

It's Time for Two Spirit Reconciliation:

A CALL FOR 2SLGBTQQIA+
MÉTIS EQUITY & INCLUSION



At 70 plus, I want to see acceptance of 2SLGBTQQIA+ as part of the reconciliation process.

– Survey Respondent

It's time for all to make the call to reconciliation.

– Survey Respondent

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MÉTIS EQUITY & INCLUSION

FINAL PROJECT REPORT February 2023

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This report is dedicated to Traditional Grandmothers Barbara Bruce and Charlotte Nolin, who grew up and worked during a time when 2SLGBTQQIA+ rights were limited or non-existent, and who persevered in the truth of their identities and spiritual practice; And to all our Two Spirit ancestors whose wisdom we draw upon and who have forged the path forward.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Two Worlds, Two Spirits: Gathering the Circle of 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis in British Columbia is a first of its kind research and community-building project for 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis community members in this province. The work has been supported by a variety of organizations, including the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Métis Nation of Greater Victoria, Métis Nation British Columbia, Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak, and the Fraser Valley Métis Association.

This report, entitled *It's Time for Two Spirit Reconciliation: A Call for 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis Inclusion and Equity*, represents the culmination and major outcome of a series of project activities and deliverables, which have included a literature review, online survey, and a major community engagement event. The online survey has produced what may be the first 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis specific data in the province.

At its heart, this report includes a series of categorized recommendations for Métis governments, in particular the Métis Nation British Columbia, chartered communities and other organizations and/or governments built around 12 key themes:

- Identity Validation
- Community Inclusion, Safety, and Acceptance
- Governance and Representation
- Housing
- Health
- Mental Health
- Cultural Wellness
- Human Rights and Discrimination
- Personal Safety and Justice
- Education and Training
- Economic Development
- Seniors and Youth

All who have participated in this project at every level of activity have expressed a desire for this type of work to continue, as it represents only the beginning of the truth and reconciliation journey for Two Spirit

people, and for new connections with peers and mentors to remain strong. All share a unified goal of coming together to make things better for all members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ Métis community.

Evaluation feedback of the event itself was constructive and very positive. The majority enjoyed all aspects of the event, were particularly grateful for the teachings and presence of Two Spirit Elders Barbara Bruce and Charlotte Nolin, believed the research focus questions were appropriate, and greatly appreciated the “unprecedented” ability to gather as 2SLBTQQIA+ Métis.

A roll-up of all recommendations appears in the final section of this report.



INTRODUCTION

We need more 2SLGBTQQIA+ programs to help our 2SLGBTQQIA+ believe in themselves.

– Survey Respondent

There is a critical need for the Métis Nation to engage in reconciliation efforts with 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis Citizens, and for community members to redress the combined impact of colonization on the basis of Indigeneity and discrimination on the basis of 2SLGBTQQIA+ identity. This intersectional erasure has created multiple barriers and impacts the 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis community both inside and outside Métis structures. Whereas many non-2SLGBTQQIA+ Indigenous people have reported the ability to find a greater sense of safety, community, and collective rights within their Indigenous nations, 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis have expressed that there has not been a safe space to call home within the Métis Nation. This double oppression compounds the experience of the longstanding exclusion or erasure of Métis people from society, and the rejection 2SLGBTQQIA+ people have experienced both in colonial society, and within Métis circles and structures. In fact, many survey respondents and event participants report feeling less accepted in Métis circles than in the general society. This is a distressing state, for the individual and the Métis Nation. In many ways, Two Spirit people are the forgotten spirits of the “forgotten people,” and through these colonial processes 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis have also lost a healthy sense of self. As one survey respondent highlighted, “We need more 2SLGBTQQIA+ programs and initiatives to help our 2SLGBTQQIA+ believe in themselves.”

There was a time when Two Spirit people in Métis culture were validated, accepted, and respected as traditional knowledge keepers. The loss of their traditional roles and the impacts of subsequent exclusion have been devastating and far reaching for 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis people, and indeed this loss of involvement of vibrant and talented people has been a loss for the Nation itself. Due to the uncertainty of acceptance, many do not openly identify as 2SLGBTQQIA+, or when they do, they are prepared for misunderstanding and rejection: “Always, every single time we come out, there is a chance we may not be accepted. This is a constant soundtrack to the background of our lives.”

Always, every single time we come out, there is a chance we may not be accepted. This is a constant soundtrack to the background of our lives.

– Survey Respondent

When 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis people can gather in a safe, supportive, accepting atmosphere, the depth of their insights, breadth of compassion, and height of aspirations are abundantly apparent. The feeling of safety and connection which occur can be both healing and motivating for those involved. As one respondent described, “Two-spirited find the one-ness amongst us all....”

The desire to “come in” to community, a term coined by Dr. Alex Wilson¹, and overcome this colonial inheritance of discrimination in Métis communities to be fully accepted and equitably supported members of the Métis Nation was strongly expressed by survey respondents and event participants. “Alex Wilson’s work has been incredibly affirming, particularly with respect to “Coming In.” Some knowledge keepers have shared that Two Spirit are halfway between the natural world and supernatural world, are sent here to maintain balance and “correct” including relief from stagnancy.”

This Project Report provides a starting set of policy and program recommendations for Métis governments and organizations to address the exclusion of 2SLGBTQQIA+ people in the explicit life of the Nation. These recommendations have been generated from an analysis of new primary data sources made possible by this project, including an online survey and in-person engagement session of 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis community members. By recognizing the systemic bias that 2SLGBTQQIA+ people have and continue to face, we can all forge a stronger Métis Nation together.

This report also highlights recommendations that are specific to 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis seniors and youth, as those groups have faced compound barriers.

As this project is framed primarily as a community engagement event and is the first specific data collected on 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis in British Columbia, the statistical and analytical findings of the report are preliminary in nature. The online survey collected responses from 66 respondents, which is a significant outcome given most online surveys hosted on the Métis Nation British Columbia website gather approximately 200 responses, and the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community is

1 Wilson, Alex. (1996). How we find ourselves: Identity development and two-spirit people. Harvard Educational Review, Volume 66(2), 303-317. Also see [Dr. Alex Wilson | Professor and Director of Aboriginal Education Research Centre \(usask.ca\)](#)

thought to be smaller, though by what proportion is undetermined. The community engagement event was attended by 22 participants, and represented a healthy cross-section of diverse identities, ages, and experiences.

It should be noted that the majority of the quotations used in this report were excerpted from the online survey, as those comments can be used verbatim, while many general observations and recommendations were generated from the community engagement, where general note capture was utilized.

The project has also committed to sharing the final report with event participants, and ensuring that the official project host organization, Métis Nation of Greater Victoria, receives and stores all collected research information.



DESCRIPTION OF THE GATHERING



The DRUM-C group performed along with participants on the second evening.








The major activity of this project was a three-day community-building and engagement event entitled “Two Worlds, Two Spirits: Gathering the Circle of 2SLGBTQIA+ Métis in British Columbia.” The event spanned three days in total, with a Welcome Reception on the first evening; an engagement event, ceremonial activities, and an evening of celebration on the second day, including a sash ceremony; and a final day of activities and discussion on the third day, including the presentation of preliminary survey results. The first day was opened by MNBC President Lissa Dawn Smith and CEO Colette Trudeau. In addition to formal facilitation by Project Lead Sasha Hobbs (HSI), the event was emceed by Pixie Wells, President of the Fraser Valley Métis Association, and Métis Nation British Columbia Minister Louis de Jaeger. The presence, interest and support of Métis leaders was important to the participants and signalled the high value of the event.

The inclusion of Two Spirit traditional grandmothers, Barbara Bruce and Charlotte Nolin seated at the centre, who travelled from Manitoba thanks to the sponsorship of Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak (LFMO), was significant, and added an incalculable value to the event. The event benefitted greatly by their presence, cultural knowledge, and spiritual guidance.

An important observation was the realization of how culturally disconnected the 2SLGBTQIA+ Métis community has become through the erosion of their collective self-esteem by the forces of colonization, religious discrimination, and community exclusion. For many who attended the event, the cultural ceremonies hosted by traditional grandmothers Barbara and Charlotte were one of the first, or in some cases the very first, cultural ceremonies they had ever participated in. The power of a renewed spiritual connection was palpable, and included many personal breakthroughs in various forms, from quiet tears of cultural relief, to newly empowered passions to create change.

2SLGBTQQIA+ MÉTIS COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT

Based on the survey results, 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis in British Columbia reflect the following trends:

-  We are resilient.
We are all ages, live across BC, gravitate to urban areas, and work at all levels.
We are culturally and spiritually inclined.
We are seeking greater community connection.
-  Our youth are interested in learning more about culture.
When youth engage with MNBC, membership, culture, and training and education are the top interests.
13% of youth who completed the survey have been or are in care.
-  Our seniors and elders are highly engaged.
100% of seniors and elders had to hide their identity as younger people.
78% of our seniors and elders do not have close friends or family to help support them as they age.
-  Close to 75% of our community access some form of services.
Cultural services, membership, and training are the most accessed resources.
39% access non-Métis specific Indigenous services.
27% access non-Métis specific 2SLGBTQQIA+ services.
-  Over half of our community do not hold any traditional teachings, and 75% did not learn about Two Spirit culture within their family and community connections.
Over 87% are extremely or very interested in learning more about traditional Two Spirit roles.

∞ Only 4% of survey respondents attended residential schools, but over 25% had a parent or grandparent who attended.
We are highly educated.
Over 60% of us hold bachelors, masters, doctorates, or other professional designations.
Our identities have impacted our career choice, at over 64%.
Only 20% of us have accessed Métis employment services.
Nearly 40% of us have felt discriminated against during a hiring process.

∞ 59% of us work in a helping field, including healthcare, education, criminal justice, or governance.
We span the income spectrum, but the majority earn under \$60K a year.
75% have some confidence in our ability to support ourselves and our families.
Over 83% of us are interested in greater financial literacy/workshops.

∞ Only 28% own our own homes or contribute to mortgage.
Over 57% of us have felt discriminated against while accessing housing, and many who have not, did not disclose their 2SLGBTQIA+ identity while seeking housing.
28% of us have moved due to our 2SLGBTQIA+ identity.
34% of us have experienced homelessness, including 1 in 5 youth.

