

Residence Life

LGBTQ Resource Guide

Egale 
Canada Human Rights Trust

Residence Life

LGBTQ Resource Guide

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INTRODUCTION

About Egale Canada Human Rights Trust

Egale Canada Human Rights Trust (ECHRT), was founded in 1995 as a charity dedicated to advancing LGBT human rights through education, research and community engagement.

Who's in your residence?

What do you know about the football player on your floor? What do you know about the assumed female cultural studies student and her girlfriend in your residence?

It's easy to think we know someone based on assumptions and stereotypes. It's also easy to assume that we know most things about a person when we discover a simple aspect of their social identity – whether they are a jock, a gamer, or a science student for example. As a Residence Life staff member, you know the importance of getting to know each of your residents. This involves thinking about what we actually know about our residence co-habitants and how we know these things; have we taken the time to get to know the many facets of their identity and personalities, or are we drawing on assumptions?

Did you know there are amazing LGBTQ residents in your residences? If so, awesome! Maybe you, yourself are an LGBTQ Residence Life staff member. Cool! In this guide we will explore some of the issues of safety and lack of inclusion experienced by LGBTQ people in residence and ways to create better support and inclusion.

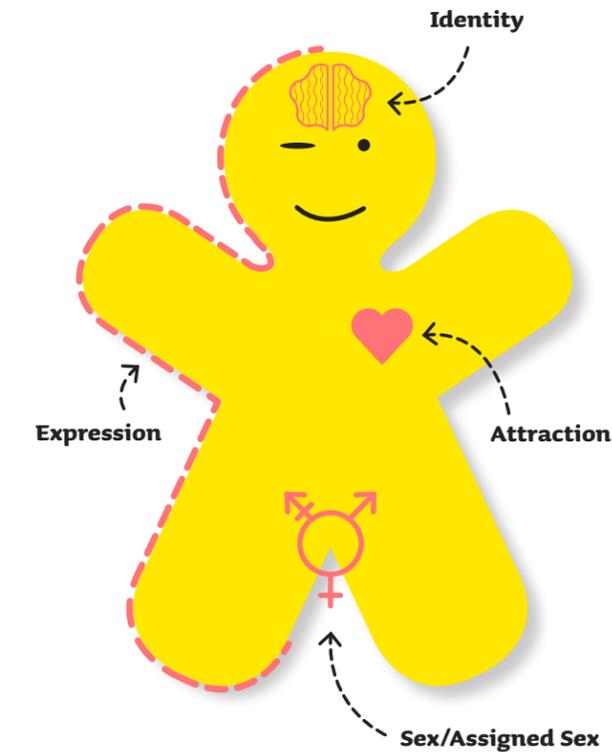
What is safer space and why is it important?

Creating a safer space means that everyone can feel comfortable and safe in their residence regardless of race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, size, age, socioeconomic status or any other intersection of identity. An LGBTQ safer space is a welcoming, supportive and safer environment, free of any type of discrimination for queer, trans, and questioning individuals. Everyone has the right to feel safe and included. A safer space is an environment in which everyone feels comfortable expressing themselves and participating fully, without fear of attack, ridicule, or denial of experience. When these safer spaces are created and fostered, it allows each of its members to achieve their greatest potential – thus strengthening the entire residence community.

Why do we say 'safer space'?

An absolute safe space has the challenges and limitations of trying to achieve perfection, which is pretty much impossible (how can we guarantee a space will always be safe for everyone?). Instead, it's more productive to work towards making spaces safer for all students and staff. Hence 'safer space', a concept that acknowledges safer spaces as 'works in progress', and spaces in need of constant maintenance and attention to keep them safer, inclusive, and welcoming for LGBTQ folk and allies alike. This means we need to ensure proper policies are put into place and that homophobic, biphobic and transphobic comments, behaviours and attitudes are not tolerated and always reprimanded. Safer space means continuously addressing all forms of discrimination in a space, including racism, ableism, classism, sexism, fatphobia, and xenophobia. A safer space is one in which discomfort and learning happens in respectful and caring ways.

The Genderbread Person



IDENTITY

Nongendered → **Woman-ness**
→ **Man-ness**

Gender identity is how you, in your head, think about and experience gender, and how you interpret what that means in a social context.

EXPRESSION

Agender → **Masculine**
→ **Feminine**

Gender expression is how you demonstrate your gender (based on traditional gender roles) through the ways you act, dress, behave, and interact.

SEX/ASSIGNED SEX

Asex → **Female-ness**
→ **Male-ness**

Sex/assigned sex refers to the objectively measurable organs, hormones, and chromosomes. Female = vagina, ovaries, XX chromosomes; male = penis, XY chromosomes; intersex = a combination of the two.

ATTRACTION

Nobody → **Men/Males/Masculinity**
→ **Women/Females/Femininity**

Sexual attraction is who you are emotionally and physically attracted to, based on their sex and/or gender.

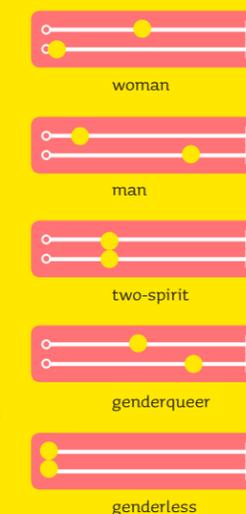
DEFINITIONS

These definitions are intended to provide a common language, answer questions and provide clarifications. These terms, like all language, have changed and evolved over time and will continue to do so. We all have labels and identities that describe our sense of self. It is important that terms that refer to identities are self-selected and respected by others.

A NOTE ABOUT LANGUAGE IN THE DEFINITIONS

In the following definitions, you will see the use of "female-identified" and "male-identified". These terms recognize that gender is a self-identification that does not necessarily correspond with the assigned sex of an individual; physical appearance and genitalia are not the only determinants of gender. It also recognizes that there are many ways to experience and express gender and is intended to include the diverse range of gender identities and expressions (read on to the Gender Identity definitions to learn more!). Female-identified refers to someone who identifies as female and male-identified refers to someone who identifies as male.

EXAMPLE Gender Identity
Here are five examples of different gender identities



Gender isn't binary.
It's not either/or.
In many cases it's both/and. A bit of this, a dash of that.

definitions

GENERAL TERMS

Sex/Assigned Sex The biological classification of a person as male, female or intersex. Most often, sex is assigned by a medical professional at birth and is based on a visual assessment of external anatomy.

Gender The social classification of people as masculine and/or feminine. Whereas sex is an externally assigned classification, gender is something that becomes evident in a social context.

Sexual Orientation A person's capacity for profound emotional and sexual attraction to another person based on their sex and/or gender.

Gender Identity A person's deeply felt internal and individual experience of being man, woman or another gender entirely. A person's gender may or may not correspond with the sex assigned at birth. Since gender identity is internal, one's gender identity is not necessarily visible to others.

Gender Expression The way a person presents and communicates gender identity to society, through clothing, speech, body language, hairstyle, voice, and/or the emphasis or de-emphasis of bodily characteristics or behaviours and traits used publicly to express one's gender as masculine or feminine or something else. The traits and behaviours associated with masculinity and femininity are culturally specific and change over time. Gender expression is not an indication of sexual orientation. Also called gender presentation.

Gender Fluidity The recognition that social constructions of gender identity and gender expressions lie along a spectrum and cannot be limited to two genders; a feeling that one's gender varies from societal notions of two genders.

Sex & Gender Binary The notion that there are only two possible sexes (male/female) and genders (man/woman), that they are opposite, discrete and uniform categories, and that gender is determined by sex.

LGBTQ An acronym for "Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Transsexual, Two-Spirit, Queer and Questioning" people.

Ally A person who believes in the dignity and respect of all people and takes action by supporting and advocating with groups being targeted by social injustice. An ally does not identify as a member of the group they are supporting (e.g. a straight person can act as an ally for gay people and communities; a cisgender lesbian can act as an ally for trans people and communities).

Intersectionality A lens of analysis of social relations and structures within a given society. The concept of intersectionality recognizes how each person simultaneously exists within multiple and overlapping identity categories (including but not limited to: gender, race, ethnicity, class, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, ability, body size, citizenship, religion, creed). Social institutions and relations privilege and marginalize these identities differently and create differentiated access to resources.

SEX

Intersex (*adj*) Refers to a person whose chromosomal, hormonal or anatomical sex characteristics fall outside the conventional classifications of male or female. Many people experience the designation of "intersex" as stigmatizing given the history of medical practitioners imposing the diagnosis on infants, children and young adults (some people may not be identified as "intersex" until puberty). As with all humans, gender identity for intersex individuals may often be complex.

FAAB An acronym that refers to someone who was assigned female sex at birth. It stands for Female-Assigned at Birth

MAAB An acronym that refers to someone who was assigned male sex at birth. It stands for Male-Assigned at Birth.

SEXUAL ORIENTATIONS

Asexual A person who may not experience sexual attraction or who has little or no interest in sexual activity.

Bisexual (*adj*) A person who is attracted emotionally and sexually to both male-identified and female-identified people.

Gay (*adj*) A person who is emotionally and sexually attracted to someone of the same sex and/or gender—gay can include both male-identified individuals and female-identified individuals, or refer to male-identified individuals only.

Heterosexual A person who is emotionally and sexually attracted to someone of the opposite sex and/or gender. Also referred to as "straight".

Lesbian (*adj or n*) A female-identified person who is emotionally and sexually attracted to female-identified people.

Pansexual (*adj*) A person who is emotionally and sexually attracted to individuals of diverse gender expression, identity or assigned sex.

GENDER IDENTITIES

Cisgender (*adj*) Refers to someone whose gender identity corresponds with their birth-assigned sex (e.g. a cisgender male is someone whose gender identity is man and was assigned male sex at birth).

