

The SOGIESC Allyship Manual: Tools for Inclusive Settlement Work

A training resource for settlement professionals supporting 2SLGBTQIA+ newcomers in New Brunswick

Funded by:



Immigration, Refugees
and Citizenship Canada

Financé par :

Immigration, Réfugiés
et Citoyenneté Canada



NEW BRUNSWICK
MULTICULTURAL
COUNCIL
CONSEIL
MULTICULTUREL DU
NOUVEAU-BRUNSWICK



pride • inclusion • equality





Hadeel Ibrahim

Executive Director at the Chorma NB

Hadeel is an Iraqi-Canadian who has made Saint John home. After a decade-long career as a local news journalist, she transitioned to the non-profit sector to deepen her commitment to social justice, equity, equality, and human rights. She is dedicated to building bridges across differences and pushing for a community where authenticity is not a privilege.



Carmen Budilean

Director of Programs at the New Brunswick Multicultural Council (NBMC)

She oversees Imagine NB (youth leadership), IMvisible NB (newcomer women), RePresent NB (EDI initiatives), the Settlement Sector Academy (SSA), and the Rural Settlement Network (RSN), strengthening equity and sector capacity. With over 8 years of senior management experience, she specializes in leadership development, program design, and community engagement. Trilingual in English, French, and Romanian, she also holds a Master's in Public Administration. Her work focuses on building inclusive, equitable spaces through collaboration with governments, schools, and community partners across New Brunswick.



Jessica Morales

fled gender-based violence in El Salvador, seeking refuge and a new beginning in Canada. Her journey highlights the realities faced by displaced women and LGBTQ+ migrants navigating Canada's immigration system. She has contributed to grassroots, arts, and advocacy initiatives that strengthen communities and promote social justice. A recipient of the Ontario Arts Council Theatre Creators' Reserve Grant and the Hispanic Women's Network Women in Leadership Award, Jessica now works with the New Brunswick Multicultural Council and uses her lived experience to help create safer, more welcoming spaces for newcomers across the province.



Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that we are in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq People. This territory is covered by the "Treaties of Peace and Friendship," which Mi'kmaq, Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet), and Passamaquoddy Peoples first signed with the British Crown in the 1700s. These treaties did not involve the surrender of land or resources but recognized Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqiyik rights and established the basis for respectful, ongoing nation-to-nation relationships.

About Our Organizations



Chroma NB is the only 2SLGBTQIA+ resource centre in the Saint John region, serving the province of New Brunswick.

We provide education and community resources.

Our work includes allyship training for local businesses and non-profits, connecting queer youth and adults to resources, creating accessible spaces for community connection, and advocating for a world where all identities are recognized and celebrated.



The New Brunswick Multicultural Council (NBMC) is a bilingual, non-profit, umbrella organization that brings together over 20 member agencies across the province to advance immigration, settlement, and cultural diversity. Since its founding in 1983, NBMC has worked to build a more welcoming, equitable, and inclusive New Brunswick by supporting newcomers, strengthening member organizations, and promoting multiculturalism as a driver of social and economic growth.

Why This Matters



First Point of Contact

Settlement work is often the first interaction newcomers have as they begin building their lives in Canada.



Addressing Misinformation

Conversations about SOGIESC can be uncomfortable when people lack access to accurate information.



Unique Barriers

2SLGBTQIA+ newcomers face distinct challenges related to safety, housing, family acceptance, and service access.

Recognizing these differences helps us respond with empathy and facts rather than fear, ensuring our work truly supports equity, safety, and belonging for all.



My Journey to Safety

My story begins in El Salvador, a place marked by violence and discrimination, especially for LGBTQ+ individuals. The constant threats and fear were a daily reality.

Escalating Threats



I faced severe homophobia at home, school, and work. Activism was dangerous; even attending Pride meant hiding our faces. After escalating threats, I had to flee urgently, leaving my partner and her daughter behind for their safety.

Crossing the Border



I sought protection in Canada, but not without immense challenges. I crossed the border on foot due to policies like the Safe Third Country Agreement, arriving with nothing but hope.

