

# BUILDING TRANS-INCLUSIVE WORKPLACES

We all have a role to play in ensuring our workplaces are supportive of everyone. Many people who are trans (have a gender identity that differs from the sex they were assigned at birth) and/or non-binary (do not identify with a binary gender of man or woman) experience harassment, discrimination and exclusion in the workplace.

## Tips for building trans-inclusive workplaces

- ✓ **Respect names and pronouns (she, he, they, zhe etc)**

If you aren't sure what pronouns someone uses, ask! And if you make a mistake, respectfully apologize and correct yourself for next time. You should also share your own pronouns, even if you think it is obvious. This helps people avoid making assumptions and doesn't leave talking about pronouns to trans and gender variant people. You can even include your pronouns in your email signature. For example:

*Karina Singh (she/her)*  
*Operations Officer – Canadian Coast Guard*  
*555-123-4567*  
*ksingh@example.gc.ca*
- ✓ **Avoid asking invasive questions**

A colleague's former name, medical history, or anatomy is personal and not necessary for you to know. Someone may choose to volunteer information in the workplace about their identity or transition. If they do, do not assume that it is appropriate to then share this information with others.
- ✓ **Advocate for gender-inclusive washrooms**

For trans and gender variant people using public washrooms can be a source of anxiety and stress. People whose appearance does not conform to what is commonly expected for men or women are frequently subjected to stares, verbal harassment, and even physical violence when they try to access washrooms. Gender inclusive washrooms can take some of the stress out of using the facilities. And remember, always respect co-workers' use of whichever washroom they choose. They know best where they are supposed to be!
- ✓ **Institute workplace training on trans inclusion**

Even within the labour movement, many people lack awareness about trans issues. Without education, non-trans staff are more likely to speak or behave in ways that are hurtful and offensive. Furthermore, some cisgender (meaning non-trans) staff may not understand reasons for workplace initiatives that foster trans inclusion, which might lead to a lack of support for such initiatives or even backlash. Workplace training is an effective way to combat harassment and discrimination.
- ✓ **Ensure that trans members' issues are represented at the bargaining table**

There are a number of bargaining demands that can support trans workers. For instance, many medical procedures related to transition are costly or inaccessible. You can encourage and push your union to negotiate a benefit plan that covers gender affirming surgeries and transition related expenses such as hormone replacement therapy or electrolysis/laser hair removal. Unions should also negotiate trans inclusion policies, and anti-discrimination and anti-harassment collective agreement clauses that include gender identity and gender expression.