Guidelines for the Inclusion of Transgender and Non-binary Members

Introduction

As Girl Guides of Canada (GGC) continues its important work of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI), we continue to look for proactive ways to improve our programs and guidelines to ensure that all members have a place of belonging. This has been true throughout our 110-year history and will continue as we move towards the future.

These guidelines have been updated to reflect GGC's position on the inclusion of transgender and non-binary members. These guidelines will also assist our members in creating safer and more inclusive spaces. If you require clarification on any of the information in this document, please reach out to GGC Inclusivity at inclusivity@girlguides.ca.

Transgender Inclusion Statement

GGC recognizes and values the richness of human diversity in its many forms and strives to create girl-focused environments where members from all walks of life, identities, and lived experiences feel a sense of belonging and can fully participate.

GGC welcomes girls and women – cisgender and transgender – as well as non-binary people who are comfortable in spaces that focus on and are driven by the experience of girls.

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Guidelines for Commonly Asked Questions

Below you'll find answers to key questions about creating safe and inclusive spaces. If you have a question that isn't included in the list below or require clarification on any of the information in this document, please reach out to inclusivity@girlguides.ca.

Membership

Who can join Girl Guides of Canada?

GGC welcomes all women and girls – cisgender and transgender – as well as non-binary people who are comfortable in spaces that focus on and are driven by the experience of girls.

Is Girl Guides of Canada changing its name?

No. Girls and women continue to experience gender-based discrimination and we see the value of a space that centers their experience. We also understand that gender-based discrimination disproportionally impacts transgender and non-binary people and we recognize that Girl Guides of Canada can be a welcoming and safer space for transgender and non-binary members, while remaining true to our roots as an organization centered on girl empowerment. GGC will continue to use the word *girl* in our name, organizational content and activities.

I have a unit member who identifies as a boy or trans boy. Can they stay in my unit or return next Guiding year?

It's important to remember that gender identity is fluid and may shift over time or be different in different spaces with different people. Current GGC youth members who identify, and live their social lives outside of GGC, as boys or trans boys, should be supported to transition out of GGC over the course of a single Guiding year.

Last year, we hosted "Camp Like a Girl" and "Girl Rally". How can we make these activities more welcoming for transgender and non-binary members?

Event titles that include the word "girl" continue to be accepted and expected at GGC, but no matter what title you choose the most important part is how inclusive the event *experience* is! By asking your volunteers to read through GGC's DEI resources and ensuring there is infrastructure to welcome trans and non-binary folks, you will be taking a huge step in the right direction. You may also want to use your event title as a way to showcase inclusion, such as changing "Camp like a girl" to "Camp like a champ!". However, titles are secondary to the experience at the event itself.

Gender Identity and Expression

What pronouns do I use when addressing someone?

Regardless of a person's gender identity or gender expression, you should use the pronouns that a person tells you to use. If someone does not tell you their pronouns, you may wish to use the name with which they introduced themselves.

How do I know if a member is cisgender, transgender, or non-binary?

The only way to know a member's gender identity, whether cisgender, transgender, or non-binary, is if they tell you. It is good practice to assume that there are cisgender, transgender and non-binary members in your unit and take steps to create a welcoming environment.

How do I answer questions from members of my unit about a transgender or non-binary member?

Questions about a member's gender identity should be left to that member to answer if they feel comfortable. If the member does not feel comfortable answering the questions, you can discuss how your unit supports and welcomes transgender and non-binary members in general.

I have a member in my unit who has questions about exploring their gender identity and is bringing it up in unit meetings or activities. How do I support them?

You can support them by allowing them to talk to you or the group about their feelings. We also acknowledge that you may not hold the expertise required to fully support the member. A great option is to provide them with resources that can help support them. We have included a resource list on page 4 of this guide.

What do I do if someone makes a transphobic comment during a GGC activity?

Girl Guides of Canada does not accept any form of hate speech towards members, volunteers, or staff. If this occurs, immediate action needs to be taken. If the activity can be stopped, do so and explain that the comments are inappropriate. You should also file an incident report.

Where can I find resources to help support conversations about gender in my unit?

See below for a list of resources for your reference.

Washrooms and Shared Spaces

How do I ensure that there is appropriate washroom access for all members in my unit?

All transgender and non-binary people have legally protected rights in Canada that allow them to use the washroom that aligns with their gender identity. When booking events, you should prioritize facilities that have gender-inclusive washrooms.

How do I best share space with all members, including transgender and non-binary members, during an overnight activity?

