# Stewards Training

# Defending Trans Members’ Rights in the Workplace

# Time: 3.75 hours includes 15 minute break

Overview of Module

This workshop should open with a definition of “trans” so that we know that everyone is starting from the same perspective.

Learning Objectives

* Define Trans, Gender Identity, Gender Expression,
* Build our understanding of the trans experience to foster compassion as a steward
* Understand the steward’s role when a member transitions from one gender to another
* Understand the employer’s responsibilities during worker transitions
* Review collective agreement language that protects trans members
* Understand the laws that protect trans workers
* Have the basic knowledge and tools to properly represent a transitioning member

1. **Opening (45 minutes)**

Welcome participants to **Defending Trans Members’ Rights in the Workplace** training. Trans issues are one of the remaining areas of human rights work where significant gains remain to be made. This training will assist you in your role as a PSAC Steward to represent Trans members.

For many of us this will be the first time learning about gender identity and gender expression.

Ask:

***How many of you know of someone who has transitioned in the community, family or workplace?*** [show of hands]

There may not be anyone who has this experience. If there is say that we may draw on their practical experience to help us today.

Explain that before we move into the learning activities and workshop content we need to first explore some definitions to assure that we are all working from a common understanding.

Handout **Definitions to Understand Sex & Gender** and **Diagram of Sex and Gender**

Review the diagram and discuss

Ask for volunteers to read the definitions.

Ask:

***Any questions about the definitions?***

Ask if anyone in the group has had experience with a colleague or friend transitioning (show of hands):

Ask:

***What sort of challenges do you think that person faced with respect to their family, community, work?*** [ask for examples/observations]

Say (if someone has shared their observations to the question above) that these are some of the very real challenges that our members will face when transitioning.

Say:

Over the last two decades we’ve seen trans issues coming to the fore in human rights and equality work. While many trans trail-blazers have done some incredible work moving their issues for fairness, dignity and respect forward, there is still much work to be done.

Unions are at the forefront of some of this work. But most union leaders, activists and stewards still have much to learn.

Ask:

***How many of you feel that you could benefit from more information to adequately represent a transitioning worker?*** [show of hands]

Say:

Let’s do an opening round of introductions. Please indicate your name, workplace, Local, and on a scale of 1-10 (1 being low, 10 being high) how would you rate you level of understanding of trans issues?

After the round note the range of comfort level or knowledge with the subject matter.

Say:

When we work with our trans members and are learning to understand their issues, we will likely make some mistakes. The best approach is to establish a good rapport with the member and to learn from them; ask the member appropriate, not invasive, questions if you are not sure.

Say:

Trans issues challenge our traditionally established notions of gender – we must rely on union principles to guide us through our understanding, support and representation.

Ask:

***What are some of the union principles that should guide us in representing trans members?***

Brainstorm and flipchart a list of union principles   
[fill in those from the list below that are not identified]

* The right to dignity on the job
* The right to safe and healthy workplaces
* Workplaces that are free from harassment and discrimination
* Negotiating wages, benefits and terms and conditions of work for ALL our members
* Employers should not have access to information or dictate our private lives
* We use our collective power to strengthen the rights of minorities
* We believe that an injury to one is an injury to all
* We know how to represent workers

Say:

Let’s keep these principles in our awareness as we move through this workshop.

**Workshop Context**

Say:

This workshop /course is designed to help us to:

[Review **objectives** that have been previously flip charted]

When working through the workshop content we may need to check our own biases/prejudices and proactively work to move beyond them.

1. **Deepening our Understanding (25 minutes)**

Say:

Transitioning is the process of changing from one sex to another, from one gender to another, including:

* Living according to one’s gender identity, not biology
* Hormone therapy
* Gender Reassignment Surgery (in some cases)

As in life, this path is unique to the individual and because of the psychological difficulties many avail themselves of therapists who are sensitive to their needs, if they can find them. This of course is exclusive to those who are privileged enough to have the resources and live in urban areas.

We must provide the support and representation so that trans workers can transition on the job; unionized workers should not feel pressure to leave their livelihood to transition.

Let’s explore the trans worker’s reality. Imagine an individual who has struggled with the gender identity for some time and has begun to live their life in their aligned gender expression at home and in their private life. They are anxious to begin this transition in the working life as well.

