**SERVING LGBT2SQ
CHILDREN AND YOUTH
IN THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM:**
A RESOURCE GUIDE

Ontario

SERVING LGBT2SQ CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM:

A RESOURCE GUIDE

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We need to talk more openly about the fact that there are many differences among youth, and all must be respected.

— *Caregiver*

PART 1

1. Why this Guide is Important

This resource guide has been developed to help children's aid societies (societies), residential service providers, and caregivers (e.g., foster, kin, and customary caregivers) better meet the needs of the LGBT2SQ children and youth they serve.

Many different acronyms are used to refer to the diverse communities of people who identify with a sexual orientation and/or gender identity that has been marginalized. In this guide, the acronym LGBT2SQ is used except when an acronym appears in a quote or reference from another source. The acronym LGBT2SQ refers to gender identities and sexual orientations including, but not limited to, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, Two-Spirit, queer, and questioning. It is important to remember that terms used to describe gender identities and sexual orientations are always evolving. Other variations of the acronym may be ordered differently (e.g., GLBT, 2SLGBTQ), or include other letters to give visibility to identities (e.g., intersex, asexual) that are not explicitly reflected in shorter acronyms (e.g., LGBT2SQIA).

Whether child protection workers and caregivers are aware of it or not, it is very likely that some of the children and youth they serve identify as LGBT2SQ. While it is estimated that 10% of the general population is LGBT2SQ, studies suggest there is a much higher percentage of LGBT2SQ children and youth in the child welfare system because many LGBT2SQ children and youth face rejection, neglect or abuse when their families learn of their sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or gender expression.[1]

> An **ally** is someone who believes in the dignity and respect of all people and takes action by supporting and/or advocating with groups experiencing social injustice. An ally does not identify as a member of the group they are supporting (e.g., a heterosexual person can act as an ally for gay people and communities; a cisgender lesbian can act as an ally for trans people and communities). (Egale, 2017).

Many LGBT2SQ children and youth also face challenges within the child welfare system. For example:

- Difficulty finding a trusted person to be open with about their identity (e.g., an ally in whom to confide).

- Lack of safe, welcoming placement options and permanent homes that affirm, and are inclusive of, LGBT2SQ identities.

- Hostility, harassment, or violence from their peers in foster and group care settings that may go unchallenged by staff and caregivers.

- Discipline for, and/or restriction of, age-appropriate behaviours that might be accepted between youth of different sexes and/or genders (e.g., dating).

- Child protection workers and caregivers who lack awareness and understanding of the needs of LGBT2SQ children and youth and/or the resources available to support them.

- Challenges developing lasting relationships or accessing appropriate services due to stigma and discrimination.

- Lack of understanding by child welfare professionals of their roles in supporting families who may be struggling with their LGBT2SQ child or youth's gender identity, gender expression, and/or sexual orientation.[2]

- Lack of specific LGBT2SQ inclusion policies and promising practices (e.g., placement related to gender identity, access to gender-affirming health care).

- Not seeing themselves and other LGBT2SQ identities represented among workers, caregivers, and leaders.

Supportive adults and LGBT2SQ-affirming services can make a positive difference in the lives and longer term outcomes of LGBT2SQ children and youth. Staff, caregivers, and leaders in the child welfare system can play an important role in preventing and addressing these challenges by becoming LGBT2SQ allies.

2. About this Guide

This guide responds to a recommendation in the Youth Leaving Care Working Group's *Blueprint for Fundamental Change to Ontario's Child Welfare System*[i] to increase caregiver capacity to serve LGBT2SQ children and youth. It also responds to other calls for action to better support LGBT2SQ children and youth in the child welfare system, including:

- The Residential Services Review Panel's report, *Because Young People Matter: Report of the Residential Services Review Panel*;[3]

- *Egale Canada Human Rights Trust's LGBTQ Youth Suicide Prevention Summit 2012: Report on Outcomes and Recommendations*;[4] and

- The *You Are Not Alone* and *Be Our Ally*[5] initiatives of the Ontario Child Advocate (OCA).[ii]

In *Safe and Caring Places for Children and Youth: Ontario's Blueprint for Building a New System of Licensed Residential Services* (July 2017), the government committed to developing a renewed approach to inclusion in residential services, which includes recognizing the unique needs of LGBT2SQ children and youth. The release of *Serving LGBT2SQ Children and Youth in the Child Welfare System: A Resource Guide* is an important step to meeting this commitment and increasing the capacity of the child welfare system to better meet the needs of LGBT2SQ children and youth.

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i   In July 2012, the Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS) in conjunction with the Office of the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth established the Youth Leaving Care Working Group, made up of youth with experience living in care, as well as community partners. The Working Group collaborated over a number of months to develop recommendations to government on ways to strengthen the child welfare system.

ii   Formally known as the Office of the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth (PACY).

The guide provides information and practical tools on how to support LGBT2SQ children and youth involved with the child welfare system and how to create child welfare services that are responsive to their needs. It recognizes that societies and residential service providers are at different stages in their work to better support LGBT2SQ children and youth, and have varied resources and strategies to do this. The guide can help those who are just beginning to develop policies and practices, and others that are looking to expand or enhance their current efforts.

The guide is organized into the following parts:

Part 2 provides an overview of some barriers and biases faced by LGBT2SQ children and youth in the child welfare system, and key concepts that will help readers understand information contained in later sections.

Part 3 outlines how caregivers and service providers can provide supportive, inclusive, and affirming services for LGBT2SQ children and youth in the child welfare system.

Part 4 examines key elements necessary for organizations to become LGBT2SQ-affirming and inclusive.

Part 5 includes information on relevant organizations and networks, terms and definitions, samples of LGBT2SQ-affirming and inclusive policies, practices and forms, and a list of resources to support organizations, workers, caregivers, and families in their ongoing efforts to provide affirming and inclusive services to LGBT2SQ children, youth, and families involved with the child welfare system.

The guide was informed by a review of current research and promising practices, by the voices of LGBT2SQ children and youth, and by staff and caregivers involved with the child welfare system. More specifically, this included:

- a review of research on the experiences of LGBT2SQ children and youth involved with the child welfare system, and on promising practices;

- a review of available resources and toolkits about serving LGBT2SQ children and youth in the child welfare system, and in related sectors (e.g., education, youth justice);

- surveys of youth, caregivers, residential service providers, and child protection workers and leaders, on challenges for LGBT2SQ children and youth in Ontario's child welfare system, current practices for serving LGBT2SQ children and youth, and the kinds of information and training that staff, volunteers, and caregivers need in order to provide affirming services to LGBT2SQ children and youth;

- youth-led focus groups with LGBT2SQ youth, in five locations across the province, about their experiences with the child welfare system, and their suggestions for making it more LGBT2SQ-inclusive;

- interviews and email surveys with key informants, including those with expertise in serving specific LGBT2SQ populations (e.g., Indigenous, Black and racialized communities, people with disabilities, smaller population centres); and

- input from an Advisory Committee made up of youth and representatives from the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies (OACAS), the Association of Native Child and Family Service Agencies of Ontario (ANCFSAO), the Office of the Ontario Child Advocate (OCA), the Ontario Association of Residences Treating Youth (OARTY), the Foster Parents Society of Ontario (FPSO), Rainbow Health Ontario (RHO), societies, and foster parents.

We would like to thank the children, youth, workers, caregivers, and leaders who contributed to this guide by sharing their experiences, advice, and recommendations on how to create a child welfare system that can better serve and meet the needs of LGBT2SQ children and youth across Ontario.

Limits of the Guide[iii]

This guide is a resource only and does not have the force and effect of ministry legislation, regulations, or policies. The guide is not intended to provide readers with clinical or legal advice. References concerning specific policies and legislation are current as of the publication date and are subject to change. References to resource and reference materials, Internet sites, and organizations are included for information only. Additionally, all references included from outside sources do not constitute or imply their endorsement of the guide. The Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS) is not responsible for the quality of the content on non-ministry Internet sites or for ensuring that the content of the material on non-ministry Internet sites listed is up to date. The linked websites may not be available in French, unless otherwise stated. Readers should consult with appropriate management and legal counsel in their organization and give consideration to the implications of all statutory requirements, including those under Ontario's child and family services legislation, in the development and application of LGBT2SQ-affirming and inclusive policies and programs.

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iii The information in this guide is current to the time of publishing. Please refer to the links provided for inquiries about the most up-to-date information.
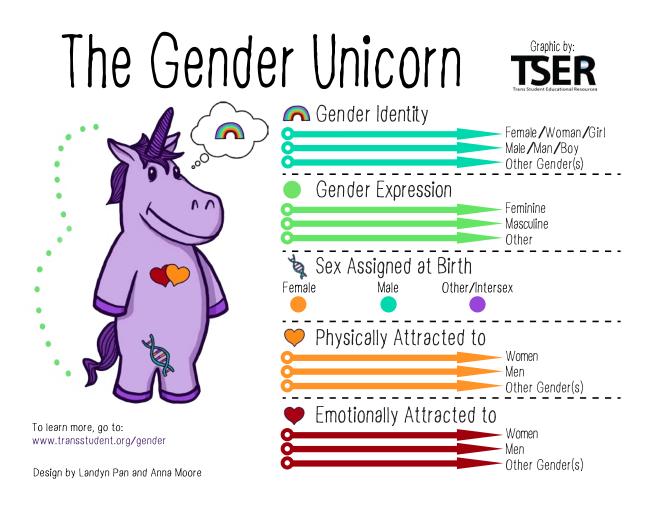
3. A Note on Language

The words we use to talk about and with LGBT2SQ children and youth are important. Choosing language that reflects respect for, and understanding of, their identities is one of the simplest ways to communicate support, and to create safer and affirming spaces for LGBT2SQ children and youth.

Some terms may be unfamiliar and confusing. While it is normal to have concerns about "getting it right," asking an individual how they wish to be identified can help to show support for their identity and experiences, and is an important first step toward being an ally.

Meet the Gender Unicorn[6]—a fun way to explore, understand, and explain the differences and interconnectedness of terms like gender identity, gender expression, sex assigned at birth, and sexual orientation:[iv]

Children and youth who identify as LGBT2SQ are not a homogeneous group. Sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression are not set at birth—they can change over time. Each child and youth is unique in how they identify. The following chart highlights identities that you will read about throughout the guide.[7]

The Gender Unicorn

Graphic by: TSER
Trans Student Educational Resources

Gender Identity
- Female/Woman/Girl
- Male/Man/Boy
- Other Gender(s)

Gender Expression
- Feminine
- Masculine
- Other

Sex Assigned at Birth
- Female
- Male
- Other/Intersex

Physically Attracted to
- Women
- Men
- Other Gender(s)

Emotionally Attracted to
- Women
- Men
- Other Gender(s)

To learn more, go to:
www.transstudent.org/gender

Design by Landyn Pan and Anna Moore

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iv Sexual orientation can sometimes be referred to as attraction.

Sex-related definitions

IDENTITY	WHAT IT USUALLY MEANS
Sex/Assigned Sex	The classification of a person as male, female, or intersex based on biological characteristics, including chromosomes, hormones, external genitalia, and reproductive organs. The term "assigned sex" is used to acknowledge that sex is often a value determined by medical professionals and is commonly assigned to newborns based on visual assessment of external genitalia. Inclusion here of the recognized category of "intersex," frequently overlooked in discussions of sex, serves as a reminder that even at the level of biology, sex is not a binary system.
Intersex	A person whose chromosomal, hormonal, and/or anatomical sex characteristics fall outside the conventional classifications of male or female.

Sexual orientation-related definitions

IDENTITY	WHAT IT USUALLY MEANS
Sexual Orientation	A term that classifies a person's potential for emotional, intellectual, spiritual, intimate, romantic, and/or sexual interest in other people, often based on their sex and/or gender. Sexual orientation is often referred to as attraction.
Lesbian	A woman-identified person who experiences attraction towards other women.
Gay	A person who experiences attraction to individuals of the same sex/assigned sex and/or gender identity. The word "gay" can be used to refer to attraction experienced by both men and women, or only men.
Bisexual	A person who experiences attraction towards more than one sex/assigned sex or gender identity.
Pansexual	A person who experiences attraction to individuals with diverse sexes/assigned sexes, gender identities, and gender expressions.
Asexual	An individual who may not experience sexual attraction or desire to engage in sexual activity.

Gender-related definitions

IDENTITY	WHAT IT USUALLY MEANS
Gender[8]	Gender is based on the expectations and stereotypes about behaviours, actions, and roles linked to being a "man" or "woman" within a particular culture or society. The social norms related to gender can vary depending on the culture, and can change over time.
Gender Identity	A person's internal and individual experience of gender. This could include an internal sense of being a man, woman, both, neither, or another gender entirely. A person's gender identity may or may not correspond with social expectations associated with the sex they were assigned at birth. Since gender identity is internal, it is not necessarily visible to others.
Gender Expression	The way a person presents and communicates gender within a social context. Gender can be expressed through clothing, speech, body language, hair-style, voice, and/or the emphasis or de-emphasis of bodily characteristics or behaviours, which are often associated with masculinity and femininity. The ways in which gender is expressed are culturally specific and may change over time.

Gender identity-related definitions

IDENTITY	WHAT IT USUALLY MEANS
Trans	The term trans is frequently used as an umbrella term for a variety of other terms, including transgender, transsexual, and can also refer to terms like genderqueer, agender, bigender, Two-Spirit, etc. Some people may identify with these or other specific terms, but not with the term trans. Similarly, some people may identify as trans, but not with other terms under the trans umbrella. At their simplest, each of these terms has commonalities with the term trans, and yet they are all unique in their specific reference to the context of, and specific relationships between, conceptions of gender identity and sex/assigned sex.
Transgender	A person who does not identify (in full or partially) with the gender associated with their sex assigned at birth (sex/assigned sex).
Gender Diverse/ Gender Independent	An umbrella term for gender identities and/or gender expressions that differ from cultural or societal expectations based on assigned sex. Individuals may identify and express themselves as "feminine men" or "masculine women," or as androgynous, outside of the categories "boy/man" and "girl/woman." People who are gender non-conforming may or may not identify as trans.
Gender Fluid	The term gender fluid refers to the potential for change in ideas, experiences, and expressions of gender at an individual and/or societal level. This concept recognizes the potential for individual movement within a gender spectrum when it comes to self-presentation or expression. Some people may choose to identify as gender fluid.
Genderqueer	A person whose gender identity and/or expression may not correspond with social and cultural gender expectations. Individuals who identify as gender-queer may move between gender identities, identify with multiple genders, or reject the gender binary or gender altogether.
Gender Creative[9]	A term sometimes used to refer to children or youth who identify and express their gender in ways that do not align with the social expectations associated with the sex assigned to them at birth (sex/assigned sex).
Cisgender	The term used to describe individuals whose gender identity or expression aligns with those typically associated with the sex assigned to them at birth.

Gender identity and sexual orientation-related definitions

IDENTITY	WHAT IT USUALLY MEANS
Two-Spirit[10]	The term Two-Spirit encompasses Indigenous cultures, spiritual beliefs, and values, as well as sexual orientation and gender identity. It is a term used by some, but not all, Indigenous people to describe their gender, sexual orientation, and/or sex and gender roles in Indigenous ways, using traditional terms and concepts. The Two-Spirit identity affirms the interrelatedness of all aspects of identity, including gender, sexuality, community, culture, and spirituality. For further information and resources on Two-Spirit communities, please visit: http://www.nativeyouthsexualhealth.com/twospiritdirectory.html
Queer	A term used by some members of LGBT2SQ communities, as a symbol of pride and affirmation of diversity. It can be used by a community to encompass a broad spectrum of identities related to sex/assigned sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation, or by an individual to reflect the interrelatedness of these aspects of their identity. Queer was historically a derogatory term for difference, used in particular to insult LGBT2SQ people and communities. Although sometimes still used as a slur, the term has been reclaimed by many individuals within LGBT2SQ communities.
Questioning[11]	A term used to describe those who are in a process of discovery and exploration about their sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or gender expression.

All children and youth have rights and should be treated with respect, including those who identify as LGBT2SQ.

— *Foster Parent*

PART 2

4. Child Welfare in Ontario

"Child welfare" refers to the system of services provided to children and youth in need of protection because they have been or are at risk of being abused and/or neglected, as well as services provided to families to prevent their child or youth from coming into care, or to facilitate reunification with a child or youth in care.