Consider having options such as private shower stalls and gender-neutral or single washrooms and changerooms. As before, all members of GGC should be invited but not required to sleep in the same room as others, no matter the sex that they were assigned at birth. There are additional considerations that should be worked through when planning an overnight activity, for example ensuring that there are safe and inclusive sleeping, changing and shower facilities. It's important to know that any changes made to better support transgender and non-binary members often benefit other members as well.

What if a caregiver of a girl in my unit does not want their daughter sharing a space, or sharing a washroom, with a transgender or non-binary member?

This should be recognized as a form of discrimination. If someone has an issue with their child sharing a space, including a washroom, with transgender or non-binary members, it is their responsibility to remove their child from the situation, or find a solution that works for their child, but does not impact the experience of the transgender or non-binary members.

Caregivers

How do I answer questions from other parents or adults about a transgender or non-binary member?

GGC's Code of Conduct requires that you protect the privacy of our members, by not disclosing or discussing personal information, including gender identity, about the members.

A member in my unit uses different pronouns at home than they do in the unit. What should I do?

You should address them as they have requested in your unit. You can ask them about the best approach when communicating with their caregivers. Never declare a person's gender identity to anyone, including their family, unless explicitly given permission to do so.

Resources

Indigenous and Two-Spirit

- **Dancing to Eagle Spirit Society** is dedicated to the healing and empowerment of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Two-Spirit individuals and their allies. Visit: http://www.dancingtoeaglespiritsociety.org/
- **The Native Youth Sexual Health Network** is an organization by and for Indigenous Youth that works across issues of sexual and reproductive health. Visit: https://nativeyouthsexualhealth.com
- **Two-Spirited People of Manitoba** is a community-based organization focused on helping Indigenous/LGBTQ/Two-Spirit people improve their lives. Visit: https://twospiritmanitoba.ca
- **Urban Native Youth Association's 2-Spirit Collective** provides support, resources, and programming for Indigenous youth who identify as Two-Spirit or LGBTQ+ and for those questioning their sexual or gender identities. Visit: https://unya.bc.ca

National

- **Action Canada for Sexual Health and Rights** – Beyond the Basics Gender Galaxy. Visit: https://www.actioncanadashr.org/beyond-basics-sneak-peek-gender-galaxy
- **Egale** aims to improve the lives of LGBTQ2S+ people in Canada and enhance the global response to LGBTQ2S+ issues. Visit: www.egale.ca
- **Gender Creative Kids** is a community organization that supports trans, non-binary, and gender-fluid youth's affirmation within their families, school, and communities. Visit: https://gendercreativekids.com/
- **Gender Spectrum** works to create gender sensitive and inclusive environments for all children and teens. Visit: www.genderspectrum.org
- **It Gets Better Canada** is on a mission to uplift, empower and connect 2SLGBTQ+ youth across Canada. Visit: https://itgetsbettercanada.org
- **Kids Help Phone** offers support for children and youth across Canada. Visit: https://kidshelpphone.ca/
- **PFLAG Canada** offers peer-to-peer support to help all Canadians with issues of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression. Visit: https://pflagcanada.ca/
- **Pride Camping Association** empowers camps to better support 2SLGBTQ+ campers, staff and families. Visit: www.pridecamping.org
- **Social Justice Toolbox** is a resource hub for free and curated social justice activities and facilitation guides. Visit: http://www.socialjusticetoolbox.com/
- **The Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity** aims to empower gender and sexually diverse communities through education, research and advocacy. Visit: www.ccgsd-ccdgs.org
- **Trans Student Educational Resources** is a youth-led organization dedicated to transforming the educational environment for trans and gender non-conforming students through advocacy. Visit: https://transstudent.org
- **The Trevor Project** provides 24/7 crisis support services to LGBTQ young people. Visit: https://thetrevorproject.org
- **Trans Lifeline** offers emotional and financial support to trans people in crisis. Visit: http://www.translifeline.org or call 1-877-330-6366

Regional

Western Canada

- **Centre for Sexuality** provides information about sexual health for all LGBTQ+ individuals. Visit: https://centreforsexuality.ca
- **End of the Rainbow Foundation** aims to improve socio-economic conditions for people of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities or expressions by providing education, support programs and research. Visit: https://endoftherainbow.ca/
- **Outloud St Albert** provides a safe space for all LGBTQ+ youth to teach, learn and grow together. Visit: https://outloudstalbert.ca
- **Out Saskatoon** builds communities of support through mental, physical and emotional health for LGBTQ+ individuals. Visit: https://www.outsaskatoon.ca

