Transgender visibility and inclusion in recreation programming

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SECTION 1. Facilitating safer recreation spaces for transgender and gender variant people

Dell started high school in the fall of September 2019 and wanted to make sure that all the teachers at school used the correct pronoun in class, so they approached each teacher individually before class to inform them. I asked Dell how it went. They said: "They're pretty good with it actually. I explained that I was going through [a gender transition]. I have gym class so I just kind of felt the need to tell my teacher because there are sometimes situations where I'm binding or I'm wearing boxer shorts and they're kind of long and you might see that, so I explained [it] and they were pretty accepting. With every other class and with the staff in general, they're pretty respectful although there are some staff members who are a bit behind and get confused or that are just not o.k. with that sort of thing". If Dell approached you as a recreation provider, what would you say?

TEXTBOX: What is your gender identity? What are your gender pronouns? Do you use "he", "she", "his", "her", "ze", "hir," "hirs , "they or "them"? Have you thought about this? If you haven't, you are experiencing what is called cisgender privilege.

Dell's lived experience of gender expression and gender identity, highlighted through the vignette above, illustrates how one 2SLGBTQ (Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer) youth is navigating their high school environment and relationships with teachers. This chapter will help unpack Dell's experience and use of language so you can be an inclusive recreation provider. In particular, throughout this chapter we will show how gender is socially constructed in binary ways (i.e., male/female) by defining several important gender axes,

discuss how binary gender is socially maintained as the status quo and the impact of this social fabrication on the lived experience of non-binary people, as well as illustrate some of the contemporary changes and challenges in recreation, parks, and tourism policy, programs and environments. The chapter ends with a series of recommendations for recreation organizations, and activities and case studies.

Introduction

Important and ground-breaking research on gender and leisure emerged as a body of knowledge in the 1980s (e.g., Deem, 1982; Glyptis & Chambers, 1982); however, much of this early work and subsequent research centres around understanding gender as a binary category (i.e., man/male and woman/female)(e.g., Frederick & Shaw, 1995; Henderson & Gibson, 2013). Until early in the 21st century, few leisure scholars challenged this notion (e.g., Oakleaf & Richmond, 2017; Lewis & Johnson, 2011; Litwiller, 2018). Our understanding of gender as static and binary oriented man/women categories has influenced the structural facilities we work in (there are often only two options for change rooms and washrooms), the programs we offer (e.g., boys and girls soccer), as well as our paperwork (e.g., the forms we use provide two options for gender) and policies (e.g., how many women must be on the field at one time in mixed gender recreational sport). Oakleaf and Richmond (2017) found these cisnormative assumptions and social norms negatively affected the experiences of transgender recreation participants and many often did not feel welcome in local parks.

For individuals who do not easily fit into stereotypical gender roles or binary oriented gender, it can be challenging to participate in public life. Scholars reveal these individuals often do not have supportive leisure environments which influences their ability to be actively engaged in physical activity, sport, outdoor recreation, arts, and culture (Litwiller, 2018). This research

illustrates constraints related to facilities and policy, but one of the biggest is the attitudes of facility staff and other participants. To fully understand the complexity of, and to re-evaluate our own assumptions and biases about gender, we want to introduce some concepts and examples to help explain why there are still barriers and constraints for transgender, non-binary, genderqueer and gender non-conforming people despite the changes made in recent years.

Many of the attitudinal barriers that exist are related to static and binary understandings of gender, but in reality, gender is very much socially constructed. An important scholar, Judith Butler (2011), suggested that gender is actively produced in binary forms (man/male or woman/female) through institutional documentation (passports, birth certificates) and regulation (gender segregated prisons, hospital wards, recreational and competitive sport). Because each person is socialized into one distinct category, the gender framework reflects that reality but also has the capacity to produce and reproduce those same categories by enforcing what it means to be a man or a woman through coercion (norms, discrimination, violence, etc.)

