

Trans-Affirming Education in Schools:

An Educator Toolkit

Jenny Kassen,
Wayne Martino &
Kenan Omercajic

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Author Biographies

Jenny Kassen • (they/them/their) is a Ph.D. candidate and sessional instructor at the Faculty of Education at the University of Western Ontario, a secondary school teacher, and an educational consultant.

Wayne Martino, PhD • (he/him/his) is a Professor of Equity and Social Justice Education in the Faculty of Education and an affiliate member of the Department of Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies at the University of Western Ontario. <https://www.edu.uwo.ca/faculty-profiles/wayne-martino.html>

Kenan Omercajic, PhD • (he/him/his) is the strategic business analyst for the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board.

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This toolkit was composed on the traditional lands of the Anishinaabek, Haudenosaunee, Lūnaapéewak and Chonnonton Nations, on lands connected with the London Township and Sombra Treaties of 1796 and the Dish with One Spoon Covenant Wampum. We acknowledge historical and ongoing injustices that Indigenous Peoples (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit) endure in Canada, and we accept responsibility as scholars conducting research at a public institution to contribute toward revealing and correcting miseducation as well as renewing respectful relationships with Indigenous communities through our teaching, research, and community service.

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Dear Reader,

In the Fall of 2020, as part of an international study entitled *Supporting Trans and Gender Diverse Youth at School: Policy and Practice*, the Trans-Affirm research team, under the leadership of Dr. Wayne Martino, launched an Ontario-based survey open to Educational Workers, that is, any employee who works in an Ontario school. The goal of this survey was to learn about Education Workers' knowledge and understanding of trans-affirming policies and practices in schools. The questions included in the survey were developed in consultation with community members and covered a wide range of topics including knowledge of policy and experience with it, personal motivations for engaging in this work, opinions on barriers and challenges and supports.

With the help of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF/FEESO), the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO), and the Ontario Teachers' Federation (OTF), along with word of mouth and social media sharing, we were able to reach over 1000 Educational Workers across the province. Their expertise and perspectives prompted us to compile the strengths, challenges, and questions into a practical application that could benefit others seeking to make schools safer and more affirming for trans and gender diverse students in Ontario. You can read the full report and the executive summary here:

<https://trans-affirm.edu.uwo.ca/report/index.html>

The toolkit is divided into 5 modules:

- 1 The first module begins with the building blocks for conversations about gender identity. We provide a general overview of vocabulary related to gender identity itself, as well as the language that names the specific kinds of oppression related to gender identity.
- 2 The second module focuses specifically on introducing frameworks for understanding gender justice and teaching

This toolkit is designed to address some of the major findings that came from the report, namely:

- Gaps in knowledge about gender identity and trans-affirming education
- Gaps in knowledge about policy related to gender identity and trans-affirming education
- Gaps in knowledge related to curriculum and curricular connections
- Lack of resources available to support educational workers and school communities in enacting trans-affirming policies and education.

about gender expansiveness, which go beyond merely accommodating and including representations of trans students in the curriculum.

3 The third module addresses what it means to create a trans-affirming school community and proposes **thinking beyond 'inclusion'** to address the roots of trans marginalization and violence against trans and gender diverse students.

4 The fourth module is devoted to building knowledge about trans policy and what its limitations are for supporting trans students and gender expansive education in schools.

5 The final module introduces two action plans for supporting trans students and trans-affirming education in schools.

While each of the modules are connected, they can also be considered separately and serve as a professional development focus in their own right. Throughout the toolkit, we continually make connections to relevant resources for both building educator understanding of gender diversity and informing practice in schools. Drawing connections to resources in this way was a direct response to educator recommendations in the survey report. Many educators commented that they did not have sufficient knowledge and that there was inadequate professional development and provision of resources to support trans inclusion and gender diversity in schools.

We hope that this toolkit can help you and your school community by providing a starting point to do this work. We encourage you to reach out to us if you need any assistance. We would love to hear from you.

Warmly,

Jenny Kassen, Wayne Martino, and Kenan Omercajic

The Trans-Affirm Research Team

trans-affrim@uwo.ca

Notes

Throughout the toolkit there are work spaces for you to keep notes, or to jot down ideas and other resources.



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Understanding Key Terms and Foundational Knowledge

Fun Fact ✓

The Pride Flag has undergone significant change since its creation in 1978 by Gilbert Baker! Subsequently, Monica Helms, a trans woman, created the Trans Pride Flag in 1999. She was a veteran who served in the US Navy in the 70s.

This resource is a short introduction to the meaning of the colours in the Transgender Pride Flag: [Blue, Pink and White: What the Colors of the Transgender Pride Flag Mean](#)

What other identity flags can you find, name, and explain? What is the significance and importance of these flags?

Quick Tip

Words have different impacts and meanings to different people, and it is important to be aware of that context before putting language that is new to us in use! For example, many people use the term 'queer' to describe themselves, but just as many people do not because the term was and still is used to harm people. It is important to take a moment and research the current use of terms to make sure you are using the right words for the right context. As a starting point, please see this [glossary of terms](#) created by The 519, a 2SLGBTQIA+ advocacy organization based in Toronto, Ontario.

Challenge by Choice

For one whole day, keep track of how many times you assume the gender of the people you interact with. This includes when you are running errands, watching TV, at work, and even walking down the street.

How many times do the people you interact with assume your gender?

At the end of the day, record your observations. What did you notice throughout this activity? What lessons and reflections can you take forward with you into tomorrow? Next week? Next month? This resource explains the differences between [gender identity, gender expression and gender attribution](#) and was created by an organization named Queer Sex Ed: Community Curriculum that creates pleasure-centered, trauma-informed, queer-inclusive, and socially conscious curriculum: [Gender: Identity, Body, Expression, and Attribution](#)

Notes



Under the Umbrella: The Language of Gender

Central to our understanding of trans and transgender is that they are umbrella terms which encompass and include a diversity of people who do not identify with the gender that they were assigned at birth. Many educators in our survey study indicated that they did not have the knowledge of key terminology related to gender identity and if they did, they did not feel comfortable or confident to use it (see pp. 51-61 of [Supporting Trans and Gender Diverse Youth in Schools: Educators' Responses](#)).

Trans people are and have always been a part of a diverse society, but they have not always been acknowledged or granted self-recognition and the right to self-determination. Access to language and terminology has not been available to account for self-identification that is not aligned with one's birth assigned gender identity. As we go on to explain, in the history of Canada, colonialism and the Church played a significant role in denying and eradicating gender diversity that existed in first Nations communities through enforced and violent assimilation. Trans people historically were also subjected to much violence at the hands of psychiatrists, clinicians and medical doctors.

It is important to keep in mind that trans people and trans students continue to experience barriers, marginalization and microaggressions which are systemic in nature. These barriers are met when accessing affirming care and in the education system where students' affirmed names and pronouns are not always respected and where safe access to gender inclusive washrooms is not always guaranteed or necessarily facilitated in schools. Central to addressing trans marginalization is having access to knowledge and understanding of an expanding lexicon for making sense of gender identity which is not limited to that which is assigned at birth. In other words, many people simply do not identify with the gender that they



Central to addressing trans marginalization is having access to knowledge and understanding of an expanding lexicon for making sense of gender identity which is not limited to that which is assigned at birth.



were assigned at birth and self-identity in a myriad of ways which is reflected in many of the terms that they use.

This module is intended to be an overview of the language we use currently to talk about all the different aspects of gender identity which are foundational to understanding gender diversity and building knowledge about trans marginalization. The [Gender Unicorn](#) is a useful idiographic that is helpful for learning

about gender and for understating differences between gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation:

This [Activity for Students](#) is an example of how the Gender Unicorn can be used to facilitate conversations with students around the different aspects of their own identity.

The Gender Unicorn
Graphic by: **TSER**
Trans Student Educational Resources

Gender Identity
Female/Woman/Girl
Male/Man/Boy
Other Gender(s)

Gender Expression
Feminine
Masculine
Other

Sex Assigned at Birth
Female
Male
Other/Intersex

Physically Attracted to
Women
Men
Other Gender(s)

Emotionally Attracted to
Women
Men
Other Gender(s)

To learn more, go to:
www.transstudent.org/gender

Design by Landyn Pan and Anna Moore

Gender Unicorn Definitions

- Gender Identity:** *How I identify.*
One's internal sense of being male, female, neither of these, both, or another gender(s). For transgender people, their own internal sense of gender identity and their sex assigned at birth are not the same.
- Gender Expression/Presentation:** *How I look and express myself.*
The physical manifestation of one's gender identity through clothing, hairstyle, voice, body shape, etc. Most transgender people seek to make their gender expression (how they look) match their gender identity (who they are), rather than their sex assigned at birth.
- Sex Assigned at Birth:** *The sex classification that I was assigned at birth.*
The assignment and classification of people as male, female, intersex, or another sex based on a combination of anatomy, hormones, and chromosomes. This is usually decided at birth or in utero, and is usually based on genitalia.
- Sexually Attracted To:** *Whom I am sexually attracted to.*
The group of people or genders to which a person can become sexually attracted to, if at all.
- Romantically/Emotionally Attracted To:** *Whom I am romantically/emotionally attracted to.*
The group of people or genders to which a person can become romantically, emotionally, or spiritually attracted to, if at all.

Examples of Genders: We included "other genders" to indicate the many genders that other people might identify as, express themselves as, and be attracted to. Examples of these genders include: Agender, Bigender, Genderfluid, Genderqueer, Transgender, Non-binary, Gender Non-Conforming and Two-Spirit.

A person’s identity is made of a mixture of how they understand themselves, how they relate to others, how others understand them, and how all of these perspectives interact with the norms of the society that they are a part of.

When we are talking about gender, the typical definition we are working with in Ontario is somebody’s individual sense of feeling in relation to the words, “boy/man” and “girl/woman”. Because of colonialism, gender in Ontario and Canada, and specifically in the education system, still tends to be understood in binary terms or as being on either end of this ‘spectrum’, or somewhere in between it.

Understandings of gender are not fixed in time, nor do they remain constant throughout one’s life. The following resources provide further exploration of the dynamic and shifting understandings of gender and how the societies we live in influence how we understand and express ourselves as well as how we are understood by those around us:

→ [Understanding Gender: Downloadable Resources](#) will lead you to a wide range of resources about understanding gender. These were created by Gender Spectrum, an organization based out of the United States which promotes the affirmation and inclusion of all genders through education, research, and advocacy.

It is important to understand that both gender and sex are assigned at birth – a person is assigned female – *It’s a girl!* – or male – *It’s a boy!* – based on anatomical and other biological characteristics that are thought to be fixed and binary, but not all people identify with their birth assigned gender. Having certain genitalia or biological characteristics does not determine a person’s gender identity. Secondly, assigning sex in this binary way fails to take into consideration the reality that “some babies may have bodies or chromosomes that don’t fit typical categories of males or females” (AMAZE, 2019).

→ The [video “Sex Assigned at Birth and Gender Identity: What Is The Difference?”](#) provides an overview of the difference between sex assigned at birth, gender identity, and gender expression.

“

Understandings of gender are not fixed in time, nor do they remain constant throughout one’s life.



The problem here is that biological sex is far more interesting than external genitalia alone! **Biological sex is made of 7 elements**, none of which can be pinned down as the determinant of biological sex. These are:

1. external genitalia
2. internal sex organs
3. gonads
4. secondary sex characteristics
5. hormone production
6. hormone response
7. chromosomes

Often, only one of these seven is used to determine the biological sex of a baby, which then leads to them being assigned a gender. This gender then determines all kinds of things in their life from what colour their room will be painted, to what expectations will be placed on them about how they should act and what their life will be like, for example, what activities they will like and what their personality will be like, to what relationships they will have. If you are thinking that this is a lot of pressure to put on a child even before they have taken their first breath, you are absolutely right.

→ In the [TED Talk The Way We Think about Biological Sex is Wrong](#), Emily Quinn offers further explication about the nuances around assigning sex/gender based on biology.

Below, we identify some of the key terms that are crucial for a foundational understanding about gender.

The term **gender identity** refers to a person's internal sense of gender, meaning their individual feelings of being a girl, a boy, neither, both, and more. Sometimes a person's gender identity will align with the gender they were assigned at birth, sometimes it won't, but the only person who gets to decide that is the individual themselves.

Gender expression refers to how individuals choose to express themselves to the world around them. This might be in the clothing they choose to wear, makeup, hair styles, mannerisms, voice and tone, amongst many others. It is very important to note that the way a person looks tells us absolutely nothing about how they identify: the only way to know that is for the person themselves to share that information with us.

Some folks will be assigned a sex and gender at birth and that will feel right to them; their *gender identity* or internal sense of their gender, aligns with the language that was assigned to them, and as such, these folks might use the term **cisgender** to describe their gender identity. Some people, and often children as young as three years old, recognize that there is a misalignment between the sex and gender they were assigned at birth and their gender identity. These folks might use language like **transgender, trans, genderqueer, nonbinary, agender, or Two-Spirit** (to name only a few) to describe themselves. Trans is an important umbrella

term that represents the diverse ways of self-identifying one's gender which does not correspond to that assigned at birth. There are many ways that someone comes to understand this about themselves which can sometimes include feelings of distress, but very importantly, also feelings of intense joy or gender euphoria when they feel affirmed.



When we look at all the ways in which colonial understandings of gender are present in our communities, we can start to understand how identities that do not fit into this definition are erased and made unnatural.



These identities have existed globally since time immemorial, and today, individuals are able to connect with virtual communities to better explore, get curious, ask questions, and understand their unique experience of gender identity alongside how they express themselves (or imagine what their expression might look like!) Because our understandings of gender identity and gender expression are shaped by the communities that we are in and around, **it is important to think about gender identity beyond the colonial frameworks that we have inherited.** The idea of gender as a binary of either boy/man and girl/woman and that there is only one way to be a boy/man and girl/woman is a product of colonial ways of understanding gender. These imposed belief systems erase and indeed deny the existence and nuance that are evident in the diversity of human experience. European settlers forced their rigid views on gender upon the civilizations they invaded, reforming Indigenous gender roles through colonial restrictions as a tool to align patriarchal family and kinship structures that mirrored the privileged European family systems during the time of invasion. Since then, this narrow understanding of gender can be found everywhere in our everyday lives, from the marketing of vitamins and nutritional supplements at drug stores to children's toys. When we look at all the ways in which colonial understandings of gender are present in our communities, we can start to understand how identities that do not fit into this definition are erased and made unnatural.

