



## What is the Safe Spaces Program?

The Safe Spaces program aims to reduce harassment, hostility, and discrimination towards LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and queer) people in Brantford and Brant County.

The Safe Spaces program is focused on raising awareness through education and offers everyone an opportunity to become knowledgeable, accepting, and supportive of LGBTQ people and issues they face. This program is a result of the work of a community coalition called The Bridge. This coalition is a group that works to identify and address inequities that are experienced by the diverse sexual and gender identified communities within Brantford and Brant County.

In partnership with:



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## The Safe Spaces Project

The Safe Spaces is an initiative intended to raise visibility and awareness of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and queer (LGBTQ) people and issues. Moreover, this project is focused on raising awareness through education, with a goal of increasing the number of LGBTQ welcoming and inclusive workplaces and agencies that complete the Safe Spaces workshop.

### **What is a Safe Space?**

The program intends to create safer *spaces where all sexual orientations and gender identities are affirmed*. Furthermore, it is where individuals who are questioning their sexual orientation and gender identity will have access to service providers who are knowledgeable about LGBTQ issues and can provide support and information for referrals.

### **What are the project objectives?**

- Raise visibility and support of LGBTQ individuals in Brant County.
- Decrease homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, and heterosexism in the workplace.
- Become more aware of the various forms of homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, and heterosexism that often exist in organizations and communities.
- Increase the number of service agencies that provide LGBTQ inclusive care.
- Offer resources to organizations in order for them to create and encourage a supportive, welcoming, and inclusive environment for LGBTQ employees and/or clients.
- Increase awareness of employees that are supportive and knowledgeable about LGBTQ issues and provide information and referrals.

# Knowledge Building

## Terms and Definitions

A basic understanding of relevant terms can help create a climate of acceptance and inclusion in your organization. However, it is important to remember that LGBTQ related vocabulary will continue to evolve as our understanding of sexual and gender diversity continues to develop. Please see glossary of terms.

## Ontario Human Rights Code

### **Sexual Orientation**

The Human Rights Code makes it against the law to discriminate against a person or to harass them based on their sexual orientation and/or same sex partnership status.

### **Gender Identity**

The Human Rights Code makes it against the law to discriminate against a person or to harass them based on their gender identity and/or gender expression. This includes transgender, intersex, transsexual, cross dresser, and anyone else whose gender identity differs from their biological sex.

## Human Rights for LGBTQ in Canada

- 1969 Consensual sex between same sex adults removed from Criminal Code of Canada
- 1973 Homosexuality no longer classified as mental illness
- 1974 Gays and lesbians permitted as immigrants to Canada
- 1977-98 Territories/provinces prohibit discrimination on basis of sexual orientation (Ontario in 1968)
- 2003 Ontario legalized same sex marriage
- 2005 Canada opens doors to LGBT marriage and immigration
- 2012 Ontario recognizes gender identity, gender expression in its human rights legislation (13 June 2012)

## LGBTQ SYMBOLS OF PRIDE

**PINK TRIANGLE** – The pink triangle was used in the Nazi concentration camps during World War II to identify homosexual males. Today, for many, the pink triangle represents pride, solidarity and a promise to never allow another Holocaust to happen.

**BLACK TRIANGLE** – As the pink triangle was used in Nazi concentration camps to identify homosexual males, the Black Triangle was used to identify lesbians, along with other women such as prostitutes, to signify that they did not conform to the Nazi's ideas of correct "female behaviour".

**RAINBOW FLAG** – The Rainbow Flag was designed in 1978 in San Francisco by Gilbert Baker. This flag is a symbol of LGBTQ pride and offers a positive, colourful and optimistic alternative to the Pink Triangle. The colours celebrate the diversity of the LGBT community. It is flown with the red strip on the top.

**OTHER RAINBOW SYMBOLS** – An inverted rainbow is often displayed to identify a positive space for LGBTQ people. Rainbow T-shirts, bracelets, necklaces, buttons and other articles also demonstrate LGBTQ pride.

## Frequently Asked Questions

What is sexual orientation?

Sexual orientation refers to an enduring pattern of emotional, romantic, and/or sexual attraction to other people. Research over several decades has demonstrated the sexual orientation ranges along a continuum, from exclusive attraction to another sex to exclusive attraction to the same sex. However, sexual orientation is usually discussed in terms of three categories: heterosexual (emotional and physical attraction to members of the other sex), gay/lesbian (emotional and physical attraction to members of the same sex), and bisexual (emotional and physical attraction to men and women).

What is gender identity and gender expression?

A person's gender identity is their inner sense of being male, female, neither, or both. Gender expression is how a person expressive their gender in the world. For example, a boy might express his gender in a non-conforming way because he is more feminine, and this expression is traditionally viewed as only acceptable for girls and women. Our society has strict gender rules that men and women are expected to follow. Gender rules are taught to everyone at a young age, and it is also known that anyone who does not follow gender norms is at risk of harassment, ridicule, and violence.

What does transgender mean?

A transgendered person is someone whose gender identity or expression differs from their biological sex. Transgender is used as an umbrella term to describe gender non-conforming people such as, transsexuals, cross-dressers, genderqueers, Two-Spirit etc.

Like everyone else, transgender people may identify as straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, and queer.

What is "coming out" and why is it important?

“Coming out” is used to refer to several aspects of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and queer persons’ experiences: self-awareness of same-sex attractions; telling one or a few people about these attractions; widespread disclosure of same-sex attraction; and identification with lesbian, gay, bisexual, and queer communities. Most people are fearful to come out because of the high risk of rejection and discrimination. Some choose to keep their identity a secret; some choose to come out in certain situations; others come out in very public ways. It is a personal choice.

Can lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and Two-Spirit people change their sexual orientation and gender identity?

