

BE TOGETHER FEEL GOOD



December 2022

SEXUAL HEALTH AND DIVERSITY

THE “COMING OUT” AND “COMING IN”

Coming out is when we voluntarily announce our sexual orientation or gender identity to those around us. As for the process of “coming in”, it gives rise to the affirmation of an identity that brings together sexuality, culture, gender and all other aspects of understanding and self-knowledge. This process is unique to Indigenous peoples.¹

BEFORE WE BEGIN, HERE ARE SOME DEFINITIONS²

Sexual (and/or romantic) orientation: Sexual and/or romantic attraction that one feels towards a person.

Gender: This is the intimate and personal experience of feeling like a man, like a woman, of identifying with these two genders, with no gender or with another gender (Interligne, 2021).

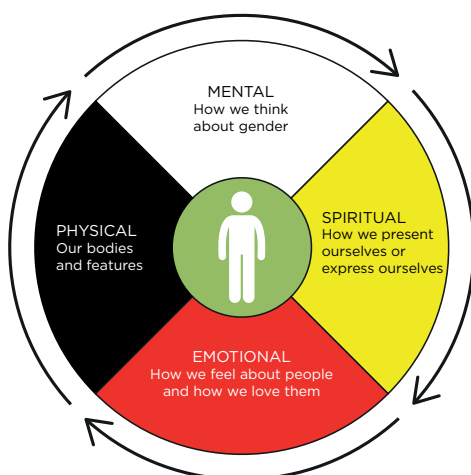
Gender expression: Gender expression refers to the codes (such as clothing, hairstyle, makeup, body language, etc.) that are used in our society to express male or female gender.

Sex assigned at birth: The biological sex corresponds to the biological characteristics of a person (such as hairiness, silhouette, hormones, genitals).

AND WHAT ABOUT TWO-SPIRITEDNESS?

Prior to colonization, sexual and gender diversity was present among First Nations. There are different terms in the First Nations languages to refer to these things (e.g., *niizh manidoowag*, in Anishinaabemowin, meaning: people who identify as having a male spirit and a female spirit.). This term also inspired the creation of the term two-spirit, which was created to encompass different spiritual, sexual and gender identities that are specific to the conceptions of each nation. The term was also created out of a need to simplify a complex concept for non-Indigenous people, who rely on gender binary parameters (male-female). Much is lost in translation due to the structure of Indigenous languages compared to non-Indigenous languages.

COMPONENTS OF SEXUAL AND GENDER IDENTITY



1. Report on Indigenous LGBTQ+ and Two-Spirit Needs: <https://familieslgbt.org/en/>
2. <https://www.teljeunes.com/Tel-jeunes/Tous-les-themes/sexualite/orientations-sexuelles-et-identites-de-genre>

We can decide whether or not to reveal these pieces of our identity to the people around us. This important step can generate different emotions (stress, worry, relief, feverishness, fear of rejection, pride). There is no right or wrong way to come out, only a way that makes you most comfortable.

Here are some things to think about to support your coming out preparations³:

L'entourage

- With whom do I feel safe?
- With whom do I feel comfortable talking about my life?
- Who in my life supports me no matter what?
- What reactions can I expect, based on what I know of the person with whom I am sharing?
- How do I want them to react?

The proceedings

- Do I want to be alone or accompanied by someone or people I trust?
- What are some of the positive or negative reactions I can expect?

The time

- What time of day would be a good time to talk? (Before school, after work, during dinner, etc.)
- What time would work best for the person to whom I want to come out?

The place

- Do I prefer it to take place in writing, face to face, by video, etc.?
- Do I prefer to be in a public or private space?

Also, make sure you have an exit point and strategy, if needed. Also make sure that you can be accompanied, if you wish, in your process by someone you trust (family, friends, counsellors) and that you are in a safe environment in which you feel good.

**You are not responsible for people's reactions to your coming out.
Everyone deserves to be respected and loved for who they are.**

SOME RESOURCES THAT CAN HELP YOU:

Do you need to talk?

Call the Hope for Wellness Helpline at

1 855 242-3310

or chat at: <https://www.hopeforwellness.ca/>

To find out more: check out our toolbox!

Do you have questions about your gender identity or sexual orientation?

Interligne

1 888 505-1010

<https://interligne.co/en/>

3. Coming Out: A Handbook for LGBTQ Young People: <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Coming-Out-Handbook.pdf>.



FIRST NATIONS OF QUEBEC
AND LABRADOR HEALTH
AND SOCIAL SERVICES
COMMISSION