

# Celebrating

## GENDER DIVERSITY

A Toolkit on

**GENDER IDENTITY &  
TRANS EXPERIENCES**

for **COMMUNITIES  
OF FAITH**



March 2016



The United Church of Canada/L'Église Unie du Canada

### What's New in This Edition

Sub-title updated to more clearly express the kit's content and audiences  
Additional workshop: A Gender Identity Workshop for Communities of Faith (pp. 47–50)  
Additional handout: Facts about Pronouns (pp. 55–56)

Celebrating Gender Diversity  
A Toolkit on Gender Identity and Trans Experiences for Communities of Faith  
(March 2016)



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**Cover:** The Trans Flag, designed by Michelle Lindsay, a Canadian, was first raised for the 2010 Transgender Day of Remembrance in Ottawa. Photo courtesy of Amanda Ryan/[transflag.com](http://transflag.com).

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## ***Welcome to The United Church of Canada's Toolkit on Gender Identity and Trans Experiences***

As The United Church of Canada seeks to fully celebrate God's diversity, understanding gender identity plays an integral role. It is our hope that *Celebrating Gender Diversity* will help communities of faith explore gender identity and deepen their understanding of gender and the integral role it plays in creating welcoming and affirming communities.

Trans and two-spirit people face many barriers in society—barriers that are often present in communities of faith as well. Many settings of the United Church have little understanding of trans people, of how to meet their needs and make them feel welcome, of how to integrate their gifts and capacities for ministry into the life of the church, and of how to integrate them into liturgy and expressions of worship.

Our ideas of what “normal” is, when it comes to gender, can limit our ability to celebrate the fullness of God's diversity. So this kit supports the church's intercultural vision of honouring differences. Learning new ways of language and of building community can have an incredible impact on the safety and spiritual well-being of trans people within communities of faith.

We hope that this resource will speak to people in all ministries of the church—whether you are a leader in a local worship or social justice committee, a ministry engaged in the Affirming Ministries Program, a camp board looking for practical tools to make camp more welcoming, or an individual seeking resources to support your own personal advocacy.

The kit begins with an introductory section to orient your work. Some topics are explored here that will help you become aware of gender identity and trans experiences.

The guides suggest concrete ways to get engaged. They offer instructions for developing trans-inclusive ministries and events, including a gender-inclusive washroom policy and trans-inclusive registration forms; and outline a workshop process that can help equip your community to hold courageous conversations. To help communities of faith engage more deeply with the material in this kit, a variety of additional activities and questions for small group discussion are also included.

The handouts will further support your learning and engagement. It may be useful to photocopy and distribute them in your community. Two of the handouts—“Celebrating Trans and Two-Spirit People in Communities of Faith” and “Radical Welcome and Gender Identity”—are also available separately for this purpose formatted as mini-brochures.

As you move from section to section, you will build understanding and find support for engaging with gender identity and trans experiences.

When you start learning about trans people and gender identity, it may feel overwhelming. It's okay to start with just one idea. Acknowledge that you will make mistakes but that you will learn from them. Some changes can happen quickly. Others may require opportunities to practise new behaviours or involve a process of planning, acting, and reflecting. Take it one piece at a time.

*Warm blessings on your journey!*



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## Introduction to Gender Identity and Trans Experiences

### SOME KEY TERMS AND CONCEPTS

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To become welcoming of trans people, we need to be aware of some key terms and concepts. In the handouts section of this kit, the Glossary of Key Terms and Concepts (pp. 57–61) provides definitions for a wide range of helpful terms. In addition, there is a Gender Identity Workshop designed to help community leaders introduce the topic of gender identity (see p. 47). But to start, let's define gender.

Most of us have an understanding of gender, gender roles, and gender identity. Our understanding has been shaped by the environments in which we grew up. Family, friends, church, school, society, books, entertainment, and the media have all influenced how we think of gender. To begin, we need to clearly understand that sexual orientation and gender identity are two completely separate things.

**Sexual orientation** refers to a person's emotional, spiritual, intellectual, and sexual attraction.

- a person whose primary sexual and/or emotional, spiritual, and intellectual attraction is to a gender other than their own is called straight/heterosexual
- a person whose primary attraction is to a person of the same gender is called lesbian/gay/homosexual
- a person of any gender who is attracted to a person of any gender is called pansexual
- a person of any gender who is attracted to either a male or female is called bisexual
- a person who does not experience sexual attraction or desire is asexual; they may or may not experience spiritual and emotional attraction to others

Sexual orientation is about who you want to climb into bed with.

Gender identity is about who you want to climb into bed as.

**Gender** is a social construct that varies from culture to culture. The World Health Organization defines gender as referring to the socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women. It includes certain roles as well as appearance. Society assigns a specific set of **gender roles**—activities, expectations, and behaviours—to females and males. Most cultures recognize two basic gender roles: masculine roles for men, and feminine roles for women. But these roles vary from culture to culture. Also, there are cultures that recognize more than two genders. For example, the term **two-spirit** is often used by people who are Indigenous and feel that they embody both masculinity and femininity.

A good place to start learning about gender is to take a few moments to reflect on your own experiences:

- When did you first become aware of your gender?
- As you grew, did you find that all men—or all women—were just like you? Were all the boys “masculine” in the same way? Were all the girls “feminine” in the same way?
- How did you learn about gender roles and expectations?

See p. 45 for a small group activity on gender roles and oppression.

- What happened when you couldn't—or didn't want to—live up to those roles and expectations?
- Where does gender show up in your everyday life today?

**Gender identity** is a self-determined identity that reflects an individual's personal understanding of gender in regards to their own embodied experience. We express our gender identity externally through behaviours, clothing, hair style, voice, and other forms of presentation. We also assume the gender of others based on their **gender expression** (i.e., their behaviours, clothing, hair style, voice, and other forms of presentation).

People whose gender identity lines up with the gender they were assigned at birth are called **cisgender**. To understand gender identity, we need to let go of the belief that a person's gender is assigned at birth as determined by biological sex—or, more specifically, genitalia. We are all much more than a penis or a vagina.

Most of us have been taught there are two and only two genders. That concept is known as the **gender binary**. The gender binary tells us that there is only one "right," "normal," or "healthy" way for gender to be understood, identified, and expressed—that is, as either male or female, masculine or feminine. The gender binary tells us that there are no grey areas, no middle ground, no continuum. If you've gone through the process to become an Affirming Ministry (see <http://affirmunited.ause.ca/affirming-ministries-program>), you've learned that human sexuality is experienced on a continuum. In the same way, gender occurs across a continuum of possibilities, rather than just two distinct boxes—man or woman.

But even recognizing a continuum is not expressive enough. There simply are not enough "labels" to identify each point along the continuum. But there are enough people! Every one of us expresses and identifies with our gender in different ways.

The terms **transgender** and **transsexual** are often used interchangeably, but the two terms actually have different meanings (see definitions, p. 57). Transgender, or trans, is an umbrella term whose meaning remains in flux. The term "trans" is broadly used to include a community of people (transgender, transsexual, genderqueer, pangender, bigender, etc.), and includes those who may

- have a gender identity different from their biological or assigned sex
- express their gender in ways that differ from societal expectations
- transition—cross over—from one gender to the other (permanently or intermittently), such as male-to-female (MTF) or female-to-male (FTM)
- be intersex (born with sex characteristics that are neither exclusively male nor female)
- identify their sexual orientation as heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, or asexual

Since **pronouns**—"she" or "he," or gender-neutral options such as "they"—are understood to communicate an individual's gender, they play an important role in gender identity (see Facts about Pronouns, p. 55). When assumptions are made about which pronoun should be used to refer to another person, there is the potential that the wrong pronoun will be used. Using the wrong pronoun is referred to as **misgendering**. Pronouns are particularly important for gender non-conforming (people who don't conform to society's expectations of gender expression or gender identity) and/or trans individuals, because the use of the correct pronoun is a way of affirming the individual's gender identity.

Being trans is not a mental illness/sexual deviance or disorder. It is not the same as being a cross-dresser. (That's a person who, on occasion, wears the clothing considered typical for another gender, but does not necessarily desire to change their gender.)

It is important to note that not everyone is comfortable adopting the terms trans, transgender, or transsexual. Trans men (sometimes called FTMs—female-to-male) and women (MTFs—male-to-female) may decide to undergo a transitioning process that can include sexual reassignment surgery (SRS) and/or hormone replacement therapy (HRT). But not all trans people who transition feel the labels FTM (female-to-male) or MTF (male-to-female) reflect their experience with gender.

Further terms relating to this topic can be found in the glossary. As you can see, gender is a concept that influences culture and institutions. Gender also plays a role in an individual's relationships with themselves and others. We hope that this introduction will give you some tools to engage in conversations about gender.

### **Listen to the Stories**

Stories are all around us. They are what move us, make us feel alive, and inspire us. Cultures around the world have used stories to share their history or cultural events with the next generation. Jesus used stories to teach and challenge his listeners. Today Sunday school teachers and clergy alike continue to use biblical and other stories to instruct and to change their listeners. Stories can entertain, heal, and motivate, helping to form communities by creating a sense of unity among the listeners.

The personal story helps us to understand others who have different experiences than we do. Watch a video, read a book, listen to an audio story, and hear the personal stories of trans people in church and society:

- [Ruth's Story](http://youtu.be/FD4X1TKjtL4) (http://youtu.be/FD4X1TKjtL4)  
Ruth Wood, the United Church minister of Calvary Pastoral Charge in Kingston, ON, speaks about her journey as a trans person and her theological reflection on acceptance and love.
- [Call Me Malcolm](http://www.facebook.com/CallMeMalcolm) (Joseph Paralagrec, Filmworks Inc., United Church of Christ)  
(www.facebook.com/CallMeMalcolm)  
The story of Malcolm, a transgender seminary student, and his struggle with faith, love, and gender identity. Study guides are available.
- [On the Male Side of Middle](https://youtu.be/UoljapEHmDA) (https://youtu.be/UoljapEHmDA; see also [www.calvinneufeld.com](http://www.calvinneufeld.com))  
This film about transgender Mennonite Calvin Neufeld captures a special moment in time between him and his family.
- [The Transgender Project](http://www.thetransgenderproject.com) (www.thetransgenderproject.com)  
An online collection of profiles that record, share, and celebrate the personal stories of transgender women and men from across Canada; stories of struggle, courage, and triumph.
- ["Two Spirit"—Injunuity](https://youtu.be/iDyagnNmg28) (https://youtu.be/iDyagnNmg28)  
A four-minute animated video by Injunuity, featuring the stories of two-spirit people.

See p. 42 for a small group process with questions, called "Listening to the Stories."

## **Additional Resources**

To deepen your understanding of gender identity and trans experiences, explore some of these online resources:

### **Websites:**

- [GLAAD: Transgender FAQ](http://www.glaad.org/transgender/transfaq) ([www.glaad.org/transgender/transfaq](http://www.glaad.org/transgender/transfaq))  
A simple one-page introductory explanation of trans identity. Further resources are available through links on the page.
- [What the Heck Are Pronouns? \(Minus18\)](https://minus18.org.au/index.php/resource-packs/pronouns) (<https://minus18.org.au/index.php/resource-packs/pronouns>)  
A comprehensive resource produced by Australia's largest youth-led organization for youth of all sexual orientations and gender identities, which includes a short article, video, and app (that helps you practise pronouns).

### **YouTube videos:**

- [Laverne Cox at Creating Change 2014](https://youtu.be/6cytc0p4Jwg) (<https://youtu.be/6cytc0p4Jwg>)  
Actress and activist Laverne Cox speaks to the importance of trans justice in the context of contemporary trans issues in North America.
- [What Are Pronouns? \(Minus18\)](https://youtu.be/3xpvricekxU) (<https://youtu.be/3xpvricekxU>)  
A video by Australia's youth-led organization about how gender identity is connected to the use of pronouns.

*For a complete list, see the "Trans and Gender Identity Resources" chart (beginning on p. 63).*

## **FAITH AND GENDER IDENTITY IN THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA**

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Being trans can play a significant role in a person's spiritual life. Due to the many challenges and blessings that occur, the experience of having a gender identity that is different from their biological or assigned sex, expressing their gender in ways that differ from societal expectations, and/or transitioning (from female to male, or male to female) are opportunities for deep spiritual reflection and growth. The trans person is forced to peer deeply into their own soul in order to confront and evaluate the meaning of their life, in a way that others rarely need to do. These are spiritual questions that go to the fundamental nature of being.

Being trans is not about having a "problem" that needs "fixing," whether that be gender or sexuality—it is about unifying the body and soul and becoming whole. For the trans person, being true to their own originality is a spiritual issue because it is the way in which spiritual truths are physically embodied.

Trans people merit acknowledgement of their sacredness, their uniqueness, simply because they are human beings who hold within themselves a grain of the sacred, as we all do. They have voices and are seeking the truth. By their presence in the world they sanctify all life.

Those who stand outside of the trans community need to learn to listen and respond with an embrace that signifies the holiness, dearness, sacredness, and depth of another human being.<sup>1</sup>

### **Theological Statement**

God has brought forth human beings as creatures who are male, female, and sometimes dramatically or subtly a complex mix of male and female in their bodies. Human cultures have created a broad diversity of roles for men and women, and have sometimes created roles for people named as neither male nor female, often revered and respected roles.

Rules of appearance in the Bible, such as in Deuteronomy 22:5 (wearing clothes of the opposite sex), are certainly among the rules criticized by Jesus as focused on outward conformity rather than inward integrity grounded in the acceptance of God's love.

There are numerous biblical affirmations of the goodness of creation and the love of God for all people, including Genesis 1, Psalm 139, John 1:1–5, and Acts 10:34–43. Galatians 3:26–29 is another example, which calls on those who are baptized to put on Christ like a garment and to look past human divisions to become one person in Christ.

Trans people are currently offering valuable ministry within The United Church of Canada, both as lay people and as clergy. In keeping with the United Church's long history of promoting gender justice, the United Church affirms all gender identities and experiences of gender.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted with permission from "The Heart/Spirit, Not the Head/Mind: Being Transgendered is a Spiritual Phenomena and not a Psychological Condition." Presented at the Sixth International Congress on Sex and Gender Diversity at Manchester Metropolitan University, 2004, by Kenneth Dollahide, Ph.D.

<sup>2</sup> Adapted from the United Church policy Affirming the Participation and Ministry of Transgender People within The United Church of Canada and Supporting Their Civil and Human Rights [GC40 2009 – 086] (search [www.united-church.ca](http://www.united-church.ca) or see the 2009 Record of Proceedings). For more on trans theology, see the reading list at [www.transtheology.org/reading.html](http://www.transtheology.org/reading.html).

