

**As per the author's request of these slides: These slides are NOT to be reproduced or distributed outside of your own download from our website.

TELEHEALTH WORKSHOP
SEPTEMBER 21ST, 2023

Two-Spirit / Indigiqueer pasts, presents, and futures

Rae Madge (she/her)



Hello! Edlanete'!



Rae Madge (she/her)

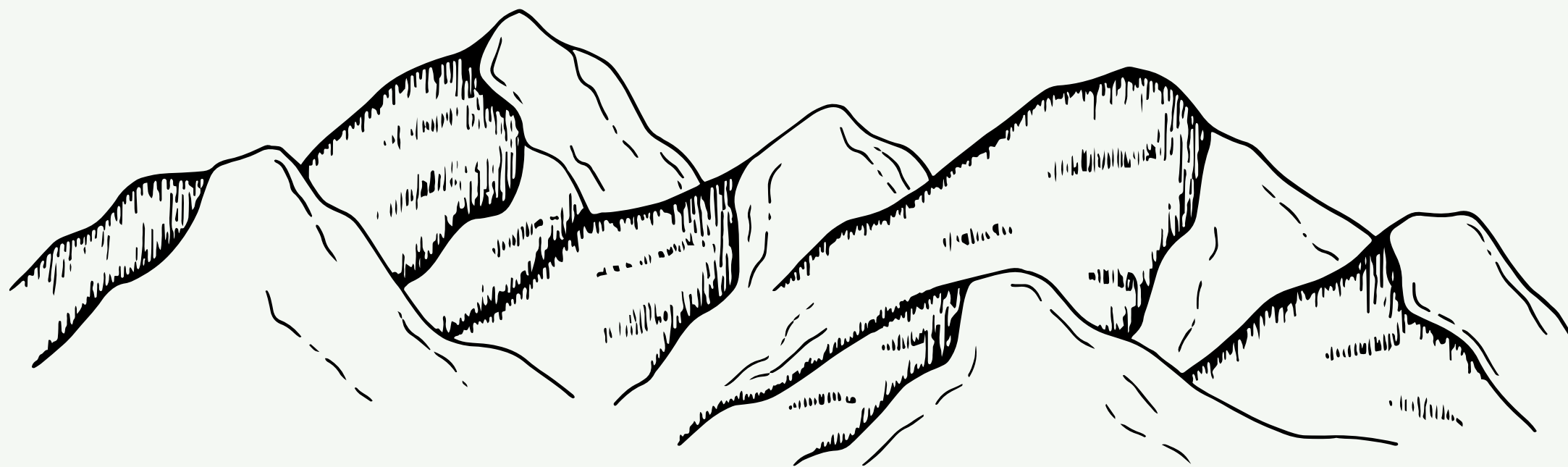
Deh'cho Dene and mixed-settler

**Program coordinator for
Where The Rivers Meet**

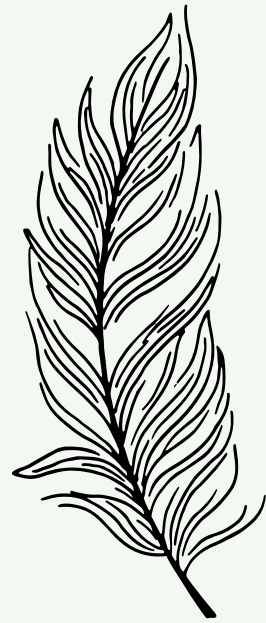
Two-Spirit, Bisexual, Queer

BA Sociology '21

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT



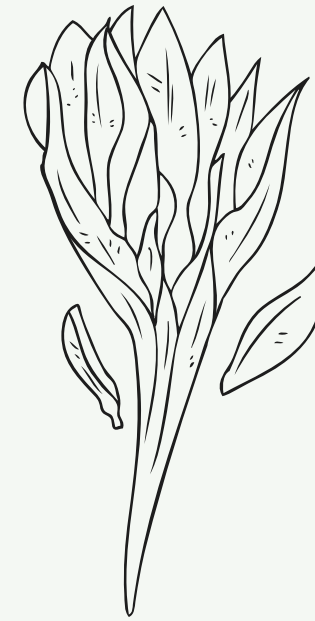
Guidelines for today's session



Respect



Confidentiality



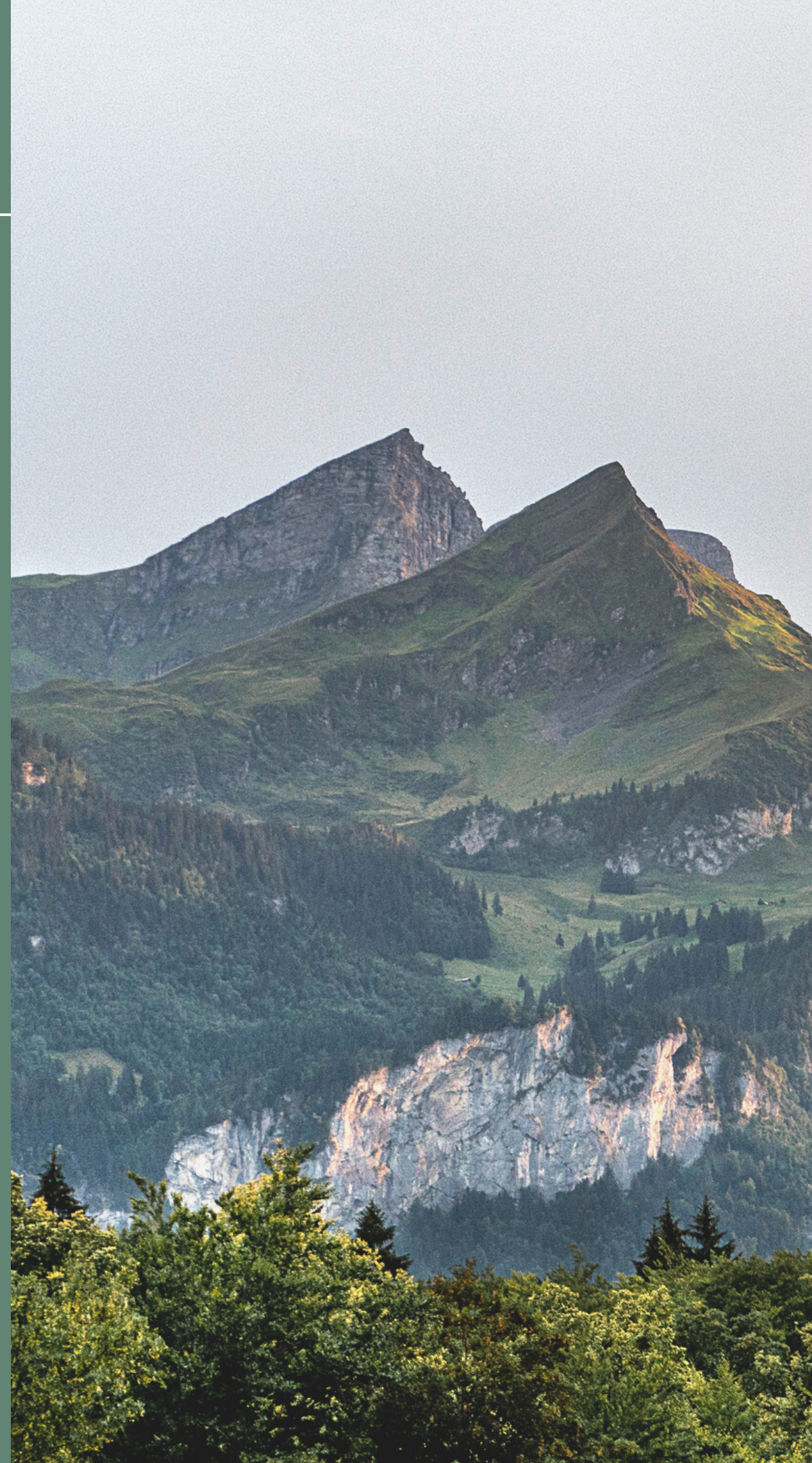
If you can't take it
in, take it with you



