



# LGBTQ

(LESBIAN, GAY, BI-SEXUAL,  
TRANS, TWO-SPIRIT AND QUEER)

## Equity & Inclusion Lens Snapshot



# LGBTQ

(LESBIAN, GAY, BI-SEXUAL, TRANS, TWO-SPIRIT AND QUEER)

We are fabulous and diverse! We are gay, lesbian, bi-sexual, trans, two-spirit and queer people. We can also be intersex and/or a-sexual. We are men, women, gender queer, youth, older adults, urban, rural, racialized, people living with disabilities, francophone, Aboriginal, immigrants, and from different economic classes. We are part of every aspect of our city, contributing every day – even if you may not know it.

1. WHO WE ARE . . . . .	3
2. OVERVIEW OF LGBTQ IN OTTAWA . . . . .	3
Sexual and Gender Diversity . . . . .	4
Trans and Gender Diverse People . . . . .	4
3. CONTRIBUTIONS WE MAKE . . . . .	5
4. BARRIERS AND INEQUITIES . . . . .	6
Heterosexism, Homophobia and Cisgenderism . . . . .	6
Transphobia . . . . .	7
Coming Out and Being Outed . . . . .	7
Discrimination – Ageism, Ableism, Conservatism, Racism, and Sexism . . . . .	8
Harassment, Bullying and Hate Crimes . . . . .	8
Workplace Barriers . . . . .	10
Invisibility . . . . .	10
Safe Spaces . . . . .	10
Lack of Access to Services, Facilities and Health Care . . . . .	11
5. WE ENVISION: AN LGBTQ-FRIENDLY CITY . . . . .	12
6. COUNCIL MANDATES AND LEGISLATION . . . . .	13
7. WHAT’S HAPPENING IN OTTAWA . . . . .	13
8. RELEVANT PRACTICES IN OTHER CITIES . . . . .	14
9. SOURCES . . . . .	14
10. DEFINITIONS . . . . .	15
11. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS . . . . .	17

This booklet is one of 11 Snapshots that serve as background information to aid in implementing the Equity and Inclusion Lens. To access them in an electronic version, visit the City of Ottawa Internal Site ([Ozone](#)) or the [Equity and Inclusion Lens webpage](#). Or the City for All Women Initiative (CAWI) [Equity and Inclusion webpage](#).



# 1. Who We Are

**W**e are fabulous and diverse! We are part of every aspect of our city, contributing on a daily basis. Some of us are parents, married, in loving partnerships or single, young, old, and have spiritual or religious beliefs and practices. Some of us identify as women, men, both, trans, intersex, or neither. Some of us are Aboriginal and may identify as “two-spirited”. As two-spirited people, we like to define ourselves and we don’t want to give up any aspect of who we are to do that (Rainbow Resource Centre 2008).

# 2. Overview of LGBTQ in Ottawa

**A**ccepted statistics show that **one in ten** people are attracted to people of the same sex. The percentage or number of LGBTQ people in Ottawa is difficult to determine. This is partly because people’s sexuality evolves over time and people self-identify differently. We are careful when we self-identify as LGBTQ in public (coming out) – for reasons of safety and for fear of being alienated from our families, friends, workplaces, or losing a child due to **homophobia** and **transphobia** (See [Barriers](#)).

**In this document, we use the acronym “LGBTQ”.** However, we recognize the ongoing lively debates about definitions within the LGBTQ communities. Terms and their meanings change over time, and vary across cultures or generations.

## INTERSECTIONALITY: COMPLEX, OVERLAPPING IDENTITIES

Each of us could identify with more than one group. It is this intersection, or crossover of identities of who we are that affects how we experience the city. This is called intersectionality. People’s lives are multi-dimensional and complex. Lived realities are shaped by different factors and social dynamics operating together.

For more info access the [Equity and Inclusion Lens Handbook](#) and [Advancing Equity and Inclusion: A Guide For Municipalities](#).

