



## C-01

### “2 Spiritedness”: Identity and History, Working with Parents to Create Safe Places in Schools

Aboriginal Community  
Advisory Committee  
(ACAC)

200A

To create an opportunity for parents/educators to learn more about the origin of the term 2 spirits. We will discuss how schools can create safe spaces for students who self identify as 2 spirited students.

#### Presenter

#### Emile Kwandibens (EJ)

Parent/ Professional - [EmileJoseph.Kwandibens@tdsb.on.ca](mailto:EmileJoseph.Kwandibens@tdsb.on.ca)

Ej Kwandibens is a member of the loon clan and is of Ojibway descent originating from Whitesand First Nation community located 20+ hours north of Toronto. Currently he resides in Toronto.

He is a northern style traditional and grass dancer for approximately 35 years. He has designed and constructed Aboriginal traditional apparel for approximately 30+ years as a self taught Artist mentored by his mother Elsie Kwandibens and other northern woodland Ojibway elders. Ej Kwandibens has travelled across North America learning and attending traditional ceremonies since he was 8 years old. His traditional elders and mentors have provided him a strong foundation of his knowledge which has been influential in his personal and professional life.

Ej Kwandibens is an Aboriginal 2 Spirited custodial parent raising his 16 year old daughter since the age of 1 years.

He has attained 25+ years of social work experience working in all streams which include Education, Child Welfare, Social Services, Mental Health, Corrections and the Judicial System.

Ej also held the position of Board Chair for the 2 Spirits organization in Toronto for 5 years. He has coordinated small to large productions including the 2 Spirits Pride Toronto float for 5 years to coordinating and choreography for World Pride 2014 opening ceremonies.

As a Indigenous cultural educator for 10+ years, he has provided educational presentations to many TDSB schools and organizations throughout the GTA and the Province of Ontario.