

# 2SLGBTQI+ Inclusion in Sport: Key Terms to Understand

Self-identification is the key

Human Rights legislation across Canada protects us from discrimination based on sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression. Read on to learn what each of these terms mean and how they are unique and independent.

**2SLGBTQI+** stands for Two Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, Questioning, Intersex and more. The plus (+) ensures that further identities related to sexual and gender diversity are included beyond those listed. There are also other variations of the acronym like LGBTQ or LGBT2+. The key here is to be open, learn and allow people to self-identify.

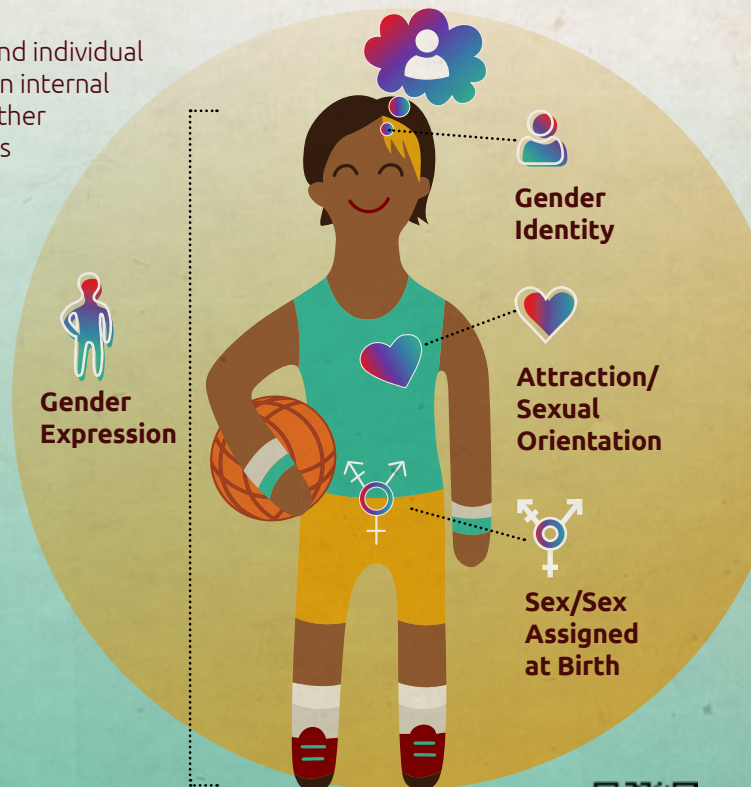
**Attraction / Sexual Orientation** refers to which gender(s) someone is attracted to. People use different terms to describe their attraction to someone else. They may call it: asexual, bisexual, gay, heterosexual or straight, lesbian, pansexual, queer, questioning, Two Spirit or another term.

**Gender Expression** is the way a person presents their gender. Some of the ways people do this are through clothing, speech, body language, hairstyle, voice, mannerisms, emphasis or de-emphasis of bodily characteristics or behaviours, name and pronoun. People may describe their gender expression as androgynous, feminine, gender fluid, gender non-conforming, masculine or using other terms. What is considered masculine, feminine and androgynous changes over time and varies among different cultures too.

**Gender Identity** is a person's internal and individual experience of gender. This can include an internal sense of being a man, woman, both, neither or another gender entirely. Everyone has a gender identity. For people who are transgender, their sex assigned at birth and their own internal sense of gender identity are not the same. For people who are cisgender, their sex assigned at birth and their own internal sense of gender identity are the same.

**Sex** is the classification of people as female, intersex or male. The combination of the following biological markers indicates our sex: chromosomes, genitalia, hormones, internal reproductive organs and secondary sexual characteristics.

Be open and learn





2SLGBTQI+

**Allyship** refers to the practice of someone who actively and intentionally promotes diversity and inclusion and challenges systems of oppression (e.g. homo/bi/transphobia, racism, sexism, classism, ableism, etc.) Allyship means modelling inclusive language and inclusive behaviour. It involves committing to educating ourselves and committing to doing better and helping others to do better. Allyship is an ongoing process of being aware of being inclusive, and creating inclusive environments, systems and policies and addressing discrimination whenever and wherever it appears.

**Intersectionality** refers to the combination of multiple forms of discrimination, which compound to form something unique from any one form of discrimination alone. For example, in Canada in 2015, women earned 87 cents to every dollar earned by men (the impact of sexism), while women of colour in Ontario earned only 58 cents to every dollar that a White man earned (intersectional impact of sexism and racism). The term intersectionality was coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989. Because our identities are multi-faceted, our work to create inclusive environments must take an intersectional approach addressing all forms of discrimination.

**Intersex** is a term used to describe a person who is born with biological markers that do not fit the typical definition of male or female. In Canada, people who are intersex are typically assigned male or female at birth. Some intersex people identify with their assigned sex, while others do not. Some choose to identify as intersex. Estimates suggest that 1-2% of the population is intersex. Intersexuality is a reminder that even from a biological perspective, sex is actually not a binary system.

