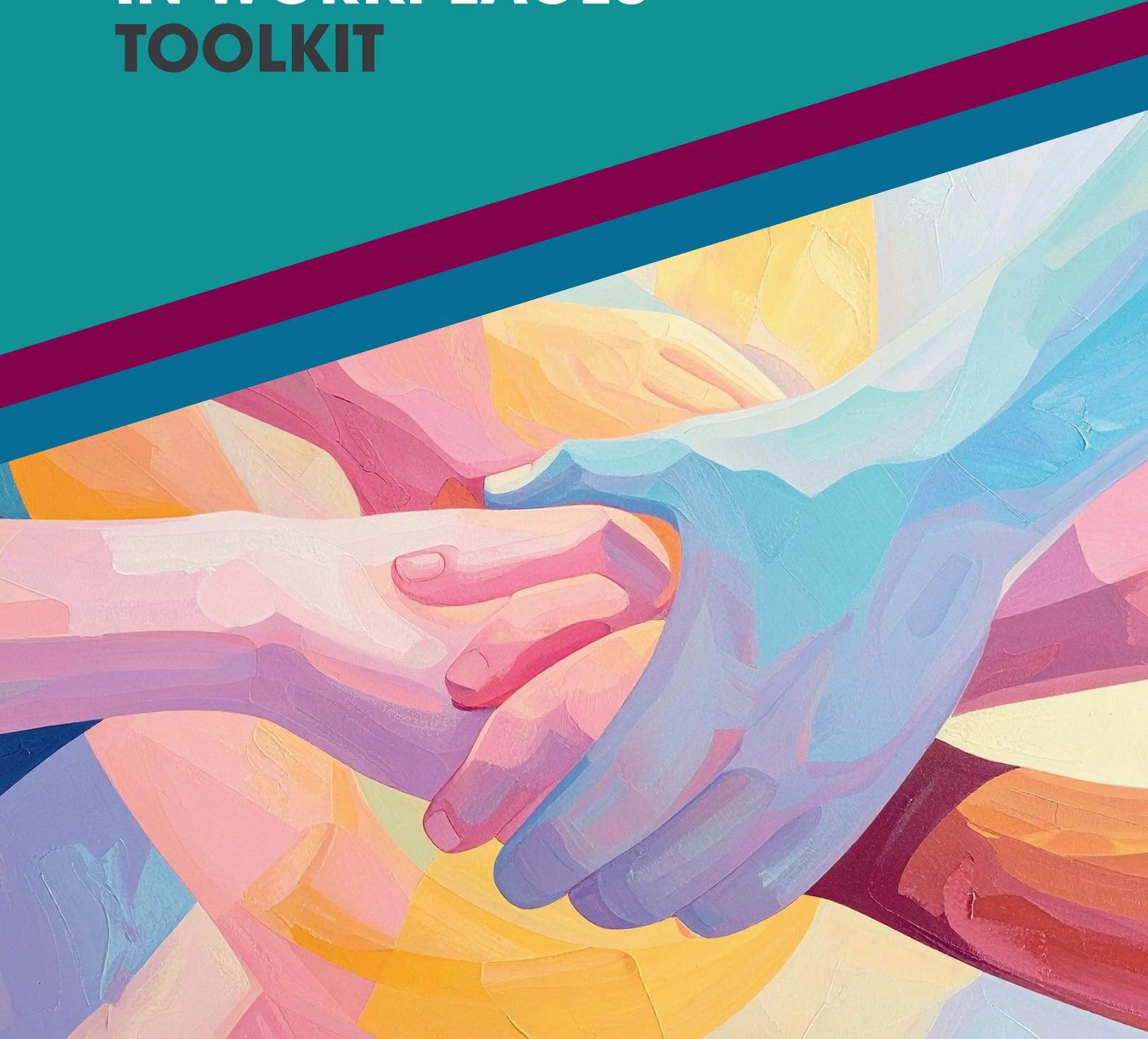# 2SLGBTQIA+ INCLUSION IN WORKPLACES
TOOLKIT

2SLGBTQIA+ INCLUSION IN WORKPLACES

What is 2SLGBTQIA+?

2SLGBTQIA+ people or people with "Queer" identities are folks whose gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, or bodies don't fit into a **heteronormative** or **cisnormative** framework. In other words, people who don't fit into the **gender binary.**

Gender & Sexual Diversity

- Gender and sexual diversity has always existed.
- Gender and sexual diversity is a feature of the natural world, not a bug in the system.
- Recognize that there is not one, single way to be a human

The 2SLGBQIA+ Community is Diverse
- No two queer people see their gender or sexuality in the exact same way
- We have different expressions, labels, terms, and perspectives
- Each individual person is the expert of their own experience
- Goal: Create a culture of respect, kindness, curiosity, and authenticity, where each person feels safe to be themselves

2S — **Two-Spirit (an Indigenous-specific term for a decolonial approach to gender or sexuality).**

L — **Lesbian**

G — **Gay**

G — **Bisexual**

T — **Transgender**

Q — **Queer/Questioning**

I — **Intersex**

A — **Asexual/Aromantic**

+ — **Recognizes that there are many more terms for diverse genders and sexualities than those listed.**

Heteronormativity: the cultural script and structures that present heterosexuality or being "straight" as good, normal, or default.

Cisnormativity: the cultural scripts and structures that present being cisgender (i.e. not transgender) is good, normal, or default.

The Gender Binary: the cultural scripts and structures that present gender as one-or-the-other, male or female, with no room for fluidity or duality.

