

# QMUNITY

BC'S QUEER, TRANS, AND TWO-SPIRIT RESOURCE CENTRE

## Going Beyond Trans Visibility

A simple guide for adopting  
gender-neutral, universal washrooms.

#YouBelongHere



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# Introduction

## Ready to create change for the better? You're in the right place.

When nature calls, it doesn't differentiate based on gender - neither should washrooms. QMUNITY has developed this guide as a free, simple toolkit with some recommendations for how to adopt universal washrooms, and create safer spaces for all trans, non-binary, and gender diverse people to feel seen, safe, and welcome in your space.

We want this resource to be accessible to everyone, so we've focused on **simple but impactful steps** you can take towards making your space more inclusive.

## Why does this matter?

We all have opportunities to help improve the lives and wellbeing of our friends, our families, and everyone within our communities. For many, discrimination and fear of harassment are a daily barrier to living full lives, free to be our authentic and true selves, safe from systemic discrimination and harassment.

## Did you know:

A Canadian survey on trans and non-binary health found approximately **74% of trans youth avoided public washrooms** for fear of being harassed, being seen as trans, or being outed.

An Ontario based study found that **1 in 5 trans people had been physically or sexually assaulted for being trans**, causing 57% of trans Ontarians to avoid public washrooms out of fear for their safety.

## Why should *you* help?

In **B.C.** there are approximately **18,000 openly trans and gender diverse people**. While some laws exist to prevent institutional discrimination against the trans community, policies alone will not protect against systemic discrimination and harassment.

## Did you know:

Inclusive policies **improve** perceived safety and **mental health outcomes** among trans and gender-diverse youth.

A growing population of trans and gender-diverse people makes **universal washrooms essential** for promoting equality and inclusivity.

Gender-inclusive washrooms **benefit** not only the trans and gender-diverse community, but also **parents, those with disabilities, and caregivers**.

The good news is that it only takes a few small changes to make a big difference in the lives of so many people who access and use your spaces, services, and more. In this document we have outlined some ways you can help.

# An added bonus:

## Understanding Universal Design

You might have heard of “**universal washrooms**”, but what does it actually mean? It draws from something called universal design, in which a place or environment is designed to cater to as many people as possible regardless of their age, ability, gender, and circumstances.

### A classic example: The Curb-Cut Effect



The curb cut you see on street corners around your city or town is a classic example of **how addressing exclusions experienced by one group of people** - in this case, people in wheelchairs - **creates an environment that enables everyone to participate and contribute fully.**

Curb cuts on sidewalks make it easier for people wheelchairs to maneuver, **AND** they are also great for people pushing strollers, the elderly with walkers, folks pulling bikes, and much more.

**Gender-neutral washrooms go a long way in creating safer and more inclusive spaces for the trans community, AND they are accommodating for families, people with disabilities that need assistance, and can reduce wait times. Gender-neutral washrooms are great for the trans community, and they are great for other people, too.**

**A design to accommodate one group of people can make things better for *everyone*.**

# Here's what you do:

## A few small changes.

## A huge impact.

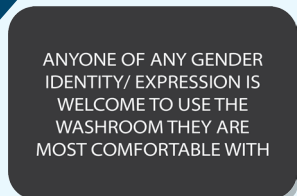
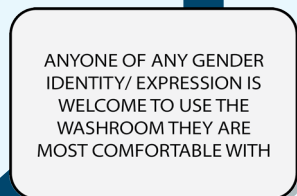
Depending on your existing infrastructure, there are a few different ways through which you can convert to more inclusive and safe washrooms for all of us to go on about our business.

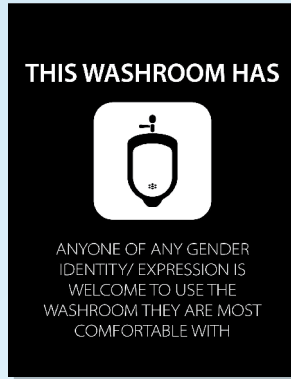
### Washroom Door

Changing the sign on the door is the first and easiest step you can take towards making washrooms gender-neutral and universally inclusive. The best practice is to **remove gender** from the equation all-together by simply showing what indemnities are inside - stalls, urinals, both.

If your business uses blade signs, or signage that doesn't fit illustrations, simply replace gendered signs with text that say **"Gender Neutral"** or **"All Gender Washroom"**.

You can easily download printable washroom signage from our website or by clicking on any of the examples below.





