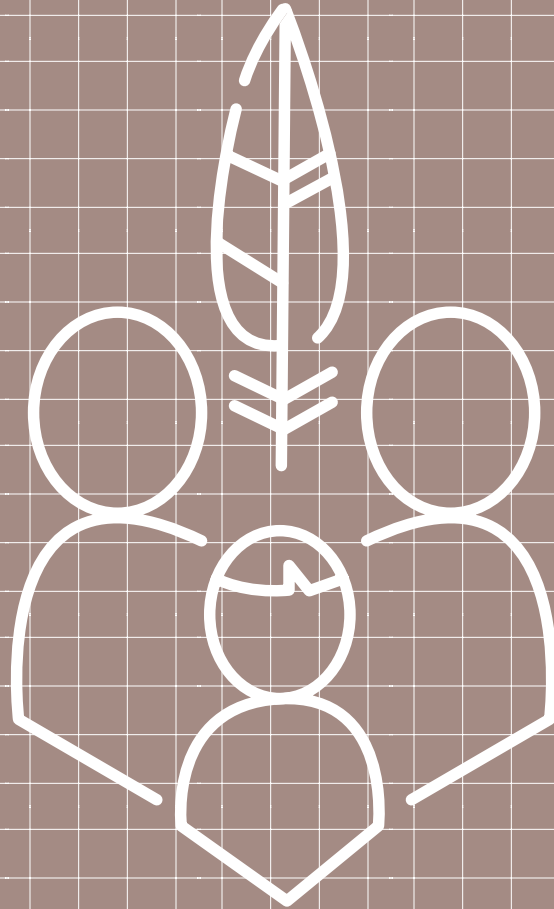


DECEMBER 2021



RAPPORT ON THE NEEDS OF INDIGENOUS LGBTQ2+ FAMILIES

As part of the project "Family diversity: Creating a regional and intersectional network"

LGBTQ2 Community Capacity Fund
Women and Gender Equality Canada



Femmes et Égalité
des genres Canada

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INTRODUCTION

« TWO-SPIRIT IDENTITY IS ONE THAT REFLECTS ABORIGINAL PEOPLES' PROCESS OF "COMING IN" TO AN EMPOWERED IDENTITY THAT INTEGRATES THEIR SEXUALITY, CULTURE, GENDER AND ALL OTHER ASPECTS OF WHO THEY UNDERSTAND AND KNOW THEMSELVES TO BE.

WHEN WE SAY THAT WE ARE TWO-SPIRIT, WE ARE ACKNOWLEDGING THAT WE ARE SPIRITUALLY MEANINGFUL PEOPLE. TWO-SPIRIT IDENTITY MAY ENCOMPASS ALL ASPECTS OF WHO WE ARE, INCLUDING OUR CULTURE, SEXUALITY, GENDER, SPIRITUALITY, COMMUNITY, AND RELATIONSHIP TO THE LAND. »

— ALEXANDRIA M. WILSON, 2007

1.1. Fear and Shame: The “Hetero-sexing” of Indigenous Peoples in Canada

To complete this part of the research project required undertaking the difficult task of finding enough Indigenous LGBTQ and Two-Spirit families willing to speak about their experiences. Even for a researcher known to Indigenous communities, this task proved daunting, as the request was sometimes seen as too invasive and may have triggered past traumas related to experiences of outsiders’ inquiries into the status or health of their families and the subsequent removal of children. This reticence may also have been exacerbated by other factors, such as fear or shame in respect to sexual orientation, the nature of Indigenous families themselves, and the weight of Indigenous people’s exclusion from family and community. Each of these will be discussed further below so that we may better understand the nature of the results.

Despite Western societies’ growing openness to LGBTQ+ people and families, imposed homophobia in Indigenous communities is still alive and well, and it impacts the ability of LGBTQ+ and Two-Spirit community members to live their lives openly and fully. With colonization and the assimilation of Indigenous peoples to new Christian values, sexuality and its expressions were relegated to silence or secretive discussions, and sex was seen as an activity reserved for procreation. Some of these new Eurocentric, heteronormative beliefs were translated into formal restrictions (laws, policies and regulations), whereas others became tenacious and enforced cultural norms and moral standards. As Hayes and Adamczyk (2012) explain, “if religious culture is the macro force responsible for behaviors, it is likely deep and wide-reaching.”

