## Transgender Individuals

Issued By: The Executive Director

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Belkin House strives to be welcoming and inclusive, and respects the diversity of ~~people~~ whoever may access our shelters and programs regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation.

A **“transgender”** person is a person whose gender identity or gender expression does not match the sex assigned to them at birth. **“Transgender”** is an umbrella term that includes:

* + Persons who identify as “male” or “female.” For example, a person who was assigned male at birth, but identifies as female, is a trans woman or transgender woman. MTF is the acronym for Male-to-Female. A person who was assigned female at birth, but identifies as male, is a trans man or transgender man. FTM is the acronym for Female- to-Male.
	+ Persons who identify as genderqueer, two-spirited, or gender non-conforming. For example, people who identify as both male and female; people who identify as having no specific gender; people who identify as belonging to a “third gender”; and people who identify somewhere along the gender spectrum between male and female. The term “two-spirited” is culturally specific to North American Aboriginal communities and refers to queer Aboriginal people who identify with both a male and female spirit. This term is not exclusive to gender identity, and can also refer to sexual orientation.

Transgender clients are accommodated according to the gender they identify with and are supported in that identity. Staff use the name and pronoun specified by the person and keep the person’s transgender status confidential. Staff will use the name and pronoun specified by the client in all interactions, as well as when discussing the client with other staff.

Staff will work with clients to ensure that they are able to use the sleeping area and washrooms that clients identify as matching their gender identity and as supporting their safety and dignity. When Belkin House is unable to admit someone who is transgender, staff will assist the person to locate safe and suitable alternative accommodation.

Transgender individuals seeking shelter or applying for our PDP Program will be required to meet the same basic intake criteria and assessment procedures as all other prospective Residents or Clients. Admittance to program, services and residency will be considered on the basis of: a) facility & program capacity and/or limitations, b) legitimate program requirements or prerequisites, c) the suitability of the client (for example, willingness and ability to comply with House Rules).

Staff will work with a transgender client to ensure that they are able to use the sleeping area within the dorm environment (male or female) as matching their gender identity and that will be safe, suitable and beneficial for that individual. Because the Belkin House shelters are dorm

environments, individuals who meet basic intake criteria and identify as male, will be offered accommodation in the male dorm; and individuals who identify as female will be offered accommodated in the female dorm. The same principle applies to the PDP Program.

Intake staff respect the client’s decision and ask how they and the rest of the staff team can best support the client to feel safe in the space. If the client is not comfortable with any of the available options, staff will assist them to locate safe and suitable alternative accommodation.

Once admitted, if there are concerns about the individual’s safety, those who are threatening the safety of the Resident (through intimidation, threats, violence, or other forms of unacceptable behaviour) will be approached by Staff and their behaviour addressed in accordance with Belkin House policy and procedures.

**Note**: as per Belkin House Policy, Residents or Clients who harass, abuse, assault, or discriminate against other Residents or Clients will be dealt with in accordance with residential guidelines and policies. Belkin House has a zero tolerance to harassment of any resident or client. Belkin House recognizes that harassment based upon sex or gender identity is discriminatory behaviour and will be treated as such.

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