

## *Talking Points about Accessible Bathrooms*

### **1. If we had all-gender bathrooms, wouldn't women be less safe?**

Many people's first reaction to providing gender non-specific bathrooms is that women's safety will be compromised. However, an analysis of the safety precautions in bathrooms suggests that women are not currently protected by the existence of gender-specific bathrooms. Women's bathrooms do not provide any physical barrier to potential predators, who can just as easily walk through an unlocked door that reads "women" as any other unlocked door. Gender segregation in bathrooms does not prevent sexual assault, and if anything, provides an illusion of safety that is not true. To increase the safety of bathrooms, we would recommend creating single-user bathrooms, providing bathroom doors that go from floor to ceiling without gaps, and eliminating the gender segregation of bathrooms that results in severe access issues for transgender and gender variant people.

### **2. All-gender bathrooms will make people uncomfortable.**

It is true that for people who are used to using gender-specific bathrooms, using gender non-specific bathrooms may feel strange or uncomfortable. Often times, social change that increases access for an excluded group and eliminated discrimination requires a reform of social practices that makes people who have not been negatively affected by the existing arrangements uncomfortable. However, discomfort or modesty, when compared with the inability to engage in basic necessary biological functions at work, school, and in public spaces, cannot be prioritized. As we make changes to increase access and reduce discrimination, we must all commit to adjusting to those changes.

### **3. The female clients/students/customers at my agency/school/business will not be able to accept using the bathroom with transgender women. Many are survivors of sexual violence, and may be triggered by using the bathroom with someone with masculine body parts.**

When we work with populations that have survived violence, it is essential to try to create safe spaces to accommodate their needs. Many of us work with populations that are diverse, with different clients/students/customers having survived different types of oppressions, and sometimes even having misconceptions or biased beliefs about each other. The proper response to a misperception that transwomen are not 'real women' or are sexual predators or a threat to non-trans women is not to exclude transwomen from women's spaces or facilities, but to help educate any women who are concerned about inclusion and dispel myths about trans people. Excluding people because other have biased misconceptions about them only increases oppression and discrimination, and does not work to create safe spaces for all women.