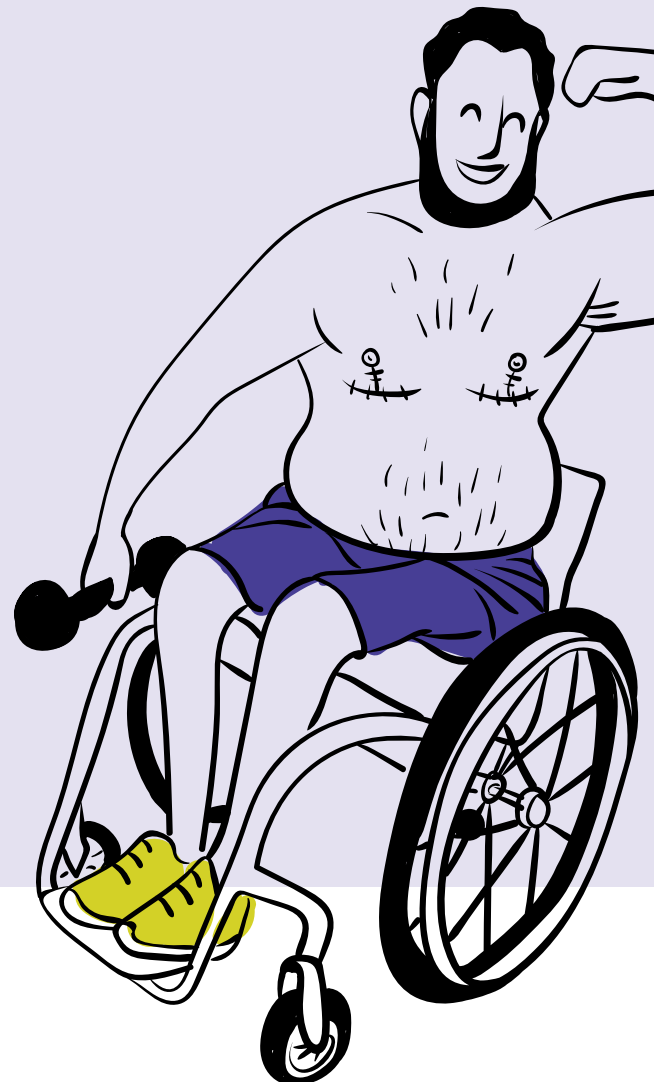


*Self-Assessment
Tool to*

Create Inclusive Fitness Spaces

for Community



Thank you for your interest in improving the inclusivity, safety, and accessibility of the fitness space you use. This tool provides you with a checklist of things to look for when considering if a fitness space is accessible for 2SLGBTQ+ individuals, including those who might face additional access barriers. Populations who have intersecting identities and experience additional barriers include people who have disabilities, larger bodies, or histories of trauma, all of which are experiences disproportionately affecting 2SLGBTQ+ communities.

The assessment tool is divided into three categories:

Physical environment

These items consider mobility around the gym for individuals with larger bodies or mobility aids, as well as signs in the environment that can contribute to feelings of inclusion or exclusion for 2SLGBTQ+ patrons.

Social environment

These items examine social practices and interactions between gym employees, contractors, and patrons which can communicate inclusion or exclusion. Individuals may not be aware that they are doing or not doing some of the things listed. We encourage you to ask around and observe a variety of interactions between staff, contractors, and patrons when assessing these items.

Policies

Items on this list have an impact on all activities in a space, as well as the organizational and gym culture. This section is best filled out by a manager, owner, or other staff member who is aware of the policies that exist.

Review the items in each category and fill in the information that is available to you. If you are unsure about an item and are unable to access the relevant information, you can use the 'unsure' column to make comments. If you notice issues that are not addressed by any of the items listed, feel free to use the 'comments' box at the bottom of each page.

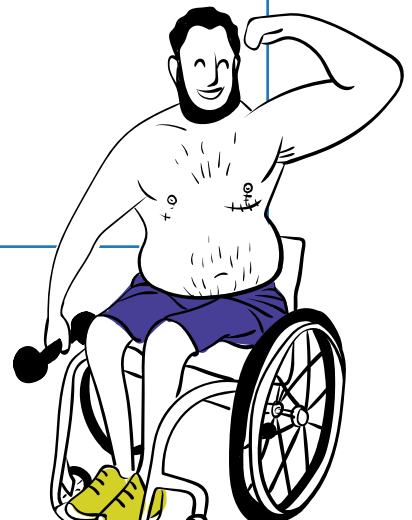
Once you have finished the assessment, we encourage you to take it to a trusted person in your fitness space and discuss what you have found. At the end of the document, there are a variety of recommendations for change you can provide to the facility to address any areas for improvement which have been identified. If you have questions, don't hesitate to contact the QTHC at connect@ourhealthyeg.ca.



