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2022

The
Queer
Agenda
Project

A Collection of
Queer Knowledge





LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT



We celebrate the work and lives of the first artists, the first story-tellers and the first history-makers who have been forgotten or ignored as time marched on. We acknowledge these early Creators that lived on the lands we now occupy.

We also acknowledge the traditional two-spirit identities present amongst Indigenous cultures that welcomes the important roles of gender diverse individuals. These individuals have been denied space and connection throughout history.

We vouch to provide safe spaces and opportunities to any individual falling under the two-spirit umbrella community, as well as embolden culture, ceremony, identity and spiritual nourishment.


These are the traditional lands and territories of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, the Wendat, the Haudenosaunee and the Anishinaabe peoples. The histories of those that previously cared for this land, the stories they told, and the lives they lived remain an integral part of it. In illuminating the voices of The Forgotten we hope to forge a bridge between all people creating a better more inclusive world where each of us is heard and our contributions acknowledged, commemorated and remembered.

Huron-Wendat /hu-ron wen-dat/

Haudenosaunee /hoe-dee-no-SHOW-nee/

Anishinaabe /ah-nish-ih-nah'-bey/

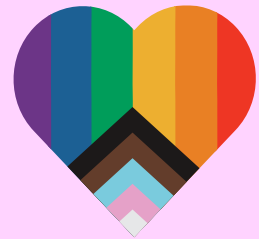
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ABOUT THE QUEER AGENDA

WHO WE ARE :

The Queer Agenda (QA) is a peer-led initiative with the purpose of reducing barriers faced by youth when accessing housing and shelter supports. Part of the QA mission is to combat homo/trans/biphobia by offering education, resources and programming in a hybrid format, for both staff and young people in shelter settings.



OUR PURPOSE :

We build safe spaces for 2SLGBTQ+ youth to promote inclusivity within communities. We raise awareness & education about queer culture and communities to empower queer youth and encourage allyship!

1977

Hot Pink = Sex

Red = Life

Orange = Healing

Yellow = Sunlight

Green = Nature

Turquoise = Magic
& Art

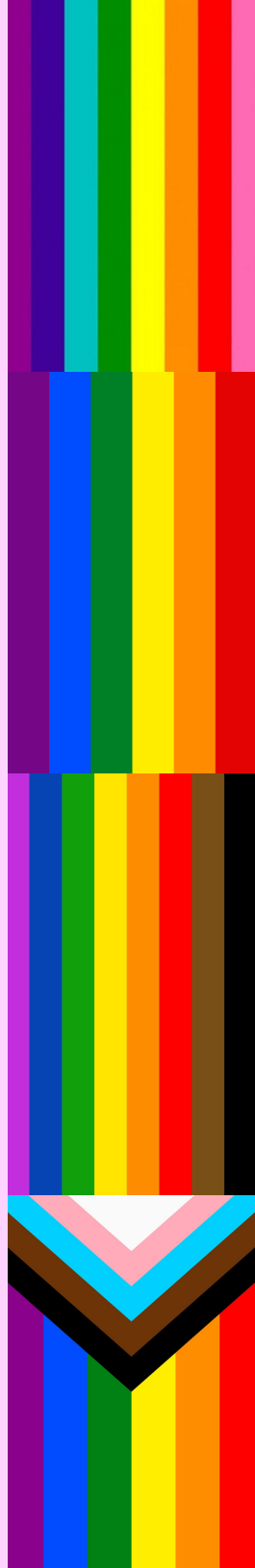
Indigo = Serenity

Violet = The spirit
of 2SLGBTQ+
people

1979

2017

2018



SOME IDENTITIES



Homosexual (Gay/Lesbian) :
Attraction to the same gender



Bisexual :
Attraction to two or more genders



Asexual :
Lack of sexual attraction



Transgender :
Gender that differs from the gender assigned at birth



Demigender :
Partial connection to a certain gender



Agender :
Lack of connection to gender



Queer :
General term referring to all non-heterosexual people



Non-binary :
General term for a gender which is not male or female



Pansexual :
Attraction to all genders



Genderfluid :
Gender that varies over time

SOME TERMS

Sexual Orientation : How a person defines their physical, emotional, and romantic attachments to other people. The three primary components of sexual orientation are attraction, behavior and identity, all of which may change over time for some people.

