

Resolution 3: Supporting 2SLGBTQ+ Rights

National Committee Name

National Advocacy Standing Committee

National Committee Chair

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Proposer of the Resolution

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Resolved Clauses

RESOLVED, That CFUW commit to supporting the human rights, equality, and inclusion of 2SLGBTQ+ (Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer +) people.

RESOLVED, That CFUW urge all levels of government to protect the rights of 2SLGBTQ+ youth and adults, ensuring their access to healthcare, education, employment, and housing, free from discrimination and violence.

RESOLVED, That CFUW urge all levels of government to fund programs and services that support 2SLGBTQ+ people—including, but not limited to, gender-affirming care, mental health care, community support services, and public education campaigns—with particular emphasis on meeting the needs of the most marginalized.

RESOLVED, That CFUW urge provincial and territorial governments to implement comprehensive sexual education curricula that speaks to the diversity of sexual orientations and gender identities, in line with the 2019 *Canadian Guidelines for Sexual Health Education*.

Background

Defining 2SLGBTQ+

The terms and acronyms used to describe sexual and gender identities have evolved—and will continue to evolve—over time. The acronym in this proposed resolution reflects common practice, though the exact acronym used varies depending on the individual, organization, or institution. 2SLGBTQ+ stands for: Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer. The ‘+’ is inclusive of all other sexual and gender diverse identities, including non-binary. For more information about what these terms mean, please see the [Government of Canada’s glossary](#).

Filling the Gap in CFUW’s Adopted Resolutions (Resolved Clause #1)

CFUW does not currently have any adopted resolutions on 2SLGBTQ+ rights or issues. This proposed resolution aims to fill this gap by affirming that CFUW is committed to

2SLGBTQ+ equality, rights, and inclusion. It is important to recognize that the struggle for 2SLGBTQ+ rights is a part of the wider struggle for human rights which CFUW champions, and to ensure CFUW spaces are inclusive and welcoming to all. This overarching commitment is the goal of Resolved Clause #1.

Discrimination Against 2SLGBTQ+ People (Resolved Clause #2)

Although discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity is prohibited by the Canadian Human Rights Act, 2SLGBTQ+ individuals continue to face discrimination, violence, and hate crimes. A 2020-21 survey of 2SLGBTQ+ individuals found that over the previous five years, 39% of respondents had experienced violence due to homophobia, transphobia, biphobia, or other forms of discrimination directed at sexual orientation or gender identity (Government of Canada, 2023). In 2023, Statistics Canada reported that hate crimes targeting sexual orientation had increased 69% from the previous year (Statistics Canada, 2024). In February 2024, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service warned that the “violent threat posed by the anti-gender movement is almost certain to continue over the coming year” (Tunney, 2024).

2SLGBTQ+ people also continue to experience discrimination and marginalization when accessing essential services like healthcare, education, employment, and housing. Resolved Clause #2 thus urges all governments to take action on these issues and ensure 2SLGBTQ+ people’s rights are protected.

The Need for 2SLGBTQ+ Programs and Services (Resolved Clause #3)

Members of the 2SLGBTQ+ community experience higher levels of depression, anxiety, suicide, addiction, homelessness, and violence (Centre for Innovation in Campus Mental Health, n.d.; Moore, 2024; Learning Network, 2018). This is particularly the case for 2SLGBTQ+ individuals with other intersecting identities, such as racialized, disabled, and/or young people. The unique, culturally-constructed barriers that 2SLGBTQ+ community members face, especially those who are most marginalized, necessitate tailored programs and services that support their health and wellbeing. This is the focus of Resolved Clause #3.

Transgender youth are five times more likely to think about suicide, and 7.6 times more likely to attempt it (Kingsbury et al., 2022). Gender-affirming care can be a crucial aspect of supporting the health and wellbeing of transgender youth. Gender-affirming care is defined by the Canadian Paediatric Society (2023) as “care provided to an individual to support their gender identity; this care may be medical, surgical, social, and/or psychological”. The Canadian Medical Association supports the provision of gender-affirming care:

“Ensuring children have universal access to a full range of medical care is essential for their well-being. We know that transgender youth have higher rates of mental health issues, including suicidal tendencies, due to stigma that they face. By

providing comprehensive health care options, we affirm the dignity and humanity of transgender individuals, reinforcing the notion that everyone deserves access to the medical support necessary for authentic self-expression” (Canadian Medical Association, 2024).

