



Allyship with 2SLGBTQIA+ Newcomers, Immigrants and Refugees



..... INITIATIVE TO END
GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Funded by:

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Immigration, Refugees
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et Citoyenneté Canada

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Halifax/
Dartmouth



Positive Spaces Initiative

Our guest speaker is **Joselynn Crosby (she/her)**
Coordinator, Positive Spaces Initiative
OCASI - Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants

The [Positive Spaces Initiative \(PSI\)](http://positivespaces.ca/) aims to support the settlement sector to more effectively serve LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, two-spirit, queer, questioning, intersex, asexual, pansexual, genderqueer, etc.) newcomers. PSI encourages training, education, leadership and resource-sharing to support LGBTQ+ newcomers, staff, volunteers and community members.

Resource for more information:
<http://positivespaces.ca/>

You are

We invite you to a Positive Space...

a part of our

A comfortable, welcoming environment

community.

A space that is free from discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression

This is an LGBTQ+*

Access to culturally inclusive services with dignity and respect

& newcomer

A place where we challenge homophobia and transphobia

Positive Space.

That believes you — staff, volunteers, newcomers, friends, families, spiritual leaders, and community leaders — can help to make our space a Positive Space.

*LGBTQ+ = Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, etc.

OCASI    www.positivespaces.ca/



Supporting LGBTQ
Newcomers in BC



Empowering newcomers to fully participate
in Canadian society for over 40 years

Our guest speakers from MOSAIC are:

Kiana Reyes, Facilitator in the I Belong Program & Rena Kim, who works as a Multicultural Outreach Services Worker, and in the Stopping the Violence Counselling program at MOSAIC.

I Belong supports LGBTQIA2+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer/Questioning) immigrant newcomers by facilitating discussions around sexuality, gender, race, culture, and class.

Often faced with being a 'minority within a minority', the *I Belong* program aims to support the unique needs of LGBTQIA2+ immigrants. LGBTQIA2+ immigrants face barriers ranging from racism, homophobia, transphobia and isolation, to logistical issues such as finding resources and support services, safe housing and employment.

The *I Belong* program aims to bridge this gap in understanding the unique needs of LGBTQIA2+ newcomers and to provide support by raising awareness and offering support groups.

Settlement organizations across Canada work with newcomers, immigrants and refugees and need to know about gender, gender identity, and sexual orientation in order to be more inclusive and responsive to client needs.

Objectives:

- ✓ **Explain the importance of using gender and sexual-inclusive language and approaches when supporting newcomers, immigrants and refugees.**
- ✓ **Identify forms of sexual and gender-based violence that are disproportionately experienced by 2SLGBTQIA+ people.**
- ✓ **Apply practical strategies for supporting newcomer survivors of GBV who identify as 2SLGBTQIA+.**
- ✓ **Know where to find additional training and resources on allyship with 2SLGBTQIA+ communities.**



Part 1

Using gender inclusive approaches
to supporting newcomers, immigrants
and refugees

Terminology about immigrants and refugees:

Permanent resident – a person granted the right to live permanently in Canada. The person may have come to Canada as an immigrant or as a refugee.

What is the difference between a refugee and an immigrant? A refugee is forced to flee for their lives. There are convention refugees and asylum seekers. An immigrant chooses to move to another country.

Person without status – a person who has not been granted permission to stay in the country, or who has stayed after their visa has expired. The term can cover a person who falls between the cracks of the system.





Human Rights Agreements and Instruments

[Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#)

For refugees, rights are protected internationally by the [Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees](#) of 1951 (the 1951 Convention), and its 1967 Protocol, among others.

Persecution and discriminations experienced by 2SLGBTQIA+ people sometimes push them to claim asylum in other countries. These refugees are, and will continue to be, in need of resettlement.

LGBTI persons may continue to be at risk where other refugees are often considered safe, in refugee camps or as asylum-seekers in more politically stable neighbouring countries. Since they frequently face discrimination at the hands of non-state actors such as family and other community members, forced displacement can be a further source of persecution and trauma.



Immigrant and refugee populations include people from the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.