## A Recent History of Trans and Gender Identity Justice in The United Church of Canada

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| <b>2009</b> | The Commitment to Inclusion is approved by the 40th General Council. It states that in matters respecting worship, doctrine, membership, and governance, the church is opposed to discrimination against any person on any basis (race, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical ability, socio-economic status, age, language, or any other basis on which a person is devalued), and it commits the church to becoming an anti-discriminatory and welcoming denomination.                          |
|             | The church affirms the participation and ministry of trans people, and encourages all congregations to welcome trans people into membership, ministry, and full participation.  |
|             | The Trans/Gender Task Group is formed.  |
|             | Resources on being trans are posted on the United Church website.   |
| <b>2010</b> | Cindy Bourgeois is the first openly transgender person ordained in the United Church.   |
|             | Survey on being trans in the United Church completed by 193 trans people and 159 allies (extends into early 2011).  |
| <b>2011</b> | 383 people participate in a series of GLBTT National Consultations, which provide opportunities for people of all sexual orientations and gender identities and their allies to help shape an open, welcoming, and affirming United Church. A report is offered as accountability.  |
| <b>2012</b> | The work of the Trans/Gender Diversity Task Group comes to an end, having created web pages with recommended resources, a Facebook page, liturgy, Trans 101 Kit and workshops, and the United Church Trans Network. A final report with recommendations is received by the Executive of the General Council and sent to appropriate staff or committees for follow-up.  |
|             | The church acknowledges the difference between gender identity and sexual orientation; affirms that gender identity is not a barrier to membership and ministry; and requests the General Secretary to update all existing policy statements that refer only to “sexual orientation” by adding “and gender identities.”   |
|             | The General Council registration form includes, for the first time, the option for participants to self-identify their gender identity. This is acknowledged at the 41st General Council as a way the church is working to more fully welcome trans people.   |
|             | At the 41st General Council, Ruth Wood, a United Church transgender woman and ordained minister, shares her story in a video entitled <a href="https://youtu.be/FD4X1TKjtL4">Ruth’s Story</a> (https://youtu.be/FD4X1TKjtL4).   |
| <b>2013</b> | Two Facebook Groups are created for allies and trans people to connect with one another: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trans and Gender Identity, The United Church of Canada is an open Facebook group for trans people, family, friends, and allies (<a href="https://www.facebook.com/groups/561099660605534">https://www.facebook.com/groups/561099660605534</a>)</li> <li>• Trans Network [UCCanada] is a private Facebook group created for trans people in the United Church</li> </ul> |
| <b>2015</b> | Online resources are updated on <a href="http://www.united-church.ca">www.united-church.ca</a> (search for “trans gender identity”).  |
|             | The 42nd General Council approves the Living Apology to LGBTT2Q people (to be a travelling, interactive art installation project).  |
|             | <i>Celebrating Gender Diversity: A Toolkit on Gender Identity and Trans Experiences for Communities of Faith</i> is published.  |

## **BARRIERS IN CHURCH AND SOCIETY**

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In 2010–2011 the United Church’s Trans/Gender Diversity Task Group conducted a survey on being trans in the church. Respondents to the survey included 193 individuals who identified as trans, and 159 who identified as a significant other, family, friend, or ally.

Of respondents, 38% were members/adherents of the United Church, while 38% identified as former members, prospective new members, or regular visitors of a United Church. The remaining 24% were most likely people who had visited a United Church or were related to a member of the church.

Respondents were asked to rate their experience in the United Church as a trans person or ally. 35% of respondents found their experience to be neutral (neither affirming nor negative). 26% found it to be somewhat affirming, while 15% checked extremely affirming. 18% found their experience in the United Church to be somewhat negative; 6% identified their experience as extremely negative.

Barriers experienced by trans people in church and society include the following:

- having their chosen name and/or pronoun ignored
- a lack of safe access to washroom facilities that line up with their gender identity
- having no option beyond two boxes (the gender binary: male or female) on forms
- difficulty in changing documentation when a person has transitioned and identifies with a new name (includes church certificates such as baptism, confirmation, ordination, commissioning, recognition of designated lay ministry)
- the common practice of breaking into groups (e.g., in choirs) based on the gender binary (men or women), leaving no room for anyone who identifies as both or neither
- being refused accommodation, or difficulty in finding safe accommodations
- loss of employment and difficulty in finding employment
- lack of access to health care by a physician who is both respectful of trans people and knowledgeable of their health needs
- prohibitive costs associated with transitioning (provincial health coverage is spotty and the wait times can be atrocious)
- lack of safety and accessibility when travelling (i.e., often harassed—or worse—at security points at airports or border crossings)

### **Discrimination against Transgender People**

In 2011 an American survey was conducted by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force and the National Center for Transgender Equality. Interviews with over 6,400 transgender and gender non-conforming people make it the largest such study ever conducted. The [National Transgender Discrimination Survey](http://transequality.org/issues/national-transgender-discrimination-survey) (http://transequality.org/issues/national-transgender-discrimination-survey) revealed that transgender and gender non-confirming people face harsh discrimination at every turn: in homes, schools, workplaces, at the grocery store, doctor’s offices, emergency rooms, before judges, landlords, police officers, and other service providers.

One of the most important findings was that the intersection of anti-transgender discrimination with structural racism is especially devastating. Racialized people in general, including those who are multiracial, fare worse than White participants across the board, with African American respondents faring worse than all others in most areas.

Here are a few of the results from the survey:

- trans people are nearly four times more likely to live in extreme poverty and twice as likely to be unemployed
- 50% experience harassment/mistreatment in the workplace
- 25% have been fired because of their gender identity or expression
- 19% have been refused a home or apartment, and 11% have been evicted
- 20% of all respondents—and 41% of Black respondents—experienced homelessness
- 41% of all respondents—and 59% of Black respondents—reported attempting suicide—compared to only 1.6% of the general population
- 19% reported being refused health care
- 22% reported harassment by law enforcement and nearly 50% were uncomfortable seeking police assistance
- over 78% reported feeling more comfortable at work and their performance improving after transitioning, despite the same levels of harassment in the workplace

While Canada wide statistics are not available for comparison with the above American stats, a 2011 report by Egale Canada Human Rights Trust, “[Every Class in Every School](http://egale.ca/every-class)” (<http://egale.ca/every-class>), looked at homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia in Canadian schools. The study surveyed over 3,700 students from across Canada between December 2002 and June 2009. Among its findings it was revealed that

- 90% of trans youth hear transphobic comments daily or weekly from other students, and almost a quarter (23%) of trans students reported hearing teachers use transphobic language daily or weekly.
- Almost three-quarters (74%) of trans students reported being verbally harassed about their gender expression, and one-quarter (25%) of trans students reported having been physically harassed.
- Trans students were much more likely than sexual minority or non-LGBTQ students to have been physically harassed or assaulted because of their gender expression (37% compared with 21% for sexual minority students and 10% for non-LGBTQ students).
- When all identity-related grounds for feeling unsafe are taken into account, including ethnicity and religion, more than three-quarters (78%) of trans students indicated feeling unsafe in some way at school. Forty-four percent of trans students reported being likely to miss school because of feeling unsafe and 15% reported having skipped more than 10 days because of feeling unsafe at school.

## **Removing Barriers in the Church**

There are many ways in which the church and individual members can work to remove barriers and build safe and welcoming places for trans people in the life and ministry of the church.

The guides in this kit—“Creating Trans-Inclusive Ministries and Events” (pp. 18–21), “Creating a Gender-Inclusive Washroom Policy” (pp. 22–25), “Creating Trans-Inclusive Registration Forms” (pp. 26–30), and “Workshop: Creating Radically Inclusive Communities” (pp. 31–41)—may be particularly helpful. Also see the handouts, especially “Celebrating Trans and Two-Spirit People in Communities of Faith” and “Radical Welcome and Gender Identity” (pp. 51–54, or available separately at [www.united-church.ca](http://www.united-church.ca)).

In addition, special Sundays and international days are opportunities for communities of faith to make anew the welcoming message of the gospel and reaffirm to all who are oppressed, “You are not alone.”

Search [www.united-church.ca](http://www.united-church.ca) for the following:

- International Day against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia—May 17
- Transgender Day of Remembrance—November 20

## **GENDER IDENTITY AND OPPRESSION**

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Many aspects of society are designed with the assumption that people are assigned a gender at birth that never changes. This means that society often does not allow space for the needs and stories of trans and two-spirit people. The name given to this type of oppression is “cissexism.”

Due to this assumption that being cisgender is “normal,” trans people’s experiences and bodies are often forgotten or erased. It can be dangerous to be made invisible in society. Trans people’s needs are often misunderstood or overlooked, making safe professional and personal relationships difficult. Trans people also experience oppression when they encounter intentional exclusion of trans and two-spirit people, meet barriers in being accepted for who they truly are, or encounter overt forms of violence.

### **Personal and Institutional Oppression**

To understand the full impact of trans experiences of oppression, some insight is required into how cissexism can occur on personal and institutional levels in addition to the barriers mentioned in “Barriers in Church and Society” above (pp. 12–14).

Personal examples of cissexism are

- social rejection (from family, partners, friends)
- street harassment and other acts of transphobic and transmisogynist violence<sup>3</sup>
- people treating a trans person as a different gender than their gender identity (using the wrong name or pronouns)
- harassment, such as a trans person being asked invasive questions about their body

Institutional examples of cissexism are

- loss of employment
- lack of access to safe washrooms
- lack of support or understanding while trying to address injustices in the legal system
- medical abuse from doctors and nurses, or the inability to find effective medical care
- hurtful media representation and a lack of representation of diverse trans experiences

### **Trans Justice for a Diverse Community**

In society, there are many ways through which people have access to power or are denied access to power. When addressing issues of trans justice, it is important to be aware of the ways in which class, race, education level, ability, and more play a factor in determining one’s ability to access resources, safety, and empowerment.

This is where the term “transmisogyny” is helpful. It highlights the fact that trans women experience the interconnected challenges of being women in a sexist society and trans in a transphobic society.

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<sup>3</sup> **transphobia:** conscious or unconscious hatred of, fear of, and discrimination against individuals who do not conform in appearance and/or identity to cisnormative or “traditional” conceptions of gender.

**transmisogyny:** a specific form of sexism and misogyny that regularly demonizes and ridicules trans women.

For trans and two-spirit people who experience mental illness, accessing medical services can be difficult. They might experience discrimination for being trans or have to deal with medical professionals who have had no training on how to serve trans people.

### **Decolonizing Gender Identity**

There are trans people who identify as men or women, and trans people who identify as trans men or trans women. These people may choose to transition medically or they may decide not to. There are also individuals who are trans who do not identify as either a man or a woman. They may identify in many different ways (a variety of terms are included in the Glossary of Key Terms and Concepts, pp. 57–61—including non-binary, agender, genderqueer, and bigender.)

To understand all of these identities, we need to pay attention to the ways in which culture is connected to gender roles and norms. While people who have non-binary gender identities (do not identify as a man or a woman) exist within and challenge Western notions of gender, there are other cultures where gender is understood very differently, including the recognition of more than two genders.

Non-binary experiences outside of Western gender norms remind us that race and gender intersect in all trans experiences. These experiences challenge conversations about trans justice to always include an analysis of and commitment to racial justice and decolonization. Many cultures hold understandings of gender that differ from the dominant binary gender model.

It is important to note that some people wish to be understood as part of the trans community, while others wish their gender to be understood as separate from being trans. Within Canadian contexts, the term “two-spirit” is frequently used by Indigenous people as an identity that relates to their gender and/or sexuality. Gender roles within some Indigenous communities, understood outside of definitions ascribed by colonial patriarchy, mean that the term “two-spirit” can act as a challenge to Western understandings of gender, gender expression, and sexuality.

The use of this term varies among communities and from person to person. More resources are listed below to help you explore how unlearning colonialism is an important element of understanding gender identity and being able to hold the stories of all experiences of all genders.

### **Asking Questions and Making Change**

Since we are immersed in our communities and culture, it can be hard to step back and realize where and how oppression is being experienced. Understanding oppression requires an awareness of power: Whose voice is respected? Who is allowed to make decisions? Who feels in control?

Power can be expressed on a personal level. For example, in a gathering, who speaks up and how often? Whose opinion is asked for and listened to? Who is treated as a leader, or invited into leadership? Who is assumed to “belong”? Who holds positions of authority? Power is also expressed in the structures of our society. Are all genders treated equally? Are all sexual orientations respected? Are all age groups listened to in the same way? What language is used? Is one ethnic background assumed to be “normal”?

Searching for answers to these questions can certainly help illuminate where change is needed so that all people may feel fully respected and included. The United Church of Canada’s intercultural vision (p. 41) invites us to ask these kinds of questions so that we may deeply examine our differences; name

and address the power dynamics in our communities; and seek to create communities that honour all of who we are—our differences and what we have in common. (For more, search “intercultural” on [www.united-church.ca](http://www.united-church.ca).)

### **How to Empower Trans and Two-Spirit People**

Addressing the loss of power that trans and two-spirit people experience in society involves changes on personal, communal, and societal levels. On a personal level, we are called to think about the way that our language fails to make space for them. Within our churches and other communities, we are called to look at the messages we are sending about the value we place on the lives of trans and two-spirit people. How are we listening to and honouring their stories? As a society, we are called to address the many injustices trans and two-spirit people are experiencing and call our governments, churches, and more, to be accountable.

More information about helpful, necessary next steps can be found in the handouts, particularly “Celebrating Trans and Two-Spirit People in Communities of Faith” and “Radical Welcome and Gender Identity” (pp. 51–54, or available separately at [www.united-church.ca](http://www.united-church.ca)).

### **Additional Resources**

#### ***Non-binary identities***

- [Words by Non-binary People re: Non-binary Experiences](#): [PDF]  
A resource for service providers who want to be more “non-binary friendly” ([www.excellenceforchildand youth.ca](http://www.excellenceforchildand youth.ca), search “non-binary friend”)  
This resource, by Omnes et Nihil, explores the diversity of non-binary experiences of gender. It helps service providers be more mindful of providing safe, affirming services.

#### ***Two-spirit***

- [Gender Abolition as Colonisation](http://boldlygo.co/gender-abolition-as-colonisation) (<http://boldlygo.co/gender-abolition-as-colonisation>)  
An article on the Boldly Go blog on how different cultural understandings of gender complicate the creation of gender justice.
- [Hearing Two-Spirits](http://briarpatchmagazine.com/articles/view/hearing-two-spirits) (<http://briarpatchmagazine.com/articles/view/hearing-two-spirits>)  
A short article in *Briarpatch* on the role of two-spirit experiences in resisting colonialism.
- [“Two Spirit”—Injunuity](https://youtu.be/iDyknNmg28) (<https://youtu.be/iDyknNmg28>)  
A four-minute animated video by Injunuity, featuring the stories of two-spirit people.
- [Two-Spirited Aboriginal People](#): [PDF]  
Continuing Cultural Appropriation by Non-Aboriginal Society  
(<http://pi.library.yorku.ca/ojs/index.php/cws/article/viewFile/6129/5317>)  
Michelle Cameron’s article in *Canadian Woman Studies* explores the history of the term “two-spirit” and its role in naming a culturally unique experience of gender and/or sexuality.
- [Language, Culture, and Two-Spirit Identity](http://apihtawikosisan.com)  
(<http://apihtawikosisan.com>, search “language culture two-spirit”)  
This blog post by âpihtawikosisân focuses on the role that language plays in naming culturally specific concepts and experiences. It looks at Cree terms used to discuss gender and sexuality.

## Guides

### CREATING TRANS-INCLUSIVE MINISTRIES AND EVENTS

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Take the time in your learning process to reflect personally and as a community on the impact of these new ideas. The tools in this kit are intended to guide the beginning of an ongoing learning process that will require patience and persistence. Below are some key aspects of creating trans-inclusive spaces for gatherings or events. They reflect a consciousness of the complexity of gender identity and make space for all experiences of gender.

#### **1. Community building; safe, accessible, and affirming programs**

##### ***a. Effective training for the leadership/staff***

Ensure that people who are in leadership positions—who act as role models in your community—are well educated about trans experiences and gender identity. Leaders who are empowered with knowledge serve the community better. They can also play a key role in ensuring that people of all gender identities and gender expressions feel safe in the community.

For leadership training opportunities, contact a local community centre for people of all sexual orientations and gender identities, Affirm United/ S’affirmer Ensemble (<http://ause.ca>), your local Conference office, or use any number of resources listed in “Trans and Gender Identity Resources” (beginning on p. 63) to deepen your knowledge.