There are religious and secular organizations which sponsor campaigns and studies emphasizing that LGBTQ people can change their sexual orientation or gender identity. Their assertions assume that there is something wrong with being LGBTQ. Instead, the largest problem is, in fact, society’s intolerance of difference. Anti-LGBTQ attitudes, laws, and policies need to change, not LGBTQ people.

## Personal Assessment of Anti-LGBTQ Bias

Anti-LGBTQ bias may be expressed by heterosexual people, or may be internalized and expressed by lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) people as well. There are many kinds of anti-LGBTQ biases that happen everyday. We often overlook more subtle actions and exclusions because they may seem insignificant. They are not. Subtle bias is still bias.

1. Do you believe that LGBTQ people can influence others to become LGBTQ? Do you think someone could influence you to change your sexual and affectional preference?
2. How would you (or do you) feel about having a LGBTQ child?
3. How do you think you would feel if you discovered that one of your parents or parent figures, or a brother or sister, were LGBTQ?
4. Are there any jobs, positions, or professions that you think LGBTQ people should be not have? If yes, why?
5. Would you go to a physician whom you knew or believed to be gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender or queer?
6. If someone you care about were to say to you, "I think I'm gay," would you suggest that the person see a therapist? What if they said, "I think I'm transgender"?
7. Have you ever been to a LGBTQ social event, march, or worship service? If not, why?
8. Can you think of three positive aspects being LGBTQ?
9. Have you ever laughed at a "queer" joke?

Written by A. Elfin Moses and Robert O. Hawkins, Jr. Adapted by GLSEN

## Coming Out

The term “coming out of the closet” refers to the life-long process of the development of positive LGBTQ identity. Typically, it is a long and difficult struggle for many LGBTQ individuals because they often have to confront many homophobic, biphobic, and transphobic attitudes and discriminatory practices. In the beginning, many LGBTQ individuals struggle with their own negative feelings and stereotypes of LGBTQ people that they have learned throughout their lives. It often takes years of painful work to develop a positive LGBTQ identity. Then, many individuals begin to make decisions about who to “come out” to. Many individuals are afraid to “come out” to friends and family.

What they might be afraid?

- Rejection and loss of relationship
- Harassment or abuse
- Being thrown out of the family
- Gossip
- Loss of financial support
- Losing their job
- Physical violence

Why might a person want to come out to friends and family?

- End the hiding game
- Be able to be whole around them
- Feel closer to those people
- Stop wasting energy by hiding all the time
- To make a statement that it is okay to be LGBTQ identified

How might someone feel after person comes out to them?

- Scared
- Shocked
- Uncomfortable
- Supportive
- Honoured
- Disbelief
- Disgusted

What do you think LGBTQ people want from the people they come out to?

- Acceptance
- Love
- Support
- Understanding
- Closer friendship
- An acknowledgment of their feelings
- A hug and a smile

### **When someone comes out to you**

Many people have been taught to fear, despise, or hate people who are LGBTQ. When someone comes out to you, they share the information about their sexual orientation or gender identity with a keen awareness of the risks involved such as the risk of losing their relationship with you, the risk of being rejected, the risk of being misunderstood, and many other risks. Unless you have given some indication of your feelings or beliefs about sexual orientation, they may have no way of knowing in advance whether your reaction will be positive or negative. These guidelines assume that you already know that person who is coming out to you. However, these concepts can be applied to situations where you do not know the person coming out to you.

- Thank the person for having the courage to tell you. Choosing to tell you mean that they have a great deal of respect and trust for you.
- Don't judge the person. If you have strong religious or other beliefs about homosexuality, keep them to yourself for now. There will be plenty of time in the future for you to think and talk about your beliefs in light of the person's orientation.
- Respect the person confidentiality. They probably are not ready to tell others right away and want to tell people in their own way.
- Tell the person that you still care about them, no matter what. You should not be different with them. The main fear for people coming out is that their friends and family will reject them.
- Don't be too serious. Sensitively worded humor may ease the tension you are both probably feeling.
- Ask any questions you may have, but understand that the person may not have all the answers. You can save some questions for later or, better yet, you can find some of the answers together.
- Include the person's partner in plans as much as you would with anyone else.
- Be prepared to include the person in more of your plans. They may have lost the support of other friends and family, and your time will be even more precious to them. This may include "family" times like holidays or special celebrations.
- Offer and be available to support the person as they "come out" to others.

- Call frequently during the time right after the person came out to you. This will let them know you are ok with things.
- Be prepared for the person to have mood swings. Coming out can be very traumatic. Anger and depression are common, especially if friends or family have trouble accepting the person's orientation. Don't take

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mood swings personally. Be flattered you are close enough to risk sharing any feelings of anger or frustration.

- Do what you have always done together. The person probably feels that coming out will change everything in their life, and this is frightening. If you always go to the movies on Friday, then continue that.
- Talk about other LGBTQ people you know. If the person knows you have accepted someone else, they will feel more comfortable that you will accept them.
- Learn about the LGBTQ community. This will allow you to better support the person, and knowing about their world will help prevent you from drifting apart.
- Don't allow the person to become isolated. Let them know about organizations and places where they can meet other LGBTQ people or supportive allies.

### **If you are going to help me...**

- ▼ Please be patient while I decide if I can trust you.
- ▼ Let me tell you my story. The whole story. In my own way.
- ▼ Please accept that whatever I may have done, whatever I may do is the best I have to offer and seemed right at the time.
- ▼ I am not 'a' person. I am THIS person, unique and special.
- ▼ Don't judge me as right or wrong, bad or good. I am what I am and that is all I have got.
- ▼ Don't assume that your knowledge about me is more accurate than mine. You only know what I have told you. That's only part of me.
- ▼ Don't ever think that you know what I should do - you don't. I may be confused, but I am still the expert about me.
- ▼ Don't place me in a position of living up to your expectations. I have enough trouble with mine.
- ▼ Please hear my feelings, not just my words - accept all of them. If you can't, how can I?
- ▼ Don't save me. I can do it myself. I knew enough to ask for your help, didn't I? Help me to better myself.

