

Trans Feminine Inclusion in Feminist Workplaces: Calls to Action and Self-Guided Audit Tool

In collaboration with Mary Vaccaro and Jammy Lo



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LEAF is a national, charitable, non-profit organization, founded in 1985. LEAF works to advance the substantive equality rights of women, girls, trans, and non-binary people in Canada through litigation, law reform, and public education using the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

This publication was created as part of the Trans Feminine Inclusion in Feminist Workplaces (TFIW) Project. The TFIW Project brought together feminist organizations, trans feminine women, and community-based researchers to identify the challenges and structural barriers to trans feminine individuals' employment and leadership in the feminist non-profit sector, and to make recommendations as to how these issues may be addressed.

Acknowledgments:

We want to offer our sincere gratitude to the **twenty women across Canada who participated in the study that formed the basis of these Calls to Action**. Each of you took the time to generously share your stories, your experiences, your ideas, and your recommendations for change. We are forever grateful for your participation in this important work. It is our sincere hope that the findings of this report can lay the foundation for more inclusive feminist organizations, where trans women and their contributions are recognized, valued, and celebrated.

We want to thank **Mary Vaccaro** and **Jammy Lo** for their incredible work recruiting and interviewing the project participants, writing up their findings in the TFIW Report, and drawing out such important recommendations from participants' interviews. Thank you as well to Siena McIlwraith-Fraticelli for her citations assistance, and Morgan Martino for the report design.

We also want to acknowledge the feminist, trans, and queer organizations and individuals across Canada who supported with recruitment, by sharing information about this project with your networks.

This work was funded by the Fund for Gender Equality Grants Fund at Toronto Foundation, Community Foundations of Canada, and the Government of Canada.

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Table of Contents:

Introduction to the Trans Feminine Inclusion in Feminist Workplaces Project	1
Calls to Action: A Path Towards Meaningful Trans Feminine Inclusion in Feminist Organizations	4
Self-Guided Audit Tool	24

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Introduction to the Trans Feminine Inclusion in Feminist Workplaces Project:

Over the past two years and with the support of the Fund for Gender Equality, an organizing group of feminist, gender equity seeking, and historically women-serving organizations – namely LEAF, West Coast LEAF, and the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies, in partnership with Wisdom2Action – has been coordinating efforts to unpack the legacy and current impacts of transphobia and transmisogyny within the feminist and gender equity seeking sectors.

We have worked to:

- ↪ Challenge transphobia and transmisogyny within our organizations and sector;
- ↪ Collaborate with other feminist and gender equity seeking organizations to better serve, include, and advocate for trans and non-binary people; and
- ↪ Support each other in the current environment of escalating and organized trans hate.

We are motivated by questions of how to make gender equity seeking organizations such as ours more inclusive for trans women. We define gender equity seeking organizations, which together comprise the feminist sector, as historically women-serving organizations whose mandate is centred on advocating for gender equity and/or providing direct services to women (inclusive of cis and trans) and their children.

As we engaged in efforts to increase trans inclusion in feminist work, it was made plain to us that trans feminine individuals were largely absent from organizational staff and leadership in feminist and gender equity seeking organizations. Given the fact that trans feminine people have been at the centre of the historical and ongoing transphobia in feminist spheres, we believed that the absence of trans feminine voices at the table was an issue that merited focused attention.



To bring the perspectives of trans feminine people who work in feminist workplaces to the forefront of these conversations, we launched the **Trans Feminine Inclusion in Feminist Workplaces (TFIW) Project**, a community-based and qualitative research project. The objectives of this research project were to:

- 1. Identify the challenges and structural barriers to trans feminine individuals’ employment and leadership in the gender equity seeking organizations and;
- 2. Recommend potential paths forward for these organizations to redress the issues of trans inclusion in feminist workplaces based on lived experience perspectives.

We hired researchers, **Jammy Lo** and **Dr. Mary Vaccaro**, to undertake the first part of this work, and to contribute to the development of recommendations as well. Jammy Lo is a community-based researcher, a harm reduction worker, and a community advocate located in Hamilton, Ontario. She is a Black, trans woman who has been working in feminist organizations since 2022. Mary Vaccaro is a community-based researcher, a consultant for feminist non-profit organizations and faculty member at McMaster University’s School of Social Work. She is a White, cis woman who has been working in feminist organizations since 2012.