1.2 Legislation

Prior to the 1800s, “there existed diverse forms of marriage among Aboriginal people, including monogamy, polygamy, and same-sex marriage” (Carter, 2008) in communities of Western Canada. The missionaries began the process of forcing gender roles onto Indigenous peoples living in Canada, and this would later become an official goal of the Church and state at the beginning of the 19th century with the institution of the reserve system. The desire to forcibly integrate Indigenous peoples into an agricultural economy led the authorities to restrict them to live on reserves, which was “among the earliest of policies to commence with the social construction of gendered tasks” (Cannon, 1998). Men would be taught to till or plow the land, and women to carry out domestic tasks, establishing a clear division of power between men and women. In keeping with this highly gendered division of roles, by the 1830s, earlier practices that were perceived by white colonists as cross-dressing or gender-crossing behaviours would no longer be tolerated (Cannon, 1998).

This hierarchical, binary gender system was then incorporated into the *Act for the Gradual Enfranchisement of Indians of 1869*, within which the distinction was made between “male Indians” and “female Indians” in respect to status. Status was clearly bestowed upon and held by a “male Indian,” even if he married a non-Native woman, and his status was passed onto his wife and bi-racial children. In contrast, the status for “Indian women” remained dependent upon the status of their fathers and was something that could easily be taken from them should they marry non-Native men. The purpose of this legislation was “to institutionalize the patrilineal descent and heterosexual marriage” (Cannon, 1998), making this the sole way to pass on an “Indian” status.

In 1876, the Canadian government legislated the first *Indian Act*, which “may be considered to be the cornerstone of Canadian colonial policy, erasing, to this day, the multiple-gender traditions, and newer expressions, of gender in this part of the Americas” (Depelteau & Giroux, 2015). Again, Native men were the bearers of status, and could bestow it upon women they married, further institutionalizing descent through the male line. This legislation “simply ‘naturalized’ the heterosexual nuclear family within First Nations communities” (Cannon, 1998). By the 1956 version of the *Indian Act*, Native women’s status was of no independent legal significance, since status could only be passed on through heterosexual unions, and only men could bequeath their wealth to their “legitimate” heirs. According to Cannon (1998), “the way that wealth was bequeathed was to declare that wives were the sole and exclusive property of their husbands and that subsequently, a man’s children were those that his wife bore.” Biological paternity became the defining factor for establishing status within the community, and “in this way, the

existence—even possibility—of same-sex relationships in First Nations communities went unacknowledged” (Cannon, 1998).

1.3 Residential Schools

According to Depelteau and Giroux (2015), the residential schools’ policy in Canada proved to be central to the implementation of the *Indian Act* and its heteronormativity. It was essential with regard to disciplining Aboriginal bodies to accept binary gender practices as well as a patriarchal, Christian conception of marriage, family and the economy. The estimated 150,000 Indigenous children who were forced to attend residential schools over five successive generations were taught to be good practicing Christians, in part by adopting Christian gender norms. These were made clear from the moment the children arrived, as boys and girls were separated and treated differently. Boys were taught to take on menial tasks as farm workers or manual labourers for industries or mines. Girls, on the other hand, were taught to be homemakers for their future husbands. In some schools, to leave the residential school, a girl was required to be betrothed or married to a good Christian man, preferably one who previously attended a residential school. In this manner, Indigenous women’s sexuality became further controlled, and heterosexuality was promoted as the only option.

Residential schools enacted the ongoing intergenerational transmission of religious beliefs, which has remained strongly rooted in many Indigenous communities, making it very difficult to “untangle individual from family religious influences because intergenerational transmission of religious belief is so strong” (Myers 1996). However, it does not take formal restrictions to shape sexual behaviours. Some research “makes salient the power of informal

cultural norms, values, and beliefs in contrast to formal restrictions for shaping individuals' behaviors" (Hayes and Adamczyk, 2012), attesting to the tenacity of colonial values and beliefs internalized by Indigenous peoples through generations of assimilation tactics used upon them.