In Ontario, these services are delivered by children's aid societies (societies), which are independent, non-profit organizations. At the time of writing, there were 49 societies, including 11 Indigenous societies, in Ontario. The Ministry of Children and Youth Services funds and oversees societies.

The paramount purpose of the legislation governing child welfare in Ontario is "to promote the best interests, protection, and well being of children." Societies have the exclusive mandate under Ontario legislation to deliver child protection services.

To determine whether a child is in need of protection, societies apply a standardized tool called the *Ontario Child Welfare Eligibility Spectrum*.[12] If a society determines that an investigation is required, they must apply the *Ontario Child Protection Standards*.[13] The Child Protection Standards guide the child protection worker throughout the life of the case—from intake, through the investigation, to ongoing case management and closure. When a determination is made that a child is in need of protection, societies provide families with services and supports, and/or referrals to community partners to try, where possible, to prevent children and youth from entering into care, and to address identified protection concerns. The primary goal when any child comes into the care of a society is for the child to be returned home whenever possible, and work is focused on achieving this objective.

Children and youth come to be in the care of societies for a variety of reasons. Children and youth in the care of a society who cannot be returned home are placed in out-of-home care with a caregiver(s) selected based on the child or youth's needs and the options available in the child or youth's extended network and community. Finding permanent homes for children and youth in care is a key contributor to improving their outcomes by providing them with safe, nurturing, and stable relationships, as well as opportunities for growth and development. Some children and youth in care will grow up in society care if a permanent home that meets their needs does not become available.

The range of placement options includes:

• **Customary care:** a culturally appropriate placement option for Indigenous children and youth in need of protection, where a child or youth is placed with a person who is not the child or youth's parent, according to the custom of the child or youth's band or Indigenous community.

- **Kinship care:** the placement of a child or youth determined to be in need of protection with a kin or community member until safety issues have been addressed to allow the child or youth's return to their parent(s), or another permanency plan has been established.

- **Foster care:** a family-based placement option for a child or youth determined to be in need of protection.

- **Group care:** the placement of a child or youth determined to be in need of protection in a children's residence (e.g., group home). There are two group home options: 1) a staff model that provides care to three or more unrelated children, or 2) a parent model that provides care to five or more unrelated children.

- **Legal custody:** occurs when a foster parent, kin or community member obtains a legal custody order in accordance with provincial child welfare legislation for a child or youth in extended society care[v] (up to the age of 18), and that child or youth has been discharged from society care.

- **Adoption:** a court order establishing that, for all purposes of law, the adopted child becomes the child of the adoptive parent and the adoptive parent becomes the parent of the adopted child.

To support youth transitioning out of the care of a society, the Youth-in-Transition Worker program, which is delivered by community agencies across the province, links young people as they transition out of care to resources and supports including housing support, education resources, employment services, and life skills training available in the community.[vi]

RESOURCES
Information on child welfare service delivery in Ontario

Ontario Children's Aid
http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/childrensaid/index.aspx

Canadian Child Welfare Research Portal
http://cwrp.ca/sites/default/files/publications/en/ON_infosheet_final_0.pdf

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v   Referred to as a Crown ward under the *Child and Family Services Act*.
vi A list of supports and services for youth who have been in the care of a society, or who are leaving the care of a society, is available at: http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/childrensaid/leavingcare.aspx.

5. Rights of LGBT2SQ Children and Youth

LGBT2SQ children and youth served by Ontario's child welfare system have the right to be free of discrimination. By examining how human rights legislation applies to LGBT2SQ children and youth, child welfare professionals can gain a greater understanding of how to develop fair, inclusive, and appropriate policies and procedures to protect the rights of, and build safer environments for, the LGBT2SQ children and youth they serve. Workers, leaders, families, and caregivers can educate themselves on international conventions and national and provincial non-discrimination laws by reviewing the following:

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)

- The *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* (UNCRC) is the most widely accepted human rights treaty.[14] The treaty establishes a wide range of protection and participation rights for children up to the age of 18. The UNCRC states that children everywhere—without discrimination—have rights: to survival; to develop to the fullest; to protection from harmful influences, abuse, and exploitation; and to participate fully in family, cultural, and social life.[15]

  The *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* can be accessed at: http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/ProfessionalInterest/crc.pdf

Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1982)

- The *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* enshrines in law the rights and freedoms of all people in Canada. Section 15 (Equality Rights) of the *Charter* states, "Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age, or mental or physical disability."

  The *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* can be accessed at: http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/Const/page-15.html

Ontario Human Rights Code (1962)

- The *Ontario Human Rights Code* is a provincial law that recognizes the dignity and worth of every person, and gives everybody equal rights and opportunities without discrimination in areas such as jobs, housing, and services. Specifically, the *Code* prohibits actions that discriminate against people based on protected grounds, including: sex, gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation.

  The *Ontario Human Rights Code* can be accessed at: http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/ontario-human-rights-code

Child and Family Services Act (1990) / Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017

- The *Child and Family Services Act* (CFSA) governs many of the province's programs and services for children and youth. The CFSA's paramount purpose is to promote the best interests, protection, and well being of children. Ontario has passed the *Child, Youth and Family Services Act*, 2017 (CYFSA) which will repeal and replace the CFSA. The CYFSA's preamble recognizes that the Government of Ontario is committed to the principles that services provided to children and families should be child-centred, should respect their identity, diversity and the principle of inclusion, and be informed by awareness of systemic biases and racism, and the need to address these barriers.

  The *Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017* can be accessed at: https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/17c14

Ontario Human Rights Commission, Policy on Discrimination and Harassment because of Sexual Orientation (2006)

- The policy was developed to help the public and Commission staff gain a better understanding of how the *Ontario Human Rights Code* protects Ontarians of all sexual orientations and to sensitize them to the issues faced by persons on the basis of sexual orientation and same-sex/assigned sex and/or same gender partnership status. It also aims to raise awareness among service providers, employers, and landlords of their obligations under the Code.

  The *Ontario Human Rights Commission, Policy on Discrimination and Harassment because of Sexual Orientation* can be accessed at: http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/code_grounds/sexual_orientation

Ontario Human Rights Commission, Policy on Harassment because of Gender Identity and Gender Expression

- The policy promotes understanding and awareness about trans people and their rights. It can help employers, unions and other vocational associations, and housing and service providers understand and meet their legal responsibilities under the *Ontario Human Rights Code* to prevent and address discrimination based on gender identity and gender expression.

  The *Ontario Human Rights Commission, Policy on Preventing Discrimination because of Gender Identity and Gender Expression* can be accessed at: http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/code_grounds/gender_identity

6. Key Concepts

The previous section provided some definitions of LGBT2SQ identities. This section provides information on some additional key concepts that are important to understand before moving to the sections that follow.

Intersectionality

"Intersectionality" is a concept first defined by Kimberlé Crenshaw[16] that describes how people are shaped by their many identities, including their sex/assigned sex, race, ethnicity, language, ability, faith, age, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, and gender identity, and the ways in which these identities intersect. Some examples of intersecting identities include a gay man of colour or a cisgender woman with a disability.

Together, these identities can result in unique and distinct experiences for an individual or group that may create barriers or opportunities.

Understanding intersectionality is central to providing holistic supports and services to children and youth impacted by the risks and challenges associated with their gender identity, gender expression, and/or sexual orientation. Indigenous, Black and racialized LGBT2SQ children and youth need access to holistic supports and services that distinctly affirm and support their identities as Indigenous/Two-Spirit, Black, racialized, and LGBT2SQ. At all stages of service delivery, service providers should consider whether the child or youth has access to all of the communities with which they identify, including cultural and faith-based communities. Service providers and caregivers should also consider intersections with a child or youth's ability-related identities. The availability or absence of holistic supports and services that relate to multiple dimensions of a child or youth's identity can impact all other areas of their life.

> Many CAS staff understand very little about the needs of LGBT2SQ youth, including the very basics such as letting trans youth wear whatever clothing they want.
>
> — *Society Staff*

> *"… colonization has greatly impacted the status and position of Two-Spirit people by suppressing Two-Spirit traditions and roles. With the forced change in gender construction over the last four hundred years, Two-Spirit people were alienated and persecuted for their practices, which ultimately resulted in the incomplete erasure of their teachings, practices, and roles and the emergence of homophobia and transphobia in Indigenous societies. Two-Spirit people continue to grapple with unique challenges that are shaped by their intertwining experiences of race, gender, and sexuality."*
>
> Native Youth Sexual Health Network and the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres (2015)
>
> For further information, please visit the Native Youth Sexual Health Network at: http://www.nativeyouthsexualhealth.com/, or the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres at: http://www.ofifc.org/

Understanding that individuals face different levels of risk and different challenges will contribute to policies, programs, and services that are inclusive, reflect the diversity of children and youth in the child welfare system, and better meet their needs. These are also critical considerations in developing policies, programs and services that respond to the complex and layered nature of systemic discrimination. Some individuals are at higher risk of discrimination because they face multiple prejudices and stereotypes based on their particular set of intersecting identities. In addition to discriminatory experiences based on their gender and sexual identities, LGBT2SQ children and youth who are, for example, from racialized, Black or Indigenous communities, may also experience inequitable treatment based on those identities.

Discrimination

Discrimination is the act of treating an individual or a group of people unequally and generally arises from negative attitudes, fear or hatred, and stereotypical assumptions and biases.[17] LGBT2SQ children and youth may face discrimination in care systems if they receive inequitable treatment due to their sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. Systemic discrimination occurs when an organization creates or maintains inequity on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or gender expression (e.g., not allowing a gay youth the same dating rights as a heterosexual youth, treating a trans identity as a mental health problem, prohibiting same sex and/or same gender couples from adopting a child). Discrimination can be the result of "doing things the way they've always been done," without considering how they impact particular groups differently. It can be direct and easy to detect, or subtle and hidden, but still harmful either way.

What are microaggressions?

Microaggressions are the everyday occurrences of subtle and often unintentional discrimination that people who experience marginalization encounter throughout their lives (Egale, 2017).

Marginalized communities, including LGBT2SQ children and youth, experience microaggressions every day. LGBT2SQ communities of colour, LGBT2SQ people with disabilities, and Indigenous LGBTQ and Two-Spirit persons are more likely to experience microaggressions. Examples of microaggressions include: talking slowly and simply to a person with a physical disability (who is not cognitively impaired) or statements such as "I am not homophobic—I have gay friends."

The combined impact of microaggressions can take a significant toll on the health and wellbeing of LGBT2SQ children and youth.

Discrimination can operate on multiple levels and so must be addressed at each of these levels:

- **Individual** – attitudes and actions by an individual that reflect discrimination against a social group.

- **Organizational** – policies, values, structures, and practices in organizations that disadvantage some social groups and benefit others, whether intended or not.

- **Societal/Cultural** – system level values, policies, structures, practices, social norms and roles, and language that reflect and reinforce the belief that one social group is superior to another.

In their own words: engaging with LGBT2SQ Indigenous Youth

As part of the development of this guide, the Association of Native Child and Family Service Agencies of Ontario (ANCFSAO) hosted a youth forum at Native Child and Family Services of Toronto (NCFST). Youth were invited to share their experiences and need for culturally appropriate services that affirm and are inclusive of their sexual and gender identities.

This is what they said:

Youth do not want to feel like they have to choose between their culture and their sexual and gender identities when receiving child welfare services.
- *Services should not separate gender identity and sexual orientation from cultural identity. This means that services specifically targeting Two-Spirit and Indigenous LGBTQ youth must be made available, and provided by those who have in-depth knowledge of Two-Spirit and Indigenous cultures.*

Youth need culturally-appropriate services and culturally-competent and knowledgeable service providers.
- *Youth want resources and services that are responsive to their lived experiences, and that are delivered in a non-judgmental way. This includes wraparound, integrated, and culturally-appropriate services. These services should not merely be "affirming" but rather "inclusive."*

Youth feel that respect and the concept of the ally go hand-in-hand.
- *If service providers wish to be considered allies, they need to respect youth identities and expression.*

Differences in the treatment of LGBT2SQ children and youth, including those in the child welfare system, stem fundamentally from the perspective that the behaviours and values of those who are heterosexual and cisgender are the norm. These assumptions, often unconscious, can result in services that exclude the experiences and needs of those who identify as LGBT2SQ (e.g., assumption that a family includes two parents of different sexes and/or genders).

- **Heterosexism:** A system of beliefs, attitudes, biases, practices, and discrimination that favours opposite-gender/sex, sexuality and relationships. It can include the presumption that other people are heterosexual or that different gender/sex attractions and relationships are the norm and therefore superior to other identities or relationships. Heterosexism results in advantages automatically being given to heterosexual persons simply because they are heterosexual (this is often referred to as "heterosexual privilege"). A few examples of heterosexual privilege include: being able to display simple affection in public without the fear of retaliation, violence, or harassment; and children's books only reflecting heterosexual parents.[18] Gaining awareness of the ways in which heterosexual people benefit from this privilege is critical to preventing the perpetuation of heterosexist beliefs.

- **Cissexism:** Prejudice and discrimination against trans or genderqueer identities and/or expressions. This includes the presumption that being cisgender is the superior and more desirable gender identity.[19]

- **Homophobia:** Fear and/or hatred of homosexuality, often demonstrated by name-calling, bullying, exclusion, prejudice, discrimination, or acts of violence—anyone who is LGBT2SQ (or assumed to be) can be the target of homophobia.[20] An example of

homophobia is using the phrase "that's so gay" to refer to something negative.

- **Biphobia:** Fear and/or hatred of bisexuality, often demonstrated by name-calling, bullying, exclusion, prejudice, discrimination, or acts of violence—anyone who is or is assumed to be bisexual or experiences attraction to multiple sexes and/or genders can be the target of biphobia.[21] An example of biphobia is assuming someone who identifies as bisexual is "just confused" or "hasn't made up their mind" about their sexual orientation.

- **Transphobia:** Negative attitudes, feelings, and/or actions towards, and fear or hatred of trans people and communities. Like other forms of oppression, it is based on stereotypes and misconceptions that are used to justify discrimination, harassment, and violence toward trans people, or those perceived to be trans.[22] An example of transphobia is refusing to use the correct name or pronouns for a trans person.

What is misgendering?

Misgendering is a cissexist practice that involves intentionally or unintentionally using pronouns, prefixes, or group addresses that do not reflect an individual's gender identity (Egale, 2017).

For example, using "guys" to address a group of people who do not all identify as men or using "she/her/hers" for an individual who uses gender neutral or they/them/theirs pronouns are forms of misgendering.

Respectful Use of Names

It is important to ask when transgender, genderqueer, and/or Two-Spirit children or youth would like to be referred to by their chosen name(s). Not all people and/or spaces are considered to be safe by transgender, genderqueer, and/or Two-Spirit children and youth to openly express their gender identity. As a result, transgender, genderqueer, and/or Two-Spirit children and youth may wish to limit the use of their chosen name(s) to select spaces and in front of specific people.

What is deadnaming?

Deadnaming involves calling a transgender, genderqueer, or Two-Spirit person by a birth-name(s), legal name(s), or any former name(s) that they do not use. Using a chosen name is one way transgender, genderqueer, and/or Two-Spirit children or youth may express and affirm their gender identity.

Intentionally or unintentionally calling someone by their deadname when they have asked to be called by their chosen name(s) is a form of transphobia. Since you may not know when a child or youth identifies as transgender, genderqueer, and/or Two-Spirit, it is important to ask all children and youth what name(s) they would like to be called.

7. LGBT2SQ Children and Youth and the Child Welfare System: Risks and Challenges

LGBT2SQ children and youth can experience unique risks and challenges in the child welfare system. This section discusses some of these risks and challenges, as well as some that LGBT2SQ children and youth may face more generally.

By becoming aware, child protection workers, agencies, residential service providers, and caregivers can take steps to address and minimize these risks and challenges. The fact that an LGBT2SQ child or youth may be at risk of these challenges should be considered in decision-making about placements, permanency planning, and other services.
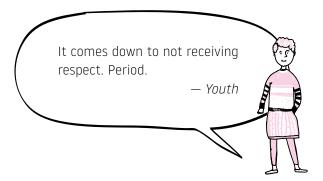
Family Rejection

Supportive relationships with family members promote healthy development in all children and youth. Unfortunately, the over-representation of LGBT2SQ children and youth in the child welfare system is in part due to children and youth being forced out of their homes, or leaving voluntarily due to rejection or physical or emotional abuse by their family.[23] When children and youth are forced to leave home for reasons beyond their control, they may experience homelessness, poverty, violence, and other risks.

