

# EQUIPPED

## Mental Health Matters

### A 2SLGBTQ+ Workbook



Canadian Mental  
Health Association  
Calgary  
*Mental health for all*



# In Memory

**The EQUIPPED program has been initiated by a donation that was provided to CMHA Calgary in memory of Phillip Thomas.**

*“On Friday, September 13, 2019, at the age of 25 years, Phillip Thomas of Calgary, AB, passed away gracefully in his home. He was a son, a brother, a student, a teaching assistant (TA), and a friend.*

*From a young age, Phillip displayed a natural talent for tennis and a passion for fitness. Over the years, he competed in many tennis tournaments, was a member of the Dinos tennis team, and held the deadlifting record at the University of Calgary gym. He also loved competing (winning) against his family in Ping Pong, cooking healthy food, and watching/critiquing new movies and television shows with his family and friends. He is most remembered for his incredible intellect, his countless inside jokes with so many people, and his innate ability to make everyone laugh.*

*Phillip had a selection of goofy looks he would make that could make anyone laugh and could roast just about anyone – anytime. He also had this innate ability to create inside jokes with just about anyone whether it was in the form of hilarious comedy skits like Key and Peele, slightly offside comments, expertly executed pranks or witty remarks; he knew exactly what to say. He would always joke around making everyone laugh so hard, and always managed to put a smile on our faces.*

*He demonstrated a curiosity about the great mysteries of the world that was evident in his favourite shows and truly developed a passion for research, which eventually propelled him to pursue his master’s degree in Math + Computer Science. His passion for research and his natural teaching ability were evident as he had received an award for being an exceptional TA. We would sit in awe as he explained what can only be described as “the matrix” that he called algorithms or something; honestly it went over our heads, but we loved how he lit up talking about it.*



*He was an incredibly bright and talented young man and was able to brighten many of his fellow students' days. He was one of the most perceptive and unique minded people some have ever met, he was accomplished, supported and loved, and yet he battled anxiety and depression most of his adult life.*

*His mental health struggles started when he was a teenager and progressed throughout the years.*

*He felt it was only a temporary solution and was too tired to keep trying to figure it out. He felt alone, he felt that he would never support himself with a job, that he would never find a partner and that he would never find a permanent solution. He didn't drink or do any drugs, he was physically healthy, and he was loved and supported, but he still felt that he couldn't cope and was too tired to keep fighting. It breaks our hearts that he left us so soon, but he lives on in our memories and stories, and in what all of us have and will become because of him.*

*Our hope is that this program equips teens and young adults with the tools and resources they need to cope with mental health struggles, build resilience, and end the stigma around mental health. CMHA Calgary has helped our family survive this terrible tragedy, and we hope this program can help prevent another one."*

The Thomas Family



## PRACTICE

In Phillip's honour, this symbol will be used throughout these courses to help emerging adults practice mental health tools and build their own resiliency.



EQUIPPED

# Acknowledgements

## Land Acknowledgement

In the spirit of reconciliation, we acknowledge that the people of CMHA Calgary live, work, and play on the traditional territories of the Blackfoot Confederacy (Siksika, Kainai, Piikani), the Tsuut'ina, and the Chiniki, Bearspaw, and Wesley First Nations, more commonly known as the Goodstoney First Nations, the Métis Nation (Region 3), and all people who make their homes in the Treaty 7 region of Southern Alberta. This Land Acknowledgement reminds us of the histories that precede us, highlights our responsibilities going forward, and helps bring us together on a shared journey of Truth and Reconciliation.



## What is the Canadian Mental Health Association – Calgary Region?

Canadian Mental Health Association – Calgary Region (CMHA Calgary) builds awareness and provides education and support for individuals and families living with mental health or substance use concerns. CMHA Calgary works closely with other community organizations to bridge gaps in the mental health care system and facilitates access to important services and resources.

## What is YouthSMART?

CMHA Calgary's YouthSMART (**Youth Supporting Mental Health And Resiliency Together**) integrates collaborative, youth-led mental health learning opportunities in local junior and senior high schools. YouthSMART knows that students are incredibly influential amongst their peers, within their schools, families, and communities. As such, YouthSMART values youth as peer contributors, actively involved in the programming and opportunities that directly impact their wellness, and works with SMART School Leaders to transform the culture of their school surrounding mental health. For more information about CMHA Calgary's YouthSMART, check out [YouthSMART.ca](https://youthsmart.ca).

## What is EQUIPPED?

EQUIPPED offers mental health training and tools for young adults. It builds on the basic concepts taught in YouthSMART, but expands knowledge for a slightly older audience of emerging adults ages 16 to 24. The program is an online, self-directed mental health education platform that offers a variety of courses. The EQUIPPED name indicates that these educational courses will help to equip a young person with foundational mental health concepts and the skills necessary to practice self-care.

## Funder Acknowledgement

We are so grateful for the support of donors, funders, and partners who are helping make EQUIPPED possible for youth and young adults to access mental health literacy tools whenever they need them.

