



Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy

Current as of: 11/04/2020



Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy Statement

Cheer Canada recognizes that diverse participation strengthens our sport and equality and freedom from discrimination are fundamental human rights. We understand, embrace, and value that each individual is unique with unique experiences. We are therefore committed to reducing risk, eliminating barriers and creating a safe, welcoming and professional environment for all, regardless of actual or perceived race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, language, gender, sex, sexual orientation, family or marital status, socio-economic status, religious beliefs, political beliefs, gender identity and expression, and/or physical or mental ability.

Cheer Canada further recognizes that cheerleading has traditionally been organized according to gender binary, where biological sex has been used to determine categories. We encourage all of our members to filter their policies and decisions through a lens of diversity, equity, and inclusion to ensure that our sport provides participants with equitable access and opportunity within our sport. We welcome your insights, advice or concerns and encourage you to email us at executivedirector@cheercanada.ca.

Cheer Canada's Commitment

Cheer Canada is committed to:

- offering educational opportunities for Coaches, Gym Owners, Athletes and the wider community to better understand and implement this policy,
- increasing knowledge and understanding of, and reducing barriers to, participation in Cheer Canada programs, training, and coaching opportunities,
- ensuring a governance structure, sport, and work environment that encourages and promotes and provides fair and equitable participation,
- continuing to incorporate diversity, equity, and inclusion matters into its strategic plan, actions, and operations, including management, sponsorship, marketing, media and communications,
- ensuring equal opportunity when developing, updating or delivering Cheer Canada programs, policies, and projects,
- seeking opportunities to enhance diversity that encourage balanced representation,
- ensuring diverse athletes have equitable opportunity for excellence,



- prohibiting discriminatory practices,
- reviewing all instances of discrimination according to the code of conduct and/or Discipline and Complaints Policy,
- monitoring and evaluating its inclusion, equity, and diversity progress.

Cheer Canada is committed to recommending the following best practices:

When developing and implementing best practices, please include diverse individuals and those who have diverse experience, to ensure you are welcoming to all.

Protect Privacy

All forms of self-identification, including but not limited to the categories listed under the policy statement, are private and should not be requested unnecessarily nor shared without permission.

If gender identification is necessary during the registration process, allow participants to register as the gender they identify with at the time of registration, and have a method whereby individuals can share their preferred pronouns. Individuals should then be referred to by their chosen name and pronouns. Within Canada, individuals should be allowed to participate in the gender category with which they identify and then that identity should not be further questioned or intervened with.

Provide Training and Education

Train and educate their members to recognize that diverse participation strengthens our sport and is a fundamental human right.

Provide training and education to reduce risk, eliminate barriers and create a safe, welcoming and professional environment for all.

Develop a policy or have a procedure in place for registration so that participants can train and compete in the gender category they identify with.

Support participants who choose not to identify their gender. When gender is a critical classifier in competitions, coaches and gym owners should work with all participants to explain the categories that are offered and offer the opportunity to register in the category in which they are most comfortable.



Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy

Have a discreet but informed process to assist staff and athletes at various stages of transition, tailored and adapted to each individual's needs. Clear direction should also be provided to administrators, coaches and others on how to help transitioning individuals.

Provide education on the eligibility requirements for transgendered and other diverse athletes to participate in local, national, and international competitions. For your information:

The **Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport (CCES)** states that: "Individuals participating in any [LTD stages] in Canadian sport should be able to participate in the gender with which they identify and not be subject to requirements for disclosure of personal information beyond those required of cisgender athletes. Nor should there be any requirement for hormonal therapy, unless the sport organization can prove that hormone therapy is a reasonable and bona fide requirement and where this is the case, only require this at the high performance levels of Train to Compete and Train to Win where international rules become a factor."

Canadian Anti-Doping Program (CADP) states that all athletes who are subject to doping control must be aware of the Medical Exemptions and Therapeutic Use Exemption (TUE) rules and requirements that apply to them and, where necessary, apply for an exemption to ensure compliance with the CADP and World Anti-Doping Code requirements. Trans athletes subject to doping control are encouraged to seek out information in confidence from the CCES to determine whether an exemption is required and, if so, work with their physician to complete the necessary documentation and submit this to the CCES.