## RESPECTFUL LANGUAGE

You may have come across the variations of LGBTQ. The acronym “LGBTTTTIQQ+” stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, two-spirit, intersex, queer, questioning. Other acronyms such as LGBT or GLBTQ are also used. Today, many gay, lesbian and bisexual groups are using “queer” as a more encompassing, more inclusive, and less cumbersome term that includes trans people.

Language is important to us because it shapes interactions with each other and distinguishes our unique identities. We welcome you to use the terms in this document – but also remember that our language is changing and dynamic, and that some people prefer one expression over another. If you are not sure, please be respectful that this may be a sensitive issue.

## SEXUAL AND GENDER DIVERSITY

As our language evolves, so too does our understanding of gender identity and sexual orientation. We are less dependent on labels, and more interested in diversity. We aim to celebrate the many forms of sexual orientation and gender identities as part of human diversity.

Gender identity and sexual orientation are integral parts of who we ALL are (yes, even heterosexuals!).

**Our biological sex** could be male, female, or intersex.

**Sexual orientation** refers to emotional and sexual desires for others of the opposite gender (also sometimes referred to as “straight”), same gender (homosexual), or both genders (bisexual).

**Gender identity** refers to the experience and expression of who we are as a woman, man, both, or neither.

Some of us are **transgender**, which can mean that our biological sex may not match up with our gender identity. As trans people, we can identify as straight, bisexual, lesbian, gay, queer, etc.

Simply put: Gender identity is about who we are, sexual orientation is about who we love. (See [Definitions](#))

## TRANS AND GENDER DIVERSE PEOPLE

Although the term “transgender” has only gained use in North America in recent years, trans people have been present in societies throughout history. In this document, **trans** or **transgender** is used as an umbrella term to describe a wide range of gender identities and experiences (see [Definitions](#)).

In the broadest sense, a trans person is someone whose gender identities do not fit with their assigned sex at birth. One trans person may feel that they are in the wrong body, identifying mentally and emotionally with the opposite gender. Another person may be comfortable identifying with both genders. Yet another person may transcend or not buy into conventional gender categories of man/woman at all.

Transgender people are diverse in their gender identities, sexual orientations, and gender expressions (dress and act). Not all trans people seek sex reassignment surgery (transsexual). The key is to respect people’s self-identity, preferences, and privacy. You cannot apply one definition or label to every trans person. You might try using a gender pronoun consistent with a person’s stated preference (he, she, they, zi). If you don’t know their preference, pay attention to how others use pronouns or respectfully ask (Trans Alliance Society 2002, 2003).

## What Can Allies Do?

- » Be confidential and professional.
- » Ask individuals you meet what pronouns they identify with, such as he/him/his, she/her/hers or they/them/theirs, as possible examples.
- » Use gender-appropriate pronouns and the name an individual requests be used.
- » Protect the person's privacy from others – or don't out them without their explicit permission. Don't tell others that they are about to meet a trans person.
- » Make sure you know how trans people want to be addressed on the phone – just in case their partner, family, or roommates do not know about their gender identity.
- » Create a list of local resources that can be used.

(Adapted from Ottawa Police Service 2005)

## 3. Contributions We Make

**W**e have contributed to making Ottawa a vibrant city. We do so through everything from charities, to food services, media, politics, and business.

**HUMAN RIGHTS:** Canada's first gay and lesbian demonstration was held in Ottawa in 1971 (and simultaneously in Vancouver). It was led by Ottawa's community leaders (Nicol 2002). We also contributed to the creation of the human rights monument next to City Hall. Lesbian women also helped create women's shelters and sexual assault support services, challenged male privilege both in the LGBTQ community and the broader society, and presented wider possibilities for women's roles.

The Ontario Human Rights Code – a law designed to grant all citizens in the province of Ontario with equal opportunities and to ban harassment and discrimination on certain grounds – was amended on June 19, 2012 to add Gender Identity and Gender Expression to the list of prescribed grounds. Sexual orientation was added to the Code as a prescribed ground in 1986.

**HEALTH CARE:** The LGBTQ community has played an essential role in advancing HIV/AIDS and hepatitis B research (Falk and Verick 1989), as well as safer-sex programs. We have also promoted harm-reduction programs such as public education that is aimed at reducing stigma, implementing anti-bullying policies in schools, and promoting patient-controlled medical care delivery. All of these programmes have benefited the broader population as we have tried to create a more open and generous society.

