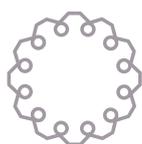


ALLYSHIP IN ACTION

FRAMEWORKS FOR TRANS AND GENDER
DIVERSE INCLUSION IN PREVENTION OF
GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE INITIATIVES



Zoe Belle
Gender Collective



WOMEN'S HEALTH
IN THE NORTH
voice • choice • power



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Women’s Health In the North acknowledges Victorian Aboriginal people as the Traditional Owners of the land on which we provide our services – the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people of the Kulin nation – and pay our respect to their Elders past and present. WHIN acknowledges that Aboriginal sovereignty was never given up and that we stand on stolen land. We are committed to Aboriginal self-determination and to supporting Treaty and truth-telling processes.

We recognise the ongoing leadership role of the Aboriginal community on gender equality and the health, safety and wellbeing of women and gender-diverse people. As First Peoples, Aboriginal Victorians are best placed to determine a culturally appropriate path to these in their communities.

CONTRIBUTORS

We deeply appreciate the contributions of trans and gender diverse people, as well as the allies who generously shared their insights to shape this resource. This resource stands as a testament to a genuinely collaborative effort among practitioners and organisations committed to inclusive practice.



Women’s Health In the North acknowledges the support of the Victorian Government.



Zoe Belle Gender Collective and Women’s Health In the North, (2026). Allyship in Action: Frameworks for trans and gender diverse inclusion in prevention of gender-based violence initiatives. Preston: Women’s Health In the North.

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INTRODUCTION

Trans and gender diverse people have a right to participate and prosper in society and live free from violence. However, growing backlash to gender equity is contributing to trans and gender diverse people experiencing increasing rates of violence, abuse and discrimination. The results are increasing social, economic and health and wellbeing disparities.

Trans equity and gender equity are part of the same struggle. Both aim to achieve safe, fair and equitable societies by challenging rigid gender norms and stereotypes. Trans justice and feminist movements are aligned. Both share a vision of a future free from stigma, discrimination and violence, where people of all genders are safe, affirmed and celebrated.

Primary prevention aims to address the underlying drivers of violence. It is focused on whole-of-population initiatives, and occurs in settings where people live, work, learn, socialise and play.

A primary prevention approach works to change the underlying social conditions that produce and drive violence against women – conditions that excuse, justify or even promote violence.

Change the Story has established that men's violence against women is driven by:

1. Condoning of violence against women.
2. Men's control of decision-making and limits to women's independence in public and private life.
3. Rigid gender stereotyping and dominant forms of masculinity.
4. Male peer relations and cultures of masculinity that emphasise aggression, dominance and control.¹

These 'gendered drivers' are well established and familiar to the primary prevention sector. But in order for change to be achieved, an intersectional approach is required. This means all efforts to prevent gender-based violence must also consider additional and overlapping areas of discrimination. These include racism, colonialism, ableism, ageism, transphobia, homophobia, biphobia and intersexism.²

Gender itself is shaped by social and political contexts and cannot be separated from colonial histories. Changing the Picture describes colonisation as setting the underlying context for gender-based violence for First Nations women – and provides specific gendered drivers of violence that are a consequence of colonisation. These include the intersection of racism and sexism, and the impacts of colonial patriarchy on First Nations cultures, gender roles and relationships.³

Transphobia, transmisogyny and racism are also deeply connected. All come from colonial ideas that decided whose bodies and identities were 'acceptable', effectively excluding people of colour since the start of colonisation. Gender is intertwined with race, class and power, reflecting how colonial structures sought to define and restrict identities. We cannot tackle these issues alone.

If we are to genuinely address inequities, prevent violence and challenge intersectional barriers, all our movements with a commitment to social justice need to work together. This means sharing power, pooling resources and uplifting one another to create the change we envision.

KEY MESSAGES

- *Trans and gender diverse people experience high rates of gender-based violence.*
- *Trans rights and intersectional feminist movements are aligned through their shared work in gender equity, social justice and human rights.*
- *Transphobia and transmisogyny reinforce rigid gender norms and dominant forms of masculinity that harm all people.*
- *Trans and gender diverse inclusion is a key part of all effective violence prevention initiatives.*
- *There are many simple and effective ways to embed trans and gender diverse inclusion in primary prevention work.*

OUR VISION

Trans and gender diverse people deserve to be valued and respected members of our communities. They have the right to enjoy safe, healthy and happy relationships, to freely express their gender identity, to participate fully in public life, and live without discrimination and violence.

