



The CO-OPERATIVE HOUSING FEDERATION *of Canada*

THE 519
SPACE FOR CHANGE



LGBTQ Inclusive Co-op Communities

Revised 2017

COOP



Housing co-ops have historically been welcoming places where all members have the right to live with dignity, free from harassment and discrimination. It is important to remember that all co-op members play a role in making sure their co-op is a safe place to live. This resource is about building awareness and fostering an understanding about issues for members of the LGBTQ community.

What does LGBTQ stand for?

LGBTQ is an acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Queer communities.
LGBTQ is an inclusive way to describe diverse sexual and gender identities.

Lesbian: a woman who is emotionally, physically, spiritually and/or sexually attracted to women.

Gay: a person who is emotionally, physically, spiritually and/or sexually attracted to people of the same gender. The word can refer to people of all genders.

Bisexual: a person who is emotionally, physically, spiritually and/or sexually attracted to people of more than one gender, though not necessarily at the same time.

Trans/Transgender: an umbrella term referring to people with diverse gender identities and expressions that may differ from stereotypical gender norms. Trans can relate to identifying differently than the sex you were assigned at birth.

Queer: was a derogatory slang term used to identify LGBTQ people. Some members of the LGBTQ community have reclaimed the word as a proud identifier.



The CO-OPERATIVE HOUSING FEDERATION of Canada

THE
519
SPACE FOR CHANGE

What is an inclusive co-op community?

Inclusive co-op communities are where all members are welcomed and respected. LGBTQ members may experience discrimination or harassment in their daily lives and in their housing co-op. Housing co-ops can create a safer place for their members and respond to all forms of discrimination and harassment.

Safer spaces are where members:

- treat all members with respect
- do not tolerate homophobic, biphobic or transphobic language, jokes or actions
- believe that all members have a right to be heard
- do not assume gender identity, gender expression, pronouns (he/she/they, him/her/them) or sexual orientation



LGBTQ rights are human rights!

It is important to recognize the rights of LGBTQ communities in the same way that we recognize any other human right. All Canadian citizens are guaranteed equal protection against discrimination regardless of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, family status or disability. Each province and territory has a human rights code that protects people from discrimination based on specific grounds like race or sexual orientation. Information about human rights codes is available online or by calling your provincial or territorial human rights commission office.

What are gender identity and gender expression?

Gender identity is about who you feel and know you are—whether you are a man, a woman, neither, both, or don't identify with these terms at all. Gender expression is how a person presents their gender identity to the world (e.g., clothes, hair, pronouns).

What is the difference between sexual orientation and gender identity?

Sexual orientation is about who you are attracted to emotionally, physically and/or sexually. Gender identity is who you feel and know you are—a man, a woman, both or neither.



What can co-op members do?

YOU can help create inclusive co-op communities by being an ally. An ally is someone who doesn't identify as LGBTQ but supports equal rights for LGBTQ communities.

An ally

- ✓ is compassionate
- ✓ is a good listener
- ✓ is open to talking and learning
- ✓ uses supportive and affirming language
- ✓ recognizes everyone's dignity and worth
- ✓ stops hurtful behaviour when possible.



Part of being an ally is addressing discrimination when it happens, or taking steps to make sure it doesn't happen again. It is important to deal with discrimination in safe and respectful ways. If dealing with someone's behaviour doesn't feel safe, bring it up with your co-op's board.

DIFFERENT WAYS TO SUPPORT

BESIDE	IN FRONT	BEHIND
You may need to stand beside someone to support them. Listen to them and walk with them through an experience.	You may need to stand in front of someone to help them avoid harm and hurt.	You may need to stand behind someone to support them, recognizing that they are the experts and know what is best for them.
✓	✓	✓

GRAPHIC COURTESY "CREATING AUTHENTIC SPACES" TOOLKIT, THE 519

Supporting trans people in your co-op

- Listen to the experience of trans people and ask how you can provide support.
- Learn about trans communities—use social media, blogs and other media to learn about the issues facing trans communities.
- Apologize if you make a mistake—everyone makes mistakes and that's okay! If and when someone points out your mistakes, acknowledge the wrong that has been done, apologize and move on.

Jacq Hixson-Vulpe



The CO-OPERATIVE HOUSING FEDERATION of Canada

www.chfcanaada.coop | 1-800-465-2752 | [f](https://www.facebook.com/chfcanaada) [t](https://www.twitter.com/chfcanaada) chfcanaada