

Providing Safe and Inclusive Settlement Services to LGBTQIA+ Newcomers

A Toolkit for Service Providers



United Way
Lower Mainland

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Part 1: Introduction

The purpose of this toolkit is to provide guidance and resources for service providers to create safe and inclusive settlement services for LGBTQIA+ newcomers and their families. This toolkit contains information about best practices and existing services for LGBTQIA+ newcomers and their families. Service providers can use these resources to build safe services, connect with other organizations to build capacity across the network, and refer newcomer clients to tailored services to meet their needs.

While the resources provided in this toolkit are mainly located on the Lower Mainland of British Columbia, this toolkit is for everyone who works with LGBTQIA+ newcomers to Canada. In addition to resources exploring organizational readiness and setting up safe service spaces for LGBTQIA+ newcomers and their families, service providers will also find resources that can be shared directly with clients if needed.

A note on acronyms and terminology: organizations listed may use different acronyms than *LGBTQIA+*. For consistency, the acronym *LGBTQIA+* is used throughout, except in proper names of organizations or resources. Please refer to the [glossary in Appendix I](#) for unfamiliar acronyms or terminology.

Acknowledgements

We, respectfully acknowledge that we live and work on the traditional and unceded territories of the Sk̓w̓x̓wú7mesh (Squamish), and səliiwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations. We also respectfully acknowledge that this toolkit and its recommendations span several Territories and Treaty areas.

We would like to thank all members of the Advisory Committee, and everyone who contributed their time, insights, and invaluable contributions to the creation of this toolkit including Bahar Taheri, Owner and Lead Consultant of Blue Tree Project Solutions.

Impact North Shore would like to gratefully acknowledge United Way for their generous financial support for this project.

Part 2: Background



Trigger Warning — The following section contains content that may be distressing and triggering to some readers.

This toolkit provides a curated list of resources to develop more inclusive and safer settlement services for LGBTQIA+ newcomers and their families. To create safer settlement services, it is important to examine the context in which existing services are delivered. This includes the lived experiences of LGBTQIA+ newcomers and their families, both in the countries from which they are emigrating, and in Canada.

Anti-LGBTQIA+ Legislation

Across the globe, anti-LGBTQIA+ laws are being enacted and enforced. Homosexuality is currently criminalized in sixty-four countries, almost half of which are in Africa (Reality Check Team 2023). In 2023, Uganda’s president signed the Anti-Homosexuality Act into law, under which people tried for “aggravated homosexuality” can be sentenced to death (Budoo-Scholtz 2023).

In statehouses across the United States, an increasing number of anti-LGBTQIA+ bills are being introduced (in 2023, that number stood at over 520 bills, 220 of which were anti-trans) (HRC Staff 2023). In 2023 alone, Florida enacted six anti-LGBTQIA+ laws, including HB 1069, banning teachers from Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 8 from instructing students about sexual orientation and gender identity, and SB 254, banning gender-affirming care (HRC Staff 2023).

Similar discriminatory laws and policies are also being enacted in Canada. While the Canadian Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms protects the rights of LGBTQIA+ persons, some Canadian provinces have used the notwithstanding clause to propose laws restricting the rights of trans youth (“Rights of LGBTI Persons” 2023; “Section 33 – Notwithstanding Clause” 2023). In 2023, Saskatchewan signed Bill 137 into law, which mandates that children must have the consent of their parent or guardian to change their pronouns and name at school, forcing children to either be outed or stay closeted (Dayal 2023). While not legislation, it is also worth noting that in Canada, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) issued a warning in February 2023 that the ‘anti-gender movement’ poses a threat of ‘extreme violence’¹ for the 2SLGBTQI+ community, and as recently as May 2024 the results of an Ipsos poll shows that support for LGBTQ+ visibility and rights are declining in Canada².

Hate Crimes

Violence against LGBTQIA+ people is also on the rise. In 2023, the European International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA) reported that the level of violence against LGBTQIA+ people in Europe and Central Asia is higher than at any point in the past decade (Amnesty International 2023). In Canada, police-reported hate crimes based on

¹ “CSIS warns that the ‘anti-gender movement’ poses a threat of ‘extreme violence’”

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/csis-lgbtq-warning-violence-1.7114801>

² “Poll finds declining Canadian support for LGBTQ2 rights and visibility”

<https://globalnews.ca/news/10538379/canada-lgbtq2-rights-poll/>

sexual orientation increased almost sixty-four per cent from 2020 to 2021 (from 258 incidents to 423 incidents) (Charlebois 2023). Of these incidents, seventy-seven per cent targeted gay and lesbian people, eleven per cent targeted asexual or pansexual people, two per cent targeted bisexual people, and the remaining ten per cent of these cases involved people of unknown sexual orientation (Statistics Canada 2023). In hate crimes targeting sexual orientation, seventy-two per cent of victims were men and boys (Statistics Canada 2023). But, as LGBTQIA+ persons may not feel safe to report hate crimes to the police, the actual figure of such crimes is likely higher (Charlebois 2023).

In Trans Murder Monitoring's 2023 Global Update, 321 trans and gender-diverse people were reported murdered—a level consistent with the 327 reported cases in 2022 (Trans Murder Monitoring 2023). In these cases, ninety-four per cent were trans women or trans-feminine people (again, consistent with 2022's findings, at ninety-five per cent) (Amnesty International 2023; Trans Murder Monitoring 2023). Moreover, eighty per cent of murder victims were either Black, Brown, or racialized; forty-eight per cent were sex workers; and forty-five per cent were migrants or refugees in Europe (Trans Murder Monitoring 2023).

While hate crimes against LGBTQIA+ people are not new, the internet now provides a worldwide platform for hate speech (Amnesty International 2023; Charlebois 2023). In Canada and across the globe, online hate campaigns have targeted LGBTQIA+ activists and public figures (Amnesty International 2023; Charlebois 2023). In 2022, trans activist Clara Sorrenti was forced to flee Canada following a coordinated doxing and swatting campaign³ targeting her in her own home (O'Sullivan and Naik 2022).

These cases, and countless others, demonstrate how hateful online rhetoric can and does result in offline consequences, both in inciting violence and negatively affecting the mental health of LGBTQIA+ people (Amnesty International 2023; Charlebois 2023). In 2022, almost forty-two per cent of LGBTQIA+ people⁴ living in Canada reported "fair or poor perceived mental health" as opposed to less than twenty per cent of non-LGBTQIA+ people (Charlebois 2023).

LGBTQIA+ Newcomers and Settlement Services

Service providers must keep this background in mind. It is important "to resist the narrative of Canada as a savior nation because it obscures complexities of the newcomer experience and inhibits the ability to be reflexive about service design and delivery" (Choby and Fischer 2016: 4). LGBTQIA+ newcomers to Canada are a diverse group, with intersectional identities and different countries of origin (Choby and Fischer 2016: 7). While newcomers may claim asylum or refugee status based on SOGI (i.e., Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity), they may arrive in Canada through any immigration stream (related or unrelated to SOGI) (Choby and Fischer 2016: 6).

As LGBTQIA+ newcomers have intersectional identities, they need a wide network of supports and services. These include settlement, language, housing, and employment services; community involvement; and physical and mental health supports. To examine existing services in British Columbia and Canada, an environmental scan was conducted in the spring of 2024. This toolkit was produced from the scan's findings.

³ This campaign involved publishing Sorrenti's address on the internet and calling the police to falsely report serious incidents at her home (O'Sullivan and Naik 2022). See Appendix I: Glossary for definitions of *doxing* and *swatting*.

⁴ Charlebois 2023 uses the acronym *LGBTQ2+*. This acronym has been changed for internal consistency.



Overall, the environmental scan determined that settlement services tailored to LGBTQIA+ newcomers are rare and existing resources and services are often clustered in major cities (such as Vancouver, British Columbia), which may cause economic and geographic barriers to access for newcomers living outside of urban centres.

Additionally, existing services are often overburdened. For example, at the time of writing, Centretown Community Health Centre's LGBTQIA+ Newcomer Program (Ottawa, Ontario), a virtual and in-person social drop-in group for LGBTQIA+ newcomers, was already at capacity for 2024. Due to high demand, the program's waiting list was also closed; although they noted that the list would reopen in 2025.

Part 3: Readiness Guidelines

This section provides tools and guidance for organizations to assess readiness to deliver services for LGBTQIA+ newcomers and their families. Based on research conducted by Impact North Shore as part of the *Service Improvement Report: Creating Safe Spaces and Reducing Barriers to Settlement Services for LGBTQIA+ Newcomers and their Families*, with newcomers and service providers, it was identified that assessing organizational readiness is a critical exercise that must be undertaken before offering services for LGBTQIA+ newcomers. Organizations must implement inclusive practices at the policy level before moving on to further steps. While organizations may mean well by displaying symbols of allyship, doing so without addressing safety on an organizational level may lead to harm to, and loss of trust from, LGBTQIA+ clients.