Physical Environment

	YES	NO	UNSURE OR N/A (describe)
Location is accessible by bus or other public transit			
Path from parking lot to door is wheelchair accessible			
Front area has space for patrons to sit to remove/change shoes			
Weight loss products are not displayed in the front area			
Posters, signage and decor throughout gym show diverse bodies			
Posters, signage and decor throughout gym show diverse ages			
Posters, signage and decor throughout gym show diverse relationships			
All-gender change rooms and washrooms are available and are separate from the accessible washroom / change room(s)			
All washroom stalls have garbage cans or other options for menstrual product disposal			
Gendered training spaces exist			
Gendered training spaces are clearly labelled			

COMMENTS



Social environment

	YES	NO	UNSURE (DESCRIBE)
Front-end staff consistently greet people with gender-neutral language			
Front-end staff are diverse			
Trainers consistently greet people with gender-neutral language			
Trainers introduce themselves using pronouns			
Trainers avoid gendered language			
Trainers are diverse			
Trainers work with clients to set goals that are not weight-oriented			
Bios on website include pronouns and identities			
Patrons are expected, and are aware of expectations, to refrain from harassing or otherwise commenting on co-patrons			

COMMENTS

Large empty rectangular area for entering comments.



Policies

	YES	NO	UNSURE (DESCRIBE)
Dress code is clear with a rationale based on safety as opposed to gendered/societal expectations			
Dress code is gender-neutral in both language and expectations			
Dress code accommodates gender-affirming wear			
Membership forms and cards include pronouns			
Membership forms and cards include preferred names			
Policies are in place and enforced concerning consent prior to touching			
Policies are in place and enforced concerning harrassment and discrimination between patrons			
Legal names and sex at birth are only collected with specific rationale			

COMMENTS



Connecting with a Change-Maker in Your Fitness Space

In the above assessment, each item for which you've checked "no" generally presents an opportunity for improvement. Once you've completed the assessment, we encourage you to connect with a trusted person who is able to make change happen in your fitness space. This may be a trainer, a manager, an owner, a board member, etc.

The following section includes recommendations for change which are designed for use by the change-maker in your fitness space. If possible, we encourage you to sit down with them to review priority or easy-to-implement improvements, and to make yourself available to support them throughout the improvement process. However, we understand that you may not have the capacity to provide them with this support. In this case, we encourage you to connect them with a local 2SLGBTQ+ organization such as the QTHC so that they have the support they need to make their space safer, more inclusive, and more accessible.

The individual you are working with may have questions concerning some of the items in the assessment that are not explicitly tied to 2SLGBTQ+ needs. Items concerning accessibility for people with disabilities, larger bodies, trauma histories, and lower socioeconomic status have been included because these are issues that disproportionately impact 2SLGBTQ+ communities. Therefore, responding to accessibility barriers concerning these issues can be important to ensuring that 2SLGBTQ+ people feel safe and included in a fitness space. When responding to these types of barriers, we encourage individuals to connect with local organizations that can offer expertise, assessment, and training related to these issues (i.e. organizations that serve people living with disabilities).

If your change-maker is interested in learning more about how they can support 2SLGBTQ+ clients and gym patrons, they can visit ourhealthyeg.ca/inclusive-fitness to access more resources and read QTHC's 2SLGBTQ+ Fitness Access Survey Report.



Recommendations for Change

The following section outlines improvements that can be made to enhance the inclusivity, accessibility, and safety of a fitness space based on the above assessment. Review the recommendations for the areas of improvement identified for your space. To help you respond to these recommendations, we've included reflection questions to help you consider specific changes that can be made to your fitness space. We encourage you to be honest and thoughtful in your reflection.

Some changes can be implemented immediately at very little or no cost, while others may require more substantial changes to the space or practices. If any questions emerge through this process, connect with the person who brought the issue to you (if they've agreed to support you) or contact the QTHC at connect@ourhealthyeg.ca.

