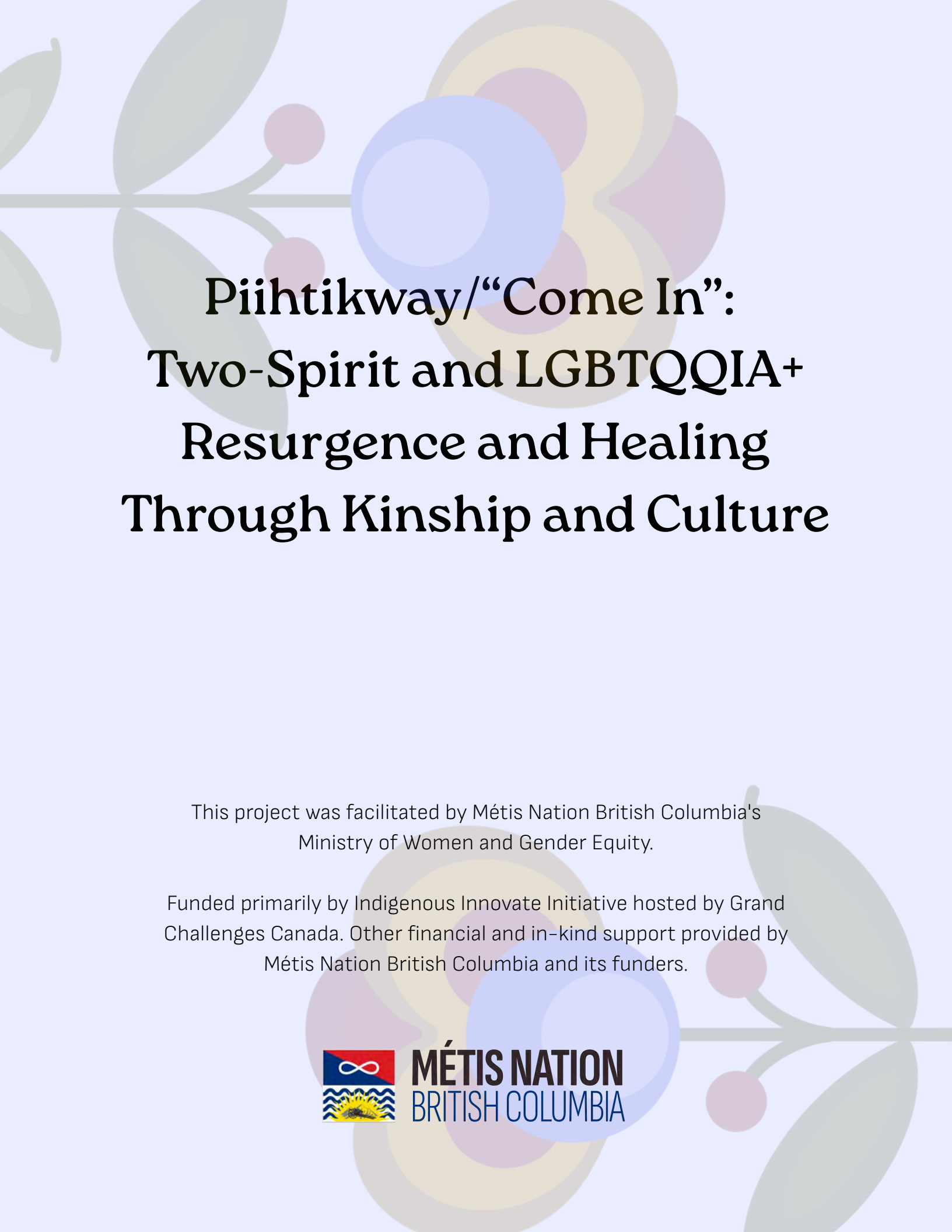


Piihtikway/“Come In”:
Two-Spirit and LGBTQQIA+
Resurgence and Healing
Through Kinship and Culture



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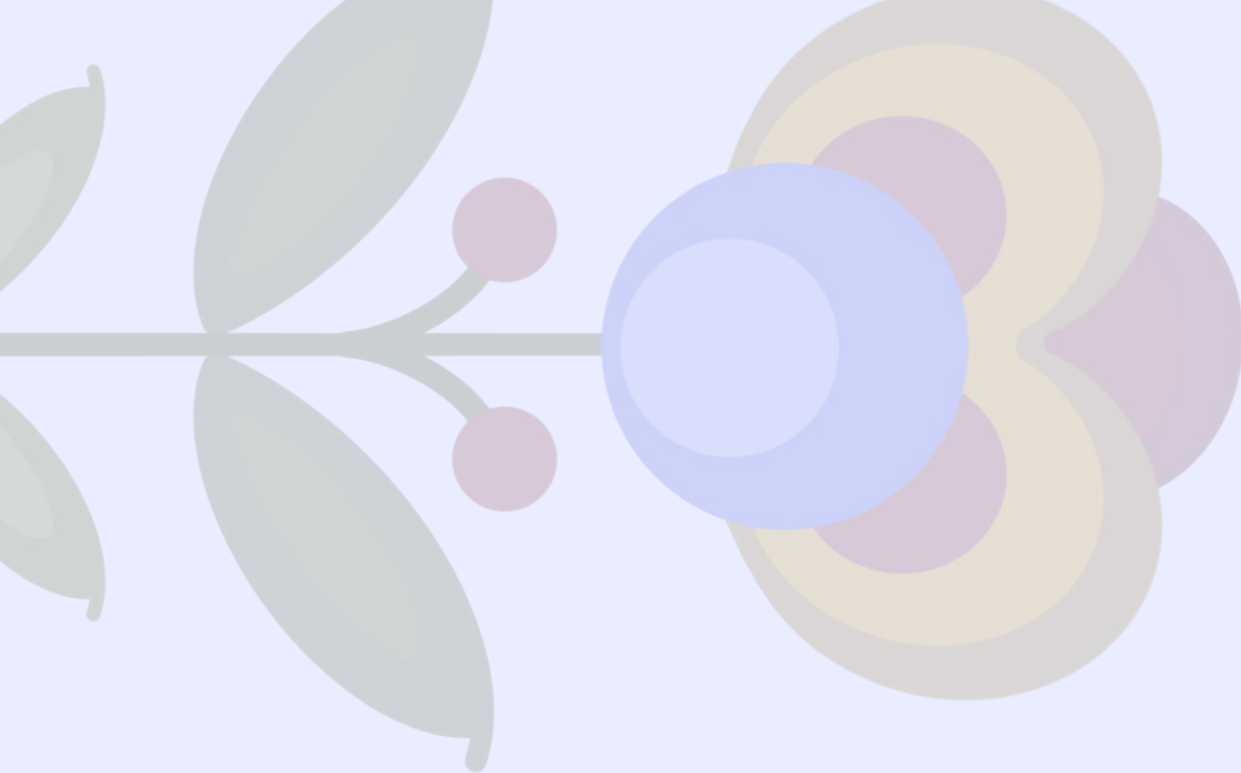
Piihtikway/“Come In”: Two-Spirit and LGBTQQIA+ Resurgence and Healing Through Kinship and Culture

This project was facilitated by Métis Nation British Columbia's
Ministry of Women and Gender Equity.

Funded primarily by Indigenous Innovate Initiative hosted by Grand
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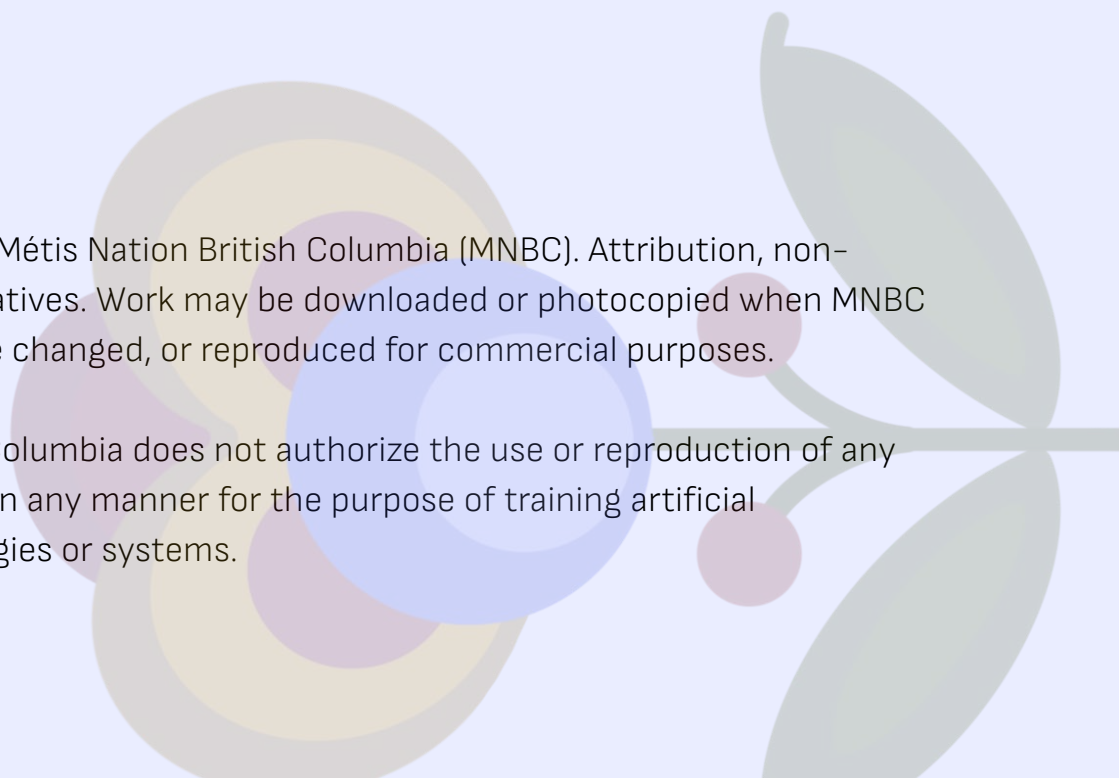


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TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Métis Nation British Columbia deeply respects the inherent and treaty rights of all 204 First Nations across British Columbia. We acknowledge the traditional and ancestral territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) Nation, ʔamakʔis (Ktunaxa) Nation, Secwepemcúl'ecw (Secwépemc) Nation, Syilx/Okanagan Nation, Lheidli T'enneh Nation, and Snuneymuxw Nation, where some of our co-creation circles and interviews took place. We recognize and honour their continued stewardship and governance.



RECOGNITION STATEMENT

Métis Nation British Columbia recognizes the 38 Métis Chartered Communities located across the province. These Métis Chartered Communities provide Métis people with local programming and opportunities for cultural connection and belonging, sometimes after generations of displacement. We celebrate the meaningful contributions of these Communities and of Métis people, both historically and in the present day.

PARTNERSHIPS AND SUPPORT

The pages of this resource are woven with prayers and offerings from the Métis Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+ community in B.C.

Michif language included in this resource was written by Elder Norman Fleury of St. Lazare, Manitoba (Southern/Heritage Michif). Language context and knowledge were provided by Elder Norman Fleury and Elder Tom McCallum of Île-à-la-Crosse, Saskatchewan (Northern Michif/Nehiyowiwin).

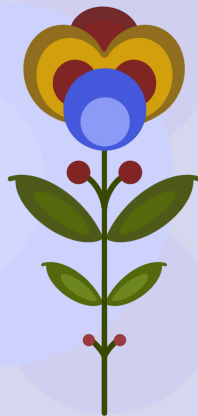
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Support provided by MNBC's Department of Communications and Community Engagement.

Funded primarily by Indigenous Innovate Initiative hosted by Grand Challenges Canada. Other financial and in-kind support provided by Métis Nation British Columbia and its funders.

Graphic Art by Métis and Scandinavian artist Kaija Heitland.

Copywrite and copyedit by Métis and First Nations editor Alyssa Cunningham.



DISCLAIMER

This resource has been co-created with MNBC's former 2SLGBTQQIA+ Advisory Committee, the elected 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis of British Columbia Governance Council (2SMBC), and 2SLGBTQQIA+ relatives who participated in the Piihtikway/"Come In" Speaker Series. We recognize the diversity of Métis 2SLGBTQQIA+ experiences, and that there may be perspectives that have not been represented in this resource. If you would like to suggest other stories and topics that could be considered in future work, please contact mowge@mnbc.ca.

Content Warning: This resource contains discussions related to systemic violence, suicide, gender-based violence, and other difficult topics. If it doesn't feel like the right time to engage with these topics, please take care of yourself. The resource will be here if and when you feel ready.

If you or someone you know is in crisis:

VictimLinkBC Toll-Free Number 1-800-563-0808 (Call or text)

Trans Lifeline Toll-Free Number 1-877-330-6366

Métis Crisis line at 1-833-Metis-BC (1-833-638-4722)

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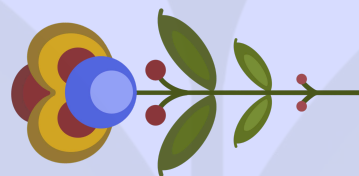
PREFACE

This resource was created by and for Métis Two-Spirit and LGBTQQIA+ community members. Throughout this collaborative work, the strength and resilience of this community surges through as co-creators shared stories of “coming in” to their Métis and 2SLGBTQQIA+ identities and communities. In the article “N’tacimowin inna nah’: Our Coming In Stories,” Alex Wilson, a Two-Spirit member of Opaskwayak Cree Nation, shares that for Indigenous Two-Spirit and LGBTQQIA+ relatives “coming in” is not a declaration of independent identity like it is when “coming out,” but rather “an affirmation of interdependent identity,” and a process of “understand[ing] their relationship to and place and value in their own family, community, culture, history and present-day world.”¹

We selected the Southern/Heritage Michif word, *pihtikway*², as the title of this resource and the foundational project that underlies it. *Pihtikway* is an invitation to enter. The intention of this project was to invite Métis Two-Spirit and LGBTQQIA+ community members to “come in” to community, and to “give back spaces”³ of belonging and wellbeing within the heart of the Nation and within the historical and modern understanding of Métis identity.

“*Pihtikway*” and “*pay pihtikway*” (sometimes spelled “*pee-pihtikwee*” depending on different language speakers) can be used interchangeably. *Pihtikway* is a conjugated form of the verb “to enter or come in,” in the imperative; it is a command or invitation to enter. “*Pay pihtikway*” is a more formal invitation.

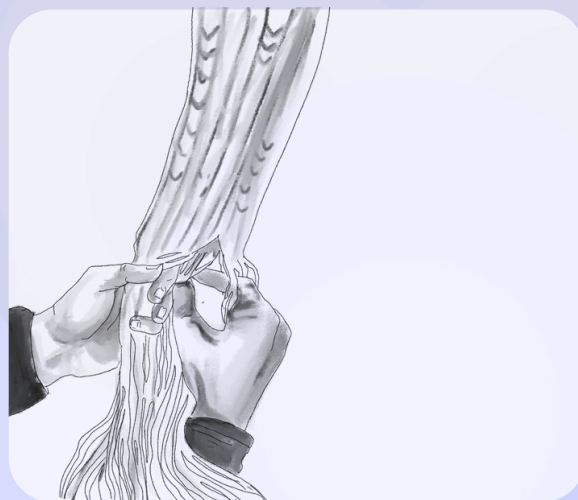
“Giving back space” is a term shared with us by Métis Two-Spirit community member, Jessy Dame.



In the article “Queering Collective Dreaming: Weaving Métis Futures of Belonging,” queer and trans Métis scholars Lydia Toorenburgh (they/them) and Holly Reid (they/them) describe how the “search for who we are as Métis people can be a profound journey of discovery and reconnection, though not without heartache and plenty of questions.”⁴ Lydia and Holly acknowledge that the journeys 2SLGBTQQIA+ people walk when “coming in” to their identities are “challenging, yet profound.”⁵

In Alex Wilson's understanding of the terms "coming out" and "coming in," there are parallels in coming in to our 2SLGBTQQIA+ community and coming home our Métis community. Coming in is grounded in wahkohtowin, a Michif/Cree word—its literal translation meaning "kinship"—though its deeper teachings refer to a worldview that acknowledges our interconnectedness and responsibility to each other and to all of Creation.

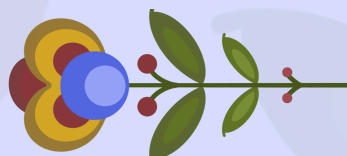
Holly and Lydia use the weaving of a Métis sash as a metaphor—inspired by Holly's PhD framework—to explore and embody an integrated identity that includes all parts of ourselves. As they remind us, Métis sashes are indicators of identity. We wear them proudly. Holly and Lydia say that they envision each person weaving their own pattern of self-expression through the process of bringing together many varied strands that make up who they are.⁶



Queer and trans Métis scholar Milo Ira interpreted Lydia and Holly's article with this beautiful image that represents our identity-weaving journeys.

In this resource, *Piihtikway*/"Come In": *Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+ Resurgence and Healing through Kinship and Culture*, we will be borrowing Holly and Lydia's sash metaphor to weave stories and resources together. We are centering the coming in stories of 2SLGBTQQIA+ relatives in their Métis and 2SLGBTQQIA+ identities and communities.

Through this weaving of many stories, we aim to re-establish the sacredness and importance of 2SLGBTQQIA+ community members as an integral part of our Métis communities. It is our hope that this resource speaks to the profound experiences of being Métis and 2SLGBTQQIA+. It is a call to remember the beauty of our unique sashes, and the strength of weaving our stories together.



ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

Métis 2SLGBTQQIA+ resurgence through connection to identity, kinship, and culture is fundamental to traditional Indigenous ways of knowing and being. As the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's *What We Have Learned: Principles of Truth and Reconciliation* report states, "supporting [Indigenous] peoples' cultural revitalization and integrating Indigenous knowledge systems, oral histories, laws, protocols, and connections to the land into the reconciliation process are essential."⁷ This extends to reconciliation within our own communities.