If your organization is considering implementing new programming for LGBTQIA+ newcomers and their families, it's recommended to first analyze the organization's ability and capacity to adopt new policies and procedures, meet the needs of your employees to enable safer service delivery and remove old processes and barriers that do not support a safe and inclusive environment.

3.1 Organizational Assessment

There are variety of factors that can be examined to better understand organizational readiness to offer LGBTQIA+ dedicated services. Key aspects to consider are motivation, capacity, staff readiness and organizational culture. Conducting a self-assessment, including surveys with staff, board and key stakeholders, is recommended as a starting point for identifying the best change leadership plan for your organization. [Leading Change: The 5 W's](#) resource, created by [Vantage Point](#), helps apply a critical lens to adopting change in a non-profit context.

Using a Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA+) lens throughout the organizational readiness assessment is recommended to support the development of responsive and inclusive policies, and programs. "GBA Plus is a process for understanding who is impacted by the issue or opportunity being addressed by the initiative; identifying how the initiative could be tailored to meet diverse needs of the people most impacted; and anticipating and mitigating any barriers to accessing or benefitting from the initiative." The following resources are available on the Government of Canada website to learn more about applying a GBA+ approach:

- [Government of Canada GBA+ Research Checklist](#)
- [Government of Canada GBA+ Course](#)

In addition to conducting an organizational self-assessment, the [Canada's LGBT+ Chamber of Commerce \(CGLCC\)](#) has a program called [Rainbow Registered](#) designed to provide accreditation to organizations and businesses that are ready to serve LGBTQIA+ clients. While

accreditation is not required to provide services to LGBTQIA+ newcomers and their families, the program [Application Guide](#) offers criteria that helps define standards of practice.

3.2 Capacity-Building

The following is a list of capacity-building networks and organizations. Service providers should learn from and build partnerships with organizations such as those included below. Note: These organizations are divided by region.

British Columbia

[Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies of BC \(AMSSA\)](#): Supports service providers of settlement, language, and diversity services in British Columbia.

[Vantage Point](#): Convenes, connects, and equips leaders to lift organizational capacity and elevate the non-profit sector

[Dignity Seniors Society](#): Consults on service provision to LGBTQIA+ seniors.

Canada

[Egale Canada](#): Organization focused on improving the lives of LGBTQIA+ people in Canada and promoting their inclusion and human rights worldwide.

[From Borders to Belonging](#): Coalition of organizations supporting LGBTQIA+ Refugees and Asylum Seekers.

[Positive Spaces Initiative \(PSI\)](#): The Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI) developed the PSI to strengthen and share resources about creating Positive Spaces across the LGBTQIA+ settlement sector. PSI offers a quarterly newsletter to distribute news, events, projects, updates, and resources.

[Rainbow Health Ontario](#): Sherbourne Health's program to improve healthcare for LGBTQIA+ communities.

[Rainbow Foundation of Hope](#): Foundation supporting settlement and relocation services for LGBTQIA+ refugees.

[SettleNet.org](#): Network for Canadian settlement-sector agencies and organizations to collaborate and connect.

[The Enchanté Network](#): Support building network for Canadian LGBTQIA+ organizations.

3.3 Safe Work Environments and Staffing

All safe services should have representative staffing in frontline and decision-making roles, and all staff must be meaningfully included in decision-making. The tools and resources in this section provide guidance on inclusive and equitable staffing and creating safe workplaces.

Safe Work Environments

The following resources include training and guides to create inclusive and safe work environments for LGBTQIA+ people.

British Columbia

[Province of British Columbia — Supporting Transgender and Gender Diverse Employees in the Workplace: For Employees, Supervisors and Managers](#): Guide for service providers to support transgender and gender-diverse people in the workplace.

Canada

[Pride at Work Canada — Reports, Guides & Toolkits](#): Multiple resources for building LGBTQIA+-inclusive workplaces

[The 519 - Creating Authentic Spaces](#): Toolkit designed to challenge transphobia and to foster environments that are inclusive of gender identity and gender expression.

Policies and Procedures

The following resources provide guidance to create and implement policies that protect LGBTQIA+ individuals from discrimination and harassment.

[CGLCC – LGBT+ Inclusive Policies and Practices](#): Provides direction on developing and implementing internal policies and practices, with an LGBTQIA+ lens.

[Pride at Work – Beyond Diversity: An LGBT Best Practice Guide for Employers](#): Provides strategies to promote inclusion of LGBTQIA+ people in the workplace.

[ProAlly – Guide of Best Practices for LGBTQ+ Inclusion in the Workplace](#): Provides best practices on how to implement LGBTQIA+ inclusive policies in organizations.

[Rainbow Health Ontario Policy](#): Policy recommendations and best practices for agencies working towards trans accessibility.

Advisory Groups

The following resource provides guidance about setting up an Advisory Group.

[Inclusion Australia - Setting up an Advisory Group in your Service: Promoting Good Quality and Safe Services](#): Resource guide for how to set up a service improvement focused advisory group

3.5 Training and Resource Guides

LGBTQIA+ Safe Spaces

The following resources include guides, reports, and toolkits about creating inclusive service environments for LGBTQIA+ clients.

[ACWS — The Blueprint Project: 2SLGBTQ+ Community of Practice](#): Resource guide for creating safe and inclusive services for LGBTQIA+ people.

[BGC Canada — 2S & LGBTQIA+ Toolkit: Made for Senior Leadership and Organizational Decision Makers](#): Toolkit for LGBTQIA+ inclusion in the workplace, including inclusive language, key concepts, staff training, and policies and procedures.

[CGLCC — LGBTQ+ Inclusion Guide](#): LGBTQIA+-inclusion strategy guide for Canadian businesses and organizations.

[Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities — LGBTQ2+ Inclusiveness: Toolkit for Inclusive Municipalities in Canada and Beyond](#): Toolkit for service providers to create inclusive service environments for LGBTQIA+ newcomers.

[Egale Canada — Free Workshops](#): Free, online workshops on a variety of topics, including service provision to LGBTQIA+ people, and school and workplace inclusion.

[Gilbert Centre — Welcoming the LGBTQ Community](#): Guide to creating inclusive services for LGBTQIA+ people and their families.

[HRC Foundation — Establishing an Allies/Safe Zone Program](#): Guide for creating LGBTQIA+ Safe Zones.

[Rainbow Health Ontario — Education & Training](#): Online cultural-competency training modules and resources for healthcare and other service providers working with LGBTQIA+ clients.

[Safe Zone Project](#): Free, online curriculum for creating safe zones for LGBTQIA+ people.

[The Enchanté Network — Mapping Canada’s 2SLGBTQI+ Movement: Growth, Capacity, and Futures](#): Report about LGBTQIA+ resources and services in Canada.

Trans and Gender-Diverse Resources

[Trans Care BC — The Education Centre](#): Courses and resources to improve service provision to transgender and gender-diverse people.

LGBTQIA+ Newcomer Safe Spaces

These resources provide specific training, guidelines, and reports about how to improve service delivery to LGBTQIA+ newcomers.

[AMSSA — LGBTQIA+ Newcomers: Strengthening Support and Understanding \(Part 1\)](#): Seminar on improving service delivery to LGBTQIA+ newcomers.

[AMSSA — LGBTQIA+ Newcomers: Strengthening Support and Understanding \(Part 2\)](#): E-learning course to improve service delivery to LGBTQIA+ newcomers.

[From Borders to Belonging — Guide for service providers supporting trans+ and non-binary immigrants and refugees \(English\)](#): English-language guide for service providers to support trans and gender-diverse newcomers.

[From Borders to Belonging — Guide for service providers supporting trans+ and non-binary immigrants and refugees \(French\)](#): French-language guide for service providers to support trans and gender-diverse newcomers.

[OCASI-Positive Spaces Initiative Training](#): Customized settlement-sector training to create Positive Spaces for newcomers. (This organization is based in Ontario.)

[Positive Spaces Initiative — Starter Kit \(English\)](#): English-language guide for creating positive spaces for LGBTQIA+ immigrants; including terms, tips, and resources. (This organization is based in Ontario.)

[Positive Spaces Initiative — Starter Kit \(French\)](#): French-language guide for creating positive spaces for LGBTQIA+ immigrants; including terms, tips, and resources. (This organization is based in Ontario.)