For example, as discussed in Chapter X (Schultz, McKeown & Cousineau, 2020), many sports are gendered (e.g., ballet is for girls/women, football is for boys/men) or segregated by gender from the time we are a child (e.g., boys and girls hockey or basketball). Further, this segregation is policed by teasing and/or bullying both young people and adults who do not conform to gender expectations. Gender non-conformity can include a lack of participation in activities deemed appropriately masculine or feminine and wearing clothing or having a hairstyle that doesn't fit gender expectations. This policing is not easy to escape given that historically (and to some extent even in 2021) the helping professions (e.g., psychiatry, social work, medicine) have labelled, pathologized, and disordered gender deviance (e.g., DSM IV Gender Identity Disorder, first published in 1994 and used until 2013).

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Behaving according to gender expectations is not a one-time instance but is an ongoing and continuous process. Butler (2011) further details the process of this social categorization through her theory of performativity-a series of repetitive acts (behaviors, mannerisms, speech, interests) that function together to imitate social understandings of binary notions of gender; an imitation so ingrained it is erroneously understood to be a natural state, rather than a social fabrication. Butler suggests that gender is not something that one 'is,' rather, something that one 'does' through expression and acts of repetition that work together to produce a particular reality where you are seen by others as either male or female (and thus man or woman). Therefore, each person, regardless of actual gender identity, is surveilled and encouraged through subtle and not so subtle social cues to fit into gender roles and expectations related to our sex assigned at birth (male or female). The social pressure to conform to gender norms and the binary beliefs about gender can be overwhelming for cisgender people and more so for transgender and non-binary people who might initially conceal their identity because of the pressure and expectation to meet these ascribed and assumed social roles.

At least two things are important to note about the lived experience of an individual's gender. First, gender is comprised of several axes including our sex assigned at birth, gender expression and gender identity. Not everyone fits into traditional social constructions of gender. For example, not all people assigned female at birth (AFAB) have a feminine gender expression and identify as a woman. There are many more options for gender, including being assigned female at birth, having a feminine gender expression and identifying as a man (See 'The Gender Unicorn': http://transstudent.org/what-we-do/graphics/gender-unicorn/).

Second, the axes of gender are far more complicated than what typical binaries permit. Men and women have historically been the only two gender categories recognized; however, our

culture is changing rapidly to reflect the lived reality of transgender and gender variant people. For example, in 2016, the Government of Canada introduced Bill C-16 to update the Canadian Human Rights Act and the Criminal Code; legislation intended to protect gender variant individuals from discrimination, harassment, and violence based on their gender identity and gender expression. In the United States ideological debates continue around protections for trans-identified individuals, oscillating between strong protections added during the Obama administration to having them dismissed or rolled back by Trump's administration, a clear setback for protecting the lives and quality of life for those not conforming to the traditional sex/gender binaries.

TEXTBOX: Definitions that will help us understand the complexity of gender

Sex assigned at birth: Each person is assigned a binary sex (i.e., female or male) at birth even though as many as 1.7% of infants are intersex; that is, they have genitalia, chromosomes, or hormones that do not align with binary sex categories. Horrifically, approximately 1 in 2000 infants receive medically unnecessary genital surgery (that occurs without their consent) so that their bodies align with binary gender expectation. https://www.hrw.org/report/2017/07/25/i-want-be-nature-made-me/medically-unnecessary-surgeries-intersex-children-us

Gender identity: One's internal sense of being male, female, neither of these, both, or another gender. Everyone has a gender identity. A person's gender identity may be the same as or different from their sex assigned at birth and can change over time. Recent research suggests that gender identity is also biological rather than only socially constructed (Reiner, 2004; Saraswat, Weinand & Safer, 2015).

Gender expression: how a person publicly presents their gender. This can include behavior, interests and outward appearance such as dress, hair, make-up, body language and voice.

Cisgender: individuals who consistently, persistently, and insistently express and feel that their gender identity is the same as their sex assigned at birth (e.g., assigned female at birth and identify as a woman).