Romantic Attraction : Having romantic contact or interaction with an individual. Romance may involve kissing, hugging, talking about love, commitment, passion, and other factors.

Gender Identity : A person's inner sense of being a woman, man, another gender, or having no gender at all. It may also change over time for some people

Name and Pronouns : Using a person's correct name (potentially different than the name on official documents) and pronouns is vital. You cannot assume a person's name or pronouns without asking directly

What are pronouns?



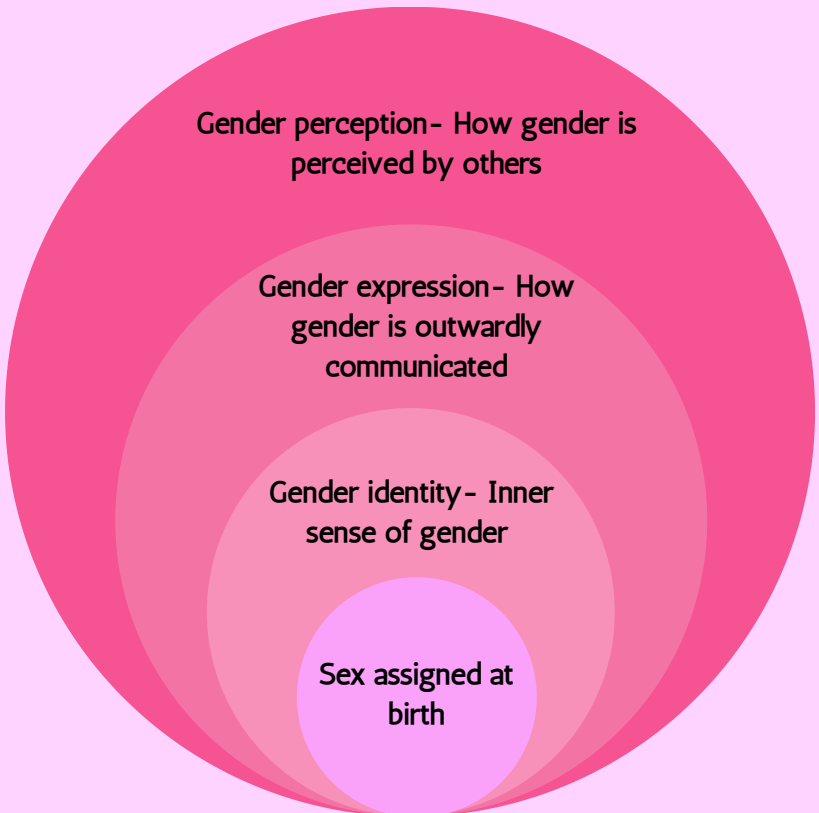
An extensive list of queer terms



INDIVIDUAL AND GLOBAL UNDERSTANDING OF GENDER

On the topic of gender, our understanding of it sits on various levels. These levels are encompassed within each other and affect each other. Our sex assigned at birth will impact our identity, just like our identity will impact our expression and just like our expression will impact our perception and others' perception of gender.

Harvard's
Terminology Guide



WHAT IS GENDER?

gen-der
noun

1. the male sex or the female sex, especially when considered with reference to social and cultural differences rather than biological ones, or one of a range of other identities that do not correspond to established ideas of male and female.