Over the years, Métis Nation British Columbia (MNBC) has hosted many events, and has created and collaborated on many resources and reports to support advocacy for the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community. The report *It's Time for Two Spirit Reconciliation: A Call for 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis Equity and Inclusion*, stewarded by Métis Nation Greater Victoria (MNGV), outlines recommendations to support 2SLGBTQQIA+ relatives in B.C. The report identified "the deep desire for greater cultural and spiritual knowledge, connection and wellbeing, and a lack of access to Knowledge Keepers and resources that would support their cultural education and spiritual path."⁸ This current resource is a response to the gap in knowledge and stories that center Métis 2SLGBTQQIA+ cultural, historic, and modern perspectives of who we are within the Métis Nation, specifically here in B.C.

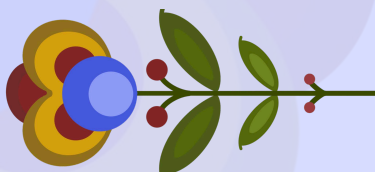
The *Piihtikway*/"Come In": Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+ Resurgence and Healing through Kinship and Culture project was stewarded by MNBC's Ministry of Women and Gender Equity. It took place from fall 2024 to spring 2025.

The project included four components:

- A virtual speaker series with 2SLGBTQQIA+ relatives across B.C., and Two-Spirit Métis ohkomimâwak/Grandmothers, Barbara Bruce and Charlotte Nolin. This series offered spaces for knowledge sharing, belonging, care, and learning for Métis 2SLGBTQQIA+ relatives. It was offered to those both newly coming in or returning into circle.
- A Medicine Pouch mini art series, in which Two-Spirit Métis (Otipemisiwak) artist Lynette La Fontaine (LL) guided participants through creating their own medicine pouches. Throughout this series, LL explained their relationship with the Southern/Heritage Michif word bundle “sikom diloo”/it’s like the water⁹ as well as other Two-Spirit teachings. Participants re-imagined the meaning of regalia as 2SLGBTQQIA+ relatives, while grounded in teachings of being held and protected by Ancestors and the land.
- An Introduction to Beading workshop where Two-Spirit Métis artist Carly Nabess taught 2SLGBTQQIA+ relatives how to bead a Métis embroidery-style circle flower pin.
- The creation of a 2SLGBTQQIA+ specific resources to uplift community stories that promote individual and community wellness.

The word bundle sikom diloo came into existence through Jacqueline Pelland, a Two-Spirit Métis relative, Michif language learner, artist and lawyer.

The foundation of this work was set by MNGV’s *It’s Time for Two Spirit Reconciliation: A Call for 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis Equity and Inclusion* report. It was supported by MNBC’s strategic plan, *Kâ Isi Nâtama Ôta Ati Nîkân: Our Way Forward*, which laid out the community’s need for advocacy, inclusive programs, and policies.¹⁰

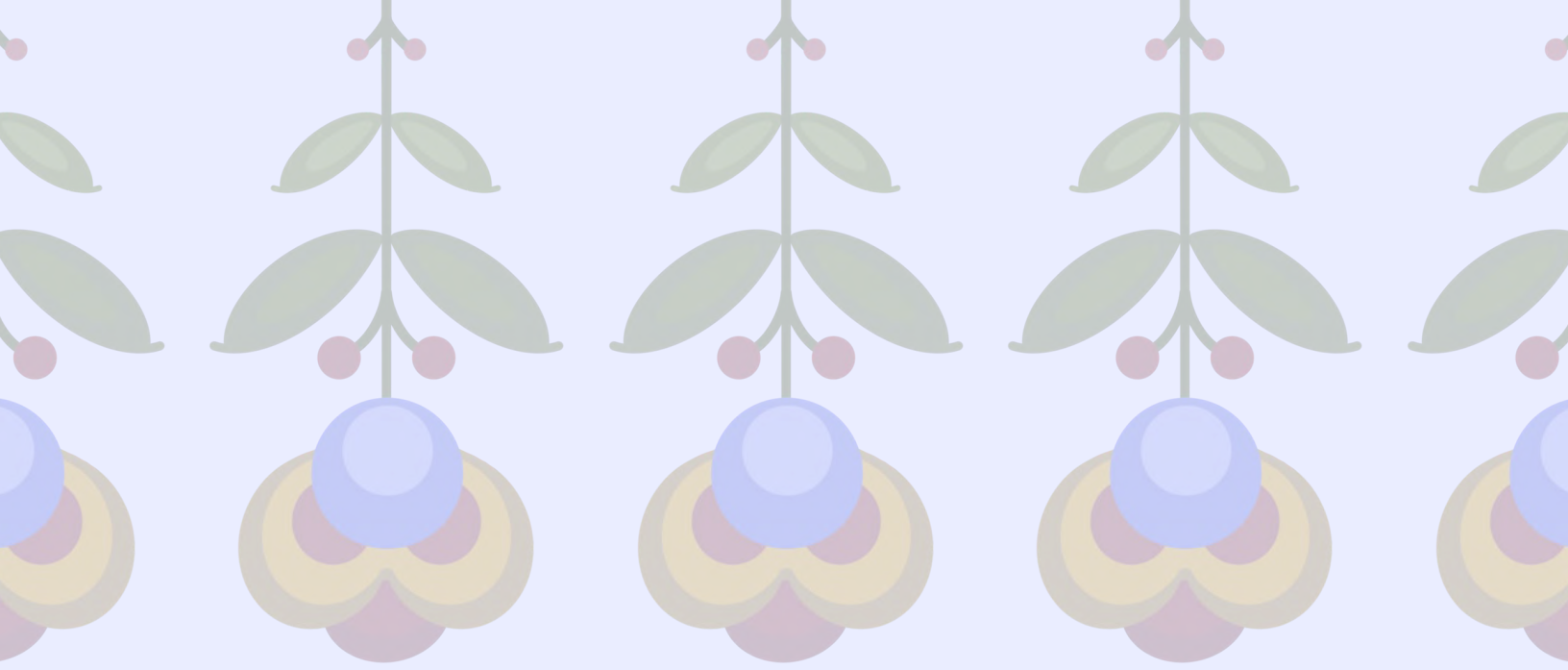


Throughout this resource, we highlight threads of stories and artwork gathered from the Speaker Series, and the Introduction to Beadwork and Medicine Pouch Workshops. We also delve into the history of 2SLGBTQQIA+ presence in MNBC, and we share offerings from the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community, that highlight community-care practices and guidance on “becoming better relatives”¹¹ to the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community.

The word bundle “becoming better relatives” was shared with Two-Spirit Michif relative, Monique Courcelles, during their mentorship with Associate Professor Dr. Lana Whiskeyjack and Matriarchal Firekeeper, Amanda Almond in their *tapahtêyimôkamik*—the Humble Lodge—research project. This teaching of “becoming better relatives” is reflected in Lana and Amanda’s work to support the strengthening of relationships between Indigenous 2SLGBTQQIA+ youth, and their kinship relations through inclusive rites of passage.

Throughout the *Piihtikway* / “Come In” project, MNBC invited the former 2SLGBTQQIA+ Advisory Committee, the newly elected 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis of British Columbia (2SMBC) Governance Council, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ relatives who participated in the Speaker Series to co-create this resource. Relatives who expressed interest were offered tobacco to honour the wisdom and teachings they would share in the co-creation circles.¹² These circles and interviews ensured that the creation of this resource was grounded in community and guided by the storytelling of 2SLGBTQQIA+ community members, *ohkomimâwak*, and Elders. Care has been taken to ensure that each relative who shared their story maintained autonomy in how they choose to be identified and how their stories and offerings have been woven into this resource. For that reason, the words “Michif,” “Métis,” and “Otipemisiwak” are sometimes used interchangeably. The use and spelling of languages such as Michif and French throughout the resource may differ based on the co-creator’s relationship to language. In content not tied to any specific co-creator’s stories, we have used Southern/Heritage Michif spelling.

Within this resource, co-created primarily for the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community, the terms ‘we’ and ‘our’ refer to 2SLGBTQQIA+ community and center 2SLGBTQQIA+ experiences. The term ‘you’ is used to reference relatives and friends of the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community. This is done to acknowledge and reflect on the similarities and differences in the experiences and perspectives of all relatives.

A repeating pattern of stylized flowers and leaves. Each flower has a light blue center, surrounded by yellow and purple petals. Above each flower is a green stem with two leaves and two small red berries.

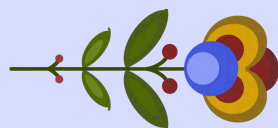
The following pages are filled with care and tenderness, with joy and sorrow, with gratitude for our Two-Spirit Grandmothers—kôhkominawak—and 2SLGBTQQIA+ Elders who walked this path before us, and with prayers for our future generations who will walk this path behind us.

We ask that as you read the stories gifted from community to community throughout these pages—whether you are 2SLGBTQQIA+, or a relative or friend of our community—that you consider this question: Who would we be if colonial policy did not try to erase us?

OPENING WORDS

Louis De Jaeger, 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis of British Columbia Chairperson

Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+ people have always been changemakers and have played integral roles in moving our people forward. It may appear that there has been a recent surge of 2SLGBTQQIA+ visibility and awareness work within MNBC but this has been in the making for a long time. Many 2SLGBTQQIA+ people over the years have advocated for protection on grounds of gender, and sexual orientation on national, provincial, and community levels of governance. It is only in recent years that we are witnessing the results of years of effort. Our community of 2SLGBTQQIA+ people and allies brought forward the Resolution to establish MNBC's former 2SLGBTQQIA+ Advisory Committee at the MNGA in 2020. Later, many community members played important roles in the establishment of MNBC's 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis of British Columbia Governance Council in the winter of 2025. The formal creation of the 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis of British Columbia Governance Council is an historic event for our Nation. This Council, alongside Councils and initiatives stewarded by other provinces, is a culmination of much advocacy and growth as a Nation.



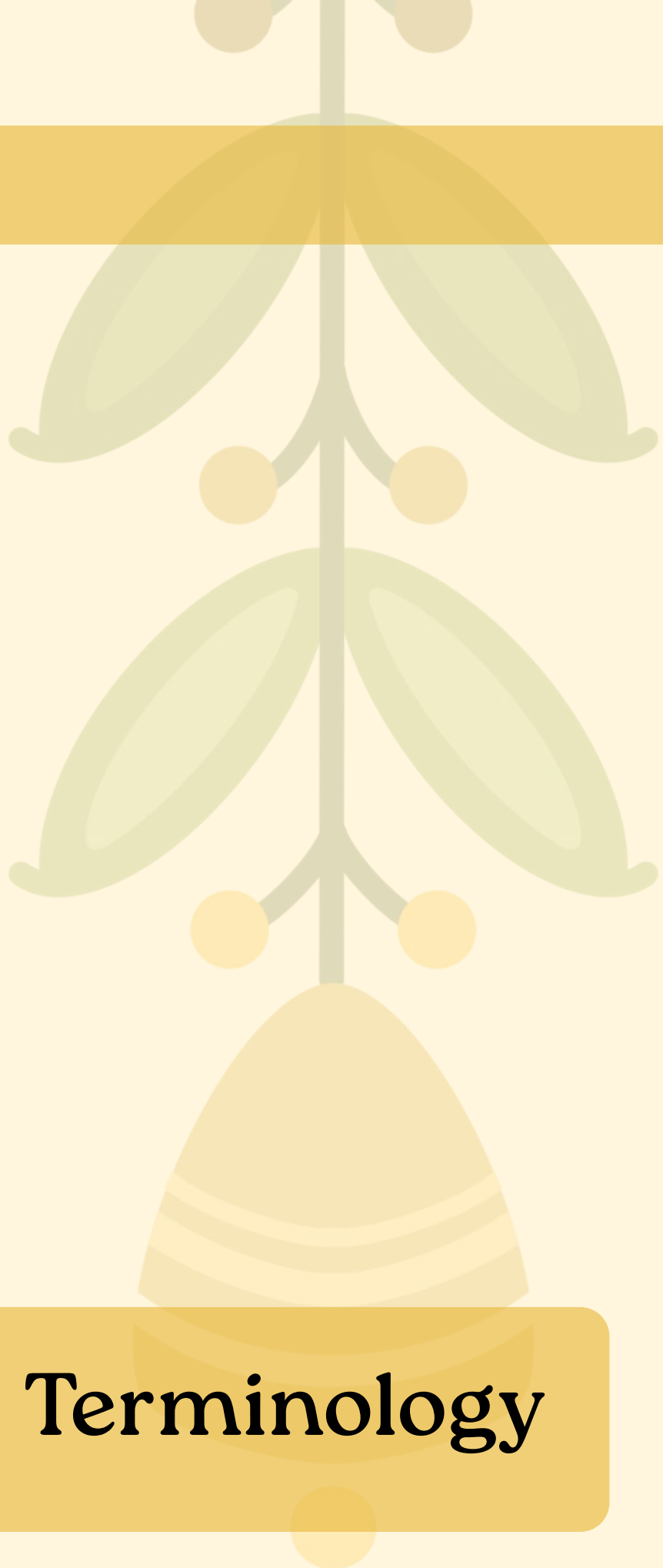
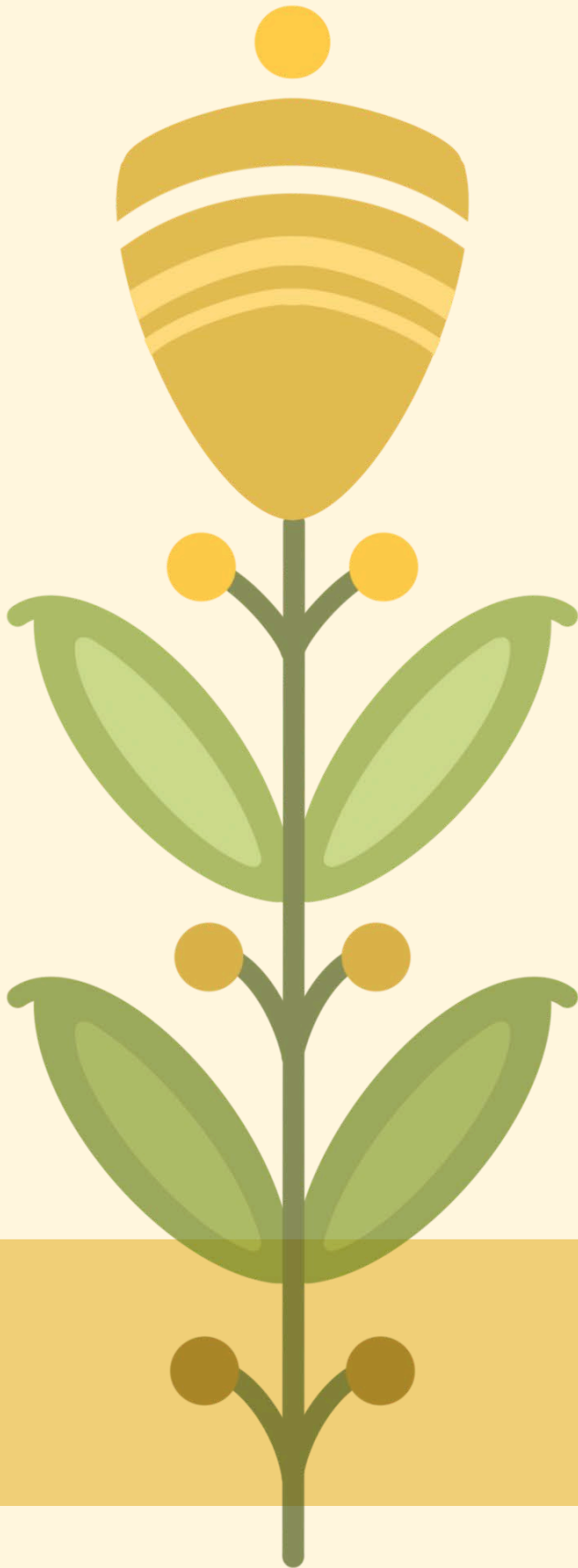
However, the journey to get here for Métis 2SLGBTQQIA+ people has not always been easy. There have been times throughout my life where I have acknowledged that our Nation wasn't ready to accept us, and in those moments, I had to step back from our Nation's politics and use my skills to serve Métis people elsewhere. Looking back, our struggles to find acceptance may feel like failures, but our past and the hardships that we have endured give us strength and courage to continue moving our people forward—sharing where we have been and how much has changed over time is a gift we offer younger people. When we find out who we are, and find other 2SLGBTQQIA+ people in our community, it is a confirmation not only of our Métis identity but affirmation of our Two-Spirit identity.

We each have different gifts that we contribute to moving our Nation forward —some people are grounded in politics and advocacy, and others in language, arts, and ceremony, or a mix of both. From advocating in politics, hosting clothing exchanges, facilitating Métis art workshops, organizing potlucks and so much more, we have been ensuring our survival through the inherent ability to come together and find each other in the darkness.

The stories within this resource are only a small representation of the continuum of diverse experiences of being Métis and 2SLGBTQQIA+. We may never know about our Ancestors who lived similar lives to our own, even in recent years, if their stories are not told. It is vital that we collect stories now of who we are and where we have been to share with future generations. I invite you to read, learn, and celebrate these coming in stories of 2SLGBTQQIA+ community in their Métis and 2SLGBTQQIA+ identities and communities.



Section 1



Terminology

TERMINOLOGY

Disclaimer: While we have chosen to use the following common definitions, we acknowledge that there is no simple way to encapsulate how every person identifies with these terms. Specific wording, or the order in which the terms are laid out, may vary by location, level of inclusivity, personal preference, and more.

2SLGBTQQA+

The terminology that follows has been generously shared by Egale Canada, in their 2SLGBTQI Terms and Definitions resource.¹³

2S = Two-Spirit: An umbrella term for the many Indigenous traditional identities forcefully suppressed by colonization. The term honours the fluid and diverse nature of gender and attraction, and their connection to community and spirituality.

L = Lesbian: A person who identifies as either woman or nonbinary who experiences attraction to the same or similar genders.

G = Gay: A person who experiences attraction to people of the same gender as themselves. It can be used by individuals of any gender but is often used to refer specifically to men who are attracted to the same or similar genders.