Transgender: transgender is an umbrella term to refer to individuals who consistently, persistently, and insistently express and feel that their gender identity is different from their sex assigned at birth (e.g., nonbinary, agender, bigender, genderqueer). Transgender people may desire to make a social, legal, or medical gender transition. For example, transsexual people are individuals who transition to a gender that is opposite to their sex assigned at birth.

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Transgender individuals may or may not be perceived by others as androgynous or as a different sex than they were assigned at birth. Transgender people may be as prevalent as 0.5% of the population (Meier, Mizock & Mougianis, 2017).

Gender variant: (also, gender atypical, gender non-conforming): Gender expressions and/or gender identities that are outside what is considered normal by a society or culture for an individual's assigned sex at birth (male or female)(Pleak, 2011). A person who is gender variant may or may not identify as transgender. While there is currently a dearth of research that measures prevalence, gender variant youth are thought to make up 5 to 12% of birth assigned females and 2 to 6% of birth assigned males (Meier, Mizock & Mougianis, 2017).

Two-Spirit (2S): Two-Spirited People are of the First Nation and, in some cultures, is the identity of a person who carries spirits of both man and woman (National Aboriginal Health Organization). It is a term that describes gender identity, sexual identity, and spiritual identity. In many First Nations cultures that had language to describe gender diversity (e.g., Cree, Zuni, Dakota, Ojibwe) these individuals were, and are, revered as a third gender, visionaries, and/or healers (Steffenson, 1987; Hunt, 2016). It is inappropriate for non-Indigenous people to label themselves Two-Spirit.

Queer: A term that can be used to encompass non-normative gender and sexual identities and/or relationship structures. Previously used as a derogatory word, it has been reclaimed by many, but not all, 2SLGBTQ communities and therefore consideration of use and audience is important.

TEXTBOX: Many people object to the use of the gender pronoun 'they' as a reference to a single person. We might typically only use she or he. But 'they' can also be used in the singular: "somebody left their textbook in the classroom and they can collect it from my office." In fact, the American Psychological Association (APA), which is the governing body that produces writing and publication guidelines, endorses the use of the singular 'they' for gender variant people who chose it and in all contexts where the gender pronoun of the individual is unknown (Section 4.18 of the APA Publication Manual, Seventh Edition). This change is important because it indicates that all people deserve recognition and respect. We can engage in respectful practices in our organizations by doing the following: When meeting a person for the first time, it is appropriate to state your name and gender pronoun and ask the name and gender pronoun of the person you are meeting. At meetings where introductions are made, ask for individuals to state their name and gender pronoun. You can also put your gender pronouns at the end of your email and on your business cards. See https://www.mypronouns.org

In spite of these setbacks, some progress continues to be made. Gender is either being dropped as required information from government documentation such as health cards and drivers' licenses, or some provinces in Canada and states in the United States are allowing an

"X" or a "U" as a sex designation on birth certificates to reflect transgender and gender variant identities. organizations are also following this trend in their paperwork and programming. For example, many universities are permitting applicants to leave the gender section blank or apply as 'another gender.' In addition, many progressive universities are allowing students to participate in the programming that aligns with their gender. For example, the University of British Columbia's website states: "we acknowledge gender identity and gender expression as a spectrum. We support every participant's right to assess and note their own gender in which to participate and/or compete in our programs. If a person is gender non-conforming or gender expansive, they can participate in any program or in any category that they feel is right for them" (https://recreation.ubc.ca/home-page/inclusive-rec/gender-identity-expression/).

One issue that every organization must address are washrooms. Lewis and Johnson (2011) cited the social policing, scrutiny, and harassment that transgender people face when using binary oriented or gendered washrooms as one of the biggest barriers facing transgender people in their leisure and/or recreation. As a result, many institutions are advocating for procedures, architecture and remodelling to create all gender or universal washrooms (single-occupant facilities with a locking door), which has the effect of increasing privacy and accessibility for many user groups (e.g., individuals with impairments). In fact, in Canada, the city of Vancouver recently passed a motion to retrofit all public restrooms with Vancouver Parks following suit. And, in the United States, states like Illinois are passing legislation like the equitable restroom act, which requires all single use bathrooms to be "all-gender."