The Canadian Paediatric Society (2023) outlines how “adolescents who have sought and received hormonal suppression as a part of a multidisciplinary approach to care report improved mental health and psychosocial functioning. Access to these medications has been associated with lower odds of suicidal ideation over the life course.” Thus, gender-affirming care, and inclusive healthcare services more broadly, are lifesaving services that need to be properly funded.

Community support services, such as drop-in centres, hotlines, social programming, counselling, and housing services, also have the potential to be lifesaving. They play a key role in combatting social isolation and providing peer support. Additionally, Resolved Clause #3 urges governments to fund public education campaigns about the diversity of sexual orientations and gender identities, to reduce stigma and promote acceptance of 2SLGBTQ+ communities.

Substantial, long-term investments in these areas will help to address the inequities faced by 2SLGBTQ+ communities and improve wellbeing and quality of life.

Sexual Education Curriculum (Resolved Clause #4)

Finally, Resolved Clause #4 covers sexual education curricula. It is important that sexual education speaks to the experiences and needs of *all* students, to ensure they are all able to stay safe and healthy. Inclusive sexual education that teaches students about different sexual orientations and gender identities can also promote acceptance and reduce homophobic and transphobic beliefs among students (Kesler et al., 2023).

The 2019 Canadian Guidelines for Sexual Health Education, funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada, state:

“Sexual health education programs should be relevant to and address the learning needs of LGBTQI2SNA+ people. Sexual health education programs should encourage acceptance and respect for the diversity of sexual and gender identities that exist in the community and include the critical evaluation of discriminatory attitudes and practices.”

These are only guidelines, however, as provinces and territories develop their own sexual education curricula. As a result, not all students receive comprehensive sexual education. For the health and wellbeing of 2SLGBTQ+ students, as well as the overall attainment of an inclusive, stigma-free society, it is important for provincial and territorial governments

to develop sexual education curricula that speaks to the diversity of sexual orientations and gender identities.

Conclusion

CFUW's mission is to achieve equality and social justice, and this mission cannot be achieved if the rights of 2SLGBTQ+ people are not upheld. While great progress has been made, Canada is not yet a place where everyone is treated with dignity, respect, and kindness regardless of gender identity and sexual orientation. We all have a role to play in changing this, and this Resolution seeks to commit CFUW to taking part. It calls upon our Clubs to be welcoming spaces, and calls upon our governments to take action to support the wellbeing of 2SLGBTQ+ communities, upholding their rights, and fostering a more inclusive society.

Implementation

To implement this resolution, CFUW Clubs and members can:

- Use inclusive language and ensure everyone feels welcome to be themselves in Club spaces.
- Review Club policies and procedures to ensure they use inclusive language. Clubs seeking guidance should review CFUW's Policy on Gender Equity in Club Educational Grants, Bursaries, and Scholarships, available on page 76 in the Administrative Procedures Book, Volume 2.
- Stand up for 2SLGBTQ+ people's rights and call out homophobic or transphobic comments.
- Read, watch, and listen to 2SLGBTQ+ stories and perspectives, to further their own understanding and inclusion of 2SLGBTQ+ communities.
- Follow guides to being a 2SLGBTQ+ ally, such as [this one](#).
- Learn about the Two Spirit identity and how colonial norms and systems have repressed Indigenous understandings of gender and sexuality, using resources such as [this video](#).
- Subscribe to 2SLGBTQ+ advocacy organizations' newsletters and follow them on social media to stay up to date on their activities and participate in their campaigns.
- Donate to, volunteer with, and collaborate with local 2SLGBTQ+ non-profit community organizations.
- Attend or participate in local Pride parades and events.
- Host and attend presentations on topics such as gender identity, the history of the 2SLGBTQ+ rights movement, challenges faced by 2SLGBTQ+ communities, and how to practice allyship.
- Explore awarding scholarships for 2SLGBTQ+ students.
- Write to local politicians urging sufficient long-term funding for programs and services that support 2SLGBTQ+ individuals, referencing specific programs and services in your community as applicable.

- Write to provincial education authorities about the importance of inclusive sexual education curricula that speaks to the diversity of sexual orientations and gender identities.

In provinces where transgender youth's rights have been or may one day be curtailed, CFUW Clubs and Provincial Councils can:

- Meet with or write to their respective provincial representatives to voice their opposition to any policies that restrict transgender youth's rights to express their gender as they choose and access the healthcare services that their physicians feel are best for them.

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