∞ 60% of us feel safer due to human rights legislation, but 40% do not.
The Human Rights Code and the legal right to marry were identified as the most important contributors to equal rights for 2SLGBTQIA+ Métis people.

∞ Over 32% of us rarely or never disclose our identity to healthcare providers.
Only 45% agree that we believe we will receive quality healthcare services.
Over 67% of us avoid seeking healthcare at least sometimes.
Only 4% of us agree that we receive culturally supportive healthcare services.

∞ 74% of us access some form of mental health support.
74% of us have been diagnosed or treated for a mental health condition.
57% of us rarely or never access cultural practitioners to improve our wellbeing.
86% of us would access Two Spirit Elders if available.
24% of us have self-identified substance abuse issues.
82% have experienced suicidal ideation in the past.
92% of us would access Two Spirit counsellor services if available.

∞ Despite greater awareness in general society and inclusion in human rights legislation, 2SLGBTQIA+ Métis feel a sense of belonging and acceptance only about half the time (53.8%)



KEY THEMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1.0 IDENTITY VALIDATION

We need our communities to understand our roles have been taken away from us.

– Survey Respondent

The importance of being accepted for who you are is foundational to a person's positive experience in this world. Imagine living your life being afraid to share a core part of your identity with others and making continuous selective choices of when to do so based on real or perceived physical or psychological safety. This has been the shared experience of 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis people in many aspects of their lives.

As one survey respondent explained, "I just recently felt safe to share my 2S identity at age 45. I honestly did not know how to describe myself in this way up til now. The non-indigenous gender equality movement has helped us but is also a box I try to avoid. I use their terminology to spark connections in hopes they will be more open to hearing what my understanding is about being 2S and our beautiful history to help them see it is not a new thing. They are as usual, stealing other cultural identifiers and passing it off as their idea. Typical behavior."

Another survey respondent also expressed the difficulty of exclusion from the system, "People who fit within the binary of male or female have the privilege of growing up with role models, stories, and a place within their community. I didn't get that growing up, and as a result I sometimes feel like an outsider in Métis spaces, or even like a disappointment because I don't fit the binary model."

Related to exclusion from role models, one respondent noted that the very process of changing one's legal identification can itself be a barrier: "The biggest problem I had when I changed my name, gender etc was that there was no 'guide' on what to do. I had to figure out everything myself. From how to get a new birth certificate, updating ID, changing passports, getting fingerprints, updating my SIN etc.

*Coming out is a slow
and tender process.*

– Survey Respondent

It would be handy to have a guide on everything that needs to be changed when you are trans but that may be more of a provincial/federal government thing than MNBC.”

Even how we set up identity questions is complex. “I appreciate that this survey allowed me to identify my gender as well as my orientation (female and 2S) - I have come across some surveys that allow me to only choose 2S as nonbinary, and I understand it as more fluid and inclusive of each individual and their gender expression along with their sexual orientation expression.”

Another survey respondent expressed a lack of validation in both Indigenous and 2SLGTQQIA+ circles, “I’ve always strongly felt that that the intersection of my queer and Métis identities were strongly connected. Unfortunately, not always in positive ways. Often through the feelings of not being enough, not being valid in Lesbian and Gay community or in Indigenous community because of the way I look/ or express my gender. Of not seeing myself represented. Of not being real.” Likewise, another respondent expressed the need to divide their identity: “It would help me feel more connected to my culture. I sometimes feel left out of Métis culture because I am queer. Also, I sometimes feel pressure to pick events/services that only relate to one identity (Métis or queer)”

In addition to having their 2SLGBTQQIA+ identities validated through formal processes, cultural acceptance and identification is also desired. There is a very strong desire among survey respondents and event participants to learn more about traditional Two Spirit roles and engage in Métis cultural practices. Many respondents do not feel that they know enough about the term Two Spirit to use it themselves but would like to do so. “I would love to learn more about this from any traditional knowledge holders that are out there. I want to learn about the roles and responsibilities to my community and take these teachings into what I do in the future.” Others express how understanding more about traditional Two Spirit identities could shape their community roles: “I think it would help in developing sense of self in relation to the community around me. It could help me in my ‘becoming’. What are my responsibilities (and associated protocol) to my Nation as a 2SLGBT person? Are there any teachings specific to each individual?”

Those who do use and understand the term Two Spirit express, “It

connects me to a long line of gender diverse and other queer Indigenous folx who had an honoured, valued, and spiritual role in the community.” Please see the Cultural Wellness section for a further discussion of the connection of Two Spirit identity and cultural wellness.

1.0	Identity Validation	
1.1	Citizenship/Registry	Establish a non-binary option on MNBC Citizenship card
1.2	MNBC	Develop and share “How To” Guide to change/update identity in different systems (health, gov id, etc)
1.3	Health / Health Authorities	Create a mechanism to identify as 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis in healthcare system



2.0 COMMUNITY INCLUSION, SAFETY AND ACCEPTANCE

“Always- every single time we come out there is always a chance we may not be accepted. This is a constant soundtrack I the background of our lives. If a business or program does not clearly identify that it is inclusive, then I can get anxious about how I will be received. Sometimes I’ll choose a different business, or I’ll not participate out of fear.”

--Survey Respondent

“We all just want to belong with out all the talking and staring.”

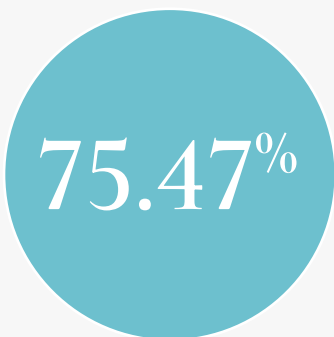
--Survey Respondent

“I feel like there are not many spaces out there in BC that are specific to Métis 2SLGBT people, let alone Indigenous 2SLGBT people. I have scarcely met or connected with other Métis Indigenous person I can relate to in this way. Maybe there are more than I think and they also don’t feel as safe openly expressing who they are.”

--Survey Respondent

“Community and belonging are suicide intervention/life promotion Belonging is the life blood to well-being. 2S Métis in many sense have been triple minorities. Belonging and community is essential to save lives.”

--Survey Respondent



.....

75.47% have never had a family member, community Elders, or other knowledge keepers share knowledge of 2SLGBTQIA+ people and traditional roles

The above sampling of survey quotations demonstrates the difficulty of connecting in a space of uncertain safety. Unless there are explicit symbols of inclusion, many will assume that they are not welcome, safe, or accepted. This reinforces the exclusion and disconnection of 2SLGBTQIA+ Métis people, as they also cannot identify each other. Even those who are more visible may harbour a desire to be less visible: *“If I could be ‘stealth’, without disclosing my identity I would. I know that by having people aware of my identity, whether I choose to*

*Being seen helps those
who are not out yet.*

– Survey Respondent

disclose it or not, influences how they perceive me. I do not like being reduced to one facet of my being and not being seen as a whole.”

The research uncovers that most of the connection that 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis people feel is more to the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community than their Métis communities. Métis circles are identified as less safe than “mainstream” spaces in many ways. Colonization and western religion are identified as primary sources of Two Spirit misinformation and identity erasure in Métis society. Survey respondents identified that there is a need to “move past all the negativity from the Catholic Church” regarding 2SLGBTQQIA+ people and “decolonize our spirituality.” It should also be noted that this dynamic is not Métis-specific, and many do not feel comfortable around those who express religious ideologies that are antithetical to their identity: *“My boss at work is heavily religious and I was afraid for her to find out I have had same sex relationships in the past. Anytime I am around religious people where I know they do not accept gay, trans or nonbinary people. Around cis gendered white males due to past trauma around harassment due to my sexual identity and masculine presentation in how I dress sometimes.”*

There is also an implicit role model function when any 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis person identifies publicly. *“Being seen helps those who are not out yet.”* In fact, creating greater visibility of 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis people and issues should be a key strategic objective in any 2SLGBTQQIA+ strategy in the future. As one survey respondent explained, *“I like being able to know that a group or community is inclusive of people like me before I choose whether or not to “come out” to them. Knowing that groups or communities have programs and spaces that are directed at 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, or even just decorations that promote inclusivity makes me feel much more comfortable.”*

The importance of other people identifying publicly and forming a peer group cannot be understated. As one survey respondent stated, *“I need to have peers in my own age category to explore these things with in a more safe space. I have a strong calling to help with the climate crisis and have been traumatized in protests by authorities. There is no safe space for us to gather, organize and educate the public about our spiritual beliefs as 2S.”* The need to connect more intergenerationally is also an emergent theme: *“It’s so hard to find elders and knowledge keepers but also just to find other youths and*

adults, I think we need intergenerational activities that connect two-spirits and indigiqueer of all stages of life.”

2.0	Community Inclusion, Safety & Acceptance	
2.1	MNC / MNBC	Raise greater awareness of the traditional Two Spirit Métis roles
2.2	MNC/MNBC	Maximize opportunities to create greater visibility and explicit inclusion
2.3	MNC/MNBC	Ensure that the Métis Pride Flag is present at all events
2.4	Communications	Ensure the use of gender inclusive language across all MNBC communications.
2.5	MNBC	Ensure that gender neutral washrooms are available at all MNBC offices and events.
2.6	MNC/MNBC	Host more 2SLGBTQIA+ Gatherings, including a National Gathering
2.7	MNC	Develop more national presence – Pass the Sash concept
2.8	MNC/MNBC	Ensure safe spaces through inclusive language and policies
2.9	MNBC	Dedicate more spaces to share 2SLGBTQIA+ stories
2.10	MNC/MNBC	Develop community resources and a hub to share them
2.11	Economic Dev	Create a list of 2SLGBTQIA+ friendly Métis businesses
2.12	MNC/MNBC	Consider development of separate 2SLGBTQIA+ Ministry – not just add-ons
2.13	MNBC	Update workplace dress codes to be inclusive of 2SLGBTQIA+

3.0 GOVERNANCE AND REPRESENTATION

It is my belief that there needs to be an elected 2SLGBTQQIA+ representative on every level of Métis governance. While I am thankful that we have begun to be included in women's circles under the adapted "and gender" type of terminology, I feel that the origins/connection naturally excludes many people who are 2SLGBTQQIA+, and also does not meet the needs of 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.