For competitions governed by international sport organizations such as the International Olympic Committee (IOC), International Cheer Union (ICU), International University Sports Federation (FISU), Pan American Sports Organization (PASO), and the International All Star Federation (IASF), within Canada and abroad, in which trans athletes, at the more advanced stages of their sport's long-term development model, are currently competing in or may do so in the future, the eligibility requirements may be more onerous. Their guidelines supersede those of Cheer Canada's.

In situations where an athlete is comfortable sharing their identity with coaches and administrators, please work with the athletes and their support team to help them understand the pertinent governing body guidelines and any mandated policies. For those who do not wish to disclose their identity, just as each athlete has the right to make their own personal decisions about where they compete, so too will each trans athlete. The decision on whether or not to comply and compete lies with the athlete and his/her support team.



Be Intentional With Language and Behaviour

When asking for gendered information: Replace “sex” with “gender”. For example:

What is your gender?:

- Female
- Male
- Non-binary
- Other: _____
- Prefer not to disclose or Not Disclosed

Use a range of images in your communications, including written, audio and video material, that use inclusive language and reflect diversity amongst your staff and members.

Inclusion policies should reference the mechanism by which individuals who feel they have been discriminated against, bullied or harassed, sexually harassed, vilified or victimized can take appropriate action through your existing complaint resolution procedure. The policy should also encourage individuals who witness another person being discriminated against, bullied or harassed, sexually harassed, vilified or victimized to take appropriate action to address it.

Allow staff and athletes to wear appropriate attire that they feel comfortable wearing. Team uniforms, both on and off the mat, should also reflect a commitment to diversity.

Even if you have a standalone transgender policy, your other organizational policies, such as equal opportunity, harassment and / or anti-discrimination policy, occupational health and safety policy, complaint resolution policy and procedure, discipline procedure, code of conduct, athlete agreements/selection policy, and mission, vision and values statements, should include a reference to your commitment to inclusion.

The language used in all documents should be gender neutral.

Check Facilities

Use the inclusive lens to create signage that reflects an inclusive and welcoming environment for all participants.

Staff and athletes should have safe access to bathrooms, change rooms and other facilities in accordance with their gender identity or gender expression.



While gender neutral change and washrooms are ideal to allow participants to choose the facilities with which they are comfortable, a single person washroom in your building could be designated as a gender-neutral bathroom/change room. All single stall bathrooms and/or change rooms should be gender neutral.

Key Terms when Discussing Gender Inclusion¹

LGBTQI2S - An umbrella terms that stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer (or Questioning), Intersex, and Two-Spirit. Our intent in selecting LGBTQI2S, as opposed to other acronyms, is to put forward the broadest definition while also remaining in line with terminology currently used by the Sport Inclusion Task Force

Sex/Assigned Sex - The classification of a person as male, female, or intersex based on biological characteristics, including chromosomes, hormones, external genitalia, and reproductive organs. The term “assigned sex” is used to acknowledge that sex is often a value determined by medical professionals and is commonly assigned to newborns based on visual assessment of external genitalia. Inclusion here of the recognized category of “intersex,” frequently overlooked in discussions of sex, serves as a reminder that even at the level of biology, sex is not a binary system.

Intersex - A person whose chromosomal, hormonal, and/or anatomical sex characteristics fall outside the conventional classifications of male or female.

Sexual Orientation - A term that classifies a person’s potential for emotional, intellectual, spiritual, intimate, romantic, and/or sexual interest in other people, often based on their sex and/or gender. Sexual orientation is often referred to as attraction.

Lesbian - A woman-identified person who experiences attraction towards other women.

Gay - A person who experiences attraction to individuals of the same sex/assigned sex and/or gender identity. The word “gay” can be used to refer to attraction experienced by both men and women, or only men. Cheer Canada’s Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy

Bisexual - A person who experiences attraction towards more than one sex/assigned sex or gender identity.

Pansexual - A person who experiences attraction to individuals with diverse sexes/assigned sexes, gender identities, and gender expressions.

¹ Ontario Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services



Asexual - An individual who may not experience sexual attraction or desire to engage in sexual activity.