FTM/F2M or Trans man A person whose sex is assigned female at birth, but who identifies as a man and/or male. Often will simply identify as a man without the prefix 'trans'.

Genderqueer (*adj*) Refers to a person whose gender identity may not correspond with social and societal gender expectations. Individuals who identify as genderqueer may identify with both male and female genders,

move between genders, or may reject the gender binary or gender altogether. Those who identify as genderqueer may or may not also identify as trans.

Gender Diverse (*adj*) A term used to refer to a broad spectrum of gender identities other than cisgender.

MTF/M2F or Trans woman A person whose sex is assigned male at birth, but who identifies as a woman and/or female. Often will simply identify as a woman without the prefix 'trans'.

Transgender (*adj*) A person who does not identify either fully or in part with the gender associated with their birth-assigned sex – often used as an umbrella term to represent a wide range of gender identities and expressions. Transgender people (just like cisgender people) may identify as straight, gay, etc.

Transsexual (*adj*) A person whose sex assigned at birth does not correspond with their gender identity. A transsexual woman needs to live and experience life as a woman and a transsexual man needs to live and experience life as a man. Many identify as transgender, rather than transsexual, because they are uncomfortable with the psychiatric origins of the term 'transsexual'. Some transsexual people may physically alter their body (e.g., sex reassignment surgery and/or hormone therapy) and gender expression to correspond with their gender identity.

Trans (*adj*) A term commonly used to refer to transgender, transsexual and/or gender variant identities and experiences. While it is often used as an umbrella term, some people identify just as trans.

TERMS ASSOCIATED WITH BOTH SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER IDENTITY

Queer (*adj*) Historically, a derogatory term for homosexuality, used to insult LGBT people. Although still used as a slur by some, the term has been reclaimed by some members of LGBT communities, particularly youth. In its reclaimed form it can be used as a symbol of pride and

affirmation of difference and diversity, or as a means of challenging rigid identity categories.

Questioning (*adj or v*) A person who is unsure of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Two-Spirit (*or 2-spirit*) (*adj*) Some Aboriginal people choose to identify as Two-Spirit rather than, or in addition to, identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans or queer. Prior to European colonization, Two-Spirit people were respected members of their communities and were often accorded special status based upon their unique abilities to understand both male and female perspectives. Two-Spirit persons were often the visionaries, healers and medicine people in their communities. The term Two-Spirit affirms the interrelatedness of all aspects of identity – including gender, sexuality, community, culture, and spirituality. It is an English term used to stand in for the many Aboriginal language words for Two-Spirit.

DISCRIMINATION ON THE BASIS OF GENDER IDENTITY AND SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Biphobia Fear and/or hatred of bisexuality, often exhibited by name-calling, bullying, exclusion, prejudice, discrimination, or acts of violence—anyone who is bisexual (or assumed to be) can be the target of biphobia.

Cisnormativity A cultural/societal bias, often implicit, that assumes all people are cisgender and so privileges cisgender identities and ignores or underrepresents gender variance. For examples of cisnormativity check out the questionnaire on page 13.

Cissexism Prejudice and discrimination in favour of cisgender gender identities and expressions. This includes the presumption that being cisgender is the superior and more desirable gender identity.

Heteronormativity A cultural/ societal bias, often implicit, that assumes all people are straight and so privileges heterosexuality and ignores or underrepresents same-gender relationships. For examples of heteronormativity check out the questionnaire on page 13.

Heterosexism Prejudice and discrimination in favour of heterosexuality. This includes the presumption of heterosexuality as the superior and more desirable sexual orientation.

Homophobia Fear and/or hatred of homosexuality, often exhibited by name-calling, bullying, exclusion, prejudice, discrimination, or acts of violence—anyone who is LGBT (or assumed to be) can be the target of homophobia.

Perceived Gender Identity The assumption that a person is trans, cisgender or genderqueer without knowing what their gender identity actually is. Perceptions about gender identity are often predicated on stereotypes relating to gender expression (e.g. what a trans man "should" look like).

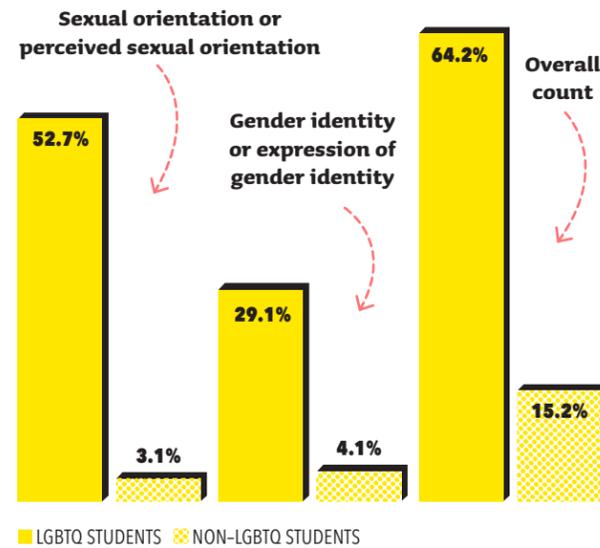
Perceived Sexual Orientation The assumption that a person is lesbian, gay, bisexual or straight without knowing what their sexual orientation actually is. Perceptions about sexual orientation are often predicated on stereotypes relating to gender expression (e.g. what a straight man "should" look like).

Transphobia Fear and/or hatred of any perceived transgression of gender norms, often exhibited by name-calling, bullying, exclusion, prejudice, discrimination, or acts of violence—anyone who is trans (or assumed to be) can be the target of transphobia.

THE HIGH SCHOOLS THAT STUDENTS COME FROM

Many youth entering post-secondary institutions today are coming from high schools where they felt unsafe for a variety of reasons. In 2009/2010 ECHRT went across the country asking youth in grades 7-12 how safe they felt at school. We asked them to speak specifically about their safety with regards to their sexual orientation and gender identity. Here's what we found:

1 Feelings of not being safe (LGBTQ/NON-LGBTQ STUDENTS)



1 See Human Rights Watch's *Hatred in the Hallways: Violence and Discrimination against Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Students in the U.S. Schools*. (Bochenek & Brown, 2001) and the American Association of University Women's *Hostile Hallways: Bullying, Teasing, and Sexual Harassment in School* (Lipson 2001).

2 Feelings of not being safe (STUDENTS WITH/WITHOUT LGBTQ PARENTS)

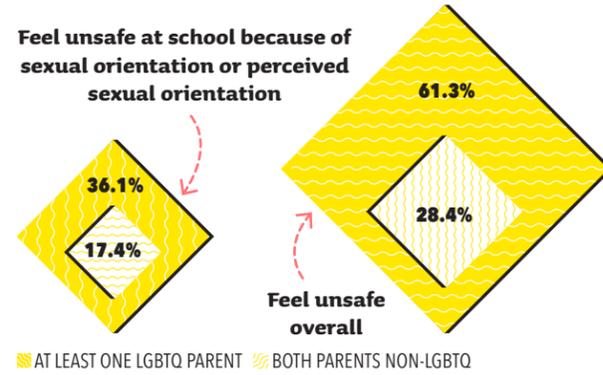
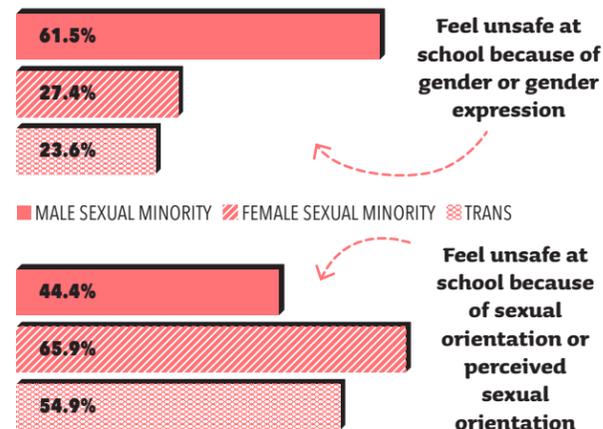


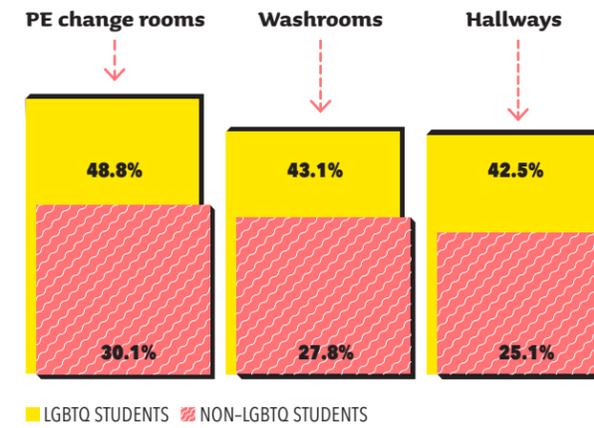
Figure 1 shows that there are serious safety concerns for both LGBTQ and non-LGBTQ students in high school, however LGBTQ students feel much less safe than their non-LGBTQ peers, with 64% of LGBTQ students reporting they feel unsafe at school. Figure 2 also highlights the heightened feelings of being unsafe at school reported by students with LGBTQ parents.

When we break down the results within LGBTQ students, we see that trans students feel even more unsafe than their LGB peers: 78% of trans students reported feeling unsafe in some way at school, compared to 63% of LGB students. This result is not surprising when we consider the social policing of gender norms (male masculinity and female femininity) that defines our society. This practice of gender policing played out in high school makes trans and gender diverse youth highly visible targets for discrimination and harassment and thus they feel less safe than their peers.

