

Affirming Gender Diversity

A discussion booklet for the classroom





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www.union-store.com/ctf-fce

Man

ACT LIKE A MAN

There is only two genders

He

Dont act like that

Just pick a gender

Why do you dress like that?

Boy





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MESSAGE FROM THE CTF/FCE PRESIDENT

Dear Colleagues,

Canadian society has come a long way in understanding, accepting, and celebrating gender diversity in all its forms. When I began my teaching career, gender was confined to two choices, forcing anyone who did not conform to hide who they really were, or risk facing embarrassment, exclusion, or worse. Most hid to protect themselves. Today's youth is both freer and safer to be who they are and express their identities than previous generations once were, which is progress that should make us proud. That said, our collective efforts towards creating greater gender equity are far from complete, and schools have an important role to play.

Education has been slow to adapt to the pace of change, which is evident in the lack of quality classroom resources and gender diversity in curriculum. This latest Student Voice booklet, *Affirming Gender Diversity*, helps fill that void and demonstrates the Canadian Teachers' Federation's ongoing commitment to social justice, quality inclusive publicly funded public education, and the teaching profession.

As classroom teachers, we work diligently to make certain our students are valued as individuals, and we strive for our interactions to be reflective of inclusive practices. As a society, we must endeavour to safeguard the full enjoyment of human rights for our gender diverse populations, and that includes helping make students' lives safer while strengthening their ability to live free of harassment and discrimination. By creating safer spaces and adopting inclusive language, we can better foster the protection of dignity and authenticity.

As a teacher and union leader, I encourage colleagues to make this publication central to your lessons. The conversations and learning it will spark are crucial steps in creating a more just and inclusive future; one where children can grow up with the confidence that comes from living as their true selves. Just like the other booklets in this series, *Affirming Gender Diversity* is written by students for their peers and teachers. The content is authentic and unvarnished, making it a learning tool that resonates with anyone who reads it. The entire Student Voice Series supports positive change from the ground up.

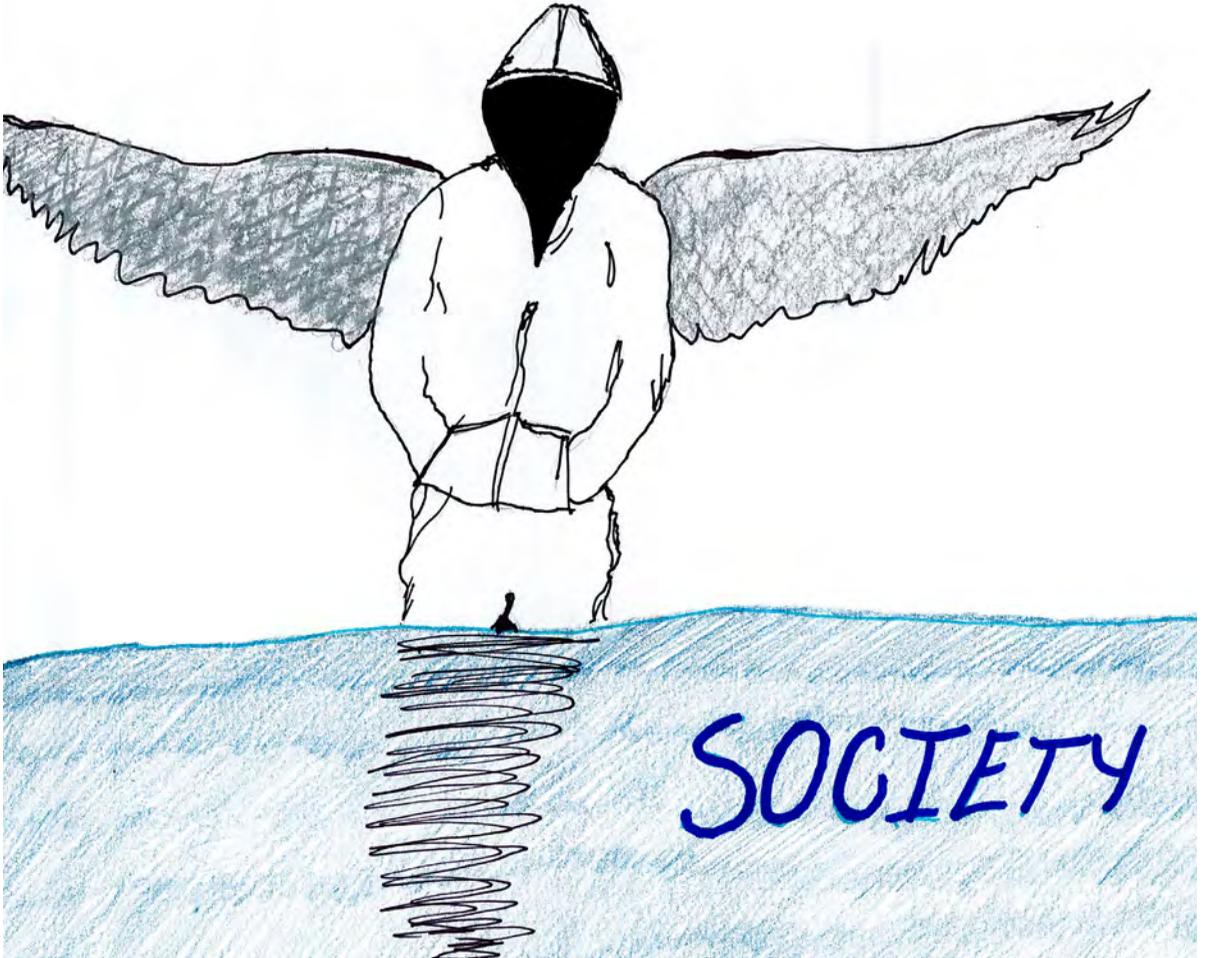
Thank you to everyone who made *Affirming Gender Diversity* possible. And to those who open and explore these pages, thank you for helping to empower and advance the rights of children and youth across the country.

In solidarity,



Shelley L. Morse

President, Canadian Teachers' Federation



INTRODUCTION

The Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF/FCE) is pleased to provide this classroom resource, *Affirming Gender Diversity*, as part of our ongoing commitment to social justice, quality inclusive publicly funded public education, and the teaching profession.

There is a lack in both quality and quantity of classroom resources on the topic of gender equality in Canadian schools. Education International's 2018 report, *Global Status of Teachers and the Teaching Profession*, highlights the urgent need for support when it comes to gender and sexuality training with many respondents indicating a "high level of need" for support to improve teaching practices regarding gender and sexuality sensitivity training (p. 38). Similarly, the CTF/FCE's own study entitled *Human Rights Education in Canada: Results from a CTF Teacher Survey* (2013) identifies a lack of information and resources on human rights education on a wide range of human rights issues, including gender equality, as one of the greatest challenges facing human rights education in Canada (p. 21). Regrettably, governmental resistance to certain topics ministries of Education deem unnecessary or controversial has engendered misinformation and/or a lack of information; more than ever, teachers require resources solidly rooted in fact, and in authentic and honest student perspectives and attitudes.