No silly
questions

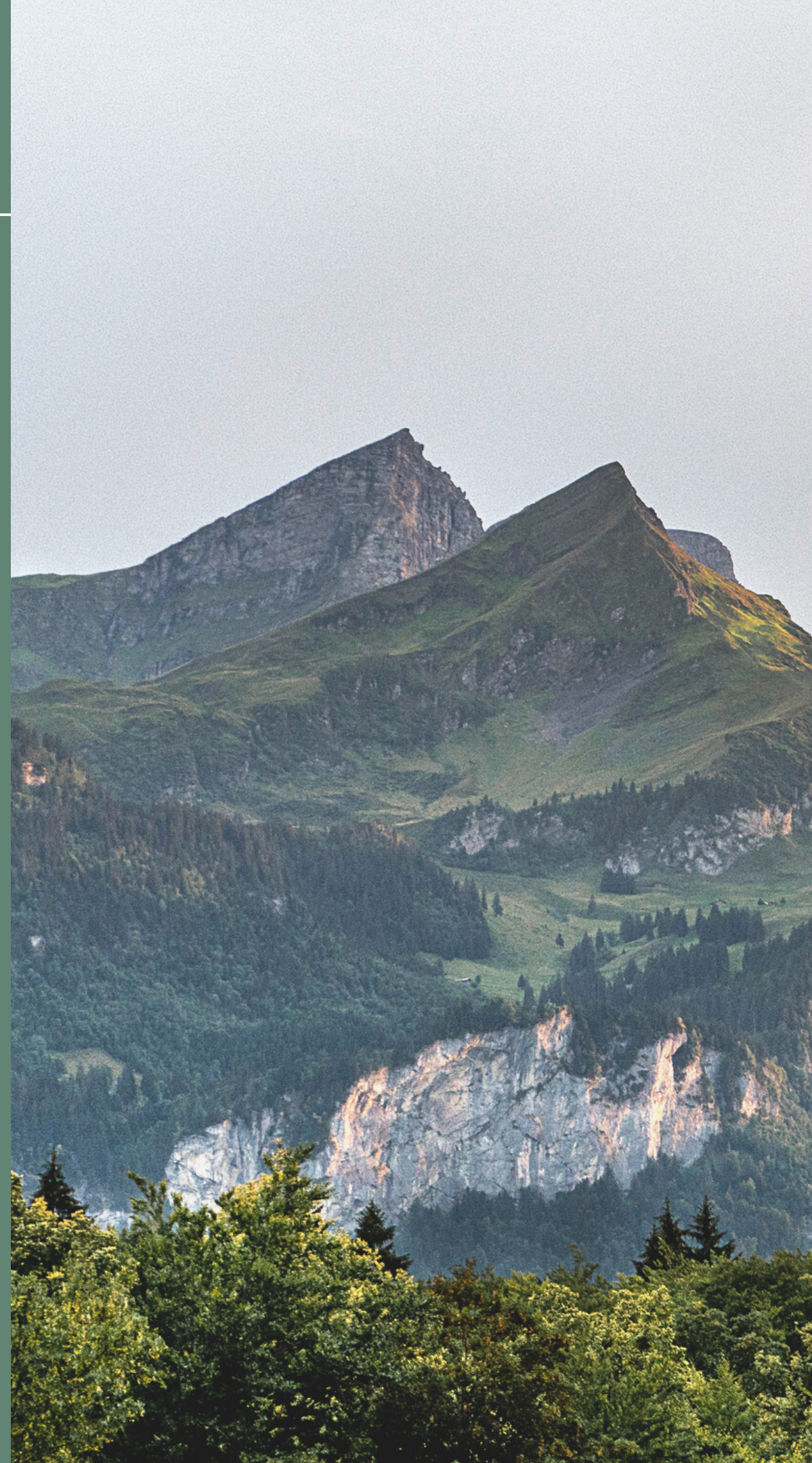
Where we're going today...

- Pre-Contact Gender Diversity
- Impacts of Colonization
- Two-Spirit Resurgence
- How to support and celebrate your
Two-Spirit and Indigiqueer peers,
clients, friends.



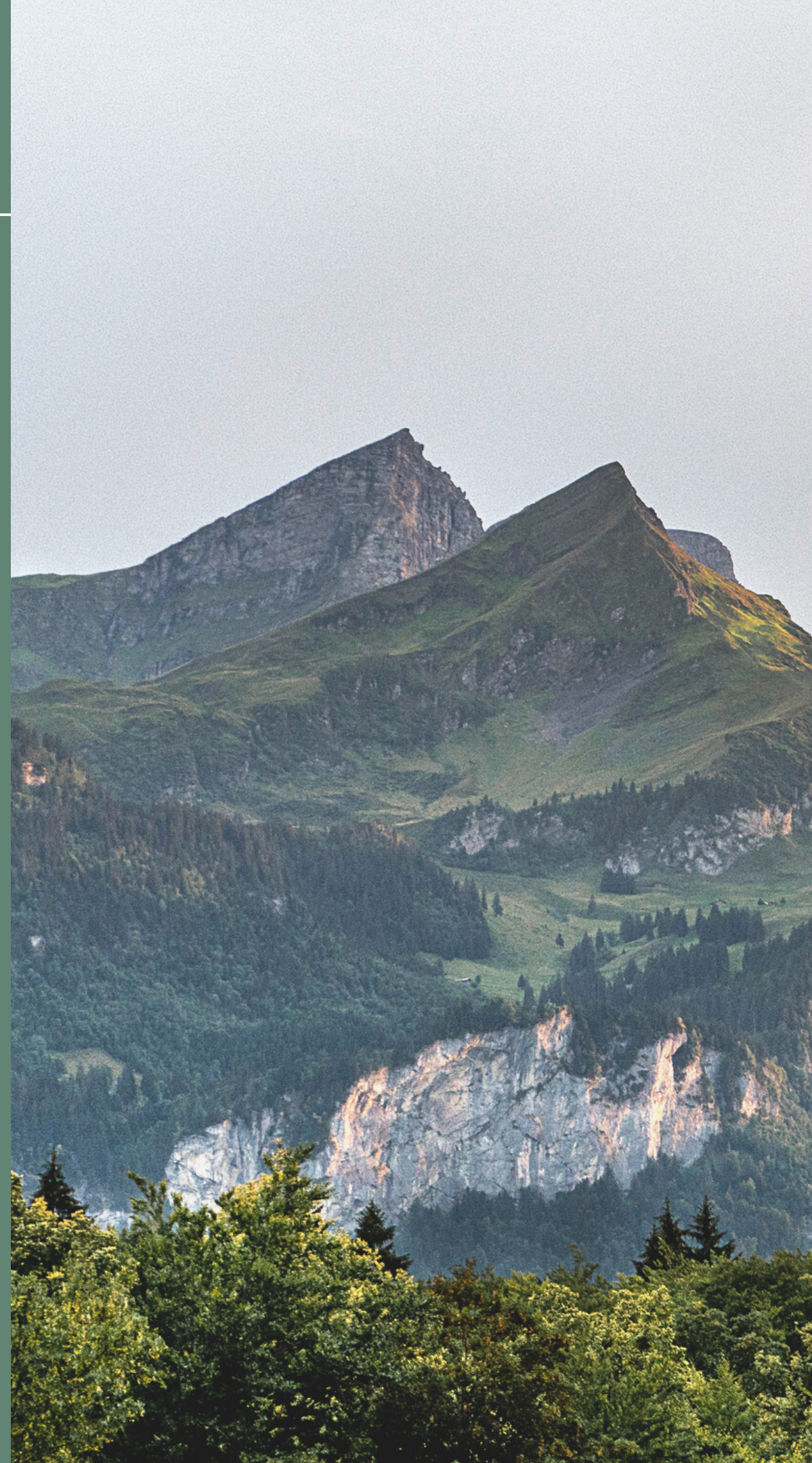
Content Warning:

Mention of suicide, addiction,
residential schools, colonial violence,
homophobia/transphobia.



Question for the chat:

How will you practice self-care, community care, and/or spiritual care during and after the session?



A lush green forest with a small waterfall and stream in the foreground. The scene is vibrant with sunlight filtering through the trees, creating a serene and natural atmosphere. The water flows over rocks, creating a gentle cascade. The surrounding vegetation is dense and healthy, with various shades of green.

Pre-Contact Gender Diversity

There are **hundreds** of unique Indigenous nations that have occupied Turtle Island for time immemorial, all with unique ways of viewing gender and sexuality.
But there are some similarities!



