Where Pride Meets the Prairies

2SLGBTQ+ Youth Community Needs Mini Toolkit for Grande Prairie, Alberta



Developed by: *Northreach Society*
Funded by: *Women and Gender Equality Canada*
September 2026

Women and Gender Equality Canada
Femmes et Égalité des genres Canada

NORTHREACH

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How to Use This Toolkit

About This Toolkit

This toolkit is based on the 2SLGBTQ+ 2025–2026 Youth (13–29) Community Needs Assessment, conducted by Northreach Society and funded by Women and Gender Equality Canada. This toolkit was compiled by Amanda Gear, MA (Community Studies), BSW, RSW, 2SLGBTQ+ Community Needs Assessment Analyst at Northreach Society. It was shaped by youth and service provider participants through feedback, working sessions, and data collected during the assessment.

Purpose

A practical guide for service providers, organizations, allies, and community members to create a more inclusive, safe, and affirming Grande Prairie for 2SLGBTQ+ youth. It's designed to be actionable, adaptable, and youth centered.

Who is This For?

- **Service Providers:** Use mezzo and macro steps to implement systemic changes.
- **Allies & Community Members:** Focus on micro and mezzo actions.
- **Youth:** Share your voice, connect with resources, and advocate for your needs.
- **Policymakers & Leaders:** Use macro steps to drive community-wide change.

How it's Organized

- **Themes:** Each section addresses a key need from the Needs Assessment identified by youth participants.
- **Levels of Action:** Micro (individual), Mezzo (organizational), Macro (systemic).
- **Youth Voice:** Direct insights from youth to guide your work.
- **Local Spotlight:** Highlights a key Grande Prairie organization or provincial organization for each theme.

Tips for Success

- **Start small:** Pick one micro or mezzo action to implement this month.
- **Collaborate**: Partner with other organizations to amplify impact (e.g., share resources, co-host events).
- **Center youth:** Involve youth in planning, feedback, and leadership.

Theme 1: Community Acceptance

Goal: Create visible, affirming spaces where 2SLGBTQ+ youth feel safe, seen, and valued in Grande Prairie.

Youth & Service Provider Voice

- Youth feel safest around visible allies and queer peers (Community Acceptance, p. 11).
- Service providers recommend creating and promoting affirming spaces (e.g., signs, QR codes).

Reflection Questions

- **Individual:** How do you show allyship in your daily interactions?
- **Organizational:** How does your organization visibly signal safety?
- **Systemic:** How can Grande Prairie normalize acceptance?

Actionable Steps by Level

Level	Action	Example
Micro	Use correct pronouns	Ask for and respect pronouns in all interactions.
Micro	Display ally symbols	Wear pronoun pins or add pronouns to email signatures.
Mezzo	Train staff	Host workshops on inclusive practices.
Mezzo	Promote affirming spaces	Highlight businesses like Wonderland Games or CULTure.
Macro	Advocate for policies	Push for SOGIE-inclusive policies in schools/workplaces.
Macro	Launch ally campaigns	Encourage businesses to sign a Visible Ally Pledge.

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Local Spotlight: Northreach Society – Free Gender & Sexual Diversity training for youth and adults. northreach.ca

Theme 2: Friendship and Community

Goal: Foster peer support, reduce isolation, and build connections for 2SLGBTQ+ youth in Grande Prairie.

Youth & Service Provider Voice

- Youth feel most supported around friends and found family (Friendship and Community, p. 19).
- Service providers advise peer support networks and community building.

Reflection Questions

- **Individual:** How do you help foster connections between 2SLGBTQ+ youth?
- **Organizational:** How does your organization create opportunities for youth to build peer connections?
- **Systemic:** How can Grande Prairie fund low-cost, accessible peer support initiatives?

Actionable Steps by Level

Level	Action	Example
Micro	Be a connector	Introduce youth to peers, mentors, or affirming groups.
Micro	Share resources	Direct youth to age-appropriate communities.
Mezzo	Host low-cost events	Movie nights, game nights, or art workshops.
Mezzo	Promote existing groups	Share info about Northreach's youth group or Kickstand GP.
Macro	Fund youth-led initiatives	Advocate for grants or sponsorships.
Macro	Amplify youth voices	Platform youth to share their stories.

kickstand Grande Prairie
Operated by: Sunrise House giving Youth hope

Local Spotlight: Kickstand GP – Drop-in space (11–25), peer support, mental health support, and Indigenous wellness. mykickstand.ca/communities/grandeprairie/

Theme 3: Community Nonacceptance

Goal: Address systemic barriers, challenge harmful narratives, and create a culture of inclusion for 2SLGBTQ+ youth in Grande Prairie.

Youth & Service Provider Voice

- Youth describe Northern, politically conservative, and oilfield-influenced culture as deeply shaping experiences of exclusion (Community Nonacceptance, p. 27).
- Service providers recommend recognizing and addressing systemic barriers (e.g., political climate, lack of resources).

Reflection Questions

- **Individual:** How do you challenge nonacceptance in your daily interactions?
- **Organizational:** How does your organization address systemic barriers to acceptance?
- **Systemic:** How can Grande Prairie address the root causes of nonacceptance?

