

Workplace best practices

SEXUAL AND GENDER DIVERSITY



Preface

This guide was developed by the Fondation Émergence in partnership with Desjardins Insurance to give you a better understanding of the trans experience, the vocabulary you need to know to talk to your employees, and the tools you need to create a more inclusive workplace. It also describes some of the benefits of creating a work environment that is inclusive of sexual and gender minorities.

The Fondation Émergence is a non-profit organization whose mission is to fight against homophobia and transphobia. They work to educate, inform and raise public awareness about the realities of LGBTQ+ people. The foundation has achieved a number of milestones in the battle for LGBTQ+ rights, including the creation of the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia (2003). They also developed the Aging Gayfully program, which aims to raise awareness and foster welcoming environments for LGBTQ+ seniors.

Desjardins Insurance has chosen the foundation to develop this guide, as they have a proven track record of producing quality content to help organizations integrate LGBTQ+ employees into the workplace.

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How to talk about diversity

Using the right words to talk about gender and sexual diversity is a great way to show LGBTQ+ people that you are an ally.



Sex

Assigned at birth

- Female
- Male

Sexual orientation

Sexual attraction

0% 100%

Romantic attraction

0% 100%

Gender identity

Woman

0% 100%

Man

0% 100%

Gender expression

Feminine

0% 100%

Masculine

0% 100%

Four fundamental concepts

1. Sex

SEX ASSIGNED AT BIRTH:

Label (female or male) given to a person at birth based on their external reproductive organs.

BIOLOGICAL SEX:

Defined by several factors, including external reproductive organs but also the internal reproductive system, sex chromosomes, and hormones produced and absorbed by the body. If any of these characteristics do not fit the medical norms for female or male bodies, a person is considered to be intersex.

2. Gender identity













Gender identity refers to how one defines their gender (man, woman, nonbinary, Two Spirit, etc.). This intimate, deep, personal understanding of oneself develops between the ages of 3 and 5 and can evolve throughout a person's life. When someone's gender identity matches their sex assigned at birth, they are considered to be "cis" or "cisgender." When their gender identity does not match their sex assigned at birth, they are considered to be "trans" or "transgender" (definitions for the words "trans" and "nonbinary" can be found later on in the guide).

3. Gender expression

Gender expression refers to how a person presents or expresses their gender, in particular through their appearance (hair, clothing, makeup, etc.). People may have a more feminine, a more masculine, or an androgynous (both masculine and feminine) gender expression. What is considered "feminine" or "masculine" varies in time and across cultures. Finally, gender expression is not necessarily associated with gender identity; for instance, a woman can have short hair and a man can wear pink.

4. Sexual orientation

Sexual orientation refers to the attraction one feels for members of one or more genders, or no genders at all. Although it contains the word "sexual," the term "sexual orientation" often encompasses various types of attraction, including both romantic attraction (romantic feelings) and sexual attraction (physical attraction). Some examples of sexual orientation include heterosexuality (attraction to members of a different gender), homosexuality (attraction to members of the same gender), bisexuality (attraction to two genders, usually men and women), pansexuality (attraction regardless of gender),¹ asexuality (little or no sexual attraction to anyone) and aromanticism (little or no romantic attraction to anyone).

	Cis man		Trans man		Cis woman		Trans woman	
Gender identity								
Sex	Female 	Male 	Female 	Male 	Female 	Male 	Female 	Male 

1. There is no consensus on the difference between bisexuality and pansexuality. Some pansexual people also describe themselves using the word "bi" or "bisexual," knowing that not everyone is familiar with the concept of pansexuality. Some people believe that pansexuality, unlike bisexuality, includes an attraction to nonbinary people.

Other key concepts to help you understand sexual and gender diversity:

This is not an exhaustive list, but understanding the concepts outlined below will give you a solid foundation to help you participate in discussions about gender and sexual diversity.

Gender binary/binarism

This paradigm splits humans into two opposing, mutually exclusive genders: men and women. This system does not take into account the diversity of human beings and excludes intersex, trans, nonbinary and gender-fluid people, as well as anyone who doesn't conform to gender norms. Gender diversity best practices include viewing gender as a spectrum that includes a wide range of identities rather than two mutually exclusive categories.

Did you know?

Categorizing humans into two genders is not universal! Many cultures recognize a third gender, such as hijras in Southern Asia, Two Spirit people in North America, muxes in Mexico and bakla in the Philippines. Some cultures even recognize more than three genders, such as the Bugis people of Polynesia, who have words for five different genders.

Coming out

Coming out is the process of sharing one's sexual orientation or gender identity with certain people.

In most cases, it is a gradual process, starting with an intimate circle (family, friends, colleagues). When a person expresses their identity freely (having shared it with most of the people around them), they are often said to be "out." Because being straight and cisgender is considered the "default setting" in our society, throughout their lifetime, and with every new person they meet, LGBTQ+ people must decide whether or not to share their identity. This decision is theirs to make, and it is important to never reveal their sexual orientation or gender identity ("out" them) without their consent.

Gender and sexual diversity

This term refers to all sexual orientations and the whole range of gender expressions and identities. It includes people who are homosexual, bisexual and trans, and members of other communities such as those who are queer, intersex, asexual, Two Spirit, etc. (LGBTQ+)

Gender dysphoria/euphoria

Feeling of deep distress experienced by trans people because their gender identity conflicts with the sex they were assigned at birth. This feeling can be exacerbated by the appearance of certain body parts (the chest, for instance) or certain interactions (for example, if someone refers to them using the wrong name or pronoun). However, dysphoria is not experienced by every trans person. At the opposite of gender dysphoria, trans people may also feel gender euphoria, a feeling of intense happiness, which can happen when they are able to express their gender openly and their gender identity is validated by others.

Homophobia

Negative attitudes towards homosexuality that can lead, directly or indirectly, to discrimination against homosexual or bisexual people or those perceived as such. There are also variants of homophobia such as lesbophobia, when this aversion is more specifically directed towards lesbians, or biphobia, when it concerns bisexuals.

Invalidating someone's identity

Calling into question or failing to respect someone's sexual orientation or gender identity, such as by denying the existence of bisexual, nonbinary or asexual people or by misgendering a trans person.

