“There is no place in the world where full equality has been reached”

A BRIEF HISTORY OF 2SLGBTQ PEOPLE IN CANADA, AND AN INTRODUCTION TO THE BARRIERS AND SYSTEMS THAT PREVENT 2SLGBTQ PEOPLE FROM EXPERIENCING FULL EQUALITY.
While Canada has made positive strides in changing policy, laws, and practices that better support and protect 2SLGBTQ Canadians, many of these changes have occurred in only the last 50 years. There is still a lot of work to be done in ensuring that 2SLGBTQ Canadians are afforded the same rights and freedoms as heterosexual/cisgender Canadians.

A BRIEF HISTORY

2017
Prime Minister Justin Trudeau delivers formal apology to 2SLGBTQ Canadians in House of Commons

2017
First long-term 2SLGBTQ youth group home in Canada opens in Saskatoon, SK

2017
Gender identity & expression protected under Human Rights Act and the Criminal Code in Canada

2019
Gender marker “X” allowed on Canadian identification and passports

2019
Gender Dysphoria removed from DSM and is no longer considered a mental disorder

2020
Multiple municipalities, including Saskatoon, now ban conversion therapy
1969
(partial)
Decriminalization of homosexuality

1981
Police raids take place in bathhouses in Toronto and Edmonton

1987
Homosexuality removed from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) and is no longer considered a mental disorder

2016
Trans people no longer need to have gender affirming surgery in order to change ID in Saskatchewan

2013
Gender Identity Disorder changed to Gender Dysphoria in DSM

2005
Same-gender marriage is legalized in Canada
**WHAT IS DISCRIMINATION?**

Discrimination is the unjust, prejudicial treatment of a person based on their identity or perceived identity. Discrimination against the 2SLGBTQ (Two Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer) community, is often called homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia. People who are members of the 2SLGBTQ community can also perpetrate discrimination against their own community.

**WHAT IS HOMOPHOBIA?**

Homophobia is prejudice, dislike, and hatred directed towards queer people, and is often rooted in chosen ignorance surrounding queer identities and experiences. Homophobia upholds beliefs that being queer is unnatural and abnormal, which justifies discrimination and normalizes acts of violence towards the queer community. Homophobia is maintained by heteronormativity, the assumption that everyone is, and should be, heterosexual. For example, when you ask a man if he has a girlfriend or when you ask a woman what her husband does for a living, you are making the assumption that they are heterosexual.

"Homophobia is often rooted in ignorance surrounding queer identities and experiences."
WHAT IS BIPHOBIA?

Biphobia refers to any discrimination towards people who are bisexual, pansexual, or polysexual. Biphobia often looks like the denial of bi, pan, or poly identities as valid sexual orientations, negative stereotypes such as being confused, greedy, or unfaithful, and hurtful commentary, such as “you’re either straight, gay, or lying” or “people just say they’re bi to look cool”. All of these examples are rooted within biphobia and often cause isolation, depression, or anxiety within bi, pan, and polysexual people.

WHAT IS TRANSPHOBIA?

Transphobia is prejudice and hatred directed towards trans people, or people who are perceived to be transgender. Transphobia is rooted in the belief that trans identities are not real or valid and often results in violence perpetuated against the trans community. Transphobia is maintained by cisnormativity, which is the assumption that everyone is cisgender (cis). Cisnormative ideas reinforce cisgender identities as superior, therefore marginalizing the transgender community. An example of cisnormativity is assuming someone’s pronouns or gender based upon their physical experience, or assuming that all people easily fit into the categories of men and women.
Homophobia exists as interpersonal and institutional discrimination towards 2SLGBTQ people, internalized discrimination that Queer people perpetuate against ourselves, and finally as lateral violence within the community.

**Institutional homophobia** is present when organizations, businesses, and governments have policies or laws that exclude or limit the rights of 2SLGBTQ people. Examples of institutional homophobia include limiting the ability of gay men to donate blood, the lack of queer representation in media, or barring queer people from participating in their religion.

**Internalized homophobia** is when a 2SLGBTQ individual experiences feelings of self-hate regarding their identity due to socialization and conditioning. It is not uncommon for a person suffering from internalized self-hate to project their feelings onto other 2SLGBTQ people. They may believe that by attacking other queer people, they can prove that they are not queer themselves. This form of violence is also referred to as lateral violence.