## Understanding Oppression

One way to explain how oppression is perpetuated in society is by defining the following terms and showing their linkages and the momentum that keeps the cycle going.

### **Stereotype**

- A preconceived or oversimplified generalization about an entire group of people without regard for their individual differences. While often negative, stereotypes may also be perceived as complimentary. However, even positive stereotypes can have a negative impact simply because they are broad generalizations.
- The stereotypes we hold form the basis of our prejudice.
- A conscious or unconscious negative belief about a whole group of people and its individual members.
- When the person holding the prejudice also has and uses the power to deny opportunities, resources or access to a person because of their group membership, there is discrimination.

### **Discrimination**

- Prejudice plus the use of power. Discrimination can take many forms, including ageism, racism, classism, heterosexism, anti-semitism, sexism, ableism, ethnocentrism, etc.
- Many acts of discrimination build up over time, perpetuated against one relatively less powerful social group by a more powerful social group, leading to a group of people being in a state of oppression.
- Oppression
- The systematic control of a group of people by another group of people with access to social power. This results in benefits for one group over the other and is maintained by social beliefs and practices.
- Because oppression is institutionalized in our society, target group members often believe the messages and internalize the oppression.

### **Internalized Oppression**

- "Buying into" the elements of oppression by the target group.

When target group members believe the stereotypes they are taught about themselves, they tend to act them out and thus perpetuate the stereotypes, which reinforce the prejudice and keep the cycle going.

## Homophobia and Heterosexism

Heterosexism is the system by which heterosexuality is the assumed norm. Heterosexism is so pervasive, it is often hard to detect. For example, heterosexual norms are reinforced by parents, teachers, and the media

Heterosexism forces many LGBTQ people to struggle constantly against their own invisibility and invisibility of their relationships, and makes it much more difficult for them to have a positive sexual identity.

Homophobia can be defined as the irrational fear of, and aversions to homosexuality and lesbian, gay and bisexual people. Homophobia can range from negative beliefs and attitudes towards lesbian, gay and bisexual individuals and those perceived to be, to verbal and physical violence against them. Sexism, Homophobia and Heterosexism are interconnected and reinforced by rigid understanding of human sexuality and gender roles.

Some forms of homophobia include:

- ▼ Interpersonal Homophobia
- ▼ Cultural Homophobia
- ▼ Institutional/Systemic Homophobia ▼ Internalized Homophobia

Homophobia is typically used to describe individual anti-gay attitudes and behaviours, whereas heterosexism refers to societal-level ideologies and patterns of institutionalized oppression of non-heterosexual people.

Examples of homophobia include but are not limited to:

- ▼ Believing gays and lesbians are not "normal".
- ▼ Consider it unnatural to be LGBTQ.
- ▼ Thinking LGBTQ teachers are harmful role models for children.
- ▼ Feeling that if a friend tells you he or she is gay, then that friend is coming on to you.
- ▼ Believing that bisexuals can't make up their minds.
- ▼ Believing LGBTQ people are promiscuous or more sexual than non-LGBTQ.

## Heterosexual Privilege

Members of oppressed groups are denied some of the privileges that members of non-oppressed groups often take for granted. The following are some examples of behaviours and other things expected to be “normal” of heterosexuals, but may pose problems for LGBTQ people. Note: Laws and legal privileges are constantly changing, and some of these issues may no longer apply.

- ▼ Showing affection in public safely and comfortably, without fear of harassment or violence
- ▼ Openly talk about one’s partner and relationship to others without considering the consequences
- ▼ Benefit from societal “normalcy”: the assumption that heterosexual individuals and relationships are valid, healthy and non-deviant
- ▼ Not face rejection from one’s family and friends based on sexual orientation
- ▼ Easy access to positive role models and media images for one’s gender identity and sexual orientation
- ▼ Automatic recognition of one’s spouse as next-of-kin in emergencies
- ▼ Raise children without fear that they will be rejected or harassed by peers because of their parents’ sexual orientation
- ▼ Receive support and validation from a religious community, if so desired
- ▼ Less risk of being denied employment, housing or other services based on sexual orientation and/or gender identity.
- ▼ Not be seen as needing therapy to “cure” one’s LGBTQ identity or same-sex attraction.
- ▼ Marry and have one’s marital status legally recognized anywhere in the world.

## Heterosexual Privilege Continued...

The following are examples of aspects of interpersonal relationships that people in heterosexual relationships often take for granted. Imagine the trauma endured by lesbians, gay men and bisexuals who are not allowed equal rights.

- The right to kiss or show affection in public
- The right to talk about your relationship
- The right not to question your normalcy
- The right to show pity when your relationship ends
- The right to live comfortably in a residence hall without enduring the fear of rejection from roommates
- The right to be open about apartment hunting with your significant other
- The right to dress without worrying about what it represents
- The right not to have to hide friends and same-sex activities
- The right to heterosexual reference base by faculty, staff and friends, so you never have to feel excluded
- The right to open support from family and friends
- The right to share holidays with family and partners
- The right to have your partner appear in family photographs
- The right to have friends not avoid being seen with you for fear of being labeled by others
- The right to visit your spouse/partner in intensive care
- The right to the security and peace of mind from knowing that local, provincial or federal laws will not be created specifically to oppress, silence, or deny the validity of your relationship

From: Sharing Silent Journeys of Faith. Catholic Pastoral Committee on Sexual Minorities (1989).

