



THE CANADIAN
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Women Lawyers Forum Membership and Mandate: Gender Inclusion Exploration

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November 2, 2023



Objectives



Agenda

Setting the Tone

Building Foundational Understanding

WLF Membership/Mandate Discussion:

- Impacts
- Opportunities

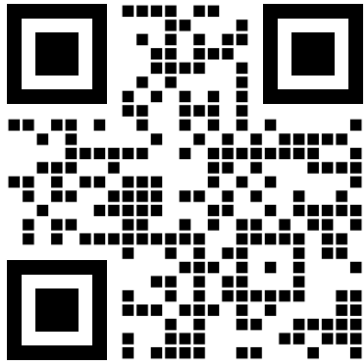
Resources

Closing

Note: There will be a short bio break

Setting the Tone

Padlet



Introduce yourself:

- Name
- Pronoun (optional)
- Where you're coming from

<https://tinyurl.com/WLFNov2>

*“Do the best you can until
you know better. Then
when you know better, do
better.”*

Maya Angelou



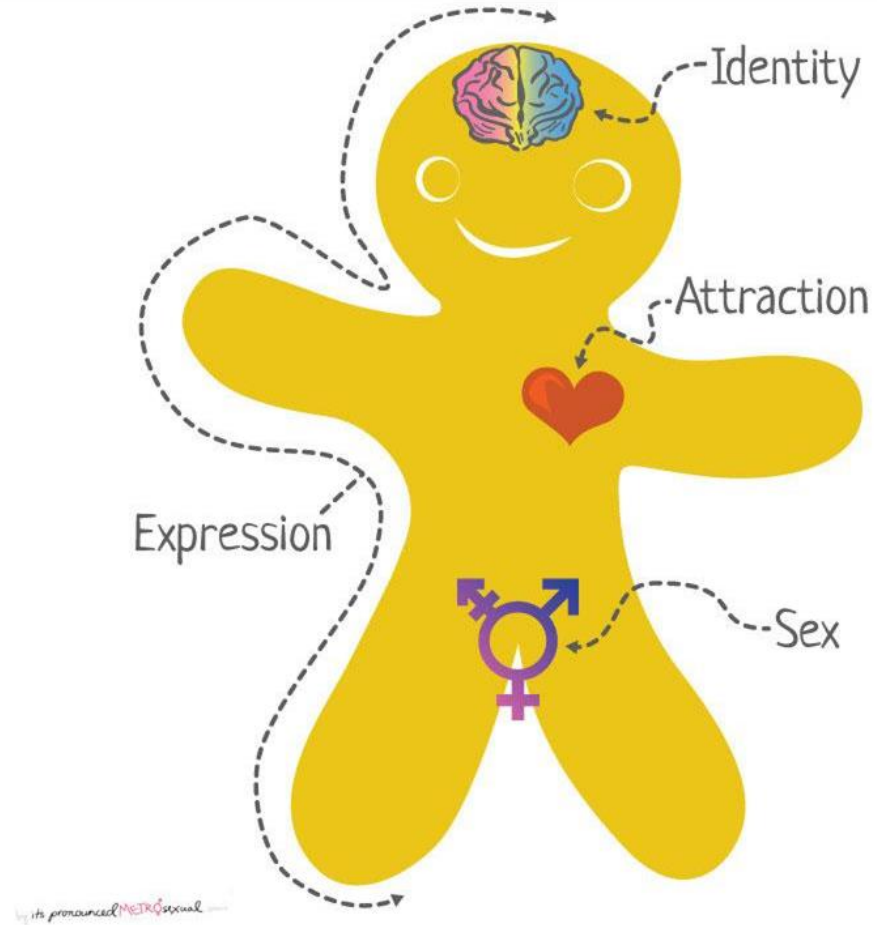
Safer Space Guidelines

- Humility
- Self-care
- Assume positive intent
- Share the air
- Listen and hear
- Confidentiality
- Soft Eyes (let go of judgement)
- Make glorious mistakes and learn
- ?