To address this situation, we have created this resource, which relies on the authentic voices of Canadian students and collects a wide variety of organically generated data from Canadian classrooms for its content.

The CTF/FCE Student Voice booklets are intended to support discussions about complex societal issues with the voice of students at the centre. These student voices form the content of the booklets from which lesson plans are developed. The booklets also help teachers encourage students to discuss important issues, to challenge the status quo societal response, and to take action to increase awareness among the school population and the local community.

The other Student Voice booklets are: *Poverty, What is it?* (2014), *Mental Health Stigma: Challenging it together!* (2016), *Truth and Reconciliation, What is it about?* (2016), and *L'insécurité linguistique : comment la vivons-nous?* (2019).

SUGGESTED USE

The Canadian Teachers' Federation has developed this resource booklet to support teachers in raising awareness and addressing questions from students around the diversity of gender, as well as social concepts such as cisnormativity, cissexism, and transphobia. There exists a wide variety of genders beyond the boy/man – girl/woman binary. Although great strides have been made, in Canada, to improve the rights of those who experience, for example, feelings of attraction, in all its forms, beyond the heterosexual, those strides have yet to be made where gender identity and gender expression are concerned.

We invite educators to use this booklet as a resource to support students to:

- **develop critical thinking skills by examining preconceptions and misconceptions about the diversity of gender identities and gender expressions;**
- **explore stigma associated with non-binary gender identities and expressions;**
- **develop empathy and understanding about how cisnormativity, cissexism, and transphobia affect the lives of all individuals, be they cis, trans, or non-binary; and,**
- **create a dialogue of understanding to build a community of acceptance, compassion, and inclusion.**

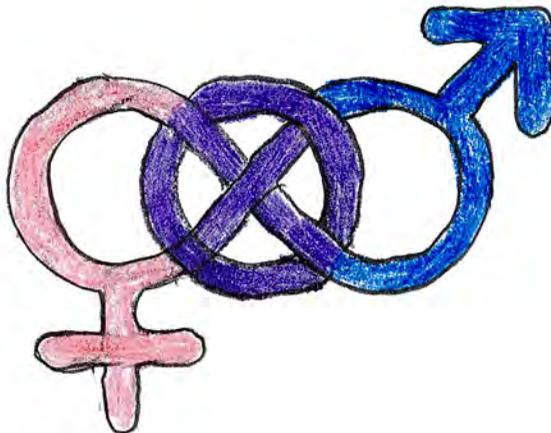




TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Key Points to Help Discussion..... 1**

- Myths and Facts about Trans
and Other Non-Binary Gender Identities3**

- Elementary.....7**

- Secondary 19**

- Participating Schools34**

- The CTF/FCE Advisory Committee on Diversity
and Human Rights35**

- Supporting Resources36**

- Additional Resources and Links39**

KEY POINTS TO HELP DISCUSSION

1. Before beginning to use this resource, educators may need to take some time to ensure students have a clear understanding of the differences between “assigned sex at birth” and “gender identity”. Please consult the Egale Canada glossary of terms and concepts, located at www.egale.ca.
2. Similarly, it is important to make certain that there is a clear understanding of the differences between “gender identity” and “attraction” (formerly referred to as “sexual orientation”).
3. The term “transphobia” is defined by Egale Canada in this way: “Fear and/or hatred of any transgression of perceived gender norms, often exhibited by name-calling, bullying, exclusion, prejudice, discrimination or acts of violence – anyone who is trans and/or gender diverse (or perceived to be) can be the target of transphobia.” Note that the prefix “trans” designates anybody who identifies or who is perceived to identify outside of the gender binary.
4. At an age-appropriate level, students should also have a basic understanding of the different agents of gender socialization, such as family members, the media, social institutions such as schools or religious groups, their peers, etc. For more background on this, please consult this blog from UNICEF, entitled “What is gender socialization and why does it matter?”, located at www.unicef.org.
5. Especially in the elementary section of this booklet, students often used binary language (e.g., boys and girls, men and women), as that is where their understanding was when they contributed to classroom discussions and completed written submissions. Educators are encouraged to make every reasonable effort to move their students towards more inclusionary language (useful guides re: our choice of language can be found at www.egale.ca in the “Resources” section).
6. Never assume that anyone (yourself, other educators, students) understand everything when it comes to gender diversity. If you need to, press the pause button, so to speak, to allow time to learn or teach a bit more. The Egale Canada glossary of terms and concepts is very helpful – well worth reviewing and sharing.

7. During discussions, where appropriate, and especially when talking about how people can be hurt by others, be intentional about pointing out the differences between intent and impact. For example, “When you said or did ‘xyz’, you may not have intended to hurt someone or their feelings, but you did, and you need to focus on the impact you had on that person, and not focus on yourself by making excuses such as, ‘But I didn’t mean it.’” For more, please read this article from *everyday feminism*, entitled “Intent vs. Impact: Why Your Intentions Don’t Really Matter”, located at www.everydayfeminism.com.
8. With respect to the effects of colonialism on the shaping of current understandings of gender in Canada, should you wish to explore this issue, you may choose to use the following guiding questions:
 - a) What does colonialism mean?
 - b) How did it impact our current understanding of gender?
 - c) How does it shape how we still think about gender in Canada?

In addition, before diving into the issue, we would strongly recommend that you undertake some professional reading on the topic; here are some suggestions:

FemNorthNet. 2016. *Colonialism and its Impacts. Resource Development in Northern Communities: Local Women Matter #3*. Ottawa: Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women. http://fnn.criaw-icref.ca/images/userfiles/files/LWM3_ColonialismImpacts.pdf.

Genovese, Maddalena, Davina Rousell, and The Two–Spirit Circle of Edmonton Society. 2014. *Safe and Caring Schools for Two-Spirit Youth*. Edmonton: The Society for Safe and Caring Schools and Communities. <https://safeandcaring.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Two-Spirit-Youth.pdf>.

MYTHS AND FACTS ABOUT TRANS AND OTHER NON-BINARY GENDER IDENTITIES

(adapted from the sources listed below, as indicated by number)

Myth: Transsexualism is unnatural.

FACT: Human gender identity exists on a spectrum of physiological and psychological characteristics. Research indicates that throughout history there have been people whose gender identity was different from their assigned sex at birth. (2)

Myth: Transsexuals deceive people when they do not disclose themselves as transsexual.

FACT: Individuals who present themselves in their felt gender should have the right to decide whether to disclose their gender identity. (2)

Myth: Male to female transsexuals are men until they have had a sex change. Female to male transsexuals are women until they have had a sex change.

FACT: For the most part, most transsexuals do not identify with their assigned sex at birth, although they may present as that sex during some part of their lives. (2)

Myth: Trans people are gay.

FACT: Being trans is about gender, not attraction – trans people can be gay, straight, bisexual, etc. (3)

Myth: All trans people stick out like sore thumbs.

FACT: Everybody is different whether they are trans or not. (3)

Myth: Being transgender is a choice.

