



## **TRANS INCLUSION POLICY**

### **The Centre for Women and Trans People**

#### **PURPOSE:**

In the spirit of the vision and the anti-oppression mandate at The Centre for Women and Trans People (The Centre) at the University of Toronto (U of T), this policy strives to include Two-Spirit, trans, and intersex folk within that framework.

The aims are:

- To ensure the rights of Two-Spirit, trans, and intersex folk at The Centre.
- To create a safe space for Two-Spirit, trans, and intersex folk.
- To actively unlearn transphobic attitudes and behaviours.
- To understand and actively dismantle the common barriers as identified by Two-Spirit, trans, and intersex folk.
- To make clear that exclusion of Two-Spirit, trans, and intersex folk is an injury to all.
- To acknowledge the history of exclusion of Two-Spirit, trans, and intersex folk including in women's organizations and the institution of feminism.
- To contribute to a culture of inclusivity and welcome for Two-Spirit, trans, and intersex folk.

#### **BACKGROUND:**

The creation of the Trans Inclusion Policy at The Centre is part of a larger history of struggle and survival within Two-Spirit, trans, and intersex communities. In creating this policy, we would like to acknowledge such strong histories and how it has impacted The Centre's work.

This policy has a dual effect of acting in response to the negative effects of trans exclusion, while also celebrating the positive benefits of inclusion.

To continue the commitment to trans inclusion over the years which included the name change from "The Women's Centre" to "The Centre for Women and Trans People" in 2006, this policy serves to formally document The Centre's commitment to trans inclusion and anti-oppression politics.

The formation of the policy has been an ongoing process and was not made in isolation. The policy would not have been possible without The Centre's integrative approach to offering trans inclusion anti-oppression trainings, educational panels, communication strategies, programming, etc. The larger project of trans inclusion at The Centre was not without its challenges; however, The Centre

will continue to facilitate progressive change, dialogue, and empowerment opportunities as guided by women and trans people who use the space.

The Centre would also like to acknowledge and thank the leadership of trans folk who have participated in all areas of The Centre over the years: staff, Collective members, Work-Study students, volunteers, allies, and members.

#### **A) NON-DISCRIMINATION AND INCLUSION POLICY – SCOPE:**

This policy reflects The Centre’s commitment to anti-oppression practices in relation to all Two-Spirit, trans, and intersex folk (volunteers, Collective members, employees, and service-users) and ensures that their rights are respected and protected. The Centre will actively work to promote a climate that is welcoming, inclusive, and accessible to Two-Spirit, trans, and intersex folk. Any conduct that fosters a hostile environment for Two-Spirit, trans, and intersex folk, whether from service-users, visitors, staff, volunteers, or members of The Centre, will not be tolerated. The Centre will include Two-Spirit, trans and intersex folk as members in all areas of The Centre and as service-users.

#### **B) DEFINITIONS:**

*The Centre recognizes the limitations of defining identity. The following definitions are meant to include, not exclude anyone from this policy, and to make visible the diversity of identities that exist. The purpose is not to impose categorizations on people, but to ensure that all people are protected by this policy. The Centre recognizes the importance of an individual’s right to self-identify and self-define.*

*Every member has the right to choose the pronouns by which they are referred (e.g. he, she, ze). Failure to use a person’s pronoun preference is considered discrimination.*

##### 1. Two-Spirit

The term "Two-Spirit" originates from the First Nations recognition of the traditions and sacredness of people who maintain a balance by housing both the male and female spirit. Today, Two-Spirit people can be Native people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, other gendered, third/fourth gendered individuals that walk carefully between the worlds and between the genders. The intent of the policy is to be adaptable to cultural specificities, including diverse practices, languages, and histories.

##### 2. Trans

*For the purposes of this document, “trans” shall be used in the widest sense possible, including self-identifying trans people, transsexuals, folks of transsexual history/experience, transgender folk, and as an abbreviation of definitions 4-6 below.*

##### 3. Intersex

Intersex individuals are born with chromosomes, external genitalia, and/or an internal reproductive system that varies from what is considered “standard” for either males or females.