3 Feelings of not being safe (MALE SEXUAL MINORITY/FEMALE SEXUAL MINORITY/TRANS)



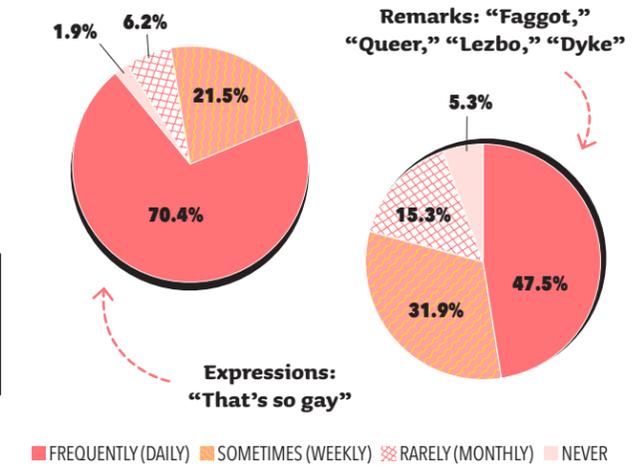
4 Unsafe areas for LGBTQ students (LGBTQ/NON-LGBTQ STUDENTS)



Intimidation, harassment and discrimination is more keenly felt in some places more than others, depending on factors such as opportunity, exposure, the presence of potential witnesses, and the type of activity associated with the place. Washrooms and change rooms are frequently referred to as being unsafe spaces for LGBTQ students, but hallways, a seemingly innocuous place, were a place students reported feeling almost as unsafe as in washrooms and change rooms. The volume of harassment in hallways has led national human rights investigations¹ to name them as key sites for violence against LGBTQ youth. The fact that so much harassment and violence against LGBTQ youth is happening in hallways – a place where peers monitor each other, rather than being under direct supervision – speaks to the critical need to focus LGBTQ positive work on changing heterosexist and cissexist school culture, so that students are standing up for each other and participating in the creation of safer school communities.

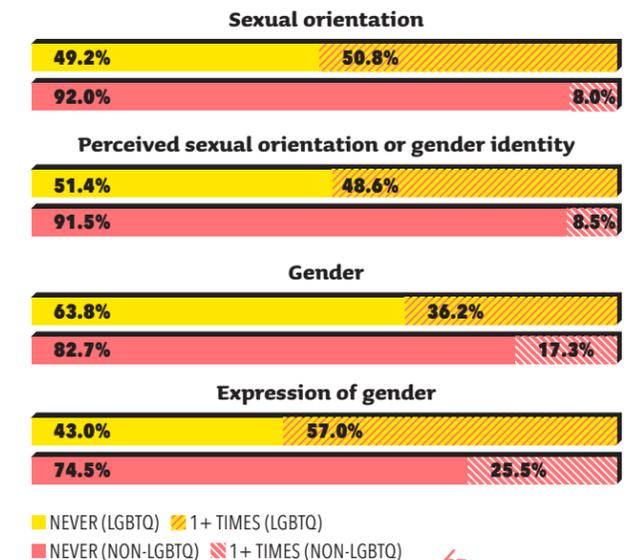
We've looked at where it happens, but what does homophobia, biphobia and transphobia look like for LGBTQ students in our schools? People do not need to be directly targeted by homophobic, biphobic and transphobic harassment to be exposed to it. They hear it in their everyday lives. This is particularly the case for youth across Canada; where results show that homophobic, biphobic and transphobic comments are extremely prevalent in schools. For instance, 70% of students reported hearing comments like "that's so gay" and 48% reported hearing remarks like "fag," "queer," "lezbo" and "dyke" daily from their peers at school. Derogatory comments like these impact not only LGBTQ people but also those with LGBTQ friends and loved ones and those who are perceived to be LGBTQ. *They create an unsafe climate for everyone.*

5 Frequency of homophobic comments (ALL STUDENTS)

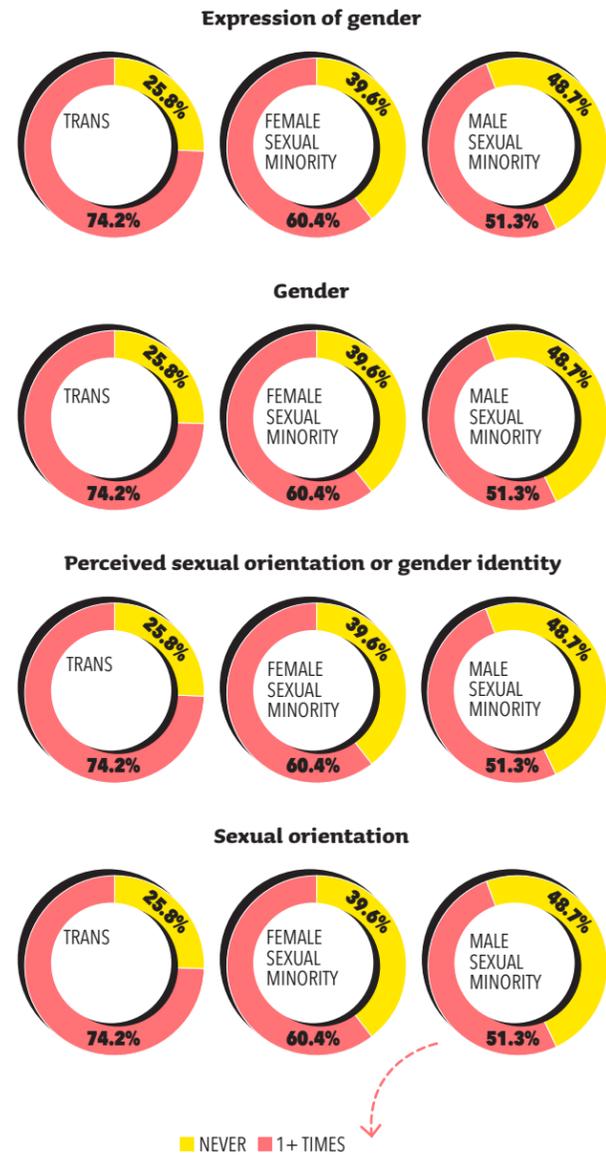


Homophobia, biphobia and transphobia also manifests as harassment, both verbal and physical. The national survey findings show that LGBTQ youth are directly victimized much more often than heterosexual youth. In the next few graphs, notice the difference in the yellow parts of the bars for LGBTQ students and orange for non-LGBTQ students.

6 Verbal harassment (LGBTQ/NON-LGBTQ STUDENTS)

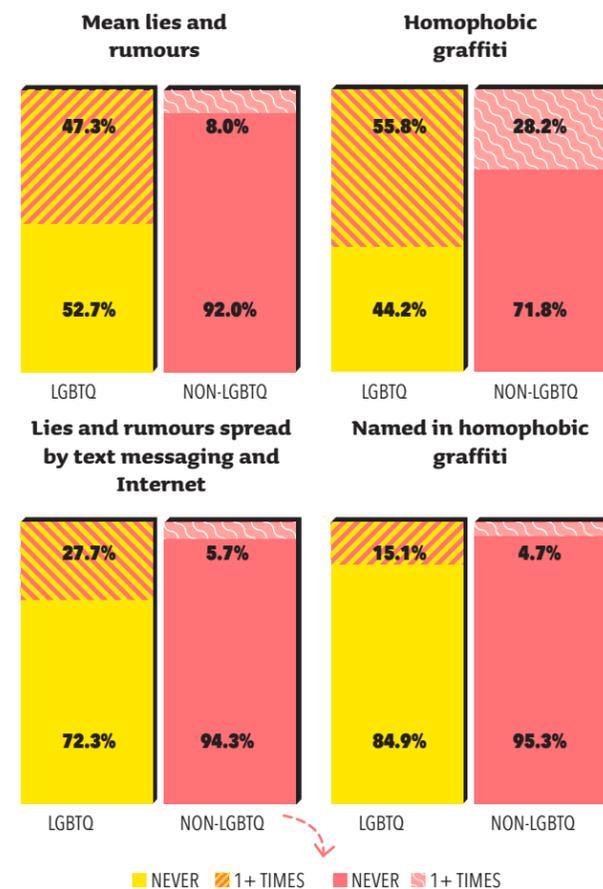


7 Verbal harassment
(TRANS/FEMALE SEXUAL MINORITY/MALE SEXUAL MINORITY)



The daily and weekly experience of harassment and of feeling unsafe have detrimental impacts on student success. For some LGBTQ youth this means low-grades in high school and for others incompleting or dropping-out, leaving these youth without access to post-secondary education. In addition, the impact on a youth's emotional and mental wellbeing can be devastating as you will see in the next section. Sexual orientation and gender identity are only two aspects of a person's social identity. Race, class, ability, gender, citizenship, and other social identities also impact LGBTQ peoples' experiences of harassment and discrimination. For example, many derogatory terms make reference to more than one facet of identity (e.g., age, class, education, geographic origin, physical and mental ability, race, religion, sexual orientation) and insults are often strung together, attacking someone's identity in multiple ways at once.

8 Other forms of harassment (LGBTQ/NON-LGBTQ STUDENTS)



LGBTQ YOUTH SUICIDE

The environments we create in residence are crucial to the wellbeing of LGBTQ students

Every year in Canada, approximately five hundred youth take their own lives (Statistics Canada, 2008).² Why are some groups, including LGBTQ youth, at a greater risk for suicide than others? LGBTQ youth experience a high degree of vulnerability to suicidal ideation and behaviour, both in Canada and the United States, particularly in comparison to their non-LGBTQ peers: approximately half of LGBTQ youth have thought about suicide, and they are over four times more likely to attempt suicide than their non-LGBTQ peers (cf. Eisenberg and Resnick 2006; Scanlon et al. 2010; Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Survey 2009). It is imperative to understand that LGBTQ youth are not inherently at a greater risk of suicide or self-harm because they are LGBTQ; rather it is their mistreatment, isolation, rejection by their communities and the subsequent feeling of unworthiness that places them at higher risk. This reality is deeply troubling and illustrates how the environments we create in residence – both informally (through social environments) and formally (through laws and policies) – are crucial to the wellbeing of LGBTQ students.