B = Bisexual: A person who experiences attraction to both people of their own gender and people of gender different from their own.

T = Transgender/Trans: A person whose gender identity does not correspond with what is socially expected based on their sex assigned at birth. It can be used as an umbrella term to refer to a range of gender identities and experiences.

Q = Queer: An umbrella term that may describe 2SLGBTQQIA+ communities, one's relationship to a particular community, or an individual identity. It can denote same-gender attraction or reflect more complex dynamics between one's sex, gender, and attraction experiences.**

Q = Questioning: An umbrella term for the process of reconciling one's felt sense of self in terms of gender and/or attraction with the language one uses to describe those experiences. It may be experienced for a single period, episodically, or persistently over one's lifetime.

I = Intersex: A person whose chromosomal, hormonal, or anatomical sex characteristics fall outside of the conventional classifications of male or female.

A = Agender/Asexual/Aromantic: Agender = a person who experiences either having no gender or a neutral gender identity. Asexual (Ace) = a person who does not experience sexual attraction, and/or who has little to no interest in sexual activity. When used as an umbrella term, it encompasses identities reflecting a range of experiences and degrees of interest in sexual intimacy, including demisexual and graysexual. Aromantic (ARO) = a person who experiences little to no romantic forms of attraction to others.

+ = diverse identities not captured in the acronym.¹⁴ This might include non-binary, gender-fluid, pansexual, and others.

This acronym has various formations that might be encountered, including: 2SLGBTQIA+, 2SLGBTQ+, LGBTQIA2S+, LGBTQ+ and more.

**The term queer has a long history that includes being used in a derogatory way towards the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community. The reclaiming of this term began in the 1980s. While it is increasingly used, it is important to acknowledge that not everyone in the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community feels comfortable and/or safe with its use.¹⁵



Coming in

Defined by Alex Wilson, a Two-Spirit member of Opaskwayak Cree Nation, “coming in” is not singularly focused on only one identity but rather the reciprocal relationship our 2SLGBTQQIA+ identities have, both within ourselves and to those around us.¹⁶ The background and importance of this phrase is further discussed in Section 2: “Coming In” to Métis and 2SLGBTQQIA+ Identity and Community.

Indigequeer/Indigiqueer

The term Indigequeer (now more commonly spelled as Indigiqueer) was created by Theo Jean Cuthand as a title for the Vancouver Queer Film Festival’s Indigenous/Two-Spirit program in 2004. He used it to acknowledge that not all LGBTQIA+ Indigenous people identify with the term Two-Spirit.¹⁷

Sikom Diloo

In 2021, Jacqueline Pelland, Kai Pyle, and Sākihitowin Awāsis spoke at a roundtable at the *Native American and Indigenous Studies Association* (NAISA) conference on “Sikom Diloo/It’s Like the Water: Michif Two-Spirit Resistance in Language, Land, and Body.” They spoke about how sikom diloo is “a way to describe the fluidity of gender, sexuality, and spacetime in a Métis context,” and the fluidity of time, as “Two-Spirit Michif resistance involves revitalizing practice from the past while also allowing them to transform in the future.”¹⁸

Since 2021, the term sikom diloo has become more commonly known, used and shared by Métis 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, though the origins of the word weren’t very well known. During the *Gathering to Heal: 2SLGBTQQIA+ Gender Based-Violence* gathering on ləkʷəŋən territory in 2023, it was shared in circle that this word bundle was brought forward by Jacqueline Pelland.

As the creation of this resource unfolded, the significance of the term sikom diloo to the Métis 2SLGBTQQIA+ community became clear, from stories of connection to the word bundle, to beautiful regalia by LL La Fontaine, to its inclusion in this resource.

In 2025, during a co-creation interview, Jacqueline Pelland, a Two-Spirit Métis relative, Michif language learner, artist, and lawyer, shared that in the summer of 2018 she was connected to Elders Verna Demontigny and Harvey Pelletier, who were working on a Michif language preservation project in Brandon, Manitoba. Her spirit lit up as she reflected on driving back and forth from Winnipeg to Brandon for an entire summer learning from them around their kitchen table while going for walks, making bannock, beading, visiting, and playing with their cat, Puddles. During this time, she met Kai Pyle—a Two-Spirit Métis and Sault Ste. Marie Anishinaabe person—who was also learning Michif from Verna and Harvey. This language learning journey inspired Jacqueline to contribute to the revitalization of Michif in a way that represents Métis Two-Spirit people. As she was considering Michif language and how it relates to our Two-Spirit kin, the term *sikom diloo* came through her. The word bundle acknowledged the fluidity “of it all” and the importance water has for Métis people, and other Indigenous Peoples everywhere.

To ensure that this word bundle was presented in a way that honours Michif language from a historical perspective while re-imagining language in a way that honours our 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis relatives, Jacqueline presented the word bundle to community Elders, and language speakers, Verna Demontigny, Harvey Pelletier, and Nohkom Charlotte Nolin. It is with such gratitude that Jacqueline shared the story of how this word bundle came to be so that it could be woven into this resource and shared with community.



Inspired by the sikom diloo word bundle, LL La Fontaine has created 2SLGBTQQIA+ regalia sets. Shared in the *Gathering to Heal: 2SLGBTQQIA+ GBV* report, LL explained their interpretation of the word bundle through their regalia designs:

"Water is fluid. We are fluid as 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. I used clear beads to represent water. When we scoop water in our hands, it is clear. Yes, sometimes minerals make water other colours, but usually water is clear. Often, water looks blue from the reflection of the sky. So, I used 10 different clear beads and 3 different silver beads on blue velveteen to try my best to represent water. The designs are based on ancestor florals, and I am using contemporary and antique beads. The silver beads represent the sun and moon light reflecting on water. Water is medicine. We are medicine."¹⁹

—LL La Fontaine



"si kom di loo (like water)" moccasins, 2023. Beading/Photo © LL La Fontaine, Otipemisiwak artist. All copies must be attributed.



"si kom di loo (like water)" 2023. Beading/Photo © LL La Fontaine, Otipemisiwak artist. All copies must be attributed.

HISTORY OF THE TERM TWO-SPIRIT

The term Two-Spirit is a contemporary term, intentionally adopted as an organizing strategy to connect the wide variety of traditional terms that many First Nations had for gender diverse people pre-colonization.²⁰

While the term “Two-Spirit”—a translation of the Anishinaabemowin term *niizh manidoowag*²¹—is relatively new to mainstream vernacular, its sentiment has existed since long before the colonization of Turtle Island. Many Indigenous Nations on Turtle Island carried a more fluid view of gender and attraction, with some Nations recognizing multiple genders.²² Some Cree terms that show this include the *napêw iskwêwisêhot*—men who dress like women—and *iskwêw ka napêwayat*—women who dress like men.²³ Throughout many Nations, people who were gender diverse were seen as having special gifts that brought great honour and benefit to their communities. Often, they held esteemed roles within their Nations, including being medicine people, ceremonial leaders, and mediators, among others.²⁴ As Two-Spirit Métis relatives, many of us embody a variety of roles central to the health and wholeness of our communities. Our relatives are Sundancers, Pipe Carriers, caregivers, educators, activists, artists, Knowledge Carriers, and so much more.

In the article “Spirituality in the 90’s and the Day a Red-Tailed Hawk Feather Fell to Earth” published in *Red River Rising* magazine, Elder Albert McLeod talks about how the Nichiwakan Society came into existence. It was in response to the suicide of two First Nations youth. Nohkom Barbara Bruce and Elder Albert McLeod were some of the leaders of the Nichiwakan Society.²⁵ The group organized the Third Annual *North American Native Gay & Lesbian Gathering*,²⁶ themed “Spirituality in the 90s”, outside of Beausejour, Manitoba, in August of 1990.²⁷ This gathering was a significant milestone for Indigenous people connecting with culture, language, and ceremony. It was there that the term Two-Spirit—originally shared by Elder Myra Laramée, PhD—was embraced in reference to Indigenous LGBTQ people.²⁸

"I believe that [Two-Spirit] described the source of our creation: the spirits of our parents who gave us life. Some people assume that it reinforces a colonial concept of binary gender (male and female) and that it causes confusion about how a person can have two spirits. But now, after many years of reflection, its meaning has become malleable and mysterious, and it continues to evolve and resonate with me. Today, I believe that the Two-Spirit name (whoever and whatever it refers to) is about the depth of strength that we possess to be who we are, and to carry a name brought to us from the spiritual realm."²⁹

—Elder Albert McLeod, *Red River Rising*

In the article "Naawenangweyaabeg Coming In: Intersections of Indigenous Sexuality and Spirituality," Two-Spirit Métis kwe, Chantal Fiola, shares that "Two-Spirit enables us to dialogue across differences of gender, sexuality, culture, and nation while engaging in our common struggles and celebrations."³⁰

When choosing how we describe and express ourselves, there are no better or worse terms. Sometimes we might incorporate one term into our sash pattern and decide later that another is better suited to us. Weaving our sash is an active process. We are always learning, always growing, and always choosing which patterns affirm our identities at any given time.



Section 2



“Coming In” to our
Métis and
2SLGBTQQIA+ Identity
and Community

"COMING IN" TO MÉTIS AND 2SLGBTQQIA+ COMMUNITY

Witness Your Becoming

By Monique Courcelles

I see you looking back
in a history that was not written for you
looking for glimpses of where you are from
and who you were meant to be

You will not find yourself there
in places that do not understand you
in places that cast you out
before knowing who you truly are

Some people will try to tell you
about a history without Ancestors like you
They make assumptions
because they only think straight
If they can see themselves in history
why do they assume
there was never anyone in-between
They tried to erase your story
rip ancestral knowledge from your bones
and bind your existence
into a story they can understand

Deep in our hearts we hear whispers
our Ancestors telling us we belong
we are worthy, we are enough
and most importantly we are sacred

Embrace who you are meant to be
mourn who you thought you were
mourn the relationships
you thought you would always have

Find liberation among the isolation
for it is only temporary
You are coming home
home within yourself
home within your culture

"Come in" to a community who loves you
who will embrace who you
for all that you have been
who will care for your tender heart
and who will witness your becoming.³¹



Coming Home to our Métis Community

Many of us weave our experiences and expressions of our 2SLGBTQQIA+ identities while finding the threads that lead us home to our Métis community. The weaving of these strands can occur in parallel or at different times. For those who do not identify as 2SLGBTQQIA+, the process of coming home to Métis identity and community can evoke similar challenges and gifts. We may have to come home again and again as we learn about our families, culture, heritage, communities, history, languages, and more.



Diversity in our History

The Métis are a distinct People with our own customs, worldviews, and ways of being. Within the broader culture of the Métis Nation, many families and kinship networks have their own diverse ways of being, often tied to their geographical locations and communities within the Métis homelands. For example:

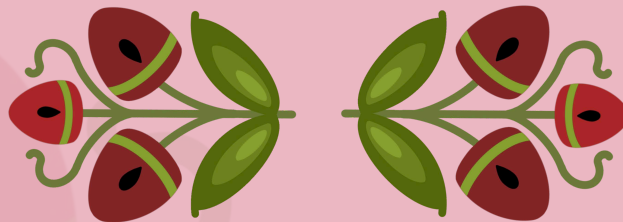
“Métis people have historically been a multilingual community. In the late 1700s and early 1800s, many Métis people were able to speak First Nations languages, such as Cree and Saulteaux, as well as European languages, such as French, Gaelic, and English. Métis people were also frequently able to speak the trade languages or creoles of their regions, such as Bungi, Brayet, and Chinook Jargon. Over time, the Métis created their own languages, which are often called Michif.”³²

The three Michif languages—Michif French, Northern Michif, and Southern Michif—all stem from different geographic locations across the Métis homeland.³³

Métis artistic expressions are another example of how Métis cultural traditions differ based on kinship to other Nations.

"[W]hile Métis people are well known for [their distinct heritage arts like fiddle music, jigging, weaving and floral beadwork], many Métis people also practiced, and continue to practice other art forms shared by First Nations and European communities, including: birch bark biting, basket making, fish scale art and rug hooking."³⁴ The sharing of cultural practices was reciprocal between Métis people and their First Nations kin.

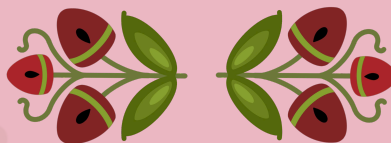
Throughout the course of history, the experiences of being Métis also greatly varied from family to family. To protect themselves from the historic and ongoing impacts of colonization and the erasure of Métis culture and identity through racist policy, many families went into hiding, forging their traditions. Others kept their culture intact by keeping it secret, maintaining their traditions within their family networks and communities.³⁵ Due to the discrimination, exclusionary laws and policies, and restrictions placed on Métis people, they became separated from both their First Nations kinship systems, and from non-Indigenous society. During this time, they became known as the "Forgotten People."³⁶ The impacts of these colonial acts are still felt today, as many individuals and communities have become distanced from their heritage, and communities of origin.



Our Stories

The stories woven throughout this resource, shared by relatives during the Piihtikway co-creation circles and interviews, are often vastly different from one another. Some relatives shared that their coming home to Métis community happened when they were so young that they didn't even realize that they were home all along. Other relatives said their family always knew they were Métis but never talked about it. There were also stories of families that didn't come home to their culture until later in life.

Louis De Jaeger spoke about travelling to Winnipeg, Manitoba, twice over the course of 10 years, and how looking at microfiches in the Winnipeg library helped him understand his story. One of these stories was about his great-grandfather, a Selkirk settler, who was hit and killed by a train in Stonewall, Manitoba. Louis' Métis great-grandmother was six months pregnant at the time, and moved to Summerset, Manitoba, and re-married. Shortly after, she was admitted to the Manitoba Sanatorium in Ninette, Manitoba, for tuberculosis treatment, where she died two years later. He shared how his grandmother never knew her mother, and how it was a common occurrence for Indigenous women who died from tuberculosis to be buried in unmarked graves. When Louis was ready to learn more about his family history, he was guided to more pieces of his story, which is how he came across a Winnipeg Free Press article about the Ninette Sanatorium Memorial cairn that contains 318 names—an incomplete list—in honour of people who died of tuberculosis at the Sanatorium. The Memorial was unveiled in 2010 in the Belmont Hillside Cemetery, in the Rural Municipality of Prairie Lakes, Manitoba.³⁷ Louis' story of the erasure and re-discovery of his family history is one that many relatives know well, and while there can be complex emotions around re-claiming our family stories, Louis reminds us that there can also be great joy.



Richard Marion is a queer Métis man and was a member of MNBC's former 2SLGBTQQIA+ Advisory Committee. In an interview, Richard shared a memory of a trip he took to Batoche, Saskatchewan, with his mémère and pépère—his grandparents—when he was nine years old. He watched them look through documents and books in the post office, searching for people who carried the same family name. He laughed as he told us his childhood self just wanted to play outside, not understanding the cultural significance of the moment. He never thought much about it at the time, but now in adulthood he looks back at his childhood memories of fiddlers, jiggers, and oven-baked galette/bannock with way too much butter, or homemade strawberry jam. It wasn't until after he married his husband in 2016 that he started coming back into his Métis identity and community.

Topher Burke (he/they) is a Two-Spirit and sixth generation Métis, and was also a member of the former 2SLGBTQQIA+ Advisory Committee. They are now the Region 4 2SMBC Representative. He shared that coming home to his Métis culture saved his life. He shared how Western ways of thinking center individuality, and can feel isolating. Topher relied on “Métis ways of thinking to build a healthier relationship with [himself] from the inside, learning to be authentic and truthful.” They expressed that though they have experienced the darkest corners of humanity, coming home to their Métis and Two-Spirit identity and community has allowed them to experience more beauty than they ever thought possible—physically, spiritually, and emotionally. Topher has cried tears of pure joy many times since then.

Many relatives shared stories of coming home to Métis community through the help of a Métis relative. Angel Robinson remembers being dragged to community potlucks and events by their grandmother as a “moody teenager.” When their grandmother passed, Angel began attending community events on their own. Eventually, with the gentle nudge of Elder Barb Hulme, this led them to their involvement in Métis Nation Greater Victoria’s governance.

SC, a Two-Spirit Métis relative, shared that their family always knew they were Indigenous, but they only learned that they were specifically Métis later as a teen/young adult. SC has since found belonging within their community and culture. They spoke to the intergenerational healing that comes with this sense of belonging and shared in circle that “now I get to pass that on to my babies, and my babies get to grow up being proud little Michif boys.”



Throughout the co-creation circles and interviews, some relatives shared stories of the hardships their families endured for being visibly Métis, while others talked about the different hardships of being unseen. Monique Courcelles has witnessed teachings shared by Métis Elder Denise McCuaig about the difficulties that come from both perspectives. These differences can often be felt even within the same family, as experienced by Elder McCuaig and her sister. Elder McCuaig shared that there are both privileges and hardships on either side. There is privilege in being unseen as Indigenous within non-Indigenous spaces, but it can also make people feel unwelcome within Indigenous communities. On the other hand, being visibly Indigenous within Indigenous communities carries privilege that does not exist in non-Indigenous spaces. Perhaps our struggles situating ourselves as Métis people in a modern world are not so dissimilar from the struggles of our Ancestors.

“Coming In” to our 2SLGBTQQIA+ Identity and Community

When it comes to queer identity, especially in mainstream spaces, we often hear the term “coming out”³⁸ to describe the act of announcing queer and gender non-conforming identities to friends, relatives, and community members. While it is often thought of as a singular event, coming out for many people is an ongoing process. Many of the relatives we visited shared that it was unsafe for them to be openly queer, even within their own families and communities. For some, this experience delayed their coming out and for others, it forced them to go “back into the closet.”³⁹

Richard Marion didn’t come out as queer until later in life, because of the predominantly anti-gay sentiment that existed while he was growing up. It wasn’t until he was in his forties that he first came into the non-Indigenous LGBTQIA+ community. He dedicated much of his time organizing, particularly in disability advocacy spaces like Blind LGBT Pride International. He shared that he has been deep in the process of building relationship with his queer identity and his place in community from an Indigenous perspective through his involvement in MNBC’s *Gathering to Heal: 2SLGBTQQIA+ Gender-Based Violence* event in Victoria, B.C., in 2023, and through MNBC’s former 2SLGBTQQIA+ Advisory Committee.