A special thanks to the Community Initiatives Program through the Government of Alberta for continuously supporting youth mental health and funding the Mental Health Matters: A 2SLGBTQ+ workbook and module.



# How to Use this Workbook

Emerging adults are dealing with a unique balance of stress due to many life changes. Throughout this period, emerging adults may experience the following challenges: the pursuit of educational or career goals, moving out of their childhood home, establishing financial independence, establishing new relationships, and developing their sense of identity (who they will be).

This workbook aims to equip you with mental health knowledge and skills to understand the things you can do to help support your mental health. This workbook is primarily designed for those who are 16 to 24, also known as emerging adults.

This workbook was designed alongside the online module Mental Health Matters: A 2SLGBTQ+ Course, available at [equipped.youthsmart.ca](http://equipped.youthsmart.ca). Although it can be used independently, you may wish to check out the online module for additional information and resources.

## Materials Needed

There is not much required for this workbook other than an open mind and some curiosity. A pen and coloured pencils would be helpful.

If you don't have access to a printer, you can recreate the activities on any blank paper.

# Table of Contents

In Memory .....	1
Acknowledgements .....	3
How to Use this Workbook .....	5
The 2SLGBTQ+ Community .....	8
Pronouns .....	11
Identity.....	12
I Am Statements.....	13
Activity – I AM .....	14
Coming Out Guide.....	15
Coming Out Decision Making .....	16
Coming Out Conversation Guide .....	17
Mental Health .....	18
Activity - Mental Health Check In.....	19
Dealing with Stress .....	20
Coping with Stressful Situations .....	21
Activity - Identify Stressor Worksheet.....	22
Coping with Microaggressions.....	23
Activity - Reflect on Situations You Have Encountered .....	24

Shifting Your Perspective .....	25
Activity - Picture Your Mind as a Cup .....	26
Allyship .....	27
Reflect: Are You an Ally? .....	28
Activity – How Would You Be an Ally in the Following Situations? .....	29
Supporting Your Well-being .....	30
Self-Advocacy .....	31
Activity - Self-Advocacy Worksheet .....	32
Protective Factors .....	33
Activity - Reflection .....	34
Community .....	35
Activity - Finding Supports .....	36
Activity - Reflection .....	37
Boundaries .....	38
Activity - Practice Your Boundary Setting .....	39
Activity - Create a Support Plan.....	40
Where to Get Help.....	41
Stay Connected with CMHA Calgary .....	42
References .....	43



# The 2SLGBTQ+ Community

At CMHA Calgary, we believe in 'Mental Health for All', and this includes the gender, sexual, and romantically diverse community.

This workbook provides an introductory learning experience about what it means to be a member of the 2SLGBTQ+ community or to support someone who is. It also provides valuable information about the unique mental health experiences someone who is part of the 2SLGBTQ+ community may face, as well as how to support positive mental well-being.

## What does 2SLGBTQ+ stand for?

Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Queer/Questioning

+ sign – used to acknowledge the many terms that can be used to describe the various additional identities that can exist within the community.

It is important to understand the various terms used to describe different identities within the 2SLGBTQ+ community.

## The Gender Unicorn




Illustration inspired by Trans Student Educational Resources (TSER)  
[www.transstudent.org/gender](http://www.transstudent.org/gender)

 **Gender Identity**


- Female/Woman/Girl
- Male/Man/Boy
- Other Gender(s)

 **Gender Expression**

- Feminine
- Masculine
- Other

 **Sex Assigned at Birth**

- Female
- Male
- Other/Intersex

 **Physically Attracted to**

- Women
- Men
- Other Gender(s)

 **Emotionally Attracted to**

- Women
- Men
- Other Gender(s)



## Gender Diversity Terminology<sup>1,2</sup>

<b>Gender</b>	Gender is a social construct – an idea created by people to help categorize and explain the world around them. Gender comes with a set of expectations like how to act, talk, dress, feel emotion, and interact with other people
<b>Gender Identity</b>	Each person’s internal and individual experience of gender. A person’s gender identity may be the same as or different from their sex assigned at birth
<b>Gender Expression</b>	This is how a person chooses to outwardly express their gender. This can include appearance, name, or pronouns
<b>Cisgender</b>	Used to describe someone whose gender identity is the same as the sex they were assigned at birth
<b>Transgender</b>	An umbrella term to describe people whose gender is not the same as or does not sit comfortably with the sex they were assigned at birth
<b>Nonbinary</b>	This is an umbrella term to represent people whose gender identity doesn’t fit comfortably within ‘man’ or ‘women’ labels. Note this can be a varied experience for individuals
<b>Gender Fluid</b>	Used to describe someone who moves between genders or has a fluctuating gender identity
<b>Gender Non-Conforming</b>	Someone who does not conform to socially accepted or stereotypical gender norms

<sup>1</sup> The Trevor Project. (2021, August 23). Understanding Gender Identities. The Trevor Project. <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/resources/article/understanding-gender-identities/>

<sup>2</sup> Fewster, P. H. (2018). *Researching for LGBTQ Health*. Lgbtqhealth.ca. <https://lgbtqhealth.ca/community/two-spirit.php>

