

Why do we need a flag?

One of the questions that is posed most often to members of the 2SLGBTQ+ community is *Why does Pride need a flag?*

There are many reasons countries, cities, provinces, and states fly their own individual flags. A flag is a symbol of unity, loyalty, and membership within a larger community. Some see flags as the ultimate symbol of patriotism. Humans have created and flown flags since time immemorial to communicate, to liberate, and to claim.



Maslow's hierarchy of needs

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs outlines the most important things that humans need to survive. If we look beyond the material needs, such as food and water, the majority of our needs are internal, or psychological. Human's need to belong; it is the anchor which grounds us all. We deliberately involve ourselves in ways that bind us together, sharing ideas, interests, family bonds, and characteristics. When we find others that share these things with us, we find larger groups with whom we affiliate. We belong.

Canadians celebrate July 1st each year with masses of Canada flags shown and flown. The Canada flag is the ultimate symbol of Canada, the group of 38+ million people that find a sense of belonging in this country. The colours of red and white and the maple leaf are recognizable around the world. Canadians feel pride in their country and show that by displaying the flag.

Provinces fly both the Canadian flag and their provincial flags. It is commonplace, and completely expected, so much so that we don't think about what it actually means. When we fly a flag, we show our kinship, our unity, our sense of belonging to a larger whole. It fills us with satisfaction that we belong. The same holds true for every flag in the world.

So when people ask why Pride needs a flag, the answer is simple; unity, Pride, belonging.