

Moose Jaw Pride & The Safer Transitions Project

Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan



Key Insights:

- The road to success starts with meeting the community or transition house where they are at in their understanding and creating opportunities for them to move forward, rather than trying to push them or be prescriptive.
- A lot of the apprehension that people show comes from a lack of contact with gender diverse people, and a fear of the unfamiliar and unknown. When people have the chance to learn from the lived experience of someone from the Trans community, this begins to change.
- Staff really began driving change after they were invited into the conversations. Make sure the people responsible for each area of work know that they have the power to make change.

Organization Profile: [Moose Jaw Pride](#) aims “to celebrate and support gender and sexually diverse people through the provision of fabulously inclusive community services and educational opportunities.” Laura, the MJP Education Coordinator, has been working with five transition houses across Saskatchewan to build their capacity to provide equitable services to gender-diverse people seeking crisis support.

The Safer Transitions Project: At the beginning of the project, **Laura went through the intake process** at each transition house, as if she were coming to seek support. Doing so revealed the barriers that could arise for someone from the gender diverse community, and helped reveal what needed to change. Based on this experience, they brought together the directors and staff to discuss the changes that could be made. Involving everyone in these discussions helped **create buy-in among the staff**, who realized that the changes would create a safer work environment and allow them to serve clients better. Laura also did **role playing** with staff to prepare them for talking to clients about different subjects.



Once they started having these conversations openly, it turned out that many staff had someone among their family or friends who was gender or sexually diverse, but they had never told their coworkers. This was an eye-opening experience for other staff, who were forced to think about why their coworkers hadn't felt safe sharing with them. **These personal connections and real stories helped people who might have been hesitant become motivated to make changes.**

MJP and the transition houses created a [Safer Transitions pamphlet](#) that explains the work that has been done to make the transition house more inclusive, and who is responsible for making sure these changes happen. That way, residents and visitors know what is happening and who to talk to if they are uncomfortable. The pamphlets also clarify who is welcome at the shelter, and how to treat them respectfully.

They also explored **how to support gender and sexually diverse youth who might come to the shelter with their parents**. For example, if the only computer is in the common area, young people may not feel comfortable using this computer to search for resources or connect with people online who are going through similar things. It is important to consider whether parents know how their child identifies, and to respect the confidentiality of information provided.



“See us. Listen and hear us. Help and protect us. Nothing about us without us!”