

# **Adapting Physical Spaces to Foster Gender-Inclusive Camp Communities**

SCampCon - November 2019



# WHO WE ARE



## PRIDE CAMPING ASSOCIATION

Davin Allan (he/him)

Having worked at a summer camp for 2SLGBTQ+ and allied youth in Ontario, Davin saw the need for many other camps to embrace this same sense of inclusion and acceptance, to ensure LGBTQ+ campers are being offered a safe and barrier-free traditional camp experience



Amanda Grassick (they/them)

Amanda identifies as queer and genderqueer and holds an MA in Interdisciplinary Studies. They draw on their personal experience in the camping community to help organizations foster diversity and to advocate for more inclusive programs and spaces.



# WHO WE ARE

The Pride Camping Association was created to help camps better support 2SLGBTQ+ campers and staff. We envision a world where all 2SLGBTQ+ campers and staff have access to safe and affirming camp programs.

We believe this world starts with intention.

The intention to do better.

The intention to create space.

The intention to dismantle barriers.

The intention to support others.

The intention to see others as they want to be seen.



**PRIDE CAMPING  
ASSOCIATION**



# AGENDA

1. Outcomes & Objectives
2. Base Knowledge & Terminology
3. Benefits & Challenges
4. Building Codes & Other Relevant Considerations
5. The Physical Spaces
  - a. Washrooms
  - b. Showers
  - c. Cabins
6. Comfort Levels
7. Resources



# OUTCOMES

## WHAT WE WILL COVER

- Factors to consider when adapting physical spaces, particularly bathrooms, shower facilities, and cabins/changerooms
- Simple and cost-effective solutions to adapt their facilities and physical spaces to better support gender-diverse campers and staff
- Recommendations on language and signage to ensure your intentions are respectfully communicated

## WHAT WE WILL NOT COVER

- Individual provincial/state building codes
- Factors to consider when building brand new facilities (although happy to share resources on this privately)
- Individual provincial/state legal requirements for providing gender-inclusive facilities



# BASE KNOWLEDGE

Starting off this presentation, we will work on the following base knowledge:

- Transgender and non-binary people deserve (and in many places have the legal right to) washrooms, showers, change rooms, and accommodations that correspond to their lived gender identity.
- Building new facilities with gender-inclusive washrooms, showers, or change rooms is not realistic for most camps.

Let's quickly review some terminology that will be used in this presentation.



# TERMINOLOGY

While much of this terminology is culturally based and the specific meanings vary between regions and cultures, we will use the following definitions throughout this presentation:

**Gender Identity:** someone's internal and individual sense of gender. A person's sense of being a woman, man, both, neither, or anywhere within a gender spectrum.

**Sex assigned at birth:** determination of a child's sex (i.e. male, female, or intersex) at birth, most often based on the appearance of external genitalia

**Transgender:** someone whose gender identity does not align with their sex assigned at birth

**Non-Binary:** someone whose gender identity does not fit into stereotypical gender norms



## **BENEFITS**

- Increase a camp's ability to fully support campers and staff
- Increased efficiency of washrooms if properly set up
- Signals to incoming campers, families, and staff that your program is a safe space
- Support physical and mental health of campers and staff
- Fostering a culture of inclusion for both identified and unidentified gender-diverse youth

## **CHALLENGES/CONCERNS**

- Confusion about signage/language
- Potential of some people feeling uncomfortable with using facilities with people of different genders
- Immovable gendered features of existing facilities (such as urinals)



# BUILDING CODES

Canada's National Building Code (NBC) is a model code that can be adopted or modified by different jurisdictions. Provincial codes exist in BC, Alberta, Ontario, and Quebec.

In the United States, there is the International Building Code (IBC) and International Plumbing Code (IPC).

These codes establish a requirement of the number of toilets required in buildings, and do specify a number of men's and women's washrooms. There is no requirement that men's and women's washrooms must be physically separated.



# BUILDING CODES

- If you are not making changes to the number of toilets and sinks available, there shouldn't be any major building code issues in the adaptations you make, but double check any building codes (municipal, provincial/state, federal) that apply to you.
- Provincial codes can be obtained for free through the National Research Council Canada or from respective provincial websites, all listed here: <https://nrc.canada.ca/en/certifications-evaluations-standards/codes-canada/provincial-territorial-ministries>



# OTHER CODES TO CONSIDER

- Fire Code: if setting up change rooms and thereby reducing floor space in cabins; if adding or removing the number of beds; if adding any additional doors or structures inside a building.
- Health Regulations: some provincial health regulations require a certain amount of floor space for change rooms.
- Plumbing Code: if altering the number of toilets/sinks that are accessible to the public.
- Accessibility/Disability Acts: if any of the facilities you are adapting are compliant to any applicable accessibility/disability acts, to ensure your changes are not affecting compliance.



