

THE CANADIAN CENTRE FOR  
**GENDER+SEXUAL  
DIVERSITY**



LE CENTRE CANADIEN DE LA  
**DIVERSITÉ DES GENRES  
+ DE LA SEXUALITÉ**

# GENDER AND SEXUALITY ALLIANCE LEADERSHIP FORUM: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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Last updated: 22/08/2018

THE CANADIAN CENTRE FOR GENDER AND SEXUAL DIVERSITY

440 Albert Street C304, Ottawa, ON K1R 5B5



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## **ORGANIZATION**

### **Who is The Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity?**

The Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity, formerly Jer's Vision, was founded in 2005. It is a non-profit Canadian organization that is a leader in anti-discrimination work, particularly in youth communities. CCGSD runs programming all over Canada and the United States, reaching about 250,000 people annually. We also are a proud leader in the International Day of Pink, engaging millions of people in wearing pink and running programs that stand up to bullying. We aspire to support and transform Canadian and Indigenous communities from coast to coast to coast in a shared vision of a discrimination-free gender and sexually diverse world. The Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity was established to support and empower work happening on a collaborative and/or collective level between and within territories, provinces, and nations of people such as Canadians, First Nations, Inuit, and Métis. This support comes in the form of educational and arts-based initiatives, research, and resources for schools and communities, ranging from a full day of workshops with ongoing support to week-long training forums with integrated year-long projects as part of its deliverables.

### **Is The Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity a registered charity?**

Yes, The Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity is a Canadian registered charity. Our registered charity number is: 863207981RR0001. You can look up our charitable status and basic information, including financial information, through the Government of Canada's Canada Revenue Agency's database at: [www.cra-arc.gc.ca/chrts-gvng/lstngs/menuen.html](http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/chrts-gvng/lstngs/menuen.html). You may also use a Charities Listings Request Form available at the same website or seek the information out by phone: 1-877-442-2899.

### **Where does the funding for The Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity come from?**

Funding for The Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity comes from a variety of sources including governmental (federal, provincial, and municipal), corporate funding, and private donations. A list of our sponsors is available at: [ccgsd-ccdgs.org/sponsors](http://ccgsd-ccdgs.org/sponsors). If you would like to make a donation or become a monthly donor, please visit: [www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/ccgsd-ccdgs/](http://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/ccgsd-ccdgs/)



## **What experience does The Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity have in the running youth forums?**

The Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity started running weeklong youth forums in 2012. This Gender and Sexuality Alliance Leadership Forum, which is in its sixth year.

## **How do I get in touch with The Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity?**

You can contact our office at:

The Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity  
440 Albert Street, Suite C-304  
Albert Street Educational Centre  
Ottawa, ON K1R 5B5  
Canada

Telephone: 613-400-1875

E-mail: [info@ccgsd-ccdgs.org](mailto:info@ccgsd-ccdgs.org)

Our general office hours are 09:00-17:00, Mondays to Fridays, excepting statutory holidays. Office hours for individual staff members may vary.

## **Forum**

### **What is the Gender and Sexuality Alliance Leadership Forum?**

The Gender and Sexuality Alliance Leadership Forum is a youth leadership forum for youth from across the country who identify as gender and sexual minorities (GSM) or their allies. Students learn to be leaders in school and youth communities on topics of GSM identities, diversity, anti-bullying, racism, anti-oppression, and mental health. It assists them in advocating for themselves and others and building safer and more resilient youth communities that are both free from discrimination and diverse in gender and sexuality.

### **How many times has the Gender and Sexuality Alliance Leadership Forum taken place?**

The Gender and Sexuality Alliance Leadership Forum commenced in May 2014. The 2019 Gender and Sexuality Alliance Leadership Forum will be its sixth iteration



## **Where can I learn more about the Gender and Sexuality Alliance Leadership Forum in previous years?**

You can find the Gender and Sexuality Alliance Leadership Forum Final Report 2015 at:  
<http://www.ccgds-ccdgs.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/GSA-Forum-2015-Final-Report.pdf>

You can find the Gender and Sexuality Alliance Leadership Forum 2016 Final Report at:  
[www.ccgds-ccdgs.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/GSA-Forum-2016-Final-Report.pdf](http://www.ccgds-ccdgs.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/GSA-Forum-2016-Final-Report.pdf)

You can find the Gender and Sexuality Alliance Leadership Forum 2018 Final Report at:  
<http://ccgds-ccdgs.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/GSA-Leadership-Forum-2018-Final-Report-Finished-1.pdf>

## **When does it take place?**

The Gender and Sexuality Alliance Leadership Forum 2019 will take place from Tuesday, May 7<sup>th</sup> 2019 to Saturday, May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2019. Individuals selected for a youth mentor position will travel to Ottawa on Sunday, May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2019 and take part in a full day of training on Sunday, May 6<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

## **What is the cost of attending the Gender and Sexuality Alliance Leadership Forum?**

Understanding that not all potential participants and their families have the financial means to pay a large registration fee, the Gender and Sexuality Alliance Leadership Forum is offered as a free educational experience. The forum includes travel, accommodations, meals, and programming. It does, however, cost approximately \$350 per participant for the week, excluding travel so we encourage those participants and families that are able and who wish to contribute a registration donation in order to ensure sustainable funding for the Gender and Sexuality Alliance Leadership Forum into the future.

We suggest an additional registration donation of between \$15-\$290 per participant. To make an additional registration donation, you may address a cheque to The Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity and mail it to:

The Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity  
440 Albert Street, Suite C-304  
Albert Street Educational Centre, Ottawa, ON K1R 5B5



Canada

Alternatively, you can make this donation online at:

[www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/ccgsd-ccdgs/](http://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/ccgsd-ccdgs/). Please choose Gender and Sexuality Alliance Leadership Forum as the fund designation for your donation, thank-you!

### **How much spending money should I send with my child or youth for the Gender and Sexuality Alliance Leadership Forum?**

Each participant will have different spending habits. The Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity covers the bulk of the week's expenses for each participant and youth mentor. The additional expenses that you and your child or youth should plan for would include: money for additional snacks, candy, and drinks from the cafeteria or vending machines; money for shopping or treats on Field Trip Day during free time; and money to buy any forgotten 4 essentials (sunscreen, menstruation products, soap, etc.). In the event that your child or youth participates in an act of vandalism or damage to venue or private property or loses their key or key card there will be an additional fee to clean, repair, or replace as necessary. This, however, will be invoiced to the participant's parent or guardian as per the participant Code of Conduct Form.

### **What should be packed for the Gender and Sexuality Alliance Leadership Forum?**

We typically advise students to bring the following: 1 week worth of weather-appropriate smart casual clothing; pajamas; indoor shoes/slippers; shower shoes (the showers are shared and slippery!); toiletries and personal hygiene products (toothbrush, toothpaste, soap, shampoo, conditioner, face wash, make-up, menstruation products, etc.); sunscreen and bug spray; towels; a notebook and pens/pencils; pillow and blanket (these will be provided but if you NEED your own to feel comfortable than do not hesitate to bring it); spending money; comfort items; personal identification and Health Care Card; cell phone (if possible); any medication (including dietary supplements or over-the-counter medications such as Advil, Tylenol, Gravol, Reactin, Midol, cough syrup, etc. as it is not CCGSD's policy to administer over-the-counter drugs, so students must bring these with them); costumes, instruments, CDs, or anything you may need for a Talent Show Performance; a small fan (the dormitories can get quite warm during summer!).