"the singer has opted to keep the names and genders of her twins private"

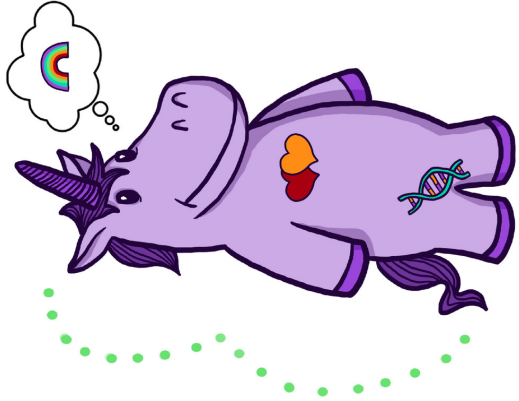
While gender has been traditionally associated with a male sex or a female sex, gender has also had a social and cultural context throughout history. When we say "gender" in today's society, we refer to **the way someone expresses masculinity, femininity or often a mix of both or the way someone's concept of self refers to masculinity/femininity**. Considering that everyone's understanding of gender can differ, **gender is often individual to each person**, allowing a multitude of gender identities to be recognized. There are nuances in the way that each person expresses their gender, making the options infinite when it comes to gender.

The truth is that **you cannot know how someone identifies simply by looking at them**. It can also be incredibly intrusive to ask someone the sex they were born with, as genitalia is typically an intimate conversation topic and not everyone would like to share what they have "between their legs". Let's say a man who has been in a severe accident has had to have his genitals amputated. We wouldn't refer to the man as being a woman after his surgery, although his sex does not align with his identity anymore.

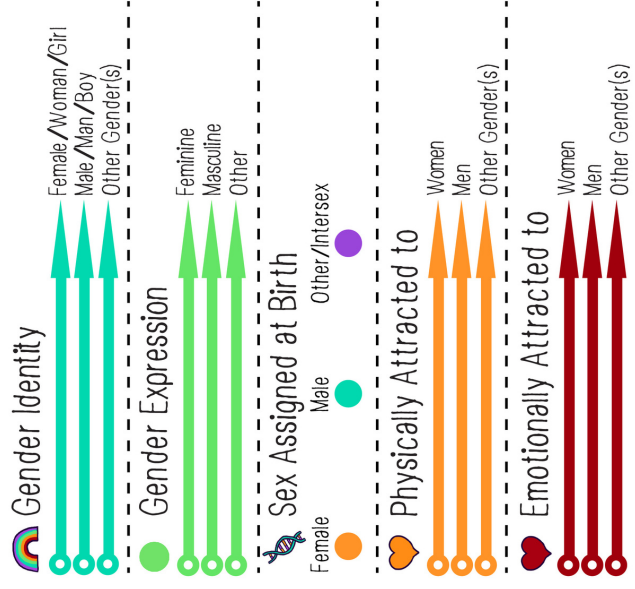
Some questions to ask ourselves :

- Has gender always been around? Will it always be around?
- If I move to Jupiter, will gender exist there?
- Do all animals have genders?
- Can a person's gender change over time?

The Gender Unicorn



Graphic by:
TSER
 Trans Student Educational Resources



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

Design by Landyn Pan and Anna Moore

DYSPHORIA

On the topic of gender, we can also think of gender dysphoria. Dysphoria is a term that refers to general discomfort, distress or unease. In a context of gender, dysphoria can be associated with our identity, our body or the way others perceive our identity and our body. Often, gender dysphoria is a phenomenon associated with transgender individuals. Historically, gender dysphoria has been a diagnosis applied to transgender people and being transgender was considered a mental disorder. Its' first use was in 1949, when American psychiatrists identified a psychiatric issue called "transsexualism" within the disconnect people felt towards their sex at birth, and how they felt about themselves. Through continued advocacy and efforts to reduce stigma, this diagnosis changed to "gender dysphoria" in 2013 and related to the distress transgender-identifying individuals experienced rather than the identity itself. The DSM-5 stressed that "gender non-conformity is not in itself a mental disorder."

In practice, having gender dysphoria or body dysphoria does not mean you identify as transgender, nor is it a condition to identify as such. While they are often found together, they exist independently and every transgender individual experiences their "Gender Quest" differently, with or without gender dysphoria. Today, we think of how we can make that shift from "gender dysphoria" to "gender euphoria". This leads to more questions such as "How can we be more accepting of all the expressions of gender?" and "What can we do to support someone experiencing gender dysphoria?"