Rebuilding a Life



With no money or support network, refugee services, Legal Aid, and settlement programs became my lifeline. I rebuilt my life through survival jobs, volunteering, and community support, navigating years of uncertainty while awaiting my refugee hearing.

Advocacy and Hope



Today, I work at the New Brunswick Multicultural Council, supporting newcomers to rebuild their lives. My journey highlights the critical importance of strong refugee, settlement, and income-support systems. For many, we aren't seeking 'more,' but simply safety, dignity, and a chance to start again.





Bill C-16 & Human Rights



2016 Milestone

In 2016, the Government of Canada passed Bill C-16, making gender identity and gender expression protected under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the federal Human Rights Act. Most provinces, including New Brunswick, have since updated their own human rights codes to reflect this change.



What Does This Mean?

Just like other protected grounds — such as religion, race, and economic status — sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression are legally protected against discrimination. This means that in public spaces, workplaces, and community settings, everyone has the right to be treated with dignity and respect, regardless of how they identify.

Power

The Power of Language



"I realize that definitions spark controversy and disagreement, but I'm okay with that. I'd rather we debate the meaning of words that are important to us than not discuss them at all. We need common language to help us create awareness and understanding, which is essential to Wholehearted living."

— Brené Brown, *The Gifts of Imperfection*

History & Gender Across Cultures

Understanding these perspectives challenges the idea that 2SLGBTQIA+ identities are new or "Western" concepts.



Indigenous Two-Spirit

Many Indigenous cultures in North America recognize Two-Spirit people as holding special roles within their communities.



Hijra Communities

Recognized as a third gender in India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh for centuries.



Muxes in Mexico

A recognized identity in Zapotec culture that predates colonization.



Historical Figures

Leaders like Marsha P. Johnson, James Baldwin, and Karl Heinrich Ulrichs contributed significantly to LGBTQ+ rights and visibility.

Creating Brave Spaces



Difficult conversations

are necessary for fostering understanding, growth, and inclusion. When discussing topics related to 2SLGBTQIA+ identities, emotions can run high due to personal beliefs, cultural backgrounds, or fear of saying the wrong thing. This section provides guidance on navigating these conversations with empathy, respect, and open-mindedness.



Brave spaces

By fostering brave spaces, we create environments where learning, self-reflection, and meaningful change can take place. These spaces encourage not just tolerance, but genuine understanding and allyship. This build stronger relationships with our families, friends, and overall communities!

Difficult Conversations & Emotions



Prepare Yourself

Ground yourself in knowledge and self-awareness before engaging.



Listen Actively

Create space for genuine dialogue and understanding.



Respond with Empathy

Acknowledge emotions while staying grounded in facts.



Manage Emotional Reactions

Encourage tolerance, genuine understanding and allyship.



Seek Common Ground

Focus on shared human values and mutual respect.





Faith and Allyship

Ways to Be an Ally Within a Faith Context

- Practice active listening without judgment
- Learn from faith leaders who advocate for inclusion
- Challenge discriminatory rhetoric aligned with your faith's values
- Support inclusive spaces in faith communities
- Foster dialogue emphasizing love, kindness, and respect

"As an immigrant queer Muslim woman of color, I feel nonexistent, sometimes even within my queer community...But Allah never left me. I never left Allah."

— Yunique



Navigating Common Concerns



Learning the Right Terminology

You don't need to know everything to be a good ally. The most important part is being open to learning and willing to ask questions respectfully. It's okay to make mistakes as long as you listen and adjust.



When Your Child Questions Their Gender

Fear is natural, but your child needs your love and acceptance. You don't need all the answers — your willingness to listen and support them is key. Seek guidance from experts and connect with support groups.



Cultural Barriers to Acceptance

Focus on shared human values and rights. Acceptance doesn't mean agreement — it means showing respect and kindness. Connect with community role models and explore examples of leaders from your culture who support 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals.

Group Exercises - 15 min

Group A

- How can I be a good ally if I don't know the right terminology?

Group B

- My child is questioning their gender, and I am scared.

