



**Curriculum Links**  
**The Sharing Circle, Season 14, Episode 6:**  
**Two Spirit People**

**Suggested Grade Levels:**

Grades 7 - 12

**Curriculum Themes and**

- Bullying
- Family life
- Identity
- Rights of Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgendered
- Suicide

**Summary of Episode:**

Life can be extremely difficult for gay and lesbian people living in Aboriginal communities. In centuries past, the two-spirited (as they were known) were highly regarded in society for their insight into the world of men and women, and for possessing spiritual gifts. Two-spirited people became ostracized and their spiritual gifts disregarded with colonization and the influence of Christian attitudes. Today, reserves are rampant with homophobia. According to Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 70 percent of the Aboriginal teen suicides on reserves today are by two-spirited youth. The Sharing Circle explores the issues faced by Aboriginal gays, lesbians, and bisexuals and illustrates the extraordinary efforts being made by those trying to end this discrimination.

### **Vocabulary:**

- November 4<sup>th</sup>
- Acceptance
- Activist
- Albert McLeod
- Alcohol
- Artist
- Ashamed
- Back turned
- Balance
- Beaten to death
- Berens River
- Bible
- Billy Merasty
- Bisexual
- Christian values
- City
- Comfortable
- Consideration
- Craig Manchulenko
- Cross Over
- Dance
- David Boulanger
- Dead
- Depressed
- Different
- Difficult
- Distant
- Divas
- Drugs
- Education
- Elder two Spirit
- Elders
- Equality
- Experiences
- Fag
- Family
- Friends
- Friendship
- Gay
- Gentle
- Gerald Stater
- Gifted
- Girly
- Hatred
- Homophobia
- Homosexual
- Hurt
- Interconnected
- Intolerance
- Isolated
- Laughter
- Leonard Saddleback
- Lost
- Manitoba
- Marriage
- Medicine Wheel Teachings
- Mother
- November 4th
- Pairs
- Pride
- Protection
- Rejection
- Residential School
- Ridicule
- Roles
- Ron Hall
- Silence
- Sports
- Street worker
- Suicide
- Support Worker
- Talk
- Teachings
- Terry Sands
- Transgender
- Transition
- Twenty-eight years old
- Two Spirited People
- Understanding
- Unnatural
- Validate
- Worth

### **Suggested Activities:**

- Discuss families and add various types of families. i.e. two parents, male and female, two parents of same sex, single parents, grandparents, extended families.
- Look at Dr. Martin Brokenleg's circle of Courage.  
[poughkeepsieschools.org/pages/students/activity/images/circle\\_logo.gif](http://poughkeepsieschools.org/pages/students/activity/images/circle_logo.gif)

### **Suggested Activities (Continued):**

- How do we make all students feel like they belong, can master a task, are independent and who are generous. People who are gay have a high risk of being excluded and made to feel ashamed. This is not acceptable if all people are equal. How do we take responsibility and help the situation?
- Discuss rates of suicide, alcohol and drug abuse among people who do not feel accepted. The rate for gay people to turn to this is high as they often do not have supports they need. To be Aboriginal and gay is then two fold and supports can be difficult to find.
- Look up support groups in your area for gay people. Invite in a speaker.
- Look at vocabulary and classify words that are hurtful and those that are accepting.
- Look up policies on Marriage and study the history of marriage. What are your thoughts about this institution and why are gay marriages an issue?

### **Additional Resources (online):**

- Dr. Martin Brokenleg  
<http://www.reclaiming.com/speakers/?action=1&ProductID=6>
- Two Spirited website  
<http://www.androphile.org/preview/Culture/NativeAmerica/amerindian.htm>
- 2 Spirits Centre  
<http://www.2spirits.com/>

## Circle of Belonging

We are all important and we all have a place where we belong. When growing up, our closest and most important relationships are with our families. How our family cares and supports us (or does not care and support) affects us. Then the next closest is our circle of friends, and then our community. We are also all responsible for our own actions and we all have a great source of resiliency. Take a look at your own personal relationships. How do they support a sense of belonging, give you a sense of mastery, a sense of independence and a sense of generosity? You may want to begin by brainstorming a list of what allows you to feel like you belong, how you feel successful at accomplishing a task-think about what you are good at doing, how you feel like you can function as an individual and express yourself, and how you give to others. In class this may be by offering an answer to a question. If you are not allowed to contribute, your sense of valuable will become distorted.