### **What should not be packed for the Gender and Sexuality Alliance Leadership Forum?**

Please do not bring weapons, firearms, alcohol, illicit drugs, excessive amounts of valuables (CCGSD is not responsible for the theft or loss of valuables), or



perfume/cologne (this is a reduced-scent space due to severe scent allergies, please exercise discretion when using scented hair and body products).

### **What is the age range of youth attending?**

Youth participants range from age 14 to 17. Occasionally this age range is slightly relaxed for exceptional students for whom the program is determined to be of considerable benefit and a good fit. Youth mentors are typically 16-24 years old.

### **How do I know that the programming is age-appropriate for my child or youth?**

The Gender and Sexuality Alliance Leadership Forum is designed for the age range of 14-17 years old. The Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity has over ten years of experience in teaching youth from ages 5-24 and has a variety of age-appropriate curriculum pieces. Plenary sessions are designed with the youngest participants in mind, whereas some workshops may broach more mature content. We encourage concerned parents and guardians to read through the workshop descriptions with their child or youth when they are released and help them to select the most appropriate programming. Any further questions about a particular programming element can be referred to the Gender and Sexuality Alliance Leadership Forum Coordinator.

### **Can youth who have already attended once attend again?**

Youth who have already attended once as a participant may be eligible to attend again and may find benefit from doing so as they continue to learn, network, and broaden their base of resources and knowledge. However, priority will be given to new participants and returning participants may be asked to take a position on a waitlist. Another opportunity for those youth who have already attended in the past, who wish to continue to engage in some capacity, is to apply to be a youth mentor in order to assist new participants through the programming.

### **What is the dress code at the Gender and Sexuality Alliance Leadership Forum?**

The dress code at the Gender and Sexuality Alliance Leadership Forum is smart casual. Everyone is expected to dress in a manner that is respectful and conducive to learning. Clothing with offensive, oppressive, or illegal symbols, words, or slogans will be deemed inappropriate for a safe(r) learning environment. We also request that hats be removed during presentations out of respect for the presenters.



**My child or youth wants to attend the Gender and Sexuality Leadership Forum, does that mean my child or youth is gay, queer, or trans?**

No. This forum is open to young leaders who do not identify as a gender or sexual minority, as long as they are willing to take action on making their community spaces safer and more inclusive for those that do. While many participants who attend identify as a gender or sexual minority or are in the process of questioning or discovering their identity, this is by no means the case for all in attendance. For those participants who do not identify (or are not questioning their identification) as a gender or sexual minority, we encourage them to enter into this learning environment with an understanding that it is designed to centre the voices and experiences of those who do. Part of allyship to marginalized communities involves giving up space and listening to those communities.

**Is youth participation at the Gender and Sexuality Leadership Forum limited to youth that identify as a gender or sexual minorities?**

No. While a large number of the youth participants do identify (or are questioning their identification) as gender or sexual minorities, the Gender and Sexuality Alliance Leadership Forum is open to all youth who are willing to take action on making their community spaces safer and more inclusive for gender and sexual minorities. For those participants who do not identify (or are not questioning their identification) as a gender or sexual minority, we encourage them to enter into this learning environment with an understanding that it is designed to centre the voices and experience of those who do. Part of allyship to marginalized communities involves giving up space and listening to those communities.

**How do I know if my child or youth is mature enough to attend the Gender and Sexuality Alliance Leadership Forum?**

The maturity level of each youth will vary individually. Attendance at the Gender and Sexuality Alliance Leadership Forum involves a certain level of emotional and personal maturity in order to be successful. Youth should generally be self-motivated learners and able to manage time and self-care reasonably well. They will be expected to, with assistance from staff, volunteers, Adult Allies, and youth mentors, wake-up in a timely manner; be punctual to activities; remember their belongings; navigate within and between buildings on Glendon Campus; abide by all forum rules, policies, regulations, and instructions; conduct themselves in such a manner that they do not endanger the safety of themselves or others around them; have the ability to attend a full day of programming and activities; and respect lights-out times. This should act as a





guideline for determining whether your child or youth is mature enough to attend the Gender and Sexuality Alliance Leadership Forum. Any further inquiries on this manner may be directed to the Gender and Sexuality Alliance Leadership Forum Coordinator.

## **Funding**

### **Where does the funding for the Gender and Sexuality Alliance Leadership Forum come from?**

The Gender and Sexuality Alliance Leadership Forum is one of the only programs run by The Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity that does not have a sustainable source of funding. It is largely financed by an annual charitable Gala in Toronto. The rest of the financing is from government grants, registration fees (for Adult Allies) and donations, private donations, and the Savings Fund of The Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity. Specific budgets for past years can be viewed in the 2015, 2016 and 2018 Final Report.

### **What kind of reporting, evaluation, and auditing is done on the Gender and Sexuality Alliance Leadership Forum?**

The Gender and Sexuality Alliance Leadership Forum is evaluated internally every year and a public report compiled. Currently you can view the 2015 Final Report, 2016 Final Report and 2019 Final Report. Additional evaluation is done as required for grants in a particular year to ensure accountability to those funders. A yearly financial audit is done for the organization, with the expenses for the Gender and Sexuality Alliance falling within that audit.

### **How can I make a donation to the Gender and Sexuality Alliance Leadership Forum?**

If you wish to make a donation to the Gender and Sexuality Alliance Leadership Forum you may address a cheque to The Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity and mail it to:

Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity  
440 Albert Street, Suite C-304  
ON K1R 5B5 Canada

Alternatively, you can make this donation online at:  
[www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/ccgsd-ccdgs/](http://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/ccgsd-ccdgs/). Please choose Gender and Sexuality Alliance Forum as the fund designation for your donation, thank-you!



## **Application Process and Registration Forms**

The application process (for both participants and youth mentors) consists of (1) Filling in the google form found on our Gender and Sexuality Leadership Forum website ; (2) a brief phone interview ; (3) Youth who are accepted to the forum will receive additional application forms to fill out and return by email or by mail (Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity, ATTN Amanda Myerson, 440 Albert Street, Suite C-304, Ottawa ON, K1R 5B5, Canada) or e-mail (leadership@ccgsd-ccdgs.org) (4) Participants are accepted on a rolling first-come first serve basis and there are a limited number of spaces.

### **How can the application forms be completed?**

The easiest way to complete the application forms is to print them off and complete by hand. If you wish, you may fill in some of the information in the Microsoft Word document and print them out in order to complete the sections that require signatures.

### **Does the application form really need a signature?**

Yes. The application forms really require a signature, either by hand or a digitally verifiable signature.

### **Do the registration packages really require a parent or guardian signature?**

If you are under the age of 18, yes, the registration packages definitely require parent and guardian signatures. This is with the exception of the Optional Mental Health Safety Form, although it might be a good idea to have a parent or guardian help you complete this form if they often provide you mental health support.

### **What is the Teacher Mentor Form?**

The Teacher Mentor Form enables you to connect with a trusted teacher in your school about the Gender and Sexuality Alliance Leadership Forum so that they can assist you in preparing (thinking ahead about assignments due around that time, questions to ask related to your school specifically, etc.) and so that you can connect with them when you return to school about implementing projects in your school community.