Using qualitative semi-structured interviews, Ms. Lo and Dr. Vaccaro gathered detailed information regarding trans feminine perspectives on barriers to meaningful employment in the feminist sector.

Twenty trans women participated in this project. Participants occupied a range of professional roles within the feminist sector, including (but not limited to) consultants, social workers, executive directors, lawyers, peer workers, and front-line service providers. The participants’ ages ranged from women in their twenties to those in their forties. Participants had a range of racial and ethnic identities and educational backgrounds.

Most participants had been employed within the feminist sector for ten years or less. As such, the research did not fully capture the historical evolution of trans inclusion in these organizations. Only one participant was actively seeking employment, limiting the perspectives from those who had not yet secured a position working within a feminist organization.



While the study had broad geographical representation across Canada, there was a notable lack of participants from Eastern and Northern Canada.

In the TFIW Project’s Full Report, Dr. Vaccaro and Ms. Lo present their findings from a community-based, qualitative research project focused on developing a comprehensive understanding of the lived experiences of trans women working within (or wishing to work within) feminist organizations across Canada.

In this shorter, companion document, you will find the TFIW Project’s recommendations – **Calls to Action** as to how feminist organizations can action trans inclusion. You will also find a **self-guided audit tool**, which distills the Calls to Action down to a checklist form. The TFIW researchers developed the Calls to Action from the interviews that they conducted, as is clear from the direct quotes provided throughout the recommendations. We then organized the Calls to Action into themes and provided concrete tips as to how to implement them.

We sincerely hope that the Calls to Action and the accompanying self-guided audit tool will be useful for gender equity seeking organizations in their continued efforts to action trans inclusion. Please note that the suggestions and tips we have provided below many of the Calls to Action are examples of how you can engage in trans feminine inclusion meaningfully. They are meant to be illustrations of what may be possible, rather than prescriptions of what must be done. They may not be suited to your workplace environment, or you may not have the resources to implement them. They may not align with employment and labour laws relevant to your jurisdiction and workplace environment (for example, intentionally hiring and recruiting trans women may not be permissible in all jurisdictions). **There is no one way to advance trans inclusion in feminist spaces. What follows is both an ideal and a starting point – adapt these Calls to Action and supplementary suggestions for your workplace as appropriate.**

This work was funded by the Fund for Gender Equality Grants Fund at Toronto Foundation, Community Foundations of Canada, and the Government of Canada.

Calls to Action: A Path Towards Meaningful Trans Feminine Inclusion in Feminist Organizations



At the end of each interview, participants were invited into a process of developing Calls to Action. Each participant was asked the same three final questions.

- ↪ What would your recommendations be for feminist organizations to action trans feminine inclusion?
- ↪ What would your recommendations be to leadership of feminist organizations relating to trans feminine inclusion?
- ↪ What would your recommendations be to co-workers, working within feminist organizations about how to bring about trans feminine inclusion?

The following Calls to Action for feminist organizations, leadership, and co-workers have been developed directly from the voices of the women who participated in this study.

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Calls to Action for Organizations and Leadership:

1. Accountability

- ↪ Develop relationships with trans women in your communities to keep you accountable. If you have the resources, hire and pay those women to sit on consultative committees:



“I think that it’s almost like you need a committee of trans women and trans friends from a variety of backgrounds and lived experiences and with commitment to not just the super privileged ones like myself, but a wide variety of folks. You just need a group of people to be there, hold you accountable to what your goals are in supporting trans women, and you got to pay them well to do it.” – Sarah

- ↪ Be okay with being challenged:

“Leadership needs to understand and also accept that people will challenge them. And that’s okay. It’s okay to be challenged. It’s okay to be wrong. It’s okay to be right. It’s okay to be wrong. So [it’s] okay to admit when you’re wrong and say, Hey, you know what? I was wrong about this” – Lo

- ↪ Acknowledge the transmisogyny that your staff experience – both from within your organization and from clients and service users.

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Ways to acknowledge the transmisogyny that your staff experience:

- ❁ Co-develop approaches for addressing transmisogyny within your organization. Speak with your trans staff to ask them how they would like to be supported.
- ❁ Ensure that your non-discrimination and anti-harassment policies explicitly include gender identity and expression, with systems for accountability and complaint resolution.

