

Understanding the Realities of Gender Diverse Peoples to Strengthen our Care Systems

Presented by Zakary-Georges Gagné

February 28, 2023
1:00 to 2:30 pm ET



THE
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NETWORK

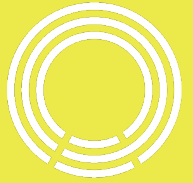
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RÉSEAU
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Understanding the realities of gender diversity

to create supportive environments
and communities

February 28, 2022
Learning Network and the Knowledge Centre

Kwei!



Zakary-Georges Gagné (elle/il - she/they)

Francophone Engagement Coordinator

Non-binary and transfeminine
Waswanipi Cree First Nation
I live in Katarowki

I am an artist, author, question asker and
detective of daily life.



Land Acknowledgement

The Enchanted Network



Largest network of **2SLGBTQI+** organizations and groups in Canada
(+ 200 members!)



Our 3 goals: **unite**, **support** and **advocate**



22 organizations serving French-speaking minority communities and
28 core organizations in Quebec

**Francophone minority
communities**

**Sexual and gender
diversity**

Indigenous identities

Holistic, transfeminist approach, centring my communities' resistance and resilience while trying to honour my ancestors' knowledge and ways of seeing the world.

Work and Approach

The importance of including persons of diverse gender identities and providing context for the role of gender inclusion in creating a supportive community

The realities of 2Spirit persons, non-binary persons and trans persons
+
Oppressive systems that impact their realities

The specificities of the Francophone minority context in Canada

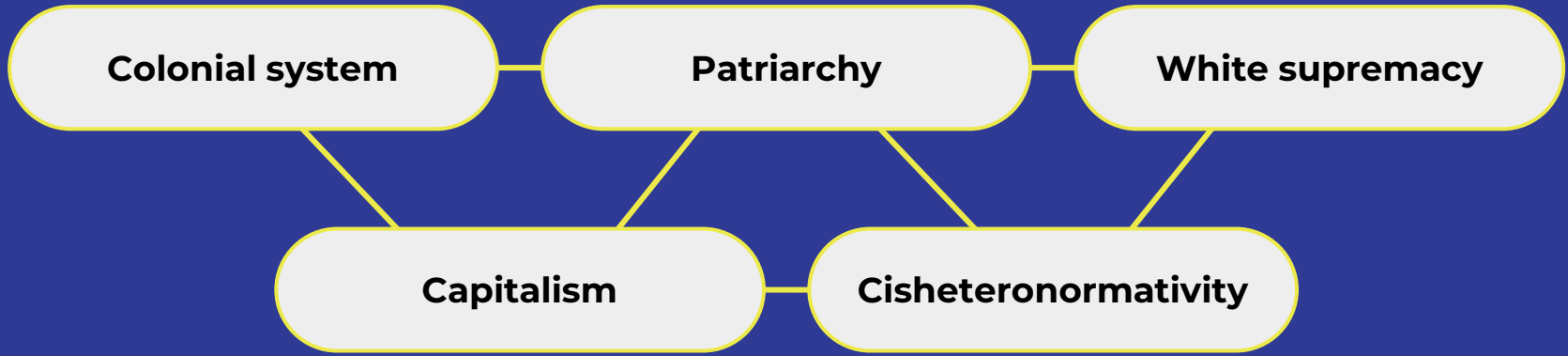


What are we talking about today?