Guide to binding



Guide to packing



Guide to bras



Guide to tucking



IDENTITY AND CULTURE

Culture has always played an important role in identity and rather than separating gender identity from cultural identity, we accept that they go hand-in-hand. To normalize gender diversity within culture, we should first understand how culture has played a role in identity and how the connection between the two can be emboldened today. Sexuality and gender sit on a spectrum and when this spectrum is observed in an Indigenous context, the Western terms we have to define gender and sexual diversity often do not translate to the array of identities that have been recognized in Indigenous communities. The terms themselves, which may have cultural context to Western society, do not have the same cultural and historical fabric as Indigenous terms. Indigenous sexuality and gender identity defies the contemporary queer framework we have grown to know.

As a Canadian-based resource, we must educate ourselves on Indigenous culture present on the land we occupy and affirm the identities that come with the culture. Elders hold a key role in the journey of youth and young adults in Indigenous communities. This is a concept that can be translated into peer support, where people in need learn from people who know. Lived experience is an indispensable resource where we have the opportunity to learn from individuals who have lived the things we do not understand. Similarly, when we connect with the elders from Indigenous communities around us, we begin to understand the struggles they have faced and what we can do to support the identities of their communities, which are often our communities as well.

Affirming Identity,
Language and
Culture



IDENTITIES OLDER THAN HISTORY

As colonial powers appropriated Indigenous territories, they tried to control, repress and erase Indigenous sexualities & gender expressions.

✦ In Juchitan, Mexico, **muxes** are neither man nor woman, but a Zapotec gender hybridity.

✦ In Hawai'i, the **māhū** embrace both the feminine and masculine.

✦ The Māori term **takatāpui** describes same-sex intimate friendships, and since the 1980s it is the term used alongside the term queer.

✦ French colonisers reported a third gender, called **ikoueta** in Algonkian language, males who adopted gender roles.

✦ The **chuqui chinchay**, a revered figure in Andean culture, was the mountain deity of the jaguars. It was also the patron of dual-gendered peoples, who acted as shamans in Andean ceremonies.

✦ In Navajo language, **nádleehí** means 'the changing one'.

✦ In Osage, Omaha, Kansa, and Oto languages, the term **mixu'ga** literally means "moon-instructed", referring to the distinct abilities and identity that the moon conferred them.

INDIGENOUS GENDER AND SEXUAL DIVERSITY

To put queer history into perspective, one should understand the queer diversity that existed before the westernisation of society. The truth is that **indigenous diversity of gender and sexuality existed long before the construction of our countries.** Old Moche pottery dating from AD 15-800 depicted same-sex relationships in a positive lens. **Indigenous cultures have always recognized diverse sexualities and gender, which were socially respected, included and even revered.**

Unfortunately, during the post-colonization in the 1400s, colonial powers tried to control and erase Indigenous sexuality and gender. **The experiences of Indigenous peoples were regulated and often replaced with a Western understanding of sexuality.** This was considered a process of modernization, aligning with the religious values of colonizers. The process of "modernization" consisted of compulsory heterosexualization through monogamous "laws of honesty" where Indigenous families were forced to follow the same family structure as Western society in which a family is composed of a mother, a father and children. **This made it impossible for Indigenous peoples to express their own understanding of gender, sexuality and family. People were accorded or denied rights according to racial boundaries of sexuality and gender.**

"The spectrum of Indigenous sexualities does not fit the confined Western registries of gender binaries, heterosexuality, or LGBT codification. It is not these idioms that are untranslatable, but rather the cultural and political fabric they represent. Indigenous sexualities defy contemporary LGBT and queer frameworks." (Manuela L. Picq et al. 2019)

