Native American LGBTQA+ and Two-Spirit Resource Guide

What is Two-Spirit?

Two-Spirit is an identity created by indigenous people for indigenous people as a way to challenge colonial ways of understanding native gender and sexual expression. It should not be used as an identity by non-indigenous people. Two-Spirit is an identity label that describes gender identity and/or sexual orientation. Other terms might be used within different tribal communities, so always respect a person’s self-identification. Overall, the term two-spirit is generally preferred to “berdache,” which is a word that European settlers used to describe a third gender person (woman-living-man) who is Native American (Poynter, 2016).

It is cultural appropriation for someone who is non-indigenous to identify as Two-Spirit. Appropriate alternatives for a non-indigenous person who identifies as multiple genders are bigender, pangender, and polygender.

Looking for more information or resources about Two-Spirit?

Content Warning: Some of the following resources contain discussions of racism, colonialism, boarding schools, intergenerational trauma, hate crimes, alcoholism and drug use, homelessness

Articles

- “Supporting LGBTQ Native American Students” – GLSEN
  https://www.glsen.org/supporting-lgbtq-native-students

- “Supporting LGBTQ/Native American LGBT People” – Center for American Progress

- “Tribal Equity Toolkit 2.0: Tribal Resolutions and Codes to Support Two Spirit and LGBT Justice in Indian County”
  http://graduate.lclark.edu/live/files/15810-tribal-equity-toolkit-20

- “8 Things You Should Know About Two Spirit People” – Tony Enos
  https://indiancountrymedianetwork.com/culture/social-issues/8-misconceptions-things-know-two-spirit-people/

- “5 Things Queer and Questioning Indigenous Folks Should Consider About Claiming Two Spirit Identity” – Mehealani Joy
  https://everydayfeminism.com/2015/10/consider-two-spirit-identity/
• “Two-Spirit Pride” – Rachel Browne

Videos

• “What Is Two Spirit?” – sexplanations
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LRGRevlUswl

• “Our Families: LGBT/ Two Spirit Native American Stories” – BasicRights
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qeFgT-X7Ajc

• “Two Spirits, One Dance for Native American Artist” – AJ+
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0OB0wdzogy0

Films

• Two Spirits: Sexuality, Gender, and the Murder of Fred Martinez (2009, documentary)
  “TWO SPIRITS interweaves the tragic story of a mother's loss of her son with a revealing look at the largely unknown history of a time when the world wasn't simply divided into male and female and many Native American cultures held places of honor for people of integrated genders.”
  CW: graphic discussion/depiction of racist and homophobic hate crime

Books


Organizations

• UA Queer and Trans People of Color & Two-Spirit Discussion Group
  Contact the LGBTQA+ Resource Center for this semester's meeting schedule

• Tucson Two Spirit Group
  Second Tuesday of each month
  160 N. Stone Ave.
Call to confirm meeting dates/times: Marlene F. Jose (520) 884-7131, ext 234.

- Native PFLAG Phoenix Chapter  
  [https://www.nativepflag.org](https://www.nativepflag.org)