- **Qmunity** provides a safe space for LGBTQ+ individuals through teaching, learning and advocacy. Visit: https://qmunity.ca
- **Rainbow Resource Centre** offers support to the LGBTQ2S+ community in the form of counselling, education and programming. Visit: https://rainbowresourcecentre.org
- **Trans Rights BC** provides information that is accessible to gender diverse individuals across British Columbia. Visit: https://www.transrightsbc.com
- **Trans Sask** offers a network of support between members of the LGBTQ+ community and their families Visit: https://www.transsask.ca

Central and Eastern Canada

- **The 519** serves the people of Toronto by supporting happy, fulfilling LGBTQ2S lives. Visit: https://www.the519.org
- **LGBT YouthLine** affirms and supports the experiences of LGBTQ2S+ youth. Visit: https://www.youthline.ca
- **Rainbow Health Ontario** creates opportunities for the healthcare system to better serve LGBT2SQ communities. Visit: https://www.rainbowhealthontario.ca/
- **Reach Out Centre for Kids (Rock)** has LGBTQ+ youth and trans specific programming, various drop-in programs and social programs. Visit: https://www.rockonline.ca
- **The Youth Project** is a non-profit charitable organization dedicated to providing support and services to youth around issues of sexual orientation and gender identity. Visit: https://youthproject.ns.ca

Québec

- **Aide aux Trans du Québec** offers support on issues or questions relating to trans identity without judgement. Visit: https://www.atq1980.org
- **Centre de Solidarité Lesbienne** promotes the wellbeing of lesbian women. Visit: https://www.solidaritelesbienne.qc.ca/en/homepage/
- **Interligne** provides mental health services for all LGBTO+ youth. Visit: https://www.interligne.co

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Inquires related to these guidelines should be directed to:
inclusivity@girlguides.ca

Girl Guides of Canada, 50 Merton Street, Toronto ON M5S 1A3
www.girlguides.ca

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Appendices

Appendix A – Glossary of Terms

When engaging in conversations about gender, it can be useful to establish a baseline or working definition for the words we use. The definitions provided below are not meant to label members, but rather to assist in offering a starting point for a shared understanding of what these words mean. Language is not static. These definitions may shift and change over time, or hold different meaning for different groups, based on generational, cultural, geographical or societal differences. These terms are not siloed, and some members will use multiple words to describe their identity.

Key Terms

For the purposes of clarity, GGC uses the umbrella terms *transgender* and *non-binary* to refer to all identities that fall outside of the woman/man gender binary. GGC acknowledges that these identities may not be claimed by everyone who identifies outside of the gender binary. GGC will continue to use the word *girl* in our organizational content and activities.

2SLGBTQI+
An acronym for Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, and intersex. The + encompasses additional sexual orientations and genders.

Agender
A person who identifies as being genderless or not having a gender.

Ally
A person who actively works to end a form of oppression that gives them privilege. Allies listen to and are guided by communities and individuals affected by oppression.

Cis/Cisgender
A person whose gender identity aligns with their assigned sex at birth (e.g., a person who is assigned female at birth and identifies as a woman).

Chosen name
A name chosen by an individual that aligns with their gender identity. At GGC we use people's chosen names.

Deadname
A name given to a person at birth that is no longer used by that individual. At GGC we use people's chosen names and avoid deadnaming people.

Discrimination
Any form of unequal treatment based on differences that results in disadvantage. It can be intentional or unintentional but always harmful; and it may occur at an individual or systemic level.

Gender

Refers to the ways that femininity and masculinity are socially constructed and re-enforced. In Canada gender is most often socially constructed as a binary even though that is not how gender is experienced by many people.

Gender binary

A social system where gender is believed to be made of two, opposite genders, typically women/girl and men/boy. These genders are often expected by society to align with a person's sex assigned at birth. In Canada, the gender binary was imported through colonization. Some Indigenous cultures had, and continue to have, binary gender systems, while others have gender systems with 3+ genders.

Gender expression

How a person publicly expresses their gender identity. This can include behaviour and outward appearance, such as clothing, hair, make-up, body language and voice. A person's chosen name and pronouns are common ways of expressing gender.

Gender identity

A person's internal understanding or sense of their gender as being woman, man, both, neither, or another gender. Gender identity is internal and cannot be assumed by someone else. The only way to know someone's gender identity is for them to tell you their gender identity. Gender identity is not static or fixed and may change over time or daily. Some examples of gender identity are girl, trans girl, boy, trans boy, non-binary, transgender, agender and cisgender.