Intersectionality

LGBTQ+ people, like everyone else, are complex individuals with multiple identities, all of which influence how they experience the world. Intersectionality emphasizes the importance of recognizing the different identities that make up each individual (e.g., gender, sexual orientation, skin colour, disability, social class, religion, level of instruction) and the ways they interact, to give a better understanding of their situation and experiences. An intersectional approach helps make sure people aren't excluded. It also means they won't be forced to choose between their multiple identities (LGBTQ+ people can also be disabled, parents, racialized, etc.)

Misgendering

Using a name, pronoun (e.g., he or she) or any other gendered word that does not reflect an individual's gender identity, whether intentionally or not. For example by using masculine pronouns to refer to a trans woman.

Deadname

A name given to a trans or nonbinary person at birth that they no longer use. This information is sensitive and confidential, and should never be shared without the person's consent.

Deadnaming someone (using their old name) can be seen as a sign of disrespect towards their identity, which is why it is essential to do your best to avoid deadnaming or misgendering people. If you do use the wrong name or pronoun, briefly apologize (without making a fuss, as you would if you got someone's name wrong), correct your mistake and do your best not to repeat it. Although some mistakes can be understood at first, misgendering or deadnaming someone intentionally and/or repeatedly can be considered harassment.

Gender norms or stereotypes

The roles, behaviours, activities and characteristics society considers to be normal or appropriate for a given gender. People who have physical characteristics or behave in ways that do not correspond to gender norms can be stigmatized, (e.g., a man who stays at home to take care of his children, a woman with visible body hair).

Pronouns

Words used to refer to a person, for example: he, she or they (neutral pronoun). These pronouns usually reflect the person's gender identity (woman = she/her, man = he/him, nonbinary person = they/them). Some nonbinary people, however, may prefer "he," "she" or other pronouns like "ze," "xe" or "ey." People may choose to indicate their pronouns in their email signature, in their social media profiles or after their name when introducing themselves. This ensures others know which pronouns to use when referring to them, as well as encouraging those around them to specify their own pronouns.

Gender affirmation (transition)

A range of social (informing people in their life, using a new name, etc.), medical (hormone treatments, surgeries or other procedures) and legal (updating name and/or gender on official identity documents) changes designed to affirm an individual's gender when it conflicts with the sex they were assigned at birth. The process is different for everyone and depends on individual choice and institutional and social constraints.

Did you know?

The choices a trans person makes about their transition in no way affect "how trans they are" and they do not make their gender identity any more, or less, valid. A trans woman is a woman, regardless of how she dresses and whether or not she has changed her name, taken hormones or undergone surgery. The same goes for trans men and nonbinary people

Transphobia

Negative attitudes that can lead, directly or indirectly, to rejection or discrimination against trans and nonbinary people or anyone who doesn't conform to gender norms or conventional representations of sex/gender.

Glossary

Here are a few terms related to gender identity. A more extensive glossary is available at: en.fondationemergence.org/lexique

Two Spirit

The word "Two Spirit" is an English umbrella term, created to reflect and restore Indigenous traditions that were forcefully suppressed by colonization. It is used to refer to a North American Indigenous person who embodies both a female and a male spirit. This term can refer to gender identity, gender expression and/or sexual orientation, and can also have a social or spiritual dimension.

The Two Spirit identity is part of a relationship to sexual and gender diversity that existed in Indigenous cultures long before colonization and continues to this day. Other more specific terms may exist in different Indigenous languages. The Two Spirit community is represented by the "2S" in the longer version of the acronym 2SLGBTQ+. The word "Two Spirit" can be used instead of or in addition to any of the LGBTQ+ identities (e.g., a person might say they are Two Spirit and lesbian).

Gender fluid

A person whose gender identity fluctuates between different gender identities (e.g., man, woman, agender).

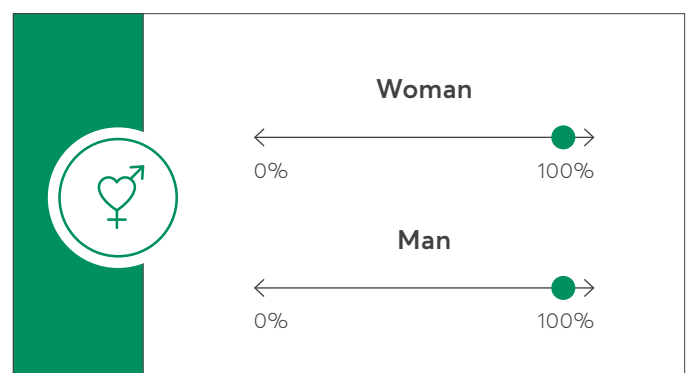
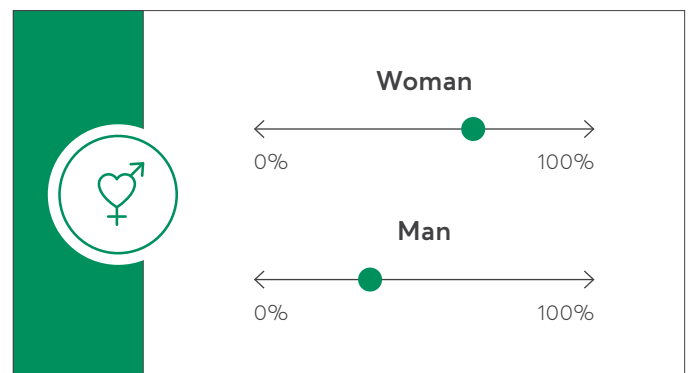
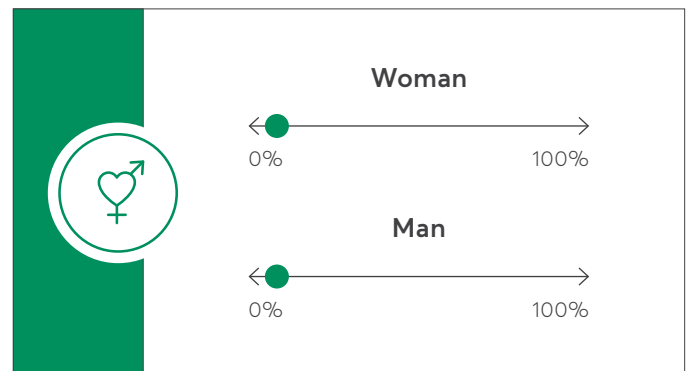
Note:

The definitions in this glossary are for information purposes only and are not exhaustive. Vocabulary related to gender and sexual diversity is constantly evolving. The person in question is always the ultimate authority on which words define them best, so it is important to listen to them.