## Sexual Diversity Terminology

<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	A person's identity in relation to the gender or genders to which they are attracted to
<b>Heterosexual</b>	Physically, romantically, or emotionally attracted to people of the opposite gender. Aka straight
<b>Bisexual</b>	A term used when someone is physically, romantically, or emotionally attracted to people of more than one gender
<b>Gay</b>	Physically, romantically, or emotionally attracted to people of the same gender
<b>Lesbian</b>	A woman whose physical, romantic, or emotional attraction is to other women
<b>Two-Spirit</b>	A term used by some Indigenous people to describe their sexual, gender, and/or spiritual identity. It recognizes that they may not live by the same terms used within Western culture
<b>Pansexual</b>	People who are attracted to others regardless of their gender
<b>Asexual</b>	People who do not feel sexual attraction to other people

# Pronouns

A pronoun is a word that refers to either the person talking (“I” or “you”) or someone or something that is being talked about (“he”, “she”, or “them”)<sup>3</sup>.

## Why use pronouns<sup>4</sup>?

People may make assumptions about a person’s gender based on their appearance or name. Assumptions aren’t always correct, accurate, or helpful. This can be harmful or damaging to some.

When you use someone’s correct pronouns it serves to create an inclusive environment where you demonstrate you care for and respect them.

Everyone has pronouns. These are not only used by transgender or non-binary individuals. People may be making a greater emphasis on sharing their pronouns for inclusion purposes, but it is important to remember the use of pronouns is not new.

The easiest way to ask someone about their pronouns is to share your own:



<sup>3</sup> Gender Pronouns | LGBTQ+ Resource Center. (n.d.). <https://uwm.edu/lgbtrc/support/gender-pronouns/#:~:text=What%20is%20a%20pronoun%3F>

<sup>4</sup> Pronouns: A How-To. (n.d.). The Diversity Center. <https://www.diversitycenterneo.org/about-us/pronouns/#:~:text=Pronouns%20are%20the%20way%20that>

# Identity

Emerging adulthood is a vital time for identity formation. This means figuring out who you are and who you want to be.

Identity includes your beliefs, personality, how you express yourself, your race, gender expression, religion, and much more. It is what makes you, you.

We all have multiple identities that intersect to influence how we experience our world, connect to others and create a sense of self<sup>5</sup>.



<sup>5</sup> Identity | *LBGTIQ Intersect*. (n.d.). <http://www.lgbtiqintersect.org.au/learning-modules/identity/>

# I Am Statements

Self-identification helps us to choose the labels we want others to use for us. It can be empowering to be in control and choose the labels used for us.

Reflect on the following questions. Then use these answers to fill out the “I Am” section on the next page.

## Questions:

What makes you, you?

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How do you think others would describe you?

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Imagine you are introducing yourself to a stranger. How would you describe yourself?

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When you apply these labels to yourself, how do you feel? They should feel affirming and right!

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What is your identity influenced by? How have your race, ethnicity, faith, community/sense of place, or other aspects influenced your identity?

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## Activity – I AM

Fill the “I AM” section with identifiers, adjectives, or other words that you feel represent you.

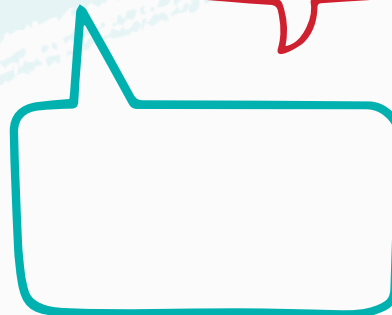


# PRACTICE

I AM  
worthy

I AM  
patient

I AM  
kind



# Coming Out Guide

Coming out refers to the process through which people identify, acknowledge, and decide to share information about their sexual orientation and/or gender identity with others<sup>6</sup>.

Coming out is a personal choice. There is no right or wrong way to come out.

Deciding to tell others can be a big, emotional decision. It is common to feel a variety of emotions. Make sure you take care of yourself.