The realities of persons of diverse gender identities

Environment and context
Physical and material security
Social and interpersonal
Access to services





**Environment
and context**

Colonial system

Pre-contact “non-binary” gender models

Important roles in Indigenous communities

Murder and assimilation of these persons

Imposition of Western gender concepts

**Environment
and context**

Hand in hand with **colonization**

Beliefs that all *white* people or concepts are **superior**

Justification for past and current violence and discrimination

Still underpinning **several existing popular beliefs and policies**

White supremacy

**Environment
and context**

Important link to
white supremacy and
oppression towards
2SLGBTQI+ persons

Patriarchy

Social and cultural system
brought to Turtle Island
by the white man

Supported by **strict standards** defining
masculinity and **devaluing femininity**

**Environment
and context**

An economic system that benefits from maintaining strict social norms around binary gender ideas. Ways in which this system maintains oppressive gender norms:



Capitalism

Pay inequities

Gendered work

Parental leave

**Environment
and context**

“The norm is to be heterosexual and cisgender”

This concept is present through assumptions that a person’s gender identity always matches their gender expression, and through daily microaggressions and harmful stereotypes.



Cisheteronormativity



Environment and context

LGB and T rights

Persons of diverse gender identities are **erased** within LGBTQ+ rights movements

Our communities are influenced by **heteronormativity**

Racialized transgender persons and those affected by poverty are specifically excluded



Environment and context

LGB and T rights

Invisibility and **marginalization**

Delayed awareness

Debates on the **validity** of identities

Public and political **violence**

The impact of this exclusion



Environment and context

Violence

Barriers

**Physical and material
security**

Violence

Transgender Canadians are 3 times more likely to experience violent victimization or non-consensual sexual behaviour.

Physical and material security

Violence

Persons of diverse gender identities are more likely to experience many forms of violence – physical, sexual, emotional, verbal, public, police, political, hate crimes.

Social isolation, stereotypes, hate speech and different systems of oppression are often at the root of this violence.

Barriers

Employment
Housing
Services

Discrimination and harassment in the workplace

According to Statistics Canada, in 2018:

69.4% of transgender people had experienced inappropriate behaviour in the workplace in the past 12 months.

This is compared to 22.5% of cisgender people.

Barriers

Employment

Housing
Services

And according to a study by TransPulse Canada, racialized and transgender persons have a greater chance of experiencing discrimination in the workplace or in school.

45% vs. 37%

Physical and material security

Source: TransPulse Canada (2020)
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1G3uM8a7MaEuYk7ONMP0P3XvKhIYMp45f/view>

Barriers

Employment

Housing
Services

Discrimination and harassment in the workplace

Lack of **awareness** and **appropriate supports**

Barriers to **education**

Limited **insurance** coverage

**Physical and material
security**

Barriers

Employment
Housing
Services

According to recent studies, about 10% of Canadians are members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.

It is estimated that between **25% and 40%** of youth experiencing homelessness identify as 2SLGBTQIA+.

Physical and material security

Source: CMHC (2022)
<https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/blog/2022/2slgbtqia-housing-needs-challenges>

Barriers

Employment
Housing
Services

Discrimination by landlords and tenants

Improper or unjustified **evictions**

Lack of **affordable** housing

Discriminatory **justice** system

**Physical and material
security**

Health care services
Government services
Community services

Awareness | Validation | Appropriate Supports | Security | Anonymity



Access to services

By virtue of the systems in place in the Canadian context, of the preconceived notions of gender diversity and of the barriers to access the elements needed to survive in a capitalist environment (employment, education, housing), persons of diverse gender identities often find themselves in complex interpersonal situations.

Families | Support | Dependent Relationship | Community Connections



Social and interpersonal

Specificities of the Francophone Minority Context

Gender and language
Historical and religious context
Community awareness
Lack of services



French - it's a gendered language!

When you speak French, you quickly understand how people perceive you. It's in almost every sentence.

Impact on the questioning process (vocabulary)



Gender and language

A few things to keep in mind:

Mr. | Mrs.: forms of colonial courtesy – unnecessary!

Assuming someone's gender: to be avoided!

Using the person's name: a resounding yes!

Stating your pronouns: always!

When writing: let's write in a gender-neutral or inclusive way!