RECOGNISING THE IMPACTS OF EXCLUSION OF TRANS AND GENDER DIVERSE PEOPLE IN THE FAMILY AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE SECTOR

Current family violence and primary prevention systems in Australia mainly address cisgender men's violence against cisgender women. This work has been vital, and is fundamental to building a system that is inclusive of trans and gender diverse people.

However, family violence, women's health and primary prevention sectors have left trans and gender diverse people, and LGBTIQ+ communities more broadly, out of the movement to end gender-based violence. This exclusion (whether intentional or not) contributes to many detrimental outcomes for trans and gender diverse communities. These include:

- A service system that has excluded, or created significant barriers to trans and gender diverse people accessing support as victim survivors of violence.⁴
- A lack of behaviour change programs that address transphobia, transmisogyny or violence towards trans and gender diverse people.⁵
- A workforce with limited skills, confidence, or an authorising environment to include trans and gender diverse people in their practice.
- A low representation of trans and gender diverse people in the primary prevention and response workforces – in particular trans women.
- Little to no funding for LGBTIQ+ and trans and gender diverse organisations to engage in primary prevention and response.

Some people who have spent many years working to address gender-based violence may find it challenging to recognise that, despite these efforts, they may also have been part of systems or practices that have caused harm to trans and gender diverse people. One of the strengths of the prevention workforce, however, is our commitment to continuously evolve how we practice intersectionality with integrity. To do this, it is important to sit gently in our discomfort, examine what it can teach us, and recognise that it is everybody's responsibility to end violence against trans and gender diverse people.

Women's health organisations, family violence services and other primary prevention practitioners and organisations have a responsibility to rectify these historic harms. We can build a future where intersectional approaches to gender equality develop through shared commitment and action.

Many organisations operate in a service system that siloes different sectors based on funding streams and organisational histories. This structure can create pressure for organisations to focus narrowly on their designated area, rather than engaging across issues. For example, a women's organisation might hesitate to take action on issues impacting trans and gender diverse people or migrant communities, believing that work falls outside its scope.

Doing the work across these intersections allows organisations to challenge stereotypes and create programs that reflect the complexity of people's lives. Intersectional approaches are essential for systemic change and require meaningful partnerships.

In recent years, gender equity services and trans justice advocates have been coming together to end gender-based violence. The partnerships between the Zoe Belle Gender Collective and Women's Health in the North, and Zoe Belle Gender Collective and Safe and Equal provide practical examples of positive action towards gender equity aligning with trans justice.^{6,7}



WHAT DRIVES VIOLENCE AGAINST TRANS AND GENDER DIVERSE PEOPLE?

Trans and gender diverse people are impacted by many of the same gendered drivers of violence as cisgender women. These include rigid gender stereotyping and dominant forms of masculinity, the condoning of violence, power imbalances and gender inequality. However, trans and gender diverse people also experience additional drivers of violence including cisnormativity, heteronormativity and rigid gender binaries.⁹ These ideas did not emerge in isolation. Gender has been imposed through colonial systems which seek to control bodies and identities in ways that serve white, patriarchal power structures.

Transphobia and transmisogyny create the authorising environment that condones violence against trans and gender diverse people. They are forms of discrimination that are underpinned and reinforced by cisnormativity. Often this results in trans and gender diverse people being excluded from service systems, population health initiatives and the design of public amenities such as male- or female-only toilets.

Whilst transphobia and transmisogyny directly impacts trans and gender diverse people it can also harm their families, partners, and communities.



Cisnormativity is the societal assumption that everyone is, or should be, cisgender and that the only 'normal' and 'natural' bodies and gender identities are 'male' and 'female'.⁹

Heteronormativity is the belief that everyone is, or should be, heterosexual and cisgender and that other sexualities or gender identities are unhealthy, unnatural and a threat to society.¹⁰ This belief system also reinforces the idea that the only socially acceptable relationships in our society are those between cisgender men and cisgender women.

Transphobia is a range of negative attitudes, feelings, or actions directed towards transgender, gender diverse or gender non-conforming people. It includes a range of behaviours, from unconscious bias and ignorance to deliberate discrimination and violence. This results in social exclusion, abuse and poorer health and wellbeing outcomes, as well as barriers to employment, healthcare, housing and education for trans and gender diverse people.

