MMIR Justice & Wellness Report

Recommendations for our Missing & Murdered Indigenous Relatives in Alberta

March 2025

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Edmonton 2 Spirit Society (E2S) and
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS 3
REMEMBERING THOSE WHO GUIDE US 7
TERMINOLOGY & INCLUSIVITY 8
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 11
TRADITIONAL WAYS OF KNOWING & BEING 12
BRIDGING THE GAPS 14
RECOMMENDATIONS 16
Foundational Principles 18
The Five Foundational Principles 18
A. Respecting Identity & Belonging 20
1. Recognize & Integrate Indigenous Perspectives & Solutions 21
2. Support Rural & Urban Populations 22
B. Culturally Safe & Trauma-Informed 23
3. Inclusive Policies & Training 24
4. Training Across All Sectors 26
C. Safety & Justice 28
Safety & Harm Reduction 29
5. Safety & Harm Reduction 30
Justice Systems & Accountability 32
6. Transparency & Oversight 33
7. Comprehensive Training - Safety 35
8. Data Collection & Research Ethics 37
9. Culturally Grounded Justice 39
10. Trust & Accountability 41
11. Culturally Safe Investigations 43
12. Oversight 45
13. Comprehensive Training – Justice 47

Restoration & Healing 49
14. Transformative Justice & Reintegration Supports 50
15. Healing-Centred Engagement & Programs 52
D. Collaboration & Community Leadership 54
16. Establish Collaborative Frameworks & Advisory Councils 56
17. Strengthen Collaboration with Provincial & Federal Agencies 58
18. Building Partnerships 60
E. Reconciliation & Accountability 62
19. Reconciliation Frameworks & Accountability Mechanisms 63
20. Promote Transparency & Public Reporting 65
21. Strengthen Relationships 67
F. Wellness & Inclusion 69
22. Strengthen Culturally Safe Mental Health Services 70
23. Housing 72
24. Wellness & Recovery Initiatives 74
25. Inclusive Policies & Training 76
G. Public Awareness & Advocacy 78
26. Comprehensive Training & Public Awareness 79
27. Cultural Revitalization & Knowledge Sharing 81
28. Evaluation, Adaptation & Cross-Sector Collaboration 82
H. Sustainability & Accessibility 83
29. Advocate for Ongoing Funding & Resources 84
30. Continuity of Care 86
31. Promote Equitable Funding Allocations 87
I. Capacity for Change 89
32. Foster Leadership Development & Mentorship Opportunities 90
33. Support Research Design & Implementation 92
34. Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ Advisory Council 94
J. Economic Security & Employment 96
35. Skills Training and Mentorship 97
36. Partnerships for Employment 99

K. Alignment with Broader Initiatives 100
37. Strategies for Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ Individuals 101
38. Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ Inclusion 103
39. Ensure Transparent, Ongoing Public Reporting 105
Walking The Path Ahead 107
EVALUATING COMPLETION AND IMPACT 108
CONCLUSION 112
FROM KNOWLEDGE TO ACTION: RECLAIMING SAFETY AND JUSTICE 113
Appendices 114
A. Appendix – GLOSSARY 115
B. APPENDIX – REFERENCES 125

REMEMBERING THOSE WHO GUIDE US

We begin this document by acknowledging, with deep respect and reverence, the traditional and ancestral lands upon which we live, work, and gather. The diverse territories of Indigenous Peoples across what is now known as Alberta. We recognize and honour Treaty 6, Treaty 7, and Treaty 8 territories, as well as the homeland of the Métis Nation of Alberta and the Métis Settlements. We reaffirm our collective responsibility to care for these lands and to nurture respectful relationships with all Indigenous communities, upholding their inherent rights, cultures, and ways of life.

Edmonton 2 Spirit Society (E2S) and Sacred Circles Village (The Village) are Indigenous-led organizations that proudly stand in solidarity with Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ people across Alberta. We dedicate this report with humility, love, and remembrance to all our Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives, honouring our Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ kin whose lives, truths, and stories continue to inspire our ongoing commitment to safety, justice, healing, and visibility.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all staff, board members, council members, and volunteers from both E2S and The Village. Your dedication, compassion, and tireless efforts have made this project possible. Your leadership, wisdom, and unwavering commitment form the foundational upon which this work rests.

Our deepest gratitude surrounds the community members who generously shared their stories, knowledge and experiences throughout this process. Your bravery, honesty, and resilience have built they very framework of this document, grounding it firmly in the lived realities and wisdom of our communities. Together, your contributions shape a future of greater safety, inclusivity, and belonging.

For all you have shared, we are deeply grateful.

TERMINOLOGY & INCLUSIVITY

Language is a powerful tool that shapes identity, belonging, and recognition. For Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+, language has been both a source of strength and of pain; of inclusion and isolation. Colonization not only suppressed traditional gender and sexual identities but also imposed external labels and terminologies that continue to influence societal perceptions today.

Inclusivity, as used here, refers to the active effort to ensure all individuals, especially those who have been historically marginalized, are recognized, valued, and provided equitable access and representation. Indigenous Inclusivity is defined as "building and fostering relationships with Indigenous people with other cultures" (Diversity Social, 2021). It is about creating a respectful environment to explore, learn, and communicate with a community that has been underrepresented for a long time in history. It is also about educating future generations about truth and reconciliation.

Aligned with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (United Nations, 2007) and the Government of Canada (Government of Canada, 2023), this document intentionally uses inclusive terms such as "Indigenous," "2SLGBTQQIA+," and "MMIR." These terms are chosen not only to reflect ongoing struggles for justice but also to honour self-identification and resist systemic erasure. Language is not neutral; it can either affirm dignity or perpetuate harm.

Colonial systems have long attempted to erase Indigenous identities by imposing restrictive definitions and categories. The suppression of Indigenous languages, cultures, and naming systems was part of a broader effort to undermine traditional knowledge systems and replace them with Eurocentric constructs. Despite these ongoing efforts, Indigenous communities continue to resist and reclaim their languages and identities as acts of resilience, healing, advocacy, and cultural resurgence (Sylliboy, 2021).

The term "Indigenous" serves as a broad, inclusive concept that encompasses First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples. However, this general term does not adequately capture the distinct identities, histories, and perspectives of these diverse communities. Terms such as "First Nations," "Métis," "Inuit," and "Two-Spirit" each carry specific cultural, spiritual, and historical significance (Native Women's Association of Canada, 2021). Recognizing these distinctions is essential, as language alone cannot encapsulate the full complexity and richness of these identities. While we acknowledge these limitations, we use the term "Indigenous" throughout this report for its broad inclusivity, clarity, and accessibility. The term has been selected to provide a shared framework for addressing systemic issues, advocating for justice, and promoting understanding across

diverse communities. It is used with the understanding that "Indigenous" cannot fully represent all experiences or identities but serves as a practical and unifying concept for this report.

In recognizing the limitations of general terminology, it is also essential to acknowledge the complexities within the 2SLGBTQQIA+ acronym. The acronym is both comprehensive and necessary, representing a spectrum of gender and sexual identities influenced by colonial structures. It offers a language through which Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ can assert their presence and resist ongoing erasure. Prioritizing "2S" (Two-Spirit) acknowledges the pre-colonial existence and enduring presence of Indigenous gender and sexual identities. This placement is intentional, reflecting the need to prioritize Indigenous voices within broader 2SLGBTQQIA+ advocacy, while recognizing the ways in which colonial systems have suppressed these identities (Government of Canada, 2023).

The term "Two-Spirit" was officially coined during the third annual Intertribal Native American, First Nations, Gay and Lesbian American Conference held in Winnipeg, Manitoba, in 1990 (Smithsonian Institution, 2021). As a pan-Indigenous term, it provides culturally relevant language for diverse gender and sexual identities. However, it is important to recognize that this term serves as a placeholder. A necessary tool until individual nations reclaim the full lexicons of their ancestral languages. Its use embodies reclamation, reconciliation, and activism. Asserting the term "Two-Spirit" is a deliberate act of resistance against colonial frameworks that imposed rigid, binary understandings of gender and sexuality. It is also a statement of sovereignty, affirming the right to define identities and roles on Indigenous terms rather than those imposed by external systems.

Before colonization, many Indigenous cultures recognized and respected gender diversity through roles, identities, and responsibilities that did not necessarily align with Western constructs of male and female. The suppression of these cultural practices and the languages that communicated them was systematic. Through practices such as residential schools, forced assimilation policies, and systemic discrimination, efforts were made to marginalize and erase Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ people. Reclaiming terminology and asserting identity through language are not only cultural acts but also political efforts towards healing, advocacy, and cultural resurgence (Native Women’s Association of Canada, 2021; It Gets Better Canada, 2024; Sylliboy, 2021).

Given this history of erasure and the continued marginalization of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+, the language used to describe those who are missing or murdered is particularly significant. The term MMIR (Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives) is used throughout this report to address the ongoing crisis impacting all Indigenous people, regardless of gender.

While many reports use the term MMIWG2S+ (Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two-Spirit+), MMIR is preferred here for several reasons:

1. **Inclusivity:** It is gender-neutral, respecting individuals' rights to self-identify and acknowledging the full spectrum of the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community.
2. **Relationality:** The word "Relative" honours a pan Indigenous worldview of interconnectedness—"All my relations." This reinforces collective responsibility toward those who are missing and murdered.
3. **Recognition of Reality:** Indigenous men and boys comprised 42% of those reported to Aboriginal Alerts in 2023 (Aboriginal Alerts, 2023). This statistic underscores the necessity of inclusive language.

Language can either affirm existence or contribute to erasure. By intentionally using inclusive terminology, this report seeks to honour those whose identities have been systematically disregarded or erased. Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ have endured generations of exclusion and discrimination, yet their resilience and continued reclamation of language demonstrate ongoing acts of survival, resurgence, and healing.

A complete glossary of terms can be found in Appendix A.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The MMIR Justice & Wellness Plan (JWP) addresses the ongoing crisis of missing and murdered Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ people in Alberta. Structural failures, rooted in systemic bias and historical erasure, have left these individuals largely invisible within broader MMIWG2S+ frameworks, research, and policymaking (Comeau et al., 2023; Hunt, 2016).

The MMIR JWP offers a practical pathway informed by community wisdom, Indigenous ways of knowing, and measurable actions. While progress has been made within the broader MMIWG2S+ movement, gender-diverse Indigenous people remain systematically overlooked or underserved, leaving them vulnerable and without equitable access to supports (AJWG, 2021; Jenkins et al., 2024). This plan responds to those gaps with culturally grounded, community-focused, and concrete strategies.

Designed as a strategic guide for policymakers, government officials, frontline organizations, and community advocates, the MMIR JWP centres the needs of Indigenous 2SLGBTQQIA+ people in Alberta. It presents the project's rationale and methodology, examines the complex challenges affecting these communities, and sets out tangible recommendations for systemic change. Above all, it provides practical next steps and a robust framework for accountability, with measurable outcomes such as reduced violence, stronger service access, and greater community empowerment.

The plan was informed by extensive engagement with Indigenous 2SLGBTQQIA+ individuals across Alberta. Formal interviews and surveys contributed valuable data, but the deepest insights came through culturally embedded practices: building relationships, sharing meals, participating in ceremony, and listening to lived experience. This reflects Indigenous knowledge systems where oral recitation of historical accounts, relationality, and reciprocity are essential ways of knowing (Wilson, 2008; Kovach, 2009).

The MMIR JWP outlines clear steps toward safety, justice, and visibility for Indigenous 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. It commits to honouring Indigenous knowledge, challenging colonial systems, and safeguarding dignity and rights. This is not a static document but a living plan, designed to evolve through ongoing community engagement, accountability, and adaptive action.

TRADITIONAL WAYS OF KNOWING & BEING

The Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives (MMIR) crisis is inherently Indigenous, shaped by complex historical and contemporary experiences rooted in colonization, systemic inequities, resilience, and cultural resurgence (Hunt, 2016; National Inquiry into MMIWG, 2019). Addressing this crisis requires methodologies based in Indigenous knowledge systems, cultural practices, and worldviews (Kovach, 2009; Wilson, 2008). Approaches that honour relationality, reciprocity, respect, and responsibility serve as guiding principles. The JWP embraces a holistic, culturally responsive framework built on these principles, to ensure responses are meaningful, respectful, and empowering for Indigenous communities (Absolon, 2011).

Traditional Ways of Knowing and Being include practices that have sustained Indigenous Peoples for generations. These practices are rooted in the land, ceremonies, kinship systems, language revitalization, governance, artistic expression, and the oral recitation of historical accounts. Within these perspectives, healing, justice, and wellness are interconnected processes that strengthen community well-being, cultural continuity, and resurgence (Absolon, 2011; Kovach, 2009; Wilson, 2008).

These practices are embedded within frameworks of relationality and interconnectedness, reflecting a worldview where knowledge emerges from lived experience and is collectively held. Together, they affirm identity, sustain cultural traditions, and foster resilience, offering holistic approaches rooted in reciprocity, relationality, respect, and responsibility (Absolon, 2011; Kovach, 2009; Wilson, 2008). The JWP recognizes these methods as dynamic and ever-evolving in response to the changing needs and strengths of communities.

Oral recitation of historical accounts remains one of the most powerful and enduring expressions of Indigenous knowledge. These narrations nurture connection, carry traditional teachings, preserve collective memory, and create pathways of healing. They also function as acts of reclamation and resistance against colonial erasure, especially for communities whose voices have been silenced, distorted, or overlooked (Archibald, 2008; Simpson, 2014). Through the sharing of histories, lived experiences are honoured, cultural identity is affirmed, and intergenerational memory is carried forward.

Far from fiction, oral recitation communicates truth. It is a way of analyzing, teaching, and sustaining Indigenous realities. At its core, this practice embodies relationality, reciprocity, and responsibility, weaving individual accounts into the wider fabric of community knowledge, resilience, and collective healing. Colonial systems sought to diminish the

value of these methods and to replace them with Eurocentric forms of record-keeping, obscuring Indigenous truths in the process (Smith, 2012). Reclaiming our traditional methods of oral recitation therefore stands as both an act of resistance to ongoing colonial harm and a vital tool for addressing the MMIR crisis (Comeau et al., 2023; Reading & Wien, 2013; Smith, 2012).

Throughout the development of this report, oral recitation of historical accounts was intentionally placed alongside other traditional practices. Gatherings in community settings, during ceremonies, over shared meals, and in intimate moments of vulnerability provided insights far richer than formal interviews alone could capture. This approach honours the interconnectedness of personal narratives with broader systemic issues, ensuring that recommendations remain culturally relevant, impactful, and responsive to community needs.

The JWP affirms the sovereignty of Indigenous knowledge systems by grounding its recommendations in principles derived from Indigenous ways of knowing, doing, and being. Aligning with these cultural practices strengthens healing, justice, and advocacy, while directly challenging colonial frameworks and affirming Indigenous self-determination. By prioritizing culturally relevant methodologies, this report ensures that the voices of Indigenous Peoples remain central, guiding respectful and meaningful responses to the MMIR crisis in Alberta.

BRIDGING THE GAPS

The MMIR JWP emerged from the urgent need to address the escalating crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people (MMIWG2S+) across Canada. Despite decades of advocacy, countless reports, and national commitments, the situation remains dire. Statistics reveal not only a failure to stem the violence but also a troubling pattern of increasing harm and systemic neglect. In Alberta, violent crime has risen every year for the past five years, with 2023 marking the highest increase at 9.2% (Government of Alberta, 2024).

The persistence of violence against Indigenous women, girls, and Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ people reflects inadequate policy responses. From 2009 to 2021, the homicide rate for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit women and girls was six times higher than for non-Indigenous women (Statistics Canada, 2023). In 2024, Alberta reported that Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people are twelve times more likely to be murdered or go missing compared to non-Indigenous women (Government of Alberta, 2024). Police are also less likely to charge perpetrators with first-degree murder when the victim is Indigenous (27%) compared to non-Indigenous victims (54%) (Statistics Canada, 2023).

Alberta's response has been the *113 Pathways to Justice* Report, developed through consultations between March 2020 and December 2021, to address safety, justice, and well-being for Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ individuals (AJWG, 2021). Yet, despite its scope, the process failed to meaningfully engage Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ people. This omission is concerning given research showing they are more likely to experience violence than their non-Two-Spirit counterparts (Dykhuizen et al., 2022).

The absence of comprehensive, culturally responsive strategies in Alberta has been compounded by intersecting issues such as the expansion of extractive industries, systemic racism within institutions, weak support networks, and fragmented responses to violence (AJWG, 2021; Comeau et al., 2023; St-Amant et al., 2023). Reports such as *113 Pathways to Justice* (AJWG, 2021), *Hate in Alberta* (St-Amant et al., 2023), and *Ancestors Too Soon* (Jenkins et al., 2024) consistently show that Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ people face compounded risks, including housing insecurity, discrimination in policing and judicial systems, heightened exposure to violence, and exclusion from mainstream responses.

Despite repeated recommendations from inquiries, Alberta still lacks a provincial strategy addressing the specific needs of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ people. Culturally safe, identity-affirming, and trauma-informed prevention strategies remain

absent (AJWG, 2021; Jenkins et al., 2024). As a result, services remain incomplete and inadequate, deepening marginalization and increasing vulnerability to violence.

Of the 113 recommendations made by the Alberta Joint Working Group (2021), more than 60 remain unaddressed. The only completed recommendation is the creation of the Premier's Council on MMIWG2S+ People, established to guide government action on violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people, and to advance safety and economic security (Government of Alberta, 2024). The appointment of a Two-Spirit Indigenous advocate as vice-chair marks an important step toward inclusion, but the Council alone is not enough.

Policies and services continue to be designed without adequate consultation of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ communities. Without their voices, initiatives fail to address distinct needs, widening gaps and reinforcing systems that ignore intersectional realities. These issues are compounded by colonial data practices that erase Indigenous concepts of gender and sexuality, replacing them with Eurocentric classifications (Hunt, 2016; Walter & Andersen, 2013).

Acknowledging these gaps, the MMIR JWP builds on the foundation of previous reports, consultations, advocacy, and community expertise. These documents span federal, provincial, territorial, municipal, and Indigenous-led initiatives. While valuable, they share common flaws: weak enforcement mechanisms, poor accountability, and the exclusion of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ perspectives.

Annual progress reports and "report cards" track federal and provincial action plans, yet results remain inadequate. Of the 231 Calls for Justice from the National Inquiry into MMIWG, only two have been completed since 2019 (CIRNAC, 2024). Alberta's progress reflects similar shortcomings, with most of the *113 Pathways to Justice* recommendations still unfulfilled.

The MMIR JWP acknowledges the groundwork of prior reports and the pain, power, and hope expressed within them. It does not replace these efforts but enhances them by prioritizing intersectional, culturally responsive engagement with those most affected. Guided by community advocates, researchers, and policymakers, this plan builds upon that foundation with a renewed focus on justice and well-being.

The JWP offers a new approach: intersectional, culturally safe solutions grounded in Indigenous ways of knowing and doing. It calls for actionable, measurable commitments that prioritize the safety, healing, and visibility of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ people. Its recommendations are meant to work alongside, not instead of, existing initiatives. Moving forward requires acknowledging how past efforts excluded marginalized voices and committing to rectify those oversights.

RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations address the urgent and ongoing crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives (MMIR) in Alberta, focusing particularly on the safety, well-being, and dignity of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ people across the province. They are not intended to replace or supersede previous efforts such as the National Inquiry's Calls for Justice, the *113 Pathways to Justice*, or *Weaving Miskotahâ*. Rather, they complement and enhance these initiatives by providing Alberta-specific, community-driven solutions that close critical gaps and advance the needs of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ people.

Built on culturally grounded, community-led approaches, the recommendations honour Indigenous sovereignty and knowledge systems. They draw on traditional ceremonies and the wisdom of Elders and Knowledge Keepers, while emphasizing solutions that are actionable, measurable, and responsive. Importantly, these solutions are informed directly by the lived experiences of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals, ensuring they remain both culturally rooted and community-driven.