*If you'd like laminated copy of these signs, QMUNITY can provide them for free.*

## What **NOT** To Do

Although it is often well-intended, signs that refer to binary notions of gender and/or trans people are still exclusionary of folks who identify as neither man or woman, and singles out trans folks. Gender identity is fluid, and comes in many different shapes and forms.

As such, avoid using signage that indicates only two genders or specifically mentions trans people.

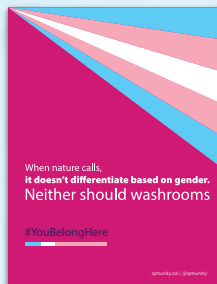


# Visual Indicators Within The Washroom

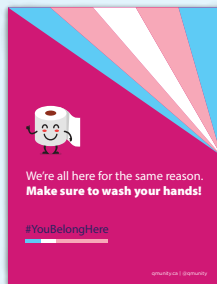
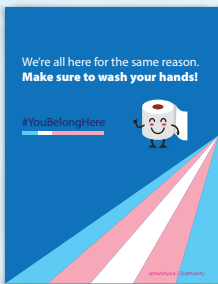


Affirming that washrooms are inclusive to all within the space can go a long way in validating someone's presence, while also offering the opportunity for education to everyone. This can be something as simple as a sticker on the mirror by the sink, or a poster hung on the back of stall doors.

We offer some free, printable templates for signage which you can download from our website, or by clicking on the images below.



 [Download Signage Package](#)



## Less is *sometimes* more

When it comes to in-washroom signage, **putting too much emphasis on trans people can have a counter effect** on trans people themselves if they encounter transphobic and anti-trans minded people while accessing the space. We recommend posting no more than 1 to 2 signs that lean more into universal language and/or humor.

## In-Washroom Offerings

It is often the case that washrooms include certain free offerings like menstrual products, condoms, or even cologne. Consider including these items available in all washrooms equally.



# Going A Few Steps Further

## Don't talk the talk, Unless you'll walk the walk.

Showing pride and offering a space for members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community to feel safe **should never be performative, but rather a reflection of your operational values and policies.** This extends not only to the management team, but every person that helps cultivate your space and the engagement with the public. *In other words*, be genuine if signaling that you do operate as a safe space for us.

### Posters & Flags

Going into a space, we all seek visual cues around us that make us feel safe and welcome. Hanging up educational pride posters, or maybe even displaying inclusive rainbow flags as either stickers or flags are all great examples of cues that let people in the community know that you see them.

Do you have a message board in your space? A poster wall? Or maybe even signs on your payment counter?

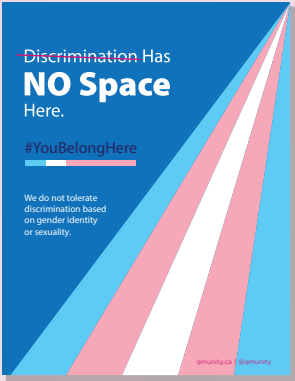
**Make sure to include messaging in support of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community where you can. Not only does it signal inclusivity, it also offers an opportunity to educate folks who access your space.**



### Progress Flags

Over the years, the Pride flag has grown and progressed to be more inclusive and give representation to a wide range of identities that exist under the rainbow. Make sure to do your research and ensure you're showing pride for all people, at all intersections of queer, trans, and Two-Spirit identities.

Here are some downloadable posters you can use:



## Pronoun Pins & Stickers



Wearing pronoun pins and/or stickers is a sign of acceptance and solidarity to the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, and makes space for everyone to safely acknowledge each other's gender identity. It's an important part of an inclusive and safe environment for 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals.



## Education

Creating safer spaces for members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community starts with gaining a better understanding of language, history, and lived experience. QMUNITY's Education Program offers a range of options to ensure you, your leadership, and entire staff are equipped with the language and knowledge to help create safer spaces for 2SLGBTQIA+ communities.



[Click here to learn more about education opportunities offered at QMUNITY.](#)

## Donate In Support of 2SLGBTQIA+ Programs

Queer, trans, and Two-Spirit communities face added barriers to living full lives, free from discrimination. Providing support to local programs and services that enable better mental health support, peer groups, and programs & services can help ensure a better life for all 2SLGBTQIA+ people.

Consider making a donation to QMUNITY, or a 2SLGBTQIA+ organization near you.

[Donate](#)

## About QMUNITY

QMUNITY is BC's queer, trans, and Two-Spirit Resource Centre. We celebrate and work to improve the lives of 2SLGBTQIA+ people 365 days a year across the province by providing services, making connections, and leading conversations.

### For more information

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