– Survey Respondent

The theme of greater representation and voice at the governance level of Métis governments and organizations is echoed strongly across the survey and the community engagement feedback. In fact, governance representation may be seen as the anchor point for on-going effective change. While there is gratitude for being included in women's circles and other initiatives, there is also an awareness that not all 2SLGBTQQIA+ people fit within that circle.

The governance recommendations reflect this broad desire for greater representation, not only at current tables, but for newly created ones as well. As one survey respondent put it, "Regional and community representatives and the board need to make more of an effort to ensure that all Métis perspectives are brought to the table. The Advisory Committee are not official representatives of their respective communities, but they should be." There is interest and appetite for the creation of new councils at provincial and national levels. "Create a Council, implement policy and procedures for inclusion, have a mission statement/standard for inclusion."

Another respondent also emphasized that it's not just one thing that needs to be done in terms of representation in governance, but that 2SLGBTQQIA+ people need more allies, and that inclusive language should be the standard. "Having a flag/sticker or other symbol up saying its a safe space (like at the office for an example), having 2SLGBTQ+ folks, or allies in positions of power (like on the board) and hearing them using inclusive language. Having elders and people in positions of power stand up against homophobia and transphobia instead of spreading it."

Moving beyond tokenism to greater political representation, and also creating more distributed leadership through community-level decision-making is also encouraged.

3.0	Governance & Representation	
3.1	Board / AGM	Include explicit mention of 2SLGBTQQA+ citizens and 2SLGBTQQA+ rights in MNBC Constitution
3.2	MNC	Establish and support a National 2SLGBTQQA+ Committee
3.3	Board / AGM	Establish and support a Provincial 2SLGBTQQA+ Council (not Advisory)
3.4	Board / AGM	Establish at least one Elected Provincial 2SLGBTQQA+ Governance Seat
3.5	Chartered Communities	Encourage the development of a 2SLGBTQQA+ Chartered Community (Vancouver ?)
3.6	MNC/MNBC	Develop governance education to encourage participation



4.0 HOUSING

“A landlord “joked” he had added cameras in my and my former partners suite so he could “watch” us. We moved.”

--Survey Respondent

“Housing insecurity and poverty are the biggest threat to safety for anyone, but especially to women and 2SLGBTQQA+ people. It is impacted by everything while also essential for safety and wellness. It has been many years since I have been homeless, but I think about it every day and it is my biggest trauma.”

--Survey Respondent

“With life, as you age, you wish to age in place. You wish age with dignity, respect and when the time comes, there is always M.A.I.D. I prefer not to live if incapable of doing it well.”

--Survey Respondent

The importance of safe, sustainable housing was a foundational topic that impacted other sectors, including health, mental health, education, training, employment, and personal safety and justice. There was a recognition that unless you have safe, sustainable housing, all other elements that contribute to socio-economic success are exponentially more difficult to achieve. The importance of taking a “housing first” policy was emphasized across several conversations.

The survey indicated that only 28% of 2SLGBTQQA+ people own their own homes, which also indicates that some 72% of 2SLGBTQQA+ are required to rent or participate in shared living arrangements. This is an area where 2SLGBTQQA+ people are doubly disadvantaged, as the research shows that 2SLGBTQQA+ Métis people experience higher than average discrimination and barriers to safe and sustainable housing options, and that their intersectional identity is a contributor.

The fear of being evicted because one’s 2SLGBTQQA+ identity was expressed, along with “stealth strategies” for passing, “When applying



.....

1 in 5 (21.1%) of 2SLGBTQQA+ Métis youth reported having experienced homelessness at some point in their lives.

for rental housing, I always did my best to hide my 2S identity as you never know if your landlord is a homophobe. I was fortunate to be able to pass when needed.” Unfortunately, when people choose to disclose, this can also have unwelcome effects, “I have been looking for shared housing and have disclosed my identity and had various subtly homophobic/ignorant, but not welcoming responses.” And still others don’t have the option of “passing.”

Therefore, the desire to create specific 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis policies and programs to redress these barriers was very strong. “I would like to see MNBC [roll] out a housing program for us specifically. We struggle so much already outside of our homes. An opportunity to design and create a valuable home that provides true safety in every way would really help my mental health and well being immensely! A place to belong and shine brightly is what we have yet to experience.”

One potential housing initiative that was proposed multiple times was the idea of developing 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis housing cooperatives. This recommendation combines the need for safe, sustainable housing with the development of community, which reinforces safety and identity. “Affordable sustainable housing makes the financial situation manageable-where you cannot be renevicted. A cooperative housing unit for us would be fantastic!” One survey respondent expressed gratitude for the current rental subsidy program as well as the desire to increase the options, “I appreciate the rental subsidy as it really helps me keep my head above water. If there were more rentals or coops for Métis people, that would be fantastic as well.”

The need for housing programs specific to 2SLGBTQQIA+ seniors was also identified, due in part to generational differences and what may be a higher rate of discrimination experienced from their senior peers. As one respondent simply put it, “We need some shared or community housing for older queer folx :)”

There was also recognition that isolated programs that do not connect to other socio-economic factors can only go so far: “I think there’s only so much “managing your finances” or other personal workshops can do to help financial security. The main drains on my finances is the extreme rate of inflation, especially for housing. Since the pandemic, grocery prices have also skyrocketed. I would much rather see enhanced social programs and cross-government advocacy for affordable housing, food security, and living wages.”

Youth were more likely to share rent than older portions of the population, with 42.1% sharing rent, and an additional 31.6% renting on their own. Only 10.6% owned their home. Alarming, 1 in 5 (21.1%) of 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis youth reported having experienced homelessness at some point in their lives; this is significantly higher than the national average (3% amongst the general population, and 6% amongst the Métis population) reported by [Statistics Canada](#). One youth shared, “While I have not been homeless, I have come close to being homeless several times and it’s still something that generates a lot of anxiety,” indicating that homelessness and poverty amongst 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis youth are areas that urgently require further exploration.

4.0	Housing	
4.1	MNC/MNBC	Take a “housing first” policy stance
4.2	Housing & Homelessness	Require that gender neutral washrooms are included in the design of all MNBC housing development projects.
4.3	Housing & Homelessness	Create a 2SLGBTQQIA+ Housing Navigator Role
4.4	Housing & Homelessness	Create 2SLGBTQQIA+ housing spaces, including but not limited co-op housing, seniors communities
4.5	Housing & Homelessness	Create 2SLGBTQQIA+ specific housing support programs
4.6	Housing & Homelessness	Provide advice/assistance to 2SLGBTQQIA+ groups to support land acquisition and development for projects and ceremonial space
4.7	Housing & Homelessness	Provide support for 2SLGBTQQIA+ facing evictions
4.8	Housing & Homelessness	Provide support for 2SLGBTQQIA+ first time home buyers
4.9	Housing & Homelessness	Advocate for, fund, and support research related to 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis and Housing & Homelessness issues

5.0 HEALTH

As a queer Métis person, I experience three times more barriers to wellness.

– Survey Respondent

4.08%

.....
Only 4.08% agreed that healthcare providers in BC demonstrate the cultural sensitivity to care for 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis

“Embracing 2SLGBTQQIA+ is not about acceptance or even identity but about improving communal health. 2S historically were essential in supporting communal function - thus to harm or merely “accept” 2S is ultimately robbing greater society from optimal health and wellbeing.”

--Survey Respondent

Some of the survey results connected to the health of 2SLGBTQQIA+ people and how they navigate (or don't navigate) the healthcare system revealed the level of systemic discrimination and exclusion from the healthcare system overall. Most troublingly, survey statistics reflected that only 4% of respondents felt that the healthcare system was culturally safe for them as 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis people; over 67% always, usually, or sometimes avoid seeking medical care; and only 30% reported that they always disclose their 2SLGBTQQIA+ identity. The downstream healthcare impacts of these choices must be significant. Event participants noted that they need, “Somewhere I can be my whole self, not having to hide parts of yourself to receive care.”

When 2SLGBTQQIA+ people do seek healthcare, especially but not limited to families, they must navigate the system in a different way: “There needs to be far more understanding of 2S families in the healthcare system. There is a strong heterormative paradigm in place. Staff make many assumptions and it sometimes leads to the wrong parent being called or not called, or assumptions of who is married to whom, or if you're not married being able to be at bedside, etc etc”

“During my medical transition I began to have “inner ceremony” with myself and incorporate traditional medicines with my testosterone injections (western medicine) Through these ceremonies spirit has gifted me other teachings, including “new” ceremonies to mark the rite of passage of coming in as 2S. Combined the teachings I have been given are 2S are here to restore harmony between men and women.”

Access to inclusive, affordable care was a core barrier identified

by participants. The doctor shortage, lack of Indigenous and 2SLGBTQQIA+ providers, and a lack of inclusive spaces were all identified as barriers. One survey respondent who did have access to care explained, “I spend a lot of my resources (time and money) to have optimal health. This includes professional trainers, dieticians, gym members and equipment (though I avoided public gym during medical transition), healthy foods, supplements, and vitamins. Without my current employment, there is absolutely no way I could afford this.” Another respondent echoed, “so difficult to get a family GP for all BC residents, even harder with more complex healthcare needs.”

A lack of trust in the healthcare system was a recurring theme. Over 67% of respondents indicated that they have avoided seeking medical care at some point in their life. A lack of inclusive, gender affirming care is intrinsically tied to this. As one respondent stated, “I was unable to begin my transition for nearly a decade after I brought it up with my family doctor at the time. Because of that, I struggled with mental health and body dysmorphia, and am also having a more uncomfortable experience transitioning later in life. Because my health concerns are seldom taken seriously, I rarely seek help for them because it just feels like a waste of time.”

