



Safe and Caring Schools – A Resource for Equity and
Inclusion in Manitoba Schools

INTRODUCTION

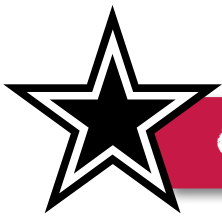


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GETTING STARTED



Whether or not your school already has a GSA, you can connect with other LGBTQ youth, educators, and allies throughout the country to share ideas, materials, and resources on the MyGSA website Discussion Forums.

Be sure
MyGSA.ca
isn't blocked at
your school!



This resource is intended to support students, teachers, administrators and districts develop and maintain safe, caring and inclusive learning environments. In particular, its goal is to provide information and answer questions for those initiating a Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) in their school.

Good luck, and remember that extra support is always available. Local, provincial and national resources are mentioned within each section.

If you want to know more about legislation and policy as they relate to real life experiences in school settings in Manitoba see the section on Questions & Answers about LGBTQ Human Rights Legislation and Policy in Manitoba. If you have questions about organizations, programmes, and resources available in your area or nationwide, have a look at the section entitled Provincial and National LGBTQ and LGBTQ-Friendly Organizations, Programmes, & Resources.



! Some schools use filtering software to block access to websites that include keywords pertaining to certain matters, such as sex, and rely on the companies that develop the software to maintain the list of unacceptable sites. Although this might be done in the interests of blocking pornographic content, an unfortunate consequence of such protocols is that many useful websites regarding important matters such as health and sexual orientation are also blocked. Be sure that *MyGSA.ca* isn't blocked at your school. If it is, ask your school administration to change the settings.

If *MyGSA.ca* continues to be blocked at your school, contact the Department of Education and Advanced Learning at mbedu@merlin.mb.ca, or Egale at 1.888.204.7777 (toll free) or mygsa@egale.ca and let us know.

If you are an educator, check out the Information & Resources for Educators section of this resource. If you are a guidance counsellor, check out the Resources for Guidance Counsellors section. If you are an administrator, check out the Information for Administrators. If you are not a teacher, a guidance counsellor, or an administrator, give these sections to your teachers, your school counsellors, and your principal!

There is also an Executive Summary of Egale's Final Report on the First National School Climate Survey: *Every Class in Every School*. You can find this in the Information for Administrators or by going to <http://MyGSA.ca/YouthSpeakUp>.



WHAT DOES LGBTQ MEAN?

This acronym can mean different things to different people, but it is generally understood to stand for “lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans (transgender, transsexual, trans-identified), Two-Spirit, queer, and questioning” or some variation of this. Check out the Terms & Concepts section in this Resource Kit or on the MyGSA website for various definitions of each of these words.



*I've seen a number of different combinations of letters and I don't know which ones to use! I don't want to exclude anyone or be disrespectful, but how can I explain the proper usage when I don't know what to say myself?
What if someone asks me what the correct thing to say is?*



Although it's true that many people opt to use different words to describe themselves, saying either LGBT or LGBTQ is widely accepted (even though it is recognized that these expressions are not necessarily all-encompassing).

For example, it is also common to include both an “I” for intersex and an “A” for ally. Some people also choose to duplicate all of the letters that can represent more than one word because it has the visual/verbal effect of demonstrating how very many different sexual orientations and gender

identities there actually are. The ones already mentioned here would look like this: LGBTTTTQQIA or LGBTTT2QQIA (where the “2” stands for Two-Spirit). The letters can be ordered differently as well, such as GLBTTQ (as used in subsection 6 of the Resources for Guidance Counsellors section of this kit as reproduced from Around the Rainbow's Toolkit for Educators and Service Providers).

Throughout this document, the acronym LGBTQ references all people with diverse sexual orientations and/or gender identities, including those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, Two Spirit, queer or questioning. In addition, the acronym LGBTQ will commonly be used except when an alternative acronym appears in a direct quote or an excerpt from another resource.



It is an excellent question though and this is one of the reasons why incorporating LGBTQ matters and inclusive language into curriculum is so vital. Sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression are parts of everyday life and everyone needs to know what language to use in order to discuss them appropriately and respectfully.

In addition to professional development, many educators who are unversed in LGBTQ matters may find it beneficial to do independent research. The MyGSA website has a section for educators, including resources and a discussion forum.