Ask:

***What are some of the issues, concerns, fears this individual will be dealing with?***

[brainstorm responses to the question. Have this list flipped charted in advance, review and discuss **after** the brainstorm, add others that may have come up]

* Fear of harassment, intimidation, discrimination, bullying or being fired because of who they are
* Fear of what may happen at work when transitioning
* Fear of being treated differently because of prejudice and fear that others have
* Fear of personal information being leaked
* Fear of the union showing prejudice, or denying to help
* Fear of not having support of any of your colleagues
* Fear that some biological females who identify as feminist and would normally be perceived as allies actually harbour transphobic attitudes to non-biological females

Say:

As you can see from this list the issues facing our trans members who are ready to transition are incredibly complex. It is very important that we are able to meet their needs and to assist other members in understanding the process as well.

As stewards it is important that we are sensitive to the needs of our trans members and can empathize with their experience.

Consider the following:

* Living in the wrong body is an incredibly distressing experience for trans people
* Transitioning is very stressful
* Going through SRS (sexual reassignment surgery) is extremely difficult, though the rewards are powerful, and sometimes life-saving

Divide participants into small groups. Ask them to discuss the following questions which are indicated on a flip chart:

***Can you imagine what the transition experience would be like?***

***What are some of the obstacles trans people might experience?***

***What might they be going through in their family lives? In their work live? In their union?***

Summary discussion points:

* + We must provide our support and representation of trans members with an awareness to the incredible amount on ongoing stressors they live with.
  + It is fundamental that their union is not a stressor, but a safe-haven to support them in their transition.

1. **Trans People Are … (15 - 20 minutes)**

Say:

Remember, Trans people are workers, trade unionists, and part of our movement

The union, and stewards as representatives of the union, have a legal and moral responsibility to support and defend all members.

Divide participants into small groups of three or four.   
Handout **Trans Member Quiz** and have them take 5 -10 minutes to complete it together.

When they are finished, review and discuss answers (following):

**Answers to Trans Members Quiz:**

* Come from all walks of life – including every race, class, culture and sexual orientation (T)
* They work in all sectors (T)
* Some “pass” in that nobody recognizes that their gender identity and gender expression don’t match their birth sex (T)
* Some trans members don’t transition at work out of fear, but lead the rest of their lives in their chosen gender expression and identity (T)
* Some transition while in the workplace – from male to female (MTF) or female to male (FTM) (T)
* The employer does not have a legal obligation to accommodate trans people (F) ( if unionized we rely on specific non-discrimination language, however in non-unionized it is well-established in Canadian law that trans individuals are protected under human rights provisions – sex and disability)
* Some trans people quit their jobs to transition out of the all-to-real fear that it will be a hostile experience; fortunately unionized workers have more protection from reprisal and may have access to insurance coverage, than do non-unionized people facing transitioning. (T).
* Many trans people are shut out of workplaces because of discrimination. Although there is no statistical evidence, we know that many MTFs end up in the sex trade to survive (T)
* An estimated 2 to 5% of the population is transgender (i.e., experience some degree of gender dysphoria). The number of people who identify as transsexual and undergo sex-reassignment is smaller. (T)

1. **Trans 101 (15 minutes)**

Say:

There are a few more concepts that will help to deepen our understanding and analysis of trans issues.

Handout **Trans Challenge** activity.

Ask participants to match the concepts/terms with their explanation/definition

Follow-up discussion points:

* At some point in their transition the trans person begins to live completely in their chosen gender identity and expression. This timeframe varies for everyone.
* Trans individuals need to be treated as fully belonging in their new gender
* Sexual Reassignment Surgery and hormone therapy are highly successful medical treatments – and can be life-saving. (Some statistics indicate 60% of trans denied access to surgery commit suicide.)
* Many trans people successfully transition without opting for surgery, for others surgery is an essential part of their journey

1. **identifying Trans Members’ Needs (15 minutes)**

Say:

Let’s identify some of needs that trans members will have when they self-identify and come to you.

[Have participants write down/think about the various ways that stewards can assist their trans brothers and sisters. In a round robin have participants share ONE item from their list. Continue around until all ideas are shared.]

Flip chart the responses under:   
  
Trans member’s needs that you will need to be prepared to assist them with:

* Employment records changed to reflect their new name
* Use of the proper pronoun
* Safe access to washroom facilities
* SRS (sexual reassignment surgery) time off
* The union and employer to jointly announce the transition to colleagues, outlining proper protocols, etc.
* The union and employer must not put the trans person in the position of having to be the trans expert, explaining his/her needs, employer and union responsibilities, etc.

