A National Youth Initiative

PRIDE GUIDE 2022

Youth Strategies for Tackling Gender-Based Violence in our Schools

Public Health Agency of Canada

Agence de la santé publique du Canada

Canada

TO PROMOTE AND PROTECT THE HEALTH OF CANADIANS THROUGH LEADERSHIP, PARTNERSHIP, INNOVATION AND ACTION IN PUBLIC HEALTH.
  —Public Health Agency of Canada

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The views and recommendations expressed in this report do not necessarily represent the views of the Public Health Agency of Canada.

Participating Schools & Districts

- Campbell River School District, BC
- Central Collegiate Institute, Moose Jaw, SK
- Cold Lake High School, Cold Lake, AB
- Collège Jeanne Sauvé, Winnipeg, MB
- Colonel By Secondary School, Ottawa, ON
- D.S. MacKenzie, Edmonton, AB
- Dakota Collegiate, Winnipeg, MB
- David Suzuki High School, Brampton, ON
- Dr. Lila Fahlman School, Edmonton, AB
- École Sir John Franklin, Yellowknife, NWT
- Edmonton Public School District, AB
- Hampton High School, Hampton, NB
- Inuksuk High School, Iqaluit, NU
- J.N. Burnett Secondary, Richmond, BC
- Queen Elizabeth High School, Edmonton, AB
- Saint John High School, Saint John, NB
- Selkirk Secondary School, Kimberley, BC
- Westsyde Secondary School, Kamloops, BC
- Winston Knoll Collegiate, Regina, SK

Centre for Global Education

PROLOGUE

The Centre for Global Education (CGE) is a school-based education non-profit that develops and delivers virtual projects to engage and empower youth from across the planet as global citizens through connecting them to the people, places, and issues they are learning about in their classrooms. Through the power of critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration, CGE empowers youth to work towards solutions to some of the world's greatest challenges.

For this project, with support from the Public Health Agency of Canada and in partnership with TakingITGlobal Youth Association, the Centre for Global Education brought together students from 16 school districts across Canada to explore the lived experiences of Canadian 2SLGBTQ+ youth with gender-based violence in their schools and communities. Between February and May 2022, alongside leadership from the youth advisory committee, students coast-to-coast-to-coast came together in a series of workshops, online communities, and a national survey, to highlight and discuss the ongoing challenges faced by themselves and their peers, and strategize around possible solutions. In an effort to capture their shared passion, a core youth leadership team co-wrote the following guidebook, "PRIDE GUIDE: Youth Strategies for Tackling Gender-Based Violence in our Schools." The purpose of this guide is to present a collection of by-youth strategies that address some of the most common challenges in navigating the physical, psychological, and emotional spaces within high schools. The youth leadership team responsible for drafting this guide compiled information on their lived experiences with the hope that it will equip people with real-life ideas that can help them to grow and strengthen their school communities.

This guide is a redraft of a version produced in 2019, completed before the Covid pandemic. Amongst many impacts, this global health crisis has illuminated the vulnerabilities and challenges that 2SLGBTQ+ students face. It has provided a clear picture of existing inequalities—and a clearer picture of the steps forward we need to take. Covid has brought urgent conversations to the forefront of our current education systems. The pandemic has forced a massive shift away from learning and teaching in traditional settings with physical interactions. It has presented us with deep questions such as the role of 'The School' as a tangible location versus school as a dispersed and virtual community of learners. This is a major challenge for youth living in situations that are unsafe for their sexual orientation and/or gender identity who often rely on the physical setting of their schools to provide connection, community, and safe spaces.

The Centre for Global Education wants to extend an enormous thank you and congratulations to the hundreds of hours of work that have been put in by students across the country to lead this conversation.

WHO ARE WE

We are a group of youth from across Canada, 16 different places - big cities, small towns, even little communities, from West to East to North - 16 unique parts of the country carrying with it significant similarities and differences. Thank you for reading this guide.