They may be experiencing marginalization from within their traditional communities, in their new community in Canada, and also from mainstream 2SLGBTQIA+ support groups.

It is therefore very important to increase knowledge and skills within organizations that provide services for newcomers around GBV to be inclusive of 2SLGBTQIA+ identities.

There are many resources, programs and tools that are available about 2SLGBTQIA+ newcomers in Canada.

-  **2S** two-spirit
-  **L**esbian
-  **G**ay
-  **B**isexual
-  **T**ransgender, **Trans**
-  **Q**ueer **Q**uestioning
-  **I**ntersex
-  **A**sexual
-  **+** other identities

Transgender: is a term defined as denoting or relating to a person whose sense of personal and gender identity does not match with the biological sex assigned to them at birth.

It has been common to think of sex, gender identity and sexual orientation as being fixed binary categories: man or woman, male or female, straight or gay. In reality, identities and attractions are not confined to a binary- they exist on a spectrum. This understanding can be very harmful towards people of non-binary genders. People can be non-binary, gender non-conforming, gender queer and transgender, for example.



What is the difference between sex and gender?

Sex refers to the biological and physiological characteristics that define males, females and intersex persons.

Gender refers to the roles and behaviours that society associates with being female or male. Rigid gender norms can result in stereotyping and curb our **expectations of both women and men. A society's** understanding of gender changes over time and varies from culture to culture.

<https://cfc-swc.gc.ca/violence/knowledge-connaissance/about-apropos-en.html>

Spectrums



Sex: biological sex assigned at birth: male, female, or intersex



Gender identity: Man/woman, non-binary, queer, agender. This is how YOU identify and might not match the sex assigned at birth



Sexual/romantic orientation: Lesbian/gay/bisexual/asexual/queer
Doesn't necessarily imply sexual behavior



Sexual behavior: Heterosexual relationship/homosexual relationship/celebrate

Intersex is defined by the Intersex Society of North America as “**a** general term used for a variety of conditions in which a person is born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy that **doesn't seem to fit the typical definitions of female or male.**”

A person is **cisgender** when their *gender identity* aligns with the *sex* they were assigned at birth.



Common Forms of LGBT+ Oppression

Homophobia

Biphobia

Transphobia



Homophobia refers to a range of negative attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours directed towards people who are, or perceived to be, 2SLGBTQIA+ with resulting systemic effects of prejudice, discrimination, and violence.

Homophobia, like racism and xenophobia, exists to varying degrees in all societies. Everyday, in every country, individuals are persecuted, vilified, or violently assaulted, and even killed, because of their sexual orientation and gender identity. Homophobic violence causes suffering which is often unrecognized or acknowledged.

<https://www.un.org/africarenewal/web-features/homophobia-violence-intolerance>

Biphobia

Hatred, fear, intolerance, disapproval, or disgust toward bisexual people. Biphobia is dangerous because it frequently leads to discrimination and violence against people who are, or are perceived to be, bisexual. Biphobia can be both individual and systemic, it can come from 2SLGBTQIA+ communities just as much as from heterosexual communities.

According to Statistics Canada: Compared with heterosexual Canadians, bisexual individuals were almost nine times more likely to be sexually assaulted in the previous 12 months.

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2018001/article/54923-eng.htm>



Transphobia

Hatred, fear, intolerance, disapproval, or disgust toward trans people. Transphobia is dangerous because it frequently leads to discrimination and violence against people who are, or are perceived to be, trans.

Transgender people are nearly twice as likely as cis-gendered women to experience intimate partner violence in their lifetimes.

[-WAGE](#)

What is an ally?

