

# Gender Informed Approaches to Substance Use Treatment

**Trauma, Gender and Substance Use  
Webinar Series**



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# The Trauma/ Gender/ Substance Use (TGS) Project

- Financial assistance provided by Health Canada
- 2 year knowledge exchange project
  - Partner with CCSA and people working in the substance use field from across Canada to collaboratively develop:
    - Evidence based guidance
    - Training
    - Public health messages
    - Knowledge products (fact sheets, resource lists etc.)
- Gender informed and transformative principles integrated with TIP principles

# TGS Project Goal

- To guide the further integration of trauma informed, gender informed and gender transformative practices into substance use prevention, health promotion, treatment, harm reduction and policy in Canada

# Today's Objectives

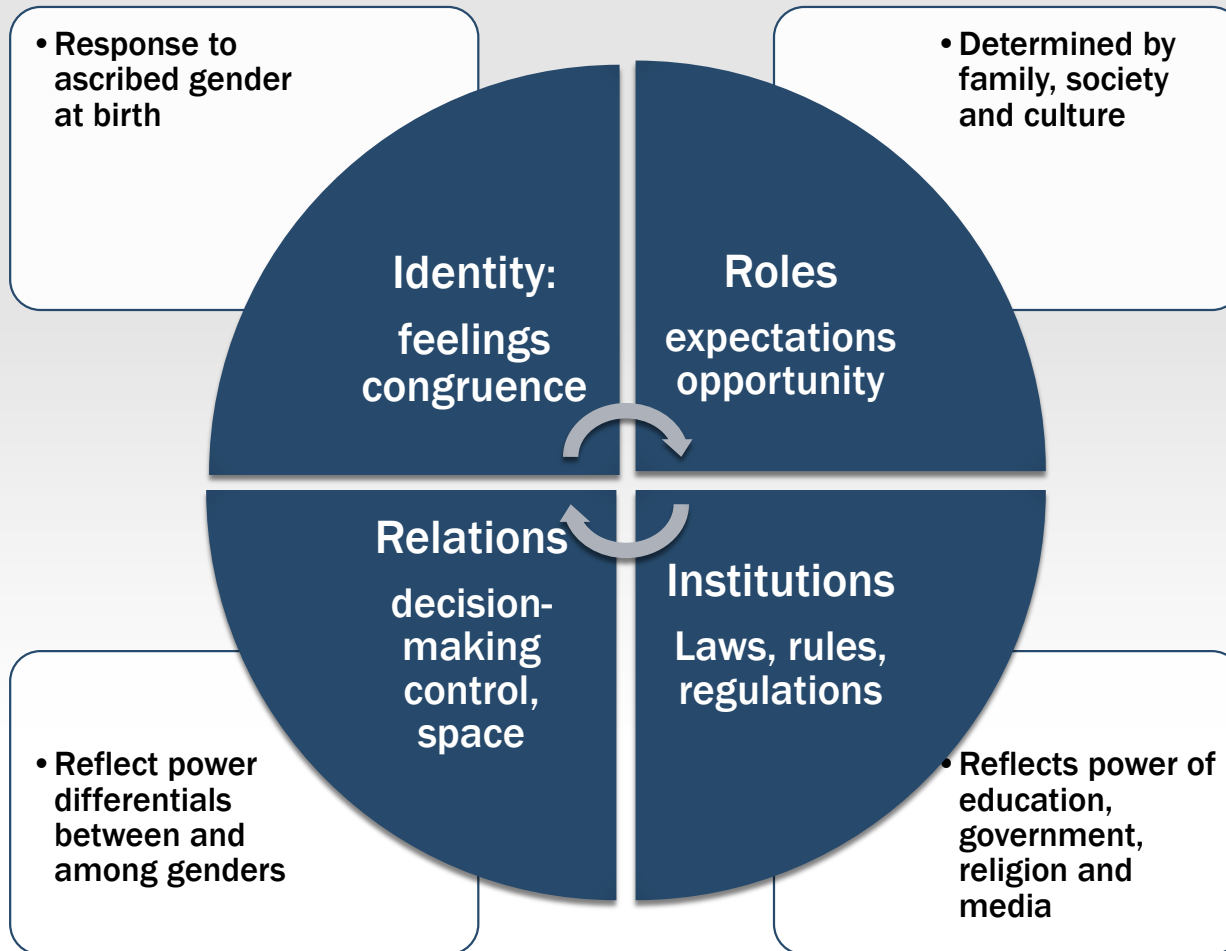
- This webinar will focus on a range of approaches for integrating gender informed and gender transformative approaches into substance use treatment.
- We will discuss successes and challenges experienced in developing and delivering gender informed substance use treatment services.



