

Guidelines for Managers: Supporting Transgender and Gender Diverse Employees in the Workplace

MacEwan is committed to building and sustaining a respectful workplace that is both diverse and inclusive. Our workplace culture is founded upon understanding and mutual respect for the dignity and worth of every individual. In practice, MacEwan's efforts are grounded in an institution-wide commitment to excellence, understanding that the pursuit of excellence is advanced and sustained by a culture that is inclusive and free from discrimination or harassment. MacEwan works in partnership with its employees to integrate these principles into all aspects of the MacEwan work experience, ensuring that individuals are treated equitably. (MacEwan University Respectful Workplace Policy, 2009)

PURPOSE

As a manager, you play the most important role in the onboarding and retention of our employees. This role is crucial when an employee discloses any personal information to you related to gender identity or expression. Your response and commitment to supporting your employee will encourage a safe and inclusive work environment. This resource can assist managers in enhancing their knowledge regarding support for transgender and gender diverse employees in the workplace.

GUIDELINES

The guidelines outlined below provides a starting point for you to utilize. It is important to note that every experience is unique and has different considerations for support. **Allow the employee to guide this process.** This list is not exhaustive, but can be used to model best practices:

- Ask the employee “what is the best way I can support you?” Respect their boundaries or requests for privacy. Keep anything that pertains to their medical or historical information confidential.
- Ask the employee “what, if anything, would you like shared with our team and how can I support you?”

- Make sure the employee has the essentials needed to set them up for success. Are there any changes necessary to their immediate workspace (i.e. name plates, business cards, email address, telephone directories, websites, uniform (if applicable), etc.)? Employees can make changes to their preferred name through PeopleSoft Self-Service > Personal Details.
- While not necessary to ask, be aware of any timelines that should be considered. For example, will the employee need to take any time off?
- Provide information about the Employee Family Assistance Program: <https://www.workhealthlife.com>. It is important to remember that requests for supports are an individual, employee led, collaborative approach. The role of the manager is to ensure the employee is aware of the supports available. Encourage the employee to discuss benefits details with the Benefits team.
- Ask “what else can I do to support you?”
- Check in with the employee – don’t wait for the employee to come to you, as they may not feel comfortable.
- Ensure that the employee is aware of MacEwan’s Respectful Workplace and Harassment policies, as well as the Human Rights and Accessibility policy and employee procedure.

As a person in a leadership position, it is important to model the respect for diversity and inclusion that you expect your staff to demonstrate. Set an inclusive tone at meetings – use gender neutral and inclusive language to address groups of people. This demonstrates inclusion for all expressions of gender, rather than just the man/woman binary. For example, instead of saying “Ok, guys”, or “Ladies, let’s get started” – try “Good morning folks” or “Have a great weekend everyone”.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The information below is based on the [Guidelines to Support Trans and Gender Variant Employees](#) developed by the Government of Nova Scotia. These guidelines outline how to support trans and gender diverse employees in the workplace based on gender identity and gender expression in a manner that is equitable, safe, inclusive and respectful.

- 1) Protect employees' privacy and confidentiality. Keep an employee's trans or gender variant identity confidential by not disclosing it to others (i.e. human resource professionals, supervisors, team members), unless the employee has authorized such disclosure (i.e. to fulfill a specific request for support) or a legal proceeding requires disclosure.
- 2) Use employees' identified name(s) and pronoun(s). Consistently use employees' identified name(s) and pronoun(s) in ways and places that they have requested and consistent with legal requirements. Normalize asking for pronouns as part of any introductions in the workplace.
- 3) Ensure dress codes and rules of appropriate dress/ appearance support the full expression of the employees' gender identity. Expectations around employee dress and appearance are flexible and not gender specific.
- 4) Employees must be able to safely and fully participate in all aspects of work life, including social events, in accordance with their gender identity. Avoid activities based on or segregated by gender.
- 5) Minimize gender-specific work assignments and duties. Where gender-specific work assignments or duties exist, employees are assigned and participate in ways they feel safe and comfortable and, if requested by the employee, are consistent with their gender identity.
- 6) Washroom and change room facilities are available for employees to use in accordance with their gender identity. Ensure employees are able to access facilities that they are comfortable using and that correspond to their gender identity, regardless of their sex assigned at birth.

The full resource can be accessed here:

<https://beta.novascotia.ca/sites/default/files/documents/1-1539/guidelines-support-trans-and-gender-variant-employees-en.pdf>

RESPONSIBILITIES

Managers

- **Show** support
- **Model** respect and inclusion
- **Educate** yourself on gender diversity
- **Enforce** respectful workplace guidelines and policies

Employees

- **Be** respectful, patient and understanding
- **Inform** the manager of support needed
- **Seek** support as needed

TERMINOLOGY

Asexual	A person who does not experience sexual attraction to people of any gender.
Bisexual	A person who is attracted to people of more than one gender.
Cisgender	A person whose gender identity is in alignment with their sex assignment at birth.
Gay	A person who is emotionally, physically, spiritually, and/or sexually attracted to people of the same gender.
Gender	How a person perceives their identity as a woman, man, both or neither, regardless of their physical body.
Gender Expression	How a person presents or expresses their gender.
Gender Identity	A person's internal and individual experience of gender. It is their sense of being a woman, a man, both, neither, or anywhere along the gender spectrum.
Gender Non-Conforming	Persons who do not follow gender stereotypes.
Intersex	A person born with biological and/or physical characteristics that are not easily characterized by medical definitions of male or female.

Lesbian	A woman who is emotionally, physically, spiritually, and/or sexually attracted to women.
Pansexual	A person who is attracted to people of regardless of gender.
Queer	An umbrella term used and reclaimed by some whose sexual orientations and/or gender identities defy the norm.
Questioning	A period where a person explores their own identity, orientation and/or gender.
Sex	The medical classification of people as male or female based on physical aspects of the body. It is usually assigned at birth.
Sexual Orientation	The direction of a person's sexual interest or attraction.
Straight	A person who is emotionally, physically, spiritually, and/or sexually attracted to people of the opposite gender.
Transgender	A person whose gender identity is not in alignment with their sex assignment at birth.
Transitioning	Refers to a range of social, legal and other medical changes that some trans people may pursue to affirm their gender identity.
Two-Spirit	A cultural and spiritual identity used by some Indigenous peoples who have both masculine and feminine spirits.

RESOURCES

Alberta Civil Liberties Research Centre

<http://www.aclrc.com/blog/2017/1/12/supporting-transgender-people-in-the-workplace>

Alberta Health Services – Pronouns

<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/pf/div/if-pf-div-bpg-peoples-pronouns.pdf>

Alberta Human Rights Commission

<https://www.albertahumanrights.ab.ca/publications/Pages/publications.aspx>

MacEwan University Office of Human Rights, Diversity and Equity

<https://www.macewan.ca/wcm/CampusLife/HumanRights/EducationInitiatives/WorkshopsTraining/index.htm>

MacEwan Centre for Sexual and Gender Diversity

<https://www.macewan.ca/wcm/CampusLife/CentreforSexualGenderDiversity/index.htm>

MacEwan University Policies – [macewan.ca/policies](https://www.macewan.ca/policies)

- Barrier-Free Access and Accommodation
- Human Rights and Accessibility Policy and employee procedure
- Harassment
- Respectful Workplace

MacEwan University Human Resources

<https://myportal.macewan.ca/staff/departments/human-resources/information-for-managers.html>

Ontario Human Rights Commission

<http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/policy-preventing-discrimination-because-gender-identity-and-gender-expression/appendix-c-best-practices-checklist>