

How to Support Newcomer 2SLGBTQIA+ Youth:

A Practice Guide for the Settlement Sector

Acknowledgements

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The Immigrant Education Society (TIES) is located on the ancestral and traditional territory of the Blackfoot Nations of the Siksika, Piikani and Kainai First Nations; the Îlethka Nakoda Wicastabi First Nations, comprised of the Chiniki, Bearspaw, and Goodstoney First Nations; and the Tsuut'ina First Nation. The City of Calgary is also homeland to the historic Northwest Métis and to the Otipemisiwak Métis Government, Métis Nation Battle River Territory (Nose Hill Métis District 5 and Elbow Métis District 6).

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General tips

Default to gender-neutral language



- › **Avoid** using “ma’am” or “sir”
- › “_____ is here to see you,” or, “**Your client** is here to see you” are better alternatives

Have visible markers of inclusivity



- › Pronoun **pins**, **pride flags**, **pronouns** in email signature
- › Continual: Keep these markers in your organization all year-long

Have 2SLGBTQIA+ and gender-based violence resources available for client referrals



- Have a **list of resources** of organizations for gender and sexually diverse individuals available in case a client needs additional support beyond the scope of your work.

Continuous learning



- Be **respectful, receptive, and open-minded** to clients who may appear visibly queer or explicitly tell you their gender identity/sexual orientation
- Learn more about **what pride means** to 2SLGBTQIA+ folks, queer history, and what different **gender identities and sexual orientations** there are

Practice Prompts

Prompt: Introducing yourself to clients

"Hi there, my name is _____, and I use ____ / ____ pronouns. How can I help you today?"



Prompt: Disclosure of gender-based violence

"Thank you for sharing that with me. That sounds like a very painful experience, and I can imagine how that has been impacting you deeply. You don't deserve to be treated that way."

Prompt: Correcting yourself after making a mistake

"I'm sorry for misgendering you, and thank you for correcting me."

Prompt: Non-committal answer options

"What is your gender identity? It's okay if you don't know or if you would prefer to skip this question."



Prompt: Explaining questions

"I'm going to be asking you about your assigned sex at birth because this application requires it to be known."

Glossary

2SLGBTQIA+

2SLGBTQIA+ is an acronym that represents Two-Spirit (2S), lesbian (L), gay (G), bisexual (B), transgender (T), queer (Q), intersex (I), asexual (A), and additional sexual and gender diverse communities (+).¹

Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

According to Women and Gender Equality Canada, **gender-based violence** is when people experience violence due to their gender, gender expression, gender identity, or perceived gender identity.² People across Canada experience GBV daily, and it can be physical, emotional, verbal, systemic, or digital.²

Gender Identity

Gender identity is a person's internal and individual experience of gender.^{3,4} It may or may not align with the sex/gender a person was assigned at birth and/or what society expects based on assigned sex. Gender identity can evolve over the course of a person's lifetime and may also not be visible to others.^{3,4}

Gender-Neutral Language

Gender-neutral language (also known as gender-inclusive language) is using language and terminology that does not make assumptions about sex, gender, or gender identity.⁵

Sexual Orientation

Sexual orientation refers to a person's potential for emotional, spiritual, intellectual, intimate, romantic and/or sexual attraction for people of the same gender, different gender, multiple genders, or no gender.^{3,4}

Queer

Queer is an umbrella term that was historically used as a derogatory slur, and now has been reclaimed by many 2SLGBTQIA+ people as a positive way to describe themselves.³ It encompasses 2SLGBTQIA+ communities, one's relationship to a particular community, or an individual identity.⁴

¹ Government of Canada (2023, August 27). *What is 2SLGBTQI+?* Women and Gender Equality Canada. <https://www.canada.ca/en/women-gender-equality/free-to-be-me/what-is-2slgbtqi-plus.html>

² Government of Canada (2026, July 16). *About gender-based violence*. Women and Gender Equality Canada. <https://www.canada.ca/en/women-gender-equality/gender-based-violence/about-gender-based-violence.html>

³ Government of Canada (2024, September 17). *2SLGBTQI+ terminology – Glossary and common acronyms*. Women and Gender Equality Canada. <https://www.canada.ca/en/women-gender-equality/free-to-be-me/2slgbtqi-plus-glossary.html>

⁴ Egale (n.d.). *2SLGBTQI terms and definitions*. Retrieved July 21, 2026, from <https://egale.ca/awareness/terms-and-definitions/>

⁵ United Nations (n.d.). *Gender-inclusive language*. Retrieved July 20, 2026, from <https://www.un.org/en/gender-inclusive-language/>

About The Immigrant Education Society (TIES)

The Immigrant Education Society (TIES) is a not-for-profit registered charitable organization that has been serving newcomers and Canadians since 1988. The goal of the organization is to provide immigrants and economically disadvantaged individuals the opportunities to feel belonging in their new community.

TIES offers the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) program, employment and settlement programs and, more recently, TIES offers childcare services. TIES also introduced the Centre for Immigrant Research to further strengthen their research capabilities.



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About TIES Centre for Immigrant Research

TIES Centre for Immigrant Research (TCIR) is a community-based research centre that generates evidence that informs policies, programs, and practices to strengthen immigrant settlement, integration, and community well-being across Canada.



Community-Based Research

Generating actionable evidence to address community challenges and inform policy and practice.



Program Development & Innovation

Translating research into practical, evidence-informed programs, resources, and solutions.



Policy & Knowledge Mobilization

Mobilizing research to inform policy, build capacity, and empower communities.