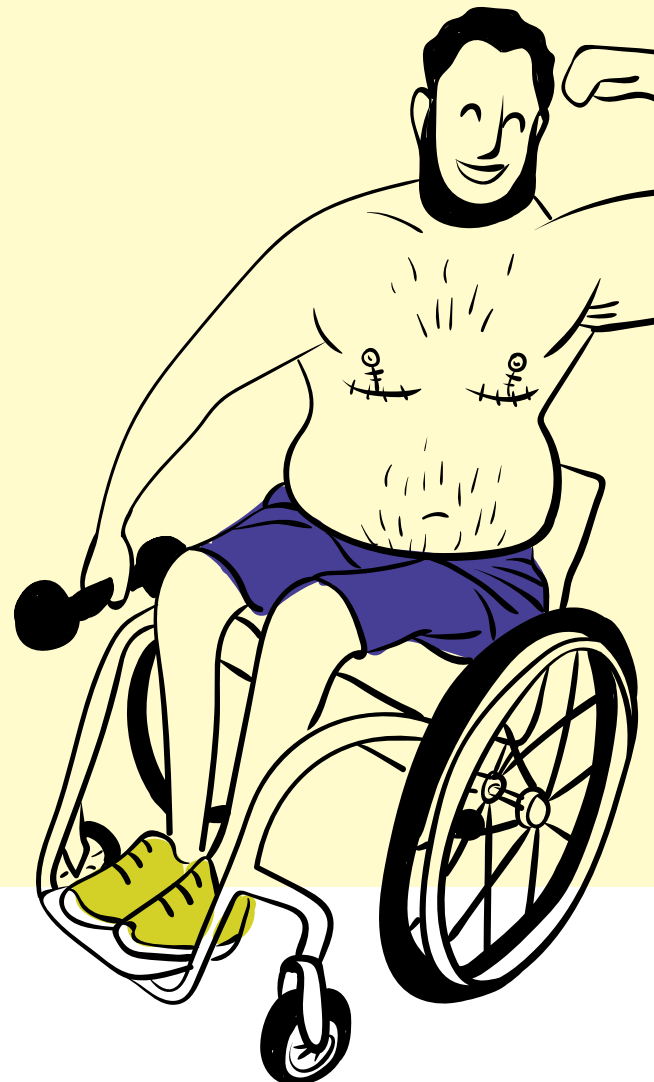


*Self-Assessment
Tool to*

Create Inclusive Fitness Spaces

for Professionals



Thank you for your interest in improving the inclusivity, safety, and accessibility of your fitness space. This tool provides you with a checklist of things to look for when considering if your fitness space is accessible for 2SLGBTQ+ individuals. The assessment also includes consideration of factors for those who might face additional access barriers such as people who live with disabilities, larger bodies, or histories of trauma, all of which are experiences disproportionately affecting 2SLGBTQ+ populations. While you may feel uncomfortable considering some of these items or may find yourself checking more than you expected, we encourage you to be as accurate as possible to identify areas for growth.

The self-assessment is divided into three categories, each of which includes a series of statements for which you can check 'yes', 'no', or 'unsure'. If you notice other things of importance while looking into these specific items, there are comment boxes at the bottom of each page for you to make additional notes.

The three categories include:

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 observe 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.

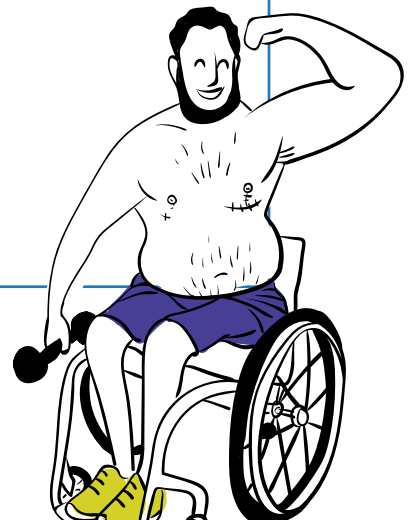
Once you have completed the self-assessment, you can review the recommendations for change at the end of the document so that you can implement tangible improvements to enhance the inclusivity, safety, and accessibility of your space for 2SLGBTQ+ populations.



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			
Turnstiles (or other barriers to enter the gym) are large enough to comfortably accommodate larger bodies			
Turnstiles (or other barriers to enter the gym) are accessible to patrons using wheelchairs and/or other mobility devices			
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)			
Washrooms and change rooms are single stall			
All washroom stalls have garbage cans or other options for menstrual product disposal			
Labels on equipment are not gendered			
Pathways in gym space are wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs, other mobility devices and/or larger bodies			
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			
Front-end staff receive training on inclusivity			
Trainers consistently greet people with gender-neutral language			
Trainers introduce themselves using pronouns			
Trainers avoid gendered language			
Trainers receive training on inclusivity			
Trainers are diverse			
Trainers work with clients to set goals that are not weight-oriented			
Management avoid gendered language			
Management receive training on inclusivity			
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