##### ***b. Being aware of how and when gender is being used.***

It may be helpful to ask yourself: *Do I need to reference gender right now?* or *How can all gender expressions and identities be included right now?*

When planning activities (for example, ice breakers), take note of the ways in which gender is present. Are gender categories being used in ways that reinforce gender stereotypes or that only give space for two genders? If so, there are many other creative ways to explore commonalities and differences among a community or establish groups for activities. It is also important to give people opportunities to talk about their experiences with gender and explore their own identities. Opportunities for intentionally uplifting gender in its diversity are an important part of affirming trans experiences. They also encourage everyone to think critically and creatively about gender identity and expression.

##### ***c. Creating graceful learning spaces***

Within any community of faith, there will likely be a wide range of experience when it comes to understanding gender identity. This means that people will need to support each other’s learning in a way that encourages growth instead of fostering fear or shame for “not knowing enough.” It also means that special attention should be given to supporting and caring for those who are marginalized due to their gender identity.

To learn more about what it means to navigate these relationships as a community, take a look at the workshop on “Creating Radically Inclusive Communities” (pp. 31–41). These activities are designed to help communities of faith explore this topic together, learn some skills for apologizing when it’s needed, and help each other learn.

#### **d. Names and pronouns**

Being able to define for yourself how you would like to be addressed—by name and pronoun—is an important aspect of building a community where people feel seen and accepted. Some trans folk may have recently chosen a name, which was not provided before the gathering. Or they may choose to wait until meeting a community before deciding which name they feel safest using. Pronouns are also important; gender often plays a role in determining which pronouns a person prefers.

To ensure a shared understanding of the importance of respecting an individual's name(s) and pronouns, create an opportunity for people to share their names and pronouns. It could be a get-to-know-you activity, or by using name tags. It can also be helpful to talk about what the best thing to do is when someone uses the wrong name or pronoun to refer to an individual.

Until you know an individual's chosen pronouns, it is helpful to learn to use gender-neutral language. For example: "Can you ask the person wearing the blue sweater if they would like to join us?" or "Is this bag theirs? Can you return it to them please?"

For many reasons, people may choose to use certain names or pronouns in some settings but not necessarily in others. It is always a good idea to ask someone how they would like to be referred to outside of the established community, or to give them an opportunity to name themselves when meeting new people. For example, someone may feel comfortable being out as a trans woman in a youth group, but would rather people did not disclose their chosen name and pronouns to family members. (For more information, see "Facts about Pronouns" on pp. 55–56.)

## **2. Registration forms**

### **a. Transparent, honest communication**

Transparent, honest communication is important to make an event or ministry affirming of trans individuals. It enables you to show how much thought and understanding you are putting into ensuring that people with various experiences of gender feel invited and safe. And it helps individuals make informed decisions about whether they want to participate in the event or join the community.

### **b. Making space for options**

Effective registration forms give space for individuals to feel cared for and respected. Providing space for individuals to list their needs and concerns can go a long way in terms of starting ongoing conversations about support. See the guide on "Creating Trans-Inclusive Registration Forms" (pp. 26–30) for a sample registration form with accompanying commentary.

## **3. Accommodations: providing information and options**

The Sample Registration Form (pp. 26–30) provides information working with participants and their guardians to ensure that trans folk feel safe at events, especially those that involve overnight accommodations. The most important elements of ensuring accommodations are accessible are

- providing as much information as possible about the accommodations and what options are available for people depending on their needs
- ensuring that there is a baseline of privacy for all participants in regards to washrooms/shower areas and changing spaces

Please see “Creating a Gender-Inclusive Washroom Policy” (pp. 22–25) for more information. Several key factors in ensuring that washrooms are accessible are

- providing a gender-neutral washroom for individuals who feel most comfortable in non-gendered spaces
- ensuring an adequate sense of privacy for individuals of all genders, through either single-stall washrooms that are available for all genders or multiple-stall washrooms that provide an adequate amount of privacy

If the space currently has limitations regarding inclusive washrooms, this is important to communicate.

#### **4. Worship**

Worship is a time for the community to gather and feel close to one another and to God. It is important that trans people do not feel a barrier to their spiritual growth because a worship space is exclusive or harmful. Here are a few considerations when planning your worship.

- Avoid using gender to determine participation in praying, singing, or speaking. Try alternate groupings like altos, tenors, and sopranos or the right side and left side of the worship space.
- Avoid using stereotypes about gender in skits or for humour. Think critically about why you are drawing on ideas about gender and how to convey your message appropriately.
- Use prayers, hymns, and scripture translations that are gender-inclusive. (Be prepared to adapt liturgy using gender-inclusive language.)
- Engage in trans theology.
  - Research theologians and queer theorists who offer exegesis of the Bible from a trans perspective. Check out this trans theology reading list for a start: [www.transtheology.org/reading.html](http://www.transtheology.org/reading.html).
  - Include stories about trans individuals and communities in sermons, invite a trans person to share their spiritual journey with your community of faith, or include trans poetry/writing as part of a service.

#### **5. Pastoral care for people of all sexual orientations and gender identities**

Spiritual care providers who can offer support and guidance to people who are dealing with transphobia and transmisogyny are in great demand. Successfully creating a community where trans people feel welcomed and celebrated is a gift for everyone involved. It also creates an opportunity and a challenge for further ministry beyond usual programming.

Trans folks who feel safe in a community may reach out for further resources or encourage other trans folks to join the community. It can be helpful to have resources on hand, such as emergency/crisis lines specifically created for youth of all sexual orientations and gender identities.

Other forms of ministry may emerge from engaging in trans affirming community building. These include being called on to act as an advocate, educating fellow community members about gender identity, and participating in events within trans activist communities.

## **6. Human rights codes and youth and young adult ministry**

Get to know and understand human rights codes in your province and the country. Many provincial human rights codes have been amended in recent years to include gender identity/gender expression as distinct categories protected from discrimination. Refer to these standards when setting policies and ensuring that standards are being met.

## **7. Networking**

It can be very helpful to network with other organizations that are engaging in trans/gender identity justice work. Networking enables resources to be shared, and it is also an important way to feel supported in your work. We suggest you connect with

- local Affirming Ministries (<http://affirmunited.ause.ca/find-a-ministry>) and Affirm United/S'affirmer Ensemble (<http://affirmunited.ause.ca>)
- local community centres for people of all sexual orientations and gender identities
- national and international organizations for people of all sexual orientations and gender identities
- summer camps—such as Rainbow Camp ([www.welcomefriend.ca/camp](http://www.welcomefriend.ca/camp)), CampOUT! (<http://campout.ubc.ca>), Camp fYrefly ([www.usask.ca/education/fyrefly](http://www.usask.ca/education/fyrefly))—and community programming for people of all sexual orientations and gender identities
- the Student Christian Movement ([www.scmcanada.org](http://www.scmcanada.org))
- campus organizations and ministries (see [www.united-church.ca/search/locator](http://www.united-church.ca/search/locator))

## **8. Claiming space for gender identity justice**

A powerful way to making a space feel safe and welcoming is to use signs and posters to express your community's policies around gender identity and trans experiences. Consider getting trans artists involved or engaging members of the community to create posters and statements for display.

## **9. Ongoing learning and growth**

We hope that the information you read here gives you some insight into the needs of people who are gender-variant, trans, or two-spirit. But no resource is a full answer to issues of discrimination in our society and communities. This resource is designed to provide enough information that you feel empowered to play a leadership role in creating change with the resources you have, in the communities you are a part of. Change will happen differently in every community and will involve different catalysts.

However, there are some helpful tools that all communities can learn together that can enable ongoing learning processes to be affirming and safe while being grounded in accountability and justice. To learn more about these skills, check out workshop on “Creating Radically Inclusive Communities” (pp. 31–41).

## **CREATING A GENDER-INCLUSIVE WASHROOM POLICY**

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One obvious way that we interact with gender is the way in which public washrooms are segregated. Gender-segregated washrooms pose problems for many reasons:

- Guardians and parents are not always the same gender as the children they are taking care of.
- Personal support workers are not always the same gender as the people they are supporting.
- People end up waiting in long lines to use the washroom, when there are available stalls nearby in a washroom designated for a different gender.

From the perspective of people who are trans and/or gender non-conforming, gender-segregated washrooms pose further problems:

- Trans and gender non-conforming individuals may feel unsafe using a washroom that matches their gender identity. When they do, people may harass them, tell them they are using the wrong washroom, or ask intrusive questions about their gender identity.
- Trans individuals who do not identify as a man or woman may not feel comfortable using gendered washrooms.

For these reasons, a gender-inclusive washroom policy is a concrete step toward making your space safe and welcoming for people of all gender identities.

### **Step One: Planning**

1. Make an education plan.
  - a. Identify key community members who will need to learn about a trans-inclusive washroom policy. They include ushers, custodians, Sunday school teachers, youth ministry leaders, and ministers.
  - b. Network with individuals who have expertise and experience in gender identity education. (See 7. Networking in “Creating Trans-Inclusive Ministries and Events” above, p. 21.)
  - c. Members of the community who are living visibly as trans will be directly affected by the education steps you take. Invite them to be involved in the planning stage, or check in with them about the plans as they are shaping up.
2. Take stock.
  - a. Identify financial assets available to animate a trans-inclusive washroom policy. Costs could include paying for an educator, washroom reconstruction/changes, and new washroom signs.
  - b. Start collecting the names of people in your community who would be interested in offering leadership to this project.

## **Step Two: Education and Developing the Policy**

1. Host learning opportunities for your community to learn about gender identity. Training could cover gender self-determination, binary and non-binary gender identities, and affirming language to talk about people who are trans.
2. Use gathering times as an opportunity to discuss ongoing work, such as commitment to educate others about gender identity, and willingness to address an issue relating to washroom use if it arises.
3. Create an official trans-inclusive policy for your community of faith. (Refer to examples and practical considerations below).

### ***What does a trans-inclusive washroom policy look like?***

There are several ways in which washrooms can be trans-inclusive. Every building is slightly different when it comes to the existing washrooms and the resources available to make changes. Here are several suggestions of how to move forward, with comments on each option:

1. Make all washrooms gender-neutral.
  - If you make washrooms available to all genders, changes to the stalls may be needed for people to use them with a desired level of privacy.
  - Education would be key to animating this washroom policy. Individuals who do not have a full understanding of gender and trans identities may object to the use of a gender-neutral washroom or feel uncomfortable using one.
2. Create a single-stall washroom that can be designated as gender-neutral, or reassign a current single-stall washroom as a gender-neutral washroom.
  - A single-stall washroom might not be able to accommodate the volume of people desiring one. Users may have various reasons: child and caretaker may not be same gender, individual may require gender-neutral washroom, single-stall washrooms are often the only ones that can accommodate physical accessibility needs.
  - Also, in order to be intentionally inclusive, it would be important to specifically designate a single-stall washroom as gender-neutral. For example, put up a sign that states “All Gender Washroom.” Depending on the building and who uses it, more explanation may be needed.
3. Reconstruct stalls in a washroom to be more like small single-stall washrooms, with floor-to-ceiling doors and a communal sink for hand washing.
  - This option may require the most construction. But it is most likely the most effective solution, as it makes washrooms accessible for all genders by removing the need to police anyone’s gender or gender presentation when accessing the space. This is especially helpful for trans individuals who fear not being read as a woman or man when using a washroom.

Decisions on the physical building changes will need to reflect the needs and context of each community. To get ideas and a feel for the pros and cons of different options, community members would benefit from taking tours in local buildings that have gender-neutral washrooms.

### ***Practical considerations***

1. Make every washroom space comfortable for all bodies and potential gender presentations. Have hooks for bags and purses in all stalls. Have wastebaskets in each stall for pads/tampons disposal.
2. Ensure that the washroom spaces provide an adequate level of privacy. Older stalls in multiple-stall washrooms may not create enough privacy for all people to feel safe while using them.
3. Be sure the signage does not perpetuate the idea that gender is a binary construct. For example, images that use a half-skirt/half-pant to signify a gender-neutral space do not accurately reflect the wide range of non-binary gender experiences. Rather, they imply that all non-binary people are half-man and half-woman. It may be useful to rethink imagery that is used on all washroom signs and move away from using pants/skirt imagery to designate gender.

### ***Further accessibility considerations***

1. A washroom policy that addresses trans-inclusivity is not complete without making full considerations of other forms of accessibility. Please consult other resources to learn about creating barrier-free washrooms for people with physical accessibility needs.
2. To address the needs of those with chemical sensitivity issues, consider including a scent-free policy. Commit to use scent-free soaps and cleaning supplies and encourage people not to apply scented lotion and perfume in the washroom.

### **Step Three: Sharing the New Policy**

1. Make information about the washrooms visible upon entering the building. Information would include where the washrooms are located and the configuration of the stalls.
2. Update relevant resources—website, brochures, Facebook pages, and so on—with information about the gender-inclusive washroom policy.
3. Use signs on washroom doors to communicate your inclusive washroom policy.
4. Develop a communication strategy with all groups that use the building so that they understand the recent changes. Use weekly announcements, newsletters, websites, and so on.
5. Create a process for ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of the washroom policy.

### **An Important Note on Gender-Neutral Washrooms**

It is important that trans people always have the right to choose the washroom that feels safest for them. Not all trans people will want to use a gender-neutral washroom, even if there is one available. If you assume that all trans people will want to use a gender-neutral washroom, trans people may feel as though their gender identity is being invalidated and disrespected.

A trans-inclusive washroom policy requires learning how to value and respect all people's experience with gender. That requires education and awareness. Simply creating a gender-neutral washroom will not make washrooms safe for all trans people.

#### **Most importantly**

Washrooms are safe for trans people when the people who are using the washrooms are educated about gender identity.

Empowering people with education helps to ensure the space stays safe.

An investment in community education is needed so that people will be able to live into the trans-inclusive washroom policy.

### **Additional Resources**

- [Gender Neutral Bathrooms](http://www.uua.org/lgbtq/welcoming/ways/bathrooms) (www.uua.org/lgbtq/welcoming/ways/bathrooms)  
This link on the Unitarian Universalist Association site has a variety of resources including FAQs, documentaries, and articles. *Note: includes concrete suggestions for washroom signage.*

## CREATING TRANS-INCLUSIVE REGISTRATION FORMS

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### Sample Registration Form with Commentary

#### **Event Description**

Event descriptions are useful in providing participants with information about what to expect before committing to participating in the event. For some people, certain activities may make them feel unsafe and prior notice gives them an opportunity to contact organizers to figure out how they can participate in the event and feel safe.

*EXAMPLE:* A United Church Conference Youth Forum is an opportunity for youth across the Conference to gather and participate in the Conference AGM. The Youth Forum is designed to introduce youth to the functions of the Conference church court level, engage in dialogue about key issues that will be covered at the AGM, and explore the Conference's theme through youth-specific programming. Youth attending this event will have the opportunity to attend workshops, play games, sing songs, and more within a social justice framework.

#### **Basic Information**

Certain information, such as legal name, age, and gender, may not be required depending on the type of event you are hosting. Below you can find an example of how to collect basic information on a registration form that is trans-inclusive.

**Legal name:** \_\_\_\_\_

Name found on health card to be used in medical emergencies, or name found on passport to be used for travelling purposes.

**Preferred name:** \_\_\_\_\_

Name to be used throughout programming and on name tag.

**Gender:** \_\_\_\_\_

For many social gatherings, there is no logistical reason to know the gender of the people attending. Ask yourself: do you really need to know registrants' gender for this event? If the information is not essential, consider removing the question, or making it clearly optional (particularly for online forms.)

The approach recommended on this form is to ask an open-ended question that allows people to self-identify. If the information will be entered into a database, you may prefer to give a range of options, such as this:

- Man
- Woman
- Cisgender man
- Cisgender woman
- Trans man
- Trans woman
- Genderqueer
- Two-spirit
- Non-binary
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Pronouns:** How would you like us to refer to you? Circle all that apply or use the space provided below.

she/her/hers    they/them /theirs    he/him/his    Other: \_\_\_\_\_

In addition to asking on the registration form, include an opportunity for individuals to name themselves and share their pronouns at the start of the programming. Someone may change their preference between the time of registration and participation at an event.