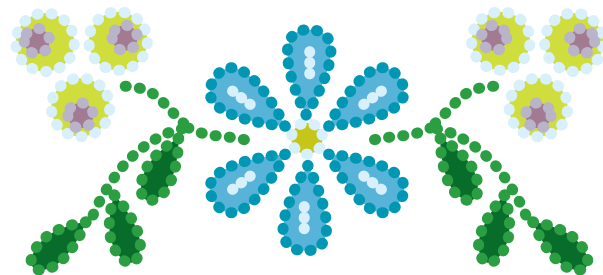
Many Métis 2SLGBTQQIA+ work in the field of healthcare or social services, at 32.65%. Two Spirit people once had an important role as peacemakers, medicine people, caregivers, and healers. It is important to remember that 2SLGBTQQIA+ people have significant contributions to offer to the healthcare profession, and, as such, the barriers described under Education and Training are also tied to health.

The significance of access to inclusive, Métis, trauma-informed, culturally centered healthcare for 2SLGBTQQIA+ people cannot be understated. This preliminary research takes place in an era where 2SLGBTQQIA+ people have access to greater rights and freedoms than any other time in Canada’s colonial history, and only scratches the surface of the Métis experience in relation to healthcare; it may never be known how many Métis 2SLGBTQQIA+ have been lost as a result of discrimination in the healthcare system.



Over 67% of respondents indicated that they have avoided seeking medical care at some point in their life

5.0	Health	
5.1	Health, Mental Health & Harm Reduction	Advocate for culturally safe healthcare for 2SLGBTQQIA+
5.2	Health, Mental Health & Harm Reduction	Create a 2SLGBTQQIA+ Health Navigator position
5.3	Health/Health Authorities	Create a mechanism for medication advisory through health services
5.4	Health / Health Authorities	Develop 2SLGBTQQIA+ Seniors Long Term Care Facilities
5.5	Health / Health Authorities	Increase options where 2SLGBTQQIA+ can choose their own primary and secondary care providers
5.6	Health / Health Authorities	Develop 2SLGBTQQIA+ culturally safe sensitivity training in medical schools, primary care, and secondary care networks
5.7	Health / Health Authorities	Encourage the inclusion of traditional medicine and practices in the healthcare system
5.8	Health / Health Authorities	Provide broader spectrum of funding for transcare
5.9	Health / Health Authorities	Encourage more 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis research and topics at health conferences
5.10	Health/ Health Authorities	Advocate for, fund and support research related to 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis and health, health gaps, health needs, and health outcomes



6.0 MENTAL HEALTH

“I have found that elders who are 2spirit only understand it as ‘gay’ and do not have a larger understanding. This means I don’t access any services. That might change if someone were non-binary. I’ve never had the opportunity to access ‘services of an Indigenous cultural practitioner.”

--Survey Respondent

I have been unable to find any Indigenous trauma-informed counsellor or psychiatrist.

– Survey Respondent

Some 74% of 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis report being diagnosed with some type of mental health condition. Over 50% of 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis have accessed the services of a mental health professional either “very frequently” or “frequently,” and only 6% of 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis have never accessed the services of a mental health professional. These astonishing statistics, perhaps more than any others, demonstrate the impact of discrimination, exclusion, lack of safety, and lack of community connection and support on the psyche and wellbeing of our 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis community.

For some, the convergence of multiple diagnoses combined with multiple barriers can lead to desperation for all levels of assistance, including cultural and spiritual support:

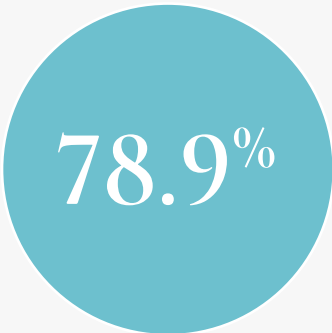
“I have many diagnoses and am struggling without having any access to a psychiatrist for my many medications and am trying to adjust them on my own since I have no support. I am also struggling to pay for my bi weekly counselling and I have not been able to identify any supports or grants. I’m pretty mentally ill and I’m really desperate for cultural spiritual care but I don’t know who to ask or how to ask and feel nervous to ask the elders that I do have in my life since I’m not sure how to ask for these teachings. I am also really needing ceremony, but I don’t know how to find it.”

Many 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis seek out both counselling and cultural supports, and the vast majority indicated that they do or would engage the services of a 2SLGBTQQIA+ counsellor or cultural practitioner if available. The role of ceremony in achieving greater

well being is also demonstrated, with over 54% attending Métis or other Indigenous ceremonies.

When asked if they would utilize the services of a Two Spirit Elder if available, over 85% indicated they would.

Youth were 10.2% more likely to have a mental health diagnosis, but also more likely to access a Mental Health professional than the general 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis population. 78.9% of youth reported having experienced suicide ideation, and 89.5% struggle with their mental health at least sometimes. 31.6% of youth reported issues with substance use, but only half indicated they would feel comfortable speaking with their primary healthcare provider about those issues. All youth indicated they believe cultural or spiritual grounding is beneficial, and 94.7% indicated that if there were a 2SLGBTQQIA+ Elder available to speak with, they definitely would or probably would access that service. Youth described significant challenges accessing mental health and cultural supports, and were hungry for cultural connection, “I would love to have access to 2SLGBTQQIA+ safe ceremonies and cultural practices to attend.”



.....
78.9% of youth reported having experienced suicide ideation

6.0	Mental Health	
6.1	Mental Health & Harm Reduction	Develop a 2SLGBTQQIA+ culturally safe staff counsellor position
6.2	Mental Health & Harm Reduction	Provide 2SLGBTQQIA+ cultural safety / sensitivity program for MNBC/MNC staff
6.3	Mental Health & Harm Reduction	Prepare and provide a list of 2SLGBTQQIA+ culturally safe counsellors
6.4	Mental Health & Harm Reduction	Provide direct funding support for 2SLGBTQQIA+ to source counselling
6.5	Mental Health & Harm Reduction	Offer 2SLGBTQQIA+ specific healing and wellness programs
6.6	Mental Health & Harm Reduction	Develop a 2SLGBTQQIA+ culturally safe addictions program
6.7	Mental Health & Harm Reduction	Advocate for, fund, and support research related to 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis mental health and harm reduction

7.0 CULTURAL WELLNESS

“I’m really needing a sense of community with peers, a sense of acknowledgement and connection with Two-Spirit Elders and knowledge keepers and am so desperate for sacred teachings and ceremonies. Like a Two-Spirit sweat lodge.”

--Survey Respondent

“I find it troubling how many Indigenous people do not understand what a 2S person is culturally. Even the term 2S only came during the 70’s AIM movement to include the queer community. Historically, We go back to the creation story, yet we have been intentionally left out of traditional teachings over the past several generations due to mysogony from the patriarchy destroying our original teachings.”

--Survey Respondent

Perhaps two things stand out the most when considering the cultural wellness of 2SLGTQQIA+ Métis people: the deep desire for greater cultural and spiritual knowledge, connection and wellbeing, and a lack of access to knowledge keepers and resources that would support their cultural education and spiritual path. Cultural wellness for 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis people is grounded in traditional Métis cultural and spiritual practices and most particularly the desire to understand traditional Two Spirit roles. As noted, “We were the peacemakers, the medicine people, the caregivers, the healers,” but Two Spirit stories, histories, and role models have been suppressed.

As one survey respondent explains, “I do not use the term two spirit at this time, though I would be open to using it in the future if I feel it fits. I feel like I don’t know enough about what it means to be two spirit or any gender in a Métis/Indigenous context. I was raised in a very western/white way, and I know what it means to be a white woman or a white nonbinary person, but I don’t know what it means to be a Métis woman or a Métis two spirit person. If I knew more about Indigenous/Métis gender roles I would be much more comfortable finding a place within them that fits.”



98% believed a strong spiritual or cultural grounding is very beneficial

While some have developed a sophisticated sense of identity, others are still very much in their early exploration stages. “I am new to my Métis cultural learning journey and did not grow up learning anything of my culture. Since then, I have learned about the respect and place of honour in Métis and Indigenous culture of those who were seen as Two Spirit - people who could see and understand from both perspectives and provide wisdom and guidance.”

Others use the term Two Spirit as an act of reclamation in itself: “I see two-spirit as a place holder term to reclaim aspects of Indigenous identity that were intentionally attacked by colonial bodies on turtle island. I use the term to define both my gender and sexuality, neither of which I feel are accurately captured by colonial terms.”

And others are developing their own relationship with the term, “To me Two Spirit is a placeholder term to locate myself with respect to my gender identity, cultural (community identity) and my spiritual identity. To me being Two Spirit is not merely about gender or having two gender expressions but rather being a fluid being with the responsibility to balance one’s community. I do use the term but I have started to use the term “Moshikahan” as found on a Michif Translation dictionary. The term states to mean “rise, come in” and is related to the universe and water - this is the closest definition I have found to explain how I feel.”

When asked about the perceived benefits of connecting with the knowledge of Two Spirit traditional roles, respondents replied:

- “Feeling stronger and safer in my identity.”
- “Moving past all the negativity from the Catholic Church.”
- “Knowing where I fit in my culture.”

Due to cultural disconnection, many 2SLGBTQIA+ Métis do not feel that they understand or have “permission” to use the term Two Spirit:

- “I do not use the term because I was under the impression that it was a sacred identification that could only be used by those who had been granted a ceremony.”
- “Two-spirit to me is a term that encompasses anyone indigenous who feels as though they are an embodiment of both the divine masculine and feminine energies. I think I do identify as twospirit but I sometimes don’t feel like I have the right to.”