Empty space for 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			
Trainers work with clients to set goals that are not weight-oriented			
Management avoid gendered language			
Management receive training on inclusivity			
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



Recommendations for Change

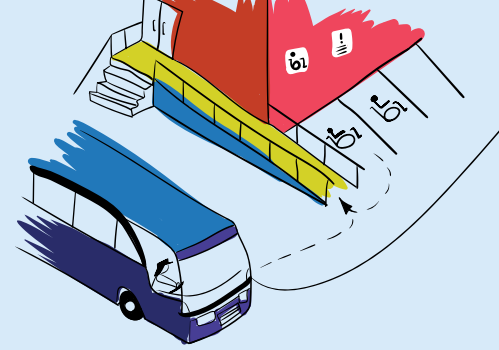
The following pages outline changes that could be made to improve the inclusivity, accessibility, and safety of your space based on the provided assessment. In the assessment, each 'no' that has been marked generally signals an opportunity for improvement. Highlight these items and review the suggested changes. Some changes can be implemented immediately at very little or no cost, while others may require more substantial changes to the space or practices.

To aid you in responding to the recommendations below, we've included a series of questions to help you reflect on your particular fitness space and possible improvements that can be made. We encourage you to be honest and thoughtful in your reflection. If any further questions emerge through this process, contact a local 2SLGBTQ+ organization like the QTHC.

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



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 or similarly weight-neutral 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 overweight 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.

Turnstiles are large enough to comfortably accommodate larger bodies;

If you have turnstiles or other physical barriers to enter your space, if and when you remodel, ensure turnstiles are placed far enough apart to allow space for larger bodies. Additionally, ensure there are access gates for patrons using wheelchairs, walkers, crutches, etc.

Turnstiles are accessible to patrons using wheelchairs and/or other mobility devices

These changes can also support patrons carrying in gym bags, using strollers, employees carrying in loads, etc. While this is a larger scale change, think about what message you are sending your gym users when some of them cannot even enter the space comfortably.

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

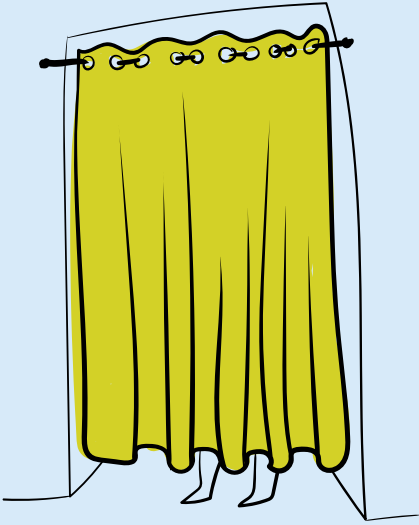
Review all of the images shown throughout your gym. If they all look the same, consider replacing some with more diverse images. Look for diversity not only in body types but also in ages, abilities and disabilities, relationships (where appropriate), gender presentation, etc.



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);

Washrooms and change rooms are single stall



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 have 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.

Labels on equipment are not gendered

If any of your equipment includes gendered labels, activity descriptions, or images, consider if there is any specific reason why. In most, if not all cases, these can be removed and/or adapted to reflect gender neutral terminology.

Pathways in gym space are wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs, other mobility devices, and/or larger bodies

Move equipment and furniture to create wider pathways between and around equipment. If there is not space for this, consider if equipment or furniture can be moved to different rooms or be eliminated. If not, if/when you move spaces, work to ensure there is adequate space for wider pathways. If pathways are consistently encroached upon, consider using tape or other markers on the floor to maintain them.

Gendered training spaces exist;

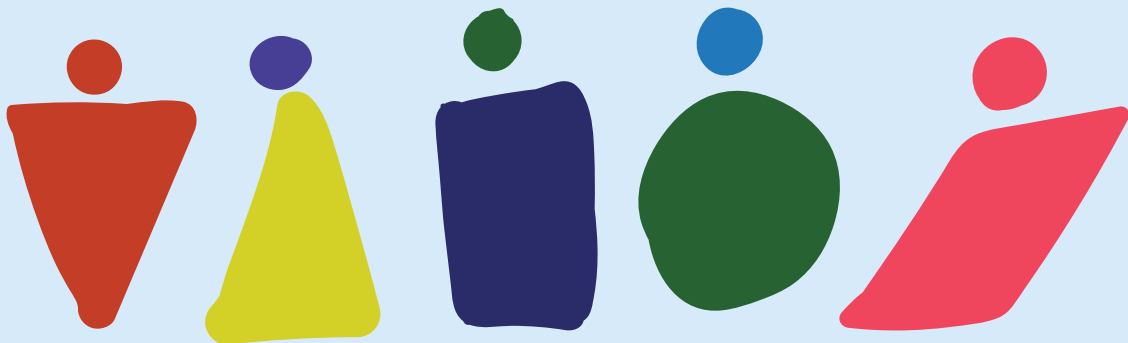
Begin by considering why gendered training spaces exist. In some cases, they are necessary for the people that use them. In others, they are unnecessary or can be made more inclusive.

