

## **All-Gender Washroom Initiative**

### **Helpful Terms and Concepts**

**All-Gender** - Using “all-gender” signifies and acknowledges that multiple gender identities and expressions exist, and that anyone, regardless of gender identity and/or gender expression is included or permitted to be in this space.

**Cisgender** - a person whose gender identity and biological sex assigned at birth align (e.g., they identify as a man and were assigned male at birth). The word cisgender can also be shortened to “cis”<sup>1</sup>.

**Gender/Sex Binary** - The view that there are only two totally distinct, opposite, and static genders and sexes (masculine/feminine, male/female) to identify with and to express. While many societies view gender and/or sex through this lens and consider this binary system to be universal, a number of societies recognize more than two genders and/or sexes. Across all societies there are also many people who experience gender and/or sex fluidity, identifying with different genders and/or sexes at different times<sup>2</sup>.

**Gender Attribution/Gender Perception** - The process of making assumptions about another person’s gender, based on factors such as choice of dress, voice modulation, body shape, etc. A related term is ‘reading,’ which refers to the process where factors such as someone’s body shape, voice, gender expression, etc. are used to make assumptions about that someone’s gender identity, sex assigned at birth, or sexual orientation. Making assumptions is a major cause of exclusion and disrespect towards others<sup>3</sup>.

**Gender expression** - how a person publicly presents their gender. This can include behaviour and outward appearance such as dress, hair, makeup, body language and voice. A person’s chosen name and pronoun are also common ways of expressing gender<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> “Comprehensive\* List of LGBTQ+ Vocabulary Definitions”. (2017). It’s Pronounced Metrosexual. Retrieved from: <http://itspronouncedmetrosexual.com/2013/01/a-comprehensive-list-of-lgbtq-term-definitions/#sthash.JJEn05TA.dpbs>

<sup>2</sup> “Terminology” (2017). Positive Space Campaign. University British of Columbia. Retrieved from: <http://positivespace.ubc.ca/terminology/>

<sup>3</sup> “Queer Terminology”. (2013). Qmunity: BC’s Queer Resource Centre. Retrieved from: [http://qmunity.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Queer\\_Terminology\\_Web\\_Version\\_\\_Sept\\_2013\\_\\_Cover\\_and\\_pages\\_.pdf](http://qmunity.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Queer_Terminology_Web_Version__Sept_2013__Cover_and_pages_.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> “Policy on preventing discrimination because of gender identity or gender expression”. (2014). Ontario Human Rights Commission. Retrieved from: <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/policy-preventing-discrimination-because-gender-identity-and-gender-expression>

**Gender identity** - each person's internal and individual experience of gender. It is their sense of being a woman, a man, both, neither, or anywhere along the gender spectrum. A person's gender identity may be the same as or different from their birth-assigned sex. Gender identity is fundamentally different from a person's sexual orientation<sup>5</sup>. A person's gender identity is not necessarily visible to other people.

**Genderfluid & gender non-conforming** - Gender fluidity conveys a wider, more flexible range of gender expression, with interests and behaviors that may change, even from day to day. In other words, they may feel they are a woman some days and a man on others, or a combination, or possibly feel that neither term describes them accurately. Gender non-conforming is a term for individuals whose gender expression is different from societal expectations related to gender<sup>6</sup>.

**Inclusive Washroom Signage** - Indicates that a washroom is welcoming and accessible to a person of any gender identity or gender expression. All-gender washrooms are not always readily available, so having inclusive signage beside binary washrooms can help decrease the risk of physical or verbal harassment or assault occurring in these spaces. These signs also help decrease fear and anxiety for trans and non-binary people, and allow them to feel comfortable in the washroom of their choice. Inclusive signage encourages showing respect for those with a different gender identity or expression, and communicates that discrimination towards trans and non-binary people is not acceptable.

**Intersex** - a term used for people who are born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy and/or chromosome pattern that does not seem to fit typical definitions of male or female. 'Intersex' has replaced the term 'hermaphrodite', which is widely considered to be outdated, inaccurate, and offensive. An intersex individual may or may not identify as part of the trans community, however the terms 'intersex', 'transsexual', and 'trans' are distinct and should not be used interchangeably<sup>7</sup>.

**LGBTQQIA+** - Acronym that stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans (transgender, transsexual, trans-identified), two-spirit, queer, questioning, intersex and asexual. The plus sign (+) is added to indicate respect for identities that are not included in or represented by this acronym.

**Pronouns** - a pronoun is a part of speech that takes the place of other nouns. Some pronouns are: I, we, he, she, they, and their. Gendered pronouns are those that indicate gender, such as: he, she, him, her, hers, his, himself and herself. Gender-neutral pronouns

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<sup>5</sup> "Policy on preventing discrimination because of gender identity or gender expression". (2014). Ontario Human Rights Commission. Retrieved from: <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/policy-preventing-discrimination-because-gender-identity-and-gender-expression>

<sup>6</sup> "Terminology" (2017). Positive Space Campaign. University British of Columbia. Retrieved from: <http://positivespace.ubc.ca/terminology/>

<sup>7</sup> "Terminology" (2017). Positive Space Campaign. University British of Columbia. Retrieved from: <http://positivespace.ubc.ca/terminology/>

are, naturally, pronouns that do not indicate gender, including but not limited to: they, their, them, ze, sie, and hir<sup>8</sup>. Personal names and pronouns are two fundamental ways we express gender and how others perceive our gender. Traditional gender pronouns (she/her, he/him) do not fit everyone's gender identity. The words people use to describe themselves and others are very important. The right terms can affirm identities and challenge discriminatory attitudes. The wrong ones can disempower, demean and reinforce exclusion<sup>9</sup>.

**Sexual Orientation** - refers to a person's identity that is based on who they are sexually attracted to. Some examples of sexual orientations are: gay, lesbian, bisexual, pansexual, or queer. Sexual orientation is different from gender identity.

**Trans, Transgender or Trans-Identified** - a term for people whose gender identity, expression, or behavior is different from those typically associated with their assigned sex at birth. 'Transgender' is indicative of a gender identification that could be between, outside of, or many identifications – identification with one term is not static. Transgender is a broad term and "Trans" is shorthand for "transgender." Transgender is correctly used as an adjective, not a noun, thus "transgender people" is appropriate but "transgenders" or "transgendered people" is often viewed as disrespectful<sup>10</sup>.

**Two Spirit** - a contemporary term that refers to the historical and current indigenous people whose individuals spirits were a blend of male and female spirits. This term has been reclaimed by some in indigenous LGBT communities in order to honor their heritage and provide an alternative to the Western labels of gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender. Traditionally within some indigenous communities, two-spirit peoples were considered to be visionaries and healers who fulfilled roles assigned to both sexes and/or other roles reserved only for those who attained the highly-respected status of two-spirit<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> "Gender-neutral pronouns". (2016).Sexuality and Gender Activism Club. Carleton College Retrieved from: <https://apps.carleton.edu/student/orgs/saga/pronouns/>

<sup>9</sup> "Questions and answers about gender identity and pronouns". (2014). Ontario Human Rights Commission. Retrieved from: <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/questions-and-answers-about-gender-identity-and-pronouns>

<sup>10</sup> "Terminology" (2017). Positive Space Campaign. University British of Columbia. Retrieved from: <http://positivespace.ubc.ca/terminology/>

<sup>11</sup> "Terminology" (2017). Positive Space Campaign. University British of Columbia. Retrieved from: <http://positivespace.ubc.ca/terminology/>