- *“I was taught that these people are unique beings who have both the masculine and feminine spirit. That they may belong to both roles and may additionally love people of the same sex. That they have unique knowledge and wisdom to share with us. I do use the term however, im not sure in what regard to myself. I’ve been told I’d be considered 2Spirit but I don’t feel I have the knowledge yet to claim it?”*

Most importantly, reclaiming an understanding of traditional Two Spirit roles would help heal cultural trauma: *“It would provide more grounding to a spiritual and cultural heritage that should have been mine since birth, but it was hidden/kept from me and replaced with extremely negative beliefs leading to lower self-esteem. I’d be recapturing a spiritual birthright that would turn what Judeochristianity has seen as a weakness or “abomination” into a strength and a celebration.”*

For many, it is time to decolonize our understanding of what it means to be 2SLGBTQQIA+ and Métis and go back to these traditional teachings. Unfortunately, this loss of knowledge has been replaced by Westernized discriminatory language, often reportedly used by some Elders, and this furthers the disconnection from community. The need for culturally safe 2SLGBTQQIA+ ceremony space was emphasized as a necessity throughout the engagement, due to the discrimination many have felt during ceremonies. As one survey respondent explained, *“I have not learned much about the traditional roles from the communities I spend time with. Chantal Fiola, Professor and Author, publishes books and articles that teach on these areas that have provided a sense of belonging and joy in my identity. Elders in my community are lost and say discriminatory things about us. I don’t listen to them anymore unfortunately.”*

Another describes that there may be a need to dive more deeply into Métis history and culture to disentangle discriminatory aspects drawn more from Western religion than Indigenous beliefs: *“...how important it is for us to uncover the positive history of 2S roles, and I expect this will be much more driven by Cree spirituality than Catholic. I feel there may have been even more suppression of 2S people in Métis culture than other Indigenous cultures. Not sure but it’s an observation as I know and hear so much more about FN 2S roles.”*

While there is broad interest overall in learning more about Métis

culture (“It would be great to have more access to individual and collective wellness events including culture, teachings, ceremony, traditional medicines, etc.”) for 2SLGBTQIA+ Métis, the strongest emphasis is on traditional Two Spirit knowledge and roles:

“Learning more about the traditional cultural and spiritual roles of 2S could provide a roadmap or affirmation of one’s existence. The dominant narrative of 2S in Non-Indigenous society is not necessarily positive or strengths-based and often had left me feeling incorrect in my existence. When I had learned of the traditional and spiritual roles of 2S it affirmed my path (identity, gifts, roles and responsibilities). As such, it is allowing me to fulfill my life cycle.”

Sharing this knowledge with all would lead to more acceptance, understanding, and respect for 2SLGBTQIA+ Métis.

7.0	Cultural Wellness	
7.1	MNC / MNBC	Host 2SLGBTQIA+ Wellness Gatherings
7.2	MNC / MNBC	Host or provide support to host 2SLGBTQIA+ ceremonies
7.3	MNC/MNBC/Chartered Communities	Develop more 2SLGBTQIA+ online communities
7.4	MNC / MNBC / Chartered Communities	Produce more articles about 2SLGBTQIA+ Métis history and role models. Move away from trauma based stories to strengths and success focus.
7.5	MNC / MNBC / Chartered Communities	Host 2SLGBTQIA+ cultural workshops
7.6	Culture, Heritage & Language	Advocate for, fund, and support cultural research related to Two Spirit traditional roles and practices.

8.0 EDUCATION AND TRAINING

"I can't think of any openly gay kids in my school. It was hard to focus on your education and be scared at the same time."

--Survey Respondent

"I grew up in a time where people were not "out," and I channeled my energy into educational achievement from a very young age."

--Survey Respondent

"There was not quality support for 2SLGBTQQIA+ Indigenous/Métis people. Academia was designed for cisgendered, heterosexual, abled, caucasian men, and the further one's identity strays from that, the more difficult it is to be successful in that setting."

--Survey Respondent

While many areas of the survey and community engagement surfaced strong common themes and experiences, educational experiences were more diverse. While many excelled in education, most did so by submerging their identities when they could; others could not, and experienced compound barriers to education early on.

One survey respondent explains, *"I had struggled with well-being as a result of intergenerational trauma, isolation, confusion and self deception with respect to my gender and cultural identity. Academia is already difficult but is further compounded when including these factors. Additionally, I had a break in high school and later attended an alternative high school due to having to hide my gender identity."*

Another respondent also traces the impacts of being transgender on their education: *"My body dysmorphia and undiagnosed depression related to my trans identity prevented me from seeking out higher education sooner. I chose a field I could learn and be educated on the job vs traditional college/university due to the fact that by the time I was receiving proper treatment, I had bills to pay."*



45.1%

.....
45.1% have a bachelor's degree or higher

Others were able to channel their energies into receiving or continuing their education to the next level. According to the survey, over 60% of 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis hold a bachelor’s degree or higher.

The other side of the education and training topic is the education and training which needs to occur in our broader communities to help educate others and reduce the discrimination that 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis people suffer.

One survey respondent states directly, “There needs to be more intersection and specific 2SLGBTQQIA+ spaces in Indigenous education. Educators and other staff must also be knowledgeable and committed to inclusion.”

Another respondent suggests, “Creating an education program to go around the schools and share the original teachings about 2S and how they are connected to the gender equality movement yet unique to our culture. It appears that society sees 2S as a part of the queer community and not the spiritual side, even our own people are confused about that.”

We also need, “Programs specifically for 2SLGBTQQIA+ so we can come together with similar folks and create community. Specific beading circles, craft night, online conferences with 2SLGBTQQIA+ speakers only.”

On that note, there was a recognition that Chartered Communities also need more assistance and resources to offer more inclusive spaces, workshops, and supports: “Encouragement, advocacy, allyship. Access to basic resources like gender neutral washrooms. My community at this point is at a place where they want to be supportive, but don’t know how to create policies/programming and put them into action and are held back by a gap in information and a lack of resources.”

8.0	Education & Training	
8.1	STEPS	Develop 2SLGBTQQIA+ specific internship spaces
8.2	STEPS	Develop 2SLGBTQQIA+ specific scholarships and grants

8.3	STEPS / Institute	Develop 2SLGBTQIA+ awareness and history courses
8.4	MNBC	Provide more political / governance training to 2SLGBTQIA+
8.5	MNBC	Create a centralized 2SLGBTQIA+ resource hub
8.6	BC	Increase the visibility of 2SLGBTQIA+ Métis in the education system
8.7	STEPS	Increase supports for 2SLGBTQIA+ students
8.8	MNBC	Provide 2SLGBTQIA+ sensitivity training for MNBC staff
8.9	STEPS	Advocate for, fund, and support research related to educational supports, gaps, and outcomes for 2SLGBTQIA+ Métis



9.0 HUMAN RIGHTS AND DISCRIMINATION

“I have been treated very differently if mentioning my partner as she/her. Interview was going well until that.”

--Survey Respondent

“If I were to have to rent another place, no legislation could make me feel secure trying to rent. If someone wanted to discriminate against me for being queer, they wouldn’t have to say that was the reason. They’d just give it to one of the hundreds of other people applying.”

--Survey Respondent

“Legislation is only as powerful as the ability to enforce it. I have to constantly stand up for myself, be a personal advocate and suffer immense emotional and psychological abuse as a result.”

--Survey Respondent

One cannot discuss 2SLGBTQIA+ rights without first recognizing that the human rights and legal rights of this community are re-emerging after decades of non-existence. As one survey respondent put it, “When I first came out it was LEGAL for me to be evicted from my home just for being queer (or fired from my job) :(“ We must not forget that while we have made strides as a society in terms of entrenching 2SLGBTQIA+ rights, we have a distance to go in terms of protecting and upholding those rights. One survey respondent aptly observed, “Human rights is such a hard process and the understanding of it is so complex most people don’t even know they are being discriminated against.”

Another survey respondent explains that inclusion in rights codes and enforcement are two different things: “Inclusion in BC Human Rights code and I think all bathrooms should be gender neutral. BCUNDRIP is another positive move forward. The problem with these is the enforcement when violations occur. I am currently waiting for legal assistance to file 9 Human Rights complaints for discrimination and



.....
While many identified inclusion in the BC Human Rights code as a “win,” over 40% reported that it didn’t make them feel any safer

abuse. I have been trying to obtain legal support with a PWD status for 7 months now. The wait list is so long and not enough legal aid to help unless we are in a defendant role. When we need to prosecute there are not many channels that can act on our behalf in a timely manner. So this makes sense as to why 2S Trans are the most likely to be murdered, homeless or victims of sex trafficking when our options at the bottom of our worst times are to just tread water and hope for the best.”

The majority of survey respondents and engagement participants expressed that the ability to legally marry, inclusion in the BC Human Rights Code, and the provision of more gender-neutral washrooms were among the top rights achieved. While these rights have no doubt had a positive impact on the lives of 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis people, this community still experiences what one termed, a “triple barrier” and “discrimination from all sides.” Nonetheless, while many identified inclusion in the BC Human Rights code as a “win,” over 40% reported that it didn’t make them feel any safer – housing rights being one example.

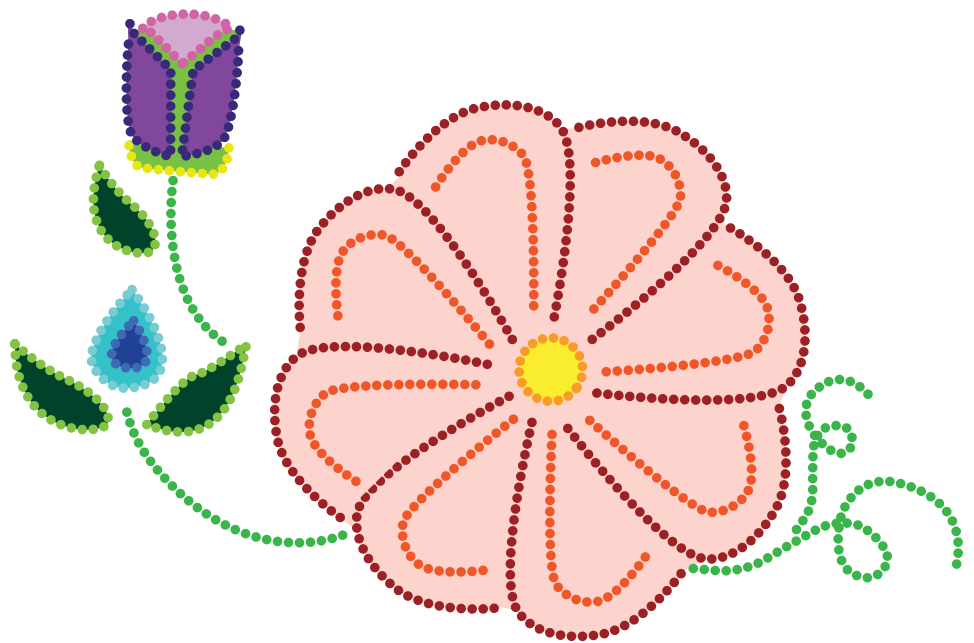
The 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis community reports on-going instances of employment discrimination, housing discrimination, and other exclusions. Over 61% reported being discriminated against in a hiring process, the majority of 2SLGBTQQIA+ do not identify when trying to secure housing if they can avoid it, 18% report they experience housing discrimination very frequently or frequently, and over 28% have moved due to discrimination.