**ARTS AND CULTURE:** As artists, we enrich the arts and culture scene in the nation's capital. Transgress, at the Ottawa Writers Festival, and Inside Out Ottawa-Gatineau LGBT Film Festival are among many events that celebrate LGBTQ artists' creativity. They also provide a venue for questioning conventional ideas about sex, gender, and sexuality. Capital Pride brings together LGBTQ people from Ottawa, Gatineau, Montreal and Toronto, and surrounding smaller cities and rural communities. The week-long Pride festival empowers us to celebrate being who we are and welcomes straight and non-trans people to join the celebration.

## KEY EVENTS IN CANADIAN LGBTQ RIGHTS

- 1969** Homosexuality is decriminalized.
- 1978** Immigration can no longer be prevented on the basis of homosexuality.
- 1996** Sexual orientation is added to Canadian Human Rights Act.
- 1999** First Transgender Day of Remembrance.
- 2005** Federal law to allow same-sex marriage passes.
- 2015** Ontario prisons change policy to accept prisoners expressed gender identity rather than gender identity at birth.

(Canadian Broadcasting Corporation 2012, 2015)

## 4. Barriers and Inequities

### HETEROSEXISM, HOMOPHOBIA AND CISGENDERISM

Almost all barriers LGBTQ people face come from the assumption that being straight and cisgender is the natural state of the human condition (heterosexism) (See [Definitions](#)). LGBTQ people encounter these barriers in their families, circles of friends, social and public spaces, schools, and workplaces. These assumptions affect them in different communities of which they are a part – such as seniors’ programs, youth camp, immigrant groups, disabilities communities, churches, or neighbourhood associations.

Many LGBTQ people also have to deal with their own internalized homophobia and cisgenderism instilled since birth. This kind of internalized homophobia can impact psychological well-being, physical safety, economic security, sense of belonging, and their human and civil rights.

### QUICK LINKS

[Capital Pride](#) attracted about 75,000 visitors in 2014.

Canada’s first [Hate Crimes Section](#) was established in Ottawa in 1993, following the strong mobilization of the LGBTQ community.

[Ottawa Police Services’ Liaison GLBT Committee](#) was one of the first of its kind in Canada. It is now adopted as a model elsewhere.

Ottawa’s LGBTQ community contributed to the creation of the [AIDS Committee of Ottawa](#).

[Abiwin Co-op](#) in Centretown was created as a non-profit, LGBTQ-friendly housing for gay and straight people.

[Gender Mosaic](#) offers support and social services for the Trans community.

[The Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity \(CCGSD\)](#) (2015) “intersectionally promotes diversity in gender identity, gender expression, and romantic and/or sexual orientation in all its forms on a national level through services in the areas of education, health, and advocacy.”

## TRANSPHOBIA

Transphobia is the dislike or fear of trans people, or people who do not fit into the conventional idea of gender (i.e. the notion that everyone is only either female or male). There is often confusion between transphobia and homophobia. Trans people become the target of homophobia even if they are actually straight. Gay, lesbian, and bi people become the target of transphobia even if they are not trans. Even within the LGBTQ community, trans people can experience transphobia.

Sexism and gender stereotypes also contribute to transphobia. For instance, a male-to-female trans woman who does not have a typically ‘feminine’ look, voice, or characteristics may face negative reactions from people who are not used to trans women.

Gender is an important part of a person’s identity. When one’s gender identity does not match with the one society assigned at birth, or when it does not fit with society’s norm, challenges are felt acutely (Canadian Labour Congress 2007, Trans Alliance Society 2002) (See [Definitions](#)).

## COMING OUT AND BEING OUTED

LGBTQ people carefully make the decision whether or not to come out in almost every social interaction in which they find themselves—on the phone, in a store, or at a job interview. This is because homophobia and transphobia are so prevalent in our society.