For more information about the Fyrefly Institute for Gender and Sexual Diversity, please visit the website at www.ualberta.ca/fyrefly-institute, or email at fyrefly@ualberta.ca. Fyrefly offers robust 2SLGBTQIA+ programming such as youth initiatives, education, audit services, events, and advocacy opportunities.

2SLGBTQIA+ INCLUSION IN WORKPLACES

Challenges and Barriers Faced by the 2SLGBTQIA+ Community

Transphobia and homophobia continue to exist in professional and informal spaces. Visibly transgender or queer people often face discrimination based on their perceived gender or gender expression. This can show up in the hiring and interview process in many ways through both conscious and unconscious biases

Examples of Common Challenges

Access to healthcare and benefits

- Many workplaces don't have benefit packages at all, let alone benefits for gender-affirming healthcare, time off for medical appointments, or bereavement leave inclusive of diverse family/partnership structures beyond heteronormative marriage etc.

Access to inclusive bathrooms

- Many workplaces have gendered bathrooms which can be a barrier for gender non-conforming people who risk harassment by folks who assume they're in the "wrong" bathroom.

Hesitation to correct pronouns or other gendered terms

- The power dynamic between employee and employers may lead an employee to hesitate to correct their superior on pronouns or other gendered terms for fear of consequence.

Legal name not matching up with an affirmed/chosen name

- Although simple, this can be the source of barriers and interpersonal conflicts.
- Some technological programs have limitations when it comes to editing names or gender markers (scheduling, email, etc).

Misgendering (calling someone by a pronoun or term that is not aligned with their identity)

- Misgendering is a huge issue faced by queer and trans people, as well as homo/transphobic microaggressions.
  - Ex. A colleague saying something like, "I didn't know you were trans, you're so beautiful!"
  - Ex. A supervisor addressing the room by saying "Ladies and gentlemen".
  - Ex. Invasive medical questions being asked of a transgender employee, like "Have you had the surgery?" or questions about genitals, etc.

2SLGBTQIA+ INCLUSION IN WORKPLACES

Creating Inclusive Spaces for the 2SLGBTQIA+ Community

Employers can take specific action to create workspaces and hiring practices that are welcoming and inclusive for individuals part of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. Ensuring that 2SLGBTQIA+ staff feel welcome, but not tokenized. Respected, but not made a spectacle.

Clearly Articulate Anti-Harassment and Anti-Discrimination Policy

This policy must explicitly prohibit discrimination and harassment on the basis of gender, gender identity, gender expression, sex, sexual orientation, or perceived gender identity/expression.

This policy should also clearly outline:
- The process for reporting harassment and discrimination
- The processes for consequences
- The consequences for repeated harassment and discrimination
  - Including an anonymous reporting option - beneficial for staff who are uncomfortable attaching their name to a complaint for fear of retaliation or social stigma.
- Should indicate that micro-aggressions fall under the category of harassment on the basis of gender identity and expression.
  - Such as, misgendering

What to do with this Anti-Harassment and Anti-Discrimination Policy?

- It is especially important that all team members be briefed on this policy at the start of their employment.
  - That way, if there is ever an instance of harassment or discrimination, leadership can point to the policy and refer back to it to outline how the behaviour is unacceptable.
- This policy may also be posted in waiting rooms or office spaces as a reminder to employees and clients.

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Ways to Promote an Inclusive Workspace Environment

Pronouns are Respected

Employers could share their own pronouns when they introduce themselves at meetings or events. Staff culture includes acceptance of kind correction if a mistake is made, but a zero-tolerance policy for purposeful misgendering.

Policy & Procedures

Policy & procedures should be inclusive of queer folks. *For example:* bereavement leave that applies to non-blood or non-marital family members (ex. partner/s who are not married, diverse family structures including polyamorous families, pets, etc.)

Benefits Package

Benefits package could include gender affirming care, mental health support, time off for appointments like surgery consultations or hormone administration.

Visually Inclusive Workspaces

Workspaces could include 2SLGBTQIA+ iconography. For example: pride flags, art by queer artists, pronouns displayed on nametags and office signage.

Pride Celebration

An organization could plan a Pride celebration, either for their own team or for the community. Pride events don't have to be huge or complex. Could consider simpler events like showing a queer movie at lunchtime with snacks and pronoun buttons available, or attending a larger Pride event together.

Staff & Workplace Culture

A culture where folks are celebratory of 2SLGBTQIA+ identities, respectful of unique experiences and expressions of gender and sexuality, and above all, where 2SLGBTQIA+ folks feel safe and affirmed.

Bathroom Accessibility

Bathrooms on site are gender neutral or there is an easily accessible gender-neutral option.

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Training and Workshops to Help Build Awareness and Inclusivity

- Most of us have been socialized into the gender binary and rigid gender roles, it takes careful deconstruction to move from these unconscious biases to conscious allyship.
- The Fyrefly Institute as well as the Centre for Sexuality in Calgary and Skipping Stone facilitate many training workshops

When should trainings take place?

Should be offered on an ongoing basis depending on factors such as staff turnover, incidents of harassment or discrimination, or simply to refresh the team.

Measures of a Successfully Safe and Inclusive Workplace

- If staff of all genders and sexualities feel respected and celebrated, that is key.
- Could consider offering:
  - An anonymous survey to gain insights into how supported and safe your staff feels
  - Holding regular feedback sessions for folks to share ways things could improve
  - Simply paying attention to issues as they arise and determining any patterns that could be remedied with more training, better policy, or more explicit support.

Learn more about Community Compass & access more FREE resources:

arpaonline.ca