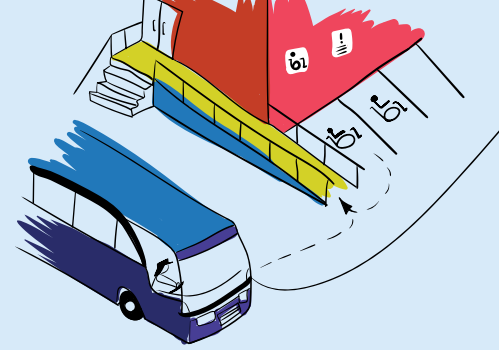
Please note that this assessment was simplified for use by community members and does not include all accessibility measures. To access the full assessment for use by employees or owners of a fitness space, visit ourhealthyeg.ca/inclusive-fitness.

Important Note:

One item that was excluded from the above assessment is whether or not staff have received diversity and inclusivity training, as this is unlikely to be something a gym patron would know. Staff have a significant impact on your organizational culture, for better or worse, and can be important change agents in your efforts to create a more inclusive space. Even staff who don't interact regularly with clients (i.e. management) often work on policies that can have huge implications for diversity and inclusion. Therefore, formal training on diversity and inclusion is important for all staff.

If your staff have not received this training, we highly encourage it. Bring in an expert to facilitate (a) training session(s) or work with your staff to enroll them in an external training program. While you may have members of staff who identify as 2SLGBTQ+, we would encourage you to work with external experts to deliver this training as 2SLGBTQ+ staff members are likely already doing a lot of unpaid and underappreciated labour to educate individuals about these issues in their own personal lives. To access training for your staff, contact the QTHC at connect@ourhealthyeg.ca.

Physical Environment



Location is accessible by bus or other public transit

If and when you change locations, consider accessibility via public transit. How far are you from bus routes? What is the route between the nearest bus stops, and your business? Are there hills? Is there a sidewalk? Is there lighting on the street?

These factors will influence whether somebody who is low-income, or using transit with a disability, will be able to safely get to and from your fitness space.

Path from parking lot to door is wheelchair accessible and/or disability friendly

Consider if there are changes you can make to your existing space. If there is only one step, can you build or purchase a ramp? If there are more steps, is it possible to install a longer ramp or a lift? Are there accessible parking stalls with enough space for a car or van that contains a wheelchair ramp? If there are stairs, are there hand-rails on each side to support somebody walking with a cane/crutches/who fatigues easily, etc.? If you cannot adapt your current space, keep these things in mind if and when you change locations.

These accommodations and changes can enhance access for gym users who use wheelchairs, walkers, crutches, canes, prosthetic limbs and/or other mobility devices. They can also support people carrying heavy loads, people with strollers, and facilitate getting equipment into and out of the gym.

Front area has space for patrons to sit to remove/change shoes

Find chairs and/or benches that can fit in your front area to provide opportunities to sit for people who are tired, lack flexibility, etc., to put on their shoes. This may include seniors, overweight gym patrons, people recovering from an injury, those who have just finished a hard workout, and more. While finding furniture, consider whether or not there are seating options with armrests and, if there are armrests, whether they are wide enough for larger gym users to sit in comfortably.

Weight loss products are not displayed in the front area

Consider if your gym needs to sell weight loss products in the first place. Are they evidence-informed products? What are the potential risks for diverse populations? Are they being used to support a “Health At Every Size” philosophy?

If you determine they are helpful for your patrons, consider what message you are sending by having weight loss products displayed at the front of your space. This may subtly tell gym users that your trainers will enforce weight loss goals, or that if they are obese they are not good enough. This is a common fear for 2SLGBTQ+ and obese communities and is also a contributing factor to the lack of use of fitness spaces. Consider if the products can be kept in a cupboard or office and be introduced by trainers or staff for people who will benefit from them and who do have weight loss goals.

Posters, signage, and decor throughout gym show diverse bodies; diverse ages; and diverse relationships

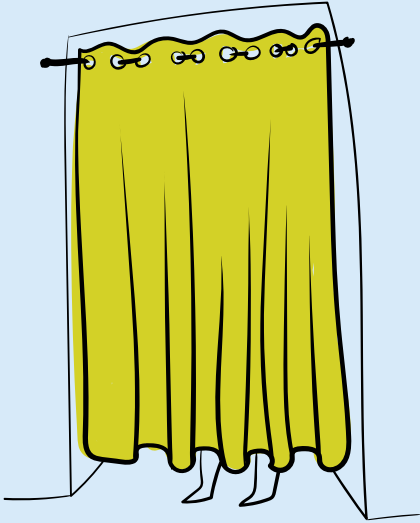
Review all of the images shown throughout your gym. If they all look the same, consider replacing some with more diverse images. Look for diversity not only in body types but also in ages, abilities and disabilities, relationships (where appropriate), gender presentation, etc.