FACT: Being trans is no more a choice than being tall, straight, or Asian. (3)

Myth: All trans people are depressed and unhappy.

FACT: Just like everyone else, many trans people live happy, successful, and fulfilled lives. (3)

Myth: Transgender identity is a mental illness.

FACT: Transgender identity is not a mental illness. The word transgender describes a persistent and authentic difference between a person's gender identity and the sex they were assigned at birth. For some individuals, this difference results in pain, discomfort, and distress (gender dysphoria). (4)

Myth: Children aren't old enough to know their gender identity.

FACT: In reality, many children know their gender identity from a very young age. Rather than interrogate our young transgender children or students about their gender identity, we should support them and encourage them, as we do with all children, to be their authentic selves. (4)

Myth: Trans people are confused about their gender.

FACT: While genitalia and DNA might correspond with assigned sex at birth, gender is much more complex. If there's a discrepancy between your brain and heart, and your assigned sex at birth, your brain and heart trump your assigned sex at birth. Trans people are no more confused or no less confused than anyone else. (1) (3)

Myth: Trans is a new phenomenon.

FACT: Although much of it was hidden and is lost, there is plenty of evidence of trans history going back thousands of years and across many cultures. (1)

Myth: Trans people are almost all trans women.

FACT: Recent information from more diverse sources suggests that there are more trans men than previously believed. (1)

Myth: All trans people have had (or want to have) sex reassignment surgery.

FACT: Sex reassignment surgery (SRS) is an array of optional procedures that differ between trans women and trans men and between individuals, depending on their circumstances and choices. A person can be trans without ever undergoing any procedures. (1)

Myth: Gender identity and attraction are the same thing.

FACT: Because trans is part of the 2SLGBTQ+ umbrella, people sometimes assume it has something to do with attraction. But it's about which gender(s) you fundamentally identify with (e.g., man, woman, some combination of both, or neither). (1)

Myth: Being trans or non-binary is just a phase.

FACT: Being 2SLGBTQ+ is an identity, not a choice, lifestyle, or phase someone grows out of. Gender identity is so complex that the exact origins are unknown. However, what is widely known is that any attempt to "fix," "cure," or "repair" a person's gender identity is not only unethical and unprofessional, it can cause great harm and lifelong damage. (5)

Myth: You can tell who trans or non-binary youth are.

FACT: The belief that you can tell who trans or non-binary youth are by simply looking at or by listening to them is based in old, unfounded stereotypes and beliefs. These stereotypes are rooted in powerful socio-cultural beliefs about gender and how young people should express their gender identity in typically masculine or feminine ways. (5)

Myth: Parents have the right to know.

FACT: Ultimately, if a parent wants to know about their child's gender identity, all they have to do is ask them. If they are ready, children will gladly tell their parents. If they are not ready or don't feel safe doing so, no child should be forced to come out. Likewise, no professional should ever share a student's gender identity without their direct permission. In fact, unwanted disclosure could be considered an act of unprofessional conduct with serious repercussions. Sadly, parental rejection is one of the leading causes of youth homelessness. For some 2SLGBTQ+ youth, places like Gender Sexuality Alliances (GSAs) may be the only safe spaces that they have in their lives. (5)

Myth: All schools are safe spaces.

FACT: Unfortunately, this is not always the case. However, the tide is slowly turning. Some provinces, like Ontario, Manitoba, and Alberta, have passed legislation to support a student’s legal right to start a GSA in their school, and research demonstrates that in schools with GSAs, students report more supportive teachers and administrators. (5)

Myth: Sexual health education is inclusive of all students.

FACT: In many schools, gender issues are completely omitted from sexual health education classes. This often happens because of personal discomfort, embarrassment, lack of training, and fear of parental backlash. And the reality is that most students want inclusive sexual health education, not from their parents but from their teachers. They trust their teachers to provide them with accurate information that is free from bias, prejudice, and stigma. (5)

Sources

1. Canadian AIDS Society. “Trans Myths”.
<https://www.cdnaids.ca/wp-content/uploads/Fact-Sheet-Trans-Myths.pdf>
2. Ontario Human Rights Commission. “Myths and Facts”.
<http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/discussion-paper-toward-commission-policy-gender-identity/myths-and-facts>
3. Young Scot. “Myths and FAacts about Sex and Gender”.
<https://young.scot/get-informed/national/myths-and-facts-about-sex-and-gender>
4. Learning for Justice. “Dispelling Six Myths About Transgender Identity”.
<https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/dispelling-six-myths-about-transgender-identity>
5. EdCan Network. “The Straight Facts: Eight common myths and misconceptions about LGBTQ2 youth”.
<https://www.edcan.ca/articles/the-straight-facts/>

Q1 Have you heard the word “gender” before? What do you think it means? What does gender mean to you?

- I feel I am a boy.
- It doesn't matter, as long as you're friends.
- But I have a question: Why did we invent “masculine” and “feminine”? You said: People are allowed to live their life, to choose their clothes, to do whatever they want for their gender.



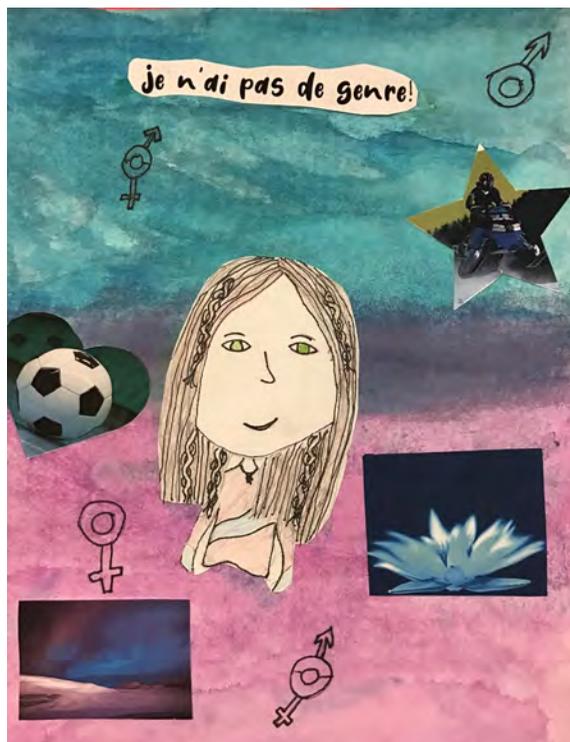
Q2 Can boys wear the colour pink or be a secretary? Can girls wear the colour blue or fix cars? How do we decide if that's okay or not okay? Can you tell by looking at someone if they are a boy or a girl? What have you learned by watching videos or by playing games?

- Well, it's like tags on things. In the boys' section it means for boys, and in the girls' section it means for girls. Tags in stores encourage gender binary, but it shouldn't be that way.
- Girls can wear blue if they choose. Girls can decide what they want to wear. Clothing does not have a gender.
- Lots of men have long hair, and lots of women don't. Hair doesn't change your gender.
- I could grow out my hair and wear "girls' clothes", and surprise! I am still a boy.
- I don't like how they say what you wear is your gender.
- For me, liking pink was hard because my friends said pink was a girl colour.
- Boys can wear whatever and so can girls. You decide if it's okay for you.
- The person who decides if it's okay is the person who is wearing the clothing, because you can wear what you want to wear.
- You can't tell if someone is a boy or a girl just by looking at them, because every child is different.
- Only the person knows what gender they are.