**Age:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Access needs:** How can we make you feel safe and supported at this event?

You may use this space to communicate emotional/mental health needs, concerns about participating in a particular event, physical/mobility access needs, and more.

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*Alternatively, include relevant check boxes such as these:*

- physical accessibility—low mobility
- physical accessibility—use mobility device
- require ASL interpretation
- require access to quiet/low sensory space
- require warning before bright and/or flashing lights are used
- require access to electricity to charge mobility device
- require use of microphones to hear people talk in large spaces
- require trigger warning before discussions of sensitive material  
(please expand upon as much as you are comfortable under *Other* below)
- require child care
- would like assistance walking to/from accommodations
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Health care needs:** Do you have any medical conditions that we should be aware of to ensure your safety and well-being at this event?     Yes     No

If yes, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

**Medication:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions for medication administration:** \_\_\_\_\_

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It is possible for someone who is transitioning to be taking medication (hormone blockers or hormones). Especially for events that last longer than a week, it could be important to provide a participant with a quiet, clean space where injection needles may be used and properly disposed of. For camps that have on-site nurses, inquire if the nurse is familiar with hormone replacement therapy and understands how to administer hormone replacement therapy injections.

*Concerns:* Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions or concerns about attending this event or use the space below:

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**Accommodations**

Describe sleeping arrangements, changerooms, showers, and washrooms (include details, i.e., public stalls or private single stalls).

*EXAMPLE:* Participants at this event will be staying at the local university’s residence with 2–3 people assigned to each room. People can request individual sleeping arrangements as needed. Each floor will have two public washrooms, which will be designated as gender-neutral. Showers are available on each floor in a room that has private stalls for standing showers. One of the residence floors has a single-stall bathroom that includes its own private shower. Programming will take place at a United Church that has two public washrooms for men and women, and one single-stall wheelchair-accessible washroom.

*Preferred accommodation:* Please list where you would feel most comfortable staying, participants you would like to share a room with, and/or what genders you would feel most comfortable sharing a room with.

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*Concerns:* Please list any needs or concerns you have about your accommodations (sleeping arrangements, changerooms, washrooms, etc.):

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**Leadership Policy/Statement**

A vision or mission statement of the ministry team offering the event is an effective way to give participants an understanding of the values that will be uplifted at the event. This is also an opportunity to inform participants about any training that the leadership team has undergone.

*Example:* This event has been organized by a collective of volunteers from a United Church Conference, including ministry personnel and lay people, on behalf of the Youth and Young Adult Programming Unit. Our goal is to provide engaging, challenging, and nurturing opportunities for youth to build community and explore their faith. The Conference Youth Forum is currently in the process of being recognized as an Affirming Ministry. Members of the leadership team for this event have undergone training in gender identity and sexual orientation, mental health awareness, suicide intervention, and First Aid.

## Sample Registration Form (Empty)

### **Event Description**

- (events)
- (topics discussed)
- (people involved)

### **Basic Information**

*Legal name:* \_\_\_\_\_

Name found on health card to be used in medical emergencies, or name found on passport to be used for travelling purposes.

*Preferred name:* \_\_\_\_\_

Name to be used throughout programming and on name tag.

*Gender:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Pronouns:* How would you like us to refer to you? Circle all that apply or use the space provided below.

she/her/hers    they/them /theirs    he/him/his    Other: \_\_\_\_\_

*Age:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Access needs:* How can we make you feel safe and supported at this event?

You may use this space to communicate emotional/mental health needs, concerns about participating in a particular event, physical/mobility access needs, and more.

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*Health care needs:* Do you have any medical conditions that we should be aware of to ensure your safety and well-being at this event?     Yes     No

If yes, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

*Medication:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Instructions for medication administration:* \_\_\_\_\_

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*Concerns:* Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions or concerns about attending this event or use the space below:

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**Accommodations**

- (sleeping arrangements)
- (changerooms)
- (showers and washrooms; public or single stalls)

*Preferred accommodation:* Please list where you would feel most comfortable staying, participants you would like to share a room with, and/or what genders you would feel most comfortable sharing a room with.

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*Concerns:* Please list any needs or concerns you have about your accommodations (sleeping arrangements, changerooms, washrooms, etc.):

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**Leadership Policy/Statement**

- (leadership team)
- (values)
- (training)

## Workshops

### CREATING RADICALLY INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

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This workshop will help communities develop the tools for having courageous conversations. Although the activities are not necessarily focused on trans or two-spirit experiences, they explore the importance of embodying values, and personal and communal forms of accountability.

You may choose from among a variety of activities. You might explore the activities one at a time weekly, as a community-building exercise. They can be integrated with other curricula, such as a youth group, Bible study, or committee meeting.

When you are planning a workshop, be sure to read the notes at the end under Closing the Workshop Space about ending the meeting well and community care.

### Setting Up the Workshop Space

#### ***Territorial Acknowledgement***

*Goal:* Part of living out the United Church's commitment to right relations is to find ways for communities to be conscious of the history of colonialism in Canada. One way to encourage awareness of our relationship with the land we live on is to take time at the beginning of an event to acknowledge the Indigenous people whose land is being used. Search [www.united-church.ca](http://www.united-church.ca) for "Acknowledging the Territory in Worship," for more information about this practice.

*Material:* Information about the history of the land you are gathered on, especially the names of the Indigenous communities who have lived and/or continue to live on the land.

*Process:* A short statement or prayer may be spoken. How you engage in this process will vary, depending on your own identity and experiences in regard to colonialism and the people who are part of the community that is gathering.

*Debrief:* Not always necessary, but space for questions or feedback can be a learning opportunity.

#### ***Care Tags***

*Goal:* Participants have an opportunity to name themselves and their needs in order to better understand how to care for one another as a community.

*Material:* The more craft supplies the better! As a minimum, markers and one piece of paper for each participant and leader.

*Process:* Invite participants to create "care tags." These are name tags that include pronouns, important pieces about the individual's identity, and how they would like to be treated in the workshop space (also referred to as access needs). Depending on the community, it may be important to explain a little about pronouns and offer examples.

#### **Example**

Name: Michiko

Pronouns: they/them

Access needs: time to think of answers to questions asked by the workshop leader

*Debrief:* Invite each participant to share their care tags with the rest of the group and display them in a way that enables them to be read.

### ***Establishing Group Norms***

*Goal:* To ensure a shared vision of how everyone should treat each other and the space, by taking time for a communal conversation about it.

*Materials:* chart paper and marker

*Process:* Invite participants to share their thoughts on what commitments should be made by all the participants in regards to behaviour and communication. During the discussion, have someone record the comments on chart paper. Ask questions such as these:

- How do you feel about the start and end time of our gatherings? Is it okay to start with people missing? What should we do if we're late or unable to attend?
- How should we share our opinions with each other?
- What should happen if someone feels hurt by a comment made in this community?
- How do we feel about cell phone use during gatherings?
- How are we to treat the stories shared in this group? What does confidentiality look like?

*Debrief:* Once this process is complete, ask:

- Does this conversation feel complete?
- Would you like another opportunity to return to this later?
- If we want to adapt or change these commitments, how should that happen?

## Activities

The following activities are designed to be connected, but they also work as standalone activities. Choose activities that suit your gathering’s available time and resources.

### **Embodying Values Activity**

*Goal:* A teamwork activity to help people make connections between values and behaviours.

The exercise focuses on community values such as accessibility, justice, love, and peace, which are created through actions of all sizes.

*Materials:* Chart paper and markers. A hard copy of the “values prompts” (below) can be helpful, particularly for visual learners.

| <b>Values Prompts</b>  |
|--|
| Healthy communities are diverse.   |
| Healthy communities have people who are accountable.                     |
| Healthy communities believe all people deserve to feel empowered.        |
| Healthy communities believe that all people are worthy.                  |
| Healthy communities make decisions from places of love rather than fear. |

*Process:* Introduce the activity: *You are about to form groups of 4–6 individuals to explore what makes a community safe and healthy. Each group will receive chart paper, a marker, and a values prompt to brainstorm with. Share your thoughts based on the prompt you receive, and identify three concrete actions that relate to the prompt.*

It may be helpful to clarify the difference between a concrete action and an abstract value statement.

Help groups brainstorm with questions such as these:

- What would this value taste, look, sound, feel, and smell like?
- What words or phrases would someone use if they were demonstrating this value?
- What would the opposite of this value look like?

Here are some concrete vs. abstract examples for the value prompt **Healthy communities are diverse**:

| <b>Concrete Action</b>   | <b>Abstract Value Statement</b>    |
|--|------------------------------------|
| People of different genders are invited to lead worship.   | There are different people.        |
| The community has engaged in education about White privilege and members are reflecting on how White cultural norms can make people of colour feel less welcome. | Everyone is welcome.               |
| The community participates in the city’s Pride Parade every year.  | The community supports all people. |

*Debrief:* Invite each group to share the values prompt they received and the concrete actions they came up with. Depending on your time, you can also encourage questions among the different groups, or take time to ask further questions such as these:

- What was challenging about this exercise?
- What was enjoyable?
- Do you think these concrete actions are reasonable?
- Why do you think people engage or do not engage in the behaviours you have listed?

*Key Points:*

- Living into our values means unlearning old habits and practising new ways of being.
- It can be easy to think and talk about healthy community values without embodying them.
- To create healthy communities, we need to think intentionally about change. Take time to consider how you will measure the health of the community and what actions will reflect the community's values.

### ***Dealing with Conflict: Group Setting Activity***

*Goal:* To use drama to explore different forms of conflict, and to work as a group to problem solve difficult situations.

*Materials:* Scenario prompts. Some examples are provided below. However, it's even better to make scenario prompts that are appropriate for the context of your community.

#### **Sample Scenario Prompts**

*Person 1* routinely uses the words “retarded” and “gay” to put others down or to talk about things they don’t like. *Person 2* has known *Person 1* for a while and has decided to have a conversation with them about their language.

\*\*\*

*Person A* and *Person B* have just met at a party and started a conversation. It’s mostly been small talk. *Person A* becomes aware that *Person B* is using the wrong pronouns for someone who is also present at the party.

What should *Person A* do?

\*\*\*

*Person 3* and *Person 4* attend church together. *Person 3* recently mentioned to *Person 4* that they would leave the church if the voted to become an “Affirming congregation.” *Person 3* feels that this would be giving too much attention to the LGBTQ community and would be unfair to everyone else who attends the church. What should *Person 4* do?

\*\*\*

*Person C* has posted something personal on Facebook about feeling hurt and betrayed after a breakup and has been receiving really negative responses from several people who are personally attacking them. *Person D*, who is close friends with *Person C*, logs onto Facebook and comes across the posts in their live feed.

What should *Person D* do?

#### *Process:*

1. Ask participants the following questions:
  - What is conflict?
  - How do you feel when you are part of a conflict?
  - Does everyone act the same way when there is a conflict? Why?
2. If you are working with a large group (30+), it may be beneficial to break off into smaller discussion groups with assigned leaders to explore each scenario. In a smaller group, this exercise can be done with the whole group. Present the scenario prompt to the group and allow time for some conversation on the subject. When there has been sufficient conversation, invite two volunteers to demonstrate an example of how to address the scenario being discussed.

3. After the scenario has been presented, invite feedback:

- What did you notice?
- What did you think was helpful about how the situation was handled?
- What did you think of the words chosen? Would you have chosen the same words?
- What would have made the situation worse?
- What would have happened if nothing was said?

*Debrief:*

Although this activity involves debriefing each scenario, it may be helpful to take some time to debrief the concept of conflict in general. You may wish to ask questions such as these:

- Do you need to address a problem if it will compromise your safety?
- How has your culture or family influenced how you understand conflict?
- What is the best way to feel prepared for situations like this that come up in everyday life?
- Is body language important when trying to solve a conflict? Why?
- How does power or privilege play a role in the way conflicts are solved?

*Key Points:*

- It takes practice to learn how to address conflict when it arises.
- We have a responsibility to have difficult conversations with each other to help each other learn and grow together.
- Calling attention to someone's (potentially) hurtful or problematic behaviour is most healing and educational when we do not place blame or judgment on each other.

***Processing Conflict: Journalling Activity***

*Goal:* To create space for participants to work individually on processing an experience of conflict and hurt.

*Materials:* Participants may be invited to bring a journal, or pen and paper can be provided. Some participants may prefer to use other devices for note-taking, such as a laptop or cellphone.

*Process:*

1. Invite participants to think of a time when they experienced an injustice that felt unresolved.
2. Tell participants that they will have 10 minutes to compose a letter addressed to the person/thing that hurt them. This exercise is meant to be confidential. They will not be required to share anything they write.

*Debrief:*

- How did it feel? What did you notice?
- Was that easy/hard? Why?
- What feelings did this exercise bring up for you?

At the conclusion of this activity, it is important to acknowledge that every individual will have their own process that works best for them for healing. Sometimes these processes can take a long time, with many ups and downs. Remind participants that if they are struggling with something, they can seek out people they trust to talk things through, and that if they have been hurt, they have the right to seek justice/reconciliation.

*Key Points:*

- It's important to create space to listen to ourselves about what is causing us pain in our life.
- Being able to name an injustice when we experience it as an important part of healing, even if it is just for our own knowledge.

### ***Giving a Good Apology Activity***

*Goal:* A hands-on experience to learn about how to offer and receive apologies.

*Materials:* N/A

*Process:*

1. Explain to participants that even in the best of communities and relationships, mistakes can still happen. Apologies are an important part of building healthy communities. Most of us have experienced needing to apologize or being told to apologize, and we have a variety of experiences with receiving all sorts of apologies.
2. Invite participants to find a partner with whom they will practise apologizing. Offer a simple scenario that would require an apology (e.g., you have said something that hurt the other person's feelings). Instruct each person to take turns both giving and receiving an apology.

*Debrief:*

The following questions could be used to debrief this exercise:

- How did it feel?
- Was it easy or difficult? Why?
- What made the apology effective? What can make an apology feel incomplete?
- When and where would be a good time to apologize?
- Do you always need to accept an apology? Why or why not?

*Key points:*

- It's not always making a mistake, but refusing to apologize that can cause the most damage to a relationship in the long term.
- In cases of emotional manipulation or abuse, someone may be asked to apologize for something they should not have to be responsible for. If giving an apology makes you feel confused or upset, take some time to think about what is causing you to feel that way. It's okay to choose not to apologize if the situation is unjust.
- It's okay to ask for time and space to think about how you want to apologize.
- Apologies should involve not only words but a change in behaviour or action.

### **Exploring the Intercultural Vision Activity**

**Goal:** Learn to honour and deepen our understanding of difference by engaging in conversation about the church's vision for becoming an intercultural church

**Materials:** Print out copies of the United Church's "Vision for Becoming an Intercultural Church" (p. 41).

**Process:**

1. Read out loud the United Church's social policy position "Vision for Becoming an Intercultural Church" (p. 41).
2. Explain the Process of Mutual Invitation.

#### **Mutual Invitation**

Mutual invitation is one way to engage in intercultural conversation. In this process, the group leader or a designated person shares first. Then they invite another person to share—ideally, invite someone who is not seated next to them—by name and with a question: "George, may I invite you to speak next?"

After the next person has spoken, they invite another. If you are invited to share, and are not yet ready, say "pass for now" and the group will offer you another invitation later. If you are invited to speak and do not want to speak at all, say "pass" and the group will honour your silence.

Continue the process until everyone in the circle has received an invitation to speak, and everyone who said "pass for now" has been re-invited to speak.