- “I was fired from my service industry job in my early 20’s when my employer found out I was 2S. When I had asked the reason for termination they stated “we do not agree with your life style, it goes against the church”
- “Self advocating for my name and pronouns felt impossible when I was being scrutinized in interviews. I know to many I am seen as a liability due to the fact that being trans means I require many drs appts, surgeries, etc as well as just expecting colleagues to correct people who misgender me. My current employer has been the most accomodating.”
- “I have never self identified in a hiring process.”

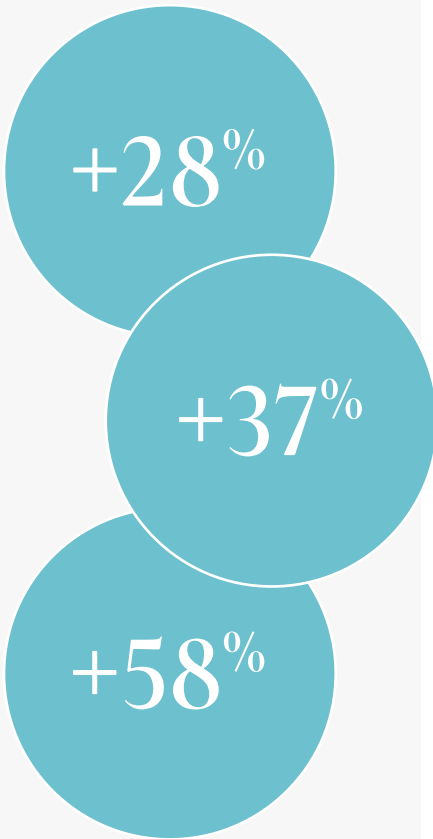


Over 61% reported being discriminated against in a hiring process

9.0	Human Rights & Discrimination	
9.1	People and Culture	Implement an HR policy review through a 2SLGBTQIA+ lens
9.2	Housing & Homelessness	Provide support 2SLGBTQIA+ experiencing housing discrimination
9.3	MNBC	Provide support 2SLGBTQIA+ experiencing hiring discrimination
9.4	MNBC	Implement a general 2SLGBTQIA+ advocacy / support line
9.5	MNBC	Provide 2SLGBTQIA+ sensitivity training to board, senate, and other governance level positions
9.6	MNBC	Advocate for, fund, and support research related to 2SLGBTQIA+ Métis rights, discrimination rates, and mitigation strategies



10.0 JUSTICE AND PERSONAL SAFETY



Over 28% report negative interactions with law enforcement due to their identity

Over 37% of 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis have experienced a crime such as a physical assault due to their identity.

Over 58% of survey respondents reporting that they had experienced intimate partner violence.

“I will not disclose in most spaces until I can access if I am safe. In some instances, people unknowingly share homophobia, transphobia, and sexist ideologies. I do not feel safe to share in law enforcement, justice, some health care settings, and never in public washroom spaces.”

--Survey Respondent

“Massive amounts of trauma informed training, cultural humility, and Indigenous decolonizing is needed in this system.”

--Survey Respondent

According to our survey and community engagement, personal safety, and fear of not being safe are major concerns among many 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis people in British Columbia. The general rule of thumb is community members do not assume safety. As one survey respondent put it: “It’s not safe until we know it’s safe.” Another survey respondent elaborated, “Always, every single time we come out there is always a chance we may not be accepted. This is a constant soundtrack to the background of our lives.”

This lack of safety includes engagement with law enforcement representatives. Over 28% report negative interactions with law enforcement due to their identity; sometimes with more emphasis on being 2SLGBTQQIA+ and other times with more emphasis on being Indigenous. One respondent shared the compounded and cascading effects of interactions with law enforcement and legal system as a 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis person:

The use of lethal force and abuse of any Indigenous person in my area is a regular occurrence. You can go to the Downtown Eastside any day and witness the police, security guards and city workers harass, bully, and abuse the most downtrodden there for no reason whatsoever. I have attempted to report these things.... and discovered there is no anonymous path to officiate a report

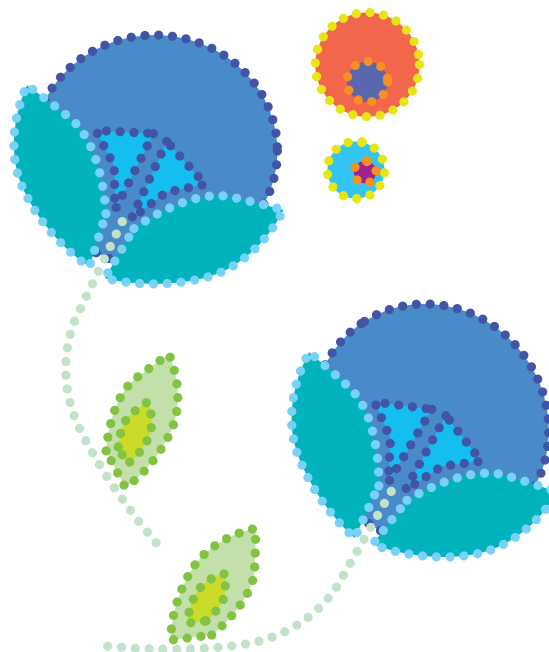
like that. I was attacked by a security guard and then abused by police while performing a ceremony. Instead of arresting the security guard, the police framed me, arrested me and stole my phone as well as physically, mentally and psychologically abused me while in custody. I am the one who called them in for help. I am traumatized from that experience to the point of becoming agoraphobic for several months after the attack. I have never been in trouble with the law. I still have regular panic attacks and have yet to get a prosecution rep to take my case and help me out. I still keep looking for some legal representation. I was able to obtain a defense attorney through legal aid. That is currently underway and taking a long time to resolve.

Disturbingly, over 37% of 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis have experienced a crime such as a physical assault due to their identity. This is an alarmingly high statistic. It is also disturbing that, of those who experienced a crime, only 15% reported it. The lack of trust in the safety and outcomes of the system for 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis is very clear.

The rate of intimate partner violence (IPV) is equally discouraging, with over 58% of survey respondents reporting that they had experienced intimate partner violence. The rate of reporting IPV is even less than for other violent crimes, with only 6% reporting IPV to law enforcement. Compounding the issue is the general lack of awareness of the issue itself. As participants noted, “A lot of relations don’t understand that we experience violence in same-sex relationships. Need education around that.”

While the situation is very troubling, and systemic interventions go beyond the scope of what individual organizations can achieve, the role of advocacy is especially required in this sector. For example, 84% of respondents indicated that creating some form 2SLGBTQQIA+ liaison within police departments would be of assistance.

10.0	Justice & Personal Safety	
10.1	Justice / AG / DRIPA	Ensure 2SLGBTQIA+ issues and concerns are included in the Métis Justice Strategy
10.2	MNBC	Strike a 2SLGBTQIA+ Rights and Reconciliation Committee
10.3	MNBC / CCs	Offer personal safety courses for 2SLGBTQIA+ Métis
10.4	Justice	Develop a “Know your human rights” workshop
10.5	MNBC	Advocate for 2SLGBTQIA+ liaison positions
10.6	Justice	Advocate for, fund, and support research related to 2SLGBTQIA+ Métis and the Justice System
10.7	MNC	Strike a 2SLGBTQIA+ IPV Taskforce
10.8	MNBC	Create an IPV “exit” bursary to cover interim housing, food, clothes, etc.
10.9	MNBC	Provide resources and tools to family and friends supporting someone experiencing IPV
10.10	MNC / MNBC	Create greater general awareness of justice and rights issues facing 2SLGBTQIA+
10.11	MNC/MNBC	Advocate for an anonymous path to report bias and discrimination against 2SLGBTQIA+ in law enforcement



11.0 FINANCIAL SECURITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

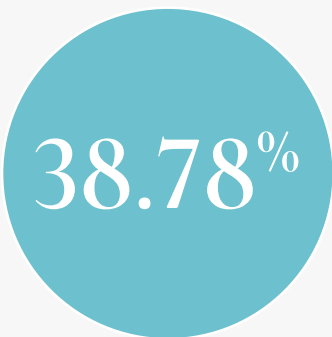
“I think there’s only so much ‘managing your finances’ or other personal workshops can do to help financial security. The main drain on my finances is the extreme rate of inflation, especially for housing. Since the pandemic, grocery prices have also skyrocketed. I would much rather see enhanced social programs and cross-government advocacy for affordable housing, food security, and living wages.”

--Survey Respondent

Like most Métis, 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis have experienced the same “intergenerational dysfunction” in achieving personal financial goals and have not been supported by larger scale economic development initiatives to assist in breaking the cycle. As one survey respondent put it: *“Financial Health is vastly underestimated or discussed. My ability to manage money has come from trial and error and has been an intergenerational dysfunction I have worked hard to break.”*

And while some have found that elusive path to financial security, there’s also a recognition that many have not been able to access let alone capitalize on opportunities: *“I feel very fortunate to be where I am in my life financially. It did not come easily, and I always worked harder than the person next to me, probably for self-esteem reasons. I also recognize that other 2SLGBTQQIA+ people have a lot more barriers than I do, and many struggle with financial resources. We have to do more to help remove barriers and set everyone up for success.”* 2SLGBTQQIA+ single parents who rent and live in Vancouver in particular stand out as a sub-group in the results as an example of compound barriers to financial security.

Métis people as a whole have traditionally expressed a very strong free, independent, and entrepreneurial spirit as reflected in our history. While we may maintain entrepreneurialism as a national personality trait or historic echo on some level, there have been few targeted programs and opportunities to develop Métis businesses and business leaders other than those offered to Indigenous business owners (in a



.....
38.78% would be considered low income

non-distinctions-based manner). As Métis people often do not feel as culturally safe, seen or supported in general Indigenous programs that most often target First Nations, 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis may feel even less seen or included these programs.