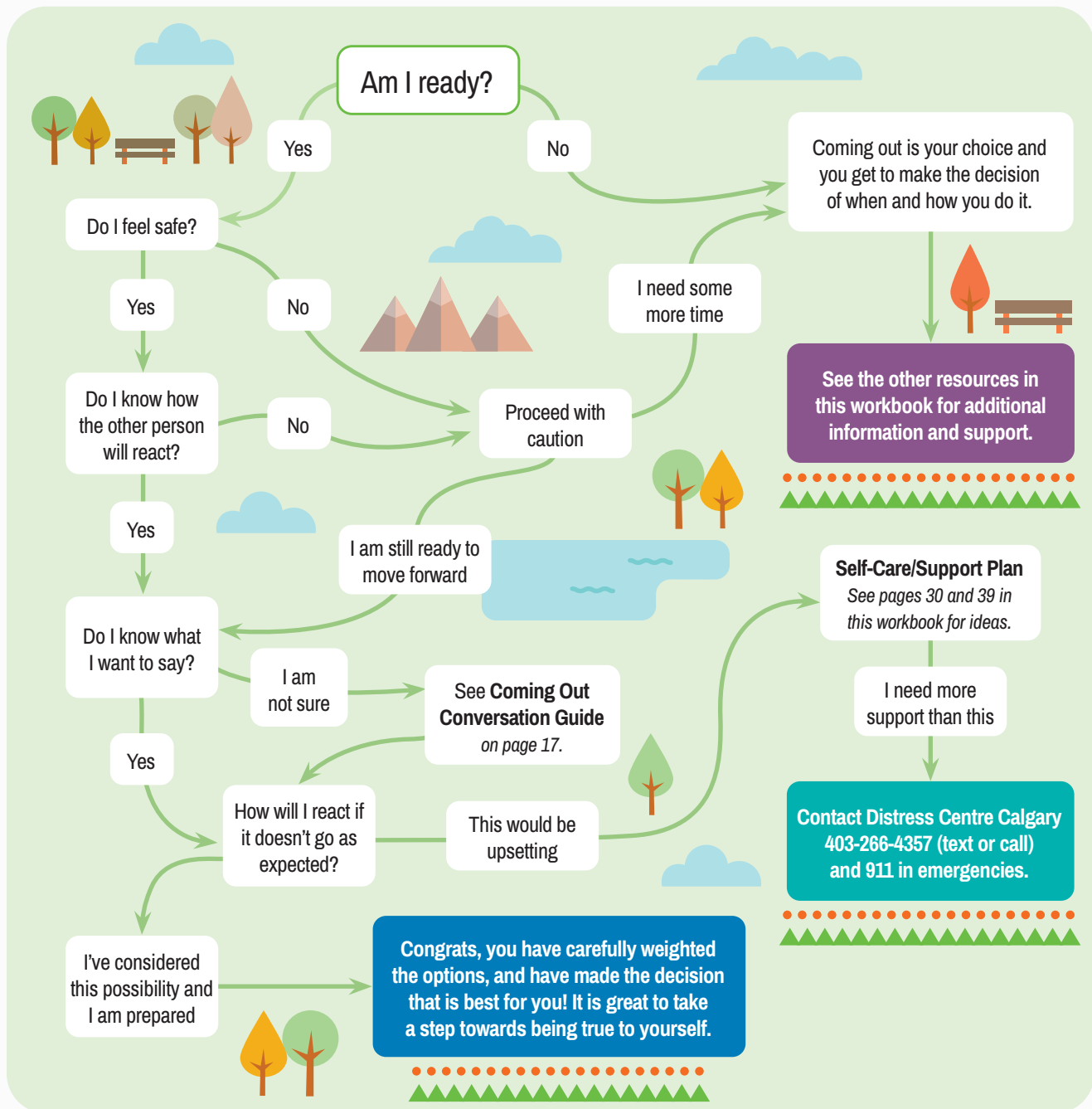


<sup>6</sup> *Coming Out: Living Authentically as LGB+*. (n.d.). HRC Digital Reports. Retrieved June 12, 2023, from [https://reports.hrc.org/coming-out-living-authentically-as-lgb?\\_ga=2.233244254.1106024709.1682527152-1668277584.1682527152](https://reports.hrc.org/coming-out-living-authentically-as-lgb?_ga=2.233244254.1106024709.1682527152-1668277584.1682527152)



# Coming Out Decision Making

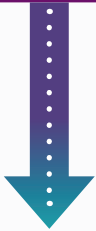
Note: coming out is a complex decision. This decision road map may not cover all of the things you want to consider. Always make the decision you feel is best for you.



# Coming Out Conversation Guide

This isn't a definitive overview of what it is like to come out. These are just a few things to consider along the way.

## Start the conversation



- **Timing:** Is now a good time?
- **Location:** Where do you feel comfortable? Are there distractions?
- **Safety:** Carefully weigh your risks and options.
- **What to say:** Consider sharing the following:
  - How you identify
  - What you need from them
  - Whether anyone else knows or who they can share this with

## Continue the conversation



- Check in on how the conversation is going
- Allow for questions. People may vary in their knowledge. You can answer their questions or point them to resources for them to educate themselves
- Remember you deserve to be treated with dignity and respect

## Re-frame things if the conversation is challenging



- You can stop and take a break at any point
- Acknowledge the feelings you both have. The person you disclose to might feel surprised, honoured, uncomfortable, supportive, skeptical, confused, and uncertain of how to react
- You will have your own feelings. If someone is making you feel negatively, consider letting them know how they make you feel

## After coming out

- Check in on your emotions and reach out to any safe people
- Engage in self-care and protect your mental well-being
- Set boundaries as needed
- Continue this workbook to see other ways your can support yourself after coming out

# Mental Health

Mental health is the state of well-being in which every individual realizes their potential, can cope with normal stresses of life, work productively, do well, and fully enjoy life.

Mental health involves how we feel, think, act, and interact with the world around us.

We all have mental health. Mental health is not the absence of mental illness.

Mental illness is a change in thinking, mood, and/or behaviour and is accompanied by distress and impaired functioning over time.