Discussion:

Stewards need to be aware of these needs and factor them into how they support trans workers.

* Stewards cannot make these assumptions if we are to provide effective representation to our trans members.

1. **Representing Trans Members – The First Meeting Role Play (30 minutes)**

Say:

It is important that you are prepared when meeting with a trans member who is self-identifying and beginning the transition process.

Assumptions might be made about the transition process by management and other members, such things as:

* The transitioning should take a set period of time
* The transition only happens with SRS (sexual reassignment surgery, some will never have this surgery)
* That a transition plan is not necessary or only necessary later in the process
* That employers can wait for legal name changes and hormone therapy takes place before being proactive’
* Which bathroom the transitioning member will use.   
  Note that this is NOT a health and safety issue per se, but will require some consideration in accommodating the transitioning member (i.e. designating a private washroom during the transition)

In groups of three we will role play your first meeting with a trans member who is ready to begin transitioning at work. One participant plays the trans members, another the steward and the third will observe and provide feedback later.   
Each participant will play each role one time.

You will have 5 minutes to role play in each role.

Time the role plays (3 times).

Debrief the role plays:

Ask:

* ***What was most challenging for you?***
* ***What was easiest for you?***
* ***What will you take from this activity?***

Say:

Now that we’ve had a chance to work with our initial conversation, let’s come up with a list of tips for dealing with trans members.

[flip responses and discuss]:

Tips for representation might include:

* Maintain the member’s privacy
* Protect the member’s dignity and demand the same of others
* Model the behaviour and attitude you want others to have with the transitioning member
* Your transitioning member is your best source of information if you are new to trans issues – ask
* You don’t need to be an expert in trans issues, but you do need to provide the best support for someone in transition
* Begin using the member’s new name and pronoun immediately; this is a show of solidarity
* Show leadership
* If you are unsure of someone’s gender and are struggling with their appearance or style as they transition, keep it to yourself; be compassionate

Hand out **Stewards Check-List for Meeting with Trans Member** and discuss

Say:

There are also some Must-nots when dealing with trans members. We must not:

* Refuse to use the member’s new name and pronoun
* Use of the word “it” – is dehumanizing (some may use the pronoun “they”)
* Do not disclose the names of anyone we know to have transitioned in the past; we do not have this right

**15 minute break**

1. **Representing trans members – coming up with a plan   
   (15 minutes)**

Say:

One of the most important aspects of your representation will be coming up with a transition plan for the trans member.

[handout **Transition Plan Guidelines** and discuss]

* Working with the employer to create a flexible transition plan that meets the trans member’s unique needs
* The plan should identify how the employer and the union will support the trans member
* The plan should include: objectives; determining whether the member stays in their current job or wishes to transfer; training/briefing co-workers on trans issues; timeframes for if/how/when to inform co-workers; changes to identification and documentation; use of washroom facilities; anti-harassment planning; and medical leaves
* Sensitizing others in the workplace to trans issues
* Inform colleagues of the importance of respecting the trans worker’s human rights; that no discrimination will be tolerated
* Let colleagues know that refusing to use the trans worker’s new name is considered harassment

Say:

Unions must negotiate language that protects trans people from discrimination and harassment; it should include guidelines about the employer’s responsibility to the trans member during their transition.

Unions must ensure that trans members confidentiality is not breached in the process.

Unions must ensure that trans members enjoy the same rights as all members.

Unions must ensure that trans members are accommodated in all aspects of their transition.

As a steward it is your role to continually check-in with the member and make sure that the employer is upholding its responsibilities. It is your role to make sure that the member is treated fairly by the employer and other union members.

If you recognize that the collective agreement is deficient in language that protects trans members, make this a bargaining issue. Many employers and unions are still learning about and accommodating trans employees/members.

REMEMBER: The employer and the union will update all employee records and directories to reflect the employee's name and gender change, and will ensure that all workplace related documents (e.g. pension and insurance) are also amended. No records of previous name or sex will be maintained, unless required by law.   
  
Note: Provincial legislation governs name changes and birth record changes.

1. **Trans Rights And The Law (25 minutes)**

Say: It is illegal to discriminate against trans people. Period.