Each of us, as individuals, identify with different races, ethnicities, ancestries, and places of origin, but share a common thread through the 2SLGBTQ+ community. While we are all tied together by this similarity, we are a wonderfully and profoundly diverse group. However, rather than setting us apart, these differences make us stronger and more connected to one another. We use this diversity as a tool to promote wellness and strength in schools for our fellow 2SLGBTQ+ and allied students.

This guide is a story of unity, persistence, and collective responsibility. Despite the different stories that we each have individually, the bond we have formed together has helped us to understand each other.

So, who are we? Our response is that we are all part of a single, united community fighting against gender-based violence, and different kinds of discrimination and how these impact our ability to move freely in our schools. This initiative, the Pride Guide project, has provided a means for us to express ourselves positively and identify potential pathways forward.

DEFINING GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

In this project, we define Gender-Based Violence (GBV) as any type of violence that is directed towards an individual based on their actual or perceived sex assigned at birth, gender identity/expression, or sexual orientation.

It is a violence that impacts us not only physically, but comes with mental, emotional, and psychological effects as well:

- Toxic masculinity - When a set of attitudes and ways of behaving stereotypically associated with or expected of men becomes toxic. It is has a negative impact on both men and on society
  - Examples: "Boys don't cry," "men shouldn't wear pink", "boys will be boys"

- Sexism - Prejudice, stereotyping, or discrimination against women and people of a marginalized gender based on sex or gender, or their perceived sex or gender.
  - Examples: Dress code violations in schools that only focus on/are enforced on girls, "She must be PMS-ing"

- Microaggressions - Subtle, unintentional comments or actions that are harmful to marginalized people.
  - Examples: "I identify as a potato," "Why don't we have straight pride day?", "You don't sound/look gay", "Which one of you is the 'guy'?"

THE IMPORTANCE OF GENDER & SEXUALITY ALLIANCES (GSAS)

Throughout this guide the term "Gender & Sexuality Alliance" is used to refer to communities of 2SLGBTQ+ students, as well as their allies, which operate within school environments.

We feel that having an established Gender & Sexuality Alliance (GSA throughout this guidebook), allows our schools to have a clear 2SLGBTQ+ community and presence. This provides students like us a safe place to express ourselves and ask questions. GSAs are often used as a stepping stone, providing words, voice, and experience on our journey to coming out. As well, being around other queer people decreases our feelings of isolation. GSAs work towards making a safer environment for us and all students by promoting mental, physical, and emotional wellness. A GSA also provides a sanctuary for our peers struggling with questions and do not feel comfortable seeking formal counselling. For others, who are devoted and passionate about social justice issues, a GSA helps them raise awareness for the problems that matter in our schools and communities.

In our National Youth Survey, 54.2% of respondents said that their emotional/ mental health was worse than before the pandemic. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many of us had to move our learning and social lives to online spaces, and our school clubs and communities were lost in the process. Within many schools, GSA members had no way to communicate with each other safely, meaning some youth in our 2SLGBTQ+ communities had no safe place to express themselves. For example, when asked if they moved online during COVID, 10 out of 13 GSAs that addressed the topic said they were unable to make the shift. Students at those schools were left to find supportive places by themselves.

COVID
AND COMMUNITIES

That said, with the ubiquity of social media, we - 2SLBGTQ+ youth - found other ways to connect and make our own communities. We discovered methods to freely express ourselves through consumption and creation of different kinds of content. Over 70% of Canadian 2SLBGTQ+ youth survey respondents named platforms such as Discord, TikTok, Instagram, YouTube, and other social media sites, as places they looked to build connections with old friends and create new ones. Through finding online community or keeping a pre-existing community alive by moving it online, queer youth felt and still feel like we belong.

Personal Experiences Through COVID, comments from our National Youth Survey:
- "I watched 2SLGBTQ+ stuff on TikTok and YouTube. I improved my art skills, improved my craft skills, ditched my toxic friends, and learned about mental health stuff"
- "I talked to friends/family and joined online discord servers that are very supportive of people talking about queer issues and topics on Instagram and TikTok"
- "I spoke with supportive friends and tried to get my parents to use my preferred pronouns, rather than how they've seen me for the past 20 years. I also watch a lot of TikTok."