An ally is “someone who recognizes the unearned privilege they receive from society’s patterns of injustice, and takes responsibility for changing these patterns” - Anne Bishop





Practicing Allyship Key Concepts

Intersectionality: This concept describes "...the ways race, class, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, ability, status and other markers of differences intersect to inform individual realities and lived experiences." (AMSSA, 2017)

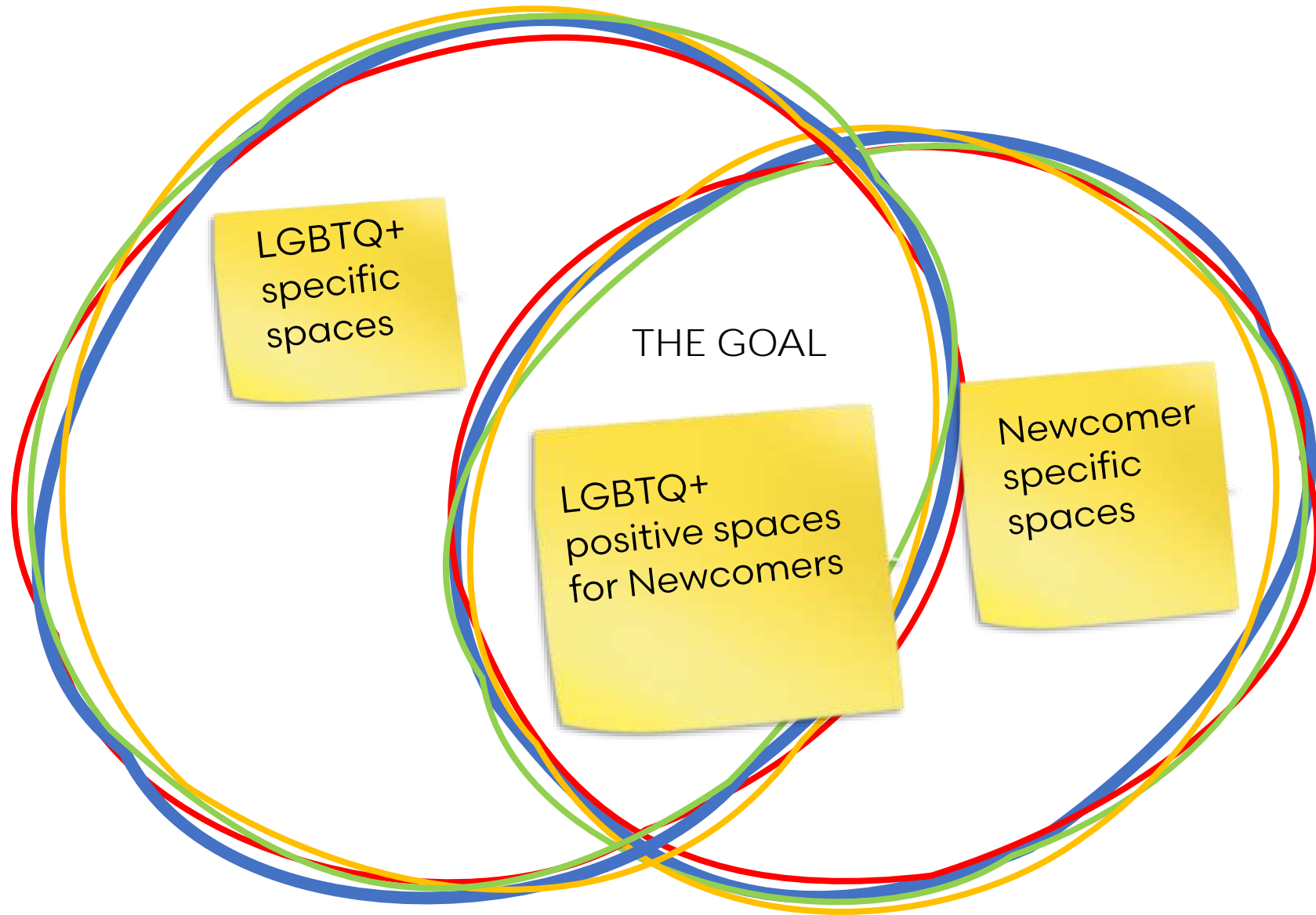
Oppression: Describes social inequalities that are caused by systems, structures, and power relations. Causes of oppression are deeply embedded in both social institutions and in the perceptions of individuals. Some forms of oppression include racism, sexism, heterosexism, and ableism.