There are very few, if any, economic development initiatives specific to supporting the economic goals of 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis people. None were identified in the research for this report. While this is an obvious gap, it is also an opportunity. The following recommendations target areas supportive of 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis business owners and emerging entrepreneurs, with recognition that large scale economic development initiatives are needed for the Nation as a whole, with 2SLGBTQQIA+ considerations embedded.

11.0	Economic Development	
11.1	Economic Development	Provide 2SLGBTQQIA+ specific business grants and loans
11.2	Economic Development	Host a 2SLGBTQQIA+ business networking event
11.3	Economic Development	Provide 2SLGBTQQIA+ culturally safe business development workshops
11.4	Economic Development	Develop a 2SLGBTQQIA+ business listing/ directory
11.5	Economic Development	Create a 2SLGBTQQIA+ culturally safe business certification
11.6	Economic Development	Offer 2SLGBTQQIA+ business mentorship
11.7	Economic Development	Advocate for, fund, and support research related to economic development drivers for 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis

12.0 ELDERS, SENIORS, AND YOUTH

It's so hard to find elders and knowledge keepers but also just to find other youths and adults, I think we need intergenerational activities that connect two-spirits and indigiqueer of all stages of life.

– Survey Respondent

“I would like to support the youth further.”

--Survey Respondent

It is important to note that targeted recommendations for 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis youth and seniors are included in all 11 previous categories and are reproduced below for convenience. The following discussion and recommendations in this section highlight the extra barriers experienced by our oldest and youngest, and often the most vulnerable, members of the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community, and how their cross-connections are mutually beneficial for each group.

Elders, seniors, and youth share similar strong concerns about access to affordable housing, access to health and mental health services, and financial security overall. Seniors and youth also tend to access more services across the spectrum and participate in more peer group-based activities. There may be opportunities to include or combine affordable housing that includes spaces for 2SLGBTQQIA+ seniors and youth, as well as cultural wellness programs, counselling programs, and other services. The idea of a 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis housing co-op came up across several discussions and could include cultural sharing space as well.

There has always been a special bond expressed between the older and younger generations, and this is modelled in family systems through the mentorship of grandparents and elders to younger generations. Nurturing stronger connections between 2SLGBTQQIA+ elders and knowledge keepers, and youth would be supportive of mental health and cultural wellness. 2SLGBTQQIA+ seniors and elders have experienced a range of challenges that can also assist current youth in developing the resilience necessary: *“I came out at 18 years old in 1968. Bound and determined not to hide, but am respectful and quite about my life.”*

Youth have voiced support for the development of more 2SLGBTQQIA+ programs and services, including cross-generational

activities, and access to cultural elders and 2SLGBTQQIA+ counsellors. “Yeah, it would be cool to have 2SLGBTQQIA+ programs and services available. I don’t know if there are any through MNBC – if there are, I feel they aren’t being advertised well enough.”

12.0	Seniors & Youth	
12.1	Housing & Homelessness	Develop seniors' homes for 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis
12.2	Health	Provide greater support for seniors' medical appointments
12.3	MNBC	Create greater opportunities for mentorship and intergenerational connections between Elders + Youth
12.4	Elders & Seniors	Develop 2SLGBTQQIA+ Elders circles and networks
12.5	Youth	Develop 2SLGBTQQIA+ Youth circles and networks
12.6	Elders & Seniors, Youth	Develop 2SLGBTQQIA+ Elders and Youth circles and networks
12.7	Elders & Seniors	Develop more 2SLGBTQQIA+ specific seniors' programs and services
12.8	Youth	Develop more 2SLGBTQQIA+ specific youth programs and services
12.9	Housing & Homelessness	Provide 2SLGBTQQIA+ specific seniors' housing supports
	Housing & Homelessness	Provide 2SLGBTQQIA+ specific youth housing supports
12.10	Health / Health Authorities	Develop 2SLGBTQQIA+ long term care placements
12.11	Health / Mental Health	Provide 2SLGBTQQIA+ specific seniors health supports
12.12	Culture, Heritage & Language	Offer Senior and Elder shared cultural workshops

NEXT STEPS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COMMUNITY RESEARCH

13.0 2SLGBTQQIA+ MÉTIS STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The important work of Métis reconciliation with 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis has just begun and will bring many benefits both to this priority population and the Métis Nation as a whole once 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis can re-embrace their traditional roles within the life of the Nation. It must be noted that this report offers grassroots developed recommendations across a variety of sectors, but it does not, and is not intended to provide a strategy for implementation across a single organization or the Métis Nation. Strategic level planning work at the organization level will also be required to identify and achieve outcomes.

They will remember us for a thousand years for the work we do here.

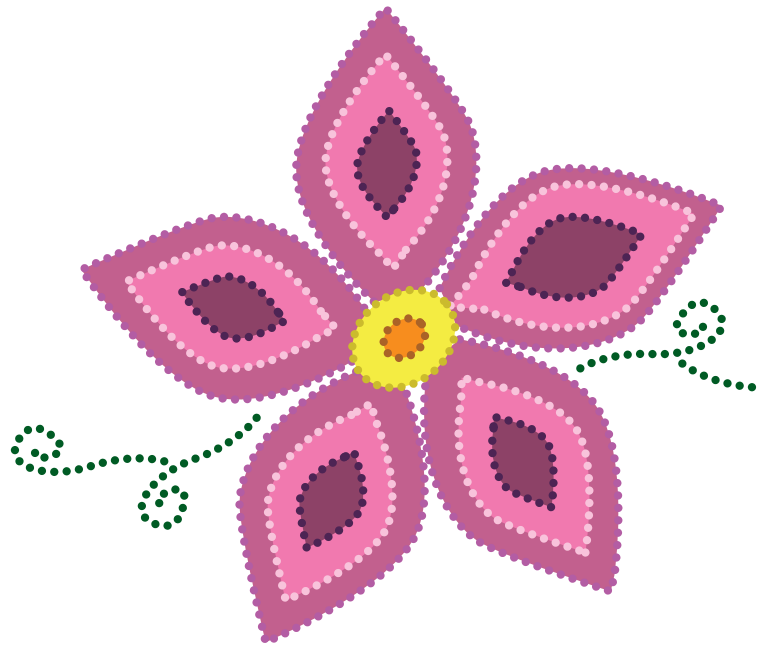
– Charlotte Nolin,
Two Spirit Knowledge Keeper
& Traditional Grandmother

13.0	Strategic	
13.1	MNBC	Develop a Provincial 2SLGBTQQIA+ strategy where BC can be a leading Métis government
13.2	MNC	Develop a National 2SLGBTQQIA+ Strategy
13.3	MNC / MNBC	Develop and ensure separate governance representation for 2SLGBTQQIA+
13.4	MNBC	Ensure the inclusion of 2SLGBTQQIA+ needs in all funding applications to overcome challenges, including but not limited to housing, health, education, employment, justice, and economic development
13.5	MNC / MNBC	Create free-standing ministries or departments and move away from adding onto other groups and committees (issues are different)
13.6	MNC / MNBC	Create more strategic partnerships to support identified 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis outcomes

2SLGBTQQIA+ MÉTIS RESEARCH PRIORITIES

In addition to the high level “starter set” of grassroots recommendations produced by this report, more academic and clinical level research of the 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis community is needed. The following list provides potential areas of further research and exploration.

- Research on Two Spirit traditional cultural and spiritual roles.
- Research on Two Spirit traditional governance roles.
- Capturing hidden Two Spirit history.
- Research on the positive impacts of “coming in” to Métis community.
- Fuller data capture on discrimination experienced by the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community.
- Collecting best practices in 2SLGBTQQIA+ cultural safety.
- Collecting best practices in 2SLGBTQQIA+ research methodology.
- Baseline research on 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis across all socio-economic sectors.



SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY RECOMMENDATIONS

INDEX	THEME & MNBC RELATED MINISTRIES	RECOMMENDATIONS
1.0	Identity Validation	
1.1	Citizenship/Registry	Establish a non-binary option on MNBC Citizenship card
1.2	MNBC	Develop and share "How To" Guide to change/update identity in different systems (health, gov id, etc.)
1.3	Health / Health Authorities	Create a mechanism to identify as 2SLGBTQIA+ Métis in healthcare system
2.0	Community Inclusion, Safety & Acceptance	
2.1	MNC / MNBC	Raise greater awareness of traditional Two Spirit Métis roles
2.2	MNC/MNBC	Maximize opportunities to create greater visibility and explicit inclusion
2.3	MNC/MNBC	Ensure that the Métis Pride Flag is present at all events
2.4	Communications	Ensure the use of gender inclusive language across all MNBC communications.
2.5	MNBC	Ensure that gender neutral washrooms are available at all MNBC offices and events.
2.6	MNC/MNBC	Host more 2SLGBTQIA+ Gatherings, including a National Gathering
2.7	MNC	Develop more national presence – Pass the Sash concept
2.8	MNC/MNBC	Ensure safe spaces through inclusive language and policies
2.9	MNBC	Dedicate more spaces to share 2SLGBTQIA+ stories
2.10	MNC/MNBC	Develop community resources and a hub to share them
2.11	Economic Dev	Create a list of 2SLGBTQIA+ friendly Métis businesses

