

The background of the entire page is a close-up, high-resolution photograph of several blue feathers. The feathers are layered and overlap, creating a sense of depth and texture. The lighting is soft, highlighting the fine details of the feather barbs. The overall color palette is a range of blues, from deep navy to a lighter, almost white-blue at the tips of the feathers.

INDIGENIZING LOVE

*A Toolkit for Native Youth
to Build Inclusion*



WESTERN STATES CENTER

INDIGENIZING LOVE

TOOLKIT HIGHLIGHTS

2

MODULES

1

ACTIVITY
WORKBOOK

SEVEN
ACTIVITIES

THREE
TWO-SPIRIT
LEADERSHIP PROFILES

100+
LINKS,
VIDEOS,
AND
RESOURCES

TOOLKIT & ACTIVITY WORKBOOK AT-A-GLANCE



MODULE 1

Better Understanding
Our Two-Spirit Relatives



MODULE 2

Creating
Systemic Change

ACTIVITY WORKBOOK



ACTIVITY A

Terms and Definitions



ACTIVITY B

List of Resources



ACTIVITY C

Two-Spirit & LGBTQIA+
History Timeline



ACTIVITY D

Culture and Language
Discussion Guide



ACTIVITY E

Tribal & Local Government
Discussion Guide



ACTIVITY F

Education
Discussion Guide



ACTIVITY G

Anticipated Reactions &
Suggested Responses



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HEADS UP

This document contains content and discussions that may be new to you. In this toolkit we cover discussions on gender, transphobia, and homophobia. Some of this content may cause you anxiety, confusion, or trigger unwanted memories. We encourage you to engage in this content to the extent you feel comfortable and where necessary disengage from the conversation. If those feelings arise, feel free to take a break, stretch, or find another way to take care of yourself. Ultimately, we provide this toolkit to encourage connectedness, knowledge sharing, and inclusion. Let's take care of ourselves and one another.

KEY TERMS

Listed below are key terms to help you better understand and navigate the introductory discussions. Additional terms and definitions can be found in the “Terms and Definitions” document (Activity A).

American Indian/Alaska Native Youth: American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) people under the age of 25 who are an enrolled citizen/member of a Tribal Nation or a descendant. This toolkit will interchangeably use American Indian/Alaska Native along with Native American, Indigenous, and Native for the dual purpose of recognizing and deferring to a Tribal Nation’s right to determine who is/is not a member and being as inclusive as possible.

Inclusion: The practice of actively acknowledging, respecting, and honoring Two-Spirit and Native LGBTQIA+ life experiences and perspectives.

Two-Spirit: Defining Two-Spirit is a challenge because the words carry multifaceted meanings in different AI/AN communities. For the purpose of this toolkit, we use the definition of the Two-Spirit Society of Denver: Two-Spirit refers to a gender role believed to be common among most, if not all, AI/AN communities and nations, one that had a proper and accepted place within our societies.¹ This acceptance was rooted in the traditional teachings that say all life is sacred. Within a traditional setting, Two-Spirit is a Tribal Nation-specific understanding of gender, and not a sexual orientation. The term was established in 1990 to organize Native LGBTQIA+ relatives and directly challenge colonial kinship systems imposed on Indigenous peoples.

LGBTQIA+: An acronym used to build community among Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning, Intersex, and Asexual people. These individual terms are further defined in the “Terms and Definitions” document (Appendix A).

Settler Colonialism: A generational form of systemic oppression and discrimination rooted in the colonization of the original peoples of a territory. Settler colonialism is still being practiced today by the dominant society and through institutional racism.

Systemic Change: An organized effort across people, organizations, and institutions to challenge discriminatory practices and build more inclusion and equity for all.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

PAST: Since time immemorial, Tribal Nations of what is now known as the United States have been Sovereigns; been responsible for the health and wellbeing of our citizenry, an endeavor that is intergenerational and connects each generation to the work of our ancestors. In the spirit of this kinship connection, we respectfully acknowledge the collective wisdom and traditions of our ancestors.

PRESENT: We express our gratitude to our partners and collaborators, specifically:

To Josie Raphaelito, Diné (Navajo Nation), toolkit content developer, lead project manager and author of this toolkit.

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To Western States Center staff, particularly Eric K. Ward, Executive Director, and Amy Herzfeld-Copple, Deputy Director of Programs and Strategic Initiatives for their courage, trust, and willingness to support our Two-Spirit and Native LGBTQIA+ youth.

FUTURE: In the spirit of this stewardship, we respectfully acknowledge our generations rising; for it is in their interest that we carry forward this work, and it is to them that we entrust it.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE TOOLKIT

In response to requests from American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) youth, Western States Center partnered with the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians, the Center for Native American Youth, and Native Youth Leadership Alliance to develop a resource toolkit for and with young Native leaders.

This toolkit is written to support Native youth, tribal communities, Two-Spirit and Native LGBTQIA+ collectives, community leaders, and partners who intend to better understand and support our Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+ communities.

We visited with Native youth in roundtable discussions, conferences, and health and wellness meetings, where we heard time and again that building support for Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+ community members continues to be a priority across Indian Country. More specifically, Native youth have asked for more resources on relationship building, caretaking, and inclusion of the Two-Spirit community. They want to better understand the important and diverse ways that Two-Spirit relatives and community members have sustained practices of making relations in spite of and beyond settler colonial violence. In other words, we developed this resource toolkit to support everyone working to Indigenize Love.

Indigenizing Love refers to the idea of understanding and reclaiming our Indigenous ways of life (including kinship systems, shared values, and expressions of love), and resisting centuries of imposed settler colonial practices, policies, and thoughts that devalue our rights to share Indigenous knowledge and thrive. To Indigenize Love, we are rebuilding connections, kinship and relationships, and strengthening our abilities to love and care for all of our relatives.

There are many leaders, Native Youth Councils, and other youth organizing entities that are diverse in their cultures, identities, and genders. Within these collectives, we want to work towards strengthening our communities and building sustainable relationships that will foster shared Indigenous knowledge. As Native youth, we need to challenge ourselves to:

- 1. Reclaim Indigenous knowledge;**
- 2. Become better partners to support our Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+ relatives; and**
- 3. Help promote efforts that Indigenize Love.**

REASONS TO USE THIS TOOLKIT

There are many reasons to use this toolkit. They include:

- *Reclaiming our cultures and languages and Indigenizing Love;*
- *Better understanding Two-Spirit relatives and building inclusion;*
- *Initiating a conversation about gender roles and understanding our Two-Spirit community members within our own Indigenous knowledge;*
- *Accessing resources and guidance on how to better understand and include Two-Spirit and Native LGBTQIA+ community members;*
- *Creating Native youth-led and youth-focused discussions on identity and inclusiveness; and*
- *Implementing community change that will positively impact the next seven generations.*

INTRODUCTION

Only AI/AN people can claim and use the term Two-Spirit to help describe their identities. Two-Spirit is an umbrella term created by and for AI/AN people who understand or are continuing to learn about their traditional gender role(s) in an Indigenous context. Today, many AI/AN people who identify in the LGBTQIA+ community also describe themselves as Two-Spirit. Not everyone who is AI/AN will be aware of or fully understand the Two-Spirit term.

The goal of this document is to promote inclusion and understanding through efforts that practice openness, kindness, listening, and acknowledgement. In order to practice these values, we first explore a brief history of Tribal Nations and the impact of settler colonialism. We also need to acknowledge and honor the organizing and conversations from which the concept of Two-Spirit arose.

Resilient Tribal Nations. Before settler colonizers traveled across the ocean to steal the land that is now known as North America, Indigenous nations, confederacies, and communities already existed, cohabitated, and thrived. Indigenous leaders and warriors fought against settler colonialism to keep their ways of life, but were eventually forced to sign treaties and agreements that nominally acknowledged tribal sovereignty and pretended



In 1886, We'wha, a citizen of Zuni Pueblo from New Mexico, is received by U.S. President Grover Cleveland as a "Zuni Princess." They are an accomplished weaver, potter, and the most famous Ihamana, a traditional Zuni gender role, now described as mixed-gender or Two-Spirit.

to restore peace. These treaties were created as tools by settler colonizers to gain power over and access to Indigenous lands and resources. They were and continue to be broken. Recognizing Tribal Nations as sovereign nations within the United States and asserting our self-determination are our strongest tools to combat evolving and concerted efforts to disregard and dismantle the hard-fought rights won by our ancestors. Injustices continue to happen and we continue the fight to assert our autonomy and sovereignty, a fight that has never stopped for any Tribal Nation.

573

Federally
Recognized
Tribes

62

State
Recognized
Tribes

Today, our Tribal Nations have government systems as well as economic development strategies and plans and continue to use traditional values and beliefs to build relationships across all ages from youth to elders. There are 573 federally recognized Tribal Nations who assert sovereignty by creating laws and policies to help govern their citizens.² Additionally, there are 62 state recognized tribes,³ many more unrecognized tribes, and other Indigenous peoples governed in various forms in Hawaii and in the insular territories of the United States (e.g. Guam and American Samoa). Similar to any government, laws can be contentious, but an increasing number of Tribal Nations are embracing gender inclusion and building stronger communities.

Forced Assimilation & Hidden Figures. Broken promises made by the federal government had (and continue to have) major impacts on Tribal Nations, our citizens, and our land. Our relatives and tribal leaders were targeted by settlers, missionaries, and military forces during invasions and raids on our communities in the name of “civilization” and “manifest destiny.” Many were forced into hiding to survive attacks and kidnappings. Oral histories from Two-Spirit elders tell us that among those who were placed into hiding were people who held important healing and mediating roles in the community. The

settler colonizers saw them as “different” because they were perceived as women carrying out “male” duties or vice versa.

Our ancestors and relatives went on to conceal traditional languages, ceremonies, and practices when policies and federal laws displaced communities from traditional lands, forced Christianity and western education onto our children, and pressured our people into other practices of assimilation. Any individual who did not conform to a western way of life (language, religion, gender roles) was punished and publicly shamed. These constraints were devastating to AI/AN people who did not fit into a specific “gender box” as understood and imposed by settler colonizers. To survive in settler society, Indigenous gender roles and kinship structures were reconfigured and Two-Spirit people became marginalized. For centuries, our families have been affected by forced sterilization, the foster care system, and adoption practices aimed at placing AI/AN children in non-AI/AN homes. This ongoing disruption of family systems results in a loss of traditional and cultural knowledge and languages, including key understandings of gender roles as they would have been explained, acknowledged, and accepted by AI/AN relatives and teachings.

The impact of these western practices, policies, and federal laws are still felt today in the form of intergenerational trauma—the transmission of oppression passed through generations. We now see major disparities in health, education, and other wellness indicators for our AI/AN communities. However, there are current systems and laws aimed at strengthening Tribal Nations and creating opportunities for all Native youth to thrive, including our Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+ relatives.

Acknowledging Our Two-Spirit & LGBTQIA+ Relatives. Our ancestors fought for our right to exist with as much traditional knowledge as possible. Today, Tribal Nations’ formal acknowledgement and inclusion of gender diversity and non-binary gender roles varies widely. As AI/AN peoples, we have many programs, services, and opportunities to engage our communities and begin questioning family, friends, and leaders about inclusion and holistic approaches

to well-being. Whether or not you live on or are connected to your Indigenous homeland should not deter anyone from engaging in a community discussion about understanding and including our Two-Spirit relatives.

In 1990, the term Two-Spirit was established and defined by a group of AI/AN people (later to be organized as the Gay American Indian group) who identified within the LGBTQIA+ community.⁴ They coordinated an in-person meeting in Canada to build connections and support. They also discussed their varying thoughts and understandings of being members of Tribal Nations, expressing themselves

support the implementation of new laws and policies that have a positive impact on our Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+ relatives.⁷ Resources like the Two-Spirit Terms Map from the Center for American Progress exist online to see traditional words for Two-Spirit relatives in our Indigenous languages.⁸ Organizations like the National Congress of American Indians, the United Nations, and local human rights collectives are supporting Two-Spirit and Native LGBTQIA+ community members and creating more space for advocacy and recognition within systemic leadership. As of 2017, these advocacy efforts are now reflected in 37 Tribal Nations having passed marriage equality laws recognizing same-sex marriage.

37 Tribal Nations Recognize Same-Sex Marriage by Law

through various gender roles, and being involved in the mainstream LGBTQIA+ community. They shared stories about traditional roles and genders understood within their AI/AN communities. Together, they prioritized the need to reclaim their traditional gender roles and to serve as advocates for Two-Spirit and Native LGBTQIA people. Articles and books, like *Queer Indigenous Studies: Critical Interventions in Theory, Politics, and Literature*; *One Bead at a Time*; *Two-Spirit People: Native American Gender Identity, Sexuality, and Spirituality*, and others help capture this historical Two-Spirit organizing and share stories about Two-Spirit leaders such as We-Wha (Zuni Pueblo), Hastiin Klah (Diné), and Pine Leaf (Crow).⁵ With these resources and books about our Two-Spirit relatives, we have the opportunity to learn and understand how we can live in balance with one another and welcome everyone to the circle.

Our Tribal Nations can now use laws like the Indian Child Welfare Act, Title IX, and the Violence Against Women Act to support our families and strengthen our communities.⁶ We have a Tribal Equity Toolkit developed by the Western States Center and key partners to promote and practice inclusion by providing resources to update existing laws and

Two-Spirit is understood in different ways in different tribal communities. Tribal Nations each have their own unique and distinct terms, histories, and understandings of non-binary and gender nonconforming people, and it is up to us to learn and understand our own Tribal Nation's knowledge systems, including multiple gender roles. Our hope is that this toolkit provides helpful discussions, information, and resources to elevate Two-Spirit and Native LGBTQIA+ people within inclusion efforts.

Visit the List of Resources document for additional suggested readings that help build more understanding of Two-Spirit and Native LGBTQIA+ relatives (Activity B).



Chief Barcheampe or Pine Leaf (1800-1854) was a woman warrior for the Crow Nation. She dressed in traditional women's clothing and was an expert with guns, bows, and war horses. She was a fierce leader who lived her own life in balance within masculine and feminine roles. She is an established historical leader within the Two-Spirit community.

GETTING INVOLVED

This toolkit promotes a discussion about understanding our Two-Spirit community members and creating space for us, as Native youth, to discuss their lack of inclusion. Together we will explore opportunities for positive change that creates more welcoming spaces for all of our relatives. Through our discussions and actions, we honor the strong AI/AN leaders who helped establish a space to acknowledge settler colonialism's negative impact on Indigenous genders. We celebrate their creation of the umbrella term "Two-Spirit" more than 29 years ago and continue their understanding and reclamation of our Indigenous identities. This toolkit is part of the legacy of Indigenous organizing and movement building.

This toolkit provides two modules to help facilitate and promote conversations aimed at including Two-Spirit and Native LGBTQIA+ relatives in all community discussions. To support initial conversations, these modules also offer activities and discussion guides that help build understanding and promote inclusion efforts across various systems of our communities. These shared tools and resources can be used to support new and existing efforts among Native youth.

