

# Community Outreach!



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# Supporting Niizh Manidoowag Two-Spirit



## How can I support Two-Spirit Youth?

Adults can support Two-Spirit youth by creating an environment rooted in empathy, respect, and open communication. It's essential to embrace diversity and foster inclusivity, whether it's through modeling acceptance at home or providing access to supportive resources and role models. This can include surrounding youth with 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals, ensuring representation in books, TV shows, and movies, and offering spaces where they feel safe and heard. By using inclusive language, engaging in practices such as smudging or sharing circles, and educating themselves about diverse identities, adults can create a nurturing environment. Recognizing that every individual has their unique identity, and respecting their journey, is key in helping Two-Spirit youth feel validated, supported, and loved. At the core of this support is a commitment to inclusivity, where everyone, regardless of their gender identity or orientation, is treated with dignity and respect.



## What is Two-Spirit?

Two-Spirit is a term used by some Indigenous peoples in North America to describe individuals who embody both masculine and feminine qualities, or who occupy a gender role outside of the traditional binary understanding of male and female. The term was coined in 1990 by Native American activist and scholar Myra Laramee at the Third Annual Intertribal Native American, First Nations Gay and Lesbian Conference in Winnipeg, Canada. It was created as a way to provide a more inclusive and culturally grounded label for diverse gender identities within Indigenous cultures. Historically, many Indigenous nations recognized and revered Two-Spirit individuals, who were often seen as having unique spiritual, healing, or leadership roles within their communities. The term "Two-Spirit" was used as a way to reclaim and honor these roles, especially after colonialism and the imposition of Western gender norms sought to suppress or erase Indigenous gender identities.

## Parents/Guardians Thoughts

**"As a parent, Accepting, understanding, caring, supportive, empathetic, compassionate, loving."**

**"By communicating acceptance and freedom of choice."**

**"Being open and having courageous conversations with youth at our table and having a safe space to be open."**

**"Educate. Celebrating diversity."**

**"By having a safe environment."**

