

# 2SLGBTQIA+ Pre-Reading

Welcome to 2SLGBTQIA+ Fundamentals!

This is your pre-reading document where you will discover how history informs the present and understand why gender pronouns matter.

Let's begin.

## Timeline of Canadian Homophobia and Transphobia

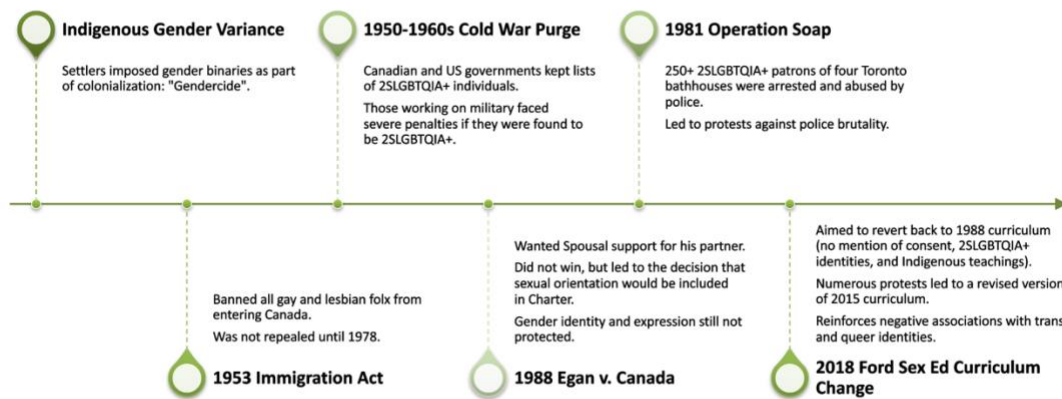


Fig. 14: "Timeline of Canadian Homophobia and Transphobia", EDI-R Office

### Indigenous Gender Variance:

When colonial settlers came to Turtle Island, they imposed a rigid gender binary on Indigenous peoples as part of the colonialization process— a prime example of the intersecting systems of oppression: colonialism, racism, and transphobia. Professor Deborah A. Miranda coined the term “gendercide” to describe the elimination of Indigenous peoples that did not conform to the gender binary (Wells, 2022). Now, Two-Spirit is being reclaimed by Indigenous folk to try and accurately represent their gender and sexual identities. Two-Spirit and other queer Indigenous folk are disproportionately affected by systems of oppression; they are overrepresented in prisons, social services, foster care systems, and more (Lawford & Butsang, 2021).

### Immigration Act:

In 1953, the Canadian government passed an amendment in the Immigration Act that effectively banned all gay and lesbian individuals from entering Canada. This bill stayed in effect until 1978 (Girard, 1987).

### Cold War Purge:

Both the Canadian and US governments kept lists of suspected and confirmed 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals to force them out of government jobs and deny them security clearance. Those working in the military faced severe penalties if authorities discovered they were part of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. Lieutenant Commander William Atkinson was forced to resign from the Royal Canadian Navy in 1959 due to his sexuality, and he spoke to the way “the army would spy on off-duty soldiers to identify LGBTQ members and employ any dirty trick in the world to trap and sort of guillotine them” (Levy, 2018).

### Egan:

James Egan was the first openly gay Canadian politician and is best remembered for the court challenge he launched the spousal allowance benefit under the Old Age Security Act in 1988. He and his partner, Jack Nesbit, had been together for almost 40 years and met all of the necessary criteria for the benefit, only to be denied by Health and Welfare Canada due to their sexuality. Though Egan and Nesbit did not win their case, *Egan v. Canada* led to the decision that sexual orientation would be included in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms as a protected ground, providing protection from discrimination based on sexual orientation (McLeod, 2018).

### Operation Soap:

Known as the 1981 Operation Soap, more than 250 2SLGBTQIA+ patrons of four bathhouses in downtown Toronto were abused and arrested by police officers in a series of coordinated raids; this led to a series of protests throughout Ontario to fight against police brutality, with many Black and Indigenous 2SLGBTQIA+ at the forefront (Bowden, 2021).

### 2018 Ford Sex Ed Curriculum Change:

In 2018, Doug Ford’s Conservative campaign for premier of Ontario promised that he would scrap the updated Sex Education curriculum. In August 2018, Ford made good on his discriminatory promise and cancelled the updated 2015 curriculum, replacing it with an adaptation of the 1998 curriculum (Maitland, 2022). This change made no mention of consent, 2SLGBTQIA+ identities, and Indigenous teachings. After protests from students, teachers, and parents, Ford repealed his plan and instead tweaked the 2015 plan; gender identity is now taught in grade eight, two years later than initially intended by the former Liberal government. With the pervasiveness of transphobia, bringing up gender identity at a younger age would be incredibly beneficial to the children. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, “By age four, most children have a stable sense of their gender identity” (Rafferty, 2022). Many children in their preteen years start to question their gender and when they aren’t given the proper vocabulary to do so, it causes a lot more identity confusion.

Now that you have some history, here's a video that encapsulates why respecting someone's gender identity and pronouns is important!

[Why Gender Pronouns Matter](#)



Here is a non-comprehensive list of some of the most common pronouns and how they are used in a sentence.

28 <https://transstudent.org/graphics/pronouns01/>

Subject	Objective	Possessive	Reflexive	Example
She (shE E)	Her (hUH R)	Her(s) (hUH Rz)	Herself (huh-rsElf)	She is speaking. I listened to her. The pen is hers.
He (hEE )	Him (hI m)	His (hlz )	Himself (him-sElf)	He is speaking. I listened to him. The pen is his.
They (TH AY)	Them (TH em)	Their(s) (T Herz)	Themselves (THem-sElvz)	They are speaking. I listened to them. The pen is theirs.
Xe (zee )	Xem (ze m)	Xyr(s) (zee rs)	Xemself (zeem-self)	Xe is speaking. I listened to xem. The pen is xyrs.
Ze (zee )	Hir (heer )	Hir(s) (he ers)	Zirself (zeer-self)	Ze is speaking. I listened to hir. The pen is hirs.
Hir (hee r)	Hir (heer )	Hir(s) (he ers)	Hirself (heer-self)	Hir is speaking. I listened to hir. The pen is hirs.

## **How to Use Pronouns Respectfully**

To recap, pronouns are a set of words used to refer to someone, without using their name.

How to Navigate Pronouns:

- Start by giving your own pronouns when you meet someone.
- If someone shares their pronouns, use them.
- Quickly apologize and correct yourself when you get someone's pronouns wrong.
- Some people use multiple sets of pronouns.
- Do not assume pronouns based on appearance, names, or other forms of gender expression!

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