[Rainbow Refugee Society — Webinars](#): Playlist of Rainbow Refugee Society’s webinars on best practices for working with and supporting LGBTQIA+ newcomers. Recommended seminars include:

- [How to address the current rise of Anti-2SLGBTQI+ hate?](#)
- [LGBTQI Refugees’ settlement challenges, strategies and recommendations](#)
- [Sponsorship Journey by a sponsored individual after arrival—English](#)
- [Supporting LGBTQI Newcomers with Ethics and Care](#)

Reports

The following are location-specific reports about service provision to LGBTQIA+ newcomers in Canada.

[Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers — Provisioning Settlement Services for LGBTQ Newcomers to Edmonton: Identifying Needs and Best Practices](#): Report about needs and best practices in service provision in Edmonton (published in 2016).

[Tri-Cities Local Immigration Partnership — Sense of Belonging](#): Report “on the sense of belonging of LGBTQIA+ immigrants in the Tri-Cities.”

Impact North Shore - Service Improvement Report: Creating Safe Spaces and Reducing Barriers to Settlement Services for LGBTQIA+ Newcomers and their Families: Report on designing inclusive and responsive services for LGBTQIA+ newcomers and their families (to be released 2024)

Mental Health for LGBTQIA+ Newcomers

These resources are specifically about mental health care and trauma-informed service provision to LGBTQIA+ newcomers.

[Rainbow Health Ontario — Mental Health Challenges for LGBT Asylum Seekers in Canada](#): Fact sheet for service providers working with LGBTQIA+ Asylum seekers.

[The Immigrant and Refugee Mental Health Project \(IRMHP\) — Course Resources](#): Course on working with immigrants and refugees (including LGBTQIA+ newcomers) offered by the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH).

Gender-Based Violence Resources

These resources offer information related to gender-based violence specifically affecting LGBTQIA+ newcomers.

[Gender-based Violence Settlement Sector Strategy](#): A national partnership that works collaboratively to build capacity and networks to better support newcomers, immigrants and refugees through research, creating tools and resources and sharing best practices. Webinar: [Allyship with 2SLGBTQIA](#) Newcomers, Immigrants and Refugees and [slide deck](#).

[Trans Lifeline](#): is a grassroots hotline offering direct emotional and financial support to trans people in crisis – for the trans community, by the trans community. In Canada Call: (877) 330-6366. The website also hosts several resources related to surviving violence: [Resource Library - Trans Lifeline](#)

Part 4: Setting up a Safe Service Space

Creating a welcoming and inclusive environment for LGBTQIA+ newcomers is vital for non-profit organizations dedicated to supporting diverse communities. The following checklist serves as a guide to help organizations become recognized safe spaces for LGBTQIA+ individuals. By implementing these steps, organizations can ensure they are fostering environments where all individuals feel respected, valued, and safe. It is important to take these steps because LGBTQIA+ individuals often face unique challenges and discrimination, and a truly inclusive space can significantly improve their well-being and sense of belonging.

Taking a step-by-step approach to creating a safe space is crucial. Each step builds on the previous one, ensuring a thorough and genuine commitment to inclusivity. Prematurely claiming to be a safe space without having implemented these practices can lead to unintentional harm, tokenism, and a lack of trust from the LGBTQIA+ community. Additionally, it is important to recognize that creating a safe space is not a one-time effort. Consistent and regular trainings throughout the year are essential to stay updated on best practices and to continuously reinforce the commitment to inclusivity. By following this checklist, organizations can develop a deep, authentic, and effective practice of inclusivity that genuinely supports LGBTQIA+ newcomers.

Safe Space Checklist for Organizations Serving LGBTQIA+ Newcomers

	Category	Action	Resources
<input type="checkbox"/>	Training and Education	Conduct LGBTQIA+ Sensitivity and Awareness Training for all staff, volunteers, and board members.	<p>The Safe Zone Project: Offers free resources and curriculum for creating LGBTQIA+ awareness and ally training workshops.</p> <p>Egale Canada – Building Bridges: Resources for LGBTQIA+ intersectionality; provides workbooks for anti-racism and affirming faith.</p> <p>Advocates for Youth – Creating safer spaces for LGBTQ Youth – A toolkit for education, healthcare and community-based organizations: Provides practical tools and checklist for organizations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal climate and practices checklist (pg. 29-30) • Cultural responsiveness (pg. 39-41) <p>Positive Spaces Initiative — Starter Kit (English) / Positive Spaces Initiative — Starter Kit (French): French and English-language guide for creating positive spaces for LGBTQIA+ immigrants; including terms, tips, and resources. (This organization is based in Ontario.)</p>

<input type="checkbox"/>	Visible Affirmation and Support	<p>Post affirming signage indicating the organization is LGBTQIA+ friendly.</p> <p>Fly Pride Flags in visible areas to show support and inclusion.</p>	<p>Safe Space Kit by GLSEN: Provides tools and resources to create visible support for LGBTQIA+ students and youth (in English and Spanish).</p> <p>Egale Canada – LGBTQIA+ inclusive posters – Provides posters for organizations to display showing they are allies and safe spaces.</p> <p>Egale Canada – Toilet Training: Provides the basics of making washrooms inclusive for everyone.</p> <p>Positive Spaces Initiative — Starter Kit, Poster, and Postcards: Download or order copies of the Positive Spaces Institute’s outreach and promotional materials (in English and French).</p> <p>Rainbow Health Ontario — Positive Space (Poster): Poster to raise awareness of discrimination against LGBTQIA+ people, and to affirm an organization’s commitment to creating a positive space.</p> <p>Rainbow Health Ontario — Positive Space (Stickers): Stickers to raise awareness of discrimination against LGBTQIA+ people, and to affirm an organization’s commitment to creating a positive space.</p> <p>You Are Safe With Me Pin: Rainbow pin that affirms the wearer’s commitment to creating a safe and positive space for LGBTQIA+ people.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Inclusive Language	<p>Update brochures and marketing materials to use inclusive language and imagery in all publications and digital content.</p> <p>Ensure website and social media content is inclusive and affirming, using correct pronouns and inclusive terminology.</p>	<p>Advocates for Youth – Creating safer spaces for LGBTQ Youth – A toolkit for education, healthcare and community-based organizations: Provides practical tools and checklist for organizations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intake and program registration forms (pg. 31) • Sample LGBTQ-inclusive terms to normalize (pg. 32-33) • Five things to consider when creating digital safer spaces (pg. 38)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Policies and Procedures	<p>Create and implement policies that protect LGBTQIA+ individuals from discrimination and harassment.</p>	<p>Rainbow Health Ontario Policy: Policy recommendations and best practices for agencies working towards trans accessibility.</p> <p>ProAlly – Guide of Best Practices for LGBTQ+ Inclusion in the Workplace: Provides best practices</p>

			<p>on how to implement LGBTQIA+ inclusive policies in organizations.</p> <p>Pride at Work – Beyond Diversity: An LGBT Best Practice Guide for Employers: Provides strategies to promote inclusive of LGBTQIA+ people in the workplace.</p> <p>CGLCC: LGBT+ Inclusive Policies and Practices: Provides direction on developing and implementing internal policies and practices, with an LGBTQIA+ lens.</p>
		<p>Ensure policies respect and protect the confidentiality and privacy of LGBTQIA+ individuals, particularly regarding their sexual orientation and gender identity.</p>	<p>Advocates for Youth – Creating safer spaces for LGBTQ Youth – A toolkit for education, healthcare and community-based organizations: Provides practical tools and checklist for organizations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Page 26 – Policy Assessment Checklist • Page 27 – Sample Policies
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Community Engagement</p>	<p>Partner with LGBTQIA+ organizations to enhance support and resources.</p>	<p>LGBTQ+ Community Centre Directory by QMUNITY: QMunity is an example of an LGBTQIA+ organization that, while focused on serving the LGBTQIA+ community, does not specifically specialize in supports and services for newcomer LGBTQIA+ individuals. This presents a great opportunity for newcomer-serving organizations to partner with QMunity, fostering collaboration and partnerships to better serve LGBTQIA+ newcomers.</p>
		<p>Host inclusive events that celebrate and support the LGBTQIA+ community.</p>	<p>Organizations can join larger festivals to generate awareness about their LGBTQIA+ newcomer focused programs and services, while also visibly and actively displaying allyship with the community. Some examples of events are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kelowna Pride • Canada Pride Festival by Vancouver Pride Society • What’s on Queer Magazine – 2024 Pride in BC events

Part 5: Inclusive Service Provision

This section includes resources to create more inclusive services, including updating official language, receiving client feedback, and facilitating discussions.