“Coming out” is a term used to describe the experience of self discovery, self-acceptance, openness and honesty about one’s sexual orientation and one’s decision to share this with others when and how they choose.

Being out has very real social, emotional, and physical consequences. People who are out may face negative judgements from others, gay bashing, or jeopardize their relationships with families and close friends. Some experience faith-based discrimination from their own religious or spiritual circles, or face workplace harassment.

## Outing

Most of us are out to our loved ones. 90 percent of respondents to a survey by the GLBT awareness project said they were out to the people they lived with. Of this group 87 percent of us are out to close friends, 81 percent to our moms and sisters, 77 percent to our brothers and 71 percent to our dads. Three quarters of us are out to our own children and 70 percent are out to our partner’s children. The same proportion of us with opposite sex partners are out to them.

Ottawa LGBTQ residents who are not out to their:

- » Children’s teachers (73 percent);
- » Own teachers (69 percent);
- » Members of their place of worship (55 percent);
- » Co-workers (53 percent);
- » Friendly acquaintances (49 percent);
- » Boss/supervisor (47 percent);
- » Other relatives (44 percent);
- » Spiritual leader (43 percent).

(Egale Canada 2011, Rainbow Resource Centre 2008, Pink Triangle Services 2001)

Being ‘outed’ describes when others reveal that truth on our behalf. If someone ‘outs’ us without our consent it may be much more difficult and may be deeply damaging. This is because it takes away our right to choose and removes control over our own identity.

This concern over being out can prevent someone from seeking proper medical care. For example, about 20 percent of LGBTQ people in Ottawa, especially youth (56 percent), are not out to their doctors (Pink Triangle Services 2001). It is important that others always treat our choices around revealing our sexual and gender identity with respect.

## **DISCRIMINATION – AGEISM, ABLEISM, CONSERVATISM, RACISM, AND SEXISM**

LGBTQ people experience many barriers and “isms” besides heterosexism, homophobia, and transphobia. Sexism affects many lesbian and bi-women, as well as trans people who don’t fit gender stereotypes. Cis-women-only spaces in shelters or gender violence support groups may exclude trans women.

We may face additional discrimination on the basis of our disabilities, age, racial or language identity, or income bracket. In many cases, our LGBTQ identity intersects with other forms of identity.

For example, two-spirit and racialized LGBTQ people may experience added feelings of marginalization, rejection, or exclusion due to racism and racial prejudice within the LGBTQ community and in broader society. They may experience homophobia in their respective cultural communities, as well as in mainstream society.

Similarly, conservative beliefs related to heterosexual norms in certain religious groups can alienate LGBTQ people from their religious and spiritual communities.

LGBTQ people may find it difficult to enjoy their most basic rights. This might include access to accommodation with their spouses or partners, or for LGBTQ parents to find appropriate childcare or schooling for their children. Senior LGBTQ couples may not have had home ownership, pension plans, or life insurance policy with their partners.

## **HARASSMENT, BULLYING AND HATE CRIMES**

Some people may use homophobic feelings to justify abusive and illegal behaviour. This can happen in schools, on the street, at community gatherings, and in workplaces.

The incident rate, types, and severity of violence perpetrated against LGBTQ people are much higher than other, non-bigotry motivated crimes. For example, one in six cases of bullying in school related to homophobia require hospitalization. However, it is often under-reported, partly due to the victim’s and the witnesses’ fear of retaliation, or fear of stigmatization on the basis of homophobia or transphobia (Roberts 1995).

The most common form of hate-crime directed towards LGBTQ individuals is assault. In 2012, 22 percent were incidents of common assault and another 15 percent were more serious (mostly assault with a weapon or causing bodily harm). Most LGBTQ victims of hate crimes are males. Young males are also the most likely to be accused of committing hate crimes (Allen 2014).

**Higher rates of bullying, suicide, and school dropouts among LGBTQ youth** are consequences of homophobic attitudes within the school system, among their peers and in wider society.

For many teenagers, being perceived to be LGBTQ or being friends with LGBTQ people, could make them a target of hate-related bullying.