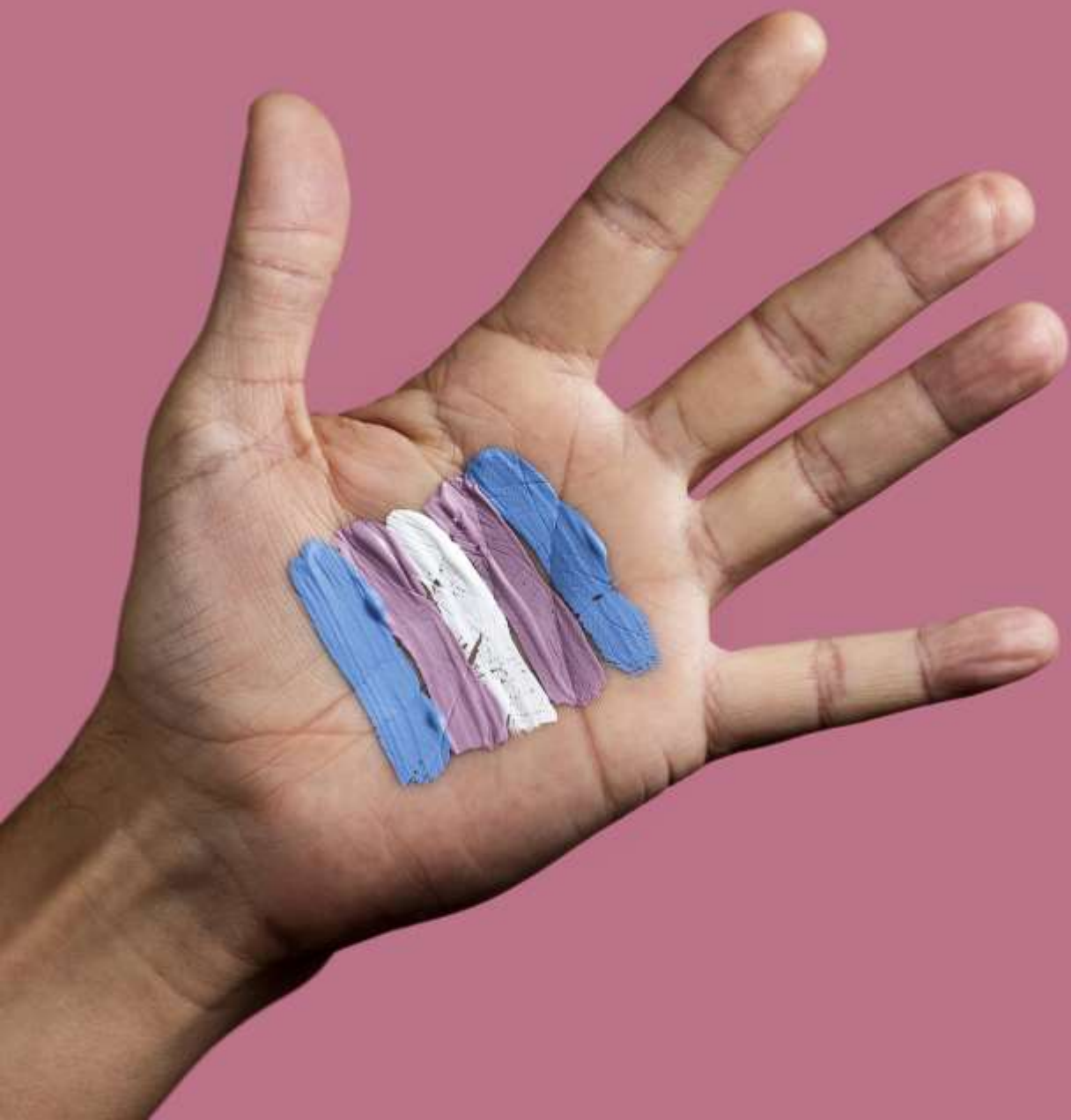
Privilege: The experience of having unearned social power. This social power is held by members of dominant groups and is dependent on both formal and informal institutions.

Discrimination: Describes when an individual or group is treated differently because of their social characteristics or membership of a certain group.