INDIGENIZING LOVE

Modules



MODULE 1

Better Understanding Our Two-Spirit Relatives



MODULE 2

Creating Systemic Change



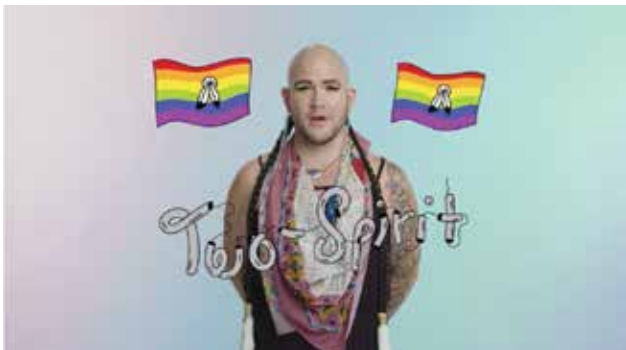
BETTER UNDERSTANDING OUR TWO-SPIRIT RELATIVES

Only AI/AN people can claim and use the term Two-Spirit to help describe their identities. Two-Spirit is an umbrella term created by and for AI/AN people who understand or are continuing to learn about their traditional gender role(s) in an Indigenous context. Today, many AI/AN people who identify in the LGBTQIA+ community also describe themselves as Two-Spirit. Not everyone who is AI/AN will be aware of or fully understand the Two-Spirit term.

Teachings and stories from our Two-Spirit and non-Two-Spirit elders tell us about a time when our Two-Spirit people had their own word(s) in our Indigenous languages to describe their roles in the community. In other words, there is a shared oral and written history across Tribal Nations of innate inclusion of Two-Spirit community members. In fact, these relatives were often viewed as sacred, contributors to kinship ties, leaders, and knowledge keepers. Knowing about this history can help promote better understanding of our Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+ relatives through an Indigenous context.

“We as Native people are failing our young people who may identify as Two-Spirit or LGBTQIA+ today by not teaching them about their identity before colonization. Our Two-Spirit and Native LGBTQIA+ communities and individuals were highly revered and were honored among our communities. History says that some tribal communities actually had celebrations and ceremonies for young people when they were coming out. Colonization has changed our way of thinking.” (Lenny Hayes, Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate, Winkta, Two-Spirit elder)

Two-Spirit is a collective of AI/AN people who use traditional knowledge to understand their spiritual grounding, gender roles, and gender expressions in their community. Today, a person may also be part of the Two-Spirit collective if they are AI/AN and identify in the broader LGBTQIA+ community. Not all Two-Spirit people are LGBTQIA+, and not all Native LGBTQIA+ people are Two-Spirit. *Slight confusion?* That’s ok. Let’s further explore by listening to stories and perspectives from Two-Spirit relatives.



WHAT DOES “TWO-SPIRIT” MEAN? (THEM, 2018):

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A4lBibGzUnE&t=3s>



SAN FRANCISCO TWO-SPIRIT POWWOW (WILBUR, 2017):

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N4BQbRnKdIY>

You may have heard that some Two-Spirit people do not feel welcome in their community or are fighting for the right to be acknowledged and respected as sacred beings who transcend the western gender binary. As a young Native leader reading this toolkit to build inclusion in your community, the first step to take is building better understanding of those who may not feel included. Then, talk to friends and family to ask for their perspectives. Chances are there are others who come to the same conclusion and want to be a partner in building understanding and promoting inclusion. Take a moment to ask yourself if you understand what Two-Spirit means. Or, if you’re in a group setting, ask each other if you’re beginning to better understand our Two-Spirit relatives and their perspectives on engaging them in our communities. *What questions remain for you and what do you feel you understand better now?* Take note of these questions and continue your own research and discussion to help build a strong foundation of Two-Spirit knowledge.

Exploring the Two-Spirit & LGBTQIA+ History Timeline

Use this 90-minute Two-Spirit & LGBTQIA+ History Timeline Activity to generate group discussion and strengthen your own culturally relevant understanding of Two-Spirit people, their histories, struggles, and achievements (Activity C). This timeline provides an opportunity to further acknowledge and support Two-Spirit and Native LGBTQIA+ community members.

Holistic Approach to Being: Indigenous Identity, Gender Identity, Gender Roles, and Sexuality

Disclaimer: There is no way that we can be inclusive of the whole history of Two-Spirit organizing and varying knowledge systems that exist in hundreds of Tribal Nations. This discussion is simply a reflection of shared Two-Spirit experiences and teachings learned from elders, family members, advocates, thought leaders, and others. Discussion points do not reflect a formalized prioritization of identity, but are shared as contributions to current or emerging conversations regarding our understanding of Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+ relatives. This narrative is meant to spark conversations and encourage readers to continue their own research.

In an Indigenous context of identity, there are many factors to explore, understand, and acknowledge. For many AI/AN peoples, we would consider some of the following when deciding how to describe our identity to

another person: Tribal Nation citizenship, clan or kinship ties to relatives and the land (as captured and shared by elders), beliefs (religious, spiritual, or all-encompassing), how you're seen in the community (athlete, scholar, activist, artist, etc.), and who you're attracted to (emotionally, physically, sexually), among many other characteristics or attributes. Some of these Indigenous components are different when compared to western society's understanding of identity, which includes self-assessments of personality traits, physical attributes, skills, abilities, and occupation. Neither of these descriptions is better than the other, but instead they help us think about the differences in cultural values.

As we become more comfortable and safe in our own identity, we're able to acknowledge those around us who are still on their exploratory journey or are struggling along the way. As Two-Spirit and Native youth, we're all reclaiming and decolonizing, learning, and refining our sense of identity and how we communicate those thoughts. This should be considered as a circular process throughout life and not linear with a defined start and end point. This toolkit is a resource to help us understand the significance of asserting identity through an Indigenous context and the critical need to create inclusion for all our friends and family members. Next, we will initiate various discussions on Indigenous identity, gender identity, gender roles, and sexuality; these discussions will help us better understand ourselves and our Two-Spirit relatives.

Exploring Indigenous Identity

Nation: As AI/AN peoples, we are playing a leading role in the Self-Determination Era established by a 1970 federal law promoting self-governance and self-rule—including reclaiming the direction and advancement of our people.⁹ Tribal Nations are actual nations on Indigenous land within what is currently known as the United States. As young leaders, this understanding of self-determination is an important recognition of treaties and laws. These rights have been fought for by generations of leaders, elders, and communities to ensure that we could be here today as citizens of our Tribal Nations and with our Indigenous lands, languages, and ways of life. Today,



if we are fortunate enough to have ties to our land and community, we have the opportunity to introduce ourselves as a citizen of our Tribal Nation; and/or we have the opportunity to describe our Indigenous family and communities if we're descendants, not enrolled, or don't fully understand yet. *How would you introduce yourself to someone who asks, "Are you from here?" In an Indigenous context, would your response be different? If yes, how so? What does your Tribal Nation and citizenship look like?*

Community: What is a Tribal Nation without our communities? Our communities start from the land we are on and include various elements such as our relationship to the land and environment, our relations to immediate and extended family and elders, and our participation in basketball and lacrosse games, Potlatch gatherings, and ceremonies that have been passed down from generation to generation. Some of our communities have open fields of corn and windmills, while others have rideshare apps and movie theaters. Our communities have organized systems and infrastructure to support each other—including places for ceremony, community gathering spaces, as well as health, education, and justice systems. We, as Native youth, are part of communities, both on and off Indigenous territory (reservation, village, reserve, rancheria, community, etc.). In order for our communities to thrive, we need to create a balance in leadership, community involvement, and relationships with each other, our communities, our land, and our cultures. *What community(ies) do you call home and how would you describe it/them? Who do you spend most of your time with throughout the year? What about your community is important to you, and why?*

Clan/Kinship Ties: An essential part of our communities is our family and kinship ties. Many Tribal Nations utilize centuries-old clan or family lineage systems to recognize details like family connections, original homelands, courtship/dating opportunities, and identified roles in the community. They also tell the story about how our families grew, migrated, and how these systems ultimately helped build our communities today. Our understanding and use of clan and family systems vary across Tribal Nations and even communities within nations. However, exploring

and asking questions to better understand our own system is another important part of our identity as AI/AN peoples. For those of us who do not have a system, or perhaps no longer have ties to our families (for any given reason), this could be an opportunity to better connect with people around us who are offering support and help. Chances are, if they don't have the proper resources or answers to our questions, they will point us in the right direction or introduce us to other community members who could provide insight. Are you aware of your clan or family lineage system? *If yes, how is your clan or family lineage system structured? If no, what questions come to mind and who or what resources do you have in mind to help you find answers?*



DIASPORA (DISPLACEMENT)

Recent discussions in Indigenous studies include Indigenous thought around "diaspora"—a term used to describe the feeling of disconnect between Indigenous people and their way of life and their current environment. Different environments include being located on Indigenous territory and land (traditional, reservation, reserve, rancheria, territory, etc.), as well as living in an urban setting away from our Indigenous territory. Among those areas affected by feelings of disconnect are our languages, teachings of community roles, and ultimately, the understanding of our Two-Spirit relatives.

Self

With an enhanced understanding of identity considerations as an AI/AN person, we can begin to consider how we, as individuals, play a role in our families, communities, and Tribal Nations. This identity is composed of various aspects of experiences and aspirations. It's how you want to be viewed by your community (mindfulness, respectfulness, strength, intelligence, etc.) and how you think you're viewed by your community (positives, negatives, in between), including gender roles and expressions (including diverse Indigenous genders), sexual orientation, and sexual behavior. Specific to the work of inclusion and social change, we can also be seen as a person who helps sustain loving conversations with our Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+ relatives and our own community. Let's explore these elements of self a bit more.

Gender Roles/Expressions

Gender roles are often expressed by what you do and how you present yourself. *Do you tend to participate in more feminine or masculine roles as expected by your community (cooking, drumming, dancing, weaving, etc.)?* Maybe a relative doesn't have a strong pull in one direction or another. Understanding the different gender roles of your community will start with conversations among elders, family, and friends about what is perceived as feminine and masculine roles and then continue with a reflection on how you feel and see yourself. It's important to note that performing traditionally masculine duties as a woman and performing traditionally feminine duties as a man doesn't necessarily mean you aren't the gender you identify as. We can hold space for those who do these activities that deviate from traditional gender roles but who do not see that changing their gender identification. In many instances, cultures evolve and women and men take on different responsibilities without this change necessarily constituting Two-Spirit-ness. For example, sometimes men learn how to bead because they like it as an art form and can make some extra money, or others might express themselves through hair styles or body postures that differ from their gender roles. We also have relatives who are non-binary/gender nonconforming and express a combination of masculinity and femininity or neither. There are no right or wrong conclusions here.

Remember, this is also an opportunity for us, as Native youth, to better understand and reclaim gender roles in the context of our Indigenous knowledge, including Two-Spirit people whose gender roles may be more spiritual, interchangeable, non-binary, and fluid.

Gender Identity

Gender identity means an internal sense of our gender. Do I feel more female, male, neither, or a combination? Do I feel somewhere along the spectrum but am not sure where? These are the first questions that may come to mind when contemplating gender identity. An important perspective to keep in mind is that this identity does not have to be definitive, and that many of our relatives never decide to define themselves and are in fact gender fluid, non-binary, or agender. If you find yourself feeling more fluid in your gender identity, then you are welcome to join the Two-Spirit collective and continue to learn more about our various roles in the community today and in the past. Again, this is an internal sense that is determined by an individual.

Sexuality

As AI/AN people, we can read or listen to our creation stories and/or revisit our own traditional teachings of sexuality to better understand our internal sense of attractions and actions, or lack thereof. Sexuality is understood within three major components: sexual orientation (who you are attracted to physically, emotionally, and/or sexually, or the absence of such attraction); sexual behavior (who you choose to be sexual with, or the choice not to be sexual); sexual identity (how you view yourself). Understandably, sexuality can be fluid and many of our peers and relatives may express or describe their sexuality differently depending on where they are on their journey to self-affirmation and acceptance.

Indigenizing Love

This process of exploring and discovering our Indigenous identities is an important element of practicing self-love. Working towards self-love through self-assurance and strength, we can discover how our thoughts and actions can help Indigenize Love on a community level.

Today, we have the opportunities to reclaim Indigenous foods, learn our languages, and capture Indigenous knowledge from elders and community



MODULE 1

members to sustain our ways of life for future generations. As Native youth, we often feel a sense of urgency to learn as much as possible about our land, cultures, and people. We lose a crucial part of our traditional ways of life if our Two-Spirit relatives are not better understood and honored for the strength they bring to our communities. We should love and accept all our relatives as it reflects our Indigenous values and not based on settler-colonial restrictions on gender or sexual preferences. This is the idea behind Indigenizing Love.

Our elders are a great example of community members who are championing acts of Indigenizing Love. In recent years, many elders have shared their stories about respecting and loving their Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+ grandchildren.¹⁰ The violent and traumatic settler-colonial acts of the boarding school era forced a generation of AI/AN children to be removed from their Indigenous ways of life, including expressions of offering, receiving, and understanding love. In order to support healing efforts, we have to engage in multi-generational discussions that are aimed at relearning and practicing Indigenizing Love.

As Native youth, we have the ability to mobilize friends, relatives, and communities to initiate conversations around Indigenous thoughts of love (for oneself and others), and reclaim our values, cultures, and innate need for inclusion. It is our responsibility to honor the sacrifices of our ancestors by acknowledging our Two-Spirit relatives and to practice daily mindfulness that helps heal and rebuild our understanding of Indigenous Love.

Trying to better understand our Two-Spirit relatives is a great opportunity to reach out to our Two-Spirit elders and learn first-hand about their experiences, traditional teachings, and spirituality. Reflect on the questions that have surfaced while reading through this toolkit and organize an Oral History Project!

OTHER IDENTITY TERMS

American Indian	Indian	Native American	Native
Indigenous	First Nation	By Tribal Nation	Name within their own respected language

TWO-SPIRIT OR LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY ROLES

TRADITIONAL ROLES IN THE PAST			
Mediators	Ceremony Leaders	Artists	Medicine People/Healers
Warriors	Storytellers	Caretakers	Land and Water Protectors
ROLES IDENTIFIED TODAY			
Counselors	Storytellers	Advocates	Tribal Officials
Teachers	Artists	Parents (biological, surrogate, foster, adoptive)	Land and Water Protectors

TWO-SPIRIT TERMS IN OUR OWN LANGUAGES

Nation	Term	“Loose” Translation
Acoma	Male-assigned: Kokwi'ma	
Aleut	Male-assigned: Ayagigux' Female-assigned: Tayagigux'	“Man transformed into a woman” “Woman transformed into a man”
Arapaho	Male-assigned: Haxu'xan (singular), Hoxuxuno (plural)	“Rotten bone”
Arikara	Male-assigned: Kuxa't	
Assiniboine	Male-assigned: Winktan	
Blackfoot (Southern Peigan)	Male-assigned: Aakí'skassi Female-assigned: Saahkómaapi'aakíkoan	“Acts like a woman” “Boy-girl”
Cherokee	Male-assigned: nudale asgaya Female-assigned: nudale agehya All term: asegi	“Different man” “Different woman” “Both male and female assigned”
Cheyenne	Male-assigned: He'eman (singular), He'emané'o (plural) (hee = “woman”) Female-assigned: Hetaneman (singular), Hatane'mané'o (plural) (hetan = “man”)	
Chickasaw, Choctaw	Male-assigned: Hatukiklanna Female-assigned: hatukholba	

The table above is an excerpt of only a few Indigenous languages based on Roscoe (1998), who worked with the Bay Area's Gay American Indians organization.¹¹ More examples of Two-Spirit in our own languages can be found here: <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/lgbt/news/2016/10/17/143403/two-spiritnative-american-lgbt-people/>¹²



OPPORTUNITIES FOR SYSTEMIC CHANGE

What is Systemic Change? As you take time to observe our own and surrounding communities, Tribal Nations, state/s, and even the country, you may identify different systems or institutions that directly impact your life. Perhaps you're thinking about your Indigenous cultures, tribal government, school, or other areas such as the health clinic or employment office. These are all systems that help create a strong foundation for, and build, a community—your community.