PRIORITIES FOR AN INCLUSIVE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

Priority 1: Inclusive Language

Pronouns

Using 2SLGBTQ+ inclusive language is vital to reflecting the diversity of orientations, genders, and expressions in school communities. Gender-inclusive pronouns beyond "he" or "she" such as the singular use of "they," as well as gender-inclusive forms of addressing groups such as "folks," makes all the difference to 2SLGBTQ+ students. Staff and students need to be aware of exclusionary language such as "you guys" or "ladies and gentlemen," and actively avoid these phrases.

There are a variety of pronouns, and it is important to always check when meeting new people what their preferred pronoun is, as well as letting them know yours. Never assume someone's pronoun. There are people who choose to use neopronouns and alternate pronouns like "xe/xem", "ze/zir", "it/its". These pronouns offer inclusion and accuracy for someone who doesn't identify by the male/female gender classifications.[1],[2]

Deadnaming

Another issue in our schools and classrooms is the deadnaming and misgendering of trans youth. This results in outing youth when they may not be comfortable with everyone knowing how they identify. It is also emotionally exhausting for us to be worried about being unexpectedly called out. It is essential for administration to take the effort to ensure that people's preferred names and gender are on attendance sheets, in email addresses, on student records, etc, to avoid the harmful impact of these situations. It should not always be up to us - youth - to push for these basic recognitions, especially when it is the system, not the people, that are the issue.

Slurs

The use of slurs in schools remains a prevalent issue for us in the 2SLGBTQ+ community. We call on teachers and administrators to act when they hear this language. One way is to contextualise to youth the history and meaning that surrounds the slurs. Building empathy helps to remind our peers that we are humans with feelings that can be hurt by their behaviour. Changing the conversation with the history of these words and why particular words (fag, dyke, queer, etc.) are so hurtful is a productive place to start. [A good lesson plan can be found here.]

[1] UNC Greensborough. (2020, October 5). Neopronouns explained - UNCG. The Office of Intercultural Engagement. Retrieved May 1, 2022, from https://intercultural.uncg.edu/wp-content/uploads/Neopronouns-Explained-UNCG-Intercultural-Engagement.pdf

[2] The "Neutral Language Council" collective. (2020, January 1). My pronouns are: It/its Pronouns.page. Retrieved May 1, 2022, from https://en.pronouns.page/it

Olga, 15

ALL GENDER
RESTROOM

ALL GENDER

Examples of 2SLGBTQ+-inclusive signage

Priority 2: School Architecture

The design, layout, signage, and architecture of a school has a huge emotional and psychological impact on 2SLGBTQ+ students in terms of comfort, wellbeing, health, and safety. We feel that it is a matter of human dignity that these facilities exist. We feel that every school should have the following in place to make all students feel accepted and supported by their school.

Gender-Neutral Washrooms and Change Rooms
Just as ramps are useful for all students, gender neutral washrooms are useful for all students, not only non-binary or trans students. Every school needs at least two gender-neutral bathrooms and change rooms available for students to use. These bathrooms must be unlocked and available to anyone and free menstrual products and hotline numbers should be available. When indicating the washrooms by signs and colours, it should not be traditionally gendered (pink/blue), nor should it be only pride colours. It should be discreet, with clear signage to eliminate the potential of outing or increased harassment towards queer students, but it should also be in an accessible location for security.

Displays of Support
For many of the students involved in this project, visible signs reflecting their identities and offering support were key to their ongoing mental health at school. We believe there are several ways that schools can support a feeling of safety and inclusion
- Painting things rainbow (e.g., Staircase, hallways, gym floor, etc.)
- Putting up flags in public spaces like the gym or library
- GSA notice board (e.g., events, flags, book recommendations)
- Displays on school TV - these are a great option because they are not easily vandalized
- Safe Space pride stickers in classrooms
- Informational posters (e.g., gender-bread person, etc)

Priority 3: Creating & Running Successful GSAs

We believe that one of the keys to a safe and healthy school environment is a thriving GSA, run by passionate youth who truly want to make a change in their school. It is important that 2SLGBTQ+ youth take charge of their own needs and wants within their communities and believe in their voices and experiences.