**Pronouns:** Ey, He, She, They, Zi or others!

There are a number of gender pronouns that people can use including ey, he, she, they, zi and others. It's important to create opportunities for everyone to share their pronouns and chosen names. Possible ways include through pronouns as part of introductions, registration forms, name tags, and email signatures. And yes, it's considered grammatically correct to use "they" in the singular!

**Trans** is an umbrella term for a variety of other terms, including transgender, genderqueer, agender, bigender, Two Spirit, etc. Some people may identify with these or other specific terms, but not with the term trans. Similarly, some people may identify as trans, but not with other terms under the trans umbrella.

**Transitioning** is the process that an individual who is trans may choose in order to achieve consistency between their gender identity and their gender expression or body. It is important to recognize that the transition to living in a way that is consistent with one's gender identity can look different for each person. For those who choose to transition, the process can involve different steps. It may include social transition, such as changing one's name, pronoun and accessing different gendered space. It may involve medical transition, such as hormonal treatments or surgical procedures and/or legal transition such as changing documentation.

**Two Spirit** is the English umbrella term to reflect the many words used in different Indigenous languages describing the fluid and diverse nature of gender and attraction and its interconnectedness to community and spirituality. The term seeks to restore traditional identities and roles forcefully suppressed or stamped out by colonization. Some Indigenous people identify as Two Spirit rather than, or in addition to, identifying as 2SLGBTQI+.

*These definitions have been gathered and adapted from multiple sources with the largest single source being Egale Human Rights Trust's Glossary of Terms.*

*For more information contact [info@specialolympics.ca](mailto:info@specialolympics.ca)*



# 2SLGBTQI+ Inclusion in Sport: How to be an Ally

## Inclusion-first philosophy



We're proud to have athletes, volunteers, coaches, staff and Board members of many gender identities, gender expressions and sexual orientations. Here are some ways that you can help to make everyone feel welcome, safe and included at Special Olympics.

## Steps to create a safe and 2SLGBTQI+ inclusive environment

- 1. Respect people's right to self-identify.** It's the law<sup>1</sup> to respect people's identity in terms of gender expression, gender identity, sex and sexual orientation.
- 2. Athletes participate in the gender category that they identify with.** It is not a requirement that the athlete has had hormone therapy or surgery.
- 3. People use the washroom, change room and other facilities that they feel are the best fit for their gender identity.** It's the law. Self-identification and the individual's personal safety are what count. Advocate for all gender washrooms and change rooms at the arenas, pools and facilities that are being used.
- 4. Use the pronoun and chosen name that the person wants.** If you're less familiar with the pronoun set that someone uses, then search for it on the internet to learn more, and then practice using it.
- 5. Respect people's right to privacy.** Individuals are not required to disclose their sexual orientation, gender identity or history, unless there is a specific, compelling reason. In cases where gender identity and documentation (e.g. passport, driver's license) do not match and are required for travel purposes (e.g. plane, train), Special Olympics will ask the athlete and/or the parent or caregiver how best to provide support. It is paramount to ensure that the athlete's confidentiality is protected while completing any verification process.
- 6. Use inclusive language that works for everyone.** Include all genders and say, for example, "Welcome everyone" instead of "Welcome ladies and gentlemen" or "boys and girls". Use the term "partner" instead of "wife", "husband", "girlfriend", or "boyfriend" to avoid making assumptions about someone's sexual orientation. Include all genders and avoid assuming you know someone's gender by saying "May I help you" instead of "May I help you, Sir" or "Madam" or "Miss". Once you know how someone likes to be addressed, then feel free to use the term that they prefer.
- 7. Be an ally and speak up.** If you hear or see something that is discriminatory, address it. If you see an opportunity to make Special Olympics safer and more inclusive, then act on it. It is our collective and individual responsibility to ensure that everyone feels respected, safe and included.

## Respect people's right to self-identify

<sup>1</sup> Federal, provincial and territorial Human Rights Codes/Acts include gender identity, sex and sexual orientation as protected grounds from discrimination. Gender expression is also listed as protected in all the Human Rights Codes/Acts except those of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and the Northwest Territories.



## What do I do if someone comes out to me?

**Coming out** is when someone discloses their sexual orientation or gender identity to you. Remember that you are being honoured when someone chooses to share this important information about themselves with you.

### Act in allyship

1. **Be open and learn.** Remember that you don't have to fully understand an individual's identity and situation in order to be respectful and supportive. Each person knows their own identity best.
2. **Respect people's privacy.** Never share details about someone's identity (even with their family members) unless they have given you express permission to do so.
3. **Connect the person to helpful supports.** If your beliefs prevent you from being welcoming, then safely connect the individual with someone who can be supportive and positive.

For more information including the "2SLGBTQI+ Inclusion in Sport: Key Terms to Understand", contact [info@specialolympics.ca](mailto:info@specialolympics.ca)



### ALL GENDER WASHROOM



**Anyone may use this space.**

We respect everyone's right to choose the washroom that is appropriate for them.

### Protect the privacy of the individual

