


2SLGBTQ+ INCLUSION



2SLGBTQ+ learners and staff are safe, welcomed, included, protected, and supported.

Statements of Best Practice

for 2SLGBTQ+ Inclusion 

2SLGBTQ+ learners and staff are safe, welcomed, included, protected, and supported.

99. Program policies and practices ensure the safety of 2SLGBTQ+ learners and staff, and protect their rights and freedoms.

- _ Program policies and practices acknowledge that both learners and staff have the following rights and freedoms:
 - _ To be addressed by the names/pronouns of their choice
 - _ To privacy of information related to **sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression**
 - _ To talk about and express their sexual orientation and gender identity (e.g., through choices in clothing, hair styles)
 - _ To be free from discrimination, bullying, and harassment based on sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression
 - _ To establish and join voluntary student organizations such as **Gay-Straight Alliances** (or Gender-Sexuality Alliances) and participate in events that foster **2SLGBTQ+** awareness
 - _ To see themselves reflected in course content, posters, messaging, advertisements, etc.
- _ Program policies outline clear anti-bullying expectations and **zero tolerance** for violence and discrimination towards **sexual and gender minorities**.
- _ Instances of discrimination, bullying, and violence targeting 2SLGBTQ+ learners or staff are taken seriously, investigated, and dealt with according to clear processes.
- _ The program ensures the staff's protection from discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression.
- _ The program considers individuals from the 2SLGBTQ+ community in the hiring and promotion processes equally without bias.

- _ The program makes it safe for sexual and gender minority teachers to be as authentic/out/open as they wish to be.

100. The program develops and promotes a culture of respect and acceptance for learners and staff, with explicit reference to sexual and gender minorities.

- _ Program policies, course outlines, student guidebooks, and diversity statements include an explicit statement of welcome to all learners, including sexual- and gender-diverse learners.
- _ Program policies, course outlines, student guidebooks, and diversity statements demonstrate clear anti-bullying expectations and **zero tolerance** for violence and discrimination towards sexual and gender minorities.
- _ Forms, waivers, and other communications directed to learners are **gender-neutral** and avoid **heteronormative** or binary/**cisnormative** assumptions.
- _ There is a visible message of support leading to inclusion posted on websites and in hallways, information boards, designated walls, classrooms, etc.
- _ 2SLGBTQ+ learners have access to school facilities such as washrooms, locker rooms, and change rooms that align with their gender identity.

101. The program supports staff in their ongoing professional development related to 2SLGBTQ+ inclusion.

- _ Onboarding training includes an orientation to program expectations regarding inclusive culture and practices, with explicit reference to the rights, support, safety, and inclusion of 2SLGBTQ+ individuals.
- _ Workshops and training, offered by 2SLGBTQ+ individuals/support groups/educators, are provided that address some of the following:
 - _ The history of the 2SLGBTQ+ community in Canada
 - _ The equal rights and freedoms of 2SLGBTQ+ individuals in Canadian law
 - _ Appropriate language to use
 - _ Stories of 2SLGBTQ+ immigrant and refugee learners
 - _ Promotion of self-awareness of one's own assumptions and biases
 - _ Promotion of empathy, perspective taking and nonjudgmental approaches to difference, especially with regard to the 2SLGBTQ+ community
 - _ Increasing the capacity of educators to model and encourage the use of inclusive language, perspective taking, and nonjudgmental approaches to difference, etc.

- _ Identifying and presenting appropriate learning resources with 2SLGBTQ+ content
- _ Increasing the capacity of instructors to design learning materials and activities that address 2SLGBTQ+ content
- _ Providing support for 2SLGBTQ+ instructors to navigate their own approach to 2SLGBTQ+ inclusion
- _ Instructors are encouraged to collaborate with colleagues to explore ways to promote 2SLGBTQ+ **allyship** and to seek input and mentoring from willing 2SLGBTQ+ individuals.
- _ The program does not presume that their 2SLGBTQ+ staff represent the voice of all sexual and gender minorities; neither does it put undue burdens on their 2SLGBTQ+ staff to educate others.

102. Supports are provided for 2SLGBTQ+ learners.

- _ The program provides support to 2SLGBTQ+ learners or connects them with agencies that can provide that support (e.g., support groups, employment counselling, and immigration services).
- _ Services for 2SLGBTQ+ individuals are offered with full acceptance of sexual and gender diversity (i.e., without bias or judgment).
- _ Schools have a crisis response policy or clear processes to follow to address 2SLGBTQ+ learners' concerns.
- _ The program supports 2SLGBTQ+ learners in efforts to initiate discussions of 2SLGBTQ+ topics and student-led initiatives, such as **Gay-Straight Alliances** (or Gender-Sexuality Alliances).
- _ The school community provides diverse and meaningful ways for 2SLGBTQ+ learners to participate in community-building activities, such as volunteering, advocacy opportunities, peer networks, and mentoring/being mentored.