When we use the term “systemic change” in this toolkit, we mean an organized effort across people, organizations, and institutions to challenge discriminatory practices and build more inclusion and equity for all. This change takes into account the interrelationships and interdependencies among those organizations and system structures. In other words, systemic change is about creating coordinated actions that can produce multiple chain reactions that ultimately lead to larger changes across systems, from the local to the national and even to the international level.

Where are we going with this? Historic and ongoing conversations with Two-Spirit and Native LGBTQIA+ community members identify the need for broad systemic change to build a culture that supports and practices inclusion. As a reminder, when we use the term “inclusion” we are talking about educating and engaging the larger community so they are ready and able to understand, acknowledge, and actively invite our Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+ relatives into the community.

For the purposes of this toolkit, we explore three key systems that impact our development as young Native people and identify opportunities to promote inclusion of our Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+ community members: **1. Culture and Language Reclamation Efforts**, **2. Tribal & Local Government**, and **3. Education**. Although there are many other systems that could be included in this discussion, we focus on the systems below to provide initial ideas and roadmaps for action. For each system we provide a brief synopsis below and a more detailed discussion guide at the end of this toolkit (Activities D – F). To learn more about systems impacting Native youth, explore the List of Resources (Activity B).

1. Culture and Language Reclamation Efforts. As we know, there are Native youth across the country who are becoming increasingly aware of the power of culture and language when it comes to identity and resilience (Center for Native American Youth, 2016).¹³ We see more stories on social media and in news outlets about Native youth who are drawing strength from their cultures to create positive change and build community. In response to Native youth demanding more access to their cultures and languages, we see increased efforts from tribal leaders, schools, and programs in Indigenizing youth engagement practices. We are hearing more traditional stories, revisiting traditional foods, and inviting Native youth to the table to help make decisions on community initiatives. During these discussions about reclaiming stories, food, and community, there is an opportunity to begin asking questions about Two-Spirit inclusion: *Where are our Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+ relatives? How do we learn more about their traditional and current roles in our communities? How do we make sure that all community members are involved when reclaiming our culture and language? How do we play a role in “Indigenizing Love?”*

These are initial questions to consider as an individual and/or as a group of young Native leaders. We have provided a more detailed Culture and Language Discussion Guide to prompt reactions to stories of AI/AN leaders who are embracing Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+ relatives and identities (Activity D). These conversations will also create space to brainstorm ideas for positive change and action.

Actions: With enhanced understanding and shared examples of how our communities are acknowledging and inviting Two-Spirit and Native LGBTQIA+ relatives back into our communities, it's time to explore ideas and resources to generate discussions and/or create action for systemic change in our communities.

- Share what you've learned from this toolkit, discuss opportunities for exploring traditional teachings on gender and values, and challenge others to understand the concept of Indigenizing Love.
- Invite a Two-Spirit relative or advocate to the community to share more about the history of Two-Spirit people and lead discussions on inclusion.

- Practice sharing your pronouns when introducing yourself and invite others to share as well.
Example: "Hello, my name is _____, my pronouns are they/them/theirs, and I'm a citizen of the _____ [Tribal] Nation." The more we create these opportunities to express ourselves, the more welcoming it can become for those who often feel isolated or dismissed by our communities.
- Contact your tribal youth council and/or Two-Spirit Society in your region to build relationships that can sustain and support Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+ relatives. Learn from one another and explore resources and opportunities to build more inclusion efforts together.
- Research community funding, grant opportunities, co-sponsorships, and other fundraising opportunities to support ideas for events or meetings that include Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+ relatives.
- Speak to culture/language teachers about their understanding (or maybe lack of understanding) of Two-Spirit relatives in the past and present. When possible, encourage those teachers to acknowledge and include Two-Spirit people and teachings in discussions. If they aren't familiar with Two-Spirit relatives yet, you could offer to share with teachers what you've learned from this toolkit.

- Get a group of friends together to create and organize a Two-Spirit Oral History Project. This is the perfect time to engage Two-Spirit elders, relatives, tribal archives, and other partners to gather stories and understandings of specific teachings and words in our own languages that help describe the importance of Two-Spirit community members.

Read through the List of Resources for additional information and sources to support your plans for action (Activity B).

2. Tribal & Local Government. Establishing community and nation laws and policies sets a foundation for values, expectations for citizenship, and a system of rules to be followed and enforced by appointed leadership. As an individual citizen, it is our responsibility to identify, understand, practice, and in some instances challenge these laws and policies to ensure protection for all community members. As young leaders, we are becoming more active citizens in understanding and speaking out for or against established laws and policies that directly impact our lives. Organizations like the Center for Native American Youth, United National Indian Tribal Youth (UNITY), Native Youth Leadership Alliance, and others, are contributing to the Native youth leadership movement that is supporting, elevating, and engaging our voices and advocacy efforts.¹⁴ Through local youth networks,

LEADER HIGHLIGHT



Lenny Hayes

Tribal Affiliation: Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate

Community: Mounds View, Minnesota

Pronouns: I do not use pronouns.

How Do You Identify? First, I identify as a "Winkta" which is the word given to me by my people in my language. Second, I identify as a Two-Spirit Male, and lastly as a gay male. This is my way of decolonizing my way of thinking.

Working For Our People: "All of the work that I do for our Two-Spirit and Native LGBTQIA+ relatives is led by the Creator. This work entails educating and raising awareness of Two-Spirit and Native LGBTQIA+ identity and issues that impact our communities. I focus my work on the issue of violence, including child and adult sexual abuse, domestic violence, human/sex trafficking, suicide, and missing and murdered Two-Spirit and Native LGBTQIA+ community members. I also strongly advocate to bring change in the child welfare systems for our young people. I work to bring acceptance and inclusion to our Two-Spirit and Native LGBTQIA+ relatives in all communities."



tribal youth councils, and regional conferences, we have the opportunity to discover, develop, and practice leadership skills to better understand tribal and local government systems and opportunities to become actively engaged. During our interactions with tribal, city, and state officials, we can begin asking targeted questions about the current and future needs of Two-Spirit and Native LGBTQIA+ inclusion across government systems: Does our local government have a Human Rights charter that protects all our relatives, including Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+ community members? *Does our marriage code explicitly recognize same-sex marriage? How do our child welfare laws engage and support Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+ families and/or children who encounter the foster care system?*

It is likely that many more questions will arise as we further explore tribal and local governments and identify exclusions or a lack of acknowledgement of our Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+ relatives. Systemic change at any level requires relationship building, persistence, and ongoing conversations with peers and local leaders. The Tribal & Local Government Discussion Guide initiates and adds to conversations about engaging in local government as young leaders and requesting more inclusion of our Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+ relatives (Activity E).

Actions: With our newfound or reinforced appreciation for civic engagement and advocacy, it's time to review suggested action items and resources to elevate our Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+ relatives into governance conversations.

- Share what you've learned from this toolkit, discuss opportunities for exploring traditional teachings on gender and values, and challenge others to understand the concept of Indigenizing Love. We really need to build relationships and meaningful connections with one another to better understand what's needed to help create a safer and more welcoming community.
- Visit your local tribal clerk's office to request copies of tribal codes, laws, policies, and ordinances to review. Review with a friend, family member, or trusted adult to learn together and identify areas that need more exploration

or discussion about inclusion of Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+ relatives. Attend your local government or tribal council meeting, especially if the agenda pertains to Two-Spirit and Native LGBTQIA+ issues.

- Read and share a copy of the Tribal Equity Toolkit 3.0 to assess sample codes, laws, and other resources aimed at building inclusion and equal protection for Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+ relatives.¹⁵
- Visit the National Indian Law Library to access and review local laws (on marriage, employment, and discrimination, for example), policies, and Human Rights charters.
- Read and identify whether your tribal laws meet the minimum Human Right standards required by International Human Rights law.
- Visit the US Human Rights Network to learn about their work.¹⁶ Then, search online to identify your local Human Rights Commissions to learn together and build relationships that support our Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+ community members.
- Write and send a "Dear Tribal Leader" letter to express your support for equal protection and acknowledgement of Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+ relatives.
- Contact your local leaders (tribal council, city council, etc.) to discuss what you've learned when reviewing local laws and come prepared to ask questions and share ideas about building inclusion for equal protection.
- Volunteer for a local or nearby Tribal Coalition to help create resources or lobby for legislation/tribal codes that support all leaders.

DID YOU KNOW?

16

PERCENT

From age 6 to 18, or approximately 16% of our lives, we spend time in a school system.

3. Education. A lot of progress has been made within grade schools and colleges and universities to promote and celebrate student diversity and inclusion. However, there is still a lot of work that needs to be done. From age 6 to 18, or approximately 16% of our lives, we spend time in a school system.¹⁷ As students, we have the opportunity to influence our education systems and push them to promote and practice inclusion efforts. The way in which our educational institution is structured depends on many factors, including the type of institute (public, private, charter, tribal, etc.), the state and county where it is located, as well as elected school administrators, boards, and other officials. As Native youth, we know about and might have participated in efforts to better acknowledge Native students in the school system, and in some states like Montana state legislation requires grade school curriculum to include local tribal history and relevance in their lessons.¹⁸ This is a perfect example of the strength in organizing and advocating for more inclusion in the classroom. As these student and school advocacy initiatives continue, this is an important opportunity for us as Native youth to be actively involved and challenge school systems to discuss gaps in student support services and opportunities to embrace our Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+ peers.

An important part of these discussions is the need for meaningful partnership building between young people and adults. As young leaders, we need adults to not only hear our concerns and perspectives, but to take us seriously and support our interests in building stronger community in schools. From adults, we need to learn about and better understand the education system so that we can identify points of entry for strategic requests for inclusion made by and for Native youth and partners. The Education Discussion Guide supports conversations on the need for true partnership and inclusion, and opportunities to create positive change in the education system aimed at supporting the strong development of all students, including our Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+ peers (Activity F).

Actions: These tools help to hold adults accountable to the culture they're creating in the classroom and on campus. More importantly, it's a tool to help identify opportunities for building understanding and inclusion of Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+ relatives.

- Share what you've learned from this toolkit, discuss opportunities to explore traditional teachings on gender and values, and challenge

LEADER HIGHLIGHT



Amber Richardson

Tribal Affiliation: Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe

Community: From Hollister, NC. Currently reside in Washington, DC.

Pronouns: She/Her/Hers

How Do You Identify? Queer Indigenous woman

Working For Our People: "At the Center for Native American Youth at The Aspen Institute, I improved data collection by advocating for more open and fluid responses

to survey questions about sexuality and gender. I also helped facilitate roundtable discussions in which Two-Spirit and Native LGBTQIA+ youth could explore the complexity and evolution of their identities, both personally and politically. In my 10+ years of working for Native youth, these experiences stood out as remarkable opportunities to give voice to my relatives and honor my own identity as a queer Indigenous woman."

"Without representation in data, media and positions of power, Two-Spirit and Native LGBTQIA+ people will not have the resources and platforms we need to create change. Everyone, including advocates and partners, has a role in telling our stories and sharing institutional power so that we can eliminate disparities together."



others to understand the concept of Indigenizing Love. This is where we as Native youth can help support community development.

- Review your teacher and student handbooks to learn about your rights as a student. We suggest you pay close attention to policies on discrimination, civil rights, student code of conduct, gender bathroom policies, and others that feel important to you.
- Review the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights website.¹⁹ Title IX of the Education amendment of 1972 protects people from discrimination based on sex in education programs or activities that receive federal financial assistance. Read about protections and learn how to keep yourself and your peers safer in an academic setting. We have the right to report forms of discrimination or harassment to authoritative collectives.
- Familiarize yourself with who is mandated to report discrimination (faculty, staff, etc.) and who is responsible for providing spaces of confidentiality (counseling, nurse's office, etc.).
- Identify and meet with student organizing groups (student councils, diversity committees, student editors for news publications, etc.) to build relationships, inform them on Two-Spirit and Native LGBTQIA+ issues, ask for support, and create meaningful partnerships.

- Ask teachers to include Two-Spirit and Native LGBTQIA+ historical and current figures in their curricula.
- Ask teachers to learn and practice sharing pronouns during introductions in the classroom.
- Promote the use of Safe Zone curricula and stickers to raise visibility of LGBTQIA+ Safe Zones on campus.²⁰ Please keep in mind that it will take extra energy and effort to adjust the trainings and curricula to meet the needs of Two-Spirit peers.
- Use culturally relevant material from the Native Youth Sexual Health Network to promote inclusion and diversity in reproductive health classes.²¹ They also share material to help fight homophobia and transphobia in your school.
- Challenge teachers to consider non-binary/gender nonconforming students when dividing groups by gender.
- Require school administrators, guidance counselors, teachers, and other faculty to receive annual training on building inclusion and safer spaces for Two-Spirit and Native LGBTQIA+ students.

Read through the List of Resources for additional information and sources to support your plans for action (Activity B).

LEADER HIGHLIGHT



Denise Juneau

Tribal Affiliation: Mandan Hidatsa Tribes

Community: Denise grew up in Montana and currently resides in Seattle, Washington

Pronouns She/Her/Hers

Working For Our People: Denise is an enrolled member of the Mandan Hidatsa Tribes, a descendant of the Blackfoot Tribe, and the Tlingit and Haida Tribes. She is recognized as the first openly gay candidate who ran for statewide office

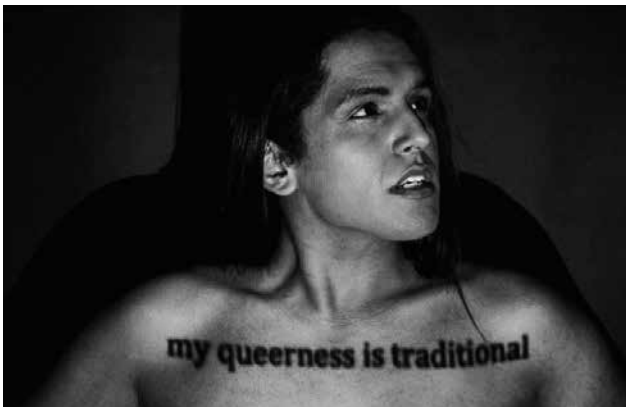
in Montana. Denise is a champion for building equity in and better access to education. She taught in the classroom, served in administration, returned to law school, and led important policy initiatives like Montana's Indian Education for All, and Graduation Matters Montana. Denise is an incredible leader in promoting and practicing inclusion efforts and creating systemic change in education.²²

Staying Safe When Initiating Conversations

There are many suggested action steps shared throughout this module that require initiating new conversations with others, including possibly new people. Talking about an unfamiliar community (like Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+ relatives) can be challenging when speaking with individuals who have more conservative views.

However, there is a general lack of understanding of Two-Spirit and Native LGBTQIA+ people amongst many of our communities. We're offering ideas and suggestions on how to initiate community engagement and build more partnerships for our Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+ relatives and peers.

In an effort to help young leaders prepare for possible reactions when initiating conversations, this toolkit provides helpful tips on how to respond in conversations with both a supporter and with someone who is not receptive to our outreach about building inclusion. Read through our Anticipated Reactions and Suggested Responses document to help further prepare for Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+ advocacy discussions (Activity G).