Incorporating the Two-Eyed Seeing approach, the recommendations integrate Indigenous and Western knowledge systems to create holistic, culturally relevant responses. This perspective ensures that traditional knowledge is honoured while also remaining adaptable to the evolving realities of Indigenous communities in Alberta. By weaving these systems together, the recommendations promote collaboration, inclusivity, and innovation in addressing systemic inequities.

A significant emphasis is placed on dismantling systemic discrimination—including racism, homophobia, and transphobia—and on upholding Indigenous Data Sovereignty. Ethical data collection and research practices must reflect community needs and perspectives, rejecting colonial methods that erase Indigenous concepts of identity. Embedding this commitment throughout the recommendations ensures accountability and safeguards the integrity of Indigenous knowledge systems.

While aligned with broader national frameworks, these recommendations are tailored to the distinct experiences of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ communities across Alberta. They address the realities of people living in urban, rural, on-reserve, off-reserve, on-settlement, and off-settlement contexts, ensuring that solutions are not generic but responsive to local conditions. This regional focus strengthens the effectiveness and sustainability of proposed actions.

The recommendations are organized into key Focus Areas, each addressing systemic inequities while enhancing resilience and culturally safe services throughout Alberta:

- Respecting Identity & Belonging
- Culturally Safe & Trauma-Informed
- Safety & Justice
- Collaboration & Community Leadership
- Reconciliation & Accountability
- Wellness & Inclusion
- Public Awareness & Advocacy
- Sustainability & Accessibility
- Capacity for Change
- Economic Security & Employment
- Alignment with Broader Initiatives

Echoing the community's overwhelming sentiment,

'we don't need another list of recommendations, we need action,'

these recommendations are designed to be actionable and measurable. Each Focus Area includes specific ‘Recommendations’ and 'Indicators of Success' to foster accountability, transparency, and inclusivity, ensuring that the initiatives not only propose change but provide pathways to actively implement and monitor it.

Foundational Principles

The Foundational Principles establish the essential values that underpin the entire MMIR Justice & Wellness Plan (JWP). These guiding elements ensure that every recommendation is rooted in safety, justice, accountability, collaboration, and community-driven leadership. They are not optional components of the JWP but its very foundation. Without consistent adherence to these principles, efforts to address the MMIR crisis risk replicating the harms they are meant to eliminate.

These principles are designed to actively confront the historical and ongoing marginalization of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals across Alberta. Colonial systems have systematically excluded their voices from policymaking, advocacy, and service provision, creating inequities, cultural erasure, and harmful disparities in access to essential services and justice (Casey, 2019; Reading & Wien, 2013). By making these principles foundational, the JWP commits to dismantling colonial structures and advancing responses that are culturally safe, relevant, and accountable to the communities most affected.

The Five Foundational Principles

Respecting Identity & Belonging

All recommendations must explicitly acknowledge, respect, and integrate the diverse identities, cultures, and knowledge systems of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples in Alberta. Meaningful recognition of these identities is essential for creating culturally relevant solutions that are effective and enduring. To avoid erasure and promote equity, solutions must reflect the distinct experiences of urban, rural, on-reserve, off-reserve, on-settlement, and off-settlement communities.

Culturally Safe & Trauma-Informed

The JWP establishes standards that guide all recommendations through culturally safe and trauma-informed approaches. This ensures efforts are responsive to the needs of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals while acknowledging the historical and ongoing trauma inflicted by colonial systems. Trauma-informed approaches must be integrated across every facet of the JWP to create spaces that are truly safe and equitable.

Safety & Justice

Safety and justice are non-negotiable. All initiatives must prioritize the protection, security, and equitable treatment of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals. Without these conditions, all other efforts are compromised. This principle demands systemic change and accountability measures that dismantle barriers to justice and safety.

Collaboration & Community Leadership

Collaboration must be community-driven, rooted in partnership, and grounded in traditional knowledge systems. Effective collaboration ensures accountability, responsiveness, and alignment with community priorities. Partnerships must respect Indigenous sovereignty and actively include Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ voices in decision-making at every stage.

Reconciliation & Accountability

Reconciliation requires transparent systems of evaluation, continuous improvement, and recognition of past and ongoing harms. Accountability and transparency are essential to prevent superficial or performative efforts. Reconciliation must be expressed through tangible actions and measurable outcomes that acknowledge and address systemic harms.

Statement about the Principles

The five principles are indispensable for achieving genuine, lasting change. They provide the structural integrity necessary for developing solutions that are culturally relevant, accountable, and community-driven. Without them, the JWP risks perpetuating harm, erasure, and inequity.

The MMIR Justice & Wellness Plan is designed to be evergreen, evolving with the needs and priorities of the Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ communities it serves. By establishing these Foundational Principles as core, non-negotiable elements, the JWP commits to ongoing responsiveness and adaptation. While new principles may emerge in the future, Respecting Identity & Belonging and Culturally Safe & Trauma-Informed remain particularly critical for grounding all recommendations in cultural integrity, safety, and relevance.

A. Respecting Identity & Belonging

Foundational Principles

Respecting Identity & Belonging is a principle that underpins all aspects of the MMIR Justice & Wellness Plan. It requires that all recommendations explicitly acknowledge, respect, and integrate the diverse identities, cultures, and knowledge systems of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples throughout Alberta. These principles are not aspirational but essential for creating culturally relevant solutions that are both effective and enduring. Without prioritizing this principle, the plan risks perpetuating the very harm and erasure it seeks to eliminate.

Culturally relevant solutions must reflect the unique experiences of urban, rural, on-reserve, off-reserve, on-settlement, and off-settlement communities. Effective recognition of these identities requires ongoing consultation and collaboration with Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals, communities, Knowledge Keepers, Elders, and leaders. Only through active engagement can culturally safe, community-driven approaches be developed and sustained.

Honouring cultural identity, dignity, and self-determination is critical to addressing the MMIR crisis in Alberta. Traditional knowledge systems, ceremonies, kinship structures, and land-based practices are not only avenues for healing and justice but also form the foundation of advocacy and empowerment. Prioritizing and centring community-led approaches fosters accountability, cultural safety, and meaningful change. When Respecting Identity & Belonging is applied throughout the MMIR Justice & Wellness Plan, it ensures that all actions are relevant, equitable, and responsive to the distinct needs of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ people across Alberta.

Recommendations

1. Recognize & Integrate Indigenous Perspectives & Solutions

Addressing the MMIR crisis requires a deliberate and sustained effort to recognize and integrate the identities, cultures, and knowledge systems of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ people throughout Alberta. This includes First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities in urban, rural, on-reserve, off-reserve, on-settlement, and off-settlement contexts. Solutions must be co-created with local communities to reflect their unique experiences and priorities, while also acknowledging regional distinctions. Meaningful engagement with Indigenous Knowledge Keepers, Elders, and leaders is essential to ensure responses are grounded in traditional knowledge, community priorities, and culturally relevant practices. Respecting and actively incorporating these distinctions across Alberta's diverse landscapes strengthens both accountability and effectiveness.

Indicators of Success

- Increased representation of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit perspectives in advisory councils, research initiatives, policy frameworks, decision-making processes, and other areas of influence.
- Development of culturally tailored programs and services that reflect the diverse experiences of communities across Alberta's geographic and cultural landscapes.
- Collaboration with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit organizations, Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and leaders to ensure community-led approaches are embedded within broader MMIR strategies.
- Evaluation of regional initiatives through community feedback, culturally relevant assessment tools, and ongoing consultation to ensure responsiveness and accountability.
- Publicly available reports that clearly document progress, challenges, and outcomes, communicated through culturally relevant and accessible channels to ensure transparency and accountability.

2. Support Rural & Urban Populations

Supporting Indigenous 2SLGBTQQIA+ individuals requires strategies that respond to the distinct needs of both rural and urban populations, as well as those who migrate to urban centres in search of safety, opportunity, or connection. Initiatives must address the cultural, geographic, and socio-economic realities of Indigenous communities throughout Alberta. Services must be accessible to people living in rural, remote, on-reserve, off-reserve, on-settlement, and off-settlement areas, as well as to those who have relocated to urban centres. Equitable access to culturally relevant supports, including housing, healing, education, employment, mental health, and social services, must be prioritized across all regions to ensure that no community is neglected or excluded.

Indicators of Success

- Implementation of regionally responsive programs that reflect the cultures, languages, and traditions of Indigenous communities in Alberta.
- Improved accessibility to services for those living in rural and remote communities.
- Documentation of community-specific practices and priorities to inform ongoing program development.
- Regular engagement with local leaders, Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and community members to evaluate the relevance and effectiveness of initiatives.
- Publicly available reports that clearly document progress, challenges, and outcomes, communicated through culturally relevant and accessible channels to ensure transparency and accountability.

B. Culturally Safe & Trauma-Informed

Foundational Principles

Culturally Safe & Trauma-Informed practices are foundational to the MMIR Justice & Wellness Plan. This principle establishes non-negotiable standards that must be embedded throughout all recommendations, ensuring that all efforts are culturally relevant, responsive, and protective of the well-being of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals. Without adherence to this principle, initiatives risk perpetuating harm, erasure, and inequity instead of fostering healing, justice, and safety.

According to the Government of Canada (2023), cultural safety is an outcome of respectful engagement that recognizes and addresses the power imbalances inherent in systems of care. It results in environments free of racism and discrimination. Achieving cultural safety requires more than cultural awareness or sensitivity. It demands transformative action to dismantle colonial structures, eliminate biases, and embed culturally informed practices into all policies, protocols, and interactions.

Trauma-informed care is an approach that recognizes the widespread impact of trauma and integrates this understanding into policies, practices, and interactions to create environments that promote safety, empowerment, and healing (Purkey et al., 2018). It emphasizes the connections between trauma, violence, and negative health outcomes, while seeking to minimize the potential for re-traumatization (PHAC, 2018; Purkey, 2018). For Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals, this means acknowledging the ongoing impact of colonization, discrimination, violence, and exclusion that continue to affect their communities.

A culturally safe, trauma-informed framework acknowledges that healing and justice must be approached holistically, integrating emotional, mental, physical, and spiritual well-being. This principle requires comprehensive training, continuous consultation, and meaningful engagement with Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals and communities. It involves creating frameworks and service delivery models that honour traditional knowledge systems, cultural practices, and lived experiences.

The principle of Culturally Safe & Trauma-Informed is essential to ensuring that all recommendations are both effective and equitable. Applying this principle to every aspect of the MMIR Justice & Wellness Plan establishes a standard of care that prioritizes safety, healing, accountability, and respect for the diverse identities and experiences of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals across Alberta.

Recommendations

3. Inclusive Policies & Training

All systems, services, sectors, and organizations that interact with Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals must adopt inclusive policies that align with Culturally Safe and Trauma-Informed principles. This requirement applies across institutions, including publicly funded services, private organizations, non-profits, community-based services, educational institutions, healthcare providers, justice systems, housing services, and other relevant entities.

Inclusive policies must create environments that address systemic barriers, power imbalances, racism, homophobia, transphobia, and other forms of harm. Ensuring cultural safety means fostering respectful engagement that acknowledges power dynamics and works to eliminate discrimination and inequity. A trauma-informed approach requires recognizing the impact of trauma and integrating this understanding into policies, practices, and interactions to promote healing, empowerment, and resilience.

Effective implementation requires comprehensive training across all sectors, designed and led by Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals and organizations. Training must be evaluated continuously and adapted to remain relevant, effective, and accountable to community needs. To maintain these standards, regular audits, evaluations, and compliance reviews must be conducted by independent bodies. Accountability mechanisms must be transparent, community-driven, and responsive to the lived experiences and evolving needs of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ people. Embedding these practices across systems ensures that policies move beyond intention to action, producing environments of safety, justice, and equity.

Indicators of Success

- Comprehensive training programs implemented across all sectors, strengthening understanding of Culturally Safe and Trauma-Informed principles with emphasis on healing, inclusivity, anti-discrimination, and accountability.
- Improved cultural competency among service providers, measured through participant feedback, independent evaluations, and regular assessments.
- Transparent accountability mechanisms established, with independent oversight bodies ensuring adherence to inclusive, culturally safe, trauma-informed practices.
- Increased satisfaction and trust reported by Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals accessing services across sectors.
- Publicly available reports that clearly document progress, challenges, and outcomes, communicated through culturally relevant and accessible channels to ensure transparency and accountability.

4. Training Across All Sectors

This recommendation establishes consistent, high-quality training across all sectors that affect the lives of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals. It ensures that Culturally Safe and Trauma-Informed principles are integrated into institutional policies, practices, interactions, and frameworks across systems, services, and organizations. These principles must be applied universally in every sector that impacts Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ people.

While advocacy and public awareness can support systemic change, achieving true accountability requires embedding these principles within the foundational structures of institutions. This necessitates ongoing training, capacity building, and a sustained commitment to aligning practices with Culturally Safe and Trauma-Informed approaches. Effective training addresses power imbalances, systemic discrimination, and harmful practices, while fostering environments rooted in safety, inclusivity, and healing.

Training programs must be designed and led by Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals wherever possible. Their leadership ensures authenticity, cultural relevance, and accountability. When Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ trainers are not available, Indigenous trainers who have completed programs developed and guided by Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals or organizations may lead these initiatives.

Continuous evaluation and adaptation are critical to maintaining relevance, effectiveness, and accountability to community needs. Unlike public awareness campaigns, which aim to shift perceptions, this recommendation embeds standards directly within institutional systems. Creating meaningful structural change requires integrating these principles across all relevant sectors, not merely promoting awareness of them.

Indicators of Success

- Increased participation of service providers across every sector and system affecting Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals.
- Implementation of culturally relevant training programs that meet standards for inclusivity, cultural safety, and trauma-informed practices across all sectors and regions.
- Improved feedback from Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals on the cultural safety and responsiveness of services provided by trained professionals.
- Regular evaluations of training programs by Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals or organizations to ensure cultural accuracy, effectiveness, and responsiveness.
- Accountability mechanisms implemented to ensure programs are consistently led by Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals or Indigenous trainers with appropriate Two-Spirit-informed guidance.
- Demonstrated improvements in cultural safety, trauma-informed practices, and anti-discrimination efforts across all sectors, measured through community feedback, independent evaluations, and continuous assessment.
- Publicly available reports that clearly document progress, challenges, and outcomes, communicated through culturally relevant and accessible channels to ensure transparency and accountability.

C. Safety & Justice

Foundational Principles

The Safety & Justice focus area of the MMIR Justice & Wellness Plan (JWP) responds to the urgent need for systemic reform to protect and uphold the rights of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals in Alberta. These communities, situated at the intersection of Indigenous and 2SLGBTQQIA+ identities, face compounded risks of violence, discrimination, and erasure. Addressing these realities requires justice systems that are not only reformed but reimagined to be inclusive, equitable, and fully accountable to the people they serve (Comeau et al., 2023; Statistics Canada, 2023).

Mainstream justice systems in Canada have consistently failed to provide equitable access, protection, and support for Indigenous Peoples, including Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals. They have too often relied on punitive measures rooted in colonial frameworks that perpetuate exclusion, incarceration, and systemic harm (Reading & Wien, 2013; Thistle, 2017). In contrast, Indigenous justice systems emphasize healing, accountability, and the restoration of relationships, drawing from traditional knowledge, ceremonies, kinship, and land-based practices (Aboriginal Justice Implementation Commission, 1999; Borrows, 2010; Coulthard, 2014). These principles align closely with restorative and transformative justice approaches, which resist punitive models and instead prioritize addressing harm, rebuilding trust, and fostering balance within communities (Davis, 2003).

For Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ people, the failure of mainstream justice systems has resulted in compounded marginalization, mistrust, and systemic neglect (Comeau et al., 2023). Bias and discrimination in policing, court processes, and investigative practices have created deep barriers to justice, while incarceration and unsafe reintegration practices continue to perpetuate harm (Statistics Canada, 2023; Alberta Courts, 2023). Justice for these communities requires more than piecemeal reforms. It demands frameworks built on cultural safety, trauma-informed care, and Indigenous sovereignty to ensure that every stage of the justice process — from prevention and harm reduction to crisis response, oversight, reintegration, and healing — reflects community priorities and lived experiences.

The Two-Eyed Seeing approach, introduced by Mi'kmaq Elder Albert Marshall, provides a guiding framework for this transformation. By drawing on the strengths of both Indigenous and Western knowledge systems, it fosters collaboration, inclusivity, and holistic solutions that are culturally grounded and non-punitive (Bartlett et al., 2012; Marshall, 2012). Applied to safety and justice, Two-Eyed Seeing bridges Indigenous justice principles with broader transformative and anti-carceral frameworks, creating pathways that repair harm, dismantle systemic inequities, and promote lasting community well-being.

The recommendations that follow reflect these foundational principles. Safety & Harm Reduction (#5) emphasizes immediate protections and culturally safe supports. Justice Systems & Accountability (#6–13) focuses on transparency, oversight, training, and culturally grounded investigations to ensure systemic accountability. Restoration & Healing (#14–15) embeds Indigenous knowledge, transformative justice, and reintegration practices to create systems rooted in healing, trust, and long-term change. Together, these interconnected recommendations build a justice framework that actively dismantles colonial harm, centres Indigenous sovereignty, and ensures that Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals can live with safety, dignity, and justice.

Safety & Harm Reduction

Safety and harm reduction are central to addressing the MMIR crisis for Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals. These communities face heightened risks of violence, discrimination, and systemic neglect, yet mainstream systems have repeatedly failed to protect them (Comeau et al., 2023; Rainbow Health Ontario, 2016; Statistics Canada, 2022).

Indigenous approaches to safety emphasize care, reciprocity, and community well-being, while mainstream systems often rely on punitive or crisis-driven responses that perpetuate harm. Effective safety requires culturally grounded and trauma-informed practices that prioritize prevention, accountability, and healing over punishment.

The following recommendation outlines strategies for building equitable systems of safety and harm reduction, rooted in cultural integrity and guided by the lived experiences of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ people.

Recommendations

5. Safety & Harm Reduction

Safety and harm reduction systems must directly address the intersecting experiences of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals, ensuring protection from violence, discrimination, neglect, and systemic harm (Comeau et al., 2023; Rainbow Health Ontario, 2016; Statistics Canada, 2022). Harm reduction approaches must be culturally safe, trauma-informed, equitably accessible, and responsive to regional contexts. Establishing enforceable standards requires protocols that actively prevent violence, discrimination, harassment, neglect, and systemic harm. These standards must be transparent, culturally informed, and embedded in policy development, community leadership, and accountability frameworks (Comeau et al., 2023; Rainbow Health Ontario, 2016; Amnesty International Canada, 2023).

Achieving this integration depends on rigorous training programs that embed culturally safe and trauma-informed practices across systems and institutions. Paid advocates and system navigators, ideally Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals, must also be incorporated into these frameworks to provide consistent, high-quality, and culturally responsive support. Advocates and navigators act as trusted resources for those navigating healthcare, policing, incarceration, housing insecurity, crisis response, and other high-risk environments. Their responsibilities include addressing systemic barriers, promoting accountability, and providing culturally safe referrals and advocacy (Abacus Data, 2023; Alberta Courts, 2023). Formalizing these roles as paid positions ensures reliable community driven support independent from volunteerism and temporary funding.

All safety protocols, standards, and frameworks must be developed through sustained consultation with Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals and organizations. Their leadership and decision-making authority must be fully integrated into protective systems. Continuous evaluation and adaptation, guided by community feedback, are essential to maintaining high standards of safety and harm reduction (Reading & Wien, 2013; Amnesty International Canada, 2023).