Indigenous Gender & Sexuality Norms

- Playfulness and fluidity
- Both serious and humorous.
- Young ones encouraged to "Try on" different expressions and community roles.
- Changing your mind is totally okay

Examples of Gender Diversity in Indigenous Languages



Examples of Gender Diversity in Indigenous Languages

Nehiyawak (Cree)

“**Ayahkwêw**”: "a man dressed/ living/
accepted as a woman"--Transwoman

“**Înahpîkasoht**”: "a woman dressed/
living/ accepted as a man"--Transman



Examples of Gender Diversity in Indigenous Languages

Crow

"Bote/Bate/Bade": "not man, not woman" -- Gender Non-Binary



Examples of Gender Diversity in Indigenous Languages

Inuit

"Qaigajuariit": "two soft things rubbing together"-- Lesbian

"Angutauqatigiik": "two hard things rubbing together"-- Gay



Examples of Gender Diversity in Indigenous Languages

Navajo

"Nadleeh": "One in constant state
of change/one who changes--

Transgender

Nadleehi (singular)

Nadleehé (plural)



Examples of Gender Diversity in Indigenous Languages

Omaha, Osage, Ponga

"Mixu'ga": "instructed by the
moon" -- Transwoman



Examples of Gender Diversity in Indigenous Languages

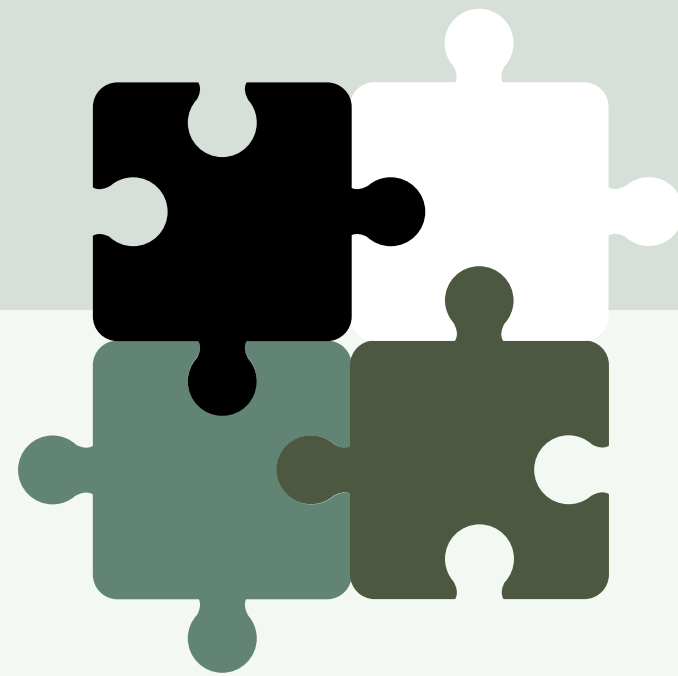
Potawatomi

"M'netwokew": "supernatural" or
"extraordinary" -- Transwoman,
spiritual connotation

"Manito" a word for Creator/God/Spirit
plus female suffix.



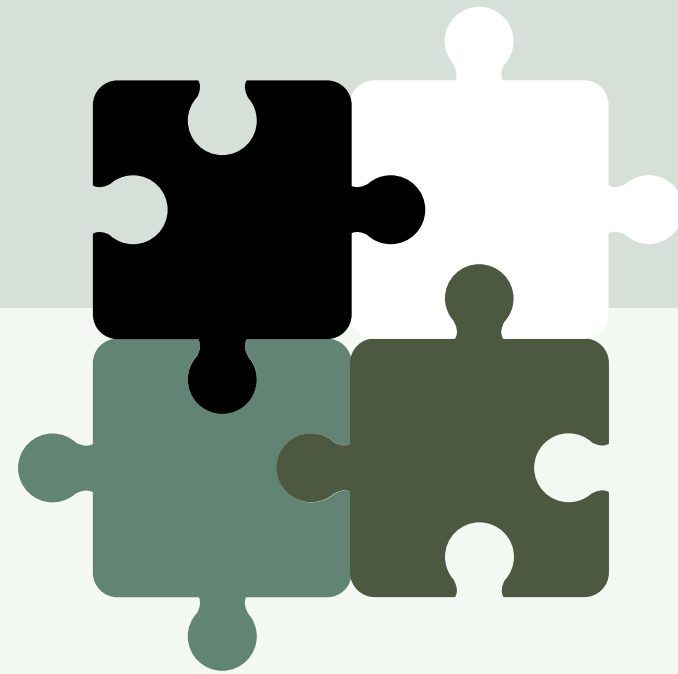
ROLES OF GENDER DIVERSE FOLKS



ROLES OF GENDER DIVERSE FOLKS



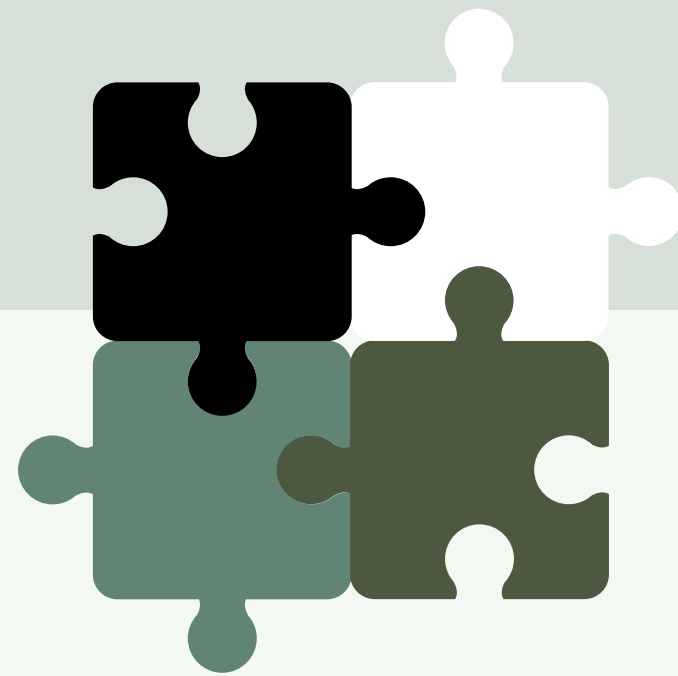
Change-makers,
someone who *sees*
things differently
and moves the
community forward.



ROLES OF GENDER DIVERSE FOLKS



Change-makers,
someone who *sees*
things differently
and moves the
community forward.



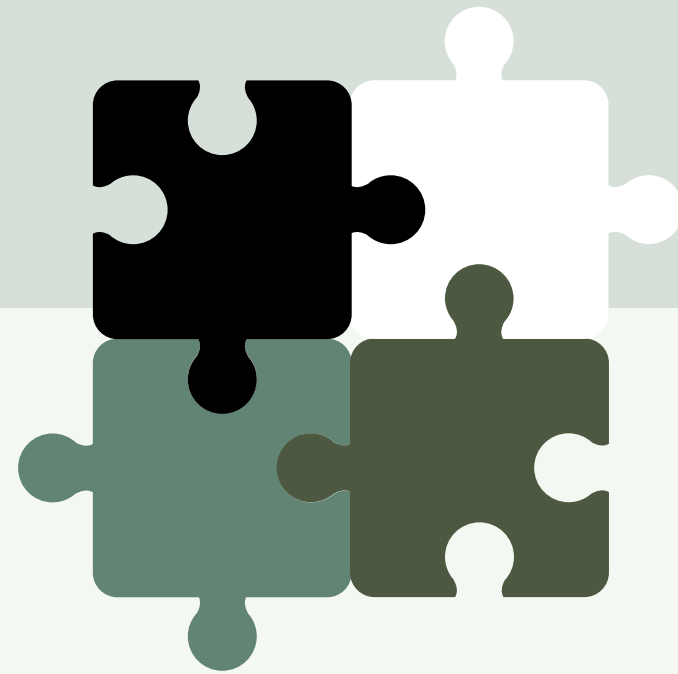
Gap-Fillers.
Mediation, peace-
making, leadership
midwifery, medicine,
ceremony, warriors.



ROLES OF GENDER DIVERSE FOLKS



Change-makers,
someone who *sees*
things differently
and moves the
community forward.



Gap-Fillers.
Mediation, peace-
making, leadership
midwifery, medicine,
ceremony, warriors.



Gender not just
about ***who you***
are but ***how***
you support the
community.

Colonization:

the action or process of settling among and establishing control over the Indigenous people of an area.

An ongoing process, not a historical event, that continues to attempt to displace, disregard, and oppress Indigenous ways of being, knowing, and doing.



IMPACTS OF COLONIZATION

Colonists saw
the peoples
here through
a European,
Patriarchal,
Christian
lens.

IMPACTS OF COLONIZATION

Colonists saw the peoples here through a European, Patriarchal, Christian lens.

Thought that the gender and sexual diversity they saw was **sinful and wrong.**

IMPACTS OF COLONIZATION

Colonists saw the peoples here through a European, Patriarchal, Christian lens.

Thought that the gender and sexual diversity they saw was **sinful and wrong.**

"Berdache"

IMPACTS OF COLONIZATION

Colonists saw the peoples here through a European, Patriarchal, Christian lens.