Transmisogyny describes transphobic and misogynistic attitudes that target trans women and trans feminine people. It exists at the intersection of misogyny and transphobia. It can take the form of verbal slurs or defamatory statements attacking the rights, dignity and humanity of trans women and trans feminine people – or physical violence. Transmisogyny can also take the form of subtle or indirect comments or actions that further marginalise, belittle, sexualise or invalidate. This can include misgendering, commenting on appearance, inappropriate questions about someone's body or medical history, breaches of confidentiality, or insinuating that trans women are not 'real' women. Transmisogyny can also affect partners, families or carers of trans women and trans feminine people through stigma, discrimination and social exclusion.¹¹

Transmisogyny impacts trans women and trans feminine people at individual, interpersonal, community and societal levels. It is one of the key drivers of violence against trans women and trans feminine people. This includes intimate partner violence, family violence, street-based abuse and harassment, sexual violence and homicide.

Transmisogyny creates barriers to participating in public life as well as limiting access to services that support victims of violence – including primary healthcare, family violence, sexual assault, and homelessness and housing services.

At a societal level, transmisogyny is so widely normalised that it is often a socially acceptable form of discrimination. This can make it difficult to identify and address. Many transphobic myths and stereotypes used to attack and undermine the rights of all trans and gender diverse people centre on transmisogyny. For example, public discourse often positions trans women's fair and equal access to bathrooms as a threat to women and children, in order to oppose the rights of all trans and gender diverse people to access basic amenities. This contradicts the evidence; trans women are more likely to be victims of violence and sexual assault than cis women.¹²



HOW TO IDENTIFY TRANSPHOBIA AND TRANSMISOGYNY

Transphobia and transmisogyny can take many forms. These include overt opposition to the right of trans and gender diverse people to exist, harmful and violent actions, and more subtle actions that try to discredit, dismiss or undermine trans inclusion.

Sometimes people may also find it difficult to identify or challenge transphobia or transmisogyny if it is coming from someone who:

- They respect or admire
- Is a friend or family member
- Has expertise and value alignment in addressing other forms of systemic discrimination
- Is a member of the LGBTIQ+ community
- Is in a position of power
- Is very set and assertive in their beliefs
- Is in the same social and professional networks, especially in rural or regional communities.

Transphobia and transmisogyny may be conscious or unconscious. It may come from belief systems, societal structures, a lack of education or a lack of connection to LGBTIQ+ communities. Regardless, it still causes harm – and everyone has the capacity to learn and grow.

SOME EXAMPLES OF TRANSPHOBIA AND TRANSMISOGYNY COULD INCLUDE:

Interpersonal

- Assuming everybody is cisgender.
- Reinforcing the gender binary, e.g. saying non-binary gender identities are not real.
- Refusing to use trans and gender diverse people's names and pronouns.
- Questioning or wanting proof about someone's gender identity based on their presumed gender at birth.
- Reinforcing harmful myths and stereotypes about trans and gender diverse people.
- Refusing to acknowledge or respect trans and gender diverse people's identities.
- Deliberate attempts to undermine trans and gender diverse people's or allies' authority, professionalism or knowledge.
- Using body language to demonstrate lack of support or inclusion for trans and gender diverse people, e.g. raised eyebrows, loud sighs, rolled eyes.
- Refusing to be in the same spaces as, or refusing to engage with trans and gender diverse people.
- Overt forms of hatred or violence towards trans and gender diverse people.

Sectoral

- Disinterest in addressing gendered violence against trans and gender diverse people.
- Assuming trans and gender diverse people are "too small a group" to prioritise in gender-based violence prevention initiatives.
- Opposition to including (or using lack of evidence as rationale for excluding) trans and gender diverse people in prevention frameworks, policies or initiatives.¹³
- Deliberate attempts to exclude trans and gender diverse people, workers or organisations from consultation or engagement.
- Excluding trans and gender diverse identities in data collection, or placing all trans people under "other" when collecting information about gender.
- Tokenising trans and gender diverse people and not giving them power in decision-making.
- Deliberate attempts to erase trans and gender diverse people through statements denying trans and gender diverse people exist in their communities, stakeholders, workforce, e.g. "We don't have any trans staff here".
- Deliberate attempts to undermine the value of trans inclusion in prevention work, e.g. deliberately not allocating resources, or only celebrating work that focuses on cisgender women's experiences.

