

## South House Trans Inclusion Policy

Updated 19/04/2016

### 1 PURPOSE

Transphobia is a normalized part of our society, presenting in both obvious and subtle forms. It shapes the lives of trans and intersex people in huge ways, such as access to jobs, places to live, bathrooms, shelters, health care, education, and much more. Trans and intersex people are routinely denied access to social services and health care, harassed by police and politicians, assaulted, and murdered. This experience of violence and discrimination includes denied access to many gender justice centres that cater only to cisgender women. South House aims to provide the safest space possible for trans people, free from judgement and persecution.

### 2 DEFINITIONS

**Cisgender:** Those who identify with the gender that was assigned to them at birth.

**Transgender:** We use “trans” in this policy as an abbreviation of the term “transgender”. As an umbrella term, “transgender” includes people who cross socially constructed gender boundaries with a gender identity or presentation not typically associated with an assigned or perceived biological sex. This includes both binary and non-binary identities: trans men and women, genderqueer people, gender-neutral/androgynous people, and other variations and combinations of gender identity and expression.

**Intersex:** A general term used for a variety of conditions in which a person is born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy that doesn't seem to fit the societally accepted definitions of “female” or “male”.

**Two-spirit:** A term used to describe those who fulfill a variety of complex gender roles within indigenous communities. Note that two-spirit people do not identify with the colonialist gender binary and cannot be defined within it.

**Cissexism:** The assumption that everyone is cisgender until proven otherwise. This includes equating vaginas with women, and penises with men.

**Transphobia:** A range of antagonistic and hateful attitudes and feelings against trans and intersex people.

**Deadname/deadnaming:** A “deadname” refers to the name that a trans person was given at birth, or a name that they used in the past that no longer reflects who they are. “Deadnaming” refers to the act of calling a trans person by a name they no longer use.

**Gatekeeping:** To attempt to dictate who is and who isn't trans based on arbitrary rules such as the amount of dysphoria one experiences, their willingness to adhere to the gender binary, and their willingness to conform to heteronormative and cissexist gender roles. This is also referred to as “gender policing”.

**Misgendering:** To refer to someone with pronouns that they do not use or claim for themselves.

### **3 NON-DISCRIMINATION AND INCLUSION POLICY**

3.1 South House will commit to anti-oppression practices in relation to all trans, intersex, and two-spirit people and actively promoting a space that is trans-positive and -inclusive. Any transphobia (outlined above) will not be tolerated and can result in temporary or permanent removal from South House and events held by South House.

3.2 All South House materials will be updated to reflect South House's Trans Inclusion Policy and will commit to the use of trans positive language. This includes refraining from the use of binary language (his or hers, s/he, both genders, opposite gender, etc), and instead using gender-inclusive language (theirs, they, all genders, other genders, etc).

3.3 When talking about gendered oppression, trans and intersex people will be mentioned and included in those discussions. Gendered violence is not exclusive to cisgender women, and South House is no longer a "Women's Centre". South House actively seeks to include trans people in discussions of gendered violence.

3.4 South House will commit to maintaining gender-inclusive programming.

### **4 EMPLOYMENT EQUITY**

South House maintains an employment equity mandate that prioritizes trans people. For more information, refer to the South House Hiring Policy.

### **5 CONFIDENTIALITY**

5.1 The trans or intersex status of any and all members of South House is considered confidential and will not be recorded or disclosed without the express permission of the individual.

5.2 The deadname (or previous name) of any trans person will not be disclosed without express permission of the individual.

5.3 All volunteers and board members must sign a confidentiality statement at the beginning of their involvement with South House.

### **6 ACCOMMODATIONS**

6.1 South House will commit to having a gender-inclusive, wheelchair accessible washroom. All events held by South House at outside locations must also be equipped with such.

6.2 If South House is unable to find a hosting location that meets these qualifications and must use a location with gendered washrooms, the gendered signs will be temporarily removed for the event. In the case that the signs are permanently fixed (for example, nailed to the bathroom door), alternative gender-inclusive signage will be placed over them.

## **7 GENDER POLICING**

South House has a duty to provide the safest space possible for trans and intersex people; all trans and intersex people will have their identities welcomed and embraced at South House. Therefore, gender policing or “gatekeeping” of any kind will not be tolerated. This includes comments such as:

- I. “[x] isn’t trans because they don’t present the way I perceive trans people should”
- II. “[x] isn’t trans because they haven’t medically transitioned/don’t want to medically transition”
- III. “[x] isn’t trans because they don’t experience the amount of dysphoria I think they should”
- IV. “[x] is just doing it for attention”

## **8 DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT**

Discrimination against trans, intersex and two-spirit people is pervasive and complex. Discrimination faced by trans, intersex and two-spirit people can be both overt and subtle. Listed below are some common forms of transphobic harassment; however, please note that this list is not exhaustive.

- I. Intentionally misgendering/deadnaming
- II. Implying that trans people are not “real” men or women
- III. Stereotyping trans people
- IV. Lower level of care, or denial of care, due to trans status
- V. Intrusive questions about bodies or transition
- VI. Fetishizing trans bodies
- VII. Mocking, teasing, and malicious jokes
- VIII. Cissexism
- IX. Physical, sexual, or emotional violence

## **9 OUTREACH**

9.1 South House will initiate and maintain relationships with trans, intersex, and two-spirit communities, as well as trans, intersex, and two-spirit focused societies around Dalhousie, HRM, and Nova Scotia.

9.2 South House will create outreach strategies around the community to centre participation from trans, intersex, and two-spirit people.

## **10 RESOURCES**

South House will commit to providing up-to-date resources on trans, intersex, and two-spirit identity and lived experience. The educational email run by the South House Board of Directors may be contacted to provide such resources: [FAQ@southhousehalifax.ca](mailto:FAQ@southhousehalifax.ca).

## **11 BUDGET**

South House will commit to prioritizing funding to support outreach, events, education, and resources centering trans, intersex, and two-spirit people.

## **12 PROGRAMMING**

12.1 South House will commit to providing programs and services centered around trans, intersex, and two-spirit people.

12.2 South House will encourage and support trans, intersex, and two-spirit people in facilitating or planning initiatives.

## **13 EDUCATION**

13.1 South House will continue to increase and update its knowledge of trans, two-spirit and intersex issues. South House will continue to update resources, websites, policies, and more to include trans, intersex, and two-spirit people with self-determined knowledge and experiences.

13.2 All new staff, board members, and volunteers will receive education on trans issues.

13.3 Though volunteers are only expected to have basic training (an understanding and respect for trans people and their experiences with oppression), both staff and board members are expected to have an in-depth knowledge of trans identity and oppression. South House recognizes that not everyone has access to up-to-date information, resources, and knowledge. Therefore, South House will provide prospective volunteers and board members with resources as needed.