## **Mental Health in the 2SLGBTQ+ Community**

Everyone has a sexual orientation and gender identity. As a minority group, individuals can be treated differently, but it is important to know that identifying as 2SLGBTQ+ is not a mental illness or disorder.

Many 2SLGBTQ+ people will experience mental health struggles. This is often due to the discrimination and stigma they may face, as well as social isolation or exclusion. That being said, many individuals with the help of supportive communities will also be incredibly resilient and thrive.

## Activity - Mental Health Check In



# PRACTICE

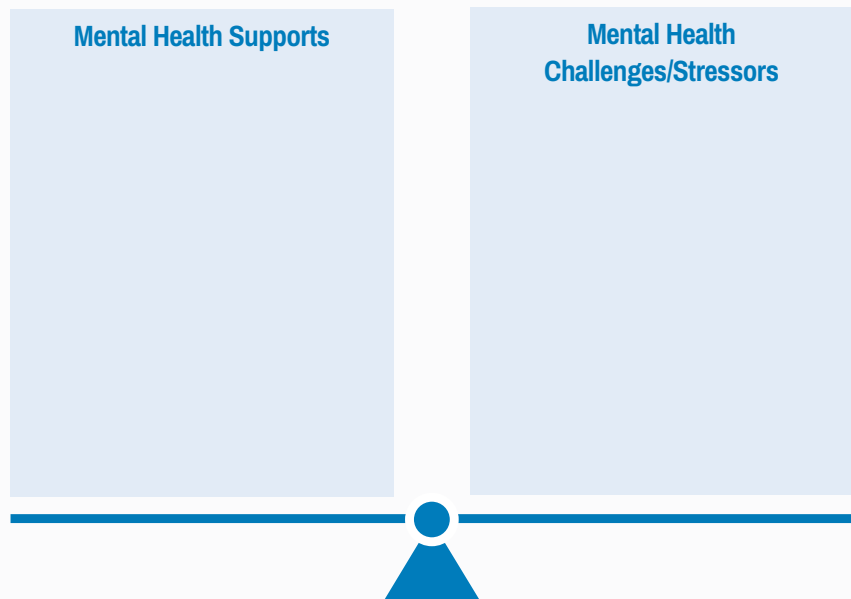
Mental health is about finding the balance between the stressors you face and the supports that help you overcome these challenges.

A mental health support is anything that helps you manage problems when they arise. This could include people in your life or coping strategies.

A mental health challenge or stressor is any thoughts, feelings, or behaviour that challenge your well-being. This can also include external things such as people or places that activate stress or make coping difficult.

Life is always changing, and as a result, what is on the scale will also shift and change. This can change whether the scale is balanced. It is common for the scale to become off-balanced when facing something difficult, as the stressors can outweigh the current supports you have. The scale may balance over time, but it also can be a sign that additional supports are needed.

Fill in your mental health scale as it currently stands:



### Reflect:

How is your mental health doing? Do you feel that you have balance?

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If needed, what could you do to change where you are?

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# Dealing with Stress

Stress is a normal reaction to the demands of life. People may feel stressed when the demands of the situation feel greater than the resources to cope with the situation. Depending on the severity, stress can feel like it is a hardship, adversity, or affliction that impacts an individual's sense of well-being.

Minority stress is triggered by the processes, institutions, structures, and thought processes that currently shape the world we live in.

Individuals in the 2SLGBTQ+ community experience minority stress due to the widespread discrimination the community faces.



# Coping with Stressful Situations

No matter the type of stress you are facing, it is important to have tools in place to deal with challenging situations.

## Reflect on your Stress

How do I feel in my body right now?

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What do I need to feel safe, secure, and heard during this time? How can I give that to myself?

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What can I learn from the situation I'm facing?

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What is useful about what I am thinking and feeling? What is not? Am I willing to let go of what is not useful?

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# Activity - Identify Stressor Worksheet



PRACTICE

Date/Time	Event <i>(Who/What/Where)</i>	Was the Stress Helpful or Hurtful?	Stress Level <i>High/Med/Low</i>	My Reaction <i>(e.g. heart pounding)</i>	My Emotions	Strategy
Yesterday evening	Talking with my friend about a frustrating encounter at work	Hurtful stress	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sweaty palms</li> <li>Lashed out at a friend</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Frustrated</li> <li>Sad</li> </ul>	Breathing exercise

Reflect on what you have filled out. Can you make any changes for next time?

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# Coping with Microaggressions

Microaggressions are everyday comments and questions that can be hurtful or stigmatizing to marginalized people and groups. They can be subtle and people may have no idea their comments or actions are harmful<sup>7</sup>.

Microaggressions can occur through the words people use or nonverbal actions.