### **Does the Teacher Mentor Form really have to be completed and signed?**

Yes, if you are a secondary school student your Teacher Mentor Form should be signed and completed. Please start this process early as teachers' often have a lot on their plates in terms of paperwork. If you believe that you should be exempt from having to get this form completed and signed, please make further inquiries with the GSA Forum Coordinator.

### **Who is eligible to complete the Teacher Mentor Form?**

Who is eligible to complete the Teacher Mentor Form? Normally the teacher sponsor for your GSA would complete the form. In practice, any teacher or school staff member that you trust to guide you through preparing the forum and making your school a safer or more inclusive space would be eligible to complete this form. In some cases, you may be attending on behalf of a community centre or organization rather than a school, in that case please feel free to interpret 'teacher' liberally. Any staff member of these institutions or organizations that is willing to serve the same function of preparing you and helping you to create change upon your return may fill out this form.

### **What is a 'school emergency contact'?**

A school emergency contact is a trusted school contact that The Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity may contact in the event that this is needed. We may need to contact a school emergency contact in one or more of the following circumstances: (a) a participant discloses a situation that is happening at the school (bullying, oppressive teacher, oppressive graffiti, etc.) that the school should be made aware of; (b) a participant has a medical or other emergency that will delay their return to school and the Parent or Guardian wishes for us to notify the school; (c) in the course of a medical or other emergency we are unable to contact either of the personal emergency contacts provided; or (d) a participant discloses that their personal emergency contacts are unsafe and our social workers need another trusted adult to work through in liaising with child services or other relevant agencies. This list is illustrative and not exhaustive. Typically the person who completes the Teacher Mentor Form also acts as the school emergency contact, although this is not strictly necessary.

### **Do I need to have two personal emergency contacts and a school emergency contact?**



Yes. This is the most effective way to ensure that, in the case of an emergency, there is an emergency contact that we can reach in a timely and efficient manner.

### **What contact information should my emergency contacts provide?**

Emergency contacts should provide their full name and relationship to the person that they are serving as an emergency contact for as well as at least one current phone number. Emergency contacts are welcomed to leave multiple numbers (home, work, mobile) as well as the hours during which they may be reached at each number

### **What are the Optional Mental Health Safety Forms?**

Optional Mental Health Safety Forms are optional forms that have been created for a dual purpose: (1) to empower participants and youth mentors to think and plan proactively around their neurodiversities and triggers, and (2) to formalize and streamline accommodation requests stemming from the need for mental or psychosocial safety. Acknowledging that this forum directly and deliberately engages with topics that may be difficult for some individuals, such as suicide, depression, mental illness, colonization, oppression, discrimination, and violence, these forms prompt potential attendees to consider whether this is an appropriate event for them at this time and, if so, what are the steps that both they and our organization can take to make this the safest and most positive experience possible.

These forms are not mandatory and attendees are invited to complete and submit them only as they wish. Completion of this form does not ensure that we will accommodate the requests made therein, but we strive to do so to the extent possible and will suggest alternate accommodations in advance if we must deny an accommodation request. We ask that individuals do not make requests that are not intimately connected with a support need as attempting to manage all the preferences and desires of each attendee renders us less capable of accommodating requests that are genuinely based in a support need. We also dissuade, where possible, participants from relying too heavily on requested proximity to a romantic partner as a support since the nature of romantic relationships is apt to change and it may be difficult to move you away from an ex when special accommodations have already been made for this person to be in close proximity to you as a support person.

### **Why does the registration package ask for my demographic information (gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity)?**



The registration package invites you to complete your demographic information, such as gender, sexual orientation, and ethnicity, in order for us to accurately report the demographic distribution of attendees at our forum for internal and donor reporting purposes. An accurate picture of the demographic make-up of attendees allows us to compare this to national demographics in order to see if there are groups that are systematically underrepresented and, if so, creatively address that underrepresentation through outreach and programming changes.

### **What is the difference between white and Caucasian?**

In terms of ethnicity, the term ‘Caucasian’ refers to individuals with heritage from the Caucasus (which include the regions currently known as Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Iran, Russia, and Turkey as well as the disputed territories of Nagorno-Karabakh Republic, Abkhazia, and South Ossetia.) This term, due to early racist science and eugenics is often used to describe all white people, and indeed this definition is now enshrined in some American law. For the purposes of this demographic sheet, however, we ask that you use ‘white’ or ‘European’ instead of ‘Caucasian’ unless you do, in fact, have heritage from the Caucasus region.

### **Do I have to have status in order to identify my ethnicity as Indigenous, First Nations, Métis, or Inuit?**

No. The only requirement to identify your ethnicity as Indigenous, First Nations, Métis, or Inuit is that you have heritage in a group and self-identify as such. A lack of official status, mixed heritage, or a white-passing skin tone is not a barrier to your self-identification as Indigenous, First Nations, Métis, or Inuit.

## **Travel**

### **Does The Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity cover travel to and from the Forum for participants?**

Yes, for participants outside of the Ottawa, The Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity will arrange and pay for travel to and from the forum. Participants within the Ottawa area who may need financial assistance travelling to and from the forum should also contact the GSA Forum Coordinator and arrangements can be made.

### **Does The Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity cover the cost of travel to and from the forum for youth mentors?**



Yes, for youth mentors outside of Ottawa The Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity will arrange and pay for travel to and from the forum. Youth mentors within the Ottawa area who may need financial assistance travelling to and from the forum should also contact the GSA Forum Coordinator and arrangements can be made.

### **Does The Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity cover the travel cost to and from the forum for Adult Allies?**

Generally speaking The Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity does not cover travel costs to and from the forum for Adult Allies. Occasionally there are funds for one Adult Ally from each province or territory or provisions that can be made for Adult Allies that are also driving youth. Please inquire with the GSA Forum Coordinator.

### **How is travel booked?**

Upon receipt of all the registration packages, group bookings for air, rail, and bus travel will be made through our travel agent at Flight Centre. Please be courteous and return registration packages on time in order to avoid delays in this process for everyone. If you need to drop out of attending the forum please let us know as soon as possible so that we can cancel or switch tickets and minimize the penalty fees that you will have to pay. Please also ensure that your travel information is complete, correct, and legible to speed up the booking process.

### **When can I expect my travel ticket?**

We aim to have all tickets distributed to travellers two weeks before the day of travel. This may be delayed if people are late in submitting their registration packages, so please be courteous and return yours on time! Your ticket will be sent to you by e-mail with instructions.

### **Why do I have to provide my legal name and gender marker exactly as it appears on my travel document?**

Unfortunately, current travel regulations require passenger's names and gender markers that appear on boarding documents to match those of their travel documents. While we understand that legal names and gender markers coercively assigned at birth can be triggering for some individuals, particularly trans individuals, we do need them in order to book your travel. We are happy to use your real name and pronouns throughout the rest of the forum and in all other communication. Additionally, names must be spelt exactly as they appear on your travel document. This pertains to anyone



who generally uses a different spelling or nicknames that do not appear on their travel documents (i.e. if your legal name on your travel document is Catherine, you cannot travel under boarding documents with the name ‘Katie’). Thank-you for your patience and understanding.