## Heterosexual Privilege Questionnaire

- |  |     |    |
|--|-----|----|
| 1. I can freely talk about my family life and important relationships to colleagues at work, school, church, etc.          | Yes | No |
| 2. My partner and I can go shopping together, pretty well assured that we will not be harassed.                            | Yes | No |
| 3. I can kiss my partner farewell at the airport, confident that onlookers will either ignore us or smile understandingly. | Yes | No |
| 4. I can be pretty sure that our neighbours where we live will be friendly or at least neutral.                            | Yes | No |
| 5. Our families and church community are delighted to celebrate with us the gift of love and commitment.                   | Yes | No |
| 6. I can walk into any bookstore, sure that I will find books that reflect my relational experience.                       | Yes | No |
| 7. When my partner is seriously ill, I know I will be admitted to the intensive care unit to visit him/her.                | Yes | No |
| 8. The books that my children read in school contain stories and pictures of families like ours.                           | Yes | No |
| 9. I can find appropriate cards for my partner to celebrate special occasions like anniversaries.                          | Yes | No |
| 10. I grew up thinking my loves and relationships were perfectly normal and healthy.                                       | Yes | No |
| 11. If I experience violence on the street it will not be because I am holding hands with my partner.                      | Yes | No |
| 12. We can choose accommodations when we travel without having to worry about whether we are accepted as a couple.         | Yes | No |

- |  |     |    |
|--|-----|----|
| 13. When one of us dies, the other can be confident of the support and understanding of family, colleagues, church community, etc. | Yes | No |
| 14. My partner is welcome to attend office parties, school dances, etc. with me.   | Yes | No |
| 15. I have always known there are people in the world like me.   | Yes | No |

## Homophobia & You: The Heterosexual Questionnaire

If we turn around questions commonly asked of gay, lesbian, and bisexual people, we can see a whole different perspective on sexual orientation.

1. What do you think caused your heterosexuality?
2. When and how did you decide you were heterosexual?
3. Is it possible that your heterosexuality is just a phase that you may grow out of?
4. Is it possible that your heterosexuality stems from a neurotic fear of others of the same sex?
5. If you've never slept with a person of the same sex, is it possible that all you need is a good gay lover?
6. Do your parents know that you are straight? Do your friends and/or roommate know? How did they react?
7. Why do you insist on flaunting your heterosexuality? Can't you just be who you are and keep it quiet?
8. Why do heterosexuals place so much emphasis on sex?
9. Why do heterosexuals feel compelled to seduce others into their lifestyle?
10. A disproportionate majority of child molesters are heterosexual. Do you consider it safe to expose children to heterosexual teachers?
11. Just what do women and men do in bed together? How can they truly know how to please each other, being so anatomically different?
12. With all the societal support marriage receives, the divorce rate is incredibly high. Why are there so few stable relationships among heterosexuals?
13. Statistics show that lesbians have the lowest incidence of sexually transmitted diseases. Is it really safe for a woman to maintain a heterosexual lifestyle and run the risk of disease and pregnancy?
14. How can you become a whole person if you limit yourself to compulsive, exclusive heterosexuality?
15. Considering the menace of overpopulation, how could the human race survive if everyone were heterosexual?

16. There seems to be very few happy heterosexuals. Techniques have been developed that might enable you to change if you really wanted to. Have you considered trying aversive therapy?

17. Would you want your child to be heterosexual, knowing the problems that he/she would face?

## Suggestions on Combating Heterosexism

- Assume that wherever you are, there are LGBTQ people who are wondering how safe the environment is for them.
- Contribute to creating a safe environment by clearly stating your support for LGBTQ people.
- Do not assume that everyone you meet is heterosexual.
- Do not assume that an LGBTQ individual of the same gender is attracted to you.
- Confront your own fears and bad feelings about LGBTQ people.
- Challenge heterosexism whether or not LGBTQ people are present.
- Realize that LGBTQ oppression is perpetuated in social situations where physical affection is exclusively heterosexual.

Adapted from Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered Community Safety Initiative  
Antigonish Women's Association

## Cisgendered and Cisgender Privilege

Cisgendered: people whose gender identity, role, or expression are considered to match their assigned gender at birth. The opposite of cisgendered is transgendered.

### **What is cisgender privilege?**

- My validity as my chosen gender is not based upon how much surgery I have had or how well I "pass" as a non-trans person.
- Strangers do not ask me what my "real name" (birth name) is and then assume they have a right to call me by that name.
- I do not have to worry about whether I will be able to find a safe bathroom to use.
- If I end up in the emergency room, I do not have to worry that my gender will keep me from receiving appropriate treatment, nor will all of my medical issues be seen as a product of my gender.
- When I go to the gym or public pool, I can use the showers.

- Strangers do not assume they can ask me what my genitals look like.

## What is an Ally?

An ally is an individual who works to end oppression within their personal and professional life. An ally works to thoughtfully end a form of oppression from which they receive privilege. For example, a white person who works to end racism, a lesbian woman who works to end discrimination against trans-identified people, or a straight man who combats homophobia.

Why be an Ally?

- You will make the community a better place; oppression is a negative force that impacts everyone.
- It gives you an opportunity to interact with and learn from a population that you may not be a member of.
- By embracing difference in others, you embrace it within yourself.

What does an Ally do?

- Commits to making positive changes.
- Challenges anti-LGBTQ comments and jokes.
- Works towards developing a better understanding of the needs and issues faced by LGBTQ communities.

What does it take to be an Ally?