My Queerness is Traditional by Ryan Young.



The Creator is Two Spirit by Ryan Young.

Ryan Young's current work focuses on empowering Two-Spirit people, using a variety of mediums, including photography, silkscreen printing, projection and mixed media. The statements used in each piece are constructed to connect gender/sexuality to Indigenous culture; while also recognizing homophobia and transphobia as tools of colonization, which keeps Queer and Two-Spirit people from building and maintaining strong connections to their culture and their communities.

Asking for Support & Guidance

This toolkit provides many resources and ideas for action to build more understanding of our Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+ relatives and to create more inclusive communities. If you are excited to get involved, but are unsure how to start, let us help you! Below are some key individuals who would be happy to discuss your ideas. These could include group-facilitated meetings/gatherings, an in-person training on building inclusion through an Indigenous context, youth train the trainer opportunities, or other plans. Please use their contact information below to start the conversation.

Additional suggestions for self-care include: talking to a friend, going for a run or going outside, listening to your favorite music, writing a poem, or revisiting other ways that help you feel comforted.

- **Lenny Hayes**, Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate, does not use pronouns, Winkta, Two-Spirit Male, Gay Male, tatetopaconsulting@gmail.com
- **Keioshiah Peter**, Diné (Navajo Nation), Non-Binary Genderqueer Femme, They/Them/Theirs, rezcondomtours@gmail.com
- **Harlan Pruden**, Nehiyawe/First Nations Cree, Ayahkwêw, Two-Spirit, hpruden@gmail.com
- **Josie Raphaelito**, Diné (Navajo Nation), Two-Spirit, Queer Indigenous Woman, She/Her/Hers, jraphaelito@gmail.com
- **Marcus Red Shirt**, Oglala Lakota, Two-Spirit/ Non-Binary, They/Them/Theirs, marcus.ruff.redshirt@gmail.com
- **Ryan Young**, Lac du Flambeau Ojibwe, Two-Spirit, They/Them/Theirs, ryan.young.photography@gmail.com

STAYING SAFE & ASKING FOR SUPPORT

Leadership and advocacy roles are important in building more inclusive communities for our Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+ relatives. It is equally important to practice safety and self-care. The discussions and action items in this toolkit can leave anyone with more questions than answers. As you begin to better understand, explore your identity/ies, and initiate discussions about supporting Two-Spirit and Native LGBTQIA+ relatives, create time (10-20 minutes) after any discussion to:

1. Reflect on what you learned;
2. Thank those who taught you something new; and
3. Process any stories/feedback/insight you received and acknowledge how you feel about the experience.

STORYTELLING

By reading and utilizing resources in this toolkit, you are creating a story that would be helpful to share with peers. They may not know the term Two-Spirit, or they may be unaware of the toolkit and how to initiate conversations in their communities. You can help promote inclusion by encouraging other Native youth to revisit their traditional values to resist settler colonialism and understand how Two-Spirit and Native LGBTQIA+ community members should and could be embraced. Suggestions are provided below on how to help share your story of Indigenizing Love.

- **Share Your Voice.** Reach out to a friend, family member, or even a local LGBTQIA+ youth group to share what you've learned from this toolkit and other shared materials.
- **Write a Blog Post.** Share your experiences of learning about Two-Spirit relatives and encourage others to better understand and embrace Two-Spirit and Native LGBTQIA+ relatives online.
- **Engage Local Journalists.** Submit a "Letter to the Editor" to a local newspaper or newsletter sharing what you've learned from this toolkit. Invite their staff to learn about your efforts to build inclusion and the importance of understanding, acknowledging, and respecting Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+ community members.
- **Help Create More Partners.** Use your favorite social media platform to use photos/images, videos, poems, or stories that promote understanding and inclusion or help educate others about our Two-Spirit relatives.

Growing Network of Resources

A List of Resources to further support our Two-Spirit and Native LGBTQIA+ inclusion efforts is provided in Activity B. This directory of media, templates, other toolkits, and additional resources have been collected from advocates, scholars, organizations, and other experts in the field.

INDIGENIZING LOVE

Activity Workbook



ACTIVITY A

Terms and Definitions



ACTIVITY B

List of Resources



ACTIVITY C

Two-Spirit & LGBTQIA+History Timeline



ACTIVITY D

Culture and Language Discussion Guide



ACTIVITY E

Tribal & Local Government Discussion Guide



ACTIVITY F

Education Discussion Guide



ACTIVITY G

Anticipated Reactions and Suggested Responses



Indigenizing Love Activity Workbook

To help implement **Modules 1 & 2**, we have created seven Activities from A to serve as reference points, education materials, and participation activities to start the conversation in your communities about Indigenizing Love.

ACTIVITY A – TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

American Indian/Alaska Native Youth: American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) people under the age of 25 who are an enrolled citizen/member of a Tribal Nation or a descendant. This toolkit will interchangeably use American Indian/Alaska Native along with Native American, Indigenous, and Native for the dual purpose of recognizing and deferring to a Tribal Nation's right to determine who is/is not a member and being as inclusive as possible.

Agender: A person who does not identify with a specific gender or feels neutral when it comes to their gender identity.

Asexual: A person who does not experience sexual attraction, but they could still experience romantic attraction.

Assigned Sex: The sex that is assigned to an infant at birth based on their reproductive organs.

Bisexual: A person who is attracted to both women and men.

Cisgender: A person who feels their gender identity and expression align with the sex they were assigned at birth.

Community: A group of people having a common history, culture, or shared social, economic, and/or political interests.

Decolonize/Decolonization: The act of restoring rights, privileges, and practices that were taken by settler colonialism.

Diaspora: From an Indigenous perspective, this is the feeling of disconnection to Indigenous homeland, people, and identity. Diaspora can be felt amongst

AI/AN youth who live on and off Indigenous homelands.

Gay: A person who is emotionally or physically attracted to a person of the same gender.

Gender: Identifying with a specific set of traits (behavioral, cultural, community roles) on the male to female spectrum.

Gender Expression: The way a person expresses their gender in ways that make them feel more comfortable and aligned to who they are. Some forms of expression could be clothing, voice, cosmetics, or mannerisms.

Gender Identity: The way a person identifies their own gender. Some examples of gender identities include 'male,' 'female,' 'androgynous,' 'transgender,' and 'genderqueer.'

Gender Nonconforming: A person who does not identify with a specific set of traits (behavioral, cultural, community roles) on the male to female spectrum.

Homophobia: Negative feelings about and fear of homosexuals based on social attitudes.



ACTIVITY A

Indian Country: Although there is an important legal definition for this term, this toolkit uses “Indian Country” to refer broadly to the peoples, lands, and cultures of AI/AN peoples in the United States.

Intergenerational Trauma: The negative impacts experienced over time, often among different generations of AI/ANs, stemming from practices of colonization, whether past or present, such as forced assimilation, displaced communities, boarding schools, and discriminatory policies and laws.

Intersex: A person born with reproductive organs that do not align with medical expectations of male or female biological markers.

Lesbian: A female-identified person who is attracted to women.

LGBTQIA+: The umbrella acronym to represent lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, intersex, and asexual people. The plus sign “+” is used to recognize additional identities.

Non-binary/Genderqueer: An identity term used by people who identify with some, all, none, or a combination of genders.

Oppression: The discriminatory act of exercising power over people to achieve or maintain control.

Pansexual: A person who is attracted to those who identify with any, all, or no gender.

Partners vs. Allies in Movements: Whereas partners are active participants in movement-building, ally suggests someone cheering from the sidelines. To help achieve goals of the toolkit, the term partners will be used throughout the document.

Pronouns: How a person chooses to refer to themselves. E.g., she/her/hers, they/them/theirs, ze/hir/hirs, he/him/his, one’s name, or respectful and personally approved culturally connected terms/ words.

Queer: A person who does not subscribe to dominant social norms to define their sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

Questioning: A person who has yet to determine what their sexual orientation and/or gender identity and gender expression is.

Self-Affirmation: The process of recognizing and asserting the identity and value of one’s self.

Self-Governance: The practice by Tribal Nations to preserve, defend, and enhance the health, safety, and well-being of their lands, resources, and people.

Settler Colonialism: A generational form of systemic oppression and discrimination rooted in the colonization of the original peoples of a territory. Settler colonialism is still being practiced today by the dominant society and through institutional racism.

Systemic Change: An organized effort across people, organizations, and institutions to challenge discriminatory practices and build more inclusion and equity for all.

Traditional: Intergenerational knowledge and practices captured and shared by community members. In our AI/AN societies, traditional Two-Spirit roles have been lost or diminished by settler colonialism.

Transgender: A person who identifies as a gender not assigned at birth.

Transphobia: Negative feelings about and fear of transgender people based on social attitudes.

Tribal Sovereignty: The exercise by tribal nations to self-govern and self-determine their lands, resources, and people.

Two-Spirit: Defining Two-Spirit is a challenge because the words carry multifaceted meanings in different AI/AN communities. For the purpose of this toolkit, we use the definition of the Two-Spirit Society of Denver: Two-Spirit refers to a gender role believed to be common among most, if not all, AI/AN communities and nations, one that had a proper and accepted place within our societies.²³ This acceptance was rooted in the traditional teachings that say all life is sacred. Within a traditional setting, Two-Spirit is a Tribal Nation-specific understanding of gender, and not a sexual orientation. The term was established in 1990 to organize Native LGBTQIA+ relatives and directly challenge colonial kinship systems imposed on Indigenous peoples.



ACTIVITY B – LIST OF TWO-SPIRIT AND LGBTQIA+ RESOURCES

Below you will find a list of resources sorted according to the toolkit’s modules. These are by no means comprehensive and we recommend you use them simply as starting points for further research. Do keep in mind that the Internet provides an opportunity to anyone to voice their opinion, whether it is grounded in personal experience, research, or simple speculation.

Websites and Online Content are often Out of Date. Make Sure to Ask Yourself These Questions:

1. *When was the content created/last updated?*
2. *Who created the content?*
3. *Is this person/site sharing lived experience as an AI/AN person?*
4. *Does this information reflect Indigenous Knowledge?*

Better Understanding Our Two-Spirit Relatives

- A Two-Spirit Journey – Finding Identity through Indigenous Culture: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LLmrBGrUy-w>
- Native American Two Spirit Dancers at 2018 LGBTQ Time to Thrive Youth Conference: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IH5JPWaNqQ8>
- Supporting LGBTQ Native Students: <https://www.glsen.org/supporting-lgbtq-native-students>
- Traditional Perspectives on Being LGBTQ2S: <https://www.wernative.org/articles/traditional-perspectives-on-being-gay-lesbian-bisexual-two-spirit-or-transgender>

- “Two Spirit” – Injunuity: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iDyaknNmg28>
- Two Spirited Native American Documentary “Open & Out”: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oxjfhS66Y8k&t=507s>
- Two Spirits, One Dance for Native American Artist: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0OB0wdzogy0>
- UBC TEFA Talks Two Spirit with Harlan Pruden: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Tb07GDNpow>
- What Does Two-Spirit Mean?: https://www.them.us/story/inqueery-two-spirit?utm_brand=them&utm_social-type=owned&utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=social&fbclid=IwAR15xf54jczE8VmVO6uLAOjc-Cd_jFFh3poiaBaxu8rfHqD90tKGI-XA6Pk
- What Is Two Spirit?: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LRGRevUswl>

Opportunities for Systemic Change

- 2018 State of Native Youth Report: Generation Indigenous: https://cnay.worldsecuresystems.com/docs/CNAY_AR2018_FINAL_Web_110618.pdf
- Tribal Youth in the Juvenile Justice System: <https://www.ojjdp.gov/mpg/litreviews/Tribal-youth-in-the-Juvenile-Justice-System.pdf>
- Working with Two-Spirit and Native LGBTQ Youth: <https://www.tribalinformationexchange.org/files/products/twospiritresourceguide.pdf>



ACTIVITY B

Culture and Language Reclamation Efforts

- We R Native Community Service “My Impact” Grants: <https://www.wernative.org/my-impact/grants>
- Center for Native American Youth Resource Exchange: <http://www.cnay.org/resource-hub/resource-exchange>
- Funders for LGBTQ Issues²⁴: <https://lgbtfunders.org/about/about-mission/>
- Native Youth Sexual Health Network: Healthy Sexuality & Fighting Homophobia & Transphobia: <http://www.nativeyouthsexualhealth.com/youthphotoproject.html>
- Oral History Project Design Resource: <http://hncpartners.org/storytelling.html>
- Two-Spirit/Native American LGBT People: <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/lgbt/news/2016/10/17/143403/two-spiritnative-american-lgbt-people/>
- Two Spirit Women: <http://www.2spirits.com/PDFolder/Two%20Spirit%20Women.pdf>
- We R Native: LGBT – Two Spirit: <https://www.wernative.org/my-relationships/sexual-health/lgbt-two-spirit>

Tribal & Local Government

- Center for Native American Youth (CNAV): <http://www.cnay.org/>
- Human Rights Campaign’s Local Issues (New York; select other states from drop down menu): <https://www.hrc.org/local-issues/new-york>
- International Human Rights Law: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/internationallaw.aspx>
- National Congress of American Indians Two-Spirit Taskforce: http://www.ncai.org/conferences-events/ncai-events/2018.10.21_Two_Spirit_Task_Force_Agenda_NCAI.pdf
- National Indian Law Library: Indian Law Research Guides: <https://narf.org/nill/resources/index.html>

- Native Youth Sexual Health Network: <http://www.nativeyouthsexualhealth.com/whatwedo.html>
- Native Youth Leadership Alliance (NYLA): <https://nativeyouthleadership.org/>
- Tribal Equity Toolkit 3.0: Tribal Resolutions and Codes to Support Two Spirit & LGBTQ Justice in Indian Country: <http://www.thetaskforce.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/TET3.0.pdf>
- United National Indian Tribal Youth (UNITY): <https://unityinc.org/>
- U.S. Department of State: Human Rights: <https://www.state.gov/j/drl/hr/>
- U.S. Department of Education: Examples of Policies and Emerging Practices for Supporting Transgender Students: <https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/sites/default/files/Emerging%20Practices%20FINAL.pdf>

Education

- Activities to Practice Sharing Pronouns in the Classrooms: <https://lgbt.umd.edu/good-practices-names-and-pronouns>
- <https://www.glsen.org/sites/default/files/GLSEN%20Pronouns%20Resource.pdf>
- <https://www.brynmawr.edu/sites/default/files/asking-for-name-and-pronouns.pdf>
- How to File a Discrimination Complaint with the Office for Civil Rights: <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/howto.html?src=rt>
- GLSEN Safe Space Kit: <https://www.glsen.org/sites/default/files/GLSEN%20Safe%20Space%20Kit.pdf>
- Safe and Caring Schools for Two Spirit Youth: A Guide for Teachers and Students: <http://www.safeandcaring.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Two-Spirited-Web-Booklet.pdf>
- Safe Zone Project: Curriculum: <https://thesafezoneproject.com/curriculum/>
- STD/HIV Prevention Strategies for LGBTQ2S: <https://www.wernative.org/articles/std-hiv-prevention-strategies-for-lgbtq>