The process of mutual invitation is from the study guide for *Our Common Vision* (United Church DVD, 2011). It is described fully in *The Wolf Shall Dwell with the Lamb* by Eric H.F. Law (1993, pp. 113–14).

3. Respond to the following question using the process of mutual invitation:
  - a. What did you find exciting about the vision?
  - b. What did you find challenging about the vision?
  - c. What are some tangible ways you might seek to live into the church's intercultural vision?
  - d. In the introduction to the kit we stated, "Our ideas of what 'normal' is, when it comes to gender, can limit our ability to celebrate the fullness of God's diversity. So this kit supports the church's intercultural vision of honouring differences." How do you see the interconnection between the intercultural vision and gender identity?

**Debrief:**

- How did the process of mutual invitation feel? What did you like about it? dislike about it?
- How might you continue to engage in the intercultural vision in your community of faith?
- What further questions arise when you consider becoming an intercultural church?

*Key Points:*

- God exists in community, and we are invited to be in community together. Individually and in community, we do everything through the lenses of our cultures: there is no such thing as a culture-free perspective.
- Our experiences and understandings are shaped by our cultures. Since we cannot capture the complexity of God through our limited cultural understandings, our understanding of God is limited when we see this God through only one dominant cultural perspective. Instead, our understandings of God and our scriptures can be deepened when we come together, as disciples of Jesus Christ, in all of our differences and diversities to acknowledge intercultural reality and richness.
- We strive to become an intercultural church to deepen our understandings and experiences of God and of one another. Within The United Church of Canada, a variety of cultural expressions of faith are affirmed and welcomed.
- Part of the vision of the intercultural church is to create a space where we can sustain our own cultural identities while also affirming those of one another.

## **Closing the Workshop Space**

### ***Ending the Meeting***

At the end of the workshop, thank the participants. This is a way to communicate that learning is a communal process and that their presence in the community is valued.

Take some time to talk about further contact among fellow participants and leaders. This can help communities stay in touch, as well as establish any necessary professional boundaries.

### ***Community Care***

Offer resources for individuals who are interested in further learning or require further support. This can be a way of ensuring that participants do not leave the workshop without any further help or direction. In particular, information about help lines and local counselling services can be useful.

Some of the exercises offered in this workshop guide could create space for people to disclose personal information that may require follow-up. Plan your event with grace time at the end, to ensure that people who require one-on-one conversations after the workshop can receive the support they require.

### **Vision for Becoming an Intercultural Church**

*When we affirm and welcome a variety of expressions of faith,  
it deepens our understanding of God and of each other.*

#### **An intercultural church is a welcoming church...**

- It is joyful, accepting, and life-giving.
- It trusts that God's Spirit opens us to new experiences. It recognizes that those experiences can be challenging, painful, or uncomfortable.
- In referring to God, it uses a range of names and images. In writing policies and making statements, it uses many different images and ways of speaking.
- It is committed to listening and learning, not just to speaking and teaching. It invites full participation and dialogue. It allows itself to be changed.

#### **a relational church...**

- It treasures the different contexts that God gives to different communities. It values diverse expressions of faith.
- It offers a positive vision of the whole community, together in its diversity. It encourages a healthy critique of each other's points of view.
- It values the give and take of respectful relationships. It commits to building right relationship with all of creation.
- It takes steps to become a multilingual community.

#### **an adaptive church...**

- It is able, with God's grace, to accept mistakes. It learns from the past and grows.
- It is open to being vulnerable.
- It affirms diverse cultural identities, and avoids their assimilation into the dominant culture.
- It dares to engage in an ongoing transformation of heart, mind, structure, and policy. It adapts to change when change is called for.

#### **a justice-seeking church...**

- It keeps finding new ways to share resources, redress imbalances of power, and challenge unfair systems. It seeks the equitable participation of all—both inside and outside of the church.
- It faithfully addresses racism and White privilege.
- It recognizes the churches' participation in historic injustices. It strives to do things differently.
- It thinks globally and commits itself to seeking justice.

#### **an intentional church...**

- It aims to be enriched by different experiences and points of view. It knows that we hold much in common, but also have many differences.
- It provides a safe context for difficult conversations.
- It supports and encourages diverse leadership. This is especially important in communities that have been marginalized in the past.
- It examines itself, reflects, and keeps learning. It prays, educates, and consults. It monitors how well it is living out its intercultural vision.

#### **a missional church**

- It looks for and applies the biblical and theological foundations for becoming an intercultural church.
- It affirms that the God of mission has a church in the world. We—in all of our differences—are active participants in God's mission.

#### **What does "intercultural" mean?**

It means living together with a respectful awareness of each other's differences.  
We do this by examining ourselves, building relationships, and distributing power fairly.

This is a plain language version of the "Vision for Becoming an Intercultural Church" adopted at the Executive of General Council (GCE) in October 2012, as part of the report "Intercultural Ministries: Living into Transformation."

## **USING THE MATERIAL IN THIS STUDY GUIDE FOR SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION**

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### **The Value of Small Groups**

Small groups (or study groups) are an opportunity for participants to discover and struggle with ideas and to learn something new. Within a prayerful, open environment that promotes discussion in a challenging but affirming way, there is the opportunity for transformation.

A group process that includes prayer and intentional time for personal reflection provides a vessel within which things can happen. And things do happen to suggest God's healing, transformative power. The group process provides the space for participants to "minister" by being there for each other, listening to each other, and prayerfully challenging each other, with openness to God's Spirit.

### **Listening to the Stories**

1. Ask participants to get comfortable. Tell them that they are going to watch a video, a story about someone whose feelings and experiences are often invisible to most people. Then, watch Ruth's Story (or another video of your choosing—see "Listen to the Stories" on p. 8 or the resources chart starting on p. 63 for a selection of possible videos).
2. Ask participants to count off, so that they wind up in small groups of about four individuals each. Each group will discuss the story, using the following questions:
  - What was this story about?
  - What is being transgender?
  - What obstacles faced Ruth (or the person whose story you watched)?
  - Why did it take Ruth a long time to become the person she wanted to be?
  - What elements of your own story do you see reflected in Ruth's story?
3. Ask everyone to reassemble. Discuss the story together, briefly going over the four questions with the entire group. Make the point that everyone's life has a story, and that knowing that story can help us understand and care about people—both those whose lives are similar and those whose lives are very different from our own. End with these questions:
  - Have you ever felt sure that you wanted to be someone other than who you are (such as to be rich instead of poor, or to have a different skin colour or different gender, or to be from a different family)?
  - Were you able to tell anyone else how you felt? If so, how did they react? If you couldn't talk about how you felt, why not?
  - Have you ever known anyone who identified as a gender other than the one assigned to them at birth? Were you supportive? Why or why not?
  - What are some things you can do to be supportive of people who are trans?

### **Additional Discussion Questions**

Invite participants to anonymously submit questions (e.g., through a question box) that can be discussed safely in the group. At any point, the group can consider the following questions:

- Did anything surprise or excite you?
- Did anything make you uncomfortable?
- What questions or concerns does the kit raise in your mind?
- How does the text support or affirm your faith?
- How does the text challenge your faith?
- What faith questions does it raise for you?
- Has the text stirred you to some form of action? If so, what?

All responses to the evaluation questions found under Questions & Feedback at the end of this kit (p. 71) are welcome.

## Small Group Activities

### A. Umbrella Activity

**Goal:** This activity will help participants to become more familiar and comfortable with some of the terms and definitions introduced in *Celebrating Gender Diversity*.

**Materials:**

- Print each of the umbrella terms from the list below, to cardstock (or paper).
- Print the definitions for each of the terms on a separate cardstock (or paper). (Use the definitions found in “Gender & Sexuality: Glossary of Key Terms and Concepts,” pp. 56–61.)
- Ensure all participants have a copy of the Glossary of Key Terms and Concepts.
- Create a complete Umbrella Words and Definitions “cheat sheet” for yourself as the facilitator.

| Umbrella Terms     |               |             |                              |             |
|--------------------|---------------|-------------|------------------------------|-------------|
| agender            | ally          | bisexual    | cisgender                    | cissexism   |
| gender             | gender binary | genderfluid | gender identity              | genderqueer |
| heterosexism       | non-binary    | queer       | sexuality                    |             |
| sexual orientation |               | trans       | transgender                  | transsexual |
| transition         | transmisogyny | transphobia | two-spirited (or two-spirit) |             |

**Exercise (15–20 minutes):**

1. Welcome and introduction
2. Invite each participant to share their name and preferred pronoun (he/him, she/her, they/them).
3. Explain the Umbrella Words and Definitions Exercise:
  - You are going to break up into groups of 3–4.
  - Each group will receive a stack of word cards and a stack of definition cards.
  - The goal is to match each definition to the correct word.
  - You can start by having someone read one of the definitions out loud. Then the group can find the word card that matches that definition.
  - Before moving on to the next definition, one person in the group needs to use the word in a sentence (to show understanding).
  - Repeat activity with next definition.
4. Come back together into plenary to debrief:
  - Are there any questions about the content? Did you notice anything new/different about the language used? What was it like to do this exercise?

## **B. Gender Roles and Oppression**

*Establishing Group Norms:* Prior to engaging in this activity, we recommend that the group works to create a safe space by completing the Establishing Group Norms activity (see p. 32). Responses to questions in this activity may raise strong emotions in participants, as they recall times of being bullied or abused. If someone starts crying, allow the pain, create space for it, have tissues easily available, and check with the person (Do you want to take a break? Are you okay now?) before proceeding.

*Purpose:* This exercise can be a lead-in for discussion around multiple issues. The facilitator can use the exercise to look at how sexism, heterosexism, and transphobia<sup>1</sup> are related to one another (share the definitions in the footnotes, if needed).

Also explain that while we are looking at dominant mainstream ideas of gender, we want to acknowledge that gender roles may vary depending on ethnicity, culture, class, ability, family, and so on.

Let participants know that in this exercise we are going to ask them to say words that might be challenging or uncomfortable for some people.

### *Materials:*

- flip chart
- markers

### *Exercise:*

Draw two boxes on the board. On top of one box write “Be a Real Man.” On top of the second box write “Be a Real Woman.” *Note: This exercise intentionally focuses on the gender binary and looks solely at men and women.*

|                      |                        |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Be a Real Man</b> | <b>Be a Real Woman</b> |
|----------------------|------------------------|

Ask the following questions—first responding to questions 1–5 for men, then responding to questions 1–5 for women. Participants can also do the exercise in pairs or small groups. Remember that this exercise seeks to look at stereotypes, not at individual behaviour.

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<sup>1</sup> **sexism:** the attitude or behaviour—based on traditional stereotypes of gender roles—that discriminates or devalues people based on their sex or gender.

**heterosexism:** the assumption that everyone is heterosexual, and that the normal way for humans to bond is with a partner of the opposite sex. Heterosexism is the systemic promotion of heterosexuality, and the simultaneous stigmatization of all other sexual orientations.

**transphobia:** conscious or unconscious hatred of, fear of, and discrimination against individuals who do not conform in appearance and/or identity to cisnormative or “traditional” conceptions of gender. It is typically demonstrated through disrespect, denial of rights and needs, and often harassment and violence.

1. Have you ever been told, or have you ever heard someone else being told, to “be a real man/woman” or “act like a man/woman”? What are the expectations (that may or may not be the reality) that society has of someone who is a “real man/woman”?  
*Write these responses inside the appropriate box—for men they may include a list of don'ts such as don't cry or don't show your emotions, be strong/dominant, fix things; for women be gentle and sweet, look pretty, be submissive, care for children.*
2. What names are men/women called, who fall outside this box?  
*Write these responses outside and around the appropriate box—for men they may include wimp, like a girl, fag, queer, pussy, gay; for women, dyke, butch, tomboy, lesbian, slut, ho, whore.*
3. What kinds of things happen physically to people outside the box?  
*Write these outside and around the appropriate box—for men and women they may include harassed, teased, ignored, physical and/or sexual assault, bullied.*
4. How might those people who are outside the box feel?  
*Write these outside and around the appropriate box—for men and women they may include afraid, insecure, lonely, different, abnormal.*
5. How might those people who are inside the box feel?  
*Write these around the insides of the appropriate box—for men and women they may include safe, comfortable, happy, proud, confident, cocky, fake, afraid of being found out.*
6. Invite people to share personal stories if comfortable.

*Reflection Questions: Transphobia/Homophobia/Heterosexism*

1. How many men here today fit in to the box all of the time? How many women? How many fit beyond the binary? *(invite people to share as they are comfortable)*
2. Is it always safe inside the box and unsafe outside the box?
3. Where do you think power lies, inside or outside the box?
4. How do these boxes contribute to the existence of sexism? heterosexism? transphobia?
5. How do the stereotypes listed in the boxes relate to stereotypes for straight and queer people?
6. What might these boxes look like inside the church? What are the expectations (gender roles, behaviour, and expressions) of men in the church? women? transgender or gender non-conforming people?
7. How do we change these expectations in the church? in society?
8. What is the role of resistance?

## A GENDER IDENTITY WORKSHOP FOR COMMUNITIES OF FAITH

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This workshop (approx. 1½ hours) is designed to help community leaders introduce the topic of gender identity to a community of faith. While the workshop environment benefits from having people of all experiences as participants, it is designed to meet the needs of individuals who are still learning about gender identity and trans experiences.

*Note for facilitators:* Explaining basic concepts is easier when you have a deeper understanding of the topic. This workshop requires thorough preparation and may generate many questions.

*Before the workshop:*

- E-mail participants asking them to share why they are interested in attending, what they hope to learn, and any concerns they have about attending.
- Make a point of learning about the workshop location. Are there any concerns about accessibility or finding the space?
- Please see each activity to prepare materials.
- Consider preparing a questionnaire to gather feedback at the end of your workshop. This will help you determine what resources or education opportunities to recommend in the future.

### 1. Gathering (3 min.)

*Materials:* copies of *More Voices*

Invite participants to sing “I Am Walking a Path of Peace” (MV 221). For the purpose of the workshop, try singing the hymn with an additional “I am learning...” verse.

### 2. Setting Up the Workshop Space (25-30 min.)

Use processes found on pages 31-32 of this kit:

- Territorial Acknowledgement, page 31
- Care Tags, page 31
- Establishing Group Norms, page 32

### 3. Bodies, Genders, and Sexualities (15 min.)

*Goal:* To explain and explore the connections between body, gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation.

*Material:* Prepare four sheets of paper with the words *body*, *gender identity*, *gender expression*, and *sexual orientation*. Or write each term separately on a chalkboard.

*Process:* Using the four terms you have written out and the suggested script, explain the differences and connections between bodies, gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation.

*Suggested script*

Most of us in this room have been taught by our families, teachers, churches, and media about the following four topics: bodies, gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation.

The most dominant story in our society goes like this: When you are born, your body determines what gender you are. Based on this gender, you are expected to wear certain clothes and behave certain ways, and it is assumed that you will be attracted to a certain gender. For example, a child is born and assigned female at birth. This person is assumed to be a woman, who will be attracted to men. *(For both the explanation and example, point to each word and trace the connections.)*

However, from our own lived experiences and relationships, we know that this story about bodies, gender identity, gender expression, and sexuality does not ring true for everyone. For example, for trans people, the gender they were assigned at birth *(point to word: BODY)* is different than their gender identity *(point to word: GENDER IDENTITY)*. We also know that people of any gender *(point to word: GENDER IDENTITY)* may be attracted to other people *(point to word: SEXUAL ORIENTATION)*.

After completing your presentation, take a few minutes to answer any questions.

*Debrief:*

- Ask participants to turn to a partner for a three- to four-minute conversation. Reflect on times when you have seen these assumptions at play.
- In the large group, share any key findings you had in your discussion.