- Willing to learn
- Open-minded
- Empathy
- Respectful
- Risk taker
- Commitment to social justice
- Willing to challenge yourself and others
- Recognizes that oppression hurts us all

## Qualities of an Ally

- Has worked to develop an understanding of the needs of gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgender people.
- Chooses to align with gays, lesbians, bisexuals and responds to their needs.
- Believes that it is in his/her self-interest to be an ally.
- Is committed to the personal growth required.
- Is quick to take pride and appreciate success.
- Expects support from other allies.
- Is able to acknowledge and articulate how patterns of oppression have operated in his/her life.
- Expects to make some mistakes but does not use it as an excuse for non-action.
- Knows that both sides of an ally relationship have a clear responsibility for their own change whether or not persons on the other side choose to respond.
- Knows that the most empowered ally relationships are based on initiating change toward personal, institutional and societal justice and equality.
- Knows that he/she is responsible for humanizing and empowering their role in society, particularly as their role relates to responding to gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgender students.
- Promotes a sense of community with LGBTQ people and teaches others about the importance of outreach.
- Has a good sense of humor.

(Based on Burton & Leisy, UMBC, 1993) (Updated by Chad Horsley, KU, 1998)

## **What Actions Can I Take As An Ally?**

- As an ally of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community you can:
- Be comfortable with your own identity
- Work to develop an understanding of people who are different
- See LGBTQ people as individuals
- Resist the temptation to group people together based on individual traits
- Have a commitment to personal growth
- Recognize it is in one's self interest to be an ally
- Educate yourself
- Work on reducing your own homophobia

- Find ways to let people know you are safe to talk to
- Know your limits
- Respect confidentiality
  
- Pay attention to the way you phrase questions or statements that may exclude gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender persons.
- Confront heterosexism, racism and sexism so we can ALL start to feel safe
- Remember that the LGBTQ person has probably spent hours preparing to come out to you and is sharing this information with the understanding that there is a risk involved.
- Understand that the person who has come out to you has not changed. He or she is still the same person. Don't fall into the trap of seeing the person only as their sexual orientation. Sexual orientation is a component of a person, not the sum total of the person.
- Remember that often actions speak louder than words. Having gay-friendly reading material in your home or office will help LGBTQ students identify you as a safe person to talk to about sexual orientation. Also, being seen with lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender people suggests you are a safe person.

## “Things you can do”

### Creating a LGBTQ inclusive environment in your agency

- If your agency develops brochures or other educational materials make sure that these include relevant information for LGBTQ clients.
- Advertise through provider referral programs such as Rainbow Health Ontario’s services providers database on in the community that your agency provides welcoming services to LGBTQ people. This will help create a welcoming environment even before LGBTQ client enters the door.
- Make sure your organization has a gender-neutral bathroom ensuring ALL individuals have an opportunity to feel comfortable.
- Visibly post a non-discrimination statement stating that equal care will be provided to all clients, regardless of sexual orientation and gender identity.
- Acknowledge relevant days of observance in your agency, such as LGBTQ Pride Day, National Transgender Day of Remembrance, World AIDS Day etc.
- Place literature in your waiting room that is LGBTQ sensitive and inclusive.
- Intakes forms should include inclusive language for LGBTQ people.

#### **Tips On Using Inclusive Language:**

- Mirror the client’s language and terminology: how do they identify their sexual orientation, gender identity and partner(s)?
- Use gender neutral terms and pronouns when relating to partners, unless you’re absolutely sure.
- Ask open-ended questions to all students, non- judgmental affirming questions
- Be knowledgeable of the terminologies
- Build trust and respect disclosure
- A therapeutic relationship must be built on trust and respect
- Do not stereotype gender expression, gender identity and sexual orientation

- Keep personal beliefs (values, morals, religion, homo/bi/transphobic comments) out of the discussions

## Appendix A: Community Terms and Definitions

Language plays an important role in our day-to-day communication. It helps create a climate of acceptance and inclusion, and send a message that you are an ally. Basic understanding of relevant terms and their meaning can help you be an informed ally to LGBTQ persons. It is equally important to bear in mind that the understanding of human sexuality and sexual and gender diversity continues to develop, and that LGBTQ-related vocabulary is continually re-examined and changed with time. An open mind and willingness to learn can help us stay informed and up-to-date.

### **Sexual Orientation**

A person's sexual identification in terms of their sexual attraction; the inclination or capacity to develop intimate sexual and emotional relationship with people of the same sex (lesbian, gay), opposite sex (heterosexual), or either (bisexual). Sexual orientation is viewed by many as a spectrum or continuum ranging from exclusive heterosexuality to exclusive homosexuality. Similarly, some view sexual orientation as fluid rather than fixed identity.

### **Sexual Identity**

Personal self-identification based on one's sexual attraction; may or may not be the same as their sexual orientation, as some people may be primarily attracted to same sex but choose not to think of themselves as gay, lesbian or bisexual for personal or cultural reasons.

### **Self-Identifying**

In the context of sexual diversity and gender identity this term refers to people's own choice of how they want to be identified, as apposed to being labeled by society or others. This is a particular issue for trans folks whose right and need to self-identify is seldom respected. It is best to not attempt to identify someone based on your assumptions, but rather let people let you know how they want to be identified.

### **Homosexuality**

Sexual and/or romantic attraction to, or involvement with members of the same-sex.

### **Heterosexual**

A person who is sexually and/or romantically attracted to or involved with members of the opposite sex.

### **Gay**

A person who is physically, emotionally and/or sexually attracted to or involved with members of the same sex; usually refers to men who are attracted to other men, but is also used as an umbrella term for both lesbians and gay men, e.g. gay people, the gay community. Replaced the old term homosexual, which is considered a more clinical term.

### **Lesbian**

A woman who is physically, emotionally and/or sexually attracted to other women. The term originates from the ancient tale of Sappho, a female poet and teacher who lived on the Greek island of Lesbos, and was known for her passionate romantic involvements with other women. Some lesbians prefer the term gay women.

### **Bisexual**

A person who has the potential of being physically, emotionally and/or sexually attracted to, or being involved with either gender.

### **Queer**

Once known as a derogatory term for LGBTQ persons, queer has been reclaimed by the community and is now used as an umbrella term representing self-identified LGBTQ people, e.g. the queer community, queer people. Usually used by community members themselves to self-identify. The appropriate use of queer is debated within the community, as many members find it offensive due its historic use.

