



TORONTO ABORIGINAL SUPPORT SERVICES COUNCIL

Toronto Aboriginal Research Project (TARP) Report

The Two-Spirited Aboriginal Community in Toronto Research Summary

What is the Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council (TASSC)?

TASSC is a not-for-profit research and advocacy organization in the City of Toronto. TASSC is comprised of ten member organizations.

- ❖ 2-Spirited People of the 1st Nations
- ❖ Aboriginal Legal Services of Toronto
- ❖ Aboriginal Legal Services of Toronto Clinic
- ❖ Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre
- ❖ Miziwe Biik Aboriginal Employment and Training
- ❖ Native Child and Family Services of Toronto
- ❖ Native Canadian Centre of Toronto
- ❖ NA-ME-RES (Native Men's Residence)
- ❖ Native Women's Resource Centre of Toronto
- ❖ Nishnawbe Homes

What is the Toronto Aboriginal Research Project (TARP) Report?

The TARP Report is the largest and most comprehensive study of Aboriginal people in Toronto ever conducted. With a sample of over 1,400 individuals, 14 topics studied and seven methodologies utilized, the TARP Report provides an important picture of the current situation, the aspirations and challenges facing Aboriginal people in the Greater Toronto Area.

I think that I have two-spirits in me and they both shine brightly and I am very proud of them. (Life History)

Toronto is home to a large and vibrant two-spirited Aboriginal community, meaning Aboriginal people who identify themselves as gay, lesbian, bi-sexual, transgendered (GLBT). In traditional Aboriginal societies, two-spirited individuals were respected and honoured. Two-spirited individuals tend to be proud of their two spiritedness and their Aboriginal identity.



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Key Issues Affecting the Two-Spirited Aboriginal Community in Toronto

The two-spirited Aboriginal community is very diverse and contains many economically successful 'middle class' individuals as well as people experiencing serious problems who are in need of various support services. Having a supportive two-spirit community in the city as well as assistance from agencies and acceptance from both the larger Aboriginal community and general mainstream society are important factors in successful urban adjustment.

The majority of two-spirited people in Toronto come from reserves or small rural communities where they experienced high rates of homophobia and discrimination. 'Coming out' to family and friends is often a difficult process for two-spirited people.

TARP Report Recommendations for the Two-Spirited Aboriginal Community in Toronto

- ❖ Establish a safe "transition" house in or near downtown Toronto.
- ❖ Create a "two-spirited gathering place" to serve the social, cultural and recreational needs of Aboriginal two-spirited people in Toronto.

- ❖ Establish a "two-spirit house" for HIV positive two-spirited people in or near downtown Toronto, as well as for families of two-spirited individuals experiencing health problems.
- ❖ That the 2-Spirited People of the 1st Nation organization receive funding for an additional long-term case management worker and to increase work related to two-spirited "awareness training" for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal organizations that serve two-spirited individuals.
- ❖ That Aboriginal Legal Services of Toronto make an effort to include two-spirited members on the Community councils.
- ❖ Undertake a research project focusing on the issues and concerns of the two-spirited community including the middle class, transgendered and HIV positive individuals.



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