



## Ask Me Anything: Pride Season

**By: Shelby Racine, Events Management Officer**

On Wednesday, July 13, we held our interdepartmental Ask Me Anything event celebrating [Pride Season](#) in collaboration with the Department of National Defence and Health Canada.

Participants tuned in virtually from many departments to take part in a compelling conversation on Pride and celebrate the resilience and spirit of the LGBTQ2S community. The event was opened by Veronica Merryfield (she/her/hers), founder of Cape Breton Transgender Network. During her remarks, she shared her journey to self-discovery, leaving everyone inspired by her words. Siobhán O'Meara (she/her/hers), Occupational Health and Safety Coordinator, Fisheries and Oceans Canada; and Danielle (Dan) MacKinlay (she/they), Senior Advisor, Diversity and Inclusion, Canadian Coast Guard co-moderated the event, sharing their own perspectives and journeys throughout the discussion. They did an excellent job facilitating the dialog and welcoming the speakers to the stage. Among these panelists were:

- Olivier Beyer, Campus Services Manager, Canadian Coast Guard College
- Master Sailor Erin Rautenstrauch, Naval Combat Information Operator, National Defence
- Jason Bett (he/him/his), Champion, Public Service Pride Network, Executive Director, Strategic Engagement and Innovation, Treasury Board Secretariat



They each spoke on many different topics that impact the LGBTQ2S community. Along with sharing their individual experiences, they spoke about self-discovery, the meaning of Pride and even shared advice with the audience.

The closing remarks were provided by H  l  ne Genest (she/her/hers), Parks Canada, which fostered a powerful moment of reflection for all listeners.

Each day, we all have the opportunity to practice allyship and advocate for equality in the spaces we occupy. It is not up to our LGBTQ2S colleagues to initiate this change; rather it is up to everyone to push for change. Conversations like this one help us all to reflect on diversity and inclusion and remind us of the importance of creating workplace environments and practices that are safe for everyone.

Thank you to all of our speakers for being vulnerable and sharing your thoughts, feelings, and ideas with us. By way of this conversation, you have helped public servants keep an active mindset when it comes to supporting their LGBTQ2S co-workers and amplifying their voices. Thank you to all who attended the event or watched the recording online. Together, we're creating space for these important conversations within the Government of Canada.

For those who didn't get a chance to tune in live, we invite you to watch the [Pride Season event recording](#) and to share this event with members of your family, friends, and community. Missed an Ask Me Anything event? Find the [past recordings on YouTube](#).

### **DFO-CCG events: Diversity and Inclusion and Ask Me Anything series**

Have ideas for upcoming AMAs, want to share more of yourself with our organization, or share general feedback? Contact the [Internal Communications, Event Management and Publications Team](#)! We are committed to learning more and doing better and hope you join us on this challenge.

To get involved with the Ask Me Anything community and access documentation from past events, join us on our new [Ask Me Anything site on GC Wiki collab](#).