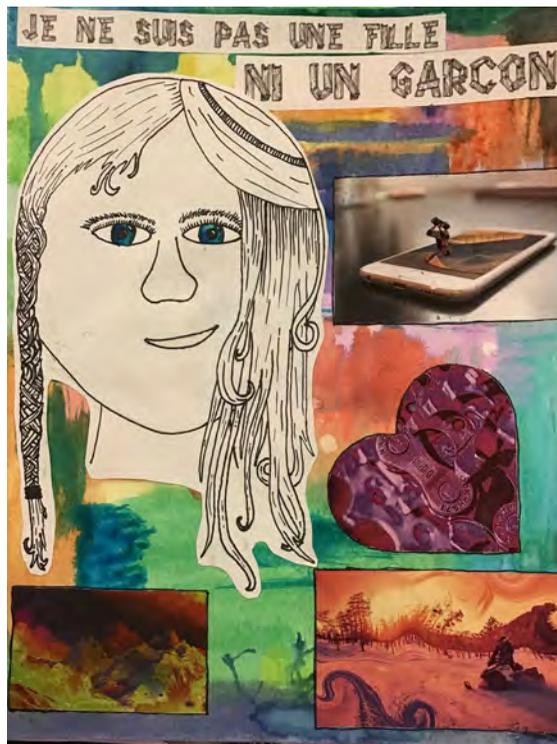
Q3 If certain toys, games or sports were only for some kids, like only the girls, and certain toys, games or sports were only for the boys, how would the other kids feel if they couldn't play those games/sports, or play with those things if they wanted to?

- I would feel MAD because I am a tomboy and I do not like girl toys. If I went to the store to get mini-sticks to play hockey, and someone said that I couldn't get that because I was a girl, I would say, "I am a girl and I can play with what I want!"
- There is no such thing as "boys" and "girls" things.
- They would feel sad, mad, disappointed, angry. They probably would not feel good. And the people who made them do it or play with it should feel ashamed for not having a good brain or soul.
- If I was only allowed to play with "boy toys", I would probably get very bored.
- If I was told I couldn't do something because I was a girl, I would feel mad and sad because we're all allowed to like the same things.
- Other kids might feel bad that they can't play certain games or sports just because of their gender, but everyone deserves to play anything. I really want to go into hockey but my mom won't let me because she thinks it's a boy sport. So she put me in gymnastics because she thinks it's a girl sport.
- Kids would feel like they might get bullied, because it was associated with the other gender. For example, if a girl wanted to play with the Robo-Alive, she might get scared, she might get bullied. Or if a boy wanted to have the pink car. Even if you're a boy, you can like pink, or girls can like blue. COLOURS DON'T MATTER!
- I'm a girl, and in ads, girls don't play with "boys' toys" like robots. That makes me think (mostly when I was younger) that I can't play with robots because I'm a girl.
- Stop the "girls" and "boys" signs in stores.



Q4 If these same children also had different skin colour, or had different abilities or different religions, how would this impact or change their experience? How might they feel?

- Children with different skin colour, ability or religion may feel less represented because they get left out, laughed at and discriminated against.
- If kids couldn't see themselves in advertisements, they might feel insecure or scared, because they don't know if they look good or bad, or if they did something wrong. And if they were a different race or ethnicity looking at an all-white ad, they might feel like it's not okay to be different.
- There are many different students, such as those with autism, Down Syndrome, dark skin, light skin. . . Nobody should be excluded.



Q5 What are some typical expectations for women/girls and men/boys in Canadian society?

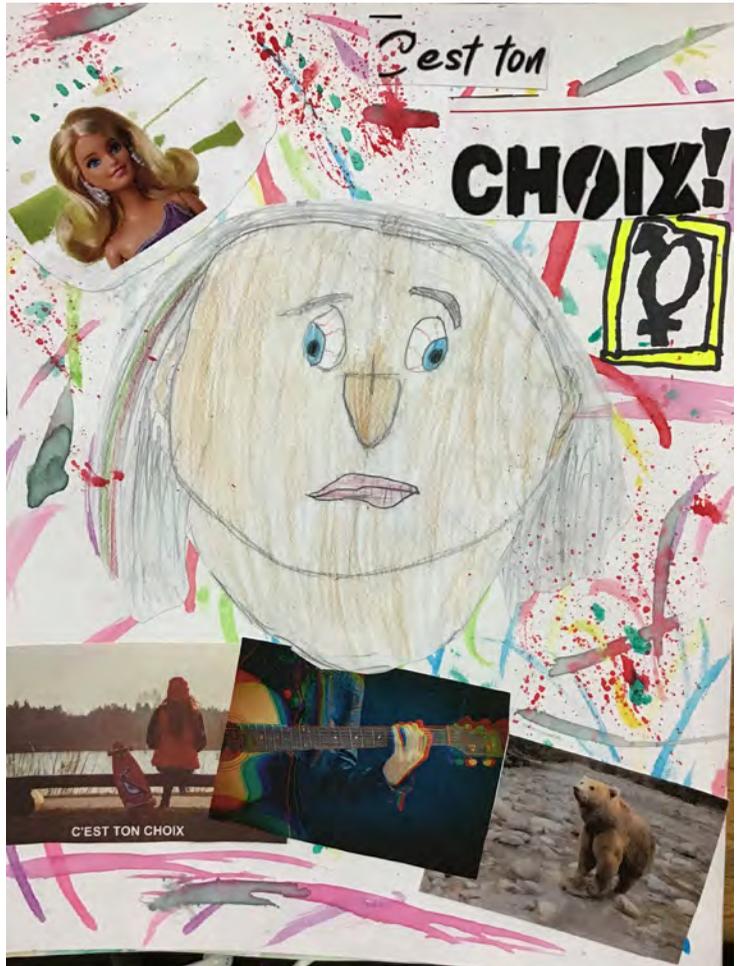
Boys / Men	Girls / Women
Have a job with a decent income	Have a job with a decent income
Take care of children if they have children	Take care of children
Go to school	Go to school
Have shelter	Have shelter
No criminal acts	No criminal acts

Boys / Men	Girls / Women
Boys go to work	Girls stay at home
Not take care of kids	Take care of kids
Be mean	Clean house
Act strong	No job / no money job
Straight	Straight
Boys work a lot	Girls cook
Males handle finance	

- Roles of both boys and girls in our community are: a vet, a surgeon, an actor, an artist, and many more. I wrote both boys and girls because I don't think there should be a job for girls or boys.
- All of the genders are the same amount of capable.
- It doesn't matter what gender you are to work a certain job.
- Typical expectations for girls are for them to do whatever they want to do! I think that because it's their choice. And typical expectations for boys are for them to do whatever they want! I think that because it's their choice.
- Women have been treated poorly just because they're girls. Women are paid less than men.