↪ Intentionally create pathways for communication and relationship building:



“I think that a lot of organizations have what’s called a ‘check-in’, so I think that really gives a person the time to be able to explain what it is that they’re going through in their everyday life. So I think that our voices are being heard now and it’s not just directed towards trans- inclusion. It’s an inclusion for everybody to make sure everybody is okay.” – QT

Suggestions as to how create pathways for communication:

- ❁ Ask each of your staff members whether there are any individuals in leadership positions that they would feel comfortable reporting issues to. If so, ask them whether they would appreciate that person checking in with them on a regular basis regarding workplace issues. If they would like this type of check-in, how often would they like it?

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↪ Ensure organizational staff and leadership are reflective of the communities you are serving.

✿ As many feminist organizations work to offer services to women and gender-diverse people, it is of critical importance that the identities of the staff and leadership team are reflective of the people served by the organization. This includes gender identity, as well as other important aspects of identity including race, age, ability, Indigeneity, and lived experience.

↪ Be connected to and listen to the communities you are serving:

“I feel like especially for this kind of job, I mean, it doesn’t matter if you’re a peer worker volunteer or you’re the CEO or the head or the chief of the board members. I feel like everyone, especially in these communities, everyone must be in some level or in some point connected or engaging with these communities, especially the communities that they provide services, that they provide support, because otherwise it feels like hollow or it feels like it’s not effective, or we are missing something that is really important. So I feel like my recommendation will be to take the time and be an active listener.” – Litza

2. Meaningful Inclusion

↪ Move past theorizing about inclusivity, and put it into practice:



“That is a thing that these organizations, often they have all these flowers on the wall, but the roots are rotting. So we have to make sure that our inclusion isn’t just performative. Don’t just say the culture that you want to have. Be the culture that you want to have.” – Belle

Suggestions for putting inclusivity into practice:

- ✿ Make it clear that your organization’s values are inclusive of trans women. Be explicit in your organizational mission statement, vision, and values that your understanding of a feminist workplace includes and values trans women.
- ✿ Review your programming and communications to explore how or whether they are unconsciously excluding trans feminine people or are not aligned with trans inclusive values. Invite trusted trans feminine allies to provide feedback on this, or hire trans feminine consultants to do this work. In either case, pay the people that you are consulting.
- ✿ Spend time engaging in values-based work to ensure that the organization, leadership, and staff are approaching the work from a shared set of values. For example, if your organization doesn’t already have core stated values, engage in a process to develop them. Once you have stated organizational values, put time aside to collectively reflect on those values and on how to implement them in your work, both externally and internally. Recognize that many people are drawn to feminist workplaces because of a perceived values alignment - use this as an opportunity to make workplace values explicit and build solidarity based on shared values.

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- ✿ As part of paid work, attend an event centering trans women.

- ✿ Hold a lunch and learn at your workplace on an issue important to trans women that is relevant to your work.

↪ Embed your commitment to trans inclusion into your organization's activities so that the commitment is more difficult to retract should there be a change in leadership.

Effective strategies for embedding your commitment to trans inclusion into your organization's structure:

- ✿ Build out relationships with other organizations that will help hold your organization accountable to your commitments.

- ✿ Do work that expressly supports trans rights.



↪ Move past inclusion workshops and pronoun culture - invite people into opportunities to make transformative change:

“I also think that having somewhat of a critical relationship with those inclusion workshops, like I said, I am sure they have their place. And certainly I imagine in places that are more hostile to trans people overall, those inclusion workshops are probably better than not having ‘em. I think if I’m fine-tuning an already somewhat accepting landscape of organizations here, I would say maybe we can chill on the inclusion workshops a little bit.” – Tina

“It would be good to have more committees that are taken seriously too, because again, certain non-profits and specifically feminist spaces, it’s hard to change, especially when you’re stuck in second wave feminism and things like that, that you have to create space for people. You also have to learn to get out of the way and to recognize your biases and not double down or dig your heels in with things like that. So creating more spaces for trans people to bring their lived experience and finding ways to dismantle that stuff. Also, not tokenizing the community and actually paying them.” - Gessie

Take the minimum steps, and then go further toward transformed workplaces:

- ✿ Ensure that the basics are in place: universal bathrooms and optional pronouns in signatures.
- ✿ Where resources permit, develop paid committees where trans women have power to influence organizational change.
- ✿ Pay trans women to provide a training for your staff, focusing on “what do you want leadership and co-workers in feminist organizations to know”.

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- ❁ When creating strategic plans and organizational plans, invite input from everyone on staff.