Gender and language

Gender-neutral vs. inclusive

Gender-neutral:

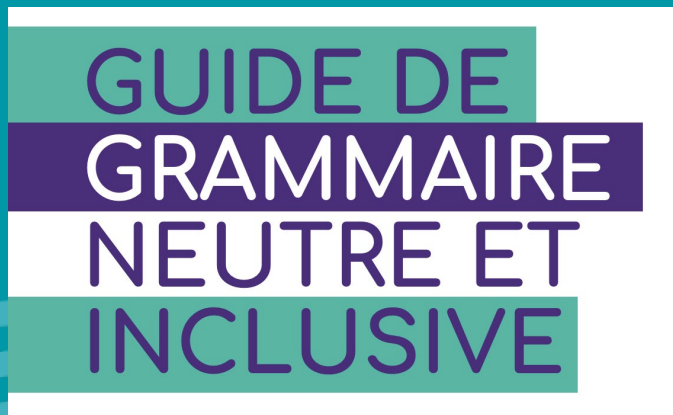
The people receiving our services are people who have experienced domestic violence.

Inclusive:

The people using our services are all survivors of domestic violence.

Gender and language

Resources on inclusive and gender-neutral language



Divergenres (Quebec)
diverggenres.org

Gender and language

Resources on inclusive and gender-neutral language



Club Sexu Inclusive Writing Guide
clubsexu.com

Gender and language

Resources on inclusive and gender-neutral language

Guidelines and resources on inclusive writing (2022)
Government of Canada



Gender and language

The presence of Francophone communities in Canada is linked to colonization movements and the fact that they still exist is linked to the Church!

- Representing Francophone interests
- Resisting Anglophone assimilation
- French Catholic Schools

Historical and religious context

The impacts of this history in 2022

- Francophone leadership
- More conservative values
- Less awareness within communities

**Historical and
religious context**

**You are either queer or
Francophone**

Lack of French resources

**Lack of funding for
Francophone organizations**

**Intersectionality: more
recent than in English**

**Community
awareness**

Lack of Francophone organizations and services

Lack of funding for Francophone organizations

**Limited access to services
Uninformed services**

Lack of services

Building caring and supportive communities

Cross-cutting principles
Organizational structure
Creating safe spaces
Creating appropriate and informed services



**No need to understand
in order to respect**


Trans joy

Intersectionality

**Self-determination and
empowerment**

**Individuality of
experiences**

Assume nothing



**Cross-cutting
principles**

The structures within your services and organizations form the guidelines for creating safe, inclusive and affirmative spaces are found in!

The odds are that if you are not an organization by and for persons of diverse gender identities, your structure was not designed with our communities in mind!

+ The importance of decolonizing and questioning our internal systems!



**Organizational
structure**

**Your intentions in this
process**

The current state

Concrete actions



Organizational structure

Some things to assess:

- Previous efforts to raise awareness and to learn
- Past collaborations
- The place and role of gender diversity in our organizations
- HR policies, processes and other documentation
- Preventing or discouraging people of gender diversity from getting involved or using your services
- Comments and feedback
- Things preventing or discouraging persons of diverse gender identities from providing comments or feedback
- General knowledge and vocabulary

Organizational structure



Clearly define **the people** we are creating the spaces for.

Consult with these communities AND hire **external consultants** for support.

Ensure that our organizational foundations allow us to welcome (and even hire!) these persons.

Apply the *care* principles and the principles of **trauma-informed care** to our practices, **and ground our intentions in dignity and empowerment.**



Creating safe spaces

Considerations when creating inclusive spaces for persons of diverse gender identities:

Anonymity
(not just of an individual,
but of an identity)

Dynamics of
intra-community violence

Using the legal name
vs. the person's name

Be explicit when
we include

Interactions with police or
other forms of authority

Emergency measures in
place (isolated locations,
service promotion, etc.)



Creating Safe Spaces

In order to support persons of diverse gender identities, services must support them through their many realities.

One service can rarely do everything. You can develop **partnerships** or **relationships** with organizations that address needs that you are not able to address.

Navigating the systems

**Interpersonal and
community**

**Physical and material
security**



Creating appropriate and informed services

Thank you everyone!



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