Additionally, consider the text featured on your posters. Are they promoting a Health At Every Size approach or are they promoting fitness, dieting, or weight loss “at any cost”? Consider whether your messaging provides helpful and healthy motivation for your gym users and if it is in line with their goals.



All-gender change rooms and washrooms are available and are separate from the accessible washroom / change room(s)

It is important to ensure that all of your clients/gym users have access to change room/washroom spaces that are safe and inclusive for them. Some trans and non-binary people do not identify with or feel safe in gendered change room/washroom spaces (i.e. “male” or “female” change rooms or washrooms). Therefore, it’s important to ensure there is an “all-gender” change room or washroom space that is available.



One option is to implement three different change room/washroom spaces, one of which is designated as all-gender. Another is to have one change room/washroom space with many single stalls, allowing the space to be used by people of all genders. This also has the added benefit of being less intimidating for people who are less confident with their bodies.

Some spaces have an additional single-stall “accessible” change room/washroom for people with limited mobility, and consider this to be a gender-neutral space. However, forcing trans and non-binary people to use this space can feel demeaning or othering if they don’t actually require accommodations for limited mobility - especially if a special code or key is needed to enter the space. This can also negatively impact gym users with limited mobility as people who do not require mobility accommodations are using the only spaces people with limited mobility can access.

All washroom stalls have garbage cans or other options for menstrual product disposal

Place a small garbage can in every washroom stall in the facility. If you have menstrual products available in the women’s change room or washroom, make them available in all other change rooms and/or washrooms too. Women are not the only people who menstruate. Making spaces safe and accessible for people of all genders who menstruate will make the gym space safer for those individuals.

Gendered training spaces exist;

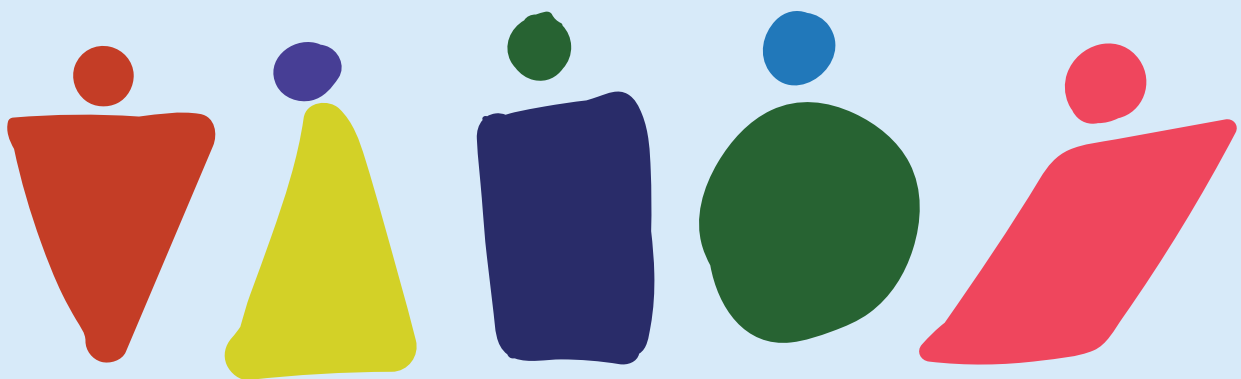
Gendered training spaces are clearly labelled

Begin by considering why gendered training spaces exist. In some cases, they are necessary for the people that use them. In others, they are unnecessary or can be made more inclusive.

For example, if there is a women's-only time to address the fact that some women feel uncomfortable working out when men are present, consider how your policies include or exclude other gym users that may require more space, time, or safety, or feel uncomfortable in a full gym. These groups can include 2SLGBTQ+ gym users, disabled gym users, or those who are elderly or have larger bodies.

Ensure that women's-only spaces and times are inclusive of transgender women and that staff and patrons are aware of this.

If gendered spaces exist, ensure they are clearly labelled/advertised and that policies are in place to avoid policing of these spaces by patrons.