HOW ARE TRANSPHOBIA AND TRANSMISOGYNY CONNECTED TO GENDERED DRIVERS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN?

Transphobia and transmisogyny are often used to reinforce rigid gender norms and dominant forms of masculinity. This could look like:

- **Pressuring trans and gender diverse people to look, sound and/or behave in ways considered to be more feminine or masculine:** This reinforces outdated gender stereotypes that are also harmful to cisgender people, and are a key driver of violence against women.
- **Pressuring trans women to be hyperfeminine, meet cisgender standards of beauty and/or abusing them if they do not meet these standards:** This reinforces pressure on all women – that there is only one way to be a woman.
- **Pathologisation (framing as mental ill-health or as deviant) of trans women, based within ideas that “feminising” is inherently “pathological” and a direct threat to dominant gender norms that being a “man” is superior:** This is interconnected with ideas within patriarchal frameworks that see women as inferior.
- **Denying or limiting trans and gender diverse people’s access to public amenities based on appearance:** This has resulted in violence and abuse towards cisgender women whose gender presentation is not hyperfeminine, or who do not meet typical western beauty standards. This also impacts people who have had health related medical procedures such as mastectomies.

- **Physical violence and verbal abuse against trans and gender diverse people perpetrated by cisgender men:** This can be driven by underlying narratives that gender diversity is unnatural, unhealthy and a threat – and that men must “protect” cisgender women and children through perpetrating violence or humiliating or degrading others to assert their masculinity.

Transmisogyny can also be weaponised to undermine and vilify cisgender women. Internationally, there is an increasing number of prominent cisgender women who are under both transmisogynistic and sexist examination and speculation about their gender identity, expression, appearance and behaviour.¹⁴

False accusations of cisgender women being male or transgender is also prominent within sport.¹⁵ This is interlinked with racism. Women athletes of colour are subjected to higher levels of false accusations surrounding their gender than their white peers – and are more frequently subjected to sex testing.¹⁶

Often the exclusion of trans women from sports is framed as protecting women. However, these campaigns rarely address gender inequity challenges facing women’s sports. These include inadequate funding, wage discrimination, gaps in media coverage and sexual harassment by coaches.

THE LINKS BETWEEN TRANSPHOBIA, HOMOPHOBIA, BIPHOBIA AND DOMINANT FORMS OF MASCULINITY

Some cohorts of cisgender men socially bond through violence and discrimination towards LGBTIQ+ people. This can present as offensive jokes, derogatory comments, perpetuation of myths and stereotypes, hate speech and physical violence.

In recent years there has been a significant increase in targeted violence against LGBTIQ+ communities perpetrated by cisgender men, for example far-right rallies vilifying transgender people. There has also been a spate of criminal assaults against gay and bisexual men, with victims identified and groomed using the dating app Grindr.^{17,18} This has coincided with increased anti-LGBTIQ+ messaging in media and public conversations.¹⁹

Whilst both cisgender men and women can perpetrate hate speech towards LGBTIQ+ communities, it is usually cisgender heterosexual men who enact incidents of direct physical violence and intimidation towards LGBTIQ+ people. Many of these incidents are filmed and shared on social media platforms or encrypted messaging services, to encourage other men to engage in or endorse these violent behaviours. This is an example of how transphobia and homophobia reinforce cultures of masculinity that emphasise aggression, dominance and control.

Transphobia, homophobia and biphobia are core to the reinforcement of dominant cultures of masculinity that impact women and LGBTIQ+ communities. They must be addressed concurrently to end gendered violence.



HOW DO WE START EMBEDDING TRANS AND GENDER DIVERSE INCLUSION IN GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE PREVENTION INITIATIVES?

It takes time, resourcing and commitment to initiate any cultural and organisational change work. Below are some useful tips and strategies to consider.

COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

In implementing a trans and gender diverse inclusion strategy, it is important to develop a communication strategy for your staff, stakeholders and service users. Abruptly implementing significant change, without providing context, or the opportunity for co-creation, can contribute to backlash and resistance which is likely to further harm trans and gender diverse people, families, friends and communities.