Nonbinary

A person whose gender identity is neither exclusively man nor exclusively woman. This term refers to various identities that can be defined as a mix of man and woman, man and woman at the same time (bigender) or neither man nor woman (agender).

The term "nonbinary" refers to a wide range of identities. Here are some examples:



Queer

A word originally used as a derogatory term for LGBTQ+ people before being reclaimed in the 1990s. Today, this term is mostly used as a word of empowerment by people who embrace a gender identity, gender expression or sexual orientation that doesn't fit social norms. This term can also have a political connotation. This word must be used with care, as some people still consider it to be offensive, especially older people who heard it used as an insult in the past. Do not use this word to refer to anyone unless you know they use it to describe themselves.

Questioning

Someone who is questioning their sexual orientation or gender identity. This can happen at any age.

Trans

A generic term used to refer to anyone whose gender identity does not match the sex they were assigned at birth. "Trans" is an adjective: **a trans woman is a woman** who was assigned male at birth, **a trans man is a man** who was assigned female at birth. Nonbinary people are usually included under the term "trans" because their gender identity (nonbinary) does not correspond to their sex assigned at birth (female or male).

The terms "trans," "transsexual," "transvestite" and "drag queen" all describe different realities!

The term "trans" includes the terms "transgender" and "transsexual." In the past, the term "transsexual" was used to refer to people who had undergone "sexual reassignment" surgery (and were therefore allowed to change their gender on their identity documents). "Transgender," on the other hand, referred to those who had not undergone or did not wish to undergo this surgery.

Nowadays, however, a trans person can change the gender on their identity documents without undergoing surgery. Moreover, "transsexual" is generally considered to be an obsolete, even derogatory term, because it has both medical and sexualized connotations and puts the emphasis on gender-affirming surgeries that not all trans people want or have access to.

A trans person should not be confused with a transvestite (also called crossdresser) or a drag queen. The terms "transvestite" and "drag queen" refer to something an individual does (dressing up as a gender other than their own). The term "trans," however, refers to who they are (their gender identity does not match the sex that was assigned to them at birth), regardless of how they dress.



Talking about diversity respectfully

DON'T

Don't say that someone has "admitted" to being LGBTQ+

Saying someone has "admitted" they are LGBTQ+ implies that it is a crime or something to be ashamed of. Although homosexuality is still illegal in many countries, it was decriminalized in Canada in 1969. Try using neutral terms like "shared" or "came out," or simply state that the person said they were gay, lesbian, bisexual, trans or any other LGBTQ+ identity.

Don't say: "You don't look gay/trans!"

Complimenting someone on the fact that their homosexuality or trans identity "doesn't show" can give the impression that you subscribe to stereotypes about these identities or think that "looking gay" or "looking trans" is a bad thing.

Don't say: "You're really pretty for a trans woman!"

This may seem like a compliment, but it isn't. It implies that trans women are not usually pretty and that this person is an exception to the rule. It can also imply that this woman would not be considered pretty if she were to be compared to cisgender women.

Don't describe a trans man as a "woman who wants to become a man" or a trans woman as a "man who dresses up like a woman"

"Trans" is an adjective and it is important to understand that a trans man is a man, and not a woman. In no way are trans men "women who dress up as men" or "women who want to become men." Similarly, describing a trans woman as a "man who dresses up as a woman" invalidates and disrespects her gender identity. You can just say that she is a trans woman, a woman who was assigned male at birth, or even better, just "a woman."

DO

Do talk about a trans person using the first name and pronouns they use

When talking about a trans person, use the name and pronouns they use now, even if the person hasn't legally changed their name and even if what you're talking about took place before the person transitioned (unless otherwise specified). Using a person's deadname and old pronouns is disrespectful to their identity and risks exposing them as a trans person to other people.

Do speak openly and without taboos about sexual and gender diversity

You can show your openness to sexual and gender diversity by addressing these topics in a positive way. For example, you can talk about your loved ones who are LGBTQ+, show your support for meaningful initiatives like the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia (May 17), or Pride Week, or even talk about LGBTQ+ people and characters that you value. This will send the message that you are a person who accepts these realities (which is not yet the case for everyone). Such an attitude also helps to normalize these topics of conversation and counter the taboos that sometimes surround them.

Workplace inclusion

LGBTQ+ people face multiple obstacles to career advancement and workplace integration, even today. Here are some frequent issues and how to address them.



Discrimination

LGBTQ+ people can face discrimination at any point throughout their career—both during the job application process, and after being hired. LGBTQ+ people are often offered fewer promotions or other opportunities for career advancement.

Statistics

- 28% of trans and nonbinary individuals are unable to provide professional references without revealing their trans identity because their name and gender do not match what is on their legal identity documents²
- 30% of trans women have been turned down for employment opportunities in the last 5 years because of their gender identity³
- 32% of people who declared being hesitant to talk about their identity in the workplace said it was out of fear that it might prevent them from advancing in their career⁴

Best practices

To encourage more diversity within your company, try the following actions:

1. Offer training for your team to help recognize and overcome unconscious biases (especially managers and those involved in the hiring process)
2. Make a list of qualifications and qualities that you are looking for beforehand and base your decisions solely on these criteria when hiring and promoting employees
3. Mention that diversity and inclusion are important to your company in your job descriptions and interviews. In interviews or in promotional content about your company, list some of the initiatives promoting diversity and inclusion (e.g., Employee Resource Group for LGBTQ+ employees, employee training)
4. Share your job postings on a professional LGBTQ+ networking platform such as QueerTech
5. Add fields in your forms for names and pronouns for job applicants

Microaggressions

Microaggressions are actions, behaviours or words that are rooted in prejudice that may seem harmless, but can actually result in harm, especially when experienced repeatedly. Here are a few examples of microaggressions towards LGBTQ+ individuals:

- Using words and expressions related to the LGBTQ+ community to indicate negative sentiment
- Making jokes about LGBTQ+ people
- Misgendering someone (for example, referring to someone as "Mr." instead of "Ms.," or "she" instead of "they")
- Staring at an employee who is with their same-sex partner
- Assuming that individuals fit the stereotypes associated with their identity, for example, asking a gay man for fashion advice or decorating tips

Microaggressions are particularly difficult to combat, as they are often unintentional and many people do not realize that what they are saying or doing is hurtful. This puts the victim in an uncomfortable position and they must choose between remaining silent (and therefore giving the impression that the behaviour is acceptable) or reacting (and thereby risk coming across as overly sensitive, emotional or dramatic).

