

Section 1:
Elements of a Welcoming Space

How to Make Spaces More Welcoming and Inclusive

From research and community engagement with diverse community partners, it was found that there are many ways to create more inclusive spaces. Welcoming spaces, positive spaces, and safer spaces are all terms that have been used for initiatives relating to fostering inclusion and cultural safety in a particular space.

The 519, a service organization focusing on the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, defines a welcoming space as: "A space where people can find themselves represented and reflected and where they understand that all people are treated with dignity and respect." *In Awareness to Action: A Health Strategy for Women and Islanders Who Are Gender Diverse* we define cultural safety as "an outcome based on respectful engagement that recognizes and strives to address power

imbalances inherent in the health care system. It results in an environment free of racism and discrimination, where people feel safe when receiving health care."

Beyond the definitions, what are the elements of a welcoming space for both clients and staff?

- They can look around the physical environment and see **inclusive symbols, images, and artwork**.
- They can hear **positive and inclusive language** being used.
- They have access to forms that include space for their pronouns, gender identity, and chosen name if it is different than their legal name. **Their pronouns, chosen name, and gender identity will be respected.**
- They can access a **gender-neutral and accessible** washroom with clear signage.
- They can see a **posted anti-discrimination policy** that outlines that discrimination based on gender, race, Indigenous identity, ethnicity, citizenship status, disability, sexual orientation (any protected grounds under the Human Rights Act) will not be tolerated and what to do/who to speak to if it occurs.
- They can see an **acknowledgement of the First Nation** (and are made aware of the Mi'kmaq Health Systems Navigators)
- Clients should be made aware of any **Interpretation services** that may be available and assisted in securing the services.
- Staff can access and are strongly encouraged to take **training on cultural safety and humility, diversity, equity, and inclusion, and anti-racism.**

Our ultimate goal is spaces where people feel:

- Seen
- Heard
- Respected
- Accepted
- Like they're an active part in the decision-making process
- Confident in what to expect when accessing healthcare services
- Like they understand the information being requested of them and provided to them

³Definition adapted from First Nations Health Authority

THE WELCOMING SPACE TOOLKIT



