

# Supporting LGBTQ2S+ Youth

## What Grandparents can know and do

AHS, Public Health Calgary Zone  
Sexual & Reproductive Health  
403-955-6515  
[Ahs.ca/lgbtq2s](https://ahs.ca/lgbtq2s)

Airdrie Pride  
[Kiersten@airdriepride.ca](mailto:Kiersten@airdriepride.ca)  
<https://airdriepride.ca>

# Territorial Acknowledgement

*Community Education Service acknowledges that the land on which we virtually gather today is the traditional territories of the people of the Treaty 7 region in Southern Alberta. The City of Calgary is also home to Métis Nation of Alberta, Region 3.*



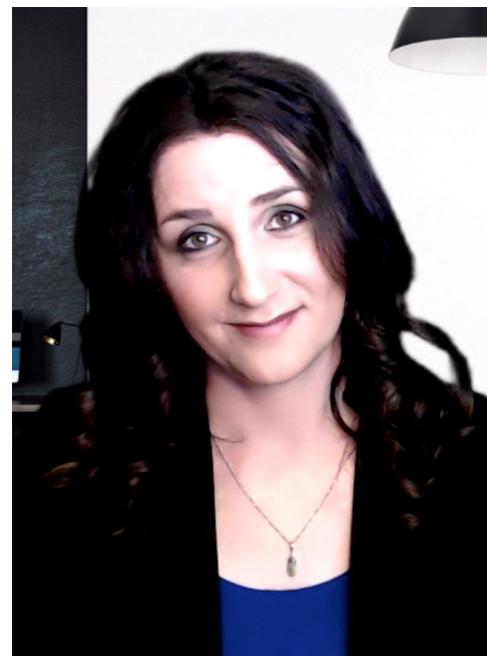
# Who are we?



Christine



Heather



Kiersten

# Who are you?



- Every person and family are different
- We all have a different knowledge
- You may or may not know your grandchild's sexual or gender identity
- You may or may not identify as LGBTQ2S+
- You want your grandchildren to be healthy, happy and successful
- You are important in the lives of youth

# Creating Safer Spaces

- We all belong
- We all have different beliefs and values
- We have the right to join in or pass
- We will each other by listening
- We have the right to privacy
- Any question is OK

# Learning objectives

- Understand the importance of creating safe spaces for LGBTQ2S+ youth
- Think about how grandparents' feelings and role
- Learn some basic terms and practical tips
- Explore resources



# Why Does This Matter?

## SEXUAL IDENTITY MINORITIES

**2x** risk for Post-Traumatic Stress<sup>1</sup>

**5x** more likely to consider suicide<sup>2</sup>

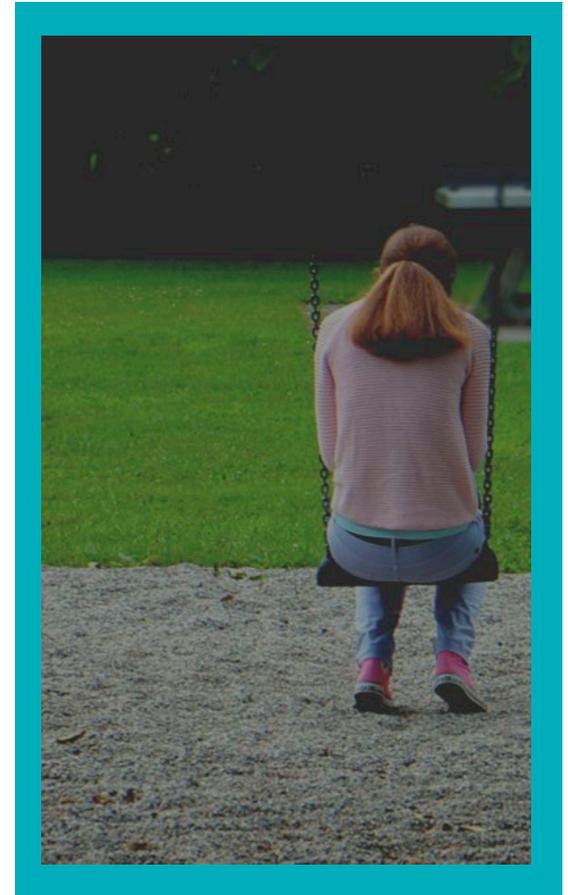
**7x** times more likely to attempt suicide<sup>2</sup>