- Supporting Safe & Healthy Schools for LGBTQ Students: <https://www.glsen.org/article/supporting-safe-and-healthy-schools-lgbtq-students>
- Teaching Beyond the Gender Binary in the University Classroom: <https://wp0.vanderbilt.edu/cft/guides-sub-pages/teaching-beyond-the-gender-binary-in-the-university-classroom/>
- The GLSEN Jump-Start Guide: Building and Activating Your Gay-Straight Alliance or Similar Student Club: https://www.glsen.org/sites/default/files/966-4_optimized.pdf
- Evaluation, Continuation, Celebration!: https://www.glsen.org/sites/default/files/Jump%20Start%20Guide%20Part%208_1.pdf
- Creating Youth – Adult Partnerships: <https://www.glsen.org/sites/default/files/Jump%20Start%20Guide%20-%20Part%206.pdf>
- Title IX & Sex Discrimination: https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/tix_dis.html
- Two Spirit Inclusion Campaign: <https://ccgsd-cdgs.org/two-spirit/>
- Ways to Participate in Day of Silence: <https://www.glsen.org/article/ways-participate-day-silence>

Advocacy Tools and Networks for Two-Spirit and Native LGBTQIA+ Relatives and Partners

- A Spotlight on Two Spirit (Native LGBT) Communities: http://www.ncai.org/policy-research-center/research-data/prc-publications/A_Spotlight_on_Native_LGBT.pdf
- I Know Mine – An Alaska Native Resource on Sex, Health, and More: www.iknowmine.org
- Indigenous Ally Toolkit: https://gallery.mailchimp.com/86d28ccd43d4be0fc11c71a1/files/102bf040-e221-4953-a9ef-9f0c5efc3458/Ally_email.pdf
- Seven Dancers Coalition – Restoring Harmony Within Indigenous Communities: <http://www.sevendancerscoalition.com/>

- Southwest Indigenous Women’s Coalition: LGBTQ Resources: <http://www.swiwc.org/lgbtq-community-resources/>
- Speaking Up Without Tearing Down: <https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/spring-2019/speaking-up-without-tearing-down>
- State of Native Youth 2016: Drawing Strength from Our Cultures: <https://cnayblog.files.wordpress.com/2016/11/state-of-native-youth-report-2016-web-spread.pdf>
- The Trevor Project Support Center: <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/resources/trevor-support-center/#sm.00001g2og3ey9dfnsx70hymuqm13t>
- Western States Center Toolkits and Resource Modules: <https://www.westernstatescenter.org/>

Two-Spirit Media Resources

- Being Two Spirit: A Brief Explainer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S8yUDrn9W4Q>
- Decolonize Love: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r70vvZlnXQ8&t=1s>
- Fire Song (movie): A movie sharing the story of a Two-Spirit Anishinaabe teenager in Northern Ontario who is struggling to support his family after his sister’s suicide. Disclaimer: this movie has heavy content about death, loss, and discussions about Indigenous genders: https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/fire_song
- Our Families: Two-Spirit/LGBTQ Families (documentary): A documentary that offers the personal stories of acceptance, struggle, and family life for Native LGBTQIA+ and Two-Spirit families: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=geFgT-X7Ajc&t=16s>
- Two Soft Things, Two Hard Things (documentary): A feature documentary that explores the complexities of a remote Arctic community holding a Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+ pride celebration. Disclaimer: this documentary has heavy content about suicide, homophobia, homelessness, and discussions about Indigenous genders: <https://twosofttwohard.com/>



ACTIVITY B

- Two Spirit (documentary): This documentary tells the story of Fred Martinez Jr. and those affected by his murder. It also explores various Native understandings of Two Spirit and changing perceptions of gender under settler colonialism: <http://twospirits.org/>
- Two-Spirit Journal: <https://twospiritjournal.com/?p=659>
- Two-Spirit Blanket by Eighth Generation: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sP6a1UOX-CI>
- Two-Spirit – Injunuity: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iDyagnNmg28>
- Two Spirits, One Dance for Native American Artist: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0OB0wdzogy0>
- What Does “Two-Spirit” Mean: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A4IBibGzUnE>
- What Is Two Spirit?: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LRGRevUswl>
- Wildfire (movie): A Two-Spirit Coming of Age Movie: A story about a young Mi’kmaw teenager who runs away from an abusive home and finds companionship and support from a Two-Spirit friend. Together, they discover and learn Mi’kmaw language and culture to heal and connect with one another: <https://www.wildfireshortfilm.com/>

Additional Two-Spirit & LGBTQIA+ Resources

- Covenant House (national network and spaces for runaway, homeless, and trafficked youth, including Two-Spirit and Native LGBTQIA+ youth): <https://www.covenanthouse.org/homeless-charity>
- How to Build a Successful Mentoring Program: https://www.mentoring.org/new-site/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Full_Toolkit.pdf
- Indian Health Service Two-Spirit and LGBTQ Resources: <https://www.ihs.gov/forpatients/healthtopics/lgbtqtwsospirit/resources/>
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA): Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+ Competency Training: <https://www.samhsa.gov/tribal-ttac/tribal-training-technical-assistance> (request for Harlan Pruden or another Two-Spirit champion)
- SAMHSA Two-Spirit Webinars: <https://www.samhsa.gov/tribal-ttac/webinars/two-spirit>
- Two Spirit Resource Directory: <https://twospiritjournal.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Two-Spirit-Resource-Directory-May-2016.pdf>
- Two-Spirit Resource List: <http://ccgsd-ccdgs.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/2SRResourceList.pdf>

Two-Spirit Narratives, Writings, and Scholarship

- 8 LGBTQ+ and Two-Spirit Native Americans Changing the World (by Brammer): <https://www.them.us/story/lgbtq-two-spirit-native-americans-changing-the-world>
- A Two-Spirit Journey: The Autobiography of a Lesbian Ojibwa-Cree Elder (by Ma-Nee Chacaby): <https://uofmpress.ca/books/detail/a-two-spirit-journey>
- Love Beyond Body, Space, and Time: An Indigenous LGBT Sci-Fi Anthology (edited by Nicholson): <http://bedsidepress.com/product/love-beyond-body-space-and-time/>
- Online Literary Publications by Billy-Ray Belcourt: <https://billy-raybelcourt.com/literary-publications>
- Online Literary Publications by Tanaya Winder: <https://tanayawinder.com/writing/>
- Online Literary Publications by Tommy Pico: <http://www.birdsllc.com/authors/tommy-pico>
- Queer Indigenous Studies. Critical Interventions in Theory, Politics, and Literatures (edited by Driskill, Finley, Gilley, and Morgensen): <https://uapress.arizona.edu/book/queer-indigenous-studies>

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- Sovereign Erotics: A Collection of Two-Spirit Literature (edited by Driskill, Justice, Miranda, and Tatonetti): <https://uapress.arizona.edu/book/sovereign-erotics>
 - Two-Spirit Reference Books (by We R Native): <https://www.wernative.org/articles/two-spirit-reference-books>
 - Two-Spirit: The Trials and Tribulations of Gender Identity in the 21st Century (by Indian Country Today): <https://newsmaven.io/indiancountrytoday/archive/two-spirit-the-trials-and-tribulations-of-gender-identity-in-the-21st-century-vJO2nkYbLkCiOWXteDhjsw/>
 - When Did Indians Become Straight?: Kinship, the History of Sexuality, and Native Sovereignty (by Rifkin): <http://www.oxfordscholarship.com/view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199755455.001.0001/acprof-9780199755455>
 - Johnny Appleseed (Joshua Whitehead): <https://arsenalpulp.com/Books/J/Jonny-Appleseed>
 - Full-Metal Indigiqueer (Joshua Whitehead): <https://talonbooks.com/books/full-metal-indigiqueer>



ACTIVITY C – TWO-SPIRIT & LGBTQIA+ HISTORY TIMELINE ACTIVITY

Content Warning: This document contains content and discussions that may be new to readers. In this toolkit we cover discussions on gender, transphobia, and homophobia. Some of this content may cause you anxiety, confusion, or trigger unwanted memories. We encourage you to engage in this content to the extent you feel comfortable and where necessary disengage from the conversation. If those feelings arise, feel free to take a break, stretch, or find another way to take care of yourself. Ultimately, we provide this toolkit to encourage connectedness, knowledge sharing, and inclusion. Let's take care of ourselves and one another.

Disclaimer: There is no way that we can be inclusive of the whole history of Two-Spirit organizing and varying knowledge systems that exist in many Tribal Nations. This timeline discussion and activity is a reflection of shared Two-Spirit experiences and teachings learned from elders, family members, advocates, collected thought leaders, and others. This activity is meant to spark conversations and encourage readers to continue their own research.

Discussion Goals

1. To better understand the historical and recent timeline of Two-Spirit relatives
2. To discuss important leaders and events in Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+ history
3. To explore the visibility of Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+ people in their recent local history

Overview

This activity is designed to help generate group discussion and a stronger foundation for understanding Two-Spirit history, struggles, and achievements. This timeline provides an opportunity to advance the inclusion of Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+ community members. Below we provide a timeline to illustrate the historical and current relevance of Two-Spirit and Native LGBTQIA+ community members, especially in relation to general US-American LGBTQIA+ history.

Target Audience

Native youth, including those within Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+ communities and those who want to better understand Two-Spirit relatives to promote acknowledgement and inclusion.

Facilitation Tips

Developing skills to feel comfortable and confident in facilitating a group conversation takes practice, feedback, and, in most cases, resource sharing and training. We have provided a few resources for you to learn more about facilitation and skill-building. These are different tips to test and practice your abilities in guiding a group discussion in a safe, productive, and deliberate manner.

- Create discussion outlines (similar to the one below) to help organize discussion goals and map out how to get there. Practicing your intros and discussion questions out loud will help build confidence and clarify your facilitation process.
- When someone is speaking, practice listening, take note of major themes, and offer a recap of what they said to make sure you:
 1. Understand what the person was trying to communicate; and
 2. Create space for clarity and follow-up questions.
- Listen to the First Time Facilitator [podcast](#) for additional tips and tricks.²⁵

Facilitation Do's & Don'ts

If you are facilitating a group discussion specifically about Two-Spirit and Native LGBTQIA+ inclusion (whether with a group made up of community members, strong partners, or a mix), you'll want to keep these major Do's and Don'ts in mind:

- **Don't** out anyone or assume another person's gender identity, sexual orientation, or pronouns. Allow individuals to describe themselves in their own terms and when they're ready to open up and express themselves.
- **Do** validate people's experiences, identity, pronouns, stories, etc. For some, this may be their first time sharing, and we want to create a space where everyone feels comfortable with anything they share.
- **Don't** tell anyone else's stories. Members should only share their own experiences.

Materials Needed

- Copies of the Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+ History Timeline for participants
- Computer/Laptop/Screen to view learning material
- Walls (optional)
- Scotch Tape (optional)
- Markers (optional)
- Printer Paper (optional)
- Post-It Notes (optional)
- Pens (optional)

Content	Format	Time Allotted
1. Introduction & Overview	Group Setting	10 minutes
2. Establish House Rules & Expectations	Group Setting	10 minutes
3. Better Understand Two-Spirit Relatives	Group or Individual Setting	10 minutes
4. Review Timeline	Group or Individual Setting	20 minutes
5. Discuss Timeline	Group or Individual Setting	30 minutes
6. Wrap Up	Group or Individual Setting	10 minutes
Total Time	90 minutes (Group Setting) 70 minutes (Individual Setting)	

Creating Safer Spaces: Before any facilitated group discussion, it is extremely important to establish expectations that help create a safer space for all participants. Facilitators initiate conversations by asking participants: "What are our intentions for this space?" As a group, work together to answer this question, establish rules and periodic check-ins during the discussion to see what individual needs are (i.e. if someone has a bad day they may want to be in the space but not participate). There should never be pressure for every person to be 100% involved or engaged.



ACTIVITY C

Timeline Activity:

This activity can be used by an individual or in a group setting, and is estimated to take 1 hour to 1 hour and 20 minutes depending on your setting. We're offering two suggested set-ups for this activity:

1. Read through the material and follow instructions for an internal/individual or group discussion setting; or
2. Create an interactive timeline walk-through prepared in advance by a facilitator.

Individual & Group Reviews: Please follow through directions below, reflect on initial discussion questions, then review the timeline before revisiting follow-up questions. You can use this new information and knowledge to support your own ongoing research and conversations with peers, friends, and family.

Interactive Timeline: If you or another peer facilitator decide to enhance this activity, you start by creating an interactive timeline. This setup requires 30 minutes to 1 hour to prepare before the group gathers. You need paper, markers, tape, and wall space. We suggest reviewing the timeline below and deciding which (if not all) time periods/years and events to write up and tape onto a wall. Having the timeline on the wall allows group participants to move around and interact organically with the information and with each other. Participants place post-it notes next to items/years/information that surprise them or events about which they want to learn more. The items with the most post-it notes can then be centered in the group discussion.

1. Introduction & Overview

Welcome and thank friends and relatives for gathering to discuss culture, language, and community inclusion. If appropriate or possible, feel free to invite someone to offer an opening song, prayer/blessing, poem, etc. Remind participants why we're all gathered and what we hope to accomplish with the discussion—building more understanding of our Two-Spirit relatives. You should review the meeting outline before creating a safer space and establishing house rules and expectations.

Ask for introductions around the room and welcome participants to share names, pronouns, identities, and any other helpful information to build connections and offer space for self-expression.

2. Establish House Rules & Expectations

As a group, discuss intentions for the space. *How do you want to be treated? What makes you feel safe? Who might feel unsafe in a group setting and why? How do you expect others to act in this group?*

Discuss these questions and others that come to mind to create house rules and expectations. These agreed upon rules can be documented on a large piece of paper or screen that can be seen by everyone in the room. Each rule should be voiced at the end of the agreement so those who cannot read/read from far away/see can still hear the final house rules. When faced with a disagreement, you should revisit these house rules and expectations to understand and mediate the conflict.

3. Better Understand Two-Spirit Relatives

Review the description of Two-Spirit relatives and use the questions below to assess your level of understanding and awareness.

Two-Spirit Definition: Two-Spirit refers to a gender role believed to be common among most, if not all, AI/AN people, one that had a proper and accepted place within our societies. This acceptance was rooted in teachings that say all life is sacred.²⁶



A Two-Spirit Journey: Finding Identity Through Indigenous Cultures (United Way Ottawa, 2017): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LLmrBGRUy-w>

Two-Spirit Discussion Questions:

- Have you come across the term Two-Spirit before? If no, what are your follow-up questions when hearing this description? If yes, what additional descriptive words come to mind about our Two-Spirit relatives?
- Do you know if there is a Two-Spirit role designated in your Tribal Nation or community? In other words, are you aware of a specific word or words in your language that is used to describe other gender identities in your Tribal Nation or community? Please refer to an interactive map from the Center for American Progress for examples of historical terms of Two-Spirit community members specific to other Tribal Nations' cultures.²⁷
- There are differences in how we learn about our identities, whether they are generational or having limited access to past or updated resources. When learning about Two-Spirit relatives, how do we create space for shaping our own identities without taking that choice away from other people when discussing the evolution of language, terms, and traditional teachings?
- As AI/AN people and Tribal Nations, we share stories and teachings through oral and written history. Do you know much about your tribal history and how all genders contribute to our history timeline? If yes, please share. If you're ready to learn more, let's explore a timeline together.

4. Review Timeline

Whether sitting in a group or moving around to view the interactive timeline, take about 20 minutes to explore the timeline of Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+ history. Ask everyone to take note which historical events surprise them, inspire them, and leave them wanting to learn more. Let them know that we'll reconvene as a group to discuss.