### **How will my child or youth be supervised during travel?**

There will be no supervision from The Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity on the flights, trains, or buses (with the exception of if an Adult Ally is attending from the same city as your child or ward). Depending on the city of departure, your child or youth will likely be travelling with other forum attendees as we book the tickets as group bookings. Additionally, if your child or youth is travelling by air and you are extremely concerned about the supervision of your child or youth in flight, Air Canada does allow for the optional purchase of Unaccompanied Minor services for youth aged 12-17. This is an additional \$100 CAD each way per unaccompanied minor and parents or guardians are welcome to purchase this service out of pocket. More information about this option can be found here:

<http://www.aircanada.com/en/travelinfo/before/youngtravellers/minors.html>

We do recommend that parents and guardians bring their child or youth to the airport or station and then check them in and escort them as far as possible to their mode of transportation (security for airline, gate for train, or vehicle for bus). Moreover, should there be any problems on the day of travel you and your child or youth are advised to contact our travel agent directly. When you receive your flight itinerary and travel ticket information we will also send the contact number of our travel agent.

### **Will my child or youth be picked up upon arrival in Ottawa and escorted to the venue?**

Yes, upon arrival in Ottawa your child or youth will be picked up by a member of The Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity’s team at either the airport or Union Station and escorted to the venue (Glendon College). This usually means a staff member and will occasionally mean a core volunteer/unpaid intern or an Adult Ally also attending the forum.

### **How will my child or youth know the person picking them up in Ottawa and escorting them to the venue?**

The Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity’s team member(s) that is picking up attendees will be readily identifiable (usually by a sign or rainbow piece of





clothing that will be conveyed to attendees about a week in advance along with the location). Additionally, attendees will have the contact information of the team member(s) meeting them.

**Will my child or youth be provided transportation and escort back to their point of departure (airport security, train, gate bus) upon leaving the forum?**

Yes, your child or youth will be provided transportation and escort back to their point of departure by members of the Canadian Center for Gender and Sexual Diversity's team.

**What is the baggage policy for air travel?**

Attendees travelling by air are allowed to bring one checked bag of standard size and one carry on item in addition to a personal item (purse, wallet, etc.) at the expense of The Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity. Additional, overweight, or oversized baggage will be at personal expense. Depending on the ticket, the one checked bag may be pre-paid or the checked bag may need to be paid for at the point of departure. In the latter instance, please have your child or youth keep the baggage receipt and submit it to the organization at the forum for reimbursement. On the return travel a member of The Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity's team will be present with a company credit card to pay for the piece of checked baggage.

**What if the registration is cancelled after travel tickets are already booked?**

If registration is cancelled after travel tickets have already been booked the attendee or their legal guardian will be responsible for reimbursing the organization for any non-refundable or transferable portion of those tickets and any administrative charges associated with doing so.

**Can I drive to the forum?**

If you have a valid Driver's license and own/have access to a vehicle for the duration of the forum then, yes, you may drive instead of travelling by other means. The Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity will reimburse your travel at 40 cents per kilometer or the cost of what your rail/bus travel would have been, whichever is less.





### **I live in Ottawa; can I commute to and from the forum every day?**

Due to the length of programming at the Gender and Sexuality Alliance Leadership Forum (from 09:00 until 22:00) on most days the Centre strongly discourages commuting and instead insists that all students remain at the venue. This is for reasons of punctuality as well as the practicalities and safety of travelling in the evening. Individual requests will be considered on a case-to-case basis, but it is very likely that they will be denied.

### **What if I need to leave the forum early?**

Pre-planned early departures can of between a few hours to a day can be accommodated. In the event of knowledge of a need for an earlier departure than 24 hours The Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity would respectfully ask an attendee to relinquish their participation to someone who is able to attend for the full duration of the forum, as there is often an extensive waitlist in progress.

### **What if I want to arrive early to Ottawa or stay after the forum; is it possible to extend my trip?**

If you let us know in advance of booking tickets early arrivals or late departures are possible! We often receive this request from attendees who have extended family in Ottawa and would like to spend some time with them. We are happy to accommodate this request if given sufficient notice. Please note that early arrivals and late departures are responsible for their own food, lodging, local transportation, and all other expenses in the period before and/or after the official duration of the forum.

## **Venue**

### **Where is the Gender and Sexuality Alliance Leadership Forum held?**

The Gender and Sexuality Alliance Leadership Forum is held at The Terry Fox Canadian Youth Centre, a friendly, inviting residential facility, situated on 2.6 acres of beautifully landscaped property, minutes away from downtown Ottawa. All of the conference programming aside from a field trip into downtown Ottawa will take place at The Terry Fox Canadian Youth Centre.



### **Where is The Terry Fox Canadian Youth Centre?**

The Terry Fox Canadian Youth Centre is located at 1805 De Gaspe Avenue, Ottawa, ON, K1K 0A4.

### **How do I transit to Glendon College?**

From downtown Ottawa you can take bus 7 St-Laurent from Bank/Slater. The nearest bus station to the venue is St. Laurent / Arundel.

### **Are participants and youth mentors allowed off-site?**

With the exception of Field Trip Day or with an escort in case of emergency, family visit, or other extenuating circumstances participants and youth mentors are not to leave Glendon Campus for the duration of the forum. Contravening this rule will result in disciplinary action, potentially including early dismissal from the program.

### **Where will the Field Trip Day be held?**

The Field Trip Day will be held in downtown Ottawa at sites of historical interest to gender and sexual minority communities. The route does vary each year so please contact the Forum Coordinator if you have specific route-related questions.

## **Supervision, Rules and Discipline**

### **Will my child or youth be supervised in Ottawa?**

Yes, your child or youth will be supervised in Ottawa by members of The Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity's team from the moment they meet team members at the designated arrival point at either the Ottawa International Airport or the Ottawa Train Station (for those travelling from outside the Ottawa) or are dropped off at The Terry Fox Canadian Youth Centre (for those in Ottawa) until they are returned to their point of departure or picked up by their parent or guardian at the forum on the last day.

### **What supervision is present at the forum?**

Supervision for participants at the Gender and Sexuality Alliance Leadership Forum is four-tiered. The first tier (starting from lowest and closest to the participants)



is the on-site supervision of our youth mentors. All participants are split into groups, called 'Houses,' that are led by a pair of youth mentors. There are approximately 9 participants per youth mentor. Youth mentors are the initial point of contact for participants for questions and support and they also provide immediate supervision. youth mentor run twice-daily check-ins with their Houses as well as perform bed checks in the evening. Youth mentors report to Adult Allies and Staff.

The second tier is comprised of our on-site Adult Allies and a Support team. Adult Allies and the Support Team are the initial contact for any situations (disciplinary, support, logistical, medical, or otherwise) that the youth mentor are not equipped or expected to handle. These Adult Allies report to staff and security or emergency personnel.

The third tier is comprised of our on-site staff and core volunteer members. The Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity's team lives with the participants, youth mentor, and Adult Allies at The Terry Fox Canadian Youth Centre for the duration of the program, effectively providing 24- hour supervision. Lastly, the 4th tier is the venues 24/7 Security Personnel who liaise with staff and Adult Allies.