Ensure that you clearly communicate why you are expanding your service eligibility or frameworks to explicitly include trans and gender diverse people. There is less likely to be resistance when people are informed about trans and gender diverse people's experiences of violence and disproportionate health and wellbeing disparities – and when that information has been provided in ways that help develop empathy and compassion.

Empower staff by keeping them informed. Offer training and resources in how to talk with other staff, stakeholders or services users who may be confused, have inaccurate information or hold harmful beliefs. Equally, screening and informing new staff of your organisational values and trans and gender diverse inclusive practices is vital in creating a safe workplace and inclusive culture.

It is important to recognise that despite support and opportunity for learning, some people may be unwilling to move forward on an inclusive and intersectional framework of ending gender-based violence. This is a form of violence and may be considered unlawful in

some circumstances.²⁰ It may be necessary to put boundaries in place, or lodge formal complaints – and focus on working with people who are less rigid in their beliefs. Access Safe and Equal's guide for overcoming backlash and resistance [here](#).²¹

PLANNING AND SERVICE REVIEW

Undertaking a brief review of your website, policies, programs and other services is a great way to start the process of developing your service's trans and gender diverse inclusive practice. Tools such as the [Rainbow Tick Standards](#) can offer a framework to support the self-evaluation of your service.

After you have taken an initial organisational review, take the time to develop an organisational or team-based plan, before starting to implement any identified changes required. Consider planning meetings or workshops with senior leadership and all staff, to clearly communicate your plan. This helps ensure you have a shared vision and helps determine and delegate responsibilities for its implementation.

If your organisation is not onboard, consider what you could do to advocate for change, or uplift your teams or your individual practice. Backlash and resistance to gender equity work can be challenging in any workplace, especially if it comes from senior management. If there is little internal support, consider accessing inclusive networks and seek allies in your broader sector or specialist services.

WHAT COULD YOU DO?

There are many simple and effective ways to embed trans and gender diverse inclusion in your work. Some examples:

- Learn more about trans and gender diverse people's experiences of violence and discrimination.
- Challenge transphobia and transmisogyny, including misinformation and disinformation about trans and gender diverse communities.²²
- Promote healthy and respectful relationships with trans and gender diverse people.
- Create inclusive environments for trans and gender diverse people, e.g. workplaces, spaces where program activities are being delivered, events.
- Update your [language](#) to be trans and gender diverse inclusive, including websites, resources, procedures, systems, strategic plan and policies.
- Include trans and gender diverse people in prevention of violence campaigns.
- Platform trans and gender diverse people and organisations at your events, or amplify their work.
- Advocate for trans and gender diverse equity, inclusion and prevention of violence initiatives.
- Support solidarity between feminist services and trans and gender diverse organisations. This includes partnerships, consultations and shared projects. Examples are co-creating projects, sharing decision-making power and including trans and gender-diverse organisations as equal partners in sector planning and strategy.

- Review your programs to ensure they are inclusive of trans and gender diverse communities, e.g. include relevant case studies in capability building activities.
- Access trans and gender diverse professional development trainings, events, communities of practice.
- Change your constitution and/or anti-discrimination exemptions to actively include trans and gender diverse people.
- Actively recruit, employ, train and build the capacity of the trans and gender diverse workforce, including trans women, trans men and non-binary people.

If your organisation is not on board, there are still things that you can do in your practice to improve trans and gender diverse inclusion. Here are some examples:

- Indicate your allyship through sharing pronouns and using inclusive language in your own practice.
- Develop your own practice through training and other professional development activities.
- Find allies within your organisation to develop a sense of solidarity and support.
- Seek external support from sector colleagues who have advocated for trans and gender diverse inclusion in their own settings.
- Share examples of work other organisations are doing in trans and gender diverse inclusion.
- Remind your workplace of legal and ethical obligations to anti-discrimination and human rights frameworks.
- Reference current research and trans campaigns that challenge disinformation and misinformation.

PREVENTION CAMPAIGNS

To end violence against trans and gender diverse people, prevention of violence organisations need to consider how trans and gender diverse people are referenced within public campaigns and communication plans. Here are some things to consider:

- Start the messages in your campaign with a vision of equality and celebration of trans and gender diverse people. Appeal to shared values (like the alignment between gender equity and trans equity).
- Include trans and gender diverse people in existing prevention messaging about gender-based violence.
- Include trans women and trans feminine people in targeted initiatives that address men's violence against women.²³
- Amplify specific campaigns that centre the experiences of trans and gender diverse people.
- Ensure diverse representation within prevention campaigns, e.g. gender identity, gender presentation, sexuality, race, age, ability, culture, ethnicity and faith.
- Within trans and gender diverse communities, reflect upon intersectionality by highlighting specific groups to address their distinct experiences. For example, First Nations people or migrants and refugees populations who experience high rates of gendered violence.