How to deal with microaggressions<sup>8</sup>: **Name, Validate, and Act**

- **Name** the microaggression when it happens. Acknowledge that this happened and that it is not in alignment with your identity or self-worth
- **Validate** your feelings. It is natural to have a wide range of emotional responses
- **Act.** This can be an internal or external action or both:
  - Internal – thoughts or affirmations that reflect your value as an 2SLGBTQ+ person
  - External – saying something to the person who committed the microaggression, or removing yourself from the situation

<sup>7</sup> Stop Saying "That's So Gay!": 6 Types of Microaggressions That Harm LGBTQ People. (2014, February 7). Psychology Benefits Society. <https://psychologybenefits.org/2014/02/07/anti-lgbt-microaggressions/>

<sup>8</sup> Singh, A. (2018). *The Queer and Transgender Resilience Workbook* [Review of *The Queer and Transgender Resilience Workbook*]. New Harbinger Publications.



## Activity - Reflect on Situations You Have Encountered



# PRACTICE

Name:

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Validate:

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Act: (what you did, or how you could act next time)

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Name:

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Validate:

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Act:

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These situations can bring up challenging emotions. Take some time to take care of yourself or talk to someone.

# Shifting Your Perspective

A big challenge to your well-being can be the thoughts, messages, and beliefs that are internalized from the outside world.

Internalized stigma is the stress you feel when you take in all of the negative messages against the 2SLGBTQ+ community and direct them to yourself. This could look like self-hating thoughts, negative self-talk, feeling depressed, punishing yourself for the way you look or what you desire, and doubting yourself or your identity.

It is important to acknowledge these thoughts to create healthier thinking habits.



## Activity – Picture Your Mind as a Cup

The more negativity (i.e. internalized stigma, challenging beliefs, stress, etc.) the less room you have for positive thoughts, knowledge, or resilience.

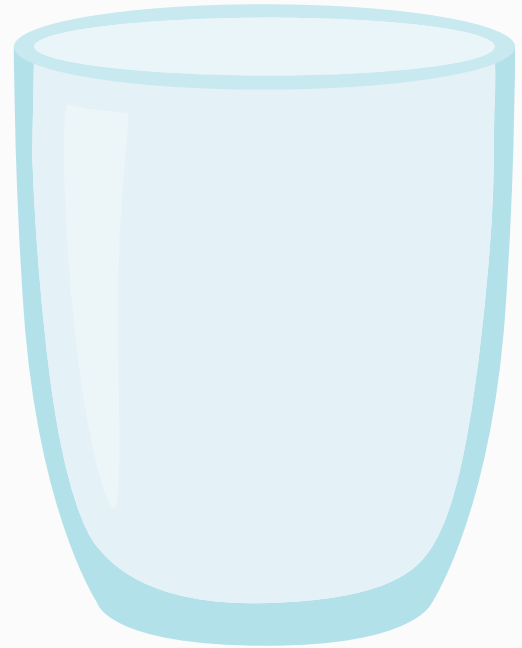


# PRACTICE

### Fill your cup as it currently is:

What is on your mind? What beliefs do you hold?

**Reflect:** How much space do you have dedicated to things that make you feel resilient? How much space do you have dedicated to things that stress you out or bring you down?



### Fill a cup with what you want your mind to be filled with:

How can you make the shift from the first cup to this cup?

The thoughts we hold onto can change from time to time. Reflect often to see how you are balancing the positive alongside the negative.



# Allyship

An ally is someone who supports people who are in a minority group even though they do not belong to that group themselves. In the 2SLGBTQ+ community, an ally is a straight and/or cisgender person who supports and advocates for 2SLGBTQ+ people.

## Quick tips for being an Ally

- Become familiar with the correct terminology
- Use correct name/pronouns
- Use inclusive language. For example, use folks instead of ladies and gentlemen, or say partner instead of assuming boyfriend/girlfriend
- Be open-minded when listening to others' experiences and stories
- Call out discrimination when you see it
- Learn about the issues that affect the community and work to support the community with these issues
- Be visible in your support
- Centre the impacted: Take the time to understand how the community wants to be supported. Sometimes this may mean speaking up for them and other times it may mean stepping aside so they can use their voice

There is no exact formula for how to be an ally, but this workbook can be a great place to start reflecting on your current practices.

# Reflect: Are You an Ally?

- Do you speak up when you see or hear people be discriminatory or even share hurtful jokes?
- Are you actively listening and learning from the people who live these experiences?
- Do you use inclusive language or share your pronouns?
- Do you transfer your privilege to those who have less?
- Do you allow space for others to express their thoughts and feelings?
- Do you believe and validate the stories and experiences you hear?
- Are you actively working to support the rights of 2SLGBTQ+ people and standing up for the issues that affect them?

Being an ally takes work!

**A**

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always  
centre the  
impacted

**L**

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listen and learn  
from those who  
live in oppression

**L**

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leverage  
your  
privilege

**Y**

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yield  
the  
floor



## Activity – How Would You Be an Ally in the Following Situations?



## PRACTICE

- A coworker, Greg (he/him) keeps saying “That’s so gay”, in response to things that frustrate him at work. When he has been confronted in the past, he says it is okay because he never says it around other gay people.

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- Your Aunt Linda (she/her) often vocalizes hurtful stereotypes about transgender people such as they are confusing children or they are only transitioning to be better at sports.

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- People often discuss how Kyla (they/them) is just experimenting with “her” gender identity, but this is a phase ‘she’ will grow out of.