Marker/category of difference: "A defining, sometimes evident, characteristic or attribute that distinguishes groups or individuals from one another in society."; markers and categories of difference are socially constructed and determined.

https://www.amssa.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/InfoSheet41_Intersectionality_Sept2017.pdf





Part 2

Gender-Based Violence

In addition to experiencing violence pre-arrival and discrimination in Canada, 2SLGBTQIA+ newcomers may be experiencing violence within their relationships, in their families and communities. Agencies need to be aware of increased risk factors.



What is Gender-Based Violence (GBV)?

Gender-based violence ([GBV](#)) is violence that is committed against someone based on their gender identity, gender expression or perceived gender.

Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) refers to any act that is perpetrated against a person's will and is based on gender norms and unequal power relationships. It encompasses threats of violence and coercion. United Nations High Commission for Refugees [UNHCR](#)

GBV is not unique to any community but rather affects all communities.

For more information about GBV in Canada, visit the WAGE Knowledge Centre.

The findings from a 2018 Statistics Canada survey based on safety showed that:

Gay, lesbian, bisexual and other sexual minority people in Canada were almost three times more likely than heterosexual Canadians to report that they had been physically or sexually assaulted in the previous 12 months in 2018.

Sexual minority Canadians were also more than twice as likely as heterosexual Canadians to experience inappropriate sexual behaviours in public, online or at work in the previous 12 months.

<https://www.rcinet.ca/en/2020/09/10/shocking-statistics-released-about-assaults-against-lgbtq-people-in-canada/>

Every year, on average, 500 Canadian youth (ages 10 – 24) die by suicide (Statistics Canada).

Studies confirm that suicide and thoughts of suicide are disproportionately prevalent among LGBTQ youth in comparison to their non-LGBTQ peers.

<https://egale.ca/awareness/backgrounder-lgbtq-youth-suicide/>



2SLGBTQAI+ Newcomers May Experience Partner Violence in Distinct Ways

For example:

- An abuser may throw out or hide items a trans woman needs (e.g. hormones, clothes, ID, binder)
- An abuser may threaten to “out” (i.e. disclose sexual orientation or gender identity) someone to their children, friends, neighbours, or employers. They also may threaten to report it to immigration authorities
- The abuser may restrict them from connecting with others, including 2SLGBTQAI+ events or communities
- The abuser may try to prevent or control the gender expression of the person they are abusing
- The abuser uses the name the person they are abusing used before they transitioned (also referred to as “deadnaming”)
- The abuser refuses to use the correct pronouns (she/her/he/him/they/them) to describe the person they are abusing
- The abuser asks invasive questions or ridicules the body of the person they are abusing
- The abuser sexually harasses or sexually assaults the person they are abusing and claims that they did it to “fix” the sexual orientation or gender identity of the person they are abusing
- Because of systems of oppression – transphobia, cissexism, homophobia, biphobia, and heterosexism – 2SLGBTQAI newcomers experience further social isolation, which can be a risk factor for additional violence

Forced marriage

Forced marriage requires more attention around the world, so it is difficult to know the prevalence in Canada.

Some individuals or groups may face greater risk of forced marriage, including minors, lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans* and queer individuals, and persons with a physical or mental disability.

People may not only be at greater risk of a forced marriage, but also face significant barriers with accessing support and leaving home.





Harmful Treatment The Global Reach of So-Called Conversion Therapy

Regardless of religious, cultural, or traditional norms and contexts, these harmful practices never work; instead, they often cause deep, lasting trauma that affects each area of life for decades.

“Conversion therapy” is a sign of both societal and internalized homophobia and transphobia.

There are myths that sexual and gender diversity is unacceptable and wrong which result in rejection and condemnation.

“Conversion therapy or reparative therapy is any treatment, including individual talk therapy, behavioural or aversion therapy, group therapy treatments, medical or drug-induced treatments, which attempt to change someone’s sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.”

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

Gender-Based violence affects 2SLGBTQIA+ people in Canada and around the world

Across the world, 77 countries criminalize same-sex activity, seven of them with the death penalty. The United Nations [Human Rights Office's](#) 2019 report highlights the dangers experienced.

