



# NWAC'S #GENERATION4EQUALITY GENDER ADVOCACY TIPS AND TOOLS



## WHAT IS #GENERATION4EQUALITY?

**#GENERATION4EQUALITY** is an Indigenous Youth-led movement that sparks, and shares, conversations regarding gender equality and diversity. It is an online platform for Indigenous Youth to gain information, ask questions, and connect with others working toward gender equality. The #Generation4Equality hashtag brings this conversation to social media, hoping to inspire these conversations and actions offline. This initiative includes, and celebrates, all voices, genders, gender expressions, and experiences of Indigenous Youth advocating for, and celebrating, gender equality and gender diversity.



## WHY IS GENDER ADVOCACY IMPORTANT?

Gender diversity and equality are important components of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis cultures, yet are understood in different ways across cultures and communities. The reality is Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning, Intersex and Asexual (**2SLGBTQQIA+**) People have been impacted by social, political, and cultural processes stemming from colonization and patriarchal societies. We all have a role to play in advocating for a better future for **2SLGBTQQIA+** Indigenous Youth.

## WHAT CAN ADVOCACY LOOK LIKE?

SETTING:	WAYS TO ADVOCATE:
At home:	Continue to make space for honest and difficult conversations in our homes in hopes of mending relationships and working toward a common goal of making this the #Generation4Equality! Whether it's having an age-appropriate conversation with your kids about consent and autonomy, or calling an Auntie about her beliefs on gender, we all have a role to play.
In your community:	Make your voice heard in local, provincial, and federal elections. Voting is a powerful tool. Social media allows us to engage with, and ask questions, to those running for positions of authority. Whether you live on a reservation and you're voting for Chief and Council, or you're voting for the Prime Minister of Canada, you can cast your vote for those advocating for gender equality and Indigenous rights. Engage with local candidates in-person, or online, and ask what they are doing to advance gender equality.
In academia:	If you're in university or college, check out your school's Indigenous Student Services. They'll look different depending on where you live, but these can be great resources for connecting with other Indigenous students. It can also provide information about scholarship and bursary opportunities, and help you stay connected to your roots while away from home. These can also be a great resource to connect you with Indigenous scholars and content, which can give you a connection to back home and open doors for you professionally. To advance gender equality, we need to increase the number of Indigenous 2SLGBTQQIA+ People who are busting down barriers in institutions that have historically shut us out.
At work:	To advance gender equality, it's critical that everyone (regardless of sex, gender, ability, race, etc.) feels safe and supported in their environment. To do so, so we should make space for voices and experiences that, in the past, have been dismissed or shut out entirely. We can contribute to this by supporting a work environment that promotes the retention and retention of Indigenous 2SLGBTQQIA+ employees, contributing to a more equal working environment and society for all. Be active in advisory and social committees (when possible), offer a safe space to talk for your colleagues, and examine HR and hiring policies that may contribute to discriminatory and unsafe practices in the workplace.
In a healthcare setting:	If you're visiting a hospital or a doctor's office, for yourself or with a loved one, being aware of your rights in this setting and sharing that knowledge is one way of advocating for culturally-safety for yourself and others. Advocating for ourselves is the first and most important part of gender equality. Beyond this, we must make sure those who violate our rights, even if they are in a position of authority, are held accountable so we can continue making the system safer for others. Concerns that your rights may have been violated can negatively impact your mental health and take a toll on your well-being. Consider reaching out to a neutral third party—someone you feel safe to open up and discuss your feelings with. Elders, family members, friends, culturally-safe social workers, and/or counsellors may be an excellent place to start.



## PROTECT YOURSELF FROM BURNOUT:

Gender inequality can sometimes feel like a forest fire—it's tough to put out and causes a lot of damage. But, with enough drops of water, even the biggest fire can be put out. For Indigenous (and non-Indigenous) Youth who are advocating for gender equality, everyday actions are those drops of water.

However, it's important to protect yourself against advocacy burnout. We're passionate and driven about these issues because they matter to us as youth and allies, but we also need to remember there is often a spiritual, physical, emotional, and mental toll that comes with fighting against oppression and hate. Here are some tips to combat burnout while you're fighting gender inequality:

- Balance is key: For every article you read that makes you feel anxious or angry, make sure you're seeking out stories of resistance and success in the face of adversity (and share them with us using the **#G4E** hashtag!). Remember, it's okay to take breaks from advocacy and, as an Indigenous Person, your existence is resistance.
- Find culturally-safe support: Whether you have a tight circle of Indigenous friends or you've recently moved from home and find yourself lonely, remember that you are walking this path for a reason, and there are others who are feeling the same way as you, or those who have had similar experiences. Seek out those folks and build your community where you are. Indigenous student services, Friendship Centres, and even local social media groups can be helpful tools. Peer support is invaluable when we're out of our comfort zone or struggling with what to do next. If you're passionate about gender equality or another advocacy issue, surrounding yourself with like-minded people can help reenergize and motivate you to keep pushing forward.
- Know when you need to step away: Taking care of your health before you reach full burnout means it will be easier for you to bounce back and pick up the fight again when you are well and ready. Here are some symptoms to look out for if you're starting to hit a wall in your gender equality advocacy journey:
  - Feelings of helplessness or being trapped.
  - Feelings of self-doubt.
  - Decreased satisfaction and sense of accomplishment about your successes.
  - A loss of motivation.
  - An increased negative or cynical outlook.
- If you're experiencing any of these things, it might be a good time to take a minute and reach out to some culturally-safe supports or peers that know what you're going through.
- Take care of all aspects of your health. Check out another NWAC initiative—[www.stbbi.nwac.ca](http://www.stbbi.nwac.ca)—to find culturally-safe and anti-oppressive services in your neighbourhood.



## STAY CONNECTED WITH #G4E:

Follow NWAC on social media to keep up to date on **#G4E** initiatives:

 @nwac\_canada (Instagram).

 @nwac\_ca (Twitter).

 @ Native Women's Association of Canada (LinkedIn).

- Share with us by tagging your posts with **#GENERATION4EQUALITY** and **#G4E** so we can share them with our followers! Some examples of information that could be helpful in advancing gender equality for Indigenous Peoples include:
  - Scholarship, grants, and bursaries for Indigenous Youth, particularly for **W2STGD+** and **2SLGBTQQIA+** people.
  - Networking and professional development opportunities for Indigenous Youth.
  - Relevant policy and legislation developments.
  - Uplifting stories of progress and change toward advancing gender equality.
- Visit us at [www.nwac.ca](http://www.nwac.ca) to find more info about **#G4E**, as well as to access fact sheets, webinars, and spotlights on First Nations, Inuit, and Métis youth leading important conversations and making waves in their home communities (and beyond) regarding topics of gender equality and advocacy.