Social Environment

Front-end staff consistently greet people with gender-neutral language;

Trainers consistently greet people with gender-neutral language;

Trainers avoid gendered language

Work with staff to brainstorm gender-neutral greetings and other gender-neutral language that will feel natural for them. Look for lists of options online, and consider words that may already be part of their vocabulary such as “they/them” for anyone whose pronouns are not known, or “folks”, “y’all”, or “friends” for groups. Remember that while “guys”, “babe”, and “dude” are often seen as gender-neutral by cisgender people, many trans and non-binary people consider them to be gendered terms.

If staff are having difficulty, encourage accountability to each other and implement rewards or consequences as needed and as appropriate for your organization’s culture and values.

Front-end staff are diverse;

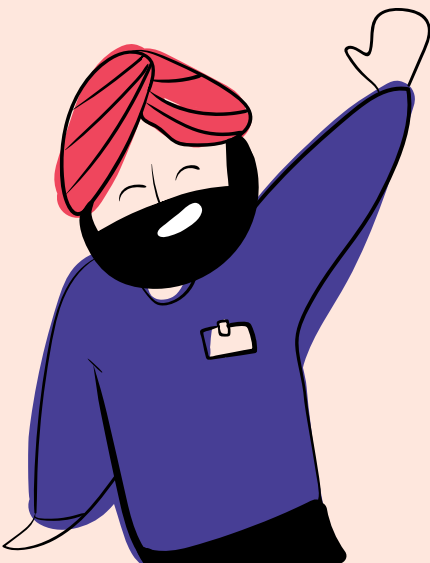
Trainers are diverse

If your staff is not reflective of the diverse identities and experiences of the broader community, consider why. Some questions to reflect on include:

- Is your organizational and gym culture inclusive?
- Have you addressed inclusivity with your patrons and staff?
- Is the physical space accessible and inclusive for people of different genders, sexualities, ages, abilities, etc.?
- Do you have a specific ‘look’ that your gym is known for or that you’re trying to foster? If so, why?

Make sure that your space is somewhere that a diverse range of people would like to work. If you build a safe and inclusive environment, people will be more likely to apply and want to work with you. If you do hire individuals who are 2SLGBTQ+ or represent other underrepresented groups, ensure they feel supported and that they are encouraged to make a meaningful contribution to your organization’s culture; otherwise, they may feel tokenized.

If you make all of the changes above and are unable to recruit a more diverse staff, consider whether your hiring team or practices have unacknowledged or implicit biases.



Trainers introduce themselves using pronouns

Trainers can help create an inclusive culture by using their own pronouns regularly. Management and other staff can also promote this by using pronouns as part of their email signatures, on name badges, and anywhere else names are used within the organization.

When cisgender people use their pronouns as a part of their regular introduction, it can normalize the use of pronouns so that the opportunity is open and easy for trans and non-binary people who would like to make their pronouns known.

Trainers work with clients to set goals that are not weight-oriented

Ensure trainers are thoughtful about client goals, discussing each client's unique priorities, and are not focusing exclusively on weight. If a client does not have weight-related goals and is still being weighed as part of assessments, consider if this is relevant. If weight is a focus of work with the client, is it being considered in a safe and respectful manner?

For many 2SLGBTQ+, disabled, or fat people, fear of weight-oriented goals and weight-shaming can be a significant barrier to participation in physical fitness and is often a reason people do not use gym or fitness spaces..



Bios on website include pronouns and identities

As much as staff are comfortable, edit staff bios on websites to include pronouns and identities. This can help 2SLGBTQ+ and otherwise marginalized people see themselves reflected in the staff and clearly demonstrate that the space is safe.

Patrons are expected, and are aware of expectations, to refrain from harassing or otherwise commenting on co-patrons

Many 2SLGBTQ+ individuals and other minorities face regular harassment and othering comments from people in positions of power and from members of the public. Policies prohibiting such behaviour must be established, promoted, and enforced. Ensure policies regarding harassment and the othering gym patrons are:

- posted visibly;
- discussed with patrons while signing up for use of your fitness space; and
- are enforced by all staff



Policies

Dress code is clear with a rationale based on safety as opposed to gendered/societal expectations;

Revise dress codes to ensure that any codes enforced are due to safety, with the specific rationale provided (i.e. wearing closed toe shoes to prevent injuries from weights falling on toes). Ensure dress codes are the same for all genders. For example, if shorts must be a certain length, it should be the same for everyone. Ensure the language used to describe the dress code is not gendered. Make edits to your current dress code accordingly and ensure it is re-publicized.

Dress code is gender-neutral in both language and expectations

Dress code accommodates gender-affirming wear

Review your dress code and ensure it allows for gender affirming wear including binders, packers, gaffs, and prosthetic breasts. Again, ensure all language is gender-neutral, even if describing gender affirming wear.