- ❁ When deciding on an important policy direction or change to the workplace, consider everyone who will be impacted and how some may be impacted disproportionately. Ask yourself whether you need input from everyone on staff, and how to best gather that input. For example, if you strike a committee to study the issue, you may wish to include a staff representative on the committee. Ensure that these types of processes have organizational influence and are not just tokenistic. To the best of your ability, manage expectations – be transparent regarding who will be making the ultimate decision(s) and name limitations for collaborative decision-making.

- ❁ Ensure staff involvement in key hiring decisions, including for senior positions. Ensure that the hiring process is widely accepted by staff. If there will be a hiring committee with staff representation, ensure that the selection of staff representatives is widely accepted by staff.

↪ Ensure that your feminist advocacy is firmly rooted in intersectional, Indigenous, and Black feminisms:

“I wish there was more conversation about anti-Blackness and anti-Blackness as it pertains to women. So ‘misogynoir’. I’ve noticed (city name redacted) has a very huge interest in conversations about Indigenous racism, but anti-Black racism or anti-Black behaviours are kind of just more of an elective or a personal project as opposed to a thing that people need to know.” – Kiki



↪ Be change makers, hire trans women:

“We can really tell the difference between tokenism and really genuine change. And that we can feel that we can feel the difference. And that if you want to be a change-maker, you just have to proactively make change instead of just trying to catch up to where you are supposed to be. So hire trans women, learn about intersectional feminism if your organization hasn’t yet, but mainly hire the people you intend to be serving someday.”
– Hunter

The fine print of hiring trans women:

- ✿ Make it explicit that your organization will hire trans women. Some participants spoke about not applying to organizations because they were unsure if their identity as a trans woman would impact their ability to gain employment. It is important to be explicit that your organization will hire trans women - and that trans women are a vital part of your organizational culture and commitment to feminist work.
- ✿ Intentionally recruit and hire trans women to create a less isolating work environment for those trans women who already work in your organization.
- ✿ Develop hiring practices that reduce bias in hiring.



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↪ Include gender affirming care in extended healthcare benefits:



“I think at least in being transfeminine, when you transition, in reality the employee or co-worker is kind of going through multiple steps. Sometimes one thing gets done earlier and then one thing is an ongoing thing, whatever, HRT is an ongoing thing, or certain surgeries with wait times and stuff. So I think that is important, and requires some sensitivity. I do think about stuff like gender affirming care. So I think that’s fairly important to provide funding and time off for stuff like that. I think that’s a topic I’d want leadership to pay attention to.” – Mango

Further suggestions for ensuring that feminist principles extend to the material realities of staff:

- ✿ Ensure that the definition of “family” or “parenting” in your human resources policy is expansive and accounts for the many ways that queer and trans people (among others) define their families (e.g. for the purposes of bereavement leave, family caregiver leave, parental leave, or other family-oriented policies).
- ✿ Explicitly include mental health leave as a valid form of sick leave in human resources policy.
- ✿ Poll staff to get a sense of the policy changes and changes to the work environment that would assist them in feeling more materially supported at work.

3. Movement Solidarity

↪ Build solidarity and connections across social justice movements.

✿ Within the scope of mandate and capacity, recognize the shared struggles among those organizing for social justice (including trans women and other gender expansive communities) and work to intentionally build solidarity across social justice movements.

4. Respect and Recognition

↪ Put intersectional feminist theory into practice by responding to workers' intersecting identities:

“I would encourage people to move away from the idea that the transgender community is this cohesive unit and that you can provide services to, that you can provide policy that’s broadly inclusive of all trans people, and instead to just look at who you actually have on your team and what they individually need to be included and supported.” – Port



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Suggestions for responding to workers' intersecting identities and supporting what they need:

- ❁ Shift from identity-centric silos to intersectional frameworks. Instead of solely focusing on individual identity, organizations should use explicit intersectional frameworks in their work. This involves rejecting the idea that any identity is a monolith and actively exploring how different axes of identity (gender, race, class, disability, etc.) intersect and create distinct experiences. For example, when conducting advocacy for trans women's rights, think about the specific right at issue, and which trans women are most impacted by the rights denial. Is it newcomer women from particular countries? Single mothers?
- ❁ Ask people if and how they want to draw on aspects of their identity and experience to inform their work, rather than assuming that they do. Normalize the concept that it is just as acceptable to not bring yourself into the work as it is to bring yourself in.
- ❁ No one is reduceable to a single aspect of themselves – when you catch yourself seeing someone as primarily one thing, try to pull yourself back and consider how you might be Othering that person and not seeing them as fully human. Remember that we are all complex individuals with multiple motivations and positionalities.
- ❁ Invite staff to identify events and initiatives centering cultural practices, social justice issues, or lived experiences that speak to them, and invite them to share those events and initiatives with the rest of the team.
- ❁ Consider providing training to all staff regarding how discrimination manifests differently for different people.

