

## NOVEMBER 2014 NEWSLETTER

### FALL 2014 IMPORTANT DATES

#### Transday of Remembrance November 20th

The Transday of Remembrance was established to remember those who were killed due to anti-transgender hatred or prejudice. The event is held in November to honor Rita Hester, whose murder on November 28, 1998, kicked off the "Remembering Our Dead" web project and a San Francisco candlelight vigil in 1999.

#### International Day to End Violence Against Women November 25th

The United Nations' (UN) International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women is an occasion for governments, international organizations and non-governmental organizations to raise public awareness of violence against women. It has been observed on November 25, each year since 2000.

#### World AIDS Day December 1st

World AIDS Day is held on December 1, each year and is an opportunity for people worldwide to unite in the fight against HIV, show their support for people living with HIV and to commemorate people who have died. World AIDS Day was the first ever global health day and the first one was held in 1988.

#### International Day for the Abolition of Slavery December 2nd

The United Nations' (UN) International Day for the Abolition of Slavery is annually observed on December 2, to remind people that modern slavery works against human rights. This holiday is not to be confused with the UN's International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition.

#### International Day of Persons with Disabilities December 3rd

United Nations' (UN) International Day of Persons with Disabilities is annually held in December, to focus on issues that affect persons with disabilities worldwide, and to celebrate their contributions to societies across the world.

## ABOUT GENDER IDENTITY & GENDER EXPRESSION

In 2012, Gender Identity and Gender Expression were added as prohibited grounds in the Ontario Human Rights Code. Every person in Ontario has the right to equal treatment without discrimination and harassment based on gender identity and gender expression with respect to receipt of goods and services, accommodation, contracting, employment, and membership in a trade union, trade or occupational association or self-governing profession.

### WHAT IS GENDER IDENTITY?

According to the Ontario Human Rights Commission gender identity refers to an individual's intrinsic sense of self. It relates to how an individual defines their gender regardless of their assigned biological sex. An individual's gender identity may include:

**Transgender:** People whose life experience includes existing in more than one gender. This may include people who identify as transsexual, and people who describe themselves as being "gender spectrum" or as living outside the categories of "man" or "woman."

**Intersex:** People, who are not easily classified as "male" or "female", based on their physical characteristics at birth or after puberty.

**Cross dresser:** A person who for emotional and physiological well-being, dresses in clothing traditionally associated with the "opposite" sex.

**Transitioning:** refers to a host of activities that Trans people may peruse to affirm their gender identity. This may include changes to their name, dress, and use of gender pronouns, and may or may not include other physical changes such as the use of medication or surgery.

**Two-spirit:** An umbrella term for a range of people in some First Nations and Aboriginal cultures that identify as carrying both a male and female spirit. This term may refer to a person's gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation.

FALL 2014  
IMPORTANT DATES (Cont.)



**National Day of Remembrance and  
Action on Violence Against Women  
December 6th**

December 6th, is the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women in Canada. Established in 1991 by the Parliament of Canada, this day marks the anniversary of the murders in 1989 of 14 young women at l'École Polytechnique de Montréal. They died because they were women.

**Human Rights Day  
December 10th**

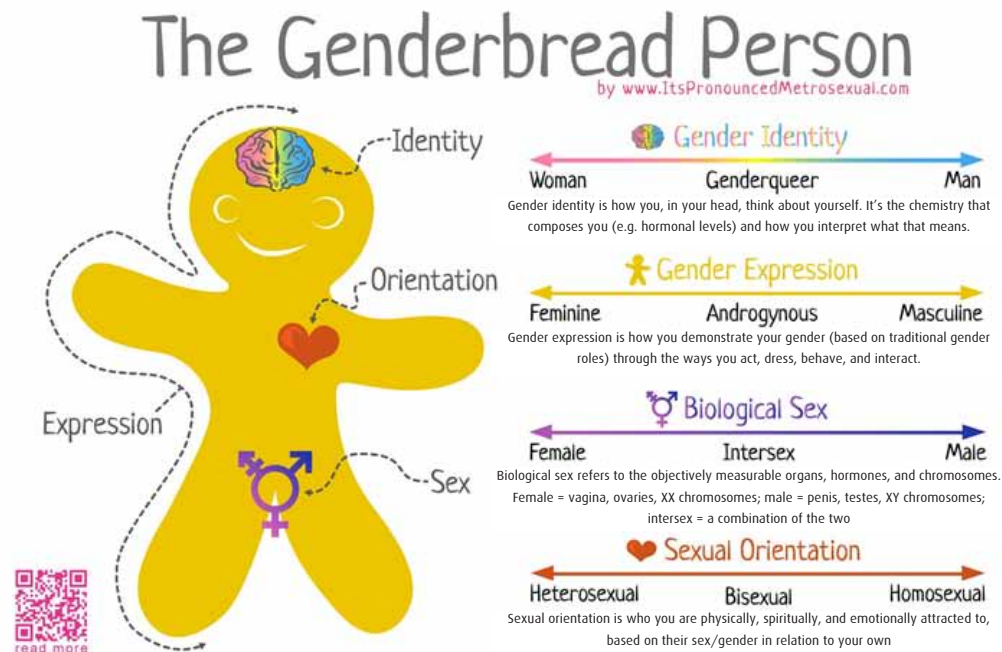
The United Nations' (UN) Human Rights Day is annually observed on December 10, to mark the anniversary of the presentation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

**WHAT IS GENDER EXPRESSION?**

Gender expression refers to the external attributes, behavior, appearance, dress etc., by which a person expresses themselves and through which others perceive that person's gender.