*Key Points:*

- What becomes apparent from these stories is that assumptions about people's bodies, gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation are often based on stereotypes and can be hurtful.
- Learning about the assumptions we make about how these categories connect can help us recognize where we need to give people more space and opportunity to name those things for themselves.

#### **4. Making Space and Starting Conversations (15–20 min.)**

*Goal:* To help participants think through common concerns around how someone addresses gender identity issues are addressed within the church.

*Materials:* Copies of individual case studies (see below) for small discussion groups. (Feel free to create your own, as well.)

*Process:* Divide into groups of three and give each small group a different case study to discuss for 10 minutes. Depending on the size of your group, you may use several case studies more than once.

### Case Studies

- a. A person e-mails the church asking if it would be safe for a trans person to attend a worship service. What do you do?
- b. You are part of a team that is hosting a youth event that will have a youth participant who has been questioning their gender identity. What do you do?
- c. Someone who has been part of your community of faith for several years has started to change their gender presentation when attending weekly worship service. What do you do?

*Debrief:* Invite everyone to return to the larger group and allow each group to share highlights from their discussion.

#### *Key Points:*

- Supporting trans people or gender-variant people requires that you respect their privacy and ability to determine what their own needs are.
- We all have a responsibility to show support and understanding of gender identity issues so that people will feel safe enough to approach us.
- Asking if someone would like ongoing support is important. People may need help that extends beyond one conversation.

### 5. Learning New Language (10 min.)

*Goal:* To become aware of how gender and language are very closely connected.

*Materials:* hymn books

#### *Process:*

Explain to participants that the language we use can say a lot about gender without us even realizing it. For example, expressions such as “ladies and gentlemen” or “mom and dad” assume there are only two genders. We can also communicate ideas about gender through the pronouns we use or the way we refer to people. For example: “Can you ask the woman over there if she is looking for something?” or “Is this your son? How old is he?”

Look together at a hymn that would be familiar in your community of faith. How is gender used in the hymn? Does it only talk about men and women? Is God only referred to as one gender?

#### *Debrief:*

- How do you think people who do not identify as a man or a woman feel when singing these hymns?
- Can you think of ways to modify these hymns so that they are more inclusive?
- What are some other times we should be aware of the language we are using in church? (*suggestions may include prayers, the language ushers use to greet newcomers, the way a minister tells a story in a sermon*)

*Key Points:*

- Even hymns or prayers that communicate a message of welcome may exclude people by the language they use.
- Becoming aware of how connected language is to gender is a long learning process. It can feel like unlearning aspects of language that feel very comfortable to us.

**6. End of Workshop Take-Away (10–15 min., depending on size of group)**

Invite each participant to reflect on one thing they would like to commit to doing based on the lessons they have learned in the workshop.

*Debrief:* Invite each participant to share how the workshop has affected them and what commitment they have made. After everyone has had an opportunity to share, thank the group for their participation. This is also an ideal time to share resources you are aware of that support further learning in the area of gender identity.

**7. Closing (3 min.)**

*Material:* copies of *More Voices*; feedback questionnaire (optional)

*Closing song:* Invite participants to sing “I Am Walking a Path of Peace” (MV 221). Try singing the hymn with an additional “I am learning...” verse.

If you have prepared a questionnaire, hand it out at the end of the workshop. Feedback can help you determine what resources or education opportunities to recommend to your community in the future.

—workshop writer: *Michiko Bown-Kai*

## Handouts

### **CELEBRATING TRANS AND TWO-SPIRIT PEOPLE IN COMMUNITIES OF FAITH**

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In communities of faith, all should feel loved and welcomed. Therefore, these spaces should challenge the hurtful messages trans/two-spirit people receive from the rest of society every day. This is why it is so important to commit to trans and two-spirit justice as a community of faith.

We live in a world that teaches us many hurtful assumptions about people who are trans/two-spirit. So it requires intentionality to help someone who is trans/two-spirit feel affirmed. This work will directly benefit members of trans/two-spirit communities. But remember, too, that when communities are created where everyone feels fully welcome, it benefits the entire community.

Here are some ways that you can engage in trans and two-spirit justice.

**1. Uplift and affirm the experiences of trans/two-spirit folks.**

Find ways to explicitly name trans/two-spirit people as children of God in liturgy. Use sermons to explore theologically how trans/two-spirit people are blessed members of the kingdom of God, and explore how trans/two-spirit experiences can influence someone spiritually.

**2. Make sure that trans and two-spirit folks are given the space to speak for themselves.**

As you engage in allyship, be sure to carefully consider the folks who are living visibly as trans/two-spirit in your community. Always give space for trans/two-spirit folks to express their needs and boundaries so that they feel safe and respected.

**3. Encourage trans/two-spirit leadership in your community by giving them an opportunity to share their gifts.**

Trans/two-spirit folks are not only gifts to their communities because of their presence and insight on gender. They also have many skills and gifts that they want to be invited to share. Take the time to get to know the trans/two-spirit folks in your community.

**4. Create a trans-inclusive washroom policy.**

Safe washrooms exist when communities are educated about gender and understand that all people have the right to choose the washroom that feels safest for them. For some trans/two-spirit folks, having a gender-neutral washroom is an important piece to feeling safe. However, it is also important to ensure that trans men and trans women can access gendered bathrooms while feeling safe and respected.

**5. Use language that is inclusive of all genders.**

The more you learn about trans/two-spirit experiences, the better you will become at using inclusive language. For example, phrases such as “ladies and gentleman” or “brothers and sisters” do not allow space for people who have non-binary gender identities. Try alternatives such as “folks,” “family,” or “siblings.” Trans/two-spirit inclusive language challenges the assumption that everyone is cisgender. For example, it does not assume that all women can give birth or that everyone lives as the same gender their whole life. Inclusive language should be part of all that your community engages in including your website, bulletins, Sunday school curriculum, liturgy, and conversations.

**6. Learn how to support.**

Make sure your pastoral care providers are educated about trans and two-spirit issues so that they can provide adequate support to trans and questioning individuals as well as their family and friends.

**7. Offer ministry to trans/two-spirit folks beyond your community.**

Do you have any resources you could offer to members of the trans/two-spirit community? Networking with organizations that are engaged in trans/two-spirit activism is a great way to let people know of the resources and gifts your community of faith can share with others.

**8. Review the current policies and resources that are being used in your community to ensure that the language and ethos are trans-affirming and trans-inclusive.**

Are your marriage certificates and policy inclusive of all genders? Is gendered language used in baptism certificates? Are any educational resources on gender and/or sexuality outdated but still in circulation?

*Further information on the use of the terms “trans,” “two-spirit,” “cisgender,” and so on, may be found in the Celebrating Gender Diversity kit.*

*It is important to note that for some cultures, more than two gender identities are recognized and that there may be a more appropriate identity that an individual prefers to use in conjunction with or instead of “trans.”*

*The term “two-spirit” is used by Indigenous peoples, but holds a variety of meaning depending on the community. The term “two-spirit” was included in this resource to respect that people may wish to claim a gender identity outside of norms defined through colonialism.*

This handout is also available formatted as a mini-brochure for photocopying and distribution.  
Search [www.united-church.ca](http://www.united-church.ca) for “trans gender identity.”

## **RADICAL WELCOME AND GENDER IDENTITY: IDEAS FOR ENGAGING IN TRANS AND TWO-SPIRIT JUSTICE**

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### **1. Read, learn, listen.**

There are so many different experiences in trans/two-spirit communities that you can always learn more by listening to people's lived experiences. The more trans/two-spirit stories you are exposed to, the better you are able to understand the complex realities of many different members of trans/two-spirit communities.

### **2. Teach yourself not to make assumptions about other people's experience with gender.**

When you stop making assumptions about others, you are creating space for them to truly be themselves. These are some common assumptions that people often make:

- you can tell who is cisgender and who is trans/two-spirit
- all trans/two-spirit people want to medically transition
- all trans/two-spirit people want to talk about gender and their experiences of being trans

### **3. Ask for pronouns and offer your own when you are meeting someone.**

Learning someone's pronouns is like learning a new person's name. You can't tell someone's name or pronouns by looking at them, so it's important to ask. And if you forget, it's best to simply ask for a reminder. The practice of asking people what pronouns they prefer is a reminder that you cannot tell someone's gender by looking at them. It is best to ask all people, not just those you perceive as gender non-conforming and/or trans.

### **4. Challenge people when you hear them say things that are transphobic, cissexist, or transmisogynist.<sup>1</sup>**

If you notice someone expressing ideas that are not inclusive or welcoming to trans/two-spirit folks or using slurs that hurt members of trans and two-spirit communities, it is important that it does not go unchallenged. Education can happen in many ways—so don't be afraid to be creative!

### **5. Share and support the stories and ideas of trans/two-spirit people in your everyday conversations and social media.**

Help make sure that trans/two-spirit folks are not only treated as footnotes in conversations about gender. Being an ally also means trying to find ways to bring trans/two-spirit stories into your everyday life.

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<sup>1</sup> **transphobic:** hating, fearing, and (conscious or unconsciously) discriminating against individuals who do not conform in appearance and/or identity to cisnormative or "traditional" conceptions of gender.

**cissexist:** assuming that everyone is cisgender and adheres to the gender binary, and seeing this as the only normal or healthy way to express gender. Cissexism oppresses people with trans identities.

**transmisogynist:** the use of language and behaviour that is sexist, misogynist, and regularly demonizes and ridicules trans women.

**6. Challenge the institutions you are a part of to be safer spaces for trans/two-spirit folks.**

Demand gender-neutral bathrooms at schools, campuses, and workplaces. Encourage teachers to use trans/two-spirit authors and artists in their class materials. Ensure policies and communications use language that is inclusive of all genders.

**7. Support the work of trans and two-spirit artists.**

Go see trans/two-spirit art shows, poetry readings, plays, and more! Also, there are always crowd-funding initiatives looking for money to support the work of trans/two-spirit artists.

**8. Learn how to talk about bodies, gender, and sexuality in ways that are trans-inclusive.**

Language is important. Take time to learn and practise new ways of talking that are inclusive of all bodies. These are some common language mistakes:

- language that only recognizes men and women (the gender binary) such as “ladies and gentlemen...,” “brothers and sisters,” “the opposite gender”
- associating genitalia and/or reproductive organs with someone’s gender

**9. Learn how to make mistakes.**

Even people with the best intentions will likely still make mistakes. As an ally, one of the most important things you can do is be willing to always listen. It is easy to feel guilty or ashamed if you make a mistake, but in these situations the best thing to do is engage in learning and apologizing.

**10. Ask.**

Check in with trans folks in your life about what information you’re allowed to share and what kind of advocacy they would appreciate. Every person’s needs are unique. Make a point of asking the trans people in your life what support looks like to them as individuals.

**11. Don’t make trans and two-spirit folks apologize for being themselves.**

Exploring gender expression and gender identity can be a tricky process with many ups and downs. Make sure that the trans/two-spirit folks in your life know that you support them, regardless of how they choose to live out their identity. Giving a trans/two-spirit person the space to be themselves without judgment can make a world of difference.

*Further information on the use of the terms “trans,” “two-spirit,” “cisgender,” and so on, may be found in the Celebrating Gender Diversity kit.*

*It is important to note that for some cultures, more than two gender identities are recognized and that there may be a more appropriate identity that an individual prefers to use in conjunction with or instead of “trans.”*

*The term “two-spirit” is used by Indigenous peoples, but holds a variety of meaning depending on the community. The term “two-spirit” was included in this resource to respect that people may wish to claim a gender identity outside of norms defined through colonialism.*

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Search [www.united-church.ca](http://www.united-church.ca) for “trans gender identity.”

## **FACTS ABOUT PRONOUNS**

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### **What are pronouns?**

Pronouns are words used to refer to a person or place. In English, the pronouns “he” or “she” are frequently used to talk about a singular person.

### **Why should we talk about pronouns?**

Most people are raised to believe that there are only two genders and that gender can be determined based on appearance. This involves a lot of assuming when making reference to other people, including the decision to use “he” or “she” pronouns. However, there are people who are hurt when these assumptions are made. They may not identify with “he” or “she” pronouns and would prefer something gender-neutral like “they.” They may be a trans person whom you are reading as the wrong gender.

### **When should we talk about pronouns?**

It’s great to talk about pronouns when meeting people or when group introductions are being made. You can’t assume someone’s name without asking; the same goes for someone’s pronouns.

### **Can I make a joke when sharing my pronouns?**

If you have been asked to participate in sharing your pronouns, it is important that you engage in the exercise with respect. For people who rely on pronoun sharing in order not to be misgendered, pronouns are a serious matter. When you don’t take sharing pronouns seriously, you are telling other people that you are unaware or unsympathetic about how painful it can be to live in a world where your identity is frequently disrespected or ignored.

### **What do I do if someone’s pronouns bother me?**

Find someone who is educated about the issue and ask if you can talk to them—it is important for you to work through your feelings about this. In the meantime, understand that people have the right and ability to choose what gender identity and pronouns work best for them, regardless of your opinion.

### **What do I do if someone uses the wrong pronouns for someone else when I am around?**

If you know the person who is being referred to, you can ask them how they would like you to respond in those situations. But when possible, correcting the pronoun is helpful. If the person using the pronoun seems confused or resistant to the correction, consider taking time to fully explain the importance of using correct pronouns.

### **What do I do if I use the wrong pronouns?**

Apologize and correct yourself by using the right pronoun. This will help you learn how to use the right pronoun in the future. Your apology should not be made in a way that demands the person you misgendered to forgive you or make you feel better.

### **What do I do if I don’t know the person’s pronouns?**

Use their name or gender-neutral pronouns.

### **How do I introduce pronouns as a facilitator in a space?**

Since discussions about pronouns may be new to many people, offer a brief explanation of the process.

A suggested introduction would be:

“When we take turns sharing our names, I want to ask each of you to also share the pronouns that you would like people to use to refer to you. For example, ‘My name is Michiko; I use *they* and *them*.’ Although we often use assumptions about gender to determine someone’s pronoun, this exercise will give us all a chance to name how we want to be addressed so we can better respect each other’s gender identities.”

In this process, people may need reminding and prompting. But it is important that all people participate, even those who are privileged enough to never have to think about stating their pronouns.

—*writer: Michiko Bown-Kai*

## GENDER AND SEXUALITY: GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS AND CONCEPTS

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*Disclaimer:* Language has power and is constantly changing. This list of terms and definitions is designed to empower you with language that will help you better understand discussions of gender and sexuality. Many of these terms are self-identifications; they mean something different to each individual who identifies with the term. For the most part, these terms are based in Western understandings of gender and sexuality so they may not always speak to the experiences of many cultures. Remember not to apply labels to individuals and that identities are fluid and contextual (just because someone shares part of their identity with you doesn't mean they're comfortable with you sharing it with others).

**ally:** a heterosexual and/or cisgender person who supports equal rights for people of all sexual orientations and gender identities. They challenge heterosexism, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia; and are aware of heterosexual and cisgender privilege in themselves and others.

### Sexuality

**sexuality:** beyond the physical aspects of our body, sexuality covers our sexual desires, sexual identity, and emotional and physical sexual health. Sexuality impacts our relationships with our own bodies as well as our relationships with other people. It involves our thoughts, desires, and experiences. Our understanding of sexuality is based on culture; religion, family, media, and more all play a role. In this sense, sexuality is something that can feel deeply personal and also be understood on a societal level.

**sexual orientation** (also known as *sexuality*): refers to a person's emotional, spiritual, intellectual, and sexual attraction

**straight/heterosexual:** a male-identified person who is attracted to female-identified people, or a female-identified person who is attracted to male-identified people

**lesbian/gay/homosexual:** a person whose primary sexual and/or emotional, spiritual, and intellectual attraction is to a person of the same gender

**bisexual:** Some bisexual communities, reflecting an understanding that there are more than two genders, define bisexuality as a person who is sexually and/or emotionally, spiritually, and intellectually attracted to both their own gender and people of other genders. However, a popular understanding of bisexual is an individual of any gender who is attracted to both men and women.