WE HOPE THAT YOU FIND THIS KIT HELPFUL, WHETHER YOUR AIM IS...

to work towards changing your school or school division policy to explicitly address sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression (look under “Activities” in the GSA Guide);

to include LGBTQ material in your school’s curriculum (see the Guide section for suggestions);

to start your school’s first-ever GSA: Good luck & keep us posted by registering on MyGSA.ca!

Please feel free to send comments or feedback

to mygsa@egale.ca



Wouldn’t it be easier just to choose one word or one set of letters and be done with it?



Maybe, but that too would be problematic. For one thing, language is always evolving—just think about all of the acronyms now in common usage as a result of new electronic technologies such as texting. And because the words relating to LGBTQ matters are identity-specific, it is particularly important to be respectful and aware of appropriate and relevant usage.

Many people choose to use the word “queer” for this very reason though. A long list of letters can be quite a mouthful! However, this too has its problems. Although the word “queer” has generally been reclaimed in contemporary usage, historically the word has had negative connotations.



THIS IS A GREAT TOPIC FOR CLASSROOM DISCUSSION:

after reading through the **Terms & Concepts** section in this kit or on the **MyGSA** website, try opening up this dialogue in your class or at a **GSA** meeting!



ABORIGINAL PERSPECTIVES ON DIVERSITY OF SEXUALITY AND GENDER IDENTITY

During the period of European colonization of the Americas, the cultural norms and social frameworks of many indigenous peoples were dramatically altered. Today, Aboriginal peoples are in the process of reclaiming knowledge and practices that have been preserved and retained. The process of reclaiming aspects of cultural identity is apparent in how many of First Nations have re-named their communities using words from their own languages. While colonial-era English names may still be used interchangeably today, this re-naming represents the beginning of a new era in First Nations empowerment. Aboriginal gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgender people have also embraced this approach and embarked on a journey of re-discovery by adopting the term, “Two-Spirit”. (Albert McLeod)

Traditional Two-Spirited History and Roles

Before European contact and colonization, *most* First Nations groups throughout North America respected and honoured diverse gender roles and identities and believed that all people were part of the sacred web of life and community (Brown). The European concepts of sex and gender roles were not shared by First Nations peoples at this time, as many First Nations cultures allowed for at least six alternative gender styles. Historically, the peoples of Turtle Island (North America) thrived in gender and sexually diverse societies for thousands of years (Alaers). These traditions and understandings were most common among the Lakota, Ojibwa, Blackfoot, Cheyenne, Mojave, Navajo and Cree peoples, but shared by many others. However, it is important to recognize that in spite of contact and many similarities, traditions varied greatly among First Nations peoples in North America and that a few cultures may have not had traditions and understandings related to diverse sexualities and gender identities and roles.

The diversity of sexuality, gender identities, and roles was reflected in First Nations languages. First Nations peoples of North America had their own specific words or terms to refer to people with diverse sexualities, gender identity, and cultural roles. Some examples are the Lakota term *winkte*, the Dinè term *nadleeh*, and the Cree terms *ayekkwé* and *a:yahkwew* (Alaers).

The traditions and understandings of the diversity of sexuality, gender identities and roles continued to survive in North America to as late as 1930 among the Klamath people in the Pacific Northwest. However, colonization and the aggressive assimilation experienced by First Nations peoples after European contact worked to displace First Nations' understandings, practices and teachings around sexuality, gender, and relationships and replaced them with “mainstream”, Judeo-Christian or Euro-Canadian perspectives and understandings.

Reclamation and Contemporary Two-Spirit Understandings

The concept and the term “Two Spirit” emerged in 1990 at the third annual Intertribal First Nations/Native American gay and lesbian conference in Winnipeg (Alaers). “Two-Spirit” is an Aboriginal spirit-name shared at that 1990 gathering of Aboriginal people who identified as gay, lesbian, bisexual, and trans at the time. The name came in a vision to one of the gathering participants prior to the event and ceremonies were held during the gathering to acknowledge the arrival and acceptance of this name

One of the local Elders, who is an Ojibwe Language Specialist, informs them that we become “ritual” brothers and sisters through ceremony and that when a person receives a spirit-name it signifies that they have a spirit-guide, a gift, a purpose, and a destiny. “Two-Spirit” is a name now embraced by many LGBTQ indigenous people of Turtle Island. It is unique to North American Aboriginal LGBTQ people because First Nations peoples connections to this land and ecology are cultural, historical, and familial (Albert McLeod).