Actionable Steps by Level

Level	Action	Example
Micro	Educate yourself	Learn about the political and cultural context of nonacceptance.
Micro	Call out discrimination	Address harmful language or assumptions in the moment.
Mezzo	Update resource directory	Partner with Grande Prairie Pride Society to add youth-verified safe spaces.
Mezzo	Encourage business participation	Invite businesses to sign inclusivity pledges.
Macro	Advocate for policy change	Push for provincial/federal policies that protect 2SLGBTQ+ youth.
Macro	Address political climate	Counter conservative narratives with education.

Local Spotlight: Grande Prairie Pride Society – Pride events, resource guide of safe organizations, and Friends of Pride businesses. grandeprairiepridesociety.com

Theme 4: Safety Concerns

Goal: Address hypervigilance, assaults, and unsafe spaces to create a safer Grande Prairie for 2SLGBTQ+ youth.

Youth & Service Provider Voice

- Youth describe living in hypervigilance, constantly assessing safety (Safety Concerns, p. 37).
- Service providers note that current political climate and legislation heighten fears among youth.

Reflection Questions

- **Individual:** How do you challenge unsafe behavior in your daily interactions?
- **Organizational:** How does your organization address safety concerns?
- **Systemic:** How can Grande Prairie address systemic barriers to safety?

Actionable Steps by Level

Level	Action	Example
Micro	Call out harmful behavior	Address microaggressions, slurs, or harassment in the moment.
Micro	Support youth in unsafe spaces	Stand with youth facing harassment or exclusion.
Mezzo	Advocate for inclusive policies	Push for SOGIE-inclusive policies in workplaces.
Mezzo	Create a community safety network	Establish confidential reporting for incidents.
Macro	Advocate for policy change	Push for provincial/federal policies that protect 2SLGBTQ+ youth.
Macro	Address legislative barriers	Counter harmful laws (e.g., Bill 27, Bill 29).

Local Spotlight: Grande Prairie Public Library – Safe, inclusive space with free access to resources, books, and programs. gppl.ca

Theme 5: Education and Awareness

Goal: Increase access to accurate, affirming 2SLGBTQ+ education and address misinformation in Grande Prairie.

Youth & Service Provider Voice

- Youth describe misinformation as the root of many challenges (Education and Awareness, p. 44).
- Service providers stress the need for comprehensive education (e.g., inclusive curricula, GSAs).

Reflection Questions

- **Individual:** How do you address misinformation about 2SLGBTQ+ identities?
- **Organizational:** How does your organization provide or promote 2SLGBTQ+ education?
- **Systemic:** How can Grande Prairie address gaps in 2SLGBTQ+ education?

Actionable Steps by Level

Level	Action	Example
Micro	Educate yourself	Learn about 2SLGBTQ+ identities, history, and local issues.
Micro	Challenge misinformation	Correct myths in conversations with facts.
Mezzo	Host education workshops	Offer sessions on 2SLGBTQ+ topics for staff/community.
Mezzo	Train staff on inclusive practices	Workshops on pronouns, gender identities, and affirming language.
Macro	Advocate for inclusive school curricula	Push for 2SLGBTQ+-inclusive education in schools.
Macro	Address legislative barriers	Counter laws limiting 2SLGBTQ+ education.

Local Spotlight: BIPAN Magazine – Art-based workshops on identity, storytelling, and Two-Spirit teachings. bipanmag.ca

Theme 6: Visibility and Representation

Goal: Increase intentional visibility of 2SLGBTQ+ people, allies, and resources to foster belonging and safety in Grande Prairie.

Youth & Service Provider Voice

- Youth emphasize the need for explicit and intentional visibility and representation (Visibility and Representation, p. 53).
- Service providers emphasize the critical need for increased visibility of resources.

Reflection Questions

- **Individual:** How do you contribute to intentional visibility of 2SLGBTQ+ people and allies?
- **Organizational:** How does your organization intentionally increase visibility of 2SLGBTQ+ supports?
- **Systemic:** How can Grande Prairie increase intentional visibility of 2SLGBTQ+ people and resources?

Actionable Steps by Level

Level	Action	Example
Micro	Display ally symbols	Wear pronoun pins or display pride flags.
Micro	Share 2SLGBTQ+ resources	Direct youth to affirming spaces, events, and supports.
Mezzo	Create visible resource directories	Publicly list safe spaces and affirming businesses.
Mezzo	Host visibility campaigns	Launch initiatives like "Visible Ally Week."
Macro	Advocate for public visibility	Push for 2SLGBTQ+ representation in city marketing.
Macro	Fund visibility initiatives	Advocate for grants to support public education.

Local Spotlight: Grande Prairie Friendship Centre – Rainbow Resiliency group (through NIHA), cultural programming, and inclusive spaces. gpfriendshipcentre.org/ihs

Theme 7: Mental Health and Disability

Goal: Improve access to affirming mental health supports for 2SLGBTQ+ youth with disabilities, neurodivergence, and chronic conditions.