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- ↪ Recognize the important role that trans women play in the fight for gender equality:

“Stop seeing us as anything other than a sister and an ally. We’re not a threat. We’re not here to take over. We’re not here to take spots. We’re here to strengthen the cause. We’re here to strengthen those rights. I mean, we’re already going through our own unique hell. If anything, we have a lot of skin in the game too, and we want to see things better for everyone.” – Stephanie

- ↪ Take trans women seriously and sustain meaningful trans inclusion by giving trans women options and choices, and by prioritizing trans leadership in organizations:

“It feels like we’re in the same kind of feeling from the sex work rights movement community, is that we’re saying the same things for a ton of years, for decades, and it feels like it’s into the abyss, into an echo chamber. And I would hope what the future of our community is, is that we’re being included meaningfully. We’re being put, not just invited to the table, but it’s our table. So I would hope for our community that we can start getting jobs being taken seriously...I want a society where trans women have more options and that when they choose any option, they’re respected in that choice.” – Jelena

“I think there needs to be mentorship for trans women in those spaces beyond just having a peer mentorship role. It’s really difficult for trans women to access the kinds of education that are needed to being credentialed as social workers and whatnot. But that’s something that the movement knows about.” – Laura



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Taking trans women seriously – investing in their leadership and ability to effect organizational change:

- ❁ Create explicit pathways for trans leadership, both on staff and on boards. Pathways must be created for trans women to move out of entry-level positions and into leadership positions. This could involve investing in specific training, capacity building initiatives, and leadership programs.

Many participants shared that inclusion felt tenuous and that trans perspectives were not well represented within the organization. One way participants suggested remedying this was ensuring that trans women had genuine decision-making power within the organization through leadership roles, Board of Director positions, or other meaningful and permanent opportunities to shift organizational culture.

- ❁ Develop mentorship programs. Offer an honorarium to the mentor and invite staff to use work time to meet with their mentors. Make it clear to staff that this is a part of their paid work, and welcome staff to make it a priority.

- ❁ When trans women are in leadership positions and misstep, remember the systemic barriers to being in leadership in the first place. Rather than undermine their leadership, support them and invest in them further.

- ❁ Define and communicate clear advancement standards.

- ❁ Gather feedback from employees on experiences with promotions and leadership selection.

- ❁ Regularly monitor hiring, promotion, and compensation data by gender identity as well as by other relevant axes of identity, looking out for disparities. Use findings to improve your practices.

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↪ Do not ask trans women to take on extra labour. Pay people for their work.

The practice of asking trans women to take on extra labour needs to end. Women who work in feminist organizations are often overworked and underpaid. The practice of assigning trans women extra labour is contributing to burnout within the feminist sector.

✿ Pay people for their work - many women in this study reported they were taking on extra labour that was often both invisible and unpaid. Trans women must be compensated for any additional labour they take on for the organization - even if they agree to do it.

✿ Support your trans employees in establishing boundaries regarding doing extra labour, if they do not want to do that work.

↪ Recognize and respond to the education disparity. Recognize diverse forms of knowledge and reflect that in hiring practices:

“I would say that recommendations are removing the requirement for post-secondary education. We need to take into consideration people’s lived experiences and expertise. And beyond that, there are many transferable experiences and skills that trans people have, especially sex workers who often are operating small businesses, their own websites, marketing, advertising all at once. That should be taken. So I think there should be a policy about the way that hiring is done.” – Jelena



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Further thoughts on recognizing diverse forms of knowledge:


- ✿ We heard directly from participants that educational requirements, including having a university education, was a barrier for many women who approached this work from a place of lived experience knowledge. It is of critical importance that feminist organizations recognize who is being left out when formal education is a requirement for employment.