**Have you heard the term Cis-normativity?**

Cis-normativity refers to the commonplace assumption that all people are "cisgender". Cisgender refers to individuals whose gender identity is in line with or "matches" the sex they were assigned at birth. Their gender identity is in line with or "matches" the sex they were assigned at birth. Cisnormativity is demonstrated in our everyday interactions and comments. Consistent use of inclusive language is one strategy in dismantling cisnormative environments.



**Sources**

The Genderbread Person - <http://itspronouncedmetrosexual.com/2012/01/the-genderbread-person/>  
Ontario Human Rights Commission - <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en>

# LISA'S COLUMN



Have you ever had a situation occur where you have replayed it in your mind, thinking about what you could or should have said or done differently? I am sure that many people can relate to this feeling and it can be quite frustrating wishing that you had the quick wit, forethought, or courage to handle a situation in a different manner. I am constantly reflecting and overthinking so I have experienced this feeling numerous times, with the most recent instance occurring over the Thanksgiving Day long weekend when I had my first encounter with overt racism.

As I was walking home, a driver had stopped his car, rolled down his window, and yelled out a racial epithet and other racialized and derogatory comments about my ethnicity. I turned my head towards the car thinking, is he talking to me? He, and his friend in the passenger seat of the car, made direct eye contact, confirming that they were speaking to me, and continued to antagonize me. I tried to ignore them, continued walking, and picked up my pace. When I got home, I couldn't stop thinking about what had transpired.

I recently sat in on CHR's Human Rights 101 workshop which was facilitated by a colleague and she had described the emotions and thoughts that can occur when you are faced with a discriminatory act, including shock, anger, thoughts about what you could have said or done, and sadness, which has been accurate of my experience. However, despite my anger and wanting to vent to someone about what had happened, I also had feelings of embarrassment about how I had handled the situation and the fact that I didn't do anything. How could I respond after retelling this situation, knowing that the inevitable follow-up question would be, so what did you do?

Throughout my studies, I have been learning about critical race theory and anti-racism in social work practice. My courses were offering a different way of thinking about social issues, such as racism, and classroom discussions were filled with insights and strategies about how to address situations and what we could do as individuals. Prior to this incident, I had never encountered direct/overt racism before but, given what I had learned and being in a field that advocates for social justice and speaking up against wrongdoing, I was confident that I would know what to say or do if the situation were to ever occur, but I was wrong.

Since it occurred, I have been reflecting and processing the situation. Although I think of myself as someone that would speak out against discriminatory behavior and have done so when I have witnessed it in the past, I have realized how difficult it can be if you are suddenly the victim. In addition to the shock and vulnerability that victims can feel in such a situation, the inclination to be an educator and/or activist in the moment can be compelling but also disconcerting. Confronting the perpetrator may have been satisfying but I also understand that vulnerability and safety are important factors that can play into how a situation unfolds.



Centre for  
Human Rights

Centre des droits  
de la personne

HOW WILL YOU REMEMBER?

DECEMBER 4<sup>TH</sup>

11:30AM – 12:30PM

UNDERGROUND RESTAURANT  
in the Student Centre

NATIONAL DAY OF REMEMBRANCE & ACTION ON

# VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Gender Based Violence & its Impact on Aboriginal Communities

Opening Ceremony

**Laureen Waters**

Aboriginal Elder

Keynote Speaker

**Victoria Pezzo**

Executive Director, Native Women's Resource Centre of Toronto

Remarks

**Dr. Rhonda Lenton**

Vice President Academic and Provost

**Representative**

from SASSL



Guest Performer

**THE REAL SUN**

Singer, Community Activist, York Alumn



Commemorative blankets & candles  
will be given away (limited quantity)

Hot chocolate will be served

For more information please contact Jodie Glean, [jglean@yorku.ca](mailto:jglean@yorku.ca)



8:30am - 6:00pm

York University Keele Campus, 280N York Lanes  
Join us as we SHARE IDEAS & RESPECT DIFFERENCES

# CALL

# FOR

# PROPOSALS

## Past Histories & Present Stories: Finding Meaning in Human Rights

How are human rights made real?

How are identities navigated/changed?

What are the new human rights battles being fought, or are we still fighting the same issues from the past?

*We are inviting individuals to submit proposals that focus on, but are not limited to:*

- Indigenous knowledge
- Intersectional identities
- Race and racialization
- Gender expression/expectations/identity
- (dis)Abilities
- Business, Science & Human Rights
- Religion/Spirituality
- Knowledge production and pedagogy
- Immigration/Refugee issues
- Community leadership & mobilisation
- Sexual orientation
- Social Media & Human Rights

*Presenters may submit proposals for a 75 minute session in one of the following formats:*

- Roundtable discussion
- Do-it-Yourself (DIY) workshop
- Individual or panel presentation
- Interactive workshop
- Dialogue process
- Artistic/Creative presentation & discussion
- Social Media & Human Rights

Proposals must be submitted no later than Friday, November 21, 2014 either by:

**online submission:** <http://www.yorku.ca/rights/forms/view.php?id=27>

or

**email submission to:** [jtcheng@yorku.ca](mailto:jtcheng@yorku.ca) or [jglean@yorku.ca](mailto:jglean@yorku.ca) as a .doc or .pdf

For more information or to request the proposal in an alternate format contact:

**Josephine Tcheng** ([jtcheng@yorku.ca](mailto:jtcheng@yorku.ca)) [www.yorku.ca/rights](http://www.yorku.ca/rights)