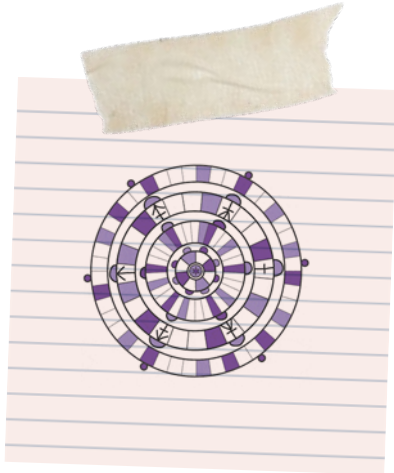
The following resources provide further understanding about how the gender binary is a colonial and white supremacist structure rather than a natural and indisputable truth.

- [*The Gender Binary Is a Tool of White Supremacy*](#) is an article that provides an overview of the colonial history of the gender binary. Please note that you will need to create a free account through Medium, the writing community through which this article is published.
- [*The Binary is A White, Colonialist Fiction and It's Up to White Cishet Folks to Disrupt It*](#) is an article that explores the shared responsibility of challenging the gender binary and the important role that those working in allyship with Rainbow communities play.
- Read or listen to this CBC interview with author Joshua Whitehead [*Joshua Whitehead Explores Indigiqueer and Two-Spirit Culture in His Canada Reads Contending Novel*](#).
- [*2SLGBTQI+ : 2S, ça veut dire quoi?*](#) is a short article in French about Two-Spirit identities written by Catherine Contant.

Notes

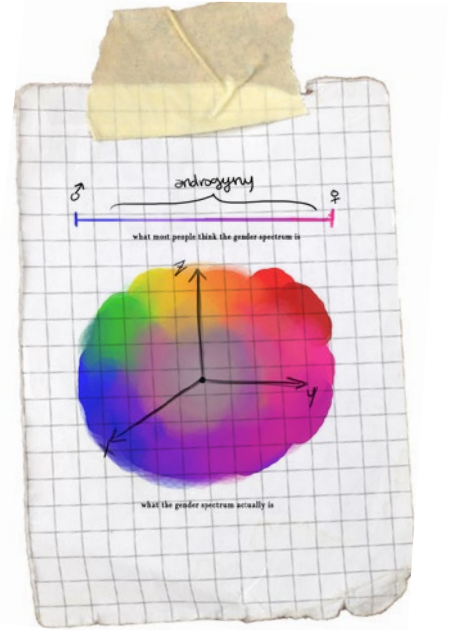
While the Gender Unicorn is a good tool for beginning to understand the different aspects of gender and sexuality, it is just one way that folks are conceptualizing gender identity.

Have you come across any of the following before?



The Gender Wheel

Created by Maya Gonzales, the Gender Wheel draws on Mayan and Aztec calendrical wheels to “help us decolonize our thinking, understand our unique place in nature, and develop a holistic planetary mindset.” (Gender Wheel, 2023)



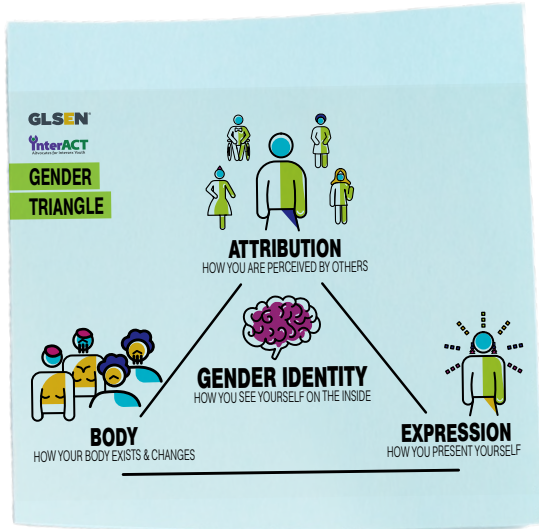
Gender Cloud

Created by The Blunt Rose, the Gender Cloud provides a three-dimensional spectrum to bring nuance to the idea of the ‘spectrum’ of gender identity.



Gender Galaxy

Created by Action Canada for Sexual Health Rights, this framework envisions gender as an ever evolving and expansive galaxy. The resource also provides prompts for a student activity.



Gender Triangle

Created by GLSEN, this graphic demonstrates how gender identity is influenced by more than just how we feel on the inside. It illustrates the relationship between gender identity, attribution, expression, and the body.

This Education Guide is a tool for educators that accompanies the Gender Triangle and provides in-depth explanations of the graphic.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity: Library Resources

Created by the University of Alberta, this website houses numerous free resources pertaining to Two-Spirit identities.



(Un)learn Gender Zebra

Created by the OSSTF/ FEESO Education Services Committee, this graphic encourages the viewer to unlearn the misconceptions about gender identity and to extend their understanding of what gender identity can be.

The graphic features a zebra illustration in the center. To the left is a yellow box titled 'UNLEARN' with a red 'X' icon. To the right is a blue box titled 'LEARN' with a green checkmark icon. The ESC logo is in the top right. The text in the 'UNLEARN' box includes: 'Gender is defined by biology and sex organs', 'There are only two gender binaries—Male & Female', 'Biology determines our gender identity', 'There are only two biological sexes', and 'How we express ourselves reveals our gender identity'. The text in the 'LEARN' box includes: 'Biology and sex organs do not define gender', 'There are more than two binary genders', 'Biology does not determine our gender identity', 'There are more than two biological sexes including intersex', and 'How we express ourselves does not reveal our gender identity'. At the bottom, it says 'Blue and Trucks => ALL' and 'Pink and Dolls => ALL'.

The way that gender identity is conceptualized is still very whitewashed, meaning that the definitions that are taken up as true and right in schools privilege colonial, linear understandings of gender that reflect a Eurocentric conceptualization. Look to activists and community-led initiatives to learn about how communities are decolonizing and challenging normative understandings of gender identity and claiming language for their own. Some resources that you may find useful for this include:

- [“All the Things They Said We Couldn’t Have: Stories of Trans Joy”](#) by Tash Oakes-Monger is a compilation of short vignettes structured around the four seasons. *Note: this book is for purchase.*
- [“Non-Binary Lives: An Anthology of Intersecting Identities”](#) by Ben Vincent, Meg-John Barker, JosTwist and Kat Gupta is a collection of essays exploring non-binary identities. *Note: this book is for purchase.*
- [“The Nearest Exit May Be Behind You”](#) by S Bear Bergman is a collection of essays about gender identity and all aspects of life.
- [Alok](#) is an author, poet, comedian, public speaker, and artist who “explores themes of trauma, belonging, and the human condition” through their work.

- [Kama La Mackerel](#) is a Mauritian-Canadian whose wide variety of artistic engagement “blurs the lines between traditional artistic disciplines to create hybrid aesthetic spaces from which decolonial and queer/trans vocabularies can emerge”.
- [Sean Saifa Wall](#) Sean Saifa Wall is a Black queer intersex activist and scholar and filmmaker whose work in all areas centers the lives of people with intersex conditions.
- [“Me, Myself, They: Life Beyond the Binary”](#) by Joshua M. Ferguson is a memoir about self-discovery

Notes



See [“Resource Links”](#) on page 83 for a full list of links

Take a look at the prompts provided on the next page and use these as a starting point for reflecting on gender identity and gender expression. This is foundational and essential for dismantling the systems of oppression that position cisgender people as natural, normal, expected, and anticipated. In the next module, you will be introduced to some frameworks for starting to name and recognize these underlying systems. It is important to note that in this respect, gender and racial justice are intertwined. Marie Laing (2021), in her book, argues that binary understandings of gender are tied to colonial ways of thinking about gender identity and “when reflected in the literal definition of Two-Spirit, can be a tool of colonialism, in the ways that it erases and does harm to trans, non-binary, and Two-Spirit people” (p.110). Laing calls for non-Two-Spirit people to embrace “understandings of Two-Spirit that hinge not on a definition of the term but rather an appreciation of the ways in which the term is truly by and for Two-Spirit trans and queer Indigenous people – and therefore holds many meanings - only a portion of which any one person can ever know, and most of which people actually do not need to know” (p. 41). Laing provides good advice and guidance for all of us when it comes to how to approach trans-affirming education:



... what non-Two-Spirit people need to know is how to be respectful to trans, queer, and Two-Spirit Indigenous people—a practice which includes, but is not limited to: not making assumptions about anyone’s body, gender, assigned sex, or sexuality, and not expecting Two-Spirit, trans, and queer Indigenous people to explain any details about our lives (or the lives of our communities) to people in order to educate them” (p. 41).



Marie Laing’s book **“Urban Indigenous Youth Reframing Two-Spirit”** is available for purchase.

You can read more from Laing’s book in this free online zine, **Two-Spirit: Conversations with Young Two-Spirit, Trans and Queer Indigenous People in Toronto.**

Fun Fact

Did you know that the definition of gender changes based on time and place? To see how these definitions have changed over time, visit the following resource:

[Exploring the history of gender expression](#)

Fun Fact

Intersex conditions occur more often than identical twins do! (1.7% compared to ~0.3%). It is important to note and remember that **“Being intersex is not the same as being transgender”**. [Intersex 101: Everything you need to know](#) is an important resource created by InterACT: Advocates for Intersex Youth.

Quick tip

Have you ever heard someone say *cisgenderED*, or *transgenderED*? This is incorrect! Cisgender and transgender are adjectives, not verbs! We don’t add the ‘ed’ to these terms the same way we wouldn’t describe our sexuality as ‘gayed’, ‘asexualled’, or ‘straighted’! [Please see this resource](#) which provides not only a Glossary of Terms but explains Terms to Avoid.

Check-In

What language do you use to describe your gender identity? Where did this vocabulary come from? Why have you chosen it to describe how you self-identify? Are you curious about any other vocabulary that might more accurately describe your gender identity?

How specific can you get with explaining what the language you use means to you?

If you are feeling creative, make a self-portrait combining the language you use with images that you feel represent you.

Challenge by Choice

Have you ever thought: “but this person doesn’t look...!” (insert adjective of choice: gay, straight, trans, nonbinary, queer)? Take a moment to think about your reaction. **What does it tell you about your expectations about what certain identities should look like? What does your reaction tell you about the norms that you have learned? What does it reveal about your preconceptions? What does it say about your own perceptions of queer and trans people?** Doing this will help you do a better job of anticipating gender diversity and making space for affirming gender expression, inclusive of people’s identity because you are not relying on certain assumptions about what queer and trans people look like. This decentering of our own expectations and preconceptions is an important component of creating space in schools for authentic self-expression.

Notes



It is important not only to listen to trans, nonbinary and Two-Spirit students but to create safe and affirming spaces in schools where they are supported and welcomed. Affording such spaces allows them to explore and engage with their identity safely and openly. The following resources feature trans youth speaking and writing about themselves and their experiences:

- [*The Gender Tag: Authentic Gender Expression*](#) is a TedTalk presented by Ashley Wylde about the Gender Tag Project, a compilation of over 600 personal narratives about gender identity presented through videos and available through YouTube. In this video, Wylde explores how this project came to be.
- [*The Gender Tag Project*](#) continues to grow as a project and provides examples of how diverse each individual's experience of gender identity is.
- [*I AM ME: The Lives of 4 Trans Youth*](#) is a short documentary created by Skylark Children, Youth, & Families, a counselling organization, showcasing the personal narratives of young people.
- [*We're Here: Indigenous 2SLGBTQ+ Youth Across Ontario Assert Needs and Experiences*](#) is an important resource created by LGBT Youthline from the findings of their needs assessment, [*Do Better: 2SLGBTQ+ Youth Recommendations for Change in Ontario*](#).
- This bulletin created by the Youth Gender Action Project (2009) entitled [*Trans youth at school*](#) highlights important research findings that center youth voices
- [*Growing Up Trans: In Our Own Words*](#) is a compilation of stories, essays, and art created by trans youth and edited by Lindsay Herriot and Kate Fry. This book is available for purchase.
- [*“Radically Listening to Transgender Children: Creating Epistemic Justice through Critical Reflection and Resistant Imaginations”*](#) by Katie Steele and Julie Nicholson is an important resource for individuals working in Early Education as it challenges the notion that young children are “too young” to know themselves and their gender identity.
- [*“Créer des milieux authentiques: Une boîte à outils sur l'identité et l'expression de genre pour aider à mettre en place des changements dans la société, les organisations et les institutions”*](#) is a French resource created by The 519 to support inclusivity of gender diversity in different social settings.
- [*Niish Manidoowag \(Two-Spirited Beings\)*](#) is a short film created by Debbie S. Mishibinijima. It features the experiences of Two-Spirit youth in discussing their lives and identities.

Check-In

Take a look at your social media feeds: **how many community-led accounts do you follow?** If the answer is: not many, this is really easy to fix! Start by following local organizations like EGALE Canada, PFLAG in your community, TRANS Wellness Ontario. This bite-sized learning is perfect for Educational Workers who are already juggling so many responsibilities.

Fun Fact

Gender identity is not a brand-new trend. Trans and gender diverse people have existed since time immemorial. Start by looking into the identities and language around these identities of the local Indigenous communities where you live, then broaden your search globally to explore the long and beautiful history of the human experience of gender.

Challenge by Choice

Think about the new language you are learning in this module. Reading definitions and using them in our everyday conversations are two very different things. Practice using new terminology with someone that you trust: formulate definitions in your own words and get used to integrating these terms in different ways. Becoming comfortable with the language is a first step to ensuring that you can be comfortable using it in your work as well.