Gender - Gender is based on the expectations and stereotypes about behaviours, actions, and roles linked to being a "man" or "woman" within a particular culture or society. The social norms related to gender can vary depending on the culture, and can change over time.

Gender Identity - A person's internal and individual experience of gender. This could include an internal sense of being a man, woman, both, neither, or another gender entirely. A person's gender identity may or may not correspond with social expectations associated with the sex they were assigned at birth. Since gender identity is internal, it is not necessarily visible to others.

Gender Equity - The process of allocating resources fairly and addressing any imbalances in the benefits available to people of different genders.

Gender Expression - The way a person presents and communicates gender within a social context. Gender can be expressed through clothing, speech, body language, hairstyle, voice, and/or the emphasis or de-emphasis of bodily characteristics or behaviours, which are often associated with masculinity and femininity. The ways in which gender is expressed are culturally specific and may change over time.

Trans - The term trans is frequently used as an umbrella term for a variety of other terms, including transgender, transsexual, and can also refer to terms like genderqueer, agender, bigender, Two-Spirit, etc. Some people may identify with these or other specific terms, but not with the term trans. Similarly, some people may identify as trans, but not with other terms under the trans umbrella. At their simplest, each of these terms has commonalities with the term trans, and yet they are all unique in their specific reference to the context of, and specific relationships between, conceptions of gender identity and sex/assigned sex.

Trans Female/Transgender Female - Someone who was assigned the male sex at birth, but whose gender identity is female.

Trans Male/Transgender Male - Someone who was assigned female sex at birth, but whose gender identity is male.

Transgender - A person who does not identify (in full or partially) with the gender associated with their sex assigned at birth (sex/assigned sex).

Gender Confirming Surgery/Gender Affirming Surgery/Gender reassignment - (now a less frequently used term) – medically-supervised program of treatment to transition a person's body to align with their gender identity through hormone therapy and/or surgery.

Gender Diverse/ Gender Independent - An umbrella term for gender identities and/or gender expressions that differ from cultural or societal expectations based on assigned sex. Individuals may identify and express themselves as “feminine men” or “masculine women,” or as androgynous, outside of the categories “boy/man” and “girl/woman.” People who are gender non-conforming may or may not identify as trans.

Gender Fluid - The term gender fluid refers to the potential for change in ideas, experiences, and expressions of gender at an individual and/or societal level. This concept recognizes the potential for individual movement within a gender spectrum when it comes to self-presentation or expression. Some people may choose to identify as gender fluid.

Genderqueer - A person whose gender identity and/or expression may not correspond with social and cultural gender expectations. Individuals who identify as genderqueer may move between gender identities, identify with multiple genders, or reject the gender binary or gender altogether.

Questioning - A term used to describe those who are in a process of discovery and exploration about their sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or gender expression.

Queer - A term used by some members of LGBT2SQ communities, as a symbol of pride and affirmation of diversity. It can be used by a community to encompass a broad spectrum of identities related to sex/assigned sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation, or by an individual to reflect the interrelatedness of these aspects of their identity. Queer was historically a derogatory term for difference, used in particular to insult LGBT2SQ people and communities. Although sometimes still used as a slur, the term has been reclaimed by many individuals within LGBT2SQ communities.

Two-Spirit - The term Two-Spirit encompasses Indigenous cultures, spiritual beliefs, and values, as well as sexual orientation and gender identity. It is a term used by some, but not all, Indigenous people to describe their gender, sexual orientation, and/or sex and gender roles in Indigenous ways, using traditional terms and concepts. The Two-Spirit identity affirms the interrelatedness of all aspects of identity, including gender, sexuality, community, culture, and spirituality. For further information and resources on Two-Spirit communities, please visit: [Two Spirit Directory](#)



Cisgender - The term used to describe individuals whose gender identity or expression aligns with those typically associated with the sex assigned to them at birth.

Gender Creative - A term sometimes used to refer to children or youth who identify and express their gender in ways that do not align with the social expectations associated with the sex assigned to them at birth (sex/assigned sex).

Discrimination - when a person experiences negative treatment or impact, intentional or not, because of their gender identity or gender expression.

For Further Information:

For additional support, please contact the Executive Director at ExecutiveDirector@CheerCanada.ca