Indicators Of Success

- Expanded availability of safety and harm reduction services across all sectors, with measurable targets for urban, rural, and remote areas.
- Development of culturally safe crisis response systems addressing mental health, substance use, violence, policing, incarceration, and housing insecurity, with outcomes evaluated through community feedback.
- Documented reduction in incidents of violence, discrimination, harassment, or neglect, tracked annually across systems and services.
- Adoption of culturally safe harm reduction practices across relevant sectors, supported by training from the Focus Area: Training Across All Sectors.
- Transparent, ongoing evaluation mechanisms that collect and respond to community feedback, with annual public reports on successes, challenges, and areas for improvement.
- Accountability frameworks that ensure community feedback drives policy adjustments and cultural safety standards.
- Formal documentation of consultation processes, including agreements, records, and recommendations, reviewed annually and incorporated into accountability structures.
- Publicly available reports that clearly document progress, challenges, and outcomes, communicated through culturally relevant and accessible channels to ensure transparency and accountability.

Justice Systems & Accountability

Justice systems and accountability mechanisms are critical to ensuring safety, protection, and healing for Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals in Alberta. These systems must address the intersecting challenges of colonialism, systemic discrimination, and cultural erasure, which have historically denied equity and safety to these communities.

Indigenous justice emphasizes healing, balance, and the restoration of relationships, while mainstream justice systems often rely on punitive measures of deterrence and punishment (Aboriginal Justice Implementation Commission, 1999). This contrast underscores the need for culturally grounded models that reflect Indigenous traditions and lived experiences. By centring values of reconciliation, harmony, and responsibility, Indigenous approaches provide a vital foundation for addressing the justice-related needs of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ people.

Yet systemic barriers persist, including discriminatory policing, unsafe incarceration practices, and investigative processes that often fail to protect or respect Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals (Comeau et al., 2023; Alberta Courts, 2023; Statistics Canada, 2023). To counter these harms, accountability requires independent oversight, culturally safe investigative units, and training rooted in Indigenous sovereignty and community wisdom.

The following recommendations (6–15) outline concrete steps for building justice systems that are transparent, equitable, and accountable to Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ communities. These measures move beyond reform to create new frameworks of justice grounded in cultural safety, intersectionality, and community leadership.

6. Transparency & Oversight

Transparency and oversight are essential for effective justice systems and are foundational to achieving safety and accountability for Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals. Without independent oversight, systems such as policing, incarceration, housing, healthcare, and social services risk perpetuating harm, discrimination, and exclusion rather than ensuring equitable protection and support. Establishing transparent, community-driven oversight bodies is therefore critical to ensuring that these systems operate in culturally safe, trauma-informed, and just ways.

Oversight processes must be guided by accountability, equity, and cultural safety. For Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ people, existing systems often fail to deliver fair, unbiased, or culturally relevant responses to violence, exploitation, and systemic discrimination. Biases rooted in racism, homophobia, transphobia, and colonialism have historically shaped how justice systems treat marginalized communities, reinforcing cycles of harm. Oversight bodies must actively identify and eliminate discriminatory practices while promoting transparency, impartiality, and cultural integrity throughout their work.

Independent oversight bodies must also operate with full transparency. This includes producing publicly available reports, ensuring accessible complaint processes, and maintaining clear accountability structures. Transparency requires culturally relevant communication channels that enable Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals to safely and effectively engage with these systems. Community feedback and consultation are vital to shaping standards and practices that are relevant, inclusive, and responsive to lived experiences.

Meaningful oversight must be an ongoing process. Regular evaluation, continuous adaptation, and collaboration with Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals and organizations are essential for maintaining accountability and cultural relevance. These mechanisms must honour Indigenous Data Sovereignty and prioritize community-led approaches to safety and justice, ensuring that reforms are not symbolic but embedded into the structures of accountability.

Indicators of Success

- Creation of independent oversight bodies with meaningful representation from Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals, ensuring culturally informed review processes.
- Publicly accessible, culturally safe annual reports detailing oversight activities, investigations, resolutions, gaps, and recommendations for systemic improvement. Reports must be distributed through culturally relevant communication channels and presented in ways that are understandable and useful to community members.
- Ongoing community engagement to assess and enhance transparency, accountability, and cultural safety within oversight processes, with documented feedback integrated into continuous improvement.
- Implementation of culturally safe ethical standards that actively eliminate discriminatory practices and biases throughout oversight and reporting mechanisms.
- Publicly available reports that clearly document progress, challenges, and outcomes, communicated through culturally relevant and accessible channels to ensure transparency and accountability.

7. Comprehensive Training - Safety

Developing culturally safe, trauma-informed, and anti-discrimination training programs for service providers is essential to achieving equitable access to justice for Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals. These programs must dismantle systemic barriers, address intersectional oppression, and ensure services are culturally relevant and responsive to the needs of these communities.

Training must be comprehensive and applicable across multiple systems, including justice, healthcare, housing, and social services, as well as other relevant sectors. Programs should prioritize Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ leadership, lived experience, and cultural knowledge to ensure authenticity, relevance, and accountability. They must also be regionally responsive, designed to reflect the distinct realities of urban, rural, and remote communities, so that access to training and its outcomes are equitable across Alberta.

Evaluation and adaptation are key to maintaining effectiveness. Feedback mechanisms must be continuous and guided by Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals to ensure alignment with community priorities, cultural integrity, and lived realities. As training evolves, its integration into institutional policies, practices, and frameworks will be critical for achieving structural and lasting change rather than short-term shifts.

Indicators Of Success

- Increased participation of service providers across all relevant sectors in training programs designed and led by Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals and organizations.
- Successful integration of region-specific, culturally relevant training modules tailored to Alberta's diverse cultural regions.
- Improved feedback from Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals regarding the cultural safety and responsiveness of trained professionals.
- Regular evaluations of training programs by Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals or organizations to ensure ongoing cultural accuracy, effectiveness, and responsiveness.
- Implementation of accountability mechanisms to ensure training programs are consistently led by Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals or Indigenous trainers with appropriate Two-Spirit-informed guidance.
- Demonstrated improvements in cultural safety, trauma-informed practices, and anti-discrimination efforts across sectors, measured through continuous evaluation and community feedback.
- Publicly available reports that clearly document progress, challenges, and outcomes, communicated through culturally relevant and accessible channels to ensure transparency and accountability.

8. Data Collection & Research Ethics

Ensuring culturally safe, accurate, and ethical data collection systems is essential for understanding and addressing the unique experiences of Missing and Murdered Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ people across Alberta. Reliable data is critical for uncovering systemic inequities, developing relevant policies, and ensuring accountability. Without it, the realities of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals remain obscured, perpetuating harmful erasure and leading to policies that fail to meet community needs (Walter & Suina, 2019; CGSHE, 2025; Thompson et al., 2023).

Indigenous Data Sovereignty affirms the right of Indigenous peoples to govern the collection, ownership, and application of data concerning their communities, cultures, and identities. Guided by the Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession (OCAP) framework, this principle ensures that data practices reflect Indigenous values, needs, and perspectives (First Nations Information Governance Centre, 2014). For Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals, sovereignty over data governance is particularly vital, ensuring culturally relevant, ethical, and accountable practices that prevent misuse and erasure.

Historically, data collection systems have excluded or misrepresented Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals, resulting in invisibility within official statistics, inadequate policy development, and unethical practices. These omissions perpetuate systemic inequities by allowing data gaps to justify inaction and insufficient responses (Walter & Suina, 2019). Preventing this harm requires systems that actively resist erasure and misrepresentation by centring Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ leadership in the design, implementation, and oversight of data collection.

Culturally safe data collection must be led by Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals and designed to reflect lived experiences, priorities, and knowledge systems. Research methodologies and tools must be adaptable to the diverse realities of Alberta's communities, whether urban, rural, on-reserve, off-reserve, on-settlement, or off-settlement. In addition, community consultation, feedback, and collaboration must guide all stages of the process to ensure data remains accurate, relevant, and reflective of those most affected.

Indigenous Data Sovereignty must anchor every data collection process to ensure accountability, transparency, and accuracy. Establishing culturally relevant research ethics and protocols is critical to avoiding exploitation or further harm and to building systems that genuinely reflect community values (CGSHE, 2025). Effective data collection is not only a technical requirement but also a cornerstone of justice, as it provides the foundation for identifying inequities, shaping culturally relevant policy, and fostering systemic accountability.

Indicators Of Success

- Development and implementation of culturally safe data collection systems designed and led by Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals.
- Increased availability of accurate, comprehensive data reflecting experiences across Alberta's diverse geographic and cultural regions.
- Integration of Indigenous Data Sovereignty principles within all data processes, with demonstrated adherence to OCAP or other accepted Indigenous standards.
- Improved accuracy and relevance of research findings due to community-led data collection that reflects lived experiences and priorities.
- Established community feedback mechanisms ensuring accountability, transparency, and adaptability in data collection processes.
- Creation of culturally relevant research ethics and protocols that prevent erasure, misrepresentation, and exploitation of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals.
- Publicly available reports that clearly document progress, challenges, and outcomes, communicated through culturally relevant and accessible channels to ensure transparency and accountability.

9. Culturally Grounded Justice

Developing MMIR protocols that acknowledge and address the unique experiences of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ people within Alberta's justice systems is essential to ensuring fairness, equity, and inclusivity. Mainstream justice systems frequently fail to reflect the lived experiences, cultural practices, and traditional knowledge of these communities, resulting in processes that are often ineffective or harmful. Culturally grounded justice therefore requires protocols that honour Indigenous worldviews, cultural values, and distinct legal traditions to ensure meaningful and effective engagement.

Achieving this goal depends on protocols shaped through sustained consultation with Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ communities across Alberta. These consultations must include individuals from diverse geographic and cultural regions, whether urban, rural, on-reserve, off-reserve, on-settlement, or off-settlement. Inclusivity is vital to accurately capture the broad realities of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ people and requires integrating Indigenous principles such as respect, reciprocity, responsibility, and relevance (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 2001).

A critical step in building culturally grounded justice is establishing reporting mechanisms that are intersectional, culturally safe, and adaptable to community needs. These systems must accurately document and respond to the experiences of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ people, reflecting cultural identities, traditional knowledge, and lived experiences. Justice processes rooted in such mechanisms will be more responsive, relevant, and effective (Aboriginal Justice Implementation Commission, 1999).

Ultimately, culturally grounded justice protocols are essential for restoring relationships, promoting healing, and ensuring equity in Alberta's justice systems. Community-led approaches that prioritize collaboration, transparency, and accountability will build a justice framework that meaningfully addresses the needs of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals while reinforcing cultural safety and integrity.

Indicators of Success

- Expanded establishment and use of culturally relevant reporting mechanisms by Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals.
- Higher satisfaction rates among community members engaging with justice systems, reflecting enhanced cultural safety and responsiveness.
- Systematic documentation of community feedback to inform and adapt reporting mechanisms, with transparent reporting on how this input will shape policy and protocol changes.
- Publicly available reports that clearly document progress, challenges, and outcomes, communicated through culturally relevant and accessible channels to ensure transparency and accountability.

10. Trust & Accountability

Engagement with law enforcement and justice systems is complicated by the historical and ongoing harm inflicted upon Indigenous Peoples, including Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals. These systems have long been tools of violence, colonization, criminalization, and forced assimilation (Reading & Wien, 2013; Thistle, 2017). Despite this harmful legacy, interaction with justice systems remains necessary to reclaim agency, assert Indigenous governance, and demand accountability. Building partnerships is therefore not an endorsement of past injustices but a strategic effort to dismantle oppressive structures from within.

For Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals, mistrust of law enforcement and justice systems is a critical factor in the MMIR crisis. Historical and ongoing trauma, compounded by discrimination and violence, has fostered deep avoidance of police, courts, and related institutions. Fears of dismissal, hostility, or further harm often prevent individuals from reporting violence or injustice. This underreporting stems directly from experiences where authorities minimized or ignored concerns, producing inadequate responses and missed opportunities for safety and protection (St-Amant et al., 2023).

Systemic discrimination reinforces this mistrust. Law enforcement and court systems frequently disregard or downgrade reports involving Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals. Such neglect undermines justice, erases realities from broader MMIR frameworks, and perpetuates the perception that these systems are fundamentally unsafe (Reading & Wien, 2013; Thistle, 2017). Research confirms that reports from marginalized groups are often deprioritized or inadequately investigated, further compounding vulnerability and eroding trust (Casey, 2019; Comeau et al., 2023).

Access to support systems is also limited. Fear of criminalization, mistreatment, or outright harm discourages many from seeking help, particularly those experiencing homelessness or engaged in sex work. These fears are often justified, as mainstream services are frequently unsafe, unwelcoming, or culturally irrelevant, alienating those most in need (Jenkins et al., 2024; Rainbow Health Ontario, 2016). The absence of accurate data further obscures realities and limits advocacy. When official statistics exclude or misrepresent Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals, their needs remain unacknowledged and unaddressed (Reading & Wien, 2013; Thistle, 2017; St-Amant et al., 2023).

Without accountability, cycles of violence persist. When justice systems fail to protect victims or punish perpetrators, impunity flourishes, deepening mistrust and reinforcing harmful power imbalances (Aboriginal Justice Implementation Commission, 1999; Jenkins et al., 2024). Establishing and maintaining strong, transparent partnerships

between law enforcement, Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ organizations, and Indigenous communities is essential to counter this pattern. These partnerships must be rooted in community wisdom, traditional governance models, and a commitment to eliminating bias and discrimination.

Effective accountability requires culturally relevant frameworks that include transparent reporting, community-driven evaluation, and ongoing consultation. Trust and accountability are not abstract principles; they are practical measures that dismantle systemic barriers while fostering equity and reconciliation. By integrating Indigenous governance models and culturally grounded approaches, partnerships become pathways to genuine safety and justice.

Indicators of Success

- Formalized partnerships and agreements between law enforcement, Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ organizations, and Indigenous communities, co-created through community consultation and documented in MOUs, protocols, or community-led policies.
- Improved reporting mechanisms that capture the experiences of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals, demonstrated by higher reporting rates, more thorough investigations, and accountability measures addressing bias and discrimination.
- Annual evaluations of partnerships conducted through inclusive, community-led processes, with public reporting and responsive action plans that measure changes in trust, satisfaction, and perceptions of safety.
- Integration of traditional governance models or culturally relevant accountability structures into partnerships, with success measured through improved reporting, increased community satisfaction, and reduced violence.
- Implementation of culturally safe reporting and data collection systems that accurately reflect the experiences of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals, ensuring inclusiveness, accessibility, and transparency.
- Demonstrated improvements in justice system responsiveness, measured through investigation outcomes, response times, and documented systemic changes based on community feedback.
- Publicly available reports that clearly document progress, challenges, and outcomes, communicated through culturally relevant and accessible channels to ensure transparency and accountability.

11. Culturally Safe Investigations

MMIR investigation units led by Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ professionals must be established to ensure justice processes are inclusive, culturally safe, and equitable. These professionals bring essential lived experience, cultural knowledge, and trauma-informed training needed to address the MMIR crisis. Inclusivity, cultural safety, and intersectionality are non-negotiable for dismantling racism, homophobia, transphobia, and other systemic barriers. Achieving justice requires robust accountability measures, consistent evaluation, and meaningful collaboration with communities most impacted by systemic violence and exclusion.

Mainstream investigations often fail to meet these needs due to entrenched biases, racism, homophobia, and transphobia (Casey, 2019; Comeau et al., 2023; St-Amant et al., 2023). When cultural safety is absent, investigations perpetuate harm, deepen mistrust, and reinforce exclusion (Reading & Wien, 2013; Jenkins et al., 2024). These failures particularly harm communities historically marginalized, criminalized, and victimized by the very systems intended to protect them.

Leadership by Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ professionals is critical to restoring credibility and responsiveness within justice systems that have long failed their communities (Assembly of First Nations, 2021; St-Amant et al., 2023). Without culturally safe frameworks, investigations risk replicating the discriminatory practices that fuel the MMIR crisis. Accountability must be rooted in community-defined standards of justice, ensuring processes are genuinely inclusive and equitable (Thistle, 2017; Aboriginal Justice Implementation Commission, 1999).

Culturally safe investigations also align with the foundational principle of Respecting Identity & Belonging, affirming cultural identity and inclusion within justice systems (Egale & The Enchanté Network, 2024; LFMO, 2023). Investigations must acknowledge historical and ongoing trauma, applying trauma-informed practices to prevent further harm and ensure survivors receive appropriate care (CTRI, 2024; Comeau et al., 2023).

Accountability requires transparent, community-driven mechanisms that rigorously evaluate investigative practices and adapt them based on continuous feedback. Establishing culturally safe reporting systems, documenting progress, and dismantling discriminatory practices are essential steps toward rebuilding trust. Investigations must remain impartial, culturally informed, and guided by standards defined by the communities most affected by systemic violence and exclusion.

Indicators of Success

- Establishment of MMIR investigation units with meaningful representation from Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ communities, co-designed with community leadership.
- Increased resolution rates for MMIR cases involving Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals, with protocols eliminating racism, homophobia, and transphobia in investigative processes.
- Robust accountability measures implemented through community feedback, independent evaluations, and transparent reporting systems, with annual reports documenting progress and gaps.
- Documented improvements in investigative practices based on evaluations and mechanisms that identify and address discrimination or bias.
- Development of culturally safe investigative protocols ensuring consistent, equitable treatment of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals.
- Transparent accountability measures in place, with documented progress in cultural safety, anti-discrimination, and intersectional practice.
- Publicly available reports that clearly document progress, challenges, and outcomes, communicated through culturally relevant and accessible channels to ensure transparency and accountability.

12. Oversight

Independent civilian oversight bodies are critical for ensuring transparency, accountability, and justice in the review of MMIR cases involving Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals. Without such mechanisms, systemic bias, discrimination, and harmful practices will persist unchecked. Internal review processes are rarely sufficient, as they often replicate colonial systems of power that have historically failed Indigenous Peoples. True oversight must therefore come from independent and community-driven structures that are trusted, transparent, and responsive. If an Ombudsman is not appointed, an independent Oversight Committee must be formed, comprising members from the Indigenous 2SLGBTQQIA+ community of Alberta with representation from all regions. Broad regional representation ensures equity by including both urban and rural voices, preventing decisions from being dominated by major centres while overlooking the realities of remote or smaller communities. Establishing these bodies is essential to prevent ongoing harm and ensure comprehensive, equitable oversight.

An Indigenous 2SLGBTQQIA+ Ombudsman is essential for achieving accountability, transparency, and transformative change. This role must be filled by an Indigenous person, preferably from the Indigenous 2SLGBTQQIA+ community, to ensure authentic representation and cultural integrity. As an independent authority, the Ombudsman must be free from external influences and adhere to culturally safe, trauma-informed, and intersectional practices. Responsibilities include investigating complaints, advocating for systemic improvements, ensuring adherence to Indigenous Data Sovereignty, and producing comprehensive, accessible annual reports. For this role to be effective, it must be properly resourced, protected from political shifts, and supported with long-term commitments that ensure continuity and stability. This position is not symbolic; it is a cornerstone of systemic accountability and trust-building.

Transparency requires culturally relevant reporting mechanisms accessible to Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals and their communities. Reports must be comprehensive, publicly available, and designed to ensure clarity and accessibility through culturally appropriate communication channels. Oversight bodies must adhere to principles of cultural safety, anti-discrimination, and intersectionality. They must actively eliminate harmful practices and promote equitable justice through rigorous, transparent accountability mechanisms.

Indicators of Success

- Independent oversight bodies established with substantial representation from Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals. If no Ombudsman, an Oversight Committee must be formed with province-wide representation.
- Appointment of an Indigenous 2SLGBTQQIA+ Ombudsman responsible for investigations, systemic advocacy, adherence to Indigenous Data Sovereignty, and annual reporting.
- Annual reports made accessible through culturally relevant communication channels, with findings clearly communicated to communities.
- Ongoing community engagement to assess and enhance transparency, accountability, and cultural safety within oversight processes.
- Enforcement of rigorous, culturally safe ethical standards that eliminate discriminatory practices and biases, with annual reviews documenting progress.
- Publicly available reports that clearly document progress, challenges, and outcomes, communicated through culturally relevant and accessible channels to ensure transparency and accountability.