It is also important to understand that the primary challenge of microaggressions is their sheer number: when considering the impact of a single "awkward" comment, we must keep in mind that the individual has probably been exposed to these types of microaggressions frequently throughout their life. For this reason, the true impact of microaggressions is not determined by a single incident, but rather by the accumulation of similar incidents over time. That is why some people refer to this phenomenon as "death by a thousand cuts."

The accumulation of these small slights undermines the confidence and well-being of LGBTQ+ people. Microaggressions can lead to anxiety and depression in LGBTQ+ individuals, as well as the feeling that they are not welcome. This, in turn, affects their motivation and professional development within the company.

Statistics

- 8 out of 10 gender-diverse or sexually diverse women have experienced microaggressions in their workplace⁵
- 53% of LGBTQ+ individuals say they hear jokes about gay and lesbian people in their workplace at least once in a while⁵

2. *S'outiller pour mieux intervenir avec les personnes trans, non-binaires ou en questionnement de leur identité de genre*, ATQ, 2021

3. LGBTQ2 Action Plan Survey – Quick Stats, Government of Canada, 2021

4. *Valeurs, besoins et réalités des personnes LGBT au Canada en 2017*, Fondation Jasmin Roy, 2017

5. *A workplace divided*, Human Rights Campaign, 2018

Best practices

- If you use the wrong name or gender:
 - Briefly apologize
 - Correct your mistake
 - Continue with what you were saying, and make an effort not to make the same mistake again
- When someone tells you they have been hurt by a behaviour or by certain words, the best thing to do is apologize and listen to what they are saying.
- If you witness homophobic or transphobic remarks, comments or jokes, speak up and express your discomfort.

Harassment

Harassment is defined as hurtful conduct that takes the form of repeated hostile or unwanted words, actions or behaviour, regardless of the intentions or motives behind them. This conduct undermines the victim's dignity or physical or psychological integrity, turning the workplace into a toxic environment for them. When harassment is related to protected grounds such as sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression, it is considered to be discriminatory harassment. When harassment includes unwanted attention or advances of a sexual nature, it is considered to be sexual harassment.

Statistics

- 44% of sexual-minority Canadians have been the target of unwanted sexual behaviour, such as sexual jokes and comments, in the workplace⁶
- 45% of trans women and 47% of trans men have been victims of workplace harassment in the last 5 years because of their gender identity⁷

Best practices

- Establish anti-harassment policies that clearly define what is considered to be harassment, and include examples of situations that could affect LGBTQ+ people, the impact of those actions and the steps that can be taken by victims or witnesses of harassment.
- Implement a process that allows employees to report harassment anonymously, without filing a complaint.
- Raise awareness among employees about different kinds of harassment, as well as the steps that can be taken by victims or witnesses of harassment.

Organizational best practices

Here are six organizational best practices you can implement in your workplace to create a more inclusive environment. To support these initiatives, we recommend that you establish a plan with deliverables and deadlines for each of the following:

- 1. Offer training sessions:** Raising awareness about the realities of the LGBTQ+ community is key to making your employees better allies. People who have received training are more likely to interact with LGBTQ+ colleagues and clients in a respectful way. Several organizations, such as Fondation Émergence and Egale Canada, offer this kind of training in different formats.
- 2. Review your policies:** We have already mentioned anti-harassment policies, and a sample washroom and locker room policy can be found in the *Gendered spaces: washrooms and locker rooms* section of this document. There are also other policies to consider, however. For example, dress code policies often use gendered language. To rectify this, the requirements could simply reflect what types of clothing are and are not allowed, thus making sure employees are permitted to wear clothing that reflects their gender identity and expression. If a uniform is mandatory, employees should be able to wear the items that match their gender identity. Asking an LGBTQ+ organization or your company's LGBTQ+ committee to review your policies will ensure that they do not exclude or discriminate against anyone, and that they use gender-inclusive writing.
- 3. Review your forms:** Some documents leave little room for diversity. However, there are numerous ways to make them more inclusive. For example: Replacing "sex" with "gender," or including several choices such as "man," "woman," "nonbinary" and "my gender identity is not listed." If it is for identification purposes, copy the gender markers available on identification documents. If it is for statistical or communication reasons, put several choices such as "man," "woman," "nonbinary" and "my gender identity is not listed."⁸
- 4. Create inclusive washrooms and locker rooms:** See the *Gendered spaces: washrooms and locker rooms* section of this document for more information.

6. Experiences of violent victimization and unwanted sexual behaviours among gay, lesbian, bisexual and other sexual minority people, and the transgender population, in Canada, Statistics Canada, 2018

7. LGBTQ2 Action Plan Survey – Quick Stats, Government of Canada, 2021

8. Updating forms and systems is a long and involved process. It is ongoing at Desjardins.

5. **Show your solidarity:** Show your support for LGBTQ+ causes by putting up stickers or posters in appropriate areas of the workplace. Fondation Émergence offers these types of materials for free. One excellent opportunity to show your support is the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia, which takes place on May 17 every year. These symbolic gestures are an excellent addition to concrete actions!
6. **Give employees the opportunity to put their pronouns in their email signatures.** Sharing one's pronouns shouldn't be the result of pressure or obligation, instead simply share information on why someone might want to do it, and how to do it.

Personal best practices

As an ally, you can make all the difference! Here are 6 best practices to apply in your everyday life.

1. **Be humble:** Try to learn more about LGBTQ+ realities while acknowledging that you cannot know everything there is to know. Listen to the individuals in question to learn how to refer to them and how they want to be treated.
2. **Respect confidentiality:** Be mindful not to reveal information about a person's gender identity or sexual orientation unless they have given you explicit permission to do so. For a trans person, this includes any documents or information that indicate either directly or indirectly that their sex assigned at birth does not match their gender identity. For example: their legal name (if it has not been changed), their deadname (the name the person used before) or pictures from before their transition.
3. **Be respectful of pronouns:** It is very important to respect and use the pronouns and name a person uses in all communications with and about them. Not only is disrespecting someone's pronouns hurtful, but it can also reveal to others that they are trans without their consent. Intentional or repeated refusal to respect someone's gender identity can be considered a form of discrimination or harassment.