For those whose genders or sexualities fell under what, today, we would call Two-Spirit or whose gender, attractions or relationships fell outside of prescribed colonialist standards, heterosexist norms were violently imposed, adding to an already traumatic situation. According to Jennifer Lafontaine (2021), "Two-Spirit children were the target of increased physical and sexual violence and verbal abuse and their suffering at residential and day schools was distinct from that of other children. They were forced into gender roles that didn't fit their worldview or existence and were taken from their culture, communities, families, and Elders who could have guided them as they grew into their Two-Spirit identity."

However, according to Anishinaabe youth worker Melody McKiver "the segregation of the genders at the schools, the indoctrination into Christian beliefs and the sexual violence at the schools left a long shadow" (Porter, 2020) on Indigenous communities, as Two-Spirit traditions were forced underground, and heterosexism infiltrated Indigenous communities when survivors returned to their homes. Five generations of new values became strongly rooted in Indigenous communities, aided by Christian religious institutions touting notions of sin.

Legally, "Two-spirited persons (then still called 'berdache') who did not comply with heterosexuality were refused citizenship status and became economically dependent on others, whereas, previously, they had been able to sustain themselves and their families" by taking on a variety of occupational activities (Depelteau & Giroux 2015). Thus, it is no surprise that Two-Spirit people hid their nature and chose to

openly live the expected heterosexual lifestyle throughout much of their lives; some only came to accept their gender or sexual orientation at a later age.

However, the greatest of the long shadows cast by residential schools is the rise of lateral violence in Indigenous communities. Middleton-Moz (1999) defines lateral violence as the internalization of oppression that leaves us in a state of shame. The shame is a sense of never being good enough, that there is something wrong with our being. Consequently, for anyone to feel a sense of worth, one has to perceive themselves as better than another. The logical defense against this pain is to put others down by making them look worse than we do. In this process, oppressive tactics are taken on by the oppressed people, at the expense of those perceived to be different or less worthy. Those tactics are manifested through a variety of means: gossip, bullying, and the withholding of employment opportunities, housing and other services.

The dominant and colonialist system has oppressed Indigenous populations and cultures through the cooperative efforts of Church and government institutions, leading to a loss of personhood and identity and causing the development of shame. New values and beliefs are promoted through education and association with different religions established in the local communities, and people are further divided through competition for government jobs and whether or not they are still attached to culturally traditional ways of being. These differences and separation issues become sources of community breakdown and causes for oppressing or putting each other down. Further exclusion of people is carried out through gossip, perceptions of marrying out, efforts to engage in sobriety or being of mixed heritage – how much Indigenous blood is needed to belong. Clearly, being of a different gender or sexual orientation remains a strong reason for being oppressed or excluded.

INDIGENOUS FAMILY STRUCTURE AND MAKE-UP

To explain Indigenous LGBTQ and Two-Spirit families, we need to understand two main issues: the definition and composition of Indigenous families and the weight of the exclusion from family and community that some Indigenous people experience. Both play major roles in the ability of Indigenous people to affirm their place within their home communities, or to make other choices to live their lives safely. This is essential in understanding the needs of Indigenous LGBTQ and Two-Spirit families.

According to Menzies (2001), “in First Nations societies families are best understood in the context of social networks of related people, called kinship in anthropological studies, in which an individual’s identity, rights, and responsibilities are defined and given meaning.” In many Indigenous nations, anyone who is older than you is given the respectful acknowledgement of auntie, uncle, grandmother, or grandfather. Because they are considered second parents, these individuals play important roles in the lives of children, regardless of whether they are related by law or by blood. Indigenous, mental health therapist Kahkakew Larocque explains, “they’re your second mother or father, and they have as much right as your biological parents to speak to you, interact with you, and even deal with you when you need to be confronted or challenged” (Camilleri, 2017).

Moreover, the way a person is related to others in the community dictates that person’s social roles and involvement in the community, since “family or kinship ties set the limits of an individual’s rights and responsibilities within the indigenous community. These ties also provide access to important food gathering areas, [and] create opportunities to share responsibility for raising and caring for children” (Menzies, 2001).

As such, when studying Indigenous families, these elements need to be considered. If we were to limit interviews in Indigenous nations to people who fit into a non-Indigenous vision of the nuclear family, we would be ignoring the many relatives involved in the make-up of an LGBTQ+ or Two-Spirit family.