5. Create Support Structures

- ↪ Create pathways for networking among trans women to increase solidarity:



“I think the more that trans feminine networks are supported by organizations the better. Organizations can talk about growing (these networks) officially, and we can absolutely say that the more resources we have to connect the better. I think grounding ourselves in the fact that we have always been here for each other and will always be here for each other. But yeah, just organizations should play a role in fostering that community and recognizing that that community is an informal grassroots structure that has the more structural support that we have, the more community, the more rights we have in the organizations we work in.” – Kahl



Suggestions for fostering community among trans women:

- ✿ If you have more than one trans feminine person on staff, invite your trans feminine staff to use work time to meet with each other (on a regular basis, if they wish) to discuss workplace issues specific to being trans feminine. Make it clear to staff that this is a part of their paid work, and welcome them to prioritize it.
- ✿ If you only have one trans feminine person on staff, invite her to reach out to another trans feminine person outside of your organization as a mentor. Provide your employee with research assistance as to who to reach out to if she would like that assistance, and offer that either you can reach out to the prospective mentor, or she can. Offer an honorarium to the mentor and invite your employee to use work time to meet with her mentor. Make it clear to her that this is a part of her paid work, and welcome her to prioritize it.

LEAF, West Coast LEAF, and CAEFS' Commitment:

↪ Develop a virtual community of practice of trans women working within the feminist sector

- ✿ Recognizing that geographic location creates disparities and isolation for trans women, we commit to assisting in the creation of a virtual community of practice led by a peer network of trans women working within feminist organizations across Canada.

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Calls to Action for Co-Workers:

↪ Stop trying to do damage control before it happens:

“I wish they would stop trying to do damage control before damage happens and let the people who are affected by those issues bring it up when it makes sense at the right time...again, and all this trying to fix things when there’s nothing fixed and nothing to be fixed and also to chill, to really chill with the girls, chill, relax. It’s okay.”
– Lena

↪ Interact with your trans feminine co-workers as peers:



“The times when I felt most comfortable at work are times when I’m socially treated as just a woman, like any other woman. And there’s not attention drawn to, ‘oh my God, does Port need her own separate room on a trip where we might be sharing rooms?’ Things like that. Yeah. I think that has had the most meaningful impact when people are just willing to interact with me as a peer, not as this ‘trans elephant’ in the room that needs to be navigated in a specific way.” – Port

↪ Find solidarity in a shared purpose and goal:

“I wish co-workers understood that we’re all here to achieve the same thing. Yeah, everyone here has a purpose and that’s the main goal. Not who I am, not what my name is, not what my favorite quote is. What really matters a lot is that we are here to do something. There’s a goal we want to achieve. And the moment you begin to focus on that, it’s going to bring a lot of closure. Rather

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than focusing on who I am, that's just unnecessary to me. I find it very unnecessary. I'm not hurting you, I'm not stepping on your toes, I'm not trying to rub it in your face. So there's no need to do the same to me." – Beatrice

- ↪ Ensure that the work that you are suggesting your trans fem co-worker takes on is not only and always work pertaining to trans people.
- ↪ Recognize the extra labour of trans women in feminist organizations:



"Just know how much extra work it is just doing the same job as the person next to us. But we're also dealing with microaggressions and dealing with bathroom policies and dealing with questions from staff about, oh, my kid has a trans friend and question... question; and people asking questions that are really a little too personal... And it's just a lot of extra work. It's a large extra layer of work that we're doing on top of the same work that the people in the desk next to us are doing. And that it's tiring, it's exhausting. It's tiring. It just wears you out eventually. And I wish they would recognize all that extra work that we do." – Hunter

Further tips:

- ✿ Support your trans co-workers in establishing boundaries regarding doing extra labour, if they do not want to do that work.
- ✿ Acknowledge the transmisogyny that your co-workers experience - both from within your organization and from clients and service users. If appropriate, ask them how they would like to be supported.

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- ↪ Recognize and respond to the inequality that exists between cis and trans women in feminist workspaces:

“I wish they knew that we were not equal. Sometimes they just see things and you’re like, I didn’t see that as a problem. And I’m like, yeah, you won’t see it as a problem. So I wish they could see clearer how certain things affect us. I feel like if they do see it from our perspective, they could voice out for us too.” – Izabelle

- ↪ Admit it when you do not know, and commit to learning:



“I wish that everyone just did a little more looking inward and acknowledging what they don’t know. I think that that’s the thing is everyone loves to talk about a big game, about what they know and their commitment to this and that and whatever. Just admit that you don’t know anything about this thing. It just saves us all, a lot of pain and anguish at the end of the day. Just be like, I don’t know shit about this topic. And commit to being better.” – Sarah

Call to Action for Funders:

- ↪ Resource trans inclusion work in the gender equity and gender-based violence sectors.

