

# Lesson One

## Indigenous 2SLGBTQI+ Pre- and Post-Colonization

### Lesson Objective

Students will learn that Indigenous understandings of gender and sexual orientation differed significantly from European understandings of gender and sexual orientation and that the process of colonization saw Indigenous understanding repressed until very recently.

### Driving Question

How have many Indigenous people resisted the European view of normality?

### Materials

- Backgrounder: A Clash of Values: Colonization in Canada (page 22)
- Reading: "[What Is Two-Spirit? Part One: Origins](#)," by Scott de Groot"

### Lesson Summary

Students will be introduced to the concept of normality and European ideology of gender and sexual orientation. The lesson aims to show how colonization had negative effects on Indigenous 2SLGBTQI+ individuals and cultures, and to show how people and groups resisted imposed colonial ideologies.

Students will learn about some Indigenous nations' complex understandings of gender and sexual orientation. Students will learn about the negative effects that colonization-imposed prohibitions against 2SLGBTQI+ expressions had on North American (Turtle Island) First Nation cultures and how, for many years, Indigenous individuals and groups fought back against this colonial prejudice and oppression.

### Pre-Teaching Supports

This lesson requires students to have a basic understanding of the process and impacts of colonization of Indigenous peoples in Canada. If students are unfamiliar with this subject, they can learn more in this article entitled "[Colonialism in Canada](#)" (*The Canadian Encyclopedia*).

It should be noted that not all Indigenous 2SLGBTQI+ have adopted the term Two-Spirit. Some Indigenous people prefer the term Indigiqueer. Others use LGBTQI+ and there is a growing movement to reclaim the traditional terms used in the language of their First Nation. Students should note that only Indigenous individuals can adopt a Two-Spirit identity or identify as Two-Spirit.

Further Two-Spirit resources and research opportunities can be found at the [Two-Spirit Archives at the University of Winnipeg](#). This archive is one of the most significant repositories of correspondence, poetry, photographs, artwork, textiles, journalism, multimedia and ephemera related to the Indigenous Two-Spirit movement in North America.

# Instructions for Teachers

## Introductory Discussion

1. How is a “normal” day different for a student/parent/doctor/professional athlete, etc.?
2. Who decides what it is to be “normal”? How are they able to dictate this normality?
3. Can you identify some of the ways the concept of being “normal” has changed in society throughout history?
4. How do different cultures see gender and sexual orientation?

## Reading

Backgrounder: A Clash of Values: Colonization in Canada (page 22)

## Follow-up Discussion/Assigned Questions

1. How did colonization contribute to the erasure of diverse expressions of sexual orientation and gender identity in Indigenous cultures?
2. What methods did the Canadian government adopt to eradicate many of those historical Indigenous understandings of gender and sexual orientation?
3. In what ways have Indigenous 2SLGBTQI+ individuals and communities created visibility on Turtle Island?

## Additional Reading

[“The Re-emergence of 2Spirit People in the 21st Century,” by Albert McLeod](#): This article is also published in the catalogue *Love in a Dangerous Time: Canada’s LGBT Purge – Reflections on queer history and why it matters today*, pp. 30-39.