We all have key roles to play in helping LGBTQ youth feel safe, accepted, affirmed and celebrated in our communities. The most successful strategy for preventing suicidal ideation or behaviours is to make your residence and your campus an inclusive space proactively. Proactively means not waiting for LGBTQ students to identify themselves but rather purposefully examining your residence and creating opportunities to communicate that your residence is a place where all students are accepted, affirmed and celebrated for who they are. Maybe you're already doing this. Maybe you have no idea where to start. The rest of this resource serves as a guide - and initial conversation - about how to create positive and inclusive spaces in residence for LGBTQ community members.

² For the purposes of this resource, and for the LGBTQ Youth Suicide Prevention Summit, "youth" refers to those under the age of 25.

WHAT'S GOING ON IN RESIDENCE?

The experience of living away from home can be particularly challenging for LGBTQ students coming to college and university. Like many of your straight or cisgender residents, moving to residence can mean leaving their support networks and trying to build new support networks at school; the first place most students look to do this is in their residences. For LGBTQ students who are coming to residence from homes where they were not out, or who are not accepted by their families because of their sexual orientation or gender identity, they are entering residence assuming they will not be accepted for who they are. This is why it is so important to think purposefully about how your residence can communicate that it is a safe and accepting space.

University and College Housing Offices already work to provide safe and welcoming living environments for students in their residences. This is evident through Residence Life staff member training programs, crisis-response protocols, and Residence Life social and safety events. Yet it can be difficult for Residence Life staff member to know who is having unsafe experiences in residence and why. As a Residence Life staff member, you understand the need to fit in, feel accepted and have a comfortable living experience at college or university. In your role you can ensure your LGBTQ residents, like all your residents, feel supported as members of the broader community increasing the likelihood to succeed. Take a minute to ask yourself: How am I *taking action* to ensure LGBTQ students feel safe and supported on my floor?

Heteronormativity and cisnormativity in residence

The heteronormativity and cisnormativity of our schools and societies can make it difficult to see the exclusion of LGBTQ people, especially for those who are straight or cisgender. Challenging the inequalities experienced by LGBTQ people necessitates understanding what it looks like. Homophobia, biphobia and transphobia, as well as other forms of discrimination are rooted in privilege and power. Privilege, while a complex concept, is the systematic advantage of certain identities. Power is the exercise of this privilege. For non-LGBTQ people then, understanding the discrimination or exclusion of LGBTQ people begins with understanding one's privilege. When people are not members of a marginalized group, they may not see inequality happening because they are not experiencing it in their daily lives. In the definitions section we introduced the concepts of cisnormativity and heteronormativity. These forms of discrimination and exclusion stem from the reality that our society assumes all people are straight and cisgender. The next page has a few examples of what this looks like.



Homophobia, biphobia and transphobia, as well as other forms of discrimination are rooted in privilege and power. Privilege, while a complex concept, is the systematic advantage of certain identities. Power is the exercise of this privilege.

Read through the following statements and circle the number of the statements that apply to you. Put a * next to the statements that surprise you, or that you have never thought of.

Heteronormativity Questionnaire

- 1 I can talk freely about my sexual orientation to or in the presence of my roommate.
- 2 I do not have to explain how or why I am heterosexual, or when I realized that I was.
- 3 I feel comfortable holding hands with my current or potential partner in my residence cafeteria, lounge or other common areas.
- 4 I will never have my heterosexuality used as a reason to be moved out of my dorm room.
- 5 I do not have to think about my sexual orientation before taking part in residence socials and activities.
- 6 I feel comfortable holding hands with or kissing my partner in residence common areas.
- 7 When I go to the campus medical centre, I know I won't be refused treatment or made to feel uncomfortable because of my sexual orientation.
- 8 I am entering my post-secondary residence experience having come from a home where my family accepts me for my sexual orientation.
- 9 When I answer "no" to the question "do you have a boyfriend" or "do you have a girlfriend" people assume I am single.

Cisnormativity Questionnaire

- 1 Strangers do not ask me what my "real name" [given name] is.
- 2 People don't assume that they have a right to call me by "real name" [given name].
- 3 People do not disrespect me by using incorrect pronouns even after they've been corrected.
- 4 I do not have trouble ticking off my gender in a box in order to allocate which residence I should be placed in.
- 5 Strangers don't assume they can ask me what my genitals look like and how I have sex.
- 6 I do not have to worry about whether I will be able to find a bathroom to use or whether I will be safe changing in a locker room.
- 7 My healthcare system (or health insurance provider) does not specifically exclude me from receiving benefits or treatments available to others because of my gender identity.
- 8 I have not been diagnosed with a mental illness for expressing who I am and how I feel about my gender.
- 9 I am entering post-secondary residence coming from a home where my family respects and accepts my gender identity.

The examples in the questionnaire are just some examples of the ways people are discriminated against because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. You may have noticed that in many cases the discrimination is not intentional. For those who do not identify as LGBTQ some of the statements may have left you feeling uncomfortable or guilty, this is a common reaction. However, it is important to remember that guilt will not make residences safer for LGBTQ students, but rather a commitment to challenging some of the norms revealed above will. If you put a star beside some of the statements above, keep these in mind as you read on to find out about how to be an ally to your LGBTQ residents.

WHAT MAKES SPACES UNSAFE FOR LGBTQ PEOPLE?

In our efforts to create a safer residences for LGBTQ students it is important to be able to identify: **what makes spaces unsafe for LGBTQ people?** A climate of safety and acceptance is created by what we work towards with our energies and actions.

Silence and stigma Stigma and silence reinforce one another, here's how: being LGBTQ continues to be met with stigma by our society at large. Cultural references assume that most people want to identify as straight and/or cisgender; this is why insults like "gay" are used so frequently. Stigma continues, in part, because of a continued reluctance to talk about LGBTQ experiences in history and today; this is the silence. This silence reinforces that there is a stigma associated with being LGBTQ. Often when homophobic, biphobic, transphobic, heteronormative or cisnormative comments are made we ignore it or we choose not to make a big deal about it. This silence creates a culture in which homophobia, biphobia and transphobia continue to exist.

A lack of intervention Homophobia, biphobia and transphobia are common place in our schools, on our streets, on social media sites and in everyday conversation. They happen through the ways information is presented, by making jokes or comments about people who do not fit into traditional gender expectations or people who are perceived not to be straight, and by doing nothing to intervene when these comments are made.

Lack of LGBTQ visibility It is possible to complete 12-13 years of education before college or university and never talk about LGBTQ people or experiences at school. When residents arrive at their post-secondary institutions this trend can be continued by events, rules and policies in places that assume heterosexual and cisgender identities (e.g. ice-breaker "dating" activities, assigning new residents to same gender floors or roommates, setting curfews for how late someone of a different gender can be

in a dorm room or by not providing information about LGBTQ services or events to residents).

Creating a climate of safety and acceptance in residence

Questions to consider:

SILENCE AND STIGMA: Do I know about LGBTQ organizations and events on campus? Do I feel comfortable talking about LGBTQ identities? Am I including LGBTQ resources and information in my Residence Life orientation and activities?

LACK OF EFFECTIVE INTERVENTION: Am I looking and listening for both active and passive LGBTQ-phobic behaviour and language? Am I addressing it everytime? If not, what support do I need to effectively intervene?

* Check out page 16 for some helpful tips on how to effectively intervene in LGBTQ-phobic harassment.

INVISIBILITY AND EXCLUSION: Do I include LGBTQ friendly and LGBTQ-serving organizations (on campus and in the community) in my student orientation programming? Do I know who these organizations are and where they are (e.g. womyn, trans and gender diversity centres, queer and trans friendly health services)? Does my school have a gender-inclusive housing policy (find out more on page 26)? Do I include visual representations of LGBTQ people in promoting campus or residence events? Am I celebrating significant LGBTQ events (e.g. Pride)?

RESPONDING TO HARASSMENT & DISCRIMINATION IN RESIDENCE

Effectively intervening in and responding to homophobic, biphobic and transphobic comments and behaviour is integral to creating safer and welcoming spaces for all of your residents. It sends a basic message that this is a space in which all people are respected. Remember, it is not just LGBTQ individuals who experience homophobic, biphobic or transphobic harassment; this harassment often happens based on perceptions about people's sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

Manifestations of discrimination

Harassment and discrimination can be overt actions, but this is not always the case. Overt forms of homophobia, biphobia and transphobia tend to be public, obvious and often individual acts. These may include calling someone a derogatory term, obvious threats and/or violence against a person or group of people because of their perceived or actual sexual orientation or gender identity.

Discrimination can also manifest itself in more subtle or hidden ways, which are not always immediately apparent or obvious. It can stem from broad generalizations about groups of people, which fuel the biases that perpetuate discriminatory language and behaviours. Homophobia, biphobia and transphobia are embedded in our daily interactions on campuses and in our residences and are reinforced through silence and a lack of response to discriminatory language, behaviours, policies and systems.

The practice of assuming people's gender identities, the lack of acknowledgement of identities that do not fit into the conventional gender binary (men and women), and the social policing of gender norms often place trans and gender diverse students at even greater risk of both active and passive forms of discrimination.³

³ Adapted from: "Challenge Homophobia and Transphobia: A Campus Guide", Canadian Federation of Students-Ontario and Lesbian Gay Bi Trans Youth Line (2011).

Effectively responding to comments sends a message that all people are respected

Do I really need to intervene every time?