### **Pansexual / Pansexuality**

Pansexuality (sometimes referred to as omnisexuality) is a sexual orientation characterized by a potential sexual and/or romantic attraction for any identity along the continuum of gender and sexual orientation, including those who do not fit into the gender binary of male/female implied by bisexual attraction. Pansexuality is sometimes described as the capacity to love a person romantically irrespective of gender or sexual orientation.

### **Two-Spirit Person(s)**

An Aboriginal term used by some First Nations to describe those in their communities who have same-sex/queer attractions/desires. Traditionally, two-spirit people are considered visionaries and healers who possess both male and female spirits. Due to the negative effects of colonization, these traditions have been lost and today two-spirit people face marginalization within the Western society as well as within their own communities.

## **LGBTQ**

An acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Two-spirit, Intersex and Queer; different variations of this acronym are often used (e.g. LGBT, LGBTQ2S); often used interchangeably with Queer as an umbrella term to encompass all non-heterosexual identities.

## **Coming Out**

A process of acknowledging one's true sexual identity and/or sexual orientation, either to oneself or to others; also refers to a voluntary public announcement of one's sexual orientation. An LGBTQ person who is open with others about their sexual orientation/identity is considered to be "out".

## **Closeted / In the closet**

A slang term that refers to the state of being secretive about one's true gender identity and/or sexual orientation.

## **Outing**

Deliberately disclosing a sexual orientation of an individual who has chosen to keep it private, without their wishes or consent.

## **Heterosexism**

The assumption that everyone is, or should be heterosexual; a system of oppression that assumes that heterosexuality is the norm, and is preferable and inherently superior to homosexuality and bisexuality; heterosexism negates LGBTQ peoples' lives and relationships.

## **Homophobia**

The irrational fear or hatred of, aversion to, and discrimination against lesbian, gay and bisexual people. There are many forms of homophobia, including cultural, institutional and interpersonal. Many of the problems faced by LGBTQ persons stem from homophobia and heterosexism. (See also biphobia and transphobia).

## **Interpersonal Homophobia**

Fear, dislike or hatred of people who are in fact or believed to be LGBTQ. May be expressed by name-calling, ostracism, exclusion from social circles, verbal and physical harassment, and individual acts of discrimination.

## **Institutional Homophobia**

Refers to the ways in which different institutions in society such as government, educational systems, religion, businesses and other organizations and systems discriminate against LGBTQ people. These are the systems and institutions in society

that make the laws, set policies, allocate resources, and shape people's attitudes and behaviour.

### **Cultural Homophobia**

Refers to the social standards, norms and attitudes held by each culture and society that promote the notion that homosexuality is wrong or unnatural.

### **Internalized Homophobia**

The experience of shame, guilt, or self-hatred in reaction to one's own LGBTQ identity or feelings of sexual attraction for a person of the same-sex.

### **Gay Bashing**

Physical, mental and/or sexual violence perpetuated against LGBTQ persons or those perceived to be.

### **Biphobia**

The irrational fear or hatred of, aversion to, and discrimination against those identified as bisexual. There is considerable overlap between biphobia and homophobia, and bi people often experience the effects of both.

### **Reclaiming**

A process of re-appropriation of certain terms used by the dominant culture to oppress minorities. The LGBTQ community has gradually reclaimed such terms as queer and dyke as an act of resistance and self-empowerment, which takes away from the negative power and meaning of these terms.

### **Dyke**

A slang term for lesbian; generally used by non-lesbians as a slur to refer to a woman who exhibits behaviour that challenges the socially-constructed norms of "femininity". In the past 20 years the term has been reclaimed by many lesbians (to a far greater extent than "fag" for gay men), e.g. Dyke March, Dykes Planning Dykes.

### **Butch & Femme**

Slang terms used mostly in the lesbian subculture to describe a woman's approximate adherence to traditional masculine and feminine gender roles respectively within a same-sex relationship, or to describe a person's appearance and mannerism.

### **Straight**

A slang term used to describe a heterosexual person.

Gender-Bending

A slang term used mostly within the LGBTQ subculture; refers to challenging the boundaries of socially prescribed norms of what is “typically” male and female through physical appearance, dress and/or behaviour.

### **Drag Queen / Drag King**

In the LGBTQ subculture to do “Drag” means to assume the dress and mannerisms of the opposite sex for performance purposes only. A Drag Queen is usually a man performing as a woman; likewise, a Drag King is a woman performing as a man; usually also identify as LGBTQ, but not necessarily. When in character, Drag Queens and Kings prefer the pronouns that correspond with their gender presentation at that time, e.g. “she” or “her” for Drag Queen.

## **Trans-Specific Definitions**

Though often confused with sexual orientation, transgender/transsexual and intersex are considered gender identities. Trans people are a distinct identity within the larger LGBTQ community, with own unique experiences and struggles. They often face marginalization within both queer and heterosexual communities. This section offers some of the most basic terms to help you be an informed ally to trans people. These terms are not definitive, and their definitions are continually debated and re-developed within the community itself. It is always best to follow the person’s lead, and let them let you know how they want to be identified, if at all. It is also important to acknowledge the existing diversity of identities and experiences within the trans community.

### **Sex**

Physical characteristics of Female or Male that are biologically and genetically determined; usually refers to one’s sexual organs and genitals.

### **Gender**

Gender is socially constructed and is based on societal expectations of how a person should behave based on their sex.