Q6 Are you different in some way (skin colour, religion, gender identity, etc.) from the people you see around you? What barriers or challenges do you face because of this? Do you think that you are able to reach your full potential? If not, what might be stopping you?

- I'm privileged because I'm White. But I'm not privileged because I'm a girl, and lots of people are sexist. And because I wear glasses. People think if someone wears glasses, they're smart.
- Yes, I do think I will face some challenges, like blue is my favourite colour, I'm a girl. Anxiety sometimes. My skin colour is different than some people, but that doesn't mean that we are different on the inside.
- One barrier is money. This year I can't afford winter boots because we aren't getting enough money for them. Sometimes I come to school without a lunch. I have other barriers, but I don't feel comfortable talking about it.
- I am privileged with my skin because people with darker skin are often abused, and I am Indigenous, so I could have had dark skin, but in a way, I'm lucky. I still think people with dark skin should be treated the same way white people are though.



Q7 Pronouns are words like “she,” “they,” “he,” etc. Why do we invite people to share their pronouns? How do you use gender-neutral pronouns?

- If you try to guess a gender, just say you / they / them, not guy or gal.
- We should tell people our pronouns because if they say him, he or his, it could make you feel bad. And if you're transgender, it could make the person uncomfortable. So just ask the pronouns. It will make the person you're talking to feel better.
- We should tell people our pronouns because if they call us the wrong gender, it might hurt our feelings.
- We should tell people our pronouns because it might offend the people who are called the wrong pronouns. Also if you meet somebody you want to tell your family about, you know how to name them.
- We should tell people our pronouns because if they are a transgender girl, and if someone called the transgender girl a “he”, the transgender girl would feel like her gender doesn't matter.
- We should tell people our pronouns because that's what we are, and we don't want them to call us what we aren't.
- You need to respect what pronoun people want to be called.
- People love it when you respect their pronouns.



Q8 Do you see gender diverse people in the books you read, in the movies you watch, or in other materials / resources you use?

- I watched anime shows that helped with me liking volleyball, and helped me understanding types of sexual orientations.
- Maybe they should add some people who don't look like Barbie.
- I usually don't see gender diverse people in books or TV shows, but I do watch a show with a transgender person.
- No, I don't see gender diverse people in books or movies or other stuff.



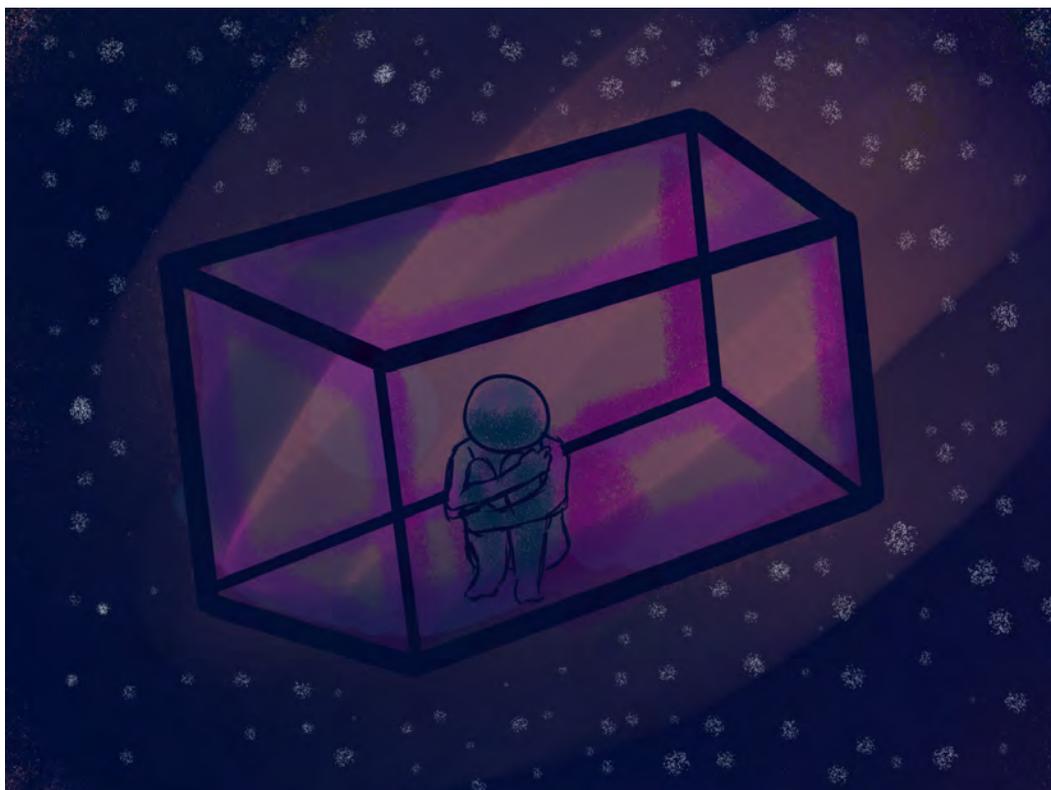
Q9 Have you ever witnessed a gender diverse person being harassed? How do you think this made that person feel? How did this make you feel?

- I have not seen a gender diverse person being harassed. I think they would be sad. It makes me feel angry.
- Nobody should get bullied because other people don't respect their gender identity. We're all the same, no different. They're people and they have RIGHTS.
- It would make me feel sad, and I would feel like I should say something about it. I would say "Stop!" and "Go away!" and "You should not be talking to people like that."
- "Once upon a time, Jesse woke up, questioning himself. Deep down, he knew he wanted to be a girl. But when he went to school, he was harassed, even by his so-called friends. Then, from the corner of her eye, Ms. K. saw. She had gone through the same thing as a child."
- "Once upon a time there was a gender diverse person being harassed by a bully. And I said, 'What if you were a gender diverse person being harassed? What would you feel like? You would probably feel sad. So run away now, okay?'"



Q10 Safer spaces are supportive, reassuring places where all individuals can feel comfortable to be who they are and share with others, without fear of harassment or getting hurt. What does a safer space look / feel like for you? Where can you find safer spaces in your school?

- A safer spot is a place where you feel safe and happy.
- A safer space is a place where you feel safe and confident in yourself.
- A safer place is a calm place.
- Safe place
Accepted
Friends and family
Everyone is equal



Q11 Imagine a gender diverse world, where gender diversity is recognized and valued, and where everyone has the freedom to express themselves however they wish. What might this look like?

- A diverse world looks like everyone is happy and not scared to be themselves.
- What does a diverse world look like?
 - People being themselves
 - Not being rude
 - Everybody's gender is accepted
 - Everyone cares for each other
 - Happiness
 - Joy and no judgment
 - They live in peace
 - Amazing and acceptance
 - Everyone is allowed to be who they are
 - Love
- The diverse world would look like a bunch of people that smile and don't care what they look like and love each other.
- I think the governments should make a rule that it doesn't matter who they are. They should be able to live in peace.
- I think a diverse world looks like a lot of girls in men's clothes, and boys in women's clothes.
- I think a diverse world would look like a peaceful world where everyone is happy and having a parade every day!



