

Work & Inclusion

Including 2SLGBTQIA+ members
the life of our union

UNITED STEELWORKERS



MÉTALLOS



We know that people who are visibly gender-nonconforming or transgender are likely to be harassed at work. 2SLGBTQIA+ people are less likely to apply for high-paying jobs because of the fear of a hostile workplace, everything from eyerolling and social exclusion to outright harassment. Work stress and poor mental health result from discrimination and from having to conceal their true selves at work.

Even those in unionized workplaces have a hard time. Recent research ([usw.to/42B](https://www.usw.to/42B)) shows that less than half of unionized 2SLGBTQIA+ workers felt supported by their unions. They also experience higher rates of poor mental health (anxiety and depression due to stigma, harassment and isolation). Workplaces can either compound the problem or alleviate it.

One thing that makes a difference is having supportive representatives and leaders who know how to be good active allies.

2SLGBTQIA+

Two-spirit • Lesbian
Gay • Bisexual • Trans
Queer • Intersex
Asexual

Here are some actions union representatives and leaders can take to increase safety and be allies

Be familiar with the resources on our union's website: usw.ca/steelpride and on your district web page. Share the resources with others.

Make it clear that 2SLGBTQIA+ members are welcome in the local union.

Speak out against all forms of harassment and discrimination. Listen when members come with concerns about how they're being treated by co-workers, managers, members, union representatives and leaders.

Bargain inclusive collective agreement language, such as access to gender-neutral washrooms and other hygiene facilities, dress codes that allow for a range of expression, leave and benefits coverage for members transitioning gender, and leaves that allow 2SLGBTQIA+ to seek care for mental and physical health issues related to facing harassment and discrimination.

Enforce USW's anti-harassment and anti-violence policy. Read out the policy summary or Yellow Sheet at the start of every union event.

Ensure the employers accommodate mental health and medical leaves, enforce and improve anti-discrimination policies, hold diversity/awareness trainings, and intervene when customers or co-workers harass. Follow up to make sure they're doing what they say they will do.

Ask for 2SLGBTQIA+-specific education and training for your local union.

Support local union Human Rights and Pride Committees; sponsor social events that bring 2SLGBTQIA+ members together.

Take part in 2SLGBTQIA+ events in the community, both as an individual and as a USW representative.

Educate the membership about respecting pronouns and chosen names. Encourage pronouns to be shared at the beginning of meetings and events.

Check yourself for unconscious bias. Do you avoid communicating with 2SLGBTQIA+ members? Do you listen less carefully to their concerns and grievances? Do you let slide inappropriate comments and behaviour at union activities or do you challenge it?