# THE PHYSICAL SPACES: WASHROOMS

- Do you already have a bathroom you can convert into a gender-inclusive washroom? Think if you already have any single-stall washrooms at camp. Consider:
  - Wellness Centre
  - Extra staff washrooms
  - Accessible washrooms
- Do you have a set of men's and women's washrooms that you could convert into two all-gender washrooms?
- Most camps have more than one set of washrooms. Converting a washroom into a gender-inclusive washroom does not mean it can only be used exclusively by transgender or non-binary people.
- If there are no other options, consider a washroom trailer.



# THE PHYSICAL SPACES: WASHROOMS

- Consider the optics: gender-inclusive washrooms should be as similar to other washroom facilities as possible. It would not be appropriate for the only gender-inclusive washroom to be an out-house while there are many gendered washrooms with flush toilets.
- Consider the logistics: is the washroom relatively accessible to the centre of camp, or is it far away?

Remember that non-binary people should have the option of a gender-inclusive washroom, but they cannot be forced to use it.



# WASHROOM SIGNAGE



This sign communicates male and/or female washroom, and does not represent or acknowledge any non-binary identities.



This symbol is confusing and is not universally understood. Not all identities relate to this symbol.



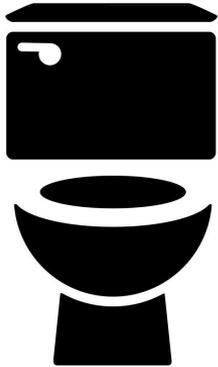
This is the wrong message. We do care. We care about people's gender identity and that they have access to the facilities they need.



While fun, this sign equates a person's gender identity to fictional creatures. A person's sense of gender is real, while mermaids and centaurs are not.



# WASHROOM SIGNAGE



# WASHROOM TERMINOLOGY

UNIVERSAL	The term “Universal” is often understood to be for all genders, but also families. Additionally, it is often includes washrooms that are accessible. I would not recommend labelling a washroom as “universal” if it is not an accessible washroom.
GENDER-NEUTRAL	“Gender-Neutral” communicates that the washroom is for anybody regardless of gender and does not imply a gender binary like if a washroom was called a Men’s/Women’s washroom.
ALL-GENDER	“All-Gender” is a more political term. It specifically communicates that this washroom isn’t just for men and/or women, but rather people of any and all genders. This term best communicates our intention, but may require an explanation to younger campers.
WASHROOM FOR ALL	“Washroom for All” or “Washroom for Everyone” are relatively new terms that are child-friendly descriptors that communicate what you intend and are associated with allyship.



# WASHROOM TIPS

Urinals: if you are converting a washroom with urinals into a gender-inclusive washroom, there are some things to consider.

- Being surprised by a urinal in an all-gender washroom can be a negative experience, as urinals are very gendered
- Include this fact on your sign: “All-Gender Washroom with Urinals”
- Consider washroom wait times, particularly for those who use a toilet rather than a urinal.

Ensure you have waste receptacles in each toilet stall of all gender-inclusive washrooms to ensure privacy around personal health and hygiene. Also consider providing self-locking sharps containers for discrete needle disposal.



# THE PHYSICAL SPACES: SHOWERS

Shower practices and policies that will support all campers, but particularly non-binary and transgender campers:

- Individual stalls for privacy
- Explaining the expectations of shower time to the group beforehand
- Counsellor supervision of shower time
- Alternative shower spaces and times



# THE PHYSICAL SPACES: SHOWERS

Establishing a gender-inclusive shower facility is simpler than people may think.

1. Remove any gendered signage from the two shower facilities
2. Schedule showers by cabin or another factor, rather than by age group
3. If there are not enough stalls in one side for all campers to shower at the same time, schedule one cabin to use both sides of the shower house, with a counsellor on each side.

This structure means that campers are only showering at the same time as their cabin mates. This effectively creates an all-gender shower house without necessarily having male-identified and female-identified campers showering in the same facility at the same time.



# SHOWER SIGNAGE



To support transgender and non-binary people, you can use the following low-cost strategies:

- Remove gender from any signage
- Include “Trans People Welcome” on signage
- Provide signage that designates where clothes are required (central area) and where clothes are optional (in stalls)
- Include hooks by each shower



# THE PHYSICAL SPACES: CABINS

The physical set up of a cabin need not change significantly to support transgender or non-binary campers or staff and will depend on their individual support plan.