13. Comprehensive Training – Justice

Develop and implement standardized training curricula focused on enhancing cultural safety, trauma-informed practices, anti-discrimination, and intersectional awareness specifically related to Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals in Alberta. This initiative directly supports the foundational principles of Respecting Identity & Belonging and Safety & Justice by promoting justice frameworks that honour the identities, knowledge systems, and lived experiences of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ people. Ensuring safety and justice requires training programs that actively dismantle discriminatory practices and promote equitable access to protection and accountability.

The Two-Eyed Seeing approach guides this effort by integrating Indigenous knowledge systems and mainstream frameworks, fostering inclusive, culturally grounded, and effective training. Programs must be tailored to reflect the distinct cultural regions of Alberta and adapted for professionals across justice, security, and community safety sectors. This includes law enforcement, legal professionals, corrections, victim services, healthcare providers, social services, and community-based programs.

Training must be designed and led by Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals and organizations wherever possible. When this is not feasible, Indigenous trainers with culturally informed guidance from Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ communities may lead, ensuring authenticity, relevance, and accountability. To maintain effectiveness, training must also include ongoing evaluation and feedback mechanisms, with continuous adaptation to embed cultural safety and trauma-informed practices across all systems. Accountability measures must be established and regularly assessed to ensure programs consistently meet community-defined standards of justice and cultural safety.

Indicators of Success

- Increased participation of justice, security, and community safety professionals in training programs designed and led by Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals and organizations.
- Integration of culturally relevant training modules tailored to the diverse cultural regions within Alberta, with effectiveness measured through completion rates, feedback, and regional adaptations.
- Improved cultural safety and responsiveness of services provided by trained professionals, as measured by structured feedback from Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals and organizations.
- Annual evaluations of training programs conducted by Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals or organizations, with outcomes, recommendations, and improvements made publicly available.
- Accountability mechanisms established to ensure training programs are consistently led by Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals or Indigenous trainers with appropriate Two-Spirit-informed guidance.
- Demonstrated improvements in cultural safety, trauma-informed practices, and anti-discrimination efforts across relevant sectors, measured through assessments, community feedback, and comprehensive reports.
- Publicly available reports that clearly document progress, challenges, and outcomes, communicated through culturally relevant and accessible channels to ensure transparency and accountability.

Restoration & Healing

Restoration and Healing are central to addressing the MMIR crisis because they respond to the deep wounds caused by colonial violence, systemic discrimination, and the erasure of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ people. Unlike punitive justice models, which often reinforce harm, Restoration and Healing prioritize repairing relationships, fostering resilience, and creating culturally safe environments where individuals and communities can recover and thrive.

This focus area is guided by the Two-Eyed Seeing approach, which brings Indigenous and Western knowledge systems together to support holistic, inclusive solutions (Bartlett et al., 2012). Through this lens, Indigenous Justice, grounded in ceremony, kinship, and land-based practices, aligns with Transformative and anti-carceral frameworks to create non-punitive pathways to justice that emphasize healing, accountability, and systemic change (Borrows, 2010; Coulthard, 2014; Davis, 2003).

By centring Indigenous knowledge and the lived experiences of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ people, Restoration and Healing move justice systems toward approaches that dismantle structural inequities and promote long-term well-being. These principles are essential for reintegration, resilience, and the creation of justice systems that are sustainable, culturally safe, and rooted in community-defined standards of equity and care.

The principles of Restoration and Healing directly guide the following recommendations. Recommendation #14, *Transformative Justice & Reintegration Supports*, applies these principles by emphasizing healing, accountability, and reintegration rather than punitive responses, ensuring that justice systems dismantle systemic inequities while supporting community well-being. Recommendation #15, *Healing-Centred Engagement & Programs*, extends these principles into community-based initiatives that prioritize culturally grounded healing, ceremonies, and collective resilience. Together, these recommendations translate Restoration and Healing into practical, actionable pathways that address both systemic reform and community care.

14. Transformative Justice & Reintegration Supports

Addressing the MMIR crisis in Alberta requires culturally grounded justice systems that meet the distinct needs of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals. These systems include formal and informal institutions, structures, and processes, such as legal systems, law enforcement, corrections, victim services, and community-based programs. Integrating Indigenous knowledge systems and prioritizing healing, accountability, and systemic change are essential. Justice systems must ensure equitable access to justice, healing, and restoration, dismantling systemic barriers linked to violence, discrimination, and erasure.

Culturally safe, trauma-informed frameworks are necessary across all stages of the justice process, including initial interactions, incarceration, reintegration, and community support. Practices must reflect the lived experiences of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals, dismantle systemic inequities, promote healing, and restore balance. The Two-Eyed Seeing approach, which integrates Indigenous and mainstream knowledge systems, fosters holistic and inclusive solutions that are both culturally relevant and adaptable.

Community-led Transformative Justice advances Restoration & Healing by challenging harmful systems and ensuring accountability. Reintegration programs must be culturally grounded, trauma-informed, and responsive to the needs of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals. These supports help rebuild relationships, restore cultural identity, and strengthen community well-being. Collaboration with formerly incarcerated individuals ensures reintegration remains relevant, while accountability mechanisms such as structured feedback, independent evaluations, and culturally informed reporting address systemic barriers like racism, homophobia, transphobia, and cultural erasure. Oversight from an Indigenous 2SLGBTQQIA+ Ombudsman or Oversight Committee is essential to keep systems aligned with community standards, advocate for improvements, and maintain transparency.

Rooted in Indigenous concepts of justice and healing, Transformative Justice acknowledges historical harm, addresses inequities, and fosters reconciliation. By applying the Two-Eyed Seeing approach, Alberta can establish justice models that emphasize healing, accountability, and transformation, while ensuring equitable, culturally safe access to justice for Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals.

Indicators of Success

- Development and implementation of trauma-informed justice models that are culturally grounded and specifically designed to support Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals across Alberta.
- Creation of culturally safe reintegration programs that are accessible and responsive to the unique needs of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals who were formerly incarcerated.
- Improved participant satisfaction rates documented through surveys, interviews, or community-based evaluations, with results published in culturally accessible reports.
- Increased accessibility of culturally safe services for Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals who are incarcerated or have experienced incarceration throughout Alberta.
- Documentation of successful reintegration efforts, including reduced recidivism rates, enhanced community acceptance, and improved support networks.
- Evidence of systemic change through accountability measures designed to address racism, homophobia, transphobia, and cultural erasure within justice systems.
- Demonstrated application of the Two-Eyed Seeing approach in program development, implementation, and evaluation, with documented outcomes.
- Annual reports produced by the Indigenous 2SLGBTQQIA+ Ombudsman or Oversight Committee, documenting progress, challenges, and recommendations for justice and reintegration efforts.
- Ongoing consultations with individuals who have experienced incarceration to assess program effectiveness, address gaps, and ensure continuous improvement through culturally relevant, trauma-informed approaches.
- Publicly available reports that clearly document progress, challenges, and outcomes, communicated through culturally relevant and accessible channels to ensure transparency and accountability.

15. Healing-Centred Engagement & Programs

Addressing the MMIR crisis in Alberta requires intentional, culturally grounded healing-centred engagement and programs that prioritize the well-being of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals. Healing must be understood as both a personal and collective process that responds to historical, intergenerational, and present-day trauma. Achieving this requires accessible, culturally safe, and trauma-informed programs rooted in Indigenous knowledge systems, ceremonies, land-based healing, and creative expression.

Healing-centred engagement emphasizes reclaiming identity, restoring relationships, and fostering resilience. Programs must integrate cultural practices, ceremonies, and arts as essential components of healing, providing avenues for expression, identity affirmation, and cultural pride. Community-wide initiatives are also needed to address collective trauma and strengthen community resilience, ensuring efforts are inclusive, accessible, and responsive to the unique needs of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals.

Equitable access to healing supports across Alberta is critical. Services must be available in urban, rural, on-reserve, off-reserve, on-settlement, and off-settlement communities. Embedding healing-centred engagement within justice systems, reintegration programs, and community-based initiatives ensures that Restoration & Healing remain foundational principles guiding all efforts.

The inclusion of an Indigenous 2SLGBTQQIA+ Ombudsman or Oversight Committee is essential to monitor, evaluate, and strengthen healing-centred programs. With authority to advocate for improvements, recommend changes, and ensure cultural safety, these oversight mechanisms provide accountability, responsiveness, and transparency. Integrating the Two-Eyed Seeing approach further enhances effectiveness by drawing on both Indigenous and mainstream knowledge systems to create holistic, inclusive, and culturally grounded solutions.

Indicators Of Success

- Development and implementation of healing-centred programs that are culturally grounded, trauma-informed, and accessible across all regions of Alberta.
- Creation of culturally relevant mental health supports, ceremonies, land-based healing initiatives, and creative expression opportunities designed specifically for Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals.
- Improved community resilience and satisfaction rates documented through surveys, interviews, or community-based evaluations, with results published in culturally accessible reports.
- Enhanced accessibility of healing supports within urban, rural, on-reserve, off-reserve, on-settlement, and off-settlement communities.
- Demonstrated application of the Two-Eyed Seeing approach in healing programs, ensuring both Indigenous and mainstream knowledge systems are utilized effectively.
- Annual reports produced by the Indigenous 2SLGBTQQIA+ Ombudsman or Oversight Committee, documenting progress, challenges, and recommendations for healing-centred engagement.
- Ongoing consultations with Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals to assess program effectiveness, address gaps, and ensure continuous improvement through culturally relevant, trauma-informed approaches.
- Publicly available reports that clearly document progress, challenges, and outcomes, communicated through culturally relevant and accessible channels to ensure transparency and accountability.

D. Collaboration & Community Leadership

Foundational Principles

Collaboration and community leadership are central to achieving justice, safety, and wellness for Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals in Alberta. At the core of this approach is the recognition that sustainable change cannot occur without culturally grounded partnerships and proactive leadership rooted in community wisdom and lived experiences. This requires honouring Indigenous sovereignty and respecting nation-to-nation relationships. It also means embedding Indigenous ways of knowing, such as oral recitation of historical accounts, relationship-based learning, and holistic approaches to wellness and responsibility.

Effective collaboration extends across multiple sectors, including Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ organizations, mainstream MMIR initiatives, government entities, service providers, and other institutions. These partnerships must prioritize Indigenous-led decision-making and self-determination, ensuring that policies, programs, and funding models are accountable to the people most impacted. A Two-Eyed Seeing approach offers a balanced pathway forward by integrating Indigenous knowledge systems with Western frameworks, allowing for solutions that are both culturally relevant and structurally effective (Hall et al., 2015).

Community leadership is critical to ensuring equity in housing, health, justice, education, and other essential areas. Establishing advisory councils, community forums, and collaborative planning sessions rooted in Indigenous governance creates transparent and inclusive spaces for decision-making. These bodies—whether Elders' councils, Métis advisory circles, or Inuit community voices—provide oversight, guidance, and accountability while embedding traditional knowledge systems into practical policies and service delivery.

The recommendations in this section focus on building collaborative frameworks (#16), strengthening provincial and federal partnerships (#17), and ensuring that mainstream MMIR initiatives fully integrate Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ leadership (#18). Together, these measures emphasize that authentic collaboration is not symbolic but structural, requiring equitable resource sharing, transparent accountability, and sustained commitment. When partnerships are guided by Indigenous sovereignty, community-defined goals, and inclusive representation, they create the conditions for long-term systemic change, resilience, and cultural renewal.

Recommendations

16. Establish Collaborative Frameworks & Advisory Councils

Collaborative frameworks and advisory councils rooted in Indigenous leadership and traditional knowledge systems are essential for developing inclusive, culturally relevant MMIR strategies. Applying a Two-Eyed Seeing approach ensures both Indigenous and Western perspectives are integrated, producing solutions that are structurally effective while remaining culturally grounded (Hall et al., 2015). These frameworks must be supported by co-developed evaluation processes, structured feedback mechanisms, and regular assessment to maintain accountability and responsiveness throughout implementation.

Practical application requires formal agreements such as memorandums of understanding (MOUs) and partnership protocols, combined with ongoing consultation and participatory decision-making. Advisory council meetings, community forums, and collaborative planning sessions that prioritize community-defined goals strengthen meaningful engagement and ensure accountability to those most impacted.

These collaborative structures must centre community-led initiatives, enable active participation from advisory bodies, and promote cross-sector collaboration through shared planning, decision-making, and communication processes. Indigenous perspectives must guide advocacy, policymaking, and service delivery at every level. Honouring nation-to-nation relationships through formal recognition and mutual respect is essential to building strong, equitable partnerships.

Advisory councils and working groups must consistently reflect diverse Indigenous representation, including Two-Spirit Indigenous individuals from First Nations, the Métis Nation, and the Inuit Nation. Active collaboration among Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ organizations, mainstream MMIR initiatives, governments, and service providers, through formal partnerships and co-developed initiatives, will enhance inclusivity, cultural safety, and responsiveness to community priorities. Transparent accountability mechanisms, including public reporting, community audits, and advisory council evaluations, are essential to maintaining trust and authenticity.

Indicators of Success

- Establishment, renewal, and growth of formalized agreements such as MOUs, partnership agreements, and collaborative structures, with progress tracked through agreements, evaluations, and partnership metrics.
- Evidence of collaborative effectiveness, demonstrated through documented planning sessions, decision-making processes, advisory body influence, and regular evaluations that measure alignment with community-defined goals and evolving needs.
- Recognition and incorporation of nation-to-nation relationships through formal agreements, protocols, or other structures that acknowledge Indigenous governance and leadership.
- Transparent selection processes, inclusive recruitment strategies, and structured feedback mechanisms that ensure advisory councils reflect diverse Indigenous identities, with meaningful representation from Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals across First Nations, the Métis Nation, and the Inuit Nation.
- Demonstrated integration of Indigenous knowledge systems and culturally relevant practices through a Two-Eyed Seeing approach within both existing and newly developed frameworks.
- Publicly available reports that clearly document progress, challenges, and outcomes, communicated through culturally relevant and accessible channels to ensure transparency and accountability.

17. Strengthen Collaboration with Provincial & Federal Agencies

Collaboration with provincial and federal agencies, including Health Canada, Indigenous Services Canada, and Justice authorities, remains essential for securing sustained funding and resources for Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ initiatives. These partnerships must prioritize culturally grounded services such as housing, mental health, advocacy, and other essential supports. Effective partnerships require formal agreements that honour nation-to-nation relationships through Treaty-based partnerships, protocols respecting Indigenous governance structures, and co-created frameworks that recognize Indigenous sovereignty and support the self-determination of the communities to which Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ people belong. Formal agreements must include accountability measures, transparent processes, and clear alignment with community-defined needs.

A Two-Eyed Seeing approach integrates Indigenous and Western perspectives throughout collaboration frameworks. This approach has been effectively applied in research contexts, where Indigenous methodologies are prioritized alongside Western science to support cultural renewal (Hall et al., 2015). In the context of MMIR responses, Two-Eyed Seeing requires documentation through co-developed evaluation reports, advisory council feedback, and transparent progress tracking. Structured dialogue sessions, shared governance frameworks, and collaborative evaluation processes ensure balanced and culturally relevant decision-making, while community-led monitoring strengthens authenticity, responsiveness, and cultural relevance.

Ongoing consultation, equitable resource distribution, and culturally safe policy development require consistent mechanisms such as resource allocation audits, community-driven evaluations, and advisory council guidance. Regular reviews, community feedback mechanisms, and co-developed evaluation processes are essential for maintaining responsiveness and inclusivity. Formal partnerships between government agencies and community organizations must be structured through written agreements, advisory councils, and designated liaison roles. Advisory councils should establish regular consultation schedules to gather feedback from diverse communities, while liaison roles facilitate direct communication between agencies and community organizations. Clear agreements and culturally safe processes must be consistently evaluated through community-led assessments, regular audits, and transparent reporting to ensure continued cultural safety and responsiveness.

Indicators of Success

- Increased funding allocations for Two-Spirit-led Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ organizations and initiatives, tracked through formal agreements and documented resource distribution.
- Formalized agreements between government agencies and community organizations ensuring accountability, transparency, and sustained support, with regular reviews and updates to maintain relevance.
- Improved accessibility and reach of culturally relevant services across urban, rural, and remote areas, measured through community feedback and documented service utilization.
- Regular reporting and evaluation of funding impacts to ensure alignment with community needs, including co-developed metrics reflecting Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ priorities.
- Publicly available reports that clearly document progress, challenges, and outcomes, communicated through culturally relevant and accessible channels to ensure transparency and accountability.

18. Building Partnerships

Strong partnerships between Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ organizations and mainstream MMIR initiatives are vital to ensuring that services, outreach, and advocacy remain culturally relevant, accessible, and responsive. These partnerships must centre Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ voices and prioritize their needs and perspectives within frameworks, policies, and initiatives. Effective collaboration requires formal agreements that honour nation-to-nation relationships, recognize Indigenous sovereignty, and uphold the self-determination of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ communities.

The Two-Eyed Seeing approach ensures that both Indigenous and Western perspectives inform collaboration frameworks. Its practical application includes advisory councils, formal agreements, co-developed evaluation processes, and structured feedback mechanisms that support ongoing dialogue, accountability, and reciprocal learning. Partnerships must actively integrate Indigenous knowledge systems alongside conventional methodologies to create services that are both inclusive and culturally safe.

Collaborative frameworks must also include clear mechanisms for assessing progress, adapting initiatives based on feedback, and ensuring that Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ voices remain central to all decisions. Achieving equity and cultural safety requires continuous commitment to co-developing processes, integrating Indigenous knowledge, and addressing barriers that hinder accessibility and inclusivity. Formal partnerships, joint initiatives, and the consistent integration of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ perspectives into existing MMIR frameworks are essential steps in dismantling systemic barriers and fostering meaningful, culturally grounded collaboration.

Indicators of Success

- Documented collaboration between Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ organizations and mainstream MMIR initiatives through formal agreements that acknowledge nation-to-nation relationships and apply a Two-Eyed Seeing approach.
- Increased number of joint initiatives that centre Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ voices and experiences, ensuring cultural relevance, accessibility, and alignment with community-defined goals.
- Integration of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ perspectives in existing MMIR frameworks, policies, and practices, supported by formalized consultation processes and structured evaluation mechanisms.
- Regular community feedback processes measuring the effectiveness, inclusivity, and cultural relevance of partnerships, with findings documented and applied to improve initiatives.
- Publicly available reports that clearly document progress, challenges, and outcomes, communicated through culturally relevant and accessible channels to ensure transparency and accountability.

E. Reconciliation & Accountability

Foundational Principles

The Reconciliation & Accountability principle grounds the JWP in both recognition of past harms and the commitment to implement meaningful, measurable actions that repair them. For Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ people in Alberta, reconciliation must address systemic racism, colonial structures, and discriminatory practices that have historically excluded them from the MMIR movement and contributed to ongoing harm (Reading & Wien, 2013; Comeau et al., 2023). Genuine reconciliation requires more than symbolic gestures; it must prioritize community-led frameworks, transparent accountability mechanisms, and sustainable investments that support healing and justice.

Reconciliation emphasizes the self-determination of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ communities, ensuring their leadership in defining solutions, setting priorities, and driving change. By challenging the gendered and heteronormative focus of the MMIR movement, this principle expands its scope to include all identities and experiences within Indigenous communities, honouring cultural safety and equity. It also calls for regionally tailored approaches that reflect Alberta's diversity across First Nations, Métis, and Inuit populations, especially those in rural and isolated areas where supports are often lacking.

Accountability must be visible and continuous. Transparent reporting, structured feedback processes, and public-facing evaluations build trust between communities, government bodies, and service providers. These mechanisms ensure that reconciliation remains dynamic and responsive rather than a one-time event. Embedding Indigenous governance models, such as advisory circles and community-led evaluations, safeguards cultural integrity and prevents tokenism.

