

REFLECTION RESOURCE FOR SERVICE PROVIDERS

working with survivors of conversion therapy

Working with survivors of conversion therapy, as well as those at risk of being exposed to these practices, can feel daunting. No one wants to do or say the wrong thing. But it is important—we never know we will walk through our doors!

It also matters because the health and social service sector, in Canada and around the world, is not and has not always been a welcoming place for 2SLGBTQIA+ communities. In fact, our sectors have been complicit in enacting or supporting conversion therapy. Sometimes this has been intentional, and sometimes it is not—but our actions, regardless of intentions, can cause harm. Reflecting on this history, and on the harms that health and social services continue to cause, is vital to building safer and more inclusive spaces moving forward.

This tool is a first step towards supporting you to create an inclusive environment for all 2SLGBTQIA+ clients and their families, and pushing back against conversion therapy. It's designed to allow you to reflect on your professional practice, and on the practices of your workplace, in order to identify strengths and weaknesses when it comes to 2SLGBTQIA+ inclusion and specifically to homophobic and transphobic conversion therapy practices.



No Conversion Canada

INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION

1

Reflecting on knowledge

- Do you know about the legal status of conversion therapy in Canada?
- Do you know how to spot conversion therapy practices?
- Do you know what resources are available to survivors of conversion therapy?

2

Reflecting on skills you want to build

- What would you do if a client at your organization shared that they had experienced conversion therapy? Are there things you're not sure how to do?
- What would you do if a client requested information on conversion therapy or revealed that they were seeking it out for themselves or for a family member?
- How confident are you at interacting with 2SLGBTQIA+ clients?
- Do you know what to do if a client requests information on gender affirming care?
- Do you know what to do if a client asks about changing their name or pronouns?

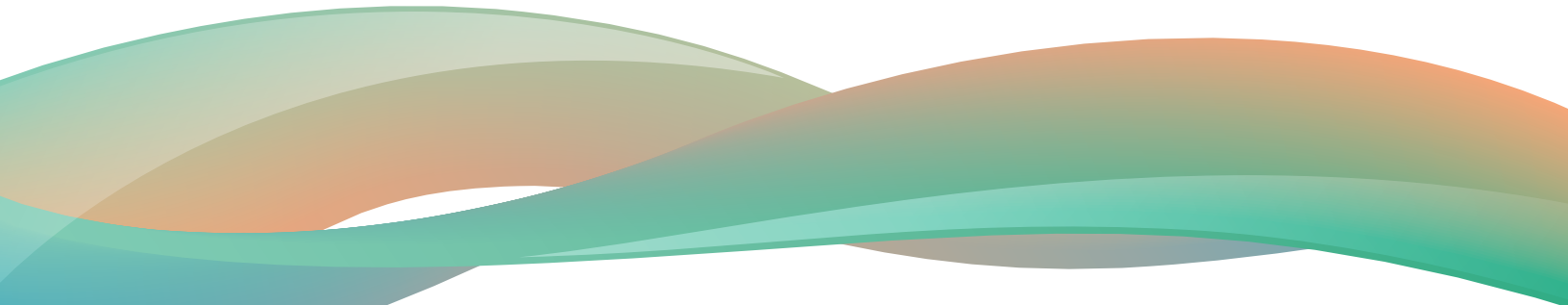
3

Reflecting on biases and misconceptions

- What kinds of things were you taught about 2SLGBTQIA+ people growing up?
- What assumptions might you make about someone if they told you they had experienced conversion therapy?
- Is there anything about the idea of working with survivors of conversion therapy that makes you uncomfortable? Where might that discomfort be coming from?

4

Reflecting on personal identity

- Do you have any personal experiences of homophobia or transphobia in general, or conversion practices in particular, that influence your work?
 - Do you have other experiences of oppression that influence your work?
 - Do you have ways to take care of yourself while doing this work?
 - Do you have support from others while doing this work?
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ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENT

1

Assessing your organization for 2SLGBTQIA+ inclusion

- Do visual materials in your organization and on your website show and celebrate sexual and gender diversity?
- Do intake forms have inclusive options for trans and gender-diverse people?
- Do staff receive training on 2SLGBTQIA+ inclusion?
- Are there gender neutral washrooms/changerooms/etc?
- If you have gendered programming, are trans and gender diverse people included in that programming, and if so, how?
- Do you have a clear process for client feedback, complaints, and accountability? Is this process publicized and easily accessible for clients?

2

Assessing your organization for competence around conversion therapy and survivor support

- Do you have protocols in place to support survivors of conversion therapy?
- Do you have protocols in place for vetting resource referrals for conversion therapy red flags, or for positive signs of 2SLGBTQIA+ inclusion?
- Does your organization have principles of trauma-informed care built into your programming and policies? Is this something staff are trained in?

Conclusion: Getting started on these questions might feel overwhelming, but there is no need to do it all at once. Instead, try building a practice of continuous learning, tackling questions and goals in whatever order and whatever pace works for you.

Reflection can also be intimidating because we might be nervous about doing something wrong, and that can feel vulnerable. But everyone makes mistakes. Try to turn mistakes into learning opportunities, and bear in mind that they are part of the process.

Reflecting on both your own professional practice and the practices in your workplace is the first step towards creating a safer space for survivors of conversion therapy. By considering these questions, identifying strengths and weaknesses, and making changes based on what you discover, you can build and maintain an inclusive environment.