**queer:** a term that may include lesbians, gays, bisexuals, trans people, and people who challenge the boundaries of sexual orientation, sex, and gender. The term can sometimes be an insult. It is also used frequently as an affirmative political and/or identity statement, and it describes a school of thought called queer theory.

**asexual:** a person who does not experience sexual attraction or desire. This person may or may not have spiritual and emotional attraction to others.

**pansexual:** someone who identifies as being attracted to all gender identities or for whom gender is not a consideration when choosing a romantic or intimate partner

**LGBTQIA2S:** an acronym used to denote identities of individuals and groups; can be understood to be inclusive of people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans/transgender, transsexual, queer, questioning, intersex, asexual, and two-spirited (2S). This acronym is always changing and evolving, which is why in this kit we have used the phrase “people of all sexual orientations and gender identities.”

## Gender

**gender:** a social construct that differs from culture to culture. The World Health Organization defines *gender* as referring to the socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women (such as certain roles, as well as appearance).

**gender identity:** a self-determined identity that reflects an individual’s personal understanding of gender in regard to their own embodied experiences

**gender presentation/expression:** how a person chooses to express their gender to others (through clothing, behaviour, etc.)

**gender binary:** the concept that there are only two genders – male and female; and understands this as the only one “right,” “normal,” or “healthy” way for gender to be understood, identified, and expressed—that is, as either male or female, masculine or feminine. The gender binary tells us that there are no grey areas, no middle ground, no continuum.

**cisgender:** a term that describes individuals whose gender identity is the same as the gender they were assigned at birth

**trans/transgender:** an umbrella term whose meaning remains in flux. The term is used to refer to a person who has a gender identity that is different from the gender they were assigned at birth, and/or expresses their gender in ways that differ from societal expectations for men and women. Trans people may identify with any sexual orientation. *Trans* is often used as a substitute for *transgender*, to include people of a wider variety of gender identities who may not feel comfortable adopting the term *transgender*.

**transsexual:** someone who is transitioning from male-to-female (MTF) or female-to-male (FTM), or someone for whom the gender they were assigned at birth does not match their felt or lived gender. *Trans* or *transgender* may also be used with this latter meaning.

**transition:** Transgender/transsexual men (sometimes called FTMs—female-to-male) and women (MTFs—male-to-female) may often decide to undergo a transitioning process that can include sexual reassignment surgery (SRS) and/or hormone replacement therapy (HRT). They may identify as straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, asexual, and/or queer. It is important to note that not all individuals who transition or identify as transgender/transsexual feel that FTM or MTF labels reflect their experience with their gender.

See p. 44 for the Umbrella Activity—a small group activity to help participants become more familiar with some of these terms and definitions.

**two-spirited** or **two-spirit**: Indigenous people who fulfill one of many mixed or cross-gender roles found traditionally. A direct translation of the Ojibwe term *Niizh manidoowag*, two-spirited or two-spirit is usually used to indicate a person whose body simultaneously houses a masculine spirit and a feminine spirit. However, not all Indigenous people are always comfortable using this term.

**intersex**: an umbrella term describing people born with sex anatomy resulting in neither purely male nor female bodies (internal and/or external). There are over 30 variations of sex anatomy. We're usually taught that sex is merely black and white, "male" or "female," but that's simply not true. There are a lot of awesome gray areas in the middle that could make someone intersex!<sup>2</sup>

**agender**: Some agender people feel that they have no gender identity, while others feel that agender is itself a gender identity. This is similar to and overlaps with the experience of being gender-neutral or having a neutral gender identity.

**non-binary**: an umbrella term used by those who do not identify as a man or a woman. Non-binary genders can be understood in a variety of ways. For some, their gender may feel like a combination of man and woman. Others have a sense of their gender being beyond the categories of man and woman entirely. Still others may feel as though they do not identify with any gender at all. *Non-binary* may also refer to gender identities that are specific to a culture that recognizes more than two genders.

**bigender**: someone who identifies as having two gender identities

**genderfluid**: refers to those whose gender identity and expression are fluid and change depending on personal circumstance and desire

**genderqueer**: someone who does not necessarily identify as a man or a woman, may identify as both a man and a woman, or identifies outside the confines of traditional Western ideas of gender

**questioning**: a word often used by youth who are in the process of coming out or are still discerning their sexuality, gender identity, or sexual orientation

**cross-dresser**: a person who on occasion deliberately dresses in clothes traditionally associated with a gender different than they were assigned at birth, and takes on the social behaviours associated with the gender being portrayed. A person who cross-dresses does not necessarily identify as trans, but is fulfilling other needs or desires.

**drag kings** and **drag queens**: individuals who present larger-than-life images of men (kings) and women (queens), exaggerating sexual stereotypes for entertainment or self-gratification

**androgynous**, **gender blender**, and **gender bender**: individuals who challenge cisnormative gender binary boundaries through their gender presentation

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<sup>2</sup> Source: Inter/Act, <http://interactyouth.org/post/97343969730/want-to-support-us-check-out-our>, used with permission.

## Trans Grammar

**Trans and cis** are considered adjectives that can describe an aspect of someone's gender identity. Therefore, the spelling of trans man/men and trans woman/women should always have a space between the two words. Trans women are still women and trans men are still men, and failing to include a space between these words may communicate otherwise.

*Trans* is an adjective that can describe an element of someone's gender identity. Therefore it is incorrect to speak of "transgendered" individuals or use the term *transgender* as a verb (i.e., transgendering).

**Gender-neutral pronouns** are the most effective way to ensure that individuals of all genders feel included when discussing hypothetical situations. Commonly used gender-neutral pronouns are they/them/theirs.

*Example 1:* "Do you have a brother or sister? How old is he or she?" can be said as:  
"Do you have a sibling? How old are they?"

*Example 2:* "That stranger looked upset. I hope they are alright  
and someone has helped them."

*Example 3:* "A new employee is starting on Monday. Where are we going to put  
their workstation?"

Some people might feel awkward using "they" in the singular. But when you think about it, it's not that different from using "you" for both the singular and the plural.

The singular "they" is a well-established usage in spoken English, when the speaker does not want to specify a gender (i.e., "he" or "she"). And dictionaries and style guides—including the Oxford English Dictionary and Merriam-Webster—are increasingly supportive of the practice, citing examples going back to Shakespeare.

## **Discriminatory Practices**

**lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer discrimination:** These varieties of discrimination take many forms; and exist between and within individuals, and across institutions and cultures. Most commonly referred to as homophobia, transphobia, and heterosexism, they are manifested through the denial of human rights; through processes of silencing, exclusion, and ostracism; and through violence and verbal abuse that can be experienced daily.

**heterosexism:** the assumption by individuals, institutions, and societal customs that everyone is heterosexual. It is also the belief that the normal, natural, healthy, and mature way for humans to bond sexually, affectionately, and emotionally is with a partner of the opposite sex. Heterosexism is the systemic societal promotion of heterosexuality, and the simultaneous stigmatization of all other sexual orientations.

**cissexism:** the assumption by individuals, institutions, and societal customs that everyone is cisgender and adheres to the gender binary. It is also the belief that the normal, natural, healthy, and mature way for humans to express their gender is by upholding the norms of the gender an individual was assigned at birth. Cissexism is the systemic societal promotion of cisgender identities, and the simultaneous oppression of folks with trans identities.

**lesbophobia/homophobia/queerphobia:** conscious or unconscious hatred of, fear of, and discrimination against lesbians and gay men. It is based in a belief system and set of priorities that assert heterosexuality as “normal” and superior, and view homosexuality/queerness as deviant, abnormal, criminal, or sinful. Lesbophobic, homophobic, and queerphobic feelings can be described as fear, hatred, disgust, etc.

**biphobia:** conscious or unconscious hatred of, fear of, and discrimination against people who are bisexual. Experienced in not only the heterosexual but also the lesbian and gay communities, it is often characterized by a lack of understanding and invisibility of bisexuality as a valid sexual orientation.

**transphobia:** conscious or unconscious hatred of, fear of, and discrimination against individuals who do not conform in appearance and/or identity to cisnormative or “traditional” conceptions of gender. Experienced in both the heterosexual and lesbian/gay/bisexual communities, it is typically demonstrated through disrespect, denial of rights and needs, and often harassment and violence. As with heterosexism, transphobia can be personal or systemic, overt or covert, and intentional or unintentional.

**transmisogyny:** understood as “sexism that specifically targets those on the trans female/trans feminine spectrums. It accounts for why MTF spectrum trans people tend to be more regularly demonized and ridiculed than their FTM spectrum counterparts, and why trans women face certain forms of sexualization and misogyny that are rarely (if ever) applied to non-trans women.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Source: Julia Serano, *Whipping Girl: A Transsexual Woman on Sexism and the Scapegoating of Femininity* (Seal Press, 2007). Used with permission.



## For More Information

### TRANS AND GENDER IDENTITY RESOURCES

Note: The United Church of Canada is not responsible for the content of external websites.

| TITLE AND SOURCE  | DESCRIPTION   | FOR USE BY            |                     |                    |                         |                          |              |
|---|---|-----------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------|
|   |   | Individuals (General) | Churches and Clergy | Children (General) | Parents of Trans People | Children of Trans People | Trans People |
| <b>UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA RESOURCES</b>  |   |                       |                     |                    |                         |                          |              |
| Affirm United/S'affirmer Ensemble<br><a href="http://ause.ca">http://ause.ca</a>  | An organization that works for the full inclusion of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people in the United Church and society.                                   | ✓                     | ✓                   |                    |                         |                          | ✓            |
| Interview with Rev. Cindy Bourgeois (Larke Turnbull, <i>The Observer</i> , March 2011)<br><a href="http://www.ucobserver.org/faith/2011/03/cindy_bourgeois">www.ucobserver.org/faith/2011/03/cindy_bourgeois</a>                    | The first known transgender person to be ordained in the United Church talks about her ministry at Central United in Stratford, Ont.                                    | ✓                     | ✓                   |                    |                         | ✓                        | ✓            |
| Ruth's Story (YouTube video)<br><a href="http://youtu.be/FD4X1TKjtL4">http://youtu.be/FD4X1TKjtL4</a>   | Ruth Wood, a minister at Calvary Pastoral Charge in Kingston, ON, talks about her life journey as a trans person and her theological reflection on love and acceptance. | ✓                     | ✓                   |                    | ✓                       | ✓                        | ✓            |
| Where Openness Is Everything (Donna Sinclair, <i>The Observer</i> , March 2006)<br><a href="http://www.ucobserver.org/faith/2006/03/where_openness_is_everything">www.ucobserver.org/faith/2006/03/where_openness_is_everything</a> | An article on <i>The Observer</i> site about Emmanuel-Howard Park United Church, Toronto, a congregation that is willingly changed by folk at the edges.                | ✓                     | ✓                   |                    |                         |                          |              |
| <b>PRINT (books, sermon ideas, worship, workshops, curricula)</b>   |   |                       |                     |                    |                         |                          |              |
| All God's Children (Melany Burrill, LifeQuest, 2009)<br>search <a href="http://www.sdiworld.org">www.sdiworld.org</a>   | A guide to conversations with young children about gender and sexual orientation (with ideas for sermons and classroom activities).                                     | ✓                     | ✓                   |                    | ✓                       |                          | ✓            |
| All I Want to Be Is Me (Phyllis Rothblatt, 2011)<br><a href="http://www.alliwanttobeisme.com">www.alliwanttobeisme.com</a>  | This illustrated children's book reflects the diverse ways that young children experience and express their gender identity.  | ✓                     |                     | ✓                  | ✓                       | ✓                        | ✓            |

| TITLE AND SOURCE   | DESCRIPTION  | FOR USE BY            |                     |                    |                         |                          |              |
|--|--|-----------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------|
|  |  | Individuals (General) | Churches and Clergy | Children (General) | Parents of Trans People | Children of Trans People | Trans People |
| Crossing Paths (Unitarian Universalist) [PDF]<br><a href="http://www.transfaithonline.org/fileadmin/TFexplore/UUA_crossingpaths.pdf">www.transfaithonline.org/fileadmin/TFexplore/UUA_crossingpaths.pdf</a>              | Stories of transgender people and resources for worship, pastoral care, and workshops.   | ✓                     | ✓                   |                    | ✓                       |                          |              |
| Hearing Two-Spirits<br><a href="http://briarpatchmagazine.com/articles/view/hearing-two-spirits">http://briarpatchmagazine.com/articles/view/hearing-two-spirits</a>   | A short article in <i>Briarpatch</i> on the role of two-spirit experiences in resisting colonialism.                                     | ✓                     | ✓                   |                    |                         |                          | ✓            |
| Made in God's Image (Ann Thompson Cook, Dumbarton United Methodist Church, 2003)<br><a href="http://annthompsoncook.com/publications.html">http://annthompsoncook.com/publications.html</a>                              | A resource for creating dialogue about people of faith and gender differences for those seeking to better understand transgender issues. | ✓                     | ✓                   |                    | ✓                       |                          | ✓            |
| My Mommy Is a Boy (Jason Martinez, 2012)<br>search <a href="http://www.lulu.com">www.lulu.com</a>  | A story of a girl who explains why her female-to-male transgender mommy looks like a boy.  | ✓                     |                     | ✓                  |                         | ✓                        |              |
| Omnigender ( <i>Virginia Ramey Mollenkott, Pilgrim Press, 2001</i> )<br>search <a href="http://www.thepilgrimpress.com">www.thepilgrimpress.com</a>  | This book moves beyond the current gender construct to offer a vision of a gender paradigm as "omnigender."                              | ✓                     | ✓                   |                    |                         |                          |              |
| Out of the Ordinary (ed. Noelle Howey and Ellen Samuels, St. Martin's Press, 2000)<br>search <a href="http://us.macmillan.com">http://us.macmillan.com</a>   | A collection of essays by the children of lesbian, gay, and transgender parents.   | ✓                     | ✓                   |                    | ✓                       | ✓                        | ✓            |
| Our Whole Lives (United Church of Christ and Unitarian Universalist Association)<br><a href="http://www.ucc.org/justice_sexuality-education_our-whole-lives">www.ucc.org/justice_sexuality-education_our-whole-lives</a> | A curriculum of sexuality education programs for: grades K-1, 4-6, 7-9, 10-12, young adults, and adults.                                 |                       | ✓                   |                    |                         |                          |              |

| TITLE<br>AND SOURCE  | DESCRIPTION   | FOR USE BY               |                           |                       |                               |                                |                 |
|--|---|--------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------|
|  |   | Individuals<br>(General) | Churches<br>and<br>Clergy | Children<br>(General) | Parents<br>of Trans<br>People | Children<br>of Trans<br>People | Trans<br>People |
| Redefining Realness (Janet Mock, 2014)<br><a href="http://janetmock.com/books">http://janetmock.com/books</a>  | A memoir from a young trans woman.  | ✓                        |                           |                       | ✓                             |                                | ✓               |
| <i>Trans Forming Families</i> (ed. Mary Boenke, Oak Knoll Press, 2003)   | These real stories about transgender loved ones from the initial shock through the various feelings, to final acceptance.   | ✓                        | ✓                         |                       | ✓                             |                                | ✓               |
| The Transgender Child (Stephanie Brill and Rachel Pepper, Cleis Press, 2008)   | Explores the challenges faced by families raising gender-variant and transgender children (birth through college).  | ✓                        |                           |                       | ✓                             |                                |                 |
| Transgender Good News (Pat Conover, New Wineskins, 2002)<br><a href="http://www.patconover.com/transgender/book.html">www.patconover.com/transgender/book.html</a>   | This book describes the real-life experiences of the joy and pain of being both Christian and gender-variant.   | ✓                        | ✓                         |                       | ✓                             |                                |                 |
| <i>Transgendering Faith</i> (ed. Maren C. Tirabassi and Leanne McCall Tigert, Pilgrim Press, 2004)<br>search <a href="http://www.thepilgrimpress.com">www.thepilgrimpress.com</a>  | A resource to help churches respond with love and care to transgender people, available through UCRDstore ( <a href="http://www.ucrdstore.ca/transgendering-faith-identity-sexuality-and-spirituality.html">www.ucrdstore.ca/transgendering-faith-identity-sexuality-and-spirituality.html</a> ). | ✓                        | ✓                         |                       |                               |                                |                 |
| Two-Spirited Aboriginal People: Continuing Cultural Appropriation by Non-Aboriginal Society [PDF]<br><a href="http://pi.library.yorku.ca/ojs/index.php/cws/article/viewFile/6129/5317">http://pi.library.yorku.ca/ojs/index.php/cws/article/viewFile/6129/5317</a> | Michelle Cameron's article in <i>Canadian Woman Studies</i> explores the history of the term "two-spirit" and its role in naming a culturally unique experience of gender and/or sexuality.   | ✓                        | ✓                         |                       |                               |                                | ✓               |
| The Whipping Girl (Julia Serano, Seal Press, 2007)<br><a href="http://www.juliaserano.com/whippinggirl.html">www.juliaserano.com/whippinggirl.html</a>   | A collection of personal essays that debunk many of the myths and misconceptions that people have about trans women, as well as the subject of gender in general.   | ✓                        | ✓                         |                       | ✓                             |                                | ✓               |