## Welcome to the Centre of Excellence for Women's Health

We are a research and knowledge exchange centre focused on sex and gendered approaches to health, with strong roots in policy, practice, academic and community networks.

[bccewh.bc.ca](http://bccewh.bc.ca)

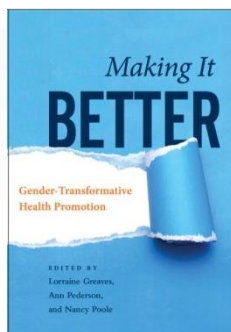
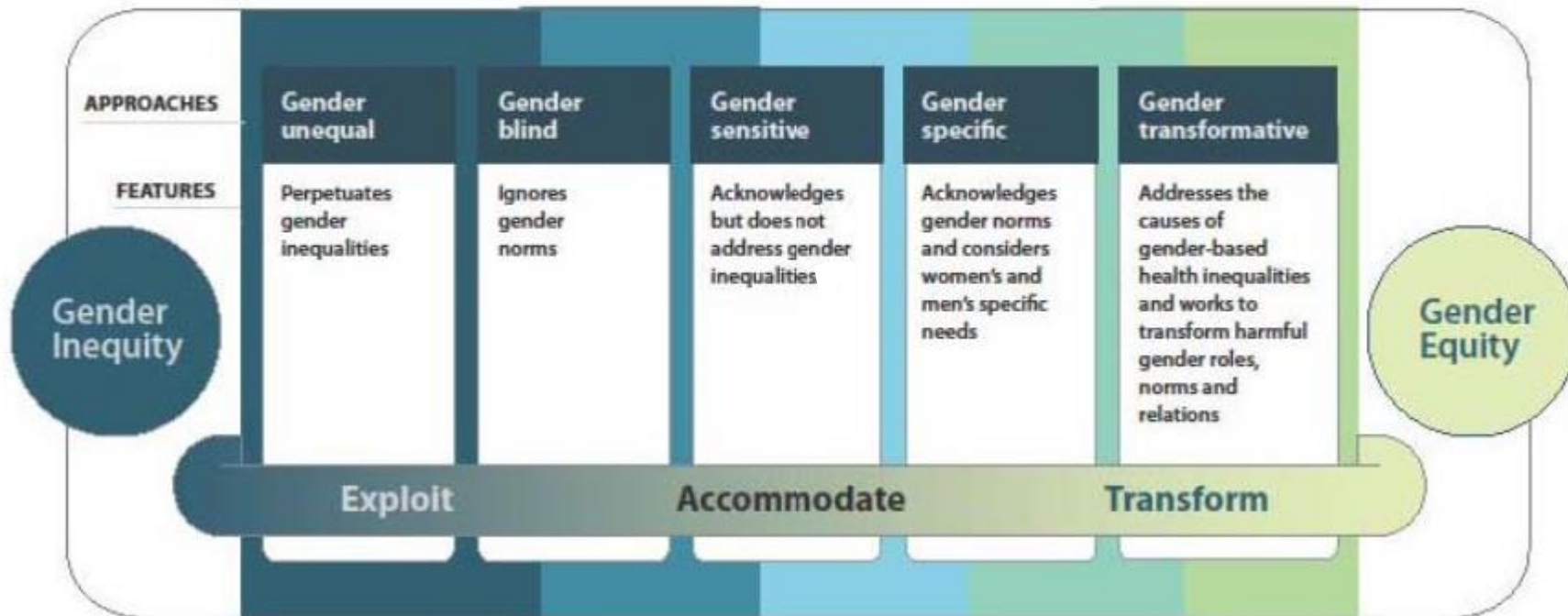


Gender has many components

intersecting and interacting with sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, culture, SES...