- Include content that supports families and partners of trans and gender diverse people in your prevention initiatives and campaigns.
- Ensure you have prepared backlash and resistance plans across your organisation, e.g. program, communications and leadership teams.
- Consider how to protect people's identities if they are pictured or named in any content, and how to support them if there is backlash to a campaign.
- Discuss risk with participants and share decision-making about risk mitigation strategies.
- Consult and partner with trans organisations on large-scale campaigns, or when developing initial capacity in trans inclusion. Ensure budget and remuneration for the time of organisations to support your campaign.

For more information, see Rainbow Health Australia's [Pride In Prevention Messaging Guide](#).²⁴



WHAT DOES MEANINGFUL PARTNERSHIP, COLLABORATION OR ENGAGEMENT LOOK LIKE?

Partnering with trans and gender diverse organisations, programs and workers needs to occur thoughtfully and sensitively.²⁵ First, consider the following:

- Trans and gender diverse organisations and programs are often not well funded or adequately resourced. There may be significant imbalances of power due to organisational size, resourcing, funding, staffing, relationships with government or other key services.²⁶
 - Openly discuss imbalances of resources. For example, if your organisation is small, all your time can be taken up in meetings, or it might take you longer to respond. It can be helpful if the larger organisations put in more resources to support the partnership.
 - If the community or organisation you are partnering with is under resourced, consider how you could support their work, or support their capacity to access greater funding.
 - Consider that resourcing may be needed to support operational capacity, not just the project capacity for the smaller organisations.

- The historic and ongoing exclusion of trans and gender diverse people from primary prevention means there are valid reasons for trans and gender diverse organisations to be apprehensive about partnerships. Authentic and ongoing relationships based upon mutual trust take time to develop.
 - Access trans and gender diverse inclusion training and professional development opportunities to ensure your organisation can be a culturally safe, responsive and respectful partner organisation.
 - Be transparent about your existing LGBTIQ+ or trans and gender diverse inclusion competency, and demonstrate your vision of future capacity.
 - Demonstrate how your organisation is committed to trans and gender diverse rights and inclusion beyond the partnership/collaboration.
 - Reflect upon what you are asking of grassroots organisations and what you are giving back, to ensure the relationship is not purely extractive.
 - Consider the biases and assumptions that influence who you work with and how you collaborate. Recognise existing knowledge, efforts and leadership within and across diverse communities, rather than assuming gaps or limitations.

- Grant application timelines often do not allow time to develop relationships. This can result in smaller organisations getting insufficient funding as a part of partnership agreements. If the time has not been taken to form meaningful relationships, small organisations may be wary that they will have no real power or benefit from collaborating with you – or that they are being exploited in the partnership or funding agreement. Remain open to adjusting budget and program plans, if possible, to ensure the partnership is mutually beneficial.
- Be aware there can be significantly more risk for smaller community organisations as they often have closer connections to community. Reputational risks and loss of trust can cause significant harm to peer-to-peer workforces.

- Consider how you could support and upskill the grassroots organisations, communities, workers and volunteers you are partnering with, whilst recognising their own skills and knowledge about their communities.
- Honestly discuss the nature of the interaction, and ensure both parties agree to what the relationship is, e.g. a partnership, collaboration, consultation, feedback or other type of engagement. Explicitly name how much involvement or decision-making power the community organisation/member has over final outputs/programs – for transparency and to inform decisions whether to participate.

Ultimately, all of the above are best supported through organisational practices that encourage a willingness to learn, adapt and work through authentic relationships.



BACKLASH AND RESISTANCE²⁷

Addressing backlash and resistance is a key part of any strategy to end gendered violence. Trans and gender diverse people are currently experiencing heightened levels of transphobic backlash. This creates additional challenges in addressing gendered violence, or supporting gender equity for trans and gender diverse people.

