

Top 5 Tips for When an Employee Comes Out as Trans

As an employer or human resources, it's your role to ensure that the workplace is a safe and inclusive space for everyone to continue being enthusiastic and engaged members of your team. Here are tips to ensure that your workplace is a welcoming and inclusive space for transgender and gender diverse people, and ways you can support employees should they come out to you.

1 Take the lead from the employee

If an employee comes out to you, take the lead from them on how they would like to be supported. It can be tempting to go above and beyond to make the employee feel safe and welcome at work, but you run the risk of going further and faster than they are ready for, including outing them to other staff when they want to keep things private.

The employee will let you know when they want to use a different name or pronoun, when they want their co-workers told (and how), and if there are any accommodations they need to feel safe.

Collaborate with the employee on a plan, which has clear responsibilities and timelines, to make sure that everyone is on the same page. Ensure you are ready to make necessary changes to ID's, logins, email address, etc. when/if the staff requires. There may also be a need to look at re-locating or re-assigning the staff to a new area/position, if they feel the need to start 'fresh.'

2 Ensure workplace policies are updated and comprehensive

Be proactive and ensure that your workplace has comprehensive anti-harassment policies that explicitly include gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation. Review your anti-harassment policy to include clear steps for how to address complaints when they arise.

Other steps we suggest you take:

- Review your Employee Policy Manual to include safe washroom/changeroom access.
- Start a diversity committee to help navigate concerns when they arise and pro-actively evaluate the work environments.
- Review your workplace health benefits package to cover for support for gender affirming services.
- Review any dress codes you might have, to accommodate staff who are transitioning or who have diverse gender expression.
- Ensure that your hiring processes are inclusive to attract more diversity into your spaces.

If you require this document in an alternative format, please contact Kayla Buehler at kbuehler@winnipeg-chamber.com.



3 Do a physical walk-through assessment of your workplace

Review the current signage or posters for sexist, homophobic, transphobic, etc. content. Make sure to include signs and posters that express and represent diversity whenever possible. Ensure you have a gender inclusive and/or single-stall washroom or changeroom before someone requests to use one. Converting an existing washroom/changeroom into a gender inclusive and/or single-user space is one option.

4 Assess forms, databases, and records

Look at all the information you collect and ask why this information is collected and what it's used for. Is all this information needed? Who has access to it?

Review HR forms and records to see what title options are given (Mr., Miss, Mrs., Ms.) and edit and/or modify to include gender-neutral options (Mx., etc.), or remove if this is not necessary for official records. HR forms and records that ask for gender and/or sex may need to refocus on what exactly this data is collected for and if it needs to be clarified. Having both Legal and Chosen Name on forms is more inclusive, unless Legal Name is not even necessary. Make sure to have a procedure in place to address staff changes, in regard to old/outdated information being archived and limiting access for safety reasons.

5 Contact Rainbow Resource Centre

Education is the first step to helping all staff, from the Executive Director down to the front-line workers, gain the knowledge they need to create safer(r) more inclusive spaces for everyone. Having Rainbow Resource Centre facilitate a workshop to help the staff with an employee's transition can be very helpful in guiding those first steps. Hosting a regular Inclusivity workshop yearly can also serve as a pro-active step in making staff aware of the importance your workplace puts on diversity and inclusion for all.

Rainbow Resource Centre can also provide additional vital support in this process, including examining policies for safety and inclusion, joining you on a walk-through of your workplace, and providing you with resources and consultation support to help make this a positive experience for everyone.

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