Gendered training spaces are clearly labelled

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;

Management 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

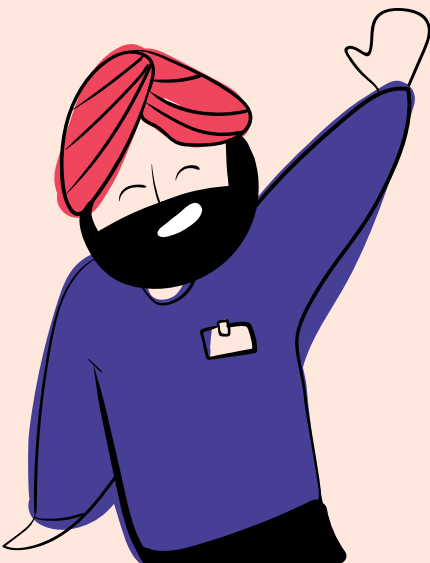
If your staff is not reflective of the diverse identities and experiences of the broader community, consider why.

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.



Front-end staff receive training on inclusivity;

Trainers receive training on inclusivity;

Management receive training on inclusivity

Work with your staff to either enrol staff in an external training program or bring in a trainer to complete (a) session(s) for you. Please avoid having a staff member teach the training. If you have a staff member or member of your management team who is 2SLGBTQ+ or otherwise in a minority, they are likely already doing a lot of unpaid and underappreciated labour to educate folks in their personal life, and there are experts in this field.

Formal training on diversity and inclusion is necessary for all staff. Although not everyone will be interacting with your clients and gym users regularly, higher-level staff and management will be working on policies that can have huge implications for diversity and inclusion. Staff have a significant impact on and can shape the organizational culture for the better or for the worse and so should be considered important change agents within your efforts to create a more inclusive space.

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 focussing 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 any codes that are being enforced are due to safety and that rationale are provided in the dress code—e.g. wearing closed toe shoes to prevent injuries from weights falling on toes. Ensure dress codes are the same for all genders; if men can work out topless, everyone should be able to; 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.

Dress code is gender-neutral in both language and expectations

Make edits to your current dress code accordingly and ensure it is re-publicized.

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.

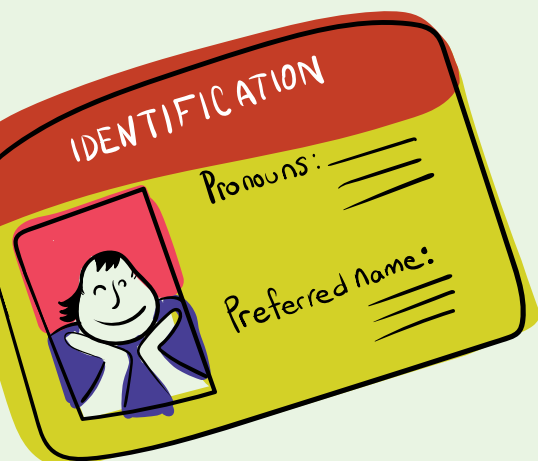
Membership forms and cards include pronouns

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.

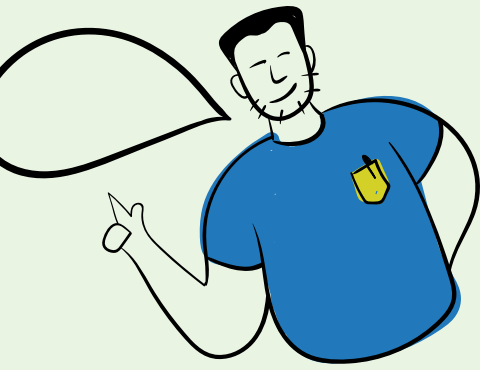
Determine where membership cards can be redesigned to have pronouns included on the card when it is printed.

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, on the back, etc.



Policies are in place and enforced regarding consent prior to touching



Review your policies around safety and consent—do they include touching? If not, revise policies to develop a policy around consent prior to touch that will enforce safety but maintain personal space boundaries. Consider requiring blanket consent for touch if a gym user is at imminent risk of harm to themselves or another based on their actions or another’s actions, but otherwise asking consent for each touch (and ensure that if anyone has concerns about any blanket consent policies there are ways to discuss it further). 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 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 members of these groups are largely 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

Review your policies and ensure there are policies in place regarding harassment and discrimination; if they do not exist, create them. Many 2SLGBTQ+ and other minorities face regular harassment and othering comments from members of the public. To ensure spaces remain safe and accessible, the gym culture created through the above recommendations must be enforced.

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, ask if the legal name is required or if a preferred name can be collected, and if sex assigned at birth is relevant or if gender may be more appropriate. If you do determine there are places where this information remains necessary, edit forms and policies to include rationale for collection of the information—many people will not notice the rationale or skip over it, but people who do not use their legal name or are trans will appreciate the acknowledgement.

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