5. Discussion Timeline

After reviewing the timeline, please consider the questions below for group discussion:

Timeline Discussion Questions:

- Have you learned about these historical events and highlights in the classroom or in another space?
- If the majority of the information is new to you, why do you think you didn't know this history before?
- Why is it important to learn about Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+ history? How does this new information influence your understanding about Two-Spirit relatives? Who would you share this timeline with?
- What major timeline events stand out to you and why? What was surprising to you?
- After reviewing the Two-Spirit timeline, what inspired you and what would you like to see added and/or included in the future? Is there anything specific to your culture that should be documented?
- After reviewing the general LGBTQIA+ timeline, what major differences do you see when compared to the Two-Spirit timeline? What would you like to see documented in the future?
- How has learning about this history affected your own feelings about Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+ relatives?

**Reminder: Take some time to revisit the facilitation tips to prepare yourself to lead group discussion. It's a good idea to have a notebook, pen, and a designated note taker to take notes of the discussion. What are the key questions that arise or reoccurring comments or themes that emerge from the discussion, and what ideas for action are identified by the group? These questions are suggestions to help organize the discussion and prioritize action items.*

6. Wrap Up

Thank those who participated in the discussion. Acknowledge the courage, knowledge, and strength it took to connect with and begin understanding one another. At the end of the meeting, it can be helpful to recap big takeaways, quotes, and/or areas in need of action. Also make note of follow-up procedures: How do we keep learning about and understanding our Two-Spirit history and relatives? How do we continue to strengthen connections? Make time to discuss the need for another gathering, shared resources, or anything else that's helpful. Lastly, if anyone is willing and able to help, you can create space for a closing song, prayer/blessing, poem, etc.



ACTIVITY C

TWO-SPIRIT AND LGBTQIA+ HISTORY TIMELINE

Year(s)	Two-Spirit History	LGBTQIA+ History
1600s – 1800s	<p>The presence of 'cross-dressing' Native men is noted by Non-Native travelers, missionaries, and military service people. They decide to call them "berdaches," which is a generic term that was used primarily by western anthropologists and comes from the French word that also implies "male prostitute."</p> <p>It is not an accepted concept or term today.</p>	<p>Sarah White Norman faces charges of "lewd behavior" with Mary Vincent Hammon in Plymouth, Massachusetts in March of 1649 – the first recorded conviction for lesbianism in North America.</p> <p>In 1779 Thomas Jefferson changes Virginia law to make sodomy punishable by mutilation instead of by death.</p>
1878 – 1960s	<p>Native American children are sent to boarding schools to "assimilate" into western society. Children are punished for speaking their Indigenous language or practicing their religion or cultures. More than 100,000 children attend the 500 boarding schools established by the U.S. federal government.</p> <p>In 1886, We'wha, a citizen of Zuni Pueblo from New Mexico, is received by U.S. President Grover Cleveland as a "Zuni Princess." They are an accomplished weaver, potter, and the most famous Ihamana, a traditional Zuni gender role, now described as mixed-gender or Two-Spirit.</p> <p>In 1887, Congress passes the Dawes Act, also known as the General Allotment Act. It allowed the U.S. President to break up reservation land, which was held by members of a tribe, into small allotments to be parceled out to heads of household and men who were married to women. This was a pivotal moment in history that redefined Indigenous family, ways of life, and modern Indigenous sexuality.</p>	<p>In 1928, <i>The Well of Loneliness</i> by Radclyffe Hall is published in the United States. The novel centers the life of a lesbian and sparks great legal controversy but also creates more public awareness about homosexuality.</p>

Year(s)	Two-Spirit History	LGBTQIA+ History
1924	Congress passes the Indian Citizenship Act and grants citizenship to all Native Americans born in what is currently known as the United States.	World War I veteran Henry Gerber founds the Society for Human Rights in Chicago. The group is the first homosexual rights group in America, and its newsletter, "Friendship and Freedom," is the United States' first recorded gay rights publication.
1952		The American Psychiatric Association's diagnostic manual lists homosexuality as a sociopathic personality disturbance.
1953		President Dwight D. Eisenhower signs an executive order that bars homosexuals from federal employment citing security risks.
1958		The Supreme Court case <i>One, Inc. v. Olesen</i> is the first to address homosexuality and becomes a landmark case for gay rights. The Supreme Court rules that the US Post Office's refusal to deliver an issue of the pro-gay publication <i>ONE: The Homosexual Magazine</i> is unconstitutional and violates free speech.
1961		Illinois becomes the first state to decriminalize homosexuality by repealing their sodomy laws.
1969		In the early morning hours on June 28, police raid the Stonewall Inn, a New York City gay bar. Its customers fight back, which leads to days of protests. The "Stonewall riots" are commemorated as the start of the gay civil rights movement in the United States. People of color led this resistance movement but are oftentimes left out of the narrative, including transgender women like Marsha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera.



ACTIVITY C

TWO-SPIRIT AND LGBTQIA+ HISTORY TIMELINE CONTINUED

Year(s)	Two-Spirit History	LGBTQIA+ History
1970		On the one-year anniversary of the Stonewall riots, community members in New York City march through the streets and the event is called Christopher Street Liberation Day, the first 'gay pride' parade.
1973		The American Psychiatric Association removes homosexuality from the DSM-II (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders), following many years of protests and advocacy by gay rights activists and their partners.
1973		Maryland becomes the first state to statutorily ban same-sex marriage.
1974	First Gay American Indian group organizes in California and begins discussions about removing the term "berdache" and establishing a term that better reflects the intersectionalities of Indigenous identities.	In Massachusetts, Elaine Noble becomes the first openly lesbian woman to be elected to a state office.
1975	Native gays and lesbians begin the first modern-day LGBT support group in San Francisco called Gay American Indians.	
1978	Congress passes the Indian Child Welfare Act to help keep Native children with Native families as well as protect and promote cultures, language, and relationships with extended family members.	Gilbert Baker and volunteers make the first rainbow flags for a pride parade in San Francisco as a symbol of pride and hope for the LGBT community.
1982		Wisconsin becomes the first state to outlaw discrimination based on sexual orientation.

Year(s)	Two-Spirit History	LGBTQIA+ History
1987	The Gay American Indians (GAI) group organizes and joins the second National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights. GAI also organizes support groups for friends and relatives who are battling governmental neglect that creates the AIDS epidemic.	
1988	Native LGBTQIA+ leaders from the U.S. & Canada organize the first gathering "The Basket and the Bow" in Minneapolis. ²⁸ During this gathering, two rules are established: 1) The group should always meet outside urban areas; 2) no drugs or alcohol should be a part of the gatherings. These rules still apply today.	
1990 – 1994	The term Two-Spirit is established in 1990 at the third international gathering of LGBTQIA+ Natives in Winnipeg, Canada. ²⁹	The Human Rights Committee, the international body with the mandate to monitor implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), holds that countries are obligated to protect individuals from discrimination on the basis of their sexual orientation in <i>Toonen v. Australia</i> (1994). The U.S. has ratified the ICCPR.
1996		President Clinton signs the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), banning federal recognition of same-sex marriage and defining marriage as "a legal union between one man and one woman as husband and wife."
1997		Comedian Ellen DeGeneres comes out as a lesbian on the cover of Time magazine, stating, "Yep, I'm Gay." Judge Chang rules that the state of Hawaii does not have a legal right to deprive same-sex couples of the right to marry.



ACTIVITY C

TWO-SPIRIT AND LGBTQIA+ HISTORY TIMELINE CONTINUED

Year(s)	Two-Spirit History	LGBTQIA+ History
2001	<p>On June 21, the body of Fred Martinez, Jr. is found near Cortez, Colorado as a victim of a hate crime. Fred was a 16-year-old citizen of the Navajo Nation and identified differently among different people, including as Two-Spirit, transgender, and gay.</p>	
2004		<p>The first legal same-sex marriage in the United States takes place in Massachusetts.</p>
2005	<p>The Diné Marriage Act is passed by the Navajo Nation. The act defines marriage as being between a man and a woman.</p>	<p>The first International Day Against Homophobia (Transphobia and Biphobia were later added) is celebrated on May 17. The main purpose of the May 17 mobilizations is to raise awareness of violence, discrimination, and repression of LGBT communities worldwide, which in turn provides an opportunity to take action and engage in dialogue with the media, policymakers, public opinion, and wider civil society.</p>
2007	<p>The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is approved by the General Assembly, recognizing for the first time that “Indigenous peoples and individuals are free and equal to all other peoples and individuals and have the right to be free from any kind of discrimination, in the exercise of their rights, in particular that based on their indigenous origin or identity” (Article 2).³⁰</p> <p>While Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United States vote against its adoption, all of these states eventually endorse it.</p>	

Year(s)	Two-Spirit History	LGBTQIA+ History
2008	The Coquille Indian Tribe located in Oregon becomes the first Tribal Nation to affirmatively recognize same-sex marriage.	President Obama signs the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act into law. The act is named for two men who were murdered — Matthew Shepard because he was gay, and James Byrd, Jr. because he was black. The new law expands previous hate crime legislation to officially categorize crimes motivated by actual or perceived gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability as hate crimes.
2009	The documentary Two Spirits is released to tell the story of Fred Martinez Jr. and those affected by his murder. The film has been shown at LGBTQ film festivals around the world.	
2011	The film Our Families: Two-Spirit/LGBTQ Families is launched by the Basic Rights Oregon organization and highlights stories of struggle, acceptance, and family from the perspective of Two-Spirit and Native LGBTQIA+ relatives.	<p>President Obama officially revokes the anti-gay, discriminatory “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” law, which prevented openly gay Americans from serving in the U.S. armed forces.</p> <p>The UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights releases a first of its kind international report documenting discriminatory laws and practices and acts of violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity, and how international human rights law can be used to combat such violence.</p>
2013	The Tribal Equity Toolkit from the Western States Center is launched as a resource to help identify areas in which existing tribal laws discriminate against Two-Spirit/LGBT individuals. ³¹ The toolkit also gives an overview of legal and policy issues impacting Two-Spirit/LGBT community members, including sample resolutions and codes to consider how to maximize equity in AI/AN communities.	The Supreme Court rules DOMA to be unconstitutional, which means same-sex couples married in their own states can now receive federal benefits.



ACTIVITY C

TWO-SPIRIT AND LGBTQIA+ HISTORY TIMELINE CONTINUED

Year(s)	Two-Spirit History	LGBTQIA+ History
2015	<p>The National Congress of American Indians passes a resolution titled “Standing in Support of Our Two Spirit Relatives in Our Communities and Nations.”³²</p> <p>The resolution declares support for the full equality of all tribal persons, including Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender tribal citizens, in the interest of furthering the cause of human rights and the principle of nondiscrimination for all tribal citizens, wherever they reside.</p>	<p>For the first time in U.S. history, the words “lesbian,” “bisexual,” and “transgender” are used in the President’s State of the Union address, when President Obama mentions that US-Americans “respect human dignity” and condemn the persecution of minority groups.</p> <p>The United Nations produces a report titled “Discriminatory Laws and Practices and Acts of Violence against Individuals Based on Their Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity.”</p>
2015	<p>As federal law, Obergefell v. Hodges guarantees same-sex couples the right to marry, but as sovereign entities, Tribal Nations can assert their sovereignty to write and enact their own tribal marriage equality laws.</p>	<p>After the tragic suicide of a transgender teenager who was subjected to Christian conversion therapy, President Obama publicly calls for an end to conversion therapy, a dangerous practice meant to change people’s sexual orientation and/or gender identity.</p>
2016	<p>The National Congress of American Indians passes a resolution to create a National Two-Spirit Task Force.³³ This Task Force assists in the coordination, collaboration, and outreach to Indian Country on Two-Spirit issues and develops and shares approaches and solutions to policy issues that affect Two-Spirit/LGBTQ community members in a manner consistent with Indian self-determination.</p> <p>The Center for American Progress and Western States Center publish an interactive map providing a definition of the term Two-Spirit and sharing examples of traditional terms identified by individual Tribal Nations.³⁴</p> <p>The Organization of American States adopts the American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, recognizing the right to gender equity as an international human right.³⁵</p> <p>Although the Declaration is adopted, Canada and the United States don’t affirmatively endorse the text. In other words, they abstain from supporting the Declaration.</p>	<p>The U.S. Defense Secretary, Ashton Carter, announces that the military will lift a ban that prevents transgender Americans from serving in the country’s armed forces.</p> <p>In the midst of anti-transgender movements throughout the country, President Obama and his administration issue a directive to all public schools that transgender students should be allowed to use the restrooms that reflect their gender identity.</p> <p>The UN Human Rights Council appoints the first ever Independent Expert on violence and discrimination against people due to their gender identity and sexual orientation.</p> <p>President Obama dedicates the new Stonewall National Monument in Greenwich Village, Lower Manhattan, as the first US National Monument to honor the LGBTQ rights movement.</p>

Year(s)	Two-Spirit History	LGBTQIA+ History
2017		In 2017 the Trump Administration's U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announces that its national survey of older adults, and the services they need, will no longer collect information on LGBTQIA+ participants.
2018	By 2018, more than 37 Tribal Nations have passed marriage equality. Additional tribes have elected to follow state marriage laws or informally recognize marriage equality.	<p>The Trump Administration announces a plan to implement a discriminatory ban on transgender military service members, which goes into effect in April 2019.</p> <p>The U.S. Department of Education announces it will summarily dismiss complaints from transgender students involving exclusion from school facilities and other claims based solely on gender identity discrimination.</p>
2019	Sharice Davids (Ho-Chunk; D-KS) becomes the first openly lesbian tribal citizen to be elected to the United States Congress.	

Additional Two-Spirit Timeline References

- Timeline of Two Spirit Identity (by M & Gamboa): <https://www.sutori.com/story/timeline-of-two-spirit-identity>
- Native American Heritage Month Timeline (by GLSEN): https://www.glsen.org/sites/default/files/NAHM_timeline.pdf
- LGBTQ History Timeline Reference (by GLSEN): <https://www.glsen.org/sites/default/files/LGBTQ-History-Timeline-References.pdf>
- Tribes, Same-Sex Marriage, and Obergefell v. Hodges (by Tweedy): <https://turtletalk.files.wordpress.com/2015/10/tweedy-on-same-sex-marriage.pdf>
- Traditional Problems: How Tribal Same-Sex Marriage Bans Threaten Tribal Sovereignty (by Zug): <https://open.mitchellhamline.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1085&context=mhlr>



ACTIVITY D – CULTURE AND LANGUAGE DISCUSSION GUIDE

Content Warning: This document contains content and discussions that may be new to readers. In this toolkit we cover discussions on gender, transphobia, and homophobia. Some of this content may cause you anxiety, confusion, or trigger unwanted memories. We encourage you to engage in this content to the extent you feel comfortable and where necessary disengage from the conversation. If those feelings arise, feel free to take a break, stretch, or find another way to take care of yourself. Ultimately, we provide this toolkit to encourage connectedness, knowledge sharing, and inclusion. Let's take care of ourselves and one another.

Discussion Goals

1. To better understand Two-Spirit relatives
2. To discuss and learn about established community values and inclusion of Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+ community members
3. To share stories and experiences from Two-Spirit and Native LGBTQIA+ individuals and organizations

Overview

Below we provide a range of stories (as videos, articles, poems, etc.) for individual or group discussion. These stories and resources share different understandings of Two-Spirit identities and the strength that can be drawn from culture to challenge discrimination as well as initial thoughts on how to Indigenize Love.