103. Steps are taken to foster safety and ensure learners are welcomed and respected in the classroom, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression.

- _ Instructors teach with the assumption that there are 2SLGBTQ+ learners in their classes who are not visible or out; that is, they recognize that some learners may never choose to be visible or out.
- _ Clear expectations are set out for respectful interactions and inclusion of all learners in the class, with explicit mention of sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression.
- _ **Homophobic** and **transphobic** comments are confronted and addressed according to clear policies and guidelines.

- _ Instructors use and model appropriate and respectful language when referring to members of the 2SLGBTQ+ community.
- _ Instructors use language that includes everyone in the class, and they avoid language that assumes everyone in the class is straight or cisgender, for example:
 - _ By using inclusive terms like “parents,” “grandparents,” “folks,” “couple,” “partner,” “students.”
 - _ By stating and asking for preferred pronouns.
 - _ By using the 3rd person singular “they” to avoid assumptions about gender.
 - _ By replacing binary forms of address such as “Hello, ladies/gentlemen” with greetings such as “Hello, everyone.”
- _ Instructors avoid dividing learners into groups based on gender identity.
- _ Classroom activities that involve families and holidays (Family Day, Mother’s Day, Father’s Day) are undertaken in a way that welcomes and includes 2SLGBTQ+ learners and their families (i.e., **heteronormative** or binary expectations are avoided).
- _ Messages of support for 2SLGBTQ+ individuals are visible and explained in the classroom (e.g., rainbow sticker, trans flag or other symbols recognizing minority sexual and gender identities).
- _ 2SLGBTQ+ learners see themselves mirrored in the content and curriculum of the class; that is, 2SLGBTQ+ lives are apparent in visuals, examples, illustrations of families, activities, role-play options, etc.

104. 2SLGBTQ+ content is embedded in class content and curriculum.

- _ 2SLGBTQ+ equal rights are included in discussions about human rights and laws in Canada.
- _ Variations in **gender identity**, **gender expression**, and family are normalized and come up naturally in all areas of learning, for example:
 - _ Relevant curriculum themes (health, employment rights, government, Canada’s history, family, education)
 - _ Examples and illustrations of families, partners, marriages
 - _ Activities (e.g., role-play options, reading/listening comprehension activities)
 - _ Language skills and instruction (e.g., reading critically to identify stereotypes; editing a passage to make it more inclusive; a grammar lesson on inclusive pronouns)
- _ Materials that include 2SLGBTQ+ perspectives, histories, stories, and contributions to the community are incorporated into class content.
- _ Instructors take care to include stories of 2SLGBTQ+ success, so 2SLGBTQ+ students see aspirational representation, and other students do not associate 2SLGBTQ+ with only struggle and adversity.

- _ A wide spectrum of 2SLGBTQ+ identities are included to portray the vast diversity within the community.

105. Instruction includes learning activities which promote empathy and the ability to interact with 2SLGBTQ+ content and individuals in a respectful manner.

- _ Learners are exposed to and learn appropriate language to use when referring to members of the 2SLGBTQ+ community.
- _ 2SLGBTQ+ resource speakers/staff/students are invited to share their stories, challenges, and successes in life.
- _ An **intersectional approach** is taken, with a focus on the intersection of minority sexual orientations and gender identities with other marginalized identities (e.g., immigration, language status, ethnicity, race).
- _ Learners encounter 2SLGBTQ+ individuals, or stories of 2SLGBTQ+ individuals, with whom they can relate on other dimensions (e.g., 2SLGBTQ+ immigrants and refugees, students, parents, job seekers, members of a profession they wish to join, etc.).
- _ A **safe** and brave space is fostered and modelled where learners can share their stories, speak their truths, explore their own and other's attitudes, and ask questions in an appropriate and respectful manner.

Vignettes

for 2SLGBTQ+ Inclusion

This section includes descriptions of what the Best Practices might look like when applied in a variety of contexts.

Vignette 1: Preparing Learners for an Inclusive Workplace

I prepare ESL learners for the workplace. Many of my students are struggling to adjust and adapt to Canadian workplace culture and expectations, and many come from conservative backgrounds with varying cultural differences and religious beliefs. As they prepare for employment readiness, I have noticed their discomfort when building communication and working relationships with co-workers and bosses/managers from the LGBTQ2S+ community. To help my students overcome their discomfort, I do the following:

- _ I engage students in discussions about diversity and inclusion at work, and create activities that get students thinking about *why* they are uncomfortable around certain populations. Are these biases fair or accurate?
- _ I introduce information such as the provisions in the Citizenship and Multiculturalism Act and the [Alberta Human Rights Act](#) which “prohibits discrimination in employment based on the protected grounds of race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religious beliefs, gender, **gender identity**, **gender expression**, age, physical disability, mental disability, marital status, family status, source of income, and sexual orientation.”
- _ I have students role-play workplace scenarios where they apply their communication skills and use inclusive language and expressions. For example, I encourage them to address people as “Hi, everyone” or “Hello, everybody,” instead of the traditional “Ladies and gentlemen” or other expressions that assume binary male/female gender. We also role-play avoiding assumptions and using gender-neutral pronouns/nouns for inquiries or statements about family members, such as “they” instead of “he” or “she” and “spouse” or “partner” instead of “husband” or “wife.”