Thus, “Two-Spirits” reclaims the rich and diverse traditions and understandings of First Nations peoples, including some that may have been lost by the subversion of indigenous cultures through colonization, Christianization and assimilation. It is a pan-historical as well as a “pan-tribal” concept and term. For many LGBTQ Aboriginal people, identifying as a two-spirited person is a form of liberation from the identities that were

imposed by other cultures and movements. Essentially it means that LGBTQ people have the ability to reflect the male and female energies (genders and sexes) and forces that create life (eg. humans, animals and plants) and that diversity within this realm is considered sacred and a component of the natural order (Albert MacLeod).

Today an ever increasing number of First Nations, Métis and other Aboriginal LGBTQ people describe themselves as 'Two-Spirit'. It is an empowered identity that emerged within the context of sustained racism, homophobia and sexism. For many First Nations people, their Two-Spirit identity reclaims their authority to define who they are and it aligns with their worldview, distinct cultures, histories and ways of being (Wilson).

However, it is important to recognize that while the term "Two Spirit" has been embraced by many First Nations peoples to separate their interests from Western-imposed concepts of gender and sexual identity, the term is not used universally or consistently across First Nations/Aboriginal communities in North America (NASTAD).

Developed In consultation with Albert McLeod, Two-Spirited People of Manitoba Inc.

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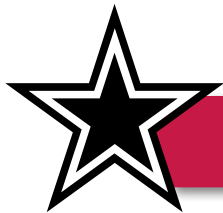
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WHAT IS INTERSECTIONALITY?

People have many identities that correspond to their race, class, physical and mental ability, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, etc. These different identities don't stand alone; together they impact a person's experiences as well as experiences of discrimination. We call this "intersectionality".

Although the word intersectionality is a more recent term, it should be noted that for centuries, Aboriginal Peoples have been using a holistic approach to health and wellbeing. Indeed '[...] for Indigenous Peoples living in Canada and around the world, the inter-relationships between the physical, mental, spiritual and emotional aspects of being are integral to individual and community health' (National Aboriginal Health Organization). Intersectionality takes a holistic approach because it involves looking at things together, for example, viewing race and gender together, as opposed to viewing them in isolation (Simpson).

Because of our different identities, there are many ways a person might experience discrimination. As the Manitoba Human Rights Code states,

the intersectionality of various characteristics may give rise to stereotypes not present with one or more different combinations of characteristics. Intersectionality can have a compound effect (i.e. individuals with more than one Code-protected characteristic are more likely to face discrimination) and can even give rise to an entirely new basis for discrimination (Manitoba Human Rights Commission).

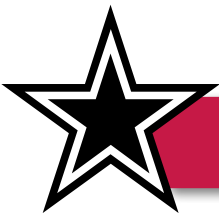
A white lesbian's experiences will be different than those of a lesbian who is Aboriginal, or a lesbian who is Aboriginal and who also has a disability. They may all experience homophobia, but the lesbian who is Aboriginal may also experience racism, while the lesbian who is Aboriginal and who has a disability may experience homophobia, racism and ableism.

Intersectionality offers a perspective that takes into account the full range of identities and circumstances facing people (Simpson).

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WHAT IS A GSA?

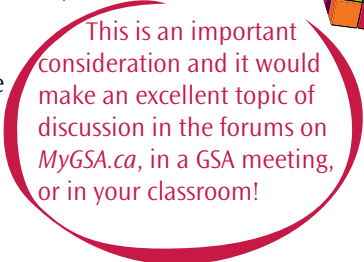
The term GSA stands for Gay-Straight Alliance (also known as LGBTQ positive space groups). Although the exact function of such clubs varies from school to school, GSAs are generally considered to be any student groups concerned with LGBTQ matters and sometimes also serving as support groups for LGBTQ students, allies, and youth with LGBTQ parents or other family members. For more extensive definitions, see the Terms & Concepts section in this kit or on *MyGSA.ca*.

Take a look at the GSA Directory on *MyGSA.ca*. You might notice that a number of the groups have alternative names, such as Rainbow Alliance, QSA (Queer-Straight Alliance), or Pride or PRYDE (Please Respect Your Diverse Environment) Club. Many student groups opt to use different names because the word “gay” is not as inclusive

as they would like. It doesn't necessarily refer to lesbians, bisexuals, or Two-Spirit people and gender identity and gender expression are not explicitly encompassed by the expression GSA.



GSAs are generally considered to be any student groups concerned with LGBTQ matters.



