



CHF Canada



LGBT2SQ Inclusive Co-op Communities

Revised 2018





Housing co-ops have historically been welcoming places where all members have the right to live with dignity, free from harassment and discrimination. All co-op members play a role in making sure their co-op is a safe and inclusive place to live. This resource is about building awareness and fostering an understanding about issues for members of the LGBT2SQ community.

What is an inclusive co-op community?

Inclusive co-op communities are where all members are welcomed and respected. LGBT2SQ members may experience discrimination or harassment in their daily lives and in their housing co-op. Housing co-ops should try to create a safer place for their members and respond to all forms of discrimination and harassment.

LGBT2SQ members can experience discrimination in complex ways. For example, someone's race, nationality, class, age, ability and other factors can make their experience more challenging. If you want to know how to make LGBT2SQ members feel safer in your co-op, ask them what they want and need to feel safe and welcome.

Safer spaces are where members:

- are non-judgemental and treat all members with respect
- do not tolerate homophobic, biphobic or transphobic language, jokes or actions
- believe that all members have a right to be heard
- do not assume gender identity, gender expression, pronouns (he/she/they, him/her/them) or sexual orientation

Don't be afraid to ask people what words they'd like used to describe themselves. You may feel awkward when you ask, but it's important to get it right!



LGBT2SQ rights are human rights

It is important to recognize the rights of LGBT2SQ people in the same way as any other human right. All Canadian citizens are guaranteed equal protection against discrimination regardless of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, family status or disability. Each province and territory has a human rights code that protects people from discrimination based on specific grounds like race or sexual orientation. You can find your provincial or territorial human rights code and related resources on [CHF Canada's website](#).



What can co-op members do?

You can help create inclusive co-op communities by being an ally. An ally is someone who doesn't identify as LGBT2SQ, but supports equal rights for LGBT2SQ communities.

Part of being an ally is addressing discrimination when it happens, or taking steps to make sure it doesn't happen again. It is important to deal with discrimination in safe and respectful ways. If dealing with someone's behaviour doesn't feel safe, bring it up with your co-op's board.

An ally

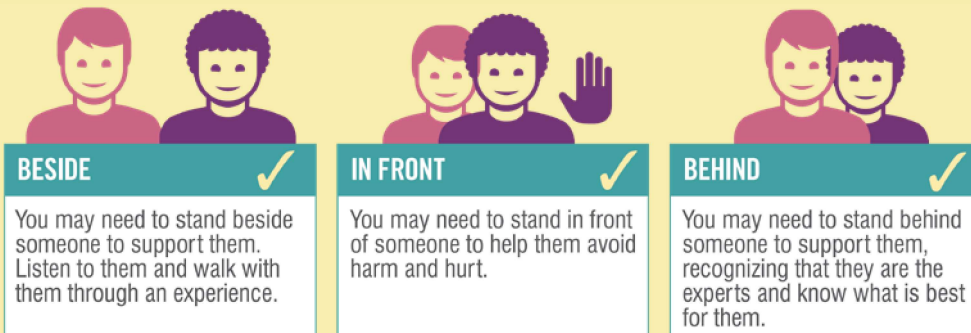
- ✓ is compassionate
- ✓ is a good listener
- ✓ is open to talking and learning
- ✓ uses supportive and affirming language
- ✓ recognizes everyone's dignity and worth
- ✓ is committed to speaking up and stopping hurtful behaviour when possible.



Supporting trans people in your co-op

- Listen to the experiences of trans people and ask how you can support them.
- Don't assume someone's gender identity based on their appearance. Ask someone what pronouns they would like you to use.
- Understand that people's identities are deeply important to them, and that it is often hurtful and embarrassing to be referred to as the wrong gender. If you make a mistake, apologize. Everyone makes mistakes and that's okay! If and when someone points out your mistake, acknowledge the wrong that has been done, apologize and work to do better going forward.
- Think about your co-op's systems. For example, if your co-op's forms ask people about their gender (i.e. Male/Female) or use a salutation (i.e. Ms/Mr), consider removing these fields or adding "my gender is" or "I use" as a fill-in-the-blank option.
- Avoid using words like "sir" and "ma'am" or "this woman/man" for people you don't know.

DIFFERENT WAYS TO SUPPORT



GRAPHIC COURTESY "CREATING AUTHENTIC SPACES" TOOLKIT, THE 519

What does LGBT2SQ stand for?

LGBT2SQ is an acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Two spirit and Queer communities. LGBT2SQ is an inclusive way to describe diverse sexual and gender identities.

Lesbian: a woman who is emotionally, physically, spiritually and/or sexually attracted to women.

Gay: a person who is emotionally, physically, spiritually and/or sexually attracted to people of the same gender. The word can refer to people of all genders.

Bisexual: a person who is emotionally, physically, spiritually and/or sexually attracted to people of more than one gender, though not necessarily at the same time.

Trans/Transgender: an umbrella term referring to people with diverse gender identities and expressions that may differ from stereotypical gender norms. Trans can relate to identifying differently than the sex you were assigned at birth.

Two spirit: a term used by Indigenous people to describe, from a cultural perspective, people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, trans, or intersex, other gender, or third/fourth gender individuals that walk between genders. Traditionally, Two Spirit people were deeply respected members of their communities and were often given special status based on their unique abilities to understand both male and female perspectives. These identities were recognized and celebrated from a young age as gifts from the creator. It is important to remember that many Two Spirit people and their teachings were lost due to the impacts of colonization. Not all Indigenous people who are part of the LGBT2SQ community identify as two-spirit, but only Indigenous people can identify as two-spirit.

Queer: was a derogatory slang term used to identify LGBT2SQ people. Some members of the LGBT2SQ community have reclaimed the word as a proud identifier.

What are gender identity and gender expression?

Gender identity is about who you feel and know you are—whether you are a man, a woman, neither, both, or don't identify with these terms at all. Gender expression is how a person presents their gender identity to the world (e.g. clothes, hair, pronouns).

What is the difference between sexual orientation and gender identity?

Sexual orientation is about who you are attracted to emotionally, physically and/or sexually. Gender identity is who you feel and know you are—a man, a woman, both or neither.