EXCLUSION

**« CANADA IS THE LAST
REMAINING COUNTRY IN THE
WORLD TO CONTINUE TO
USE RACE AND GENDER TO
DETERMINE THE IDENTITIES
OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES. »**

— PAM PALMETER, AVOCATE

With the *Indian Act* of 1876, the Government of Canada gave itself the unilateral right to determine who was to be considered an “Indian.” Moreover, according to the Indigenous Foundations definition, Aboriginal peoples in Canada who were classified as “Status Indians” were registered under the Indian Act on the Indian Register— a central registry maintained by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) and “Status Indians” were wards of the Canadian federal government.

According to lawyer Pam Palmeter (2014), “despite numerous amendments to the Indian Act since 1876, Indian registration (status) can be granted or lost at the sole discretion of the government registrar based on one’s gender or marital status.” Today’s Indigenous peoples living in the colonized territories recognized as Canada are still ruled by the Indian Act, and “status Indians” continue to be registered with the federal government and are issued a band card as proof of status. This card provides them with proof of belonging, and over the years has become the symbol of “Indianness” for many na-

tions, dividing those who have certain rights—to live on reserve, attend reserve schools, access treaty rights, and connect with elders, culture, language and traditions—from those who do not.

Inclusion remains important for Indigenous peoples forced to navigate the turbulent waters of identity maintained by the colonialist structure, beyond the recognition of being a “status Indian.” There is the need to be considered a recognized member of a family or kinship constellation of a band, and the need to belong, because, as Cree of James Bay community leader Edmund Metatawabin explains, if you “take the Indian out of the land, away from their language, culture, mode of thought, and traditional way of living, and you begin to destroy their soul” (Talaga, 2018). The need to belong, to be important to an interconnected group of people and to feel that you have a place, is a form of spiritual connectedness for Indigenous people and part of a healthy existence, not only for the individual but for future generations. According to Carriere and Richardson (2009), “it is crucial for the well-being of indigenous children, families, and communities to preserve the culture and identity of indigenous children and those practices that encourage extended family care and community connection.”. The disruption of connection to family or community has been associated with mental illness and suicide (Chandler, 1998; Youngblood, 2000; Carriere, 2009).

METHODOLOGY

Asserting one's identity as LGBTQ+ or Two-Spirit, in Indigenous families and communities that are weighed down by homophobia and transphobia, threatens the continuity of this connectedness, and in some cases, even one's personal safety. Unlike in mainstream LGBTQ+ culture, Indigenous people do not strive to come out as a sign of asserting one's independent identity, but rather "come in," which is described by Wilson (2007) as an affirmation of interdependent identity: an Aboriginal person who is LGBTQ+ or Two-Spirit comes to understand their relationship to and place and value in their own family, community, culture, history and present-day world. "Coming in" is not a declaration or an announcement; it is simply presenting oneself and being fully present as an Aboriginal person who is LGBTQ+ or Two-Spirit. "Coming in" is a way to integrate one's LGBTQ+ or Two-Spirit identity with one's cultural identity. When a family or community does not accept non-normative genders or sexual orientations, this can lead to exclusion for LGBTQ+ and Two-Spirit people, which translates to an inability for them to maintain their cultural identity.

As with the previous study involving service providers and organizations working with Indigenous peoples, research was conducted through an interview process with members of Indigenous LGBTQ or Two-Spirit families. Some contacts were made directly through the researcher, and others through referrals from organizations or participants.

Despite efforts made to connect with Indigenous LGBTQ or Two-Spirit families, only a handful of interviews were possible. In addition, many individuals did not want to be recorded or identified in any manner, attesting to the fear of potentially coming out and being targeted either within their own communities or within the urban Indigenous community. In these cases, the information provided was transcribed as being from anonymous contributors.