Setting up a Club
- Talk to other GSAs to get inspired
- Identify an interested & trustworthy teacher-sponsor
- Create a proposal to present to the principal/teacher
- Find a safe space (if this isn't possible, look to your larger community to see if a meeting space exists)
- Inform the student body that anyone is encouraged to join
- Create rules that maintain your space as inclusive and accessible - and enforce them
- Listen to the concerns and requests of your members, a safe space welcomes everyone's opinions, needs, and ideas. Some examples of important rules include:
  - Talk about the idea, not the person
  - No dead-naming & no assuming pronouns
  - What happens at GSA stays at GSA
- Choose a meeting time (once a week is ideal) to keep conversations going and maintain momentum towards common goals.

Naming your Club
The level of acceptance at each school is different, so choosing the right name for your club is important. Choosing one that makes clear what your club is about, but also maintains safety. There are many common names, or you could make up your own!

Some Common Acronyms
- GSA: "Gender and Sexuality Alliance" (previously known as "Gay-Straight Alliance")
- QSA: "Queer Straight Alliance"

- SOGI: "Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity"
- HERO: "Helping Educate Regarding Orientation"
- SAFE: "Students Advocating For Equality"

Dealing with Peer Hostility
Our National Youth Survey revealed that since the start of the pandemic, students have continued to experience harassment, bullying, and other forms of GBV because they are 2SLGBTQ+ (or others thought they were 2SLGBTQ+). This includes 38.4% who indicated they had experienced verbal harassment, 41.1% that disclosed someone revealed their 2SLGBTQ+ identity to others without their permission, and 26.8% who said they had experienced cyberbullying. 15.3% added that they had been subjected to a threat of physical or sexual harassment or violence. Though this number seems low, this creates a feeling of unsafe school cultures and the idea that schools might not always be supportive. It is important that students are all reminded that if they feel unsafe or uncomfortable, then they should leave the immediate area around a situation and contact their school administration.

Encouraging Participation
Encouraging meaningful participation can help promote diversity in your GSA and keep members coming back:

- Setting open goals for the year so people know what they are coming to do, and it doesn't feel exclusive
- Make sure people's voices feel heard
- Use social media and post pictures/videos of the GSA in action
- Incentives/prizes for showing up and participating
- Invite guest speakers from the queer community
- Advertise in the school with announcements and posters
- Talk to junior high schools so incoming students are already excited to join

Priority 4: Teachers & Administrators

Feeling safe

As teens, our lives centre on school, work, home, and our faith communities. If we don't feel safe at school, that is a significant part of our lives to continually fear or juggle anxiety around. By helping to promote strong mental health, through creating places that we feel safe, 2SLGBTQ+ students can thrive.

During a workshop on this topic, 2SLGBTQ+ students from across Canada came up with the following priorities on what makes us feel safe in our school community. They are presented anonymously below:

- "Teachers who try to connect and relate to you"
- "A lack of any physical/emotional threats, physical and mental security and safety"
- "Being able to open, learn, make mistakes and be vulnerable with each other. A safe community to me is constructive for everyone"
- "Using my preferred names in the appropriate times > no outing"
- "Having the ability to share my emotions and have the chance to grow without barriers"
- "Communication that is ongoing and open"
- "Being heard and understood without judgement"
- "Seeing myself in the school - representation visually in a space is important!"
- "Being able to be myself without thinking twice"
- "Inclusive buildings (e.g., having gender neutral washrooms)"

Teachers

Supportive teachers and staff members in the school is a key step in creating an inclusive environment. Teachers are the liaison between students and administration, with the ability to get to know individual students on a deeper level than the assistant principals and principals. A supportive teacher fosters a welcoming classroom space and opens discussions outside of the GSA environment.