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|---|---|-----------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------|
|   |   | Individuals (General) | Churches and Clergy | Children (General) | Parents of Trans People | Children of Trans People | Trans People |
| <b>ONLINE ORGANIZATIONS</b>   |   |                       |                     |                    |                         |                          |              |
| COLAGE<br><a href="http://www.colage.org">www.colage.org</a>  | COLAGE is for people with a lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer parent.   |                       |                     |                    |                         | ✓                        | ✓            |
| Coming Out as Transgender (Human Rights Campaign)<br><a href="http://www.hrc.org/resources/resource-guide-to-coming-out">www.hrc.org/resources/resource-guide-to-coming-out</a>   | This resource is to help people through the process of coming out as transgender in realistic and practical terms.  | ✓                     |                     |                    |                         |                          | ✓            |
| Gender Creative Kids<br><a href="http://gendercreativekids.ca">http://gendercreativekids.ca</a>   | This website provides resources for supporting and affirming gender creative kids in their families, schools, and communities.  | ✓                     | ✓                   | ✓                  | ✓                       | ✓                        | ✓            |
| Gender Abolition as Colonisation<br><a href="http://boldlygo.co/gender-abolition-as-colonisation">http://boldlygo.co/gender-abolition-as-colonisation</a>   | An article on the Boldly Go blog on how different cultural understandings of gender complicate the creation of gender justice.  | ✓                     | ✓                   |                    |                         |                          | ✓            |
| Gender Identity and Our Faith Communities (Human Rights Campaign)<br><a href="http://www.hrc.org/resources/entry/gender-identity-and-our-faith-communities-a-congregational-guide-for-transg">www.hrc.org/resources/entry/gender-identity-and-our-faith-communities-a-congregational-guide-for-transg</a> | This congregational guide for transgender advocacy empowers people of faith with the knowledge and skills necessary to transform their communities into welcoming environments. |                       | ✓                   |                    |                         |                          |              |
| Gender Neutral Bathrooms (Unitarian Universalist Association)<br><a href="http://www.uua.org/lgbtq/welcoming/ways/bathrooms">www.uua.org/lgbtq/welcoming/ways/bathrooms</a>   | This link has a variety of resources on making washrooms safe spaces, including FAQs, documentaries, articles, and suggestions for signage.                                     | ✓                     | ✓                   |                    |                         |                          | ✓            |
| GLAAD: Transgender FAQ<br><a href="http://www.glaad.org/transgender/transfaq">www.glaad.org/transgender/transfaq</a>  | A simple one-page introductory explanation of trans identity on the GLAAD website. Further resources are available through links on the page.                                   | ✓                     | ✓                   |                    | ✓                       |                          | ✓            |
| Identifying as Trans<br><a href="http://teenhealthsource.com/sgd/identifying-trans/">http://teenhealthsource.com/sgd/identifying-trans/</a>   | A helpful page on the TeenHealthSource site to offer people who are questioning their gender identity, especially youth.  |                       |                     |                    |                         |                          | ✓            |

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| Institute for Welcoming Resources<br><a href="http://www.welcomingresources.org">www.welcomingresources.org</a>   | Resources to help faith communities become affirming of people regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.  | ✓                     | ✓                   |                    |                         |                          |              |
| Kids of Trans Resource Guide (COLAGE)<br><a href="http://www.scribd.com/doc/42240594/KOT-Resource-Guide">www.scribd.com/doc/42240594/KOT-Resource-Guide</a>   | A resource created for and by people with transgender parents.   |                       |                     |                    |                         | ✓                        | ✓            |
| Language, Culture, and Two-Spirit Identity<br><a href="http://apihtawikosisan.com">http://apihtawikosisan.com</a> , search “language culture two-spirit”  | This blog post by âpihtawikosisân focuses on the role that language plays in naming culturally specific concepts and experiences. It looks at Cree terms used to discuss gender and sexuality. | ✓                     | ✓                   |                    |                         |                          | ✓            |
| Le Néo<br><a href="http://www.le-neo.com">www.le-neo.com</a>  | This French-language resource is on gender identity and orientation.   | ✓                     | ✓                   |                    | ✓                       | ✓                        |              |
| Many Voices<br><a href="http://www.manyvoices.org">www.manyvoices.org</a>   | A Black church movement for gay and transgender justice.   | ✓                     | ✓                   |                    |                         |                          |              |
| National Center for Transgender Equality<br><a href="http://www.transequality.org">www.transequality.org</a>  | An organization devoted to ending discrimination against transgender people.   | ✓                     | ✓                   |                    |                         |                          |              |
| PFLAG Canada<br><a href="http://www.pflagcanada.ca">www.pflagcanada.ca</a>  | Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays provides support and resources on issues of sexual orientation and gender.  | ✓                     | ✓                   |                    | ✓                       | ✓                        | ✓            |
| Teaching Transgender<br><a href="http://transequality.org/issues/resources/teaching-transgender-guide-leading-effective-trainings">http://transequality.org/issues/resources/teaching-transgender-guide-leading-effective-trainings</a> | This how-to guide for leading trainings about the lives of transgender people was created by the National Center for Transgender Equality.   | ✓                     | ✓                   |                    |                         |                          | ✓            |
| Transfaith<br><a href="http://www.transfaithonline.org">www.transfaithonline.org</a>  | Transfaith is dedicated to educating churches about trans faith and trans folk, and nurturing the expression of the sacred.  |                       | ✓                   |                    |                         |                          |              |

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|--|--|-----------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------|
|  |  | Individuals (General) | Churches and Clergy | Children (General) | Parents of Trans People | Children of Trans People | Trans People |
| The Transgender Project<br><a href="http://www.thetransgenderproject.com">www.thetransgenderproject.com</a>  | An online collection of profiles that record, share, and celebrate the personal stories of transgender women and men from across Canada; stories of struggle, courage, and triumph.                                      | ✓                     | ✓                   |                    | ✓                       | ✓                        | ✓            |
| TransKids Purple Rainbow Foundation<br><a href="http://www.transkidspurplerainbow.org">www.transkidspurplerainbow.org</a>  | TransKids is committed to the premise that Gender Identity Disorder is something a child can't control and it is society that needs to change.   | ✓                     | ✓                   |                    | ✓                       | ✓                        | ✓            |
| Transtheology<br><a href="http://www.transtheology.org">www.transtheology.org</a>  | An open-source academic project that seeks contributions from as many traditions as possible. Includes a useful reading list.  | ✓                     | ✓                   |                    |                         |                          | ✓            |
| TransTorah<br><a href="http://www.transtorah.org">www.transtorah.org</a>   | How to access and transform tradition, and become welcoming sanctuaries for people of all genders.   | ✓                     | ✓                   |                    | ✓                       |                          | ✓            |
| TransWhat? A Guide towards Allyship<br><a href="http://transwhat.org">http://transwhat.org</a>   | For those just starting to learn about gender identity. Provides basic information and how to be an ally.  | ✓                     | ✓                   |                    | ✓                       |                          |              |
| What the Heck Are Pronouns? (Minus18)<br><a href="https://minus18.org.au/index.php/resource-packs/pronouns">https://minus18.org.au/index.php/resource-packs/pronouns</a>   | A comprehensive resource produced by Australia's largest youth-led organization for youth of all sexual orientations and gender identities; includes a short article, video, and app (that helps you practise pronouns). | ✓                     | ✓                   |                    | ✓                       |                          | ✓            |
| Words by Non-binary People re: Non-binary Experiences: A resource for service providers who want to be more "non-binary friendly"<br><a href="http://www.excellenceforchildandyouth.ca">www.excellenceforchildandyouth.ca</a> , search "non-binary friend" | This resource, by Omnes et Nihil, explores the diversity of non-binary experiences of gender. It helps service providers be more mindful of providing safe, affirming services.  | ✓                     | ✓                   |                    | ✓                       |                          | ✓            |

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|---|---|-----------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------|
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| <b>YOUTUBE VIDEOS</b>   |   |                       |                     |                    |                         |                          |              |
| The Gender Axis of Evil<br><a href="https://youtu.be/0co0minMG6l">https://youtu.be/0co0minMG6l</a>  | Zinnia Jones on the conflation of gender, gender expression, and sexuality.   | ✓                     | ✓                   |                    |                         |                          |              |
| HRC Observes National Transgender Day of Remembrance (Human Rights Campaign) <a href="https://youtu.be/vbflAsldos4">https://youtu.be/vbflAsldos4</a>                                  | This video highlights November 20 as a day to mark the passing of transgender people who have died because of hate.   |                       | ✓                   |                    |                         |                          |              |
| Laverne Cox at Creating Change 2014<br><a href="https://youtu.be/6cytc0p4Jwg">https://youtu.be/6cytc0p4Jwg</a>  | Laverne Cox, known as Sophia Burset on <i>Orange Is the New Black</i> , speaks to the importance of trans justice in the context of contemporary trans issues in North America. | ✓                     | ✓                   |                    | ✓                       |                          | ✓            |
| On the Male Side of Middle<br><a href="https://youtu.be/UoljapEHmDA">https://youtu.be/UoljapEHmDA</a><br>(see also <a href="http://www.calvinneufeld.com">www.calvinneufeld.com</a> ) | This film about transgender Mennonite Calvin Neufeld captures a special moment in time between him and his family.  | ✓                     | ✓                   |                    | ✓                       | ✓                        | ✓            |
| Transgender Basics—Gender Identity Project<br><a href="https://youtu.be/UXI9w0PbBXY">https://youtu.be/UXI9w0PbBXY</a>   | A 20-minute educational film that discusses basic concepts of gender, sexual orientation, identity, and gender roles.   | ✓                     | ✓                   |                    | ✓                       | ✓                        | ✓            |
| “Two Spirit”—Injunuity<br><a href="https://youtu.be/iDyagnMng28">https://youtu.be/iDyagnMng28</a>   | A four-minute animated video by Injunuity, featuring the stories of two-spirit people.  | ✓                     | ✓                   |                    | ✓                       |                          | ✓            |
| Voices of Witness: Out of the Box<br><a href="https://youtu.be/QzCANWGsEdc">https://youtu.be/QzCANWGsEdc</a>  | This groundbreaking documentary gives voice to the witness of transgender people of faith. Online <a href="#">study guides</a> are available.                                   | ✓                     | ✓                   |                    | ✓                       | ✓                        | ✓            |
| What Are Pronouns?<br><a href="https://youtu.be/3xpvricekxU">https://youtu.be/3xpvricekxU</a>   | A video by Minus18, Australia’s youth-led organization, about how gender identity is connected to the use of pronouns.  | ✓                     | ✓                   |                    | ✓                       |                          | ✓            |

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|--|--|-----------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------|
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| <b>OTHER FILMS</b>   |  |                       |                     |                    |                         |                          |              |
| Call Me Malcolm<br>(Joseph Paralagrecó, Filmworks Inc., United Church of Christ)<br><a href="http://www.facebook.com/CallMeMalcolm">www.facebook.com/CallMeMalcolm</a>             | The story of Malcolm, a transgender seminary student, and his struggle with faith, love, and gender identity. Study guides are available.                  | ✓                     | ✓                   |                    | ✓                       | ✓                        | ✓            |
| No Dumb Questions (Melissa Regan)<br><a href="http://www.nodumbquestions.com">www.nodumbquestions.com</a>  | A film with discussion guides follows three young girls' conversations about gender and acceptance when they learn Uncle Bill will soon be Aunt Barbara.   | ✓                     | ✓                   | ✓                  | ✓                       | ✓                        | ✓            |
| <b>THEATRE</b>   |  |                       |                     |                    |                         |                          |              |
| Transfigurations: Transgressing Gender in the Bible<br><a href="https://petersontoscano.com/portfolio/transfigurations">https://petersontoscano.com/portfolio/transfigurations</a> | By unearthing the stories of gender-variant people in the Hebrew and Christian scriptures, Toscano's one-person play deepens Bible stories and characters. | ✓                     | ✓                   |                    |                         |                          | ✓            |

## MORE FROM THE UNITED CHURCH

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### Questions & Feedback

We welcome your feedback and evaluation of the kit, as well as your questions. E-mail your comments and/or responses to the following questions to [trans@united-church.ca](mailto:trans@united-church.ca).

- What seems important in the kit?
- What are the kit's strengths?
- Was any part of the kit unclear?
- Does anything seem left out?

### Worship Services

Worship resources are posted online for two special days. Search [www.united-church.ca](http://www.united-church.ca) for the following:

- International Day against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia—May 17
- Transgender Day of Remembrance—November 20

### United Church Website

For more information and resources on trans and gender identity, search [www.united-church.ca](http://www.united-church.ca) for “trans gender identity.”

### Networking—Connect with One Another Online

There are two online places on Facebook for allies and trans people to connect with one another:

- **Trans and Gender Identity, The United Church of Canada** (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/561099660605534>) is an open Facebook group for anyone—trans people, family, friends, and allies—to openly engage in discussions on what it's like being trans in The United Church of Canada, share resources and news, and post ideas on how to encourage the full participation of all gender identities in the church.
- **Trans Network [UCCanada]** is a private Facebook group created for trans people in the United Church. It is a safe place to network with, support one another, share links to helpful resources, and more. All who identify as trans are welcome! The list of members will be kept strictly confidential. E-mail [trans@united-church.ca](mailto:trans@united-church.ca) for instructions on how to join.

### Affirm United/S'affirmer Ensemble

Affirm United/S'affirmer Ensemble (<http://affirmunited.ause.ca>) is an organization of people of all sexual orientations and gender identities within The United Church of Canada. Affirm United works to promote the full inclusion of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and trans people in the church and in society. Each United Church organization that is an Affirming Ministry declares itself to be fully inclusive of people of all sexual orientations and gender identities—and they back up their words with action. The Affirming Ministries Program encourages study of what it means to be publicly welcoming and inclusive. The program also provides support for sexual orientation and gender identity issues, and encourages the study of other United Church resources that promote the inclusion of other marginalized groups.



Celebrating Gender Diversity  
A Toolkit on Gender Identity and Trans Experiences for Communities of Faith  
(March 2016)

[www.united-church.ca](http://www.united-church.ca)

