

Resources to help you create positive spaces:

The Positive Spaces Initiative
 Resources, training, and events to support LGBTQIA+ newcomers in Ontario.
positivespaces.ca

Rainbow Railroad
 An organization that provides support to LGBTQIA+ people outside of Canada seeking asylum.
rainbowrailroad.ca

Settlement.Org
 A collection of resources for immigrants, refugees, and newcomers in Ontario.
settlement.org

The African and Caribbean Council on HIV/AIDS in Ontario (ACCHO)
 Education, advocacy, support, and leadership in response to HIV/AIDS in African, Caribbean, and Black communities.
accho.ca

211 Ontario
 Programs, resources, and services for people who identify as LGBTQIA+
211ontario.ca/211-topics/lgbtq/

LGBT Youth Line
 A youth-led support line for LGBTQIA+ youth (29 and under) across Ontario.
youthline.ca

Trans PULSE
 A community based research project with information and resources to support trans people in Ontario.
transpulsesproject.ca

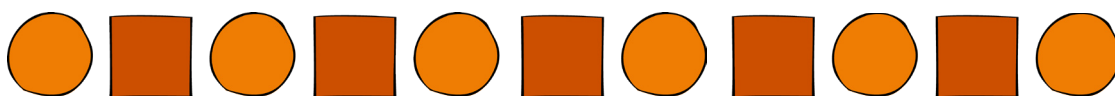
It's Pronounced Metrossexual
 A free online resource for learning about gender, sexuality, and social justice.
itspronouncedmetrossexual.com/

Rainbow Health Ontario
 A province-wide program that promotes the health of LGBTQIA+ communities
rainbowhealthontario.ca/

What side of the call are you on?



Choose to be a positive space.



What is a positive space?

Positive Spaces are welcoming environments where LGBTQIA+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, questioning, intersex, asexual, etc.) folks are able to access culturally inclusive services with dignity and respect, and where service providers can work free from discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. Everyone can work to create Positive Spaces by challenging homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, heterosexism, monosexism, and cissexism.

What does language have to do with positive spaces?

In order to build a positive space and make all newcomers feel comfortable and visible, it is important to know the appropriate terminology and concepts related to the LGBTQIA+ community, as well as how to **address oppressive and hurtful language**. Hearing negative terms impacts a person's sense of self and their sense of safety. Over time, if these experiences accumulate, it can erode the self-esteem of LGBTQIA+ immigrants and refugees, and impact their choice to disclose their identities to others, particularly if they perceive that they don't belong in their communities.

How can I practice inclusive language?

Give space for self-identification. Approach intake questions in an open-ended way that allows for disclosure of sexual orientation and/or gender identity and expression if the individual feels comfortable. Asking non-judgemental questions in a sensitive way will foster trust in your interactions. Never assume to know how a person self-identifies - if you are not sure what term or pronoun a person prefers, just ask!

Consider the impact of language. Think about the terms we use everyday to discuss gender, marital status, family structure, etc., and how that language can reinforce **heterosexism, cissexism, and monosexism** within your workplace. An example would be to use the term 'partner' instead of terms such as 'husband' or 'wife.' Asking a person about their 'partner' leaves more options for that person to share the reality of their family structure and home life.

Challenge labels. The space given to LGBTQIA+ immigrants and refugees to express themselves is limited by ideas about who they should be and how they should behave. Regardless of whether someone's experience fits into your understanding of what it means to be an immigrant or refugee, it is your responsibility as a service provider to validate that experience and ensure that they are delivering service with dignity and respect.