In the article “N’tacimowin inna nah’: Our Coming In Stories,” Alex Wilson shares that for Indigenous Two-Spirit and LGBTQQIA+ relatives “coming in” is not a declaration of independent identity like it is when we “come out,” but rather “an affirmation of interdependent identity” and a process of “understand[ing] their relationship to and place and value in their own family, community, culture, history and present-day world.”⁴⁰

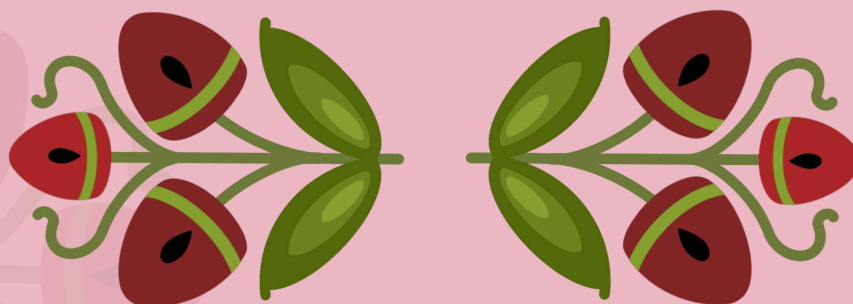
The importance of community to the experience of coming in was evident in the co-creation circles and interviews. Many of our kin spoke of the significance of people who came into their lives—a school counsellor, a relative, an Elder—and showed them that it was okay to be 2SLGBTQQIA+, that they were loved and valued, and that they had a place in community.

Issy, a Two-Spirit and Indigiqueer Michif relative, shared how important it was for them to know that their gender identities were welcome in community. “I attended a Two-Spirit retreat and it changed my life. I was held up, celebrated, and loved for being entirely myself. I heard stories from my Two-Spirit kin, so much love and pain and wounds and scars and strength—things we all uniquely shared together. I participated in songs and ceremony and gathering sage with Kookums. My recently cracked-open heart was filled by the Spirit of my people. The Rainbow people.”

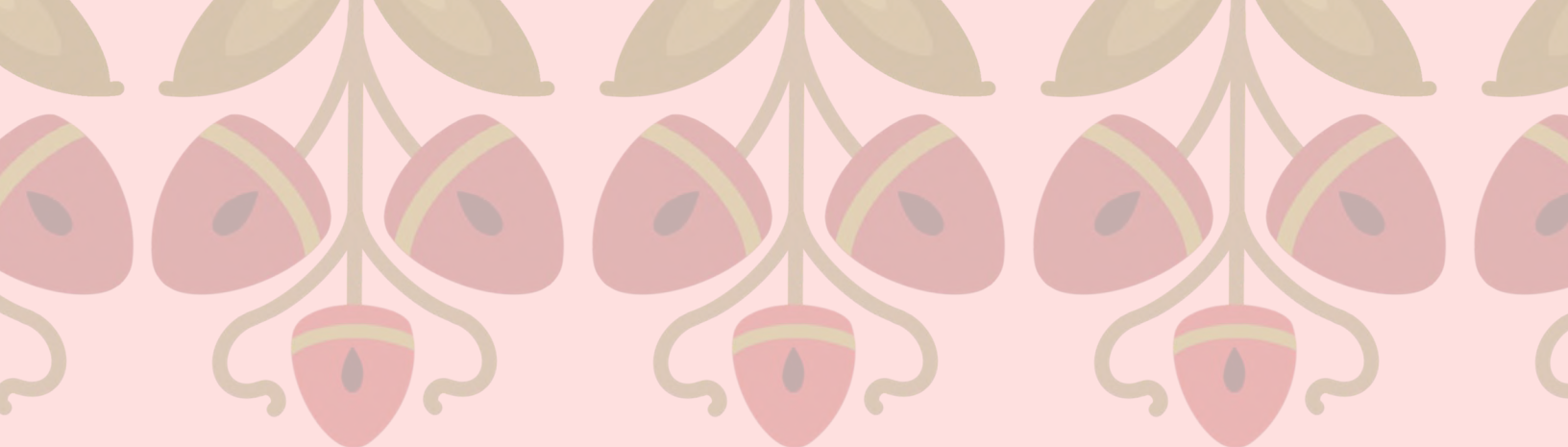


In circle, Dan, a Michif person who uses all pronouns, said that coming in to our 2SLGBTQQIA+ identities is nuanced. There can be moments of great joy, community, and ceremony, and moments where we question our belonging within those spaces. He shared that a Two-Spirit relative told them that identity crisis is normal within the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community. Dan likened it to the identity crisis we can experience around being Métis, and how the experience of questioning “are we Métis enough?” or in this case, “are we queer enough?” is normal within our communities.

Laura McKay, a Two-Spirit Métis relative, shared similar sentiments to Dan. Navigating coming in to her Métis identity was complex, and often left her wondering if she had a right to Métis culture and teachings that she was never given growing up, due to being disconnected from her identity. She shared the relief she felt after connecting with her Métis community and culture, and how she found her place and role within it.



Al, a Two-Spirit Métis, emphasized the importance of “hearing from Elders that there is no box... everybody has their own story, piece, and understanding, and there isn't a recipe” for being Two-Spirit. Even within our 2SLGBTQQIA+ identities, there is so much diversity in the experience and understanding of who we are. Al shared that hearing “a definition that Two-Spirit is when a person's feminine and masculine spirits are in harmony really made [her] feel authentic in [her] Two-Spirit identity.” She reflected on the fluidity of her Métis Ancestors in viewing both masculine and feminine identities in a balanced way, where neither is less valuable than the other.



Topher Burke shared that the *Two World, Two-Spirits* gathering in Richmond, B.C., in 2022, was the first time he came into the Métis 2SLGBTQQIA+ community. Having never experienced a Métis 2SLGBTQQIA+ specific event or ceremony, they had no idea what coming into culture would mean, and this terrified them. However, the gathering and the Two-Spirit teachings offered by Nohkom Barbara Bruce completely changed Topher's understanding of what it meant for them to co-exist within their masculine and feminine identity. Topher said it was life-changing. "It was the first time that I ever felt like I was coming home to a place where I belong."

AM, a Two-Spirit, queer Métis woman, shared similar sentiments about a different MNBC 2SLGBTQQIA+ event, where listening to teachings from Two-Spirit Elders and listening to the stories shared by relatives made her understanding fall into place. She shared that the term she resonated most with in connection to her spirituality and sexuality was sikom diloo.

The gathering spaces of the *Piihtikway*/"Come In" project also offered relatives their first opportunity to come in to a Métis-specific 2SLGBTQQIA+ space. We are honoured to witness and be a part of their coming in stories.

"I loved every minute of it. I don't know exactly where I fit in, generally, but upon entering (to [kimiyoootootin,]⁴¹ a beautiful honour song) I knew I was in the right place. Nohkom Barbara said each of our names. It was the first time I heard my name in a circle such as this, and it was very powerful... I tear up now just reliving it."

—Liz Anderson, queer person of Métis and settler heritage

"This was a wonderful experience. It was warm and inviting and has helped me feel more connected to like-spirited people. I will absolutely be back."

—Laura McKay

"This was an incredible experience. I appreciated the accessibility of it being online. I appreciated being able to share space with other 2SLGBTQQIA+ folks—especially since I live in a rural area with fewer opportunities to feel connected to this community. I appreciated hearing about the coming out/coming in stories—it made me feel seen and like I am not alone in my experience. It can be hard and lonely navigating the world as a 2SLGBTQQIA+ person, so thank you for helping me find my way home."

—Anonymous relative

Words of Wisdom about "Coming In"

Throughout the speaker series, 2SLGBTQQIA+ relatives offered words of wisdom about coming in to community:

"Breathe. Relax. You're seen and loved."

—Dan

"Ask questions, listen, and participate as best as you can."

—Issy

"Listen and absorb."

—Natasha Hnatuk, Indigiqueer and Two-Spirit Michif relative

"Know that you are seen and loved by a big community—even if we've never met. Who you are is perfect, and there are people who will see you and love you for exactly who you are. It's okay to not know exactly who you are, or for that to change over time. The world is a better place because of you."

—Anonymous relative

"Listen closely and keep your heart open."

—Kayla Trace, Métis and Cree, queer poet

"Come and listen. It's okay if you are not ready to share. Hearing the stories and feeling the connection is life changing."

—Laura McKay

"Give it a try, and when asked, say what you need. Or say it even if you're not asked... but I really appreciated that about this circle... we were asked."

—Liz Anderson

"Be gentle with yourself. There's a lot of learning and unlearning that happens when you can fully be yourself with community."

—Amanda B, queer Métis

"Embrace the advice and love provided by your fellows."

—AM

"Don't be intimidated. This was a very warm and welcoming community and space to be held in!"

—Anonymous queer Métis relative

"It can be scary to come in the first time, as is anything new. However, I can promise that if you come in with an open heart, you will find your kin. You will come home: home within yourself, and home within your culture. We will hold space for you and welcome you in."

—SC

"Wherever you're at, your knowledge of culture is okay. Walk softly, listen before speaking. You deserve to be here. Just know that where you are in your journey of connection or understanding is where you're supposed to be. It's enough. We often focus on not taking up too much space out of respect for others, which is a good thing. But we also need to give ourselves permission not to hold back. To share all of ourselves."

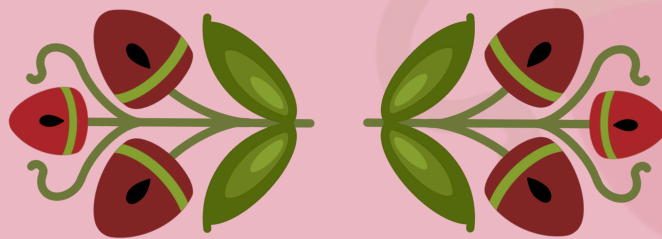
—Sasha Lindsay, Two-Spirit Cree Métis

Weaving Together Our Diverse Identities

During the "Resisting the Stonecutter" speaker series session with Milo Ira, Angel Robinson shared that "a commonality [they] experienced between being Métis, Two-Spirit (specifically gender diverse), and a femme presenting neurodivergent 'diagnosed' late in life is that all those aspects of [their] identity were consistently invalidated throughout [their] life." They shared that it was important for them to advocate for a position within Métis Nation Greater Victoria's (MNGV) governance to fill the gap in 2SLGBTQQIA+ representation. MNGV and Fraser Valley Métis Association were among the first Métis Chartered Communities to have a 2SLGBTQQIA+ Representative as part of their Métis Chartered Community Boards. Since then, Angel and MNGV have continued to push for 2SLGBTQQIA+ equity and representation in all levels of Métis community engagement and governance, to ensure that the needs of Métis people are approached with an "intersectional"⁴² lens.

Métis and 2SLGBTQQIA+ identities may be interwoven with other identities, for example being neurodivergent, disabled, unhoused, mixed race (i.e., First Nations, Black, South Asian, etc.), or experiencing a mental illness. The immense diversity among the strands of our identities can mean needing to determine which identity to put forward while navigating unwelcoming or inaccessible spaces. While for some, it may be easy to tuck away or prioritize parts of who they are, for relatives who are more visibly 2SLGBTQQIA+, racialized, and/or disabled, this may not be an option.

During the “Ask Nohkomak” speaker series session, kôhkominawak Barbara Bruce and Charlotte Nolin shared it is important to protect ourselves from harm, which sometimes necessitates hiding parts of who we are.



In the co-creation interview, Louis De Jaeger shared that his understanding of his story evolved by following his instinct, with one piece of his story leading to another in a deeply intuitive way. He spoke about how this core instinct or inherent memory protects us from danger and helps us identify other Two-Spirit people in spaces where it may not be safe to be out publicly. Louis also acknowledged that we cannot find acceptance without the willingness to be seen. We recognize that there is a difficult balance between prioritizing personal safety and building collective safety by showing up wholeheartedly.

Al shared that her “Two-Spirit identity is...a cousin to [her] Métis identity. [She] can put [her] hand up and say, ‘I’m Métis’ or choose not to when it’s not safe.” She acknowledges the privilege she carries in being able to choose when to be visible. She asked an important question that other community members might also be asking: “Am I only going to do that when the privileges outweigh the disadvantages, because of how negatively being marginalized both as a Two-Spirit and Métis person impacts me?”

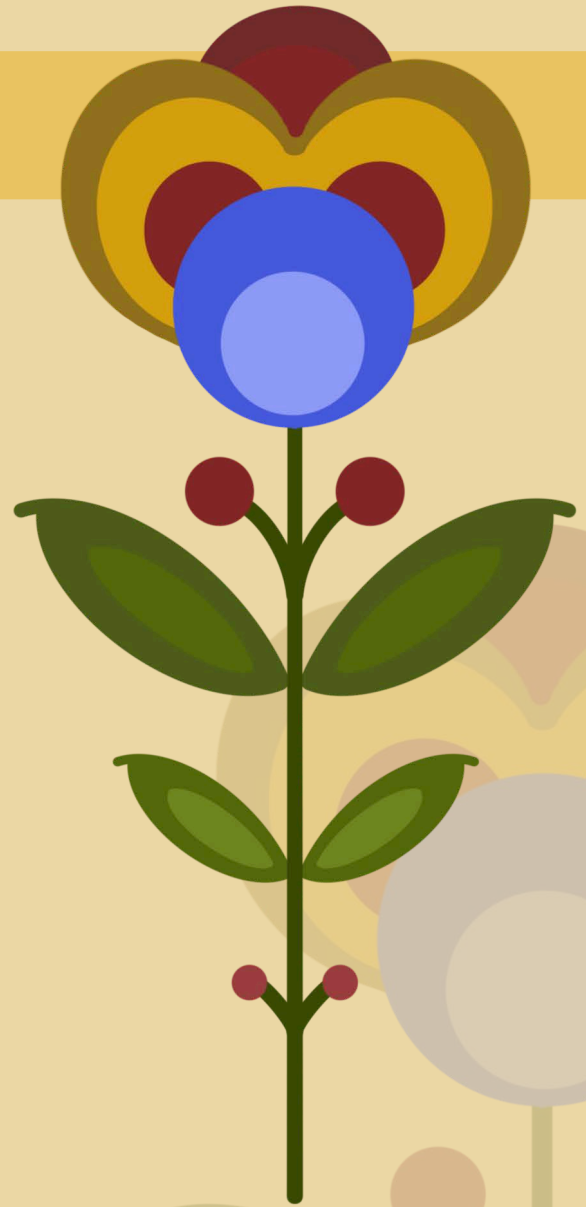
Al acknowledged that though she carries privilege, it can also be exhausting “to always be on the defense.” This sentiment of being exhausted from advocating for our right to exist authentically and still be treated equitably was a common theme in many of the stories shared during the *Piihtikway* “Come In” project.

Jesse Gunn, a queer and Métis relative living in the North, where communities are often less welcoming than urban places, has established a strong support network and confidence in who he is. For him, being seen in northern communities is like a beacon for 2SLGBTQQIA+ community members who are scared to ‘come out’ and are looking for advice on how they can exist as they are within their own communities. Jesse shared that he would rather our kin prioritize their safety and take the time to build a strong, loving, and supportive network of people before ‘coming out.’ He shared that for people who live in rural and remote areas, where there is an increased risk of violence and suicide, being seen might mean finding even one person in your community who you can be yourself with. It could also mean taking trips to urban spaces to exist in queer culture.

Collective safety relies on acknowledging the places where we exist with more ease than our visibly marginalized relatives, and on showing up for our community in ways that lift everyone up. Richard expressed the importance of being able to embrace all aspects of who we are, while also recognizing that there may be spaces where we present some parts of ourselves over others. He also encouraged asking for help whenever needed, especially for relatives with disabilities.

In “Queering Collective Dreaming: Weaving Métis Futures of Belonging,” Lydia and Holly share their vision of a future “where 2SLGBTQ+ Métis will be able to look to their community and see their inner truth reflected back in acceptance and celebration among Métis people. The collective dream is for each of us to be supported to journey through our sash, weaving in a circle with others who have done and are still doing that work and who can provide mentorship and encouragement. We will then more readily find ourselves at home in our bodies and in community, surrounded by a rich tapestry of sashes depicting the joyful and resilient lives and legacies of other 2SLGBTQ+ Métis kin.”⁴³

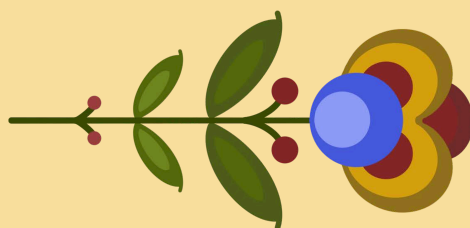
Section 3



Remembering The
Threads Woven
Before Us

REMEMBERING THE THREADS WOVEN BEFORE US

An important part of weaving our sashes includes carrying forward the strands from those who wove threads before us, and weaving patterns inspired by those of other community members and Ancestors. This means understanding the impacts of the erasure of our identities, both past and present. Although the attitudes that would seek to erase our communities and our stories are still prevalent, so too is our resistance. One way we resist is through remembering. This is necessary for the continuity of our sashes, our stories, and our community. We recognize the ways in which those before us wove networks of care and community that make our belonging possible.

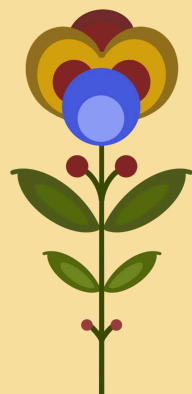


Gender-Based Violence

Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDOR) is observed all over the world on November 20. This day of significance aims to commemorate the lives of trans relatives who have been lost to violence and discrimination. It was founded in 1999 by a small group of trans women to memorialize the murders of Black trans women Rita Hester and Chanelle Pickett.⁴⁴ Since then, the names of those lost are compiled for each past year and honoured through vigils, marches, art and more. Transgender Day of Remembrance is about honouring lives lost, but it is also about standing up for our transgender kin through action and awareness. MNBC's *Gathering to Heal: 2SLGBTQQIA+ GBV* report, states that "art is an act of resistance" and resistance is also enacted through "voice, presence or absence, song, laughter, and crying."⁴⁵ It is a way to honour our relations and our culture and resist colonial violence.

