



### WHAT IS GENDER EXPRESSION?

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

### WHAT IS GENDER IDENTITY?

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.

Terms to describe gender identity may include but are not limited to:

**Transgender:** people whose life experience includes existing as another gender or in more than one gender. This may include people who identify as transsexual, and people who describe themselves as being "genderqueer" or gender non-conforming.

**Intersex:** people who are not easily classified as "male" or "female", based on their physical characteristics or external sex organs at birth or after puberty. This term replaces the inappropriate term "hermaphrodite".

**Transitioning:** refers to a multi-step process that trans people may pursue to affirm their gender identity. This may include changes to name, dress, use of pronouns, and may or may not include other medical or physical changes. Transitioning takes time to complete and may be an ongoing process. York University is committed to providing accommodation to people who are transitioning upon request and on a case by case basis.

**Two-Spirit:** refers to a person who has both a masculine and a feminine spirit, and is used in some indigenous cultures to describe sexual orientation, gender and/or spiritual identity. As an umbrella term it may encompass same-sex attraction and a wide variety of gender variance, including people who might be described in Western culture as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transsexual, transgender, gender queer, cross-dressers or who have multiple gender identities.

**Transsexual:** a person whose biological sex assigned at birth does not match their gender identity. They may seek or undergo one or more medical treatments to align their bodies with their gender identity, such as hormone therapy, sex reassignment surgery or other procedures.

They may transition socially to align external attributes and appearance with their gender identity.

**Genderqueer:** a person whose gender identity is neither man nor woman, is between or beyond genders, or is some combination of genders.

Some gender queer people identify under the transgender umbrella while others do not.

**Gender Non-Conforming:** a person who doesn't conform to society's expectations of gender expression based on the gender binary, expectations of masculinity and femininity, or how they should identify their gender.

### PRACTISING INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

Language is a powerful tool for creating inclusive spaces and cultures. Inclusive language helps to recognize everyone as full and valued members of society. Below are some guidelines and tips on how to enhance verbal and written communication when referring to sex and gender identity.

#### GENERAL TIPS

- Gender identity/expression is not binary, but a continuum.
- Sex refers to a person's biological status and is typically categorized as male, female, or intersex, whereas gender identity refers to a sense of oneself as male, female, transgender, or where a person fits on the gender constellation.
- Trans, Transgender and Transsexual refer to gender identity, not to sexual orientation.
- Address individuals by their desired pronoun. Avoid making assumptions about a person's gender based on their appearance





**Change it up.** Get into the habit of using inclusive language. Here are a few examples. Instead of saying...

He, Him, She Her, use They, Them, especially if you are unsure or the person has not shared their pronouns with you yet

Instead of policeman, cleaning lady, or chairman, say officer, cleaner, chair

Andnsteadf saying wifer husband, sapartner or spouse

Instead of saying hi, guys, say hi, folks or hi, everyone

## DO YOU KNOW YOUR RIGHTS?

All individuals have the right to use a public washroom of their choosing. Demanding someone, who is using the services of the facilities, to leave the washroom can be a form of harassment. Gender neutral washrooms are available across York's campuses. For a full list, visit <http://maps.info.yorku.ca/keele-campus/>

We should not assume that every person is cisgender. That assumption can marginalize those who identify as trans.

In 2012, Gender Identity and Gender Expression were added as separate grounds in the Ontario Human Rights Code. An accommodation might include changing academic documents to reflect the gender of the persons choosing.

## LINKS TO YORK RESOURCES

For more information on inclusive language, contact the Centre for Human Rights.

### YorkU Human Rights Policy

<https://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/policies/policies/human-rights-policy-and-procedures/>

### Gender-Free Language Policy

<https://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/policies/policies/gender-free-language-policy/>

### YU DEDI Strategy

<https://www.yorku.ca/dedi-strategy/>

### YU DEDI Toolkit

<https://www.yorku.ca/dedi-strategy/toolkitdev/>

## EXTERNAL RESOURCES

### Ontario Human Rights Commission

[https://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/code\\_grounds/gender\\_identity](https://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/code_grounds/gender_identity)

### Centre for Addiction & Mental Health

<https://www.camh.ca/en/your-care/programs-and-services/rain-bow-services-2slgbtq>

York University's Centre for Human Rights, Equity and Inclusion (CHREI) promotes and builds a respectful, equitable, diverse, and inclusive university community. We strive to be a leader in providing accessible, impartial, non-adversarial, and confidential programs and services that uphold human rights, facilitate equitable access to opportunities, and champion diversity and inclusion.

We provide free services to current York students, faculty, and staff. To consult our team, call, leave us a message or e-mail us. Leave your name, email, and/or phone number and we will respond within 3 business days.

## CONTACT US:

### CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUITY & INCLUSION (CHREI)

📄 Room 2070, Victor Phillip Dahdaleh (TEL) Building 4700 Keele St. Toronto

📞 416-736-5682

🌐 <https://rights.info.yorku.ca/>

✉️ [rights@yorku.ca](mailto:rights@yorku.ca)