**2-4x** risk for substance abuse<sup>1</sup>

## GENDER IDENTITY MINORITIES

**14x** the risk for suicide and self harm<sup>1</sup>

**14x** the risk of substance abuse<sup>1</sup>



# Stigma is Hurting Youth

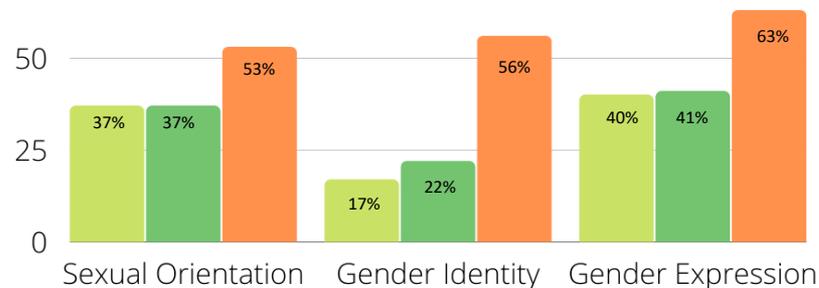
## School Experience

- Stigma leads to increased verbal and physical harassment

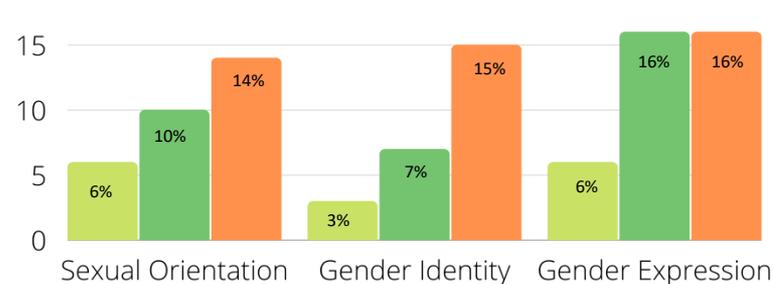
## Homelessness

- LGBTQ2S+ youth make up **5%** of general population - but account for approximately **40%** of homeless youth population

**Verbal Harassment in Canadian Schools\***



**Physical Assault in Canadian School\***



■ LGBQ+ Girls ■ LGBQ+ Boys  
■ Gender Diverse Youth

# How our brains work



- We **CATEGORIZE** based on characteristics deemed meaningful by society.
- We unconsciously **IDENTIFY** to people/groups who have established similar categories (in-group bias) – which provides confirmation bias that our categories are accurate
- We **COMPARE** to other groups and fail to see the diversity in people outside of our own in-group (out-group bias)

# Where are you at?



What categories have you established that make acceptance and understanding challenging?

What can you do to re-categorize and increase your confidence and understanding of the LGBTQ2S+ community?

“Do The Best You Can Until You Know Better. Then When You Know Better, Do Better.”  
~Maya Angelou

# YOU Make a Difference

- **Be Unconditionally Affirming**
  - Assume you may be the only safe person for your grandchild
- **Encourage Dialogue**
  - Don't be shy to ask questions and learn
- **Avoid Perfection Paralysis**
  - See mistakes as progress instead of roadblocks

“I will go with you!”