5.1 Inclusive Language and Forms

A safe service space must use inclusive language both in outreach and on official documents. This section includes templates and guides to create inclusive intake and needs-assessment forms. The following resources offer guidance for creating inclusive forms and using inclusive language on official documents.

[Denver Prevention Training Centre — Guide to LGBTQ+ Inclusive Forms](#): Guide for creating inclusive intake forms.

[Queering Medicine — Intake Form Guidance for Providers](#): Guidelines for creating inclusive intake forms for service providers.

[The Rainbow OT — Inclusive Intake Forms](#): Guidelines for creating inclusive intake forms for service providers.

[UBC Equity & Inclusion Office — Inclusive Forms](#): Guide for creating inclusive intake forms.

[WRHA — Ethical Considerations When Developing Forms](#): The Winnipeg Regional Health Authority's guide for creating inclusive forms and avoiding heteronormative and cisnormative language.

The following is an example of a handout on sexual orientation and gender identity, which may be of use in service provision to LGBTQIA+ clients.

[The Gender Unicorn](#): Gender and sexuality worksheet offered in fifteen languages.

5.2 Facilitation

The following resource outlines best practices for group facilitation. This guide is designed to help organizations facilitate online sessions with LGBTQ+ immigrants and their families. This is a general guide that can be used as a template for organizations facilitating focus groups and sessions with LGBTQIA+ newcomers.

- Facilitation Guide ([see Appendix III](#))

Part 6: Resources for LGBTQIA+ Newcomers

This section includes information and services for service providers to provide to their LGBTQIA+ newcomer clients. These resources and services include programs for children and youth, and their parents or caregivers; settlement, physical and mental health, employment, housing, and free or low-cost food services; community organizations; and online resources.

6.1 Settlement Services

The following are settlement services for LGBTQIA+ newcomers. These settlement services have been divided by region and this list may not be exhaustive. (To have your service added to the list please email community@impactnorthshore.ca.)

The North Shore

[Impact North Shore – Bridge to Belonging Program](#): Home to the North Shore Immigrant Service Centre, Impact North Shore offers a full range of services im/migrants including dedicated services for LGBTQIA+ newcomers and their families through the Bridge to Belonging Program.

Vancouver and the Lower Mainland

[DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society — LGBTQ+ Newcomer Services](#): One-on-one and group support for LGBTQIA+ newcomers in Surrey, British Columbia.

[ISSofBC — Moving Ahead Program \(MAP\)](#): Settlement, employment, and English-language services for newcomers with multiple vulnerabilities, including LGBTQIA+ people. MAP has several service locations in cities throughout the Lower Mainland, including Burnaby, Coquitlam, Langley, Maple Ridge, New Westminister, Richmond, and Vancouver.

[MOSAIC — I Belong Program](#): Large non-profit organization that provides settlement services for newcomers. The I Belong Program provides support and services (including counselling, peer support, and mentorship) for LGBTQIA+ refugees and newcomers to Vancouver, British Columbia.

[Rainbow Refugee](#): Program that supports LGBTQIA+ and HIV+ persons seeking asylum in Canada; hosts drop-in events, information sessions, and community events.

[Richmond Multicultural Community Services \(RCMS\) — LGBTQIA2S+ Program](#): Settlement, housing, counselling, language, and other services for LGBTQIA+ newcomers, Permanent Residents, and Refugees in Richmond, British Columbia.

British Columbia

[Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria \(ICA\) — LGBTQ2S+ Services for Refugees and Immigrants](#): The largest Resettlement Assistance Program on Vancouver Island; the ICA provides settlement services to LGBTQIA+ refugees in Victoria, British Columbia.

Canada

[Centre for Newcomers — LGBTQ+ Newcomer Services](#): Offers LGBTQIA+-specific services for newcomers in Calgary, Alberta.

[Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization \(OCISO\) — LGBTQ+ Settlement Services](#): Settlement services for LGBTQIA+ people in Ottawa, Ontario.

[The Neighbourhood Group Community Services — Rainbow Connect](#): LGBTQIA+ newcomer workshops, peer groups, and one-on-one supports in Toronto, Ontario.

6.2 Physical and Mental Health Services

The following are physical and mental health resources for LGBTQIA+ newcomers. While some services are specific to newcomers, others are LGBTQIA+-friendly services (regardless of immigration status).

LGBTQIA+ Newcomer Health Services

These health services highlight specific programs for LGBTQIA+ newcomers.

[Catherine White Holman Wellness Centre](#): Free, low-barrier health, wellness, and legal services for trans and gender-diverse people, (including newcomers) in Vancouver, British Columbia.

[Health Initiative for Men \(HIM\)](#): Non-profit organization in Vancouver, British Columbia, providing health care and mental health services for gay, bisexual, and queer men, and gender-diverse people. Also offers specific supports for newcomers.

[MOSAIC — I Belong](#): Individual and group counselling for LGBTQIA+ newcomers in Vancouver, British Columbia.

LGBTQIA+ Health Services

The following health services (divided by region) are tailored to LGBTQIA+ people.

The North Shore

[Family Services North Shore — PROUD2BE LGBTQ2S+ Support](#): Counselling and supports for LGBTQIA+ families, parents, and youth.

Vancouver and the Lower Mainland

[BC Children's Hospital — Gender Resources](#): Gender-affirming resources for children and youth in British Columbia.

[Come As You Are \(CAYA\) Health Centre](#): CAYA Health Centre offers a wide range of physical and mental health services for women, and trans and non-binary people in Vancouver, British Columbia.

[Catherine White Holman Wellness Centre](#): Free, low-barrier health, wellness, and legal services for trans and gender-diverse people, (including newcomers) in Vancouver, British Columbia.

[Dignity Seniors Society](#): Resources and advocacy for LGBTQIA+ seniors in Vancouver, British Columbia.

[Health Initiative for Men \(HIM\)](#): Non-profit organization in Vancouver, British Columbia, providing health care and mental health services for gay, bisexual, and queer men, and gender-diverse people. Also offers specific supports for newcomers.

[Island Sexual Health — LGBTQIAA+ Resources](#): Health resources for LGBTQIA+ people on Vancouver Island.

[Options for Sexual Health](#): LGBTQIA+-friendly clinical services and sexual health resources in Vancouver, British Columbia.

[Prism Services at Three Bridges Community Health Centre \(West End\)](#): Health education and referral service for LGBTQIA+ people in Vancouver, British Columbia.

[QMUNITY — Free and Low-Cost Counselling](#): Free and low-cost counselling for LGBTQIA+ and gender-diverse people in Vancouver, British Columbia.

[Trans Care BC](#): Connecting trans people and their loved ones to gender-affirming care, support, and information in Vancouver, British Columbia.

[Vancouver Coastal Health — 2SLGBTQIA+](#): LGBTQIA+ health resources in Vancouver and on the Sunshine Coast.

[YouthCo HIV & Hep C Society](#): A non-profit that works with, and offers peer support among, youth aged 15–29 in Vancouver, British Columbia, to reduce vulnerability to HIV, AIDS, and Hepatitis C.

British Columbia

[AIDS Vancouver Island \(AVI\)](#): Support and services for people affected by HVI, HCV, and substance use; with multiple service locations, including Victoria, Nanaimo, Comox Valley, and Campbell River, British Columbia.

[Fraser Health — 2SLGBTQIA+](#): LGBTQIA+ health resources in southwestern British Columbia.

[Geometry Integrated Health](#): LGBTQIA+-owned health clinic, offering many different treatments, including massage and counselling in Victoria, British Columbia.

[Island Sexual Health](#): Clinic that provides sexual health care, educational programs, and products to people of all orientations, genders, and identities in Victoria, British Columbia.

[What's on Queer! BC Magazine — Therapy, Counselling, & Support](#): Mental health resources for LGBTQIA+ people in British Columbia.

Canada

[Black Coalition for Aids Prevention \(Black CAP\)](#): Offers support for Black people in Toronto, Ontario living with HIV/AIDS.

[Centretown Community Health Centre — Newcomer Programs](#): Offers inclusive and diverse community health services in Ottawa, Ontario. Services include but are not limited to LGBTQIA+ mental health services, HIV testing, and gender-affirming care. Services are delivered in English and French, with translation supports available.

[MAX Ottawa](#): Health services for gay, bisexual, queer, Two-spirit, and all men that love men (both cis and trans), in Ottawa, Ontario.

[Toronto People With AIDS Foundation \(PWA\)](#): Provides support for people in Toronto, Ontario, living with HIV/AIDS.

[Trans Lifeline Canada](#): Canada-wide trans peer-support phone line.

Trans Health

While these resources are included in the previous section, this section highlights specific resources dedicated to trans and gender-diverse care.