4. **Ask for pronouns—or refrain from doing so:** It is not always necessary to know a person's pronouns, especially in the case of a short interaction or when you are speaking directly to the person. You can simply avoid gendered words and titles (e.g., Mr., Ms., Sir, Ma'am) and use neutral vocabulary. A good practice would be to simply refer to a person with gender-neutral terms and pronouns (by using singular "they" to refer to them and using terms like "customer" or "employee" instead of "man" or "woman").

If necessary, you can also ask a person for their pronouns in one of the following ways:

- by first indicating your own pronoun, for example, "Hello, my name is Olivia and I use 'she/her' pronouns. What about you?"
- by asking, "How would you like me to refer to you/to introduce you?" or simply, "What are your pronouns?"

5. **Indicate your pronouns:** Indicating your pronouns lets others know how you would like them to refer to you and signals that you will be respectful of other people's pronouns, thus encouraging them to share their own pronouns. It also prevents singling out trans people who would otherwise be the only ones to provide this information. You can add your pronouns in your email signature, on social media or in parentheses after your name on online meeting platforms. During professional and networking events, you can also add your pronouns to your name badge, under your name. Lastly, you can make a habit of giving your pronouns when introducing yourself during discussions and presentations, and encourage others to do the same. However, it is important to keep in mind that sharing one's pronouns should always be an option, not an obligation.
6. **Use inclusive communication practises:** The way you talk about and refer to LGBTQ+ people sends a strong message about your relationship to diversity and inclusion. For example, avoid words that could have a negative connotation (e.g., "transsexual"), remember that identities are adjectives (e.g., say "trans people" and not "the trans"). You can also use words that don't specify the gender of the person you are talking to or about, such as "Hello, everyone" instead of "Hi guys" whenever possible. You can also adopt a gender-inclusive writing style in your written communications (e.g., "they" instead of "he or she").

Facts about inclusion in the workplace

Diversity is a significant asset, and there are many benefits to creating a more inclusive workplace. Here are a few.



Increased productivity

A more diverse team, working in an inclusive environment, is:

- More innovative
- More involved
- More engaged (makes more of an effort)
- More likely to recommend their employer
- More loyal (stays with the same company for longer)
- Available more often (takes less sick leave and other time off work)
- And works better as a team

According to a study by Deloitte,⁹ when employees feel included and believe that their organization cares about diversity, their capacity for innovation increases by 83%, and their ability to work as a team increases by 42%. These employees are also twice as committed to the company (more likely to stay with the company, put in extra effort and recommend their employer to others). The same study showed that the more included an employee feels, the more likely they are to be present at work (thereby cutting costs associated with absenteeism) and to get a better performance evaluation.

Higher employee retention

One out of four LGBTQ+¹⁰ people have stayed in the same job primarily because their workplace was very inclusive.¹¹ On the other hand, 15% of LGBTQ+ people said they have quit a job before because the environment was not very inclusive, and another 21% thought about it.¹²

Improved customer reach

Seventy-eight percent of LGBTQ+ adults and their friends, families and relatives would be willing to switch from their current brand to a brand that is known for being "LGBTQ+-friendly".¹³ Considering that approximately 1/10 of the population is LGBTQ+,¹⁴ they, along with their loved ones, represent a substantial portion of the population!

Work teams that include at least one person from the same demographic group as their target audience are 158% more likely to understand their customer base.¹⁵

9. Waiter, is that inclusion in my soup? A new recipe to improve business performance, Deloitte & Victorian Equal Opportunity & Human Rights Commission, 2013

10. Different organizations use different acronyms. In this guide, we have used the acronym LGBTQ+. However, when citing studies or the work of other organizations, we use the acronym they choose to use themselves.

11. Workplace Divided, Human Rights Campaign, 2018

12. *Étude sur le harcèlement en milieu de travail*, Léger Marketing for Fondation Émergence, 2021

13. Community Marketing Inc., 2016

14. The average of self-declared LGBTQ+ people in Canada in surveys by Léger Marketing for Fondation Émergence in 2015, 2016, 2018 and 2021 is 12.75%

15. Sylvia Ann Hewlett, Melinda Marshall, Laura Sherbin, and Tara Gonsalves, Innovation, Diversity, and Market Growth (Center for Talent Innovation, 2013)

Gendered spaces: washrooms and locker rooms

Gendered spaces such as washrooms and locker rooms are very common, but they raise questions and sometimes concerns from both LGBTQ+ communities and non-LGBTQ+ people. In this section, we'll try to answer those questions and present an inclusive alternative: non-gendered spaces.



Gendered spaces VS non-gendered spaces

Gendered spaces are places that only people of a certain gender are allowed to use (e.g., men's washrooms, ladies' change rooms). Non-gendered spaces (also called gender-neutral, unisex or all-gender spaces) are places that everyone has the right to use.

What's the problem?

Going to the washroom or getting changed in a locker room are everyday activities that should be accessible and safe for everyone. Sadly, this is not always the case – despite the fact that equal access to washrooms and sanitary facilities without discrimination, harassment or abuse is protected under the *Canadian Human Rights Act*. Many people who are trans or nonbinary or who do not conform to our society's gender stereotypes have to deal with people staring, making rude comments or gestures, or even creating rules that ensure their exclusion.

In Ontario, 57% of trans people said that they avoid public washrooms out of fear for their safety¹⁶

A US study shows 68% of trans people have experienced verbal harassment when using a gendered washroom at least once in their life and 9% have reported experiencing physical violence (e.g., being forcibly removed from the washroom, being hit or physically intimidated).¹⁷

Organizational best practices

- Set up gender-neutral washrooms and locker rooms. Having at least one gender-inclusive bathroom per building is strongly recommended. For example, if you are planning to renovate your facilities, ask your architects to design gender-neutral washrooms and locker rooms. In addition to these solutions, it's a good idea to make your gendered washrooms trans inclusive.
- Indicate gender-neutral washrooms on your floor plans and signage using inclusive signage.

- At the entrances of gendered washrooms, indicate the location of the closest gender-neutral washrooms.
- Implement a washroom and locker room policy that expressly guarantees access to washrooms and locker rooms according to a person's gender identity and that bans any type of harassment (see sample policy on page 19).
- In all washrooms, indicate who has the right to use the space, and remind everyone that harassment and discrimination are not tolerated. You can simply use the policy provided and/or use posters such as those available on the [Egale Canada website](#).