Building Foundational Understanding

Genderbread Person



Source: <https://www.itspronouncedmetrosexual.com/2018/10/the-genderbread-person-v4/>

Gender Inclusion: A few highlights

- Gender diversity celebrated in Indigenous cultures
- 2002: NWT 1st province/territory to add **gender identity** to its Human Rights Act
- 2009: First Trans March in Toronto
- 2012: Ontario 1st province/territory to add **gender expression** to Human Rights Code
- 2013: “Gender Identity Disorder” removed from DSM as a mental illness
- 2017: Bill C-16 adds **Gender Identity & Expression** to the Canadian Human Rights Act and the Criminal Code
- 2019: “they” declared Word of the Year by Merriam-Webster
- 2021: Unanimous vote Bill C-4 bans “Conversion Therapy” in Canada

Systems of Privilege and Oppression

The structures within society that allow inequities to continue through the perpetuation of policies and practices that disadvantage marginalized groups and favour dominant groups.

Ableism

Anti-Asian Racism

Anti-Black Racism

Anti-Indigeneity

Anti-Semitism

Cissexism

Classism

Heterosexism

Islamophobia

Racism

Sexism

Transmisogynoir

Transphobia

and many more

WHAT IS PRIVILEGE? THE COIN ANALOGY

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FvIEVEW1Sp8>

Social Location Definition

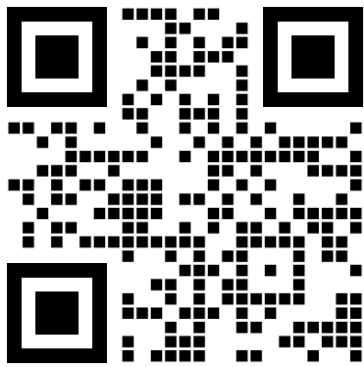
The combination of your identities that shape where you have access to power and privilege and where you do not.

Your social location influences:

- *how you see the world*
- *how the world sees you*



Padlet

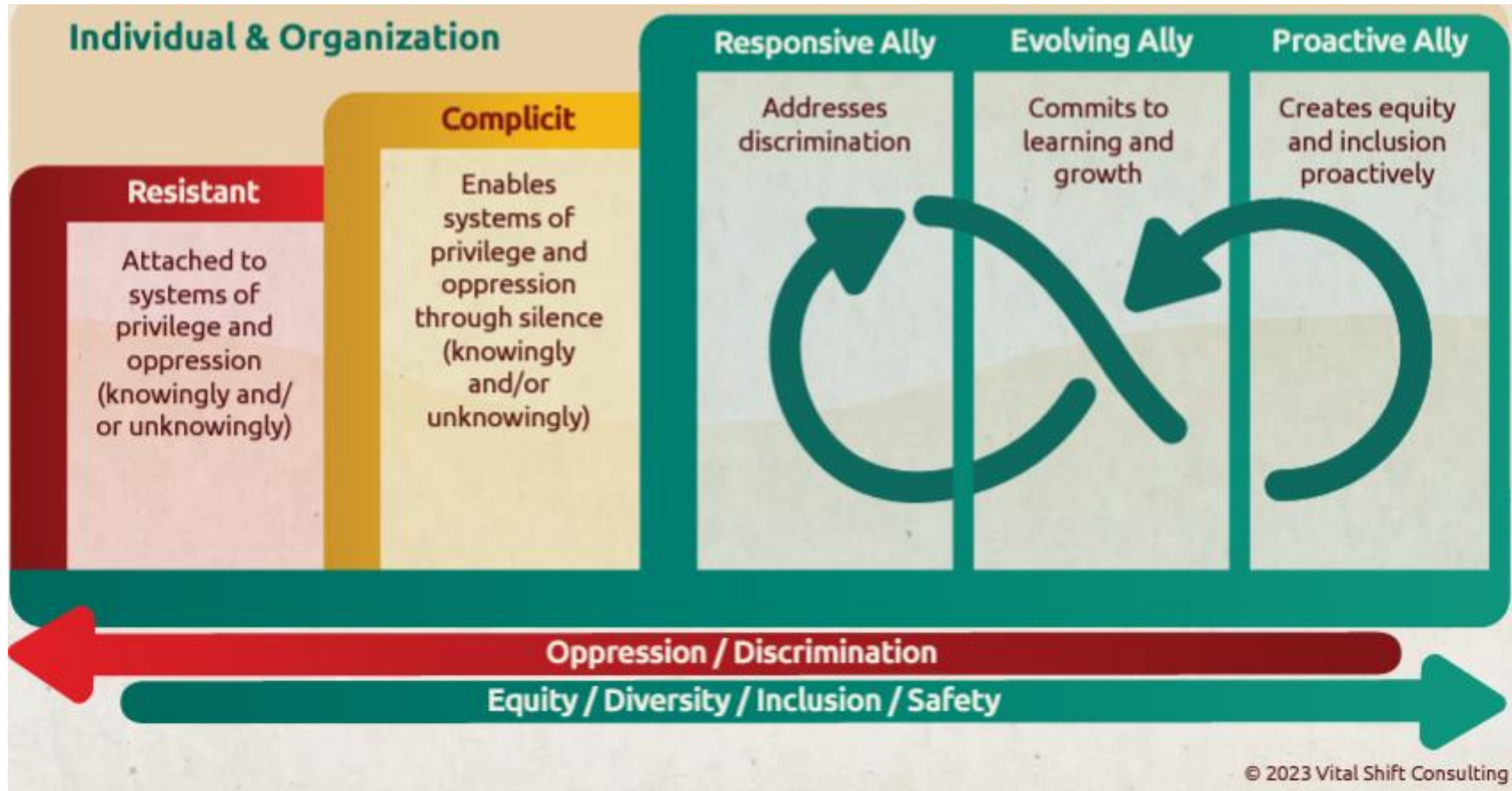


What is something new that you've learned or an idea that you've been reminded of today?

<https://tinyurl.com/WLFNov2>

WLF Membership & Mandate Discussion: Impacts and Opportunities

An Ally Journey



What can we learn from other organizations?

LEAF Women's Legal Education and Action Fund

FAEJ Fonds d'action et d'éducation juridique pour les femmes

YWCA Canada

National Advocacy. Community Action.

Une voix nationale. Des actions locales.

FAEJ Fonds d'action et d'éducation juridique pour les femmes

A Gender-Inclusive Update to LEAF's Mandate

“Understandings of gender in Canadian society have shifted since LEAF first established its purpose in 1985. A range of diverse gender identities have progressively gained recognition in wider social spheres, and people are increasingly publicly identifying at many different points along the gender spectrum. At this point in time, it is clear that women are not the only group of people who encounter gender-based discrimination

LEAF strives to engage in gender equality advocacy that appropriately reflects present-day Canadian legal and social issues. That is why LEAF's Board of Directors, in consultation with our member branches, recently voted to update our mandate. LEAF's mission and mandate is now the following..”

LEAF Mandate

LEAF is a national charitable organization that works towards ensuring the law guarantees substantive equality for all women, girls, trans, and non-binary people.

LEAF: some steps taken on their gender inclusion journey

Education: LEAF staff, board members, and branch members received training in trans inclusion

Discussion: LEAF staff, board members, and branch members came together on multiple occasions to discuss the best path forward

Feedback: Supporters provided feedback and encouragement

Communication:

- Executive Director, General Counsel and Board Chair's public letter on gender inclusive update to mandate
- Frequently Asked Questions published

YWCA Canada Mandate

YWCA Canada is a leading voice for women, girls, Two-Spirit and gender diverse people.

YWCA Canada: some steps taken on their gender inclusion journey

Reflection by Board:

- Reviewed mandate language to be inclusive
- Reflected on whether they could provide an inclusive space to uphold the inclusive language

Education:

- Board member who was a leader in this space provided Board with books and other resources
- Board received basic training on gender inclusion
- Membership education starting with basic training and then working up to more advanced topics

Policy Review: Reviewed Board level policies through an inclusion lens including gender, anti-racism, etc.

