

2SLGBTQIA+ Nova Scotian Inclusion Guidelines

This checklist is for service providers (government, non-profit or corporate) who work with, for, and support people who are part of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community living in Nova Scotia.

TERMINOLOGY

Pronouns: Pronouns are part of someone's gender expression, and people can have multiple sets of pronouns for themselves (such as using both he/him/his and they/them/theirs). Pronouns are not "preferred" but instead are required for respectful communication. (University of Wisconsin, 2023)

Gender Identity: is a person's internal and individual experience of gender. A person's gender identity can be the same or different from their assigned sex at birth. Gender is a spectrum and therefore a person's gender identity could be masculine, feminine, both or neither. (Kids Help Phone, 2023)

Sex: the term used to describe a person's biology and what parts (i.e.: visible sex organs) are used to assign their sex at birth. (Kids Help Phone, 2023)

Sexual Orientation: describes the way a person feels towards people of a particular (or more than one) gender, physically, emotionally, sexually and/ or romantically. (Kids Help Phone, 2023)

Deadname: the name that a transgender person was given at birth and no longer uses upon transitioning. (Merriam Webster, 2023)

2SLGBTQIA+: The acronym that stands for two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, intersex and asexual. (Kids Help Phone, 2023)

Two-Spirit: A person who identifies as having both a masculine and feminine spirit. The term is used by some Indigenous people to describe their sexual, gender and/ or spiritual identity. (LGBTQ Health, 2023)

Lesbian: someone who identifies as a woman who is physically, emotionally, sexually and/or romantically to people who also identify as women. (Kids Help Phone, 2023)

Gay: someone who identifies as a man who is physically, emotionally, sexually and/or romantically to people who also identify as men. (Kids Help Phone, 2023)

Bisexual: a person who is physically, sexually, romantically and / or emotionally attracted to people of their own and other genders and who identifies as bisexual. (Kids Help Phone, 2023)

Transgender: people whose gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth. People whose gender identity falls outside of the gender binary (the idea that there are only two genders – man and woman) may also call themselves trans. (Kids Help Phone, 2023)

Queer: a broad term that includes all sexual orientations and gender identities within the 2SLGBTQ+ community, including those who don't identify with any other identity in the 2SLGBTQ+ acronym. The term queer can be both positive and negative. Historically, queer was used as an insult, but it has been reclaimed by some folks in the 2SLGBTQ+ community to self-identify in a more positive and empowering way. (Kids Help Phone, 2023)

Intersex: intersex describes when a person is born with both male and female sex organs or other sexual characteristics. Some intersex individuals are assigned a sex at birth that they're raised as, which may or may not fit with how they view their gender identity. (Kids Help Phone, 2023)

Asexual: a person who doesn't experience or rarely experiences physical attraction to other people but may be emotionally attracted to others. (Kids Help Phone, 2023)

Cisgender: a person whose gender identity and gender expression match the sex they were assigned at birth. (Kids Help Phone, 2023)

GENERAL

1. Make sure you are using correct pronouns for people. Use pronouns on email signatures, when introducing yourself and others.
2. If you make a mistake, apologize and move on. Do not make it about you.
3. DO NOT out any members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. It is not your place to do so, and it can be extremely dangerous for them to be out to certain people.
4. Be respectful and non-judgemental

REPRESENTATION

Include 2SLGBTQIA+ employees in all levels of programming and employment.

The use of pronouns allows others to feel comfortable in the space to be able to be their authentic self. Employees need to use correct pronouns and correct others when they use incorrect pronouns; it is a human right. Educate staff and others around pronouns and their importance.

- a. Move forward with including pronouns in communications (e.g., email signatures)
- b. Make it standard practice when introducing someone (e.g., "This is my colleague Jenn, whose pronouns are she/hers.")
- c. Add pronouns to name badges.
- d. Recognize that there are pronouns beyond 'him' and 'her.' This includes 'they' but also neopronouns and Indigenous terms. For example, negm (or nekm) are Mi'gmaq terms for gender.)

Make sure that there are gender neutral washrooms available.

- a. Make sure that male-designated bathrooms include supplies and amenities for sanitary napkins and menstruation products.

Edit out any gendered language and make sure all messaging is as neutral as possible.

- a. Except where gender matters to the care of the client.

Partner with the Transgender Inclusion Committee to make sure that all practices are the same.

CULTURE

Make all employees aware of terms and definitions and specifically point out what is outdated and not acceptable.

- a. Have resources easily accessible for staff to double-check.

Learn from the mistakes. Instead of getting defensive, listen, educate yourself, and acknowledge that you've made a mistake.

It is not up to your 2SLGBTQIA+ staff or clients to educate. Do your own research as some questions could be triggering to some people.

Remember that Two-Spirit identities are rich and complex; they are more than sexual orientation and/or gender identity but there is overlap with marginalized sexual and gender identities. There are cultural aspects beyond sex and gender.

- a. Recognize that Two-Spirit is an umbrella term as well.

PERSONAL

DO NOT out any member of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. It can be extremely dangerous for them to be out completely, and it isn't up to you to inform others. They might feel safe to come out in the space that you've created, but homophobia and transphobia still exist outside of that space.

Incorporate a dress code that allows people to feel comfortable expressing their identity without judgement.

Be supportive and have supports for people who are transitioning.

Avoid making assumptions about identities based on a person's appearance.

Correct people who use deadnames and incorrect pronouns. It isn't always up to the 2SLGBTQIA+ community to advocate, allies need to help educate.

Respect the name that people identify with; even if it doesn't match their legal name. Many transgender, non-binary, and gender-diverse people are uncomfortable being referred to the name assigned at birth as it does not reflect who they are. This is commonly referred to as a 'dead name.'