Together, reconciliation and accountability create the conditions for lasting structural change. They require governments, institutions, and service providers to enter relationships with humility, respect, and a willingness to share power. When reconciliation frameworks, public reporting, and strengthened relationships are pursued in tandem, they create the foundation for equity, healing, and justice for Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ people in Alberta. These principles directly inform the following recommendations: establishing reconciliation frameworks and accountability mechanisms (#19), promoting transparency through consistent public reporting (#20), and strengthening relationships with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities (#21).

Recommendations

19. Reconciliation Frameworks & Accountability Mechanisms

The development of a comprehensive reconciliation framework to address both historical and ongoing harms experienced by Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals is indispensable. These frameworks must be collaboratively designed through respectful partnerships with communities and organizations, ensuring the active and equitable inclusion of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ voices. Their perspectives, lived experiences, and needs must remain central to ensure that frameworks are effective, relevant, and culturally grounded.

Integrating reconciliation frameworks into broader Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives (MMIR) strategies is essential to promote systemic change while aligning with existing policies and commitments. To sustain relevance and impact, these frameworks must include culturally safe accountability measures that are transparent, responsive, and designed to uphold reconciliation commitments. Such mechanisms build trust across the MMIR community while ensuring that commitments are continually evaluated, adapted, and refined to meet evolving needs.

Accountability requires clear, measurable indicators of progress supported by community-driven feedback processes. Methods such as surveys, focus groups, consultations, and digital engagement platforms must be accessible, culturally safe, and responsive so that Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals feel respected, supported, and meaningfully included. Regular assessments of essential services, such as mental health care, housing, and legal assistance, must be prioritized. Monitoring well-being outcomes — particularly improvements in trauma reduction, service accessibility, and equity — provides systematic insight into whether reconciliation efforts are achieving their intended impact.

Equitable representation in governance, policy development, and program implementation is essential, requiring the inclusion of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals at every level of decision-making to ensure frameworks are relevant and effective. Achieving this representation depends on consistent reporting, secure and sustained funding, and community engagement that is authentic rather than symbolic. Lasting reconciliation also demands long-term investment and genuine collaboration, with frameworks that remain culturally grounded, adaptable, and responsive to the distinct needs of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities across Alberta. A flexible approach that acknowledges these differences is fundamental to ensuring continued relevance, sustainability, and success.

Indicators of Success

- Development of formalized reconciliation frameworks guided by Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ communities, ensuring equitable inclusion and meaningful participation throughout all stages of design and implementation.
- Transparent documentation of past harms, actions taken to address them, and progress achieved, shared through accessible, culturally safe reporting mechanisms that respond directly to community feedback.
- Creation of culturally safe accountability mechanisms with clear, measurable indicators of progress, designed to adapt to evolving community needs and circumstances.
- Ongoing engagement with Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ communities to ensure reconciliation processes remain relevant, effective, and responsive across diverse regions of Alberta.
- Secured, sustainable funding to support reconciliation frameworks and accountability mechanisms, ensuring their long-term viability and impact.
- Equitable inclusion of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals in governance, policy development, and decision-making processes, particularly in areas affecting their safety and well-being.
- Improved access to culturally safe services, including mental health care, housing, legal assistance, and other essential supports, measured through regular community-led assessments.
- Demonstrable improvements in well-being outcomes, such as reduced trauma, enhanced accessibility of services, and greater equity in health, justice, and social systems.
- Publicly available reports that clearly document progress, challenges, and outcomes, communicated through culturally relevant and accessible channels to ensure accountability and transparency.

20. Promote Transparency & Public Reporting

Transparency and accountability in reconciliation efforts require consistent, accessible reporting that reflects the experiences and priorities of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ communities. Building trust depends on reports that are culturally relevant, straightforward, and widely available through diverse communication channels.

Effective reporting mechanisms must be co-designed with Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals to ensure their voices and perspectives remain central. Information should be collected, presented, and shared in ways that honour cultural practices and communication preferences. These include oral recitation of historical accounts, visual arts, digital platforms, and community gatherings. Accessibility also requires providing reports in multiple formats, including print materials, online publications, videos, and in-person presentations.

Maintaining transparency demands structured, ongoing opportunities for community feedback. These mechanisms must be culturally safe, accessible, and adaptable to address the distinct needs of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals. Public-facing reports must include summaries of community input, evaluations of implemented recommendations, and clearly outlined plans for future action.

Public reporting is not a one-time measure but part of a broader commitment to continuous dialogue between government bodies, service providers, and Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ communities. When reporting is transparent, accessible, and rooted in cultural integrity, it builds trust and strengthens accountability. It also ensures that reconciliation efforts remain dynamic and responsive, with communities able to see their priorities reflected in outcomes and hold systems accountable for meaningful, measurable progress.

Indicators of Success

- Regular publication of reconciliation progress reports that document successes, challenges, areas for growth, and updated action plans.
- Reports should be shared through culturally relevant communication channels. These include oral recitation of historical accounts, digital platforms, print materials, videos, and community gatherings.
- Use of culturally safe processes for gathering, documenting, and integrating community feedback to inform decisions and improve systems.
- Transparent demonstration of how community feedback influences decisions, including explanations when recommendations cannot be fully implemented.
- Consistent sharing of results and updates back to communities through accessible formats and culturally relevant channels.
- Structured and ongoing dialogue between government bodies, service providers, and Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ communities to ensure alignment with community-defined priorities.
- Secured, sustainable funding and resources to support culturally relevant reporting, community engagement, and the consistent publication of reports.
- Evaluation of reporting and engagement effectiveness through satisfaction surveys, engagement metrics, and qualitative assessments.
- Public availability of reports that clearly document progress, challenges, and outcomes, communicated in transparent and culturally relevant ways.

21. Strengthen Relationships

Reconciliation efforts must actively build strong, respectful relationships with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities. This includes recognizing the unique experiences of Inuit people in Alberta, who are often underserved due to a lack of adequate supports. Alberta has the second-largest Inuit population living away from their homelands, with approximately 2,945 residents, primarily in Edmonton (Statistics Canada, 2021). Their distinct perspectives, needs, and cultural practices must be integrated into all stages of planning, decision-making, and implementation. Collaboration must extend beyond consultation into true partnerships and co-design processes that respect the rights, traditions, and aspirations of each Nation. Applying a Two-Eyed Seeing approach ensures strategies are informed by diverse ways of knowing, honouring Indigenous governance while also drawing on external expertise and resources.

Culturally tailored approaches responsive to regional and community-specific realities are essential to inclusivity, cultural safety, and respect for diverse identities. Reconciliation must acknowledge the historical and ongoing impacts of colonization while prioritizing relationship-building based on mutual trust, transparency, and accountability.

Collaboration across sectors, including health, education, justice, social services, and community organizations, is critical to creating comprehensive reconciliation efforts. Sector-wide engagement ensures that strategies are culturally grounded while also supported by broader systems of care. Particular attention must be paid to engaging Inuit-led organizations in Alberta, which remain historically overlooked despite the size of the population (Statistics Canada, 2021).

Such partnerships must be built on principles of mutual respect, shared accountability, and transparency. Strengthening partnerships requires intentional efforts to enhance cultural safety and address barriers to meaningful participation for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities. By grounding reconciliation in Two-Eyed Seeing, these partnerships can create solutions that are culturally safe, community-driven, and sustainable.

Indicators of Success

- Application of a Two-Eyed Seeing approach throughout collaboration processes, integrating Indigenous and non-Indigenous knowledge systems to enhance cultural safety, inclusivity, and mutual respect for Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ people.
- Increased inclusion of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ perspectives from First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities within advisory councils, research initiatives, policy frameworks, and program co-design processes.
- Development of culturally tailored programs and services that reflect the distinct needs and priorities of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ people within First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities.
- Active collaboration with Indigenous-led organizations, including Inuit-led initiatives, to ensure their distinct perspectives are incorporated into reconciliation strategies and partnerships, with particular attention to Inuit Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals in Alberta.
- Community-driven evaluations that assess the effectiveness, inclusivity, and cultural safety of reconciliation efforts, with findings shared transparently and used to guide continuous improvements.
- Strengthened collaboration across sectors—health, education, justice, social services, and community organizations—to support culturally safe, community-driven solutions centred on the needs of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals from First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities.
- Improved representation and participation of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ people from First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities in governance, policy development, decision-making, and collaborative initiatives.
- Establishment of sustainable, long-term partnerships built on mutual trust, transparency, accountability, and secured funding to ensure ongoing collaboration that addresses the needs of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals.
- Publicly available reports that document progress, challenges, and outcomes, communicated through culturally relevant and accessible channels to ensure transparency and accountability.

F. Wellness & Inclusion

Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals in Alberta continue to face widespread social, economic, and health-related barriers. Rural, remote, reserve, and settlement areas experience heightened inequities due to limited resources, poor infrastructure, and geographic isolation, while culturally unsafe environments, long wait times, and discrimination within health systems further discourage individuals from seeking care. These inequities create conditions of exclusion, erasure, and systemic harm that directly undermine wellness, safety, and inclusion. Addressing them requires culturally grounded strategies that are responsive to diverse regional contexts and rooted in the voices and leadership of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ communities.

The JWP recommends applying the Two-Eyed Seeing approach, which integrates Traditional Indigenous knowledge with Western methods to enhance cultural relevance, accessibility, and effectiveness. Embedding this approach into mental health care, housing, recovery, and gender-affirming services ensures that supports are not only culturally safe and trauma-informed but also adaptable to diverse regional and community-specific needs. Achieving wellness demands initiatives that strengthen identity, foster healing, and honour cultural resilience, including land-based healing practices, peer support networks, and Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+-led housing and recovery models.

At the same time, systemic barriers such as geographic isolation, migration between urban and rural areas, stigma, and inadequate provider training exacerbate inequities, particularly in accessing gender-affirming care and culturally competent services. These barriers reinforce exclusion and mistrust, leaving many without the supports necessary for safety and well-being. Addressing these challenges requires comprehensive frameworks that combine culturally grounded practices with mainstream methodologies, intentionally designed to promote equity, inclusion, and continuity of care across all regions.

Wellness and inclusion are therefore not secondary considerations but central to the JWP. By advancing culturally safe mental health services, developing affirming housing models, expanding recovery initiatives, and mandating inclusive policies and training, recommendations 22–25 establish the necessary foundation for Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals to thrive with dignity and pride.

Recommendations

22. Strengthen Culturally Safe Mental Health Services

Expanding culturally safe, trauma-informed mental health services for Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals across Alberta requires a comprehensive, community-driven approach that emphasizes regional relevance and accessibility from the outset. This initiative prioritizes accessible land-based healing, peer support networks, and culturally rooted practices that address intergenerational trauma, stigma, and discrimination.

Ensuring equitable access to mental health services demands strategies tailored to diverse regional needs, particularly in underserved rural and remote areas. Effective care must integrate Traditional Indigenous knowledge with the Two-Eyed Seeing approach, combining Indigenous and Western methodologies to enhance cultural relevance and effectiveness. This integration supports holistic pathways to healing by drawing on Indigenous knowledge systems alongside clinical practices, improving engagement, trust, and wellness outcomes. Trauma-informed care that acknowledges the impacts of colonization, intergenerational trauma, and systemic discrimination is essential for fostering healing and resilience.

Achieving equitable access also requires a coordinated, multifaceted effort involving collaboration between communities, service providers, and policymakers. Indigenous leadership must be centred to ensure services are culturally safe, regionally responsive, and sustainable. Increasing the availability of land-based healing programs, ceremonies, and culturally adapted mental health services is critical, while peer support networks led by Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals can foster community resilience and affirm cultural identity. Strategies must be adaptable to reflect the unique challenges of each region, from urban centres that often lack cultural safety to rural, remote, reserve, and settlement areas that continue to struggle with chronic underfunding, isolation, and limited infrastructure.

By embedding Traditional Indigenous knowledge and the Two-Eyed Seeing approach into mental health frameworks, Alberta can strengthen cultural safety, accessibility, and overall effectiveness of services. This integration promotes responsive, culturally relevant models of care that address both systemic inequities and the personal healing needs of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals. Embedding these principles across policies, service delivery, and evaluation ensures that improvements are sustained, measurable, and accountable to the communities most impacted.

Indicators of Success

- Increased availability of culturally grounded mental health services for Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals across Alberta, particularly in underserved rural, remote, reserve, and settlement areas, with evidence of collaboration between Traditional Indigenous knowledge holders and Western practitioners.
- Documented improvements in mental health outcomes measured through culturally adapted wellness assessments that integrate Indigenous knowledge and the Two-Eyed Seeing approach.
- Enhanced satisfaction rates reported through culturally relevant surveys, community consultations, and ongoing feedback mechanisms.
- Expanded access to land-based healing programs, ceremonies, and peer support networks specifically designed for Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals.
- Demonstrated effectiveness of trauma-informed practices in addressing intergenerational trauma, stigma, and discrimination, evaluated through culturally relevant tools and consistent assessment.
- Sustained improvements monitored through regular evaluations that ensure services remain culturally relevant, accessible, and effective.
- Active collaboration with Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ leaders in designing, implementing, and evaluating culturally safe services.
- Publicly available reports that clearly document progress, challenges, and outcomes, communicated through accessible and culturally relevant channels to ensure transparency and accountability.

23. Housing

Develop and expand culturally safe, affirming, and Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+-led housing initiatives that reflect the diverse needs of communities across Alberta. Housing services must include transitional, emergency, and supportive models that address urban–rural migration and regional challenges in Northern, Central, and Southern Alberta. These models should be rooted in relational care, land connection, and traditional practices, incorporating local knowledge systems to promote resilience and strength. Services must honour practices such as multigenerational living, community-based living, and land stewardship, which may be overlooked by Western frameworks but are essential for maintaining cultural relevance, safety, and effectiveness.

Critical changes are needed to gender-based violence services, particularly shelters, to properly respond to 2SLGBTQQIA+ communities. Ensuring inclusive and affirming housing services addresses critical gaps in support by providing safe, culturally relevant options accessible across Alberta (Marshall, 2024). Marshall (2024) highlights that many services perpetuate gender norms and create service gaps for cis and trans male-identified individuals. Addressing these gaps requires culturally safe, affirming housing services for Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals.

Equitable access requires addressing barriers like urban–rural migration, stigma, and intersecting identities. Urban areas face discrimination and culturally unsafe environments, while rural and remote regions struggle with underfunding and isolation, creating disparities in housing access. Services should be tailored to regional needs, ensuring both cultural relevance and safety.

Collaboration with Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals, leaders, and organizations is essential in designing, implementing, and evaluating housing services. Co-designing housing models through community-led initiatives strengthens cultural safety, responsiveness, and alignment with the unique needs of diverse communities, while ensuring inclusive and affirming environments that address longstanding service gaps.

Indicators of Success

- Increased availability of inclusive, affirming housing programs for Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals across Alberta, particularly in underserved areas.
- Development of regionally responsive housing services that address the distinct needs of Northern, Central, and Southern Alberta.
- Expansion of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+-led housing models rooted in relational care, land connection, and traditional practices.
- Improved accessibility to housing services for individuals navigating urban–rural migration, stigma, and intersecting identities, with a focus on cultural relevance and safety.
- Meaningful collaboration with Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ leaders and communities in the co-design, implementation, and evaluation of culturally safe housing models.
- Regular evaluations and structured community feedback on the effectiveness, cultural relevance, and safety of Indigenous-led housing initiatives.
- Publicly available reports documenting progress, challenges, and outcomes, communicated through culturally relevant and accessible channels to ensure transparency and accountability.

24. Wellness & Recovery Initiatives

Wellness and recovery initiatives aimed at fostering healing and revitalization within Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ communities must be grounded in cultural safety and resilience, a strong sense of identity, and a deep sense of belonging. Tailoring programs to reflect the diverse cultural practices, traditions, and teachings of these communities is essential for effective recovery. Integrating Traditional Indigenous knowledge with Two-Eyed Seeing, which combines Indigenous wisdom and Western frameworks, ensures culturally relevant, trauma-informed care. These approaches promote holistic healing, community empowerment, and personal growth while acknowledging the intersectional identities within the Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ population.

Recovery efforts are not only about addressing trauma but also about restoring balance and creating pathways for long-term well-being. Embedding recovery within land-based healing, cultural revitalization, and community leadership strengthens resilience while building systems of care that are culturally safe, accessible, and community driven. By advancing recovery through practices that affirm identity and foster belonging, these initiatives ensure that Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals can heal, reclaim strength, and thrive with dignity across Alberta’s diverse regions.

Indicators of Success

- Increased participation in culturally grounded recovery programs, including land-based healing, ceremonies, mentorship, and peer support led by Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals.
- Documented improvements in participants' sense of identity, belonging, cultural resilience, and overall well-being, measured through pre- and post-program assessments.
- Reduced relapse rates and stronger wellness outcomes as reported by participants, measured using culturally relevant evaluation tools.
- Expanded availability of culturally grounded recovery initiatives across Alberta, with particular attention to underserved rural and remote regions.
- Sustained long-term impact demonstrated through ongoing assessments of participants' recovery and wellness over extended periods.
- Increased collaboration with Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ leaders, community members, and healers in the design, development, and implementation of recovery programs.
- Publicly available reports documenting progress, challenges, and outcomes, communicated through culturally relevant and accessible channels to ensure transparency and accountability.

25. Inclusive Policies & Training

All publicly funded shelters and housing services must be required to implement inclusive policies and training that promote cultural accountability, affirming practices, and the specific needs of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals. These policies must explicitly recognize the intersection of gender, sexuality, and Indigenous identity, while fostering environments that are both culturally safe and inclusive. Regular audits and compliance reviews conducted by the Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ Ombudsman or another independent oversight body are essential to ensure policies are applied consistently and lead to tangible improvements in service delivery. These audits should focus on identifying gaps in cultural competency, monitoring adherence to inclusive practices, and ensuring training reflects the lived experiences of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals.

Embedding inclusive policies across housing services must also be paired with ongoing training that is trauma-informed, culturally safe, and responsive to community feedback. Training programs should be developed and delivered in collaboration with Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ leaders and organizations to ensure authenticity and accountability. When applied consistently, these measures will not only improve service provider competency but also create safe, affirming, and equitable spaces where Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals can access shelter and housing without fear of discrimination or exclusion.

Indicators of Success

- Implementation of culturally safe and trauma-informed training programs for shelter staff across Alberta, with a focus on the unique cultural needs and lived experiences of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals.
- Improved service provider competency and cultural accountability, measured through feedback gathered from Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals and regular evaluations.
- Establishment of clear accountability mechanisms to ensure ongoing compliance with inclusive policies, with periodic audits by an Ombudsman or independent body.
- Increased satisfaction rates reported by Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals accessing shelter and housing services, demonstrating improved cultural safety and affirmation.
- Publicly available reports that clearly document progress, challenges, and outcomes, communicated through culturally relevant and accessible channels to ensure transparency and accountability.

G. Public Awareness & Advocacy

Creating culturally safe, inclusive, and accessible education and awareness initiatives is essential for achieving justice, safety, and empowerment for Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals. Addressing the MMIR crisis requires dismantling historical erasure, challenging ongoing discrimination, and promoting cultural resurgence through intentional, multifaceted approaches. These initiatives must elevate Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ voices, challenge harmful stereotypes, and amplify cultural pride while ensuring that the stories and lived experiences of communities remain at the centre.

This focus area includes public awareness campaigns, culturally safe training, inclusive curricula, and programs that honour and revitalize Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ identities. Collaboration with leaders, Elders, and Knowledge Keepers ensures authenticity and community grounding, while the Two-Eyed Seeing approach supports the integration of Indigenous knowledge systems with Western methodologies. Together, these initiatives foster allyship, dismantle stigma, and strengthen advocacy for justice.