Thought that the gender and sexual diversity they saw was **sinful and wrong.**

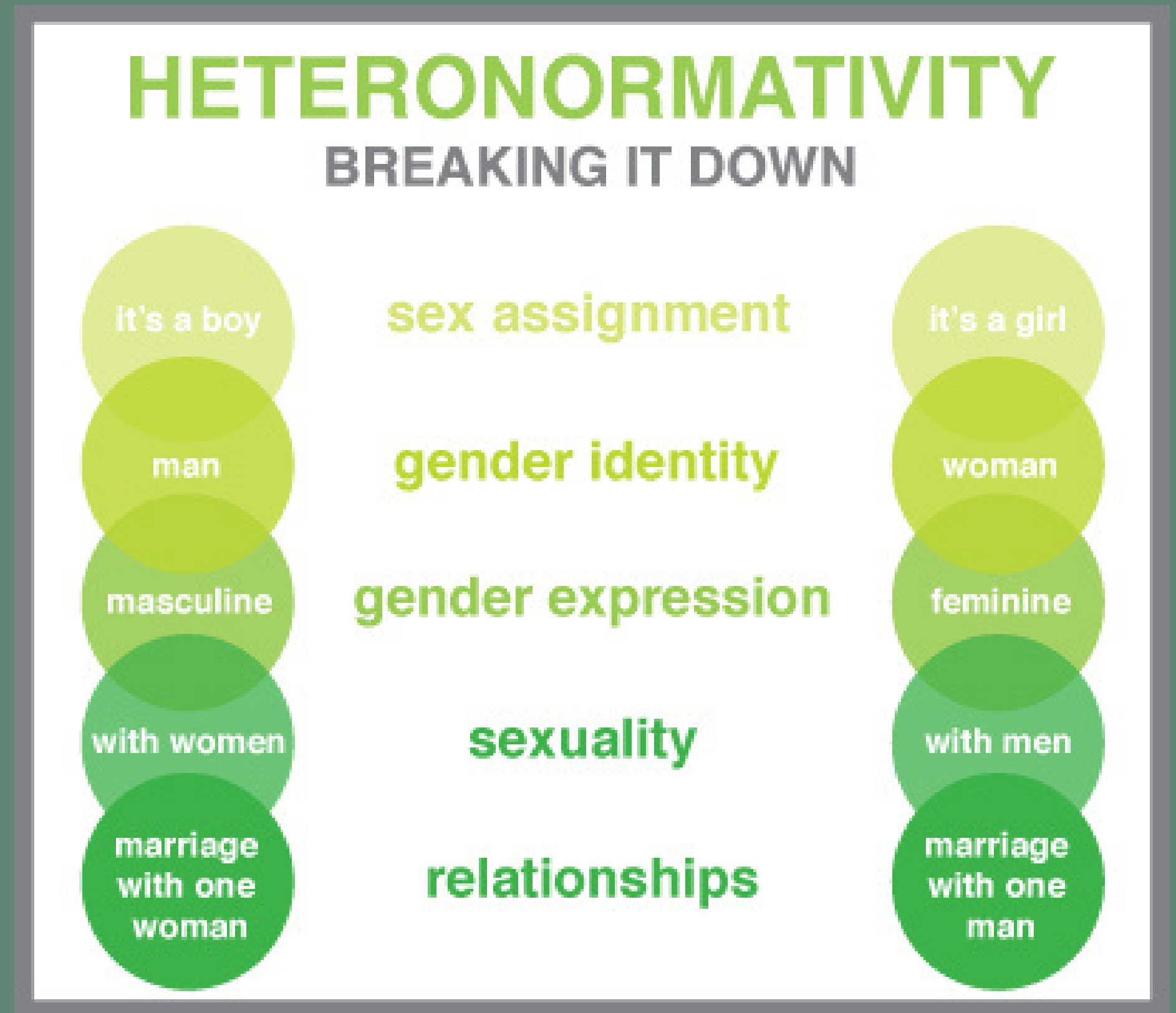
"Berdache"

Thought it was their duty to **change** the Indigenous peoples ways of being.