Sometimes we can be tempted to let comments slide for a whole host of reasons; "I'm in a rush, I don't want to deal with this right now", "I don't know exactly how to respond", "nobody heard that anyway", "they didn't mean anything by it", "everyone knows 'that's so gay' is just an expression and isn't really meant to put down gay people". Your position of authority in residence makes it even more important that you intervene every time. In fact, one of the most upsetting findings of the National Climate Survey is that nearly 89% of LGBTQ students reported hearing homophobic comments from their peers on a daily or weekly basis. Your LGBTQ residents need to trust that as not only a peer, but a leader in residence you will use your power to support the respectful inclusion of all residents, including them. Otherwise, we risk sending the following message:

- A) Residences promise safety and respect for all students
- B) Students witness disrespect of sexual and gender minority students in residence every day, and they often see their Residence Life staff member and fellow students look the other way.

Message: "Human rights apply to everyone except LGBTQ people. If it applied to them, our Residence Life staff member would be doing something about all the abuse they take".

A + B = Rights for everyone but LGBTQ people.

Think about it. Many LGBTQ students have been getting this message their entire lives, from their peers, their teachers, their families, their communities and the media. We need to interrupt this message by effectively and consistently intervening in homophobic, biphobic and transphobic behaviour. Having practiced responses may help you to feel more prepared to respond in the moment instead of feeling caught off guard. Check out the following card for tips on how to respond effectively.

HOW TO HANDLE HARASSMENT IN 3 MINUTES OR LESS

1 Stop the harassment immediately

- Interrupt the comment or halt the physical harassment (call for help if it is physical harassment).
- Do not pull the residence member aside to address them privately unless absolutely necessary; the severity and public nature of the situation warrants an immediate and public response and it should not be dealt with through private talks at a later time or date.
- Ideally, make sure all people in the area hear your response; this makes it clear that this behaviour is unacceptable in your residence and demonstrates your commitment to safer and inclusive spaces for all. Be mindful however, that public shaming can cause a person to withdraw or become defensive rather than take your point into consideration. This may inhibit a person from expressing their thoughts or feelings in constructive ways because they fear negative social repercussions. The focus of a public response should be on addressing the comments or behaviours and never framed as a personal attack or shaming. This method should be used based on best judgment and consideration for your relationship with the person(s) in question and the context.

2 Identify the harassment

- Label the form of harassment: “You just made a transphobic (homophobic, biphobic, racist, sexist, ableist, classist, etc.) comment”.
- Do not imply the person(s) targeted by the harassment is a member of that identified group.

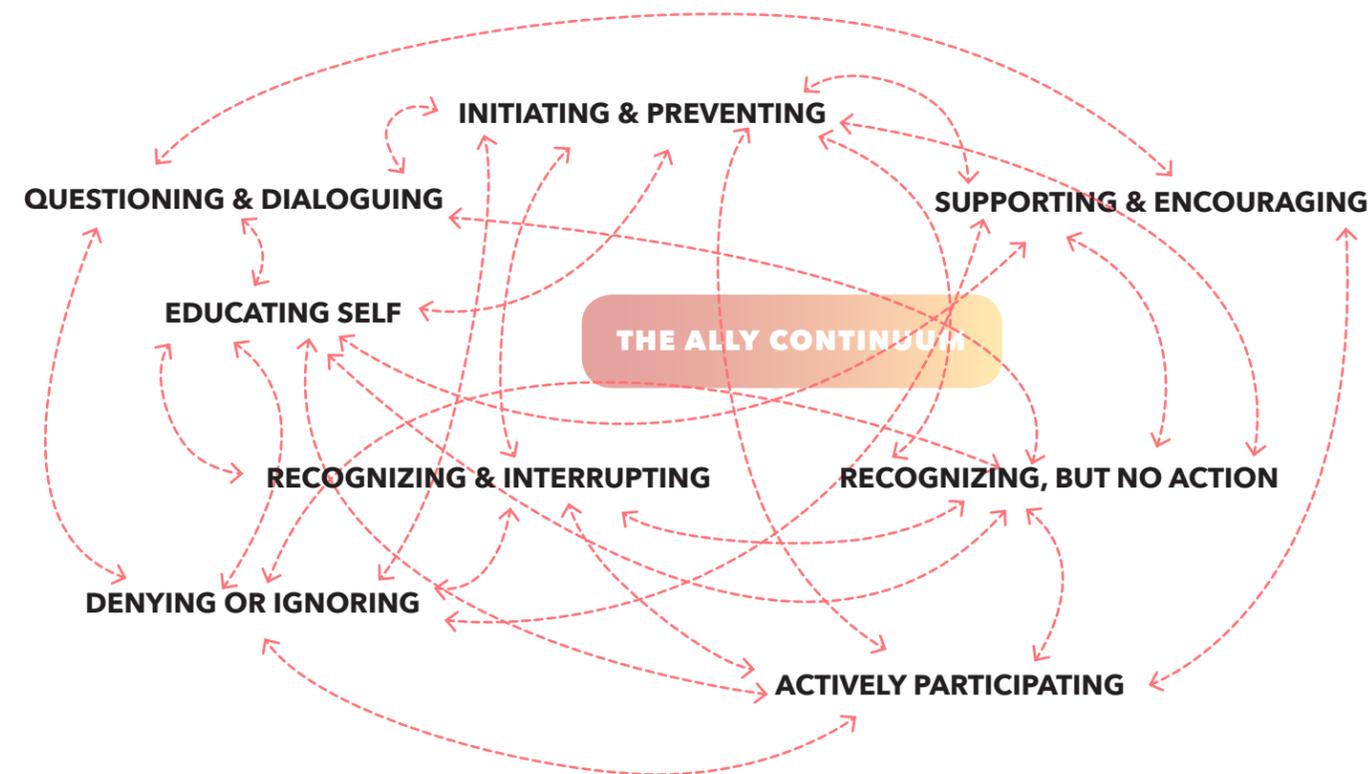
- Do not imply the person who made the comment is transphobic, homophobic, biphobic, racist, sexist, ableist, classist, etc. Focus on the behaviour not the person.

3 Broaden the response

- Do not personalize your response at this stage: “We, at this residence, do not harass people”. “This residence and all of its facilities are inclusive spaces and have a zero-tolerance policy for discriminatory/hurtful behaviour.”
- Re-identify the offensive behaviour: “This name calling can also be harmful to others who overhear it”.

4 Ask for change in future behaviour

- Personalize your response: “Chris, please respect the other members of this residence and think before you act”.
- Check in with the person(s) who were targeted by the harassment at this point: “Please tell me if this behaviour continues. We can take future action to work out this problem. We want everyone to feel safe and respected at this residence”.



ALLY CONTINUUM

A useful tool for introducing the concept of allyship

Allies are people who recognize the unearned privilege they receive from society’s patterns of injustice and take responsibility for changing these patterns. Allies include men who work to end sexism, white people who work to end racism, cisgender people who work to end transphobia, able-bodied people who work to end ableism, and so on.⁴

Allies are critical to the work of creating LGBTQ safer and inclusive spaces. Being an active ally takes courage and education. Allies are prepared to confront their privilege and challenge the structures that hold that privilege in place (remember the examples on page 13). There are lots of ways to act as an ally; the Ally Continuum is only one way to think about your role as an ally (while our focus is on being an ally to LGBTQ people and communities, but this continuum could be used to explore allyship in other contexts).

⁴ Bishop, Anne. “Becoming an Ally”.

An ally is a person who is supportive of the LGBTQ community

The Ally Continuum

The Ally Continuum represents eight forms of action a person can take in response to discrimination against LGBTQ people. These actions vary from actively engaging in homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, heterosexism or cissexism to supporting and initiating actions that challenge and disrupt these forms of discrimination. It is important to recognize that people may be in multiple places on the continuum at the same time depending on the communities, individuals or situations they are working with. Acting as an ally is a process and a journey.

ally continuum

Actively Participating This response describes the active participation in homophobic, biphobic and transphobic behaviours. These behaviours are usually overt and can include:

- laughing at or telling jokes that put down LGBTQ people
- making fun of people who don't fit into stereotypical/traditional gender roles
- shaming others for engaging in behaviours that are stereotypically associated with a gender not their own
- preventing LGBTQ celebrations on campus

What does this look/sound like in residence?

- Steven, a first year student living in residence, calls his roommate Azir a 'fag' because Azir doesn't have a girlfriend.
- Francoise tells his friends he doesn't mind gay people he just doesn't want to see them kiss each other.

Denying or Ignoring This response is characterized by a "business as usual" attitude. Here, homophobia, biphobia and transphobia are often more difficult to pinpoint as it is usually disguised as the "way things have always been". This may involve denying, ignoring or downplaying homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language or behaviour. For example:

- a reluctance to challenge established gender norms
- denying that homophobia, biphobia and transphobia, cissexism and heterosexism exist

What does this look/sound like in residence?

- Liz, a Residence Life staff member, tells her resident, Zonia, that it's not a big deal that another resident called her a 'dyke' at last night's res social, that she was "only kidding", and to lighten up.
- Keisha decides not to put up a poster advertising the next campus LGBTQ group BBQ because "there are no LGBTQ students on her floor".

Recognizing, But No Action This response is characterized by a recognition of homophobic, biphobic or transphobic actions and the harmful effects of these actions. This recognition however, does not result in action to interrupt the homophobia, biphobia or transphobia. People may not take action because of their

own prejudices or because of a lack of knowledge about how to respond. This stage of response is often accompanied by discomfort from recognizing discrimination yet failing to act on this recognition.

What does this look/sound like in residence?

Corrine, a new Resident Life staff member, comes into the common room to hear a group of female identified students talking about an upcoming meeting for the washroom access campaign, which aims to secure safe access to washrooms for trans and gender diverse people on campus. Corinne overhears the group say that trans people are disgusting and that there is no way that they will share "their" washrooms with them. They start to discuss how to take action against this campaign. Corinne, while uncomfortable, is at a loss as to how to respond and, since all the residents appear to be of the same opinion on the issue, leaves the room saying nothing.