The recommendations in this section build a continuum of change: Comprehensive Training & Public Awareness (26) calls for cross-sector education and campaigns that normalize and affirm Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ identities. Cultural Revitalization & Knowledge Sharing (27) deepens this work by supporting the reclamation and intergenerational transfer of cultural knowledge, language, and stories that sustain identity and resilience. Evaluation, Adaptation & Cross-Sector Collaboration (28) ensures that these initiatives remain accountable, adaptable, and responsive to evolving community needs while embedding consistency across all sectors.

By fostering awareness, promoting cultural resurgence, and ensuring accountability, this section of the JWP ensures that advocacy and education are not symbolic but transformative. Together, these efforts dismantle erasure, strengthen identity, and build solidarity within and beyond Indigenous communities. They create pathways for reconciliation that are visible in public discourse, sustained through intergenerational knowledge, and measured through transparent evaluation. In this way, education and advocacy become catalysts for cultural pride, systemic change, and lasting justice for Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals.

Recommendations

26. Comprehensive Training & Public Awareness

Developing and implementing culturally safe, trauma-informed, and intersectionality-focused training programs across sectors, including justice, healthcare, education, housing, social services, and community programs, is essential for dismantling systemic barriers and promoting equity. These programs must be led by Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals, or by Indigenous trainers with culturally informed guidance, to ensure authenticity and accountability. Training should prioritize anti-discrimination, cultural safety, and intersectional awareness to strengthen service provider competencies and create inclusive environments.

Alongside training, public awareness campaigns must elevate Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ voices, challenge harmful stereotypes, and raise awareness of the MMIR crisis. Campaigns that centre community stories, resilience, cultural pride, and lived experience will foster allyship, dismantle stigma, and drive broader social change. Embedding Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ histories, identities, and cultural teachings into educational frameworks is equally vital for addressing historical erasure, colonization, and ongoing exclusion, ensuring these communities are represented and normalized across all sectors.

Collaboration with Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ leaders, Elders, and Knowledge Keepers is critical for ensuring that both training and public awareness initiatives remain authentic, relevant, and rooted in community wisdom. When designed in this way, training and awareness efforts move beyond symbolic gestures and become transformative tools that build allyship, dismantle systemic barriers, and strengthen the foundation of justice, wellness, and reconciliation across Alberta.

Indicators of Success

- Increased representation of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ voices and experiences in training programs and public awareness campaigns.
- Enhanced engagement, reach, and feedback that demonstrate improved understanding, allyship, and cultural competency.
- Implementation of culturally safe, trauma-informed training programs across all sectors, with emphasis on intersectionality and anti-discrimination.
- Growth in the number of service providers trained in culturally relevant, trauma-informed practices.
- Establishment of standardized curricula across sectors that integrate Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+-specific training modules.
- Increased awareness and allyship reported by students, educators, service providers, and community members.
- Strengthened cultural competency and allyship among service providers, educators, and policymakers.
- Documentation of mentorship programs, intergenerational knowledge-sharing initiatives, and cultural revitalization projects.
- Sustained improvements demonstrated through regular evaluations of training and public awareness initiatives to ensure cultural relevance and responsiveness to community needs.
- Publicly available reports that clearly document progress, challenges, and outcomes, communicated through culturally relevant and accessible channels to ensure transparency and accountability.

27. Cultural Revitalization & Knowledge Sharing

Support initiatives that document, celebrate, and revitalize Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ identities, histories, and cultural practices. This includes oral recitation of historical accounts, language programs, creative expression, and intergenerational knowledge-sharing. These initiatives must be guided by the leadership of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals and grounded in community-defined priorities. Their purpose is to restore cultural pride, strengthen identity, and build resilience by ensuring that cultural knowledge is honoured, practiced, and carried forward.

Cultural revitalization is also a form of advocacy. By elevating traditional practices and Two-Spirit histories, these initiatives directly challenge cultural erasure and discrimination, making visible the strength and continuity of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ peoples. The promotion of cultural pride and knowledge-sharing among Elders, youth, and community leaders creates a foundation for cultural continuity and ensures that teachings and practices are passed on across generations. When Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ voices are centred, revitalization becomes a pathway to both healing and systemic change.

Indicators of Success

- Increased funding and support for cultural revitalization initiatives led by Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ leaders.
- Enhanced access to resources promoting Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ cultural resurgence, pride, and knowledge-sharing.
- Documentation of community feedback ensuring alignment with cultural priorities and evolving needs.
- Increased participation in intergenerational knowledge-sharing initiatives. These include oral recitation of historical accounts carried across communities.
- Development and dissemination of culturally relevant educational resources co-created with Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ communities.
- Publicly available reports that clearly document progress, challenges, and outcomes, communicated through culturally relevant and accessible channels to ensure transparency and accountability.

28. Evaluation, Adaptation & Cross-Sector Collaboration

Establishing continuous monitoring and evaluation processes is essential to ensure that education and awareness initiatives remain culturally relevant, accurate, and responsive to the evolving needs of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ communities. Evaluation must be understood as a dynamic and ongoing process, not a one-time measure, with results directly informing adaptation and improvement. These systems must be rooted in community feedback, guided by culturally safe practices, and flexible enough to respond to emerging knowledge, shifting priorities, and diverse regional realities across Alberta.

Cross-sector collaboration strengthens this process by ensuring consistency and cohesion across education, healthcare, housing, social services, and other systems that shape the well-being of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals. Joint initiatives, such as shared training programs, conferences, and coordinated knowledge-sharing efforts, build collective accountability and reinforce culturally safe practices across sectors. Transparent reporting of evaluation findings, coupled with clear documentation of adaptations, ensures that improvements remain visible, accessible, and accountable to the communities most impacted.

Through consistent monitoring, adaptation, and collaboration, education and awareness initiatives evolve into sustainable tools for systemic change. Embedding accountability into every stage of evaluation not only ensures these efforts remain relevant but also demonstrates a commitment to transparency and responsiveness. By clearly linking evaluation to visible improvements, initiatives can foster trust, strengthen resilience, and reinforce the leadership of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ communities in shaping solutions that reflect their priorities and cultural knowledge.

Indicators of Success

- Creation of evaluation frameworks prioritizing cultural relevance, inclusivity, and responsiveness to community needs.
- Regular assessments and adaptations of training programs and public awareness campaigns to ensure their relevance and effectiveness.
- Cross-sector collaboration demonstrated through joint training programs, conferences, and knowledge-sharing initiatives.
- Publicly available reports that clearly document progress, challenges, and outcomes, communicated through culturally relevant and accessible channels to ensure transparency and accountability.

H. Sustainability & Accessibility

Ensuring the well-being, safety, and resilience of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals requires sustained, accessible, and culturally grounded services that are consistently available across Alberta's urban, rural, remote, reserve, and settlement communities. These services must address diverse needs while also recognizing the heightened vulnerabilities created by geographic isolation, systemic discrimination, and gaps in infrastructure. Special attention must be given to individuals transitioning between regions or reintegrating after incarceration, as these shifts often expose people to additional risks, disconnection, and barriers in accessing culturally safe supports. Continuity of care is therefore essential for reducing gaps, preventing cycles of harm, and fostering long-term resilience.

Sustainability cannot be achieved without stable, long-term funding structures. Too often, short-term or project-based funding interrupts service delivery, undermines trust, and limits the capacity of community-led initiatives to plan for the future. Effective advocacy for sustainability must prioritize equitable funding and resource allocation, particularly for grassroots and community-led initiatives that are best positioned to address community-specific realities. These initiatives carry the cultural knowledge, relational accountability, and lived expertise needed to design and deliver services that reflect local priorities. Transparent reporting and ongoing evaluation are essential for ensuring that resources reach those most impacted by the MMIR crisis and that funding decisions remain accountable to the communities they intend to serve.

Advocacy efforts must go beyond financial stability to include accessible, culturally safe services and strong accountability mechanisms. Building sustainable systems requires addressing disparities, strengthening community resilience, and ensuring programs remain responsive to evolving needs. This includes investing in regionally tailored approaches, supporting transitions across care systems, and ensuring that funding structures reflect Indigenous sovereignty and community-defined priorities.

This section of the JWP highlights three interconnected priorities that advance these goals: advocating for ongoing funding and resources to sustain culturally grounded services (#29), ensuring continuity of care across regions and life transitions (#30), and promoting equitable funding allocations that prioritize grassroots and community-led initiatives (#31). Together, these measures establish the foundation for accessible, resilient, and community-driven systems that uphold justice, healing, and wellness for Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals across Alberta.

Recommendations

29. Advocate for Ongoing Funding & Resources

Sustaining programs for Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals requires secure, long-term funding that ensures stability and continuity of services. Without consistent resources, even the most effective initiatives struggle to maintain momentum, leaving communities vulnerable to service gaps and disruptions. Funding structures must therefore prioritize culturally grounded services, including mental health supports, housing, advocacy, and capacity-building, while remaining responsive to the diverse realities of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals in urban, rural, remote, on-reserve, and settlement communities.

Stable funding also strengthens trust between service providers and communities. When programs can plan beyond short-term funding cycles, they have the capacity to expand services, retain skilled staff, and respond flexibly to evolving needs. Prioritizing community-led and grassroots initiatives is especially important, as these are best positioned to reflect local knowledge, cultural practices, and community-defined priorities. Ensuring equitable funding allocation also requires transparent reporting, community-led evaluation, and accountability mechanisms that demonstrate how resources are being invested and whether they align with Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination.

By committing to long-term, equitable funding structures, Alberta can foster stability, resilience, and culturally relevant services that directly support healing, safety, and wellness for Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals. Sustained investment not only strengthens community trust and service continuity but also creates the conditions for meaningful systemic change, ensuring that programs remain responsive, effective, and grounded in Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination.

Indicators of Success

- Increased and sustained funding allocations for Two-Spirit-led and Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ initiatives across Alberta.
- Growth in the number of culturally rooted programs accessible to urban, rural, and remote communities.
- Regular evaluations to assess funding adequacy, responsiveness, and alignment with community priorities.
- Publicly available reports that clearly document progress, challenges, and outcomes, communicated through culturally relevant and accessible channels to ensure transparency and accountability.

30. Continuity of Care

Establishing continuity of care is essential to ensuring that Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals do not fall through systemic gaps when moving between communities or transitioning after incarceration. Many face disruptions in services when shifting between urban, rural, and remote areas, resulting in inconsistent access to health care, housing, and cultural supports. These gaps can exacerbate trauma, increase vulnerability, and undermine resilience.

Culturally safe, trauma-informed, and affirming care must guide all transitional supports. Services should be designed with flexibility to reflect the unique needs of individuals across diverse regions, while also addressing barriers created by underfunding, stigma, and systemic discrimination. Reintegration supports for formerly incarcerated individuals are particularly critical, ensuring access to housing, health care, cultural practices, and community connections that reduce recidivism and foster healing.

Strong collaboration with communities and service providers will be necessary to maintain consistency of care across systems. Ongoing consultation with individuals who have lived experience of incarceration or migration will provide essential insights into service gaps and ensure pathways of care remain relevant and responsive. By embedding accountability, adaptability, and cultural grounding, continuity of care can become a cornerstone of resilience and long-term wellness.

Indicators of Success

- Development of transitional support programs that prioritize culturally safe and affirming care for Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals.
- Increased accessibility and regional availability of culturally relevant services for incarcerated individuals and those re-entering their communities.
- Documented reintegration outcomes, including reduced recidivism rates, improved individual resilience, and stronger community well-being.
- Regular consultations with formerly incarcerated individuals to identify gaps in services, improve care pathways, and enhance program effectiveness.
- Publicly available reports that clearly document progress, challenges, and outcomes, communicated through culturally relevant and accessible channels to ensure transparency and accountability.

31. Promote Equitable Funding Allocations

Promoting equitable funding is essential to addressing the systemic underfunding that has historically excluded Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ initiatives. Grassroots and community-led projects are often best positioned to respond to the specific needs of their communities, yet they remain the least resourced. Ensuring equity requires funding structures that are transparent, accountable, and designed to prioritize culturally relevant, community-driven initiatives across Alberta.

Resources must be distributed in ways that recognize regional disparities, particularly the needs of rural, remote, reserve, and settlement communities. Transparent criteria and accessible funding processes are critical for reducing barriers and ensuring that community-led organizations can meaningfully participate. Equitable funding allocations must not only meet immediate needs but also build the long-term capacity of grassroots organizations, enabling them to provide sustainable, culturally safe services.

By embedding fairness and accessibility into funding systems, Alberta can ensure that resources flow directly to the communities most impacted by the MMIR crisis. Directing funding to grassroots and community-led initiatives strengthens local leadership and supports programs that are culturally safe, inclusive, and responsive to community priorities. This approach also promotes cultural resilience by sustaining initiatives rooted in Indigenous knowledge systems and lived experiences. Long-term equity in funding must not only address immediate needs but also create the conditions for sustainable growth, healing, and systemic change. With fair and transparent processes, investments become more than financial commitments—they evolve into pathways of empowerment, resilience, and justice for Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals across diverse regions.

Indicators of Success

- Increased proportion of funding directed toward grassroots and community-led initiatives that centre Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ priorities.
- Establishment of clear funding criteria that prioritize culturally relevant, community-driven projects.
- Improved accessibility to funding opportunities for Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ organizations, with particular attention to rural and remote areas.
- Annual equity assessments of funding distribution, documenting impacts, gaps, and areas for improvement through transparent reporting.
- Publicly available reports that clearly document progress, challenges, and outcomes, communicated through culturally relevant and accessible channels to ensure transparency and accountability.

I. Capacity for Change

Empowering Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ communities is essential for ensuring their leadership and centrality in all MMIR-related initiatives. Capacity for Change emphasizes building the knowledge, skills, and structures that enable communities to guide advocacy, lead programs, and influence systemic reforms in ways that reflect their lived realities. Achieving this requires sustained investment in culturally relevant resources, mentorship opportunities, research capacity, and formal governance structures that ensure accountability and representation.

Leadership development and mentorship (32) are crucial for cultivating resilience, cultural pride, and intergenerational knowledge-sharing. Community-led research initiatives (33) ensure that evidence, data, and policy frameworks reflect the experiences of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ people while upholding Indigenous Data Sovereignty. Establishing a Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ Advisory Council (34) provides the formal governance needed to secure representation in policymaking, funding decisions, and program evaluations. Together, these recommendations ensure that communities are not only supported in building capacity but also empowered to lead.

Capacity for Change anchors the JWP in a commitment to leadership, knowledge, and governance that is both community-driven and culturally grounded. By investing in mentorship, strengthening research capacity, and embedding advisory councils into decision-making, Alberta can ensure that Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ communities shape the policies and programs that affect their lives. This approach builds long-term resilience and creates pathways for systemic change that are accountable, sustainable, and rooted in cultural integrity.

Recommendations

32. Foster Leadership Development & Mentorship Opportunities

Empower Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ leaders and organizations through consistent access to funding, mentorship, training, and capacity-building resources. Develop mentorship programs that promote intergenerational learning, leadership development, and community healing for Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ youth. Additionally, facilitate intergenerational knowledge-sharing between Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ Elders, youth, and community leaders to strengthen cultural continuity, resilience, and identity. Programs should focus on fostering leadership, cultural resilience, and identity while building pathways to advocacy and community engagement. Connect emerging leaders with Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and experienced advocates to strengthen kinship networks, preserve traditional knowledge, and empower community members to advocate for justice and systemic change.

Strengthening leadership and mentorship ensures that Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ communities can guide their own healing and advocacy efforts with confidence and authority. By investing in intergenerational learning and capacity-building, Alberta can support the development of resilient leaders who carry forward cultural knowledge while advancing systemic change. This approach not only reinforces identity and kinship but also secures the foundations for long-term community well-being and justice.

Indicators of Success

- Expansion of mentorship programs connecting emerging leaders with Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and experienced advocates.
- Strengthened kinship networks and cultural continuity, leading to enhanced community resilience.
- Increased leadership roles held by Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals within organizations, advisory councils, and government bodies.
- Regular participant feedback gathered to assess program effectiveness, identify gaps, and guide improvements.
- Higher levels of youth participation in cultural activities, mentorship programs, and intergenerational knowledge-sharing initiatives.
- Documentation and preservation of traditional teachings and cultural knowledge through community-led projects.
- Publicly available reports that clearly document progress, challenges, and outcomes, communicated through culturally relevant and accessible channels to ensure transparency and accountability.

33. Support Research Design & Implementation

Advancing research initiatives led by Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals is essential to ensure accurate representation, ethical practices, and culturally relevant methodologies. For too long, research about Indigenous and 2SLGBTQQIA+ peoples has been conducted without their meaningful involvement, often reinforcing harmful stereotypes or overlooking critical realities. Placing Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals at the centre of research restores integrity to knowledge creation, strengthens trust, and prevents harmful patterns of extraction or misrepresentation.

Embedding research initiatives within broader advocacy and policy frameworks ensures that findings translate into real-world impact. When research is tied directly to program design, policy reform, and advocacy campaigns, it supports systemic change rather than remaining limited to academic contexts. Community-driven research also has the power to generate culturally safe data that reflects lived realities, strengthens accountability, and provides evidence for service delivery improvements across justice, health, housing, and education.

Prioritizing community-led research also builds capacity for future generations. Supporting Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ researchers, leaders, and organizations to define their own priorities and methodologies creates pathways for leadership development and mentorship in the research field. It ensures that inquiry remains rooted in cultural integrity, responsive to community needs, and aligned with Indigenous Data Sovereignty principles. This investment lays the foundation for long-term resilience, ensuring that knowledge systems evolve in ways that empower communities and promote justice, equity, and wellness.

Indicators of Success

- Growth in the number of research projects led or co-led by Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ researchers and organizations.
- Improved inclusion of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ voices and experiences in reports, recommendations, decision-making processes, and policy frameworks.
- Comprehensive evaluation reports and community feedback documenting successful research initiatives.
- Collaboration with Indigenous Data Sovereignty initiatives to ensure ethical research practices and community ownership of data processes.
- Publicly available reports that clearly document progress, challenges, and outcomes, communicated through culturally relevant and accessible channels to ensure transparency and accountability.

34. Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ Advisory Council

Creating a formally recognized Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ Advisory Council is essential for ensuring that the voices and lived experiences of these communities are central to provincial decision-making. For too long, the exclusion of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals from formal governance structures has reinforced invisibility and limited meaningful influence in policy and program development. Establishing this council guarantees that representation is not symbolic but embedded within the processes that shape justice, safety, and wellness initiatives across Alberta.

The Advisory Council must include representatives from First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ communities across the province to reflect the diversity of perspectives, experiences, and needs. Its responsibilities should extend to guiding provincial policies, reviewing funding decisions, and providing oversight for police actions, complaints, and program evaluations. By embedding accountability and transparency into each of these areas, the council will help build trust among communities that have long experienced systemic discrimination, neglect, and exclusion.

In addition to governance and oversight, the Advisory Council plays a critical role in advancing reconciliation and strengthening community resilience. Its recommendations provide culturally grounded guidance to government bodies, service providers, and advocacy organizations, ensuring that MMIR-related strategies remain responsive and inclusive. Over time, this structure fosters greater equity in decision-making, ensures that systemic change is informed by Indigenous worldviews, and supports the creation of programs and policies that truly reflect the priorities of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ communities.

Indicators of Success

- Creation of a Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ Advisory Council with representation from Métis, First Nations, Inuit, and Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ communities across Alberta.
- Documented contributions of the Advisory Council to policymaking, program evaluation, funding distribution, and advocacy initiatives.
- Enhanced transparency, accountability, and effectiveness in decision-making processes impacting Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals.
- Publicly available reports that clearly document the Council's recommendations, progress, challenges, and outcomes, communicated through culturally relevant and accessible channels to ensure transparency and accountability.

J. Economic Security & Employment

Achieving economic security is crucial for the safety, wellness, and empowerment of Indigenous 2SLGBTQQIA+ individuals. Economic resilience not only contributes to overall well-being but also opens pathways to stability, self-determination, and greater agency. Despite this importance, systemic barriers such as discrimination, limited access to culturally relevant training, and inadequate support networks continue to restrict employment and economic opportunities. The recommendations in this section are designed as tools to dismantle these barriers, ensuring that employment and income security become achievable realities rather than distant aspirations.