Non-gendered spaces are beneficial to many people

In addition to helping LGBTQ+ people who do not conform with gender norms, gender-neutral washrooms and locker rooms can be useful for parents accompanied by young children and disabled people accompanied by an attendant of a different gender. Furthermore, single-stall facilities help all people who want to have more privacy.

What not to do in gendered spaces:

- Ask a person to prove their gender identity.
- Ask a trans person to use other facilities because of other people's discomfort or negative attitudes.
- Provide uninvited comments to people you perceive as trans (e.g., applauding their courage, telling them they are welcome here). Even if it is done with good intentions, it might make them feel awkward.

16. Transgender people in Ontario, Canada: Statistics to inform human rights policy, Trans PULSE Project, 2015

17. Gendered Restrooms and Minority Stress: The Public Regulation of Gender and its Impact on Transgender People's Lives, The Williams Institute, UCLA School of Law, 2013

What to do if...

Someone is worried about the fact that a trans person is using gendered washrooms/locker rooms (e.g., a trans woman in the women's washroom)

Ask if there was any inappropriate behaviour. If not, suggest that the person who feels uncomfortable use other washrooms/locker rooms in an understanding way.

You can also explain to them that the washrooms/locker rooms are shared spaces that are available for use by anyone of the corresponding gender identity (you can refer to your policy and/or signage mentioned in the organizational best practices). **It's up to the person not wanting to share the space to leave, not the trans person.**

Someone asks me where the washrooms are, but I don't want to assume their gender

If the person did not specify which washrooms they were looking for, it's best to give them as much information as possible. Washrooms are often located in the same general area, but if that is not the case, list them out for the person.

Addressing a myth:

"Having gender-neutral washrooms and allowing trans women to use women's washrooms will lead to more assaults."

- A study carried out in the U.S. in 2018¹⁸ showed that cities where trans people were not allowed to use restrooms that correspond to their gender identity did not have fewer restroom assaults than cities that allowed trans people to use restrooms that correspond to their gender identity.
- Trans people are frequently attacked in washrooms, and forcing them to use washrooms that do not correspond to their gender identity only exposes them to more violence.
- Washrooms have been separated by gender for a long time, but that does not seem to prevent attacks. Unfortunately, a symbol on a door doesn't stop a violent or ill-intentioned person.
- Anti-harassment policies still apply, regardless of whether washrooms are gendered or not, and inappropriate behaviour should never be tolerated.



18. Gender Identity Nondiscrimination Laws in Public Accommodations: a Review of Evidence Regarding Safety and Privacy in Public Restrooms, Locker Rooms, and Changing Rooms, Hasenbush, Flores & Herman, 2019

Sample inclusive washroom policy:

Note: Feel free to add to and/or modify this template.

Goal:

The aim of this policy is to assert *[Company name]*'s commitment to fostering a work environment that is safe and welcoming for everyone, regardless of their gender identity or expression.

Definition:

Non-gendered spaces (sometimes referred to as unisex, gender-neutral or all-gender) are spaces that everyone has the right to use regardless of their gender identity (men, women, nonbinary people, etc.).

Policy statement:

In accordance with the *Canadian Human Rights Act* (Bill C-16), which protects equal access to washrooms and sanitary facilities from any form of discrimination, harassment or abuse, *[Company name]* undertakes to provide customers, visitors, volunteers and staff members with non-gendered washrooms, and to ensure that they can choose a washroom that best matches their gender identity.

- Each person is responsible for deciding which washroom or locker room best corresponds to their gender identity (regardless of the sex they were assigned at birth or the gender designation on their identity documents).
- Anyone, regardless of their gender identity, is free to use a non-gendered single-user washroom. These single-user washrooms may help people who need more privacy or feel uncomfortable using gendered washrooms.
- It is strictly forbidden to ask a person to provide any proof to justify their right to use a gendered space or to question them about the sex they were assigned at birth, the gender designation on their identity documents or the status of their medical transition.
- Staff members and visitors are prohibited from forcing a person to use a single-use washroom unit or a washroom that does not correspond to the individual's gender identity.

As a reminder, *[Company name]*'s (refer to name of your anti-harassment policy) neither tolerates nor allows any form of physical, psychological or sexual abuse. Any type of harassment or inappropriate behaviour may result in disciplinary measures up to and including dismissal.

Roadmap to transitioning in the workplace

Human resources, managers and colleagues play a key role in ensuring a smooth and safe transition for trans employees. The keys to a successful gender transition in the workplace are communication and collaboration between the transitioning employee and all other parties involved so you can map out needs, important dates and the best ways for people to offer their support to the transitioning employee.



A tool to guide you on this journey

It is important to follow the pace set by the person who is transitioning and to realize that, while the workplace can provide trans and nonbinary employees with suggestions for processes, they may not work for every person because each transition path is unique. That is why we suggest that this form be given first to the employee for consideration. You can then use it as a working document or roadmap for meetings between the employee who is transitioning and resources around them (e.g., HR, manager). Please feel free to adapt this document to your needs and realities.

Please note that the plan may change at any time. Some aspects (such as medical procedures or legal name changes) may be delayed due to factors that are outside the employee's control, while others depend on human factors (e.g., the emotional state of the employee on the day they're supposed to make the announcement, team reaction to the announcement, recovery time after a medical procedure). Although it's helpful to schedule and plan for the various stages of the transition process in the workplace, the dates are in no way definitive. The plan must therefore remain flexible.

Employee information	
First name used in the workplace until now	
Last name	
Full name as it currently appears on the employee's official ID	
First name to be used from now on and added to the employee's file	
Pronouns to be used from now on	
Gender identity	<input type="checkbox"/> man <input type="checkbox"/> woman <input type="checkbox"/> nonbinary <input type="checkbox"/> trans masculine <input type="checkbox"/> trans feminine <input type="checkbox"/> gender fluid <input type="checkbox"/> agender <input type="checkbox"/> gender queer <input type="checkbox"/> Two Spirit Other: _____
Has a request been filed to legally change your first name/gender markers?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, and the changes have been made (indicate the types of changes and effective dates): _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, but the changes have not yet been made (indicate the filing dates): _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Not yet, but I would like to request changes (indicate the types of changes and expected filing dates):*** _____ *** State here if you need help with this process: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> No, I do not intend to request any changes.
City/postal code	
Phone number	
Email address	

Transition plan

Workplace transition date:¹⁹

Date the employee will start presenting as their lived identity (by using a different first name, pronouns or gender, and/or dressing differently) in the workplace:

Gendered spaces:

Are washrooms and/or locker rooms where the employee feels comfortable/safe available in the building where they work?