According to a study conducted by the Family Acceptance Project, LGBT2SQ youth who reported high levels of family rejection were 8.4 times more likely to have attempted suicide, 5.9 times more likely to be depressed, and 3.4 times more likely to use drugs than LGBT2SQ peers from families that reported no or low levels of family rejection.[24] Further, a recent Ontario study conducted by TransPulse found that transgender youth who

had supportive families experienced a 93% reduction in suicide attempts over one year, compared to transgender youth who did not have supportive families.[25]

Research has also shown that, if given the chance to learn about LGBT2SQ identities and experiences, and to understand the negative impacts that their rejection has on children and youth, parents, caregivers, and other family members may become more supportive.[26]

> It comes down to not receiving respect. Period.
>
> — *Youth*

Health Care Concerns and Needs

While LGBT2SQ children and youth often struggle with the same health concerns as non-LGBT2SQ children and youth, they are also much more likely to experience mental health and addictions issues.

- People who identify as LGBT2SQ have higher rates of depression and anxiety than the general population due to the negative impacts of stigma, prejudice, and discrimination;[27]
- LGBT2SQ children and youth are more likely than their peers to use drugs and alcohol as a way to cope with "isolation, alienation and discrimination from a homophobic society;"[28]

- Two-Spirit and Indigenous LGBTQ children and youth are at a higher risk of experiencing suicidal thoughts or engaging in suicide attempts than non-Indigenous children and youth stemming from the impact of colonization, intergenerational trauma, and systemic racism;[29]

- In a study of transgender youth in Ontario, approximately half had thought about suicide and one in five had attempted suicide in the preceding year;[30] and

- Transgender children and youth who choose and are able to transition require specialized care and support.[31] Lack of access to these supports can significantly affect their mental health and wellbeing.

In general, LGBT2SQ individuals receive poorer quality health care than the general population as a result of stigma, discrimination, exclusion, and lack of access to quality care.[32] Many health care providers have little to no training on LGBT2SQ health issues, or on providing specialized clinical care for members of LGBT2SQ communities. As a result, health care providers may not be sensitive to the particular health needs of, or be knowledgeable about, how

to best support LGBT2SQ children and youth.[33] Access to appropriate health and mental health services for transgender and gender diverse children and youth is even more limited and challenging. Accessing affirming health care services may be even more challenging for LGBT2SQ children and youth outside of large urban centres, where specialized health care can be limited and training for health care professionals on appropriate LGBT2SQ care is less accessible.

Because of negative past experiences with the health care system, LGBT2SQ people may delay or avoid seeking health and mental health supports, or may choose to withhold personal information from health care providers.[34]

LGBT2SQ children and youth involved in the child welfare system may have particular challenges getting appropriate health care. Frequent placement moves, for example, may make it even more difficult to find health care providers with whom they can build trust and feel confident about how they will be treated in talking openly about health issues.

RESOURCES
LGBT2SQ-friendly health services and information on sexual and gender diversity

Rainbow Health Ontario
https://www.rainbowhealthontario.ca/

Gender Spectrum
https://www.genderspectrum.org/

What does it mean to transition?

Some transgender and gender fluid children and youth may choose to socially, medically, and/or legally transition as a way to affirm their gender identity.

Social transition is the process a person takes to affirm their gender identity in public spaces and in social interactions. This includes deciding how to navigate gendered spaces like washrooms or change rooms, as well as considering gender expression, name, and pronoun use in different social environments (e.g., dressing in a style that aligns with their gender identity, adopting a different haircut).

Legal transition is the process a person takes to change their name and/or sex designation on provincial, territorial and federal documents, including their birth certificate, driver's licence, and passport (for further information on changing government issued identification, see p. 53).

Medical transition involves the therapeutic, pharmaceutical, surgical, or other health care-based interventions a person may wish to undertake to affirm their gender identity. Some examples include speech therapy, hormone therapy (including puberty blockers for children and youth), counselling, hair removal, and/or gender-affirming surgical procedures. Gender-affirming health care must be individualized according to a client's needs. Health care providers have an important role to play in supporting trans and gender diverse children and youth throughout their gender journey. This may include conversations about non-medical and non-surgical aspects of gender affirmation (e.g., safe chest-binding, voice therapy).

Choosing whether to (or not to) transition, in what way(s), and at what time, is a very personal process. Decisions around transitioning are based on a number of factors, including individual comfort levels, safety (particularly within less inclusive spaces where children or youth may face bullying and/or violence), access to financial resources, and connection to appropriate health care supports.

For more information about transitioning and the needs of transgender and gender diverse children and youth, refer to the Families in TRANSition guide developed by Central Toronto Youth Services: http://www.ctys.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/CTYS-FIT-Families-in-Transition-Guide-2nd-edition.pdf

Violence and Harassment

Gender-based Violence and Harassment

Gender-based violence can include any form of violence (e.g., sexual harassment, assault, exploitation, physical threats, and emotional and psychological violence) that is based on an individual's gender, gender expression or gender identity, and is intended to control, humiliate or harm the individual.[35] Violence based on gender is an issue that affects diverse populations including women-identified persons, Indigenous persons, LGBT2SQ persons, racialized women, persons with disabilities, and seniors. Lesbian and bisexual girls and women, transgender girls and women, gender fluid people, LGBT2SQ communities of colour, Two-Spirit and LGBTQ Indigenous communities, LGBTQ newcomers and refugees, LGBT2SQ persons with disabilities, and LGBT2SQ persons with HIV/AIDS are disproportionately impacted by this violence.[36, 37] The absence of LGBT2SQ inclusive policies and programs may result in further harm to LGBT2SQ survivors of gender-based violence, and could contribute to the perpetuation of gender-based violence.

Harassment and Violence in School

School can be a challenging place for children and youth in the child welfare system. Those who identify as LGBT2SQ may face experiences that compound these challenges. For example, research indicates that many LGBT2SQ students routinely face discrimination, harassment, bullying, and violence by other students—and even some teachers—on the basis of their sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or gender expression.[38]

A 2011 Canadian study, conducted by Egale Canada Human Rights Trust that surveyed over 3,700 students from across Canada, found that:[39]

- two out of three LGBT2SQ students reported feeling unsafe at school;
- over two-thirds of students reported hearing homophobic expressions such as "that's so gay" every day at school;

- more than half of transgender students reported feeling unsafe in change rooms and washrooms;
- approximately half of all LGBT2SQ students and three-quarters of transgender students reported that they have been verbally harassed at school; and
- approximately one-quarter of LGBT2SQ students, and more than one-third of transgender students, reported being physically harassed or assaulted at school.

The study found that LGBT2SQ children and youth are more likely to miss class due to feeling unsafe, which impacted their academic performance[40] and demonstrates that experiences of bias, harassment, and violence can have a profoundly negative effect on a student's success in school, and their general wellbeing.

For LGBT2SQ children and youth involved in the child welfare system, the experience of moving from placement to placement and changing schools in the process can further compromise education. Consistently supportive allies, caregivers, workers, and teachers are essential to helping LGBT2SQ children and youth cope with these realities.

Supporting LGBT2SQ Students

There are provincial, school board, and school-based policies and programs in place to help support LGBT2SQ children, youth, and their families navigate school environments.

Take a look at the Egale Canada Human Rights Trust resource for supporting children and youth in Ontario schools to learn more: https://egale.ca/supporting-gender-diverse-child/

Bullying

Unfortunately, many children and youth will experience bullying—as someone who has been bullied, as someone who witnesses bullying, or someone who has bullied, or a combination of all three. Bullying is a particularly significant issue for LGBT2SQ children and youth.

LGBT2SQ children and youth experience high rates of cyberbullying and online harassment in comparison with their non-LGBT2SQ peers. U.S. based research has found that LGBT2SQ youth are harassed or bullied online three times more often, and sexually harassed four times more often, than their non-LGBT2SQ peers.[41]

The consequences of bullying are significant:

- Bullying has been found to be associated with a loss of interest in school activities, decreased quality of school work, poorer grades, and poorer attendance records.[42]
- Approximately one-third of LGBT2SQ youth who have been bullied have attempted suicide in comparison with 7% of the total youth population.[43]

In addition, LGBT2SQ children and youth may have fewer supports available to help them address bullying and its impacts.[44] Those who are in care may also experience bullying in their foster or group home; as a result, they may lack a safe home environment, which is so important to helping children and youth cope with bullying.[45]

Homelessness

In 2015, the first national study of children and youth who experience homelessness concluded that involvement in the child welfare system is a key risk factor for homelessness. Of the 1,103 respondents surveyed from 47 different communities across 10 provinces and territories, a high percentage of homeless youth had previous involvement with protection services (57.8%), and experienced one or more forms of abuse (63.1%) and/or neglect (37%).[46]

Additionally, a disproportionate number of LGBT2SQ children and youth experience homelessness. In Canada, 29.5% of homeless youth report being LGBT2SQ.[47] In addition to the reasons that other youth become homeless, LGBT2SQ children and youth involved with the child welfare system may have left placements because they did not feel supported.[48]

With no fixed address, regular meals, clean clothes or showers, homeless youth may drop out of school and/or find it difficult to find or keep a job. For these reasons, many homeless youth lack the education, job experience or life skills to transition to independence.[49]

On the street, LGBT2SQ children and youth may face barriers to accessing homeless shelters and other programs aimed at supporting street-involved children and youth. LGBT2SQ children and youth have reported being afraid to access mainstream shelters for fear of psychological, physical, or sexual violence. Transgender and gender fluid youth in particular may face barriers because homeless shelters and other support programs are often segregated by gender, and may not have an understanding of transgender and gender diverse children and youth and their needs.[50] Lack of access to LGBT2SQ-inclusive shelters and programs is even greater outside of large urban centres.

Two-Spirit and LGBTQ Indigenous children and youth are particularly at risk of homelessness. They face unique barriers to accessing safe, affirming and culturally appropriate housing. Some Two-Spirit and Indigenous LGBTQ children and youth are forced to relocate to urban centres to find housing which can result in limited access to community, language, culture, and ceremony.[51]

The risk of homelessness speaks to the need for appropriate placements for LGBT2SQ children and youth in the child welfare system and the importance of working to support family acceptance and reunification.

8. Myths and Stereotypes

Social norms can influence our attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours, and shape our understanding and assumptions about what is acceptable and what is not. There are a number of myths and stereotypes about LGBT2SQ communities that, when left unchallenged, have a harmful impact on LGBT2SQ children and youth.

Training and education can help dispel myths and build affirming and inclusive environments that recognize the realities of LGBT2SQ children and youth. Child protection workers and leaders, residential service providers, and caregivers can reinforce affirming practices by modelling appropriate behaviours, speaking out when they hear individuals supporting myths, and intervening when they witness behaviours that promote discrimination.
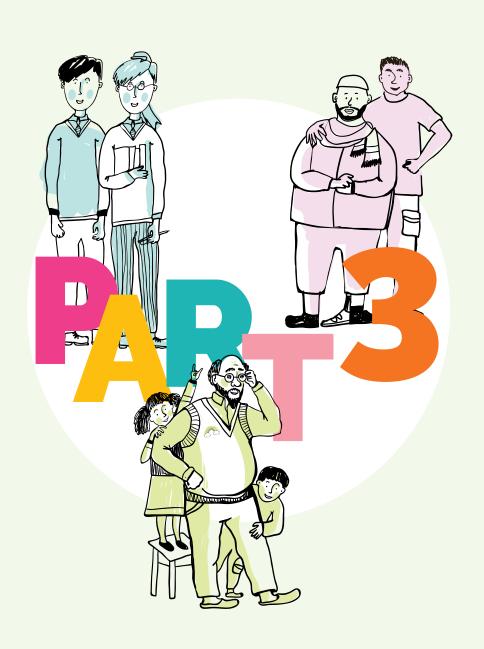
Here are some common myths and misconceptions about LGBT2SQ children, youth, and communities, and facts to counteract them. Child welfare service providers, leaders, and caregivers can consider how these myths have influenced their own thinking, the organizational culture for decision-making involving LGBT2SQ children and youth, and how services for LGBT2SQ children and youth have been shaped as a consequence:

MYTH	FACT
"I don't know any LGBT2SQ people."	It is estimated that around 10% of the population is LGBT2SQ and research indicates that approximately one in every four families has a member who identifies as LGBT2SQ.[52] Some research suggests that LGBT2SQ children and youth may represent more than 10% of child welfare clients due to family rejection and other risk factors.[53] Additionally, Egale's *First National Climate Survey on Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia in Canadian Schools*[54] found that over 14% of students self-identified as LGBT2SQ. It's important to remember that not all LGBT2SQ individuals are open about their sexual and/or gender diversity for various reasons, including safety and lack of support.

MYTH	FACT
"Sex and gender are the same thing."	While sex/assigned sex and gender are often connected concepts, they are not the same thing. Sex/assigned sex is the classification of a person as male, female, or intersex based on biological characteristics while gender is based on a person's internal and individual experience.
"Adolescents are too young to know their sexual orientation and gender identity."	Research has consistently shown that the average age of awareness of a lesbian, gay or bisexual identity is 10 years of age. Research confirms that children become aware of their gender identity by the age of three to five years.[55]
"You can change an LGBT2SQ youth's identity."	Being LGBT2SQ is neither a choice, nor a phase. Medical and psychological experts agree that attempting to change someone's sexual orientation and/or gender identity does not work and often causes harm.[56]
"Parents cause their children to become LGBT2SQ."	Just as we cannot explain what makes some people heterosexual or cisgender, we do not understand what makes other people LGBT2SQ.
"Transgender people are just confused about their gender. It's just a phase."	Individuals do not choose to be transgender, much like other individuals do not choose to be cisgender. Research indicates gender identity cannot be changed by therapies designed to make a person "match" their sex/assigned sex.[57]
"Gender identity and sexual orientation are the same thing."	Gender identity and sexual orientation are two completely separate aspects of a person's identity. Gender identity is a person's internal and individual experience of gender, while sexual orientation speaks to a person's attraction.
"A person is either 'straight' or 'gay.' "	Many experts view sexual orientation as diverse and fluid, recognizing that many people are not exclusively homosexual or heterosexual.

MYTH	FACT
"A bisexual person is just confused."	A person who identifies as bisexual experiences attraction to people of more than one sex/assigned sex or gender. It does not mean that they are confused about their sexual orientation.
"I can tell if an individual is LGBT2SQ."	This premise is based on the false assumption that all LGBT2SQ people exhibit what society has determined to be stereotypical behaviour of LGBT2SQ individuals. Many self-identified heterosexual (or "straight") individuals exhibit mannerisms or behaviours that society considers as being "gay."
"Coming out is a one-time event."	Coming out is a lifelong and daily process as LGBT2SQ individuals decide how to express their identity/orientation and to whom they wish to reveal their identity/orientation.
"All LGBT2SQ people have had some kind of negative experience to 'make them that way.' "	There is no evidence linking child abuse with sexual orientation or gender identity later in life.
"Children raised by same-sex parents are more likely to be LGBT2SQ themselves."	Research has concluded that children raised by same-gender parents are no more or less likely to be LGBT2SQ than children raised by heterosexual parents.[58]
"There is no longer discrimination against LGBT2SQ individuals."	Many children and youth still regularly experience and/or witness anti-LGBT2SQ put downs and fight cissexist expectations of gender on a daily basis.
"LGBT2SQ is one community."	LGBT2SQ people are as diverse and intersectional as non-LGBT2SQ populations. People of any race, ethnicity, religious or spiritual affiliation, language, age, and ability can identify as LGBT2SQ. When referring to LGBT2SQ groups, it is more appropriate to say LGBT2SQ communities.

PART 3

PART ③ AFFIRMING SERVICES

LGBT2SQ-affirming and inclusive services, placements, and organizations create conditions where children and youth may feel comfortable expressing themselves without fear of rejection, ridicule, disrespect, or invisibility. Inclusive environments in the child welfare system can help LGBT2SQ children and youth feel safe and respected, and reduce the potential that they may experience the risks and challenges outlined in the previous section. LGBT2SQ-affirming and inclusive services can help children and youth develop a positive sense of self, build their resilience, and make trusted connections that will be important throughout their lives.