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- A classmate Issa (she/her) is very vocal about her work as an ally, but there have been complaints from the members of the Gay Straight Alliance (GSA) club at school that she isn’t listening to the experiences of the people from the 2SLGBTQ+ community.

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**Reflect:** What is a situation that has come up in your life? What would you do differently or how could you be an ally in the future?

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# Supporting Your Well-being

Self-care is anything you do to take care of yourself so you can stay physically, mentally, and emotionally well<sup>9</sup>.

Self-care is about more than bubble baths and breathing exercises, although these can be helpful! It is about recharging your energy levels so you can continue to deal with any challenges that come your way.

There are a variety of ways to engage in self-care. Check out the following activities dealing with self-advocacy, protective factors, community support, boundaries, and creating a support plan.



<sup>9</sup> Lawler, M. (2021). *What is self-care and why is it critical for your health?* Everyday Health. <https://www.everydayhealth.com/self-care/>

# Self-Advocacy

Self-advocacy means speaking up for your rights, your needs, or the things that are important to you<sup>10</sup>.

Self-advocacy is a way to educate others about your needs, empower yourself, and make changes that benefit your life<sup>11</sup>.

Self-advocacy has three components<sup>12</sup>:

- Understanding your needs
- Knowing what kind of support might help to meet your needs
- Communicating these needs to others



<sup>10</sup> *Self-Advocacy Kit Book 1 Self-Advocacy and Human Rights Advocacy for Inclusion | Self-Advocacy Kit.* (n.d.). Retrieved June 21, 2023, from <https://www.advocacyforinclusion.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Self-Advocacy-Kit-Updated-Book-1-final-website.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> *Self Advocacy Guide.* (2015, September 25). Trans Rights BC. <https://www.transrightsbc.ca/take-action/self-advocacy-guide/>

<sup>12</sup> Lee, A. (n.d.). *Self-Advocacy: What It Is and Why It's Important.* [www.understood.org](http://www.understood.org). <https://www.understood.org/en/articles/the-importance-of-self-advocacy>



## Activity - Self-Advocacy Worksheet



# PRACTICE

What is the problem? What is your goal?  
Be clear and detailed about what you want to achieve.

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Who do you need to advocate to? Who has responsibility for this problem?

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What are the barriers to making this change?

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What strategies or resources could you use to help your efforts? Are there people who can support you?

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What will you do if this plan doesn't work out? Are there alternatives you are willing to explore?  
Plan for both positive and negative outcomes.

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# Protective Factors

Mental health is a process of risk factors and protective factors.

Risk factors can be anything that challenges your mental health. Protective factors help build and support resilience. It is like a shield to 'protect' you from adversity and keep you mentally healthy.

## Protective factors can include:

<b>Supportive relationships</b>	<b>Physical well-being</b>	<b>Compassion</b>
<b>Positivity</b>	<b>Coping skills</b>	<b>Community support</b>
<b>Self-esteem</b>	<b>Optimism</b>	<b>Feeling of control</b>
<b>Emotional self-regulation</b>	<b>Sense of purpose</b>	<b>Healthy thinking</b>
<b>Connection</b>		

## Activity - Reflection



# PRACTICE

What protective factors do you have in your life?

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What brings you joy? What makes you feel healthy and supported?

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What helps you bounce back after a hard day?

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Are there any protective factors you would like to improve?

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### Challenge

Throughout your day take pictures (or write down) everything that helps protect or support your mental health. This can be people, places, or things. Challenge yourself to see just how many you can find.

# Community

A community can be a virtual or physical space where people sharing common interests, goals, and/or experiences come together to share, connect, and work towards shared goals.

Your community can consist of both professional and natural supports.

Professional supports are a more formal support that includes people or organizations who are trained or certified to provide services, education, and resources.

Natural supports are relationships and associations that we develop in the course of daily living. Natural supports include family, friends, neighbours, coaches, coworkers, teammates, etc.<sup>13</sup>

It is important to utilize the relationships you already have in your life. Professional supports are very important, and there is a time and a place when access to these services is essential. Professional supports can also pose a challenge. Programs ending, waitlists to access services, or difficulty finding programs that accurately meet one's needs, etc. can impede someone from getting the help they need. This is why it is important to have natural supports you can rely on.

It is important to have support from those who accept and affirm your identity.

<sup>13</sup> *Working with Vulnerable Youth to Enhance their Natural Supports: A Practice Framework Acknowledgements Content Development.* (n.d.). [https://burnsfund.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/CC-Natural-Supports-Framework\\_2019\\_FINAL\\_Pages.pdf](https://burnsfund.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/CC-Natural-Supports-Framework_2019_FINAL_Pages.pdf)

## Activity - Finding Supports



PRACTICE

### Map out your community:

What supports currently exist in your life?

Think about places or people that are supportive. You can also include any online communities or services you connect with.

Highlight or star any supports who support or affirm your identity.



## Activity - Reflection



## PRACTICE

How can I connect with the community I already have?

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Reflect on your current supports. Do you have people in your life that are queer-friendly?  
Are they an ally?