- Yes. Approximate date when the employee intends to start using washrooms and/or locker rooms different from the ones they were previously using:

- Yes. The employee does not intend to change washrooms/locker rooms. The person wishes to continue using the same spaces they are currently using.
- No. What could be a possible solution to this problem?

” As an employer, it is your responsibility to ensure your trans employee has access to the washrooms and/or locker rooms of their choice. No one can be forced to use separate washrooms or locker rooms simply because other people have expressed fear or discomfort. **”**

Integrating Trans People in the Workplace Guide, 2016



¹⁹. Choosing a single date for all of these changes can facilitate the process but is not required. The transition can be a gradual process, and it is important to respect the pace set by the employee.

Changes to be made:

Use this table to indicate the systems/places where changes must be made, the person responsible for making these changes and the date the changes must be made.

Warning: Some changes must wait for a legal name change, but not all. In addition, some changes can take some time before going into effect (e.g., printing new business cards, processing time for certain computer systems). These delays must be taken into account in your planning.

Changes to be made	Person responsible for making the changes	Date
Changing the name/gender on internal documents and networks that do not require a legal name change (e.g., organizational chart, username in professional software). List them below:		
Changing the name/gender on internal documents that do require a legal name change: List them below:		
Changing the name/gender on external documents (e.g., website, professional profiles) List them below:		
Changing the employee's email address (does not require a legal name change)		
Changing the employee's name/gender in the accounting system (generally requires a legal name or gender change)		
Creating gender-neutral washrooms and locker rooms if not already done (see the <i>Gendered spaces</i> section of this document)		
Changing the employee's first name on their office door/nameplate/name tag/business card (does not require a legal name change)		
Giving the employee a uniform that matches their gender identity and expression (does not require a legal name or gender change)		
Other changes		

Transition announcement

- People to be notified
- How will the announcement be made?
- Who is responsible for making this announcement?
- Announcement date

Important: Always refer to the person who is transitioning before making any announcement. They may not want, or be able, to make the announcement themselves (in which case they might ask someone else to do it), or they may not want a big announcement at all.

Here are a few examples of how the announcement can be made:

- The employee can address the members of their team in person.
- A letter written with or by the employee can be sent to suppliers, clients, managers of other departments and other people who work with the employee.
- A resource person (member of HR staff, union representative or manager) can notify upper management (if the employee who is transitioning has given them permission to do so).
- A manager can make a short announcement during the next meeting with people from the relevant department (if the employee who is transitioning has given them permission to do so).

Although it is normal for such an announcement to raise some questions, it should not become the platform for personal or invasive questions. People facilitating the announcement can remind employees that such questions are not welcome and offer information sources people can refer to.

Awareness-raising activities

The purpose of awareness-raising activities

Awareness-raising activities can be arranged before or after an employee's announcement to better equip their colleagues and answer their questions. These activities help avoid putting the entire burden of educating others on the shoulders of the person who is transitioning.

Describe what type of activities will be offered to the employee's colleagues/managers and the dates of these activities (e.g., training from Fondation Émergence/Egale Canada, sending out an email with resources, guides, flyers from different LGBTQ+ organizations).

Time off

Will the employee be taking any time off?

These dates will be used to plan ahead so that the necessary accommodations can be made. It is not necessary to reveal the type of surgery, merely the date it is scheduled for and the recovery period, if applicable.

Respecting individual journeys

A person who is transitioning may not wish to make any sort of medical transition, or they may feel the need to undergo multiple medical procedures. All transition journeys deserve respect.

Key contacts

Which HR manager or team leader should be contacted in case of:

- **Problems:** Discrimination, harassment, inappropriate comments, etc.
- **Questions:** How to refer to the trans employee in front of customers, how to answer questions from people outside the team, etc.

Resource person	
First name	
Last name	
Pronouns	
Title/role	
Phone number	
Email address	

This document was written by:



For more information about available services (training, tools and other assistance), visit: en.fondationemergence.org/proallie

In partnership with:



Resources

Book a training session:

Organization and key services	Description
<p>Fondation Émergence Montreal, QC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Training• Personalized help• Information (to order or to download for free)	<p>Fondation Émergence works to educate, inform and raise awareness about the lived experiences of people within a broad range of sexual orientations, gender identities and gender expressions.</p> <p>Their core activities include International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia (which was created in 2003), Aging Gayfully (fostering welcoming environments for seniors), ProAlly (providing workplaces with training, tools and personalized help on their path to inclusion) and Chosen Family (helping LGBTQ+ caregivers).</p>
<p>Egale Canada Toronto, ON</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Training• Information	<p>Egale is Canada's leading organization for 2SLGBTQI²⁰ people and issues. They improve and save lives through research, education, awareness, and by advocating for human rights and equality in Canada and around the world. Their work helps create societies and systems that reflect the universal truth that all persons are equal and none is other.</p>

Support line:

Interligne:

Interligne is a front-line centre providing support and information to people concerned by sexual and gender diversity.

Toll-free English/French support line (also available by text message, live chat and email), accessible 24/7: 1-888-505-1010

20. LGBTQ+ organizations sometimes use other variations of the acronym. We have chosen to use the acronyms these organizations use themselves.

Other organizations to discover

There are hundreds of LGBTQ+ organizations and associations across Canada.

Here are some in your province/territory.