### **What supervision is present on Field Trip Day?**

On the Field Trip Day the supervision during the guided portions of the tour are supervised by youth mentor, Adult Allies, staff and core volunteers, as well as the external tour provider(s) that we are working with in a given year. During 'free time' participants are allowed to explore an area of downtown (which rotates each year) according to a Buddy System (larger groups are encouraged and whereby at least one member of the partnership/group has a charged cell phone). Staff, core volunteers, and Adult Allies will offer to lead students that are interested and from out of town to areas that interest them while any additional staff, core volunteers, or Adult Allies are strategically disbursed through the 'free time' zone to keep an eye out for participants in distress. At least one member of the Support Team stays in the centralized meet-up location.

### **Who are the youth mentor?**

Youth mentors are exceptional alumni of past GSA Forums, who are typically aged 16- 24, who have returned to be peer leaders of the programming to youth participants.



### **Who are the Adult Allies?**

Adult Allies are adults (typically teachers, youth workers, social workers, or parents) who have volunteered their time at the forum to aid in supervising and supporting the youth participants.

### **Do the staff of The Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity, volunteers, and Adult Allies have valid Criminal Record checks?**

Yes, all staff, volunteers, and Adult Allies are required to have valid vulnerable sector Criminal Record checks on file.

### **What qualifications do staff, volunteers, and Adult Allies have?**

Staff, volunteers, and Adult Allies bring a variety of professional qualifications to the job depending on the individual. Many of these people have some or all of the following trainings: safeTALK, ASIST, First Aid, Fire and Emergency warden training, Active Shooter Training, NonViolent Crisis Intervention, Violent Threat Risk Assessment, Ontario HIV + Substance Use Training, Anti-oppressive Training, Mental Health First Aid, Trauma Informed Care, and 19 Canadian Red Cross 'Preventing Violence Against Children and Youth' Certification. Moreover, most of these individuals have lived experience of a variety of identities and marginalization.

### **What rules are participants to abide by?**

Participants are expected to abide by the Code of Conduct laid out in the registration package; the Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity's Safe(r) Spaces, Sexualized Behaviour at Youth Forums, Sober Space, and NSSI policies; Terry Fox Canadian Youth Centre; all instructions given at the forum by emergency or security personnel, staff, core volunteers, Adult Allies, or youth mentor; and all municipal, provincial, and federal laws and bylaws.

### **Is my child or youth going to have sex at the forum?**

While The Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity is a sex-positive organization that believes in youth exploring their sexuality in healthy and consensual ways if they so desire, however the Gender and Sexuality Alliance Leadership Forum is a sex-free educational space. Sexualized behaviour of any kind is prohibited at youth forums run by The Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity and discovery of



engaging in sexualized behaviour is grounds for dismissal. The forum has an 'open door' policy in which no two or more participants or youth mentors are allowed in a dorm room together with a closed door. During free time there is regular supervision of the dormitories and other campus spaces. In the evenings bed checks are done to ensure that all participants are in their rooms alone for the night. Participants discovered outside of their rooms after bed checks for anything other than using the washroom or to access the Support Team, will be considered in violation of forum rules and policies and may be dismissed from the forum.

### **Will someone wake my child or youth up in the morning at the forum?**

Yes, the youth mentor at the Gender and Sexuality Alliance Leadership Forum will do wake up calls for their House participants at 07:00 every day. If your child or youth is capable of waking themselves up in a timely manner and for some reason wishes to opt out of these wake-up calls then they may discuss this with their youth mentors.

### **What happens if my child or youth breaks the rules at the forum?**

Participants and youth mentors that are found breaking the rules at the forum will be subject to a variety of disciplinary action including being asked to make an apology or reparation, invoices or fines, demotion from the position of youth mentor, or being sent home. Participants or youth mentors who break rules that are also laws may face additional legal consequences.

## **Safety and Emergencies**

### **Is there a safe place to leave valuables?**

The Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity discourages bringing excessive valuables and cannot be held responsible for the lost or theft of valuables. The most secure place to leave valuables is locked in an individual's dorm room, or alternatively on their person if they are necessary for the day's activities. Youth mentors, Adult Allies, and staff/core volunteers can also hold on to valuables during the day if the need arise (for example on Field Trip Day), but this should not be a first resort.

### **What happens in the event of an emergency during the forum requiring evacuation or shelter-in-place procedures?**

In the event of an emergency during the forum requiring evacuation or shelter-in-place procedures everyone at the forum will evacuate the building they are in or



shelter-in-place as required and as per The Terry Fox Canadian Youth Centre's emergency procedures. Participants are encouraged to remain flexible and calm during emergencies and follow the instructions of the following in ascending order: their own judgment, youth mentors, Adult Allies, Staff and Core Volunteers by Rank, and ultimately Security or Emergency Personnel. Participants are reminded to never return to an evacuated building for anything or anyone before it has been cleared by Emergency Services. In the case of an evacuation, once the building has been evacuated to a safe distance there will be headcounts done.

### **Will my child or youth be safe on Field Trip Day?**

While the Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity cannot guarantee the personal safety of every individual on Field Trip Day, general safety protocol will be in effect. On Field Trip Day the supervision during the guided portions of the tour are supervised by youth mentors, Adult Allies, staff and core volunteers, as well as the external tour provider(s) that we are working with in a given year. During 'free time' participants are allowed to explore an area of downtown (which rotates each year) according to a Buddy System (larger groups are encouraged and whereby at least one member of the partnership/group has a charged cell phone). Staff, core volunteers, and Adult Allies will offer to lead students that are interested and from out of town to areas that interest them while any additional staff, core volunteers, or Adult Allies are strategically disbursed through the 'free time' zone to keep an eye out for participants in distress. At least one member of the Support Team stays in the centralized meet-up location.

Attendees, at all points of the Field Trip Day, are expected to maintain their safety and the safety of those around them by following general safety principles such as: maintain an awareness of one's surroundings; do not accept transport from strangers; obey all federal, provincial, and municipal laws and bylaws (including no jaywalking and no shoplifting); do not acquire piercings or tattoos; stay hydrated; use sunscreen and protective weather gear; beware of pickpockets and remain aware of personal belongings; manage your time such that you will return to the meet point in time to board the bus back to Glendon.

### **Is Ottawa Safe?**

Ottawa, like all cities, has its risks but Ottawa is not an inherently unsafe city. We would remind participants to always be aware of their surroundings and personal belongings; to make sure their youth mentors are aware of their location at all times;



report anything suspicious to Staff, Core Volunteers, or Security; and to always follow the directions of Staff and Emergency Personnel.

### **What happens in the event of public emergency in Ottawa such as a severe weather warning, act of terrorism etc.?**

In the extremely unlikely event of a public emergency in Ottawa (such as a severe weather warning or act of terrorism) the Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity's team will follow all instructions from government agencies or emergency personnel. We would also make efforts to avoid any particularly affected areas or shelter in place as necessary. Should the public emergency be of significant magnitude and assuming communications are possible, we will contact parents and guardians to update them on the situation.

### **What happens in the event of a medical emergency?**

In the event of a medical emergency that surpasses the capacity of our on site first aid trained staff to handle the individual experiencing the emergency will be transported by the fastest and most capable available means to the Sunnybrook Emergency Room just down the street from Glendon College. The medical forms provided to the Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity will be provided to the hospital staff as well as the individual's Health Care Card, assuming it is accessible. The Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity will also immediately notify the primary emergency contact of the individual or, should this contact be unavailable the individual's secondary or school emergency contact in that order.