TEACHERS SHOULD	TEACHERS SHOULD NOT
Use posters, pins, or stickers to share their own gender/sexual identity to create a safe space	Put up "safe space" posters in their classroom if they are not open to supporting queer students
Begin the semester with a *private* survey asking for preferred names/pronouns of all students	Refuse to use correct pronouns and/or name
Check with the student to see where they are out and where they are not	Out students without their permission
Understand that gender and sexuality changes throughout someone's life	Force students to provide a label on their gender and sexual identity
Make it clear that they want to connect to, understand, and support their students	Use dead names in safe spaces or use chosen names in non-safe spaces.
Use phrases like "folks" of "friends" when addressing the class	Use phrases like "boys and girls" or "guys" when addressing the class as a whole
Ask for student input when organising a GSA that will best serve their needs	Be secretive about the GSA and refuse to talk about it openly
Bring in resources (articles, guest speakers, videos) from the queer community	Refuse to talk openly about SOGI topics in all classes
Include in their plans for substitute teachers a section with information on pronouns	Rely on the official class list to reflect the correct names and pronouns of their students to guest teachers

Administrators

We believe it is the role of administrators at our schools (principals, assistant principals, guidance counsellors, librarians, nurses, etc.) to set the tone for language and behaviour. Silence is never a good approach. Administrators need to build trust with 2SLGBTQ+ students in their school, so that when incidents happen, everyone feels like they will be listened to, heard, and seen, and then treated fairly and with empathy.

Priority 5: Education that Reflects

Sexual Health Education

In our National Student Survey, only 4.3% of student respondents indicated that they had been taught explicitly on 2SLGBTQ+ related topics in <u>any</u> classroom curriculum in the last year. However, 45.4% of respondents agreed with the statement, "I have seen positive *representations* of 2SLGBTQ+ related topics in a class." This lack of representation creates youth that are ignorant or averse to SOGI health and wellbeing. In addition, not teaching 2SLGBTQ+ sexual education ignores the sexual health and wellbeing of 2SLGBTQ+ youth. Including 2SLGBTQ+ sexual education in classes normalizes the language, behaviours and relationships. If schools are to prepare all youth for the future and keep students safe, then we cannot ignore the importance of inclusive sexual education.

We believe that sexual education should meet the following minimum guidelines:
- Education on the history of sexual orientation and gender identity
- Language and identities within the queer community
- Sex education implemented at younger grades
- Safe sex practices for all types of sexual health and wellbeing
- Topics of consent and relationships

Other Subjects

Sciences - Update content to reflect current understandings of gender and sex
- Acknowledging trans, intersex, and sex hormones in biology

Mathematics - Queer representation in all areas of study
- Casual representation in problems that include queer actors and use of a variety of pronouns (again, normalizing language)

Social Studies - Inclusion of 2SLGBTQ+ history not just in social justice specific classes
- Cover gay rights movements in Canadian history; examine challenges faced by 2SLGBTQ+ refugees; explore stories of two-spirit elders and the role in Indigenous communities worldwide

English - Inclusion of literature that shares stories from the 2SLGBTQ+ perspective
- Ensure prose are written by queer authors and not just stories on this topic by people outside of the community

Physical Education - Remove labels and barriers for trans students
- Split PE classes by desired competitiveness level, rather than gender

Art & Music - Study the rich and expansive history of 2SLGBTQ+ contributions
- Include pieces by queer artists and study the impacts they had on society

Other School Spaces - Display inclusive imaging and messages throughout the school
- Library books and resources in prominent positions for pride month

Kristine, 16

IT GETS BETTER

During one of our national workshops, 2SLGBTQ+ students from across Canada talked about things we would tell younger versions of ourselves, just entering our schools. These positive messages and affirmations remind us that we have the power to make change in our communities and shift them to the better!

"There is always someone to talk to."

"Some people may not understand, but there are always people who will."

"Utilise your counsellors and support system."

"There are people in your community who like you and support

you."

"Don't be afraid to reach out for help."

"Try to not let the ignorance bother you, they don't know better."

"Even if it has a bad start, you can find your supports."