- _ I provide and have learners read free booklets and online materials from ALIS Alberta on what to do if you experience discrimination because of gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, etc.
- _ I engage students in problem-solving scenarios like confronting bullying and discrimination in the workplace, providing them with helpful tips and phrases to use in addressing these issues, and making them aware of their individual rights as workers and people in Canada.

Vignette 2: The “Family” Theme in LINC

I teach CLB 3–4 learners in LINC, and we often do activities on the theme of family. Before starting learning activities, we chat a bit about family to elicit students’ prior knowledge and their own definition of family. Sometimes students mention that their understanding of family structure has evolved compared to what they had thought back home. To open the discussion to diverse perspectives on family, I do the following:

- _ I ask students to give examples of how their ideas of family have changed. I invite students to ask questions and engage with the information shared.
- _ We brainstorm for the different types of families that students know about, making sure that same-sex parents are among the many structures included. I use this activity to normalize the many variations of family structures that exist in societies.
- _ I give an overview of how family structure has evolved by introducing students to family vocabulary like “nuclear,” “extended,” “common-law,” “single-parent,” “blended,” and “same-sex” families.
- _ I show pictures and video clips of a variety of families, including same-sex couples and parents, and individuals whose gender expressions are outside the binaries of male and female to further normalize a variety of genders and family structures. Students then create narratives about the families’ lives based on the scene in the photo or video (e.g., One parent is cooking dinner, while a child is playing with their sibling; One mother is washing dishes, and the other mother is playing with the children).
- _ I create an activity for students to share about their own family structures in small groups. I make it clear that students can choose to share as much or as little information about their families as feels comfortable for them.

Vignette 3: Addressing Confusion and Building Empathy

I address the confusion that learners at all levels sometimes express related to LGBTQ2S+ inclusion in Canada. For instance, one of my students told the class that she was uncertain about using a washroom because it was “gender-neutral” and didn’t have a female sign. In order to promote understanding, I do the following:

- _ I ask questions and probe to prompt inquiry and reflection: Who is allowed to use this washroom? Who do you think might be afraid to go into a gendered washroom? What are the advantages of a gender-neutral washroom?
- _ I use this confusion as an opportunity to introduce relevant vocabulary and language, for instance, around non-binary identities (identifying neither as fully male nor fully female) and transgender identities (identifying as a gender that is different from your biological sex assigned at birth).
- _ I encourage perspective taking and the development of empathy, for instance, by brainstorming for challenges non-binary or transgender individuals may face when using the washroom that feels right to them.

Vignette 4: Fielding Questions

I teach intermediate LINC classes, and I find myself fielding all sorts of questions from curious learners. For instance, a young man in my class mentioned that he had seen a Pride parade, and asked about the significance of the rainbow flag and the letters. When these questions arise, I often assign some independent exploration on these topics.

- _ I brainstorm with the class about good Google search terms they could use to learn more (e.g., Pride parade; rainbow flag; LGBTQ2S+ meaning). Students take out their phones, do some exploring, and share their findings. I record the information they gathered on the board and welcome additional questions.
- _ I remind all learners about our classroom expectations of respect, kindness, and inclusion—everyone belongs. I encourage them to assume that there are people in the room who are LGBTQ2S+ or whose loved ones are LGBTQ2S+ (myself included) and to make sure that what they say conveys respect. If students use inappropriate language, I non-judgmentally help them find the correct terms. I always confront **homophobic** and **transphobic** statements with a reminder that those comments are not permitted in our classroom, and that LGBTQ2S+ equal rights are the law in Canada.