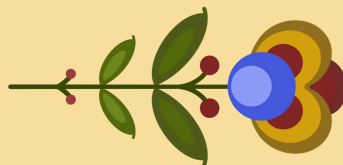
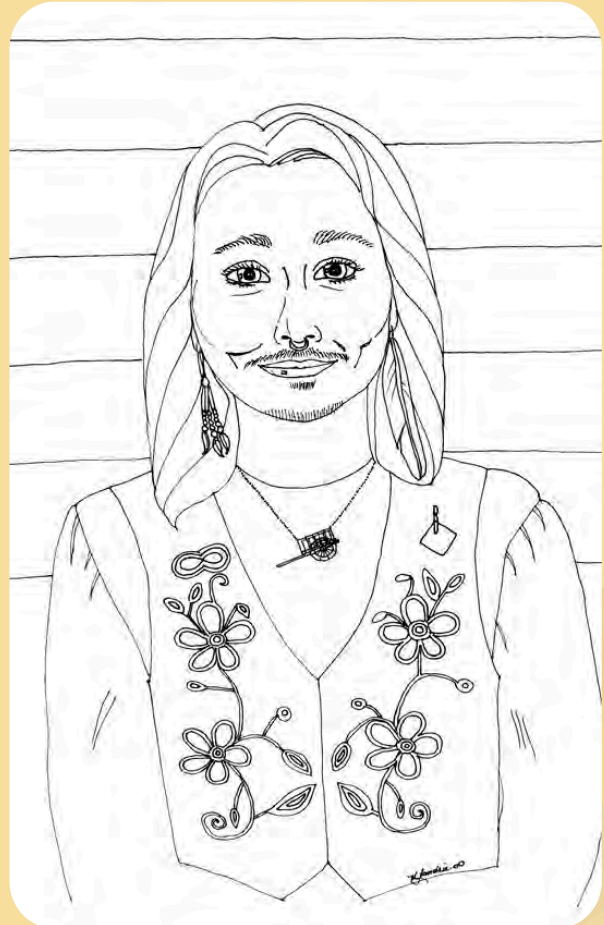
It is important to note that racialized trans, Two-Spirit, and gender diverse people—especially trans women of colour—are disproportionately affected by transphobia and transphobic violence due to the intersections of poverty, homelessness, sexism, racism, and colonization.⁴⁶ Assimilative practices and policy, residential schools, the Sixties Scoop, the ongoing legacy of colonization and the attempted erasure of Indigenous people have also deeply impacted the understanding of historical and modern presence of 2SLGBTQQIA+ people within Indigenous communities and Nations.⁴⁷

Reflecting on coming in to our Métis and 2SLGBTQQIA+ identities and communities, Jesse Gunn, who lives in an urban-rural community in northern B.C., shared his struggles with finding a place for himself within his Métis community. As a relative who has lost loved ones to suicide, he talked about how colonial narratives tell us we do not belong. Despite this, Elders shared with him the teachings that Two-Spirit people are sacred, balancing masculine and feminine energy, and that we are medicine people who strengthen the bonds within community. “I feel like that is what we are doing to this very day,” Jesse says as he laughs, with his trickster energy. He grew to understand his place within our culture and community, and the significance in other 2SLGBTQQIA+ relatives also coming to understand their role and place in community. Like many of our relatives who are building strong 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis communities despite adversity, the depths of Jesse’s heart, his strength and compassion are like poetry—a gift to community. Even when speaking about suicide and violence, Jesse highlighted the importance of our community finding hope and courage to be themselves in this world. In this way, he and all our relatives who are leading the way for future generations are themselves embodying hope.



Transgender Day of Remembrance is incredibly important for raising awareness about the ongoing challenges faced by 2SLGBTQQIA+ community, and for highlighting the work that still needs to be done to ensure that our relatives can be free from discrimination and violence.

This colouring page titled “Transgender Person in Métis Beaded Vest with Transgender Flag” by Métis artist Maryanne Landrie is in the *Kii wiichihitonaan We Take Care of Each Other Community Healing & Violence Prevention Colouring Book*. It is a reminder of the work that needs to be done to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our trans, Two-Spirit, and non-binary kin.⁴⁸

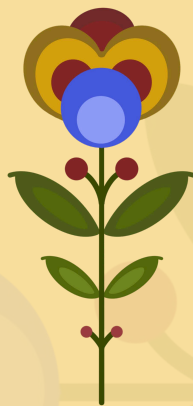


LGBT Purge

The Purge refers to a period of time that began prior to the establishment of Canada's Constitution and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. During the Cold War of 1945–1991, 2SLGBTQQIA+ people who were employed in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), Canada Armed Forces (CAF), and federal public service had their human rights systematically violated. Employees were harassed, investigated, demoted, fired, and forced to resign due to the perception that their sexuality was a “character weakness.” There were assumptions that this meant they would share classified information if blackmailed by the Soviet Union.⁴⁹ It is estimated that 9000 Federal employees lost their jobs between 1950 and 1990.⁵⁰

Garth Caron is a Two-Spirit relative from a Métis family that originates from the Red River valley and migrated to Batoche, where they partook in the Northwest Resistance of 1885. His family's farmhouse still stands on the grounds of the Batoche National Historic Site in Saskatchewan. During a co-creation interview, Garth shared how working in the airline business for 20 years was a highlight in his life. He traveled to places like Fort Simpson, Inuvik, and Yellowknife which connected him to the land and his Indigenous Ancestors. Garth shared how he loved working with his colleagues and the public. This love for being of service to the public translated over to his work for the Canadian government in the early 1970s. Though he found the work fulfilling, he shared how during the time of the LGBT Purge he witnessed so many systemic inequities grounded in sexism and homophobia in a workforce that predominantly centered heterosexual white men. From day to day, he was never sure if he would have a job. Garth shared stories about how the RCMP would go to the Elgin Hotel in Ottawa to observe and record the bar patrons and public service employees through newspapers with two holes cut out for them to see through. This surveillance extended not only to public areas but also to private residences.

In 2016, a class action lawsuit was launched against the Canadian government for all the systemic injustice and abuse perpetrated on 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. Garth had to request access to his employment files from archives to qualify for the class action lawsuit. He said the things written about him were incredibly hurtful. One of the settlement agreements from the class action was to create a reconciliation and memorialization fund, now known as the LGBT Purge Fund.⁵¹



The LGBT Purge Fund non-profit has a legal mandate to implement four main projects:

- Create a national monument to discrimination against 2SLGBTQI+ people in Canada including the LGBT Purge;
- Support the development of a museum exhibition by the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, based in Winnipeg;
- Address the collection, preservation, and accessibility of historical records related to the LGBT Purge; and
- Work with the Canadian government to enhance inclusion in the federal public service and to improve existing training on 2SLGBTQI+ inclusion.⁵²

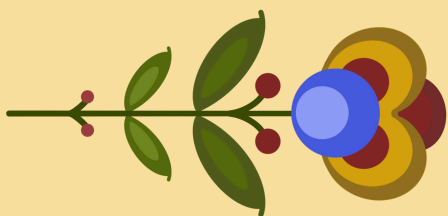
The Purge Fund created the Canadian Museum of Human Rights' traveling exhibition called *Love in a Dangerous Time: Canada's LGBT Purge*.⁵³ The exhibition toured in Winnipeg, in the fall of 2025. It started by sharing about the Indigenous history of gender and sexual diversity, and how the homophobia that fueled the Purge was deeply rooted in colonization and Western ideologies of gender roles. The exhibition highlighted stories by Two-Spirit Elders and Knowledge Carriers Charlotte Nolin, Albert McLeod, Ma-Nee Chacaby, John Sylliboy, and Saylesh Wesley.⁵⁴

In the co-creation interview, Garth talked about the profound way that discrimination against women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people was normalized in the workplace. He shared how important it was for him to reclaim the harm that has happened to him so that it doesn't hold power over him and he can move forward in his life. His experiences of discrimination have encouraged him to support other advocacy work. This includes speaking on behalf of the 2SLGBTQQIA+ Governance Council Resolution at MNBC's AGM in 2024, and federally on the Women's Class Action against the RCMP and the Public Complaints Review Commission. To this day, there are still several class actions against the RCMP. Garth continues his family's legacy of fighting for the rights of marginalized people. Garth said that "when [we] look back, we've come a long way, but we still haven't gone far enough."

HIV/AIDS

In the 1980s, rare cases of diseases were impacting young gay men in the United States at an “unusually high rate”.⁵⁵ The disease associated with this increase of rare diseases was originally known as Gay-Related Immune Deficiency (GRID), due to the incorrect assumption that the only people impacted were gay men.⁵⁶ In 1982, this advanced stage of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)⁵⁷ was renamed Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS).⁵⁸ In March of 1982, the first case of AIDS was reported in Canada. By 1983, organizations, physicians, and gay communities mobilized after seeing the early impacts of AIDS within Canada.⁵⁹ Over the years, it has become clear that HIV can impact anyone, regardless of age, sex, gender, sexual orientation, or race.⁶⁰

In cities like Vancouver, Montreal, and Toronto, Indigenous gay men were also impacted by the rapid spread of HIV.⁶¹ As a response to this growing crisis across Turtle Island, Two-Spirit HIV/AIDS activism gained momentum.⁶² In 1997, Communities, Alliances & Networks (CAAN) was incorporated as a national, non-profit Indigenous AIDS Service Organization (ASO). The creation of this organization was inspired by a panel of Indigenous people living with HIV, who spoke at the first national HIV/AIDS conference in 1991 to address the epidemic of HIV and AIDS among Indigenous people.⁶³

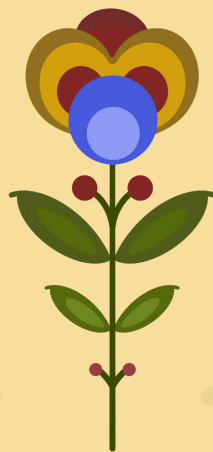


In a co-creation interview, Louis talked about how efforts towards 2SLGBTQQIA+ liberation came at a terrible cost at the height of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. He shared that he wouldn't see friends in community for some time, only to learn that they had died alone in their apartment for a multitude of reasons. Some people contracted HIV and went into hiding or were unable to find appropriate care. Others were so afraid of getting sick that they self-isolated and died of suicide. Louis shared that there are still things to fight for. He notes that with medical advances, people who contract HIV can live long and healthy lives.

The *2-Spirit Stories: Re:Membering* documentary highlights the Two-Spirit HIV/AIDS resistance movements across Turtle Island since the 1980s. Through the platform of this documentary, Indigenous Two-Spirit leaders shared stories and offerings of how the crisis impacted their lives and their loved ones. They spoke of hardships from facing social stigma and isolation to the deaths of loved ones from HIV/AIDS. The social isolation and generational impacts of colonization also lead to increased risk of violence, suicide, and drug overdose. They also shared stories of the power of coming into their Two-Spirit identities and community, and their relationship to Spirit, culture, and ceremony.⁶⁴

In 2018, Canada endorsed the “Undetectable Equals Untransmittable” (U=U) principle.⁶⁵ The U=U is a prevention strategy where “the consistent use of antiretroviral therapy (ART) leads to an undetectable viral load, which means a person cannot pass HIV on.”⁶⁶ This scientific discovery and the campaign to spread awareness have played a major role in the prevention and reduction of HIV transmission. This discovery not only impacts physical wellness, but social wellbeing by reducing the stigma towards and isolation of people living with HIV.⁶⁷

Though the U=U strategy is lifechanging for people living with HIV, there are still significant barriers for Indigenous people in accessing timely diagnosis and treatment due to “colonialism, racism, social exclusion, and the repression of self-determination,”⁶⁸ all compounded by transphobia and homophobia, which influence how Indigenous people access health systems.



In 2022, Community Based Research Centre (CBRC's) Two-Spirit Program led the Medicine Bundle research project, a pilot program to facilitate physical and spiritual wellness for Indigenous people living in B.C., aged eighteen and older.⁶⁹



Photo Credit: Toonasa Photography/CBRC

"A Medicine Bundle is personal to its carrier and contains items and traditionally gathered medicines that are sacred to them. The Medicine Bundle helps Indigenous people engage with their health in a holistic way—mind, body, spirit, and sex."⁷⁰

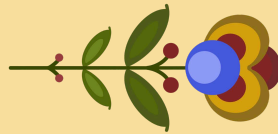
The Medicine Bundles contained traditional medicines such as sage, sweetgrass, tobacco, and cedar, as well as an HIV self-test kit, sexual health supplies, and resources that support health and wellness. The success of the Medicine Bundle pilot project indicated the need to make the program more broadly accessible.

As of 2025, the Medicine Bundle project has expanded to five communities across Turtle Island. These communities are building Medicine Bundles that reflect the cultural teachings and medicines relevant to each community, with the support of CBRC's team.⁷¹

CBRC's Medicine Bundle program is a powerful example of how integrating Indigenous health systems—through the inclusion of traditional medicines and the cultural teachings of collective care and wellbeing—improve outcomes of HIV prevention and treatment.⁷²

Transgender Day of Visibility

In 2010, trans activist Rachel Crandall created the International Transgender Day of Visibility (TDOV). Annually on March 31, communities and organizations across the globe celebrate transgender people and their accomplishments while raising awareness of the continued discrimination and violence experienced by the community.⁷³



What's Changed

Métis Two-Spirit community member, Sasha Hobbs (SH), was the lead consultant for the *Two Worlds, Two-Spirits: Gathering the Circle of 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis in British Columbia* project, facilitated by MNGV in 2022. In her reflections on the gathering, SH shared her experience of growing up unable to identify as a Two-Spirit person. Without space to share her experiences openly and be surrounded by community in the way we are today, she felt isolated. She shared that not feeling safe to be who we are is generational and systemic. Older generations have helped create safer spaces, but systemic violence and discrimination are still impacting our relatives, even more so for trans, Two-Spirit, and non-binary relatives.

As pointed out by SH, one of the biggest changes in the coming in journey is seen through generational differences. As kôhkominawak Barbara and Charlotte highlighted when sharing their experience in the “Ask Nohkomak” speaker series session, “the choices we have today either did not exist or were not accessible for [us] to explore.” The notion that acceptance is more readily experienced by younger generations is an important one to acknowledge. When faced with the precarious reality of being in this community, it can sometimes be difficult to recognize that the ways we navigate our authentic selves today can be easier and safer than it was for those who came before us. This is not to devalue any of our journeys, but instead to remind us how the Métis 2SLGBTQQIA+ experience is situated in variables. The work we need to do is never far away, but neither are our moments of joy.

The advent of social media has meant access to many more stories of coming in. Two-Spirit Métis relative, SC, mentioned in circle that social media groups have been a major way that connection is created and sustained. Social media platforms foster integral connections for a community that is not easily able to come together. They can become a space created and sustained by, for, and with kin.

We all face different challenges in our coming in journeys based on our physical location. Just as our journeys differ through facets like generational placement and intersecting identities, differences are also created by the ability to directly and authentically interact with ourselves and our community. For people who, like AM, live in more rural areas, the ability to connect through social media and to remotely attend Métis 2SLGBTQQIA+ meetings, groups, or events are indispensable.

Accessing gender affirming care is also much easier in urban locations compared to rural areas, which can be a major obstacle for those on that specific journey. There is an undeniable level of privilege for those who exist in urban settings. However, through the advancements in technology allowing for safe digital spaces, the work of organizations like MNBC, and the support of our kin, rural communities will continue to exist and thrive. 2SLGBTQQIA+ communities are persistent and eternal, no matter what changes and challenges are endured.

Section 4



2SLGBTQQIA+ Pride and Healing

2SLGBTQQIA+ PRIDE AND HEALING

A fundamental part of being in community is fostering a sense of wholeness, pride, belonging and healing. May these threads of joy and celebration inspire us, as we weave in their vibrant colours.

Pride in 2SLGBTQQIA+ Identity and Community

Throughout the co-creation circles, we asked our relatives what aspects of themselves and of the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community they are most proud of. Here are the stories and sentiments they shared:

Dan is proud of being able to give back to the community by providing information and support to those who need it. She also spoke about the strong relatives who stand up for their rights and the rights of their kin, and who work to bring community together.

SC is proud of finding freedom from societally imposed gender norms, and existing freely as they are outside of those expectations after coming into their Two-Spirit identity. When asked what they are most proud of regarding the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community, SC spoke about how strong and authentic the community is, and that so many folks continue to show up despite hardship. SC is also incredibly proud of how welcoming and loving the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community is with each other. They said, "I meet you once, you're family." They spoke to the importance of practicing traditional ways of being where we can see all sides and finding a way to support all our relatives in "feeling welcome and at home."

AM shared a similar sentiment to SC. AM said she is proud of how many people are willing to stand with, support, and represent the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community. It warms her heart to see community stand up and "even if there is fear involved, still say 'look at me, here I am. I will help and I will be our voice...' in all of the various ways that they do."

During one of the co-creation circles, Laura expressed how proud she is that 2SLGBTQQIA+ relatives have dug so deeply into who we are and what our role is within our community in a “gut wrenching, blood, sweat, and tear journey.” She talked about the strength and power that 2SLGBTQQIA+ relatives have, allowing us to care for not only ourselves but also each other. Laura shared that being Two-Spirit means looking at issues from multiple views to ensure we make decisions in a good way. She also spoke about the importance of trying different approaches to an issue, as “even if [it] doesn’t work, it doesn’t mean [we] stop trying.”

“I think the community support and care I see on a daily basis is something we should all be proud of. It's so powerful to see community spaces, events, and support networks available to younger generations. I think we have all contributed to that in our own ways, with our own gifts, which has resulted in a very special community. It's something I hope we are able to continue to build upon.”