According to a 2009 study:

- » **59%** of LGBTQ high school students reported they were verbally harassed, compared to **seven percent** of non-LGBTQ students.
- » **25%** of LGBTQ students indicated being physically harassed due to their sexual orientation, compared to **eight percent** of non-LGBTQ students.
- » **31%** of LGBTQ students reported personal harassment on the internet or via text messaging, compared to **eight percent** of non-LGBTQ students.
- » **73%** of LGBTQ students reported they felt unsafe at school, compared to **20 percent** who did not.
- » **51%** of LGBTQ students reported they did not feel accepted at school, compared to **19%** of non-LGBTQ students
- » **85%** of LGBTQ students reported being verbally harassed at school in the past year because of their sexual orientation.
- » **40%** reported being physically harassed.
- » **19%** reported being physically assaulted
- » Compared to Canada, fewer of the American students, **61 percent**, reported that they felt unsafe in school because of their sexual orientation (CBC and the Climate Survey on Homophobia 2009).

## Cyber Bullying

There are no definitive statistics on the scale of online-bullying and its impact on LGBTQ youth; though several high profile cases of suicides as a result of bullying have brought this issue to national attention. Cyber bullying is particularly problematic because although it can cause significant harm to its victim, it falls within a legal grey area in which RCMP or local police cannot act. [Ontario's Safe Schools Act](#) specifically prohibits cyber bullying, though its enforcement remains problematic.

Higher rates of bullying, suicide, and school dropouts among LGBTQ youth are consequences of homophobic attitudes within the school system, among their peers and in wider society.

## WORKPLACE BARRIERS

LGBTQ people often experience barriers due to the lack of a safe work environment and appropriate accommodations. Attitudinal barriers and prejudices about LGBTQ people have an impact on everyday workplace interactions, job interviews, and hiring practices of staff and volunteers. Lack of outreach to recruit and retain qualified workers and volunteers who identify as LGBTQ, or lack of clear messages to welcome, LGBTQ people in the workplace, can leave LGBTQ people feeling unwelcome or ignored (see Invisibility, below).

Lack of awareness about trans people can also be a barrier to employment. For example, interviewers may not know how to interview a trans candidate respectfully and fairly. This could prevent the candidate from getting the job, even if they are well qualified for the position. Lack of clear policies regarding inclusion may also be employment barriers (Trans Alliance Society 2002).

## INVISIBILITY

The invisibility of queer lives – or not being part of everyday life of the city – is a reflection of heterosexism, cisgenderism, and homophobia in society. A common heterosexist notion is that a family is made up of a dad (male), mom (female) and children and that human beings are “naturally” straight. This ignores the realities and needs of families with two dads or two moms, LGBTQ couples, or grandparents who identify as LGBTQ. The experience of bisexual people is that they often become invisible as they are seen only as straight (if dating someone of the opposite sex) or gay/lesbian (if their partner is the same sex).

LGBTQ people with disabilities experience further invisibility, as they are often assumed not to have sexual or romantic desires.

We should not be made to feel unwelcome or invisible in our communities because our families may be superficially different from traditional standards. No one should ever have to hide who they are simply to fit in with what is expected.

## SAFE SPACES

Access to safe, LGBTQ-friendly spaces that can be used and enjoyed by all LGBTQ, trans, straight and non-trans people alike is important for creating an inclusive city. Everyday acts like holding hands on the street or kissing one’s spouse good-bye on the bus, can be a barrier for LGBTQ people. These expressions could trigger negative reactions or harassment by strangers.

Homophobia reduces our access to safe public spaces, to meeting partners, and developing healthy relationships. For trans people, safe and inclusive public spaces are often very limited: bathrooms, gyms, sports games, emergency shelters or sexual assault support services are commonly organized for cis-gendered women only or cis-gendered men only. In rural and socially conservative areas, LGBTQ people may not feel safe to come out in their neighbourhoods and LGBTQ communities and LGBTQ-friendly services may not be visible or available.