Target Audience

Native youth, including those within the Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+ communities and those who want to better understand Two-Spirit relatives to promote acknowledgement and inclusion.

Facilitation Tips

Developing skills to feel comfortable and confident in facilitating a group conversation takes practice, feedback, and, in most cases, resource sharing and

training. We have provided a few resources for you to learn more about facilitation and skill-building. These are different tips to test and practice your abilities in guiding a group discussion in a safe, productive, and deliberate manner.

- Create discussion outlines (similar to the one below) to help organize discussion goals and map out how to get there. Practicing your intros and discussion questions out loud will help build confidence and clarify your facilitation process.
- When someone is speaking, practice listening, take note of major themes, and offer a recap of what they said to make sure you:
 1. Understand what the person was trying to communicate; and
 2. Create space for clarity and follow-up questions.
- Listen to the First Time Facilitator [podcast](#) for additional tips and tricks.³⁶

Facilitation Do's & Don'ts

If you are facilitating a group discussion specifically about Two-Spirit and Native LGBTQIA+ inclusion (whether with a group made up of community members, strong partners, or a mix), you'll want to keep these major Do's and Don'ts in mind:

- **Don't** out anyone or assume another person's gender identity, sexual orientation, or pronouns. Allow individuals to describe themselves in their own terms and when they're ready to open up and express themselves.
- **Do** validate people's experiences, identity, pronouns, stories, etc. For some, this may be their first time sharing, and we want to create a space where everyone feels comfortable with anything they share.
- **Don't** tell anyone else's stories. Members should only share their own experiences.

Content	Format	Time Allotted
1. Introduction & Overview	Group Setting	10 minutes
2. Establish House Rules & Expectations	Group Setting	10 minutes
3. Share Learning Material	Group or Individual Setting	5-15 minutes
4. Discussion	Group or Individual Setting	30 minutes
5. Wrap Up	Group Setting	10 minutes
Total Time	80 minutes (Group Setting) 50 minutes (Individual Setting)	

Materials Needed

- Computer/Laptop/Screen to view learning material
- Copies of articles or written material listed in learning material

Creating Safer Spaces

Before any facilitated group discussion, it is extremely important to establish expectations that help create a safer space for all participants. Facilitators initiate conversations by asking participants: “What are our intentions for this space?” As a group, work together to answer this question, establish rules and periodic check-ins during the discussion to see what individual needs are (i.e. if someone has a bad day they may want to be in the space but not participate). There should never be pressure for every person to be 100% involved or engaged.

1. Introduction & Overview

Welcome and thank friends and relatives for gathering to discuss culture, language, and community inclusion. If appropriate or possible, feel free to invite someone to offer an opening song, prayer/blessing, poem, etc. Remind participants why we’re all gathered and what we hope to accomplish with the discussion—building more understanding of our Two-Spirit relatives. You should review the meeting outline before creating a safer space and establishing house rules and expectations.

Ask for introductions around the room and welcome participants to share names, pronouns, identities, and any other helpful information to build connections and offer space for self-expression.

2. Establish House Rules & Expectations

As a group, discuss intentions for the space. How do you want to be treated? What makes you feel safe? Who might feel unsafe in a group setting and why? How do you expect others to act in this group? Discuss these questions and others that come to mind to create house rules and expectations. These agreed upon rules can be documented on a large piece of paper or screen that can be seen by everyone in the room. Each rule should be voiced at the end of the agreement so those who cannot read/read from far away/see can still hear the final house rules. When faced with a disagreement, you should revisit these house rules and expectations to understand and mediate the conflict.

3. Learning Material:

“What Does “Two-Spirit” Mean? | InQueery | them” (them, 2018): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A4lBibGzUnE&t=3s>

Map of Two-Spirit/Native American LGBT People (Ridings, 2016): <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/lgbt/news/2016/10/17/143403/two-spiritnative-american-lgbt-people/>



ACTIVITY D

Native American Two Spirit Dancers at 2018 LGBTQ Time to Thrive Youth Conference (Human Rights Campaign, 2018): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IH5JPWaNgQ8>



Decolonize Love (MJ C, 2019): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r70vvZlnXQ8>

4. Discussion Questions

After reviewing the learning material, please consider the questions below for group discussion:

- What was your key takeaway from this video/ these videos?
- What are the top two words that come to mind after watching this video/these videos?
- Do you know the word(s) in your language that describe an Indigenous person who is Two-Spirit or LGBTQIA+? If yes, please share. If no, why do you think we don't have words for these relatives?
- Are any of those words connected to how you feel about your community? Community can mean family, school, team, campus, etc. If yes, please share why you think that is. If no, are these words or adjectives something you'd like to see within your community?
- What role do you see culture and connection to community play in this video/these videos? Do you have stories to share from your community and teachings?

- Do you feel that you have enough access to opportunities to learn about your culture, language, and teachings? Do you feel that everyone (like our Two-Spirit relatives) from the community is invited to get involved in these opportunities?
- How do you think other young people who are not (yet) well connected to their community or culture feel about using culture and language as a source of strength? These youth could live away from their Indigenous land, be involved in the foster care system, or be from a family that was involved in the relocation era. How do you want to reach out and engage those peers?
- Do you have ideas for strengthening efforts for gender inclusion by using culture and language? Are there action steps from the toolkit that seem more attainable than others? Why?

**Reminder: Take some time to revisit the facilitation tips to prepare yourself to lead group discussion. It's a good idea to have a notebook, pen, and a designated note taker to take notes of the discussion. What are the key questions that arise or reoccurring comments or themes that emerge from the discussion, and what ideas for action are identified by the group? These questions are suggestions to help organize the discussion and prioritize action items.*

5. Wrap Up

Thank those who participated in the discussion. Acknowledge the courage, knowledge, and strength it took to connect with and begin understanding one another. At the end of the meeting, it can be helpful to recap big takeaways, quotes, and/or areas in need of action. Also make note of follow-up procedures: How do we keep learning about and understanding our Two-Spirit history and relatives? How do we continue to strengthen connections? Make time to discuss the need for another gathering, shared resources, or anything else that's helpful. Lastly, if anyone is willing and able to help, you can create space for a closing song, prayer/blessing, poem, etc.



ACTIVITY E – TRIBAL & LOCAL GOVERNMENT DISCUSSION GUIDE

Content Warning: This document contains content and discussions that may be new to readers. In this toolkit we cover discussions on gender, transphobia, and homophobia. Some of this content may cause you anxiety, confusion, or trigger unwanted memories. We encourage you to engage in this content to the extent you feel comfortable and where necessary disengage from the conversation. If those feelings arise, feel free to take a break, stretch, or find another way to take care of yourself. Ultimately, we provide this toolkit to encourage connectedness, knowledge sharing, and inclusion. Let's take care of ourselves and one another.

Discussion Goals

1. To better understand current local government systems
2. To foster civic engagement, especially as it comes to promoting inclusion for all our relatives, including Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+ peers

Overview

Below we provide a range of stories (as videos, articles, poems, etc.) for individual or group discussion. These stories share different perspectives about Two-Spirit and Native LGBTQIA+ discrimination at the hands of government leadership. The learning material will help generate discussions to better understand areas in need of systemic change within our government structures.

Target Audience

Native youth, including those within the Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+ communities and those who want to better understand Two-Spirit relatives to promote acknowledgment and inclusion.

Facilitation Tips

Developing skills to feel comfortable and confident in facilitating a group conversation takes practice, feedback, and, in most cases, resource sharing and training. We have provided a few resources for you to

learn more about facilitation and skill-building. These are different tips to test and practice your abilities in guiding a group discussion in a safe, productive, and deliberate manner.

- Create discussion outlines (similar to the one below) to help organize discussion goals and map out how to get there. Practicing your intros and discussion questions out loud will help build confidence and clarify your facilitation process.
- When someone is speaking, practice listening, take note of major themes, and offer a recap of what they said to make sure you:
 1. Understand what the person was trying to communicate; and
 2. Create space for clarity and follow-up questions.
- Listen to the First Time Facilitator [podcast](#) for additional tips and tricks.³⁷

Facilitation Do's & Don'ts

If you are facilitating a group discussion specifically about Two-Spirit and Native LGBTQIA+ inclusion (whether with a group made up of community members, strong partners, or a mix), you'll want to keep these major Do's and Don'ts in mind:

- **Don't** out anyone or assume another person's gender identity, sexual orientation, or pronouns. Allow individuals to describe themselves in their own terms and when they're ready to open up and express themselves.
- **Do** validate people's experiences, identity, pronouns, stories, etc. For some, this may be their first time sharing, and we want to create a space where everyone feels comfortable with anything they share.
- **Don't** tell anyone else's stories. Members should only share their own experiences.



ACTIVITY E

Content	Format	Time Allotted
1. Introduction & Overview	Group Setting	10 minutes
2. Establish House Rules & Expectations	Group Setting	10 minutes
3. Share Learning Material	Group or Individual Setting	5-15 minutes
4. Discussion	Group or Individual Setting	30 minutes
5. Wrap Up	Group Setting	10 minutes
Total Time	80 minutes (Group Setting) 50 minutes (Individual Setting)	

Materials Needed

1. Computer/Laptop/Screen to view learning material
2. Copies of articles or written material listed in learning material

Creating Safer Spaces

Before any facilitated group discussion, it is extremely important to establish expectations that help create a safer space for all participants. Facilitators initiate conversations by asking participants: “What are our intentions for this space?” As a group, work together to answer this question, establish rules and periodic check-ins during the discussion to see what individual needs are (i.e. if someone has a bad day they may want to be in the space but not participate). There should never be pressure for every person to be 100% involved or engaged.

1. Introduction & Overview

Welcome and thank friends and relatives for gathering to discuss culture, language, and community inclusion. If appropriate or possible, feel free to invite someone to offer an opening song, prayer/blessing, poem, etc. Remind participants why we’re all gathered and what we hope to accomplish with the discussion—building more understanding of tribal and local governments and the gaps in services to support our Two-Spirit

relatives. You should review the meeting outline before creating a safer space and establishing house rules and expectations.

Ask for introductions around the room and welcome participants to share names, pronouns, identities, and any other helpful information to build connections and offer space for self-expression.

2. Establish House Rules & Expectations

As a group, discuss intentions for the space. *How do you want to be treated? What makes you feel safe? Who might feel unsafe in a group setting and why? How do you expect others to act in this group?* Discuss these questions and others that come to mind to create house rules and expectations. These agreed upon rules can be documented on a large piece of paper or screen that can be seen by everyone in the room. Each rule should be voiced at the end of the agreement so those who cannot read/read from far away/see can still hear the final house rules. When faced with a disagreement, you should revisit these house rules and expectations to understand and mediate the conflict.

3. Learning Material

Gay Couples from Largest Native American Tribe Call for Marriage Equality (2018): <https://www.sbs.com.au/news/gay-couples-from-largest-native-american-tribe-call-for-marriage-equality>



A Washington State Indian Tribes Approves Same-Sex Marriage (Yardley, 2011): <https://www.nytimes.com/2011/08/12/us/12tribe.html>

Two-Spirit Youth Reclaiming Their Identities and Spaces (Browne, 2017): https://news.vice.com/en_ca/article/a3j8kp/two-spirit-youth-are-fighting-for-their-identities-and-a-place-to-call-their-own

The Youth Committee from the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians (ATNI) brings forward a Two-Spirit equality resolution and it was unanimously passed in 2018 (Western States Center, n.d.): <https://www.facebook.com/westernstatescenter/videos/10155290118892077/>

4. Discussion Questions

After reviewing the learning material, please consider the questions below for group discussion:

- Do you have experience with your local government—tribal, county, municipal, and/or state? This can include employment, an internship, or simply attending a meeting. Why is getting involved in local government important?
- Do you feel your officials are representative of the community in which you live?
- Do you feel like you can communicate with or access your representatives?
- Have you ever felt like you couldn't participate in local government on account of how you identify (as AI/AN or because of your gender or sexual orientation)?

- Do you think your local laws adequately recognize and protect your human rights? Remember, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples states: "Indigenous peoples and individuals are free and equal to all other peoples and individuals and have the right to be free from any kind of discrimination, in the exercise of their rights, in particular that based on their indigenous origin or identity." (Article 2)³⁸
- Have you ever felt discriminated against or targeted for disciplinary action by local law enforcement? Why do you think that is?
- Do you have ideas for changes that could be made in the community to build more inclusion for our Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+ relatives? Are there suggested action items from the toolkit that seem more attainable than others? Why?

**Reminder: Take some time to revisit the facilitation tips to prepare yourself to lead group discussion. It's a good idea to have a notebook, pen, and a designated note taker to take notes of the discussion. What are the key questions that arise or reoccurring comments or themes that emerge from the discussion, and what ideas for action are identified by the group? These questions are suggestions to help organize the discussion and prioritize action items.*

5. Wrap Up

Thank those who participated in the discussion.

Acknowledge the courage, knowledge, and strength it took to connect with and begin understanding one another. At the end of the meeting, it can be helpful to recap big takeaways, quotes, and/or areas in need of action. Also make note of follow-up procedures: How do we keep learning about and understanding our Two-Spirit history and relatives? How do we continue to strengthen connections? Make time to discuss the need for another gathering, shared resources, or anything else that's helpful. Lastly, if anyone is willing and able to help, you can create space for a closing song, prayer/blessing, poem, etc.



ACTIVITY F – EDUCATION DISCUSSION GUIDE

Content Warning: *This document contains content and discussions that may be new to readers. In this toolkit we cover discussions on gender, transphobia, and homophobia. Some of this content may cause you anxiety, confusion, or trigger unwanted memories. We encourage you to engage in this content to the extent you feel comfortable and where necessary disengage from the conversation. If those feelings arise, feel free to take a break, stretch, or find another way to take care of yourself. Ultimately, we provide this toolkit to encourage connectedness, knowledge sharing, and inclusion. Let’s take care of ourselves and one another*

Discussion Goals

1. To discuss safety and safety concerns in our current educational institutions
2. To initiate conversations and learn about established community values and how to better understand and include Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+ relatives

Overview

Below we provide a range of stories (as videos, articles, poems, etc.) for individual or group discussion. These stories share different perspectives from Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+ community members about their experiences in the education system.

Target Audience

Native youth, including those within the Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+ communities and those who want to better understand Two-Spirit relatives to promote acknowledgement and inclusion.

Facilitation Tips

Developing skills to feel comfortable and confident in facilitating a group conversation takes practice, feedback, and, in most cases, resource sharing and training. We have provided a few resources for you to learn more about facilitation and skill-building. These are different tips to test and practice your abilities in

guiding a group discussion in a safe, productive, and deliberate manner.

- Create discussion outlines (similar to the one below) to help organize discussion goals and map out how to get there. Practicing your intros and discussion questions out loud will help build confidence and clarify your facilitation process.
- When someone is speaking, practice listening, take note of major themes, and offer a recap of what they said to make sure you:
 1. Understand what the person was trying to communicate; and
 2. Create space for clarity and follow-up questions.
- Listen to the First Time Facilitator [podcast](#) for additional tips and tricks.³⁹

Facilitation Do's & Don'ts

If you are facilitating a group discussion specifically about Two-Spirit and Native LGBTQIA+ inclusion (whether with a group made up of community members, strong partners, or a mix), you'll want to keep these major Do's and Don'ts in mind:

- **Don't** out anyone or assume another person's gender identity, sexual orientation, or pronouns. Allow individuals to describe themselves in their own terms and when they're ready to open up and express themselves.
- **Do** validate people's experiences, identity, pronouns, stories, etc. For some, this may be their first time sharing, and we want to create a space where everyone feels comfortable with anything they share.
- **Don't** tell anyone else's stories. Members should only share their own experiences.