—Anonymous queer Métis relative

“I'm so proud to be Two-Spirit, to be a voice fighting for others just like me, unique in their own special ways. To be a safe space for queer youth, to guide them along their paths, to accept them for who they are, to hold them and love them where they may be scared to open up. I feel such gratitude to be a part of such a powerful and loving community of Two-Spirit Métis.

—Issy

“I am most proud of myself for continuing to challenge the status quo even when faced with adversity, and I am proud of my community for their courage and resilience, I particularly mean in the North. The courage and resilience that my community has shown, has given me strength, and has helped me have the courage to keep going.”

—Jesse Gunn

Grounded in Collective Care

Throughout the *Piihtikway*/"Come In" project, relatives shared that navigating the harshness of the world as a 2SLGBTQIA+ Métis person can be exhausting. Two-Spirit Métis relative Ren Jager shared that throughout their research on Two-Spirit joy, they found that Two-Spirit people often embody roles that relate to self and community advocacy.⁷⁴ Fully embodying these roles, without balancing other aspects of health such as our emotional, mental, physical, and spiritual wellbeing, can take a toll on our wellness. It was important in the co-creation circles to talk about ways that we nourish our spirits and each other.

Some self-care and community-care practices that were shared include connection to:

- Spirit/Creator/Ancestors;
- the land;
- community (virtually or in person);
- family, friends, pets, and loved ones;
- culture; and
- ceremony, including smudge/smokeless smudge and laying down tobacco.

Creativity, including making art and drumming, was also emphasized, along with physical wellness. Eating well, drinking enough water, and getting proper sleep were discussed. Another key aspect of self-care is taking part in other activities, such as reading, playing video games, sharing memes, and practicing gratitude.

"A deep connection with my personal creative practice, and supporting and engaging with my local creative community is everything to me. It reminds me to be present and truly appreciate the gifts everyone is offering the world alongside all we are working to change.

Connection with nature is also a vital part of my self-care practice. I'm so grateful for the grounding medicine the trees, plants, and water offer."

— Anonymous queer Métis relative

The conversations in the co-creation circles and interviews highlighted that community care and wellbeing is at the center of all the advocacy work that is happening. While there is much work to be done, it is important to find balance and intentionality, which sometimes means allowing ourselves to step back while others step forward so that we may rest our tender hearts. Resistance is not always active. It can also be found while leaning into soft and joyful spaces that nourish our spirits and honour who we are as 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis people. These spaces that connect us to community ensure that joy is an integral part of our resistance, and an affirmation of our identities as both Métis and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.⁷⁵

Two-Spirit and Indigenous LGBTQIA+ Celebration and Awareness

Since 2021, the Two-Spirit Program within the CBRC along with other Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+ communities and allies across Canada have been calling upon Indigenous leaders and communities, and all levels of government to proclaim the Spring Equinox⁷⁶ as Two-Spirit and Indigenous LGBTQIA+ Celebration and Awareness Day. In 2024, CBRC witnessed significantly more proclamations and celebrations taking place across Turtle Island, including in Vancouver, Edmonton, Saskatoon, Toronto, Yukon, Lac Seul First Nation, and Sault Ste. Marie.⁷⁷

“Two-Spirit Celebration and Awareness Day is a homecoming—an opportunity to recognize the strength and tremendous progress made by the Two-Spirit and Indigenous LGBTQIA+ community over the years.”⁷⁸

—Jessy Dame, former Two-Spirit Program Manager at CBRC

There is no doubt about the importance of remembering and honouring those we have lost. However, it is equally important to celebrate our existence and our community.



Section 5



Becoming Better Relatives to the 2SLGBTQQIA+ Community

BECOMING BETTER RELATIVES TO THE 2SLGBTQQIA+ COMMUNITY

It is important to acknowledge that gender equity is for everyone and must also be inclusive of our transgender, Two-Spirit, non-binary, and gender non-conforming kin. Gender equity is about respecting and caring for each other as sovereign beings with self-determination and the freedom to exist as we are. It is about ensuring that everyone has safe and equitable access to the places and resources they need.

*"The [It's time for Two-Spirit Reconciliation] research uncovers that most of the connection that 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis people feel is more to the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community than their Métis communities. Métis circles are identified as less safe than "mainstream" spaces in many ways. Colonization and western religion are identified as primary sources of Two-Spirit misinformation and identity erasure in Métis society."*⁷⁹

As we currently see a rise in misinformation about the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community, in particular for trans, Two-Spirit, and non-binary kin, it is essential that relatives and friends of the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community are equipped with appropriate evidence-based information to support their journey of becoming better relatives.

The *We Are Allies* campaign was created by B.C.'s Provincial Health Services Authority in collaboration with:

- Indigenous Knowledge Carriers and Elders;
- trans, Two-Spirit, and non-binary people, as well as their families and loved ones, who are speaking from their own experiences;
- researchers from the Vancouver School of Nursing at the University of British Columbia, who reviewed published research and created learning resources; and medical and other care providers with experience providing gender-affirming care to young people.⁸⁰

More information on the *We Are Allies* campaign resources are discussed in Section 7: A Recent History of 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis within MNBC.

While ensuring you are equipped with information from people with lived experiences and experts, other important aspects of becoming a better relative include practicing tâpahtiyim'sowin/humility and being “open to new ideas and recognizing the wisdom that surrounds us from others who carry experiences different than ours.”⁸¹ Taking the time to understand experiences that are different from our own is how we can begin to take better care of each other.

While visiting with our 2SLGBTQQIA+ kin, many people reflected on the power of witnessing what it means to become better relatives to the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community through being in community and doing the work to advocate for the safety and wellbeing of all our 2SLGBTQQIA+ relatives.

At MNBC's AGM in September 2024, 2SLGBTQQIA+ relatives prepared to discuss the 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis of British Columbia Governance Council Resolution. Some people felt nervous about speaking up in front of the AGM, and about the potential for harm towards the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community that could come from the Resolution discussions. Hearing these concerns, Angel Robinson asked Carmen Carriere, former Region 2 Métis Women of British Columbia (MWBC) Representative, for support. In no time at all, aunties mobilized around 2SLGBTQQIA+ relatives as they told stories of hardship and of hope, while they advocated for representation in MNBC's Governance. Family and friends of the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community humbly shared stories of their own journeys reconciling the harm they have caused to people they love, and recognizing the importance of standing with the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community to ensure their safety and wellbeing.



Carmen is now the current MWBC Chairperson. In this role, she shared this message with 2SLGBTQQIA+ relatives, honouring our parallel and distinctly different experiences:

"I have many loved ones who are part of the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community, and as such standing behind you all, alongside when needed, and, if need be, in front of you for physical protection, you have my solemn word that I am and will be there for this. I believe as a Métis matriarch it is my responsibility to protect all children and young people, especially those who are in a vulnerable place. While I don't have lived experience as a queer person, I have experience being maligned and discriminated against as a woman in the time that I was coming of age and indeed as a young adult. I understand from my own experience what it feels like to be pushed aside and disregarded. It is why I feel called to do the work with the MWBC."

We acknowledge the importance of the various levels of support that Carmen highlights, whether it be standing alongside or in front of the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community based on individual circumstances. We honour that we are humans and our relationships with each other are imperfect. By acknowledging that we do not know everything and that making mistakes is part of our learning, we can continue to come back into circle and show up better for each other.

During the co-creation circles, we asked our 2SLGBTQQIA+ relatives what advice they would give to people who wanted to be better relatives. Here is some of the wisdom they shared:

"Move thoughtfully and respectfully in all you do. Honour who you are completely so you are able to fully offer open and supportive space to others. Listen, slow down, and wholeheartedly listen. There is so much we can discover, both personally and as a community, when we make room to genuinely hear the lived experiences of others."

—Anonymous queer Métis relative

"Make it safe and okay for [the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community] to be their authentic selves, young [people especially] need to hear that. If I had heard that at 13 years old, my life would be drastically different today. Not many of us have that kind of support structure. Not many of us have parents that are that open and encouraging. Most of our parents are scared for us and want us to fit into the mold so that it's safe for us. But what they lack in understanding is that forcing someone into a mold that they don't fit into is causing far more danger than encouraging them to be themselves.

The parents first need to process and understand their own fears and why there are reacting in such a way, and then educate themselves on what the child needs, and have clear communication with the child so that they can understand where the child is at."

—Topher Burke

"Give people the benefit of letting them change and not being so rigid in who they should be. Recognize that people grow and change over time, and you're not the same person you were even yesterday... Let people have the freedom to explore and change if they want to—they are not a static human being."

—Dan

"Advocate for appropriate medical services for queer and Two-Spirit seniors and Elders so that they don't have to go back into the closet to receive care."

—Richard Marion

"To be a better relative, my advice is to listen, to truly listen with the heart and ears. Learn and ask how to create safety in 2SLGBTQQIA+ communities. Ask with gentleness and respect, as queer hearts have many bleeding wounds you may not yet see or understand. Create safety. My people *need* this to survive. Safety. Show with intentional actions that you are a safe space. We will come to you when we feel safe. Do not take our fear personally. There is a reason the Rainbow people can be hesitant to feel safe. Many spaces are still unsafe. Many of my people still feel unwelcome."

—Issy

Some other things to consider are:

- including 2SLGBTQQIA+ people in your advocacy for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) by considering alternative acronyms such as MMIWG2S+ or MMIR (Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives);
- using a person's chosen name and pronouns to show that you see them and respect them for who they are, not who you believe them to be;
- not disclosing "dead names"/legal names, or "outing" someone without their explicit consent, for example not sharing names or photos from 2SLGBTQQIA+ private events without prior consent; and
- working towards bringing balanced perspectives in the spaces where there is disproportionate representation of a particular experience (i.e., care work being largely represented by women, economic development being predominantly represented by men). Diversity in perspective allows us to see multiple viewpoints within our interconnected kinship systems.

When you work to uplift the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community, you are benefitting everyone—including yourself. Advocating for 2SLGBTQQIA+ kin disrupts the reinforcement of the gender binary, a system that extends harm beyond 2SLGBTQQIA+ communities to men, women, and children. A system that reinforces social norms that confine women to caregiving roles, and confine men into roles devoid of tender and creative forms of self expression and community connection, an impossible standard that increases their risk of violence towards themselves and others. Gender liberation is not just for the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community. It is for everyone, so that they may take off the masks they wear to protect themselves, feel the things they feel, and do the things they are passionate about without criticism or discrimination.



Section 6



The Piihtikway/“Come In”: Two-Spirit and LGBTQQIA+ Resurgence and Healing Project

The Piihtikway/"Come In": Two-Spirit and LGBTQQIA+ Resurgence and Healing Project

Speaker Series

'Ask Nohkomak' with Nohkom Barbara Bruce and Nohkom Charlotte Nolin

In the first session of the *Piihtikway/"Come In": Two-Spirit and LGBTQQIA+ Resurgence and Healing through Kinship and Culture* project speaker series, 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis relatives learned about cultural traditions around healing, well-being, and Two-Spirit identity. This session was led by kôhkominawak Barbara Bruce (she/her) and Charlotte Nolin (she/her). Nohkom Barbara is a Two-Spirit Michif/Otipemisiwak Sundancer, Sweatlodge leader, and Pipe Carrier. Nohkom Charlotte is a Tastawiniyew (Two-Spirit) Otipemisiwak (Métis) trans woman and a survivor of the infamous Sixties Scoop.

The presence of Nohkom Barbara and Nohkom Charlotte was deeply appreciated. They provide powerful examples of actualizing Métis Two-Spirit and trans identities while guiding and supporting others in community. The session was opened with *kimiyootootin*, an Honour Song and love song, written by Andrea Menard. The statement around this song reads, "when sung from the heart, it offers deep respect and love to the recipient. By expressing honour and love in such a balanced way, you elevate the relationship to the sacred."⁸² We wanted to honour them for walking before us when it was not safe to do so, for welcoming us home as 2SLGBTQQIA+ relatives, and for reminding us that we are connected to Spirit, and that we are loved.



'Resisting the Stonecutter: Two-Spirit and Queer Indigenous Experiences in Neurodivergence' with Milo Ira



‘In this session, Milo Ira (they/them), an autistic Two-Spirit Métis researcher, explored how colonial ideas of ‘normal’ impact the health care of neurodivergent Two-Spirit and queer Indigenous people. Milo shared how Western health systems create barriers to both self and community acceptance and care for Two-Spirit and queer Indigenous people. They also highlighted how Indigenous ways of knowing can offer paths toward healing.

'Queering End of Life Care' with Dutch Dion-Glowa

Dutch Dion-Glowa (they/them), a queer Otipemisiwak poet, artist, and death doula talked about their relationship with plant medicines used for grieving. During this session, Dutch shared considerations around how queer relationship dynamics, such as polyamory, can impact decisions around children and property during the estate planning processes. They also shared some traditional death and dying protocols shared with them by Métis Elders and Knowledge Carriers.



'Holding Time Still through the Art of Photography' with Yarrow Froehler



Piihtikway/"Come In"

Speaker Series:

**'Holding Time Still Through
the Art of Photography'
with Two-Spirit Métis
Photographer,
Yarrow Froehler**



Yarrow Froehler (they/them), a Two-Spirit Métis photographer, talked about how their connection to nature inspired them to start documenting, witnessing, and holding time still through the art of photography. Yarrow also shared how seeking out 'glimmers,' little moments of joy and beauty, has been vital to their mental wellbeing. Helping others also experience glimmers is an integral part of their work. In this session, Yarrow shared the importance of documenting our lives as 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.

'Being in Relationship with the Land: Métis Art and Identity' with Carly Nabess

In this session, Two-Spirit Métis artist Carly Nabess (she/her) shared her journey to co-creating murals that celebrate identity and diversity in Northwest B.C., a process that honours the relationship to the land and territory holders like Sharon Bryant, Kitsumkalum Laxgibuu. Carly highlighted the importance of centering community throughout each stage of the project, from Tsimshian Elders of the territories offering blessings, support, and leading medicine walks, to youth choosing symbols that represent them, and having Métis Elder Sandra Conlon provide support and guidance on the mural projects.



Piihtikway/Come In

Speaker Series:

**'Being in Relationship
with the Land: Métis
Art and Identity' with
Two-Spirit Métis Artist,
Carly Nabess**

Photo Credit: Arts Wells, Alefa Sakakibara, Freedom Road Portraits



Introduction to Beading Workshop

During the Introduction to Beading workshop facilitated by Two-Spirit Métis artist Carly Nabess, 2SLGBTQQIA+ relatives learned how to create a Métis embroidery-style beadwork circle flower pin, which was gifted to the community as part of the *Piihtikway/"Come In": Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+ Resurgence and Healing through Kinship and Culture* project. In this session, participants learned introductory beading techniques, including how to flat stitch a circle, a straight line, a curved line, and how to create zipper-style edging for the pin.



Medicine Pouch Mini Art Series

The Medicine Pouch virtual mini art series featured LL La Fontaine (they/them), a Two-Spirit Métis (Otipemisiwak) visual artist with roots in both northern Saskatchewan and the historic Métis community of the Red River Settlement. They grew up on the traditional, unceded Dakelh territory of the Stella'ten, and currently reside in T'Sou-ke territory.

Kôhkominawak Barbara Bruce and Charlotte Nolin opened the series with teachings about the four sacred medicines: sage, sweetgrass, cedar, and tobacco. Throughout the series, LL shared their relationship with the sikom diloo word bundle and with the teachings from the book *she walks for days inside a thousand eyes: a two-spirit story* by the late Sharron Proulx-Turner. While re-imagining what regalia meant as 2SLGBTQQA+ relatives, participants in the medicine pouch series were grounded in teachings of being held and protected by Ancestors and plant relatives.



Photo credit: Lydia Toorenburgh, 2025

DANIELLE COURCELLES

Title

Spiraling Seasons

Artist Statement

This piece was inspired by a Métis/Cree/Métis-Cree ancestor piece (pg. 202 *kôhkominawak ocihcîwâwa Our Grandmother's Hands: Repatriating Métis Material Art* by Gregory Scofield) and wall pockets by contemporary artists Adele Arseneau and Lisa Shepherd. This piece was an exploration for me to incorporate traditional designs and new-to-me techniques. It shows the 4 seasons, and represents the fluctuation and growth of our individual identities across our lifespan.

Materials

Commercial tanned bison hide, cotton velveteen, cotton fabric, acrylic yarn, cotton piping, size 13/0 & 15/0 uncut and charlotte cut seed beads, Czech fire polish beads, Tiger Eye gemstone beads, nylon thread, silk thread

Artist contact information

Instagram: @uenoidae



Photo credits: Yarrow Froehler, 2025





Photo credits: Yarrow Froehler, 2025



ELLE AIKEMA (they/them)

Title

Wâpikwana for Nitôtîmak, Tastawiyiniwak
(Flowers for my relatives, the in-between/Two-spirit people)

Artist Statement

In this piece, I wanted to pay tribute to all of our Two-Spirit relatives (past, present, & future) by highlighting the little-known Two-spirit colours (violet, red, yellow, & two-toned blue) as named by the late Two-Spirit Métis writer, Sharron Proulx-Turner. The florals were inspired by various Métis ancestor pieces that I saw featured online by the Amelia Douglas Institute and in person at the British Museum in London. I was also inspired by the creativity and wisdom exemplified by my fellow artists over the course of the workshop series. I am sincerely grateful for their encouragement and expertise, and for the good medicine in the laughs we shared together. This piece was a teacher to me in many ways beyond learning the how-to and expanding my skillset. The journey to completion was a true test of patience and letting go of perfectionism; I can't wait to do it all over again!

Materials

Melton wool (front); Commercial Bison hide (back, fringe); Reindeer hair, hand-dyed by Mara Kersey (tufting in center flower); Piping and Bias tape (side & top edges); variety of ropes (neckband); fabric from Türkiye (inside); variety of seed & delica beads, size 10 & 11; Nymo thread.