Vignette 5: Teaching Healthcare Professionals

I teach English for healthcare professionals. I want to make sure that any LGBTQ2S+ learners in my class know that they are welcome and safe, and I want any of my learners' future LGBTQ2S+ patients/clients to receive compassionate and inclusive care. To encourage this, I model inclusive practice through the following actions:

- _ My name tag and my email sign-off also includes my pronouns. When I introduce myself to the class, I point that out and ask if they know why this has become a common practice.
- _ Students read an article about LGBTQ2S+ seniors going into long-term care. They complete typical vocabulary and comprehension activities, learn appropriate vocabulary to use, and reflect on implications for their future practice. A few mentioned really relating to the article in their concern for their own LGBTQ2S+ loved ones.
- _ When I design role-plays, I include scenarios with same-sex spouses, and patients/clients/co-workers with gender-neutral names and they/them/their pronouns.
- _ When I teach a grammar lesson on subject-verb agreement, I bring up the use of "they" and "them" to be inclusive and not assume someone's gender. I have students rewrite paragraphs written in the 3rd person singular (he/him or she/her) to make them both less awkward and more inclusive (using plural nouns and they/them/their).

References and PD Resources

for 2SLGBTQ+ Inclusion

This section includes resources that informed this document and resources (academic articles, websites, videos, tutorials, courses, etc.) for professional development and further learning on this topic.

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Resources for the Classroom

for 2SLGBTQ+ Inclusion

This section includes resources (lesson plans, curriculum, readings, videos, podcasts, etc.) to use in class.

Alberta Workforce Essential Skills (AWES). (2021). Diversity and Inclusion [Video playlist]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLb5jNH9sU42HcmI9w0AgE4WZTjaSdG5cN>

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Community Resources

for 2SLGBTQ+ Inclusion 

This section includes community sources for learner support, guest speakers, etc.

Alberta Education Gay–Straight Alliances

<https://www.alberta.ca/gay-straight-alliances.aspx>

“Gay-Straight alliances (GSAs) and Queer-straight alliances (QSAs) promote welcoming, caring, respectful, and safe schools for LGBTQ2S+ students and their allies.”

Alberta Health Services – Sexual and Gender Diversity

<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/info/Page15590.aspx>

“Alberta Health Services is an inclusive organization that recognizes that everyone is different and valued. AHS attends events throughout the province to reach out to marginalized groups and celebrate the diversity of our work force.” The website provides resources, awareness, connections, and transgender health information.

Centre for Newcomers, Calgary: LGBTQ+ Newcomer Services

<https://www.centrefornewcomers.ca/lgbtq>

“The Centre for Newcomers offers services to the full range of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and other sexually diverse newcomers to Canada. Whether you have permanent residency, filing for asylum as a refugee, or are here under any other status, then you can access the LGBTQ+ newcomer services.”

Edmonton 2 Spirit Society

<https://e2s.ca/>

This organization focuses on enhancing the traditional roles of Two Spirit people, and creating supportive environments for Two Spirit people.

EMCN: Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers: Rainbow Refuge: LGBTQ Refugee Support & Welcome Network

Call 587-938-6869 for more information

Edmonton Queer History Project

<https://edmontonqueerhistoryproject.wordpress.com/>

The Edmonton Queer History Project (EQHP) “is a multimedia, public art exhibition and community archive comprised of art, artifacts, and videotaped life history oral interviews. This collection showcases the people, places, and events that built understandings of Edmonton’s queer community over the past 40 years.”

End of the Rainbow

<https://endoftherainbow.ca/lgbtq-newcomers-group/>

End of the Rainbow is a newcomers’ group in Calgary with a mission “to improve socio-economic conditions for people of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities or expressions (SOGIE) by providing innovative education, support programs, and research.”

GLSEN

<https://www.glsen.org/>

Founded in 1990 by a group of teachers, “GLSEN works to ensure that LGBTQ students are able to learn and grow in a school environment free from bullying and harassment.” GLSEN looks for evidence-based solutions for K–12 through original research.

ilga

<https://ilga.org/>

The International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ilga) focuses on advocacy and research, and includes information on travel and human rights.

Pflag Canada

<https://pflagcanada.ca/>

Also see the local PFLAG chapters in Calgary, Edmonton, Lacombe, Red Deer, and St Albert:

<https://pflagcanada.ca/pflag-chapters/alberta/>

The Pride Centre of Edmonton

<https://pridecentreofedmonton.ca/>

The Centre provides support responsive to the “needs of people with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, gender expressions, and of the people in their lives.”

Rainbow SIG

<http://www.rainbowsig.org/>

The mission of Rainbow SIG is to bring together NAFSA members who share the following goals:

- _ To counsel international students and study abroad students who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+)
- _ To support LGBTQ+ professionals in international education
- _ To combat homophobia, heterosexism, and transphobia within NAFSA

Shades of Colour

<https://www.shadesofcolouryeg.com/>

This grassroots community is founded by and provides community support for People of Colour, and Queer/Trans People of Colour, living in Edmonton. It facilitates community meet-ups, workshops, mutual aid, and community outreach.

The Wellness Centre

<https://www.wellnesscentreab.ca/>

This centre focuses on crisis support and health and wellness support to transgender, non-binary, and gender diverse persons in northern Alberta.