Recognizing and Interrupting This response involves not only recognizing homophobic, biphobic and transphobic behaviours, but also taking action to stop them. Though the response may go no further than stopping the action, this stage is often an important transition from passively accepting homophobia, biphobia or transphobia to taking action to address them. Examples of this type of response are:

- choosing not to participate in actions or behaviour that are heterosexist, cissexist or derogatory of LGBTQ people and speaking out against them
- participating in LGBTQ events that one may have previously avoided out of concern for what others might think

What does this look/sound like in residence?

- Herman tells his friend Aarti that saying "that's so gay" to describe something as being undesirable upsets him because it implies that it is wrong to be LGBTQ. He asks Aarti to avoid saying this when he is around.
- Valentina sees a poster for the Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) Welcome BBQ in her residence hallway and decides to go even though she hadn't thought about LGBTQ people being at her college until she saw the poster.

Make an effort to get to know LGBTQ people fully, rather than focusing solely on their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Educating Yourself This is a crucial part of being an effective ally and includes taking action to learn more about LGBTQ people as well as heterosexism, cissexism, homophobia, biphobia and transphobia. An active ally takes responsibility for their own learning. This can include reading books, attending workshops, talking to others, joining organizations, watching films, or any other actions that can increase awareness and knowledge.

IMPORTANT THINGS TO REMEMBER WHEN EDUCATING YOURSELF:

- Education is *your* responsibility, not the responsibility of LGBTQ people. Not every LGBTQ person is comfortable sharing their story or being an educator for others.
- Everyone, including people who identify as LGBTQ, has a unique life story. One person's story or experience will not represent everyone's experience. It is unfair to ask LGBTQ people to answer questions on behalf all LGBTQ people or "the" LGBTQ community (as there are many LGBTQ communities) just as it is unfair to ask straight or cisgender people to speak on behalf all straight and/or cisgender people or "the" straight and/or cisgender community.
- A person's sexual orientation or gender identity is one part of who they are. Make an effort to get to know LGBTQ people as individuals, rather than focusing solely on their sexual orientation or gender identity

What does this look/sound like in residence?

Hamid shares his residence floor with Yuri. They also have a class together and sometimes share study notes. Hamid knows that Yuri identifies as genderqueer, but Hamid has never met an openly genderqueer person before and doesn't really know what that means. Instead of asking Yuri to educate him on genderqueer identities, Hamid goes online to websites written by genderqueer folk and allies to get more information. The next time he and Yuri hang out to study, Hamid doesn't make a big deal of Yuri's gender identity and continues to interact with them as his friend, rather than his "genderqueer friend" by asking them "How was your week so far"?

Questioning and Dialoguing This involves not simply interrupting individual experiences of discriminatory behaviour but also questioning policies and practices (including your own practices) that reinforce heterosexism and cissexism. Here, allies are connecting and discussing with others how to challenge these practices in their communities. For example:

- questioning your own behavior and that of those around you
- inviting others to reflect on the impact of their actions
- attempting to raise awareness about homophobia, biphobia and transphobia as well as heterosexism and cissexism through conversation and dialogue

What does this look/sound like in residence?

Jeremy, a third year residence student, asks his house's social coordinator, Greg about the annual event where incoming male students are forced to dress in women's clothing as a 'hazing' action. Jeremy engages Greg in a conversation about how this events makes many students feel upset, angry and unsafe in residence. Jeremy also tells Greg that he would be willing to help out on an event that challenges ideas about gender expression in a way that affirms and celebrates gender diversity and avoids transphobic and misogynistic behaviour.

Umm

Supporting and Encouraging This involves acting in support of campaigns, events, policies, etc. for LGBTQ inclusion; as well as encouraging others to take action against homophobia, biphobia and transphobia, heterosexism and cissexism. Effective allies acknowledge that people take action at different degrees of personal risk and offer support accordingly.

What does this look/sound like in residence?

Katie has belonged to the campus queer-allied group for two years. She makes a point of inviting new people to join the group and to chat with people when it is their first time attending so that they feel welcome. She wears a rainbow pin on her backpack and talks about why with her family and friends.

Initiating and Preventing This response entails actively anticipating and identifying heterosexist and cissexist institutional practices or individual actions and working to prevent or change them. This involves working in collaboration with others to challenge the root causes of heterosexism and cissexism as well as to promote inclusion. Allies here continue to be aware of and prioritize critical self-reflection/education for themselves and others. This type of allyship may involve organizing events, educating others or leading campaigns to ensure spaces are LGBTQ positive and affirming.

What does this look/sound like in residence?

Trina, a Residence Life staff member organizes a movie night for her residence where she shows a LGBTQ themed film and has a guest speaker at the end to talk about homophobia, biphobia and transphobia and its impacts. She shares information with her students about how they can get involved on campus to end these forms of discrimination, including the washroom access campaign. She also lets students know that this residence supports safe and gender-affirming washroom access, taking time to explain why this is important and what it means.



No one becomes an ally overnight. Allies work continuously to develop an understanding of the personal and institutional experiences of those with whom they are aligning themselves. Being an ally requires humility as well as a commitment to listening, learning and challenging your own assumptions and privilege. Accept that you will make mistakes; own up to them, learn from them and try your hardest not to repeat them. Every one of us can act as an ally for others and play a crucial role in challenging social oppression and building just and inclusive communities.

Being an ally requires humility as well as a commitment to listening, learning and challenging your own assumptions

TRANS, GENDER DIVERSE & INTERSEX STUDENTS IN RESIDENCE

Trans and gender diverse people face an alarming degree of discrimination and harassment across the country. The National Climate Survey, Every Class in Every School, speaks to this disturbing reality:

- 78% of trans students feel unsafe at school, with 44% having missed school because of these feelings;
- 74% of trans students have been verbally harassed because of their gender expression;
- 49% of trans students have been sexually harassed in school within the past year; and
- 37% of trans students have been physically harassed or assaulted because of their gender expression.

For many trans and gender diverse people one of the most effective factors that support mental health lies in access to competent, effective and affirming medical care. For those who wish to transition, whether physically and/or socially, access to affirming medical care can be critical both to safety and well-being.

What does transitioning mean?

The process whereby people change their gender expression (i.e. appearance and/or physical body) to align with their gender identity is called transitioning, which is a gender affirming process. Transitioning means different things to different people, due in part to issues of access, safety and personal choice. It may involve, if freely chosen, modification of bodily appearance, presentation or function by medical, surgical, or other means.

People decide to transition because they are seeking a sense of wellbeing and wholeness in their lives. They feel that they will have a better quality of life as a result of this change. For some people, gender transition is the only effective therapeutic treatment for real and challenging stresses.

As a Residence Life staff member there are a number of steps you can take to support the physical and emotional safety of people transitioning in residences:

What might this look like in residence?

- Students who are questioning their gender identity may also change their gender expression.
- Some students may have a strong sense of their gender identity but have come from homes or communities where their gender identity was not affirmed or where it was unsafe to express their gender and may see living away from home as an opportunity to begin or continue to explore gender expression that corresponds to their gender identity.
- Others have a strong sense of their gender identity and have been expressing that through their gender expression for some time.

What are some of the barriers to access?

The following are some key things to know and consider when thinking about access. These barriers are often amplified by racism, dis/ability, body size, age, citizenship, class privilege, criminalization and other forms of social injustice.

In order for a person to access the necessary medical care under the public funding model to alter their body to correspond with their gender identity (whether through hormones or surgical procedures) they must obtain a diagnosis of Gender Dysphoria (formerly known as Gender Identity Disorder), which is currently listed in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, the guide used by mental health professionals to diagnose psychological conditions. Because gender identity is an inalienable aspect of human identity rather than an indicator of mental health; many people feel uncomfortable being told their gender identity makes them ill. Without such a diagnosis however, it is often not possible to access medical care around transitioning.

Finding a doctor who is able to provide respectful and affirming care can be extremely challenging. Further, some people experience barriers around accessing medical appointments or spaces (e.g. those who face challenges in leaving their home, such as differentiated mobility or anxiety). Many doctors do not receive adequate LGBTQ sensitivity training (on average a total of 5 hours⁵). As a result of inadequate training or personal bias, doctors often fail to use the appropriate name, pronouns, or comfortable words when talking to trans patients and about their bodies.

⁵ For articles that discuss LGBTQ-sensitivity training that pre-clinical doctors receive (or don't receive) in medical schools across the US and Canada see: jama.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?articleid=1104294 or www.huffingtonpost.com/andrew-silapaswan/lgbt-health-care.b.1184931.html.

Because society privileges bodies differently, healthcare providers sometimes use perceived health concerns such as disability, mental health or body size, to refuse certain people access to hormones and other gender affirming care. Moreover, the power of medical care providers (as well as courts) to deem an individual's capacity to consent (which has implications on a person's autonomy over their own body) can block access to medical transition and other healthcare. Even when people can access affirming medical care, those living with certain medical conditions may face greater risks to their bodies in accessing hormone therapy (e.g. some bodies may not be able to accept hormones).

It is important to take into consideration that medical professionals and institutions have caused harm to trans, gender diverse and intersex individuals and communities. This makes accessing these institutions difficult and fraught with complications. Yet, there are many trans, gender diverse and intersex people who take comfort in a formal diagnosis. It is important that the mistreatment and stigmatization of trans, gender diverse and intersex individuals by medical professionals and institutions be acknowledged without ostracizing or judging communities and individuals who find comfort within these categories and labels.

Access is often not solely about medical care, but also involves accessing things like haircuts and clothing that express one's gender identity. Because gender expression is often strictly socially policed, by youth and adults alike, it's possible that if a person's physical body doesn't fit in with the social expectation of what is considered "male" or "female", they may experience verbal or even physical violence if they are perceived as wearing the "wrong" clothing or having the "wrong" haircut.

Supporting students who are transitioning in gender-segregated residences

Sometimes students may begin their transition process while living in a gender-segregated residence or on a gender-segregated floor/section/wing. When this is the case, it is important to check in with the student to ensure that their needs are being met by their living situation. Each individual student will have unique needs and desires, so it's important to have a conversation with the student to negotiate solutions that will be most appropriate for them.