PARTICIPANTS

In all, 11 interviews were carried out. They included members of various nations: Cree, Algonquin, Oji-Cree, Cherokee-Freedman, Kahnien'kehá:ka (Mohawk), Inuit, Métis, Mig'maq and Innu. The interview participants were:

1. A young couple in their mid-twenties who are just beginning the process of assisted procreation. The partners are of different nations (Cree/Algonquin and Oji-Cree). Both identify as Two-Spirit and met while attending university. They are a stable couple seeking to become parents in the next year and share their time between living in the Cree community of Mistissini and the city of Gatineau.
2. A mid-thirties single mother who is of Cherokee/Freedman heritage, with a teen daughter. Both parent and child are gender-fluid. They live in the urban neighbourhood of Verdun, Montreal. The daughter was conceived within a relationship with a male partner, but the mother has raised the daughter on their own. They are open to having other children and hope to find a partner who is also interested in developing a larger family.
3. An older lesbian/non-binary couple with children conceived with the help of a known but uninvolved donor. They have raised their family off-reserve, in a small urban area, but now that their children are grown and independent, they are contemplating returning to life on reserve. They have requested to remain anonymous.
4. A single and separated older mother of a pre-teen daughter conceived through a known donor within a previous relationship. The parents have a shared custody agreement; the primary caregiver lives with a lesbian partner and is soon to be married, while the interviewee lives on reserve. This mother came out later in life and has two older children conceived during a relationship with their heterosexual father, with whom she also shares six grandchildren.
5. A Two-Spirit person (non-binary) in their late teens living with their mother. The mother has recently come out as bisexual. The teen was raised by both parents off reserve but maintains ties with the mother's family on reserve. Their parents' recent divorce was related to the father's inability to accept their identity.
6. An early forties Two-Spirit mother of two pre-teen daughters, living as a family with the biological father of the children in a large urban area. This Two-Spirit person is actively involved in the urban Indigenous community and promotes the transmission of traditional knowledge to Indigenous youth and women who have been alienated from their cultures.
7. A single Two-Spirit auntie of teens who plays a very active role in their lives. A Métis artist, writer, and filmmaker, she has lived in Tio'tia:ke for nearly two decades.

8. Two mid-forties lesbians, who came out recently and have married. The four children are from one woman's previous marriage with a man. All concerned are from the same nation and live within the community and requested anonymity.
9. A trans father in his mid-thirties, his cis woman partner, and their pre-teen son. All live in a small Indigenous community but keep to themselves. They expressed the desire to have all information kept confidential.
10. A man in his late thirties who identifies as gay, and who shares custody of his teen son with a former partner who is a woman. He lives with his trans partner in a large urban area and requested that all information be kept confidential.
11. An elder who has worked with the Indigenous LGBTQ and Two-Spirit community for over twenty years.

In addition, the comments and reflections of a Two-Spirit elder, mother of two and grandmother to many, are also included. These contributions are not from a direct interview, but from various conversations held with the author throughout the years.

OBSERVATIONS

It is important to note that nearly half of the families interviewed did so under condition that they would not be identified. This attests to Indigenous people's ongoing fear of being seen as different, especially as it relates to gender and sexual orientation. When questioned about their concerns, interviewees stated two primary reasons: not wanting to be pushed away from family or community and the fear that being labeled as Two-Spirit or LGBTQ may bring about questions with respect to their abilities as parents and even a potential risk of losing their children to the system. Both of these fears stem from the legacies of colonization and the multi-generational transmission of trauma.

Another common feature of the interview participants pertains to the development or "coming in" to their identity as Two-Spirit or LGBTQ later in life, having had children in previous (or seemingly) heterosexual relationships. Two-Spirit identity, by its nature, is not specifically related to sexual attraction, nor is sexual orientation considered to be fixed. However, some participants' experiences of coming to terms with their gender identity or sexual orientation at a later point in their lives may reflect the pervasive need to still fit into the heteronormativity that has been imposed upon Indigenous nations. Despite Indigenous nations' efforts to reconnect with their own traditional values, the legacy of colonial legislation and residential schools is still strongly felt and is interwoven within the fabric of cultural norms, feeding individuals' notions of not being good enough and their fear of rejection from loved ones. In this context, denying one's personal identity may seem easier than defying community and familial expectations.

Also noticeable was interview participants' tendency to focus away from their own personal stories and the recounting their struggles, to instead speak about their desire for global change for future generations. Discussions of personal obstacles and barriers made up only a small portion of the interviews, and coming-out stories were not central. In general, it was as if their stories resided in the present moment, the status of their current lives and those of their children. Interviewees saw the value of participating in the interviews in order to assist families and communities to reawaken Indigenous peoples' sense of resilience in a world that conti-

nues to deprive them of the basic human rights. As such, struggles related to their identity as Two-Spirit or LGBTQ+ individuals appeared less significant than the larger struggle to maintain their Indigenous identity.