Every individual has an important role to play in creating inclusive and affirming services in the child welfare system, and supporting LGBT2SQ children and youth to be safe, and reach their full potential:

- *Everyone* involved in the child welfare system can become an ally. Allies are youth, families, caregivers, child protection workers, and child welfare leaders who do not identify as LGBT2SQ, but who are committed to take action to promote fairness, acceptance, mutual respect, and equity for LGBT2SQ children, youth, and families.

- *Families and caregivers* can make conscious choices to provide supportive, inclusive and affirming care for LGBT2SQ children and youth. Families who accept their child or youth's sexual orientation and gender identity and expression provide a critical protective factor that greatly reduces risks that LGBT2SQ children and youth face, and strongly influences health, wellbeing, and positive outcomes for their children.[59]

- *Child welfare professionals* can support families and caregivers struggling to accept their LGBT2SQ child or youth's identity by delivering services within their mandate that are supportive, accessible, and affirming. Professionals can also support LGBT2SQ children and youth in accessing affirming health care, education, services, positive spaces, peers, and communities that are culturally relevant.

- *Child welfare leaders* can be committed to organizational cultures that are safe, inclusive, and affirming, so that all services are inclusive, equitable, and demonstrate respect for LGBT2SQ children, youth, and families.

Affirming and inclusive services promote resiliency in children and youth, which research indicates improves future outcomes.[60] Resiliency refers to a child or youth's ability to bounce back from tough situations and thrive.[61] Promoting resiliency can decrease the likelihood of a child or youth feeling isolated and help build skills to recover from difficulties they encounter. Introducing even a few positive elements into a child or youth's life (e.g., family supports, supportive social environments) can help them bounce back, flourish, and reach their full potential.[62]

To be resilient, LGBT2SQ children and youth need adults in their lives who respect their sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. The single most common factor for children and youth who are resilient is having at least one stable and committed relationship with a supportive parent, caregiver, or other adult.[63]

It is important to understand that resiliency in Two-Spirit and Indigenous LGBTQ children and youth will look different than in non-Indigenous children and youth. Building resiliency within Two-Spirit and Indigenous LGBTQ children and youth is dependent on access to culture and ceremony, as well as the opportunity for them to build a sense of belonging with their community. To increase resiliency in Two-Spirit and Indigenous LGBTQ children and youth, it is crucial to ensure they have access to holistic supports that affirm their overlapping and intersecting identities. The importance of holistic, community-based supports to building resiliency also applies to other populations of LGBTQ children and youth (e.g., Black and racialized children and youth).

This part of the guide provides tips and resources that may be considered by families, caregivers, and child protection and residential services workers to develop, promote, and create LGBT2SQ affirming and inclusive practices. Part III covers the following topics:

- The importance of allies
- Demonstrating respect in conversations with LGBT2SQ children and youth
- Supporting families who are struggling with their child's identity
- Intake, assessment and service planning for LGBT2SQ children and youth
- Inclusive language in forms and tools
- Affirming placements

- Affirming and inclusive placements for transgender children and youth
- Supporting transgender and gender diverse children and youth
- Affirming programs and activities for LGBT2SQ children and youth
- Supporting LGBT2SQ youth in care to transition to adulthood.

Five/Fourteen

Five/Fourteen, an LGBTQ-focused foster care agency, is based in Windsor with locations in other cities across Ontario and is dedicated to providing services and support to LGBTQ and gender diverse youth in foster care. It draws its name from both the anniversary of the decriminalization of homosexual acts in Canada, as well as the date of Ontario's Children and Youth in Care Day, both of which fall on May 14.

For more information please visit: http://www.fostering.ca/

9. The Importance of Allies

As noted previously, allies play an important role in the child welfare system by promoting and contributing to organizational and system cultures in which LGBT2SQ people are valued and respected. They model behaviours and practices that affirm the identities, worth, and equality of children and youth.[64] Allies stand up to homophobia, transphobia, biphobia, and all forms of oppression through their ongoing actions.

RESOURCE
Info and tips on how to be an ally to LGBT2SQ children and youth

Egale Canada Human Rights Trust: How to be an LGBTQ Ally
https://egale.ca/how-to-be-an-lgbtq-ally/

Allies can feel confident that while their support may seem small, these acts can make a significant difference in the lives of LGBT2SQ children and youth, and promote positive system and organizational change.

HOW YOU CAN BE AN ALLY

✓ Assume in every conversation that there are LGBT2SQ people or people with LGBT2SQ loved ones in the room. Allies consider how others might be affected by the tone and direction of the conversation.

✓ Do not make assumptions about how people identify. Listen for, or politely ask at the appropriate moments, how someone identifies (e.g., gay, lesbian, cisgender, transgender, gender-fluid, genderqueer), and what name and gender pronoun (e.g., he, she, they) they prefer.

✓ Recognize how being cisgender and/or heterosexual is privileged in society, and identify ways to use that privilege to support LGBT2SQ people and communities.

✓ Use inclusive language in both individual and group conversations so that everyone feels welcome (e.g., use partner instead of only "boyfriend" or only "girlfriend"; "hi everyone" instead of "boys and girls" or "ladies and gentlemen").

✓ Listen respectfully to the experiences and perspectives of LGBT2SQ children and youth, validate what is shared and acknowledge that homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia exist, and that it takes courage to share personal stories and ideas.

✓ Speak up when witnessing offensive language or bullying behaviour. Addressing homophobia, transphobia, and biphobia is a shared responsibility, not just that of LGBT2SQ people alone.

✓ Promote inclusive practices, policies, and procedures that address barriers for LGBT2SQ children and youth (e.g., lack of LGBT2SQ positive messaging, spaces, programs, non-inclusive forms) within an organization.

✓ Recognize and address the intersecting identities and possible multiple oppressions that a child or youth may experience, and the unique situations and barriers that they may face (e.g., LGBT2SQ children and youth who are Indigenous, Black, racialized, live with a disability).

✓ Let all children and youth know that you are open to talking about and affirming LGBT2SQ identities and experiences.

10. Demonstrating Respect in Conversations with LGBT2SQ Children and Youth

When children and youth are able to talk openly about their identities, service providers are better equipped to meet their needs. At all stages of involvement with the child welfare system (e.g., initial contact and assessment, ongoing service, and transitioning out of care), children and youth need to feel respected and engaged in issues that affect their care and wellbeing.

It is important to remember that you may not know if a child or youth is LGBT2SQ, so all conversations should be respectful and encourage children and youth to feel safe and comfortable voluntarily sharing information about their identity.

A child or youth may, with any person and at any time, disclose or discuss their identity/orientation and/or their experiences. As a result, all child protection workers, other staff and board members in child welfare agencies, caregivers, families, and volunteers should be well trained and ready to have these conversations in an informed and supportive manner.

LGBT Youth Line

Youth Line is an Ontario-wide LGBT2SQ peer support line. Youth Line offers confidential and non-judgmental peer support through telephone, text, and chat services.

For more information on LGBT Youth Line visit: http://www.youthline.ca

What are gender neutral pronouns?

Many people believe that there are only two sets of pronouns: she/her/hers or he/him/his. However, these pronouns do not reflect all gender identities (e.g., transgender and gender fluid). Other pronouns that may be used include:

- *They/them/theirs (singular)*
- *Ze/Zie, Hir/Zir, Hirs/Zirs*
- *Ey/Em/Eir*

To avoid using the wrong pronouns, and potentially misgendering someone, ask them which pronouns they use to refer to themselves. If you are unable to ask someone about their pronouns, default to using their name and gender neutral language (example: this is Sally and they enjoy playing baseball).

Learn more about gender neutral pronouns and inclusive language through The 519, a community agency in Toronto: http://www.the519.org/education-training/

When the opportunity arises to have a one-to-one conversation with a child or youth about their sexual orientation and/or gender identity:

- Listen for and create space for self-disclosure. Children and youth will disclose their sexual orientation and/or gender identity when, and if, they feel ready, and if it has been demonstrated that it is safe to do so.

- Do not "out" a child or youth without their permission. Allow them to set the pace of "coming out" if that is what they want. Be proactive in opening conversations related to gender and sexual diversity (e.g., ask: "Do you know what the rainbow sticker on my datebook means?").

- Ask for a child or youth's consent to record, share, or use their chosen name(s), pronouns, or other information related to their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

- Ask respectful questions and be clear that you want to understand their perspectives, wishes and experiences, and that you will accept and support them in the identity that feels most comfortable for them.

- Children and youth have a right to confidentiality. You should not disclose information regarding a child or youth's sexual orientation or gender identity without good reason (e.g., a safety concern) and only with their permission. This includes disclosure to the child or youth's family or caregiver.

- Never make assumptions about a child or youth's gender identity or sexual orientation based on their dress, behaviour, or other forms of gender expression, although sometimes these can give clues to their identity.

- Do not assume that LGBT2SQ children and youth are suffering or have regrets about their sexual orientation or gender identity, and want to be heterosexual or cisgender. Likewise, if an LGBT2SQ child or youth is having problems, don't assume that sexual orientation or gender identity is the cause.

- Recognize that many children and youth have never heard anything positive about being LGBT2SQ. They may have internalized negative social messages and stereotypes about LGBT2SQ people. Provide them with a positive response that affirms who they are and their experiences as an LGBT2SQ-identified person.

- Create a safe environment by letting them lead the conversation as much as possible.

- Be a connector. Children and youth need information and access to other LGBT2SQ people of all ages, including peers and role models— when they are ready. In smaller areas it may be necessary to reach out to the broader community or other communities across the province. LGBT2SQ children and youth living in regions where these supports are not readily available can be connected with supports that are available online (see Part 5: B of this guide—Relevant provincial and national organizations, service directories, regional and community agencies and support networks, LGBT2SQ-specific health centres, and LGBT2SQ social events (i.e., LGBT2SQ-specific film festivals, Pride organizations)—p. 68).

- LGBT2SQ children and youth have different experiences and have specialized needs. Make sure you are informed about appropriate LGBT2SQ services and supports (e.g., health care, mental health, and education) to promote healthy development and self-esteem.

- For youth transitioning out of care, a successful transition to adulthood can be facilitated by relationships with caring adults who provide youth with emotional support, guidance, and assistance in this time of change. Connect LGBT2SQ children and youth transitioning out of care with appropriate organizations, resources, and services, and help them build community that includes other LGBT2SQ peers and mentors.

RESOURCE

Tips on having respectful conversations with LGBT2SQ children and youth

Central Toronto Youth Services, Families in Transition: Communication Matters

http://www.ctys.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/CTYS-FIT-Families-in-Transition-Guide-2nd-edition.pdf

11. Supporting Families who are Struggling with their Child's Identity

Research indicates that family acceptance or rejection plays a critical role in influencing the health, mental health, and wellbeing of all children and youth.[65] Some research suggests that LGBT2SQ children and youth may be over-represented in the child welfare system because they have been rejected or abused by their families due to their LGBT2SQ identity.[66] The objective for societies in all child protection cases is to continually work with the child's family and extended family or community towards establishing a stable, safe, and permanent home for the child.

Family acceptance helps:

- protect against depression, suicidal behaviour, and substance abuse;
- promote self-esteem, social support, and overall health; and
- support and strengthen the relationship between family and child.

The 519

The 519, a Toronto-based community centre, runs LGBT2SQ-positive programs for youth including a Newcomer Youth Mentorship program for those new to Canada, a Trans Youth Sports drop-in program, a Body Love movement work-shop, and an Animation Movie Camp called Animating!

For more information, visit:
http://www.the519.org/programs/category/youth

Families who are struggling to accept their child or youth's sexual and/or gender identity may need support from child welfare professionals to change their behaviours if those behaviours have resulted in the child or youth suffering harm or being exposed to a risk of harm within the meaning of child welfare legislation. In some cases, it may be necessary to bring a child or youth to a place of safety while parents or caregivers learn how to better support their LGBT2SQ children and youth. Research demonstrates that rejecting families can become much more accepting if they receive support and accurate information to understand, accept, and connect with their child.[67]

Child protection workers can support families and caregivers who struggle with their child or youth's identity by doing the following:[68]

- providing a setting where parents and caregivers may privately raise concerns, feelings and questions about their child's identity;

- providing information to correct misunderstandings and address myths about sexual and gender diversity;

- educating families and caregivers about the impacts of family rejection on LGBT2SQ children and youth;

- giving families respectful language to talk about sexual orientation and/or gender identity and expression with their child or youth;

- educating families and caregivers on how supportive and accepting behaviours will positively affect LGBT2SQ children and youth and what these behaviours look like (e.g., using a child or youth's chosen name(s) and pronouns, allowing age-appropriate relationships, providing LGBT2SQ positive information, including on community resources); and

- referring families to peer supports that help build connections with LGBT2SQ-positive families and allies (e.g., peer support networks such as PFLAG[vii]), and when possible, trying to connect them with other families and caregivers with similar cultures, faiths, and places of origin, who support their LGBT2SQ children and youth.

Many families struggle in isolation to understand their child or youth's identity, unaware of community resources that can help. Providing appropriate support and resources can repair or strengthen a family's relationship with their child or youth and help them gain understanding, shift perspectives, change behaviours, and become allies.

vii PFLAG Canada supports, educates and provides resources to anyone with questions or concerns about family member gender expression, gender identity and/or sexual orientation. More information is available at: http://pflagcanada.ca/

RESOURCES

Support for families struggling to accept their child or youth's identity

A Practitioner's Resource Guide: Helping Families Support Their LGBT Children
https://www.suicideinfo.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/
Helping-Families-to-Support-Their-LGBT-Children_oa.pdf

PFLAG Canada: a national charitable organization, founded by parents who wished to help themselves and their family members understand and accept their non-heterosexual children
http://pflagcanada.ca

A list of PFLAG chapters across Ontario can be accessed at:
http://pflagcanada.ca/pflag-chapters/ontario/

LGBT Family Coalition
http://www.familleslgbt.org/main.php?lang=en

12. Intake, Assessment and Service Planning for LGBT2SQ Children and Youth

There are specific requirements outlined in legislation, regulation, and standards that must be followed by societies and child protection workers in determining if a child or youth is in need of protection and in providing child protection services, when appropriate. This section outlines key stages of this process and discusses how child protection workers can become more informed about the experiences and needs of LGBT2SQ children, youth, and families, and use their clinical assessment skills to explore issues of safety and wellbeing that are related to identity at each stage of a child protection case.

Intake: Receiving a Referral and Determining the Appropriate Response

When a society receives a report or information that a child or youth is or may be in need of protection, they assess the referral in accordance with the requirements in the *Ontario Child Protection Standards* (the Standards) and apply the *Ontario Child Welfare Eligibility Spectrum* (the Spectrum) to support decision making about eligibility for child protection services. The child protection worker uses the Spectrum in combination with other available information about protective factors, safety threats and risks, and patterns of previous child welfare involvement, to determine the most appropriate response to the referral that meets the unique needs of children and youth (for safety) and their families (for support).

When determining eligibility for services for LGBT2SQ children and youth, based on the information available, child protection workers should also consider to what extent, if any, sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or gender expression are contributing factors associated with the referral for child welfare services and the child or youth's level of safety and risk. In doing so, child protection workers can more adequately evaluate the unique needs of the child or youth and their family, and determine the most appropriate response.

Conducting a Safety Assessment and Risk Assessment

If a child protection worker determines that an investigation is required, the Standards guide the child protection worker in making decisions about the child's needs and care—through the investigative phase of service, to planning for ongoing case management, and throughout the life of the case.

In accordance with the Standards, a child protection worker first conducts a safety assessment to determine the level of immediate danger to a child or youth. The child protection worker considers the immediate threat of harm and the seriousness of the harm or danger given the current information and circumstances. The child protection worker also conducts a risk assessment to determine the likelihood of future risk of child maltreatment due to family characteristics, behaviours, and functioning. The results of the risk assessment are intended to inform case decision making and service provision.

It is important to note that a determination for ongoing intervention must be based on the existing grounds for determining whether a child is in need of protection in accordance with the Standards and the Spectrum. The determination that the child is in need of protection is independent of a family's response to a child's LGBT2SQ identity, unless there is harm or risk of harm that is sufficient to ground the determination that the child or youth is in need of protection. The existence of strife within the family over the child or youth's LGBT2SQ identity, even if that strife includes a degree of poor treatment, does not, in and of itself, create a ground for a child welfare intervention.