These include:

- targeted killings
- sexual and physical violence and spontaneous attacks including in state institutions such as medical clinics, prisons and schools
- hate speech, even given by state officials and the media
- arrest and detention without basis
- forced conversion therapy, surgeries and sterilization
- restricted access to basic services including inadequate access to appropriate health care, particularly for those who are HIV-positive
- higher levels of bullying and abuse in school settings, leading to lower educational attainment

But some forms of violence are also experienced in Canada. The issue is complex.

<https://hillnotes.ca/2020/06/10/lgbtq2-refugees-in-canada/>



Criminalization exposes those concerned to the constant risk of arrest, detention and, in some cases, torture or even execution. It also perpetuates stigma and contributes intolerance and violence. Changing laws is a human rights priority.

In those countries that have already removed criminal sanctions, greater, collaborative efforts are needed to respond to discrimination and homophobia, including both legislative and educational initiatives.

As allies, we all have a role to play, particularly those in positions of power and privilege— including politicians, community leaders, teachers and journalists.

<https://www.un.org/africarenewal/web-features/homophobia-violence-intolerance>

“When half of all LGBTQ2 individuals in Canada report experiencing gender-based violence, it is a national crisis that calls for an immediate response.”

The Honourable Maryam Monsef Minister for Women and Gender Equality





Mission

MOSAIC enriches communities through services and advocacy, furthering the success and sense of belonging of newcomers and individuals from diverse backgrounds.



Settlement Assistance



English Language Training



Employment Programs



Interpretation and Translation

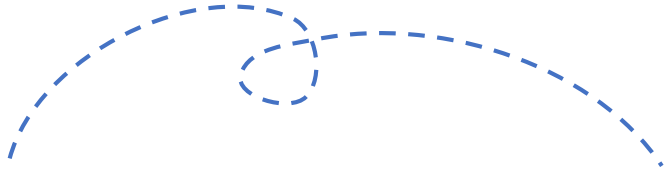


Counselling Services



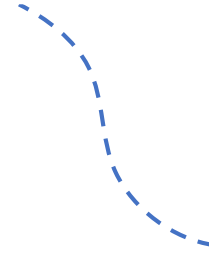
Community Outreach





I Belong

Facing the intersections between gender, sexuality, class, race, cultural diversity, criminalization, and colonization....





I Belong

Facing the intersections between gender, sexuality, class, race, cultural diversity, criminalization, and colonization....