Although positive changes are afoot, structural and attitudinal barriers still exist in many contexts. For example, when transgender and gender variant people do not have documentation that reflects their gender or have access to all gender spaces to go to the washroom or change,

these barriers prevent participation in leisure, sport and recreation. Community centers, gyms and public washrooms are among public recreation spaces that feel the most unsafe for transgender people (Davis et al., 2019). Many transgender people risk dehydration to circumvent the use of washrooms and avoid change rooms and changing clothes where removing clothing reveals imperfect and non-binary bodies or scarring from surgery which invites scrutiny and harassment (Oakleaf & Richmond, 2017). For example, 57% of transgender participants in Scheim, Bauer, and Pyne's (2014) study avoided public toilets every day to escape the gender policing that comes with it.

> **TEXTBOX:** Imagine navigating day to day life without using a public washroom. Plan one day based on not using a public restroom. What would that day look like?

When transgender and gender variant people are able to overcome these pervasive constraints to participation, they are often exposed to transphobia with recreation instructors and coaches turning a blind eye to overt bullying from both peers and other authority figures (e.g. other teachers, coaches)(Kosciw et al., 2014). They also experience frequent microaggressions; that is, those seemingly innocuous comments or behavior that are actually hurtful and stereotyping, and that are either deliberately or unknowingly committed over and over again, including such instances as exoticization by asking invasive personal questions about body parts (Nadal et al., 2011) or refusing to use the name and pronoun requested (Soulliere, 2014).

> **TEXTBOX:** Microaggressions are readily observed and talked about by the targeted marginalized group but often harder to see if you are not a part of this group. A common microaggression is when a gender variant person is in the washroom and individuals who enter do a double take and check the gendered signage on the door. It is not uncommon for the person entering to insist that the gender variant person is in the wrong washroom.

As a result, some transgender individuals avoid recreation contexts all together, while others attempt to conceal their gender to participate (Oakleaf, 2017; Lewis & Johnson, 2011).

The process of attempting to hide one's gender identity through, for example, avoiding washrooms, covertly undressing and dressing in changerooms, choosing to wear clothing that is stereotypical, or participating with little enthusiasm in a particular gendered sport, means engaging in recreation and leisure is a laborious process of working hard to imitate social understandings of man or women to pass (or be read by others) as a binary gender (Lewis & Johnson, 2011; Oakleaf, 2017). To engage in gender segregated leisure spaces as a transgender or gender non-conforming person is to have one's gender constantly talked about or questioned by teammates, opponents and staff; it is to risk having one's gender further interrogated and being discovered as transgender (Lewis & Johnson, 2011). The consequences of not passing (being read as your gender by others) includes experiencing physical and verbal harassment (Taylor et al., 2011; Bettcher, 2007). For transgender and gender non-conforming individuals, the anticipation of being on the receiving end of this violence can negatively impact recreation experiences by always having to be alert for danger or through avoidance all together. In Oakleaf's (2017) study, "strategies for managing risk included engaging in hypervigilance, increasing efforts to pass, and simply avoiding certain spaces and activities. Participants described a continual process of scanning their environment, looking both for allies and for those who would object to their presence" (p. 114). Limited access to safer leisure programs and facilities (i.e. supportive, non-threatening environments) means that transgender people are both less physically active and less likely to participate in sports than heterosexual and gender normative people (i.e. people that conform to expected behavior for their perceived gender)(Calzo et al., 2014).

As a result of experiencing social exclusion through a lack of accessible facilities, programs and policies as well as harassment, transgender and gender non-conforming people

have a higher risk of reporting psychological distress, self-harm, major depressive episodes, and suicide than gender conforming youth (Veale et al., 2017) and adults (Testa et al., 2012). When there are few safer and supportive spaces for transgender people at home, school, in after-school programs, or in community recreation, the resulting isolation compounds these issues (Ryan, 2003). Therefore, creating inclusive recreation environments, where transgender and gender non-conforming people can feel safe and included, plays a vital role in the social inclusion of this population.