Family rejection is an important factor to identify and assess when determining whether a child or youth is in need of protection, as family rejection of the child or youth's sexual and/or gender identity can increase a child or youth's risk of harm, self-harm, and suicidal thoughts and behaviours.

When conducting the safety and risk assessments for children and youth who identify as, or may be, LGBT2SQ, child protection workers can include consideration of whether the parents' or caregivers' attitudes and/or response towards the child or youth's sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or gender expression are putting the child or youth at risk of emotional, physical, or sexual harm.[69] The child protection worker can assess the effects of family rejection or acceptance on the wellbeing of LGBT2SQ children and youth.[70]

When conducting the safety and risk assessment, a child protection worker may wish to consider whether the LGBT2SQ child or youth is experiencing, or is at risk of, maltreatment and rejecting behaviours. Some examples include:

- physical punishment because of the child or youth's sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or gender expression;

- verbal harassment or name-calling related to the child or youth's LGBT2SQ identity;

- sexual assault or aggression related to the child or youth's LGBT2SQ identity;

- being forbidden from dressing, grooming, or expressing their gender in a way that is consistent with their gender identity;

- being prevented from accessing healthy LGBT2SQ supports and community, such as peers or mentors;

- being prevented from accessing gender-affirming health care and transition support;

- refusing to acknowledge a transgender or gender diverse child or youth's choice of name and gender pronouns; and/or

- subjecting the child or youth to reparative therapy, religious conversions, or other treatment designed to attempt to change sexual orientation and/or gender identity.[71]

After an investigation has concluded, if there is a determination that the child or youth is in need of protection and the case is transferred to ongoing services, the focus of ongoing services is on protecting the child(ren) and engaging families in services and other community supports in order to reduce the likelihood of future harm to the child(ren). At this stage in the child protection case, it is critical that child protection workers assist the child or youth determined to be in need of protection, and their families, with identifying and accessing community services that are affirming and support acceptance of diverse sexual and gender identities.

Ongoing Service Case Management

Once a decision is made that the child/youth and family will receive ongoing child protection services from a society, the child protection worker will develop a service plan (for both in/out of care services). The service plan is the link between assessment and intervention and guides the family, child protection worker, other service providers, and all casework activities toward well-defined goals and outcomes against which progress can be measured over time. The service plan utilizes family strengths and targets areas of need and is intended to reduce and/or eliminate risk, and increase the safety and wellbeing of the child or youth and family.

The child-focused and family-centred approach to service delivery is both a philosophy and a practice that supports active and meaningful participation of families and their support system in case planning and when service decisions are being made. Together, a child protection worker and the family identify intervention strategies and services that would assist in the reduction and/or elimination of risk for the LGBT2SQ child or youth, to increase their safety and wellbeing and, if the service plan involves an out-of-home placement, identify the path to family reunification.

The goal of the service plan, developed through collaboration and engagement with the family and child or youth, is to address the behaviours that have created the need for protection, and should consider:

- developing an understanding of the caregiver's perspective, including assumptions and values that may be associated with the behaviours that have created the need for protection;

- identifying available supports or services (e.g., peer-support groups for families of LGBT2SQ children and youth) that could help address the protection concerns by promoting positive change and improve child and youth safety and wellbeing;

- strengthening the child or youth's connections to supportive adults;

- identifying individuals within the family's and child or youth's networks, including cultural and faith communities, who can model and reinforce acceptance of the LGBT2SQ child or youth, and provide direct support to them and/or their family; and

- using a child and youth-centred approach that encourages and considers the child or youth's voice.

In situations where a parent-child separation is required, the chosen placement should be one that affirms the child or youth's LGBT2SQ identity[72]. Additionally, the service plan can consider individuals, organizations, and professionals from whom the child or youth may wish to receive more support related to their LGBT2SQ identity.

The following chart identifies considerations for child protection workers when using mandated tools with LGBT2SQ children and youth, and/or their families. While these tools are required and there is structure to them, workers can apply them in ways that support LGBT2SQ children, youth, and families, and affirm their identities. The considerations are not exclusive or limited to any one of the tools and can be used at all stages of case management.

Family Strengths and Needs Assessment

DESCRIPTION: Assists child protection workers to identify the presence of family and child/youth strengths and resources by identifying the needs of family members and utilizing family strengths while targeting areas of need.

Consideration when using the tool:

- Does the child/youth have supports in place where they can openly express their sexual orientation, gender identity or expression?
- Does the family or caregiver have supports in place to assist with understanding and accepting their child/youth's sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, including those that are connected to their cultural or faith communities?
- Does the child have people in their life who can act as advocates for their needs, in spaces such as schools, if needed?
- Has the child/youth been utilizing drugs or alcohol, engaging in self-harm, considering or attempting suicide or running away, potentially as a way to cope with any internalized homophobia, biphobia or transphobia which may or may not relate to the situation in their home?
- Has the child experienced bullying in school or elsewhere because of their sexual orientation, gender identity or expression?
- What is the child or youth's perception of themselves?
- Does the child or youth have a peer group or friends who are part of LGBT2SQ communities?

Plan of Care

DESCRIPTION: Specifies the plan for a child/youth when receiving services from a society, including desired outcomes linked to the child/youth's needs and strengths.

Consideration when using the tool:

- How have the child/youth's sexual orientation, gender identity or expression been considered in the development of the plan of care (e.g., possible peer supports, affirming placement and caregiver, identifying affirming service providers), and access to transition supports and gender-affirming health care, if desired?

Assessment and Action Record (AAR)

DESCRIPTION: Tracks the progress of a child/youth in care in seven life dimensions: health, education, identity, family and social relationships, social presentation, emotional and behavioural development, and self-care skills. The AAR helps child welfare professionals, families, and caregivers assess a child/youth's needs, develop high-quality plans of care, and monitor the child/youth's progress from year to year.

Consideration when using the tool:

- Has the child/youth expressed interest in further exploring their sexual orientation and gender identity or expression?

- Does the child/youth have a relationship with individuals who are supportive of the child/youth's sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression? If so, who?

- Does the child/youth feel comfortable talking to their primary physician about their sexual orientation, gender identity or expression?

- How have others responded to their identities or perceptions about their identity? Have they experienced negative responses (e.g., bullying, blame, ostracism)?

- How well supported are they for their identity in their family or placement? At school? In the community?

Inclusive Language in Forms and Tools

By using inclusive language, staff and caregivers can communicate that it is safe to be open with them about gender identity and sexual orientation. Inclusive language is a powerful way to demonstrate that no assumptions and/or value judgments will be made about a child or youth's identity or the ways they prefer to express their gender.

When staff adopt inclusive language in using child welfare tools, services are likely to be even more responsive to the needs of a child or youth.

Placing a blank for a person's gender designation allows an individual to identify their gender identity. The "Other" box can feel like an after-thought and people are made to feel like a freak for not "fitting in" to the other boxes.

— Youth

Additionally, inclusive language in child welfare forms demonstrates an organization's commitment to inclusion and diversity, communicates to children and youth that they are recognized, and can help make services more responsive to the unique needs of each LGBT2SQ child or youth. For example, wherever gender information is requested, forms should include multiple options, and not only "male" or "female." Forms should also provide an opportunity for individuals to indicate whether the name they go by is different from their legal name. For example, if a legal name is needed, a form can ask

for "Legal name" as well as "Chosen name(s)." Language can also be made more inclusive by replacing narrow options such as "mother" and "father" with "parent 1," "parent 2," and "parent 3."
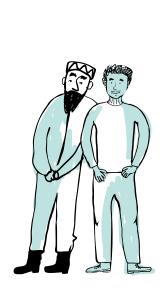
Conducting a review of all forms and tools is an important step to making language inclusive of LGBT2SQ children, youth, and families.

RESOURCE
Making forms more inclusive for LGBT2SQ children and youth

Inclusive Agency Forms. Human Rights Campaign
http://www.hrc.org/resources/all-children-all-families-inclusive-agency-forms
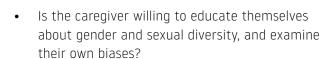
13. Affirming Placements

Caregiver Recruitment and Placement Selection

Finding appropriate and affirming placements for LGBT2SQ children and youth (e.g., foster, customary, kin, and group care placements) is critical for their safety and wellbeing. When LGBT2SQ children and youth are placed in settings that are not affirming, they are at greater risk of bullying and potential violence from their peers, and may face rejection or denial of their identity by their caregivers. Affirming placements, on the other hand, can help build a child or youth's self-esteem, confidence, and self-advocacy, which all can assist with long-term positive outcomes. For Two-Spirit and LGBTQ Indigenous, Black, and racialized children and youth, culturally appropriate placements and facilitating connections with community members, mentors and cultural spaces that affirm and support their sexual and gender identities is critical to providing good care.

With the goal of finding affirming placements, child welfare professionals may consider the following questions, whether they know the child or youth's identity or not:

- Has the caregiver or family received adequate information and training on LGBT2SQ-inclusiveness?

> Our agency needs to change its policies on gay/lesbian foster and adoptive homes. How are youth supposed to feel welcome when who they are isn't accepted?
> —Foster Parent

- Is the caregiver willing to educate themselves about gender and sexual diversity, and examine their own biases?

- Does the caregiver or members of the family openly identify as LGBT2SQ?

- Does the caregiver have knowledge and awareness of LGBT2SQ communities and issues that may uniquely affect LGBT2SQ children and youth?

- Does the caregiver have any experience providing a positive home for LGBT2SQ children and youth?

- Are there currently any other LGBT2SQ children, youth or adults in the placement?

- Does the caregiver model LGBT2SQ-affirming and inclusive behaviour (e.g., referring to children and youth by their chosen name(s) and pronouns, encouraging children and youth to utilize the washroom that best aligns with their gender identity)?

RESOURCE
Information for caregivers on LGBT2SQ inclusiveness

In the All Children All Families section of the Human Rights Campaign website, there is a webinar for foster/adoptive families caring for LGBT2SQ youth, called *Caring for LGBTQ Youth: An Introduction for Foster & Adoptive Parents* (60-minutes).

Available online at:
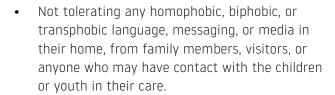http://www.hrc.org/resources/all-children-all-families-webinars

- Is the caregiver open and willing to affirm the child or youth's choice of name, pronouns, clothes, hairstyle, and/or other indicators of identity?

- Is the caregiver willing to support and promote LGBT2SQ cultural inclusion in the home (e.g., posting LGBT2SQ-positive symbols and posters, making LGBT2SQ-positive resources, books, and films available)?

- Will the caregiver support a child or youth to access LGBT2SQ social functions or support groups specifically for LGBT2SQ people, as well as any health appointments related to their identity?

Families and caregivers can create and maintain open, safe, and inclusive homes through various strategies, such as:

- Creating an environment where it feels safe and comfortable to speak openly and honestly about sexual orientation and/or gender identity (e.g., through modelling positive behaviour for other family members and peers, not tolerating incidents or expressions of homophobia, transphobia, or biphobia, having day-to-day conversations that affirm the child or youth).

- Inviting the child or youth's friends and/or partner home and to family events and activities.

- When the child or youth is ready, reaching out for peer supports (e.g., family to family, parent to parent, caregiver to caregiver) and supportive community groups that welcome LGBT2SQ children, youth, and families.[73]

> Sharing rooms is a common thing in the foster care system, which may be much more complicated for trans folks.
> —Youth

- Not tolerating any homophobic, biphobic, or transphobic language, messaging, or media in their home, from family members, visitors, or anyone who may have contact with the children or youth in their care.

Affirming Placements for Transgender and Gender Diverse Children and Youth

Transgender children and youth have distinct needs and often face multiple barriers and placement changes.[74] Child welfare practitioners may wish to consider the following when recruiting caregivers and selecting placements for transgender children and youth:

- Transgender children and youth should be consulted about their preferred type of placement. In general, they should be provided with placements according to the gender with which they identify, or mixed gender placements, and should not be placed according to their legal sex/sex at birth. Exceptions may be made in some circumstances in consultation with the child or youth (e.g., if they are in a stable placement when they come out and prefer to stay; if they are just beginning to transition and would be uncomfortable or unsafe in a placement based on their gender identity).

- Transgender children and youth should have access to appropriate washroom facilities (e.g., all-gender, single-stall washrooms) and private spaces. If washrooms are segregated by gender, transgender children and youth should be permitted to use the washroom that feels most comfortable, based on their lived gender identity and safety.

- Placements should be supportive of the transition of transgender children and youth.

- Transgender children and youth should be asked their preference regarding sharing a room with another child or youth of the same birth assigned sex.

RESOURCES
Selecting affirming placements for transgender children and youth

Getting Down to Basics: Tools to Support LGBTQ Youth In Care: Working With Transgender Youth
https://www.lambdalegal.org/sites/default/files/gdtb_2013_09_transgender_youthr.pdf

AdoptUSKids: Talking with Experts: Part 1 of 3: Engaging LGBT Families: Creating a Welcoming Environment
http://adoptuskids.org/_assets/files/NRCRRFAP/resources/talking-with-experts-on-engaging-lgbt-families-part-1.pdf

Human Rights Campaign webinar about promising practices for serving trans and gender diverse youth for foster/adoptive parents:
http://www.hrc.org/resources/all-children-all-families-webinars.

14. Supporting Transgender and Gender Diverse Children and Youth

Providing affirming homes and services for transgender and gender diverse children and youth involved with the child welfare system means allowing them to freely and openly express their identity. This includes supporting a child or youth's choice of clothing or hairstyle, which can be important aspects of self-expression. It may also include supporting access to tools (e.g., chest binders, packers, stand-to-pee devices), gender-confirming health care and/or interventions (e.g., hormone treatments, hair removal) that for some children and youth may help them to feel their body better aligns with their gender identity.

It is critically important that transgender youth interested in hormone blockers, hormone treatments, and other gender-confirming health care interventions receive competent and affirming medical advice and care. Youth who don't have access to the health services they need, for example, may resort to using hormones without a doctor's supervision, which could lead to negative health consequences. Lack of access to trans-affirming health care can also lead to mental health concerns (depression, anxiety), self-harm, substance use, and suicide.

It is also important to avoid assumptions that youth interested in considering hormone blockers or therapies, or other medical interventions should wait until they are older to make decisions. Forcing youth to wait to access gender-confirming health care greatly increases risks, including suicidal thoughts and behaviours. Referrals to medical professionals who are competent in working with transgender and gender diverse youth should be sought, so that they can receive appropriate advice and care.[75] Where qualified medical professionals cannot be easily accessed, especially in rural or northern communities, mentoring by experienced practitioners and collaborative care by local and distance practitioners may be possible.[viii]

Finding Gender-Affirming Supplies

It is important to look for stores or agencies, both online and in your community, that sell or rent gender-affirming supplies such as binders, packers, stand-to-pee devices, and hair removal devices.

Read QMUNITY's resource on chest health for trans, gender diverse, and Two-Spirit communities to learn more about safe binding practices and where to purchase binding supplies online. This resource can be accessed at: http://qmunity.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/I_Heart_My_Chest_-_English_version.pdf

viii Contact Rainbow Health Ontario for information, training and referrals; consult their online Trans Primary Care Guide https://www.rainbowhealthontario.ca/TransHealthGuide/

Community Spotlight: The DressCode Project

The DressCode Project is an initiative to create safer spaces in salons for people in LGBT2SQ communities. The initiative highlights the importance of being able to look the way you feel and how going to a salon and asking for a haircut that is not traditional to your gender is sometimes a scary and difficult experience, particularly for people who are transgender.

The DressCode Project has the objective of ending gender discrimination in the hair industry by ensuring an affirming, supportive and non-judgmental salon experience. All DressCode salons undertake to use appropriate pronouns, have gender neutral washrooms and complete sensitivity training provided by the DressCode Project. The DressCode Project also hosts "The Gender Free Haircut Club," a free haircut event for LGBT2SQ youth once every two months in Toronto. For more information and the online directory of salons participating in the DressCode Project, visit:
http://dresscodeproject.com/
Instagram: @thedresscodeproject
Facebook: Dress Code Project

Additionally, child welfare professionals and caregivers can support self-expression of transgender and gender diverse youth by:[76]

- Promoting organizational cultures or policies that support a youth's self-expression;

- Modelling trans-positive behaviours in the workplace, home, and the community;

- Participating in and promoting trans-positive community activities; and

- Assuming that transgender youth are NOT "acting out" when they express their gender identity.