Intersex

An umbrella term for a person born with sex traits or reproductive anatomy (chromosomes, gonads, sex hormones, or genitals) that do not fit the narrow medical definitions of male or female bodies.

Misgender

Referring to someone using words, pronouns, or other form of address, in a way that does not align with their gender identity. Intentional misgendering is a form of gender-based harassment and violence. An example would be using she/her pronouns to describe someone who uses they/he/zie pronouns.

Non-binary/Gender diverse/Genderqueer

Umbrella terms for gender identities that fall outside of the gender binary, and gender identities that some people claim. A person who identifies as non-binary, gender diverse or genderqueer, has a gender identity that does not fit into the socially constructed gender binary. The only way to know if someone is non-binary, gender diverse or genderqueer is if they identify that way. GGC uses "non-binary" as the umbrella term for these identities throughout this document.

Pronouns

Words that are used to refer to a person, without using their name. Common pronouns are she/her/hers, he/him/his, they/them/theirs, and ze(zie)/zir/zirs. While pronouns are part of a person's gender expression, they cannot be used to determine a person's gender identity. For example, someone who uses they/them pronouns may identity as a woman or man. People may also use multiple sets of pronouns, for example she/they or she/he, or ask to not use pronouns at all – instead use their name as a pronoun.

Queer

An umbrella term used by some individuals whose sexual orientations and/or gender identities fall outsider of cisgender and heterosexual norms.

Questioning

A period where a person explores and questions their own sexual identity, orientation and/or gender.

Sex assigned at birth

The sex assigned, by mid-wives, doctors or another adult, to a child at birth. Sex assigned at birth is based primarily on the appearance of external genitals but can be based on other physical characteristics. Previously, the term "sex" was used. Examples are female, male and intersex.

Trans boy/man

A person who identifies as transgender and a boy/man. Someone who is assigned female at birth and identities as a boy, may not necessarily identify as a trans boy. They may identify as a boy, trans, or another identity. The only way to know if someone is trans boy/man is if they tell you that they identify that way.

Trans girl/woman

A person who identifies as transgender and a girl/woman. Someone who is assigned male at birth and identities as a girl may not necessarily identify as a trans girl. They may identify as a girl, trans, or another identity. The only way to know if someone is trans girl/woman is if they tell you that they identify that way.

Transgender/trans/trans+

Umbrella terms used to describe people whose gender identities are different from their sex assigned at birth (e.g. someone who is assigned male at birth and identifies as a woman/non-binary). This term can also include gender identities that people claim. Like all gender identities, transgender is internal and an identity that a person must claim, it cannot be assumed by someone else. The only way to know if someone is transgender is if they tell you that they identify that way.

Transition

Refers to the range of social, legal, and medical changes that some transgender people may do to affirm their gender identity. It's important to remember that transition is a process, not a single moment. For many people, transition is something they do over time, and they may transition in some spaces sooner than others. It is inappropriate to ask if someone has or is transitioning.

Two-Spirit

An umbrella term used by some First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people to describe a person who identifies as having both feminine and masculine spirit. Originally Anishinaabe based, various Indigenous peoples and nations use the term in different ways, or not at all and may refer to gender identity, sexual orientation, or societal roles not tied to gender and sexual orientation. Two-Spirit is exclusively used by indigenous people. Like all other identities, do not assume that because someone is Indigenous and identifies as LGTBQI+ that they are two-spirt. The only way to know if someone is two-spirit is if they tell you that they identify that way.

Appendix B – Programming Recommendations

These programs, available on the Girl Guides of Canada program platform, provide support for the development and advancement of inclusive programming. As we continue to create programming that reflects the identities of our membership, the programs offered on the platform will be updated.

There are a variety of activities that you can try in the Explore Identities Program Area. The best place to get started is in the Different Together Theme with these activities:

Sparks	**Brownies**
Curious Cat Puppet	Friendship Circles
Personal Prints	Inside Out
Same on the Inside	Keep Inclusion Up
Suna Says	Paper Plate Portrait
What Makes Me "Me"!	Safe Spaces

Guides	**Pathfinders/Trex**
Assumptions	Being Inclusive: Foundation Stations
A Symbol of Safety	First Thoughts
Be an Ally	Personal Petals
Inside and Out	Re-Group
Same and Different	Spell it Out

Rangers/Trex
Back 2 Back Connect
Growing Acceptance
Illustrate Identities
(In)visible Identities
What's Your Story?