

Equity & Diversity Committee's
LGBTQ+ Tips Resource



Disclaimer

The purpose of this document is to assist camps in adhering to and supporting the spirit of standards MA.4.7. and HR.2.13. through the education of and interactions with staff, participants, parents, caregivers and other stakeholders.

Moreover, this document intends to assist camps in creating an emotionally, physically and mentally stimulating and safe environment for everyone at camp.

This is a living document and as such, will be updated on a regular basis to reflect new resources, identified areas for support and improvement as camps pursue and assess their own needs and supports in the camp environment.



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Table of Contents

Disclaimer	2
Document Creators	2
Basic Terminology	4
Safe(r) and Positive Spaces	7
How to Handle Disclosures	8
Staff	10
Inclusive Hiring Practices	10
Working with Trans(gender) Staff Members	10
How to Coach and Support Staff Through Conversations.....	11
Parents	12
Approaching Tough Questions.....	12
Working with Parents Prior to Camp	12
Talking to Parents about Disclosures	13
Documentation and Operations	14
Application Forms	14
Camp Signage.....	14
Gender Neutral Programming and Camp Groups	14
Tips for Making Marketing More Inclusive	15

Basic Terminology

Sex, Gender Identity, Gender Expression, and Sexual Orientation are all parts of a person's identity, however, there is not necessarily a direct link between the categories.

This means that if you see a person's **Gender Expression**, it does not mean you will know their **Gender Identity** or **Sexual Orientation**.

Every person is unique; one person may have a different interpretation of a term than another person. It's important to follow their lead and use the names and pronouns they identify with.

Lesbian

Gay

Bisexual

Trans(gender)

Queer/Questioning

2 two

Spirit

+ an effort to include
the whole community



SEX: Assigned at birth. *Biological*, based on internal and external organs, hormones and DNA. A person's sex can fall into the following categories: "female", "male", and "inter-sex".

INTERSEX: A person born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy that doesn't fit the typical definitions of "female" or "male". For example, a person might be born appearing to be female on the outside, but having mostly male-typical anatomy on the inside.

GENDER IDENTITY: How a person *feels* and identifies. A personal sense of who they are.

TRANS(GENDER): An umbrella term for people whose gender identity does not align with the sex they were assigned at birth in the way society would typically expect. The term includes, but is not limited to, trans man, trans woman, non-binary and genderfluid.

CIS(GENDER): A person whose gender identity corresponds with the sex they were assigned at birth. For example, a person who is assigned male at birth and identifies as a man.

TRANS MAN: A man assigned "female" at birth.

TRANS WOMAN: A woman assigned "male" at birth.

NON-BINARY: A person whose gender identity does not fit into the categories of "man" or "woman".

GENDERFLUID: A person whose gender is not fixed and can change over time.

AGENDER: A person who does not have a gender and/or have a gender they describe as neutral.

TWO-SPIRIT: An Indigenous identity to describe a person who possesses both masculine and feminine spirits. This might refer to gender identity, gender expression and/or sexual orientation and often has a spiritual component. Two-spirit means different things to different Indigenous people and communities.

GENDER EXPRESSION: How a person presents *publically*. Can include appearance (e.g., clothing, makeup, hair, etc.), behaviour, voice and name/pronouns.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION: Who a person finds sexually or romantically attractive.

STRAIGHT: A person who is attracted to people of another gender.

GAY: A person who is attracted to people of the same gender.

LESBIAN: A woman who is attracted to other women.

BISEXUAL (“bi” for short): A person who is attracted to both people of the same gender and another gender. The prefix bi refers to “binary”, which can sometimes indicate men and women.

PANSEXUAL (“pan” for short): A person who is attracted to people regardless of their gender. The prefix pan refers to the Greek definition meaning “all”, and in doing so rejects the gender binary.

ASEXUAL (“ace” for short): A person who does not experience sexual attraction. Some asexual people may desire to be affectionate and/or have a romantic partnership.

QUESTIONING: A person who is in a process of discovery and exploration about their sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or a combination thereof. Some people may also use this term to name their identity within the LGBTQ2S+ community.

QUEER: Queer is an umbrella term used by people who identify their sexual orientation and/or gender identity as other than straight and/or cisgender. Historically “queer” was exclusively used as a derogatory term, but today, some members of the LGBTQ2S+ community - particularly youth - have reclaimed it.