Notes

Systems of Oppression Related to Gender Identity

Good intentions alone are not enough to create safe and affirming spaces for trans and gender diverse students in schools. It is important to understand trans marginalization and how to address it beyond simply embracing a commitment to trans inclusion and representation. The following terms are central to building this understanding:

Cisgenderism, cissexism, and cisnormativity are the root of the violence perpetuated against trans and gender diverse people is.

Cisgenderism refers to a pervasive ideology that denigrates and denies the legitimacy of self-assigned gender identities which do not align with those that are imposed at birth. Such a system of belief is institutionalized and taken-for granted and contributes to trans marginalization in schools. It also results in and perpetuates cisgender privilege and gender entitlement. Follow this link for more information on [cisgenderism](#).

Cissexism is a set of values, beliefs, and actions that state that cisgender identities (woman and man) are the only normal and natural identities, and that identities that any other gender identity is deviant and unnatural, therefore, to be policed, regulated, and rectified for transgressing the ‘natural’ order of gender aligning with sex assigned at birth. The following resource provides more information regarding cissexism: [What does it mean to be Cissexist?](#)

Cisnormativity is a set of values, beliefs, and actions that presume that everyone is cisgender or wants to be cisgender. These values, beliefs, and actions mean that identities other than cisgender ones are viewed as exceptional, niche, and uncommon. Frohard-Dourlent (2016) defines cisnormativity as “the belief that gender is a binary category that naturally flows from one’s sex assigned at birth” (p. 4). You can access the full

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It is important to understand trans marginalization and how to address it beyond simply embracing a commitment to trans inclusion and representation.



thesis online for further reading: [‘Muddling through together’: Educators navigating cisnormativity while working with trans and gender-nonconforming students.](#)

This free questionnaire from the Canadian Federation for Students provides an excellent starting point for identifying where cisnormativity is present: [Challenging Cisnormativity: Working Toward Gender Inclusive Spaces.](#)

Cissexism is why people might be afraid to come out as there is real danger in making yourself visible and known in a climate that largely believes that you are unnatural and must be ‘corrected’; cisnormativity is why people *have* to come out in the first place: society does not anticipate them and the choice is to make yourself visible, or remain erased and unconsidered.

Cisnormativity and cissexism are deeply intertwined with other forms of oppression, for example, colonialism and racism: understandings of gender identity are largely coded and understood through norms that are dictated by the standards of whiteness; these norms result in the erasure of gender diversity that has existed since time immemorial.

Where cissexism is easier to spot because of its overt manifestation through acts of transphobia (both interpersonal and systemic), cisnormativity, which often manifests in microaggressions (actions with good intentions but harmful impacts). An example of such a microaggression may be

stating to a trans person, “Oh! I would have never guessed you are trans!”

A major part of the work we must do is to assess how our assumptions about gender identity and expression impact our actions, and whether our *intent* aligns with the *impact* we are having. Though the microaggression outlined above may be intended as a compliment, it communicates many underlying beliefs that are harmful (i.e., that we are able to tell someone’s gender identity from how they look, that we expect trans people to be ‘noticeable’ or identifiable by their inability to ‘pass’ as a cisgender person, and that we believe all trans people wish to ‘pass’ as cisgender and to conform to certain gender norms).



Cisnormativity and cissexism are deeply intertwined with other forms of oppression, for example, colonialism and racism: understandings of gender identity are largely coded and understood through norms that are dictated by the standards of whiteness.



An important note about Transphobia

Transphobia refers to individual expression of hate and discrimination that is directed at trans people. The word phobia means fear, but transphobia is much more than just an expression of fear. Transphobia is driven by a deep-seated rejection of the trans people that is based on an erroneous and harmful belief that there is something inherently wrong with trans people. Please see these resources to learn more about the meaning of transphobia:

- [Defining: Transphobia](#)
- [How to Recognize Transphobia-and what to do next](#)
- [What is Transphobia?](#)

It is important to distinguish between transphobia and cisgenderism. Transphobia refers to an individual's attitude or expression of hate directed at trans people while cisgenderism is an ideology - a belief system that "essentializes sex/ gender as biologically determined, fixed at birth, immutable, natural and externally imposed on the individual" (Kennedy, 2018, p.308). Such a belief system leads to and perpetuates transphobia.

Below, you can review additional resources for examining your own beliefs and assumptions:

- Scholar and activist Julia Serano has many free resources available on her website that address cissexism and cisnormativity. This article is an excellent starting point: [Cissexism and Cis Privilege Revisited - Part 1: Who Exactly Does "Cis" Refer To?](#)
- For further reflections on cisgender privilege, review the [Cis Privilege Checklist](#).
- The following article by Natacha Kennedy (2018) also provides significant insight into and explanation of how cisgenderism impacts and affects the development of self-perceptions in trans people and trans children: ["Prisoners of Lexicon: Cultural Cisgenderism and Transgender Children"](#).

There is a lot of terminology surrounding gender identity and the oppression related to it and it is constantly evolving. It's ideal to start small, but to start as soon as possible. Generally, a great strategy is to familiarize yourself with current language and to find sources to draw on that can help you rethink the things you thought you knew about gender identity, which will help you stay up to date on the new language that is emerging day-by-day.

Check-in

Have you ever been to Pride? Why or why not? What events have you attended? Who did you bring along?

How do you engage with 2SLGBTQIA+ topics and culture outside of June, Pride Month?

Fun Fact

Did you know that the Federal Government has a 2SLGBTQIA+ Action Plan?

Check it out! [Federal 2SLGBTQI+ Action Plan... Building our future, with pride](#)

How do these priorities align with the work that you want to do? Are there any missing focus areas that you can find? How do you think this Action Plan is going to impact 2SLGBTQIA+ communities? Can you think of ways to integrate these priorities into the work that you are doing/are interested in taking on?

Challenge by Choice

Reflecting on your professional work, try to identify a time where you made cisnormative assumptions. If you could turn back time, what would you do differently and why? **How can you use this knowledge going forward both personally and professionally?**

Quick tip

Students are often very gracious with us as we make an effort to get to know them better. They will often answer the questions we bring to them and seem very open to supporting our learning, however students are not our gender mentors! Make sure to connect with your colleagues, so that you can support one another throughout this important learning.

Notes

2 Frameworks for (Un)Learning

For all of the hard work that individuals in schools are undertaking to ensure representation and safety of trans and gender diverse people (for example, board-wide awareness campaigns, school-specific events such as celebrating Pride Month, and supporting clubs such as Gender and Sexuality Alliances), educational spaces remain unsafe. There are several useful frameworks for understanding why this is the case and what we can do about it.

A Trans Studies Approach

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[Trans studies is] ‘the kind of knowledge that transgender people have of their own embodied experiences’ and of the impact of ‘discourses and institutions that act upon and through them’

(Stryker, 2006, p. 13)



Trans Studies is a field of study which has been developed by trans scholars. It provides a framework for understanding gender identity, gender expression and embodiment as they are relevant to trans and gender diverse people. This field introduces concepts such as *cisgenderism*, *cissexism* and *cisnormativity* which are central to understanding trans marginalization specifically and gender privilege more broadly. Susan Stryker¹, one of the key proponents of Trans Studies, calls “the kind of knowledge that transgender people have of their own embodied experiences” of the impact of “discourses and institutions that act upon and through them” (p. 13). She specifically calls for *trans desubjugation* which refers to the need to include the voices and diverse perspectives of trans people and their lived experiences at the centre of education and generating knowledge about trans people. Subjugation refers to the act of *bringing someone under control* in the form of domination by one group over another. It is both a form of symbolic and material violence in that it is a result of actively denying a person from a non-dominant group the freedom, agency, official access to support self-knowledge and capacity for self-determination. This form of subjugation restricts

¹ Stryker, S. (2006). (De)subjugated knowledges. In Stryker, S. & Whittle, S (Eds.), *The transgender studies reader* (pp. 1-18). Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group.

education about trans identities in school and is also reflected in requirement that an ‘expert’ validate gender identity through a diagnosis of gender dysphoria. Cisnormativity and cissexism are deeply intertwined with other forms of oppression, for example, colonialism and racism: understandings of gender identity are largely coded and understood through norms that are dictated by the standards of whiteness. *Desubjugation* refers to the act of undoing which takes the form of a **decolonizing approach** to generating knowledge that is committed to addressing enforced invisibility and erasure of trans and two-spirit people in our schools. However, it is not just about representing and educating about trans people - including trans people in the curriculum for example - but addressing the very systems of oppression that normalize *cisgenderism* and result in the perpetuation of *cissexism* which is intertwined with other systems of oppression related to white privilege, ableism, classism etc.

These useful resources draw attention to the important role of trans activists in the civil rights movement - black/trans of color women who in the past have been erased from historical accounts of activism in Canada and in the United States. They help us to think through the implications of incorporating trans knowledge into the curriculum:

- This is a 9-minute video showcasing some important transgender figures in Canadian History: [4 Canadian Trans Activists You Should Know](#)
- This website provides audio recordings of interviews with Sylvia Rivera and Marsha P. Johnson, two activists who were crucial in the movement for trans rights in the USA: [Sylvia Rivera and Marsha P. Johnson: Listen to the Newly Unearthed Interview with Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries](#)
- This illustrated story book provides more information about Sylvia Rivera and Marsha P. Johnson for and is available for purchase: [Sylvia and Marsha Start a Revolution!](#) (A Picture Story Book)
- [Screaming Queens](#) is a documentary about the Compton Cafeteria Riot of 1966 was created by Victor Silverman and Susan Stryker
- This book explores the history of transgender history in the US and was written by Susan Stryker: [Transgender History: The roots of Today’s Revolution](#)
- Watch a 2-hour lecture with Susan Stryker entitled: [Transgender History: The Roots of Today’s Revolution](#)

An Intersectional Approach

Central to a trans studies approach in education is the need to embrace an intersectional approach to addressing equity and social justice. Kimberlé Crenshaw, an American Black feminist, critical race scholar and activist first coined the term “intersectionality” to refer to multiple forms of oppression and social injustice that overlap in an individual’s life based on their race, gender, sexuality, ability, economic background, faith. Given Canada’s history of genocide and colonialism, it is critical that we — in the Ontario education system — recognize, consider, and understand intersectionality. Moreover, an intersectional approach is central and required to address trans marginalization and to recognize the diverse lived experiences and histories of trans students in schools, as they exist in all communities regardless of whether they are visible in schools or not. The following videos and readings provide insight into intersectional frameworks and more information about how to employ an intersectional approach to affirming trans identities:



An intersectional approach is central and required to address trans marginalization and to recognize the diverse lived experiences and histories of trans students in schools.



- [The Urgency of Intersectionality](#), TED Talk by Kimberlé Crenshaw
- [How Does Intersectionality Relate to Indigenous and Western Linking Frameworks?](#) is a two-page fact-sheet created through the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women
- [2SLGBTQ+ Identities and Child Welfare: Intersectional Identities](#), is a website that provides numerous free resources.
- [God Loves Hair](#): is a collection of short stories written by Vivek Shrya that is available for purchase.
- [“I’m Muslim and My Gender Doesn’t Fit Me: A Resource for Trans Muslim Youth”](#) is a free online resource created by the Muslim Youth Leadership Council.

Anti-Oppressive Education

Both a trans studies and intersectional approaches to thinking about and addressing gender justice are also aligned with Kumashiro’s framework for understanding what anti-oppressive educational work can look like in schools. **There are four main approaches to Kumashiro’s anti-oppressive education**, and we have summarized them for you below, along with some examples of what bridging with curriculum might look like.

1. EDUCATION FOR “THE OTHER”

Schools must be made safe and helpful for students who are oppressed: it must be a space which “welcomes, educates, and addresses the needs of the Other” — those students from non-dominant or minoritized communities (Kumashiro, 2000, p. 28). This also means that students must be affirmed in their identities, and so no assumptions should be made about them (for example, educators should not assume that all students are cisgender as the default). Dedicated separate spaces must also be provided for students who are *Othered* so that they might find support if and when they experience harm (e.g., a school might run a Gender and Sexuality Alliance or similar student-led club). Educators must recognize, embrace, and name the differences between students’ identities and “acknowledge and affirm differences and tailor their teaching to the specifics of their student population” (Kumashiro, 2000, p. 29). In other words, trans and gender diverse students should see themselves reflected in the content they learn.

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Educators must recognize, embrace, and name the differences between students’ identities and ‘acknowledge and affirm differences and tailor their teaching to the specifics of their student population’

(Kumashiro, 2000, p. 29).



Bridging with Curriculum

In the classroom, a teacher can begin by thinking about how they are making their space welcoming to trans and gender diverse students. Small cues such as trans and Intersex-Inclusive Progressive Identity Flags and providing easily accessible and visible class materials that represent a wide range of identities are examples of how this can be done. Educators can intentionally create group guidelines with students that explicitly state that all identities will be respected in class. Educators should provide opportunities to showcase the brilliant work of trans and gender diverse individuals, ensuring that intersectional representation is centered. These resources provide some tips for educators directly from families:

- [LGBTQ Families Speak Out: Four Ways Schools Can Create Safer, More Welcoming Learning Environments for Our Children](#) is a short article about steps to creating safer spaces at school.
- [Gender Sandcastles: Conceptualizing Nonbinary and Trans Identities](#) is a short article exploring gender identity and one individual's experience of coming to know themselves.

2. EDUCATION ABOUT “THE OTHER”

Students, for the most part, are only ever taught about cisgender people with the inference that birth-assigned gender is the only legitimate gender identity. Such knowledge is partial and “encourages a distorted and misleading understanding of *the other* that is based on stereotypes and myths” (Kumashiro, 2000, p. 32). Kumashiro suggests that while educators can choose to include specific units of study that focus on the Other, a more effective method is to “integrate Otherness throughout the curriculum” (p. 33). By intentionally integrating representations of trans and gender diverse identities into multiple lessons and units of work, an educator has more opportunities to highlight the diversity of trans communities in many contexts. By increasing visibility and representation, educators are contributing to learning that can help their students recognize the richly diverse world that they are a part of.

