

2SLGBTQI+ FAMILY INCLUSION TIP SHEET FOR SERVICE PROVIDERS

NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES ARE COMMON
FOR 2SLGBTQI+ FAMILIES
WHEN ACCESSING SOCIAL SERVICES.
FOLLOW THESE TIPS TO CREATE
A WELCOMING SPACE!

1 INTRODUCE YOURSELF WITH YOUR NAME & PRONOUNS. ASK YOUR CLIENTS THEIRS.

This will enable you to correctly identify your clients and their families, let them know you are an ally & help create a comfortable experience. Try this: "Hi, I'm ____, and I use she/her pronouns. It's nice to meet you! What's your preferred name and pronouns?"

2 ASK WHAT PARENTING LABELS YOUR CLIENT/S USE

Don't assume you know the names, labels, or structure of the 2SLGBTQI+ families to whom you are providing service. For example, don't assume the birth parent uses the label "mother." Did you know that many trans & nonbinary parents are misidentified as "same-sex" by providers?

3 ONLY ASK FOR REPRODUCTIVE INFO IF IT IMPACTS YOUR SERVICES

Remember: All families do not look alike. Children come into the world in many ways. 2SLGBTQI+ parents do not like to feel like a curiosity.

4 MAKE YOUR SIGNS, UNIT NAMES, FORMS & POLICIES INCLUSIVE OF ALL GENDERS & FAMILIES

2SLGBTQI+ families experience erasure & discrimination through gender-exclusive washrooms; forms that only include Male/Female, Mother/Father, or two-parent-only options; policies that only extend to biological/heterosexual parents; and names of departments that are gender specific and exclusive. For example, using terms like parent, guardian, partners, and spouse are more inclusive. Ask your clients which terms they would like you to use.

5 ENSURE YOUR 2SLGBTQI+ TRAINING IS INTERSECTIONAL & INCLUDES ANTI-RACISM TRAINING

Did you know 2SLGBTQI+ Indigenous, Black and racialized parents report higher incidence of being discriminated against and misrecognized as the friend, "nanny", sibling, or grandparent to their own child? Racialized 2SLGBTQI+ parents, particularly fathers, Two-Spirit, trans & nonbinary parents, report being seen as predators when doing ordinary things, like bike riding or traveling, with their children, which can lead to police intervention and criminalization. Thinking about how racial bias & gender norms influence your perception of families is important. Seeking out anti-racist and 2SLGBTQI+ equity training is key.

6 IF YOU MAKE A MISTAKE, IDENTIFY, LEARN, APOLOGIZE & MOVE ON

Mistakes happen! When they do it is important to identify your error, apologize, state a commitment to doing better & move on. It is uncomfortable for clients if you dwell on your errors.

7 ASK YOURSELF QUESTIONS

When working with 2SLGBTQI+ clients, ask yourself: Am I offering them the same benefits and protections as heterosexual families? Might our services differently impact 2SLGBTQI+ clients?

8 ENSURE YOU ARE UP-TO-DATE ON 2SLGBTQI+ LAWS & POLICIES

Make sure you know provincial equality laws & create/enforce policies that treat all 2SLGBTQI+ families equally. For example, 2SLGBTQI+ parents report being targeted & excluded by heterocentric fertility clinic policies, having to wait for child benefits, and being denied employee spousal benefits because service providers & HR Departments haven't been trained to apply equal parenting & family laws.

9 WRITE & POST YOUR COMMITMENT TO 2SLGBTQI+ FAMILIES

Create a document that lists the steps your organization/agency is taking to address 2SLGBTQI+ discrimination and be inclusive. Post this on your walls, website, and social media. Rainbow flags & positive space signs are a great start, but they are not enough!

10 BE FRIENDLY & KIND

The 2SLGBTQI+ community has a long history of being pathologized & criminalized through social services. They've been denied the same benefits as heterosexual families, faced barriers getting essential documents like birth certificates for their kids, and have even had their kids taken away due to their gender identity and sexuality. It takes bravery for them to access your services. Honour this by being kind, friendly and following these tips.