Province/territory	Organization	Description
AB	Calgary OutLink Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity	Calgary Outlink is a hub that promotes support and community connectedness for all gender and sexually diverse people.
	FrancoQueer Western Committee	The FrancoQueer Western Committee's mission is to lead a conversation on gender and sexual diversity and raise awareness about 2SLGBTQIA+ identities in minority francophone communities.
BC	QMUNITY BC's Queer, Trans, and Two-Spirit Resource Centre Society	QMUNITY empowers queer, trans and Two-Spirit individuals to be their best selves, by offering free counselling, information and referrals, access to gender-affirming chestwear and youth one-on-one peer support.
MB	Rainbow Resource Centre	Rainbow Resource Centre offers support to the 2SLGBTQ+ community in the form of counselling, education, and programming for individuals ranging from children through to 55+. It also supports families, friends, and employers of 2SLGBTQ+ individuals. Rainbow Resource Centre's Education Program provides 2SLGBTQ+ and ally education, awareness, and outreach that assists healthcare providers, educators, students, social services, and commercial service providers.
NB	Chroma: Pride, Inclusion, Equality Inc.	Chroma: Pride, Inclusion, Equality Inc. is a community organization focusing on advocating for 2SLGBTQIA+ people in the Saint John Region. Their goal is to promote initiatives and highlight issues impacting their community by maintaining a strong cohesive voice. They promote inclusion through programs and services, and address community needs including basic human rights, employment equality, health and well-being, and housing in collaboration with local community partners.
	Gris Acadie	GRIS – Acadie is a non-profit research and social intervention group based in New Brunswick that was created in 2019. Their mission is to foster a better understanding of gender and sexual diversity to support LGBT+ people in the Atlantic provinces and help them thrive.
NL	Trans Support Newfoundland	Trans Support NL is a non-profit organization that offers resources, peer support, and awareness and inclusion training to support the trans community of Newfoundland and Labrador.
NS	Nova Scotia Rainbow Action Project Society (NSRAP)	The Nova Scotia Rainbow Action Project (NSRAP) seeks equity, justice, and human rights for 2SLGBTQIA+ people in Nova Scotia. NSRAP seeks to create change in their communities and in society at large so that all 2SLGBTQIA+ people are included, valued, and celebrated. They will achieve this through building community and developing strong networks outside of the community in addition to public outreach, education, and political action.

Province/ territory	Organization	Description
NU	Positive Spaces Nunavut	Positive Spaces Nunavut provides ongoing educational sessions (Positive Space Training), information and resources to the community on issues related to sexual and gender diversity and LGBTQ identities.
NWT	Rainbow Coalition of Yellowknife	<p>Rainbow Coalition of Yellowknife (RCYK) is dedicated to creating a safer space for LGBTQ2S+ youth by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • raising awareness about LGBTQ2S+ issues and identities • helping LGBTQ2S+ youth build confidence • helping parents of LGBTQ2S+ youth to accept, understand and love their children • providing advice and support to community agencies and organizations about LGBTQ2S+ issues • advocating for a safer and more equitable territory for LGBTQ2S+ youth, and • operating a Rainbow Youth Centre in Yellowknife
ON	519	The 519 responds to the evolving needs of the LGBTQ2S communities, from counselling services and queer parenting resources to coming out groups, trans programming, and seniors' support. They provide free, accommodating and non-judgmental space where individuals, organizations and non-profit groups can meet, organize and work towards their goals. They share knowledge and insight gathered on the ground through consulting and workshop services, best practice research and public engagement campaigns.
	CGLCC (Canada's LGBT+ Chamber of Commerce)	<p>Each of the CGLCC's programs is designed to elevate LGBT businesses and foster greater diversity and inclusion across Canada's economy.</p> <p>Whether they're connecting LGBT+ businesses to a global network or a corporation with a vested interest in diverse procurement, they're here to facilitate connections that can build a more inclusive Canada.</p> <p>They also serve businesses looking to form more inclusive cultures or programming, offering inclusivity training and market-preparedness training for serving LGBT+ clientele. They use their LGBT+ expertise and research to facilitate a stronger, more inclusive Canadian economy for all.</p>
	Pride at work Canada	Through dialogue, education and thought leadership, Pride at Work Canada/ Fierté au travail Canada empowers Canadian employers to build workplaces that celebrate all employees regardless of gender expression, gender identity, and sexual orientation. Their learning, networking and community events happen across the country, advising, celebrating and connecting the most inclusive Canadian employers. They help private, public and nonprofit employers to create safer, more inclusive workplaces that recognize the skills of LGBTQ2+ people.
PE	Pride PEI	Pride PEI's mission is to create an inclusive community through the annual PEI Pride festival & parade, ongoing social events, education, and advocacy. They will uplift and centre the voices of our most marginalized members, recognizing that social equality does not equal social equity.

Province/ territory	Organization	Description
QC	<u>ATQ</u> (Aide aux trans du Québec)	The ATQ fights for trans people’s rights to live life to the fullest in society and the right to grow in respect and dignity. The organization is also a centre for active listening, psychosocial interventions and resource redistribution.
	<u>Conseil québécois LGBT</u>	The Conseil québécois LGBT , or CQ-LGBT, is the leading authority on the protection of the rights of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans people in Quebec. The purpose of CQ-LGBT is to reinforce LGBT rights and advocate for equality, regardless of gender identity and sexual preferences.
SK	<u>OUTSaskatoon</u>	OUTSaskatoon’s mission is to uplift 2SLGBTQ people by leading, serving, and supporting in a dynamic community. They foster physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual health through intentional services and meaningful engagement.
YT	<u>Queer Yukon</u>	Queer Yukon supports, promotes, and organizes events for the 2SLGBTQIA+ community and their allies in Whitehorse, Yukon. Officially incorporated in 2018, they have been organizing Yukon Pride since 2013, as well as many other events to bring together 2SLGBTQIA+ and allied Yukoners to build a strong and vibrant community.

Mark your calendars!

May 17, International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia

The first national day against homophobia, an initiative of Fondation Émergence, took place in Quebec, Canada in 2003. This day later became the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia, now celebrated in many countries around the world. The date of May 17 was chosen to commemorate the removal of homosexuality from the list of mental illnesses by the World Health Organization (WHO) on the same date in 1990. Every year, Fondation Émergence organizes an awareness campaign on an issue faced by LGBTQ+ people.

Pride

This festival, organized on different dates across Canada, is an opportunity for LGBTQ+ people and allies to celebrate progress, commemorate the past and highlight the battles that still need to be fought. It's also a time of the year when sexually and gender-diverse people can assert their identity with pride and connect with their communities.

Other significant dates for LGBTQ+ communities:

- **March 31** – International Transgender Day of Visibility
- **April 11** – International Day of Pink (anti-bullying)
- **April 26** – Lesbian Visibility Day
- **September 23** – Bisexual Visibility Day
- **October 11** – National Coming Out Day
- **Third Wednesday in October** – International Pronouns Day
- **October 26** – Intersex Awareness Day
- **October 20** – Asexual Awareness Day
- **November 20** – Transgender Day of Remembrance
- **December 1** – World AIDS Day





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