Break participants into groups of three. Each group is given 6 post-it notes. Ask them to take 5 minutes to come up with 2 responses to each of the following topics [flip chart these]:

**Employer Responsibilities towards Trans Workers**

**Union Responsibilities towards Trans Workers**

**Transitioning Worker’s Responsibilities**

After 5 minutes have them post their notes on the respective flip chart. When notes have all been posted, review them, then distribute the **Roles and Responsibilities of the Parties during Transitions of Trans Workers** handout and review it incorporating anything new that came up as a result of the exercise.

**The Laws**

Ask:

***Aside from protections offered through collective agreements, which laws apply or are relevant to the trans member?***[brainstorm list, flip chart responses]

* Charter of Rights and Freedoms
* Criminal Code
* Canadian Human Rights Act
* Canada Labour Code (health and safety, Part II)
* Provincial and Territorial Labour Relations Act (health and safety, non-violence)
* Provincial Human Rights Codes

Ask:

***Can you think of examples of how these various legislations impact/protect trans workers?***

Sample responses:

* Human Rights Codes protect the trans members from discrimination on the grounds of gender identity and expression (Ontario, Manitoba, Nova Scotia, Northwest Territories) or under the ground of sex or disability (read-in in other jurisdictions)
* The Charter protects individuals fundamental freedoms:
  + Section 15 Equality Rights
  + Section 7 Security of Person
* Criminal Code – protects from hate crimes
* Bill C-279 including trans in prohibited grounds (this bill received second reading at the Senate on February 4, 2014).

1. **What More Can Unions Do To Build Rights And Protection For Trans People? (15 minutes)**

Say:

While it is illegal to discriminate against trans people in Canada, the reality is that trans people are discriminated against every single day. Derogatory comments, refusal of services, refusal of medical care, verbal and physical harassment, violent assaults, denial of housing – are real examples of what a trans person may experience daily.

Trans people also face challenges when their status as a man or woman becomes an issue – for identification documents. This is important for the purposes of marriage, adoption, custody, security clearances, immigration, and the like.

Human rights laws are not specific in protecting trans people except in the Northwest Territories. However, recently a long fought win on including gender expression and identity as a prohibited grounds in the Canadian Human Right Act is becoming law. Several ground breaking cases have confirmed that the protection against discrimination on the basis of sex includes protection against discrimination against trans people.

In April 2014, India’s Supreme Court passed ground-breaking legislation giving trans individuals the right to identify as a third gender, “other”, on official documents.

Have this posted on a flip chart, read and discuss:

* The CLC Workers in Transition Guide states:  
  ***Clear collective agreement language will provide the best protection for workers transitioning on the job. Negotiating language on trans workers also allows the union to educate members before anyone transitions at work and helps prepare a more open and accepting workplace.***

Ask:

***What can we as union representatives (Stewards) do to address this one last area of human rights work?***[Suggested answers]

* Stewards along with the union can join the call for gender identity and expression to be explicitly spelled out as grounds for human rights protection in provincial, federal and territorial human rights acts.
* Stewards along with their union can fight to have trans protection included in hate crimes legislation which would acknowledge and enshrine the discrimination and violence faced by the trans community as illegal.
* Stewards and unions can act as leaders on social and economic issues, playing a public role in education and advocacy on the part of trans people; the skills and knowledge that we’ve built in our fight for equality for women, racial minorities, disabled individuals, Aboriginals, and gays and lesbians, can be used in our fight for equal rights for trans people.

1. **Wrap Up (5 minutes)**

Say:

It is important that stewards have an understanding of the complex issues facing workers in transition. We must be able to meet our duty of representation but also to do so from an informed position. Trans issues will be new to many of you; don’t shy away, but take the time to learn. Check your own prejudices and misunderstandings and make a point to change.

Representing a transitioning member can have profound impacts on their experience and life. It can be a precious gift. But we also need to think of the bigger picture, addressing in whatever way we can the social change that needs to happen so that the trans community is a real and integrated part of society.

The resources you’ve received lead you well positioned to advance your own understanding and bring this to the union and your communities.

Always remember “An injury to one is an injury to all!”