Youth & Service Provider Voice

- Youth describe barriers to accessing mental health supports, including lack of services and cost (Mental Health, Disability, and Wellbeing, p. 62).
- Service providers emphasize the need for safe spaces, cost/accessibility, and education.

Reflection Questions

- **Individual:** How do you support the mental health and wellbeing of 2SLGBTQ+ youth?
- **Organizational:** How does your organization address mental health, disability, and wellbeing for 2SLGBTQ+ youth?
- **Systemic:** How can Grande Prairie improve access to affirming, intersectional mental health supports?

Actionable Steps by Level

Level	Action	Example
Micro	Use affirming language	Respect names, pronouns, and identities, including disability and neurodivergent identities.
Micro	Share mental health resources	Direct youth to affirming counselors and crisis lines.
Mezzo	Provide free/low-cost services	Offer sliding-scale or subsidized mental health supports.
Mezzo	Train staff on intersectionality	Workshops on supporting 2SLGBTQ+ youth with disabilities.
Macro	Advocate for funded mental health services	Push for public funding of 2SLGBTQ+-affirming supports.
Macro	Address economic barriers	Advocate for affordable housing, transportation, and healthcare.

Centre for Sexuality

Provincial Spotlight: Centre for Sexuality – Counselling and brief therapy on a sliding scale, with $0 options, open to all Albertans. centreforsexuality.ca

Theme 8: Socialization (Family, Religion, Culture)

Goal: Address the impacts of family, cultural, and religious socialization on 2SLGBTQ+ youth to foster acceptance and belonging in Grande Prairie.

Youth & Service Provider Voice

- Youth describe how family, religion, and culture can be both protective factors and sources of hardship (Socialization, p. 73).
- Service providers underscore that family dynamics are a pivotal factor in the well-being of 2SLGBTQ+ youth.

Reflection Questions

- **Individual:** How do you support 2SLGBTQ+ youth navigating family, cultural, or religious challenges?
- **Organizational:** How does your organization address the impacts of socialization on 2SLGBTQ+ youth?
- **Systemic:** How can Grande Prairie foster acceptance within families, cultures, and religions?

Actionable Steps by Level

Level	Action	Example
Micro	Validate youth identities	Affirm a youth's gender or sexual identity, even if their family doesn't.
Micro	Share affirming resources	Direct youth to culturally competent supports and communities.
Mezzo	Offer family education	Host workshops for parents/guardians on affirming 2SLGBTQ+ youth.
Mezzo	Develop culturally competent programs	Ensure services respect and incorporate cultural/religious identities.
Macro	Advocate for family acceptance	Push for public campaigns and policies supporting 2SLGBTQ+ youth in families.
Macro	Educate cultural/religious leaders	Partner with faith and cultural communities to promote acceptance.

Local Spotlight: St. Paul's United Church – Affirming faith community, inclusive programming, and support for 2SLGBTQ+ youth and families. stpaulsuc.ca

Moving Forward Together

We are deeply grateful to the 2SLGBTQ+ youth of Grande Prairie for sharing their experiences, wisdom, and resilience with us. This toolkit would not exist without your voices, time, and trust. Thank you to the service providers, community partners, and allies for their collaboration. This project was funded by Women and Gender Equality Canada.

Northreach Society acknowledges that our work takes place on Treaty 8 territory, the ancestral and present-day home of many diverse First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples. We are grateful to work, live, and learn on the traditional lands of the Nêhiyawak, Dane-zaa, Denesuline, and Métis peoples, and acknowledge the neighbouring Nations of Duncan's First Nation, Horse Lake First Nation, and Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation.

Thank you to our community partners: Kickstand Grande Prairie/Sunrise House, Grande Prairie Pride Society, GALAP, Grande Prairie Friendship Centre, Odyssey House, YMCA, John Howard Society and Tabono, Grande Prairie Family Education Society, Grande Prairie Public Library, Grande Prairie RCMP and Grande Prairie Police Services, Children and Family Services, Resource Centre for Suicide Prevention, Grande Prairie Public School Division, Peace Wapiti Public School Division, Grande Prairie Catholic School Division, St. Paul's United Church, Northwestern Polytechnic Student Association, Wapiti House, Western Alberta Regional Victim Serving Society Grande Prairie, Mountain Plains Community Services Society of the North, and Mental Health Therapists. We also extend gratitude to local businesses for displaying posters and fostering inclusion. Thanks to Jude Tweed for art and design.

Your Next Steps

- **Start small:** Pick one micro, mezzo, or macro action to implement this month.
- **Share widely:** Distribute this toolkit to colleagues, community members, and decisionmakers.
- **Give feedback:** Let us know how these strategies work for you at info@northreach.ca
- **Stay connected:** Follow Northreach Society for updates, resources, and opportunities to collaborate.

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My Notes

Use this space to:

- Write down ideas for implementing actions in your organization.
- Track progress on your goals (e.g., "Trained 5 staff on inclusive language").
- Add local resources or contacts specific to your work.
- Reflect on youth feedback or community needs you've observed.

MEASURABLE OUTCOMES TRACKER

ACTION ITEM	TIMEFRAME	WHAT WAS DONE	WHAT WAS ACHIEVED