[BC Children's Hospital — Gender Resources](#): Gender-affirming resources for children and youth in British Columbia.

[Catherine White Holman Wellness Centre — General Resources](#): Health resources for trans and gender-diverse people in Vancouver.

[Trans Care BC](#): Connecting trans people and their loved ones to gender-affirming care, support, and information in Vancouver, British Columbia.

[Trans Lifeline Canada](#): Canada-wide trans peer-support phone line.

6.3 Parents and Caregivers

The following are resources (divided by region) for parents and caregivers of LGBTQIA+ children.

The North Shore

[Family Services North Shore — PROUD2BE Drop-in Groups for Parents](#): Virtual, facilitated drop-in groups for parents of LGBTQIA+ children on the North Shore.

Vancouver and the Lower Mainland

[QMUNITY — Parent Resources](#): Resources for parents and caregivers of LGBTQIA+ youth and children in Vancouver, British Columbia.

British Columbia

[Gender Spectacular](#): Monthly drop-in support group for parents and caregivers of Trans, gender non-conforming, and Two-Spirit children and youth in Greater Victoria, British Columbia.

6.4 Children and Youth

These resources cover a broad range of needs for LGBTQIA+ and/or newcomer children and youth, from health and wellness to community involvement. These resources have been divided into categories based upon their audience (i.e., LGBTQIA+-youth newcomers, newcomer youth in general, or LGBTQIA+ youth in general).

LGBTQIA+ Newcomer Youth

The following resources are designed specifically with LGBTQIA+-newcomer youth in mind.

[CultureLink — Sankofa LGBTQ2S Program](#): Interactive workshops for LGBTQIA+ newcomer youth aged 13–29 in Toronto, Ontario.

[ICA — The Q+ Crew](#): The Victoria Inter-Cultural Association’s peer-support group for LGBTQIA+ newcomers, refugees, and racialized Canadians aged 18–30. The ICA offers both virtual and in-person programs (in Greater Victoria, British Columbia).

Newcomer Youth

The following resources are designed for newcomer youth.

[DIVERSEcity — DIVERSEyouth](#): Youth group for newcomers aged 13–24 in Surrey, BC.

[Recreation, Engagement, Action, Connection Hub \(REACH\)](#): Program that supports newcomer youth aged 13–24 in Delta, Langley, and Surrey, British Columbia.

LGBTQIA+ Youth

The following resources (divided by region) are designed for LGBTQIA+ children and youth.

The North Shore

[Family Services North Shore — PROUD2BE Yourself Groups for Youth](#): Drop-in group for LGBTQIA+ youth aged 16–24 on the North Shore.

Vancouver and the Lower Mainland

[Douglas College — Q+ Works Employment Program](#): Job training and career exploration for LGBTQIA+ youth aged 16–29 in New Westminister, British Columbia. Note: participants must be legally entitled to work in Canada.

[QMUNITY — GAB Youth and GAB Junior](#): Drop-in programs for LGBTQIA+ youth aged 10–13 and 14–25 in Vancouver, British Columbia.

British Columbia

[AVI — Queer Peers Training Series](#): Peer leadership-training program offered through AIDS Vancouver Island.

[FOUNDRY](#): A province-wide network of community organizations and service centres offering substance-use and social services; mental, physical and sexual health care; and peer supports for LGBTQIA+ youth aged 12–24. These services can be accessed virtually or at over 13 locations province-wide (including North Vancouver and Vancouver, as well as the Lower Mainland, the Interior, Northern BC, and Vancouver Island).

[FOUNDRY — Queer Café Virtual Group](#):

The Foundry’s virtual group for LGBTQIA+ youth aged 16–24.

[VPS — Gender Generations Project](#): Formerly known as Trans Tipping Point, Gender Generations Project is a biannual arts retreat for Trans, Non-Binary, Two Spirit, and other gender-diverse youth from Victoria, British Columbia.

[VPS — Victoria 2SLGBTQIA+ Youth Resources](#): Resources for LGBTQIA+ youth in Greater Victoria.

[VPS — Victoria Pride Youth Leadership Council](#): Event- and project-planning group of LGBTQIA+ youth aged 14–24 in Victoria, British Columbia.

Canada

[Friends of Ruby](#): Organization supporting LGBTQIA+ youth (aged 16–29) in Toronto, Ontario.

6.5 Employment Services

The following are employment services (divided by region) for LGBTQIA+ and racialized newcomers.

Vancouver and the Lower Mainland

[DIVERSEcity — SAHARA Employment Program for Men](#): Employment services for racialized men in Surrey, British Columbia.

[Douglas College — Q+ Works Employment Program](#): Job training and career exploration for LGBTQIA+ youth aged 16–29 in New Westminister, British Columbia. Note: participants must be legally entitled to work in Canada.

[Jobs for Queers Victoria](#): Employment resources for LGBTQIA+ people in Greater Victoria, British Columbia.

[WorkBC — 2SLGBTQIA+](#): Resources for LGBTQIA+ people seeking employment and work support.

Canada

[CGLCC — LGBTQI+ Newcomers Program](#): Entrepreneurship program for LGBTQIA+ newcomers in Toronto, Ontario; currently in the research and development stage.

6.6 Housing

The following resource is a group dedicated to finding safe housing for LGBTQIA+ people.

[Queer Housing Victoria \(B.C.\)](#): Housing resources for LGBTQIA+ people in Greater Victoria.

6.7 Community Organizations and Community Involvement

These resources cover a broad range of needs for LGBTQIA+ people and/or newcomers.

Newcomer LGBTQIA+ Community Organizations

The following are specific programs for LGBTQIA+ newcomers in Canada.

[Centretown Community Health Centre — LGBTQIA+ Newcomer Program](#): Virtual and in-person social drop-in group for LGBTQIA+ newcomers in Ottawa, Ontario.

[Spectrum — Rainbow Newcomers Connect](#): Drop-in group for LGBTQIA+ newcomers in Kitchener, Ontario.

LGBTQIA+ Community Organizations

These community organizations (divided by region) provide services to all LGBTQIA+ people.

Vancouver and the Lower Mainland

[PFLAG Vancouver](#): Vancouver chapter of PFLAG Canada, a national charitable organization supporting LGBTQIA+ people and their loved ones by connecting them with local resources and communities.

[QMUNITY](#): Vancouver, British Columbia's queer, trans, and Two-Spirit resource centre.

[Sher Vancouver](#): Community organization providing programs and services to queer South Asians and their loved ones in Metro Vancouver, British Columbia.

[Vancouver Pride Society](#): Events and advocacy for LGBTQIA+ communities in Vancouver, British Columbia.

British Columbia

[AVI — Queerabilities Victoria](#): Virtual weekly check-in for LGBTQIA+ persons who live with mental and/or physical disabilities and/or chronic illnesses.

[AVI — South Island Gender Variant Drop-In Group](#): Monthly in-person drop-in group for trans, non-binary, genderqueer, Two Spirit, and other gender-diverse people on Vancouver Island, British Columbia

[Victoria Pride Society](#): Volunteer organization supporting LGBTQIA+ communities in Greater Victoria. Victoria Pride hosts several community events throughout the year.

[Queer Outdoors - Victoria and Vancouver Island, BC](#): Community hiking group for LGBTQIA+ people on Vancouver Island.

Canada

[PFLAG Canada](#): National charitable organization supporting LGBTQIA+ people and their loved ones by connecting them with local resources and communities.

[Rainbow Resource Centre](#): Organization providing supports and services for LGBTQIA+ communities in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

[The 519](#): Community centre with a variety of programs and services for LGBTQIA+ people in Toronto, Ontario.

6.8 Free and Low-Cost Food

The following are LGBTQIA+-friendly food bank and meal programs located in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Vancouver and the Lower Mainland

[A Loving Spoonful](#): A Metro-Vancouver-based not-for-profit organization providing free meals for people living with HIV/AIDS.

[Saige Community Foodbank & Community Kitchen](#): Two-Spirit-, trans-, and gender-diverse-safe food bank and community kitchen in East Vancouver, British Columbia.

6.9 Online Resources

This section includes online resources, including community groups and online learning for LGBTQIA+ newcomers.

LGBTQIA+ Newcomer Groups

[LGBTQ2S+ POC/ Newcomer Group of Victoria](#): Facebook group for LGBTQIA+ people and People of Colour newcomers to Greater Victoria, British Columbia.

[Vancouver LGBT Newcomers](#): Facebook group for LGBTQIA+ newcomers to Vancouver.

LGBTQIA+ Forums and Groups

[Empty Closets](#): Online forum for LGBTQIA+ people.

[Jobs for Queers Victoria](#): Employment resources for LGBTQIA+ people in Greater Victoria, British Columbia.