Peer Support Group

One-on-one
Counselling

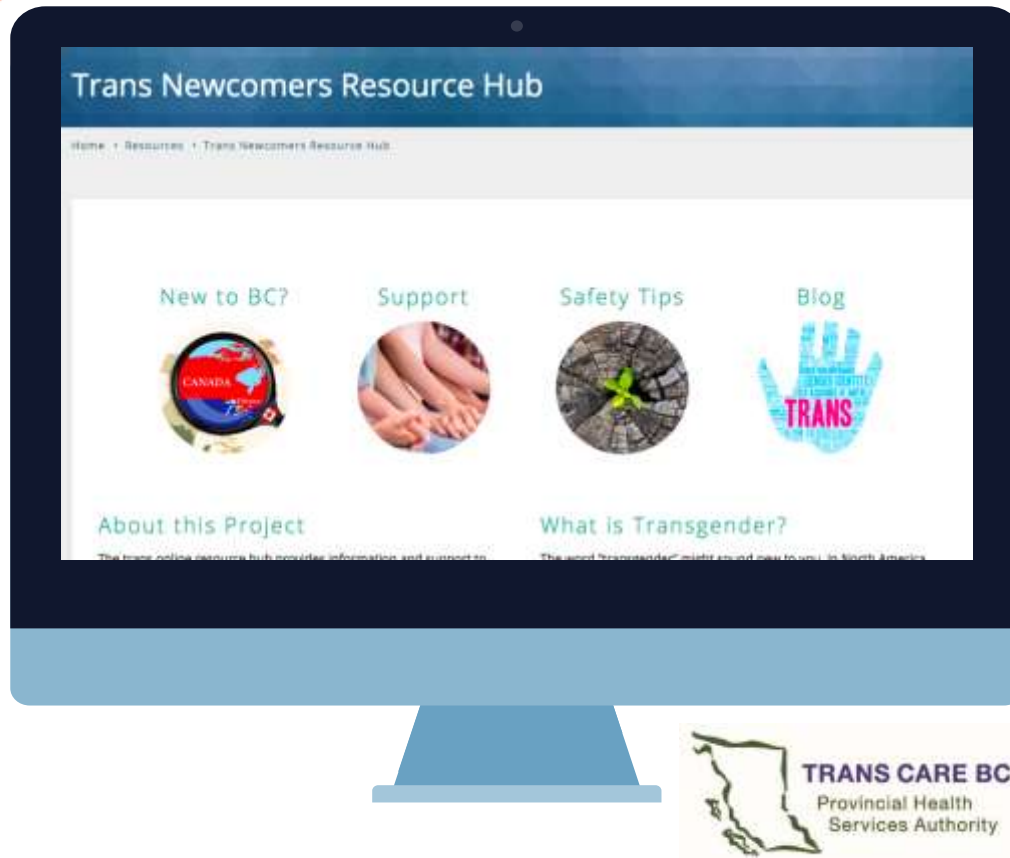


Counselling Support
Group

One-on-one Support

Beyond Borders and
Binaries





Trans-Newcomers Resource Hub

Online community where newcomer transgender folks can access settlement related information and resources, find peers and mentors, and build a network of support.



Part 3
Practicing Allyship with
2SLGBTQIA+ Newcomers,
Immigrants & Refugees

Positive Spaces Initiative

Resource for more information:

<http://positivespaces.ca/>

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*LGBTQ+ = Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, etc.

POSITIVE SPACES INITIATIVE MODEL



LGBTQIA+
Settlement
Network

Partnerships &
regular meetings



Regional
Champions

Raise Awareness
about LGBTQIA+
newcomers



PSI
Professional
Development

Train & develop
action plans & best
practices to better
serve LGBTQIA+
newcomers



Roundtable
Events

Identifying specific
issues affecting
LGBTQIA+
newcomers



Grassroots
Initiatives,
Conferences

Share resources,
expand PSI network
regionally,
provincially &
federally



Inclusive Language

The use of gender non-**specific language** (i.e. **'partner' instead of 'husband', or 'they' instead of 'she'**) to avoid assumptions around gender identity and sexual orientation, and to enhance the accessibility of information and services. Educational, social, and health services are especially encouraged to use inclusive language until advised otherwise by the person they are talking to or about.

Don't

OUT PEOPLE to other staff or clients

PRESSURE them to be OUT (anywhere) or stay closeted

ASSUME someone's gender or sexual orientation

QUESTION someone's identity or personal experiences

MIS-GENDER people – this is very harmful

SHAME OR BRING SIN into the conversation

ASSUME just because someone is Queer, they are not religious or spiritual

EXPECT people to educate you

QUESTION which washroom someone chooses to use (or other gendered spaces)

SAY "You don't look/seem gay"

ONLY HAVE BINARY-GENDERED spaces and programs



Being A Better 2SLGBTQAI+ Ally:

- ✓ Listen, respect, and acknowledge the validity of the experiences and perspectives of 2SLGBTQAI+ people.
- ✓ Actively seek out information and opportunities to further develop your own understanding. Sources may be the media, events, connecting with 2SLGBTQAI+ community members, and looking into services and supports in your community.
- ✓ Your learning is your responsibility. 2SLGBTQAI+ people are not obligated to answer your questions and be educators.
- ✓ Be open to feedback about the impacts of your behaviour on others.
- ✓ Reflect on and question negative stereotypes and perceptions of 2SLGBTQAI+ held by you or other people.
- ✓ Try not to assume how other people identify: "Listen for, or politely ask, how someone wants to be identified."
- ✓ Know that there are 2SLGBTQAI+ people, or people with 2SLGBTQAI+ loved ones, around you when you are discussing 2SLGBTQAI+ topics. Consider how those around you "...might be impacted by the tone, spirit, and direction of the conversation.