Content	Format	Time Allotted
1. Introduction & Overview	Group Setting	10 minutes
2. Establish House Rules & Expectations	Group Setting	10 minutes
3. Share Learning Material	Group or Individual Setting	5-15 minutes
4. Discussion	Group or Individual Setting	30 minutes
5. Wrap Up	Group Setting	10 minutes
Total Time	80 minutes (Group Setting) 50 minutes (Individual Setting)	

Materials Needed

1. Computer/Laptop/Screen to view learning material
2. Copies of articles or written material listed in learning material

Creating Safer Spaces

Before any facilitated group discussion, it is extremely important to establish expectations that help create a safer space for all participants. Facilitators initiate conversations by asking participants: “What are our intentions for this space?” As a group, work together to answer this question, establish rules and periodic check-ins during the discussion to see what individual needs are (i.e. if someone has a bad day they may want to be in the space but not participate). There should never be pressure for every person to be 100% involved or engaged.

1. Introduction & Overview

Welcome and thank friends and relatives for gathering to discuss culture, language, and community inclusion. If appropriate or possible, feel free to invite someone to offer an opening song, prayer/blessing, poem, etc. Remind participants why we’re all gathered and what we hope to accomplish with the discussion—building more understanding of tribal and local governments and the

gaps in services to support our Two-Spirit relatives. You should review the meeting outline before creating a safer space and establishing house rules and expectations.

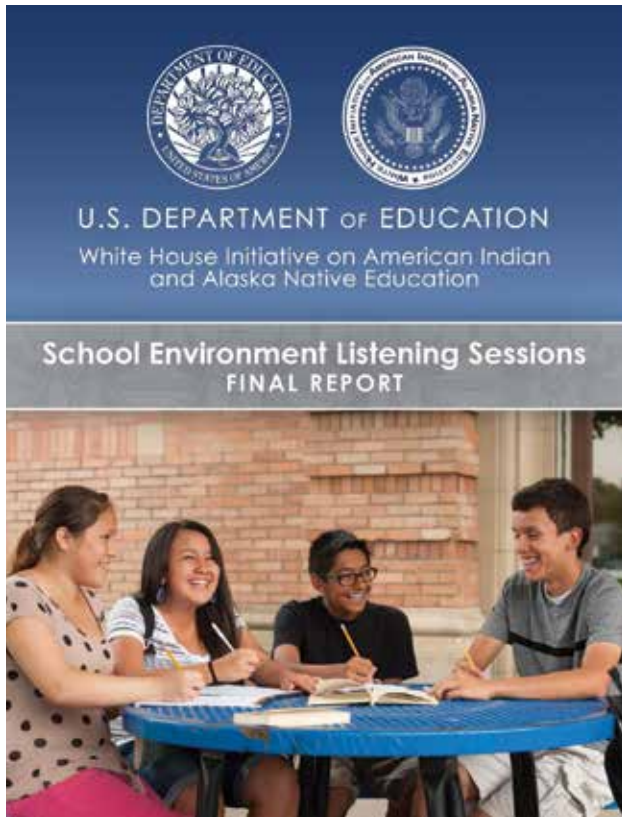
Ask for introductions around the room and welcome participants to share names, pronouns, identities, and any other helpful information to build connections and offer space for self-expression.

2. Establish House Rules & Expectations

As a group, discuss intentions for the space. *How do you want to be treated? What makes you feel safe? Who might feel unsafe in a group setting and why? How do you expect others to act in this group?* Discuss these questions and others that come to mind to create house rules and expectations. These agreed upon rules can be documented on a large piece of paper or screen that can be seen by everyone in the room. Each rule should be voiced at the end of the agreement so those who cannot read/read from far away/see can still hear the final house rules. When faced with a disagreement, you should revisit these house rules and expectations to understand and mediate the conflict.

3. Learning Material:

Schools Struggle to Support LGBTQ Students (Minero, 2018): <https://www.edutopia.org/article/schools-struggle-support-lgbtq-students>



Fort Peck Tribe Adopts a NC Trans* Bathroom Policy (Pruden, 2016): <https://twospiritjournal.com/?p=313>

White House Initiative on American Indian and Alaska Native Education (U.S. Department of Education, 2015):

<https://sites.ed.gov/whiaiane/files/2015/10/school-environment-listening-sessions-final-report.pdf>

4. Discussion Questions

After reviewing the learning material, please consider the questions below for group discussion:

- Do you feel safe in your school? Do you feel like you can trust your teachers, professors, and school administrators? If yes, why? If no, why not?
- What is your school body makeup? Are peers diverse in culture, language, religion, nationality, and gender?
- Are there situations in the classroom where you feel alienated from conversations about gender?

- Do you play competitive sports? How does your gender identity impact your participation and enjoyment of sport?
- Do you feel your school's curriculum provides enough information and consideration of the experience of minorities, including Two-Spirit or non-binary/gender nonconforming students?
- When do you decide to report feeling unsafe at school and how? Have you considered the impact of homophobia at your school? Does your institution have a policy for reporting homophobic or transphobic incidences?
- Do you have ideas for solutions or change to improve the school system for all students? Are there action steps from the toolkit that seem more attainable than others? Why?

**Reminder: Take some time to revisit the facilitation tips to prepare yourself to lead group discussion. It's a good idea to have a notebook, pen, and a designated note taker to take notes of the discussion. What are the key questions that arise or reoccurring comments or themes that emerge from the discussion, and what ideas for action are identified by the group? These questions are suggestions to help organize the discussion and prioritize action items.*

5. Wrap Up

Thank those who participated in the discussion. Acknowledge the courage, knowledge, and strength it took to connect with and begin understanding one another. At the end of the meeting, it can be helpful to recap big takeaways, quotes, and/or areas in need of action. Also make note of follow-up procedures: How do we keep learning about and understanding our Two-Spirit history and relatives? How do we continue to strengthen connections? Make time to discuss the need for another gathering, shared resources, or anything else that's helpful. Lastly, if anyone is willing and able to help, you can create space for a closing song, prayer/blessing, poem, etc.



ACTIVITY G – ANTICIPATED REACTIONS AND SUGGESTED RESPONSES: TWO-SPIRIT & LGBTQIA+ ADVOCACY

Our advocacy in the community also builds solidarity. We are sharing the message that everyone is important in this process of Indigenizing Love. As Native youth practicing and developing our advocacy skills for Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+ community members, we can anticipate various reactions to our questions and discussion points—both in support as well as in resistance. This document helps us think through what to expect and prepare better responses.

ONE ADDITIONAL NOTE TO CONSIDER WHILE ELEVATING OUR VOICES AND PERSPECTIVES:

Everyone has different experiences and traumas throughout their personal journeys. As difficult as it may be to resist confrontation and arguments in this work, keep in mind that our relatives and community members may be facing their own healing or resistance to healing. In other words, they may be working through their own traumas that cause them to act out or respond in a negative way. Depending

on where they are in their journey, they may or may not be able to receive your outreach. It is important to remember that their reactions or behaviors do not belong to you and you do not need to internalize them. If a peer, relative, or community member is acting irrationally or making you feel uncomfortable, it's okay to leave the situation. If the person is violent, make sure you let a trusted adult know or turn to someone else for support.

ANTICIPATED REACTIONS AND SUGGESTED RESPONSES

In Support: Positive reactions to conversations about inclusion can be exciting and surprising. They are also good opportunities to build even stronger communities and invite people to deepen their understanding long term.

- “I’ve heard the term Two-Spirit, but I’m not sure what it actually means. I’d like to learn more.”

Suggested Response: *I appreciate your interest and I’d love to share more. Two-Spirit is an umbrella term used to help organize Native LGBTQIA+ people and recognize traditional roles from our own cultures. I’ve learned that many Tribal Nations have stories of gender roles that were not limited to just girls and boys. I’m hoping to learn more about those stories and how we can better support our Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+ relatives. Would you like to learn with me?*

- “I heard that Two-Spirit relatives had important roles in our community before colonization. How can we help to acknowledge those roles today?”

Suggested Response: *Yes, we did and still do have diverse gender roles in our communities. I am willing to share what I know specifically to my own tribe about Two-Spirit identity to help build understanding and acknowledge all of our relatives. We also have Two-Spirit elders and young people who may be willing to share their knowledge. Would you like to learn more about these roles?*



ACTIVITY G

- “I am interested in becoming a partner to the Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+ community. How can we work together to be more inclusive?”

Suggested Response: We can work together by truly understanding and learning what it means to be Two-Spirit and Native LGBTQIA+. Two-Spirit identity goes much deeper than a label. It is our connection to culture and spirituality. Would you be willing to learn more so that you can be a supportive partner?

- “I’m not American Indian or Alaska Native (AI/AN), but I identify myself as Two-Spirit. How can I help?”

Suggested Response: I’m glad to hear that you want to be helpful in building inclusion. First, we need to clarify that only AI/AN people can claim and be part of the Two-Spirit community. When non-Native people call themselves Two-Spirit, they take all of our history, all of those things that make the Native LGBTQIA+ experience unique, and they say it doesn’t matter. I hope you will reconsider how you use that label so we can continue to work together to learn from one another.

Supporting Resources:

Indigenous Ally Toolkit⁴⁰: https://gallery.mailchimp.com/86d28ccd43d4be0cfc11c71a1/files/102bf040-e221-4953-a9ef-9f0c5efc3458/Ally_email.pdf

Resistance: Negative reactions to conversations about inclusion can be challenging and discouraging. But they are also opportunities to explain your motivation more and invite others to reconsider their reactions. It can take multiple such encounters before someone starts changing their position and we can never know when this will happen, but your responses help foster that process. A negative response is not a failure on your part – it is part of the other person’s journey.

- “As a Native person, I have never heard about the term Two-Spirit. Being LGBTQIA+ is not traditional to my knowledge. This is not our way.”

Suggested Response: I have taken the time to learn more about the impact of settler colonialism on our people. They told us that we were wrong to speak our language, to practice our

ceremonies, and that we were wrong to think there was more to gender than just men and women. I want to continue learning about our ways of life, resist settler colonialism, and reclaim teachings that welcome all of our people—including Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+ relatives.

- “Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+ people do not belong in our community.”

Suggested Response: Our traditional values teach that we are accepting and must show compassion for all people even when we don’t understand. How can we say who belongs in our community if we are acting on our own biases?

- “We don’t have any Two-Spirit or LGBTQIA+ community members. Why do we need to talk about them?”

Suggested Response: You may think we do not have Two-Spirit or LGBTQIA+ community members, but we don’t know for sure. People may be scared to share or express their true selves for fear of being isolated from or dismissed by our community. I want to live in a place where we respect and acknowledge one another. In order to do that, we need to make sure that we talk about—and later talk with—Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+ relatives. Let’s help make all of us feel safer.

Supporting Resources:

Why Non-Natives Appropriating “Two-Spirit” Hurts⁴¹: <https://www.bgdblog.org/2016/07/appropriating-two-spirit/>

Can White People Use the Term “Two Spirit”?⁴²: <https://askawhiteperson.com/2015/05/25/can-white-people-use-the-term-two-spirit/>

It is entirely possible that you will have many other reactions from community members and relatives as you develop your advocacy skills. As a collective, we hope that we continue to grow spiritually, mentally, and emotionally from each experience. Please know that the collective acknowledges your efforts and appreciates your courage to help Indigenize Love and build inclusion for all of our relatives.

CITATIONS

(CHRONOLOGICALLY)

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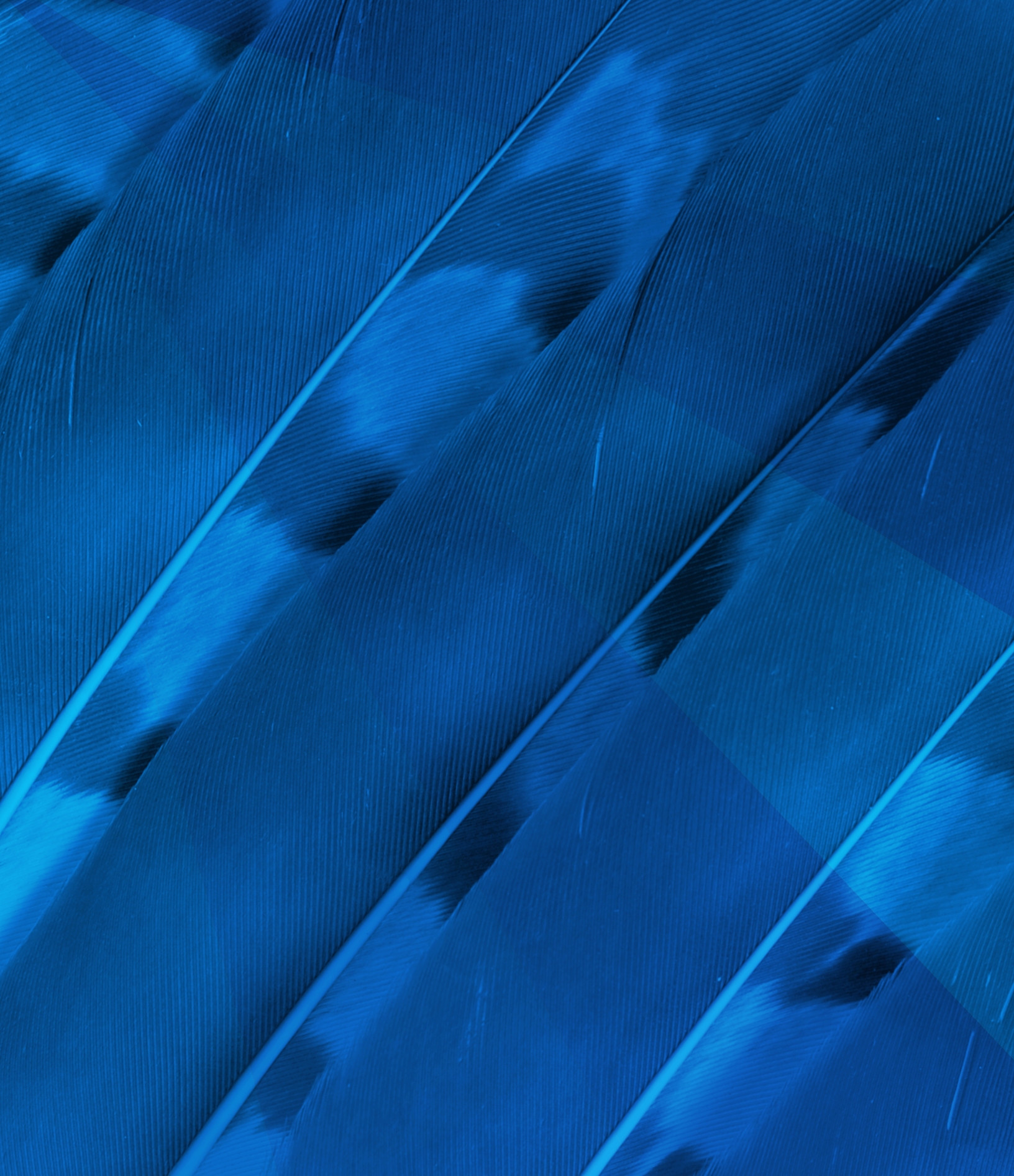
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