❁ The Calls to Action in this report need to be resourced to be meaningful. A feminist sector working toward trans inclusion needs the funding to be able to do that work. Trans inclusion must be a priority for funders in the gender equity and gender-based violence sectors. This would allow organizations to implement deeply intersectional work.

Trans Feminine Inclusion in Feminist Workplaces:

A self-guided audit tool



How to use this tool: The suggestions and tips we have provided below many of the Calls to Action are examples of how you can engage in trans feminine inclusion meaningfully. They are meant to be illustrations of what may be possible, rather than prescriptions of what must be done. They may not be suited to your workplace environment, or you may not have the resources to implement them. They may not align with employment and labour laws relevant to your jurisdiction and workplace environment (for example, intentionally hiring and recruiting trans women may not be permissible in all jurisdictions). *There is no one way to advance trans inclusion in feminist spaces. The below is both an ideal and a starting point – adapt these Calls to Action and supplementary suggestions for your workplace as appropriate.*



For organizations and leadership:

Accountability

Our workplace has...

- Developed relationships, and continues to develop relationships, with trans women in our communities to keep us accountable. Resources permitting, we hire and pay those women to sit on consultative committees.
- Leaders who are okay with being challenged.
- Acknowledged the transmisogyny that our staff experience - both from within our organization and from clients and service users.
- Relationships with other organizations that will help hold us accountable to your commitments.
- Co-developed approaches for addressing transmisogyny within our organization. We have worked with trans feminine staff to do this, asking them how they would like to address the transmisogyny they are experiencing.
- Nondiscrimination and antiharassment policies that explicitly include gender identity and expression, with systems for accountability and complaint resolution.
- Intentionally created pathways for communication and relationship building.
- Gathered information from staff members regarding (1) whether there are any individuals in leadership positions that they would feel comfortable reporting issues to, (2) if so, whether they would appreciate that person checking in with them on a regular basis regarding workplace issues, and (3) if they would like this type of check-in, how often they would like it.
- Staff and leadership that are reflective of the communities we serve.
- Connected and listened to the communities we serve, and established pathways for continuing to do so.

Meaningful Inclusion

Our workplace has...

- The basics in place: universal bathrooms and optional pronouns in signatures.
- Made it clear that our values are inclusive of trans women. We are explicit in our organizational mission statement, vision, and values that our understanding of a feminist workplace includes and values trans women.
- Reviewed its programming and communications to explore how or whether they are unconsciously excluding trans feminine people or are not aligned with trans inclusive values. We have invited trusted trans feminine allies to provide feedback on this, or have hired trans feminine consultants to do this work.
- Spent time engaging in values-based work to ensure that the organization, leadership, and staff are approaching the work from a shared set of values. [For example, engaging in a process to develop core organizational values if they don't yet exist, and then putting time aside to collectively reflect on those values and on how to implement them in organizational work, both externally and internally.] We recognize that many people are drawn to feminist workplaces because of a perceived values alignment, and we have used this as an opportunity to make workplace values explicit and build solidarity based on shared values.
- Firmly rooted its feminist advocacy in intersectional, Indigenous, and Black feminisms (e.g. expressly addressing colonial violence and misogynoir in advocacy).
- Attended an event centering trans women as part of paid work.
- Held a lunch and learn on an issue important to trans women that is relevant to our work.
- Embedded our commitment to trans inclusion into our activities so that the commitment is more difficult to retract should there be a change in leadership.
- Engaged in work that expressly supports trans rights.

- Moved past inclusion workshops and pronoun culture, and has invited people into opportunities to make transformative change.
- Developed paid committees where trans women have power to influence organizational change (resources permitting).
- Paid trans women to provide a training for our staff, focusing on “what do you want leadership and co-workers in feminist organizations to know”.
- When creating strategic plans and organizational plans, invited input from everyone on staff.

Movement Solidarity

Our organization has...

- Built solidarity and connections across social justice movements.

Respect and Recognition

Our organization has...