IMPACTS OF COLONIZATION

Heteronormativity is introduced

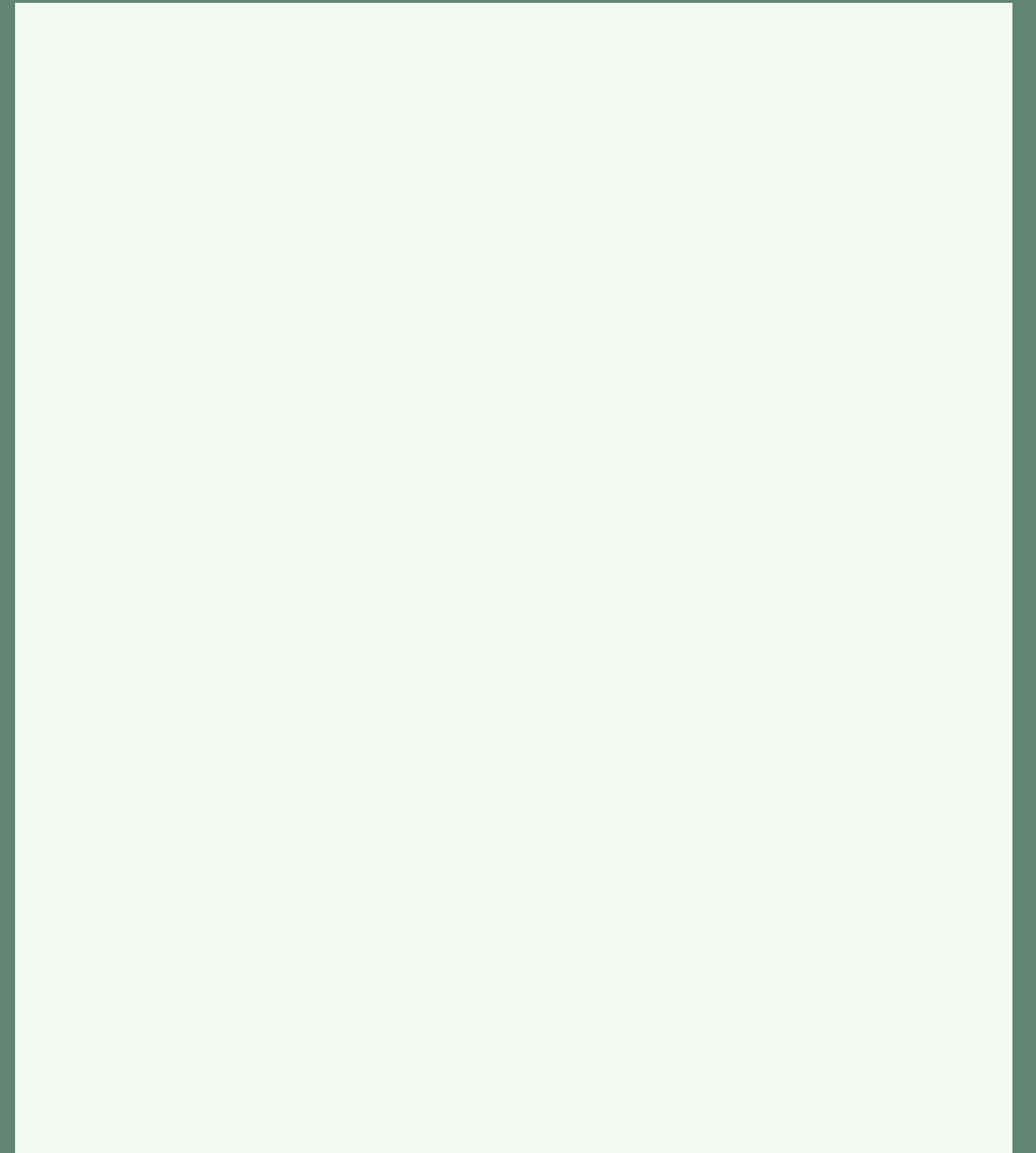
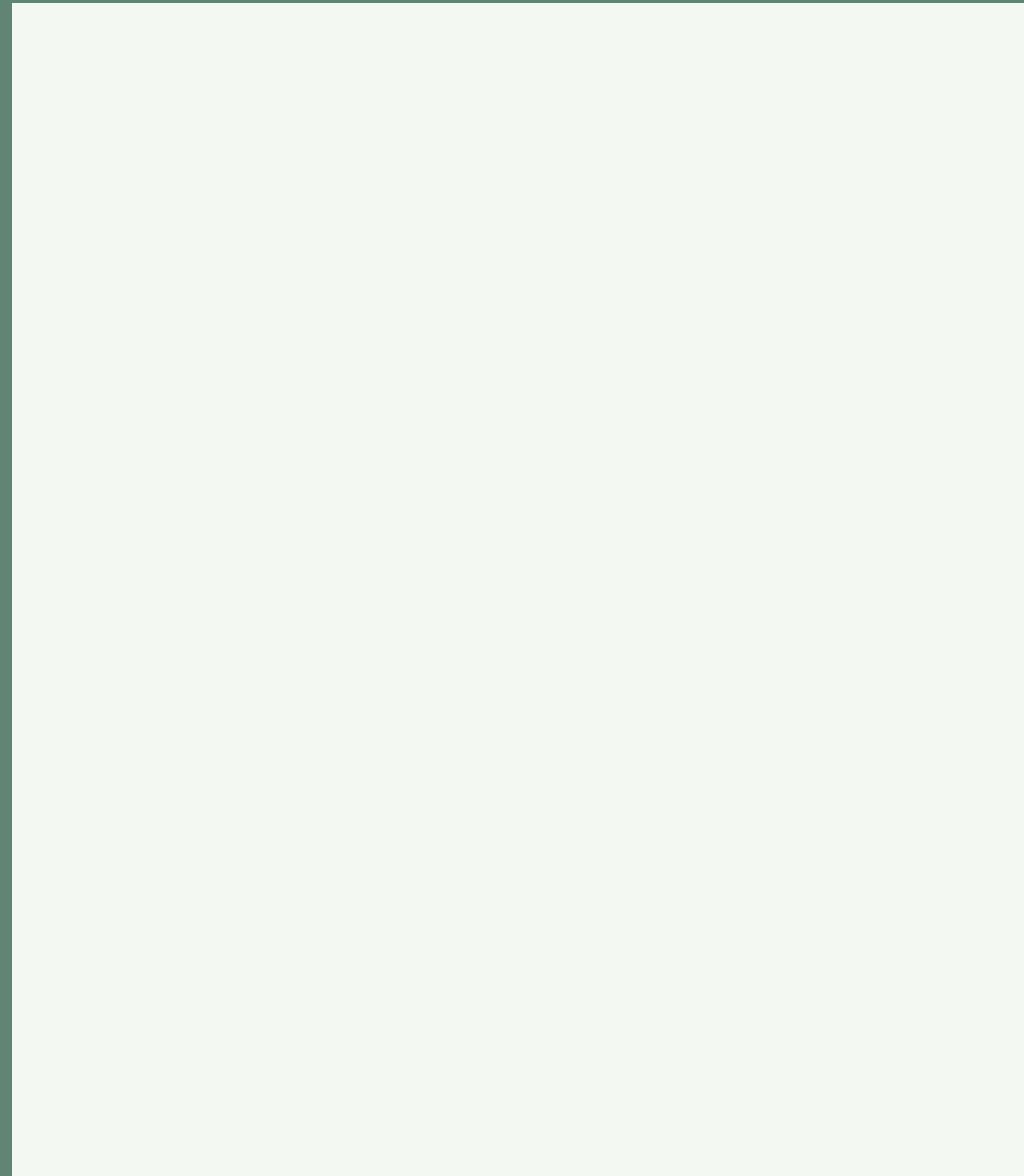
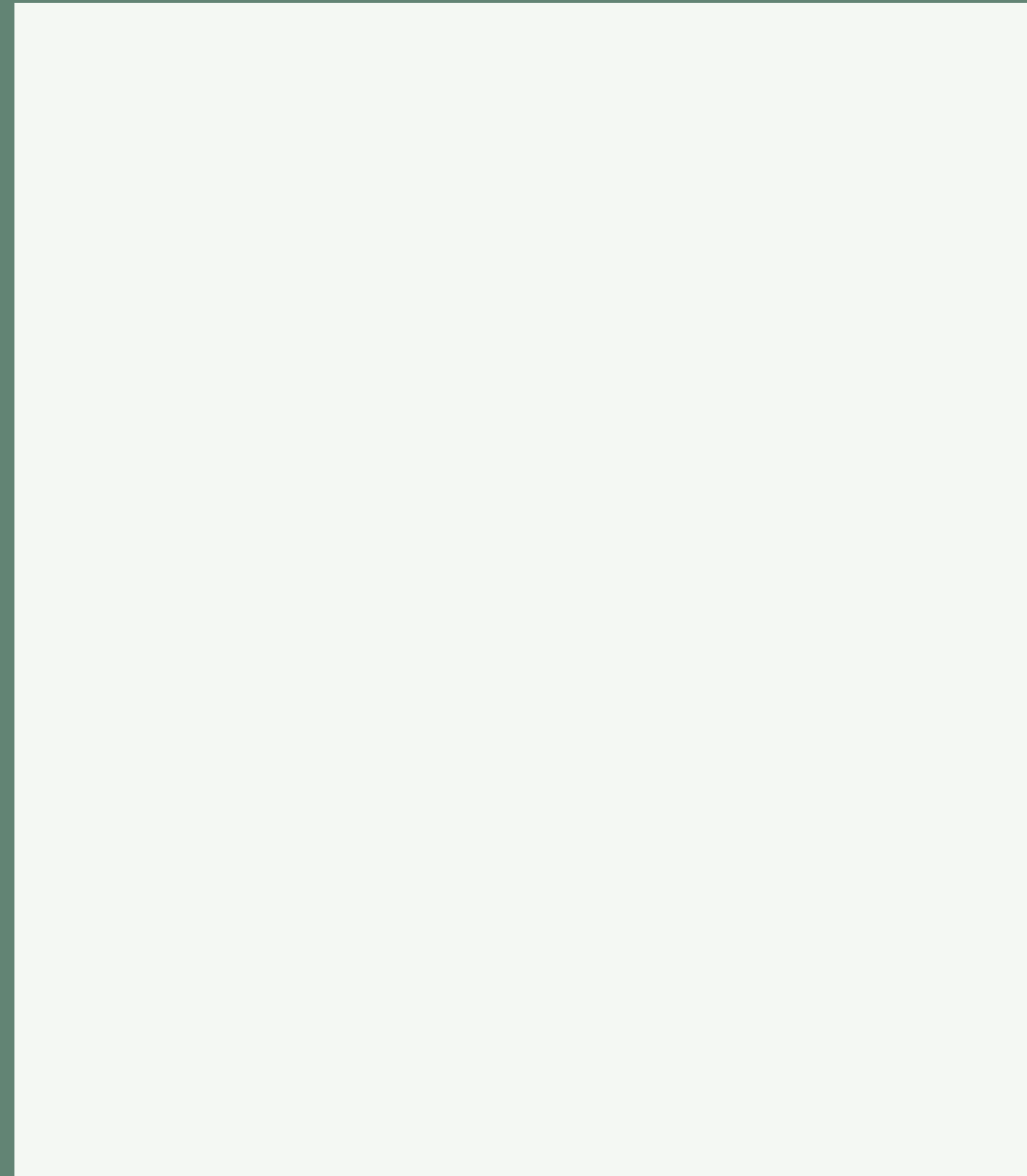
Residential schools introduced and reinforced the heteronormative gender binary through violent means.



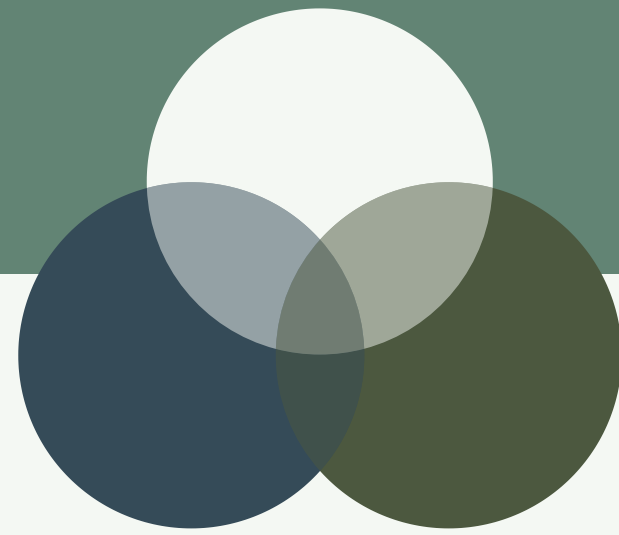
Homophobia and transphobia were not a part of Indigenous culture on Turtle Island before this; these ideas were brought over from Europe by the colonizers.

Homophobia and transphobia are colonial paradigms.

ONGOING EFFECTS OF COLONIZATION ON INDIGENOUS GENDER DIVERSITY

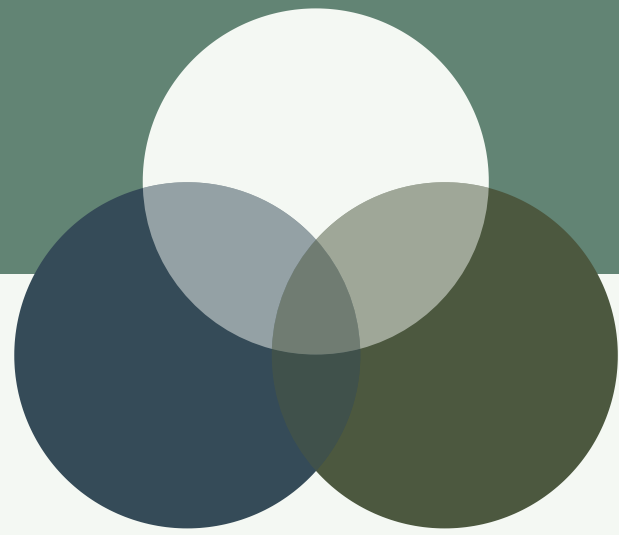


ONGOING EFFECTS OF COLONIZATION ON INDIGENOUS GENDER DIVERSITY



Generations of
Two-Spirit and
Indigiqueer folks
affected by
intersecting
layers of
discrimination
and stigma.

