



**Two Spirit People: American Indian Lesbian
Women and Gay Men (Monograph Published
Simultaneously As the Gay & Lesbian Social
Services , Vol 6, No 2)**

Lester B Brown

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Two Spirit People is the first-ever look at social science research exploration into the lives of American Indian lesbian women and gay men. Editor Lester B. Brown posits six gender styles in traditional American Indian culture: men and women, not-men and not-women (persons of one biological sex assuming the identity of the opposite sex in some form), and gays and lesbians. He brings together chapters that emphasize American Indian spirituality, present new perspectives, and provide readers with a beginning understanding of the place of lesbian, gay, and bisexual Indians within American Indian culture and within American society. This beginning will help you understand these unique people and the special challenges and multiple prejudices they face. Traditionally, American Indian cultures showed great respect and honor for alternative gender styles, since these were believed to be part of the sacred web of life. If the Great Spirit chose to create alternative sexualities or gender roles, who was bold enough to oppose such power? If one's spiritual quest revealed one's identity to be that of not-woman, not-man, gay, or lesbian, who should defy their calling? The interpretation of contemporary American Indian religions that gay American Indians retain sacred rights within Indian cultures, and that they can share this gift with others, have implications for therapy, identity formation, social movements, and general human relations. Social workers and other human service professionals, American Indian studies students, sociologists, anthropologists, and lesbian and gay scholars will find Two Spirit People enlightening and a significant contribution to the development of professional interventions for oppressed groups that is ethnically and culturally sensitive. Only by understanding the belief systems from which these oppressed groups come will you begin to really help them achieve positive change. You will become better equipped to specifically help gay and lesbian American Indians as you gain insight into:

- American Indian alternative gender styles
- social service issues for American Indian lesbians and gay men
- American Indian not-men and not-women and their choosing ceremonies
- American Indian lesbian and gay identity development
- American Indian lesbian and gay literature
- AIDS and American Indians Two Spirit People helps you see that family and community acceptance of lesbians and gays is possible. The families of American Indian lesbians and gays do not usually abandon them, thus helping them face a generally unaccepting American milieu. Looking to this book and the American Indian perspective of alternative sexuality/gender styles, American society as a whole can begin to take a new approach to the treatment and understanding of other groups traditionally held to the "outside" of American mainstream society.

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