Is that okay?

Group C

- My family comes from a place where people are not accepting of 2SLGBTQIA+ identities.

How can I help my family understand and accept this?

Group A- How can I be a good ally if I don't know the right terminology?

Many newcomers may feel apprehensive about using the correct terminology for fear of making mistakes. Understanding terminology can be a barrier for some, but it's important to recognize that everyone is learning.

Good news, *You don't need to know everything to be a good ally.* The most important part is being open to learning and willing to ask questions respectfully. It's okay to make mistakes as long as you are willing to listen and adjust your language. A good ally also uses inclusive language to make others feel safe and valued and seeks out resources, training, and opportunities to learn.



Group B- My child is questioning their gender, and I am scared. Is that okay?

Many parents may feel fear or uncertainty when their child expresses questioning their gender identity, often due to a lack of understanding or fear of societal backlash. These emotions are natural but need to be addressed with empathy.

It's important to focus on creating a supportive environment for your child. Seeking guidance from experts and connecting with support groups can help ease your fears. It's crucial to remember that your child needs your love and acceptance to navigate their journey confidently. You don't need to have all the answers, but your willingness to listen and support them is key.

Reflect on times in your own youth when you felt misunderstood by your parents or others. Remember, not seeing eye to eye or being exposed to new ways of thinking is a common experience across generations.



Group C- My family comes from a place where people are not accepting of 2SLGBTQIA+ identities. How can I help my family understand and accept this?

It's important to foster understanding while acknowledging the cultural and emotional barriers that may exist. Focus on shared human values and rights and create a compassionate environment for dialogue. Encourage open discussions and help your family understand that acceptance doesn't necessarily mean agreement but showing respect and kindness. Connecting with community role models and experts can also help bridge gaps in understanding. One way to bridge gaps in understanding is to connect with community role models and experts who can provide guidance. Additionally, exploring examples of organizations and leaders from your home culture or community who support 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals can be powerful.



What Next? Goal Setting



Today

What is one step you can take today to be a better ally?



This Year

What is one step you can take over the next year to be a better ally?



In Your Community

What ways can you support 2SLGBTQIA+ inclusion in your community?



Your Strengths

What one allyship skill or topic do you feel very confident in?



Growth Areas

What's one allyship skill or topic you feel you need more learning or help on?

Sources & Further Learning

Creating Space Toolkit (No Hate in the Hammer)

Provides strategies for creating inclusive spaces in various community contexts.

<https://nohateinthehammer.ca/toolkit/creating-space/>

Independent Lens: A Map of Gender-Diverse Cultures

A documentary exploring gender diversity across various cultures, expanding the understanding of non-binary identities.

<https://www.thirteen.org/program-content/independent-lens-a-map-of-gender-diverse-cultures/>

Egale Canada Resources

A comprehensive collection of resources focused on LGBTQIA+ inclusion, rights, and education.

<https://egale.ca/resources/#category=resources>

Crisis Lines

Kids Help Phone

Call: 1-800-668-6868 (toll-free)

Text: CONNECT to 686868

Website: [Kids Help Phone](#)

LGBTQ Youth Line

Call: 1-800-268-9688

Text: 647-694-4275

Trans Lifeline

Call: 1-877-330-6366

Website: [Trans Lifeline](#)

Hope for Wellness Helpline

(Available 24/7 to all Indigenous people across Canada)

Call: 1-855-242-3310 (toll-free)

Chat online: [Hope for Wellness](#)

9-8-8: Suicide Crisis Helpline

Call or text: 9-8-8 (24/7)

Available in English and French. Connect with a trained professional for help with mental health or crisis support.

Sexual Violence New Brunswick

Phone: (506) 454-0437

Thank you!



Chroma NB

General Inquiries Query@chromanb.ca

Education/ Resource specific questions

Education@chromanb.ca

Chroma NB PO Box 203

Saint John, New Brunswick

E2L 3X8



NBMC

General Inquiries info@nbmc-cmnb.ca

Settlement Sector Academy

<https://www.nbmc-cmnb.ca/ssa>