However, there is greater risk in doing nothing. If initiatives that undermine trans and gender diverse people gain momentum, there is risk of this undermining broader gender equity work and women's rights movements. For example, there are links between the erosion of trans and gender diverse people's rights to access healthcare, and the right to access abortion care.²⁸

Backlash and resistance can come from many places including colleagues, external stakeholders, government, governance mechanisms, community or social media.

If you witness transphobia in the workplace, it is important to be able to identify the harmful behaviour – and have the skills to actively challenge or disrupt it. Your response may be different in different contexts, including internal meetings, external stakeholder engagement or in training or workshop sessions. If safe to do so, consider:

- Setting up group agreements in training or capability building sessions that explicitly state a zero-tolerance stance for discriminatory language or behaviour.
- Reinforcing awareness of the shared drivers of violence against women and trans and gender diverse people.
- Reminding people that ending violence against women is deeply connected to addressing violence against trans and gender diverse communities.

- Referencing key statistics of trans and gender diverse people's experiences of gendered and family violence.
- Referencing policies or position statements in your organisation, from peak bodies or from government, that are inclusive of trans and gender diverse people in addressing gender-based violence work.
- Referencing your code of conduct or group agreement. If people continue with inappropriate behaviour or statements, it is okay to pause or stop the session, or to ask the individual to leave.
- Reiterating that facilitators have the right to move the conversation along or intervene by changing the topic of conversation.
- Avoiding collusion, for example by using clear body language to demonstrate disapproval of discriminatory language or behaviour, e.g. shaking your head.
- Using informal or formal complaints mechanisms.
- Following up as a team or an organisation rather than leaving it upon the individual practitioner.

We encourage you to develop your own ways of disrupting transphobia that suit your setting.

For more information, see Rainbow Health Australia's [Pride in Prevention Messaging Guide](#).

EXAMPLES OF STATEMENTS THAT DISRUPT TRANSPHOBIA INCLUDE:

"This conversation is making me feel uncomfortable. Trans and gender diverse people experience high rates of gendered violence and deserve our support and respect."

"I feel this conversation is misinformed and does not align with my values. Rigid gender norms are key drivers of violence against women and trans and gender diverse communities. Our movements align and intersect. We support trans and gender diverse people."

"In this learning environment, trans and gender diverse people are central to the work we are doing. We ask that you refrain from interrupting. You have the right to leave, but you do not have the right to disrupt this session with views that are harmful, as was discussed at the outset of this session."



CHECKING IN AFTER INCIDENTS

In the workplace, incidents of transphobia may occur in a variety of contexts including through backlash and resistance. This may lead to unsafe workplaces, poor job satisfaction, organisational reputation damage, barriers in forming partnerships, loss of staff, informal or legal complaints.

Be conscious that transphobia can cause distress to trans and gender diverse people, their families, friends, allies and colleagues. Not all trans and gender diverse people are “out” in the workplace. It is also important not to assume the relationships other colleagues may have with trans and gender diverse communities.

The response to incidents of transphobia can differ, depending on whether it is direct or indirect discrimination. Some actions that you could take include:

- Checking in with people afterwards to see what they thought, or if they were impacted.
- Asking people if they need any support or solidarity.
- Providing information about, or accessing specialist LGBTQIA+ supervision.
- Coming together with organisational allies to make collective decisions about how to respond.
- Debriefing with a friend or colleague.
- Utilising internal or external complaints mechanisms to report discriminatory language or behaviour.
- Providing information about or accessing specialist support services.

Naming transphobia when it occurs can be very powerful. A supportive ally can make people feel less isolated and reduce the impacts of harm.

Examples of statements that identify transphobia include:

“Hey, I just wanted to check in with you after that meeting. I was really concerned about some of the behaviours and harmful statements that were made. Are you okay? Trans inclusion is important to me.”

“Hey, I am concerned about the inappropriate comments that we just witnessed. Is it okay to talk to you about this? It is important to me to address transphobia when I see it.”

While providing referral information to specialist services and supports is an important step, it cannot be done without also addressing the discrimination. We have a responsibility to address harm, and this includes creating safe, inclusive and gender affirming workplace cultures for LGBTQIA+ workers. For more information see [WorkWell’s LGBTQIA+ Toolkit](#).

WHAT NEXT?

Including trans and gender diverse people in efforts to prevent gender-based violence is essential, as we want safe and fair communities for everyone. Now is the time to act. Inclusion happens through intentional choices and everyday actions.