Aboriginal two-spirit people may not identify with the Euro-Canadian LGBTQ culture and groups, or their two-spirit identity may not be accepted in their home community where imposed homophobia

via colonization still has impact (Deschamps 1998). Racialized LGBTQ people or LGBTQ immigrants may experience difficulty finding a welcoming space that accepts both aspects of their identity as LGBTQ and their cultural backgrounds (see [Intersectionality](#)).

## LACK OF ACCESS TO SERVICES, FACILITIES AND HEALTH CARE

Many LGBTQ community members are not getting the help they need with social isolation, depression, suicide ideation, substance abuse, and safety concerns related to homophobia and transphobia (Pink Triangle Services 2001). Workplace cultures, schools, public health programs, commercial services, religious ceremonies, and family laws may not operate to include LGBTQ people.

Many LGBTQ youth are expelled from their family homes after coming out to their parents. However, an adult shelter can be intimidating for youth and a youth shelter may not be LGBTQ-friendly. Finding LGBTQ-related services in French is an added challenge for French-speaking persons who identify as LGBTQ.

Gender-specific facilities often can be unsettling spaces for trans people or for those of us with non-traditional gender identities. Even going to a washroom in the office or a changing room at a pool is a barrier, for there are prevalent attitudinal obstacles that make it unwelcoming and/or unsafe. Other people may tell them “they are in the wrong bathroom,” making assumptions about their gender identity and in some cases, wrongly reporting them for “harassment.”

Sometimes I’ll be in a gay group, but they’re not racially sensitive. So that is uncomfortable. And it can be uncomfortable to be in an African-American group where they make rude remarks about gay people. And I think, gosh we’re really all in this together. It’s the same: racism, sexism, homophobia, all the same thing.

— (Lesbian Bi Gay Trans Youthline)

## DYKE MARCH

The ‘Dyke March’ is a lesbian-led but inclusive protest march much like the original gay pride parades and marches. It began in 1981 and usually occurs at the same time as Pride. It is intended to increase lesbian visibility and activism. Over the years it has grown to be more inclusive of bisexual, intersex, and transgender women.

## TRANS-DAY OF REMEMBRANCE

Since 1999, the trans day of remembrance has honoured all people killed as a result of transphobia.

## THE RAINBOW FLAG

The Rainbow Flag is a common symbol for the LGBTQ+ community, whose design was inspired by the hippie and civil rights movement in the 1970s. Created by artist and activist, Gilbert Baker, the original flag composed of eight colours and the current six-colour version continues to represent the pride and diversity of the community.

## 5. *We Envision: An LGBTQ- friendly City*

- » The City incorporates LGBTQ-inclusive language and approaches in everyday City business.
- » LGBTQ communities are visibly or symbolically included in all civic initiatives and events in the city.
- » LGBTQ people feel safe and welcomed in the workplace, community centres, stores, or City Hall. There are no assumptions that exclude LGBTQ people or that out us in public.
- » LGBTQ individuals can access and receive services without complications or worrying about potential homophobic or transphobic encounters. (e.g., health care, marriage services, housing, using washrooms etc.).
- » When LGBTQ people experience homophobia or transphobia, clear and efficient processes can help us access the services we are seeking.
- » Information on LGBTQ issues is visible and easily accessible through the City intranet and mainstream services.
- » Programs and services have clear and relevant outcomes to LGBTQ communities.
- » Health centres provide dignified, non-judgemental services to LGBTQ individuals and address specific LGBTQ health issues.
- » Police are there to protect us, not harass us.
- » Equitable hiring and career development practices are in place and implemented.

### WHAT CAN ALLIES DO?

- ✓ **Develop awareness** about the diversity, issues, and service needs of the LGBTQ communities.
- ✓ **Build knowledge** of LGBTQ stakeholders in the community (e.g., Kind Space, Daily Xtra Ottawa, To Be, Lambda).
- ✓ **Understand** the negative impacts of homophobia, heterosexism, and transphobia.
- ✓ **Place “Positive Space” stickers** on office doors or storefronts. Actively indicate LGBTQ people are welcome and safe being who they are.
- ✓ **Avoid** viewing straight or non-trans culture as the norm.
- ✓ **Use a broader definition** of women and men that includes gay or lesbian, bi, and trans people for a gender-specific space or program.
- ✓ **Object** when I see or hear something that I think is homophobic or transphobic (joke, insult), even though it may be unpopular.
- ✓ **Know** it’s okay to ask if I’m not sure what to say or do.
- ✓ **Become a champion, ally or mentor** by getting involved in LGBTQ events.
- ✓ **And, if I identify as LGBTQ**, I know that my knowledge and experience can enrich the city.