SECTION 2. Key issues to address.

Policy makers, agencies and organizations can address several of the challenges facing gender variant people by, for example, creating gender inclusive forms, establishing all gender washrooms, and having a transgender inclusive policy for sport and recreation programs. To unpack the rationale for inclusive policy, we can begin by examining the structures of elite sport. Historically, elite athletes who were not easily read as female were tested to prove their female sex, ostensibly to maintain a fair and equal playing field for the competition. As such, sport is often sex segregated based on assumptions about the natural superiority of individuals assigned male at birth and concerns about fairness (Sykes, 2006). To clarify, the presence of testosterone in a body assigned female at birth is assumed to provide an unfair advantage because it is socially coded as a male hormone even though all bodies have testosterone (Fausto-Sterling, 2000). Athletes who have generated enough questions about their feminine gender have historically been subjected to a physical examination to prove their sex, then chromosome testing, and more recently, tests of testosterone levels as the defining feature of sex in sport. According to this logic, too much testosterone means that the athlete cannot be female, and this is why female transgender athletes are intentionally excluded from most gender -segregated

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sports. But, this exclusion stems from inaccurate perceptions of the unfair athletic advantages of

transgender people (Sullivan, 2011). Until recently, sex testing and the measuring of testosterone

levels was not undertaken with elite athletes in the men's events. Recent research shows that,

when athletes are grouped into two sex categories (women and men), elites athletes' levels of

testosterone overlap considerably. That is, testosterone is not an effective measure to

differentiate two sexes (Healy et al., 2014). The impact of the widespread and inaccurate beliefs

about the presence or absence of testosterone as a defining feature of gender includes Indian

sprinter Dutee Chand, who has naturally high levels of testosterone, and who was banned from

competing at a national and international level by the Athletics Federation of India (AFI). This

decision was overturned by the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) and Chand was vindicated

from an imposed ban on competing.

Examples more likely to influence our day-to-day professional lives have to do with

gender segregated recreational sports. Although this is slowly changing, from the time children

are registered in their first recreational sport, they (or their caregivers) must choose either girls or

boys sport programming "because of the sex-segregated nature of facilities, programmes,

activities and uniforms" (Travers, 2018, p. 651). Children who are transgender, genderqueer, or

gender nonconforming can be caught in a double-bind because what happens at the elite level

often influences every day recreational or community sport. As of 2004, the International

Olympic Committee stated in the Stolkhom consensus that before participating, transgender

athletes were required to have gender affirming genital surgery, legal recognition of identity

change, and appropriate hormone use; all policies that reinforce the traditional binary of gender.

However, in 2009 the U.S. Transgender Law and Policy Institute's 'Guidelines for Creating

Policies for Transgender Children in Recreational Sports' emphasized the importance of student

participation in sport on the basis of their *understood* gender identity rather than medical and legal affirmations (Travers, 2018). Also, in the United States, high school athletes and coaches are encouraged to use the recommendations of the report 'On the team: Equal Opportunity for Transgender Student Athletes' (2010) which states that student participation should be valued over policing binary sex segregation:

> a transgender student athlete at the high school level shall be allowed to participate in a sports activity in accordance with his or her gender identity irrespective of the gender listed on the student's birth certificate or other student records, and regardless of whether the student has undergone any medical treatment (2010, p. 25)

As of 2018, USPORT, the national governing body of university sport in Canada, allows student-athletes to compete on the team that corresponds with either their sex assigned at birth or their gender identity. While some adult recreational sport organizations have adopted transgender-inclusive policies that resist a simple gender binary (e.g., men's and women's softball that are transgender inclusive; Travers & Deri, 2010), troubling examples of instances remain where this is not the case. For example, sport that occurs within the queer community is often not transgender inclusive or is outright transgender exclusive. Even the Gay Games, which bills itself as an inclusive international sporting event, adheres to binary-based notions of who can compete (Symons & Hemphill, 2006). Other examples in adult sport contexts include mixed sport teams, when there is a requirement to have, for example, no more than four ultimate players of one gender on the field at a time. In this case, transgender and genderqueer participants are often subjected to scrutiny, policing, and the burden of proof.

