



Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs
EMPOWERING OUR NATIONS

AMC Celebrates International Non-Binary People's Day

Treaty One Territory, Manitoba – The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) issues this statement today to celebrate International Non-Binary People's Day. July 14 is recognized internationally as Non-Binary People's Day – a day to celebrate those who identify out of the man/woman gender binary. This date was chosen in 2012 for being precisely between International Women's Day and International Men's Day.

While the concept of non-binary may seem new to some, First Nations have recognized and respected this concept for thousands of years. Today we use the term "Two-Spirit", which reflects our complex understanding of gender roles, spirituality, and sexual/gender identity within First Nations cultures.

Acting Grand Chief Cornell McLean states, "May we observe this day by raising awareness about the many issues faced by non-binary and Two-Spirit people; including lack of recognition, lack of support, and discrimination."

AMC proudly celebrates those who are non-binary and Two-Spirit. Further, we hope that our Nations will challenge and dismantle the harmful colonial constructs of discrimination within our community and beyond. Members of our Nations who identify as non-binary or Two-Spirit are worthy of the utmost love, respect, and safety.

There are many ways to become a great ally to those who identify as non-binary or Two-Spirit. These include but are not limited to:

- Being open to learning about non-binary identity and unlearning harmful rhetoric.
- Confronting your prejudices and unconscious bias.
- Introducing yourself with your name and pronouns.
- Use inclusive terms such as *folks* or *everyone* when addressing a group.
- Using the pronoun 'they' when referring to someone whose gender is not yet known.

"While colonial culture may enforce the notion that gender exists as a strict binary, we First Nations know that there is much more to it. Non-binary and Two-Spirit people teach us that knowing one's identity is where power can grow. An identity that no person or force can strip away," concludes Acting Grand Chief Cornell McLean.