

## **GENDER, INTERSEX and SEXUALITY DIVERSITY**

### **INTRODUCTION**

All types of women, trans-people, intersex people, gender queer people, Brotherboys and Sistergirls are welcome to access the services of the NT Working Women's Centre.

While maintaining our status as a women's organisation and recognising the importance of women's services, we recognise that feminist services understand gender-based violence, discrimination and disadvantage and are therefore the most appropriate to provide advice and support to all types of women, trans-people, intersex people, gender queer people, Brotherboys and Sistergirls.

Lisa Mottet and John M. Ohle state in their research paper, *Transitioning Our Shelters* (The National Gay and Lesbian Force Policy Institute, Washington DC, 2003, p.4)

Many times, transgender people lose their job when their employers learn of their transgender status. Moreover, it is often very difficult to find employment as an openly transgender person.

They further report that the Washington Transgender Needs Assessment Study found in Washington DC that one third of trans people were earning \$10 000 or less per year and 15 per cent reported losing a job due to workplace discrimination. The Transgender Law Centre and National Center for Lesbian Rights found that 64 per cent of trans people in San Francisco earned less than \$25 000 a year. This is consistent with the NTWWC mandate to assist where there is a relationship between gender and disadvantaged bargaining positions, insecure and low paid work.

Our organisation will not tolerate discriminatory behaviour on the basis of a person's trans status or intersex variation from staff, service users or members of the organisation.

### **DEFINITIONS**

With permission, these definitions have been taken from the Alice Springs Women's Shelter's policy *Working with People of Diverse Genders, Sex and Sexuality*.

**Gender** –refers to a person's internalised sense and outward expression of being either "feminine" or "masculine"; both; neither or moving fluidly around a diversity of genders. Gender is usually assigned to a person at birth; is associated with their determined biological sex; and based on the socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for females or males. Many people do not agree or identify with the gender they were assigned at birth. They may live as the opposite gender to the one they were assigned or they may be gender non-conforming. This means that their sense of self does not fit within the cultural assumptions about the male/female binary and they may choose to express their gender outside of this.

**Sex**- refers to a person's biological characteristics which include sex chromosomes, hormones, reproductive anatomy and other physical attributes Sex is described as 'Female', 'Male' and 'Intersex'. A Trans person who has undergone hormonal and/or surgical procedures to change their sex, may possess a combination of female and male sex characteristics. This does not make that person Intersex. (see Intersex)

**Intersex** – is an umbrella term used to describe a diversity of biological variations in which a person is born with sex chromosomes and/or reproductive anatomy that is not considered to be exclusively female or male.

**Trans-** (can refer to transgender; trans-identified; transsexual, and gender-diverse) is an inclusive umbrella term for persons whose gender identity, gender expression, or behaviour does not conform to that typically associated with their perceived, or actual, biological sex. Gender identity refers to a person's internal sense of being female, male, or something else; gender expression refers to the way a person communicates gender identity to others through behaviour, clothing, hairstyles, voice, or body characteristics.

Some people who have transitioned from female to male or from male to female no longer consider themselves to be Trans. They may consider being Trans as one stage of their life and identify only as men or women.

Not all Trans people wish to undertake a surgical or hormonal transition. Additionally, not all trans people will be able to financially afford, or otherwise engage with medical transition.

**Brotherboy-** Can refer to Indigenous transgender female to male person. A distinct cultural identity with unique protocols. Some Indigenous gay men may refer to themselves as Brotherboy. Some masculine lesbians are referred to as Brotherboys.

**Sistergirl-** Indigenous transgender male to female person. A distinct cultural identity with unique protocols.

#### **SERVICE PROVISION**

All types of women, trans people, intersex people, Brotherboys and Sistergirls will be offered the services of the NT Working Women's Centre.

#### **Confidentiality**

The trans or intersex variation of clients of the NTWWC is considered private and confidential. This information can be highly sensitive and impact directly on the safety of that individual. As such the organisation's confidentiality policy applies to this information and such details shall not be recorded or disclosed without the express permission of the individual involved.

#### **Procedure**

Referrals to the NT Working Women's Centre are through the usual channels.

The NT Working Women's Centre will not disclose a client's trans or intersex status without express permission from the client.

The NT Working Women's Centre will not refer a trans or intersex client without confirmation that the referred service has inclusive policies and practices in place. Referrals to an unsafe service make us an unsafe service.

All NT Working Women's Centre forms are inclusive and reflect diversity.

Service users are to be addressed and referred to by their preferred gender pronoun (They, She, He, etc.) verbally and in all documents.

## RESOURCES

ACON, see here <http://www.acon.org.au/>

Darke, Julie and Cope, Allison (2002) *Trans Inclusion Policy Manual For Women's Organizations*, Trans Alliance Society, Vancouver.

Mottet, Lisa and Ohle, John M. (2003) *Transitioning Our Shelters*, The National Gay and Lesbian Force Policy Institute, Washington DC.

OII- Intersex Australia, see here <http://oii.org.au/>

The Gender Centre <http://www.gendercentre.org.au/>

Sisters and Brothers NT, see here  
<https://www.facebook.com/SistersBrothersNTCelebratingDiversity>

Zoe Belle Gender Centre, see here <http://gendercentre.com/>

## TO DO FOLLOWING COM APPROVAL:

1. Staff training, Sisters and Brothers NT will facilitate.
2. Advise Services we refer to, ask what their policy around this. Referring to an unsafe Service makes us unsafe.
3. Note on website and signage in offices that 'All types of women, trans-people, intersex people, gender queer people, Brotherboys and Sistergirls are welcome to access the services of the NT Working Women's Centre.'