Beyond the fields, transgender and genderqueer individuals face policy and political issues in their leisure travel. For example, during travel there exists much anticipation associated with not passing at security checkpoints and border crossings when gender expression and sex designation on identification does not match, either because documentation has not been changed

or because the sex designation on the passport and birth certificate has been changed to reflect gender identity (to M, F or X). In both Canada and the United States, transgender and genderqueer individuals no longer need to receive gender affirming surgery to change these documents. Once the decision is made to change the sex designation on the birth certificate and/or passport, the individual may not want to travel until documents match their gender identity and/or, if having surgery, until gender affirming surgeries are complete. For genderqueer and gender non-conforming people, choosing an X on their birth certificate also has implications for travel. Because transgender people are criminalized and prosecuted in a number of countries around the world, safe and accessible travel is not always possible, particularly when documents show an 'X' for gender. While it is not illegal in Canada to have a gender of X on your birth certificate and a gender of F on your passport, passport Canada warns that they cannot be certain what documents and information border crossing guards have access to, and what difficulties may ensue because the documents are not aligned (e.g., detention of passage).

One final issue that is deserving of attention is how gender is experienced differently depending on masculinity, femininity, race and class. For example, within the ostensibly inclusive 2SLGBTQ community, transgender women are often subjected to underhanded comments by queer cisgender women who call their femininity into question by belabouring biology as assigned at birth and the associated socialization as male. Transgender women of colour are disproportionately and violently murdered (Dinno, 2017) and gender variant individuals experience more violence and harassment than transgender individuals who pass (Harrison, Grant & Herman, 2012). Finally, many of the commonly recognized identities (e.g., non-binary) come out of white queer communities. Few organizations recognize and use

identities that centre Indigenous and People of Colour such as stud (Kuper, Wright & Mustanski, 2014) and Two-Spirit.

TEXTBOX: More helpful definitions

Cisnormative: Implicit or explicit assumptions, expectations and understandings of gender that make invisible transgender and gender variant experiences through microaggressions, violence and harassment.

Misgender: To intentionally or mistakenly attribute the wrong gender to a transgender or gender variant person by, for example, using the incorrect pronoun.

Passing: Transgender or gender variant people who are read as fitting into the binary gender by other people in public spaces in a way that allows them to escape experiences of transphobia and transmisogyny. Those individuals who consistently pass and do not reveal their gender past are often referred to as 'stealth'.

Transphobia: prejudice, discrimination, and oppression experienced by transgender and gender variant people

Transmisogyny: Aggressive targeting fetishization and violence of transgender femininity in particular (Serano, 2012)

Transition: individuals who are transgender or gender variant may legally (e.g., documentation), socially (e.g., with friends and family) or medically (e.g., surgery) transition to another gender. We should never assume one's transitional trajectory and curiosity should not be enough to question it.

Transgender Ally: Being an ally to trans people means working against transphobia, transmisogyny and other oppressions (racism) by listening, learning, and taking action (the 519)

Safer spaces for gender non-conforming people: Recommendations

In many jurisdictions, facilitating inclusive and gender affirming spaces for transgender and gender non-conforming people is a legal obligation as a recreation or leisure service provider. For example, according to the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario (HRTO), "for transgender people, insisting on their treatment in accordance with their birth gender for all purposes is discriminatory because it fails to take into account their lived gender identity" (p.1).

And yet, as of 2020, in the United States, only 17 states have explicit protections for transgender people (California, Connecticut, Colorado, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Iowa, Maryland, Maine, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington State, as well as the District of Columbia) but a 2020 supreme court ruling supports using the 1964 Civil Rights act to protect lesbian, gay and transgender people against discrimination at work.

