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1.14 Community, Diversity, and Victim Services

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1.14.4 Gender Diversity

(Enacted: 2016.06.21)
(Effective: 2022.05.17)

POLICY

The Vancouver Police Department (VPD) is committed to delivering effective police services which respect the needs of Vancouver's communities. It is incumbent upon all VPD employees, including sworn members and civilian professionals, to treat people of all gender identities and gender expressions with compassion, dignity and respect.

Gender identity and gender expression were added as a prohibited grounds of discrimination to the British Columbia *Human Rights Code* in 2016 and the *Canadian Human Rights Act* in 2017.

The VPD acknowledges that all language, including the language of diversity and inclusion, is dynamic and evolves to reflect changes in society. This policy recognizes the intersection of power and language and is aligned with best practices and training. The VPD recognizes the importance of language towards building and maintaining relationships with the community, and commits to supporting our employees as the language of diversity and inclusion changes.

DEFINITIONS

The following definitions go beyond what is described in procedure. The VPD expects employees to use respectful language that promotes equity.

Gender binary: a social construction whereby people are thought to be of either one of two genders: man/boy or woman/girl. These genders are expected to correspond to birth sex: male or female. This social construction is being replaced by an understanding of gender as a continuum. See also gender spectrum.

Gender expression: how a person publicly presents or expresses their gender. This may include behaviour, appearance, and mannerisms. A person's preferred name and pronouns are also common ways to express their gender.

Gender identity: each person's internal and individual experience with gender. This includes their sense of being a woman, a man, both or neither, or anywhere along the gender spectrum. Gender is independent of sex assignment at birth. Gender identity should not be confused with a person's sexual orientation as gender identity does not define sexual orientation.

Gender non-conforming or gender variant: individuals who do not follow gender stereotypes based on traditional behaviour, actions and roles of women and men.

Gender spectrum: gender as a continuum, as opposed to a binary concept. This is replacing the social construct of gender binary. See also gender binary.

Intersex: Intersex people are born with sex characteristics (including genitals, gonads and chromosome patterns) that do not fit binary notions of male or female bodies. Intersex describes a wide range of natural bodily variations. In some cases, intersex traits are visible at birth while in others, they are not apparent until puberty. Some chromosomal intersex variations may not be physically apparent at all. Intersex refers to biological sex and is distinct from gender identity and sexual orientation.

Preferred name: name that an individual uses to reflect the individual's lived identity (the gender that the person knows themselves to be and live). Calling someone by a previous name rather than the name that reflects the individual's lived identity is disrespectful. Intentionally denying an individual's identity or outing someone as transgender is harmful to the person and can expose them to danger within the community.

Sex: biological category based on reproductive, anatomical and genetic characteristics with the broad categories of female, male, or intersex.

Transgender or gender diverse: an umbrella term that encompasses a range of identities; however more specifically refers to people whose gender identity is different or divergent from the sex they were assigned at birth. Transgender can mean transcending beyond, existing between, or crossing over the gender spectrum.

PROCEDURE

1. Upon being informed that a person identifies as, or is, a gender other than what they may appear, or what their government issued identification indicates, VPD employees shall refer to the person's preferred name and pronoun. For example:
 - a. *She, her, hers;*
 - b. *He, him, his;*
 - c. *They, them, their, ze, hir, hirs; or*
 - d. Other pronouns requested by the person.
2. If employees are uncertain of which pronouns to use, employees should use gender neutral language.
3. When entering the person into a General Occurrence (GO) report, or other official report, as an "entity", employees must enter the person by the name and gender indicated on their official government identification (e.g., driver's license, birth certificate, BC identification card).
4. When completing narrative pages of the GO, employees must use the person's preferred name and pronoun(s). It is recommended that employees use language such as:

"The complainant, NAME, will be referred to by their preferred name - NAME - in the remainder of this report".

NOTE: In referring to transgender people, the word transgender is to be used as an adjective (e.g., transgender man or transgender woman) and not as a noun (e.g., Tony is transgendered).
5. If a transgender person is to be transported and lodged at the Vancouver Jail, the Jail NCO should be contacted and informed of the person's preferred name and gender identity. See [RPM Section 1.12.1\(v\) Searches of Person](#) and [RPM Section 1.12.1\(iii\) Transportation of Persons in Custody](#).