Finally, many participants spoke about feeling alienated from their communities, which affected their choice of where to live, among other things. The majority of participants live within urban areas, or in a community other than their Indigenous community. When questioned about where they lived, their responses inevitably indicated their need to find a sense of safety and security to enable them and their children to live with limited fear of being harassed, perso-

nally attacked or bullied. Even the elder who chose to take part in the interview stated a need to separate from her home community because of a crisis of values, and now refers to the urban Indigenous people as her community. For some, distance also provides safety for family members remaining in the community of origin, since if our participants openly lived what many still perceive to be a sinful way of life, this could affect the reputation of other family members.

CONCLUSION

The interviews conducted served to validate the importance of many of the issues referred to by the organizational representatives we interviewed, as summarized in the previous report (“Report on Indigenous LGBTQ+ and Two-Spirit Needs”). Most of the interview participants saw barriers or difficulties within the larger context of the impacts of colonization on their loved ones, and a need to accept or forgive the personal hurts they had experienced as part of the fallout of the imposition of colonial values upon Indigenous nations. The urgent needs participants expressed related mainly to efforts at decolonization, as well as the need for means to address the pain of being excluded from families and communities of origin.

Most spoke of the importance of creating community or family away from their families and communities of origin, in urban areas where they have chosen to live with their families. There was a consensus amongst participants that experiences of Indigenous peoples remain different from those from mainstream LGBTQ+ communities, and that these make it difficult for them to utilize non-Indigenous specific community resources with ease. The reality of experienced racism in non-Indigenous organizations perpetuates mistrust and contributes to a shared belief that reconciliation remains only a distant possibility.

This explains the point made by some that it's necessary to build Two-Spirit and Indigenous LGBTQ+ communities and organizations, separate from LGBTQ+ communities and movements in the non-Indigenous world. According to Depelteau and Giroux (2015), the reason for the separation between the Two-Spirit movement and the LGBTQ movement has to do with the importance of taking into account experiences of racism and colonialism, and of retaining the notions of gender variance and sexual orientation that existed in traditional Aboriginal cultures. In other words, at the heart of the efforts to distinguish the Two-Spirit movement from the LGBTQ movement is the desire to escape a homophobic milieu while, at the same time, not being whitewashed and isolated from one's own culture.

This does not, however, translate to a development in isolation from LGBTQ mainstream groups. Participants acknowledged the need for allies with experience in navigating the world of government and organizations and with the ability to “play the game” in order to build a structure by which to access and maintain funding to assist in decolonizing efforts. This position is reflected in the recommendations made below.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are provided to respond to our research objectives to define the needs of the Two-Spirit and LGBTQ+ families and determine how the LGBTQ+ Family Coalition can best respond to those needs.

- 1. The LGBTQ+ Family Coalition should assume the role of mentor for the creation of a cross-nation Indigenous Two-Spirit and LGBTQ+ organization in the territories presently recognized as the province of Québec.** The LGBTQ+ Family Coalition is a recognized organization with much experience in community work. Their allyship would prove valuable in establishing a Two-Spirit and LGBTQ+ organization that could better define and respond to the needs of Indigenous people and Two-Spirit and LGBTQ+ families living and working in the numerous communities across the province.
- 2. The LGBTQ+ Family Coalition should clearly define its role as mentor and establish a timeline and process for the gradually increasing autonomy of the Two-Spirit/LGBTQ+ organization.** The definition of this role must reflect respect for Indigenous self-determination and the spirit of decolonization.
- 3. The LGBTQ+ Family Coalition should actively seek out Two-Spirit and LGBTQ+ representatives from the 11 Indigenous nations living in the territories presently recognized as the province of Québec in order to form an initial organizing body for this community group.** Representation and consultation are crucial to respecting cultural differences. Some individuals interviewed within the context of this study have expressed a desire to be involved.
- 4. The LGBTQ+ Family Coalition should provide guidance to the initial organizing body of the community group on how to find funding to begin to build an appropriate organizational structure.**
- 5. The LGBTQ+ Family Coalition should provide experienced guidance to Two-Spirit representatives in establishing a structure that reflects both non-Indigenous and Indigenous worldviews, known as Two-Eyed Seeing.** This will require that all involved remain open to learning from each other.

