

# PRIDE MONTH

**STARTING IN JUNE AND CONTINUING THROUGH THE SUMMER MONTHS,** Canadians celebrate Pride, an annual celebration of 2SLGBTQIA+ identity and a global call to political action. More than simply a parade or a rainbow flag, Pride is a collective protest against anti-2SLGBTQIA+ discrimination and a commemoration of the community's rich history. This year, Halifax Pride Festival runs from July 17 to 27.

Pride is rooted in grassroots activism; in fact, the first Pride event – the Stonewall riots – were a protest against police persecution in New York City. On June 28, 1968, for the second time in a week, police carried out a raid on the Stonewall Inn, a popular gay bar. Outraged community members fought back, sparking a series of protests and demonstrations that lasted for six days and left a lasting mark on the 2SLGBTQIA+ community in NYC and on gay rights movements around the world.

Similar protests broke out in Toronto in 1981, after police carried out a series of raids on four gay bathhouses. Nearly 300 men were arrested, despite homosexuality having been decriminalized nationally in 1969. Community members rallied in response; the protests that followed helped galvanize the budding gay rights movement in Canada.

While protections and opportunities for 2SLGBTQIA+ people have increased, hateful rhetoric and stigma persist. In many parts of the world, rates of discrimination, violence and legal challenges are on the rise. Pride celebrations help foster a sense of community for a group that has historically been shamed and ostracized into isolation, while also serving as a broader educational platform on 2SLGBTQIA+ issues.

## Connection to Doctors Nova Scotia's Work

About 1.3 million Canadians over the age of 15 identify as part of the 2SLGBTQIA+ population – including patients, physicians and healthcare providers across Nova Scotia. Developing a strong understanding of 2SLGBTQIA+ issues is essential to fostering inclusive, accessible and trauma-informed care. It also encourages providers to reflect on how unconscious bias may be affecting their service delivery and to take meaningful steps toward making their practices psychologically safe for patients and staff.

Sexual orientation and gender identity are important social determinants of health. As an equity-deserving group, 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals experience the burden of minority stress and are at a higher risk of experiencing poor mental health outcomes. The phenomenon of minority stress is thought to be related to increased stigma, discrimination and internalization of negative societal attitudes minority groups face. This phenomenon is compounded by intersecting identities, such as race, which can further impact an individual's health and access to equitable care. Doctors Nova Scotia is committed to educating staff and members about the impacts of anti-2SLGBTQIA+ discrimination in health care, examining and addressing internal biases, and advocating for systemic change to support health equity.



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## References

- The History of Pride Month – [tinyurl.com/HistOfPride](https://tinyurl.com/HistOfPride)
- Facts, stats and impact: 2SLGBTQI+ communities – [tinyurl.com/Canada-2SLGBTQI](https://tinyurl.com/Canada-2SLGBTQI)
- Halifax Pride – [halifaxpride.com](https://halifaxpride.com)



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