**Stewards Check-list for Meeting with**

**Trans Member**

1. Acknowledge how difficult the decision to talk to you must have been
2. Reassure them that you will maintain confidentiality, and do so.
3. Let them know you’re there to help and that you need their suggestions on what would be most helpful.
4. Ask them when/if they want to tell their manager/supervisor/HR, or if they want you to, or if they want you there for support.
5. Talk to them about timing for their process.
6. Ask them if they expect to change their name. If yes, learn their name and ask them when they want you to start using it and the proper pronoun.
7. Ask if they anticipate needing time off for treatment, when and how long that might be.
8. Make sure they understand the normal sick leave provisions will apply.
9. Offer to go over the benefits plan with them if they need information about coverage.
10. If there’s a uniform policy or dress code, talk to them about how and when they want to handle it.
11. Ask about their needs regarding washrooms and changerooms, and ensure they know that they have your support in using the facilities consistent with their gender identity.
12. Let them know that you will do everything you can to ensure they can continue doing their current job, if that is their wish, and they have a right to it.
13. Be prepared to discuss alternative work shifts, locations, etc., if they want to move to a new area and start “fresh” at some point during transition.
14. Talk to them about any ideas they might have about general workplace anti-harassment education plan.
15. Follow up on anything you have agreed to.
16. Check-in with them regularly, be proactive for signs of trouble from supervisors/co-workers.

**Transition Plan Guidelines**

**Sample Transition Plan**

**Objectives:**

* For the employee to remain at their current location as a (job classification).
* For the union, employees and (employer name) to ensure that (name of transitioning employee) continues to enjoy all the same rights with respect to the collective agreement between (employer name) and (union name) while performing their duties.
* To accommodate the employee in another position in the company should re-integration into the current work site become too difficult from the transitioning worker’s point of view.

**Achieving these objectives:**

Since the first priority is for (employee name) to remain at their current work location, the following initiatives need to take place.

(The timing will be adjusted according to any leaves of absences, which are currently scheduled from (insert dates). This plan will be based on these timelines but with the flexibility to adjust as necessary.)

Educating the management team is the first priority in this exercise so that they will be able to address any concerns or take immediate action should there be any inappropriate conduct. Equally important will be a partnership with the union at the (regional or national level/ insert as appropriate) and the (insert as appropriate) at the location to work together with the site manager and management team to address these objectives.

Thus far knowledge of this situation has been limited to (insert as appropriate): VP Operations, “Union” National Representative, VP Human Resources, Assistant VP Labour Relations, Labour Relations Advisor, etc.

Advising others must be done in a manner which respects the employee’s privacy and only on a need-to-know basis for the purposes of achieving our objectives.

**Specific initiatives:**

* Reading material regarding transgender and MTF individuals as well as presentations by subject matter experts in the area.
* Presentations to management team and union representatives on (insert date).
* Design of education plan for employees at site to be determined by management and union in consultation with the employee. Timing to be discussed with employee.
* Education of other employees who are in regular contact with the site will be designed and delivered as appropriate.
* Review of human rights training and human rights legislation and how it applies to this situation may also be appropriate for the immediate staff.

**Duty to Accommodate:**

* All parties must work together to ensure that the employee can remain in their workplace in their current job.
* Continuous monitoring of the work environment through contact with the employee should ensure that accommodation is successful.
* After a reasonable period of time, should the re-integration of the employee back into the work unit prove to be too difficult in the view of the employee, the employer and the bargaining unit agent, together with the employee, should look at other options. This would include but is not limited to positions elsewhere in the company with the preference to remain in the employee’s current classification.

**Going Forward:**

* Identify key personnel for management and union contact for employee and to ensure consistency during integration back into the workplace.
* (Employer contact) to serve as HR contact throughout transition and integration back into the workplace.
* Employee to identify any concerns immediately to manager, labour relations advisor or union representatives as necessary.
* Labour Relations and Employee Relations to provide support to management team and employee as necessary.
* Employee to ensure that medical documentation remains valid as per the health plan and Collective Agreement requirements, prior to return to work after sick leave period.

**Diagram of Sex and Gender**

**“normal man/cisgender man”** **“normal woman/cisgender woman”**

**Sex (anatomy, chromosomes, hormones)**

**Male Intersex Female**

**Gender Identity (psychological sense of self)**

**Man both/neither/other Woman**

**Gender Expression (communication of gender)**

**Masculine androgynous Feminine**

**Sexual orientation (erotic response)**

**Attracted to women Bisexual Attracted to men**

Our society / cultural expectation is that men occupy the extreme left ends of all four scales (male, man, masculine, attracted to women) and women occupy the right ends.