Not being able to make my own decisions means to me that my voice and opinion isn't being heard. Not being able to make my own decisions can make a person feel small and invisible. This could make people feel insecure because no one listens to their opinions, ideas, and decisions.
—*Youth* (From *The Ultimate Health Rights Survival Guide,* Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth)

Government-issued identification and gender identity

Birth registration and certificates record the sex/assigned sex of all children and youth. Personal information listed on birth registration and certificates is used to develop other forms of government-issued identification. For transgender and genderqueer children and youth, this means that their government-issued identification aligns with their sex/assigned sex and not their gender identity (Rainbow Health Ontario, 2015).

It is important that transgender and genderqueer children and youth have the option of changing government-issued identification to align with their gender identity. Lack of access to affirming identification can significantly impact access to job opportunities, housing, appropriate health care and social services, and can decrease safety (particularly if what is on a child or youth's identification doesn't match their gender expression).

With the support of parents, guardians, and caregivers, sex designation can be changed on the following government-issued identification:

- *Ontario Birth Registration and Certificate*
- *Ontario Driver's Licence*
- *Federal Passports*

Note: Ontario Health Cards issued as of June 13, 2016, no longer list sex designation (although this information is still within the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care's database).

Take a look at the following websites for more information on how to change sex designations on government issued identification:

- *Changing sex designation on an Ontario birth registration and certificate:*
  https://www.ontario.ca/page/changing-your-sex-designation-your-birth-registration-and-birth-certificate

- *Changing sex designation on an Ontario driver's licence:*
  https://www.ontario.ca/faq/how-do-i-change-sex-designation-my-drivers-licence

- *Changing the sex designation on a passport:*
  https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/canadian-passports/change-sex.html

15. Affirming Programs and Activities for LGBT2SQ Children and Youth

Tailored programs for LGBT2SQ children and youth promote peer and community connections, build identity and positive self-regard, and provide an opportunity for fun social events. Programs that are not specific to LGBT2SQ children and youth, but that support their presence and actively affirm their rights and dignity, can also help LGBT2SQ children and youth feel they do not have to keep their identity a secret.[77] In northern, remote, and rural communities, child welfare workers can be creative and collaborate with other community organizations and agencies to ensure children and youth have access to affirming programs and activities.

Some agencies have established LGBT2SQ peer support or social/recreational groups. These groups may include allies, be offered in partnership with other community organizations, and include LGBT2SQ children and youth who are not in the child welfare system. Sponsoring or participating in Pride events (e.g., LGBT2SQ Pride, Trans Pride) are also important ways to affirm LGBT2SQ children and youth. If peer support and social groups for LGBT2SQ children and youth are not available, child welfare workers, as allies, may wish to assist in developing them.

It is important that child welfare organizations collaborate with other identity-based organizations, for example, Indigenous organizations that provide culture-based and holistic services. Two-Spirit or LGBTQ Indigenous children and youth can be referred to a local Indigenous Friendship Centre[ix] to access culturally-based services and programming, or be provided with information about the Native Youth Sexual Health Network, which is an organization led by and for Indigenous youth that works across issues of sexual and reproductive health, rights, and justice.[x]

SOY – Supporting Our Youth

Located at Sherbourne Health Centre in Toronto, Supporting Our Youth (SOY) works to support the health and well-being of all queer and trans spectrum youth by running groups, programs, and events. For more information, visit http://www.soytoronto.org

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ix   A listing of local Indigenous Friendship Centres is available at: http://www.ofifc.org/about-fc/centres/map.

x   Further information on resources, programs and supports offered by the Native Youth Sexual Health Network is available at: http://www.nativeyouthsexualhealth.com.

Transcend Drop-In Trans Youth Group

The Transcend Drop-In Trans Youth Group is operated by gender diverse facilitators for gender diverse youth in Ottawa. Transcend Drop-In gives youth who identify as gender diverse or who are questioning and/or exploring their gender expression a chance to make friends, get support, work on projects, and have fun. The group meets on the last Monday of each month from 6 to 8 p.m. at Family Services Ottawa and eats together. Guest speakers are occasionally invited to the group. For more information on the Transcend Drop-In, visit:

http://familyservicesottawa.org/children-youth-and-families/around-the-rainbow/

El-Tawhid Juma Circle

The El-Tawhid Juma Circle (ETJC) is an LGBTQI2S affirming mosque in Toronto that is welcoming of everyone regardless of sexual orientation, gender, sexual identity, or faith background.

Read more about them here: http://www.jumacircle.com

16. Supporting LGBT2SQ Youth in Care to Transition to Adulthood

All youth leaving care need access to supports to help them transition successfully to adulthood, including fostering connections with community, building social networks, developing life skills, obtaining stable housing, and securing further education, training and employment. When supporting LGBT2SQ youth in these transitions, consideration should be given to helping youth build their self-advocacy and skills to help them address potential discrimination and bias they may face in adult service systems and the community at large (e.g., in securing housing). Connecting these youth with LGBT2SQ programs, mentors, peer supports, networks, and LGBT2SQ-affirming social opportunities is essential. This should also include helping youth connect with culturally-based and faith-based services and supports that they may be seeking. Appendix B includes information on some organizations, service directories, community agencies, and support networks.

RESOURCES
Finding programs and activities that affirm LGBT2SQ-identified children and youth

Creating Safe Space for GLBTQ Youth: A Toolkit. Advocates for Youth
http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/storage/advfy/documents/safespace.pdf

Two Spirit, Trans, Gender Diverse, & Queer Indigenous Youth Group
http://kindspace.ca/2syouth/

LGBT Youth Line, resource list for resources:
http://www.youthline.ca/get-support/links-resources/

Youth in Transition Worker Program

The Ministry of Children and Youth Services funds the Youth-in-Transition Worker (YITW) program in community agencies across Ontario. YITWs are working with youth formerly in the care of a society to connect them with educational, employment, housing, life skills, mental health, and other supports in their communities, and support them to navigate the transition from care to adulthood.

Through the YITW program, funding is provided to the Sherbourne Health Centre's Supporting Our Youth (SOY) program, a mentoring program for LGBT2SQ children and youth in Ontario. SOY has one YITW who focuses on supporting LGBT2SQ children and youth who are leaving care to identify, access, and navigate the services and supports in their communities to make a smooth transition into adulthood.

PART 4

17. Setting the Organizational Context

LGBT2SQ-affirming and inclusive services cannot be dependent solely on individuals working in child welfare organizations or on those who identify as LGBT2SQ. The consistent use of affirming practices throughout the organization is dependent upon the demonstrated commitment and accountability of senior management and Boards of Directors to integrating LGBT2SQ-affirming practices and policies at all levels of their organization.

Child welfare leaders can create an organizational culture that promotes equality by clearly establishing an environment that is inclusive of, and values, diversity. LGBT2SQ-affirming and inclusive organizations take action on the following:

- organizational environments and physical spaces;

- formal policies;

- open communication and dialogue; and

- training.

18. Creating Affirming Environments and Physical Spaces

All children and youth benefit from positive spaces in which gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, and all forms of diversity are supported, made welcome, and promoted in visible ways. It is important to have visible cues in the environment where LGBT2SQ children and youth can see themselves reflected.

Positive spaces reflect a commitment to welcome and include all members of the community and to create safe and affirming environments that are free of discrimination and harassment for all people.[78]

There are different ways to create a positive and affirming organizational environment:

- Display LGBT2SQ posters, a rainbow flag, a trans flag and other LGBT2SQ identity flags, positive space stickers, and other pro-LGBT2SQ symbols that are representative of diverse LGBT2SQ communities. Note that positive space indicators should only be used when backed by training.

- Provide easy access (i.e., in common areas) to resources and information directed to LGBT2SQ children and youth, including resources specific to the experiences and needs of Two-Spirit, Indigenous, Black and racialized LGBT2SQ children and youth, and LGBT2SQ children and youth with disabilities.

- Ensure access to washrooms, change rooms or other gendered spaces is based on a person's lived identity—how they choose to identify and present themselves to the world.

- Celebrate diversity—recognize LGBT2SQ specific holidays and events such as PRIDE and allocate resources for these activities.

- Integrate topics about diversity, equity, and social justice into existing training or in the development of new training.

- Clearly state the organization's commitment to LGBT2SQ inclusivity on the organization's website and printed materials.

Positive space brings visibility and support to LGBT2SQ children, youth, and families involved with the child welfare system. Creating a positive space is about intentionally including positive markers and challenging the patterns of silence that continue to marginalize LGBT2SQ people, even in environments with anti-discriminatory and inclusive policies.[79]

Sample LGBT2SQ Inclusivity Statement

We are committed to anti-oppressive practice in which we challenge the impacts of power and privilege, eliminate barriers, and are inclusive of the broad range of diversity in our community.

—*Durham Children's Aid Society Website*

Positive Space Campaign in Action

The Positive Space Campaign at George Brown College in Toronto is a reflection of the organization's commitment to welcome and include all members of the community and to create a college community that is free of discrimination and harassment based on gender and sexual identity. The Positive Space Campaign brings visibility and support to lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, Two-Spirit, and queer and questioning communities at George Brown College. Trained Resource Persons display the Positive Space Logo at the entrance of their work area, indicating that they are queer-positive and able to provide information and referrals.

https://www.georgebrown.ca/positivespace/

19. Organizational Policies

Formal policies that support fair treatment and opportunity in services and practices, and that clearly set out the organization's values, are the foundation of creating an inclusive organization.

Examples of other policy areas include those related to organizational partnerships and referral relationships, client and community feedback, and anti-oppression training.

Clear expectations can be included in the following[80] (note that sample policies are contained in Appendix C of the guide):

1. Organization's mission, vision, and values statements that communicate a commitment to non-discriminatory, anti-oppressive, and LGBT2SQ-affirming policies and practices.

2. Policies or bylaws related to board composition and recruitment of families, caregivers, and volunteers that communicate that the organization expects itself to be reflective of all populations served, including LGBT2SQ communities.

3. Policies related to ongoing training for all staff, caregivers, and volunteers on LGBT2SQ-affirming and inclusive services and organizational practices.

4. Client/Service non-discrimination policy that prohibits service-related discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression (e.g., policy that LGBT2SQ children and youth receive care according to their self-identified sexual orientation, gender identity, and preferred gender expression).

5. Employment non-discrimination policy that clearly prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression in human resource practices, and requires recruitment, retention, and advancement of a diverse workforce that reflects the community, including diverse gender/sexual identities/expressions.

6. Harassment and complaint procedures that are equipped to address potential discrimination based on gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation.

RESOURCES
Tools for creating a safe and affirming environment

Rainbow Health Ontario—Inclusive Washroom Signage

https://www.rainbowhealthontario.ca/resources/gender-neutral-washroom-signs/

Creating affirmative organizational policies

Human Rights Campaign. LGBTQ Resources for Child Welfare Professionals

https://www.hrc.org/resources/all-children-all-families-additional-resources

Policy on Equitable Child Welfare Services Relating to Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity and Expression. Children's Aid Society of Toronto

http://www.torontocas.ca/sites/torontocas/files/backgrnder-to-policy-gender-di_0.pdf

Creating Authentic Spaces: A Gender Identity and Gender Expression Toolkit to Support the Implementation of Institutional and Social Change

The 519, a Toronto-based community centre, in consultation with the Ontario Human Rights Commission *and members of Toronto's trans communities, developed the* Creating Authentic Spaces: A Gender Identity and Gender Expression Toolkit to Support the Implementation of Institutional and Social Change *to provide organizations with a greater understanding and step-by-step suggestions to create inclusive and affirming environments for everyone, regardless of their gender identity and/or gender expression. The toolkit includes many resources on how to affirm difference, foster diversity, and cultivate inclusivity to strengthen an organization. Pages 70–77 of the toolkit provide tip sheets on the following topics:*

- *Gender-specific and gender-neutral pronouns;*
- *Starting conversations;*
- *Being an effective trans ally;*
- *Being a supportive peer or co-worker;*
- *Supporting an employee in transition;*
- *If you are transitioning on the job;*
- *Washrooms and change rooms;*
- *Creating a welcoming environment; and*
- *Your rights as a trans person.*

The toolkit is available at: http://www.the519.org/education-training/.

20. A Culture of Open Communication

A culture of open communication allows organizations to identify and address challenges that exist for LGBT2SQ children and youth and collectively create solutions to address them. Everyone involved in the child welfare system should be encouraged to bring forward concerns and to speak openly without fear of reprisal about discrimination that is taking place within their organization.

Organizations can take a number of steps to facilitate feedback from workers, caregivers, children and youth, which include drop boxes for comments, anonymous surveys, and regular informal meetings where everyone in the organization is welcomed and encouraged to participate. Emphasis on confidentiality and anonymity, and the need to consider the dynamics of power imbalances when designing these feedback processes will help contribute to a willingness to openly participate.

LGBT2SQ children and youth, in particular, can offer insight into how well the child welfare system and individual services are meeting their needs, and how they can be improved. Children and youth should have opportunities to talk about their experiences knowing that it is safe to do so, to be believed when they do, and to see positive results when they speak up.

Child welfare leaders should strive to actively create an organizational culture that is committed to ongoing learning and training opportunities, and feedback from openly listening to critiques of current practices, and being non-judgmental.

RESOURCE
Opening up the lines of communication

How Leaders Can Build Agency Competency. National Centre for Child Welfare Excellence

http://www.adoptuskids.org/_assets/files/NRCRRFAP/resources/talking-with-experts-on-engaging-lgbt-families-part-2.pdf

21. Training

Child protection workers, families, caregivers, and youth from across Ontario have identified the need for training throughout the child welfare system on providing LGBT2SQ-affirming and inclusive services and organizations.

Research suggests that comprehensive LGBT2SQ-specific training for board members, staff, volunteers, families, and caregivers is a best practice to better serve LGBT2SQ children and youth. To sustain the benefits of training, individuals should also be made aware of resources they can access in their day-to-day work with respect to serving LGBT2SQ children and youth.

> In 2015, only 10% of society staff surveyed had received training on how to support families struggling to accept their LGBT2SQ child or youth.
>
> **MCYS Survey**

Training that is multi-levelled (from introductory to advanced), ongoing, inclusive of LGBT2SQ children and youth voices, and integrated into an organization's general training requirements, is most effective. Some child welfare leaders have also emphasized the need for mandatory LGBT2SQ training. Regular evaluation and updating of training is also essential.

Some of the topics that may be addressed in training include:

- existing non-discrimination and human rights laws;
- supporting resiliency in LGBT2SQ children and youth;
- acknowledging the intersectionality that exists within LGBT2SQ communities;
- understanding unique risks and challenges faced by LGBT2SQ children and youth;
- managing confidential information, including how to avoid "outing a child or youth";
- finding safe, respectful, and affirming placements for LGBT2SQ children and youth;
- how to be an ally to the LGBT2SQ community;
- how to talk about gender identity and sexual orientation;
- how to create safe and welcoming spaces;
- how to address homophobia, transphobia, and biphobia;
- how to support transgender and gender diverse children and youth;
- relevant terms, definitions and acronyms; and
- myths and misconceptions about LGBT2SQ children and youth.

Child welfare organizations can engage with community partners and organizations to provide outside training and expertise on LGBT2SQ children and youth (e.g., PFLAG, Native Youth Sexual Health Network, Rainbow Health Ontario). They can also utilize existing training, such as *Out and Proud*,[xi] designed by the Children's Aid Society of Toronto for the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies, to increase the capacity of child welfare organizations to serve LGBT2SQ children and youth. While some agencies will not have such organizations in their communities, they can make use of online and social network supports such as those available at: positivespaces.ca. The site offers community links to counsellors who serve LGBT2SQ newcomers, toolkit manuals, and referrals which assist in making any agency a positive space.

xi Further information on Out and Proud designed by the Children's Aid Society of Toronto for the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies is available at: http://www.torontocas.ca/out-and-proud.