(Coalition of Community Health and Resource Centres of Ottawa and Pink Triangle Services 2006)

## 6. Council Mandates and Legislation

- » [City of Ottawa, Equity and Diversity Policy](#)
- » [Ontario Human Rights Code \(Provincial\)](#) – Prohibited grounds of discrimination includes sexual orientation and sex (gender identity is covered under “sex”)
- » [Employment Equity Act \(Federal\)](#) – City of Ottawa provides annual status report on LGBTQ City employees

## 7. What’s Happening in Ottawa

- » City of Ottawa Equity and Diversity Award Program – Recognizes individuals or teams who have demonstrated a clear commitment to making the City an inclusive workforce of individuals in all designated groups and creating a culture of respect and diversity.
- » [Ottawa Police Service GLBT Liaison Committee](#) – Community-based crime prevention work by the LGBTQ community, police and criminal justice system representatives.
- » [Kind Space](#) – LGBTTTQ+ community centre in Ottawa offering a space for discovery and connection to community and community resources.
- » [Daily Xtra Ottawa](#) – Ottawa’s gay, lesbian and trans media/online.
- » [Minwaashin Lodge](#) - Aboriginal Women’s Support Centre: Services for Aboriginal women including a Two-Spirit women’s program.
- » [Gender Mosaic of Ottawa](#) – Support services for trans and Cross-Gender people and their partners.
- » [Around the Rainbow](#) – Support for LGBTQ families and allies in child care, preschools, schools and the community.
- » [Carleton University Students’ Association Gender and Sexuality Resource Centre \(CUSA’s GSRC\)](#) - Aims to be a safe(r) space for Carleton students of all gender identities and sexual orientations. We take an intersectional approach in our programming, offering education, advocacy, events, and support.
- » [Pride Centre of the Student Federation of University of Ottawa](#) - The Pride Centre is a Student Service that strives to promote a culture of affirmation through sex-positivity, and celebrate diversity of gender, sex, and sexuality both on and off campus.
- » L’Association des pères gais de l’Outaouais – French-speaking discussion and support group where members can discuss the experiences of gay fatherhood.
- » [Ottawa Senior Pride Network](#) – Committed to creating safe, LGBT-friendly services and residential environments and building a strong, connected, visible senior queer community in Ottawa.
- » [The International Day of Pink](#) - International Day against Bullying, Discrimination, Homophobia, Transphobia, and Transmisogyny across the world and celebrated in Ottawa.
- » [International day against homophobia, transphobia and Biphobia](#) - May 17 represents an annual landmark to draw the attention of decision makers, the media, the public, opinion leaders and local authorities to the alarming situation faced by lesbian, gay, bisexuals, transgender and intersex people and all those who do not conform to majority sexual and gender norms.

- » [Youth Services Bureau Spectrum LGBTQ+ Community Youth Group](#) – A weekly program for LGBTQ+ youth that provides workshops, discussion groups, and art collaborations, as well as counselling services, peer mentoring, and primary care resources.

## 8. Relevant Practices in Other Cities

[Advancing Equity and Inclusion: A Guide for Municipalities](#) presents a flexible approach to equity and inclusion and is adaptable to the diverse structures, contexts, and experiences of municipalities from across Canada. Flip through the different sections of this guide or visit [City for All Women Initiative \(CAWI\)](#) to find examples from municipalities across Canada.

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## 10. Definitions

**BIGENDER** refers to people who identify as both male and female and are comfortable being both. Often bigender people will spend some time presenting in one gender and sometimes in the other.

**PANGENDER** is having mixed gender identity, not identifying as one static gender (OPS 2005; OHRC 1999; Trans Alliance Society 2003).

