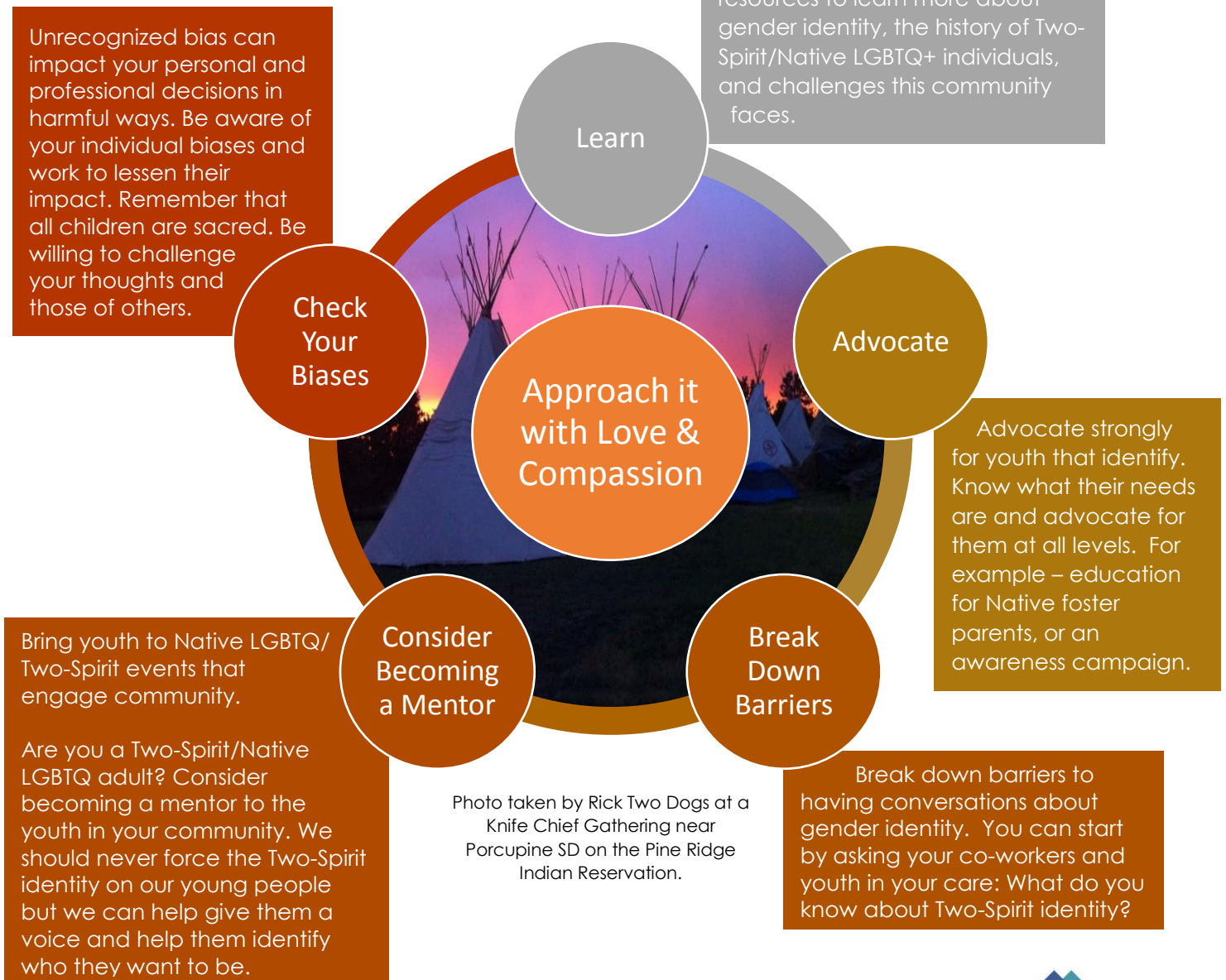


# Creating Safe & Welcoming Spaces for Two-Spirit/Native LGBTQ+ Youth

Tribal and state child welfare organizations and staff, tribal leaders, mental health professionals, foster families, and all community members can help to create safe and welcoming environments for Native youth that may identify as Two-Spirit and/or LGBTQ+.

Every individual can...



