



INDIGENOUS GENDER EQUALITY

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

WHY ARE WE TALKING ABOUT GENDER EQUALITY?



GENDER diversity and equality are essential components of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis cultures, yet are understood differently throughout each culture and community. The reality is Indigenous women, girls, Two-Spirit, transgender and gender-diverse people have been impacted by social, political, and cultural processes stemming from colonization. These initiatives are just beginning to unpack how this continues to affect how people connect with culture, navigate realities, access opportunities, and advocate for change.

ACKNOWLEDGING THE ROOT CAUSES OF GENDER INEQUALITY.



BEFORE colonization, Indigenous communities across Turtle Island and Inuit Nunangat had clear definitions and understandings of gender. People were valued for their skills, Knowledge, and how they contributed to and cared for their communities. Responsibilities were shared equally. Patriarchal and heteronormative values were forced upon Indigenous communities by settlers and disrupted these systems, which had previously provided freedom and safety for people to live as their authentic selves. These values were enforced through assimilation attempts, such as Residential Schools, forced migration, Sixties Scoop, and violence toward Indigenous women, girls, transgender, Two-Spirit, and gender-diverse people, including the ongoing Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two-Spirit+ (MMIWG2S+) genocide, and forced and coerced sterilization.

HOW DOES GENDER INEQUALITY IMPACT COMMUNITIES AND ORGANIZATIONS?



PERHAPS most painfully, as it involves Indigenous people harming their own, is how gender inequality has interrupted our abilities to live and work in good ways, aligned with Traditional values and practices. Current social skills and work practices no longer create healthy workplaces and/or communities. This process, known as “lateral violence,” where one becomes the oppressor within the workplace or community. In other words: Instead of directing anger toward the oppressor, one directs anger at their peers or tries to disempower them. It is an example of how the cycle of gender inequality continues to impact ways we live and work together, as well as how it creates situations that result in us harming each other.

DIGGING DEEPER:



Most understand now that unless you are the descendant of a settler who identifies as the gender assigned at birth, much of society isn't set up to serve your needs. Consequently, Indigenous Peoples identifying as 2SLGBTQIA+, as well as their loved ones and communities, may have much learning and unlearning to do as they walk a path of rediscovery in their cultures, Traditional Knowledges, and histories to begin to live safely as their true selves.

NOW WHAT?

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 youth advocating for gender equality, everyday actions are those drops of water. **Generation 4 Equality** means this is the generation:

- To have honest conversations with friends, Elders, families, communities, and ourselves about gender equality and gender diversity.
- To reflect on how gender identity monumentally shapes our reality.
- To resist being complacent toward attitudes that condone or normalize prejudice, shame or judgement toward Two-Spirit, transgender and/or gender-diverse Indigenous people.
- To reconnect with our Traditional Ways that value everyone, regardless of gender, because everyone has something to contribute.
- To find opportunities to advocate for systemic change, to the best of our ability, in ways that keep us safe and protected from burnout.
- To radically accept and love ourselves, because it's the very least we deserve.

WHAT CAN I DO?

- Visit www.generation4equality.ca for information, webinars, and spotlights on First Nations, Inuit, and Métis youth leading necessary conversations making waves in their home communities (and beyond) regarding topics of gender equality and advocacy.
- Share your thoughts on social media using the hashtags: **#GENERATION4EQUALITY** and **#G4E** so we can share them with our audience and connect Indigenous youth with other like-minded individuals across Turtle Island and Inuit Nunangat! Some examples of information that could help advance gender equality for Indigenous Peoples include:
 - o **Scholarships, grants, and bursaries for Indigenous youth students.**
 - o **Networking and professional development opportunities for Indigenous youth.**
 - o **Relevant policy and legislation developments, such as the recently announced Federal 2SLGBTQI+ Action Plan.**
 - o **Uplifting stories of progress and change toward advancing gender equality.**
- Learn from our Indigenous youth leaders, and other gender advocates, who are experts of their own lives and have much to share about proper language, definitions, and terms related to gender identity and sexual orientation.
- Continue to make space for honest and difficult conversations with those around us. Bring a spirit of collaboration forward in hopes of mending relationships and working toward a common goal to make this the Generation 4 Equality!