[Queer Outdoors - Victoria and Vancouver Island, BC](#): Community hiking group for LGBTQIA+ people on Vancouver Island.

Online Learning

[Egale Canada — Free Workshops](#): Free, online workshops on a variety of topics, from event planning, to parenting and caregiving, for LGBTQIA+ people.

[Settlement.org — Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity](#): Information about LGBTQIA+ rights in Canada.

6.10 Toolkits and Resource Libraries

This section includes LGBTQIA+-service toolkits compiled by different organizations.

LGBTQIA+ Newcomer Toolkits and Resources

These toolkits provide more information about resources and support for LGBTQIA+ newcomers to different regions in Canada.

[BC Refugee Hub — LGBTQ Refugee Resources](#): Resources for LGBTQIA+ refugees in British Columbia.

[From Borders to Belonging — Resource Library](#): Resources for LGBTQIA+ newcomers.

[Rainbow Foundation of Hope — Newcomer Support](#): Resources and support for LGBTQIA+ newcomers.

[Rainbow Foundation of Hope — Refugee Support](#): Resources and support for LGBTQIA+ refugees.

[Saskatchewan Intercultural Association — Newcomer-focused 2SLGBTQ+ Services in Canada](#): Toolkit of programs and services for LGBTQIA+ newcomers in Canada.

[Spectrum — Rainbow Newcomers Toolkit](#): Settlement resources for LGBTQIA+ newcomers in the Waterloo, Ontario Region.

Trans and Gender-Diverse Toolkits and Resources

These resources are specific to trans and gender-diverse people.

[BC Children's Hospital — Gender Resources](#): Gender-affirming resources for children and youth in British Columbia.

[Catherine White Holman Wellness Centre — General Resources](#): Health resources for trans and gender-diverse people in Vancouver.

[Vancouver Island Trans Resources](#): Resources for transgender and gender-diverse people on Vancouver Island.

[What's on Queer! BC Magazine — Trans & Gender Diverse](#): Resources for trans and gender-diverse people in British Columbia.

LGBTQIA+ Toolkits and Resources

The following toolkits (divided by region) provide general resources for LGBTQIA+ people in Canada.

Vancouver and the Lower Mainland

[Fraser Health — 2SLGBTQIA+](#): LGBTQIA+ health resources in southwestern British Columbia.

[Vancouver Coastal Health — 2SLGBTQIA+](#): LGBTQIA+ health resources in Vancouver and on the Sunshine Coast.

British Columbia

[EngAgeBC — Aging with Pride](#): Resources for queer seniors in British Columbia.

[Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria \(ICA\) — LGBTQ2S+ Resource Directory](#):

Resources for LGBTQIA+ people in Greater Victoria.

[Island Sexual Health — LGBT2QIAA+ Resources](#): Health resources for LGBTQIA+ people on Vancouver Island.

[Province of British Columbia — Gender equity & 2SLGBTQIA+ resources](#): Resources for LGBTQIA+ people in British Columbia.

[Victoria Pride Society — Victoria 2SLGBTQIA+ Youth Resources](#): Resources for LGBTQIA+ youth in Greater Victoria.

[What's on Queer! BC Magazine — Community Resources](#): Community resources for LGBTQIA+ people in British Columbia.

[What's on Queer! BC Magazine — Poster Wall](#): Events for LGBTQIA+ people in British Columbia.

[What's on Queer! BC Magazine — Therapy, Counselling, & Support](#): Mental health resources for LGBTQIA+ people in British Columbia.

[WorkBC — 2SLGBTQIA+](#): Resources for LGBTQIA+ people seeking employment and work support.

Canada

[Capital Pride — 2SLGBTQ+ Community Resources](#): Community resources for LGBTQIA+ people in Canada.

[PFLAG Canada — Resources](#): Resources for LGBTQIA+ people and their loved ones.

6.11 Emergency Contact for LGBTQIA+ newcomers

The following is an emergency contact list tailored to LGBTQIA+ newcomers. Service providers can print this list for their newcomer clients and give them a copy to carry with them in case of emergency.

- Emergency Contact List ([see Appendix IV](#))

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Appendix I: Glossary

Cisnormativity: The assumption that people must identify with their gender assigned at birth.

Cultural competency: The ability to understand, communicate with, and effectively interact with people from different cultures. It involves awareness of one's own cultural views, knowledge of other cultures, and respectful attitudes toward cultural differences.

Deadnaming: Deadnaming is the act of referring to a transgender or non-binary person by the name they were assigned at birth, but no longer use.

DEI: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Dox/Doxing/Doxxing: Publishing a person's private information.

Gender-diverse: An inclusive term that refers to a range of gender identities and expressions that differ from traditional binary notions of male and female. It encompasses people who are transgender, non-binary, genderqueer, genderfluid, agender, and others whose gender identity or expression is outside conventional norms. The term highlights the variety and complexity of gender experiences and promotes the recognition and respect of all gender identities.

Heteronormativity: The assumption that only heterosexual identities are normal.

Intersectionality: A framework for understanding how various aspects of a person's identity (such as race, gender, sexuality, and class) intersect and create unique experiences of discrimination and privilege. It highlights the interconnected nature of social categorizations and how they contribute to systemic inequality.

IRB: Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

IRCC: Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada

LGBTQIA+: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, Intersexual, Asexual +

Newcomer: All recent immigrants to Canada, regardless of status.

Non-gender conforming: Refers to individuals whose gender expression or identity does not align with societal expectations or norms associated with the male or female binary. This can include how a person dresses, behaves, or identifies, challenging traditional gender roles.

Sector Leader: Leaders of settlement sector organizations.



Service Provider: Person providing settlement or other related services to LGBTQIA+ newcomers.

SOGI (or SOGIE): Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (or Sexual Orientation, and Gender Identity and Expression)

Swatting: Filing a false, malicious report against another person so that the police will show up at their home.

Token/Tokenism: Including someone as a symbol of diversity rather than as a real effort to create an inclusive environment.

Trauma-informed approach: Recognizes effects of trauma, seeks to recognize signs of trauma, incorporates knowledge about trauma into official policies and practices, and seeks to avoid re-traumatization.

Appendix II: Safe Space Checklist for Organizations Serving LGBTQIA+ Newcomers

Category	Action	
Organization Readiness Assessment	Key aspects to consider are motivation, capacity, staff readiness and organizational culture.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Conducting a self-assessment, including surveys with staff, board and key stakeholders	<input type="checkbox"/>
Policies and Procedures	Create and implement policies that protect LGBTQIA+ individuals from discrimination and harassment.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Ensure policies respect and protect the confidentiality and privacy of LGBTQIA+ individuals, particularly regarding their sexual orientation and gender identity.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Training and Education	Conduct LGBTQIA+ Sensitivity and Awareness Training for all staff, volunteers, and board members.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Inclusive Language	Update brochures and marketing materials to use inclusive language and imagery in all publications and digital content.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Ensure website and social media content is inclusive and affirming, using correct pronouns and inclusive terminology.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Visible Affirmation and Support	Post affirming signage indicating the organization is LGBTQIA+ friendly.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Fly Pride Flags in visible areas to show support and inclusion.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community Engagement	Partner with LGBTQIA+ organizations to enhance support and resources.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Host inclusive events that celebrate and support the LGBTQIA+ community.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Appendix III: Facilitating Inclusive Online Sessions

Facilitation Strategy for Culturally Competent, Queer Competent, Trauma-Informed, anti-oppressive Online Sessions

This guide was developed by Deem Tattan, an uninvited refugee currently residing on the unceded territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh people.

"I introduce myself to you in my mother tongue: 'Salam'. While reflecting on the complexities of my connection to this land, as a refugee from lands ravaged by wars fueled by greed, patriarchy, and colonization, I acknowledge the nuances of my position in relation to Indigenous peoples on Turtle Island."

Deem is a Trans masculine non-binary individual who finds solace and purpose in advocating for social justice and truth. They carry Bedouin and Assyrian roots from the Arabian Peninsula and what is known today as Syria.

Embracing the roles of a partner, a plant dad, and a fervent lover of soups, Deem's advocacy extends beyond borders. Their work is rooted in a pursuit of joy and a commitment to disrupting systems of oppression. Their identity is characterized by resilience, compassion, and a fierce dedication to amplifying marginalized voices.

Whether nurturing plants or stirring pots of stew, Deem navigates holding many complex and marginalized identities on new lands while standing strong in support of marginalized trans and gender-diverse folks.

This guide is created based on my best abilities and knowledge. While I do not claim to be the best, I hope that my lived experience, combined with my frontline work, activism, and advocacy, can shape a useful guide for future advocates. Please feel free to connect with me at datattan@gmail.com for any questions, clarifications, or feedback.

