

Five Arguments for Trans Inclusion in the Homelessness Sector



Why Argue for Trans Inclusion?

1. Not everyone is required to do this
 - But you might want to or have no choice
2. Backlash against trans rights
 - It is likely to reach spaces you are in at some point
3. Conversations allow people to change and grow
 - The long, slow work of persuasion



Five Arguments

1. Trans people have the right to be included
2. Access without safety is no access at all
3. Inclusion defeats fear
4. Base expectations on behaviour, not identity
5. Disproportionate need, disproportionate harm



1) Trans People Have the Right to Be Included

- **2017:** Gender identity and expression added to Canadian Human Rights Act
- **OHRC:** Duty to accommodate trans people
- Not perfect, but it's important



2) Access Without Safety Is No Access at All

- Inclusion based on sex at birth ignores safety
- Real inclusion only happens with safety, and safety requires choice



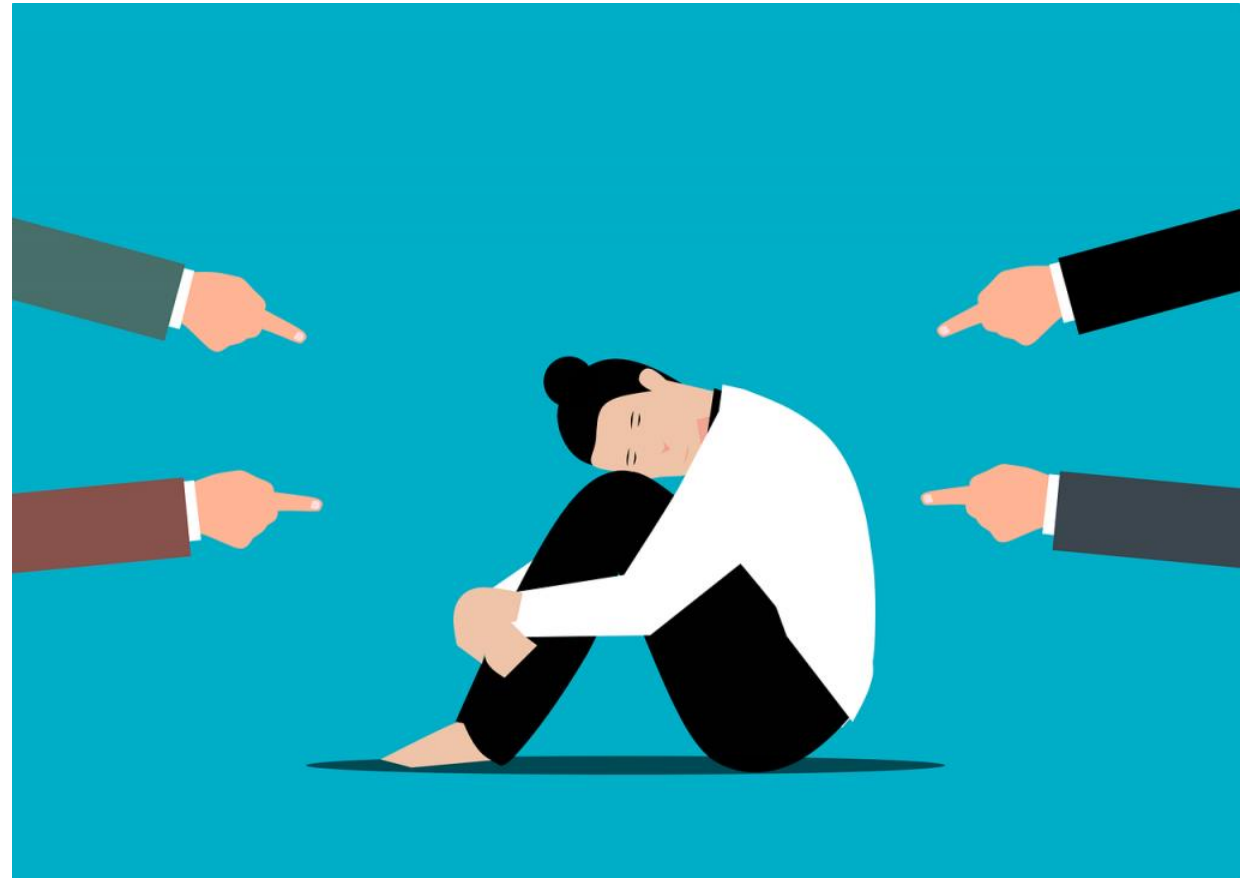
3) Inclusion Defeats Fear

- False inclusion is based in prejudice
- Prejudice is based on fear
- Inclusion creates positive examples, which breaks down fear



4) Base Expectations on Behaviour, not Identity

- That said, conversations about safety are important
- There will always be people who engage in predatory behaviour
- Clear norms for behaviour that are the same for everyone
- Reframe concerns rooted in transphobia as ones about behaviour



5) Disproportionate Need, Disproportionate Harm

- Trans people are more likely to need homelessness services
- When accessing services, trans people have distinct needs
- Harm is therefore disproportionate when services fail to be inclusive



Image: The 519 Community Centre

What These Arguments Have in Common

1. Avoid defining what a man or woman is
2. Don't depend on the characteristics of individual trans people
3. Focus on the goal of inclusion



But What About...

- What about hardened transphobes?
 - Identify and confront, not necessarily convince
- What about trans-specific services? An alternative to inclusion?
 - No — choice remains key



Thank You for Listening!

Trans inclusion will be a reality as long as we remain committed to it!

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