Fostering economic empowerment through entrepreneurship, arts, and cultural industries is equally essential for strengthening the capacity of Indigenous 2SLGBTQQIA+ communities to thrive and achieve long-term resilience. These fields offer more than financial opportunities; they provide culturally affirming spaces where identity, creativity, and tradition are celebrated. By investing in Indigenous artists, entrepreneurs, and cultural practitioners, Alberta can create employment pathways that reflect community values while building sustainable economies. Such initiatives also foster pride, intergenerational connection, and the revitalization of cultural knowledge. Recommendation 36 specifically highlights how systemic reforms can embed cultural safety and accountability into these industries, ensuring that economic security is rooted in cultural resurgence rather than assimilation.

According to recent data from Statistics Canada (2023), these approaches are not just beneficial; they are necessary to bridge the persistent economic disparities faced by Indigenous 2SLGBTQQIA+ populations. Targeted, culturally competent strategies dismantle systemic barriers by tailoring resources and training to community realities, embedding accountability measures into funding, and addressing discrimination in workplaces and institutions. Recommendation 35 outlines inclusive workforce development and employment initiatives as concrete tools for expanding equitable access and fostering participation in Alberta's economy. Together, these recommendations provide the structures, accountability, and resources needed to turn economic equity from rhetoric into action.

Recommendations

35. Skills Training and Mentorship

Empowering Indigenous 2SLGBTQQIA+ individuals requires consistent access to skills training and mentorship programs that enhance employability and support long-term resilience. Training must go beyond generic job-readiness models and instead be tailored to reflect the lived realities, cultural strengths, and aspirations of Indigenous 2SLGBTQQIA+ communities. Embedding cultural safety, trauma-informed approaches, and Two-Eyed Seeing principles ensures that participants are not only gaining technical skills but also receiving support in affirming environments where their identities are valued.

Developing strategic partnerships with government bodies, private sectors, and non-profit organizations is essential to link training with real employment opportunities. Partnerships must explicitly address workplace discrimination, promote inclusivity, and commit to creating culturally safe environments. These collaborations should also expand mentorship programs that connect Indigenous 2SLGBTQQIA+ participants with Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and experienced professionals, strengthening both professional capacity and cultural identity. Such initiatives build confidence, preserve kinship networks, and ensure that economic opportunities are directly tied to community values.

The JWP emphasizes that training and mentorship are not symbolic supports but practical tools for achieving economic security. When integrated with inclusive employment pathways, these programs make stability, self-determination, and career advancement tangible. By embedding accountability mechanisms, linking training to actual job opportunities, and prioritizing cultural relevance, Alberta can move beyond aspirational commitments to deliver real, measurable change for Indigenous 2SLGBTQQIA+ individuals.

Indicators of Success

- Increased availability of tailored training programs that reflect the needs, priorities, and lived experiences of Indigenous 2SLGBTQQIA+ communities.
- Growth in formal partnerships between Indigenous organizations, governments, and the private sector that directly expand equitable employment opportunities.
- Improved employment outcomes for Indigenous 2SLGBTQQIA+ individuals, demonstrated through higher retention, advancement, and job satisfaction rates.
- Enhanced participant experiences reported through culturally relevant surveys, consultations, and feedback processes that measure both effectiveness and cultural safety.
- Regular evaluations of training programs and partnerships, documenting measurable improvements and ensuring alignment with evolving community priorities.
- Publicly available reports that clearly document progress, challenges, and outcomes, communicated through culturally relevant and accessible channels to ensure transparency and accountability.

36. Partnerships for Employment

Building equitable pathways to employment requires collaboration between Indigenous organizations, governments, and the private sector. Strategic partnerships can create inclusive workplaces, promote anti-discriminatory practices, and ensure resources are allocated to support the economic advancement of Indigenous 2SLGBTQQIA+ individuals. These partnerships must prioritize culturally grounded approaches and focus on removing systemic barriers that have historically limited access to meaningful work for this community.

Partnerships should not remain symbolic but instead produce measurable outcomes such as increased recruitment, retention, and advancement of Indigenous 2SLGBTQQIA+ people in diverse sectors. Clear objectives, accountability mechanisms, and transparent evaluation processes are essential to demonstrate how resources are being used effectively. Ongoing consultation with Indigenous 2SLGBTQQIA+ communities ensures that workplace initiatives reflect lived experiences, respond to real barriers, and remain grounded in cultural integrity.

By embedding accountability into every stage of partnership development, Alberta can ensure collaborations build lasting equity in employment. These efforts strengthen economic security, expand opportunities across regions, and foster inclusive growth. When built on trust, transparency, and cultural safety, partnerships create workplaces where Indigenous 2SLGBTQQIA+ individuals can thrive, contribute meaningfully, and lead with resilience and pride.

Indicators of Success

- Increased number of formal partnerships established between Indigenous organizations, governments, and the private sector.
- Growth in employment opportunities created specifically for Indigenous 2SLGBTQQIA+ individuals, across diverse sectors and regions.
- Improved retention and promotion rates for Indigenous 2SLGBTQQIA+ individuals within participating organizations, reflecting greater equity and inclusion.
- Annual evaluations measuring partnership effectiveness and employment impacts, informed by community feedback and clear accountability metrics.
- Publicly available reports that clearly document progress, challenges, and outcomes, communicated through culturally relevant and accessible channels to ensure transparency and accountability.

K. Alignment with Broader Initiatives

Achieving justice, safety, and visibility for Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals requires more than isolated initiatives. It demands alignment with provincial, national, and international frameworks that shape the broader response to the MMIR crisis. For far too long, these large-scale frameworks have overlooked or excluded Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ voices, perpetuating invisibility and systemic inequities. Ensuring meaningful alignment means embedding their perspectives into every stage of policymaking, from advocacy and design to implementation and evaluation. Only through this integration can policies reflect lived realities while upholding Indigenous sovereignty, self-determination, and cultural safety.

This alignment must be intentional and intersectional, bringing together Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ communities with governments, institutions, and mainstream MMIR initiatives in co-creative processes. Recommendation 37 emphasizes the need for strategies that integrate Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ perspectives within broader action plans, ensuring that initiatives like the National Inquiry's Calls for Justice or Weaving Miskotahâ are inclusive and culturally grounded. Recommendation 38 builds on this foundation by demanding not just symbolic inclusion but structural reforms that guarantee representation through advisory roles, dedicated consultation mechanisms, and community-led initiatives. Finally, Recommendation 39 focuses on transparency and accountability through ongoing public reporting, ensuring that progress is visible, challenges are acknowledged, and commitments are upheld through dialogue and accessible communication.

Together, these recommendations ensure that alignment with broader initiatives is not superficial but transformative. They provide the tools to close long-standing gaps, embed cultural safety across systems, and make space for authentic leadership by Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals. By weaving their voices into the heart of larger strategies and holding systems accountable through transparent reporting, Alberta can ensure that alignment becomes a pathway to equity, visibility, and justice rather than another layer of exclusion.

Recommendations

37. Strategies for Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ Individuals

Ensuring that provincial, national, and international action plans addressing the MMIR crisis are inclusive of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ perspectives is critical for systemic change. Too often, large-scale initiatives fail to account for the unique realities of these communities, reinforcing cycles of invisibility and exclusion. It is imperative that these frameworks prioritize culturally safe, intersectional approaches that are co-developed with Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ leaders and organizations. This ensures that strategies reflect lived realities, respond to evolving needs, and support both cultural safety and equity across all levels of implementation.

Collaboration among Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+-led organizations, mainstream MMIR initiatives, and government bodies must be intentional and sustained. By establishing structured forums or working groups, stakeholders can create space for regular dialogue, shared decision-making, and co-created solutions that meaningfully address systemic barriers. These structures strengthen coherence across initiatives and provide accountability mechanisms to ensure commitments translate into measurable outcomes.

Embedding these strategies across existing action plans, including the 113 Pathways to Justice, Weaving Miskotahâ, and the National Inquiry's Calls for Justice, is not only beneficial but necessary. Doing so ensures that Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ perspectives are fully integrated into the design, evaluation, and adaptation of broader frameworks, preventing exclusion and reinforcing Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination. Through consistent advocacy and structured inclusion, alignment with broader initiatives becomes an avenue for transformation rather than tokenism.

Indicators of Success

- Increased advocacy efforts ensuring Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ perspectives are actively integrated into the implementation, evaluation, and evolution of existing action plans, including the 113 Pathways to Justice, Weaving Miskotahâ, and the National Inquiry's Calls for Justice, with measurable growth in participation.
- Stronger collaboration with organizations responsible for implementing these action plans, demonstrated through formal partnerships, shared leadership roles, and decision-making structures that prioritize Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ voices.
- Documented policy and practice improvements resulting directly from advocacy efforts for better inclusion, with clear examples of changes made and their impacts on communities.
- Regular evaluations to ensure alignment with broader initiatives remains responsive and inclusive, including semi-annual reviews and adjustments based on community feedback. Reports must be publicly accessible and communicated through culturally relevant channels.
- Publicly available reports that clearly document progress, challenges, and outcomes, communicated through culturally relevant and accessible channels to ensure transparency and accountability.

38. Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ Inclusion

Strengthen advocacy efforts to ensure that Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals are meaningfully included in all policy-making processes related to the MMIR crisis. Their voices must be prioritized, respected, and consistently engaged across every stage of policy development, implementation, and evaluation. Inclusion cannot be symbolic; it must be embedded in the structures, practices, and accountability systems that guide decision-making.

Achieving this requires the creation of formal mechanisms that guarantee representation and influence. These may include dedicated Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ advisory roles within government and service systems, mandatory participation in policy drafting and oversight committees, and consultation forums that operate on principles of cultural safety and respect. Such mechanisms ensure that input is not an afterthought but a central force shaping policy directions, service standards, and systemic reforms.

Embedding these structures will strengthen accountability and transparency within institutions and increase responsiveness to the unique needs of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ communities. When their leadership and lived experiences guide policy, decision-making becomes more equitable, culturally grounded, and effective. This approach also helps rebuild trust between communities and institutions, affirming that reconciliation efforts are not simply rhetorical but actively honour Indigenous sovereignty, cultural safety, and the right of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals to lead change.

Indicators of Success

- Increased representation of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals in advisory councils, policy development processes, and decision-making bodies.
- Growth in the number of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+-led initiatives influencing provincial and federal policies.
- Enhanced accountability mechanisms ensuring that policy changes reflect Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ voices, with documented cases demonstrating impact.
- Publicly accessible reports detailing progress, challenges, and areas for improvement, published on a bi-annual basis.
- Annual satisfaction surveys among Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ participants to measure the effectiveness and respectfulness of their inclusion in policy processes.
- Publicly available reports that clearly document progress, challenges, and outcomes, communicated through culturally relevant and accessible channels to ensure transparency and accountability.

39. Ensure Transparent, Ongoing Public Reporting

Transparent and ongoing public reporting is essential for building trust, accountability, and inclusivity in all MMIR initiatives involving Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals. Reports must be culturally relevant and accessible, ensuring that progress, challenges, and areas for improvement are communicated in ways that resonate with diverse communities. Accessibility requires offering multiple formats such as print materials, oral transmission of histories, digital platforms, videos, and community gatherings, ensuring that information reaches both rural and urban audiences effectively.

Beyond information-sharing, effective reporting must embed mechanisms for accountability and responsiveness. This includes community forums, digital feedback platforms, and structured consultations that allow Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ communities to provide input and see their voices reflected in outcomes. Reporting should not be static; it must serve as a living process that continuously incorporates feedback, adapts to evolving needs, and demonstrates how recommendations are being implemented in practice.

Transparent reporting also strengthens relationships between communities, service providers, and government agencies by ensuring all parties remain accountable to commitments. Embedding community-driven evaluations and ensuring that feedback loops are clear and respected will make reporting a tool for empowerment rather than a symbolic exercise. In this way, ongoing public reporting becomes a cornerstone of systemic change, ensuring that initiatives remain relevant, responsive, and rooted in the priorities of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ communities.

Indicators of Success

- Regular publication of progress reports detailing successes, challenges, and areas for growth. Ensure these reports are accessible and distributed through multiple channels to reach the community effectively.
- Enhanced accessibility of reports to community members through culturally relevant communication channels, ensuring that reports are understandable and reachable to all community segments.
- Active documentation and incorporation of community feedback to inform ongoing improvements in policy and practice. Feedback should be actively solicited and visibly acted upon in subsequent planning and reporting cycles.
- Establishment and maintenance of mechanisms for ongoing dialogue between government bodies, service providers, and Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ communities. These mechanisms should facilitate regular interactions and continuous engagement.
- Publicly available reports that clearly document progress, challenges, and outcomes, communicated through culturally relevant and accessible channels to ensure transparency and accountability.

Walking The Path Ahead

These recommendations are not simply words on paper; they form a roadmap for immediate and transformative action. Each section has outlined critical steps to address systemic inequities across justice, wellness, inclusion, reconciliation, sustainability, capacity, economic security, and alignment with broader initiatives. Together, these recommendations create a comprehensive framework that is Alberta-specific yet aligned with national and international priorities. Grounded in Two-Eyed Seeing and guided by Indigenous sovereignty, they ensure that the voices and priorities of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals are at the centre of every decision.

The intent of this plan is not to overshadow or replace the foundations laid by previous reports, but to build upon them by filling the gaps and driving measurable action. Safety, justice, and inclusion will not be achieved through symbolic gestures or short-term commitments. They require systemic reforms, culturally safe practices, and the recognition that Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals must be equal partners in shaping the solutions that affect their lives. These recommendations emphasize that equity is not a gift to be granted but a right to be upheld, and that true reconciliation must be lived out through practice, not only promised in principle.

Accountability and transparency are the threads that hold this entire framework together. The Indicators of Success are not suggestions; they are concrete benchmarks for measuring whether progress is real, consistent, and community-driven. By embedding culturally safe evaluation, public reporting, and ongoing community engagement into every recommendation, this plan ensures that commitments remain visible, responsive, and resilient. Trust will only be built when progress is measured openly and when Indigenous communities themselves have authority in defining what success means.

Walking the path ahead requires courage and dedication. It demands political will, long-term investment, and collective responsibility from governments, service providers, and communities alike. For too long, the voices of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals have been sidelined in MMIR advocacy and policymaking, leaving their unique realities invisible within broader strategies. This document responds to that exclusion with a call to action that is both urgent and achievable. The time for incremental steps has passed; Alberta now can lead with integrity and cultural humility.

These recommendations are a call to transformation. They are an invitation to walk together toward justice, healing, and safety, guided by the wisdom of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ communities. The responsibility is shared, the path is clear, and the time is now. By committing to this roadmap with sincerity, courage, and accountability, we can build a future that upholds inclusion, justice, safety, and wholeness for generations to come.

EVALUATING COMPLETION AND IMPACT

Ensuring that these recommendations create meaningful and lasting change requires more than implementation; it requires comprehensive, culturally grounded evaluation processes. Evaluation must not be treated as an afterthought but as an integral part of the framework, guiding each stage from planning to practice. Effective evaluation must be ongoing, transparent, and rooted in the lived experiences, priorities, and wisdom of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals across Alberta.

Evaluation must move beyond narrow statistical measures that too often erase or misrepresent community realities. Instead, it must centre Indigenous Data Sovereignty and elevate community-driven knowledge systems that honour self-determination, cultural safety, and intersectional awareness. Recognizing the value of oral transmission of histories, lived experiences, and cultural outcomes alongside quantitative indicators ensures that success reflects community realities rather than external expectations.

These frameworks must also reflect Alberta's diverse contexts. Evaluation processes need to extend across urban, rural, remote, on-reserve, off-reserve, on-settlement, and off-settlement communities, capturing distinct needs and challenges in each. Tailoring approaches to these diverse realities ensures equity, prevents further marginalization, and strengthens trust in evaluation processes. When evaluation is regionally responsive, it helps close systemic gaps while affirming the resilience and leadership of local communities.

Evaluations must establish robust feedback loops that connect communities, governments, and service providers in a process of continual accountability. Findings cannot remain static in reports; they must inform policy adjustments, refine funding allocations, and enhance service provision. Public reporting through culturally relevant and accessible channels is essential to transparency and empowers communities to hold institutions accountable. In this way, evaluation becomes not only a measure of progress but also a catalyst for sustained transformation.

Key Indicators of Success

Inclusive Data Protocols

The number of inclusive, culturally safe, and identity-affirming data protocols adopted and implemented across sectors. These protocols must be designed in consultation with Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ communities to ensure they are culturally relevant, intersectional, and respectful of Indigenous Data Sovereignty principles. The creation of inclusive data protocols requires a commitment to dismantling harmful practices of erasure and exclusion. This includes acknowledging the limitations of existing systems while actively creating new pathways that honour and reflect the diverse experiences of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals. Inclusive data collection must also account for intersecting barriers faced by individuals navigating systems that were never designed with their identities and experiences in mind. Finally, these protocols must establish clear safeguards for confidentiality and consent, ensuring that communities retain ownership and control over how their data is gathered, stored, and shared.

Sustainable Funding

The amount of sustained funding directed toward Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ initiatives, with a specific focus on ensuring equitable access across all regions of Alberta, including urban, rural, remote, on-reserve, off-reserve, on-settlement, and off-settlement areas. Funding distribution must prioritize community-led initiatives and reflect the distinct needs of diverse communities throughout the province. To be effective, funding structures must be adaptable, responsive to community feedback, and aligned with principles of equity and justice. Ensuring access to sustainable funding is essential for the success of culturally grounded, community-driven initiatives. Resources must be allocated with attention to the geographic, cultural, and social diversity of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ communities, while barriers faced by individuals in remote, rural, and underserved areas must be addressed with intentionality. Finally, all funding mechanisms must include transparent accountability processes, ensuring that resources are not only distributed equitably but also used in ways that directly benefit and strengthen the communities they are intended to serve.

Cultural Safety Training

The percentage of agencies, organizations, and service providers with staff trained in cultural safety, trauma-informed practices, anti-discrimination frameworks, and intersectional awareness. Training must be mandatory across sectors and evaluated for cultural relevance, effectiveness, and inclusivity through regular feedback from Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ participants. Effective cultural safety training goes beyond initial education; it requires ongoing evaluation, adaptation, and commitment to systemic change. Organizations must actively integrate feedback from Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ participants to ensure training remains relevant, respectful, and effective. Training must also be tailored to address the specific needs and experiences of individuals throughout Alberta, with particular attention to the disparities between urban and rural regions. Ensuring cultural safety within all services is not only an ethical responsibility but a practical necessity for fostering trust, accountability, and equitable service delivery.

Community Feedback

Qualitative feedback from Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ community members, including satisfaction rates, reported experiences of safety, and perceived responsiveness of services. Mechanisms for gathering feedback must be accessible, culturally appropriate, trauma-informed, and inclusive of diverse voices from communities throughout Alberta. Creating spaces for meaningful feedback requires ensuring that processes are safe, welcoming, and guided by community protocols. The diversity of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ voices must be heard and respected in all stages of evaluation. Feedback mechanisms should include multiple avenues for participation, such as surveys, interviews, focus groups, and community gatherings, to reduce barriers to engagement. It is essential that feedback be used not only to assess progress but also to drive visible, measurable changes in policies, services, and practices.

Reduction of Harm

Documented decreases in rates of violence, discrimination, housing insecurity, and other systemic inequities impacting Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals must be central to evaluation. Both short-term and long-term impacts must be measured, with recognition that systemic change requires sustained commitment and accountability. Addressing harm requires acknowledging the complex interplay of historical and ongoing injustices while ensuring that all responses are rooted in trauma-informed and culturally grounded practices designed to dismantle discriminatory structures. Harm reduction must be understood as a continuous process that evolves with the needs of communities, requiring regular reassessment and adaptation. Evaluation frameworks should combine quantitative indicators, such as service access and safety outcomes, with qualitative measures that reflect the lived experiences and definitions of safety provided by community members. Visible, community-led reporting of these outcomes is essential to demonstrate real progress and to sustain trust in the systems intended to protect and support Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals.