> Unless workers are trained to support the youth, address him/her/them with respect, make the environment LGBT2SQ positive, they will not be successful in connecting and addressing the youth's needs.
>
> *—Society Staff*

PART 5

PART ⑤ RESOURCES, TEMPLATES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

This section provides information on resources, sample policies, forms and tools for leaders, workers, caregivers, and families to support their ongoing efforts to provide affirming services to LGBT2SQ children, youth, and families involved with the child welfare system, including information on:

A. Terms and definitions

B. Relevant provincial and national organizations, service directories, regional and community agencies and support networks, LGBT2SQ-specific health centres, and LGBT2SQ social events (i.e., LGBT2SQ-specific film festivals, Pride organizations)

C. Sample LGBT2SQ affirming policies

D. Examples of inclusive questions for child welfare forms

E. An LGBT2SQ self-assessment checklist

F. Endnotes and bibliography

A. Terms and Definitions

A comprehensive glossary of terms related to LGBT2SQ identities and experiences can be found at:
egale.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Egales-Glossary-of-Terms.pdf

B. Relevant Organizations, Service Directories, Community Agencies, Support Networks, Health Centres, and Social Events

Provincial and National Organizations and Resources

Action Canada's Beyond the Basics: a resource for educators on sexuality and sexual health
https://www.actioncanadashr.org/beyondthebasics/
Beyond the Basics offers tools to teach youth about sexuality and sexual health from a sex positive, human rights perspective.

Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity
www.ccgsd-ccdgs.org/
An organization that provides information on education, training, awareness campaigns and youth conferences across Canada.

Egale Canada Human Rights Trust www.egale.ca
A national charity promoting lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, intersex, and Two-Spirit (LGBTQI2S) human rights through research and policy, training and education, direct services, and community engagement. The website provides information on Gender and Sexuality Alliances (GSA) in schools, reporting homophobic violence to police (the Report Homophobic Violence, Period [RHVP] program) and fundraising/awareness campaigns supporting LGBT2SQ youth.

Family Acceptance Project www.familyproject.sfsu.edu
Information and research about the experiences, health, and wellbeing of LGBTQ children and youth. Publications geared for parents struggling to accept an LGBT2SQ child are available here as are links to other resources for families.

Gender Creative Kids Canada
www.gendercreativekids.ca
Resources for gender creative kids and their families, schools, and communities. Links to community events as well as articles, brochures, resource manuals and fact sheets are available here.

Gender Spectrum www.genderspectrum.org
Information on gender diverse children and youth, and tips for creating gender inclusive spaces. The website has information and links pertaining to mental health, parenting and legal issues.

sprOUT Project
www.griffincentre.org/reachout.php
As part of Griffin Centre's reachOUT program, SPROUT Project connects LGBTQ people with intellectual disabilities ages 18+ across Ontario to resources and communities.

Human Rights Campaign – All Children, All Families http://www.hrc.org/resources/all-children-all-families-about-the-initiative
All Children, All Families is a project by the Human Rights Campaign that provides resources, webinars, and supports to LGBTQ children and youth.

Native Youth Sexual Health Network
www.nativeyouthsexualhealth.com
An organization by and for Indigenous youth that works on issues of sexual and reproductive health, rights, and justice throughout the United States and Canada. Links to A First Nations Sexual Health Toolkit, Two-Spirit Mentors Support Circle, and Indigenous Young Women's Leadership Project are available on this site.

Ontario Child Advocate (OCA)
http://www.provincialadvocate.on.ca/
The Ontario Child Advocate (OCA), formally the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth (PACY), is an independent office of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and provides an independent voice for children and youth across the province receiving services in Ontario's child welfare system. OCA has the authority to receive and respond to complaints, conduct reviews, represent the views and preferences of children and youth, make reports and provide recommendations. The Office of OCA released the Ultimate Health Rights Survival Guide—a step-by-step guide for young people to assist children and youth with making health decisions, available at: https://www.provincialadvocate.on.ca/reports/advocacy-reports/english-reports/IDC_SurvivalGuide_EN.pdf

Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants
www.OCASI.org
Provides resources to increase organizational capacity to more effectively serve LGBTQI2S+ newcomers, including the Positive Space Program, and an agency self-assessment tool at: www.PositiveSpaces.ca.

PFLAG Canada www.pflagcanada.ca/
PFLAG Canada is a national charitable organization, founded by parents who wished to help themselves and their family members understand and accept their non-heterosexual children and youth. PFLAG chapters are located in communities throughout Ontario, and are listed on the PFLAG Canada website.

Rainbow Health Ontario
www.rainbowhealthontario.ca
Rainbow Health Ontario (RHO) is a province-wide program working to improve access to services and promote the health of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and queer (LGBTQ) communities. RHO provides information about LGBTQ health and links to LGBTQ-friendly physical and mental health services in Ontario.

TransParent www.transparentcanada.ca
Provides support and information for parents and families of trans and gender diverse individuals.

TransPulse Project www.transpulseproject.ca
Provides research, statistics and information about transgender human rights and transgender people in Ontario. Videos, journal articles, and project reports related to the lived experience of trans people across Canada are available here.

TransWhat https://transwhat.org/
A helpful guide to support allyship.

Trans Youth Family Allies www.imatyfa.org
Provides information and support for families with transgender and gender independent children and youth. The site offers a manual for parents of trans youth, a list of online resources for trans youth, and a speakers bureau with contact information for booking public speakers who specialize in trans advocacy and awareness.

Service Directories

LGBT Youth Line Referral Database
www.youthline.ca/get-support/referral-database
The Youth Line maintains a database of referral resources for LGBT youth in Ontario. It includes services and supports that are LGBT-specific.

Rainbow Health Ontario Service Directory
https://www.rainbowhealthontario.ca/service-directory/
A list of health and social service providers and programs that have expressed a commitment to providing competent and welcoming care to LGBTQ people in Ontario.

Two Spirit Resource Directory http://www.nativeyouthsexualhealth.com/twospiritdirectory.html Native Youth Sexual Health Network has developed a directory of Two-Spirit resources.

Phone Lines

Kids Help Phone www.kidshelpphone.ca
24-hour, national telephone and online counselling, referral and information services for children, youth and young adults.
1-800-668-6868

LGBT Youth Line www.youthline.ca
Peer support phone line for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, Two-Spirit, queer and questioning youth.
1-800-268-9688

Trans Lifeline www.translifeline.org
Peer support phone line run by transgender people for transgender people.
1-877-330-6366

Regional and Community Agencies and Support Networks

Belleville and Quinte: Say OutLoud
Say OutLoud is an alternative youth group that offers an inclusive place in the community for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, intersex, Two-Spirit, queer, questioning youth and their allies.
http://www.sayoutloud.ca/

Hamilton: New Generation Youth Centre: Support around Gender Experience
Support around Gender Experience is a peer support group for youth who are trans, non-binary, and questioning their gender.
https://www.ngenyouth.ca/programs

Kingston: TransFamily Kingston
TransFamily Kingston is a diverse group of transgender people, family members, friends and allies in the Kingston, Ontario area who gather at least once a month to share stories and experiences, provide peer support, and assist each other in navigating the various barriers faced by trans people and by their supporters. https://transfamilykingston.com/

Niagara Region: Rainbow Niagara
Rainbow Niagara provides services, information, support and resources to individuals of sexual and gender diverse communities, families and the community. Programming includes individual support for clients throughout the Niagara Region, health promotion initiatives such as Pride Prom and the Pride Halloween Dance, as well as community presentations.
http://questchc.ca/participate-at-quest/rainbow-niagara/

Ottawa: Family Services Ottawa: Around the Rainbow
Around the Rainbow, offered by Family Services Ottawa, is a community-based program which provides a range of education, counselling and support services. The program supports lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, Two-Spirit, queer and questioning (LGBTTQ+) communities and allies.
http://familyservicesottawa.org/children-youth-and-families/around-the-rainbow/

Ottawa: Kind Space
Kind Space is an organization that provides accessible resources, events, social, and educational programming to celebrate and support people of all sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions. http://kindspace.ca/

Ottawa: Ten Oaks Project
The Ten Oaks Project engages and connects children and youth from LGBT2SQ communities through programs and activities rooted in play.
http://www.tenoaksproject.org/

St. Catherines: Quest Community Health Centre: Trans/Gender-Questioning Youth Group
The Trans/Gender Questioning Youth Group is a social support group for gender diverse youth 14–19 years of age. The support group offers trans and gender questioning youth a forum for discussion, movies, and guest speakers. http://questchc.ca/participate-at-quest/groups/

Sudbury: TG Innerselves
TG Innerselves provides peer support, informal discussion, and assistance finding professional services for the transgender community.
http://tginnerselves.com/index.html

Thunder Bay: Children's Centre Thunder Bay: The Other 10%
The Other 10% is a group supported by Children's Centre Thunder Bay for youth and young adults between 12 and 25 years of age who are interested in exploring what it means—and doesn't mean—to be a part of the LGBTQ community.
http://www.childrenscentre.ca/en/adolescents/other-10

Toronto: The 519
The 519 is a Toronto agency that provides a wide range of programming and services to the LGBTQ community, which includes counselling services and queer parenting resources to coming out groups, trans programming and senior's support.
http://www.the519.org/

Toronto: Access Alliance
Access Alliance offers programs and services for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and queer (LGBTQ+) newcomers. http://accessalliance.ca/programs-services/lgbtq-programs/

Toronto: Black Coalition for AIDS Prevention (BlackCAP)
BlackCAP delivers support services that meet the health and wellness needs of clients who are living with or affected by HIV or AIDS. Some of these support services include: counselling, settlement, practical and peer support, employment, housing and social support services that help people achieve their goals. http://www.black-cap.com/

Toronto: Central Toronto Youth Services: Families in TRANSition (FIT) Group
The Families in TRANSition (FIT) Group is a 10 week support group for parents/caregivers of trans youth (13–21 years of age). http://www.ctys.org/category/groups/#fit

Toronto: Central Toronto Youth Services: Pride and Prejudice
Pride and Prejudice offers programs for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer and questioning youth, 13–24 years of age. http://www.ctys.org/category/programs/#pride-amp-prejudice

Toronto: Central Toronto Youth Services: Transceptance
Transceptance is a peer support program for parents and caregivers of trans youth and young adults.
http://www.ctys.org/category/groups/#transceptance

Toronto: Egale Youth OUTreach
Egale Youth OUTreach provides individual counselling, homelessness and suicide crisis services for LGBTQI2S youth up to 29 years of age.
https://egale.ca/outreach/

Toronto: Sherbourne Health Centre: LGBTQ Family Network
The LGBTQ Parenting Network is a program of Sherbourne Health Centre that supports lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and queer parenting through research, training, resources and community development. http://lgbtqpn.ca/

Toronto: Sherbourne Health Centre: Supporting Our Youth (SOY)
Supporting Our Youth (SOY) is a community development program of Sherbourne Health Centre that works to support the health and wellbeing of all queer and trans spectrum youth by running groups, programs and events, and by providing one-on-one support for queer, trans and questioning youth who are 29 years of age and under. http://soytoronto.org/

Toronto: Toronto Family Services: David Kelly Services (DKS) LGBTQ+ and Counselling HIV/AIDS
The David Kelley HIV/AIDS Counselling Program provides professional counselling and support services to people living with or affected by HIV/AIDS. Services include short and long-term professional counselling to individuals, couples and families on issues such as loss, relationships, self-esteem, planning for healthy living, changing health status, and self-care. https://familyservicetoronto.org/our-services/programs-and-services/david-kelley-services/

Toronto: Toronto for All

Toronto for All is an online resource by the City of Toronto that provides information and resources for trans communities of colour.
http://www.torontoforall.ca/trans-youth-of-colour/

Toronto: Two-Spirited People of the 1ˢᵗ Nations

Two-Spirited People of the 1ˢᵗ Nations provides prevention education and support for 2-spirited people, including First Nations, Métis and Inuit people, living with or at risk for HIV and related co-infections in the Greater Toronto Area.
http://www.2spirits.com/index.html

Waterloo Region: OK2BME

OK2BME is a set of support services for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or questioning (LGBTQ) children and youth in the Waterloo Region. The OK2BME program consists of three unique areas including confidential counselling services, an OK2BME Youth Group for individuals 13-18 years of age, as well as public education, consulting and training around LGBTQ+ issues. http://ok2bme.ca/

Waterloo Region: SPECTRUM

SPECTRUM is a LGBTQ community space that provides programming, social groups, special projects, research, events, resources, and a DVD library. http://www.ourspectrum.com/

Windsor: Windsor Pride Community Education and Resource Centre

The Community Education and Resource Centre provides a safe and positive space where members of LGBTQ communities can find information and referrals to community services and connections to individual and group counselling and peer support. The Centre also provides diversity education and resources for Windsor Essex at large and advocates for the LGBTQ community through partnerships and leadership in broader initiatives. http://www.windsor-pride.com/

York Region: Aids Committee of York Region: Rainbow Youth Group

The Rainbow Youth Group supports youth to connect with others during difficult and challenging times in their lives, and to receive support. It also provides a social space for LGBTTIQQ2SA+ youth to feel acceptance, to make new friends and to share positive experiences.
http://www.acyr.org/myhouse/groups/#Youth

LGBT2SQ-Specific Health Centres

Hamilton: Trans Community Health

Trans Community Health (TCH) is a twice-monthly clinic for trans and gender non-conforming individuals.
http://shelterhealthnetwork.ca/?page_id=713

Ottawa: Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario

The Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario has a multidisciplinary team that offers information, comprehensive assessment and treatment (which can include hormonal interventions) to children, youth and their families when there are questions regarding gender identity. Referrals can come from community providers, schools, parents and the youth themselves. http://www.cheo.on.ca/en/genderidentity

Thunder Bay: NorWest Community Health Centre

NorWest Community Health Centre (NWCHC) provides individuals with safe, supportive, and non-judgmental health and counselling services.
http://www.norwestchc.org/locations/thunder-bay/programs/lgbt-health

Toronto: Sherbourne Health Centre

Sherbourne Health Centre offers a wide range of primary health care programs and services to lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, Two-Spirit, intersex, queer or questioning individuals. http://sherbourne.on.ca/primary-family-health-care/lgbt-health/

LGBT2SQ-Specific Film Festivals

Kitchener-Waterloo: Rainbow Reels Queer and Trans Film Festival
Rainbow Reels Queer and Trans Film Festival brings queer and trans centred art and film to the Waterloo Region and Southwestern Ontario. The annual festival features film, art, comedy and workshops.
https://rainbowreels.org/about/

Kingston: Reelout Queer Film + Video Festival
Reelout was created to celebrate queer media arts and to contribute to community vitality by programming materials that focus on issues of sexuality, race, culture, religion, class, gender, ability, health and age in Kingston and the surrounding area.
http://www.reelout.com/festival-info/films/

London: London Lesbian Film Festival
The London Lesbian Film Festival is an annual gathering which aims to portray the richness and diversity of lesbian experiences and to strengthen communities. http://www.llff.ca/

Sudbury: Queer North Film Festival
Queer North Film Festival is an annual event in Northern Ontario that celebrates the diversity of the gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and Two-Spirit communities through cinema.
http://www.sudburyindiecinema.com/qnff.html

Toronto: Queer West Film Festival
The Queer West Film Festival was created to share queer films and media that may not have found a home at other festivals. artsfestival.queerwest.org/

Toronto and Ottawa: Inside Out
Inside Out is an organization committed to challenging attitudes and changing lives through year-round initiatives in queer cinema. Inside Out also presents the annual Toronto LGBT Film Festival and the Ottawa LGBT Film Festival. https://www.insideout.ca/

Pride Organizations

Annual Pride celebrations are hosted in communities across Ontario every year. Pride provides the opportunity for LGBT2SQ communities and allies, through events and activities, to promote equity, unity, education, inclusion and awareness of sexual and gender diversity. Below is a list of Pride organizations across the province:

PRIDE ORGANIZATION	CITY	WEBSITE
Barrie Pride	Barrie	http://barriepride.com/
Brantford Pride	Brantford	http://brantfordpride.ca/
Brockville Pride	Brockville	https://www.brockvillepride.com/
Chatham-Kent Pride	Chatham-Kent	https://www.facebook.com/PrideCK
Elliot Lake Pride	Elliot Lake	http://www.elpride.ca/
Grey Bruce Pride	Bruce County and Grey County	https://www.facebook.com/GreyBrucePride

PRIDE ORGANIZATION	CITY	WEBSITE
Guelph Pride	Guelph	http://www.guelphpride.com/index.html
Hamilton Pride	Hamilton	http://hamiltonpride.ca/
Kawartha Lakes Pride	Kawartha Lakes	https://www.facebook.com/KawarthaLakesPride/
Kincardine Pride	Kincardine	https://www.facebook.com/kincardinepride
Kingston Pride	Kingston	http://www.kingstonpride.ca/
Muskoka Pride	Muskoka	http://www.muskokapride.com/
Ottawa Capital Pride	Ottawa	http://ottawacapitalpride.ca/
Peterborough Pride	Peterborough	http://peterboroughpride.ca/
Pride Durham	Durham Region	http://www.pridedurham.com/
Guelph Pride	Guelph	http://www.guelphpride.com/index.html
Pride London Festival	London	http://pridelondon.ca/
Pride Niagara	Niagara	http://prideniagara.com/
Pride Toronto	Toronto	http://www.pridetoronto.com/
Simcoe Pride	Simcoe	http://www.simcoepride.com/
Sudbury Pride	Sudbury	http://www.sudburypride.com/
Thunder Pride	Thunder Bay	http://www.thunderpride.ca/
Tri-Pride	Cambridge, Kitchener, Waterloo	http://tri-pride.ca/
Windsor-Essex Pride Fest	Windsor-Essex	https://www.wepridefest.com/
York Pride Fest	York Region	http://www.yorkpridefest.com/

C. Sample LGBT2SQ-Affirming Policies

C.1 Policy Principles in Creating a Non-Discrimination Policy

Below are sample principles that can be considered when an organization is developing a non-discrimination policy. The process for developing such a policy benefits from the input of staff, volunteers, youth, caregivers and community partners, and individuals of all sexual orientations and gender identities.