## A Continuum of Approaches to Action on Gender and Health



Greaves, L., Pederson, A., & Poole, N. (Eds.). (2014). *Making it Better: Gender-Transformative Health Promotion*. Toronto, ON: Canadian Scholars Press. p.22





# Treatment Setting and Mandate

# Renascent Addiction Treatment

- Organizational mandate
  - Provide addiction recovery programs for those at the most serious end of the substance use continuum
    - Seeking/needing abstinence goal
    - Working with full circle of client's loved ones
    - Within a 12 recovery model
- Population specific foundational work (Renascent and sister organization Donwood Institute)
  - Renascent Women's Program founded 1980
  - Donwood Women's Program founded 1992
  - Donwood LesBiGay Program founded 1995
    - Renamed Rainbow Service 2003



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*The road to recovery starts here.*

# Who we are

## The Jean Tweed Centre



For Women & Their Families

- Working from a framework of safety, connection and empowerment, women-centered care is a holistic approach which validates the experiences of women and contextualizes substance abuse and mental health within her broader social and cultural experiences, including trauma and violence

# Continuum of Care

- Support & Stabilization
- Residential & Day Programming
- Wrap-Around Services (Family, Trauma, Individual Counselling, Continuing Care, Telemedicine)
- Outreach (Pregnancy/Parenting, Concurrent A/MH, Justice)
- Supportive Housing (Permanent, women-led households)

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# BREAKAWAY ADDICTION SERVICES



## **Our Mission:**

- To provide seamless, comprehensive and effective harm reduction services and a full range of addictions treatment services that are amenable to an individual's needs and goals.
- Our services are offered through community-based facilities with a focus on street and community outreach.

## **Philosophy:**

- We are dedicated to providing treatment that includes all aspects of our client's lives and situations.
- We have always operated on a non abstinence or 'harm reduction' approach, which forms the philosophical basis for all our work.



# Gender specific treatment programming

# Services for Women

- Increased Social Awareness/Acknowledgement
- Women's Voices –Feminism Influences Health Care
- Growing Dissatisfaction with Dominant Treatment Models
- Advocacy – “Jean Tweed” & Others

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# Women Specific Treatment

## A Braided Approach

SAFETY – Emotional & Physical  
CULTURE – Environment  
GENDER – By Women/For Women

### CREATING SANCTUARY:

- Non Violent Social Engagement
- Trauma Informed

### CLINICAL COMPETENCY

- Self Reflective
- Cultivating Gender Lens

### REDUCING BARRIERS & BUILDING CAPACITY –

- Flexibility/Child Care/Housing/Women's
- Health/Collaboration

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# EVALUATION

## WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED

- Feedback:
- High Satisfaction Rates
- Feeling of Safety
- Validation
- Support for family needs
- Continuum of services (trauma/family/etc.)
- Example:
- Mom & Kids Too
  - ▣ Retention/Goal Attainment/Family Reunification

# Population Focused Treatment

- Population Specific programming
  - Critical mass of clients and staff
  - All or essential core program elements delivered by clinicians from that population
  - Key program sessions explicit to unique, perhaps exclusive, experiences and recovery issues faced by that population
- Population sensitive program
  - Organization, facility, and staff sensitive to and attentive to unique, perhaps exclusive, experiences and recovery issues faced by that population
- Population neutral program
  - Program content focused on common elements of recovery faced by all addiction clients working to recovery



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In what ways has  
discussion and  
practice changed  
with requests  
for treatment from  
transgender people?

# PROGRAMS FOR LGBTTTQQ2SIA INDIVIDUALS

- **Available**

- Not enough programs specifically for LGBTTTQQ2SIA people
- Not workable to offer generic services with some accommodation
  - Clear evidence that these individuals face barriers, and are often uncomfortable in mainstream services
- Services that exist are generally poorly distributed

- **Accessible**

- Barriers to service must be minimal (Location, physical plant, first contact staff)
- Information about services must be communicated in appropriate media.
- Other clients must be accommodating

- **Acceptable**

- Staff: Incorporate significant number of peers; Non-peer staff need to be genuinely accepting (pronouns etc.)
- Program: co-developed with clients; respond to specific population needs; Low barrier intake; Flexible to changing needs/wants



# Responding to Transgender Clients

- Anti-Oppressive Lens – Inclusion Policy – Challenging binary assumptions
- Trans Access Training
- Messaging/Marketing Service to Trans Communities
- Interagency Networking
- Infrastructure, i.e. washrooms
- Curriculum/Programming/Language
- Evolving Knowledge/Practice

# Renascent's Journey to Improve Services

- Pieces to Pathways focus on addiction service to the Trans population
  - Objective to improve access and reduce/eliminate barriers to effective treatment
- Pieces and Pathways work with Renascent
  - Full organizational audit in relation to improving service for the Trans population
    - Policies and procedures
    - Website
    - Promotional materials
    - Physical environments
    - Program session outlines
    - Audits of program sessions
    - Audits of intake and assessment interviews
    - Staff training



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# Comments, Questions, Discussion

Type your  
questions

In the Q&A  
box in the  
bottom right  
hand corner