2.12	MNC/MNBC	Develop a separate 2SLGBTQIA+ Ministry independent of other Ministries
2.13	MNBC	Update workplace dress codes to be inclusive of 2SLGBTQIA+
3.0	Governance & Representation	
3.1	Board / AGM	Include explicit mention of 2SLGBTQIA+ citizens and 2SLGBTQIA+ rights in MNBC Constitution
3.2	MNC	Establish and support a National 2SLGBTQIA+ Committee
3.3	Board / AGM	Establish and support a Provincial 2SLGBTQIA+ Council (not Advisory)
3.4	Board / AGM	Establish at least one Elected Provincial 2SLGBTQIA+ Governance Seat
3.5	Chartered Communities	Encourage the development of a 2SLGBTQIA+ Chartered Community (Vancouver?)
3.6	MNC/MNBC	Develop governance education to encourage participation
4.0	Housing	
4.1	MNC/MNBC	Take a "housing first" policy stance
4.2	Housing & Homelessness	Require that gender neutral washrooms are included in the design of all MNBC housing development projects.
4.3	Housing & Homelessness	Create a 2SLGBTQIA+ Housing Navigator Role
4.4	Housing & Homelessness	Create 2SLGBTQIA+ housing spaces, including but not limited co-op housing and seniors' communities
4.5	Housing & Homelessness	Create 2SLGBTQIA+ specific housing support programs
4.6	Housing & Homelessness	Provide advice/assistance to 2SLGBTQIA+ groups to support land acquisition and development for projects and ceremonial space
4.7	Housing & Homelessness	Provide support for 2SLGBTQIA+ facing evictions

4.8	Housing & Homelessness	Provide support for 2SLGBTQIA+ first time home buyers
4.9	Housing & Homelessness	Advocate for, fund, and support research related to 2SLGBTQIA+ Métis and Housing & Homelessness issues
5.0	Health	
5.1	Health, Mental Health & Harm Reduction	Advocate for culturally safe health-care for 2SLGBTQIA+
5.2	Health, Mental Health & Harm Reduction	Create a 2SLGBTQIA+ Health Navigator position
5.3	Health/Health Authorities	Create a mechanism for medication advisory through health services
5.4	Health / Health Authorities	Develop 2SLGBTQIA+ Seniors Long Term Care Facilities
5.5	Health / Health Authorities	Increase options where 2SLGBTQIA+ can choose their own primary and secondary care providers
5.6	Health / Health Authorities	Develop 2SLGBTQIA+ culturally safe sensitivity training in medical schools, primary care, and secondary care networks
5.7	Health / Health Authorities	Encourage the inclusion of traditional medicine and practices in the health-care system
5.8	Health / Health Authorities	Provide broader spectrum of funding for transcare
5.9	Health / Health Authorities	Encourage more 2SLGBTQIA+ Métis research and topics at health conferences
5.10	Health/ Health Authorities	Advocate for, fund and support research related to 2SLGBTQIA+ Métis and health, health gaps, health needs, and health outcomes on the local, provincial, and national level
6.0	Mental Health	
6.1	Mental Health & Harm Reduction	Develop a 2SLGBTQIA+ culturally safe staff counsellor position
6.2	Mental Health & Harm Reduction	Provide 2SLGBTQIA+ culturally safe / sensitivity program for MNBC/MNC staff

6.3	Mental Health & Harm Reduction	Prepare and provide a list of 2SLGBTQQIA+ culturally safe counsellors
6.4	Mental Health & Harm Reduction	Provide direct funding support for 2SLGBTQQIA+ to source counselling
6.5	Mental Health & Harm Reduction	Offer 2SLGBTQQIA+ specific healing and wellness programs
6.6	Mental Health & Harm Reduction	Develop a 2SLGBTQQIA+ culturally safe addictions program
6.7	All levels of Government	Advocate for, fund, and support research related to 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis mental health and harm reduction
7.0	Cultural Wellness	
7.1	MNC / MNBC	Host 2SLGBTQQIA+ Wellness Gatherings
7.2	MNC / MNBC	Host or provide support to host 2SLGBTQQIA+ ceremonies
7.3	MNC/MNBC/Chartered Communities	Develop more 2SLGBTQQIA+ online communities
7.4	MNC / MNBC / Chartered Communities	Produce more articles about 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis history and role models. Move away from trauma based stories to strengths and success focus.
7.5	MNC / MNBC / Chartered Communities	Host 2SLGBTQQIA+ cultural workshops
7.6	All levels of Government	Advocate for, fund, and support cultural research related to Two Spirit traditional roles and practices.
8.0	Education & Training	
8.1	STEPS	Develop 2SLGBTQQIA+ specific internship spaces
8.2	STEPS	Develop 2SLGBTQQIA+ specific scholarships and grants
8.3	STEPS / Institute	Develop 2SLGBTQQIA+ awareness and history courses
8.4	MNBC	Provide more political / governance training to 2SLGBTQQIA+
8.5	MNBC	Create a centralized 2SLGBTQQIA+ resource hub

8.6	BC	Increase the visibility of 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis in the education system
8.7	STEPS	Increase supports for 2SLGBTQQIA+ students
8.8	MNBC	Provide 2SLGBTQQIA+ sensitivity training for MNBC staff
8.9	STEPS	Advocate for, fund, and support research related to educational supports, gaps, and outcomes for 2SLGBTQQIA+
9.0	Human Rights & Discrimination	
9.1	People and Culture	Implement an HR policy review through a 2SLGBTQQIA+ lens
9.2	Housing & Homelessness	Provide support to 2SLGBTQQIA+ experiencing housing discrimination
9.3	MNBC	Provide support 2SLGBTQQIA+ people experiencing hiring discrimination
9.4	MNBC	Implement a general 2SLGBTQQIA+ advocacy / support line
9.5	MNBC	Provide 2SLGBTQQIA+ sensitivity training to board, senate, and other governance level positions
9.6	MNBC	Advocate for, fund, and support research related to 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis rights, discrimination rates, and mitigation strategies
10.0	Justice & Personal Safety	
10.1	Justice / AG / DRIPA	Ensure 2SLGBTQQIA+ issues and concerns are included in the Métis Justice Strategy
10.2	MNBC	Strike a 2SLGBTQQIA+ Rights and Reconciliation Committee
10.3	MNBC / CCs	Offer personal safety courses for 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis
10.4	Justice	Develop a “Know your human rights” workshop
10.5	MNBC	Advocate for 2SLGBTQQIA+ liaison positions
10.6	Justice	Advocate for, fund, and support research related to 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis and the Justice System

10.7	MNC	Strike a 2SLGBTQQIA+ IPV Taskforce
10.8	MNBC	Create an IPV "exit" bursary to cover interim housing, food, clothes, etc.
10.9	MNBC	Provide resources and tools to family and friends supporting someone experiencing IPV
10.10	MNC / MNBC	Create greater general awareness of justice and rights issues facing 2SLGBTQQIA+
10.11	MNC/MNBC	Advocate for an anonymous path to report bias and discrimination against 2SLGBTQQIA+ in law enforcement
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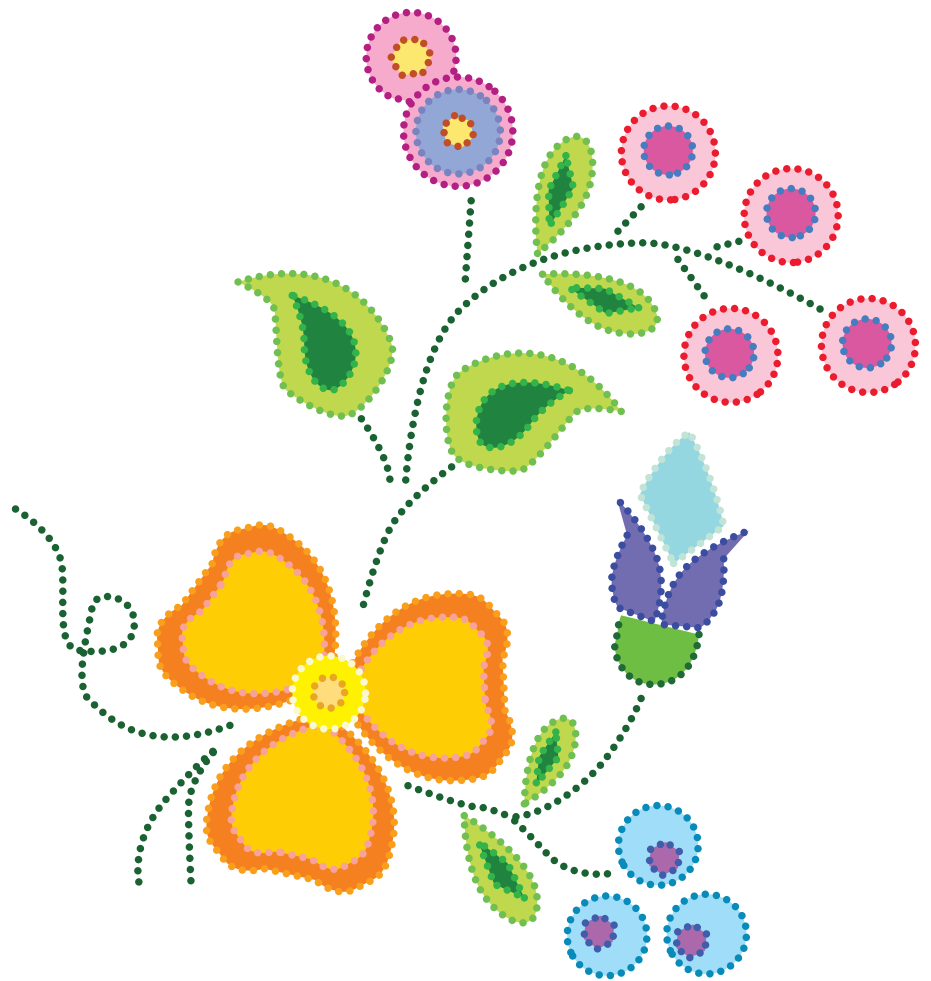
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13.6	MNC / MNBC	Create more strategic partnerships to support identified 2SLGBTQIA+ Métis outcomes

In addition to these recommendations, this report also suggests the following areas of potential research areas:

- Two Spirit traditional cultural and spiritual roles.
- Two Spirit traditional governance roles.

- Capturing and reclaiming hidden Two Spirit history.
- Two Spirit family line research with a focus on knowledge transfer.
- The positive impacts of “coming in” to Métis community.
- Fuller data capture on discrimination experienced by the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community.
- Collecting best practices in 2SLGBTQQIA+ cultural safety.
- Collecting best practices in 2SLGBTQQIA+ research methodology.

Baseline research on 2SLGBTQQIA+ Métis across all socio-economic sectors, including but not limited to formal research on housing, homelessness, health, mental health, education, economic development, and justice.





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