This is an important consideration and it would make an excellent topic of discussion in the forums on *MyGSA.ca*, in a GSA meeting, or in your classroom!



GAY-STRAIGHT ALLIANCE

See the Terms & Concepts section in this kit or on *MyGSA.ca*.



LGBTQ AWARDS, SCHOLARSHIPS, BURSARIES

NATIONAL

Lambda Foundation Scholarships

<http://www.lambdafoundation.com>

The Lambda Foundation raises money to enable universities to grant awards designed to promote national recognition of individuals or groups who, through their achievement, build bridges of understanding of gays and lesbians with other equality seeking groups. Currently, Lambda Foundation scholarships are available at the following institutions:

University of Manitoba

Lambda Foundation for Excellence—Les McAfee
Memorial Award

[http://webapps.cc.umanitoba.ca/gradawards/
index.asp](http://webapps.cc.umanitoba.ca/gradawards/index.asp)

awards@umanitoba.ca

Carleton University

Lambda Foundation for Excellence Award

[http://gradstudies.carleton.ca/webapps/awards/
lcms_award_view.php?award_id=494](http://gradstudies.carleton.ca/webapps/awards/lcms_award_view.php?award_id=494)

awards@carleton.ca

Université de Montréal

Bourses Fondation Lambda pour l'excellence

fes-bourses@fes.umontreal.ca

University of Guelph


Lambda Foundation Scholarship in LGBT Studies

[http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/
graduate/current/pdffiles/gradawards.pdf](http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/pdffiles/gradawards.pdf)

awards@registrar.uoguelph.ca

For a more comprehensive listing, and for information about Egale's GSA Bursary, check out *MyGSA.ca*!



 **University of New Brunswick**

Lambda Foundation Christian Landry Memorial Award for Graduate Studies

https://eservices.unb.ca/calendar/graduate_awards


gradschl@unb.ca

 **University of Ottawa**

Lambda Foundation for Excellence Award


<http://www.lambdafoundation.com/docs/awardJW02010.pdf>

grdaward@uottawa.ca

 **University of Saskatchewan, College of Law**

Poster Prize in Human Rights

<http://tinyurl.com/3ymybry>

 **University of Victoria**

Candis Graham Writing Scholarship, Lambda Foundation Fund

<http://registrar.uvic.ca/safa/bursaries/termsofawards/writing.html>

finaic@uvic.ca

**Mark S. Bonham Scholarship for Queer Studies
in Film and Video**

The Mark S. Bonham Scholarship is available to Canadian citizens or landed immigrants who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, transgendered or intersex and are pursuing undergraduate studies full-time in the fields of film and/or video that relate to the cultural expression of lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, transgender/transsexual and/or intersex individuals and/or educate the mainstream community about LGBTTI lives and/or issues.

<http://www.insideout.on.ca/festival/scholarship.htm>



The LGBTOUT Student Award

This student award is available to students entering first year programs at any of the University of Toronto campus locations. The Selection Committee shall look primarily for outstanding volunteer contributions to creating change on campus or in the community through LGBTQ community service and/or activism.

<http://www.sgo.utoronto.ca/Students.htm#LGBTOUT%20Student%20Award>

THE POINT FOUNDATION FOR LGBTQ STUDENTS

Point Foundation is an American organization which provides financial support, mentoring, leadership training and hope to meritorious students who are marginalized due to sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. Point Foundation scholarships are available to all students; however, they can only be used at educational facilities in the United States.

<http://www.thepointfoundation.org/index.html>

PROVINCIAL

Sybil Shack Human Rights Youth Award

Dr. Sybil Shack received national recognition as an educator, writer, and broadcaster and was active in the promotion of human rights all her life. A remarkable and committed educator, Dr. Shack never confined her interests to the school system. She was a part of numerous boards and committees in Winnipeg including being a board member, a vice-president and co-convenor of the Legislative Review Committee for The Manitoba Association for Rights and Liberties. In 2004 that commitment to the organization took the form of a bequest upon her passing.

In order to honour the life of Dr. Sybil Shack and her commitment to educating youth and to human rights, the Board of Directors of the Manitoba Association for Rights and Liberties decided to use her generous gift to recognize the work of young people that has had an impact on the advancement of rights and freedoms in Manitoba by creating the Sybil Shack Human Rights Youth Award.



**Safe and Caring Schools-
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is part of Egale's Safe Schools
Campaign.**