##### 4. Transgender

“Transgender” is an umbrella term that includes anyone whose gender identity and/or gender expression does not match society’s expectations of how an individual who was assigned a particular sex at birth should behave in relation to their gender. The term may include, but is not limited to:

- pre-operative, post-operative and non-operative transsexuals who may or may not use hormones;
- intersex individuals;
- persons exhibiting gender characteristics and identities that are perceived to be inconsistent with their gender at birth;
- persons perceived to be androgynous; and
- cross-dressers

## 5. Transsexual

Transsexuals are individuals whose gender expression or identity is perceived to conflict with the sex assigned to them at birth, and who may or may not begin, or continue the process of hormone replacement therapy and/or gender confirmation surgery. Transsexuals are often described as female-to-male (FTM) i.e. Trans Man, or male-to-female (MTF) i.e. Trans Woman.

## 6. Gender Variant, Gender Non-conforming or Gender Different

Gender variant, gender non-conforming, or gender different individuals have a gender identity and/or gender expression that is not confined to the false binary dichotomy of male or female. This includes individuals who do not conform to, or actively reject, expectations of a specific gender role and individuals who express both masculine and feminine qualities. This includes, but is not limited to, genderfuck, genderfluid, and genderqueer identities.

## 7. Gender Identity

Gender identity is an individual's own understanding of themselves in terms of being male or female, man or woman, or something other or in-between. An individual's gender identity has nothing to do with their genitalia or chromosomes.

## 8. Gender Expression/Gender Presentation

Gender expression/gender presentation describes the external characteristics and behaviors that are socially defined as either masculine or feminine such as dress, mannerisms, speech patterns and social interactions. People's behaviours that convey something about their gender identity, or that others interpret as meaning something about their gender identity. It is recognized that gender identity and/or gender expression/gender presentation may be fluid and may change over time.

## 9. Cisgender/Cissexual (Cis)

Cisfolk are those who experience gender identity and sex as being in alignment with what was assigned at birth.

## **C) OUTREACH:**

The Centre will initiate and maintain networking strategies to connect with Two-Spirit, trans, and intersex folk and Two-Spirit, trans, and intersex communities. The Centre will foster outreach strategies to expand participation of Two-Spirit, trans, and intersex folk within The Centre's work.

## **D) PROGRAMMING:**

The Centre will commit itself to providing programs and services inclusive of Two-Spirit, trans, and intersex folk. Two-Spirit, trans, and intersex folk will be supported in their leadership of, or be welcomed to give input into, any workshops or programming to reflect their lived experience and voice.

## **E) EDUCATION:**

The Centre will continue to increase its knowledge of Two-Spirit, trans, and intersex issues through ongoing educational programming and the incorporation of Two-Spirit, trans, and intersex issues into volunteer training programs. The Centre encourages developing self-education on the part of allies and commits itself to providing up-to-date resources to facilitate this on-going process. Anti-transphobia training shall always be included during volunteer/work-study training sessions, staff training, and Collective training.

**F) ELIGIBILITY FOR SERVICES AND PARTICIPATION IN THE ORGANIZATION:**

Candidates for staff, volunteer, and Collective member positions at The Centre will not be discriminated against on the basis of their Two-Spirit, trans, or intersex status. Furthermore, The Centre believes that those who are on the margins are often in better positions to understand how systems of oppression, power and privilege work and are maintained, and thus specifically welcomes the perspective of Two-Spirit, trans, and intersex folk and their contribution to The Centre. The Centre will provide Two-Spirit, trans, and intersex folk who meet the criteria for services with the same range of services available to all. No volunteer, Collective member, or worker at The Centre shall refuse to work with a Two-Spirit, trans, or intersex service-user, volunteer, Collective member or co-worker because of their Two-Spirit, trans or intersex status.

**G) CONFIDENTIALITY:**

The Two-Spirit, trans, or intersex status of any and all members of The Centre is considered confidential and private and will not be recorded or disclosed without the express permission of the individual. Two-Spirit, trans, or intersex folk will choose if, when, and to whom to disclose their status.

**H) ACCOMMODATION:**

The Centre will make appropriate bathrooms available to all people. All shared bathrooms will be equipped to provide privacy in a communal setting. At any events held off site, The Centre will ensure that appropriate sleeping accommodations and change facilities are provided. The Centre will not tolerate the policing of identity in bathrooms, change rooms, sleeping accommodations, and related facilities.

**I) VISIBILITY:**

The Centre will promote Two-Spirit, trans, and intersex visibility in its physical space by having event programming that is trans-focused, and posters that are trans-focused. The Centre will commit to displaying signage explicitly welcoming Two-Spirit, trans, and intersex folk outside The Centre's door.

**J) BUDGET:**

The Centre will commit to allocating a significant portion of available funds to Two-Spirit, trans, and intersex programming, outreach, events, and resources. This amount must reflect the priorities and spirit of this policy.

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