Rate your organization using the following scorecard:

- 1 represents that your organization has never considered this aspect.

- 5 represents that your organization has discussed this aspect and is starting to make changes and/or address issues.

- 10 represents that your organization has recognized, addressed, and continues to monitor your performance of this aspect.

POLICY PRINCIPLE	EXAMPLE	RATE YOUR ORGANIZATION FROM 1 TO 10	CHANGES TO BE MADE
Policies clearly set out your organization's commitment to creating inclusive and affirming environments.	"[XXXXXX] organization is committed to creating strategies to address harassment and discrimination."		
Policies clearly set out the organization's objectives in establishing the policy.	"The goal of this policy is to ensure that all clients and employees understand that all forms of discrimination and harassment are unacceptable. These actions are not compatible with the standards of this organization and violate the law."		
Policy statements clearly set out steps of how the organization will achieve each goal.	"We will provide training and education to ensure everyone is aware of their rights and responsibilities."		

POLICY PRINCIPLE	EXAMPLE	RATE YOUR ORGANIZATION FROM 1 TO 10	CHANGES TO BE MADE
Policy goals, objectives, and organizational roles and responsibilities be explicitly stated.	"All persons are expected to uphold and abide by this policy. Supervisors have additional responsibilities to immediately act on observation or allegations of harassment or discrimination."		
Policy clearly outlines the mechanisms by which the organiza-tion will deal with any potential complaints.	"The following actions will be taken if an individual does not follow this policy."		

*   Non-discrimination policy principles and examples from The 519: Creating Authentic Spaces Toolkit (http://www.the519.org/media/download/2392)

C.2 Sample Inclusion Policy Statement

Inclusion policies support affirming services in all programs and services an organization provides, and also informs individual behaviour within an organization. Below is an example of an organization's inclusion policy statement.

Inclusion statement

(Insert your organization's name here) is committed to providing a safe and inclusive environment for all employees, volunteers and children, youth and families receiving services. As an organization, we are committed to including all people regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or expression and to respecting everyone's sexual orientation, gender identity and expression. We are committed to creating an organizational environment that recognizes the dignity and worth of each person. We are committed to maintaining privacy and confidentiality. We are committed to respecting the diverse social and cultural backgrounds of each person. We are committed to values of respect, integrity, and honesty. As an organization we are committed to these basic principles so that everyone can thrive and reach their fullest potential.

Policy statement

This organization believes that all people have the right to access services regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity and expression. The organization strives to remove barriers based on sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and we work to create an inclusive environment. The organization will ensure that all transgender and gender non-conforming people are treated with dignity. This policy is applicable to all management, staff, board members, volunteers, and children, youth and families receiving services.

The organization encourages all people regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or expression to participate fully and to access our services, employment, governance structures, and volunteer opportunities. We will make every effort to see that our structures, policies, and systems reflect the entire community and promote equitable access for all.

This policy is intended to act as a positive force for equity and the elimination of all discriminatory behaviour. Board members, staff, and service users will refer back to the *Ontario Human Rights* Code for areas of discrepancy or concern.

Scope of this policy

This policy applies to all of our organization's employees, contractors, volunteers, students, community members/participants, board of directors, and visitors.

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*   Sample inclusion policy statement from The 519: Creating Authentic Spaces Toolkit
    (http://www.the519.org/media/download/2392)

C.3 Sample Washroom Signage Policy: The 519

POLICY OVERVIEW STATEMENT

The 519 is committed to promoting respect, inclusivity and equality for all program users, staff, volunteers and members of the public. As a community centre serving a diverse community, we endeavour to provide a space that is welcoming to everyone, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, family make-up or ability. In order to extend this welcoming and affirming nature to our washroom facilities, we have enacted the following Washroom Policy in order to provide for a variety of abilities, uses and gender expressions.

SCOPE OF POLICY

This policy applies to all employees, volunteers, program participants and visitors to The Centre.

GENDERED WASHROOMS

The Centre offers traditional men-only and women-only washrooms on the second and third floors, and individuals may use the washroom of the gender in which they identify. Individuals who self-identify as male may use the "Men's Washroom" and individuals who self-identify as female may use the "Women's Washroom." Self-identity is the only criteria to determine which washroom a person uses.

ALL-GENDER WASHROOMS

We acknowledge the fact that there are many individuals using The 519 who will benefit from "All-Gender Washrooms." These would allow for a father and his daughter, or a mother and her son, to enter the same washroom together. "All-Gender Washrooms" will also benefit those whose gender identity or gender expression is more complex than simply "male" or "female." For individuals who fall outside the gender binary, access to washrooms can be a constant source of frustration. To support these families and individuals, and to recognize the diversity within our communities, The 519's first floor multi-stall washrooms are designated "All-Gender Washrooms." They are not labelled for men or for women exclusively. Any person may use these facilities.

ACCESSIBILITY

One washroom on each floor of The Centre has been designed with a variety of accessibility needs in mind. These washrooms are single-use spaces with door-opening technology, enough space to manoeuvre mobility devices and in some cases, a change table. Accessible washrooms provide additional privacy to the user(s) and allow for families and individuals requiring the assistance of a support person the space they require to comfortably use the facility.

SIGNAGE

Signage shall be placed on each washroom designating if the washroom is a "Men's" or "Women's" or "All-Gender" washroom. Signage for the "All-Gender Washroom" shall provide direction to the nearest gendered washroom and vice versa.

Washroom Signage shall not utilize images of people, so as to avoid gender stereotyping, but shall instead indicate which fixtures exist inside the washroom (i.e., toilet, sink, urinal, change table, etc.). All signage will include Braille.

* Sample washroom signage policy from The 519
(http://www.the519.org/policies)

D. Examples of Inclusive Questions for Child Welfare Forms

Child welfare organizations can design forms that include all children and youth. Inclusive forms can create the opportunity to have a conversation with a child or youth about what services and supports will be most responsive to their individual needs. Below are examples of how questions about sex, gender identity and sexual orientation can be asked using inclusive language.

1. What are your legal first and last names?

_____

2. What are your chosen first and last names?

_____

3. What is the sex that was assigned to you at birth?

    a) Female
    b) Male
    c) Intersex
    d) Another sex/assigned sex
       (please specify:_____)
    e) Prefer not to answer

4. How do you currently identify your sex?

    a) Female
    b) Male
    c) Transsexual
    d) Intersex
    e) Another sex/assigned sex
       (please specify:_____)
    f) Prefer not to answer

5. What is your current gender identity (please select all that apply)?

    a) Cisgender girl/woman
    b) Cisgender boy/man
    c) Transgender girl/woman
    d) Transgender boy/man
    e) Trans
    f) Two-Spirit
    g) Gender Diverse (e.g., genderqueer, gender fluid, gender creative, non-binary)
    h) Queer
    i) Agender
    j) Another gender identity
       (please specify:_____)
    k) Prefer not to answer

6. What is your sexual orientation (sometimes referred to as attraction; please select all that apply)?

    a) Gay
    b) Lesbian
    c) Bisexual
    d) Pansexual
    e) Two-Spirit
    f) Asexual
    g) Queer
    h) Another sexual orientation
       (please specify:_____)
    i) Prefer not to answer

7. What pronouns do you use (please select all that apply)?

    a) He/him/his
    b) She/her/hers
    c) Ey/Em/Eir
    d) Another form of pronouns
       (please specify:_____)

E. An LGBT2SQ Self-Assesment Checklist for Child Welfare Workers and Caregivers Serving LGBT2SQ Children, Youth and Families

The National Center for Cultural Competence at Georgetown University has developed a comprehensive checklist, the *Self-Assessment Checklist for Personnel Providing Services and Supports to LGBTQ Youth and Their Families*— that is intended to heighten the awareness and sensitivity of child welfare workers to the importance of LGBT2SQ competency in service delivery. The checklist helps assess an individual's own practices and to identify possible areas for new action and areas for improvement when delivering child welfare services to LGBT2SQ children, youth and families. The checklist covers the physical environment, materials and resources, communication practices, values, and attitudes. It provides concrete examples of the kinds of values and practices that foster LGBT2SQ competency.

The *Self-Assessment Checklist for Personnel Providing Services and Supports to LGBTQ Youth and Their Families* can be accessed through the National Center for Cultural Competence's Website at: https://nccc.georgetown.edu/documents/Final%20LGBTQ%20Checklist.pdf.

Note: The inclusion of this resource is intended as an example of a current tool that is publically available to assess an individual's competency in delivering child welfare services to LGBT2SQ children, youth and their families. Its use is not required by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services.

Rating Scale: Please select A, B, or C for each item listed below:

A = I do this frequently, or the statement applies to me to a great degree.

B = I do this occasionally, or the statement applies to me to a moderate degree.

C = I do this rarely or never, or the statement applies to me to a minimal degree or not at all.

SELF ASSESSMENT	A	B	C

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT, MATERIALS, AND RESOURCES

		A	B	C
1.	I display pictures, posters and other materials that are inclusive of LGBTQ youth and their families served by my program/agency.	A	B	C
2.	I ensure that LGBTQ youth and families across diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural groups:			
	• have access to magazines, brochures, and other printed materials that are of interest to them.	A	B	C
	• are reflected in media resources (e.g., videos, films, CDs, DVDS, Websites) for health and behavioral health prevention, treatment, or other interventions.	A	B	C

SELF ASSESSMENT	A	B	C
3. I ensure that printed/multimedia resources (e.g., photos, posters magazines, brochures, videos, films, CDs, Websites) are free of biased and negative content, language, or images about people who are LGBTQ.	A	B	C
4. I screen books, movies, and other media resources for negative stereotypes about LGBTQ persons before sharing them with youth and their parents/ families served by my program/agency.	A	B	C

COMMUNICATION PRACTICES

	A	B	C
5. I attempt to learn and use key words and terms that reflect "youth culture" or LGBTQ youth culture, so that I communicate more effectively with youth during assessment, treatment, or other interventions.	A	B	C
6. I understand and respect that some youth may:			
• choose not to identify as LGBTQ or prefer to use other terms to identify themselves.	A	B	C
• abandon use of all terms associated with sexual orientation/gender identity or expression so as to remain "label-free."	A	B	C
7. I understand and apply the principles and practices of linguistic competence as they relate to LGBTQ populations within my program/agency, including the use of:			
• preferred gender pronoun(s).	A	B	C
• preferred proper names.	A	B	C
• terms that reflect self-identity about sexual orientation/gender identity.	A	B	C
8. I advocate for the use of linguistically appropriate terminology for LGBTQ populations within:			
• my program/agency.	A	B	C
• systems that serve children, youth, and their families.	A	B	C
• professional and community organizations with which I am associated.	A	B	C

VALUES AND ATTITUDES

	A	B	C
9. I avoid imposing values that may conflict or be inconsistent with those of LGBTQ youth cultures or groups.	A	B	C
10. In group therapy or treatment situations, I discourage the use of "hate speech" or slurs about sexual orientation/gender identity or expression by helping youth to understand that certain words can hurt others.	A	B	C
11. I intervene appropriately when I observe others (i.e., staff, parents, family members, children, and youth) within my program/agency behave or speak about sexual orientation/gender identity or expression in ways that are insensitive, biased, or prejudiced.	A	B	C
12. I understand and accept that family may be defined differently by LGBTQ youth (e.g., extended family members, families of choice, friends, partners, fictive kin, godparents).	A	B	C
13. I accept that LGBTQ youth, parents/family members may not always agree about who will make decisions about services and supports for the youth.	A	B	C
14. I recognize that LGBTQ identity has different connotations (negative, neutral, positive) within different racial, ethnic, and cultural groups.	A	B	C
15. I accept that culture heavily influences responses by family members and others to youth who are LGBTQ, and to the provision of their care, treatment, services, and supports.	A	B	C
16. I understand and respect that LGBTQ youth may conceal their sexual orientation/gender identity or expression within their own racial, ethnic, or cultural group.	A	B	C
17. I accept and respect that LGBTQ youth may not express their gender according to culturally-defined societal expectations.	A	B	C
18. I understand that age and life cycle factors, including identity development, must be considered when interacting with LGBTQ youth and their families.	A	B	C
19. I recognize that the meaning or value of health and behavioral health prevention, intervention, and treatment may vary greatly among LGBTQ youth and their families.	A	B	C

SELF ASSESSMENT	A	B	C
20. I understand that family members and others may believe that LGBTQ identity among youth is a mental illness, emotional disturbance/disability, or moral/character flaw.	A	B	C
21. I understand the impact of stigma associated with mental illness, behavioral health services, and help-seeking behavior among LGBTQ youth and their families within cultural communities (e.g., communities defined by race or ethnicity, religiosity or spirituality, tribal affiliation, and/or geographic locale).	A	B	C
22. I accept that religion, spirituality, and other beliefs may influence how families:			
• respond to a child or youth who identifies as LGBTQ.	A	B	C
• view LGBTQ youth culture.	A	B	C
• approach a child or youth who is LGBTQ.	A	B	C
23. I ensure that LGBTQ youth:			
• have appropriate access to events and activities conducted by my program/agency.	A	B	C
• participate in training (i.e., panel presentations, workshops, seminars, and other forums).	A	B	C
• participate on advisory boards, committees and task forces.	A	B	C
24. I ensure that members of "families of choice" identified by LGBTQ youth:			
• have appropriate access to events and activities conducted by my program/agency.	A	B	C
• participate in training (i.e., panel presentations, workshops, seminars, and other forums).	A	B	C
• participate on advisory boards, committees and task forces.	A	B	C
25. Before visiting or providing services and supports in the home setting, I seek information on acceptable behaviors, courtesies, customs, and expectations that are unique to:			
• LGBTQ youth and their families.	A	B	C
• LGBTQ headed families.	A	B	C
26. I confer with LGBTQ youth, family members, key community informants, cultural brokers, and those who are knowledgeable about LGBTQ youth experience to:			
• create or adapt service delivery models.	A	B	C
• implement services and supports.	A	B	C
• evaluate services and supports.	A	B	C
• plan community awareness, acceptance, and engagement initiatives.	A	B	C

27. I advocate for the periodic review of the mission, policies, and procedures of my program/agency to ensure the full inclusion of all individuals regardless of their sexual orientation/gender identity or expression. **A** **B** **C**

28. I keep abreast of new developments in the research and practice literatures about appropriate interventions and approaches for working with LGBTQ youth and their families. **A** **B** **C**

29. I accept that many evidence-based prevention and intervention approaches will require adaptation to be effective with LGBTQ youth and their families. **A** **B** **C**

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