Safe(r) and Positive Spaces

Although we can never ensure that a space is completely safe, there are key elements that all group members should understand to create as safe a space as possible. Staff members can create Safe(r) Space guidelines for spaces, such as cabins, and/or programs, such as inclusion or anti-bullying activities.

It is best if group members can brainstorm the following elements together.

ELEMENTS OF A SAFE(R) SPACE:

1. **Content alert.** We cannot know the details of campers' and staff members' experiences and what may affect them negatively. For this reason, it is important to let people know what will be discussed.
2. **Actively listen.** It is crucial that people feel heard by others, especially when sharing personal experiences.
3. **Respect.** Treat people the way they want to be treated. Use people's preferred names and pronouns.
4. **No judgment.** People should not be judged for their opinions or identity.
5. **Assume good intent.** People have different levels of understanding when it comes to LGBTQ2S+ inclusion. The more people we keep in the conversation, the more people will learn.
6. **No public shaming.** Shaming puts a stop to learning and can have negative effects on people's self-esteem.
7. **No hate speech.** Remarks or actions that discriminate against someone's race, national or ethnic origin, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, family status, and disability should not be tolerated.
8. **Right to pass.** If someone is not comfortable sharing, this is perfectly fine and should be respected.

9. Privacy and confidentiality. Personal stories shared should not be shared outside of the space. Only if a child shares an experience of abuse should confidentiality be broken.

10. Support staff on hand. People may need additional support during or after a program.

How to Handle Disclosures

If a staff member or camper wants to disclose information regarding their gender identity, gender expression, sexuality or similar topic, it is important to remember that regardless of the age of the person that is speaking to you, they are showing a level of trust and respect. They may have been nervous or apprehensive to speak to you and/or you may be the first person they've told.

There is no script or blueprint for handling disclosures (on either side) but there are some general guidelines:

DO:

- Be patient.
- Control your emotions - try to be calm and relaxed.
 - If you feel that you cannot control your feelings, call your supervisor or a trusted friend to talk
- Offer comfort.
- Support children by letting them know that:
 - You are glad they are telling you about this
 - They are not alone
 - You will do everything you can to help them with any difficulties
 - You are there to support them

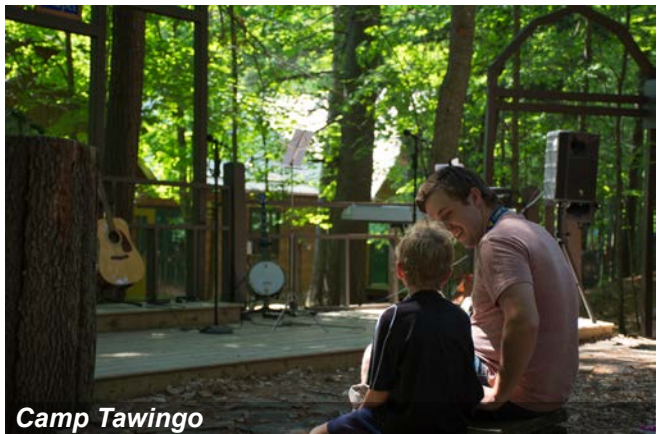
- Be aware of the child's age and skills.
- Respect them and use appropriate language.
- Let them talk – practice active listening.
- Ask what you can do to support them and work with them.
- Provide community resources upon request.
- Allow them to choose their own identity, or change their identity.

DON'T:

- Look shocked, disgusted or upset.
- Lead the conversation.
- Make assumptions or jump to conclusions.
- Label the child or use labels they have not used for themselves.
- Share any information or speculate about the child.
- Say things like:
 - I figured as much
 - Are you sure?
 - You're not old enough to know that
 - Why didn't you tell me before?
 - We're going to have to change your group/bunk



Camp Mini-Yo-We



Camp Tawingo

Staff

Inclusive Hiring Practices

CREATING AN INCLUSIVE STAFF TEAM:

- Include an inclusivity statement in all your job descriptions and postings.
- During interviews, make a habit of introducing yourself with your name and pronouns. Ask the applicant for their pronouns - this is a great indicator that you are a safe and welcoming space.
- Have staff write their pronouns on their name tags on the first day of pre-camp.

Working with Trans(gender) Staff Members

- Trans staff members should be allowed to work in the cabin that aligns with their gender identity. Provide individual space for the staff member to change and single stall bathrooms when possible.
- Have a conversation with the staff member about their comfort level with being out to their peers. Some individuals may want others to know that they identify as transgender, while others may not. Never out someone without their permission.
- Work with the staff member to determine any accommodations they may require while at camp. Let them know that you want them to feel comfortable and safe while at camp.





How to Coach and Support Staff Through Conversations

- Consider consulting the Ontario Health and Physical Education Curriculum for guidance on age appropriate conversations.
- Coach staff to listen to campers and validate their feelings; camp may be the first place they have felt safe sharing their identity. Staff should be coached to set their personal bias aside and instead listen to and affirm what the camper is saying.
- Some staff may not be as comfortable as others having discussions with campers. If a staff member is unsure of what to say, have another staff member who they can defer to (e.g., “These are some great questions! Why don’t we set aside some time later on when Chris can come to our cabin and answer some of your questions?”).
- A staff member should never feel pressured to share their identity with a camper, nor should campers feel pressured to share their identities with each other at any time.

Parents

Approaching Tough Questions

Remind parents that in order to create safe and inclusive spaces, it is important to protect the privacy of all campers. Speaking to parents about another camper would be a breach of this privacy. Let parents know that they would not want their camper's personal information disclosed to other parents without their permission and the privacy of a trans(gender) camper is no different.

Parents may be concerned about their child sharing living and washroom space with a trans(gender) camper. Let them know that there is no evidence of trans individuals being found guilty of going into washrooms to cause violence. When violence in washrooms is reported, it is directed towards the trans person. By not allowing trans individuals into living and washroom spaces that align with their gender identity, we are discriminating.

Explain to parents how you train your staff. Your staff are trained to prevent bullying and help ensure that camp is a safe space for all campers. If there are any concerns about behaviour in cabins or washrooms the staff will address that immediately.

Consider providing resource documents to parents and having them available on your website.

Working with Parents Prior to Camp

Thank the parent for coming to you! It can be very scary as the parent of a trans camper to seek out safe spaces for their camper. Remind the parent of your confidentiality policy and that their camper's trans(gender) identity will not be revealed without their permission.

Remember that a camper's trans(gender) identity is only one part of who they are, and like any other camper they are coming to camp to have fun, learn, grow and make friends.

If you are unsure of a camper's pronouns, ask the parent – never assume.

Some families may be okay with you disclosing their camper's trans(gender) identity to others; other families may not. Be sure to clarify before you disclose anything; never assume that a camper is 'out' to their peers.

Inform the parent of your policies around private changing/bathroom spaces.

It is not appropriate to ask a parent about their camper's transition status unless it is medically relevant to their time at camp (e.g., the camper is taking hormones or hormone blockers which will need to be administered at camp).

Parents of a trans camper may be more scared and anxious than other parents because their camper may have experienced discrimination in the past. Be as transparent as possible with your policies and how you can support their camper. Do not be afraid to ask the parent for help; work with the parent!

Talking to Parents about Disclosures

Always ask the child if they are out to their parents/guardians before contacting them.

Have a conversation with the camper before contacting their parents. It may be that the camper feels safe at camp to share this identity but isn't ready to be out at home. This doesn't mean that the environment at home is unsafe.

If there are any concerns that the child may not be safe if the parents are aware of their identity or because of their identity consider contacting Children's Aid Society.



Taylor Statten Camps

Documentation and Operations

Application Forms

Review Your Application Forms

Is it essential that you ask a camper to identify their gender on a application form? If essential, replace the Male/Female check box with a blank space for the individual to complete.

Camp Signage

Washrooms and Change Rooms

- Where possible, update to universal change rooms instead of single gendered changing areas.
- Provide single changing stalls where possible.
- Allow the individual to choose to use the washroom they feel best matches their gender identity.

Gender Neutral Programming and Camp Groups

- Give all campers the opportunity to partake in all activities. Mix groups where possible; developmentally, it often will make more sense to have children grouped by age rather than by gender.
- Strive towards creating gender neutral programming.
- Review language used in songs and games to ensure that they are inclusive.

Tips for Making Marketing More Inclusive

- Review marketing materials for inclusive language.
- Review any photos and/or videos used to promote your camp – do you show a wide variety of participants?
- Include a statement regarding your camp's inclusive policies in marketing materials (including emails, website, hard copies, etc).