Reality is much more complex.

**Definitions To Understand Sex & Gender**

**Biological Sex**

Biological sex includes external genitalia, internal reproductive structures, chromosomes, hormone levels, and secondary sex characteristics (for example, breasts, facial and body hair). These characteristics are objective: they can be seen and measured.

The scale consists not just of two categories (male and female) but is actually a continuum. Most people exist somewhere near one end or the other. The space more in the middle is occupied by intersex people (who have combinations of characteristics typical of males and those typical of females, such as both a testis and an ovary, or XY chromosomes (the usual male pattern) and a vagina. Or they may have features that are not completely male or completely female. This space in the middle is also occupied by some trans people, including those who are in the process of sex re-assignment.

**Gender Identity**

Gender identity is how people think of themselves and identify in terms of sex (man, woman, boy, girl). Gender identity is a psychological quality. Unlike biological sex, it can’t be observed or measured, only reported by the individual.

Like biological sex, it consists of more than two categories, and there’s space in the middle for those who identify as a third sex / gender, both, or neither. We lack language for this middle space because everyone in our culture is supposed to identify completely with one of the two extreme categories. The words “genderqueer” and “they” are sometimes adopted.

In fact, many people feel that they have masculine and feminine aspects of their psyches, and some people, fearing that they do, seek to purge themselves of one or the other by acting in exaggerated sex-stereotyped ways.

**Gender Expression**

Gender expression is everything that we do to communicate our sex/ gender to others. For example, the type of clothing we wear, our hair styles, mannerisms, the way we speak, the roles we take in interactions, etc.

Sometimes we communicate our gender expression purposefully, sometimes it’s accidental. Our gender expression could be forced on us as children, or by dress codes at school or at work.

Gender expression is a continuum, with feminine at one end and masculine at the other. In between are gender expressions that are androgynous (neither masculine nor feminine) and those that combine elements of the two (sometimes called gender bending).

Gender expression can vary for an individual from day to day or in different situations, but most people can identify a range on the scale where they feel the most comfortable. Some people are comfortable with a wider range of gender expression than others.

**Sexual Orientation**

Sexual orientation indicates who we are erotically attracted to. The ends of this scale are labeled “attracted to women” and “attracted to men”. In the mid-range is bisexuality. There are also people who are asexual (attracted to neither men nor women).

We tend to think of most people as falling into one of the two extreme categories (attracted to women or attracted to men), whether they are straight or gay. However, studies show that most people are in fact not at one extreme of this continuum or the other, but occupy some position in between.

Source: Center for Gender Sanity, Westchester, California

**Trans**

Trans is a category of people who are trans-identified. We may include:

1. people who are transsexual (have had, or are in the process of having, sex re-assignment surgeries and/or hormone treatment)
2. people who are transvestites some or all of the time (whose gender expression is opposite to their biological sex)
3. people whose gender identity does not match their biological sex

“ Trans liberation is not a threat to any lesbian woman or gay man or bisexual person. . . We’re not taking away your identity. No one’s sex reassignment or fluidity of gender threatens your right to self-identity or self-expression. On the contrary, our struggle bolsters your right to your identity.

**My right to be me is tied with a thousand threads to your right to be you.”**

Leslie Feinberg, Trans Liberation, 1998

**Cisgender**

A term that was “born” within the trans community. It essentially means “anyone not trans”. It has become a standard referent inside and outside of the gender diverse community.

**Stealth**

As defined within the trans community, stealth is the 100% distancing of oneself from their previous life. A total cut-off from the past insofar as to the rest of the world .The person’s previous <boyname> or <girlname> did not exist.  To someone that has gone stealth, any life prior to their transitioned name and new circumstance does not exist.

**MTF** – Male to Female

**FTM** – Female to Male

**Crossdresser**

Generally speaking, crossdressers are heterosexual males who have a strong feminine side that they need to express, but are generally content to present as male on a daily, ongoing basis. There are some female crossdressers, but they are certainly much fewer and far less is known about them, as little research has been done in that area. A crossdresser generally identifies as their birth gender/anatomical sex, and their documentation reflects that.

**Drag Queen**

Generally speaking – a gay male parodying the stereotypes of females in our society. Exaggerated modes of dress, speech and mannerisms. Most often done for the “camp” factor. Very seldom do true drag queens go on to gender transition, although anecdotally, many transwomen often do drag shows as a way raise money or  to slowly start to express themselves in what is perceived to be a relatively “safe” space.