# Every child welfare agency can...



## Educate

- Educate staff, mental health professionals, and other organizations on topics such as:
  - Gender identity
  - Two-Spirit/Native LGBTQ+
  - Transgender 101
  - Suicide Prevention
- Develop and/or establish a curriculum for Native foster parents of Two-Spirit and/or Native LGBTQ+ youth.
- Receive safe-zone training as an organization.
- Provide basic living skills training to youth.
- Host a gathering to encourage individual, family, and community healing.

### Resources

1. Lenny Hayes, Tate Topa Consulting

Website: <https://www.tatetopa.com/>

Email: [tatetopaconsulting@gmail.com](mailto:tatetopaconsulting@gmail.com)

Phone: 651-447-8672

2. [Walking in Two Worlds: Understanding the Impact of Historical/Intergenerational Trauma on the Two-Spirit/Native LGBTQ Community.](#) (webinar recording)

## Display Affirming Materials

- Share pictures of same-sex foster parent couples.
- Display campaigns and posters throughout the organization.

## Create an Awareness Campaign

- Work with individuals that identify to create and distribute a campaign that raises awareness about Two-Spirit/Native LGBTQ+ identities.

### Campaign Examples

1. [Native. LGBTQ. Proud.](#)

2. [Healthy Sexuality & Fighting Homophobia & Transphobia, Youth Photo Project](#)

3. [#WeNeedYouHere](#)

4. [Two-Spirit Loved & Accepted](#)

## Form an Inclusive and Diverse Board

- Invite Two-Spirit and/or Native LGBTQ+ leaders from within your community to be a part of your advisory board.

## Establish a Mentoring Program

- Create a program that engages older Two-Spirit and/or Native LGBTQ+ individuals to mentor youth. By doing so, youth can also learn about culture and spirituality, and the history of the Two-Spirit identity before colonization.
- Assist and encourage youth in building relationships with elders in the community.

## Collect Data

- Encourage tribes and agencies to collect data specific to Two-Spirit/LGBTQ youth.

## Engage Same-Sex Families

- Engage, welcome, encourage, and support same-sex families in your community to become foster parents.
- Establish opportunities for same-sex families to offer respite, friendship, support, and mentorship to youth who may identify and their families.

## Provide Support Resources

- Collaborate with other agencies to share resources.
- Provide staff with support resources to share with youth who may identify.

## Create Policies and Procedures

- Create policies in regards to the protection and non-discrimination of Two-Spirit and/or Native LGBTQ+ individuals and **display** the policy.
- Encourage tribal communities to develop codes to protect adults and youth who identify as Two-Spirit and/or Native LGBTQ+.

## Check Biases

- As an organization, check your bias and the bias that staff may bring to the workplace.
- Discuss bias with staff.

Resources:

1. [Family Assessment: Understanding Bias](#)
2. [Family Assessment: How to Overcome Bias](#)

## Additional Resources

1. Digital Stories from the field: Healing Footsteps of Two-Spirit LGBTQ People
  - a. Lenny's story: <https://youtu.be/YZfGYNDbFXc>
  - b. Joseph's story: <https://youtu.be/Spx4hpGdwNI>
  - c. Jason's story: <https://youtu.be/R-Ppfg8Pdf0>
2. [Working with Two-Spirit and Native LGBTQ Youth Resource Guide](#)  
A list of resources from Lenny Hayes and the Capacity Building Center for Tribes.
3. [A Place in the Middle](#)  
Hawaiian children and their teacher tell a powerful story of ancient traditions that they're keeping alive and the valued place for those that embrace their masculine and feminine traits.
4. ["Two Spirit" - Injunity](#) – An animated video by <http://www.injunity.org> featuring: Mica Valdez (Mexico), Nazbah Tom (Navajo/Diné), Arlando Teller (Navajo/Diné), Charlie Ballard (Anishinaabe, Sac & fox), Esther Lucero (Navajo/Diné).
5. [Isolation in the Reservation](#)  
"This trailer is an introduction to a photoessay about the unique struggles and joys the Navajo LGBTQ community faces on the reservation. To view this photoessay, please click the link: [reservationisolation.org](http://reservationisolation.org)"
6. [Native PFLAG](#) - Sheila Lopez [NativePFLAG@gmail.com](mailto:NativePFLAG@gmail.com) - 602.803.3907
7. Tribal code example: [Portage approves non-discrimination ordinance to protect LGBT community](#)
8. Not Native specific, but helpful resources:
  - a. [Becoming an Affirming Agency](#) (video from the Capacity Building Center for States)
  - b. [Working with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning/queer youth](#) (Minnesota)