PBS : A Map Of
Gender Diverse
Cultures



TIMELINE OF CANADIAN QUEER HISTORY

- 1980** - Canada's first QTBIPOC activist group, Gay Asians Toronto (GAT) is formed
- 1983** - GAT organizes an event called CelebrAsian, held at the 519 Community Centre in Toronto, that was the first fundraiser for HIV/AIDS held in the city
- 1988** - A group of Toronto QTBIPOC hosts the fifth International Lesbian and Gay People of Colour conference, with attendance from the Caribbean, England, and the United States
- 1989** - The Toronto-based Two-Spirited People of First Nations group is created with the aim to provide a place of connection for 2SLGBTQIA+ Indigenous peoples
- 1990** - The Black activist groups, AYA, Young Ebony Sisters, and Black CAP are all formed. The first Black lesbian and gay retreat is held north of Toronto
- 1993** - The Aboriginal Circle of Two-Spirits organization is formed in Edmonton in order to help members connect to their culture and language as well as hold sessions on topics such as HIV/AIDS and mental health
- 1998** - Blackness Yes! Collective is formed and the first Black 2SLGBTQIA+ pride event, Blockorama is organized as a response to Pride Toronto's discriminatory practices
- 2012** - Sins Invalid—a U.S. based disability justice performance incubator—performs at the Art Gallery of Ontario after an invitation from QTBIPOC activist, Syrus Marcus Ware, and highlights the disabled QTBIPOC reality
- 2016** - Black Lives Matter is the honourable group for Toronto's Pride Parade and stops the procession to protest anti-Black racism within the 2SLGBTQIA+ community and continued police brutality in Canada.

THE STONEWALL RIOTS

As queer and trans people experienced much policing and stigma, Drag Queens took the lead on fighting back in 1969 during the Stonewall riots. They are often at the forefronts of fighting for Queen Liberation. We owe Queer & Trans Activists our respect for establishing and continuing the fight for many of our Queer rights and privileges today!



"Queens Liberation Front" group protesting at a march

Marsha P. Johnson
August 24, 1945-
July 6, 1992



Sylvia Rivera
July 2, 1951 -
February 19, 2002

Stormé DeLarverie
December 24, 1920 -
May 24, 2014



Miss Major Griffin-Gracy
October 25, 1940
(age 82)

ALLYSHIP

We can all support each other through allyship, but what is an ally? An ally is a person who advocates for an individual or a group that is being discriminated against and acts towards ending oppression through supporting people who are stigmatized, discriminated against and/or treated unfairly.

Allies have been involved in most movements to end stigma and empower 2SLGBTQ+ communities. As an ally, it is your responsibility to work towards improving social climates to make them more inclusive towards queer folk.

Actions you can take to create safer spaces for queer individuals :

- Posting queer-positive materials
- Wearing visible markers such as pins, bracelets, etc.
- Educating people around you about queer topics
- Never making assumptions about a person's gender or sexuality
- Allowing queer people to "come out" on their own terms
- Using inclusive and gender-neutral language
- Responding to anti-2SLGBTQ+ behaviour

2SLGBTQ+ FRIENDLY FAITH GROUPS

You shouldn't have to choose between identity and faith! Both are part of a person's identity and this document compiles a list of 2SLGBTQ+ friendly faith groups and places of worship to allow folk to celebrate their identity and their culture holistically



29.7% of 2SLGBTQ+ Canadians are aged 15-24

32% of 2SLGBTQ+ Canadians reported that they consider their mental health to be poor or fair

0.9% of all Canadian couples in 2016 were same-sex couples, of which 33.4% were married

27% of 2SLGBTQ+ Canadians have experienced some type of homelessness or housing insecurity, compared to 13% of non-2SLGBTQ+ Canadians

40.5% of 2SLGBTQ+ Canadians make less than \$20,000, compared to 26.2% of non-2SLGBTQ+ Canadians