- ✓ Observe and be aware of the ways that people around you act as allies.
- ✓ Remember, everyone's experience of gender and sexuality is different and it's impossible (and unfair) to ask one person to speak on behalf of a whole group!"
- ✓ When you see offensive behaviour or language, intervene!
- ✓ Actively use gender and sexually inclusive language to ensure that everyone around you feels respected and comfortable.
- ✓ Be aware of the challenges and barriers faced by 2SLGBTQAI+ people- challenge them!
- ✓ If you make a mistake, apologize- even if you have good intent. Becoming a better ally involves making errors, acknowledging those errors, and growing from them.
- ✓ Be courageous! Don't be afraid to learn, ask for more information and provide support.

<https://egale.ca/awareness/how-to-be-an-lgbtq-ally/>

Please join us
for project updates, resources & discussion:

Staff Network on GBV @settlement.org

Upcoming Webinar

December 2: Engaging Men & Boys





Resources

Programs and Resources Across Canada

The Positive Spaces Initiative (PSI) was developed by the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI).

<https://positivespaces.ca/>

OCASI: Building Newcomers' Resilience through Community Education:

A Toolkit for Service Providers. <https://ocasi.org/sites/default/files/ocasi-gbv-toolkit-english-online.pdf>

Rainbow Resource Centre

<https://rainbowresourcecentre.org/support/groups/new-pride-of-winnipeg>

Out Saskatoon

https://www.outsaskatoon.ca/sk_lgbtq2s_organizations

Laing (2006): LGBTQ Immigrant Exclusion: An Introduction.

<http://legacy.aaisa.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/LGBTQ-Immigrant-Exclusion-An-Introduction.pdf>

YMCA: Gender-Based Violence Prevention – A Guide for Working with Newcomers.

<https://www.ymcafx.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/YMCA-Manual-online.pdf>

Suehn (2015): The experience of settlement work with LGBTQ newcomers.

<https://open.library.ubc.ca/cIRcle/collections/ubctheses/24/items/1.0166680>

Check out groups who are actively working with 2SLGBTQIA+ newcomers:

SOY EXPRESS: <https://soytoronto.com/programs/express/>

Rainbow Railroad:

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

519

<https://www.the519.org/>


I Belong- Mosaic B.C

<https://www.mosaicbc.org/services/settlement/lgbtq/>

Trans Newcomers Resource Hub

<https://www.mosaicbc.org/resources/trans/>



Media	
Gender Neutral Pronoun Practice	http://showyourlovetoday.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Pronoun-Practice.pdf
Queer Muslims Confront Intersectional Challenges	https://youtu.be/wu0yhryYlQ
Why Gender Pronouns Matter	https://youtu.be/9iKHjI5xAaA
Idon't want to leave part of myself at the door	https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL86252F3CAD425969
What Does "Two-Spirit" Mean?	https://youtu.be/A4IBibGzUnE
Gay Criminalization from 1799 to 2019	https://www.unfe.org/the-history-of-the-right-to-love-if-youre-gay/
Intersectionality: Bob the stripey blue triangle	https://miriamdobson.com/2013/04/24/intersectionality-a-fun-guide/
You Are Among Friends - A booklet by and for LGBTQ+ newcomers	https://learnatwork.ca/pluginfile.php/47868/mod_resource/content/1/Gender-Inclusivity-Sheet_PDF-web-SEPT-2016.pdf
I don't want to leave part of myself at the door	https://www.amssa.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/OCASI-Positive-Spaces-Starter-Kit-English.pdf
Discussing trans and gender-diverse people	https://www.the519.org/education-training/training-resources/our-resources/media-reference-guide
Guide to Allyship	https://guidetoallyship.com/?fbclid=IwAR2f078Ay1uran8Ok9OZLbHLWLPYKYL4c-VUoLCt9sHkTMGe7EpQBfqaATg
Queer Terminology from A to Q	https://qmunity.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Queer-Glossary_2019_02.pdf



Thank You!