For some students, living in a gender-segregated floor/section/wing or in a gender-segregated residence that is not in-line with their gender identity will not be acceptable, and they may need to move onto a co-ed floor or into a co-ed residence space. For others, what may be required is a change in the language that is used in speaking about the floor/section/wing or residence and their presence there (i.e. avoiding the use of gendered language). In all cases it is essential that students have access to both living spaces and washrooms in which they can feel comfortable.

Supporting intersex students

Many intersex people experience their diagnosis and medical treatment as physically and emotionally damaging, and struggle with the stigma of marks left behind by interventions done to them without their consent. Many may opt out of living in residence completely as they will not see this as a safe space for them, particularly as shared bathrooms and changerooms can be sites of discrimination or violence for intersex people. The lack of privacy that defines many residence bathroom/showers, in both co-ed and gender-segregated dorms, leave many intersex students feeling unsafe in those spaces. This is due to the risk of being exposed to the social policing of their bodies, which may be experienced through looks of disapproval, inappropriate comments or demands for information about their bodies, harassment and/or violence. These feelings of being unsafe may manifest in a number of ways: intersex residents may only take showers at off-peak times to avoid encountering others in the bathrooms; they may refrain from joining sex-segregated events (e.g. dances) or intramural teams. For Residence Life staff members, supporting intersex students means being aware of potential past trauma intersex students may have experienced. It also involves recognizing that "intersex" is not a term that all people identify with. We will look in greater detail at how to be an ally to intersex students on the next page.

For a list of LGBTQ programs and service providers in your area go to campus.mygsa.ca

Campus & community supports

Being aware of campus and community supports is an excellent way to support gender diverse and trans students as a Residence Life staff member. Often students living in residence are new to the community in which they are going to school, and don't know where to find trans-positive health care or service providers. Check in with any on-campus LGBTQ organizations to find out if they have information about trans-positive health care providers and services, or do your own research by visiting the on-campus healthcare centre to ask if they are familiar with and able to provide respectful and affirming care for trans and gender diverse patients. See the resource section at the end of this document for directories of LGBTQ healthcare service providers in Ontario.

Students may also be interested in accessing other services in the community as part of their transition process. Becoming aware of places where students could purchase clothing and shoes in their size, or obtain aesthetic services like hair removal is another positive step to take in supporting trans and gender diverse students as a Residence Life staff member.

HOW TO BE AN ALLY TO TRANS, GENDER DIVERSE & INTERSEX STUDENTS

Being mindful of your words and actions is an important part of being an ally to trans, gender diverse and intersex students in your residences. In the Ally Continuum you started to explore what acting as an LGBTQ ally looks like as a Residence Life staff member. Here we want to focus on some key ways of supporting trans, gender diverse and intersex students.

Don't make assumptions!

Don't assume that you can tell what someone's gender is, what bathroom someone belongs in or what pronoun someone uses just by looking at them. If you're not sure about a person's preferred pronoun, ask them in a polite and respectful way. The model you can use is: "Is there a pronoun that you prefer to use?" You may also try to detect cues from other people they know, for example, what pronouns do their friends use when talking about this person? What pronouns does this person use self-referentially? And then, respectfully follow from there. Ultimately, it is better to ask in a polite and respectful way rather than to make assumptions about how someone prefers to be addressed.

Some people, for example those who identify as genderqueer, may prefer not to use gendered pronouns as these may be seen to impose an identification that does not correspond with who they are or how they express themselves. On the next page is a chart to help you understand how to use gender-neutral pronouns.

If you're not sure about a person's preferred pronoun, ask them in a polite and respectful way

Respect what people ask you to call them

This includes both pronouns and names. What does this look and sound like?

If someone would like to be referred to as they, call them "they". Don't talk about how grammatically incorrect it is, or how "weird" you might think it sounds.

If someone would like to be referred to as "ze," use it. Don't talk about how it makes you feel uncomfortable or how you find it difficult or silly. Just because it is less common does not make it less valid.

Don't ask a trans or intersex person what their "real" name is (i.e. the name they were given when they were born). If you do know the birth name of a trans or intersex person do not share it. If they want people to know, they are the ones who should disclose it. On the flip side, you may need to ask a trans or intersex person when and where it is safe to use their chosen name and pronouns. For instance, if they are NOT out to certain people ask them how you should refer to them in that context.

Whether you've known someone by their given name for 10 years or 2 weeks, if they ask you to call them by their chosen name, do it. Like pronouns, chosen names are often closely tied to identity. If you struggle with using this person's new name, work at it. Practice in your head. If you make a mistake, work at not making that same mistake twice. The name that person has chosen is important to them; do not dismiss it.

How to use gender neutral pronouns

	Subject	Object	Possessive adjective	Possessive pronoun	Reflexive
She	She laughed	I called her	Her eyes gleam	That is hers	She likes herself
He	He laughed	I called him	His eyes gleam	That is his	He likes himself
Singular they	They laughed	I called them	Their eyes gleam	That is theirs	They like themselves
Spivak	Ey laughed	I called em	Eir eyes gleam	That is eirs	Ey likes emself
Ze and hir	Ze laughed	I called hir	Hir eyes gleam	That is hirs	Ze likes hirself
Zie	Zie laughed	I called zir	Zir eyes gleam	That is zirs	Zie likes zirself

Respect people's privacy

All of your residents have a right to privacy; Residence Life staff members should keep a student's trans, gender diverse or intersex status confidential. You should never disclose a person's trans, gender diverse or intersex status without that person's explicit permission (e.g. If someone is living as a woman, refer to them as such, rather than as a transwoman or trans).

Educate yourself

This is about understanding what gender identity means. Every person's sex and/or gender identity is a personal and important part of who they are, and some people have sexes or gender identities that challenge the binary of female and male (e.g. revisit the definition of genderqueer). There are very specific times when it is OK to ask someone who is trans, gender diverse or intersex respectful questions about their identity and experiences (e.g. at a workshop about trans identities and experiences, or perhaps a close family member or friend who is trans and has given you permission to ask questions) but you need to remember:

It is not the job of trans, gender diverse or intersex people – even your close friends and family members – to educate you and answer all of your questions. This is an exhausting

If someone would like to be referred to as they, call them "they"

and invasive demand to put on anyone. For example, we would never expect a Residence Life staff person to speak on behalf of all Residence Life staff about the experiences of all Residence Life staff members. We all have diverse identities and experiences. Trans, gender diverse and intersex people are no different and are entitled to the same privacy as cispeople in regards to their personal lives.

Do your own homework and research. The resources section at the end of this guide will help you get started.

Find information written by trans, gender diverse and intersex people. Learn about how stigma, discrimination and injustice is being challenged, as well as how you can act as an ally.

INCLUDING TRANS, GENDER DIVERSE & INTERSEX STUDENTS IN RESIDENCE

What spaces can be made safer? How do Residence Life staff members' rooms and offices become safer spaces for everyone? How do we make spaces safer for trans, gender diverse and intersex people? What steps can be taken to make trans, gender diverse and intersex people feel more included in residence?

Explicit school and housing policies that address gender identity & expression

In order to create inclusive residence environments, in which students spend the majority of their time, explicit policies to promote the safety and inclusion of trans, gender diverse and intersex students are critical. Most colleges and universities assign housing based strictly on the sex that individuals were assigned at birth and many have residence halls designated as single-sex by building, floor and/or room. As a result, trans, gender diverse and intersex students often lack safe and comfortable on-campus housing options.

Schools are beginning to address this issue in a number of ways. Some campuses in the United States for example, have enacted policies that support trans, gender diverse and intersex students in obtaining suitable, safe housing that is in keeping with their gender identity/expression. Check out a model policy from the University of California, Riverside at <http://out.ucr.edu/ourcampus/Pages/Housing.aspx>. Besides implementing supportive policy statements, a growing number of colleges and universities, particularly in the United States, are creating gender-neutral housing options, in which students are assigned a roommate regardless of gender. The type and extent of gender-neutral housing offered varies by campus, and may involve individual suites, a hallway or floor, particular buildings or areas of buildings, or the majority of residence halls. For more information visit the National Student Genderblind Campaign: <http://www.genderblind.org>.

Organizations, including post-secondary institutions are responsible for implementing policies and practices that uphold Human Rights Codes. This responsibility includes a legal duty to accommodate people, with the goal of allowing people to equally benefit from and access services, education, housing, and work. The Canadian Federation of Students has created a document to support students who are interested in organizing campaigns to examine and challenge the root causes of homophobia, biphobia and transphobia on post-secondary campuses. One of the ways this campaign could be taken up is by organizing for gender and sex inclusive housing policies. You can access this document online at: <http://cfsontario.ca/en/section/193>.

Access to washrooms

The two school areas most commonly identified as unsafe for trans, gender diverse and intersex people are those that are invariably sex-segregated: change rooms and washrooms. Safe washroom and change room access is not a luxury or a special right. For many, finding a safe place to use the bathroom is a daily struggle. Trans, gender diverse and intersex people and people who don't fit gender stereotypes report being harassed, physically assaulted and questioned by authorities while trying to use the bathroom; many avoid using public washrooms altogether, leading some to develop serious health problems. Making public washrooms safer for trans, gender diverse and intersex people and people who don't fit gender stereotypes is not a separate problem from making washroom use safe and dignified for all people.

Accessibly located, gender-neutral, universal-access washrooms (whether single or multi-stall) increase washroom accessibility for lots of people and can reduce the risk of victimization of trans, gender diverse and intersex people because they are available to anyone and do not single anyone out. While having access to gender neutral, universal-access washrooms may meet the needs of some students and staff members, ultimately, all people on

post-secondary campuses should have the right to access gendered washrooms based on their self-stated gender identity.