JOHN (he/she/they)

Title

Untitled

Artist Statement

The design has flowing forms from ancestral pieces, specifically seven oaks. The centerpieces are a pair of rhododendron blooms, from the house I've grown up in. The ferns are symbolic to my coastal upbringing, and the waves of grasses reflect my familial connection to the prairies. The final result and colours came through weeks of inspired design, trial, and error.

Materials

Quills (dyed), beads, leather, velveteen

Artist contact information

jleslie207@gmail.com



Photo credits: Yarrow Froehler, 2025



LAUREN MICAELA PETERSEN

Title

Enn kaniikaniit wiiya

Artist Statement

Lii Michif kii noochihaywuk lii bufloo a zhwaal kayaash. Lauren is inspired by the historical and current relationships between Michif people, bison herds, and the medicines from the lands they shared. All materials used in the creation of this bag have been provided to her through loved ones, community members, or the earth itself. The florals tell the story of the fluidity of gender and the creativity and healing that blooms when Two-Spirit Michif relatives come together in a good way.

Materials

Bison hide, bison teeth, bison bone, glass seed beads, Miyuki delica beads, tri-cut seed beads, diamond-cut bronze beads, diamond-cut silver beads, cotton thread, sinew, venetian white heart tube beads, cotton cloth, wool

Artist contact information

Instagram:
@aenfammmichifart



Photo credits: Yarrow Froehler, 2025



LL LA FONTAINE (they/them)

Title

nohkum Barbara's medicine pouch

Artist Statement

This is a second medicine pouch inspired by our Michif Two-Spirit word bundle, "sikom diloo". The ancestor shapes in the beadwork are from the James Bay Area, where the florals seem to be like waves. I created this pouch for Nohkum Barbara.

Materials

Cotton velveteen, cotton piping, variety of seed beads including antique ones, cotton fabric, brain tanned deer hide, wool yarn, brain tanned moose hide.

Artist contact information

Website: www.otipemisiwakartist.com



Photo credits: Yarrow Froehler, 2025



LYDIA TOORENBURGH

(they/them)

Title

Making My Body My Home

Artist Statement

This bag represents my relationship with my body as a Two-Spirit person with a female reproductive system. The infinity symbol represents breasts while the quills represent top surgery scars. The moon represents my womb and the fluidity of my identity as it changes in phases while always remaining whole. The seven stars represent the Seven Grandfather Teachings, and the strawberry represents my heart and heart medicine. The blue and white colours bring in the fluidity of "sikom diloo." The beaver fur is inspired by my dear friend Monique Courcelles' Two-Spirit Métis Beavework gauntlets, bringing in the playfulness of the beaver as innuendo and the teachings of the Beaver's name, "amisk" in nehiyawewin, which contains the action of searching—representing my searching for how to make my body my home.



Photo credits: Yarrow Froehler, 2025

Materials

Velveteen, commercially tanned buffalo hide, cotton fabric, contemporary and vintage seed and charlotte cut beads, porcupine quills, nymo thread, fireline thread, artificial sinew, cotton piping, wool yarn, and beaver fur.

Artist contact information

Instagram: @mihkostikwan.beads



MONIQUE COURCELLES (they/them)

Title

Prayers for Alberta

Artist Statement

Over the past couple years I was blessed to be a part of tapahtêyimôkamik—the Humble Lodge—and learn from Associate Professor Dr. Lana Whiskeyjack, and Matriarchal Firekeeper, Amanda Almond, from the University of Alberta's Department of Women and Gender Studies. I met so many wonderful trans, Two-Spirit, and non-binary relatives and their kin. In those circles and ceremonies, we witnessed each other's care, tenderness, laughter, joy, and tears. This medicine pouch was created for my relatives in Alberta who are facing an onslaught of anti-trans legislation. This piece carries prayers for healing and finding strength in the land, and within each other.



Photo credits: Yarrow Froehler, 2025

Materials

Melton wool, commercially tanned buffalo hide, cotton fabric, contemporary size 13 seed beads, silk thread, cotton thread, nylon thread, cotton piping, wool yarn, and beaver fur.



TOPHER BURKE (he/they)

Title

A Sparkling Light in the Darkness

Artist Statement

Originally, this piece was inspired by the Northern Lights, but as this was a Two-Spirit project, I started channeling the Drag Queens of yore, with their fierce tongues, sharp wit and glamorous sequined gowns. This piece took on a life of its own and guided itself into existence. Traveling around Canada, visiting as many bead stores as possible, the bright colours and shimmering facets spoke to me. They demanded they become part of the piece, until its final form took shape, in glamorous, fur-trimmed fashion, while paying homage to our Aunties and Grandmothers. Follow the QR code below for the full statement.

Materials

Bison hide, felt, beads, Porcupine quills, Caribou tufts, Rabbit fur, cotton broadcloth

Artist contact information

Instagram:

@haylookatthisdot.ca

Website: Heylookatthis.ca

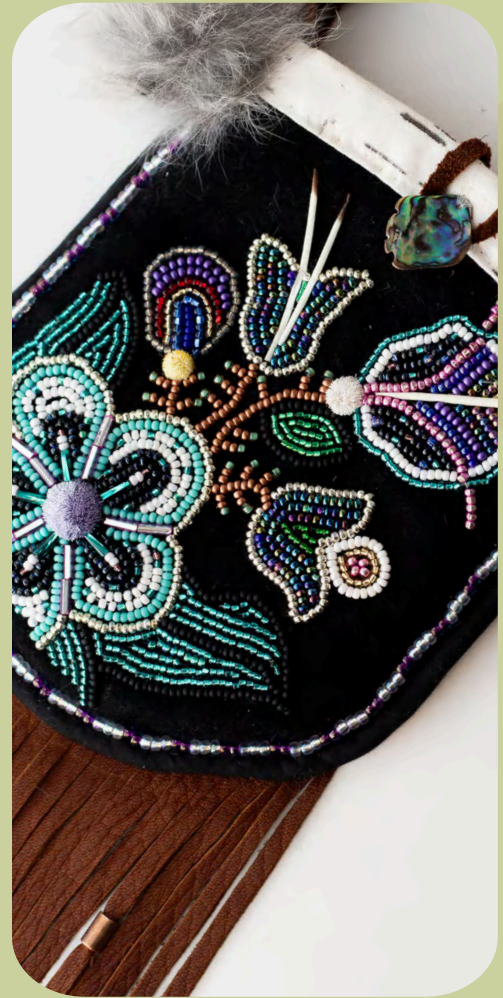


Photo credits: Yarrow Froehler, 2025





Section 7

**A Recent History of
2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis
within MNBC**

A RECENT HISTORY OF 2SLGBTQQIA+ MÉTIS WITHIN MNBC

2021

2SLGBTQQIA+ Advisory Committee

At MNBC's MNGA in 2020, a Resolution was put forward for MNBC to establish a provincial 2SLGBTQQIA+ Advisory Committee. The Resolution was carried unanimously, and in the spring of 2021, MNBC established the 2SLGBTQQIA+ Advisory Committee, consisting of Métis Citizen volunteers to advise MNBC on:

- the unique cultural, health and social needs of 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis people;
- addressing discrimination, prejudice, mental health challenges, suicide, domestic abuse, social isolation, and homelessness of 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis people;
- identifying and developing 2SLGBTQQIA+ cultural and wellness programming;
- identifying and celebrating contributions by 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis people;
- advocating for 2SLGBTQQIA+ rights;
- and assisting in ensuring the needs of 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis people are being met in the province of British Columbia.⁸³

2022

Pride Parade

Led by the 2SLGBTQQIA+ Advisory Committee, MNBC participated in Vancouver's Annual Pride Parade for the first time. Métis artist and woodcarver Pat Callihou crafted a Red River Cart for the float. Accompanied by V'ni Dansi musicians and jiggers, 2SLGBTQQIA+ community members, relatives, and friends came together to elevate 2SLGBTQQIA+ visibility and celebrate our community.

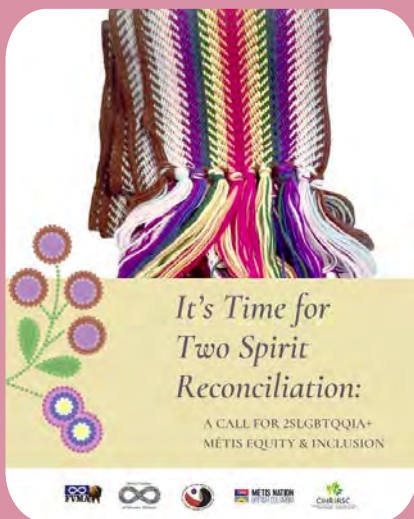


Two Worlds, Two-Spirits Gathering

Métis Nation Greater Victoria (MNGV) led the *Two Worlds, Two-Spirits: Gathering the Circle of 2SLGBTQIA+ Métis in British Columbia* project, in partnership with Métis Nation British Columbia, Fraser Valley Métis Association, and Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak (LFMO). The project, funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), had three components:

- a virtual survey;
- a three-day in person community-building and engagement event; and
- a comprehensive report on the findings of the survey.

The *Two Worlds, Two-Spirits: Gathering the Circle of 2SLGBTQIA+ Métis in British Columbia* was the first 2SLGBTQIA+ Métis-specific gathering to take place in B.C.



Report Front Cover Design:
Darcy Senger

In a co-creation interview, Angel Robinson, a Two-Spirit relative and member of MNBC's former 2SLGBTQIA+ Advisory Committee, shared that this event came from the desire "to make sure our 2SLGBTQIA+ kin are seen, represented, supported and included in the conversations and decisions that our Nation was making."

Information from the survey and gathering contributed to *It's Time for Two Spirit Reconciliation: A Call for 2SLGBTQIA+ Métis Equity and Inclusion*, a report written by Métis Two-Spirit community member and the project's lead consultant, Sasha Hobbs (SH). The report, published in February 2023, identifies gaps in services and supports.

It contains 105 recommendations for MNBC Chartered Communities to MNBC's various Ministries and Departments, the Métis National Council (MNC), and other governments and organizations.⁸⁴ The recommendations are divided into the following twelve categories:

- Identity Validation
- Community Inclusion, Safety, and Acceptance
- Governance and Representation
- Housing
- Health
- Mental Health
- Cultural Wellness
- Human Rights and Discrimination
- Personal Safety and Justice
- Education and Training
- Economic Development
- Seniors and Youth

In a co-creation interview, SH talked about witnessing the power of bringing together Métis 2SLGBTQQIA+ relatives, Creator, and our Ancestors within the gathering and ceremonial space. Many people who attended the *Two Worlds, Two-Spirits* gathering, and other gatherings since, reflect on the palpable love in those spaces. SH echoed this sentiment, sharing how “Two-Spirit people [...] bring that kind of understanding, because we do see the world with a different lens and different perspectives [...] so there is an inherent compassion for each other.” Over the years, the relationships and care established at this gathering have continued to grow into a beautiful and expansive community within B.C.

For SH, and many other people in attendance, the *Two Worlds, Two-Spirits* project was a milestone for the Métis 2SLGBTQQIA+ community. To SH, this work was a labour of love. She is proud of the significant outcomes and impact of this project, and acknowledges that there is still much work to be done.

Sashing Our Warriors

In 2017, Métis Youth of British Columbia (MYBC) Governance Council and the Ministry of Youth launched the *Sashing Our Warriors* campaign, a grassroots movement that calls attention to the impact of violence on our otherwise invisible Métis women and girls through the power of Métis ceremony and sashing.

In 2022, the campaign was re-visited by MWBC, MYBC, and MNBC's 2SLGBTQQIA+ Advisory Committee. They incorporated yellow into the sash to represent the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community within the context of violence prevention.



2023

Pride Parade

MNBC participated in Vancouver's 45th Annual Pride Parade, which was attended by Métis 2SLGBTQQIA+ community, relatives, and friends from across the province accompanied by V'ni Dansi musicians and jiggers.



Gathering to Heal: 2SLGBTQQIA+ GBV

The *Gathering to Heal: 2SLGBTQQIA+ Gender-Based Violence (GBV)* event took place in November 2023. It was held near one of the culturally significant sites of the ləkʷəŋən People, known as Songhees Point/p'áləc'əs, at the entrance to Victoria Harbour.⁸⁵ This event was a collaboration between the Ministry of Mental Health & Harm Reduction and the Ministry of Women & Gender Equity. The *Gathering to Heal: 2SLGBTQQIA+ Gender-Based Violence* report states:

"[Kôhkominawak/our Grandmothers] Barbara Bruce and Charlotte Nolin supported in leading ceremony, holding us in circle, and providing teachings. Through the attendees, we were able to bring a variety of experiences together in ceremony, grounded in relationality. We were welcomed into space by a visiting hummingbird who provided lightness throughout the entire event.

The space was opened with prayers, love, and kindness. We started in circle together with food and open hearts. Through this, we were able to speak our own truths and share our love with others in the room. There was much discussion on histories of 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, and [kôhkominawak] supported the conversations throughout the two days with groundings and blessings."⁸⁶



Photo Credit: Jessy Dame, 2023

After the event, kôhkominawak Barbara and Charlotte offered their reflections on the gathering.

“We started off the gathering with the mindset of ki wiichihiitonaan (we take care of each other). When we come together, especially when 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis people come together, that’s exactly what we do—we take care of each other. This was witnessed and observed. We came together in November to learn, grow, and support each other in ceremony. We established that in circle, we are all equal, and there is no hierarchy involved, just love, passion, and Spirit. When we think about past historical moments that were taken away from us, we can also reflect on the fact that we have kept going and are moving the resurgence of Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+ people forward. The young people coming up behind are benefiting from this.

The [*Gathering to Heal: 2SLGBTQQIA+ GBV*] gathering in B.C., was a reinforcement of our belief in humanity. As the word spreads, more and more people are connecting—connecting with Spirit, connecting with each other. Over the two days, there was no hesitation in helping each other with sewing or beading or even peer support, helping each other while laughing and crying. We are no longer the ones hiding in the shadows—we are out, and within these spaces we are out front and that makes us feel good.”⁸⁷



Report Front Cover Art:
Métis Artist, Jude Williams (Moth Latte)

2024

Pride Parade

MNBC and Vancouver Sea to Sky Métis Association partnered for Vancouver's 46th Annual Pride Parade. Jiggers from V'ni Dansi joined Métis 2SLGBTQQIA+ community, relatives, and friends from across the province for the 3rd year in a row. The jigging was a hit as always!



Photo Credit: Cayleigh Borsboom, 2024



Photo Credit: Cayleigh Borsboom, 2024



Photo Credit: Cayleigh Borsboom, 2024

2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis Discussions Around Dignity in Death and Dying

This event took place in May 2024, on the territories of the Hul'q'umi'num'/Halq'eméylem/Həŋqəmiḥəm⁸⁸ speaking Peoples in Surrey, B.C. The Ministry of Women and Gender Equity hosted discussions around Dignity in Death and Dying, in partnership with the Ministry of Health and Wellness and the Ministry of Elders.

Participants were welcomed into the space by Elder Fern Hinse, who offered opening and closing sentiments. The event was facilitated by Two-Spirit Métis relative Jessy Dame, who guided participants through discussions which included subject matter experts from Dying with Dignity Canada. This 2SLGBTQQIA+ specific event on Dignity in Death and Dying provided participants space to discuss how they related to topics personally and as a community. Two-Spirit Métis artist Carly Nabess created a graphic art piece and poem that represented the important perspectives of our community.



Graphic Art: Carly Nabess, 2024

Grief and Medicine

by Carly Nabess

We are all connected

We are all medicine

We are the sweetgrass that surrounds our community

We are the wild roses growing out of the sand

Every part of us is medicine

Every phase from our petals to our hips are healing

We are the foundation

We are the roots

Connected through spirit

Connected through love

These connections make us stronger as we navigate life, death and beyond

We are medicine, like sweetgrass rooted in this land

This is the land that holds us while we celebrate life and grieve death

This land holds us while we grieve parts of our lives and celebrate death

This land holds us while we hold one another

We Are Allies Campaign⁸⁹

Gender diverse people have always existed and have long experienced discrimination. In recent times, there has been an overwhelming rise in harmful misinformation around the slow increase of gender affirming care and those who find peace and survival in it, especially aimed at youth. To address misinformation, the national *We Are Allies* campaign was launched in July 2024 by B.C.'s Provincial Health Services Authority in partnership with an array of organizations including MNBC. MNBC was honoured to help highlight the unique experience of 2SLGBTQIA+ Métis people, ensuring not only that support was wholly inclusive, but that our youth are reassured in the existence of our trans, Two-Spirit, and non-binary kin.

The campaign includes introductory videos on the range of ways that family members, healthcare providers, and friends can support trans, Two-Spirit, and non-binary youth. 2SLGBTQIA+ relatives can learn more about important topics related to gender-affirming care and gender diversity through research summaries by the Vancouver School of Nursing, University of British Columbia (UBC). 2SLGBTQIA+ relatives, friends and family, and service providers can also learn how to identify and address the spread of misinformation to ensure that everyone, especially young people, has access to accurate information to support informed decision-making.

We Are Allies also supports advocacy through stories shared by people with direct experience, including health professionals; family and caregivers of gender diverse youth; trans, Two-Spirit, and non-binary youth themselves; and Two-Spirit and Indigenous community leaders, including kôhkominawak Barbara Bruce and Charlotte Nolin. Visit weareallies.ca to hear their stories.



**Two-Spirit people
have always existed –
and now, Two-Spirit
youth need our support.**

Learn the history.
Hear our stories.