Regardless of local laws, it is your ethical responsibility to be gender inclusive. So, how can we as recreation and leisure service providers make sure that our facilities, programs, policies and procedures are inclusive of gender non-conforming people? There are many reports and studies, done in consultation with different transgender communities, that provide us with guidance. For example, the parks board in Vancouver, British Columbia, undertook a series of consultations with transgender and gender variant individuals on how to address barriers and constraints to the use of municipal parks. Six recommendations were identified:

1) use inclusive signage (e.g., eliminate gendered signage and use functional signage, see Figure 2 for examples). On forms, only ask participants to report gender if it is absolutely necessary. If it is necessary, use inclusive gender options but avoid simply adding 'other' as a gender category. Add gender options that are used in your queer community (e.g., nonbinary, genderqueer) or leave a blank space and allow participants to share their identity.

2) create inclusive public spaces (accessible single use washrooms, addition of universal change rooms).

3) mandate human resource training (to educate and ensure all staff and participants in programs are welcoming) and create visible policies (related to transgender and gender variant needs) that community members as well as staff can see.

4) implement programming that is transgender and gender variant specific or reduce gendered programming. If programming is gendered, specifically state transgender inclusion.

5) facilitate collaborative public and community partnerships so that the transgender community can influence facilities, policy, and programs

6) make sure that the education tools you use come from transgender and genderqueer communities (Soulliere, 2014).

Figure 2. Gendered Signage

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Figure 3. Functional Signage

Source: Shutterstock

One example of transgender and gender variant specific programming is an all-body swim. All body swims create a safer space for individuals with gender non-conforming bodies and identities. During the swim, folks are allowed to wear clothing that they are comfortable in (for example, clean shorts and t-shirt that would usually not be allowed in the pool because they are

not bathing suit material). In all gender changerooms, they can remove clothing that is worn during the day (e.g., binders) and reveal non-binary bodies and/or scars from surgery and be active in a community of other similar people. When undertaking the programming of an all-body swim, some considerations include that washrooms and change rooms should be all gender and lifeguards and staff should be gender variant if possible, or at least be named as allies by the transgender community.

Other effective practical suggestions are offered by an organization called the 519 (Toronto, ON) in their report: "Creating authentic spaces: A gender identity and gender expression toolkit to support the implementation of institutional and social change". In it, Hixson-Vulpe (2015) suggests the following four guidelines for all organizations:

1) create trans-positive washrooms and change rooms

2) address issues around name and pronoun changes

3) support employees who are transitioning while working, and

4) support equal access and fair hiring practices for transgender people.

For example, to fulfill these guidelines, it is important to recognize that transgender and genderqueer people may use a name in the everyday that is different from their legal name. To respect their lived identity, all staff and other participants should refer to them by the name and gender they request. In addition, it is also important not to label this as the 'preferred' name or 'preferred' pronoun because this term implies that the name request is simply one option of many, rather than an everyday lived identity.

Creating safe spaces also means undertaking the labor of unlearning what you have been taught about gender; not assuming that all AFAB and all AMAB have the same characteristics, identities, and pronouns. For example, when a person asks to use the restroom, do not assume

their gender. If your facility still has gendered washrooms, simply point out all the options and let them decide which to use. If your organization creates safer more inclusive restrooms, label them as all gender, rather than gender neutral - after all, gender is never neutral! And on the phone, do not assume the gender of the person speaking based on the tone of their voice. Eliminate the use of 'm'am', 'sir' and 'ladies and gentlemen' from your lexicon and instead use terms like 'folks' or say things like 'how is everyone doing today?". So, how do you know that your organization has been successful in creating safer spaces? Ask yourself, are transgender people using your services? However, do not ever think that transgender people are not using your services just because you are not able to see them.

Much of what we have discussed above indicates policy changes and actions that organizations can take to facilitate safer spaces for use by gender variant people, these recommendations are what would be considered institutional reform; that is, adjustments to programs, policies, and facilities to include those who are already confident in their gender but uncomfortable in cisnormative spaces. However, organizations also need to consider programming for 2SLGBTQ people that *centres* their voices, experiences, needs, and interests. Leisure scholars have noted these spaces are places of affirmation and exploration as well as support (Litwiller, 2018). Therefore, for organizations to truly be inclusive, they should consider programming that is for 2SLGBTQ people only and run by 2SLGBTQ staff. This type of programming allows youth to question and confirm their gender identity and gender expression and express a more authentic identity in a safer space.

