



National Tribal Sexual Assault Resource Center

Designing your work with Native Two-Spirit and LGBTQ+ Relatives in Mind

Ideally, when a new organization or program is in its earliest stages, intentional care is taken to plan for meeting the needs of everyone they may interact with. This includes considering from the onset needs for accessibility, culturally grounded programming, and spaces and services centered around the holistic needs of your unique community. We know that this pre-planning doesn't always happen, however it is never too late for organizations to build intentional spaces designed to meet the needs of all who may come for help or support.



These tips and considerations are intended for the development of sexual violence programming with Native Two-Spirit and LGBTQ+ relatives in mind, but may be applicable to a variety of populations within your community.

Mapping Activity

As a team, try visualizing and mapping out what a Native Two-Spirit or LGBTQ+ survivor would experience at your program, from when they arrive, all throughout their time receiving services and support. You may even want to include options for connections with outside partners.

Spend time thinking about and discussing what the experience really is, not just what policies or protocols say. Write down/draw each step and think about ways to strengthen areas or identify gaps. Don't forget to note the ways that you are doing well!



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Considerations for Programs Serving Native Two-Spirit and LGBTQ+ Survivors of Sexual Violence

Your Building and Physical Spaces

The way you organize any physical space sends a message to everyone who visits and works at your program.

Things to consider when setting up and developing the physical space of your organization:

- **Restrooms/Changing Rooms:** Do you have gender-neutral options? Provide accessible, private facilities when possible with clear signage. Consider highlighting what is in the space versus who will use the space.
- **Signage/Brochures/Posters:** Do you have visible, inclusive representation and imagery including Native Two-Spirit and LGBTQ+ people in your space? How are folks represented within your program's printed/digital materials? Think about ways to indicate that your space is welcoming to all.
- **Registration or Intake Forms:** Do you have space for both a legal name and a preferred name? What gender options do you include on forms? Are there ways for folks to self-identify? Do you have options for people to indicate pronouns? Know and review your reporting requirements to ensure you are only gathering necessary or required information.



An intentionally inclusive space sends a message that all are welcomed, valued, and allowed to use the space and services you are providing.



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Key Considerations for Programs Serving Native Two-Spirit and LGBTQ+ Survivors of Sexual Violence

Your Staff and Services Offered

Staff should be familiar with the ways Native Two-Spirit and LGBTQ+ survivors experience sexual violence across the lifespan and within your local community.

Things to consider to equip your staff to serve survivors and provide informed and appropriate services:

- **Provide Regular Training Opportunities:** Do you engage in ongoing learning and educate new and current staff? Training is important for ALL staff, not just direct service providers. Include leadership, admin, volunteers, interns, etc.
- **Wellness and Health:** How does your program integrate holistic needs of Indigenous survivors and staff, including addressing spiritual wellness?

It is important to know and refer to other local, state, Tribal, and national resources as needed to help support a survivor fully.



- **Inclusive Programming:** Offer programming specifically for Native Two-Spirit and LGBTQ+ survivors, that doesn't require people to "out" themselves to receive services.
- **Honor Multiple Identities:** How does your program provide space for multiple, intersecting identities? Do not only focus on gender or sexuality in programming, and avoid "othering".
- **Understand and Address Barriers:** Explore barriers for Native Two-Spirit and LGBTQ+ survivors in your community. Work to create conditions for disclosure and response/services that meet needs.



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Key Considerations for Programs Serving Native Two-Spirit and LGBTQ+ Survivors of Sexual Violence

Your Policies and Procedures:

Policies and procedures promote consistency across the organization for both staff and survivors, building a healthy environment and reputation.

Things to consider for creating guidelines and practices to serve Native Two-Spirit and LGBTQ+ survivors:

- **Clarify and Affirm Access to Services:** Do you have a written statement clearly stating that you serve all people? Many staff or programs assume that people know this, but if it isn't explicit, some may not think a program is for them.
- **Review Policies and Protections:** Do your anti-discrimination policies include sexual orientation and gender identity? Do your organization's policies on disclosures ensure everyone's privacy is being protected? Make certain staff are familiar with policies, and update as needed.



Establishing protocols to address difficult issues or problematic behavior/language with both staff and survivors can help to create safer spaces for all.

- **Update Language Usage:** Is the language in your policies and materials gender neutral where possible? Does your program use language that may make it seem as if you only serve certain genders or respond to certain types of violence (i.e. men's violence against women)? Consider where you can shift language away from gender.
- **Establish Inclusive Hiring Practices:** Take time to review job descriptions, interview structures, and hiring requirements such as background checks.



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