Messages of encouragement

Stop gender stereotyping!

Hi! I get to choose.

Be respectful.

Be who you feel you are!

Gender equity amongst us all!

Be free to express who you are!

Respect people for who they identify as.

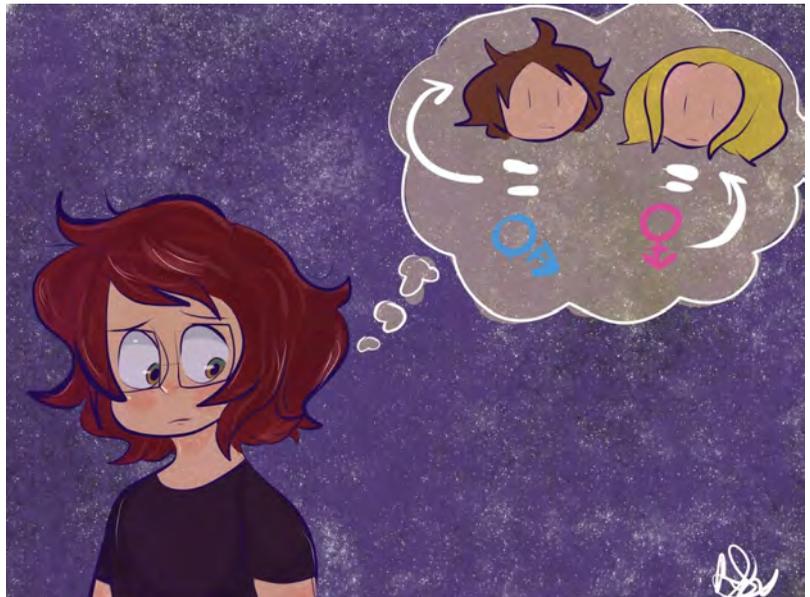
Q1 What does gender mean to you?

- It doesn't say anywhere you have to be male or female or either.
- Gender is a construct made by society/the media.
- A way someone expresses themselves to the world.
- When you're born, your whole life is planned out for you, because of the genitals you were born with. Parents decorate their daughters' rooms in pink with fairy mobiles, and blue with cars is a common theme for boys. You're given skirts if you're a girl, boxes of dress-up clothes and the idea of femininity shoved down your throat. If you're a boy, you get cars, trucks, and baseball bats and soccer balls, and the idea of "Man up, don't cry!" fed to you with your mushed up peas and carrots. I was lucky enough to have a bat in hand and skates on my feet before I could walk or knew which hand I shot with. But some girls get handed fairy tale books and dresses instead, and never learn how much they love baseball or hockey because they tried out for cheerleading instead, since that's a "girl sport".
- Gender is what someone goes by, or wants to categorize as. This may or may not be what that person was born with. Now that gender is becoming more and more important to people, it is important not to discriminate against someone just because they are different. There are many different genders that people can be, and society is making laws about freedoms for people of any gender.
- To me, gender is a way of identifying yourself. It doesn't have to be something you're forced to have. You can be transgender, male, female, or even non-binary. It's part of your identity and who you are as a person. It's whatever you want to be. I also think that people shouldn't be judged by their gender and should be treated equally.



Q2 What have you been taught about gender? For example, by the media, by popular culture? Why do you think you've been taught this? How could this harm some people and assist others?

- I have been taught quite a bit from social media, I think that this could be harmful because there is no way of knowing if it is true or not.
- Girls can do any job, same with boys.
- Anybody can play with any type of game, do whatever sport they want.
- We also need to break the stereotype that males are the providers for the family and moms take care of the children.
- It's weird to see all the negative things said about each gender; I realize I've heard them said to me and to others. It makes you realize how bad gender norms are, and how badly we need to change them.
- Overall, this class is the most I've learnt about all the different types of genders. I think we are taught this because it's becoming more and more relevant every day. We are starting to normalize it better, for example, transgender washrooms that anyone can use. I feel that this kind of stuff should be taught in every school because it's important.
- I have seen it from popular culture and the media together. For example, lots of people were talking about genders or how you should respect pronouns on social media like TikTok. I mainly learned it from there because before that I didn't know much about it or care that much, but as I learnt more about it on social media, I learnt how harmful it can be to misgender somebody and how that can hurt them.



Q3 What gender identities other than male or female are you aware of?

- There are way more than boy and girl, like non-binary, agender, pangender, genderqueer, two-spirit, third gender, and many more.
- Other genders: non-binary (umbrella term), demi-boy, demi-girl, demi-gender, gender fluid, bigender, trigender, gender flux, demi-flux, pangender, agender, two-spirit.
- Gender diversity is about recognizing and respecting that there are many ways to identify outside of the male and female binary.
- What is most important is that people respect those who are gender diverse, and the decisions they make about their lives.



3. What gender identities other than male and female are you familiar with?

*Agender: a person who does not identify themselves with any particular gender (i.e; genderless/gender neutral)



Pronouns vary depending on what the person is comfortable with!

*Gender fluid: a person whose gender identity changes/fluctuates over time through different genders



*Demiboy: a person who partially, but not wholly, identifies as male



*Demigirl: a person who partially, but not wholly, identifies as female



*Bigender: a person whose gender identity changes/fluctuates between typically two different genders



* All of these identities may fall under the umbrella NON-BINARY!!



Q4 Why do we invite people to share their pronouns?

- People share their pronouns so others can correctly identify them with the gender they are. Some pronouns besides the usual “he”, “she”, or “they”, are “ze”, “zir”, “mx”, “hir”, “em”, “vir”, “sie”, “ter”, “eir”, and “ve” (this is only a small sampling of many more pronouns). Many people who do not use the “typical” pronouns society proclaims them as from birth, due to forced cisnormativity, use these pronouns instead.
- You can’t tell someone’s pronouns by just looking at them.
- You need to respect people for what they identify as, or what they would rather be called, because since we live in a place where there are more than 2 genders, we should make sure to make everyone feel comfortable or that they are in a safe spot.



Q5 What are some typical expectations for males/boys and females/girls in Canadian society? How do these expectations (of Canadian society) change for people who are racialized, disabled, neuro-diverse, of diverse faiths, etc.?

- When I think about gender, I think about gender roles. I don't like gender roles. If you're a boy, and you want to wear a dress, then wear a dress. It doesn't make you any less of a boy unless you want it to. Gender roles are always talking about how girls are supposed to be quiet, polite and basically doormats to everyone around them. Boys are supposed to be emotionless, hulking rocks. And don't get me started on how people who don't identify with either get treated, because that would be a really long paragraph to read.