**Lateral violence** operates internally and across marginalized groups. It stems from intergenerational internalized oppressions, such as homophobia, and can reinforce fractured or dysfunctional communities. An example of lateral violence is when bisexual people are questioned on the validity of their queerness, or when queer people of colour are excluded or not allowed as much space at events as white queer people.
While homophobia is targeted towards anyone who isn’t heterosexual, or perceived to not be heterosexual, bi/pan/polyphobia is specific to bisexual, pansexual, and polysexual individuals. A very important distinction between homophobia and bi/pan/polyphobia is that bi/pan/polyphobia can come from both heterosexual people and other queer people. In fact, many bisexual, pansexual, and polysexual people experience routine bi/pan/polyphobia from their fellow queer community members. Therefore, whether you are straight (heterosexual) or part of the 2SLGBTQ community, make sure to assess your attitudes towards bisexual, pansexual, and polysexual people.

Stigma around bi/pan/polysexual people includes false beliefs like:

- **They can’t make up their minds as to whether or not they are gay or straight**
- **They are confused, unfaithful, or greedy**
- **They are more likely to have casual sex and get STBBI’s**

Stigma surrounding bi/poly/pansexual identities can lead to feelings of isolation and poor mental health. It can also lead many people to avoid disclosing their orientation in order to avoid judgement and alienation from both peers and strangers. In many ways, coming to terms with being bi, poly, or pan can be more difficult than being gay, because society tends to privilege binary identities (eg. straight or gay). Bi, pan, and poly people can teach us to better understand the fluidity and complexity of sexuality.
There are still many individuals, organizations, institutions, systems, and religious groups that view transgender people as being confused, mentally ill, or as a threat to conventional gender norms. These views are transphobic and too often result in verbal or physical violence towards trans people.

Those who discriminate against transgender people often hold rigid concepts of gender. They view gender as being biologically determined and restricted within a binary of male and female. These beliefs are used as rationale for discriminatory practices, laws, and for normalizing and justifying violence towards the trans community.

Members of the 2SLGBTQ community can also perpetuate transphobia; being queer does not void people of prejudicial bias. An example of this is when trans women are denied access to spaces for queer women because they are not viewed as “real women”. Such exclusion is rooted in transphobia and misogyny.

Ultimately, everyone deserves the same rights and respect, regardless of their gender or sexual orientation. So whether you are straight or queer, assess your beliefs and biases and ensure that you are working to educate yourself on the trans community.

“It is revolutionary for any trans person to choose to be seen and visible in a world that tells us we should not exist.”

- Laverne Cox
An important step to addressing transphobic biases is acknowledging the cisgender privilege you carry. Many cisgender people don’t think about the challenges a trans person faces on a daily basis as a result of their gender and/or expression. Some examples of cisgender privilege are:

- A cis person can use public restrooms without fear of verbal abuse, physical intimidation or violence, or arrest.
- A cis person’s validity as a woman or man is not based on what kinds of surgery they’ve had or if they “pass” as their gender.
- Strangers don’t assume that they can ask a cis person what their genitals look like or how they have sex.
- Cis individuals are typically called by the name they provide and are not asked what their “real name” is.
- A cis person can reasonably assume that their ability to acquire a job, rent an apartment, or secure a loan will not be denied on the basis of their gender.
- A cis person can purchase clothes without being refused service or mocked by staff.

Acknowledging and accepting that you hold cisgender privilege is ongoing work. While it may feel uncomfortable this work is critical in order to create more just and equitable outcomes for the Transgender community.
Despite the progress that has been made in Canada, 2SLGBTQ Canadians still do not consistently experience equitable, affirming, and inclusive treatment. This looks like a lack of representation or censorship in the media, discrimination in healthcare and support services, job constraints, exclusion from housing, bullying, gender based violence, and intimate partner violence. Therefore, there is still a great need for allies and support for Two Spirit, Trans, and Queer people. Straight and cisgender allies are often in positions where they can leverage their privilege and address discrimination in ways that 2SLGBTQ people often can’t. Here are a few allyship tips:

→ The term ‘Ally’ is a verb, not a noun - it requires action! In order to be an ally, you have to take action to discrimination.

→ Don’t make assumptions about a person’s sexual orientation, gender, sex, or pronouns.

→ Practice using gender neutral language and start introducing yourself with your pronouns

→ Be aware of your own bias and gaps in knowledge, and educate yourself so you can unlearn any harmful beliefs you may hold against the 2SLGBTQ community

→ Support initiatives that lead to more inclusive spaces, policy, events, and representation

→ Always shut down oppressive language and explain why that language is harmful

→ Integrate 2SLGBTQ material and voices throughout your work and at home
The 2SLGBTQ community experiences disproportionate rates of violence and harassment, and the Trans community experiences exponentially more than their queer, cisgender peers.