ONGOING EFFECTS OF COLONIZATION ON INDIGENOUS GENDER DIVERSITY

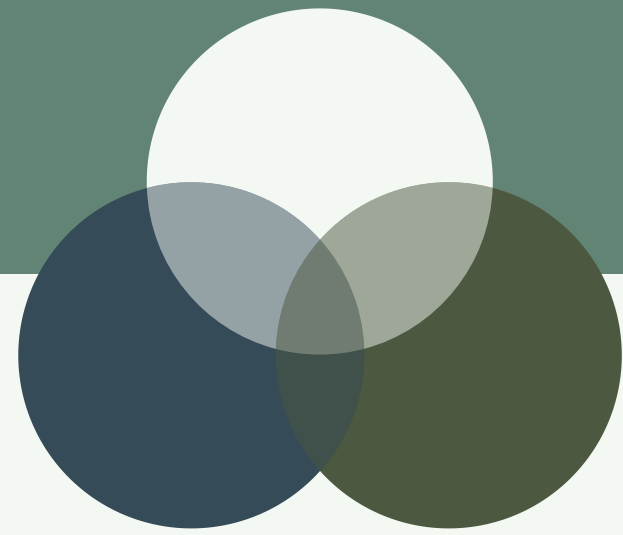


Generations of Two-Spirit and Indigiqueer folks affected by **intersecting** layers of **discrimination** and **stigma**.



To **protect** Two-Spirit folks from **targeted violence**, many communities **hid 2S folks** and **stopped passing on Two-Spirit teachings**.

ONGOING EFFECTS OF COLONIZATION ON INDIGENOUS GENDER DIVERSITY



Generations of Two-Spirit and Indigiqueer folks affected by **intersecting** layers of **discrimination** and **stigma**.



To **protect** Two-Spirit folks from **targeted violence**, many communities **hid 2S folks** and **stopped passing on Two-Spirit teachings**.



Internalized homophobia and **transphobia** persists within the Indigenous community.

Experiences and Struggles of Two-Spirit People



Experiences and Struggles of Two-Spirit People

- Devastating levels of poverty.
- Report feeling unsafe in the healthcare system.
- High frequency of being forced out of communities /homes/families because of their sexual or gender identity.
- High rates of depression, anxiety, substance use.
- Barriers in access to culturally safe services.



Experiences and Struggles of Two-Spirit Youth in Schools

- Two-Spirit students feel unsafe while attending schools.
- Lack of safety leads students to miss classes.
- Frequent experiences of:
 - Homophobia
 - Bullying
 - Harassment (sexual, verbal, and physical)
 - Exclusion and rejection
 - Discrimination
 - Destruction of property.



Experiences and Struggles of Two-Spirit Youth

- Two-Spirit youth are more likely than their heterosexual peers to:
 - Report depression and anxiety issues.
 - Attempt suicide.
 - Be kicked out of home or run away.
 - Drop out of school.
 - Abuse drugs and alcohol.
 - To engage in risky sexual activities.



Experiences and Struggles of Two-Spirit People

These outcomes and risk factors are *not due to being Indigiqueer*, but rather, society's unacceptance, homophobia, transphobia, and **ongoing effects of colonization.**



Experiences and Struggles of Two-Spirit People

We also know that these issues can be significantly lessened through the **explicit, ongoing, affirmation, support, and celebration of Indigenous gender and sexual diversity.**



MOVING FORWARD WITH HOPE

Pakosêyimowin

"pro-spective"

Let us embody a Two-Spirit, visionary, hope-filled ideology. One that looks towards a resurgent Two-Spirit revolution.

MOVING FORWARD WITH HOPE

1990 "Native American Gay and Lesbian Conference"

Myra Laramee had a vision during ceremony and proposed the English translation of this Anishinaabemowin word:

"niizh-manidoowag" which means ***"Two-Spirit"***

Two-Spirit

Became a word that recognizes the unique social positioning that being Indigenous *and* Queer affords a person.



Two-Spirit

Two-Spirit is healing.
Two-Spirit is decolonial.
Two-Spirit is liberation.

**Accepting and
celebrating Two-Spirit
people is reconciliation.**



What does it mean to be
Two-Spirit?

1. An umbrella
term that refers
to **all**
2SLGBTQIA+
First Nations,
Métis, and Inuit.

What does it mean to be
Two-Spirit?

1. An umbrella term that refers to all 2SLGBTQIA+ First Nations, Métis, and Inuit.

2. Used to describe a person who has **both male and female spirits** within them.

(May align with terminology like non-binary, bigender, or gender-fluid)

What does it mean to be
Two-Spirit?

1. An umbrella term that refers to all 2SLGBTQIA+ First Nations, Métis, and Inuit.

2. Used to describe a person who has both male and female spirits within them.

(May align with terminology like non-binary, bigender, or gender-fluid)

3. A **ceremonial or community role** rooted in one's ability to see things from more than one perspective.

What does it mean to be Two-Spirit?

*Important to note that the Two-Spirit identity is unique to Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island.

You cannot be Two-Spirit without being Indigenous.

What does it mean to be
Two-Spirit?

"Coming out" vs. "Coming in"

For many Indigenous 2SLGBTQ+ folks, the experiences of being and becoming happy and authentically themselves includes something that can be described as "coming in", instead of "coming out".

Coming Out

- Separation from ideologies of origin.
- Independence from familial culture.
- Distancing from origin story.

Coming In

- Return to Indigenous ideologies.
- Interdependence/Collective identity.
- Reconnection to roots.



“When we come in to our Two Spirit identity, we are affirming our interdependence—our collective identity. Two Spirit is about presenting oneself and being fully present as a Native person who is LGBT. We understand that we have a place in—and we are valuable to—our families, communities, cultures, histories, and the present-day world.”

DR. ALEXANDRIA WILSON

Coming-in can be a significant path towards healing for Indigiqueer folks, especially youth, when solid community ties are emphasized and rooted in interdependence.

Indigiqueer folks navigate spaces where the validity of their identity may be questioned due to persisting, internalized colonial narratives.

Challenge those narratives.

**What can you do to support,
celebrate, and affirm Two-
Spirit and Indigiqueer folks?**



What can you do to support, celebrate, and affirm Two-Spirit and Indigiqueer folks?

Don't make assumptions about people's gender or sexual identities.



What can you do to support, celebrate, and affirm Two-Spirit and Indigiqueer folks?

Use Indigiqueer (and everyone's!) correct names and pronouns.

This is the easiest way to signal, “I see you, I support you, I trust that you know yourself better than I do”.



What can you do to support, celebrate, and affirm Two-Spirit and Indigiqueer folks?

Use inclusive language.

When talking about bodies and health, emphasize the detail you're focusing on rather than the gender.

“People who menstruate”

“People with vulvas”

“People with testicles”



What can you do to support, celebrate, and affirm Two-Spirit and Indigiqueer folks?

Make your physical space and washrooms as trans-inclusive as possible.

It may be helpful to use clear signage like “This washroom has stalls” and “This washroom has urinals”.

Ex.

- Provide waste bins in all bathroom stalls.
- If supplying menstrual products, have them in all bathrooms.



What can you do to support, celebrate, and affirm Two-Spirit and Indigiqueer folks?

Put "2S" at the beginning of the acronym.