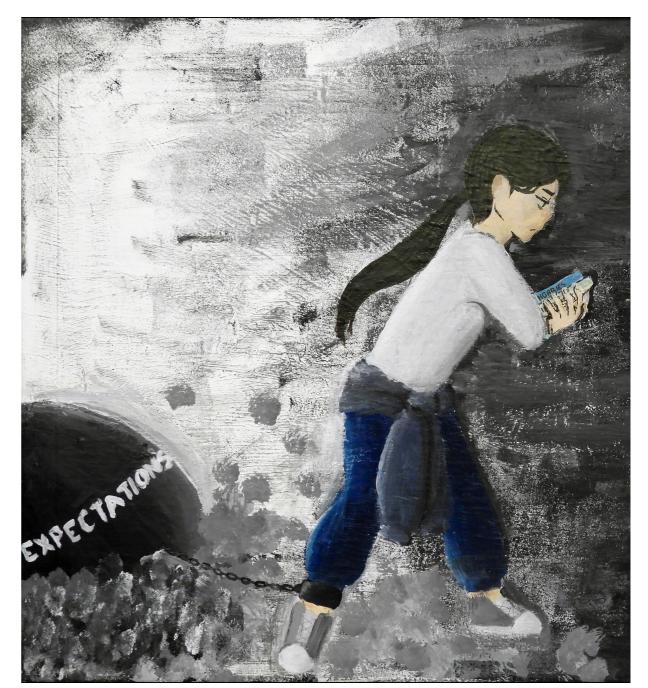"Don't stop fighting, it gets better eventually."

"There are others going through the same struggles who understand the strife of these tribulations."

"It's okay that you deadnamed yourself, you didn't think it would happen."

"Try not to be so hard on yourself."

"I really am not alone and there are so many people going through similar situations."

"Try to be a safe space for others."

Isabelle, 16

Appendix : Definitions

Ally: A heterosexual and cisgender person who supports equality for members of the 2SLGBTQ+ community by challenging homophobia, biphobia, or transphobia.

Aromantic: Aromanticism is a romantic orientation that describes someone who feels disconnected from societal expectations of romance. Aromanticism is a spectrum and can vary from little interest in romantic relationships, to complete romance repulse.

Asexual: Feeling a disconnect from normalized societal expectations of sexual attraction. Ranges from little interest to complete sex repulsion.

Bisexual: Sexually attracted not exclusively to people of one gender; attracted to men, women, and non-binary people.

Cisgender: Most people are "cisgender." That is, their gender identity is aligned with or "matches" the sex they were assigned at birth. The opposite of this definition would be trans, or transgender.

Deadnaming: Using the pre-transition name (i.e., deadname) for someone, instead of the individual's current preferred, chosen name. It is both emotionally and psychologically harmful.

Gender: A societal construct of expectations and stereotypes related to behaviours, actions, and roles of "man" or "woman." Social norms related to gender vary depending on the culture and change over time.

Gender Dysphoria: The clinically significant distress a person feels due to a mismatch between their gender identity and their sex assigned at birth. It is a diagnosable disorder categorised in the DSM-5. People with gender dysphoria commonly identify as transgender, but gender nonconformity does not always lead to dysphoria.

Gender Identity/Expression: How a person publicly presents their gender. This includes behaviour and outward appearance such as dress, hair, make-up, body language and voice. For most people, their sex and gender identity align, but for some, it does not. People may identify outside the categories of woman/man and be Gender Non-Conforming (GNC). People who are gender non-conforming may or may not identify as trans.

Genderfluid: Changes over time in a person's gender expression or gender identity, or both.

Homosexual/Gay: Refers to a person attracted to the same gender or sex, or the trait of being attracted to the same gender or sex. This term is usually used for non-women but has evolved into an umbrella term for all non-straight-identifying people.

Heteronormativity/Cisnormativity: Acting on/believing in a worldview that perpetuates the idea that heterosexuality is the only "normal" or "natural" identity and way of life.

Heterosexual/Straight: refers to a person attracted to the opposite gender or sex.

Intersectionality: A concept used in critical theories to describe the ways in which oppressive institutions (racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, classism, etc.) are interconnected and cannot exist separately from one another. A comprehensive definition and resources list is linked here.