Bridging with Curriculum

To help you think through how you might begin to integrate representation of trans and gender diverse people, here is a resource to get you started:

- [Transgender People: 10 Common Myths](#) is a free and interactive resource created by VOX
- [En Inclusif](#) is an online French dictionary that finds gender-neutral options for gendered language
- [Alpheratz](#) is an academic based at Sorbonne Université. They specialize in linguistics and develop inclusive French resources

3. EDUCATION THAT IS CRITICAL OF PRIVILEGING AND OTHERING

Oppression cannot only be understood in terms of groups being oppressed on the basis of their identities but must consider the dynamic relationship of privileging and othering in society. In this approach, an educator actively teaches about how and why certain identities are treated as “normal” and expected in society, while others are considered exceptions. Kumashiro stresses that students must learn not only about the Other, but also about themselves and how their own unique makeup of identities may be *othered* or *privileged*, depending on context and background. This critical focus will help them understand also how they are complicit in systems of the privileging/othering dynamic. The critical thinking skills that students learn and practice at school around privilege and oppression will help them develop confidence in challenging systems of power that ultimately harm everyone.



Bridging with Curriculum

Engaging in critical thinking can certainly be introduced at any point in education, but it is easier for everyone if it is a practice that is scaffolded from early years through to senior ones.

→ At an **elementary school level**, some questions that can begin to prompt students might be:

“How would this story book be different if you were the main character? Why do you think this might be?”

Questions that begin to draw students’ attention to their own positionality and start to raise awareness of how each person’s experience is different and begin to recognize the axis of their own identity that impacts on the ways that they understand their own experiences.

→ At a **middle-school level**, prompts could include critical conversations around teaching materials such as textbooks. Prompts might include:

“What voices are not being heard in our science textbook? How did the authors let us know whose voices are the most important ones and which ones are less important?”

Critical media literacy can help students recognize that the school system is not neutral and that the materials they are exposed to have lessons beyond the general content which reflects societal priorities (for example, looking at which scientists are highlighted in the main text as ‘experts’ and which scientists are placed in ‘spotlight’ positions to present ‘alternative’ perspectives). These reflections can help to scaffold conversations around privileging and othering.

- At the **high school level**, teachers can start to explicitly **examine with students the ways in which systems of oppression work together to shape what knowledge is presented as ‘normal’ or Othered**, for example, in biology, examining the role of racism, colonialism, and white supremacy in the shaping of gender norms (for fantastic inspiration on readings related to this, follow [@alokvmenon](#) for their “book reports”).

This resource was created by Trans Wellness Ontario and is available for free via Facebook:

[Cisgender Privilege and the Cisgender Privilege Checklist](#)

4. EDUCATION THAT CHANGES STUDENTS AND SOCIETY

In this approach, oppression is not a singular action or belief, but rather an ever-evolving process that comes from repeating particular stories and stereotypes which “frame how people think, feel, act, and interact” (Kumashiro, p. 40). When narratives and stereotypes are referenced and repeated, they contribute to a collective misrepresentation of marginalized individuals. Oppression occurs when these narratives and stereotypes and their origins and histories are uninterrupted and so continue to permeate society at all levels. This approach therefore requires an ongoing critical focus on deconstructing representations and thinking about the norms that continue to govern how gender identity is thought about. It examines how educators can strategically work with negative representations and narratives about trans people. Kumashiro emphasizes that this understanding of oppression “provides insight not only into the cause of harm, but also into the relationship between different forms of oppression” (p. 41). He stresses that different forms of oppression in this case not only work alone, but ‘supplement’ each other by adding to the negative representation, and that oppression works in ways which are “multiple, interconnected, and situated” (p. 41).

Bridging with Curriculum

- **At an elementary level**, this may look like naming assumptions related to gender identity as they come up in class, for example, assumptions about gender identity and presentation in story books. Along with naming assumptions, teachers can also begin discussions about what to do if we make assumptions about somebody’s gender identity (e.g., e.g., question why those assumptions are made and develop an understanding of how assumptions are influenced by social norms and expectations), thus supporting students in working through any ‘stuck’ feelings.
- At a **middle school level**, a teacher can use assessment, for example, a **Know/Want to Know/ Learned** chart to support students in self-reflection on how their understanding of embedded assumptions are growing over the course of a Unit of Study. The teacher might include a ‘I am changing’ category for the student to identify the concrete changes they are making based on their unlearning. Please see this resource: [Printable KWL Chart Templates](#)

- At a **secondary level**, teachers can use Independent Study Projects to create a space for students to explore the assumptions that exist within the subject matter they are learning about, and to practice identifying and articulating the dynamics of oppression while also putting forward suggestions for change.

This work takes time and intention, and there are many supports online to help you with this.

Please see these resources for building curricular bridges:

- [Gender Inclusive Biology](#): a website dedicated to affirming gender and sexual diversity in the biology classroom
- [LGBTQ Flags: The History and Symbolism of 23 Flags](#): a short article from Teen Vogue about the history of flags in Rainbow communities which is also connected to a lesson plan.
- [Resources for Gender and LGBTQ+ Inclusive Schools](#): A compilation of diverse resources including lesson plans created by Welcoming Schools, an anti-bullying initiative of the Human Rights Campaign Foundation.
- [Affirming Gender Diversity](#): A discussion booklet created by the Canadian Teachers Federation.

- [Pronoun Resource for Teachers](#): A graphic resource created by EGALÉ Canada and illustrated by Sophie Labelle.
- [Affirming and Inclusive Language](#): An interactive resource about inclusive language created by EGALÉ Canada
- [Pronoun Learning Module](#): An interactive online tool to practice the use of neopronouns, created by Minus 18, an Australian organization championing the rights of 2SLGBTQIA+ young people.
- [How Two-Spirit People are 'Coming In' to Their Communities](#): Read or listen to this episode Unreserved, a show on CBC hosted by Rosanna Deerchild that centers Indigenous stories, experiences, and voices.
- [Teaching about Gender Diversity](#): Teacher-tested Lesson Plans for K-12 Classrooms: A book available for purchase that features lesson plans designed to help teachers integrate teaching about gender diversity in their practice.
- [Gender: Your Guide](#): A Gender Friendly Primer on What to Know, What to Say, and What to Do in the New Gender Culture: A guide available for purchase that supports education about gender-inclusive practices in everyday conversation.

The following are books for younger audiences that can be used for read-alouds or individual book studies:

- [“10,000 Dresses”](#) by Marcus Ewert
- [“The Boy and the Bindi”](#) by Vivek Shraya
- [“47,000 Beads”](#) by Koja and Angel Adeyoha
- [“Melissa”](#) by Alex Gino

If you would like to learn more about an Anti-Oppression Education, please see the following:

- Kevin Kumashiro – [Four Approaches to Social Justice Education](#)
- [Toward a Theory of Anti-Oppressive Education](#)
- [Anti-Oppressive Framework: A Primer](#), Created by ETFO/FEEO

THE TAKE-AWAY

1. The language used to describe gender identity is changing and evolving, but we must do everything we can to stay current so that students do not have to constantly be educating us.
2. There are very useful frameworks available that can help us name and understand trans marginalization and violence. Putting a name to this violence means that we can find concrete and targeted strategies to end it.
3. Students in Ontario have a right, inclusive of age and subject matter, to see themselves represented in schools and in the curriculum.
4. Education provided through curriculum is one of our most powerful tools for combating cisgenderism, cissexism, cisnormativity, and transphobia.

Notes



3 Creating Trans-Affirming Schools



The term *inclusive* is commonly used to describe the school climate that we strive to create. However, a commitment to inclusion often translates into celebrating and representing diversity without necessarily addressing the root causes of systemic oppression and specifically trans marginalization. It often means that cisnormativity, cisgenderism, cissexism and transphobia go unchallenged.

An **affirming** as opposed to an **inclusive** approach is about dismantling the cissexist notion that the cisgender experience is the ‘normal’ way of being and that anyone who isn’t cisgender wishes to fit in or pass as cisgender. It is about creating environments where certain identities are not seen as the norm or standard against which all others are compared. Such environments lead to *othering*, which results in trans students being seen as exceptional; an *affirming* approach sees all gender identities as equally valid. It supports an ethic of self-determination and acknowledges every person’s capacity and responsibility to examine and be curious about their gender identity - to articulate their own understanding of their identity and to choose the language to self-identify in the way that is most meaningful to them.



An *affirming* as opposed to an *inclusive* approach is about dismantling the cissexist notion that the cisgender experience is the ‘normal’ way of being and that anyone who isn’t cisgender wishes to fit in or pass as cisgender.



Consider these differences:**PRONOUNS**

In an **inclusive school**, a student can share their pronouns and have them respected if they differ from the pronouns that would be associated with their sex assigned at birth.

In an **affirming school**, all students and staff know what pronouns they use, use them to introduce themselves, are able to articulate why they use these pronouns, and they are comfortable asking for pronouns and apologizing if and when they mess them up. They understand why more gender inclusive pronoun use is needed and are committed to having conversations with students about the fact that not everyone identifies with their birth-assigned gender identity. Name and pronoun changes are seamlessly integrated across system-wide platforms such as attendance, student portals, and school payment portals (for example, SchoolCash Online).

GENDER DIVERSITY AND TRANS INCLUSION

In an **inclusive school**, the staff may take up the topic of gender diversity as part of Pride month and/or on designated days such as the International Day of Pink or International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia.

In an **affirming school** there is a commitment to integrating a focus on gender diversity and trans inclusion into and across the curriculum, inclusive of grade and subject matter.

WASHROOMS

In an **inclusive school**, a student has the right to use the washroom that corresponds with their gender identity. However, the provision of gender inclusive washrooms is understood more in terms of accommodating the individual trans student rather than as part of whole school approach to supporting gender expansiveness.

In an **affirming school**, all staff and students know where all washrooms are located, know to offer visitors all options without assuming which washroom they will want to use, there are enough washrooms to accommodate all students and staff comfortably and these are clearly marked, located in accessible spaces so students don't have to miss class to walk across the school, everyone feels safe accessing whichever washroom they wish, no extraordinary measures are required to access these (office washroom use, special key, request for accommodation). There is an understanding about washroom access that is related to educating about restrictive gender binary thinking and its harmful impact on all students in schools. There is also an awareness and understanding of the need to avoid the problematic practice of designating the accessibility washroom as also the all-gender washroom.

Creating affirming spaces takes intentional and ongoing work at all levels of the educational system. **For more reading on how to create affirming learning spaces, please refer to the following resources:**

- [The Gender Friendly Classroom](#): a short article written by Dr. Lee Airton
- [Welcoming gender diversity in schools and classrooms](#): Key definitions: an accessible list of definitions compiled by Dr. Lee Airton.
- [Developing a gender inclusive school](#): a step-by-step plan for creating more affirming spaces in schools, created by the Welcoming Schools, a branch of the Human Rights Campaign Foundation
- [Draw-the-line — Against transphobic violence](#): an awareness campaign including downloadable resources created by EGALE Canada.

In an **affirming school**, gender diversity and critical conversations about *cissexism*, *cisgenderism*, *cisnormativity*, and *transphobia* are embedded into the curriculum with the understanding that it is important for all students to learn about themselves and the incredible diversity of human experience. While gender diversity needs to be integrated into the curriculum and not just thought about as an “add-on”, it should not be conceptualized as a ‘niche’ topic reserved for select subject areas. Every single student needs to learn about gender diversity in all areas of the curriculum, inclusive of science and mathematics, and not just in language arts and history. Knowledge about gender diversity in the study of biology is important, for example. Learning about trans and gender diverse communities for their brilliance beyond gender-based activism, survival in the face of violence, and transition stories that center linear representations of transition is vital. **Below, you will find a short list of trans and gender diverse individuals who are doing amazing work across disciplines:**

- [Vivek Shraya \(author, musician, performer\)](#)
- [Wendy Carlos \(musician, composer, first trans recipient of a Grammy\)](#)
- [Trans Chefs](#)
- [Trans Scientists](#)

Creating a trans-affirming curriculum is also about understanding the diversity of the trans community – that there is no one way of being trans or nonbinary – and that trans people exist in every community. The representation reflects the full nuance of trans and gender diverse lives in all of their creativity, complexity, and mundane realities, not merely narratives of struggle, coming out, and medical transition. It avoids a siloed or additive approach to addressing equity with a consciousness of and always a focus on thinking about other systems of oppression and how they are intertwined in any one person’s life.

Please see this resource where racialized 2SLGBTQI+ youth are calling more affirming spaces in schools and in their communities:

→ [We’re Here: Racialized 2SLGBTQ+ Youth Across Ontario Assert Needs and Experiences](#), a resource created by LGBT Youthline and the Do Better Campaign

Creating an affirming learning environment where everyone knows they have the option to show up authentically as themselves, and feel *safe enough* to be themselves, requires us to be bold and unambiguous in our explicit support of trans and gender diverse people, and in the ways in which we embed their realities and growing knowledge about gender expansiveness into our professional practice and the curriculum. Educating about gender diversity throughout the curriculum is central to creating and sustaining an affirming school climate and culture. It is central to enacting gender justice.

Notes

IN PRACTICE



Bridging with Curriculum

Considerations for Program Planning, the Ontario Ministry of Education’s online resource for educators on expectations and policy surrounding curriculum delivery, states that a student’s success in school is directly linked to their sense of self or spirit, which is impacted by their cognitive, emotional, social, and physical needs, which in turn, are influenced by their environment and context. The development of gender identity as a component of social development is specifically identified. Attending to each of these needs, as well as to the environment in which students learn is crucial to ensuring that they thrive. As the most recent climate survey on homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia in Canadian schools from EGALE Canada (2021) clearly demonstrates, trans and gender diverse students are struggling at school: fewer than one in ten trans students reported ‘flourishing’ in regard to their mental health, and 40% reported languishing (p. 103). Only 13% of trans respondents strongly agreed that they could “be myself at school” (p. 87), and under 30% of trans and gender diverse students reported

feeling “very safe” at school (p.76). Trans students who did not feel safe at school were more likely to skip school, which had a negative impact on their academic achievement.

To all ends, the EGALE report makes it clear that the environment or context, or gender climates (Ullman, 2014) which trans and gender diverse students are exposed to are toxic, and that their cognitive, emotional, social, and physical development, along with their sense of self and spirit are being compromised.