**BIPHOBIA** – The irrational hatred and/or fear of those people who love and have intimate relationships with people of both sexes. Bisexuality is often seen as a phase or process of experimentation only, thus a person can be only gay or heterosexual but never both. Bisexual people are often pressured to “choose a sexuality”. Biphobia comes from heterosexist as well as gay and lesbian communities (2SP1N 1998).

**BISEXUAL / BI** – An individual who is attracted to both males and females, though the degree of attraction to either sex may vary from person to person.

**CISGENDER** – An adjective used to describe someone whose gender corresponds to their assigned sex.

**GAY** – A man who is attracted to other men. The term is also used loosely to refer to someone who identifies as gay, lesbian or bisexual.

**GENDER IDENTITY** – An internally felt sense of gender, or intrinsic sense of manhood or womanhood. It refers to the self-image or belief a person has about their gender as being female, male, both or something altogether different. Gender identity does not always match the gender assigned at birth, and is different from sexual orientation (OHRC 2014).

**GENDER QUEER** – a catch-all category for gender identities that are outside of the gender binary and cisnormativity.

**HETEROSEXISM** – The view that heterosexuality is normal and all other orientations as deviant. It includes the assumption that everyone is and should be heterosexual (attracted to someone of the opposite sex only), unless known to be otherwise; and that non-heterosexuals are unnatural or abnormal (Trans Alliance Society 2002).

**HOMOPHOBIA** – The irrational hatred and/or fear of feeling love for members of one’s own sex, and therefore the hatred of those feelings in others. It is the personal forms of heterosexism, ranging from rejection and derogatory comments, to harassment, to physical violence (gay bashing), to silencing (‘as long as they don’t talk about it’), to denial of human rights to LGBTQ people (Trans Alliance Society 2002).

**LESBIAN** – A woman who is attracted to other women. The term dyke has been proudly reclaimed by lesbians and used interchangeably as lesbian.

**QUEER** – Historically been used as a pejorative term for those with a same-sex orientation, referring to an unnatural, abnormal, and sexually deviant status. This word has been proudly reclaimed and altered by lesbians, gay men and bisexual people to represent all those who diverge from conventional heterosexuality.

**QUESTIONING** – A person who has not yet defined his or her sexual orientation and may be open to sexual experiences with individuals of same sex.

**SEXUAL ORIENTATION** – Who we are romantically attracted to and want to be sexually intimate with. While popular belief holds we are either solely attracted to men, or solely attracted to women, studies show that most people are not at one extreme end of this scale (OHRC 1999).

**TRANSGENDER / TRANS** – A broadly used umbrella term that refers to all individuals who identify with, or express, a different gender than the one they were biologically ascribed at birth. Trans people include people who reject, or who are not comfortable with, in whole or in part, their birth-assigned gender identities. Some trans people may be more comfortable with the term “gender queer”.

**TRANSITION OR GENDER REORIENTATION** – Moving from-birth assigned sex to the life of one’s felt gender (living according to gender identity, not biology). The process includes using an opposite-sex name, obtaining new personal identity documents that reflect the person’s felt gender and/or new name, and working in the opposite-sex role. This may or may not include making physical changes through hormones or sex reassignment surgery (Trans Alliance Society 2002; OHRC 1999).

**TRANSPHOBIA** – The irrational fear and loathing of people who transgress conventional gender and sex rules in the binary system (man-woman; male-female; masculine-feminine). Its expression can be covert and subtle, or blatantly hateful and violent. Like other forms of discrimination, transphobia is often invisible to those who are not its targets (Trans Alliance Society 2002).

**TWO-SPIRIT(ED)** – Indigenous people who fulfill one or many mixed gender roles. The term ‘Two-Spirit’ acknowledges the complexity of gender. Prior to colonization, most Aboriginal nations understood gender beyond male or female, and those who were “Two-Spirited” held special roles within their community, such as mediators, teachers and visionaries. Today, the Two-Spirit movement is working towards reclaiming cultural teachings and restoring a place of honour for all (Oahas 2014).

# 11. Acknowledgments

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## ORGANIZATIONS:

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