In an effort to provide such a space, Litwiller (Submitted) has been offering drag performance and gender play workshops to local gender variant, transgender and cisgender youth, where they learn how to apply feminine and masculine make-up and dress up and move as

other genders. Many of these youth attend the workshop to explore their own identities and are most interested in learning how to apply make-up. Youth have shared that the genderplay workshop is an opportunity to be in a low-stakes environment and practice being who they thought they might be, or who they already knew they were, but were unable to express in everyday life due to the homophobic and transphobic circumstances at school and at home. For example, one youth states: "I love to play with makeup already but it's like I can't really do that much cause wherever I go I usually don't have a safe spot. So, if I do it, I do it in my house and wash it off immediately". The opportunity for exploration should not be only for queer identified youth. Straight and cisgender identified youth have much to gain by trying on new identities: "I think it's like an exploration of myself and what the possibility of my identity is. Like how far can I stretch it to the point where I get uncomfortable. I tried doing [masculine] makeup and I remember l thought it was super cool, but when I put it on I felt out of place and like I kind of realized like I'm good with like just being a cisgender girl. So I think it did help me like, realize my gender, and kind of like solidify my gender".

Providing welcoming recreation spaces where all youth and adults can be themselves requires staff and other participants to be more relaxed about gender expectations through intentionally inclusive programs and changes to policy and facilities. To minimize and eliminate gender policing requires a lot of effort – as most of us have been trained to mimic binary gender for so long that our behaviors, interests, and roles are very often unconsciously performed. We hope that this chapter provides a great starting point for conversations, allyship, and action.

Discussion questions & activities
1. Famous feminist and queer theorist Judith Butler claims that gender is not innate but rather an imposition that is acted out over and over again across many different expressions (e.g., life-long participation in a particular sport, how you dress, the way that

you walk). These repetitions work together to produce a binary gender that other people then read as male or female. How do you act out your gender through acts of repetition?

2. 2SLGBTQ (Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer) is an acronym that has evolved over a long period of time. Each letter represents an historically marginalized group of people who are marginalized because of their gender or sexual identity. Is it therefore important not to express frustration over its evolution or mock it as 'alphabet soup," but to learn the acronym or if there are unfamiliar letters to ask what they represent. For example, some communities may use the acronym LGBTQQI. You might have never seen two Q's so you might say, what do the Q's stand for? What acronym does the queer community use in your community?

3. What are the laws and policies that protect transgender and gender variant people in your state, province or organization?

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4. Language use is important! Why is it better to use 'all gender' washroom signage rather than 'gender neutral'? What other gendered facilities, processes, or programs need attention?

5. Here is a great activity for cisgender people: "If you are having a hard time using the correct pronouns and names of people, make sure to challenge yourself and repeat the correct pronoun and name over and over again in your head. Ask to practice someone's name and pronouns with co-workers who might be having the same problem. If you make a mistake, take the lead from the person you were addressing, but make sure to move on and don't get caught in that moment. Do not give up. Any feelings of discomfort or confusion are not outweighed by the right of someone to be respected for who they

are" (Hixson-Vulpe, 2015, p.14). In your everyday practice, if you mess up someone's pronoun, briefly apologize and move on.

Scenarios for discussion

1. Suppose you are organizing an all-body swim for your local community. Many of the transgender folks who are attending want to bring a friend who is an important emotional support but also cisgender. Should cisgender allies be allowed to come? Why or why not? What would be the potential impact of either decision?

2. Now that you have read the chapter and are familiar with gender theory, barriers, and constraints to recreation participation for gender non-conforming people and guidelines for facilitating safer spaces, how would you respond to Dell's request from the beginning of the chapter?

Additional readings & resources

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The Trans PULSE Project (Ontario) was a community-based research (CBR) project that investigated the impact of social exclusion and discrimination on the health of trans people in Ontario, Canada.

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