"2SLGBTQ+" instead of "LGBTQ+"
or even "LGBTQQ2S+"



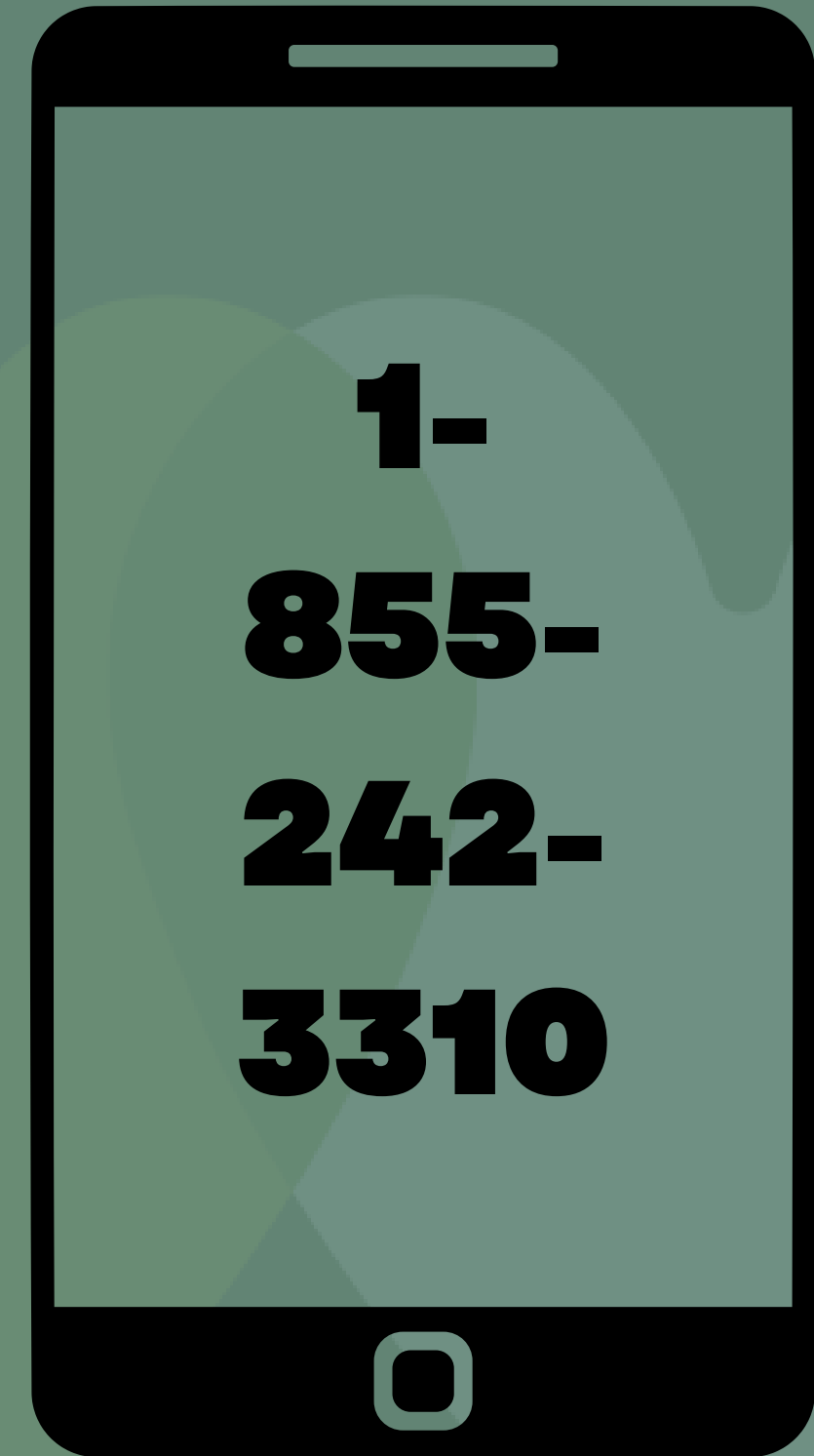
What can you do to support, celebrate, and affirm Two-Spirit and Indigiqueer folks?

Promote **culturally relevant mental health and crisis resources** for 2SLGBTQ+ Indigenous youth and adults.



Hope for Wellness Help Line

- Offers immediate help to **all Indigenous peoples** across Canada.
- Available 24/7 for counselling and crisis intervention.
- **Phone and chat counselling** available in English and French.
- On request, phone counselling is also available in **Cree, Ojibway, and Inuktitut.**



www.hopeforwellness.ca

What can you do to support, celebrate, and affirm Two-Spirit and Indigiqueer folks?

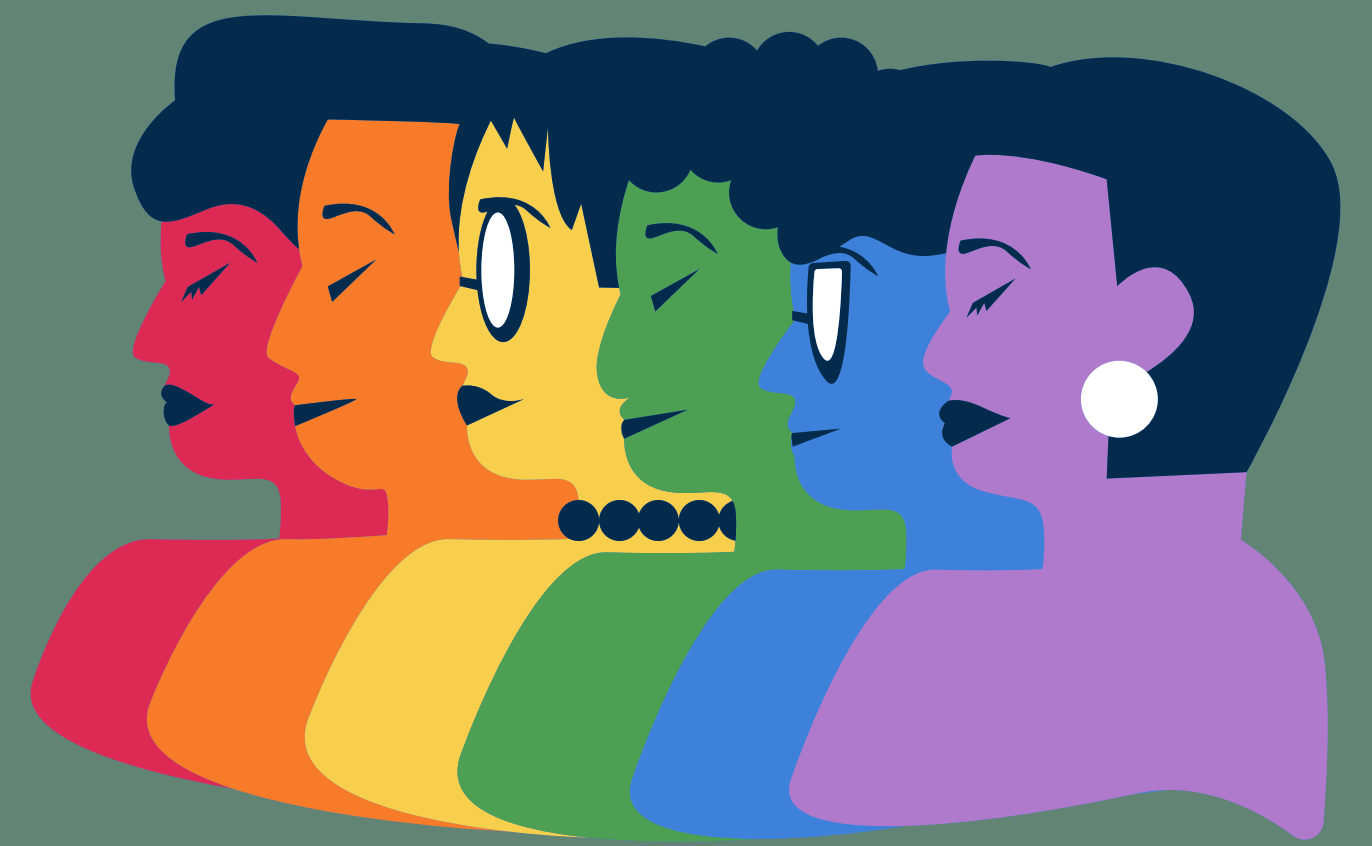
Provide resources for Indigiqueer colleagues, students, clients, and friends to **connect to their culture.**



tapah̄têyimôkamik: the humble lodge

Research project at the U of A that aims to co-create inclusive rites of passage for Indigenous 2SLGBTQIA+ youth and their kinship relations.