Overview

This guide is designed to help you facilitate online sessions aimed at understanding the needs, barriers, lived experiences, and ideas for improvement directly from racialized LGBTQ+ immigrants and their families.

This is a general guide that can be used a template for organizations facilitation sessions with LGBTQIA+ newcomers.

Important Note: If you're a service provider or staff member working at a settlement, refugee, or im/migrant support organization, it's important to think carefully before referring someone to focus groups like this. Here are some guidelines I use for referral:

- **Communication Ability:** Make sure the person you're referring can clearly communicate in the language of the session.
- **Understanding Expectations:** Make sure they know what's expected of them and how the sessions will run.
- **Digital Connectivity:** Make sure they have the means and ability to connect to the online sessions (private and safe space, stable internet connection, a private device, etc.).
- **Capacity and Wellbeing:** Check if the person has the emotional and mental capacity to participate. These sessions can be heavy and may reopen wounds. We want to avoid causing more harm while we learn. People's experiences aren't just data points for our reports.
- **Voluntary Participation:** Make sure they understand that participating is entirely voluntary and not required. Their consent and agency must come first. Often, clients feel like they "owe" the sector; it's our job to make sure they know they don't.
- **Strive for Excellence:** Reflect on your own criteria and see what you can add, remove, or adjust to ensure we cause the least harm possible. As service providers, we should always aim to excel in our services.

This guide incorporates these considerations to help you facilitate productive and compassionate sessions.

Online Session Structure

- Platform: Zoom (or other recommended tools like Microsoft Teams, Google Meet, or Miro for collaborative activities)
- Duration: Up to 1.5 hours
- Participants: Racialized LGBTQ+ clients, referred by organizations that provide support to them.
- Objectives:
 - Identify unique needs
 - Understand intersectional barriers
 - Explore previous (and current) lived experiences

- Generate ideas collectively for improvement

Pre-Session Preparation

1. Hiring a Facilitator:
 - Rule of Thumb: "Nothing about us, without us."
 - Prioritize lived experience: Recruit someone who has personal experience relevant to the group.
 - Versatile professional experience: Choose someone with a diverse professional background.
 - Community involvement: Look for someone who is well-known and active in the community.
 - Relevance to the group: For example, if the group is for LGBTQI im/migrants, the facilitator should be or have been an LGBTQI im/migrant.
 - Go the extra mile: Preferably, hire someone who identifies as trans/nonbinary and is a visible minority.
2. Environment Setup:
 - Quiet, private space: Ensure a distraction-free environment for yourself.
 - Technical check: Test all equipment and internet connection 30 minutes before the session.
 - Backup plans: Prepare alternatives for technical issues (e.g., phone numbers, other platforms, pre-written emails).
3. Participant Communication:
 - Warm welcome: Send a heartfelt email with session details, including time, date, duration, platform link, honorarium/compensation, and what to expect.
 - Accessibility needs: Offer participants the option to share any specific needs or accommodations in advance.
 - Session purpose: Briefly explain the session's goals.
 - Information use: Clarify how the collected information will be utilized.
4. Materials:
 - Create a slide deck (if applicable)
 - i. Extra mile: Prepare a simple presentation to introduce the session that can be emailed to participants beforehand.
 - Digital whiteboard or note-taking tool: Set up tools like Zoom whiteboard, Miro, or Google Jamboard.
 - Pen and paper: Keep these handy to jot down points as participants speak, fostering a two-way conversation rather than a rigid Q&A.

Session Facilitation

Introduction (20 minutes):

I like to spend extra time in the introduction, setting the tone and the vibe. This ensures everyone is engaged and ready to participate meaningfully.

1. Land Acknowledgment:

- Begin with a land acknowledgment: Recognize the traditional territories of the Indigenous peoples where you and the participants are located.
 - Engage participants: Ask folks to acknowledge the lands they're on. If they're unsure, explain the importance of addressing colonial history and how they can find out which lands they reside on.
- 2. Welcome and Introduction:**
- Welcome participants and introduce yourself and any co-facilitators.
 - Explain the session's purpose, structure, and community guidelines.
- 3. Emotional Safety Toolkit:**
- Introduce the concept of an emotional safety toolkit. Explain that participants can:
 - Use a "safe word" in the chat to indicate they need a break.
 - Turn off their camera or mute themselves if they need a moment.
 - Leave the session quietly if they need to, without explanation. They can send a private message if they want to inform the facilitator.
- 4. Icebreaker:**
- Conduct an icebreaker to create a more comfortable atmosphere and to get to know the participants a little bit better (e.g., share a favorite activity or hobby).

Main Discussion - Part 1 (20-30 minutes)

- 1. Set the Tone for Discussion:**
- a. Open Participation: Mention that this is not a robotic Q&A. Participants can unmute any time to join the conversation.
 - b. Explain that the questions are open-ended, and they can discuss what feels most relevant to them.
 - c. Always break down the main discussion into 2 periods with a break in between.
1. Question 1: "What is the first thing that comes to mind when you think of welcoming and inclusive services?"
- Allow each participant to share.
 - Use follow-up questions to explore deeper if necessary. assess the necessity of this by tapping into your emotional intelligence, differentiate between the need vs. your curiosity. Run a quick risk assessment within yourself before asking any follow up question, prioritizing always the wellbeing and benefit of the participant(s).
2. Question 2: "What are some of the biggest challenges you have faced since arriving in Canada as an LGBTQIA+ newcomer?"
- Encourage sharing of personal stories.
 - Acknowledge and validate experiences.
 - If there's time, offer some resources, or offer to connect later with folks for resources.

3. Question 3: "Have you encountered any barriers or discrimination when accessing settlement services due to your LGBTQIA+ identity? If so, could you share about your experience?"
 - Mention that this is the last question before the break and folks can share whatever they feel is relevant
 - Allow space for sharing.
 - Allow for silence to be present, don't fear it
 - Be prepared to manage emotional responses with sensitivity.

Break (5-10 minutes)

Assess the length of the break based on how long or short the first part of the discussion was. Aim for a balance that gives participants enough time to recharge without losing momentum. During the break, I like to play music to create a relaxing atmosphere. Selecting music that feels relevant to the participants can make a huge impact. If you know the countries some participants are from, consider playing a famous song from those countries. This small touch helps create a welcoming and inclusive environment.

When announcing the break, clearly communicate its start, duration, and when the session will resume. Encourage participants to use this time to relax, stretch, or grab a snack. As the break ends, give a one to two-minute warning and gradually fade out the music to signal the transition back to the discussion.

Main Discussion - Part 2 (20-30 minutes)

Transition after the break to the second part of the focus group, following similar techniques in the first part.

4. Question 4: "How do you think settlement services could better meet the needs of LGBTQIA+ immigrants like yourself?"
 - Encourage brainstorming and discussion.
 - Use a digital whiteboard to capture ideas or a sticky note board where everyone can share thoughts and then you can run through them together.
5. Question 5: "What do you think settlement workers need to know about working with LGBTQIA+ immigrants and their families?"
 - Discuss knowledge gaps and training needs.
6. Question 6: "What programs and services do you think would be helpful for LGBTQIA+ immigrants and their families?"
 - Mention that this is the last question, and folks can share whatever they feel is relevant
 - Explore specific program suggestions and needs.

Conclusion (15 minutes):

1. Summary and Thanks:
 - from the notes you took earlier, summarize key points and themes discussed.
 - Thank participants for their time and contributions.
 - Thank the organization that is hosting
 - I like to thank the lands you are operating from
2. Next Steps:
 - Explain the next steps and how their input will be used.
 - Provide contact information for follow-up questions or concerns.
3. Wellness and Safety Resources:
 - Share a list of resources for wellness and safety, including crisis lines and support organizations in Vancouver.
 - Offer your contact information for any participant related follow up inquiries.
4. Feedback:
 - Conduct a brief, optional feedback poll about the session to gather participant insights for future improvements.
 - If there's no time/capacity for an on-the-spot feedback period, offer your contact information and your managers/the manager's contact information (Sometimes it's easier for folks to give feedback to someone who wasn't in the session).

Team work - Post-Session Follow-Up

1. Summary Report (to be sent via email to participants):
 - Compile relevant notes and insights from the session.
 - Highlight key themes, needs, and suggestions.
 - Send the resources mentioned earlier.
 - Offer extra resources available upon connecting via email.
2. Send a Thank You Email promptly:
 - Send a thank you email to participants.
 - Include a summary of the session and next steps.
 - Provide resources or support contacts if needed.
 - Mention honorarium details (when to expect it, confirming emails used for the transfer)

General Tips for Trauma-Informed Facilitation

- Safety: Ensure participants feel physically and emotionally safe.
- Trustworthiness: Be transparent about the session's purpose and how information will be used.
- Choice: Allow participants to choose their level of participation.
- Collaboration: Encourage a sense of collaboration and shared decision-making.
- Empowerment: Focus on strengths and resilience of participants.