Share this resource with your team. Set your next steps and commit to creating spaces that are safe and affirming for all. Every action, no matter how small, brings us closer to a future free from violence.



KEY TERMS

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| Cisgender | A term used to describe people whose gender identity or experience aligns with the gender that was presumed and recorded for them at birth. |
| Cisnormativity | The societal assumption that everyone is, or should be, cisgender and that the only 'normal' and 'natural' bodies and gender identities are 'male' and 'female'. ²⁹ |
| Gender | The socially learnt roles, behaviours, activities and attributes that any given society considers appropriate for men and women; gender defines masculinity and femininity. Gender expectations vary between cultures and can change over time. ³⁰ |
| Gender-based violence | Gender-based violence is violence that is directed against someone because of their gender. It includes acts that inflict physical, mental or sexual harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion and other deprivations of liberty. ³¹ |
| Gender equity | The process of achieving a fair and just world for people of all genders. Achieving gender equity sometimes means taking different approaches for women and gender diverse people, to address the inequalities and barriers they face. For instance, trans, gender diverse and non-binary people encounter greater barriers to equity and equality. Gender equity is a key factor in achieving health equity more broadly. |
| Gender norms | The dominant beliefs and rules of conduct which are determined by a society or social group in relation to the types of roles, interests, behaviours and contributions expected from girls and boys, men and women. Norms are not neutral in their effect but rather create and maintain unequal relations of power. ³² |
| Heteronormativity | The belief that everyone is, or should be, heterosexual and cisgender and that other sexualities or gender identities are unhealthy, unnatural and a threat to society. ³³ This belief system also reinforces the idea that the only socially acceptable relationships in our society are those between cisgender men and cisgender women. |
| Intersectionality | Intersectionality refers to the interconnected nature of social categorisations – such as gender, race, class, disability or sexuality – as they apply to a given individual or group. These are regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage. ³⁴ |
| Intersexism | Intersexism refers to the stigma, discrimination and harm experienced by people with innate variations of sex characteristics. ³⁵ |

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| LGBTIQA+ | LGBTIQA+ is an acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex, queer, asexual, and other identities (“+”). The plus acknowledges that these identities are fluid and related identities which do not fit into the other labels. |
| Primary prevention | A primary prevention approach works to change the underlying social conditions that produce and drive, excuse, justify or even promote gender-based violence. It works across the whole population to address the attitudes, norms, practices, structures and power imbalances that drive gender-based violence. ³⁶ |
| Solidarity | Acting together in support of a collective group, grounded in shared values and trust, to unite diverse people in challenging inequality. |
| Tokenism | The superficial or symbolic inclusion of people from underrepresented groups. Tokenism occurs when organisations prioritise appearances over meaningful inclusion. This results in inauthentic engagement and reinforces inequality. |
| Trans and gender diverse | An overarching term that refers to people whose gender identity or experience is different from the gender that was presumed and recorded for them at birth. Within this grouping, people use a range of different terms including trans woman, trans man, non-binary, Brotherboys and Sistergirls. |
| Transgender | A term used to describe people whose gender identity differs from the gender they were presumed at birth. |
| Transmisogyny | A term that describes transphobic and misogynistic attitudes that target trans women and trans feminine people. It exists at the intersection of misogyny and transphobia. It can take the form of verbal slurs or defamatory statements attacking the rights, dignity and humanity of trans women and trans feminine people, or it can result in physical violence. Transmisogyny can also take the form of subtle or indirect comments or actions that marginalise, belittle, sexualise or invalidate. This can include misgendering, commenting on appearance, inappropriate questions about someone's body or medical history, breaches of confidentiality, or insinuating that trans women are not 'real' women. Transmisogyny can also affect partners, families or carers of trans women and trans feminine people through stigma, discrimination and social exclusion. ³⁷ |
| Transphobia | A range of negative attitudes, feelings, or actions directed towards transgender, gender diverse or gender non-conforming people. It includes a range of behaviours, from unconscious bias and ignorance to deliberate discrimination and violence. This results in social exclusion, abuse and poorer health and wellbeing outcomes, as well as barriers to employment, healthcare, housing and education for trans and gender diverse people. |

FOOTNOTES

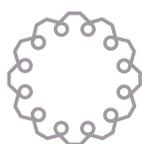
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For more information about this work contact us at:

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