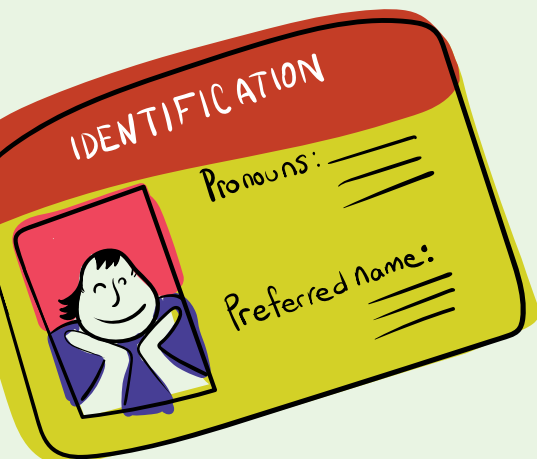
Membership forms and cards include pronouns

Examine your membership form and identify where a write-in space for pronouns (and gender, if you have tick-boxes) can be added. Record members' gender and pronouns in your administration systems.

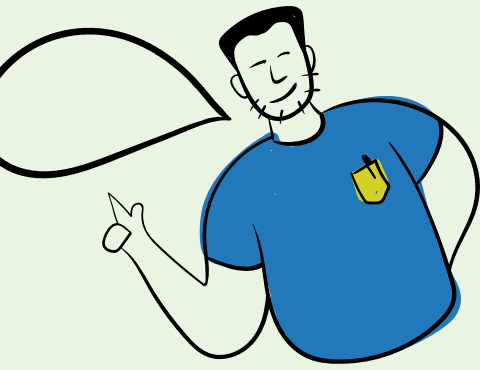
Determine where membership cards can be redesigned to have pronouns included on the card when it is printed (if applicable).

Membership cards include preferred names

Consider the purpose of your membership cards - do they need to display a legal name, or are they simply used to verify identity while entering the gym? In most cases membership cards will not require a legal name and preferred names can be used in the existing space for a first (and, where applicable, last) name. If a legal name is determined to be required, examine how your membership cards can be redesigned to display the preferred name prominently, with the legal name in smaller text (i.e. on the back).



Policies are in place and enforced regarding consent prior to touching



Review your policies concerning safety and consent. Do they include a policy to obtain consent prior to touching another individual? If not, revise your policies to include one to enforce safety and maintain personal boundaries.

While you may want to require blanket consent for touch if a gym user is at imminent risk of harming themselves or another, consider a policy that otherwise requires consent before each touch. Consent for touch can be as simple as, “I want to help you position your hips correctly, can I put my hands on you to show you?” Once a policy is developed, make sure all trainers are aware and have opportunities to practice to make this skill more natural. Ensure trainers also have education on how to describe or model movements if gym users do not consent to touch.

Many 2SLGBTQ+, disabled, and other visibly minority individuals have histories of trauma and are at higher risk of sexual and physical assault compared to cisgender and/or heterosexual people. Reducing unexpected touch can make spaces safer and decrease triggering episodes in a gym environment.

Policies are in place and enforced around harassment and discrimination between patrons

Many 2SLGBTQ+ and other minorities face regular harassment and othering comments from people in positions of power and from members of the public. Policies prohibiting such behaviour must be established, promoted, and enforced. Ensure policies regarding harassment and the othering gym patrons are:

- posted visibly;
- discussed with patrons while signing up for use of your fitness space; and
- are enforced by all staff

Legal names and sex at birth are only collected with specific rationale

Review all policies, forms, etc., and identify where legal names and sex assigned at birth are collected. In each instance: consider if the legal name is required or if a preferred name can be collected instead. Additionally, consider if sex assigned at birth is relevant or if gender may be more appropriate for the purposes needed.

If you do determine there are places where this information remains necessary, edit forms and policies to include rationale for collection of this information. Many people will not notice the rationale or will skip over it but people who do not use their legal name or are trans or non-binary will appreciate the acknowledgement.

Once you have collected the minimum amount of information required, consider how the information is kept secure. Who needs to know patrons' legal names or sex assigned at birth? Is it only kept in case of medical emergencies or insurance claims? If so, do trainers or front desk staff need to have access to this information or can this information be kept securely in a locked office for managers or owners only?





For more information visit
ourhealthyeg.ca/inclusive-fitness

