

Shelter Pulse

Gender Expansion Policy Primer

The guidelines and checklists below provide indicators of best/promising practices from research and serve as recommendations and benchmarks for ongoing policy evaluation and evolution

Policy Primer

Shelter policy analysis through a gender expansive lens requires a rigorous assessment of systemic inequalities, as well as a means to assess how diverse groups of women, men, and gender diverse people may experience policies, programs and initiatives (Government of Canada, 2021). In the context of same-sex relationships, power and control imbalances are one of the primary causes of IPV through the exploitation of an individual's weaknesses. One of these weaknesses is the threat of being "outed", which can have adverse social, familial and professional consequences. Gender-diverse individuals may experience challenges accessing services because a person might not identify as male or female, be in the process of transitioning or could have characteristics of both binary genders. Shelter policies need to be non-discriminatory of non-conforming gender identities when delivering services.

This project has been funded by Women and Gender Equality Canada



Women and Gender
Equality Canada

Femmes et Égalité
des genres Canada

Canada

Policy Checklist (Adapted from: Canadian Audit and Accountability Foundation, 2021)

The following criteria may be considered in assessing or evolving policy using a gender expansive approach:

- Policies identify gender equality as a priority: The policy statement, vision or mission has emphasized that gender equality is a key objective.
- Policies state all staff and members of the organization are equally responsible for making sure the organization and its programs are conducive to eliminating violence against shelter seekers.
- Policies set out principles and practices it applies to improving gender equality outcomes in all its daily activities.
 - The design and delivery of the organization's services are targeted at VAW/GBV experienced by shelter seekers who identify as female or with the female experience.
 - The shelter agency's roles, responsibilities, authority, and accountability to gender equality matters are clearly defined, attributed and communicated
- Policies speak to the provision of staff gender equality and awareness training.
- Policies confirm a shelter organization possesses, or has access to, sufficient gender equality specialist expertise or gender-based analysis tools in order to carry out activities in a gender-inclusive way and evaluate them.

- Policies and procedures use and/or promote the use of gender-inclusive language (e.g, pronouns they/them) either within the policies or daily activities.
- Policies provide examples of performance indicators measuring the effectiveness and overall reach of gender-expansive initiatives.
- Policies describe the performance monitoring process of the agency's gender equality programs and services to VAW survivors.
- Policies to create a welcoming, inclusive and affirming care experience for Shelter seekers and Staffs.

References:

Canadian Audit and Accountability Foundation. (2021). *Practice Guide to Auditing Gender Equality*. <https://www.caaf-fcar.ca/en/performance-audit/34-performance-audit/practice-guides/204-auditing-gender-equality>

Government of Canada. (2021, April 14). *What is Gender-Based Analysis Plus*. <https://women-gender-equality.canada.ca/en/gender-based-analysis-plus/what-gender-based-analysis-plus.html>