The Ontario Ministry of Education states in *Considerations for Program Planning* that “**Every student is entitled to learn in a safe, caring environment, free from discrimination, violence, and harassment**”. Foundational to delivering on this promise of providing “**positive, inclusive, equitable, and non-discriminatory elementary and secondary school experience**” (Ministry of Education, 2023), are the principles of human rights, and the Ministry of Education² directs all levels of the Ontario Education system to actively combat

2 Ontario Ministry of Education. (2023). *Human Rights, Equity, and Inclusive Education. Considerations for program planning*. Retrieved from <https://www.dcp.edu.gov.on.ca/en/program-planning/considerations-for-program-planning/human-rights-equity-and-inclusive-education>

discrimination, bias, systemic barriers, while simultaneously respecting diversity and promoting inclusive education. The Ministry states that, when students do not see themselves reflected in their learning and in their school communities, they disengage and suffer academically. The Ministry calls for educators to create inclusive learning environments to support all students to reach their full potential and that the **“most effective way to enable all students to learn about healthy and respectful relationships is through the school curriculum”³**.

Please see these resources which provide examples of a trans-affirming curriculum:

- [Finding Pride: Teaching Trans History in Secondary Social Studies](#)
- [ETFO Suggested Resources for Gender Independent Children and Transgender Youth/Adults](#)
- [ETFO/FEEO 2SLGBTQ Resources](#)

³ Safe Schools Action Team. (2008). *Shaping a Culture of Respect in Our Schools: Promoting Safe and Healthy Relationships*. Ontario Ministry of Education. Toronto, Ontario.

4 Policy Awareness



“

The most important thing to know is that, in Ontario and Canada overall, the right to self-identify, to be accommodated, and to be in spaces that are free from discrimination are enshrined in the *Ontario Human Rights Code*.



In the education system there is a structure to how policy gets decided and disseminated. This module focuses on the *Education Act* because it is the unifying document that impacts all educational workers. We recommend that you look into the specific policies that regulate your specific profession to gain an understanding of their position on gender identity and how this topic should be engaged with. These policies are key to understanding exactly what is expected of you as an educational professional and help you support your professional commitment if there are any questions as to why you are choosing to engage with the topic of gender identity and diversity in your work.

The most important thing to know is that, in Ontario and Canada overall, the right to self-identify, to be accommodated, and to be in spaces that are free from discrimination are enshrined in the *Ontario Human Rights Code*⁴ and the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*⁵. These legislative frameworks directly impact and inform policy making at the Ministry and School Board levels. However, it is important to understand that while legislative frameworks are necessary and important tools that are needed to drive and inform support for transgender students in schools, they are not enough. An understanding of the root causes of trans marginalization and hence education about cissexism and cismarginalization and not just on transphobia are central to creating gender-inclusive school communities.

4 *Ontario Human Rights Code, RSO 1990, c H.19.* <https://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/ontario-human-rights-code>

5 *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, s 15, Part I of the Constitution Act, 1982, being Schedule B to the Canada Act 1982 (UK), 1982, c 11.*

Defining a policy



...policy itself is always open to interpretation and indeed its implementation can never be guaranteed. It is influenced by actors in specific contexts with various degrees of commitment and levels of understanding.



A policy is any document that outlines a set of ideas, rules, guidelines, or a plan of action that has been proposed officially for an organization to follow. These can take the form of legislation (for example, the *Education Act*, The *Ontario Human Rights Code*), but can also include supporting documents, for example, Policy/Procedure Memorandum, Strategic Action Plans, Professional Guidelines and Advisories. It is important to note that in some school boards, official policy and procedure documents are differentiated from guidelines with the former being a stipulated requirement for all schools to follow. Guidelines, on the other hand, do not have this institutional and organizational weight in that schools are not required to follow them. This example highlights that what a policy is and how it is defined is open to some interpretation. However, policy itself is always open to interpretation and indeed its implementation can never be guaranteed. It is influenced by actors in specific contexts with various degrees of commitment and levels of understanding.

Policy that specifically references trans and gender diverse people tends to focus on ensuring accommodation – it enshrines the right to access of services and self-expression, anti-discrimination and anti-harassment – it enshrines the right to safer environments free of the damaging effects of discrimination and harassment on the grounds of gender identity and expression.

[Gegi.ca](https://gegi.ca), an Ontario-based online knowledge mobilization hub for trans-inclusive policy and guidelines, is an invaluable resource for Educational Workers seeking information about supporting trans and gender diverse students that is specific to their boards.

What follows is an overview of the legislation and policies that are most relevant to supporting trans and gender diverse students in the Education sector. As you read through this information and explore the policy that exists, take the time to check in with yourself by reflecting on the following questions:

- 1. What official policies and guidelines that specifically address gender identity and gender expression exist in your own context?**
- 2. Where have you seen examples of policy being used to support trans and gender diverse students in your workplace?**
- 3. Who are the key individuals or departments in your schoolboard or workplace who are familiar with these policies and responsible for ensuring that they are enacted?**
- 4. Are you able to name the specific policy documents and provisions that outline your own professional responsibilities for affirming trans and gender diverse students?**

ONTARIO HUMAN RIGHTS CODE

The foundation for supporting the human rights of trans and gender diverse people in Ontario is grounded in the Ontario [Human Rights Code](#). In 2012, the *Ontario Human Rights Code* was amended by [Toby's Act⁶](#) to include gender identity and gender expression as protected grounds from discrimination and harassment. The Code stipulates that all people:

- have human rights that cannot be infringed upon or dismissed
- have individual dignity and worth
- are entitled to equal rights and opportunities without discrimination
- need a climate of understanding and mutual respect, so that everyone feels a part of society and can contribute fully to it.

The Code protects individuals in the following social areas:

- accommodation (housing);
- contracts;
- employment;
- goods, services and facilities; and
- membership in unions, trade or professional associations.

Education is covered by the Code as it falls under the definition of service. This means that schools have a duty to create policies and procedures to ensure the safety of

⁶ *Bill 33, Toby's Act (Right to be Free from Discrimination and Harassment Because of Gender Identity or Gender Expression), 2012, 1st Session, 40th Parliament, Ontario, 2012.*

students. It is a requirement. This Code protects people on the following grounds:

- age;
- ancestry, colour, race;
- citizenship;
- ethnic origin;
- place of origin;
- creed;
- disability;
- family status;
- marital status (including single status);
- **gender identity, gender expression;**
- receipt of public assistance (in housing only);
- record of offences (in employment only);
- sex (including pregnancy and breastfeeding); and
- sexual orientation.

The OHRC has produced several documents to support our learning around our duties towards trans and gender diverse students.

The following resources created by the Ontario Human Rights Commission are especially useful for Educational Workers looking to further their understanding of human rights policy as it relates to gender identity and expression in Ontario:

- [Teaching Human Rights in Ontario](#)
- [A Policy Primer: Guide to developing human rights policies and procedures](#)
- [Policy on Preventing Discrimination because of Gender Identity and Gender Expression](#)
- [Human Rights in Ontario: Gender Identity and Expression](#)

The OHRC is clear: at school, trans and gender diverse students have the right to be free of discrimination and to be accommodated, and as Educational Workers, it is our role to know the rights that protect the students we serve and ensure we do not present barriers to them.

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

The Ontario Ministry of Education has “the ultimate responsibility for ensuring a healthy and inclusive environment, and for preventing and addressing discrimination and harassment.” (OHRC, 2013, p. 4).

The Ministry of Education directs school boards to and communicates expectations through policy documents called **Policy and Program Memoranda (PPMs)**. These policies are extremely useful for educational workers to be familiar with because they outline what the expectations are of a school board with regards to the creation and provision of a safe and supportive learning environment for all students. For example, if you are having issues with a school’s response to a student request - familiarity with the PPMs gives you a solid foundation from which to advocate. Familiarity with PPMs also ensures that you can hold school boards accountable for developing, updating, and enacting policies and procedures that align with these stipulations.

On the next pages, you will find some examples of these different policies that you can print out, have on hand, share with colleagues and students: knowledge is power, and the more folks know about what the expectations are and what should be happening in schools to support trans and gender diverse students, the more voices there are to support and advocate for safer learning environments.

ACCOMMODATION

Stipulations in policy ensure that students and staff who are trans or gender diverse and request an accommodation based on gender identity can receive them. In general, these have to do with

- name and pronoun use/change
- washroom use
- sports/extracurricular
- field trips

Ultimately, all students, inclusive of age, have a right to participate fully in school life and activities in a way that aligns with their gender identity. This means

that their affirmed name and pronouns should be used and in accordance with respect and/or need for privacy, that they can use the facilities that correspond with their gender identity without exceptional processes or barriers (re: to the point of hardship- keys, special permissions etc.); join teams (if gendered) that align with their gender identity, and, on overnight trips, be lodged in the sleeping arrangement that aligns with their gender identity and feels safest to them. However, it is important to keep in mind that accommodation, while important, is not enough. The reason for this is that such a policy emphasis often leads to an individualized approach rather than a commitment to addressing the systemic forces of cisgenderism and cissexism which are a necessary foundational basis for creating a gender expansive school climate. This report outlines the results of the

Supporting Transgender and Gender Diverse Students in School: Policy and Practice study and provides more details from the perspective of educators: [Supporting transgender and gender diverse students in Ontario schools: Educators' responses.](#)

This is why it is important to think about the implications of policy for curriculum and teaching. It is important to move beyond an individualized focus to a more proactive commitment to educating the whole school community about gender diversity and gender expansiveness. **How can a focus on gender identity and gender expression be incorporated into all subjects across the curriculum and in your subject area/field?**

Some Examples of School Board Policies/Guidelines for Supporting Trans Students

As you read through the examples of school board policies listed below, consider these questions for reflection:

- **To what extent are the following guidelines informed by OHRC?**
- **To what extent do they move beyond accommodation to address the root causes of cissexism and transphobia?**
- **How do these policies address questions of intersectionality and the need for decolonial approaches to addressing and education about gender diversity?**

- [Supporting trans students in our schools \(Durham District School Board\)](#)
- [Administrative Procedure 398: Gender Identity \(Avon Maitland District School Board\)](#)
- [Guidelines for the Accommodation of Transgender and Gender Independent/ Non-Conforming Students and Staff \(Toronto District School Board\)](#)
- [Supporting Inclusive, Safe and Caring Spaces for Diverse Identities: Guidelines and Best Practices \(Near North District School Board\)](#)
- [Supporting & Protecting LDSB Transgender-Spectrum and/or Gender Non-Conforming Students \(Limestone District School Board\)](#)
- [Gender Identity and Gender Expression: Fostering Inclusive Learning Environments for All Students \(Ottawa-Carleton District School Board\)](#)
- [Gender Identity and Gender Expression Guidelines \(Peel District School Board\)](#)

ACCOMMODATION IS NOT ENOUGH!

There is a big difference between having the right to request accommodation and actually requesting it. We must consider the barriers that still exist for students who may wish to access accommodations:

- it requires a student to out themselves in order to access rights;
- it requires a student to feel safe enough to out themselves (or so unsafe that they have no other option);
- it requires responsive and knowledgeable staff to ensure that the policy or guidelines are properly enacted (for a great example of considerations, This resource created by EGALE Canada illustrates the coordinated efforts required to support a student's transition as safely as possible at school: [Supporting Your Gender-Diverse Child](#)
- in the case of washrooms and change rooms, it may require the physical space to be amendable to a restructuring of facilities (re-labeling, etc.); and
- it requires an education component for changes that are being made (education so that staff understand the parameters of confidentiality re: names and pronouns; requires education around any new signage/ use with washrooms).

The right to accommodation is not a straightforward endeavor. It requires a coordinated effort to ensure that the student is accommodated in the best way possible and that this is responsive, flexible, and makes space for the fact that identities evolve over time. Having a solid understanding of these foundational components is key to ensuring that this policy is enacted with integrity to expressed student needs and that it does not remain focused just on the Individual trans student who is often put in a position to advocate for themselves in requesting accommodation. Because accommodation is determined on a case-by-case basis, it results in an individualized focus on the trans student and leaves unexamined the need to address systemic barriers that require the need for such accommodations in the first place.

Anti-Harassment/Anti-Discrimination

Anti-harassment/Anti-discrimination policy is in place to provide remedies and to test whether someone has been discriminated against. It establishes the expectation that every person in an organization is worthy and deserving of being treated with respect and dignity. The following PPMs are directly related to anti-harassment and anti-discrimination directives in education:

PPMS

- [Policy/Program Memorandum 119: Developing and implementing equity and inclusive education policies in Ontario schools](#)
- [Policy/Program Memorandum 120: Reporting violent incidents to the Ministry of Education](#)
- [Policy/Program Memorandum 128: The provincial code of conduct and school board codes of conduct](#)
- [Policy/Program Memorandum 144: Bullying prevention and intervention](#)
- [Policy/Program Memorandum 145: Progressive discipline and promoting positive student behaviour](#)
- [Policy/Program Memorandum 151: Professional activity days devoted to provincial education priorities](#)

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We know that despite these policies, schools remain unsafe. Policies with no follow-through are not deterrents. Policies with no education around them and support for enacting them are empty and provide a false sense of safety.



We know that despite these policies, schools remain unsafe. Policies with no follow-through are not deterrents. Policies with no education around them and support for enacting them are empty and provide a false sense of safety.

These policies are reactive in that they require a person who has endured discrimination to have the capacity and faith in the system to come forward and report the incident. The policy requires the student to endure a process whereby they must prove what happened to them. This process exposes

the students to potential retraumatization and does not guarantee a satisfactory or restorative remedy.

Even though principals are instructed through policy, such as the progressive discipline [PPM 145](#), to not reveal “more information than necessary”, for example, not outing students to their parent or guardian, the truth is that if a student is reporting transphobic harassment or discrimination, their identity may be revealed, which may put them in an even more unsafe situation.

Without addressing the root of the issue, cissexism and cisnormativity, no amount of anti-bullying policy is going to ensure that trans and gender diverse students are not victimized for transgressing colonial norms of gender identity and expression.