### **Gender Identity**

One’s internal sense of being male, female, neither or neutral, or both (bi-gender). Some view gender as binary – either male or female, while others view it as a spectrum ranging from full femininity to full masculinity, with other possible identities in between. One’s gender is demonstrated to others through such external indicators as appearance, clothing and behaviour. (see gender presentation)

### **Gender Presentation / Gender Expression**

Refers to the external appearance, dress, mannerism and behaviour through which each individual present their internal gender, or the gender they want to appear as. Gender

presentation may change, for example, a Drag King may present as a male during his performance, but as a female in her daily life.

### **Cross-dressing**

The practice of dressing in clothes traditionally assigned to the opposite gender; this term is also used for heterosexual folks who like to dress up in opposite- sex clothing.

### **Genderqueer**

A gender identity. Those who identify as genderqueer reject the notion that gender is binary and that there are only two genders in the world (either man or woman); genderqueer folks may identify with both male and female genders, or neither, or anywhere on gender identity continuum.

### **Transsexual**

An individual whose gender identity (their internal feeling of being male or female) is not in-line with their physical body and sexual organs. Most transsexuals have the desire to change their bodies through a sex- reassignment surgery and/or hormones so that their sex is congruent with their internal gender identity, while some only go through certain parts of the transition or none at all, due to the high costs of these procedures.

### **Trans People / Trans Community**

An umbrella term used by the community that includes all the transgender identities and can include transsexual and intersect.

### **FTM / Female-to-Male Transsexual man Trans Man**

Female to male transition; female-to-male transsexual.

### **MTF / Male-to-Female Transsexual woman Trans Woman**

Male to female transition; male-to-female transsexual.

### **Transgender / Trans Person**

Person whose gender identity or gender expression differs from conventional or socially-imposed expectations of what is male or female. "Trans" is also used as an umbrella term to describe the spectrum of individuals whose gender identity and expression, to varying degrees, does not correspond with their physical sex characteristics, or does not conform to society's assigned gender roles and expectations. The views on trans-related terminology continue to evolve and debated within the LGBTQ community.

### **Intersex**

Someone who physically falls between what is defined as male or female based on gender, hormones, internal organs and chromosomal differences. For some this is seen as a medical condition and for others it is as an identity. Person born with partial or full sexual characteristics of male and female. About 4% of children in North America are born interseext. In most cases birth doctors decide on the sex of the newborn through a "corrective" surgery, sometimes without the parents' knowledge or consent, thinking it would coincide with the "chosen" gender. For many intersex persons it is not physically visible and they are unaware of this until later in life, when they begin to question their gender identity.

### **Transphobia**

The irrational fear or hatred of, aversion to, and discrimination against trans people. There is a strong connection between sexism, homophobia and transphobia based on patriarchal privilege and rigid understanding of gender roles.

### **Transition**

The period or process through which transsexual people begin to change their physical appearance and bodies to match their internal gender identity; may involve a change in physical appearance (hairstyle, clothing), behaviour (mannerism), and identification (name, pronoun); may also be accompanied by the use of hormones and sex reassignment surgery.

### **Sex Reassignment Surgery (SRS)**

A series of surgical procedures through which trans people can alter their genitals and bodies to match their internal gender. The high cost of these procedures makes them inaccessible to most trans people, particularly those experiencing poverty, homelessness and racial discrimination.

## Appendix B: LGBTQ Resources

### Brantford/Brant County:

#### Health Care

##### **Grand River Community Health Centre**

##### **Counselling/Medical services (free)**

347 Colborne Brantford, ON N3S 3N2

519- 754-0777

grandriverchc.ca/

##### **The Brantford Community Healthcare System: Sexual Assault/Domestic Violence Care Team**

519-751-5544 ext 4449

#### Youth Groups

##### **Youth for P.E.A.C.E (LGBT Youth Group)**

Meets the last Tuesday of each month

109 George St.

Paula

519-753-8681 ext. 417

##### **Laurier Rainbow Alliance**

<https://www.facebook.com/LaurierBrantford>

RainbowAlliance

Twitter:@WLUBrantfordRA

##### **Drop In Youth Café (Brantford Public Library)**

Meets every Wednesday from 6:30pm -

8:30pm

173 Colborne St.

519-756-2220

Email: info@brantford.library.on.ca

#### Counselling

##### **Grand River Community Health Centre**

##### **Counselling/Medical services (free)**

347 Colborne Brantford, ON N3S 3N2

519- 754-0777

grandriverchc.ca/

##### **Sexual Assault Centre of Brant (free)**

24 hr crisis and support line:

519-751-3471

Business line: 519-751-1164

Email: sexualassaultcentre@sacbrant.ca

##### **St. Leonard's Community Services Addiction and Mental Health Programs (free)**

225 Fairview Drive, Brantford, ON

Ph:519-754-0253 ext.126

Fax: 519-754-0264

[www.st-leonards.com](http://www.st-leonards.com)

#### Peer Support Groups

### **LGBTQ Coffee and Social**

Meets the first and third Tuesday of each month.

A night for community members and allies to socialize, watch movies, play cards etc.

6-8pm. 19+

363 Colborne St.

Email: cmecija@grchc.ca

### **Gender Journeys Brantford**

**Sean/Aiyanna**

519-754-0777 ext. 511

Twitter: @GenderJourneysB

Email: genderjourneysbrantford@gmail.com

### **Community Groups**

#### **Brantford Pride**

Tara Buchanan

[www.brantfordpride.ca](http://www.brantfordpride.ca)

<https://www.facebook.com/BtfdPride>

<https://twitter.com/BrantfordPride>

Email: brantfordpride@gmail.com

#### **The Bridge**

Christine Wildman

[www.facebook.com/TheBridgeBrantford](http://www.facebook.com/TheBridgeBrantford)

Twitter: @TheBridgeBrant1

Email: [thebridgebrant@gmail.com](mailto:thebridgebrant@gmail.com)