There are some social considerations to think about to support transgender or non-binary campers, which will be covered in my colleague's presentation, *Adapting Social Spaces*, also scheduled during SCampCon.

The one major physical factor that comes into play is changing. This can be addressed through a physical set up or a cabin-wide practice.



# PHYSICAL ADAPTATIONS FOR CABINS

- Place campers in a cabin closest to the washroom, as a change room option.
- Use any side room or spare room in a cabin as a designated change room.
  - Consider promoting your session with the lowest registration as a gender-inclusive session, when you may have more space in cabins to use a spare room as a change room.
- Set up a temporary change room with rope and a shower curtain in the corner of a room, or hanging a hula-hoop and a blanket for a change room that doesn't need to be in the corner.
- Build a more permanent fixture in the corner of a cabin by simply adding a dividing wall with a curtain or a door.
- Pop-up change rooms can be purchased online that could be moved around as needed.



# PRACTICE ADAPTATIONS FOR CABINS

Counsellors could set any of the following expectations for everyone changing in the cabin:

- People can change in their bunk/under their covers
- People can use a designated, lower-traffic area of the room to change
- Everyone has the option of going to the washroom to change

Counsellors should be careful with how these messages are communicated. They should be framed as a way to allow for individual privacy and what makes each person comfortable. This messaging could easily turn negative if not facilitated intentionally, causing campers to feel shameful about their bodies.



# COMFORT LEVELS

There is no evidence behind the argument that predators will take advantage of gender-inclusive spaces, particularly female-identified washrooms\*. In fact, the real risk is to transgender youth who do not have access to a safe washroom\*\*.

However, people may feel uncomfortable with the idea of sharing washrooms, shower facilities, cabins, and change rooms with transgender or non-binary people. Regardless of where this uneasiness comes from, it is a valid feeling that we can turn into a learning opportunity.

\* A. Hasenbush, A. R. Flores, and J. L. Herman, "Gender Identity Nondiscrimination Laws in Public Accommodations: A review of evidence regarding safety and privacy in public restrooms, locker rooms, and changing rooms," *Sexuality Research and Policy Review* 16, no. 1 (2018): 70-83.

\*\*J. Veale, E. Saewyc, H. Frohard-Dourlent, et al., and the Canadian Trans Youth Health Survey Research Group, *Being Safe, Being Me: Results of the Canadian Trans Youth Health Survey (Vancouver, BC: Stigma and Resilience Among Vulnerable Youth Centre, School or Nursing, University of British Columbia, 2015.*



# COMFORT LEVELS

- Transgender and non-binary people have protected rights in all provinces in Canada and many states in the US.
- If anyone is uncomfortable using an all-gender washroom, offer them a different washroom to use.
- If anyone is uncomfortable being in a cabin with a transgender or non-binary camper, offer to move that person to a different cabin, but do not move the transgender or non-binary camper.
- Never disclose the gender identity or status of any person.



# COMMUNICATE YOUR ACTIONS

Communicate to your families the commitments to inclusion you have made and the options you have in your facilities to ensure the safety of transgender and non-binary youth.

Communicate any changes to your facilities to your campers and review with everyone the location of your gender-inclusive spaces.

Communicate that you have gender-inclusive spaces on your job postings to help build a staff team and culture that is passionate about supporting 2SLGBTQ+ campers.



# RESOURCES

- Adapting Social Spaces to Foster Gender-Inclusive Camp Communities - SCampCon presentation by the Pride Camping Association
- Pride Camping Association Resource Section: <https://www.pridecamping.org/resources>
- HMCA Architecture + Design, Designing for Inclusivity: Strategies for Universal Washrooms and Change Rooms in Community and Recreation Facilities:  
[https://hcma.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/HCMA\\_Designing-for-Inclusivity\\_V1-1.pdf](https://hcma.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/HCMA_Designing-for-Inclusivity_V1-1.pdf)
- Camps 'N Codes, American Camping Association:  
<https://www.acacamps.org/resource-library/campline/camps-n-codes>
- The Simple Design Solutions That Can Make Bathrooms Better - For All Genders:  
<https://qz.com/933704/how-to-design-transgender-friendly-bathrooms-that-make-people-of-all-genders-feel-safe/>



# MORE FROM PRIDE CAMPING ASSOCIATION

- 2020 ACA Tri-State Camp Conference (March 10 - 12, 2020)
- Various 2020 Provincial Camping Association Conferences
- Pride Camping Professionals Facebook Group
  - [facebook.com/groups/pridecampingpros](https://facebook.com/groups/pridecampingpros)

## CONTACT US



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