### **What happens in the event of a mental health emergency?**

In the event of a mental health emergency that surpasses the capacity of our on site Support Team, who have a variety of skills and certifications including safeTALK, ASIST, and Mental Health First Aid, the Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity would call in external professionals or transport the individual to a mental health facility as required. The medical forms provided to the Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity will be provided to the facility staff as well as the individual's Health Care Card, assuming it is accessible. The Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity will also immediately notify the primary emergency contact of the individual or, should this contact be unavailable the individual's secondary or school emergency contact in that order.





**What happens in the event that a participant or youth mentor needs to leave early due to an emergency situation?**

In the event that a participant or youth mentor needs to leave early due to an emergency situation (death in the family, illness, etc.), the Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity will make every effort to facilitate the travel of that individual back to their home (switching flights, dropping off at the rail station or airport) should that assistance be required. The individual or, depending on age, their parent or guardian will however be billed for any expenses incurred for the early departure as well as any non-refundable food, accommodation, or programming costs already incurred on that individual's behalf for the unused duration of the forum.

**What are the participants and youth mentors expected to do to contribute to safety at the forum?**

Participants and youth mentors are expected to act in such a way that respects the safety and wellbeing of themselves and others at the forum. They are expected to take general personal safety precautions (lock doors, keep valuables secure, wear sunscreen, be aware of their surroundings, etc.); exercise good judgment (look both ways when crossing streets, do not take unnecessary risks such as sliding down bannisters, be careful on slippery surfaces, do not pierce or tattoo oneself or others); and follow all staff instructions, forum rules and policies, campus rules and policies, directions of emergency personnel, and obey all municipal, provincial, and federal laws and bylaws.

**In particular, what are the participants and youth mentors expected to in order to contribute to safety on Field Trip Day?**

As at other times at the forum, participants and youth mentors are expected to act in such a way that respects the safety and wellbeing of themselves and others at the forum. They are expected to take general personal safety precautions (keep valuables secure, wear sunscreen, be aware of their surroundings, do not talk to strangers etc.); exercise good judgment (look both ways when crossing streets, do not take unnecessary risks such as sliding down bannisters, be careful on slippery surfaces); and follow all staff instructions, forum rules and policies, campus rules and policies, directions of emergency personnel, and obey all municipal, provincial, and federal laws and bylaws.

Moreover, on Field Trip Day participants and youth mentors should remember to stay hydrated and bring any medication related to seasonal allergies or insect bites.





Sunscreen and appropriate weather gear is important. When group tours are happening, everyone should take care to keep up with the group and, in particular, to cross streets together. During 'free time' participants and youth mentors must use the buddy system and at least one person in the buddy group must have a charged cell phone.

### **What is the Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity's policy on drugs and alcohol?**

The Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity, while embracing principles of harm reduction, has a zero-tolerance policy for drugs and alcohol at youth forums, which are considered educational environments. This policy extends to staff and volunteers. Those found in possession of alcohol or illicit drugs, to be intoxicated by alcohol or illicit drugs, distributing alcohol or illicit drugs, or purchasing alcohol or illicit drugs will be sent home at their individual expense, or the expense of their parent or guardian depending on age. The individual or the individual's parent or guardian, depending on age, will also be liable for any unused nonrefundable costs incurred on the individual's behalf for meals or accommodation. Furthermore, some of what is listed (use of illicit drugs, distribution of illicit drugs, distribution of drugs or alcohol to minors) may be considered criminal offenses under the law and individuals may face criminal proceedings depending on the offense, from which the Centre cannot necessarily shield them.

### **What is the Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity's policy on sexual harassment, sexual assault, or assault?**

The Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity has a zero-tolerance policy on sexual harassment, sexual assault, or assault. These activities are criminal and violate the personal and bodily autonomy of individuals and as such have no place in society, much less in an educational environment. Any individual found to be in violation of this policy will be sent home at their individual expense, or the expense of their parent or guardian depending on age. The individual or the individual's parent or guardian, depending on age, will also be liable for any unused nonrefundable costs incurred on the individual's behalf for meals or accommodation. Furthermore, in many instances these may be considered criminal offenses under the law and 24 individuals may face criminal proceedings depending on the offense, from which the Centre cannot necessarily shield them.



## **What is the Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity's policy on non-suicidal self-injury (NSSI)?**

The Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity has a harm reduction policy on non-suicidal self-injury (NSSI). NSSI is the deliberate completion of actions with the intent to harm, but not kill, oneself and is generally considered a maladaptive coping mechanism. In the event that an individual reveals a history of or ongoing struggle, through word or deed, with a form of NSSI, which can include cutting, burning, poisoning, hair pulling, head bashing, and disordered eating, the primary goal of the Centre is not to stigmatize this behaviour but offer harm reduction strategies (ensuring students can self-administer proper First Aid, using snapping rubber bands or holding ice in place of cutting, etc.) and resource connections and referrals in their home community (assuming that these are lacking and the individual is not already working with professionals on developing better coping mechanisms). In the event of individuals presenting non-serious fresh injuries, First Aid will be administered or self-administration facilitated and in the case of an individual presenting with serious or life-threatening injury, protocol for medical emergencies will be followed.

Students whose self-harm methods are particularly risky for themselves or others, due to the involvement, for example, of weapons, fire, or risk of concussion, and for which harm reduction policies are not feasible will be forbidden from practicing at the forum and individuals will be invited to leave at their own expense if they cannot or will not comply with this restriction. We will ensure connections and referrals to resources and professionals in the home community are made before the individual departs. We furthermore request that individuals reduce harm to others by not practicing in front of others, not glorifying self-harm, and keeping obviously fresh self-harm wounds under bandages or cover when in public. If individuals have any questions about this policy they may contact the Program Coordinator directly to discuss further.

## **What confidentiality rights to individuals at the forum have?**

Information given to staff, core volunteers, youth mentors or Adult Allies is confidential, within the confines of need-to-know personnel within organization to the extent that the information received does not relate to serious and imminent risk of harm to self or others. In the event that abuse is disclosed to a CCGSD staff, adult ally and/or volunteer, we as an agency have a duty to report the disclosure of abuse to child protective service. Youth who disclose acquisitions of abuse will always be told that a call to child protective services will be made. This youth will have already signed a 'Limits of Confidentiality' form, as per our protocol for youth attending forums under the age of 16 years old. There are staffed trained in safeTALK and ASIST to make



connections for youth contemplating suicide and our staff will not hesitate to connect with police in the event that an individual confesses intent to commit a violent crime. If you have any questions about this policy, please contact the Program Director directly to discuss further.

## **Adult Allies**

### **Who are Adult Allies?**

Adult Allies are adults from the community, usually parents, teachers, counselors, youth workers, or social workers attending the forum with youth they parent or work with, who volunteer their time to assist in chaperoning and supporting the youth throughout the duration of the forum.

### **What qualification do Adult Allies have?**

Adult Allies have a range of qualifications and experiences. Some are parents and have experience supporting their own children or their peers, while others work professionally as teachers, counselors, youth workers, or social workers and have a range of specialized skills that the Centre may call upon in case of need. Some Adult Allies also have specific language skills (minority languages or ASL) that enables them to support specific youth from minority language communities.

