
Beyond the Binary:

The Video

Shae (they/them): Welcome to Moving Beyond the Binary; creating welcoming spaces for gender diverse people.

This video was created in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq people.

Did you know that the gender binary with only two categories is a colonial invention? Prior to colonization many indigenous communities placed great importance on gender diversity and honour two-spirit people for their wisdom and spiritual significance. As you watch this video we encourage you to reflect on the fact that we live in a place where gender-diversity was historically valued and celebrated.

Magia(they/them): The Queer Diverse community's power, magic, skill, talent, energy is enthusiasm, adaptation, compassion, resilience, and hope.

Stevi (they/them): I love the freedom that comes with being queer. I love the fact that like when you meet queer people it's like very They're like they're already thinking Outside The binary. There is a lot of freedom, and a lot of like silliness and kind of stepping out of the societal norms.

Rhiannon (she/her): I think it's important to celebrate, uplift and promote trans leaders in our community. Trans leadership allows us as trans people to see ourselves in those roles, and to dream of more.

Shae: On transgender day of visibility in 2022, The Legal Information Society of Nova Scotia proudly launched our Moving Beyond the Binary publication. Moving Beyond the Binary provides an overview of steps that organizations can take to ensure that people of all diverse genders feel valued, safe and welcome.

Gender is a beautiful spectrum of identities. Not everyone fits into the gender binary of men and women. This video will walk you through three simple things you can do to ensure the people of all genders feel validated and welcome. After watching, we encourage you to read Moving Beyond The Binary in full, and share it with your friends, family, coworkers, and community.

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Number One: Respect Everyone's Pronouns And Names. Learning and respecting everyone's pronouns and chosen names are simple but important ways to show that you want to make everyone feel welcome. The most common personal pronouns are she/her, he/him and they/them. But there are many other pronouns too. Names are also an important part of self identity and self expression. Don't assume that you know someone's pronouns based on how they look. Instead, it's important to create a safe environment that invites others to share their pronouns. One way to do this is to lead with your own pronouns when you meet someone. "Hi! My name is Shae and my pronouns are they/them."

It takes time to learn a new skill. If you make a mistake with someone's name and pronouns, quickly apologize and move on. Practice so you can get it right next time. Be gentle with yourself and keep practising.

Magia: When I first changed my name I was a bit anxious about how folks would receive it. At least in the art sector, everybody embraced it. It was normal. It was accepted. It wasn't a hassle. When someone uses my correct name and pronouns, it feels like they're treating me with the same respect that I treat them with. It means that I'm being seen and recognize the way that I want to be.

Stevi: As someone who worked with youth, it wasn't encouraged for me to talk about being trans. And I abided by this for seven years. We spent half of our life at work. It's such a minimal thing to like be respected as an individual. And I know that sometimes people think its scary, or whatever, like nervous to try, but like as long as there's effort it just shows that I matter as a person.

Rhiannon: It doesn't rely solely on trans people, or queer people, members of the community, to make workplaces a safer space. This is something that falls on all of us, and, you know everybody can be an ally to the 2SLGBTQIA community.

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Number Two: Have Gender Neutral Washroom Options And Support People In Using The Washroom That Is Right For Them. Many gender diverse people experience transphobic comments, harassment, and even violence when simply trying to use the washroom. Get creative about sharing space and resources. There are many ways to create inclusive environments.

Rhiannon: All people deserve the right to use the bathroom and feel comfortable doing so and part of that is having gender neutral bathrooms available for people to use.

Number Three: Use Inclusive Language Beyond The Binary. Many of us have grown up in the world in which gender language is seen as a way of showing respect. For example, titles like Mr and Miss, or greetings like Welcome ladies and gentlemen. This kind of language can actually cause harm because it often involves making assumptions about what someone's gender is. It also erases people who identify outside of the gender binary.

We encourage you to think about ways that you can adjust your language to be more inclusive. Try greetings like “welcome folks,” “welcome guest,” or any other gender neutral phrase that suits the occasion.

Magia: As an artist I relish words; cherish words. We can choose better words. There are so many languages Words phrases that you can use and use words to connect and create community

Stevi: Language is always like forever changing, and so are people. Do the research. Keep yourself up to date. Have it in your policies. Put in the work to want to learn.

Rhiannon: Do you have workplace policies and processes that support somebody going through a transition? Do you have discrimination policies for incidents of harassment or violence people may face? Do you have health plans, where people can access gender affirming care that they need?

Magia: My advice to employers wanting to respect gender diverse people is to be flexible about dress codes, and don't make assumptions. If you don't know something, just ask.

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Rhiannon: We as people are fluid and dynamic or changing over the course of lives. I've identified as many different genders, many different sexualities

Stevi: As a Queer person, I've come out multiple times. I came out as queer when I was young, and then I came out as trans, and poly. I kind of feel like coming out you never really stop as a queer person. Whether your identity is changing or your meeting new people for the first time.

Rhiannon: What's important to think about from a workplace perspective is how can you support somebody as they go through these changes in their life.

Magia: We don't have to limit ourselves by the binary. Be your authentic self. Be you, and however that you expresses you, that's valid. I'm here for you. I'm seeing you the way you wanna be seen.

Thanks for watching this video and learning with us. Visit legalinfo.org/beyondthebinary for more tips and information on creating welcoming spaces for everyone.

The Legal Information Society Of Nova Scotia: Empowering Communities Through Education.