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Who supports and affirms you?

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Where do you need more support?

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# Boundaries

Boundaries are rules or limits someone establishes to protect their well-being. Boundaries can include clear communication stating what you need, what you will and won't tolerate, and how you'd like others to treat you<sup>14</sup>.

Boundaries are important to protect and support your mental health. You can set a boundary at any time if someone is not supporting your identity, valuing your existence, or is in any way impacting your mental health<sup>15</sup>.

How to set boundaries:

Identify and define the boundary

Communicate what you need

Be simple and clear

Set consequences if needed



<sup>14</sup> 5 Tips for When People Cross Your Boundaries. (2022, May 6). Psych Central. <https://psychcentral.com/blog/when-people-cross-your-boundaries>

<sup>15</sup> 8 Tips on Setting Boundaries for Your Mental Health - DBSA. (n.d.). Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance. <https://www.dbsalliance.org/support/young-adults/8-tips-on-setting-boundaries-for-your-mental-health/>

## Activity - Practice Your Boundary Setting



## PRACTICE

### Example

**Situation:** Jared (he/him) is frustrated because his family consistently refers to his boyfriend Sam (he/him) as just a friend. It is important to Jared that his relationship is recognized.

**Boundary:** Jared wants to set a boundary around how his family treats his relationship and refers to Sam.

**Communicate your needs:** "I've noticed that whenever we speak about Sam, you refer to him as a friend. It is important to me that you acknowledge our relationship and use the words boyfriend or partner."

**Set consequences as needed:** "If you continue to refer to Sam as my friend, I may need to take a break from our regular family dinners".

The situation you are facing:

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What is the boundary you want to create?

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Communicate your needs:

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Set consequences as needed:

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## Activity - Create a Support Plan



## PRACTICE

It is important to know what people and places are safe for both your physical and mental well-being. Fill out the following information, and use this to reflect on when you need extra support.

**People:** Who in your life can you draw on for support?

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**Places:** What places do you feel safe being yourself?

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**Warning Signs:** What are the signs you are struggling or need extra support?

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**Coping Skills:** How do you like to cope with the stress you face?

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**Resources:** What organizations, websites, groups, etc. can you draw on for support?

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For example: Centre for Sexuality groups

<https://www.centreforsexuality.ca/programs-services/2slgbtq-programs/> or

It Gets Better Canada website <https://itgetsbettercanada.org/>

# Where to Get Help

This workbook was developed to provide introductory mental health knowledge and tips for emerging adults. However, if you are struggling or just need a listening ear, please reach out to one of the supports below for more assistance. You can also print and share this page with a friend who may need support.

## 2SLGBTQ+ Specific Resources

### Phone/Text

**LGBT National Hotline** 888-668-5428  
(Monday – Friday 2 pm - 10 pm, Saturday 10 am - 4 pm)

**LGBT National Youth Talkline** (25 & under)  
800-246-7743  
(Monday - Friday 2 pm - 10 pm, Saturday 10 am - 4 pm)

**Trans Lifeline** 877-330-6366 (3 pm - 11 pm)

### Websites

<https://www.centreforsexuality.ca/>  
<https://www.calgaryoutlink.ca/>  
<https://www.skippingstone.ca/>  
<https://calgarypride.ca/>  
<https://www.calgaryqueerartsociety.com/>  
<https://www.lgbthotline.org/>  
<https://itgetsbettercanada.org/>

### Phone/Text

- **Canadian Mental Health Association – Calgary Region (CMHA Calgary)**  
**Peer Line:** 403-297-1402
- **Distress Centre Calgary (24/7):**  
403-266-1605
- **ConnecTeen (24/7 talk):**  
403-264-TEEN (8336)
- **ConnecTeen (24/7 text):** 587-333-2727
- **Kids Help Phone (24/7 talk) :**  
1-800-668-6868
- **Kids Help Phone (24/7 text):** 686868

## Websites

[www.youthsmart.ca](http://www.youthsmart.ca)

[www.recoverycollegecalgary.ca](http://www.recoverycollegecalgary.ca)

[www.mindyourmind.ca](http://www.mindyourmind.ca)

[www.cmha.calgary.ab.ca](http://www.cmha.calgary.ab.ca)

[www.havethattalk.ca](http://www.havethattalk.ca)

[www.thealex.ca](http://www.thealex.ca)

## Note

CMHA Calgary does not necessarily support or endorse the listed community resources. We have reviewed each source; however external organizations may change content without notice.

# Stay Connected with CMHA Calgary



[www.cmha.calgary.ab.ca](http://www.cmha.calgary.ab.ca)

[www.youthsmart.ca](http://www.youthsmart.ca)

[www.recoverycollegecalgary.ca](http://www.recoverycollegecalgary.ca)

[www.equipped.youthsmart.ca](http://www.equipped.youthsmart.ca)



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@CMHACalgaryRegion



Canadian Mental Health Association - Calgary Region



Sign-up for our e-newsletter:

<https://secure.cmha.calgary.ab.ca/join-our-newsletter>



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