Communication:

- Kept returning to the reasons why this is important: clear messaging
- National Board members connected with local provincial and territorial members to discuss the message and encourage adoption

WLF: Steps to date

The WLF Executive has taken the following steps

- Education
 - Created a living document of resources on gender, linked [here](#)
 - Hosted virtual book clubs to discuss books related to gender
 - Held a training session on trans-competent lawyering
- Consultation
 - Consulted with other organizations – LEAF and YWCA – who have gone through similar mandate explorations
- Exploration
 - Weaving gender inclusion throughout current work (e.g., asking for input on a more inclusive name for the WLF's Madam Justice project)
 - Conducting this session: WLF Membership & Mandate: Gender Inclusion Exploration, Nov. 2, 2023

Mandates

***The CBA Women Lawyers Forum** promotes women's stature and influence in the legal profession in Canada. We create and offer programs and networking opportunities to support women lawyers.*

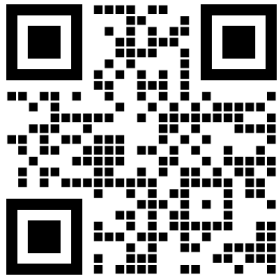
***LEAF** is a national charitable organization that works towards ensuring the law guarantees substantive equality for all women, girls, trans, and non-binary people.*

***YWCA** Canada is a leading voice for women, girls, Two-Spirit and gender diverse people.*

Not for us, without us

- Importance of involving people who are gender diverse in the WLF gender inclusion process
- People who are gender diverse are the ones directly affected by transphobia and cissexism and the strategies to address those issues
- Lived experience informs and improves systems, policies, practices and programs
- Involvement also provides a potential opportunity for accessing increased networks

Impacts and Opportunities



<https://tinyurl.com/WLFNov2>

How might the WLF's current activities be exclusionary? What are possible opportunities to create greater inclusion. What do we need to stop doing, continue doing or start doing for gender inclusion for our current activities.

- Mandate
- Membership
- The Common Room: member articles
- Leadership
- Professional development
- Leadership Conference
- Cecilia I. Johnstone Award
- Madam Justice
- Social media
- Resolutions
- ...

Resources on Gender Diversity Inclusion

Gender Diversity Inclusion Guidance

- [“Building Trans-Inclusive Workplaces”](#), Public Service Alliance of Canada
- « [Des milieux de travail accueillants pour les personnes trans](#) », Alliance de la Fonction publique du Canada
- [“Creating Authentic Spaces: A Gender Identity and Gender Expression Toolkit to Support the Implementation of Institutional and Social Change”](#), The 519
- [“Transitioning Employers: A survey of policies and practices for trans inclusive workplaces”](#), Pride at Work

Resources on Gender Diversity Inclusion

Pronoun Sharing

- [“Pronoun Sharing Best Practices”](#), Special Olympics Canada
- [“Meilleurs pratiques en matière de partage des pronoms”](#), Olympiques spéciaux Canada
- [“Pronoun Usage Guide”](#), Egale
- [“Pronouns Matter”](#), Pronouns.org

Resources on Gender Diversity Inclusion

Inclusive Washrooms

- [“We all need a safe place to pee”](#), Ivan Coyote
- [“Toilet Training: The basics of making your washrooms inclusive for everyone”](#), Egale
- [University of Toronto](#): signage showing what is in the washroom, e.g. toilet, urinal, baby changing table, accessible washroom
- [Toronto Metropolitan University](#) : signage for men’s and nonbinary washroom, women’s and nonbinary washroom, signage for all gender washroom
- [Egale](#) : signage for inclusive washrooms

Resources on Gender Diversity Inclusion

2SLGBTQI Glossary

- [“2SLGBTQI Terms and Definitions”](#), Egale
- [“Lexique et définitions 2SLGBTQI”](#), Egale
- [“The 519 Glossary of Terms”](#), The 519

Resources on Gender Diversity Inclusion

Education

- [Free \(English, French and bilingual\) webinars](#) on 2SLGBTQI+ topics including trans and nonbinary identities, Egale
- [“Genderbread Person: Components of Human Identity”](#), Egale
- [“Personne gingenre: Composantes de l’identité humaine”](#), Egale
- [“Gender Unicorn”](#), Trans Student Educational Resources
- [“Genderbread Person”](#), It’s Pronounced Metrosexual

Resources on Gender Diversity Inclusion

Additional Resources

- [“Media Reference Guide-Discussing trans and gender-diverse people”](#), The 519
- [“Q&A with Egale’s Director of Legal”](#), Egale
- [“June 2023: 2SLGBTQI-Related Legal Development and News in Canada and Internationally”](#), Egale

Closing

*Do the best we can until
we know better. Then
when we know better, do
better.*

Adapted from Maya Angelou



With thanks

S. Kate Moore

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