**IF YOU WITNESS AN ASSAULT:**

- Call for help if you are around people or make loud noises so the attacker knows they are being watched.
- Doing something directly to intervene isn’t always a safe option, but shouting and creating a distraction can help. You might yell: “Stop! I see you!” Call for help if there are people around you, or call police if you are comfortable doing so.
- Stay with the survivor(s) until help arrives. Assure them that it wasn’t their fault and that help is on the way.

**IF YOU ARE ASSAULTED:**

- Get to a safe place and go to the hospital if necessary.
- If you feel safe doing so, call the police as soon as possible and report what happened. Remember that you have the right to review the statement you gave and to get a card with the incident number and the police officer’s names and badge numbers. The incident number will be important when getting information about your case at a later date.
- Report all of your injuries to both the police and a doctor in detail, and write down everything that happened as soon as possible. It is important to document everything you remember about the assault.
THE DECISION TO REPORT TO POLICE:

Choosing to report is up to you. If you don’t feel ready to report or don’t want to report, that’s OK. What’s most important is taking care of yourself.

You may feel nervous about reporting the incident. Take someone with you for support so you don’t have to do it alone.

You have the right to ask for breaks, for the officer to repeat or explain any questions asked, for a support person to be present, and to end your statement at any time.

Whether or not you choose to report to police, we encourage you to connect with support services. See the back of this resource for support options.

FOLLOWING AN ASSAULT:

It is not uncommon for someone who has been attacked to feel fear, guilt, and/or shame after an assault. Remember, it was not your fault.

Take care of yourself:

- If you are hurt, go to the hospital.
- Seek counselling or mental health supports - at OUTSaskatoon we provide free counselling
- Reach out to a trusted friend or family member for support. You’re not in this alone!
There are a number of support programs for survivors. These programs can include covering the cost of counselling, dental and medical expenses, and damaged property.

## COMMUNITY SUPPORTS

### OUTSASKATOON
Peer support (over the phone and in person), individual & family counselling (appointments can be booked online), and Sexual Health Clinic with STBBI and HIV testing available

- (306) 665-1224
- 1-800-358-1833
- outsaskatoon.ca

### HEALTHLINE 811 (SK)
24/7 health, mental health, & addictions support over the phone

- 811
- healthlineonline.ca

### VICTIM SERVICES
76 25th Street East
Saskatoon, SK S7K 3P9
Service Centre Hours of Operation: 7:00am - 11:00pm

- 306-975-8400

### TRANS LIFELINE
24 hour crisis line for the Trans Community

- 1-877-565-8860
- translifeline.org

### SASKATOON SEXUAL ASSAULT & INFORMATION CENTRE
24-Hour Crisis Line
Individual & Group Counselling
Survivor Assistance

- (306) 244-2294
- ssaic.ca

### MOBILE CRISIS
24 Hour Crisis Phone

- (306) 933-6200
- saskatooncrisis.ca

### UR PRIDE (REGINA)
Individual & Family Counselling

- (306) 586-8811 Ext. 207
- urpride.ca

### USSU PRIDE CENTRE
University of Saskatchewan Queer community centre. They have a drop-in, weekly programming, and host events.

- 306-966-6615
- ussu.ca
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“YOU CANNOT CHANGE ANY SOCIETY UNLESS YOU TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR IT; UNLESS YOU SEE YOURSELF AS BELONGING TO IT AND RESPONSIBLE FOR CHANGING IT.”

- GRACE LEE BOGGS
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Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, and Canada have made many positive strides in changing local, provincial, and federal policy and legislation in order to provide rights to 2SLGBTQ people. Were there any dates in the timeline that surprised you?

Have you witnessed homophobia or transphobia before? This could look like gossip, inappropriate jokes, name calling, bullying, or targeted violence. What could you do the next time you witness similar behaviour?

If you’re cisgender, how did it feel to assess your privilege? What privileges did you learn you may have?

How can you use your privilege and voice to show your acceptance and support of 2SLGBTQ people?

What actions can you take in your workplace in order to show your acceptance of 2SLGBTQ people?

Queer people can also discriminate against fellow members of the 2SLGBTQ community. If you’re Queer, what can you do the next time you witness or hear discrimination from your Queer friends or peers?

Think about your work or school environment. Do you think 2SLGBTQ people feel fully accepted, supported, and safe there?

What education is needed in order to make it a safer environment? What changes could be made to policies, spaces, washrooms, signage, and representation?
OUTSaskatoon works to uplift 2SLGBTQ people by leading, serving, and supporting in a dynamic community. OUTSaskatoon fosters physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual health through community support groups, counselling, drop-in services, queer-specific education and training, sexual health services, community events, and a long-term group home for Two Spirit, queer and trans youth ages 16-21.

FIND MORE RESOURCES AT:
www.outsaskatoon.ca

hello@outsaskatoon.ca