

Creating on-set safety for 2SLGBTQ people

Health and safety practices have created safer environments for cast and crews over the years. A project can now only launch with those practices in place. The cost of ignoring those practices is too high.

And what about psychological safety—feeling safe working with other people?

It is a paradox. 2SLGBTQ+ people often gravitate toward the arts to feel safe and included yet may not find the safety they need in artistic spaces. Recent research shows that most members of the 2SLGBTQ+ community have lived through experiences that make

them feel unsafe while working on Canadian films¹. Even unintended harm is harm.

The good news? Creating safety yields stellar results. When people feel safe, they are more creative and productive. While the work to create safety starts at the top with the project leaders, everyone in the cast and crew needs to buy into the work of creating safety on set. You may even qualify for funding to support equity on set.

Establish the basics on set to avoid issues before they happen, and be open to feedback that can make your workplace—on a soundstage or under a starry sky—safe:

Know the names. 2SLGBTQ+ refers to a variety of gender and sexual identities. A few of these letters may seem unfamiliar. 2S means Two-Spirit, an identification some Indigenous people use to reflect that they contain both masculine and feminine identities. Q reflects queer or questioning. Queerness may have broad implications, standing for a wide range of non-heterosexual gender or sexual identities or could reflect a person's sense of not belonging to any defined identity. The plus sign at the end reflects the multitude of gender and sexual identities not captured in the acronym. The takeaway? Everyone gets to define their own identity.

Respect pronouns and identities. Share yours when introducing yourself, so your cast and crew know it is safe to do the same. You can also ask people to identify their pronouns on their contracts. Use pronouns on call sheets, too.

Avoid stereotypes about 2SLGBTQ+ in day-to-day conversation and expectations of people on set. Stereotypes are based on a limited view of people, so be sure to ask people in the 2SLGBTQ+ community about their on-set skills without assumption.

Make training available for crew members at every level. Consider courses on unconscious bias, microaggressions, microinvalidations, and inclusive practices.

Set up gender-neutral washrooms, single-user accessible washrooms, or both. If you are filming in a space with existing, gendered bathrooms, talk to the owners to see what can be done during the shoot to accommodate your production.

Make period products available for all crew members without assuming who will need them. Stock all bathrooms with products.

Alberta is on the leading edge of inclusion in film and television. Expect to see more places looking for inclusive hiring, infrastructure, and experience. You can be an inclusion leader, even before you start production.

Dig deeper

Égale Canada, Pronoun Usage Guide <https://egale.ca/awareness/pronoun-usage-guide/>

Harvard Implicit Bias Test <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>

The Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion workplace self-assessment
<https://ccdi.ca/media/3646/toolkit-business-case-en.pdf>