Familiarity with these policy documents and the specific areas that speak to equity and the need for representation in instruction, activity, and assessment, are critical supports for educational workers who feel hesitant to incorporate trans-affirming representation in their work for fear of backlash ([Supporting Transgender and Gender Diverse Students in Ontario Schools: Educators' Responses](#), p. 61).

There is a marked difference between the rights that we have on paper and what plays out in real life. Educational workers reported a fear of government backlash, community, and parents/guardians. Though educational workers are supported by policy to do this work, the reality is that many do not feel secure enough to engage with it. Further support can be sought to understand how

professional organizations, such as ETFO, OTF, OSSTF, etc., might provide guidance and support in navigating the fear that was documented in the report.

For further information around how professional organizations are providing guidance in this regard, please review the following:

- [OSSTF FEESO Webinar Advocating for Transitioning and Transgender Youth](#)
- [Canadian Teachers' Federations' Affirming Gender Diversity](#)



Implications for Educational Workers

It is important to think about moving beyond an approach to accommodation and addressing discrimination which embraces a commitment to systematically educating about trans inclusion and gender diversity in the curriculum. This means not just including a diverse representation of trans people in the curriculum but thinking about how knowledge about cisgenderism, cissexism and gender entitlement can be incorporated into the curriculum and in all areas of the curriculum. This education is relevant and vital for all students.

What this means for you: as an educational worker, you are supported by policy to:

- affirm student's self-assigned identities;
- represent trans identities in your work;
- protect trans students' confidentiality; and
- make classrooms and schools safer for trans students

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Education about gender diversity is central to putting policy into practice.



Policy in and of itself is a good start, but having a policy in place does not necessarily guarantee that students will be affirmed and that their best interests and needs will be met. Policies have to be enacted. Education about gender diversity is central to putting policy into practice. This is why a focus on the curriculum and knowledge of relevant resources are so vital to building knowledge about gender expansiveness for all students and to ensure that trans students see represented in what they are learning in schools.

Ultimately, being familiar with policy helps us reduce the barriers to accessing support for trans students. No student should have to come out or expose themselves to a potentially dangerous environment in order to access the most basic of human rights and dignity. It is the responsibility of the system to create and

provide access to gender inclusive washroom spaces in schools and to educate about why such spaces are needed in the first place. The trans student should not have to out themselves or be visible to ensure that such that their basic human rights are met.

Notes





5 Strategic Action Plans

Large-scale change, especially when it challenges cisgenderism and deeply engrained cissexist norms, is a massive undertaking. It requires a concerted and coordinated effort from everyone – principals, school leaders, education workers, departments, and every single team that makes up an education system at large. It is important to remember that existing legislation, policy and curriculum exist to support your learning and gender diversity in your school.

Research has found that schools are not only unsafe for trans and gender diverse students, but that gender and sexual diversity is not being addressed in the curriculum (Peter et al., 2021). Collectively, taking steps to make schools safer and more affirming right now with the tools that we have at our disposal is imperative. An intersectional framework which acknowledges that gender identity is multi-dimensional and influenced by one's race, sexuality, socio-economic status, ability and faith is integral to addressing equity and social justice in schools.

In this module, you will find two action plans that will help you assess and refine your goals as an individual and as a school-based learning community.

Each plan has its own specific goals for addressing the gaps identified in the *Supporting Trans and Gender Diverse Youth in Schools* report, namely those of **knowledge about gender diversity, policy familiarity and awareness, curriculum development**, and **resource access for educators** to support trans students and gender expansive education in schools. Each plan comprises four parts:

- 1. Inventory:** an opportunity to take stock of current experiences and practices and resources.
- 2. Audit:** what existing policies are in place and what if any existing resources are available/needed to create trans-

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Collectively, taking steps to make schools safer and more affirming right now with the tools that we have at our disposal is imperative.



affirming schools and classrooms? What do you know/is already known about gender diversity/trans-affirming education? What work is already/has been being done? What PD has been provided?

3. **Compile:** A dedicated space to pool resources, policy, and community partners who can support creating trans-affirming learning spaces and communities (there is a lot that exists, you just need to find it!). This process does make demands on one's time and it is best conceived as a collaborative and collective endeavor (i.e., formation of a committee or work that can be initiated within the purview of an existing committee structure).
4. **Setting Goals:** dedicate space to take what you have found in your inventory, audit, and compilation of resources, and use that information to set realistic, scaffolded goals that are attached to a timeline and have accountability measures in place.

These plans follow similar guidelines that start with self-reflection, followed by audit, a space for integration of **policy and curriculum**, and finally, a concrete plan for creating trans-affirming practice. **They are founded on the following beliefs and values:**

- **Principles of restorative justice are integral to this process and work,** emphasis on repairing relationships, taking responsibility for harmful actions, and collective healing, over punitive discipline and retribution; intersectional understandings of oppression must be at the heart of (un)learning, meaning that at the heart of the work is an understanding of the pervasive effects of colonialism, racism, cissexism etc., and a concerted effort to seek these out within systems and within our own lives.
- **Trans, nonbinary, and gender diverse students, staff, and community members deserve to see joy, thriving, and flourishing of their communities.** They deserve more than the bare minimum of human dignity provided by existing anti-discrimination and human rights policy. They deserve to know that their futures can be full and bright.

- **Cissexism, cisgenderism and cisnormativity (intertwined with concurrent systems of oppression) are at the core of every variation of violence and erasure that trans and gender diverse students endure.**

These oppressive values and beliefs are embedded across all aspects of the education system.

- **Transformative change is always possible**, even if it doesn't seem so in the moment.
- Fear prevents/stifles/impedes change, but **education and curiosity are powerful tools to counter fear.**
- **We are stronger together**, and together we can affect significant and meaningful change.

The main purpose of these plans is to support coordinated push to build the necessary foundations for both affirming trans and gender diverse students in all schools and creating educational spaces at all grade levels. Good intentions alone will not make schools safer spaces.

Individual Action Plan

The goal of the **Individual Plan**: an individual journey of growth and learning

- Name, recognize, and address the cissexism and cisnormativity in personal and professional life
- Perform a personal and professional audit
- Acquaint yourself with relevant local school and board policy and relevant and available resources
- Revisit curriculum frameworks and statements to identify where a focus on gender justice is explicitly relevant and warrants integration into units of work that you are currently teaching in your subject area
- Plan ahead to compile the resources you may need to support a student/student learning about gender diversity and which are relevant to teaching a trans-affirming curriculum

My motivation for taking this work on is...

Somebody that I can turn to for support while working through this plan is...

My Goals for this process are...

Part 1: Inventory

The following prompts will provide you with an inventory of where your beliefs about gender identity come from and how they show up in your work. You may want to grab a notebook to write your thoughts down, a colleague with whom you feel comfortable sharing, or any other method that you enjoy for reflecting and recording.

PERSONAL BELIEFS AND IDENTITY

Our Personal Beliefs and Identity do not form from nothing. We are the product of innumerable influences. These prompts are designed to help you pinpoint some of the important influences in your life that impact on your own self-understanding of gender identity.

- I identify as...
- I express my gender identity by...
- When I meet new people, do they generally assume my gender identity correctly?
- The first time I was aware of my gender identity was...
- The first time I was aware some other people's gender identity was...
- Where did I learn about gender identity and gender roles? Who were the people and communities I learned from?
- To what extent is my gender identity and the way I express my gender influenced

by certain social expectations and norms?

- Have my beliefs about gender identity ever been challenged?
- When was the first time I remember them being challenged? How did I react and respond?
- What other aspects of my identity influence or impact on my understanding of my gender?
- How do I feel about expanding my knowledge about gender identity currently? Why is it important to me?

Notes

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Professional Practice is the combination of the specific service that you provide (shaped by the training you received, the resources you draw on, the practical approaches you use, the administration/organization of your practice (for example, intake forms, student tracking for case load, reporting forms, attendance, communications about students in the school community) and the relationships you build with students and the adults who care for them.

- **What did my pre-service training teach me about trans and gender diverse people?**
- **What additional training is currently being offered to support my learning?** If I haven't accessed it in the past, why not?
- **Do the resources I draw on represent trans and gender diverse people?** Do I use these resources with all students, or only students who identify under the trans umbrella? What process do I use for making this decision?
- **Do the resources that I draw on for my personal professional learning include trans and gender diverse people?** Do these resources provide knowledge about gender identity and gender expression?
- **What resources are available in my school library for learning about gender diversity and which feature representation of trans people and trans communities?**
- **Do I name and educate about trans and gender diverse people/ gender diversity in my daily practice?** For Pride Month? As part of teaching the curriculum?
- **Am I integrating a focus on gender identity and gender expression into current units of work that I teach?**
- **What are the policies and curriculum frameworks most support me in teaching about gender identity and gender expression in trans-affirming ways?**
- **What is my process for creating space for students to learn about pronouns, to learn each other's pronouns, to share their own pronouns?** What is my process for accommodating changes in names and pronouns as it becomes relevant to students?
- **Are all students that I work with aware of their ability to change their name and pronouns with me?**
- **What is my process for documenting and communicating these changes in a way that honors a student's wishes?** What is my process for ensuring that a student is comfortable with the name/pronouns used in communications with others (e.g., parents/guardians, other school-based professionals, school staff, peers, administrators)?

- **To what extent am I aware of gender inclusive washroom access for all students in my school?** Are these spaces easily accessible and safe for students? On what am I basing this evaluation of safety? Have students told me directly or am I assuming?
- **What kind of a relationship do I need to build with students, caregivers, and colleagues to ensure that I feel confident in embedding trans-affirming practices into my daily work?**

Notes



Part 2: Audit

Now that you have completed an inventory of your Personal Beliefs and Professional Practice, it is time to take a critical look at your intentions and how they align. Use these prompts below to reflect and record your thoughts.

1. Do you notice any connections between your personal beliefs about gender identity and your practice as an educational worker? Take a look at the training you received: at any point in your pre-service training or in-service professional development and activities have you received specific instruction about cissexism and cisnormativity? Are you able to identify where these forms of oppression have been addressed in your training and how this knowledge has been incorporated into your own practice?
2. What is the extent of my knowledge and understanding of trans inclusion and gender diversity more broadly? Consider, here, the difference between *inclusive* and *affirming* approaches. Are there any identifiable gaps in my knowledge and understanding?
3. What sorts of frameworks might be helpful to you in developing and strengthening my knowledge and understanding of what is needed to support trans students and to educate about gender diversity in schools?

How might the modules included in this toolkit be helpful or useful in this regard both in terms of introducing you to key terminology, trans studies, intersectional and anti-oppressive educational frameworks? To what extent do they provide resources and policy awareness that are helpful in both supporting trans students in schools and trans-affirming education?

Before moving on, revisit the goals that you set for yourself at the beginning of this Action Plan. Is there anything that you need to remove, revise, or add?

My revised/edited/updated goals are...

Part 3: Compile

Take some time to compile a few resources for creating affirming learning environments! If you are not aware of trans-affirming resources or do not have immediate access to any, you might want to look at the ones that we have shared throughout the toolkit as a starting point.

In my immediate circle (who do you know, either through your work or in your life, who would be willing and able to support you with this work?)

In my learning community (who are the people/departments/committees in my school and school board who are already doing this work? What supports might they be able to provide me with? Does my local union have any support that I may be able to access or get involved with?)

In my community (What local community partners might you reach out to get inspired and involved? What is already taking place within my community that I can learn from and contribute to?)

RESOURCE HAUL

- **The policies that are most relevant to my practice** (i.e. school; Board; Education Act; Professional Association or Organization) Print these out and keep a copy on hand! Make note of the roles and responsibilities for educators and schools that are outlined in each policy.
- **Existing curriculum frameworks/** documents/existing resources that support a focus on gender identity and gender expression.
- **School library resources:** consult with the school librarian to learn more about already existing material in the school that addresses gender diversity and includes trans specific characters/content
- **Practice-Specific:** take some time to Google professionals in your field that are doing trans-affirming work. What resources do they recommend? Do they have any that they have developed?
- **Social Media/Internet sources:** Learning does not only have to happen in formal settings! Take some time to go through your social media channels and find some new accounts to follow! You could also take a look at who the new accounts you find follow for their information! You could start, begin with the local community resources that you just compiled!

SHARING: This compilation will change over time as personal, professional, and social media circles change. You might consider housing your list in an online document and sharing it with colleagues. They might have some excellent additions of their own to share with you!

Notes



Part 4: Action

It is time to make a plan that helps you build knowledge of what is needed to create and sustain the conditions for supporting trans students and gender expansive education at your school.

My final revised/edited/updated goals are....

Now that you have a set of refined and specific goals for yourself, you can begin breaking them down into smaller steps that will help you achieve them. Use the following chart to set up your action plan, and step into the next phase of this work.

GOAL	RATIONALE	TIMELINE	RESOURCES/ SUPPORTS	OBSTACLES/ STRATEGIES	ACCOUNTABILITY
<i>Description of specific goal</i>	<i>Why you feel this one is necessary</i>	<i>Break down a specific time frame in which you wish to accomplish this goal</i>	<i>List and collect all material recourses and human supports that are going to help you achieve this goal</i>	<i>What are some obstacles that you are anticipating to achieving this goal? What are some strategies that you can think of right now that might be useful in navigating these obstacles?</i>	<i>How are you building in accountability measures to help you stay focused and on track with your goals?</i>

GOAL	RATIONALE	TIMELINE	RESOURCES/ SUPPORTS	OBSTACLES/ STRATEGIES	ACCOUNTABILITY

Congratulations on completing your Individual Action Plan! Remember that this is a work in progress. The expectation is that you will change your mind about goals as you learn more, that your evolving practice will influence how relevant certain goals are and your perception of supports and obstacles, and that your timelines may also change. Along the way the plan will help you stay focused and accountable, documenting the changes will provide you with a snapshot of the growth that you are undergoing as an individual through this work.

