



What can we do to help?

How can I help someone who is 2SLGBTQIA+?

This handout helps us understand the unique challenges and practical ways to support Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual or agender (2SLGBTQIA+) people. If you are wondering what all these letters and words mean, check out the other handout, called "Do you know what 2SLGBTQIA+ means?", that breaks down the language.

Challenges

Colonization hurt our culture and teachings on purpose, including those of 2SLGBTQIA+ people who existed and thrived before contact. This means they face many problems with their physical and mental well-being, culture, and beliefs. Sometimes, 2SLGBTQIA+ people move from their homes to cities hoping to be accepted for who they are. Sadly, both the Indigenous communities they come from and the larger 2SLGBTQIA+ community in cities may not accept them completely. Indigenous communities may reject their own members for being 2SLGBTQIA+, and people in cities may be racist. Because of this, 2SLGBTQIA+ people often experience violence like being verbally harassed, sexually harassed, or threatened physically.

Because of these challenges, many 2SLGBTQIA+ people are scared to come out and be themselves because they fear being made fun of or hurt. They also face a higher risk of attempting suicide. However, more and more 2SLGBTQIA+ people are becoming confident in sharing who they really are, and others are becoming more understanding of the problems they face. Younger generations, like GenZs, are expecting people to take action and support human rights. They know people who use gender-neutral pronouns, and they strongly believe that all-gender washrooms are necessary.



10 Tips

You can make a positive difference in the lives of 2SLGBTQIA+ people by following these 10 steps for people you already know or meeting for the first time. In our everyday lives, when we meet someone new, we often make assumptions about someone's gender and pronouns based on how someone looks, including what they are wearing, the length of their hair, shape of their body, and if their voice is high or low. Rather than guessing, here are 5 practical tips to be respectful:

What is a pronoun?
It's how we talk about another person using a shortcut instead of their first name. The most common pronouns are "she/her" and "he/him." There are other pronouns, like "they/them" for one person.

1. Use gender-neutral pronouns, such as "they/them" or simply use their first name, until someone shares their pronouns.
2. Use gender-inclusive language, such as "person," "member," "parent," until you get to know someone better.
3. Anyone can share their pronouns so 2SLGBTQIA+ people do not feel alone in sharing theirs.
4. Respect and use the first name and pronouns that a person provides (even when different from what is on their government documents).
5. When a person asks for directions to the washroom, offer all options. For example: "The women's and men's washrooms are to the left and we have a single-user washroom down the hall to the right."



When we know someone is 2SLGBTQIA+, here are five steps to make their lives better and easier:

6. Avoid asking inappropriate questions about being 2SLGBTQIA+. For example: "How do you have sex?" or "Have you had the surgery?" or "How do you know you are non-

binary?" For many, these are private matters and they are exhausting to explain over and over.

7. Avoid name-calling and jokes that put down 2SLGBTQIA+ people. For example: "That's so gay!" or "My pronouns are attack helicopter [or other words that make fun of sharing pronouns]."
8. If a 2SLGBTQIA+ person shares with you that they are struggling, thank them for trusting you, listen to them, and take their challenges seriously (even if you don't understand them). Say kind words and give them a copy of the [2SLGBTQIA+ Resource](#). Check in with them afterwards to see how they are doing.
9. Unless you have permission from 2SLGBTQIA+ person, do not share with other people about their gender identity and/or their sexual orientation. Because there is still a lot of discrimination against 2SLGBTQIA+ people, this could have harmful consequences, even if you did not mean to.
10. If mistakes are made, apologize quickly, make corrections, and continue with conversation. Don't go on and on with the apology - this makes it awkward.



Using the Skwxwú7mesh principle **Na wa nelhnihtway ta uxwumixw** (the people go through it together), we can make sure we **include** and **take care** of all our people.

The Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw will protect the Amalgamation and enhance Úxwumixw cultural values and traditions through respect, equality and harmony for all.