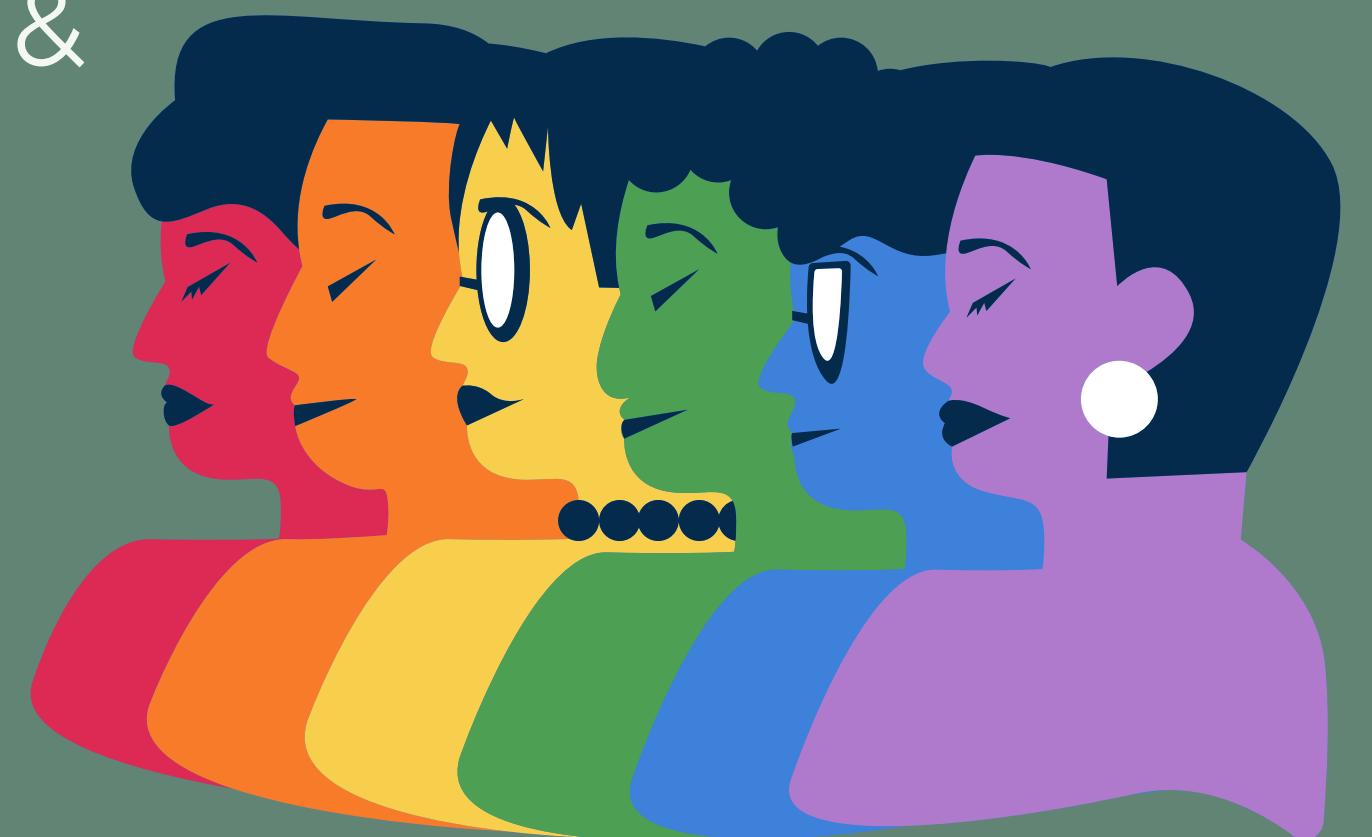
Project lead is Dr. Lana Whiskeyjack
lwhiskey@ualberta.ca



2Spirit, Native LGBTQ, & Indigiqueer News

Facebook

Shares announcements about gatherings, conferences, sweats, ceremonies, retreats, and other Two-Spirit, Native LGBTQ & Indigiqueer Special Events

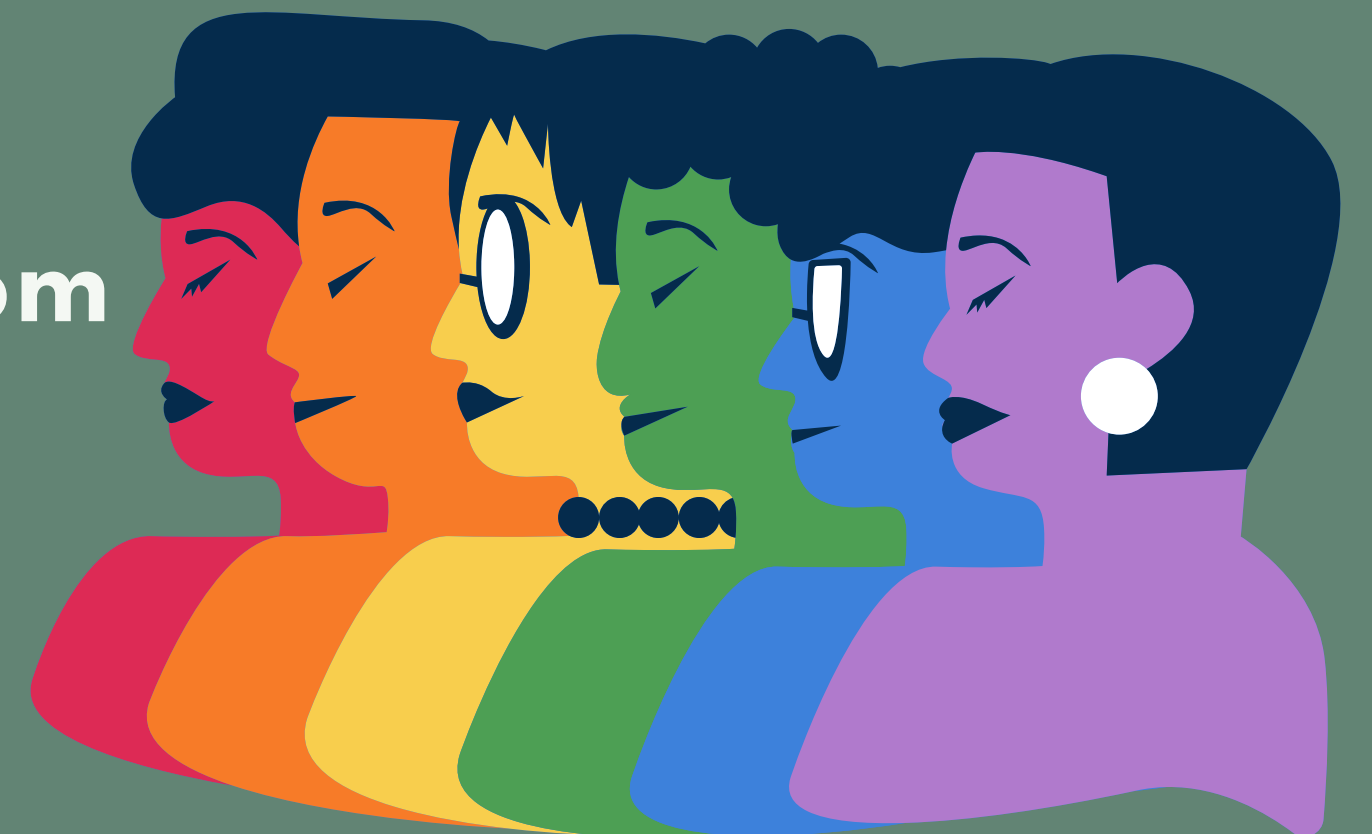


Native Youth Sexual Health Network (NYSHN)

An organization by and for Indigenous youth that works across issues of sexual and reproductive health, rights and justice throughout the United States and Canada.

info@nativeyouthsexualhealth.com

<https://www.nativeyouthsexualhealth.com>



What can you do to support, celebrate, and affirm Two-Spirit and Indigiqueer folks?

Know whose **traditional lands** your workplace is on.

Research and acknowledge which nations call that land home, what they call themselves in their own language, what happened to them, what their teachings are.

Include a land acknowledgement (including your commitments to reconciliation) on your website, signage, etc.



What can you do to support, celebrate, and affirm Two-Spirit and Indigiqueer folks?

Tell your Indigiqueer clients that their gender and sexual identity is **sacred**, and that they are so loved and appreciated **just for being who they are.**

Affirm that their Indigeneity is not at odds with their queerness. Share the resources I've provided and encourage connection to culture.



What happens when we support and celebrate Indigenous 2SLGBTQ+ Folks?

When Indigiqueer kids feel loved and supported, they grow up into **healthy queer adults**, who are then role models for what **queer joy can look like across a lifetime**, reproducing **Indigiqueer joy** instead of generational queer trauma.

What happens when we support and celebrate Indigenous 2SLGBTQ+ Folks?

- **Our communities flourish.**
 - Risk factors are mitigated

What happens when we support and celebrate Indigenous 2SLGBTQ+ Folks?

You are supporting **decolonizing** efforts through the *resurgence* of traditionally-grounded ways of viewing gender and sexuality.



The Future I Imagine

One in which people of all ages are free to pursue themselves ***wholly and authentically***, without limiting *colonial, patriarchal, heteronormative / cisnormative* views on what gender and sexuality should look like.



The Future I Imagine

A **gender-full** society.

One in which folks are encouraged to pursue *gender euphoria* in ways that are **freeing**, not restrictive.

So we all benefit.

Questions for discussion and reflection:

- What is something you learned today that particularly stood out to you?
- How comfortable do you feel interacting with and supporting Two-Spirit / Indigenous LGBTQ+ folks now?
- How will you use this information going forward in your work and life?

Mah'si cho!



Rae Madge (she/her)

*Program Coordinator for
Where The Rivers Meet*

wtrm@ualberta.ca

ermadge@ualberta.ca



Survey:

