

Resources

Gender identity and gender expression are a blossoming area of law and social consciousness. This pamphlet provides a basic understanding of some of the contemporary issues. Consult the following resources and contact the ACLRC for seminars on these and other human rights topics.

- ACLRC – www.aclrc.com
- Alberta Education – www.education.alberta.ca
- Alberta Trans – www.AlbertaTrans.org
- Calgary Outlink – www.calgaryoutlink.ca
- Gender Spectrum – www.genderspectrum.org
- Institute for Sexual Minority Studies and Services – www.ismss.ualberta.ca
- Trans Equality Society of Alberta – www.tesaonline.org
- Youthsafe – www.youthsafe.net

For information on accommodating transgender/transsexual people in the workplace, see our pamphlet on that topic.

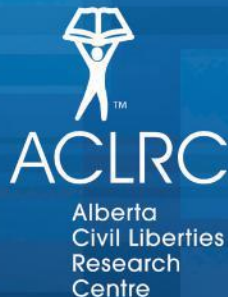


Who we are

The Alberta Civil Liberties Research Centre (ACLRC) provides resources, research and education on human rights and civil liberties issues. The ACLRC publishes many research papers and information pamphlets on legal rights and responsibilities. We provide speakers on various human rights issues affecting Albertans.

This pamphlet does **not** provide legal advice, but gives an overview of the law and some important information for employers.

For more information on this topic or to book a speaker from the ACLRC please contact us:



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Teacher's guide

Gender Identity and Gender Expression





This resource is a basic guide to being respectful of all people regarding their gender identity, including people who are genderqueer, non-binary, transgender, agender, androgynous, gender fluid, gender non-conforming, and gender questioning.

What is gender identity and gender expression?

One's experience of gender is the interconnection between physical body, gender identity and gender expression (Genderspectrum.org). Gender identity is how an individual expresses their sense of self within societal gender norms. A person may not feel that gender is a binary of male and female and, instead, may define as non-binary or genderqueer. Some people may also define as agender, meaning that they are genderless or possibly do not want to label their gender. Sometimes, "cis" or "cisgender" is used to identify those people whose gender identity (male or female) matches their gender assigned at birth.

Gender expression is how individuals articulate their gender. For instance, a person might wear make-up, they may prefer dresses and their expression of gender may not match what has traditionally been expected. Gender expression not only includes a person's dress, but also how they talk and present to others in their community.

Someone who is:

- **"gender fluid"** may define as a dynamic mix of girl and boy on any given day.
- **"gender non-conforming"** may not express their gender within expected cultural and social norms.
- **"androgynous"** may look neither male nor female or a bit of both.
- **"transsexual"** may have some surgeries or take hormones, but may also choose not to do these things.

Definitions of gender are changing rapidly and young people are continuously defining new genders. Search the internet for current definitions from a reputable source, or see one of the resources listed.

Is gender identity a protected ground in human rights?

The Alberta Government published *Guidelines for Best Practices: Creating Learning Environments that Respect Diverse Sexual Orientations, Gender Identities and Gender Expressions*, 2016. The law supports providing equality in services and other areas to gender diverse communities. The *Alberta Human Rights Act* (RSA 2000, c. A-25.5) says:

No person shall

(a) deny to any person or class of persons any goods, services, accommodation or facilities that are customarily available to the public, or

(b) discriminate against any person or class of persons with respect to any goods, services, accommodation or facilities that are customarily available to the public,

because of the ...gender, gender identity, gender expression, ... or sexual orientation of that person or class of persons or of any other person or class of persons.

This would include providing equal services to people of all gender identities. A service provider, such as a school, may also have to accommodate a person for such things as time away from school for appointments related to their gender identity or expression. See the Duty to Accommodate Interpretive Bulletin at www.albertahumanrights.ab.ca

Who defines gender identity?

The Alberta Government has stated that everyone in school has a right to self-identification of their gender identity and gender expression. This also means that individuals have the right to be referred to by the pronoun and name that they indicate, regardless of what their legal documents state (*Guidelines for Best Practices*).

What pronouns might be used?

Using only the pronouns "he" and "she" presupposes that there are only two genders and imposes a binary system of gender on everyone. Individuals who do not identify with the traditional binary pronouns may ask you to use other pronouns such as:

ze/e	instead of	he/she
zir/hir/em	instead of	her/him
they/them/their	instead of	he/she/her/him
Mx.	instead of	Mr./Mrs./Ms./Miss

Sometimes they will indicate this on a nametag or button stating "they/them" meaning when you refer to them in a sentence you might say, "Lacey forgot *their* homework. *They* went home to get it."

*See this handy guide on pronouns - web.mit.edu/trans/GenderNeutralPronouns.pdf

