My First Pride in Canada

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Hola! My name is Oscar, I'm a queer international student at Seneca, and I'm excited to welcome you to our blog space! Stay tuned, we'll be sharing stories, tips, and reflections on topics that matter to our international student community

I remember that the day before my first Pride in Canada, I was in front of the mirror trying to decide what to wear. I ended up choosing something completely different from what I had planned even before arriving in Toronto. Maybe it was the stress of my school assignments, or the fact that I had just arrived in the country a month earlier and was still trying to find where to live. Pride was coming fast and so was everything else. But I had something very clear: I wanted to enjoy my first pride in Toronto.

I've had the opportunity to visit other pride celebrations around the world before, but this was my first time in North America. I'd heard that Toronto hosts one of the biggest parades in the world, so the excitement was really high. Pride in Colombia is openly celebrated, but I have to say that we don't do it on this scale. In Toronto, it feels like the entire city was involved, regardless of their orientation or identity. Everyone was talking about Pride, local businesses had their flags out and proud, a giant flag hung at the mall, and even pedestrian crossings painted in the colors of pride, I was shocked. I had never seen a place as visibly involved in the celebration as Toronto.

Toronto Pride Explained

I know you might have lots of questions, and that is ok, I had them too. As a newcomer or as someone who has been here for some time but has never been to pride, there could be lots of questions. What should I wear? Where should I go? What's the vibe like? To be honest, the best way to find answers to these questions is to experience it for yourself. However, to help you feel more prepared, here is some key information for you to better understand this celebration:

Globally, pride month goes from June 1st to June 30th, but the official Toronto Pride Festival happens during the last weekend of the month. This year Pride celebrations will take place from June 26th to June 29th. It all ends with the Pride Parade[SP3] , which takes place on Sunday, June 29th.

That weekend is packed with events, including the Trans March and Dyke March, as well as street festivals centered around Church Street -, Toronto's historic queer hub You'll find everything from DJs and drag performances to delicious food and local pop-up vendors. Most events are free and open to everyone, regardless of how you identify.

What to wear?

BE YOURSELF. Pride is the perfect moment to show up as YOU! Whatever that looks like. Let your imagination flow or simply keep it simple, there's no dress code for this, and you definitely don't have to be wrapped in rainbows (unless you want to be).

The most important thing is that you feel great and can move freely because you are probably going to be dancing, walking, and standing for some time. My top advice? Stay hydrated, wear breathable clothes, and choose comfortable shoes — your feet will thank you later. Remember that Pride is celebrated during the Summer and the temperature can be really hot so it's important to take care of yourself while enjoying the festivities.

And whatever you wear, don't forget to bring your biggest smile. Take the opportunity to meet people,

connect with our queer community, and live fully in the moment.

Support Resources for 2SLGBTQ+ Youth and Community Members

If you're looking for support, connection, or resources as a 2SLGBTQ+ youth or community member, there are several welcoming and confidential services available at Seneca and in Toronto:

Seneca Resources:

Reconciliation and Inclusion: Field Notes - Pride

Seneca Libraries Pride Page

Seneca Pride Page

Community & Local Resources

The 519

- Toronto-based 2SLGBTQ+ community centre
- Offers counselling, trans programming, newcomer support, and events
- Located in the Church-Wellesley Village
- Open to all ages and identities

Lesbian Gay Bi Trans (LGBT) Youth Line provides support through text, chat and by phone.

YouthLine is a chat, text and email service for 2SLGBTQ+ youth aged 16 to 29. You can connect to other trained peer supporters to talk about your gender identity, sexual orientation, mental health and relationships with others.

- Text: 647-694-4275
- TTY: 416-962-0777
- Email: askus@youthline.ca
- Use the online chat: www.youthline.ca
- Languages available: English
- Hours of operation: 4 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. every Sunday to Friday

Trans Lifeline's Hotline is a phone service for trans and questioning people. You can connect to other trans people all over Canada and the United States that self-identify as trans to talk to someone anonymously and confidentially.

- Call the toll-free number: 1-877-330-6366
- Hours of operation: 10 a.m. to 4 a.m. Eastern Time Zone (ET)

(Written by Oscar Andres Guerrero Manjarrez)

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