Learn more:
weareallies.ca



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Financial
contributions Health
Canada

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Learn more:
weareallies.ca



Financial
contributions Health
Canada



Visit weareallies.ca

MNBC's 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis of British Columbia Governance Council

In winter of 2023, a Resolution to establish a 2SLGBTQQIA+ Act and Governance Council was submitted to MNBC's Métis Nation Governing Assembly (MNGA) by Métis Nation Greater Victoria. This Resolution aimed to meaningfully include 2SLGBTQQIA+ Citizens within MNBC's legislation and governance. The Resolution was defeated, and community members mobilized to support the education of issues, challenges, and the histories of the 2SLGBTQQIA+ people to Métis Chartered Communities. The Resolution was amended, re-submitted, and passed at the MNGA in the spring of 2024. The Resolution was then brought to MNBC's 2024 Annual General Meeting for consideration by all MNBC Citizens in attendance. 2SLGBTQQIA+ community members—surrounded by Métis aunties for strength—shared stories of both joy and hardship, and the importance bringing 2SLGBTQQIA+ people back into circle to ensure our kin do not continue to be the “Forgotten People” within the “Forgotten People.”⁹⁰ The Resolution passed, and by January 2025 the first ever 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis of British Columbia (2SMBC) Governance Council members were elected to take over the work of the 2SLGBTQQIA+ Advisory Committee and represent the needs of Métis 2SLGBTQQIA+ people across B.C.

2025

ASIST Training

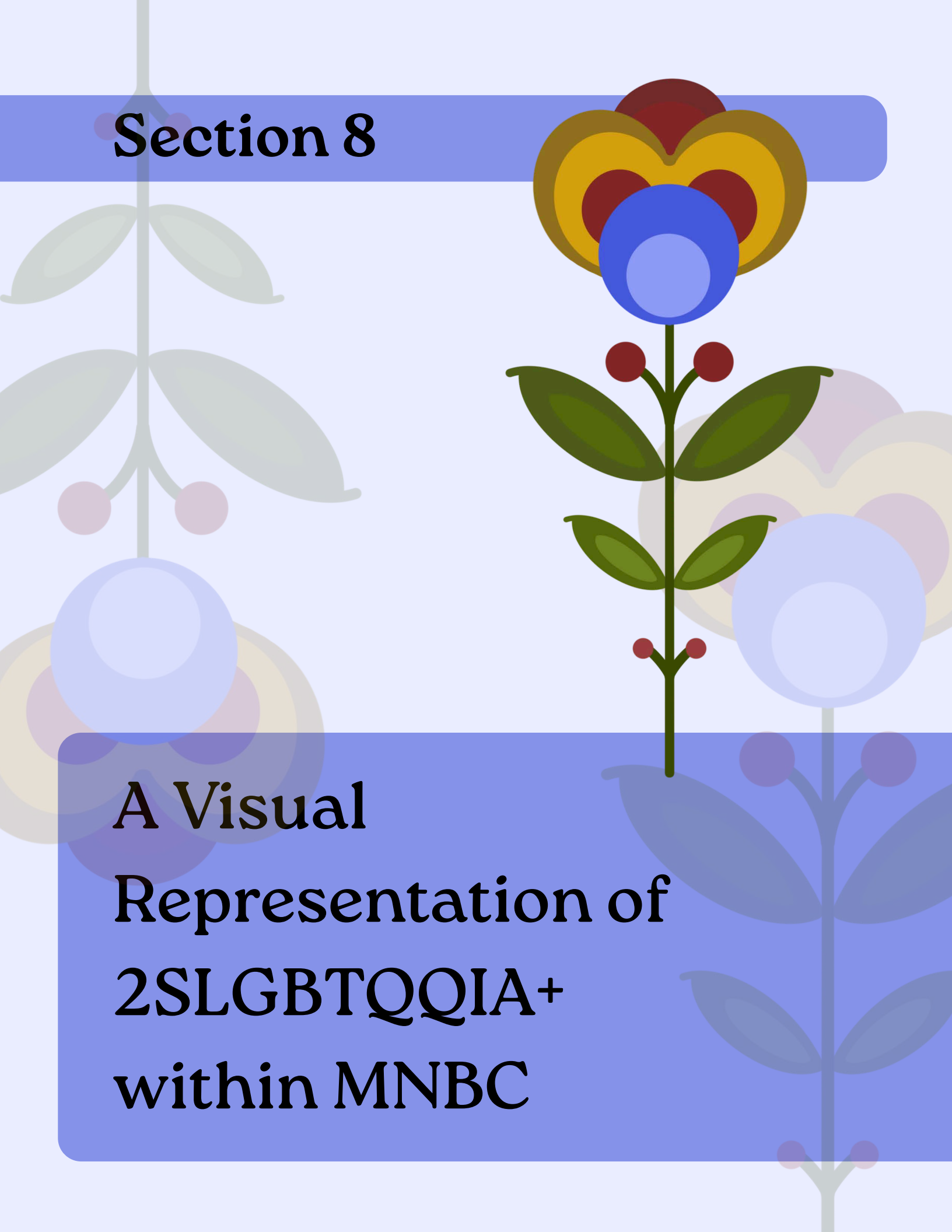
MNBC's Ministry of Health and Wellness, in partnership with LivingWorks, offered Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) as part of the conclusion to the *Kaa-wiichihitoyaahk (We Take Care of Each Other) Community Capacity Building* project. 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis community members aged eighteen and older were invited to attend a workshop led by Métis trainers Topher Burke and Jodi Bremner, from February 7–9, 2025. This event was attended by MNBC's newly elected 2SMBC Governance Council members, alongside community members. The ASIST training was filled with tenderness, care, grief, and laughter as community learned skills to reduce suicide stigma and promote mental wellness within our communities.

Pride Parade

MNBC and Vancouver Sea to Sky Métis Association partnered for the second time for Vancouver's 47th Annual Pride Parade. In attendance was Métis 2SLGBTQQIA+ community, relatives, and friends from across the province, Dene fiddler Wesley Hardisty who played some vibrant fiddle tunes, and V'ni Dansi jiggers, whose dancing lit up the streets.



Section 8



A Visual
Representation of
2SLGBTQQIA+
within MNBC

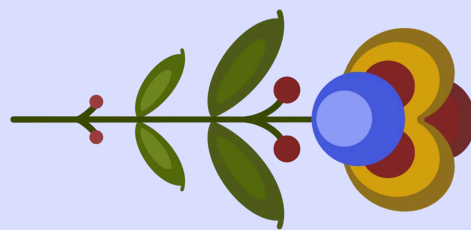
A VISUAL REPRESENTATION OF 2SLGBTQQIA+ WITHIN MNBC

Pride and Ally Sash

In 2020, the Métis Youth of British Columbia (MYBC) Governance Council recognized that the Métis sash and protocol for wearing the sash, either around the waist for men or across the chest for women, was not inclusive of 2SLGBTQQIA+ relatives. This inspired the creation of the Pride and Ally sash. Shaughn Davoren, a non-binary person, former MYBC Chairperson and first openly trans member of MNBC's Board of Directors, acknowledged that "this [was] an incredible way that the youth [could] be leaders of positive change."

Danielle Bergevin, former Region 2 MYBC Representative, and now MYBC Chairperson, shared that the intention behind the Pride and Ally sash was to "show the Nation and community members that we, especially the youth, are committed to building relationships with the Two-Spirit and queer community, and to show the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community that they are loved and cared for and that the space is held for them throughout the Nation." Danielle also shared that the name "Pride and Ally" was chosen to re-center and honour the intersectional experience of being 2SLGBTQQIA+ within Métis spaces.

Shaughn shared that "the Pride and Ally Sash exists to raise the voices of 2SLGBTQ+ people and shows that people are not alone." They also expressed the importance of acknowledging that community members who wear this sash may be allies, or even 2SLGBTQQIA+ relatives that have not yet come into their 2SLGBTQQIA+ community.



In 2022, MYBC released the first Pride and Ally sash, which reflected the colours of the Progressive Pride Flag.

In 2023, the sash was updated by MYBC in collaboration with MNBC's 2SLGBTQIA+ Advisory Committee to reflect the symbolism in the Intersex-Inclusive Progress Pride Flag.

Meaning of the Intersex-Inclusive Progress Pride Flag Colours:

Red: Life
Orange: Healing
Yellow: Sunlight
Green: Nature
Blue: Serenity
Violet: Spirit
Yellow, and Purple: Intersex community
Black, and Brown: People of Colour (POC)
Pink, Blue, and White: Transgender community⁹¹



Photo Credit: Yarrow Froehler, 2025

In Season 1, Episode 1 of MNBC's Métis Speaker Series, "Words from an Elder", Elder Denise McCuaig explains that culture is not static but forever changing. To this point, she shares that she once held a gendered lens of how men and women should wear sashes. However, seeing youth from MNBC proudly wear their sashes like a scarf helped her shift her perspective and recognize the importance of honouring 2SLGBTQIA+ youth.⁹² Now, during sashing ceremonies, Elder McCuaig asks youth how they would like to be sashed. She shares how honoured she feels to sash them in a way that feels right for them, recognizing that our culture is fluid.

Logo

The 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis British Columbia logo was created in 2023 by Métis artist Kaija Heitland, in partnership with MNBC's former 2SLGBTQQIA+ Advisory Committee.

During the initial consultation, the Advisory Committee shared symbolism and sentiments that reflected what it means to be 2SLGBTQQIA+. The final version of the logo combined a two-petal flower and berry laurels, representing the birth of the Métis Nation through the coming together of European and First Nations kin.



Section 9



Resources

RESOURCES

Throughout the *Piihtikway*/"Come In" project co-creation circles and interviews, co-creators shared resources that made them feel connected to culture and community. This ranged from media such as reports, books, and websites to conversations about virtual gatherings spaces and accessibility. We discussed the importance of learning about the initiatives our kin are doing in their own communities to share inspiration throughout our kinship networks.

For rural and remote areas, particularly in the North, where services and supports are less accessible, Jesse Gunn shared the importance of actively creating networks of friends and family who are 2SLGBTQQIA+ or welcoming to the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community, who can share resources and knowledge.

Blind LGBT Pride—International Organization

Website: <https://blindlgbtpride.org/>

Unreserved with Rosanna Deerchild— "Seven Sacred: Respecting and Restoring our Buffalo Relatives"

Website: <https://www.cbc.ca/listen/live-radio/1-105-unreserved/clip/16102439-sacred-seven-respecting-restoring-buffalo-relatives>

Film by Tasha Hubbard—"Singing Back the Buffalo"

Website: <https://buffalosong.com/>

SOGI123—Two-Spirit Framework

Website: <https://www.sogieducation.org/resource/two-spirit-belonging-in-sogi-inclusive-frameworks/>

Dr. Lucy Fowler, Royal Roads University—Video on Two-Spirit and Indigiqueer (Métis) Identities and Experiences

Website: <https://youtu.be/x96sKX8OLRA?si=Uc4Uq6TTRH2ABh3h>

We Are Allies Campaign—Resources for Allies

Website: <https://www.weareallies.ca/>

Film by Dachinta Center—"The Land is Queer: Community & Land-Oriented Approaches to Indigenous Queer Theory, Life & Politics"

Website: <https://youtu.be/ahU91mRC5sY?si=k8USAcIHjCgJHY3A>

Métis Nation British Columbia—"S1 E1: Words From an Elder with Denise McCuaig"

Website: <https://youtu.be/AxCXxet2wxU?si=4nLGRjyk1l5L-nts>

Métis Nation British Columbia—"S1 E6: Two Spirited Champions with Louis De Jaeger" Website: <https://youtu.be/k1AQ2ikjhD8?si=UPffS6exEC7whOFQ>.

Métis Nation British Columbia—"Métis Speaker Series S8 E6: Two-Spirit Identity, Belonging, and Reclaiming Community" Website: <https://youtu.be/uSOryJIUv8E?si=ivfJno81gBRTLEkm>

Visit MNBC's Ministry of Women and Gender Equity on the mnbc.ca website for more 2SLGBTQQIA+ resources

MNBC Programs and Services

MNBC strives to bridge socio-economic gaps and create greater well-being for all Métis in B.C. across our many "social sector" Ministries, which include but are not limited to our Ministries of Education, Skills Training and Post-Secondary Education (STEPS), Health, Mental Health and Harm Reduction, Housing, and Poverty Reduction. These efforts extend to our Ministries focusing on intersectional populations with specific needs, including but not limited to our Ministries of Women and Gender Equity, Elders, and Youth.

For support applying for MNBC Citizenship or support related to Skills Training, Employment & Post Secondary (STEPS), call:

1-800-940-1150 (toll free)

To find out more about MNBC's programs and services such as the Counselling Connect for financial assistance to access counselling, or the Reaching Home Program for financial support for housing, visit:

www.mnbc.ca

Métis-Specific Resources

Amelia Douglas Institute <https://ameliadouglasinstitute.ca/>

It's Time for Two Spirit Reconciliation: A CALL FOR 2SLGBTQQIA+ MÉTIS EQUITY & INCLUSION by Métis Nation Greater Victoria
<https://www.mngv.ca/other-resources>

The Ribbon Skirt Project by Indigenous Nouveau
<https://www.theribbonproject.ca>

The following books can be found in the Gabriel Dumont Institute shop at
<https://www.gdins.org/shop-gdi>:

Anskoonamakew Iii Shansoon/Giveaway Songs by Andrea Menard

asowacikanisa: A Guide to Small Métis Bags by Gregory Scofield and Amy Briley

Fingerweaving Untangled: An Illustrated Beginner's Guide Including Detailed Patterns and Common Mistakes by Carol James

kôhkominawak ocihcîwâwa—Our Grandmothers' Hands: Repatriating Métis Material Art by Gregory Scofield

maskisina: A Guide to Northern-Style Métis Moccasins by Gregory Scofield and Amy Briley

sînapân kîskasâkâs: A Guide to Making Contemporary-Style Métis Ribbon Skirts by Bonny Johnson and Leah Marie Dorion

wâpikwaniy: A Beginner's Guide to Métis Floral Beadwork by Gregory Scofield and Amy Briley

Visit MNBC's Trading Post to purchase art from Métis makers across B.C.:
<https://metistradingpost.shop/>

Indigiqueer and Two Spirit Books

Below is a list of books that are written by Two-Spirit and Indigiqueer authors and/or feature 2SLGBTQQIA+ representation. Not all the authors in this list identify as 2SLGBTQQIA+, and not all stories contain 2SLGBTQQIA+ representation or storylines.

Adam Garnet Jones (Cree/Métis)

- *Fire Song* (2018)

Arielle Twist (Nehiyaw)

- *Disintegrate/Dissociate* (2019)

Billy Ray Belcourt (Cree)

- *Coexistence: Stories* (2024)
- *A Minor Chorus: a Novel* (2022)

Chantal Fiola (Michif)

- *Rekindling the Sacred Fire: Métis Ancestry and Anishinaabe Spirituality* (2015)
- *Returning to Ceremony: Spirituality in Manitoba Métis Communities* (2021)

Chelsea Vowel (Métis)

- *Buffalo is the New Buffalo* (2022)

Cherie Dimaline (Métis)

- *Funeral Songs for Dying Girls* (2023)
- *The Marrow Thieves* (2017)

Délani Valin (Métis)

- *Shapeshifters* (2022)

Dutch Dion-Glowa (Métis)

- *Trailer Park Shakes* (2022)

Gregory Scofield (Métis)

- *Thunder Through My Veins: Memories of a Métis Childhood* (2019)
- *kipocihkân* (2009)

Jen Ferguson (Métis/Michif)

- *The Summer of Bitter and Sweet* (2022)
- *Those Pink Mountain Nights* (2023)
- *A Constellation of Minor Bears* (2024)

Jessica Johns (Nehiyaw)

- *Bad Cree* (2023)

Joshua Whitehead (Oji-nêhiyaw)

- *Making Love with the Land* (2022)
- *Jonny Appleseed* (2018)
- *Full-Metal Indigiqueer* (2017)
- *Love after the End: An Anthology of Two-Spirit and Indigiqueer Speculative Fiction* (2020) edited by Joshua Whitehead

Kent Monkman (Cree)

- *Miss Chief Eagle Testickle Vol. 1 & 2* (2023)

Sharron Proulx-Turner (Métis)

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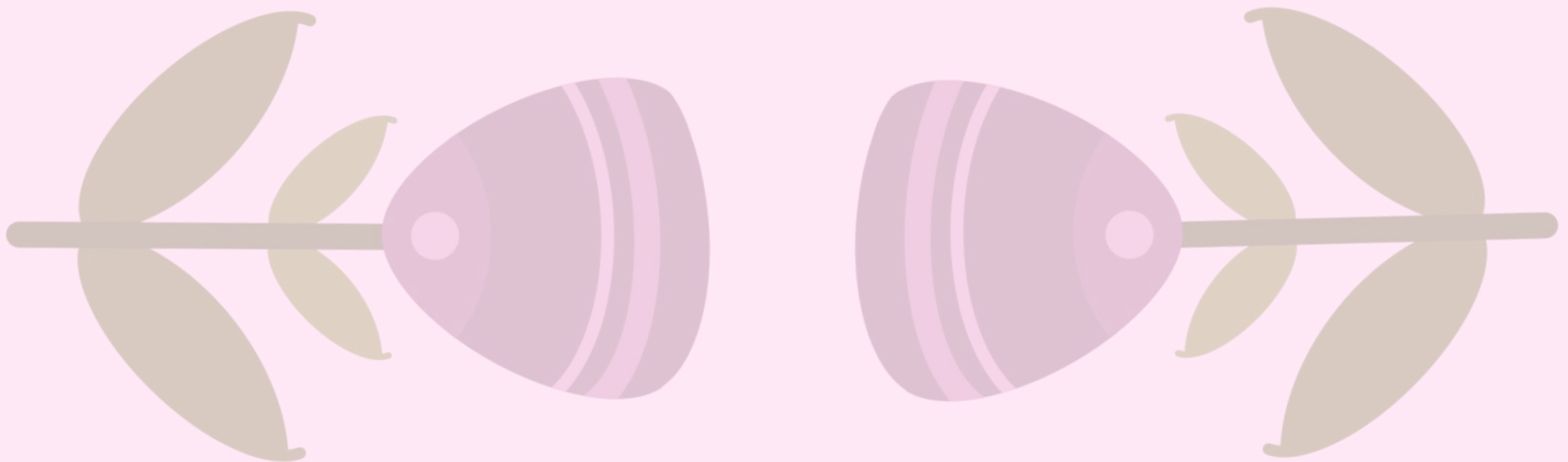
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