we act or talk. Some people might prefer to wear clothes that are usually seen as more for boys (masculine), while others might like clothes usually seen as more for girls (feminine). Some people might like things that are in between or a mix of both (androgynous). It's about how we choose to present ourselves to the world, which may not always line up with our gender identity.

Whew! We covered a lot of ground. Don't worry! You do not need to memorize all these words and categories. When you meet someone new, it is more important to follow the lead of the person and mirror the language that they use (if they choose to share it with you). Remember, it's important to be kind and accepting of others, no matter who they are attracted to, how they identify, or express themselves.

In the next handout called "How can I help someone 2SLGBTQIA?," we learn about the unique challenges that 2SLGBTQIA+ people face and easy ways you can support them. This will help you whether you are meeting someone for the first time or already know them.