Intersex: A term used to describe a person born with reproductive systems, chromosomes and/or hormones that are not easily characterized as male or female. Intersex characteristics occur in one out of every 1,500 births. Some intersex people identify with their assigned sex, while others do not.

Lesbian: Someone that is sexually attracted to people of one's own gender identity. Lesbian is an exclusive term for non-male identifying people who are solely attracted to non-male identifying people.

Misgendering: Referring to someone, especially a transgender person, using a word, a pronoun or form of address that does not correctly reflect the gender with which they identify.

Non-Binary (NB, Enby): An all-encompassing category for gender identities that are not exclusively masculine or feminine–identities, which are outside the gender binary.

Outing: The act of disclosing a 2SLGBTQ+ person's sexual orientation or gender identity without their consent.

Pansexual: The sexual, romantic, or emotional attraction towards any people regardless of their sex or gender identity.

Phobia (Homophobia/Transphobia/Biphobia): The aversion to, fear, hatred, or intolerance of 2SLGBTQ+ people and communities. Like other prejudices, it is based on stereotypes and misconceptions that are used to justify discrimination, harassment, and violence toward queer people.

Pronouns: Words that replace a noun in a sentence such as "she/her", "he/him", or "they/them". Alternatively, there are neopronouns like "xe/xem" or "ze/zir". Xenopronouns are a subsection of neopronouns in which a different noun is used in place of a pronoun.

Queer: An umbrella term used to describe people in the 2SLGBTQ+ community broadly. Often used as a term meaning "not straight" - although seen as a slur by certain people or associated with radical movements that many people consider scandalous, so be wary of usage.

Sex: The classification of people as male, female, or intersex. Sex is usually assigned at birth and is based on an assessment of a person's reproductive systems, hormones, chromosomes, and other physical characteristics.

Sexual Orientation: Describes the complexity of human sexuality. It ranges from gay/lesbian to bisexual and heterosexual orientations and changes throughout a person's life. Sexual orientation is not determined based on gender identity, as a trans person may identify as gay, lesbian, queer, straight, or bisexual, just as people who do not identify as trans.

Transgender (Trans): A person who identifies as a gender other than what they were assigned at birth. It includes, but is not limited to, people who identify as transgender, transsexual, or gender queer. Some people may identify as trans and not use the labels "female" or "male." Others may identify as existing between male and female or in different ways beyond the binary of male/female.

Trans man and Trans woman: A person whose sex assigned at birth is "female" and identifies as a man may also identify as a trans man (female-to-male FTM). A person whose sex assigned at birth is "male" and identifies as a woman may also identify as a trans woman (male-to-female MTF).

Transitioning: Refers to the process of transitioning from one gender to another, or none. This process may include changing the way that they dress, the pronouns they use or the name they go by. Some people may also choose to go through medically supportive treatments such as hormone therapy, gender-affirming surgeries, and other procedures. The process of transitioning looks different for everyone, and there is no average time for the process and not everyone may choose to do the same things.

Two-Spirit: A term used by/for Indigenous peoples to describe, from a cultural perspective, people who are not heterosexual/cisgender. It is used to capture a concept that exists in many Indigenous cultures and languages. The term Two-Spirit can describe a societal and spiritual role that people played within traditional societies, such as: mediators, keepers of ceremonies, transcending accepted roles of men and women, and filling a role as an established middle gender. Some Indigenous cultures had up to 8 different gender designations. Here is a video explaining in more depth.

Acronym	Definition	Acronym	Definition
AFAB	Assigned Female at Birth	GSA/QSA	Gender & Sexuality Alliance, Gay-Straight Alliance, or Queer Straight Alliance.
AMAB	Assigned Male at Birth	2SLGBTQIA+	Two Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer (Questioning), Intersex, Asexual, and more
GNC	Gender Non-conforming	WLW	Woman loving woman; typically used to describe non-males in a relationship with other non-males;
FTM	Female-to-male transition	MLM	Man loving man; typically used to describe non-females in a relationship with other non-females
MTF	Male-to-female transition	T4T	Trans for trans; used to describe an intimate relationship between two trans people, no matter their gender identity
SOGI	Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity		