



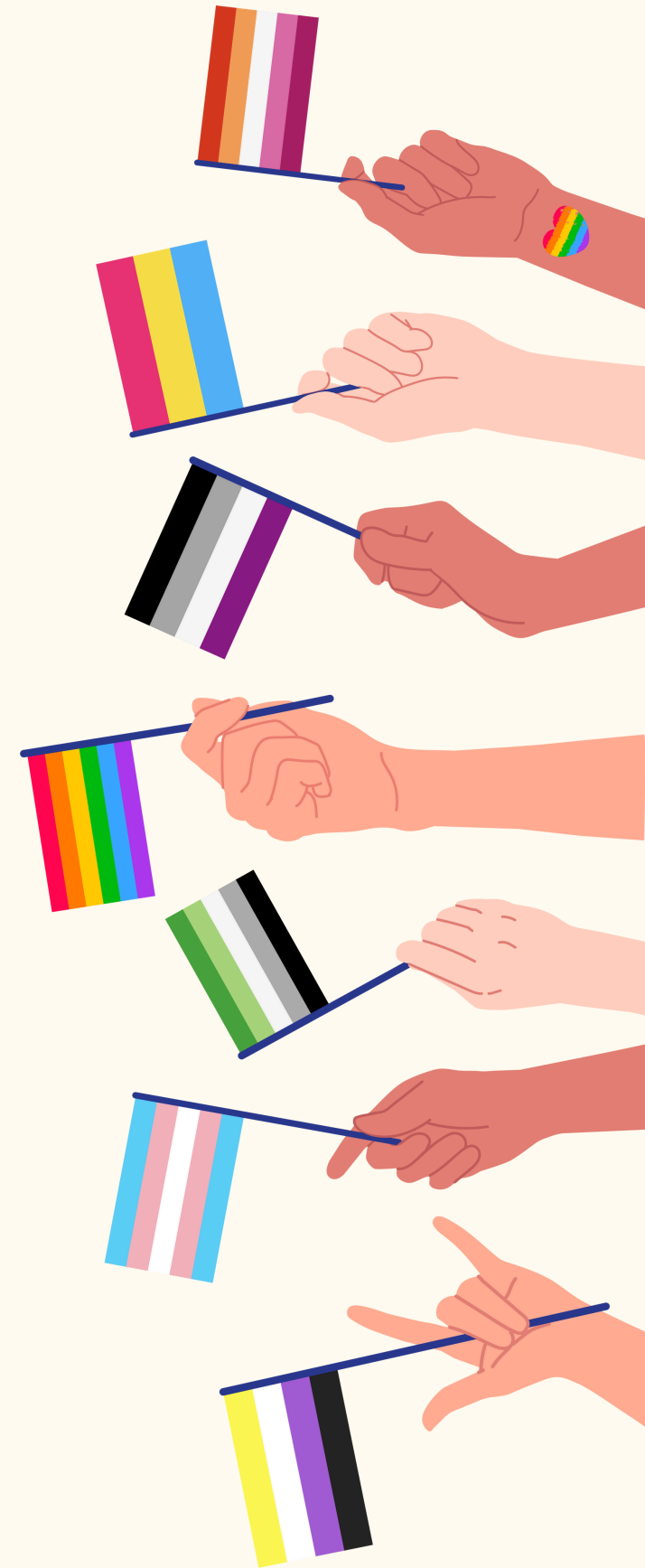
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A Guide to Empowerment for 2S/LGBTQIA+ Students

The 2S/LGBTQIA+ community has always been strong and continues to lead the pursuit for justice in our schools and communities.

Remember – you're not alone!
Your classmates, teachers, school staff, and caring adults can all play a part in co-building safer schools that affirm wonderfully diverse student identities.



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Validate your feelings

Pride is a feeling that is commonly connected to the 2S/LGBTQIA+ community. However, it doesn't mean that we all start there. We all carry unique ways of experiencing, interpreting and expressing our feelings. Wherever you are on your journey of self-love and discovery, your feelings are important.





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Ask yourself:

- How can I be kind to myself when acknowledging my feelings?
- What are some of the ways I choose to express my feelings and what are some other forms of expression I would like to try?

Remind yourself:

- You don't need to keep your feelings to yourself.
- Your feelings are important and deserve to be validated.





Build a network of support



Having a community that loves and supports you for who you are can be a powerful affirmation. It's not always easy to find but know there are many who will stand by you and appreciate you for who you are.



Ask yourself:

- Who do I feel safe and comfortable around?
- Are there affirming adults or peers that I trust and can share my experiences with?
- Are there safe online support networks I can access?

Remind yourself:

- You do not need to build this network by yourself. Affirming adults and peers can support you by connecting to supportive communities.
- You can also surround yourself with affirming messages via media (television, social media etc.).





Advocate for yourself and for others

Advocacy is any way you stand up for yourself and others. Advocacy can take many forms, and it is important to acknowledge that small choices can lead to big changes.





Ask yourself:

- What am I specifically advocating for?
- Who can I meet with to advocate for the changes I want to see?
- Do I have people who can join me?
- What safety considerations should I consider?

Remind yourself:

- You are enough and you deserve to be happy.
- It is okay to identify what you need, and to ask for help in getting it.
- To prevent burnout, try to focus on one or two issues you have greatest potential to influence.
- Advocating for others can be affirming, but you don't need to take this on, not every day.
- Practice self-love and celebration along this journey.





Look beyond your school community

There are many places of empowerment inside and outside of school. You can find (or create) local 2S/LGBTQIA+ clubs and events, research the history of 2S/LGBTQIA+ movements and legacies, as well as engage in positive social media influences.





Ask yourself:

- What advocacy efforts/social groups already exist in my school and/or community?
- Do I feel comfortable sharing this part of myself with others, or would I rather engage anonymously?
- What would a friend group that is empowering to 2S/LGBTQIA+ folks look like to me? How can I help create that?

Remind yourself:

- 2S/LGBTQIA+ communities foster resiliency in the face of discrimination, building skills to fight for their right to be seen, heard and understood.
- If you feel a disconnect from your community, or aren't ready to actively participate, remind yourself that it still exists and is fighting for you and your rights.