School Action Plan

The goal of the **School Plan**: a whole school commitment to creating a trans-affirming school

- Name, recognize, and address the cissexism and cisnormativity in all the spaces that make up the school community (extending beyond the typical spaces-washroom, change room, attendance)
- Perform a gender climate audit of all school spaces and departments
- Review how policy has previously been implemented
- Develop a whole school approach to curriculum development to support the incorporation of content about trans people, trans marginalization, and gender diversity

<p>Our motivation for taking this work on is...</p>	
<p>The people involved in this process are...</p>	
<p>Our goals for this process are...</p>	

Part 1: Inventory

Use the following checklist to compile a list of your School Inventory. It might be helpful to go through this process by department. Use the Practices/Evidence column to document the measurable examples of each item, and the Notes column to add any information that you feel might be relevant for members of your school team who are not part of this process with you.

	Practices/Evidence	Notes
What knowledge about gender identity and gender diversity is evident in our school community?		
What specific trans-affirming policies and curriculum exist?		
What available school-based training about gender identity and gender diversity has been provided?		
What available school-based training about trans-affirming policy has been provided?		

	Practices/Evidence	Notes
<p>Policy: Does the school have a trans policy? Are staff and students aware of it? Have students accessed the policy? What have the responses been, in your experience? Has policy access led to individual solutions? Permanent change?</p>		
<p>Curriculum: What learning about gender diversity has been provided to students through the curriculum?</p>		
<p>What school-based supports for trans and gender diverse students are provided (e.g., student-led Pride clubs, dedicated support staff)?</p>		

	Practices/Evidence	Notes
<p>What school-based affirming initiatives are provided (e.g., Pride Prom, Pride Conferences, school-wide campaigns)?</p>		
<p>What school-based resources exist (library resources, professional resources)?</p>		
<p>Are school facilities provided (e.g., washrooms, changing rooms, signage)?</p>		

	Practices/Evidence	Notes
What administrative procedures and supports are in place (uniforms, attendance, student tracking, reporting, communications etc.)?		
What community partnerships exist?		
What opportunities for student voice/ youth engagement/ community feedback and engagement are provided?		

Part 2: Audit

	1. No Knowledge/ Availability/ Capacity/ Supports	2. Limited Knowledge/ Availability/ Capacity/ Supports	3. Some Knowledge/ Availability/ Capacity/ Supports	4. Satisfactory (Individualized or concentrated in pockets rather than on a whole school level) Knowledge/ Availability/ Capacity/ Supports	5. Substantive (Whole School) Knowledge/ Availability/ Capacity/ Supports
Knowledge about gender identity and diversity					
Knowledge about trans-affirming policies					
Knowledge about curriculum					

	1. No Knowledge/ Availability/ Capacity/ Supports	2. Limited Knowledge/ Availability/ Capacity/ Supports	3. Some Knowledge/ Availability/ Capacity/ Supports	4. Satisfactory (Individualized or concentrated in pockets rather than on a whole school level) Knowledge/ Availability/ Capacity/ Supports	5. Substantive (Whole School) Knowledge/ Availability/ Capacity/ Supports
Available School-based training about gender identity and diversity					
Available School-based training about trans-affirming policy					
Policy implementation					
School-based supports for trans and gender diverse students					

	1. No Knowledge/ Availability/ Capacity/ Supports	2. Limited Knowledge/ Availability/ Capacity/ Supports	3. Some Knowledge/ Availability/ Capacity/ Supports	4. Satisfactory (Individualized or concentrated in pockets rather than on a whole school level) Knowledge/ Availability/ Capacity/ Supports	5. Substantive (Whole School) Knowledge/ Availability/ Capacity/ Supports
School-based affirming initiatives					
School-based resources					
School facilities					
Administrative Support					
Restorative Work and Education					

	1. No Knowledge/ Availability/ Capacity/ Supports	2. Limited Knowledge/ Availability/ Capacity/ Supports	3. Some Knowledge/ Availability/ Capacity/ Supports	4. Satisfactory (Individualized or concentrated in pockets rather than on a whole school level) Knowledge/ Availability/ Capacity/ Supports	5. Substantive (Whole School) Knowledge/ Availability/ Capacity/ Supports
Community partnerships					
Opportunities for student voice/youth engagement/ community feedback and engagement					

Now, step back and reflect on the chart in light of the following questions:

1. What is the extent of the knowledge and understanding of trans inclusion and gender diversity more broadly that already exists in the school? Are there any identifiable gaps in the knowledge and understanding that relate specifically to policy awareness, curriculum development, resourcing, capacity building?
2. What sorts of frameworks might be helpful in developing and strengthening knowledge and understanding of what is needed to support trans students and to educate about gender diversity in your school? How might the modules included in this toolkit be helpful or useful in this regard, both in terms of introducing key terminology, trans studies, intersectional and anti-oppressive educational frameworks? To what extent do they provide resources and policy awareness that are helpful in fostering a whole school commitment to supporting trans students in schools and trans-affirming education more broadly and across the curriculum?
3. What sorts of financial/board supports/funding are available to support PD and curriculum development for education workers in the school?

Before moving on, take a look at the goals that you set for yourself at the beginning of this Action Plan. Is there anything that you need to remove, revise, or add?

Our revised/edited/updated goals are....

Part 3: Compile

Take some time to compile a few available resources for creating affirming learning environments!

In our circle (who do we know, either through work or in life, who would be willing and able to support us with this work?)

In our learning community (who are the people/departments in our school and school board who are already doing this work? What supports might they be able to provide us with? How could we make time to reach out and engage with them and share our reflections?)

In our community (What local community partners might we reach out to inspire us to integrate the work that they are already doing in our own practice? What is already taking place within our community that we can learn from and contribute to?)

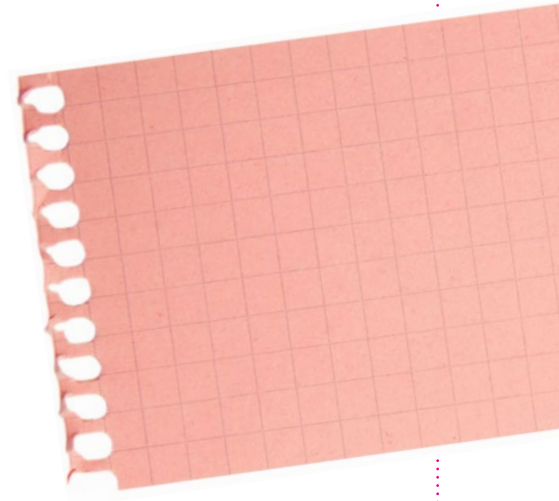
At the school board level (are there specific consultants or those with equity designated responsibilities that you could reach out to?)

RESOURCE HAUL

- The **policies** most relevant to developing a whole school approach are... (school; Board; Education Act; Professional Association or Organization) Print these out and keep a copy on hand!
- Existing **curricular and other resources** that are available in the school to support educators in their learning and teaching about gender diversity and trans inclusion across the curriculum
- **School board level resources and materials** that have already been developed.

SHARE these resources with your team! A cross-departmental compilation of existing resources, units of work and coverage of topics that are addressed in the curriculum are useful in building awareness and knowledge of gender diversity education on a whole school level.

Notes



Part 4: Action

It is time to make a plan that helps you build knowledge of what is needed to create and sustain a whole school approach to supporting trans students and gender expansive education at your school.

Our final revised/edited/updated goals are....

Now that you have a set of refined and specific goals for your team, you can begin breaking them down into smaller steps that will help you achieve them. Use the chart below to set up your action plan, and step into the next phase of this work.

GOAL	RATIONALE	TIMELINE	RESOURCES/ SUPPORTS	OBSTACLES/ STRATEGIES	ACCOUNTABILITY
<i>Description of specific goal</i>	<i>Why you feel this one is necessary</i>	<i>Break down a specific time frame in which you wish to accomplish this goal</i>	<i>List and collect all material recourses and human supports that are going to help you achieve this goal</i>	<i>What are some obstacles that you are anticipating to achieving this goal? What are some strategies that you can think of right now that might be useful in navigating these obstacles?</i>	<i>How are you building in accountability measures to help you stay focused and on track with your goals?</i>

GOAL	RATIONALE	TIMELINE	RESOURCES/ SUPPORTS	OBSTACLES/ STRATEGIES	ACCOUNTABILITY

While the initial action plan is complete, it is an evolving process as goals will need to be revisited/revised given the availability and provision of the resources that are needed to sustain a whole school commitment to building knowledge and understanding of gender diversity and trans inclusion.

Final Thoughts

As we come to the end of this Toolkit, we would like to leave you with some final thoughts:

- The **need to support trans students in schools is urgent and is best conceived as both an individual and a collective effort** that is supported and resourced by the school administration and School Boards.
- **Ensuring the duty of care for all students and their human rights** is at the core of the work that is needed to create trans-affirming schools.
- Building knowledge and capacity for creating trans-affirming schools and classrooms takes time and **a coordinated effort on a whole school level is needed**.
- **Existing legislation, policy, and curriculum are necessary resources** for educators to defend and support trans inclusion and trans-affirming education in schools.
- **Knowledge and implementation of existing legislation and policy, as well as integrating trans specific content into the curriculum**, are vital to supporting trans students and to enacting gender justice in schools.
- The **support of principals and school leaders is vital** in creating trans affirming schools and makes a difference.
- Trans students and gender diversity exist in all communities, and therefore, **trans-affirming approaches require an intersectional lens** that avoids siloing equity and social justice concerns.

As one of the participants in the Supporting Trans and Gender Diverse Youth in Schools: Policy and Practice study shared with us:

“The more I learn, the more I realize I need to learn.”

This Toolkit is intended as a starting point for this work and is a resource that you can return to as you individually engage with trans-affirming practices in your work and as you bring others along with you.

In solidarity,

The Trans-Affirm Team



Resource Links

Blue, Pink and White: What the Colors of the Transgender Pride Flag Mean

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/life/2023/04/28/transgender-pride-flag-colors-meaning/11697579002/>

519 Glossary of Terms

<https://www.the519.org/education-training/glossary/>

Gender: Identity, Body, Expression, and Attribution

<https://www.queersexedcc.com/post/gender-identity-body-expression-and-attribution>

Supporting Trans and Gender Diverse Youth in Schools: Educators' Responses

<https://trans-affirm.edu.uwo.ca/report/Full%20Report.pdf>

Gender Unicorn

<https://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/BTB25-5I-01.pdf>

Gender Unicorn activity for students

https://www.changetochill.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Gender-unicorn-activity_FINAL.pdf

Understanding Gender: Downloadable Resources

<https://www.genderspectrum.org/resources>

Sex Assigned at Birth and Gender Identity: What Is The Difference?

<https://amaze.org/video/gender-identity-sex-at-birth/>

The Way we Think about Biological Sex is Wrong

https://www.ted.com/talks/emily_quinn_the_way_we_think_about_biological_sex_is_wrong?language=en

The Gender Binary Is a Tool of White Supremacy

<https://aninjusticemag.com/the-gender-binary-is-a-tool-of-white-supremacy-db89d0bc9044>

The Binary is A White, Colonialist Fiction and It's Up to White Cishet Folks to Disrupt It

<https://www.terraincognitamedia.com/features/the-binary-is-a-white-colonialist-fiction-and-its-up-to-white-cishet-folks-to-disrupt-it2019>

CBC interview with author Joshua Whitehead Joshua Whitehead Explores Indigiqueer and Two-Spirit Culture in His Canada Reads Contending Novel

<https://www.cbc.ca/radio/thenextchapter/full-episode-dec-31-2018-1.4956361/joshua-whitehead-explores-indigiqueer-and-two-spirit-culture-in-his-canada-reads-contending-novel-1.4956994>

2SLGBTQI+ : 2S, ça veut dire quoi? by Catherine Contant

<https://ici.radio-canada.ca/jeunesse/maj/1988129/bispiritualite-autochtones-diversite-sexuelle-genre>

Gender Galaxy

https://www.actioncanadashr.org/sites/default/files/2019-03/Action_Canada_for_Sexual_Health_and_Rights_BeyondtheBasics_Galaxy-web.pdf

Gender Cloud

<https://bluntrose.com/2020/03/01/the-problem-with-the-term-gender-spectrum/>

The Gender Wheel

<https://www.genderwheel.com/about-the-gender-wheel/>

Gender Triangle

<https://www.glsen.org/sites/default/files/2019-12/GLSEN-Gender-Triangle-Visual.pdf>

Gender Triangle education guide

<https://www.glsen.org/activity/gender-triangle-education-guide>

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity: Library Resources

<https://guides.library.ualberta.ca/edi/2s>

(Un)learn Gender Zebra

http://osstfupdate.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/ESC-Gender_Postcard-8.5-x-3.5_PROOF_Page_1-scaled.jpg

All the Things They Said We Couldn't Have: Stories of Trans Joy by Tash Oakes-Monger

<https://us.jkp.com/products/all-the-things-they-said-we-couldnt-have>

Non-Binary Lives: An Anthology of Intersecting Identities by Ben Vincent, Meg-John Barker, JosTwist and Kat Gupta

<https://uk.jkp.com/products/nonbinary-lives>

The Nearest Exit May Be Behind You” by S Bear Bergman

<https://arsenalpulp.com/Books/T/The-Nearest-Exit-May-Be-Behind-You>

AlokVaid-Menon

<https://www.alokvmenon.com/>

Kama La Mackerel

<https://lamackerel.net/>

Sean Saifa Wall

<https://www.seansaifa.com/>

“Me, Myself, They: Life Beyond the Binary” by Joshua M. Ferguson

<https://houseofanansi.com/products/me-myself-they>

Exploring the history of Gender Expression

<https://link.ucop.edu/2019/10/14/exploring-the-history-of-gender-expression/>

Intersex 101: Everything you need to know

<https://secureservercdn.net/198.71.233.183/dhf.2b0.myftpupload.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/4intersex-101.pdf>

Glossary of Terms and Terms to Avoid

<https://www.glaad.org/reference/trans-terms>

“Urban Indigenous Youth Reframing Two-Spirit” by Marie Laing

<https://www.routledge.com/Urban-Indigenous-Youth-Reframing-Two-Spirit/Laing/p/book/9780367556884>

Two-Spirit: Conversations with Young Two-Spirit, Trans and Queer Indigenous People in Torontoby Marie Laing

<https://www.twospiritresearchzine.com/>

The Gender Tag: Authentic Gender Expression

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VjzpRvXNh7Q>

The Gender Tag Project

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLFS4s3pfLP1xEfB_1Rsi52EwbOdR3hCK2

I AM ME: The lives of 4 Trans Youth

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eHtXW9Y5pNs>

We're Here: Indigenous 2SLGBTQ+ Youth Across Ontario Assert Needs and Experiences

<https://anyflip.com/bktrb/xmhk/>

Do Better: 2SLGBTQ+ Youth Recommendations for Change in Ontario

https://ctys.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/YGAP_School-1.pdf

Growing Up Trans: In Our Own Words

<https://www.orcabook.com/Growing-Up-Trans-P5302.aspx>

Radically Listening to Transgender Children: Creating Epistemic Justice through Critical Reflection and Resistant Imaginations” by Katie Steele and Julie Nicholson

<https://rowman.com/ISBN/9781498590389/Radically-Listening-to-Transgender-Children-Creating-Epistemic-Justice-through-Critical-Reflection-and-Resistant-Imaginations>

“Créer des milieux authentiques: Une boîte à outils sur l’identité et l’expression de genre pour aider à mettre en place des changements dans la société, les organisations et les institutions”

The 519

<https://www.the519.org/resources/creer-des-milieux-authentiques/>

TNiish Manidoowag (Two-Spirited Beings) by Debbie S. Mishibinijima

<https://vimeo.com/222306137>

Transgender Studies Quarterly on Cisgenderism

<https://read.dukeupress.edu/tsq/article/1/1-2/63/92024/Cisgenderism>

What does it mean to be Cissexist?

