Gender diversity training and Canadian academic library workers

A survey in progress

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Introductions

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Agenda

1. Project Overview
2. Definitions
3. Literature Review

4. Survey Design
5. Future Steps
6. Invitation to Participate

Context and scope

Our survey is in progress: no findings or data analysis, limiting discussions that could influence potential participants.

We are mostly new to survey design, being transparent about uncertainties and challenges, even basic ones.

Project Overview

Why this topic?

The political and cultural climate demands it

rise in anti-trans sentiment in political, legal and health care arenas, in schools -- and in libraries.

Researcher motivation

research imperative for academic librarians, desire to make that research meaningful, better serve trans patrons and colleagues in our own spaces

Definitions

Gender diversity training

Any learning or skill-building events that include content designed to increase understanding of the lived experience of trans and gender non-conforming people and their communities.

Trans and gender non-conforming

Gender identities held by people who do not identify with the identity they were assigned at birth.

The term includes trans people with binary identities (ex. trans woman or trans man), as well as those whose identities are fluid or non-binary, and those who do not identify with any gender. The term refers to gender identity rather than sexuality or sexual orientation.

Trans

Our inclusive umbrella term of choice, a shorthand not only for transgender, but for "trans and gender non-conforming"

Literature Review

LIS research &
erasure of trans experience

"Despite the unique needs and barriers, most LIS research merges trans people with more general studies about "LGBTQ" populations... Even in those studies the transgender representation is very minor and the results almost exclusively focus on lesbian and gay library users, or generalize needs to the entire "LGBTQ" population. Additionally, some studies, past and present, use outdated language... and/or conflate sexual identity and gender identity..."

(Epsten 2021 p.16)

Academic library services & barriers

Institutional supports & barriers: name change policies, all gender bathrooms

Collections & resources: for academic research, and community

Access: problematic cataloguing and subject headings

Public services: lack of knowledge, calls for **training**

"staff seem aware of deficiencies in their own knowledge, and express strong desire for educational opportunities..."

(White et al 2018 Gender-Inclusive Library Workgroup Report p. 6)

Gender diversity training for staff

"From my research on trans inclusion in libraries over the past several years, it is abundantly clear that educational resources are absolutely necessary to facilitate intentional gender inclusive practices in libraries ... Ally training isn't for everyone, because not everyone is an ally, but much of the information in those workshops … would be valuable to any worker in an organization striving toward inclusion… You don't need to be an ally to not be ignorant."

(Keralis 2023 p.287-88)

Frequently prescribed, not much described

Mostly case-study, best-practice articles

Implicit and explicit connections between gender diversity training and EDI efforts

Scarcity of literature surveying non-librarian library workers

Research Questions

1. Are workers in Canadian university libraries receiving gender diversity training?

2. If so, what was the format, content and context of the training, and what was their experience of the training?

3. If not, are they interested in participating in training, and why or why not?

Creating the Survey

Three main sections of survey: demographics, people who have taken training, people who have not taken training

An iterative process: as we wrote and edited the survey we were able to specify the direction of the research

Translation: university service to research faculty at Concordia

Ethics and Data

Ethics approval process - great way to:

- pay attention to details, operationalize and plan
- (re)consider your research questions vs instrument, survey questions
- think about privacy and confidentiality vs richness of data
- in our case: move away from institutional/library data towards personal experience of training

Open data: we fell on the side of not depositing data due to potential sensitivity of data collected

Survey Questions: Demographics

What is the size of the university in which your library is based?
- Large (Over 30,000 students)
- Medium (10,000-30,000 students)
- Small (Under 10,000 students)
- Prefer not to answer

What type of role do you occupy at the library?
- Professional librarian or archivist
- Library administration
- Paraprofessional library assistant/technician
- IT support staff or technology specialist
- Other, please describe

Survey Questions: Training

Who was invited to attend this training?
- All employees of your university
- All library employees
- All library employees who work with students and/or the public
- All library employees in a specific unit(s), please specify unit(s)
- Only professional librarians
- Only non-professional or paraprofessional library staff
- Other, please specify

Optional: Have you made any changes in your work practices due to this training? Please provide specifics if you feel comfortable. [Short answer]

Future Steps

Survey Launch

Potential Challenges

Data Gathering and Analysis

Limitations

Future Projects

Invitation to participate:

rb.gy/94489j

Cited References

Epsten, J. (2021). *Transformation through cultural humility: Developing an online curriculum for supporting transgender and gender variant people in libraries* [Master's thesis, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill] . http://id.loc.gov/vocabulary/iso639-2/eng

Keralis, SDC. (2023). Is the Library a Gendered Place? Journal of Library Administration, 63(2), 284–289. https://doi.org/10.1080/01930826.2022.2159246

White, E., Coghill, D. E., Doherty, M. T., Palmer, L., & Barkley, S. (2018). *Gender-inclusive library workgroup report* (VCU Libraries Task Force Reports). Virginia Commonwealth University. https://doi.org/10.21974/338X-PS11

Trans inclusion: presentations

Gilgan, A. (2020, June 4-5). Transgender allyship in libraries. California Academic & Research Libraries 2020 Conference: Slides.

Kim, S., Kehrein, M., Yogi, B., & Garber-Pearson, R. (2017, November). Reimaging transgender 'inclusion' for libraries. Washington Library Association 2017 Annual Conference: Pre-Conference Workshop Slides; Conference Slides; Best Practices Handout; Resources & Readings; Recorded Webinar.

Krueger, S.G. (October 24, 2019). Trans inclusion for libraries. Workshop at the Virginia Library Association Annual Conference. Norfolk, VA: Slides.

McCracken, K. (2020, February 27). Trans and gender non-conforming inclusion in libraries. Association of College & Research Libraries Universities Libraries Section Professional Development Series. Webinar: Recording; Slides.

White, E., Barkley, S., Doherty, M. T., & Coghill, D. E. (2019, December 11). Developing Gender-Affirming Library Spaces, Systems, Services and Staff. Association of Southeastern Research Libraries Webinar: Recording; Slides.

Further readings & resources

Burnham, K. T. (2023). Gender Inclusivity Trainings at Academic Libraries: Two Case Studies. In K. K. Adolpho, S. G. Krueger, & K. McCracken (Eds.), *Trans and gender diverse voices in libraries* (pp. 351–373). Library Juice Press.

Egale Canada: 2SLGBTQI Terms and Concepts / Termes et concepts 2SLGBTQI + Research & Resources

Drake, A. A., & Bielefield, A. (2017). Equitable access: Information seeking behavior, information needs, and necessary library accommodations for transgender patrons. Library & Information Science Research, 39(3), 160–168. Link

May, E. (2019, September 5). Not Cis in LIS: A Roundtable Discussion about being Trans in Libraries. BCLA Perspectives. Link

Wagner, T. L., & Crowley, A. (2020). Why are bathrooms inclusive if the stacks exclude? Systemic exclusion of trans and gender nonconforming persons in post-Trump academic librarianship. *Reference Services Review, 48*(1), 159–181.

Yates, E. (2022, June 6). "It's a very straight space": Gender-diverse students' narratives about the library. *Canadian Association of Professional Academic Librarians (CAPAL) Conference 2022*. Link.

Our next presentation on this topic:
June 14, *Gender and Sexuality in Information Studies Colloquium,*
Princeton University Library

Thank you!
Questions??

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