CONCLUSION

Effective evaluation is not a one-time event but a continuous, evolving process that must be rooted in community voices, cultural safety, and Indigenous Data Sovereignty. When guided by these principles, evaluation becomes more than a measure of progress; it becomes a living tool for advocacy, transformation, and healing. Progress cannot be reduced to statistics alone. It must reflect the lived experiences, strengths, and realities of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals across Alberta, ensuring that every step forward is grounded in community priorities and cultural knowledge.

The adoption of inclusive data protocols, equitable funding mechanisms, robust cultural safety training, meaningful community feedback, and measurable harm reduction provides the foundation for accountability that is both systemic and relational. These are not abstract ideals but practical tools that ensure the recommendations outlined in this plan remain alive, adaptable, and responsive. By embedding evaluation into every recommendation, the JWP confirms that commitments must be visible, measurable, and defined by the communities themselves, not imposed by external systems. In doing so, evaluation strengthens the integrity of the entire framework and prevents promises from fading into symbolic gestures.

Publicly sharing results through culturally accessible channels strengthens transparency, trust, and reciprocity. It also reinforces the principle that Indigenous communities have the authority to define what success looks like and how it should be measured. Iterative evaluation processes make this work resilient, allowing programs and policies to grow alongside the shifting needs of the people they serve. This responsiveness ensures that evaluation is never static but always a reflection of dialogue, accountability, and renewal. By linking outcomes to the Indicators of Success, communities can track not only whether commitments are met but whether they are felt in daily lives as safety, dignity, and belonging.

In this way, evaluation becomes part of the larger journey of reconciliation and systemic change. It carries forward the same spirit as the preceding recommendations: to centre Indigenous sovereignty, insist on accountability, and honour the wisdom and leadership of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ people. The responsibility is shared, the benchmarks are clear, and the path is open. With courage, transparency, and sustained commitment, evaluation can transform from a bureaucratic requirement into a force for justice, healing, and safety for generations to come.

FROM KNOWLEDGE TO ACTION: RECLAIMING SAFETY AND JUSTICE

The MMIR Justice & Wellness Plan (JWP) represents more than a document; it is a powerful call to action shaped by the resilience, wisdom, and lived experiences of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ communities across Alberta. Throughout its recommendations and strategies, this plan clearly outlines pathways for transformative change that are grounded in cultural safety, community wisdom, and intersectional awareness. It challenges us to dismantle systemic barriers, eliminate violence, and actively counter the ongoing erasure and marginalization of these communities.

Every stakeholder, including governments, organizations, community leaders, and allies, has a crucial role in translating these recommendations into tangible and impactful actions. By prioritizing Indigenous sovereignty, respecting cultural practices, and committing to ongoing accountability, we can collectively ensure that Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ individuals are recognized, valued, and supported. This requires long-term investment, transparent evaluation, and a readiness to embed equity and cultural safety into every decision and every structure.

This work demands urgency, sincerity, and sustained dedication. It requires us to move beyond acknowledgment into meaningful implementation, transforming policies, practices, and perceptions in ways that genuinely empower Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ communities. We must foster collaborative partnerships, invest in culturally responsive initiatives, and continually evaluate progress with openness and honesty. The path ahead is clearly marked by those who have courageously shared their truths, leaving no question about what must be done.

Our shared commitment today is an act of honour and responsibility. By walking together with courage, humility, and respect, we carry forward the strength of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ communities and ensure that justice, healing, and safety are not deferred to the future but lived in the present, for generations yet to come.

Appendices

A. Appendix – GLOSSARY

2SLGBTQQIA+

Represents those who are Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, asexual, and all other sexual orientations and genders (Shared Health Manitoba, 2025)

2SLGBTQQIA+ Terms defined

The order of the LGBTQQIA+ acronym reflects both a deliberate effort to address lateral violence within the community and a recognition of historical contributions from marginalized groups. Prioritizing "L" (lesbian) before "G" (gay) acknowledges the systemic exclusion and erasure of lesbian voices, particularly in spaces dominated by gay men. It also honours the critical activism and care work of lesbians during the aids epidemic when many stepped in as caretakers and advocates at great personal risk. The sequence's evolution—adding "B" (bisexual), "T" (transgender), "Q" (queer/questioning), "I" (intersex), and "A" (asexual)—demonstrates an ongoing effort to centre those who have been historically sidelined, promoting inclusivity and justice within the broader community (SHL, 2022)

Two-Spirit

Two-Spirit is a contemporary English umbrella term used by some Indigenous peoples to describe individuals who embody diverse sexualities, genders, cultural, and spiritual identities within Indigenous communities. Unlike Western constructs of identity, Two-Spirit identities are deeply rooted in Indigenous cultures, traditions, and understandings of personhood. Not all LGBTQ+ identifying Indigenous individuals use this term; its adoption signifies a decolonizing act of reclaiming and reviving cultural traditions that were suppressed or erased through colonization.

The term *Two-Spirit* was officially coined during the third annual Intertribal Native American, First Nations, Gay and Lesbian American Conference held in Winnipeg, Manitoba, in 1990. It was introduced as a pan-Indigenous term to provide a culturally relevant and unifying language for diverse Indigenous gender and sexual identities, while simultaneously challenging colonial frameworks that imposed rigid, binary understandings of gender and sexuality.

Before colonization, many Indigenous cultures recognized and respected gender diversity through roles, identities, and responsibilities that did not necessarily align with Western notions of male and female. The suppression of these cultural practices through residential schools, forced assimilation policies, and ongoing systemic discrimination led to the marginalization and erasure of Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ people.

Reclaiming the term *Two-Spirit* is, therefore, both a political and cultural act of resistance, resilience, and identity affirmation.

The need for the term *Two-Spirit* also arises from the erasure and loss of Indigenous languages due to colonization. Many Indigenous languages have lost their lexicons, terminologies, and cultural expressions that once encompassed diverse gender and sexual identities. Language loss is not only a loss of words, but a loss of the complex understandings and frameworks embedded within those words. Two-Spirit Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ have often been left without the appropriate words from their own languages to describe their identities, roles, and responsibilities. The term *Two-Spirit* serves as a reclamation and reassertion of these identities within a contemporary context while acknowledging the need to revitalize and recover traditional knowledge systems and language.

It is essential to recognize that *Two-Spirit* is not simply a synonym for LGBTQ+; rather, it is a distinct identity with cultural and historical significance that varies across nations and communities. As a culturally specific term, it emphasizes the intersectionality of Indigenous worldviews, kinship systems, and traditional roles that were integral to many Indigenous societies. It acknowledges the need for language that affirms Indigenous identity and gender diversity in ways that are culturally safe, meaningful, and rooted in Indigenous knowledge systems (Native Women's Association of Canada, 2021; It Gets Better Canada, 2024; and Sylliboy, 2021)

Lesbian

A person who identifies as a woman or nonbinary and experiences romantic and/or sexual attraction to the same or similar genders (Native Women's Association of Canada, n.d.)

Gay

Traditionally used to describe a man who is romantically and/or sexually attracted to men. However, it can be used by individuals of any gender to denote attraction to people of the same gender (Egale Canada, 2023)

Bisexual

A person who experiences romantic and/or sexual attraction to people of more than one gender (Native Women's Association of Canada, n.d.).

Transgender (Trans)

A person whose gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth. This term can encompass a range of gender identities and experiences. (Egale Canada, 2023)

Queer

An umbrella term that encompasses a range of sexual orientations and gender identities that are not exclusively heterosexual or cisgender. Historically used as a slur, it has been reclaimed by many as a positive self-identifier and as a statement against oppression (Native Women's Association of Canada, n.d.).

Indigiqueer

A term used by some Indigenous people to describe their identity as both Indigenous and queer, highlighting the intersection of their cultural and sexual or gender identities (Native Women's Association of Canada, n.d.).

Questioning

An umbrella term for the process of exploring and reconciling one's feelings about their gender identity and/or sexual orientation. This process may occur at any stage of life and can be a single occurrence or an ongoing experience (Egale Canada, 2023; Gov't of Canada, 2023).

Intersex

A person whose chromosomal, hormonal, or anatomical sex characteristics do not fit typical definitions of male or female. Intersex individuals may have variations in reproductive or sexual anatomy that differ from societal expectations (Egale Canada, 2023; Government of Canada, 2023).

Asexual (Ace)

A person who does not experience sexual attraction and/or has little to no interest in sexual activity. The asexual spectrum includes various identities, such as demisexual and graysexual, reflecting a range of experiences with sexual attraction and desire (Egale Canada, 2023; Government of Canada, 2023).

Demisexual

Referring to a person who feels sexual attraction only once a strong emotional bond is formed. (Government of Canada, 2023; Egale Canada, 2023)

Greysexual

A person who experiences sexual attraction infrequently or with limited intensity, existing in the gray area between asexuality and sexuality. (Egale Canada, 2023)

+ (Plus)

A symbol used to acknowledge and include all other gender identities and sexual orientations not specifically represented by the preceding letters in the acronym. It recognizes the diversity and fluidity of human experiences related to gender and sexuality (Native Women's Association of Canada, n.d.).

Allyship

An active, consistent, and arduous practice of unlearning and re-evaluating, in which a person in a position of privilege and power seeks to operate in solidarity with a marginalized group (Queen's University, n.d.).

Colonialism

A system and practice where one group seeks to impose its will upon another, utilizing the resources of the subjugated group for the benefit of the colonizers. This involves political, physical, cultural, spiritual, and intellectual occupation, often resulting in the forceful displacement of Indigenous populations. Historically, doctrines such as terra nullius ("nobody's land") have been employed to morally justify colonial expansion and the exploitation of lands deemed unoccupied or underutilized (York University, n.d.).

Coloniality

Refers to the enduring patterns of power, control, and influence that persist beyond the formal end of colonial rule. It encompasses the continuation of colonial-era practices, ideologies, and structures that shape contemporary societies, maintaining inequalities and suppressing Indigenous knowledge systems. Coloniality manifests in various domains, including education, governance, and culture, perpetuating the dominance of Eurocentric perspectives and marginalizing alternative worldviews (York University, n.d.).

Cultural Competency

The ability to self-reflect on one's own cultural values and how these impact the way one provides care, as well as continually learning to gain a deeper understanding of another's culture (Government of Canada, 2021).

Cultural Continuity

The persistence of a way of life and its worldviews, encompassing activities and values linked with traditional practices such as hunting and fishing, as well as intangible expressions like oral transmission of histories, art, and the passing of traditional knowledge to younger generations (Qikiqtani Inuit Association, n.d.).

Cultural Resilience

The capacity of a cultural system to absorb disturbances and reorganize while undergoing change, thereby retaining key cultural elements and functions (Buijs, 2018).

Cultural Revitalization

The process through which unique cultures regain a sense of identity, such as through promoting heritage, languages, or reviving traditions and customs (Bergen, n.d.).

Cultural Safety

An outcome based on respectful engagement that recognizes and strives to address power imbalances inherent in systems of care, (like health care). It results in an environment free of racism and discrimination, (where people feel safe when receiving health care) (Government of Canada, 2021).

Culturally Grounded Approaches

Methods and practices that are built from the ground up, rooted in the cultural values, practices, and worldviews of the Indigenous populations they intend to serve (Youth Research and Evaluation eXchange, 2023).

Disaggregated Data

Data that has been broken down into detailed sub-categories such as age, gender, income, or geographic region, allowing for a more nuanced understanding of diverse population groups and the identification of disparities that may be obscured in aggregated data (Statistics Canada, 2023).

Equitable Access

The principle of ensuring that all individuals have fair opportunities to attain their full potential, recognizing that different people may require varying levels of support and resources to achieve the same outcomes. Unlike equality, which promotes treating everyone identically, equity acknowledges the diverse experiences and needs of individuals, aiming to eliminate disparities

rooted in historical and contemporary injustices. In the context of mental health services in Canada, equitable access involves removing barriers such as financial constraints, transportation issues, and lack of insurance coverage to ensure that everyone can receive appropriate care regardless of their background or socioeconomic status. Similarly, in the arts sector, equity is understood as promoting fair conditions for all people to fully participate in society, recognizing that while all people have the right to be treated equally, not all experience equal access to resources, opportunities, or benefits. (Canadian Mental Health Education, 2023; Canada Council for the Arts, n.d.; Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety, n.d.)

Extractive Industries

Sectors involved in the exploration, extraction, and initial processing of natural resources such as minerals, oil, and gas, which are foundational to Canada's economy and infrastructure development, which often impact Indigenous communities disproportionately (Natural Resources Canada, n.d.).

Inclusive Data Protocols

Frameworks and guidelines designed to ensure that data collection, analysis, and dissemination processes are equitable, culturally sensitive, and representative of all population groups, particularly marginalized communities (Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, 2023).

Indicators of Success

Measurable values that represent progress towards achieving specific objectives or desired impacts within a project or organization, serving as benchmarks for performance evaluation (McGill University, n.d.).

Indigenous Data Sovereignty

The right of Indigenous Peoples to control the collection, ownership, and application of data that pertains to their members, knowledge systems, customs, or territories, ensuring that data practices align with their self-determination and governance structures (Simon Fraser University Library, n.d.).

Indigenous Knowledge Systems

Complex frameworks of knowledge, innovations, and practices that are developed and maintained by Indigenous Peoples through generations, reflecting their unique cultures, languages, values, histories, governance, and legal systems. These systems are place-based,

cumulative, dynamic, and involve living in harmony with the natural world (Impact Assessment Agency of Canada, 2023).

Intersectionality

A framework for understanding how various aspects of a person's social and political identities—such as race, gender, class, sexuality, and ability—interconnect and contribute to unique experiences of oppression or privilege (Crenshaw, 1989).

Kinship Systems

The complex network of social relationships that define familial connections within a community, encompassing societal values and spiritual beliefs within a land-based framework. Kinship systems help maintain traditional ways of life, ensure the care of elders and youth, and determine the sharing of work and distribution of resources, thereby ensuring the survival and cohesion of the clan (Learn Alberta, n.d.).

Lateral Violence

Aggressive behaviors occurring among members of a group, stemming from accumulated and internalized stress and oppression. This phenomenon manifests when individuals, feeling powerless to confront external sources of oppression, redirect their frustrations toward peers, colleagues, or community members. Common manifestations include bullying, gossiping, harassment, exclusion, intimidation, and physical violence (CTRI, n.d.; Native Women's Association of Canada, 2011).

MMIR

Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives—a term inclusive of all Indigenous people impacted by the crisis, regardless of gender. While many reports and discussions use the term Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two-Spirit+ (MMIWG2S+), we term MMIR (Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives), except when directly quoting another body of work.

The use of MMIR is intentional for several reasons:

- **Inclusivity** – The term is gender-neutral, respecting an individual's right to self-identify their gender while providing a more accurate reflection of the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community's experiences.

- **Relationality** – Using the word 'Relative' honours the Indigenous worldview that we are all related— *'All my relations'*. This reminds us of our collective responsibility toward those who are missing and murdered.
- **Recognition of Reality** – Indigenous men and boys comprised 42% of those reported to Aboriginal Alerts in 2023 (Aboriginal Alerts, 2023), demonstrating the necessity of inclusive language.

MMIWG2S+

An acronym for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, Two-Spirit, Transgender, and Gender-Diverse+ peoples, representing a human rights crisis involving disproportionate rates of violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ individuals in Canada (Government of New Brunswick, n.d.).

On-reserve / Off-reserve

Terms used to describe whether a person's usual place of residence is within or outside areas legally affiliated with First Nations or Indian bands. 'On-reserve' includes specific census subdivisions such as Indian reserves and settlements, while 'Off-reserve' refers to all other areas not classified as 'On-reserve' (Statistics Canada, 2021).

On-settlement / Off-settlement

Terms referring to the residential status of Métis individuals in Alberta, Canada. 'On-settlement' pertains to those residing within the eight Métis settlements established in 1938, while 'Off-settlement' refers to Métis individuals living outside these designated areas (Indigenous Corporate Training Inc., n.d.)

Pan-Indigenous

A term referring to initiatives or policies that apply uniformly across all Indigenous groups, without acknowledging the distinct cultural, legal, and historical differences among First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples. The Chiefs of Ontario have criticized such approaches, stating that they violate First Nations' inherent and treaty rights to land and self-governance. They advocate for distinctions-based policies that respect unique identities and rights of each Indigenous group (Chiefs of Ontario, n.d.).

Profound Listening

An immersive and empathetic practice, transcending auditory perception, engaging all senses to fully know the speaker's message (Isaacson, 2018).

Reciprocity

A value within Indigenous ways of knowing that emphasizes mutual exchange, responsibility, and balance in relationships. A foundational principle emphasizing mutual exchange and balance in relationships, where actions are met with appropriate responses, fostering interconnectedness and cooperation. In Indigenous worldviews, reciprocity involves a continuous cycle of giving and receiving that nurtures relationships among individuals, communities, and the natural world. Robin Wall Kimmerer illustrates this concept through the serviceberry tree, which shares its fruit freely with the ecosystem, embodying a model where "wealth comes from the quality of your relationships, not from the illusion of self-sufficiency" (Kimmerer, n.d.). In public health ethics, reciprocity entails responding to individuals' contributions or sacrifices—such as adhering to health measures—by ensuring they receive appropriate support or compensation, promoting trust and social cohesion (Kimmerer, n.d.; NCCHPP, 2014).

Relationality

A fundamental concept within Indigenous worldviews emphasizing the interconnectedness of all beings, relationships and responsibilities. It accepts people exist within a web of relationships – not only other humans but also the land, animals, and spiritual entities. Relationality underscores the importance of maintaining balance, respect, and reciprocity within these relationships, guiding ethical conduct and decision-making. Relationality is rooted in Indigenous languages and traditions, reflect the cultural contexts of individual Indigenous nations and shared understanding across Indigenous communities globally (Wildcat, Voth, 2023)

Restorative Justice

An approach to justice that emphasizes addressing the harm caused by criminal behavior through inclusive processes involving victims, offenders, and the community. It focuses on meeting the needs of those affected, promoting healing, and facilitating the reintegration of offenders into society. Restorative justice provides opportunities for safe and voluntary dialogue, encouraging accountability and fostering understanding among all parties involved (Correctional Service Canada, 2024)

Settler-Colonialism

A distinct form of colonialism characterized by the establishment of a settler society that seeks to replace Indigenous populations with an invasive settler population. Unlike other colonial forms focused primarily on resource extraction, settler-colonialism involves the ongoing occupation

and control of land, aiming to permanently displace Indigenous peoples and erase their presence. This process is driven by a territorial project centred on land accumulation, often justified through ideologies that dehumanize Indigenous populations and legitimize their dispossession (York, n.d.).

Trauma-Informed

An approach that recognizes the widespread impact of trauma and integrates this understanding into policies, practices, and interactions to create environments that promote safety, empowerment, and healing. Trauma-informed care emphasizes understanding the connections between trauma, violence, and negative health outcomes, and seeks to minimize the potential for re-traumatization. In healthcare settings, this approach involves recognizing the prevalence of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and their long-term effects on health, fostering trust, and empowering patients in their care (Public Health Agency of Canada, Purkey, 2018).

Two-Eyed Seeing Approach (Etuaptmumk in Mi'kmaq)

This perspective, introduced by Mi'kmaw Elder Albert Marshall of the Eskasoni First Nation, encourages looking at the world through more than one lens (Northern Ontario School of Medicine, 2021). As Elder Marshall (Bartlett et al, 2012) explains, it is "to see from one eye with the strength of Indigenous ways of knowing, and to see from the other eye with the strengths of Western ways of knowing, and to use both of these eyes together." By valuing both knowledge systems, this approach helps generate innovative solutions, ensuring that no single worldview overshadows the other.

B. APPENDIX – REFERENCES

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