6. **The LGBT+ Family Coalition should assume temporary responsibility for the dissemination of informational materials on LGBTQ+ subjects to service organizations currently working within Indigenous communities in the territories presently recognized as the province of Québec.** This can be done in tandem with the Two-Spirit and LGBTQ+ representatives who can identify where and how to provide informational pamphlets and materials.
7. **The LGBT+ Family Coalition should create space on its website to host pages dedicated to Two-Spirit and LGBTQ+ users and others seeking important information on issues of interest regarding Two-Spirit and Indigenous LGBTQ+ families.** Information to be posted on these pages needs to be vetted by Indigenous groups or individuals (consultants or elders) involved with Two-Spirit and LGBTQ+ people.
8. **The LGBT+ Family Coalition should add their voice to lobbying efforts for the rights of Indigenous peoples.** This will require an awareness of ongoing issues, and as such, whenever possible, the LGBT+ Family Coalition should make well-informed public statements on matters of related to injustice and rights violations affecting Indigenous peoples.
9. **The LGBT+ Family Coalition should seek to broaden its definition of “family” to be more inclusive of BIPOC families.** The colonial view of family excludes cultural groups that do not ascribe to the concept of a nuclear family composed of parents and children.
10. **The LGBT+ Family Coalition should add to their established practices a commitment to continue the cultural sensitivity training of present and future personnel, volunteers and board members, and a commitment to promoting correct information about the history of colonization in these territories presently recognized as Québec and Canada.** This means being an active ally within the organization’s practices, and by so doing, contributing to decolonizing efforts.

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR INDIGENOUS LGBTQ2+ FAMILIES

GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Please introduce yourselves and how you identify.
2. Can you describe your family constellation?
3. Can you share a bit about how you met and decided to create a family?
4. Do you presently live in your home community? If yes, what made you decide to stay here? If no, what made you decide to leave?
5. How did children become part of your family plans?
6. Who did you include in your decision-making? Family members? Friends? Co-workers?

SAFETY

1. How open do you feel your community is towards LGBT+ individuals? Families?
2. Do you actively participate in community events? Why or why not?
3. Do you feel safe living in your community? What makes you feel safe?
4. What elements create unsafe feelings in your community?
5. Have you been treated differently than other community members because of your orientation, gender or family difference?
6. Have any other family members been treated differently or badly because of your orientation, gender or family difference?
7. Have your children been treated differently or badly because of your orientation, gender or family difference?
8. Who is legally recognized (birth certificate) as parents for your children?
9. Are your children recognized as having status in your nation?
10. Have your children experienced any difficulties in getting status in your nation? (Insemination or mixed heritage)
11. What do you believe needs to happen in your community to make it safer for members who are LGBTQ2+?

SERVICES

1. How open do you think the health sector or workers are to the LGBTQ+ people in your community? (Education, government, social services, law enforcement)
2. Have you or someone you know have negative experiences with these community organizations?
3. Is there a local LGBTQ+ organization? If yes, what services or activities do they provide?
4. If there was a local LGBTQ+ organization, what services or activities would you want them to provide?
5. What do you believe needs to be developed to make services more inclusive to LGBTQ+ members of your community?
6. Were you able to access information about family planning from within your community? Where did you find what you needed?
7. Do make use of LGBTQ+ organizations outside your community? Which ones? For what purpose?
8. Have ever heard of the LGBTQ2+ Family Coalition? (Provide information)
9. Have you ever participated in any activities or events organized by them?
10. If yes, how did it go? If no, what prevented you?
11. Do you feel that such activities should be organized by non-Indigenous people, Indigenous people only, or a mixed group of people including Indigenous people?
12. Should activities organized for Indigenous LGBTQ2+ people be open to non-Indigenous participants?
13. What could the LGBTQ2+ Coalition do to make you feel more included?
14. What kind of activities or events do you feel the Coalition could organize to meet the needs of LGBTQ2+ people?
15. Where and how should these activities take place? In a centralized location, in the community, outside the community, online?
16. Would you be interested in getting involved in organizing or participating in activities or events for LGBTQ2+ people? In what capacity?
17. Do you have anything else to add?

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