<https://www.healthline.com/health/transgender/cissexist>

Muddling through together’: Educators navigating cisnormativity while working with trans and gender-nonconforming students

<https://open.library.ubc.ca/media/stream/pdf/24/1.0228782/4>

Challenging Cisnormativity: Working Toward Gender Inclusive Spaces

<https://cfsontario.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/07>

Defining: Transphobia

<https://www.mykidisgay.com/blog/defining-transphobia>

How to Recognize Transphobia-and what to do next

<https://www.healthline.com/health/transphobia>

What is Transphobia?

<https://www.transactual.org.uk/transphobia>

Cissexism and Cis Privilege Revisited - Part 1: Who Exactly Does “Cis” Refer To?

<http://juliaserano.blogspot.com/2014/10/cissexism-and-cis-privilege-revisited.html>

The Cis Privilege Checklist

<https://takesupspace.wordpress.com/cis-privilege-checklist>

Prisoners of Lexicon: Cultural Cisgenderism and Transgender Children

https://www.degruyter.com/document/doi/10.1515/9783839430200-022/htmlhttps://www.ted.com/talks/kimberle_crenshaw_the_urgency_of_intersectionality?language=en

Federal 2SLGBTQI+ Action Plan... Building our future, with pride

<https://women-gender-equality.canada.ca/en/free-to-be-me/federal-2slgbtqi-plus-action-plan.html>

4 Canadian Trans Activists You Should Know:

<https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/1787639875636>

Sylvia Rivera and Marsha P. Johnson: Listen to the Newly Unearthed Interview with Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries

<https://www.nyhistory.org/blogs/gay-power-is-trans-history-street-transvestite-action-revolutionaries>

Sylvia and Marsha Start a Revolution!

<https://jmellison.net/books/>

Screaming Queens

<https://www.kqed.org/trulyca/43/screaming-queens>

Transgender History: The roots of Today's Revolution by Susan Stryker

<https://www.hachettebookgroup.com/titles/susan-stryker/transgender-history-second-edition/9781580056908/?lens=seal-press>

Transgender History: The Roots of Today's Revolution

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cCjdrLeil74>

The Urgency of Intersectionality, TED Talk by Kimberlé Crenshaw

https://www.ted.com/talks/kimberle_crenshaw_the_urgency_of_intersectionality

How Does Intersectionality Relate to Indigenous and Western Linking Frameworks?

<https://www.criaw-icref.ca/images/userfiles/files/Fact%20Sheet%203%20EN%20FINAL.pdf>

2SLGBTQ+ Identities and Child Welfare: Intersectional Identities

<https://oacas.libguides.com/c.php?g=715117&p=5144106>

God Loves Hair by Vivek Shraya

<https://arsenalpulp.com/Books/G/God-Loves-Hair-Tenth-Anniversary-Edition>

I'm Muslim and My Gender Doesn't Fit Me: A Resource for Trans Muslim Youth" by the Muslim Youth Leadership Council

<https://advocatesforyouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Im-Muslim-My-Gender-Doesnt-Fit-Me.pdf>

LGBTQ Families Speak Out: Four Ways Schools Can Create Safer, More Welcoming Learning Environments for Our Children

https://www.oise.utoronto.ca/oise/News/2019/Four_ways_schools_can_create_safer_and_more_welcoming_environments_for_LGBTQ_families_and_students.html

Gender Sandcastles: Conceptualizing Nonbinary and Trans Identities

https://itgetsbettercanada.org/2022/03/31/gender-sandcastles/?gclid=CjwKCAjw9J2iBhBPEiWAErwpeQblFgbkolgDnNjPU9yrV4-OAiALX0voMcSwf8_QSqnxPA9C5ho5PhoCJ3kQAvD_BwE

Transgender People: 10 Common Myths by Vox

<https://www.vox.com/identities/2016/5/13/17938088/transgender-people-rights-myths>

En Inclusif, an online French dictionary that finds gender-neutral options for gendered language

<https://eninclusif.fr/>

Alpheratz is an academic based at Sorbonne Université

<https://www.alpheratz.fr/>

Cisgender Privilege and the Cisgender Privilege Checklist by Trans Wellness Ontario

<https://www.facebook.com/TransWellnessOntario/photos/a.1059599124574036/1064282424105706>

Printable Know/Want to Know/Learned Chart Templates

<https://edit.org/blog/kwl-chart-templates>

Gender-Inclusive Biology

<https://www.genderinclusivebiology.com>

LGBTQ Flags: The History and Symbolism of 23 Flags

<https://www.teenvogue.com/story/lgbtq-flags-history-symbolism>

Resources for Gender and LGBTQ+ Inclusive Schools by Welcoming Schools

<https://welcomingschools.org/resources>

Affirming Gender Diversity by the Canadian Teachers Federation

https://www.ctf-fce.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/SVB5_AGD_EN_final_web-1.pdf

Pronoun Resource for Teachers by EGALE Canada

<https://egale.ca/awareness/pronoun-resource-for-teachers/>

Affirming and Inclusive Language by EGALE Canada

<https://egale.ca/awareness/affirming-and-inclusive-language/>

Pronoun Learning Module

<https://www.minus18.org.au/pronouns/>

How Two-Spirit People are ‘Coming In’ to Their Communities on CBC Unreserved, hosted by Rosanna Deerchild

<https://www.cbc.ca/radio/unreserved/how-two-spirit-people-are-coming-in-to-their-communities-1.6272654>

Teaching about Gender Diversity: Teacher-tested Lesson Plans for K-12 Classrooms

<https://canadianscholars.ca/book/teaching-about-gender-diversity/>

Gender: Your Guide: A Gender Friendly Primer on What to Know, What to Say, and What to Do in the New Gender Culture

<https://www.leeairton.com/genderyourguide>

“10,000 Dresses” by Marcus Ewert

<https://socialjusticebooks.org/10000-dresses/>

“The Boy and the Bindi” by Vivek Shraya

<https://arsenalpulp.com/Books/T/The-Boy-the-Bindi>

“47,000 Beads” by Koja and Angel Adeyoha

<https://www.flamingorampant.com/books/47000-beads-by-koja-and-angel-adeyoha-illustrated-by-holly-mcgillis>

“Melissa” by Alex Gino

<https://www.scholastic.ca/books/view/melissa-formerly-published-as-george>

Four Approaches to Social Justice Education by Kevin Kumashiro

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GN-yhISqfz0&feature=youtu.be>

Toward a Theory of Anti-Oppressive Education

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/1170593>

Anti-Oppressive Framework: A Primer, Created by ETFO/FEEO

https://www.etfo.ca/getmedia/67d7eb05-4c08-414a-8979-7d98d94899bc/210504_Anti-OppressiveBooklet.pdf

The Gender Friendly Classroom by Dr. Lee Airton

<https://www.edcan.ca/articles/gender-friendly-classroom/>

Welcoming gender diversity in schools and classrooms by Dr. Lee Airton

<https://www.edcan.ca/articles/gender-diversity-schools/>

Developing a gender inclusive school by Welcoming Schools

<https://welcomingschools.org/resources/framework-for-developing-a-gender-inclusive-school>

Draw-the-line — Against transphobic violence by EGALE

<https://egale.ca/awareness/draw-the-line-atv/>

Vivek Shraya, author, musician, performer

<https://vivekshraya.com/>

Wendy Carlos, musician, composer, and first trans recipient of a Grammy.

<https://www.theguardian.com/music/2020/nov/11/she-made-music-jump-into-3d-wendy-carlos-the-reclusive-synth-genius>

Trans Chefs

<https://www.bonappetit.com/story/trans-chefs-changing-restaurant-culture>

Trans Scientists

<https://wepstem.com/2020/06/11/celebrating-trans-scientists/>

We're Here: Racialized 2SLGBTQ+ Youth Across Ontario Assert Needs and Experiences by LGBT Youthline and the Do Better Campaign

<https://anyflip.com/bktrb/guxy>

Finding Pride: Teaching Trans History in Secondary Social Studies

<https://www.socialstudies.org/system/files/2022-06/SE-860322170.pdf>

ETFO/FEEO Suggested Resources for Gender Independent Children and Transgender Youth/Adults

<https://www.etfo.ca/socialjusticeunion/2slgbtq/etfo-suggested-resources-for-gender-independent-children-and-transgender-youth-adults>

ETFO/FEEO 2SLGBTQ Resources

<https://www.etfo.ca/socialjusticeunion/2slgbtq/2slgbtq-resources>

Teaching Human Rights in Ontario

<https://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/teaching-human-rights-ontario-guide-ontario-schools>

A Policy Primer: Guide to developing human rights policies and procedures

https://www3.ohrc.on.ca/sites/default/files/A%20policy%20primer_Guide%20to%20developing%20human%20rights%20policies%20and%20procedures_2013.pdf

Policy on Preventing Discrimination because of Gender Identity and Gender Expression

<https://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/policy-preventing-discrimination-because-gender-identity-and-gender-expression>

Human Rights in Ontario: Gender Identity and Expression

https://www3.ohrc.on.ca/sites/default/files/Gender%20Identity_Gender%20Expression%20Brochure_Accessible_English.pdf

Supporting transgender and gender diverse students in Ontario schools: Educators' responses

<https://trans-affirm.edu.uwo.ca/report/Full%20Report.pdf>

Supporting trans students in our schools (Durham District School Board)

<https://www.ddsb.ca/en/about-ddsb/resources/Documents/Equity/Supporting-Trans-Students-in-Our-Schools.pdf>

Administrative Procedure 398: Gender Identity (Avon Maitland District School Board)

https://www.amdsb.ca/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=1088879&type=d&pREC_ID=1380582

Guidelines for the Accommodation of Transgender and Gender Independent/Non-Conforming Students and Staff (Toronto District School Board)

<https://www.tdsb.on.ca/About-Us/Innovation/Gender-Based-Violence-Prevention/Accommodation-of-Transgender-Students-and-Staff>

Supporting Inclusive, Safe and Caring Spaces for Diverse Identities: Guidelines and Best Practices (Near North District School Board)

<https://www.nearnorthschools.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Supporting-Inclusive-Spaces-for-Diverse-Identities-Guidelines.pdf>

Supporting & Protecting LDSB Transgender-Spectrum and/or Gender Non-Conforming Students (Limestone District School Board)

https://cdn5-ss16.sharpschool.com/UserFiles/Servers/Server_352698/File/Board/Equity%20&%20Inclusion/LDSB%20Transgender%20STUDENT%20Guidelines%20FINAL%20May%202021.pdf

Gender Identity and Gender Expression: Fostering Inclusive Learning Environments for All Students (Ottawa-Carleton District School Board)

<https://pub-ocdsb.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=11412>

Gender Identity and Gender Expression Guidelines (Peel District School Board)

https://www.gegi.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/PDSB_2017_GI-and-GE-Expression-Guidelines-.pdf

Supporting Your Gender-Diverse Child by EGALE

<https://egale.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Supporting-Your-Gender-Diverse-Child-Resource-2017-Final.pdf>

Policy/Program Memorandum 119: Developing and implementing equity and inclusive education policies in Ontario schools

<https://www.ontario.ca/document/education-ontario-policy-and-program-direction/policyprogram-memorandum-119>

Policy/Program Memorandum 120: Reporting violent incidents to the Ministry of Education

<https://www.ontario.ca/document/education-ontario-policy-and-program-direction/policyprogram-memorandum-120>

Policy/Program Memorandum 128: The provincial code of conduct and school board codes of conduct

<https://www.ontario.ca/document/education-ontario-policy-and-program-direction/policyprogram-memorandum-128>

Policy/Program Memorandum 144: Bullying prevention and intervention

<https://www.ontario.ca/document/education-ontario-policy-and-program-direction/policyprogram-memorandum-144>

Policy/Program Memorandum 145: Progressive discipline and promoting positive student behaviour

<https://www.ontario.ca/document/education-ontario-policy-and-program-direction/policyprogram-memorandum-145>

Policy/Program Memorandum 151: Professional activity days devoted to provincial education priorities

<https://www.ontario.ca/document/education-ontario-policy-and-program-direction/policyprogram-memorandum-151>

OSSTF/FEESO Webinar Advocating for Transitioning and Transgender Youth

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DO0jofqcn_Q

Canadian Teachers' Federations' Affirming Gender Diversity

https://www.ctf-fce.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/SVB5_AGD_EN_final_web-1.pdf