

Gender Ally



Introduction



Acknowledgement

The authors would like to acknowledge the communities and Nations of the Lekwungen and WSÁNEĆ Peoples on whose unceded territories we are privileged to work, live and play.

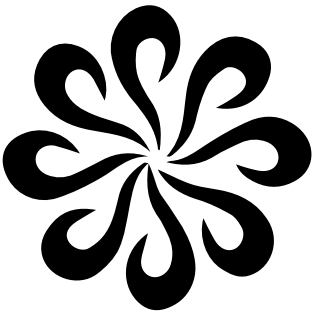
The Project

Gender Ally is a series of Workshop Materials, developed with the goal of building awareness and understanding of gender, sexuality and human rights issues to support trans, Two-Spirit, and gender non-conforming inclusion in all programming and language at Artemis Place. The content was developed with consistent feedback from a number of students at Artemis Place and tested in the classroom over the following term. Feedback from teachers and counsellors, an educational resource developer, as well as educators who specialize in trans awareness have all enhanced the forming of the content. Once complete, the workshop materials were then made available online at onmyplanet.ca for other community and interest groups to utilize outside of formal educational systems.

Each workshop segment emanates from one of the personal experience stories (edited) from The Queer Story Archive at onmyplanet.ca. All the stories are video recordings of real people, not actors, telling their own stories. It is our intention to represent all the storytellers, their decisions and their opinions with the utmost respect and dignity. Full versions of each story video are available at onmyplanet.ca (search by the first name of the storyteller).

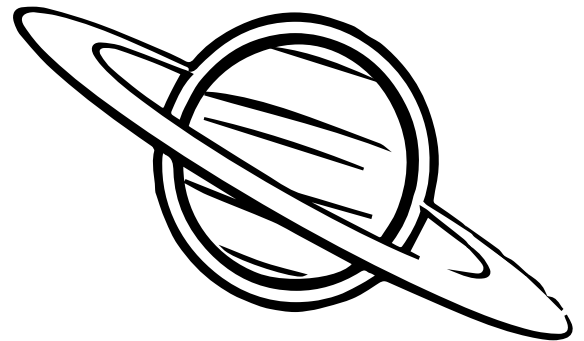
Background

The Gender Ally Project was initiated by onmyplanet.ca in partnership with Artemis Place Society and was funded by The Victoria Foundation in Victoria, BC.



Artemis Place Society operates Artemis Place Secondary School and Artemis Young Parent Program, which includes an on-site Child Care Centre. The Secondary School integrates education, counselling and life-skills in a nurturing alternative school setting. Artemis Place is for young women, and/or young women who are pregnant or parenting, and all trans youth who have resisted conventional programs and require an intentional community to find support and success.

OnMyPlanet.ca (est. in 2011) is a trans and queer positive website that is home to The Queer Story Archive – an ever-growing collection of personal experience stories on video, from everyone under the rainbow and the people that love us. As of 2017, over 125 stories are posted on the site – all stories are accessible 24/7 and are free to watch. Onmyplanet.ca also has resources pages for Victoria and Vancouver, BC.



Historical Context

For historical context, the authors would like to call to mind a few recent benchmarks:

- Gender Identity and Expression were officially adopted into the BC Human Rights Code in 2016.
- During the production of this workshop series, Gender Identity and Gender Expression were added to the Canadian Human Rights Act with the passing of Bill C-16, in June of 2017.

It's a great step forward to have gender identity and gender expression included in the Canadian Human Rights Act and the Provincial Human Rights Codes. However, many trans and queer individuals are painfully aware of the fact that Canadian society is at a point where both federal and provincial steps had to be taken to provide some protection from the widespread transphobia and homophobia that is still firmly entrenched. It will be a long and complex path to close the wide margin between what is socially acceptable behaviour toward trans, gender non-conforming, Two-Spirit and queer individuals at the moment and a place of equality and respect.

Access to the legal framework necessary to examine human rights claims is (as is much of our society) restricted by privilege. Those with the means, the education, and the status to pursue a human rights claim are most successful in doing so. Which by design, means that individuals who already experience substantially more barriers and are most often negatively affected by human rights violations, are least likely to pursue them. So, far from this being the end of the struggle, these milestones represent the beginning of the immense amount of education, reconciliation, allyship, and healing work that needs to be done to reach a place of equity.

First Person Perspective and the Group Experience

With this in mind, please know that finding folks who are willing to share their stories in this way is quite difficult and rare. We acknowledge the storytellers' courage in stepping forward and are grateful for their honesty and vulnerability so that others could benefit from their experiences. We recognize the incredible value of these stories and offer the storytellers our gratitude for sharing a part of their lives with us.

We believe that working from first person accounts will help the workshop participants to empathize with the storytellers and will encourage them to express more personal perspectives in the discussion and activities. It is our hope that the vulnerability expressed here will prompt the participants to explore and share some of their own experiences and feelings in a more in-depth way. With this, we encourage the participants to extend the utmost of respect not only to the storytellers in the videos but to each other and to themselves. Each person in the group needs to be respected and treated with dignity.

In order to create and maintain a safer group environment, it is very important that all participants in the workshop – including the facilitator – be responsible for maintaining the safer space guidelines and group agreement.

Project Credits

Onmyplanet.ca

Anna Malkin - Project Developer, Creator, Video Producer,

Joyce Rankin - Project Developer

Artemis Place

Rachel Calder - Executive Director

Kim Sholinder - Teacher (Development Phase)

Emma Cochrane - Teacher (Pilot Phase)

Jae Shortt - Counsellor (Development and Pilot Phases)

All the Artemis Place students that participated in the development phase in focus group meetings and online.

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