

Introduction

Being a teen is hard, and it is even more difficult if you cannot see yourself in the media you interact with and positive representation is scarce. The literary world, like other media outlets, often fails to create and provide materials that reflect the diversity present in society. This Hotline issue is a call for a greater presence of LGBTQ+ persons in YA materials as authors, illustrators, and characters, and more diverse representation for LGBTQ+ identities in the characters portrayed.

Y(LGBTQ+)A Hotline was created to help address the gap in specific LGBTQ+ materials and also provide knowledge to people that may need assistance in suggesting materials and resources to LGBTQ+ teens. As information professionals, it is necessary that we consider the needs of our communities, especially when members of those communities need access to good, relevant, and useful information and resources. While Pride is an excellent time to place emphasis on the contributions made by and materials featuring LGBTQ+ people, the best time to do this is throughout the year. Providing support and content year-round will demonstrate your organisation's commitment to inclusivity and diversity. These actions will further show that LGBTQ+ persons are valued members of your community, which is even more important when wanting to support and include LGBTQ+ youth.

We hope that this issue of YA Hotline provides professional readers with ideas on implementing changes in order to be more welcoming and inclusive of LGBTQ+ teens. When representation is scarce, it is important to create the space for those resources to exist, and help create a demand for more of that content.

Please note that the terminology used in this issue is informed by present common usage. Efforts have been made to ensure that language throughout is kept neutral and inclusive, but language is a living thing, so these terms may (and likely will) change over time. A glossary of terms on sexuality and gender identity is provided at the end of our issue. In many cases the shortened acronym LGBTQ+ has been used in lieu of the current version of the "full" acronym 2SLGBTQIAA+. This decision was made for the sake of brevity and is in no way meant to exclude anyone.

Land Acknowledgement

The authors of this issue acknowledge that this research was conducted and compiled in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq. We are all Treaty people. The authors of this issue are settlers (non-Indigenous) and as such, we recognize that our experiences and views of topics such as diversity are informed by our colonial history. Two-spirit, or 2-spirit, identities are part of Indigenous life and culture that was erased by colonisation. This erasure is reflected in the small number of works that are authored by or include representations of two-spirit individuals.

The cover of our issue was designed and illustrated by Ridley Thomas.