Recommended Tools

- Zoom: For video conferencing and breakout rooms.
- Miro or Google Jamboard: For collaborative whiteboarding.
- Google Forms: For pre-session surveys and post-session feedback.
- Slack or Microsoft Teams: For ongoing communication and support.

By following this strategy, you can ensure your sessions are inclusive, respectful, and productive, providing valuable insights into the experiences and needs of racialized LGBTQIA+ clients.

Thank you for taking the time to read, I hope our paths cross in the future. May this facilitation guide land nicely within your heart. May you find what you're seeking for.

If you're interested in exploring my services as a facilitator, please email me and we can talk on how we can create something together.

I wish you warmth and ease,

In Queerness,
In Solidarity,

Deem T.

Please contact Deem Tattan with any questions or comments regarding this facilitation guide:
datattan@gmail.com.

Appendix IV: Emergency and Non-Emergency Contact List – Community Support Services

This is a list of emergency and non-emergency contacts for LGBTQIA+ and racialized newcomers in British Columbia, and across Canada. In this list, you will find crisis helplines, hate-crime reporting services, and community resources.

[The Crisis Centre](#): Contact the Crisis Centre to have a confidential conversation and explore options whether you are in crisis, or simply feel hopeless, or are worried about someone else.
Having thoughts of suicide? Call or text 9-8-8
Experiencing a Mental Health Crisis? Call 310-6789

Local and National Helplines

- [National Suicide Crisis Helpline](#): Call or text 988 (24/7/365); English or French
- [BC Mental Health & Crisis Response](#): 310-6789 (no area code); 140 languages
- [BC Suicide Prevention and Intervention Line](#): 1-800-784-2433; 140 languages
- [Vancouver Coastal Regional Distress Line](#): 604-872-3311
- [Howe Sound/ Sunshine Coast / Bella Coola](#): 1-866-661-3311
- [Seniors Distress Line](#): 604-872-1234
- www.YouthInBC.com: Online chat for youth (Noon to 1 am, PST)
- www.CrisisCentreChat.ca: Online chat for adults (Noon to 1 am, PST)

[Directory of IBPOC therapists](#): Healing for the IBPOC community.

[SNIWWOC Mental Health Services](#): Located in BC, provides Canada-wide free therapy to low-income racialized women, including transgender and Two-Spirit community members. To access services, please fill out the [request form](#), including proof of income for eligibility check.

[Access Pro Bono](#): An independent organization composed of volunteer legal service providers across BC. Check your eligibility online [here](#) or by phone (1-604-878-7400). You can find other free legal service providers in BC [here](#) if you are not eligible.

[South Asian Legal Clinic of BC](#): This clinic offers free multilingual legal advice and information to low-income people living in British Columbia who identify as South Asian. To book an appointment, call 604-111-3333.

[Qmunity](#): Qmunity is a resource centre for queer, trans, and Two-Spirit people. They offer, among other things, a free counselling program by master's-level counselling placement students and a low-cost counselling program offered by professional counsellors. Call 604-684-5307 or email kole.lawrence@qmunity.ca.

[Prideline](#) (Gay and Lesbian Helpline): Peer support, information and referrals for anyone in BC, available weeknights from 7 pm to 10 pm. Call 1-800-566-1170.

[Trans Lifeline](#): Grassroots hotline offering direct emotional and financial support to trans people in crisis; for the trans community, by the trans community. Call 1-877-330-6366.

[CyberMisogyny: Using and strengthening Canadian Legal responses to gendered hate and harassment online](#) (West Coast LEAF, 2014).

Reporting to Police

Emergency:

Call 911 if your immediate safety is at risk and immediate action is required (interpretation available in more than 200 languages).

Non-Emergency:

[Vancouver Police Hate Crime Department](#): Hate crimes and hate incidents can be reported by way of the police's non-emergency, dedicated line for hate crimes and incidents by phone at 604-717-3321 or by email at vpd.diversity@vpd.ca (not monitored 24/7). To document an incident with no safety risks, no physical evidence, and no identifiable suspects, scroll down to Reporting a Hate Crime to [access a PDF form](#) available in multiple languages. Document all information including texts and videos.

[Victoria Police](#) has hate crime coordinators, but no dedicated hate crimes unit. Report hate crimes and incidents by way of the police's non-emergency complaint line at 250-995-7654.

[ResilienceBC Anti-Racism Network](#): Provincial resource that assists and supports local police departments investigating hate crimes and hate incidents. Phone (toll free) 1-855-462-5733, or email BC_HATE_CRIMES@rcmp-grc.gc.ca

[RCMP](#) (Hate Crime Reporting): Available in all provinces. [Click here](#) to report online.

[Police-Based Victim Services](#): These respond to all types of crime as well as non-criminal, traumatic events such as accidental death. Find your closest services from the [online directory](#) or other resources [here](#).

Resources for British Columbia

Online Reporting (Non-Police)

Online reporting tools are available in some municipalities to report non-emergency crimes that meet certain criteria, such as property related crimes with no suspect known to the complainant and no element of violence.

[VictimLinkBC](#): Toll-free, confidential, multilingual service (up to 150 languages, including 17 Indigenous languages) available across BC and the Yukon.

[BC211](#): Free and confidential service that connects people to helpful and vital resources in their community by referring them to a broad range of community, government, and social services.

[Crime Victim Assistance Program \(CVAP\)](#): This program provides financial benefits to eligible victims, immediate family members and some witnesses in coping with and healing from the effects of violent crime by providing a range of benefits.

Third-Party Reporting for Hate Crimes and Incidents

You can report (1) anonymously or (2) on behalf of another person to a third-party service other than the police.

[BC Crime Stoppers](#): If you wish to report a criminal activity to the police anonymously, you can contact Crime Stoppers by phone at 1-800-222-8477 or online.

[The United Against Discrimination \(UAD\) Coalition](#): Use this online form to anonymously report hate incidents and other forms of discrimination experienced or witnessed. KCR Community Resources is collecting this data to help develop a community protocol to address racism and discrimination in their communities.

[BC Human Rights Complaints Resource](#): (For hate incidents.) Individuals can file complaints through the BC Human Rights Tribunal. If you experience unequal treatment regarding employment or housing, services, you can file a complaint with the BC Human Rights Tribunal [here](#).

[BC Human Rights Clinic](#): Follow this link to arrange a free 30-minute legal consultation by appointment; for qualified clients, the clinic also provides summary advice, 1–2 hours of legal assistance and legal representation; find more information [here](#) or reach the Inquiry Line at 604-622-1100 or toll free 1-855-685-6222, Monday to Friday from 8:30 am to 4 pm.

Canada-Wide Resources

[Kids Help Phone](#): Canada's only bilingual phone and online counselling service for youth. It is free, anonymous, and confidential. Phone 1-800-668-6868 or text CONNECT to 686868 to reach a crisis responder, available 24/7/365. Use the [Live Chat](#) to connect with a professional counsellor from 7 pm to midnight EST daily.

[Hope for Wellness Help Line](#): A specific resource for Indigenous people to provide immediate, culturally competent telephone counselling, available in English, French and (upon request) in Cree, Ojibway, and Inuktitut. Phone 1-855-242-3310 (24/7/365). You can chat live on their website in English or French.

[Black Youth Helpline](#): Multicultural youth helpline that serves all youth and specifically responds to the need for a Black-youth-specific service. To access services, call 416-285-9944 or 1-833-294-8650, email info@blackyouth.ca or contact them online.

[Naseeha](#): An anonymous, nonjudgmental, confidential and toll-free peer support helpline (1-866-627-3342) and text line for Muslims experiencing personal challenges, 7 days a week (12 pm to 3 am EST). Naseeha also provides free online counselling to Canadian residents in English, French, Urdu, Punjabi, Arabic, Turkish, Somali, Bengali, and Swahili. For more information, call 905-890-2365 or email info@naseeha.org.

[Egale](#): is a Canadian organization for LGBTQIA+ people and issues. It engages in research, education, and advocacy. Its [Rainbow Action Hub](#) includes education and resources to combat anti-LGBTQIA+ hate, including a list of local LGBTQIA+ organizations. Call Monday to Friday from 8:30 am to 4 pm EST, at 604-622-1100 or toll-free at 1-855-685-6222 or email at infobchrc@clasbc.net.