### **What is the screening for Adult Allies?**

There is no 'application process' per say for Adult Allies. Adult Allies must be tied to at least one youth from a present or past forum professionally or by family and must present a valid Police Records Check (Vulnerable Sector).

### **What is the role of Adult Allies?**

The role of Adult Allies is to assist in general chaperoning, support, emergencies, and supervision. Participant and youth mentors from the House may come to an Adult Ally with a situation that they are not equipped to handle. The Adult Ally can then either encourage the individual to resolve the situation, perhaps with facilitation (i.e. apologizing for a misunderstanding), actively resolve the situation themselves (i.e. support a youth in crisis, solve a logistical problem), or refer the situation or question to another person on the Support Team, Emergency Team, or Staff Team as appropriate to resolve. Regardless of how the situation is handled, Adult Allies should report the details



of the question/problem/situation and any solution or action to resolve to staff, core volunteers, other Adult Allies, and youth mentors as necessary.

### **Who do Adult Allies report to?**

Adult Allies report to staff and security. Depending on the situation, they may also report back to core volunteers, other Adult Allies, and youth mentors as necessary. For example, if there is a situation with a participant that involves them having to sit out of an activity during the day, the Adult Ally should inform that participant's youth mentors so that they do not become needlessly alarmed at that participant's absence and also inform, perhaps, the person keeping track of workshop registration in case there is a waitlist of interested people for the workshop the participant is missing.

### **How can I become an Adult Ally?**

There is no application process, per say, to become an Adult Ally. If your child or ward, student, or youth that attends your programming or whose case you manage is attending the forum and you would like to attend the forum as well as an Adult Ally, simply send the Program Coordinator an e-mail requesting the Adult Ally Registration Package and a scanned copy of a valid Police Records (Vulnerable Sector) Check.

### **Is there a cost to attend as an Adult Ally?**

In order that Adult Allies do not take programming spots away from youth, we strongly encourage all Adult Allies to pay a registration fee of \$350. This registration fee acts as cost recovery for the meals and accommodation that we have to book for you for the week.



## **Accommodations**

### **Where are the accommodations for the participants?**

Participants will be assigned accommodation in one of the group dorms at The Terry Fox Canadian Youth Centre. The dorms are open concept with bunk beds and will be shared with other forum participants.

### **What are the sleeping arrangements for the participants?**

Each participant (and youth mentors, staff, and core volunteers) will be assigned their own bed in a dorm at the venue. Participants are generally grouped by House (special accommodations notwithstanding) and have monitors in close vicinity.

### **Can my child/youth stay in a room with someone else?**

Despite the fact that there are some double rooms at Glendon, participants and youth mentors may not share a room with another participant or youth mentor. If a parent is attending with their child/or ward, or if siblings are attending the forum together, it may be possible to have a double room if desired. Please inquire with the Program Coordinator if these circumstances apply in your case.

### **What are the washrooms like in the residence?**

Washrooms in the residence building are co-ed and are shared between approximately 6-10 people in a House/Floor block. Toilets and showers have individual stalls, while sinks and mirrors are in a common area. The floors of the showers and the space around the showers can be slippery when wet so we advise the use of shower shoes and recommend that everyone exercise caution on wet surfaces to avoid unnecessary slips and falls. If you do fall and hit your head, please let a staff member, core volunteer, Adult Ally, or youth mentors know immediately so that we can rule out a concussion.

### **Is there access to refrigerators in the residence?**

Staff members will have some limited access to mini refrigerators, but participants, youth mentors, Adult Allies, and core volunteers will not have direct access. Should you have ice packs, medication, or special food with you that requires refrigeration please connect in advance or immediately upon arrival with the Program Coordinator.



## Food

### **Is food at the forum included?**

Yes, three meals a day at the forum (breakfast, lunch, and dinner) are included and have been pre-paid. Each meal includes a 'main', two 'sides', and two drinks (coffee, tea, fountain pop, fountain juice, fountain milk), and dinner includes a dessert. As food has been prepaid for each meal we do encourage youth to take food at every meal even if they are not hungry. There are many semi-perishable items (fruit, vegetables, muffins, sandwiches) that can be saved to eat later in the day, it is not possible to use the pre-paid meal voucher outside of designated meal times.

That said, it is possible to buy food at an additional cost outside of designated meal times (either through the cafeteria or through vending machines). Staff also has extra food, drinks, and snacks available (smaller items on hand and larger items usually in the Residence buildings) upon request, especially for diabetics and those with low blood sugar. Lastly, it is possible to buy extra or special (bottled drinks, candy, etc.) food at designated meal times or on Field Trip Day, but this is an additional expense that is not covered by the forum.

### **From where does the food for the forum come?**

All the food at the forum comes from The Terry Fox Canadian Youth Centre cafeteria, with the only exception being food that is purchased through vending machines, brought by an individual to the forum, or purchased from external sources during Field Trip Day.

### **How does the cafeteria work at Glendon?**

For our forum, meals will be eaten in the Cafeteria. Participants will take a tray enter the food service area where they will be served their main meal by the staff at The Terry Fox Canadian Youth Centre. There is a self-serve salad bar in the main part of the cafeteria.

If you have any questions about food items (ranging from where to find something, to whether or not something meets your dietary restrictions), please do not hesitate to ask the cafeteria staff and they will be happy to assist you. You may also ask a staff member, core volunteer, Adult Ally or youth mentor and they will either answer your question or help you ask the cafeteria staff if they do not know the answer. We encourage you to explore the cafeteria each day to get a good idea of what is offered at



a particular mealtime, as it changes. This is especially true for those with dietary restrictions; also remember you can mix and match sides and mains from different stations and some stations cook to order!

### **Can the cafeteria accommodate my dietary restrictions, preferences, and allergies?**

The Terry Fox Canadian Youth Centre Cafeteria can almost certainly accommodate your dietary restrictions, preferences, and food allergies. All dietary restrictions, preferences, and food allergies listed in the registration packages are submitted to food services and they make every effort to accommodate them. Vegetarian, vegan, gluten-free, and lactose-free food options are among some standard accommodations that the cafeteria is well equipped to make. If you have extreme food requirements and are concerned about the cafeteria's ability to meet these needs, please contact the Program Coordinator who can put you in touch with the cafeteria staff to discuss directly. Please everyone, also submit your registration packages in a timely manner to ensure the cafeteria has ample time to order food suited to the group's dietary needs.

### **What if I change my dietary preferences mid-way through the forum?**

If you change your dietary preferences mid-way through the forum (for example, if you meet some really amazing vegans and decide to go vegan too) we will make every effort to accommodate you but we cannot guarantee it as the food for the week has already been ordered. There are limited amounts of some food (i.e. veggie burgers and gluten-free pasta) and we encourage you not to take that food away from people who have had consistent food preferences and indicated this in their forms in advance. If you think you might experiment with a more restrictive diet, we encourage you to indicate this on your form in advance.

### **Will participants have access to a kitchen to cook?**

No, participants will not have access to a kitchen to cook. A possible exception may be made for extreme dietary needs that cannot be accommodated by the cafeteria, by their own admission. Please contact the Program Coordinator to discuss with the cafeteria staff directly if you believe this applies to you.