Men	Women
Strong	Weak
Independent	Dependent
Hard-working	Housewife
Providers	Consumers
Emotionless	Emotional
Intelligent	Dumb
Manly	Feminine
Aggressive	Soft
Athletic	Run, throw, punch like a girl
Educated	Uneducated
Adventurous	Unadventurous
Serious	Happy / joyful
Work-based	Family-based
Provider for family	Caretaker of family
Capable	Incapable

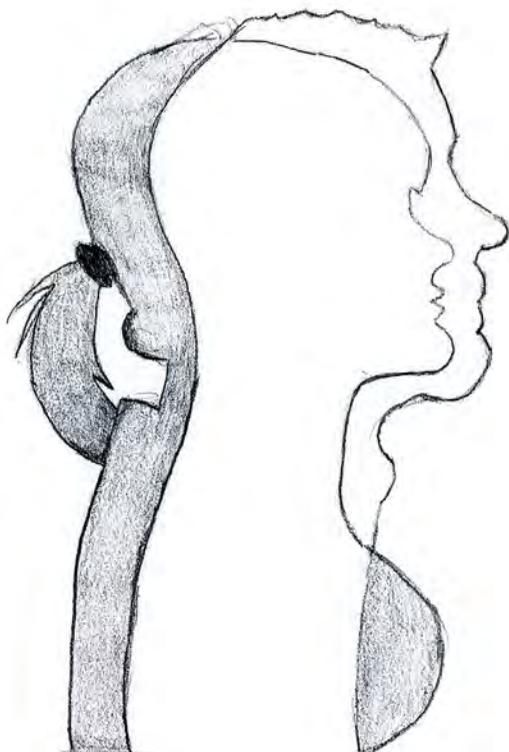
Q6 These expectations impact all genders differently. How do they impact gender diverse individuals? How do they impact boys/men? How do they impact girls/women?

- I want to look like a mix of both, not feminine/masculine, but both. As a kid, it confused me because I didn't like the same things other people did. I felt like I was wrong.
- I don't know for sure, but I imagine that it would be very restricting and anxiety producing.
- I think anyone can be impacted by these messages. It can be harmful to stereotype a gender because it can offend someone or make them feel like they shouldn't be a certain way.
- It can be difficult to "fit in" when you don't fit society's stereotypes (e.g., if you're a masculine girl or a feminine boy). Everyone is likely impacted by these stereotypes at some point in their life. These messages can be hurtful/harmful because they can discourage you from being who you are and from liking what you like.



Q7 What might be happening in your “spaces” that might prevent a gender diverse person from feeling safe enough to be visible, if that is their choice? How can we make classrooms and schools safer for gender diverse people who may choose to share their identities?

- Make sure all (there is no place for intolerant people in the education system) teachers are educated and accepting with the subject. Teachers need to condemn discriminatory comments, this will then make it easier for students to follow in their footsteps.
- We could make classrooms safer and make people feel safer by learning things like this in school. We did a unit on it last year in health, but even just knowing about it makes it easier to understand their experiences.
- All teachers should share their pronouns and preferred name, and explain why they are doing it (because they don't want others to make assumptions about our pronouns, and they are modeling inclusion, and signaling that we can't make assumptions about anybody's personal pronouns).
- We could not make assumptions about someone's gender, and always use someone's preferred pronouns.



Q9 Have you ever witnessed any incidents of transphobia (gender diverse individuals being harassed)? How do you think this made that person feel? How did this make you feel?

- My non-binary friend is treated quite poorly online.
- My cousin is trans and he has told me some stories, and it has upset me, about what people say to / about him.
- Harmful jokes overheard in groups of friends make it hard to come out.
- I think every gender is affected, no matter who the comment is directed towards, because, for example, if a girl gets told she's "sensitive", it's immediately labelled as a negative thing, so anyone around her (a boy) is now going to think he can't show emotion because it's something only "girls" do, and it makes you seem weak.
- I have seen it on TV. It made me feel upset, and I felt bad for that person because no one should be treated poorly just because they are different. Everyone should be treated equally with respect. I think that person felt hurt and lonely, or that something was wrong with them because they were being bullied.
- When my friends and I were making an LGBTQ+ slideshow for our "passion project", some people were making fun of us and also making fun of someone who was LGBTQ+. I personally felt bad for the victim, so I started to fight back, and they just left. We tried to make the victim feel better, but they were still crying.
- Yes, I have witnessed a person who is gender diverse being bullied. This made me feel upset and angry. I also felt bad for them because they had worked so hard to tell their parents about what gender they preferred, and as a person in the LGBTQ+ community, I know the struggles and challenges you need to overcome to be accepted as a person by people at school, or just by friends at home. I think this made the person feel bad or unappreciated, they may have felt like they don't belong, or they don't have a voice. Like I said before, I have faced these challenges and problems, and sometimes you need to get another person to help you.
- Yes, I have seen a gender diverse person being bullied. This made me feel kind of guilty for not trying to stop the bully.

Q10 Have you witnessed incidents of misogyny (harassment directed at girls or women)? How do you think this made them feel?

How did this make you feel? What attitudes / behaviours are there in society that lead to misogyny?

- I personally have been yelled at / honked at by people in public, and it's honestly scary, because you don't know what may happen to you. But it's so normal that no one really cares too much.
- I have witnessed harassment before because it was me. It made me feel scared and like I should be quiet and not speak up.
- I've witnessed harassment and experienced it myself. It makes women feel uncomfortable, taken advantage of, upset, out of control. It makes me upset that it is something that is happening all the time.
- Yes. Most encounters of misogyny I've seen are on the internet, but there have been times that I've seen people in real life being misogynistic. Some of them I didn't realize because I was uneducated, but others I saw, I realized what they were saying after, and I wish I'd said something. I've seen women get called space aliens for having a period. I wish I'd said something there. But I didn't. I've seen women get called unhealthy for having hair in places besides on their heads. I've heard people saying we should ignore things that exist and that they are things you don't talk about in public. I've seen people shamed for being different, or told that what they wear is "not feminine enough" or "too masculine". But my questions are: Why are so many things gendered? Why is consent so underrated by people? Why can't no mean no? And why is nothing done about it? Why are we told that we are too emotional to lead? Why are so many things considered to be "a man's job"? Why are we so far from equality, that things that are considered "feminine" are treated like the plague by men? Most people would answer with "I don't know", which is the only answer I've received. Sometimes I've been told I'm a cynic, or that I'm overreacting, or that I shouldn't worry about it, or that I'm too young to understand. But if I'm too young to understand, why does it affect me?