### **HIV/AIDS Resources**

#### **The Aids Network**

Serving Hamilton, Haldimand, Norfolk and Brant

Jean-Pierre Mukuna

226-388-3559

Email: [jpmukuna@aidsnetwork.ca](mailto:jpmukuna@aidsnetwork.ca)

#### **Safe Spaces Program**

Casey Mecija

Safe Spaces Coordinator

519-754-0777 ext. 253

Email: cmecija@grchc.ca

### **Online resources**

#### **The Bridge**

[www.thebridgebrant.com](http://www.thebridgebrant.com)

#### **Brantford Pride**

[www.brantfordpride.ca](http://www.brantfordpride.ca)

#### **Rainbow Health Ontario**

[www.rainbowhealthontario.ca](http://www.rainbowhealthontario.ca)

#### **EGALE: Equality For Gays and Lesbians Everywhere:**

<http://egale.ca/>

Trans PULSE Project

[www.transpulseproject.ca](http://www.transpulseproject.ca)

#### **Senior Pride Network**

[www.seniorpridenetwork.com](http://www.seniorpridenetwork.com)

#### **PFLAG: Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays**

[www.pflagcanada.ca/](http://www.pflagcanada.ca/)

### **Health Care Outside of Brantford/Brant County:**

#### **Carys Massarella, M.D**

Family Medicine

Quest Community Health Centre

145 Queenston St.

St Catherines, ON

905-668-2558

[www.questchc.ca](http://www.questchc.ca)

\*Hormone therapy, trans care\*

#### **Dr. Felicia Otchet**

Psychologist (fee)

370 South Street

London, ON

519-630-1863

[www.drotchet.com/](http://www.drotchet.com/)

Email: [fotchet@drotchet.com](mailto:fotchet@drotchet.com)

#### **Cathy Risdon, M.D.**

Family Medicine

McMaster Family Practice

690 Main St. West

Hamilton, ON

905-521-5016

**Albina Veltman, M.D.**

Psychiatry (free)  
St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton  
Centre of Mountain Health Services  
100 West 5th St., Box 585  
Hamilton, ON  
905-522-1155 x36657  
\*Assessments for 'Gender Identity Disorder,' Psychiatric support. \*

**Dave Vervoort, M,Sc.**

Psychotherapy (fee sliding scale)  
P.O. Box 25064  
370 Stone Road  
Guelph, ON  
519-821-5163  
www.RainbowTherapist.com

**Michael Lee-Poy, M.D.**

Family Medicine  
Centre for family medicine  
10-B Victoria Street South  
Kitchener, ON  
519-821-5163  
\*Hormone therapy, trans care\*

**Links to other communities**

**Sherbourne Health Centre**

333 Sherbourne St  
Toronto, ON  
www.sherbourne.on.ca/

**519 Church Street Community Centre**

Toronto, ON  
416-392-0519  
www.the519.org/

**The LGBTQ Community Wellness Centre of Hamilton (The Well)**

27 King William St. (Lower level)  
Hamilton, ON  
www.thewellhamilton.ca  
Email: info@thewellhamilton.ca

**Positive Space Network of Halton**

Confidential telephone line: 905-634-2347  
ext 408 \*  
(Cell) 905-407-4986  
Email: marcusl@rockonline.ca

## LGBTQ Health Issues and Disparities (Rainbow Health Ontario).

### Lack of sensitivity and knowledge

Stressful conditions contribute to depression, anxiety, suicidality, substance use, smoking

Lack of services for gender transition

Lack of information on sexual health

Some cancers: anal, lung, breast, ovarian

Lack of services for pregnancy and parenting

Cardio-vascular, weight, body image

### Mental and Emotional Health

Depression/Anxiety- at least 1.5 times higher than for heterosexuals. Rates relate directly to stress and the expectation and experience of discrimination. (Dean 2000/Meyer 2003)

Suicide/Self harm-more – LGBT 2.5 times more likely to experience suicidal ideation, make suicide attempts and engage in self-harm. (Bagley 1997, MIND 2003)

Among trans Ontarians, 43% had attempted suicide at some point in their lives. (Trans PULSE 2010)

### **Violence and Trauma**

Physical violence, verbal assault and threat: “Compared with heterosexuals, the odds of being victimized were 2 times greater for gay and lesbians and 4.5 times greater higher for bisexuals.” Stats Canada 2006

Trans people are at greatest risk for violence (Namaste 1997, Gapka 2003)

Partner abuse is over twice as common as in straight relationships, is under-reported, and the dynamics often do not fit the conventional model of relationship abuse (Stats Canada, 2006)

### **Alcohol, Tobacco and Drugs**

LGBT people more likely to use alcohol, marijuana, cocaine and other club drugs (GLMA 2001)

Bisexuals more likely to report problem alcohol use (Dobinson, 2003)

Tobacco Use - Toronto Survey of 3,000 LGBT adults:

- Lesbian, gay, bi and trans = 36%
- Heterosexual and non-trans = 15% (comparative rate)

LGBT people also smoke for longer over the life span (Clarke 2007)

LGBT people who are more out report lower rates of substance use/abuse

### **Health Care for Trans People is Very Hard to Find**

Lack of welcoming places for general and transition related health care (hormone therapy, monitoring, support)

Can be provided in primary health care teams but providers need training (Sherbourne Health Centre, 2009)

Sex reassignment surgery (SRS) was de-listed from OHIP funding from 1998 – 2008. Now, there is a large backlog of trans people wanting surgery. (MOHLTC – 2009)

Specialized counselling, groups and places to get information are lacking. (RHO report to MOH, 2010)

### Top 10 Health Issues for LGBTQ Youth

- Social Isolation
- Bullying and Victimization
- Physical and Sexual Abuse
- Homelessness
- Depression and Anxiety
- Risk of Suicide
- Sexual Risk Taking
- Smoking
- Drug and Alcohol Addiction
- Access to hormone blockers or hormones and ID

