

# Native American and Two-Spirit Resource Guide

**Content Warning:** Some of the following resources contain discussions of racism, colonialism, boarding schools, intergenerational trauma, hate crimes, alcoholism and drug use, homelessness

## What Is Two-Spirit?

Two-Spirit is an identity created by indigenous people for indigenous people as a way to challenge colonial ways of understanding native gender and sexual expression. It should not be used as an identity by non-indigenous people. Two-Spirit is an identity label that describes gender identity and/or sexual orientation. Other terms might be used within different tribal communities, so always respect a person's self-identification. Overall, the term two-spirit is generally preferred to "berdache," which is a word that European settlers used to describe a third gender person (woman-living-man) who is Native American (Poynter, 2016).

It is cultural appropriation for someone who is non-indigenous to identify as Two-Spirit. Appropriate alternatives for a non-indigenous person who identifies as multiple genders are bigender, pangender, and polygender.



*Looking for more information about Native American and Two-Spirit?*

## Articles

["Supporting LGBTQ Native American Students"](#)  
– GLSEN

["Supporting LGBTQ/Native American LGBT People"](#) – Center for American Progress

["Tribal Equity Toolkit 2.0: Tribal Resolutions and Codes to Support Two Spirit and LGBT Justice in Indian Country"](#)

["8 Things You Should Know About Two Spirit People"](#) – Tony Enos

["5 Things Queer and Questioning Indigenous Folks Should Consider About Claiming Two Spirit Identity"](#) – Mehealani Joy

["Two-Spirit Pride"](#) – Rachel Browne

## Videos

["What Is Two Spirit?"](#) – sexplanations

["Our Families: LGBT/ Two Spirit Native American Stories"](#) – BasicRights

["Two Spirits, One Dance for Native American Artist"](#) – AJ+

## Books

- Driskill, Qwo-Li, Daniel Heath Justice, Deborah Miranda, and Lisa Tatonetti. *Sovereign Erotics: A Collection of Two-Spirit Literature*. University of Arizona, 2011.
- Driskill, Qwo-Li, Chris Finley, Brian Joseph, and Scott Lauria Morgenson. *Queer Indigenous Studies: Critical Interventions in Theory, Politics, and Literature (First Peoples: New Directions in Indigenous Studies)*. University of Arizona, 2011.

## Films

[Two Spirits: Sexuality, Gender, and the Murder of Fred Martinez](#) (2009, documentary)

“TWO SPIRITS interweaves the tragic story of a mother’s loss of her son with a revealing look at the largely unknown history of a time when the world wasn’t simply divided into male and female and many Native American cultures held places of honor for people of integrated genders.”

CW: graphic discussion/depiction of racist and homophobic hate crime

## Organizations

### On-Campus

#### **UA Queer and Trans People of Color & Two-Spirit Discussion Group**

Contact the LGBTQA+ Resource Center for this semester’s meeting schedule

#### **LGBTQA+ Support Group**

When: Tuesdays from 4-5:30 pm

Where: SUMC 412

Free and confidential

For more information, contact Martie van der Voort at [mvanderv@email.arizona.edu](mailto:mvanderv@email.arizona.edu) or 621-3334.

#### **Gender Spectrum Support Group**

When: Mondays from 3-4:00 pm

Where: Administrative Conference Room C312, Third Floor Campus Health

Cost: \$5 each week (can be billed to Bursar's.) Please check in at CAPS.

### Tucson/Phoenix

#### **Thornhill Lopez Center on Fourth**

<https://www.lgbtcenters.org/LGBTCenters/Center/6882/Thornhill-Lopez-Center-on-4th>

#### **Tucson Two Spirit Group**

Second Tuesday of each month

160 N. Stone Ave.

Call to confirm meeting dates/times:

Marlene F. Jose (520) 884-7131, ext 234.

#### **Native PFLAG Phoenix Chapter**

<https://www.nativepflag.org>