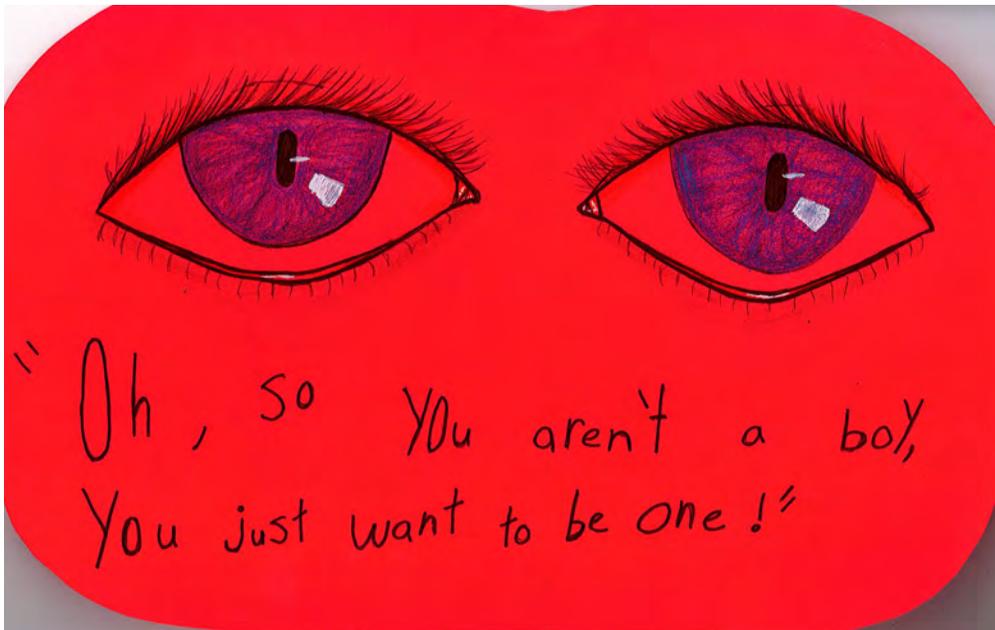


Q11 How does cissexism affect gender diverse individuals in different ways? What are the consequences of cissexism? What am I doing to perpetuate cissexism?

- We need to normalize stopping people from saying inappropriate jokes.
- It would be terrifying to go somewhere and be scared of what some people may think of me or say in front of me or behind my back.
- Cissexism operates exactly like sexism and racism; it is a true form of discrimination that would make people feel discriminated against.
- People are less likely to be hired if they're not cis.
- Non-binary people are often not recognized; when they choose to be "out", they are often mocked or disadvantaged.
- The ways that cissexism is used today is in statements that only talk about men or women, while excluding other genders. These statements are a form of microaggressions.
- Addressing and resolving the injustice of cissexism starts off with simply acknowledging its existence, and identifying it in everyday life. Some examples of cissexism include: asking if it's a boy or a girl when the mother is pregnant, because you can't tell the gender identity until the child is able to tell you; referring to a trans person's name as their "real name"; and making "pronoun proclamation" mandatory in speaking circles.
- Presenting yourself as gender diverse is not about seeking attention or receiving special treatment, it is about being your authentic self.
- Each school should hold an assembly to show that the school itself is accepting of non-binary genders, and not against them. If you weren't cisgender, and you didn't know your school was on your side and accepting you, you may not say anything about yourself and you would likely be treated differently than you would like. More people would come out or identify as who they feel, so they could be safer. Other students who are accepting should also let others know so that they can feel accepted, not "left out", safer, and secure from being bullied or pushed around. Things this simple can allow someone to have so much more confidence, feel as if they are accepted, and know they have someone to stand up for them and with them.
- If you do misgender people, you quickly apologize and use the pronouns or name they have requested.

Q12 What could I be doing to challenge cissexism in my school and/or community, and to be more affirming of gender diversity?

- Using the correct gender diverse names and pronouns, as well as gender-neutral language, are reasonable expectations.
- Teach more about genderfluid and different sexual orientations (not just gay, lesbian, or bisexual, but asexual, pansexual, polysexual, etc.). Teach more about gender (cis, trans, non-binary, gender fluid). Teach these things to younger kids (elementary) to stop transphobia, and to make sure they know it's safe.
- You can be what you want to be, you don't have to conform to gender stereotypes. We should encourage attempts at breaking them down. Everyone is affected by what is currently being said and done.
- Be an upstander, not a bystander.
- You can stop laughing at inappropriate jokes. Stop people from making inappropriate jokes.



Q13 Imagine a gender-diverse world, where gender diversity is recognized and valued, and where everyone has the freedom to express themselves however they wish. What might this look like?

How can you learn to identify cissexism? What does it look like and sound like (feel like)? How can you disrupt it? What needs to change in our schools and beyond our schools for this to start happening, and how can you be a part of it?

- Different isn't wrong.
- If the world's norm was a gender-diverse world, most everyone would be able to have the chance to feel accepted by others. People wouldn't have to worry about what others think about them expressing themselves, or worry about judgment. If gender diversity was valued and recognized, each and every person would feel loved, and have a sense of belonging. Although our society has got better over the years, gender diversity has still not become normalized or embraced. If the world didn't judge everyone for who they wanted to be, I think everyone would be a lot happier, more confident, and proud of who they are.
- Diversity doesn't work without psychological safety. People only contribute unique ideas to a group when they feel comfortable and safe enough to speak up.



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Catherine Hart

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Beverley Loker-French

New Brunswick Teachers' Association (NBTA)

Julia MacRae

British Columbia Teachers' Federation (BCTF)

David O'Soup

Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation (STF)

Wes Delve

Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF/FCE), Staff Liaison

SUPPORTING RESOURCES

(from the “Teacher Kit” developed for the creation of the CTF/FCE Student Voice Booklet #5: *Affirming Gender Diversity*)

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AND LINKS

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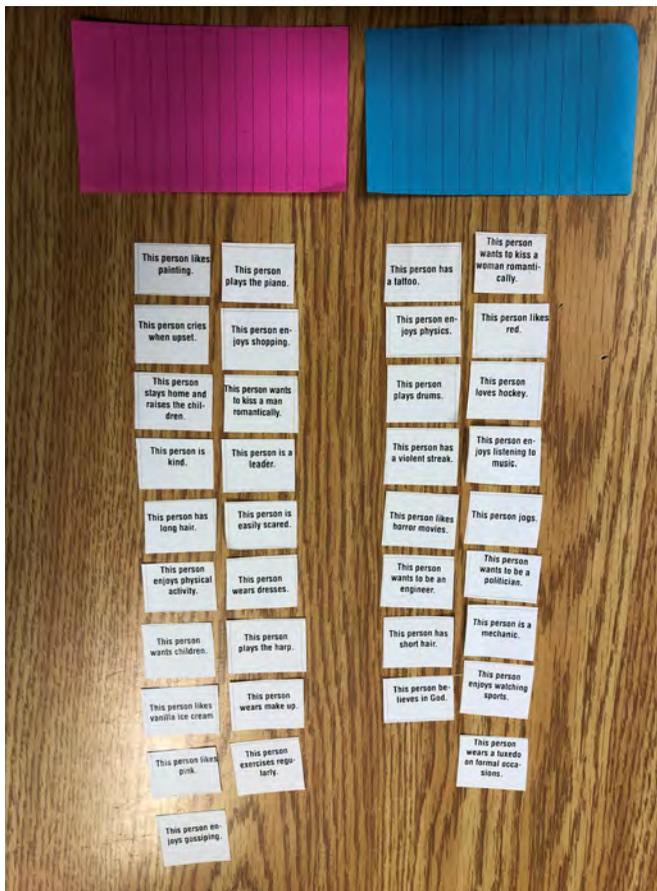
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■ NOTES

SOIS TOI-MÊME





www.imagine-action.ca