- Put intersectional feminist theory into practice by responding to workers’ intersecting identities.
- Shifted from identity-centric silos to intersectional frameworks. Instead of solely focusing on individual identity, we use explicit intersectional frameworks. This involves rejecting the idea that any identity is a monolith and actively exploring how different axes of identity (gender, race, class, disability, etc.) intersect and create distinct experiences. [For example, when conducting advocacy for trans women’s rights, we would think about the specific right at issue, and which trans women are most impacted by the rights denial. Is it newcomer women from particular countries? Single mothers?]

- Asked staff if and how they want to draw on aspects of their identity and experience to inform their work, rather than assuming that they do. We have normalized the concept that it is just as acceptable to not bring yourself into the work as it is to bring yourself in.
- Understood and communicated to staff that no one is reduceable to a single aspect of themselves. We have explored the idea that no one is primarily one thing, and that thinking of someone in that way might be Othering that person and not seeing them as fully human.
- Invited staff to identify events and initiatives centering cultural practices, social justice issues, or lived experiences that speak to them, and we have invited staff to share those events and initiatives with the rest of the team.
- Considered providing training to all staff regarding how discrimination manifests differently for different people.
- Recognized the important role that trans women play in the fight for gender equality.
- Taken trans women seriously and sustained meaningful trans inclusion by giving trans women options and choices, and by prioritizing trans leadership in organizations.
- Created explicit pathways for trans leadership, both on staff and on boards. Pathways must be created for trans women to move out of entry level positions and into leadership positions. This could involve investing in specific training, capacity building initiatives, and leadership programs.
- Developed mentorship programs. We have offered an honorarium to the mentor and invited staff to use work time to meet with their mentors. We have made it clear to staff that this is a part of their paid work, and welcomed staff to make it a priority.
- Invested in trans women leaders. [For instance, when trans women are in leadership positions and misstep, remember the systemic barriers to being in leadership in the first place. Rather than undermine their leadership, support them and invest in them further.]
- Defined and communicated clear advancement standards.

- Gathered feedback from employees on experiences with promotions and leadership selection.
- Regularly monitored hiring, promotion, and compensation data by gender identity as well as by other relevant axes of identity, looking out for disparities. We have used these findings to improve our practices.
- Supported trans employees in establishing boundaries regarding doing extra labour, if they do not want to do that work.
- Paid people for their work. Trans women must be compensated for any additional labour they take on for the organization - even if they agree to do it.
- Recognized and responded to the education disparity. We recognize diverse forms of knowledge and reflect that in hiring practices.

Create Support Structures

Our organization has...

- Created pathways for networking among trans women to increase solidarity.
- If more than one trans feminine person on staff: Invited trans feminine staff to use work time to meet with each other (on a regular basis, if they wish) to discuss workplace issues specific to being trans feminine. We have made it clear to staff that this is a part of their paid work, and welcomed staff to prioritize it.
- If one trans feminine person on staff: Invited its trans feminine staff member to reach out to another trans feminine person outside of our organization as a mentor. We have provided our employee with research assistance as to who to reach out to if she would like that assistance, and offered that either she can reach out to the prospective mentor, or someone else from the organization can. We have offered an honorarium to the mentor and invited our employee to use work time to meet with her mentor. We have made it clear to her that this is a part of her paid work, and welcomed her to prioritize it.



For Co-Workers:

Meaningful Inclusion

As a co-worker, I ...

- ☐ Don't try to do damage control before it happens.
- ☐ Interact with my trans feminine co-workers as peers.

Movement Solidarity

As a co-worker, I...

- ☐ Find solidarity with trans feminine co-workers in a shared purpose and goal.

Respect and Recognition

As a co-worker, I...

- ☐ Ensure that the work that I suggest my trans feminine co-worker take on is not only and always work pertaining to trans people.
- ☐ Recognize the extra labour of trans women in feminist organizations.
- ☐ Support my trans co-workers in establishing boundaries regarding doing extra labour, if they do not want to do that work.

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- Acknowledge the transmisogyny that my co-workers experience - both from within our organization and from clients and service users. If appropriate, I have asked them how they would like to be supported.
 - Recognize and respond to the inequality that exists between cis and trans women in feminist workspaces.
 - Admit it when I do not know, and commit to learning.

For Funders:

As a funder, I...

- Prioritize trans inclusion in funding. I know that a feminist sector working toward trans inclusion needs the funding to be able to do that work.



LEAF is a national charitable organization that works towards ensuring the law guarantees substantive equality for all women, girls, trans, and non-binary people through litigation, law reform, and public legal education. Since 1985, LEAF has intervened in more than 130 cases that have helped shape the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

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