

2SLGBTQQIA Pride Month

Tuesday June 11, 2019



June is Pride Month, and as we celebrate Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex and asexual (2SLGBTQQIA) people, and all other sexual orientations and genders, it is also a time of reflection. There have been many accomplishments, but there is still much work needed to overcome deep-seated prejudices and exclusion.

Our Final Report includes experiences of Indigenous people who identify as 2SLGBTQQIA. In some cases, these truths were shared by the family members of missing and murdered Indigenous 2SLGBTQQIA people. In other cases, 2SLGBTQQIA people shared their own experiences as survivors of violence. Many who participated in the National Inquiry's processes, including Knowledge Keepers and experts, agreed that Indigenous 2SLGBTQQIA people are often forgotten in any discourse about violence, and the lack of distinctions-based data is a significant barrier in recognizing and understanding the scope of violence they face.

The testimonies we heard during the Truth Gathering Process reinforce the point that when communities are homophobic or transphobic, they are reinforcing colonial actions — both outside of Indigenous communities as well as within.

Prior to European contact, an important ethic that prevented homophobia and transphobia was that of non-interference. Through the residential school system and other colonial practices, the Canadian state forcibly altered Indigenous gender norms and imposed practices aimed at erasing and excluding accepted 2SLGBTQQIA identities, and cultural and spiritual roles. That distortion became internalized by many individuals, families and communities, and continues to have deep and damaging ramifications today.

We also heard that there is hope — a resurgence is underway in Canadian society. Social media is connecting Indigenous youth in new and powerful ways, including those who are 2SLGBTQQIA. Within Indigenous communities, there is also growing acceptance of Two-Spirit people in traditional ceremonies, such as Pow-Wows, sweat lodge ceremonies and Sun Dances. This speaks to the deep resiliency and courage of 2SLGBTQQIA people.

So as we march this month, and raise our flags, let's celebrate and redouble our efforts to extend acceptance, protections and rights to everyone. Let's be the inclusive Canada we know we can be.

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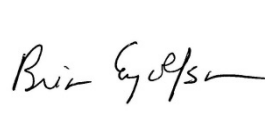
Marion Buller
Chief Commissioner

Tshinashkumitnau



Michèle Audette
Commissioner

Chi-meegwetch



Brian Eyolfson
Commissioner

Nakurmiik



Qajaq Robinson
Commissioner