Many post-Secondary campuses are starting to organize for the rights of trans and gender diverse people, and people who don't fit into gender stereotypes by organizing campaigns for explicit policies, universal access to washrooms on campus, and to create a culture of respect and inclusion. George Brown College in Toronto is one of the campuses leading this fight with an initiative led by a group of students and staff called Free to Pee @ GBC, www.freetopeegbc.com.

Inclusion in residence events

Residence socials and events should be inclusive and, when possible gender neutral. When organizing games or athletic events for residents, for example, ensure that teams are not divided into gendered groups (i.e. boys vs. girls). When creating posters for residence formals or other social events, ensure that if couples are depicted, they are not exclusively heterosexual, cisgender couples. If gender segregated activities must be planned, residents should be able to participate with the group based on their self-stated gender identity.

How do we make spaces safer for trans, gender diverse and intersex people?

SCENARIOS

The best strategy for creating safer and inclusive residences for LGBTQ residents is to do so purposefully and proactively. Here you can practice being prepared and proactive by exploring common scenarios in residence. The following scenarios are based on real experiences in residences. Some of them focus on supporting LGBTQ students while others focus on responding to situations of homophobia, biphobia and transphobia.

Working with the scenarios

Ask yourself: What are the issues at play? Who do I need to involve to resolve the situation? What resources do I need to find/connect with? What do I need to do to address this scenario proactively (i.e. to try and ensure it is not something I face in my residence) and reactively (i.e. now that this has happened, how do I deal with it?).

Use the resources in this guide “The Ally Continuum” (p. 17–20) and “How to be an ally to trans and gender diverse people” (p. 24) as a starting point to help you work through the scenario. Don’t forget there are many more resources out there!

Scenario 1

Quinn is a second-year student on an all-women’s floor in residence. In the last few months, Quinn has started wearing less feminine clothing and asked hir family, friends & classmates to refer to hir using the gender neutral pronouns ze and hir. Ze doesn’t identify as a woman, but ze also doesn’t feel like a man. Quinn is beginning to feel really unsure about participating in Residence Life on hir floor, since it is conceived of as a ‘women’s only’ space and is looking for your support to ensure ze can continue to be included in this space.

How can you, as a Residence Life staff member, support Quinn through this time? How will you work with Quinn and your other residents to make sure that ze has the most positive experience in residence possible?

Scenario 2

Rachel and Yasmin are two female-identified students in your residence who are in a relationship with each other. Some of the guys on their floor like to get together and talk about which girls are hot. While making rounds, you overhear a group of guys in one of their rooms making a bet that whoever can hook-up with Yasmin and “turn her” (a slang term for a coercive and often violent attempt to “change” someone’s sexual orientation) wins, and there are bonus points if a guy can “hook-up” with both of them at the same time.

What do you say to this group of boys? How do you ensure the safety of Rachel and Yasmin? What steps will you take to create a culture of safety and respect in your residence?

Scenario 3

Aditya is an international student who is living in residence. He is gay and has a boyfriend who lives off campus but who often comes to visit him in residence. His parents, who financially support him, are here to visit and you see the three of them walking down the hallway. A fellow resident, and acquaintance of Aditya, also sees them and pops his head out of his room calling out (with genuine interest), ‘Hey, are they going to meet the new boyfriend?’ Aditya looks terrified and is silent in response.

Can you say something in the moment to help Aditya? How do you respond to the student who inadvertently outed him to his parents? How could you have prevented Aditya being put in this position? How are you facilitating conversations in your residence to ensure all students can feel safe?

Scenario 4

You are at the Residence Life Orientation Week events planning meeting. A fellow Residence Life staff member suggests that your residence host the annual “lip sync competition” in your large common room. This event is one of the most popular welcome week events, and is always very well attended. You have noticed that many of the students who perform in the competition frequently dress in drag to get laughs; laughs which stem from transphobic behaviour and comments which are inevitably made. The reward for winning the competition is house points, and you’ve noticed that almost every year, the winning group is inevitably the one that is dressed in the most “hilarious” drag. You express your discomfort with the transphobic nature of this event. However, your co-worker defends the event by saying that it’s something that happens every year and that it is one of the most popular Residence Orientation Week events, and he doesn’t think that it’s upsetting anyone because there are not any trans students at this school.

Who is upset by transphobia? How do you explain that many people are in fact uncomfortable or even upset by this event? How do you leverage potential allies? Are there other potential allies on the committee?

The best strategy for creating safer and inclusive residences for LGBTQ residents is to do so purposefully and proactively

LGBTQ INCLUSIVE RESIDENCE LIFE

For students living on-campus, Residence Life is a hugely important part of their experience at college or university. These spaces often serve as hubs for community and social interaction with peers and play an important role in student wellbeing. This is why ensuring all students feel safe and accepted is an important priority for Residence Life staff members. Below are a few ideas for creating LGBTQ-positive events to support you in creating Residence communities where everyone can freely participate without discrimination.

Orientation

When planning your residence orientation, be inclusive of the LGBTQ student population by incorporating info on queer services and resources on campus. Acknowledging LGBTQ organizations and services on campus and in the community provides positive messaging around LGBTQ inclusion early in a student's residence experience. Keeping that in mind, it is important to maintain that inclusive environment by continuing to ensure residence events are accessible and reflective of all students, including LGBTQ students.

Check-ins

Having a kind of 'check-in' night for your residence is a great way to create space for students to voice their concerns and also for you to get to know them. One way to incorporate this is to perhaps have one night of the week where everyone from the residence or floor gathers, orders in food and has a check-in discussion. Coming prepared with some questions about how people are feeling in residence is a great way to open up conversation on the experiences and concerns of LGBTQ students in a non-intrusive way and may make students feel safer expressing themselves.

Movie night

Most films have little or no LGBTQ representation, whether in content, subject matter or characters. Where LGBTQ representation exists, it is often heavily stereotyped. Having a movie night featuring an LGBTQ themed film is a great way to foster a safer space in your residence. You might also open up a conversation after the film to discuss how LGBTQ people were depicted in the film, as well as LGBTQ inclusion on your campus. For film ideas check out: MyGSA.ca/educators/movies, Out on Screen (www.outonscreen.com), Inside Out (www.insideout.ca) or look for local queer film festivals for movie ideas.

Intramural sports

Sports can be particularly intimidating or inaccessible activities for some LGBTQ folks as 49% of students reported feeling unsafe in spaces like the locker room. If hosting a sports event at your university or college, make sure it is clear that all students are welcome to take part regardless of assigned sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression – while free from discrimination and disrespect.

KNOW YOUR CAMPUS & COMMUNITY RESOURCES

ON CAMPUS SERVICES

Know on-campus LGBTQ groups, organizations, or spaces. These might include:

- Centres for Gender & Sexual Diversity
 - Safe or Positive Space Initiatives (often run out of a Student Centre)
- Womyn & Trans Centres
 - Student Clubs/Groups (there are often campus-wide and faculty specific student groups or clubs depending on the size of your college or university)
- Student Affairs
- Alumni networks

Mental health, health and counselling services

- Find out if your campus Counselling Services offer specific support for LGBTQ students
- Remember to check in with on-campus LGBTQ organizations – or do research of your own by visiting the on-campus healthcare centre – to find out if they have information about which health care providers and services provide respectful and affirming care to LGBTQ patients.

WHAT'S IN YOUR COMMUNITY?

In addition to services available on your campus there are many resources for LGBTQ people in your communities. For a list of organizations in your area visit us online at campus.mygsa.ca. The Canadian Federation of Students has also compiled a great list of these organizations in "Challenge Homophobia & Transphobia: A Guide", which is available online at cfsontario.ca/downloads/QTCampusGuide.pdf.

LGBTQ RESOURCES (NATIONAL)

2-Spirited People of the 1st Nations

www.2spirits.com
2-Spirited People of the 1st Nations is a non-profit social services organization whose membership consists of Aboriginal gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people. To learn more about the history of Two-Spirit people in North America check out their report "We Are Part of Tradition: A Guide on Two-Spirited People for the First Nations Communities".

Canadian Professional Association for Transgender Health (CPATH)

www.cpath.ca
The Canadian Professional Association for Transgender Health (CPATH) is a professional organization devoted to the health care of individuals with gender variant identities.

Intersex Society of North America

www.isna.org
The Intersex Society of North America (ISNA) is devoted to systemic change to end shame, secrecy, and unwanted genital surgeries for people born with an anatomy that someone decided is not standard for male or female.

PFLAG Canada

www.pflagcanada.ca
PFLAG (Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) is an organization of family members and friends of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people, with affiliates in many countries. PFLAG Canada supports, educates and provides resources to parents, families, friends and colleagues with questions or concerns about sexual orientation and gender identity or how to support LGBTQ loved ones.

Transpride Canada

www.transpride.ca
Trans Pride Canada is a non-partisan network of partners and allies working together for trans rights.

TransPULSE Resource Guide

transpulseproject.ca
The TransPULSE Resource Guide is a compilation of resources currently available for trans and transitioned people across Canada. You can access it online at: <http://transpulseproject.ca/resources/resource-guide>.

UNIFIED RESOURCES

The Canadian Federation of Students

www.cfs-fcee.ca
Formed in 1981, the Canadian Federation of Students is a bilingual national union of over one-half million students from more than 80 university and college students' unions across Canada. The Federation provides students with an effective and united voice, provincially and nationally.

College Student Alliance

www.collegestudentalliance.ca
The College Student Alliance (CSA) is a member-driven advocacy organization which serving Ontario's college and college-university students. CSA's main competencies are advocacy related on behalf of its membership on all issues relating to college education including tuition, accessibility, quality and transferability.

The Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA)

www.casa-acae.com
CASA is a member-driven organization that advocates for students through policy development and research, awareness campaigns, government relations, and partnerships with other stakeholders.



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