**Gender Dysphoria**

Discontent with one’s biological sex and/or the gender they were assigned at birth.**Trans Member Quiz**

Answer True or False to the following:

\_\_\_Trans members come from all walks of life – including every race, class, culture and sexual orientation.

\_\_\_Trans members work in all sectors.

\_\_\_Some trans members “pass” in that nobody recognizes that their gender identity and gender expression don’t match their birth sex.

\_\_\_Some trans members don’t transition at work out of fear, but lead the rest of their lives in their chosen gender expression and identity.

\_\_\_Some transition while in the workplace – from male to female (MTF) or female to male (FTM).

\_\_\_The employer does not have a legal obligation to accommodate trans people.

\_\_\_ Some trans people quit their jobs to transition out of the all-to-real fear that it will be a hostile experience; fortunately unionized workers have more protection from reprisal and more access to insurance coverage, than do non-unionized people facing transitioning.

\_\_\_Many trans people are shut out of workplaces because of discrimination. Although there is no statistical evidence, we know that many MTFs end up in the sex trade to survive.

\_\_\_An estimated 2 to 5% of the population is transgender (i.e., experience some degree of gender dysphoria). The number of people who identify as transsexual and undergo sex-resassignment is smaller.

**Roles And Responsibilities Of The Parties During Transitions Of Trans Members**

**Employers:**

* Are not permitted to discriminate on the basis of gender identity or expression when it comes to hiring, training, or promoting trans people
* Cannot fire trans workers because they transition or come out
* Must give trans workers access to appropriate washrooms, uniforms, dress codes, etc., during their transition
* Uphold the privacy, confidentiality and dignity of the worker
* Need to cooperate and change records for pension coverage, medical and health plans, EI, CPP, etc. to reflect the trans worker’s new identity
* Cannot deny access to private health care benefits to trans workers that are available to other workers with other medical needs (i.e. if wigs are covered for cancer patients they should also be covered for trans people who require them, also for medical reasons)
* Must consult and collaborate with union representatives
* Have the primary legal responsibility to accommodate a worker up to the point of undue hardship

**Unions:**

* Have a duty to represent all members fairly
* Work with the worker and the employer where an accommodation is required
* Defend workers whose rights are threatened or ignored
* Operate in a manner that is free from discrimination and harassment
* Have a responsibility to enforce the employer’s obligation to prevent harassment in the workplace and to defend workers who are subject to harassment
* Respect the privacy and confidentiality of members
* Provide – and ensure the employer provides – education about equality issues, anti-harassment and duty to accommodate

**Transitioning Worker:**

* To communicate with the union and the employer
* To supply job-relevant medical information (not all medical information)
* To be cooperatives and assist in identifying and implementing an appropriate accommodation, if required

**Trans Challenge**

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| --- | --- |
| 1. Gender Identity Disorder | \_\_\_After a year or two of living in their social gender many trans people will opt for this |
| 1. Hormone therapy | \_\_\_The trans individual lives in their proper gender for a prescribed period |
| 1. Social gender identity | \_\_\_Individuals who derive pleasure from dressing as the oppose sex but do not have issues with their biological sex |
| 1. Sex reassignment surgery (SRS) | \_\_\_The trans person will usually undergo this treatment early in their transition |
| 1. “Real life test” | \_\_\_The change of expression to their proper gender in terms of clothing, mannerisms, name change, etc. |
| 1. Cross Dresser | \_\_\_The diagnosis given by a specialist when someone is transsexual (even though the trans person usually already knows this) |

**Trans Challenge Answers**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1. Gender Identify Disorder | D After a year or two of living in their social gender many trans people will opt for this |
| 1. Hormone therapy | E The trans individual lives in their proper gender for a prescribed period |
| 1. Social gender identity | F Individuals who derive pleasure from dressing as the oppose sex but do not have issues with their biological sex |
| 1. Sex reassignment surgery (SRS) | B The trans person will usually undergo this treatment early in their transition |
| 1. “Real life test” | C The change of expression to their proper gender in terms of clothing, mannerisms, name change, etc. |
| 1. Cross Dresser | A The diagnosis given by a specialist when someone is transsexual (even though the trans person usually already knows this) |