An estimated 1 million Canadians identify as 2SLGBTQ+

STATISTICS RELATING TO 2SLGBTQ+ CANADIANS

24% of 2SLGBTQ+ Canadians are enrolled in school, college, CEGEP or university

40% of 2SLGBTQ+ Canadians have seriously contemplated suicide in their lifetime

12% of same-sex Canadian couples had children in 2016, compared to about 50% of opposite-sex couples

263 hate crimes targeting sexual orientation were reported in 2019, of which 53% were considered violent crimes

33% of 2SLGBTQ+ Canadians found it difficult or very difficult to meet their needs in terms of transportation, housing, food, clothing, participation in some social activities and other necessary expenses

2SLGBTQ+ COMMUNITY SUPPORTS

Emergency Line (Police, Fire & Medical Support)

Call OR Text 9-1-1 / Non- Emergency 1-(866)-876-5423

LGBT Youth Line: 29 & Under

(Sunday to Friday, 4:00PM to 9:30 PM)

Call 1-(800)-268-9688 OR Text (647)-694-4275

Trans LifeLine Canada: 24/7

Call (877)-330-6366

Kids Help Phone: Ages 5 - 25 , 24/7

Call 1-(800)-668-6868

Parents Friends of Lesbians And Gays York Region:

Support Groups : Visit Pflagyork.ca for programming

Anonymous Support Line : 1-(866)-977-3524

2 Spirit people of the 1st Nation

Visit www.2spirits.org or (416)-944-9300

for 2 Spirit Indigenous Programming

360kids Support Services: Ages 16-27

Visit www.360kids.ca/programs-services

OR Call Drop-in Center (416)-948-2186

More Resources



CONTINUING THE WORK

The Queer Agenda (QA) is currently offering in-person and virtual workshops to community partners and agencies in the GTA and York Region. The cost and duration of workshops are flexible. The content can be focused on a specific topic or can provide an overview of the topics included in the program.

Program topics :

- 2SLGBTQ+ identities
- Gender identity and expression
- Appropriate terms to use
- Queer history as it relates to diverse communities
- Drag history
- Community involvement and supports
- Safety during Pride celebrations

To book a workshop please reach out to thequeeragendaproject@gmail.com

Jesse Vacarciuc is a professional musician, a peer mentor to many youth in the community and a Child and Youth Worker in different organizations in the Toronto and York region. They were awarded Youth Recognition in the framework of the Public Heroes Program and have since worked on various projects in the GTA focusing on awareness surrounding 2SLGBTQ+ issues, homelessness and mental health, notably, the Queer Agenda. Most importantly, Jesse is a young educator bringing forth positive change to their communities.



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★ ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ★

I'd like to thank everyone who took part in making the Queer Agenda come to life. Though it had its' ups and downs, the work accomplished was always a pleasure and it taught us more than we could even articulate. Thank you to all of the organizations who connected with us and gave us the space to run workshops, thank you to the PFLAG team and the York Pride team for giving us space to march with them during Pride month and thank you to all the finance staff for enduring our lack of mathematical knowledge.

Special thanks to Sean Kidd, Sidney Lichenstein and Mardi Daley for giving me a platform to create this project, guiding me through the intricacies of leadership and always being present to support in any capacity. None of this work would've taken place without them. They are the pillars of the work that I do and the work other youth have done in their communities to bring forward positive change.

Special thanks to the Queer Agenda team : Nina Gholizadeh, Emma Bockner, Wesley Turtlebury and Brandon Stembo for building the foundation of this project with me and offering their unique insights to the process of this work. Each one of them contributed to creating a safer space for the youth that were serviced and none of the frontline work could have been done without them.

Special thanks to all the first participants of our workshops. They trusted us with their time, thoughts and feelings and made the first round of workshops worth waking up and showing up for. Thanks to everyone's feedback, we were able to prove the impacts of our work and implement change to better service all youth.

Finally, special thanks to the 360°kids team for giving us the space, time and resources to put our work into motion and connect to the people who needed us most. Thanks to their support, we were able to bring this project to life and be involved in our community in a larger capacity.



The *Queer* *Agenda* Project

A By-Youth-For-Youth Initiative