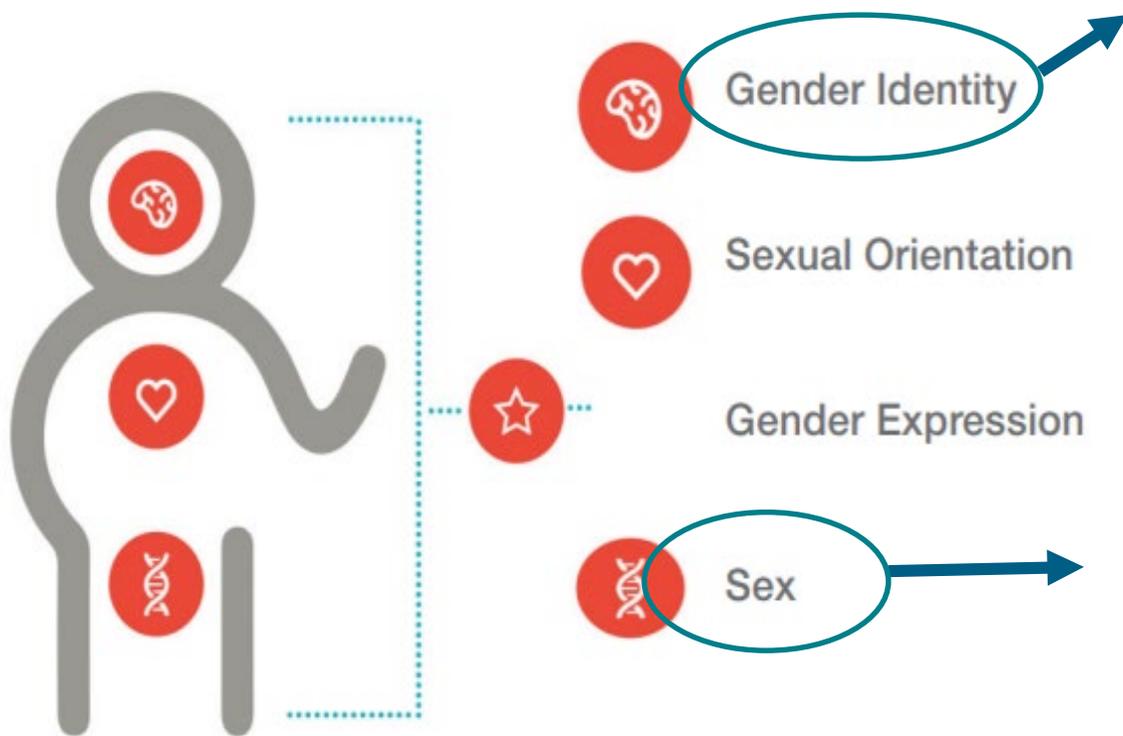


# Umbrella Terms



- L - lesbian
- G - gay
- B - bisexual
- T - transgender
- Q - queer/questioning
- 2S - Two Spirit
- + - additional identities

# Sex & Gender



**Gender** – a person’s internal sense & experience of identity as female, male, both or neither, regardless of sex assigned at birth

**Sex** – categories (male, female) to which people are typically assigned at birth based on physical characteristics

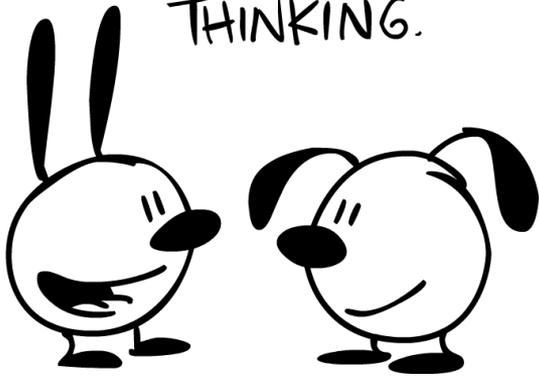
# Sex & Gender



# Grandparents

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I'VE GIVEN UP MY  
BLACK-AND-WHITE  
THINKING.



THE SHADES BETWEEN  
BLACK & WHITE  
AREN'T GRAY...



THEY'RE THE FULL  
COLOR SPECTRUM!



# Tips about Pronouns

- We use pronouns to talk about someone when we don't use their name
- She/he/they...
- Pronouns are part of someone's identity
- When we use pronouns we show that we see and hear someone

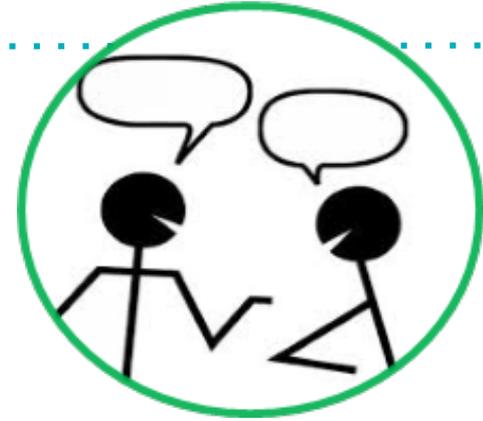


# Tips about Names

- Our name tells a story – use the name that someone uses for themselves
- Using a past name can hurt



# Coming Out



Telling people about your sexual orientation or gender identity

- BE AN ALLY – listen, support, ask questions, learn – BE THERE
- It's not yours to tell – respect confidentiality

# Creating Safer Families

## Supportive Actions

- Showing & saying love
- Talking about their identity
- Connecting your child to events, organizations & people
- Requiring others treat your child respectfully
- Checking in regularly

## Rejecting Actions

- Showing anger at your child's identity
- Ignoring child's identity or trying to change it
- Isolating them from others
- Shaming, name calling
- Blaming them if others hurt them

# What if other family, cultural or faith contacts believe something else?

- Values are personal
- Be kind
- Listen and learn – get the facts
- Choose the right time to talk
- Get to know people who are different to you – join groups, get support

# Community Conflicts



## Prioritize

your grandchild's self-discovery journey and identity over cultural norms and beliefs.

## Trust

your grandchild knows and/or will figure out who they are - and that YOU can help create the space for them to do that.

## Support

your grandchild and position yourself as a 'safe place to land' for them

# Resources



## Competence Builds Confidence!

Calgary and surrounding area has a variety of resources to support members of the LGBTQ2S+ community and their families!

# What if I Get it Wrong?

**Forgive  
yourself**

**Acknowledge  
the error**

**Apologize  
and move on**

**Practice your  
inclusive  
skills**



Thank you



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