

Ten ways to support 2SLGBTQIA+ youth this pride month

June 14 2024, by Leah Hamilton and Corinne L. Mason



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June is Pride Month in many parts of the world.

It commemorates the [1969 Stonewall Riots in New York City](#) that

amplified an already growing social movement to support gay, lesbian, bisexual and trans rights.

After [police raided the Stonewall Inn](#), a gay bar in Greenwich Village, [members of the queer and trans communities](#) and neighborhood allies took to the streets in protest for six days.

Pride Month reminds us of where we've come from and what progress has been made, and it is an opportunity to take stock of the struggles that remain.

Anti-2SLGBTQIA+ sentiments

Since Pride Month last year, Canada has seen an intensification of [anti-2SLGBTQIA+ sentiments](#) stemming from [hate movements](#) and emboldened by conservative provincial governments. [New Brunswick](#), [Saskatchewan](#) and [Alberta](#) have announced new policies that target 2SLGBTQIA+ communities, and youth in particular.

Access to [inclusive education](#), gender-affirming health care and sports has been rolled back, leaving 2SLGBTQIA+ youth even more vulnerable to homophobia and transphobia. In addition, Indigenous and racialized 2SLGBTQIA+ youth often contend with the intersecting prejudice of racism and anti-2SLGBTQIA+ sentiments.

In response, the federal government recently announced [increased funding](#) to support Pride organizations and festivals amid increased hostility.

Many [2SLGBTQIA+ Canadians are in their teens](#), still figuring out how to navigate a society that isn't always accepting. Despite this, Pride—and the stories about it—typically center 2SLGBTQIA+ adults.

So here are 10 concrete ways to support 2SLGBTQIA+ youth during Pride and beyond.

1. Create and protect 2SLGBTQIA+ affirming schools

2SLGBTQIA+ affirming schools are essential for the well-being of two-spirit, queer and trans youth. That means ensuring youth have access to gender-neutral bathrooms, respecting pronouns and names and not requiring [parental consent for using them](#), and having robust and [consent-based sexual health education](#).

Parents, principals and teachers, including their unions, should continue to [speak out against harmful policies](#).

Far-right groups like [Take Back Alberta](#) aspire to have a slate of candidates [take over Alberta school boards](#) in the 2025 municipal elections. As a parent, you can resist these harmful takeovers by campaigning to be elected to your local school board and becoming actively involved in parent councils.

2. Educate yourself about gender-affirming health care

As gender-affirming health care faces [significant threats](#), it is important for the public to educate themselves about these issues. [Learn from experts](#) and [trans-affirming organizations](#). Amplify the voices of health organizations like the [Canadian Paediatric Society](#) that use [scientific evidence](#) as the basis for their public policy advocacy.

3. Improve access to inclusive sports and leisure

Sports and leisure are associated with [positive physical, emotional and mental health outcomes for youth](#). Inclusive sports environments generate [greater self-esteem for 2SLGBTQIA+ youth](#).

Like the sporting organization [Canadian Women & Sport](#), local leaders, advocates, coaches and parents can support 2SLGBTQIA+ youth by pushing back against trans exclusion to ensure all youth can benefit.

4. Support 2SLGBTQIA+ youth artists and musicians

Music and art can be important mediums for queer youth's [self-identity and group identity](#). Creating music and art can create feelings of safety, [experiences of freedom](#) and an opportunity to imagine possible futures. During Pride month, support the young artists in your life by attending their shows or buying their art.

5. Support 2SLGBTQIA+ affirming spaces for youth

2SLGBTQIA+ affirming spaces for youth have been targeted in recent years. This includes [violent protests and arrests at drag storytime events](#) and [far-right counter-protests at high schools](#). This Pride, provide support for 2SLGBTQIA+ affirming spaces such as youth drag events, [drag storytime](#) and summer camps for [2SLGBTQIA+ youth](#).

6. Amplify 2SLGBTQIA+ role models

Young people use a variety of media to [affirm their identities and build communities](#). Support youth by amplifying 2SLGBTQIA+ [role models](#)—those young people see in real life ([like teachers](#)) and those in books and media.

Research shows that having [mentors and positive role models](#) increases

the mental and physical well-being of gender and sexual-diverse individuals.

Many public libraries have [Pride collections](#) featuring books for all ages. Given the pressure to [ban books with 2SLGBTQIA+ content from schools](#), it is even more important to read these stories and support 2SLGBTQIA+ authors.

7. Donate to organizations advocating for 2SLGBTQIA+ youth

There are many [Canadian organizations](#) running programs and advocating for 2SLGBTQIA+ youth. 2SLGBTQIA+ organizations [like Egale](#) and [Skipping Stone](#) raise money to support the legal fight against policies that threaten to strip rights from 2SLGBTQIA+ youth. Canadian pop duo Tegan and Sara [have a foundation](#) raising funds for queer justice by supporting grassroots organizations and activists.

8. Create and amplify opportunities for 2SLGBTQIA+ celebration and joy

Supporting 2SLGBTQIA+ youth means going beyond simply removing physical or legal barriers to inclusion. It also means creating and amplifying opportunities for celebration and joy. Finding a supportive community of people where you can be yourself can be a [life-changing experience](#).

Research suggests connecting with other members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community through celebratory events like [queer youth proms](#) can improve [happiness, comfort and safety](#).

9. Speak out against hate and discrimination

The last few years have [seen hateful attacks](#), [disinformation](#) and discrimination against the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. Now is the time to use the power you have to speak out.

Learn how to become a stronger ally. Intervene in conversations that are anti-2SLGBTQIA+ or perpetuate [mis- and disinformation](#).

2SLGBTQIA+ youth have asked adults to [stand up for them, including by not supporting politicians](#) who advocate for anti-2SLGBTQIA+ legislation.

There are [great resources](#) to help you become more informed about the evidence that debunks anti-2SLGBTQIA+ policy proposals. Read them, sign and share petitions, and join actions big and small (like [Queer Momentum](#)).

10. Listen to 2SLGBTQIA+ youth voices

Allies need to listen more than they speak. Now is the time to amplify the voices of [2SLGBTQIA+ youth](#) and lived experiences—youth know what they need from adults.

Check out results from large-scale surveys of 2SLGBTQIA+ youth such as this [Canadian study](#) guided by Youth Advisory Groups or the [Trevor Project's 2024 National Survey on the Mental Health of LGBTQ+ Young People](#) in the United States. This study provides a wealth of evidence about how to offer support to queer youth based on 18,000 responses.

This Pride month, come for the celebration but continue to show up to support 2SLGBTQIA+ youth all year. By taking concrete actions, we can build more inclusive communities and positively impact the lives of

2SLGBTQIA+ youth.

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