### **Can participants keep non-perishable snacks with them in their rooms?**

Yes, participants may keep non-perishable (granola bars, dried fruit, etc.) or semiperishable (fruit, muffins, etc.) snacks with them in their rooms. There is also access





to a microwave in the Common Rooms and in the Cafeteria so poparts or microwave popcorn may also be options. Please remember to dispose of any garbage, crumbs, and apple cores appropriately. At the end of the forum please take any remaining food with you or dispose of it, especially if it is semi-perishable. Do not leave fruit to rot in the rooms.

### **What if participants get hungry in between meals?**

If a participant, or anyone, gets hungry in between designated meal times there are a few options. Firstly, ask a staff member if there is any extra food. Typically CCGSD staff carry food on them in case of emergencies (low blood sugar, need to take food with medication). Folks who are not hungry enough at mealtime to eat all the food that has been prepaid for them are encouraged to give extra semi-perishable items (pizza, fruit, muffins, etc.) to staff in order to store to replenish this extra food that can be accessed during non-designated meal times. Alternatively, individuals may purchase additional food from vending machines out of pocket. On Field Trip Day there are also a variety of restaurants and stores that additional food may be purchased from.

### **What if participant is not hungry at a designated mealtime?**

If a participant is not hungry at a designated mealtime, we encourage that individual to take food anyways in order to eat later. Food like fruit and muffins can be carried around and staff can also store limited amounts of food in refrigeration upon request. Folks who are not hungry enough at mealtime to eat all the food that has been prepaid for them are also encouraged to give extra semi-perishable items (pizza, fruit, muffins, etc.) to staff in order to store this extra food so that can be accessed during non-designated meal times for people that need it (folks who couldn't eat earlier, diabetics, people that need to take medication with food, etc.).

### **Is the venue (pea)nut free?**

No, we cannot guarantee that the cafeteria or the venue as a whole are nut or peanut free. If you have extreme allergies to nuts and/or peanuts please indicate this on your Medical Form and carry an epi-pen at all times.





## **Health and Medication**

### **Where should participants keep prescription medications?**

Participants should keep prescription medications locked in their rooms unless those medications are needed throughout the day, in which case they should be kept securely on their person.

### **Can participants share prescriptions medications?**

No. Participants are forbidden from sharing prescription medication. Prescription medication should be taken only by the person that it is prescribed to and only in the amount indicated by the prescription. Sharing prescription medication is a legal offense and will be considered a violation of the Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity's zero-tolerance policy on drugs.

### **What happens if my child or youth forgets to bring their prescription medication?**

If your child or youth forgets to bring their prescription medication there are several options. If the medication is not vital (i.e. some topical skin medications, some anti-anxiety drugs) your child or youth has the option to not take the medication for the duration of the forum. If it is vital or if you just live nearby, you may drop-off your child or ward's prescription medication. If it is vital and you do not live nearby, please contact your child or ward's doctor and have them fax a prescription to the Shoppers Drug Mart at 541 Montreal Rd, Ottawa, ON, K1K 0V1. Make sure that your child or youth has enough money to cover the cost of the prescription and we will escort them to pick it up.

### **Will the Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity administer over-the-counter medication (Advil, Tylenol, Gravol, Reactin, Midol etc.) even if my child or youth did not bring it with them?**

No, the Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity will not administer over-the-counter medication that an individual did not bring with them due to potential liability for drug interactions or adverse reactions. Many of these medications, however, can be purchased. A staff member can escort your child or youth to a pharmacy down the road so that they can purchase it themselves (and consult a pharmacist if need be).

### **What if my child or youth needs over-the-counter medication while at the forum and they do not have any with them?**



A staff member can escort your child or youth down the road to the pharmacy to purchase over-the-counter medication for personal use and consult with a pharmacist if necessary. We do encourage participants and other individuals to bring all over-the-counter medications that they might need to avoid these difficulties and inconveniences.

**Can the Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity administer prescription medication for my child or youth while they are at the forum?**

The Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity is not allowed to keep or administer any medications for youth attending the forum. All GSA Leadership forum participants are responsible for carrying and administering any medications that they regularly take. In cases where the participants and/or parent/guardian would like The Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity staff to hold and administer medication for the duration of the forum an additional permission form must be signed before the start of the forum.

**Are the people trained to administer an Epi-Pen on site?**

While youth this age typically know how to self-administer Epi-Pens and it is not the Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity's aim to undermine the autonomy of youth, yes there are people trained to administer an Epi-Pen available on site at all times in case they are needed.

**Are there people who are First Aid trained on site?**

Yes. Security at The Terry Fox Canadian Youth Centre are First Aid trained and there are staff, core volunteers, Adult Allies, and youth mentors that have valid First Aid certification as well.

**Should my child or youth bring sunscreen and insect repellent?**

Yes, please bring both of these as it can be very sunny on Field Trip Day and mosquitoes like to rest in the grass at Glendon in the evenings. There will also likely be some extra on hand.

**Is there disposal for sharps on site?**

No, there is no disposal unit for sharps on site. If you use sharps (insulin, testosterone, etc.) please bring a portable disposal unit to dispose of them safely. Please



do not bring piercing sharps as you are not permitted to pierce yourself or others at the forum. Please also do not bring sharps for illicit drug use as this space has a zero-tolerance policy on drugs.

## **Support**

### **What is the support system available on site?**

On site we have a dedicated Support Team made up of staff, core volunteers, and Adult Allies. The Support Team is coordinated by a Head of Support. If ever the amount or kind of support required by a youth exceeds the ability of our Support Team to provide we will liaise with, call-in, and refer to outside organizations. The Support Team includes folks who have various certifications including: social work background, Mental Health First Aid, safeTALK, and ASIST.

### **What are the safeTalk and ASIST?**

SafeTALK and ASIST are two Living Works certifications that help to make communities suicide-safer. Individuals trained in safeTALK know how to talk to someone in distress and determine if suicidal ideation is (part of) the problem, then connect them with someone who can perform a suicide intervention. ASIST trains individuals in suicide first aid, allowing them to assess the risk (is this person merely thinking about suicide, which is common, or are they planning to act, which requires dedicated intervention) of a person thinking about suicide, conduct an intervention, and connect them with long term resources. Due to the disproportionate amount of deaths by suicide in gender and sexual minority communities, including youth communities, we consider these trainings to be of paramount importance for our Support Team to be well versed in.

### **Why is it important to be suicide-alert at a youth forum?**

It is important to be suicide-alert at a youth forum, because youth are often disproportionately at risk of death by suicide. Moreover, due to the disproportionate amount of deaths by suicide in gender and sexual minority communities, including youth communities, we consider suicide-alertness to be an invaluable skill. Lastly, this forum touches on some very heavy topics, including suicide that may spark thoughts or questions about suicide and we want to be available to discuss this with youth.

### **What kinds of mental health accommodations can be made for participants and youth mentors?**



The Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity is open to discussing any mental health accommodation that would make the forum accessible to you, although we may not ultimately be able to make that accommodation. Some accommodations that have been accessed in the past: designated quiet space during programming, active listeners, being able to ‘step out’ when triggered, access to fidgets, ability to bring fidgets, access to extra food and 36 water, room next to a support staff, room next to a personal support, group snapping and ASL clapping instead of clapping/applause, no wake-up call, obtaining and bringing food to you at meal times, and making trigger warnings available where possible. You may request these (please note that some are automatically provided to the group) or others accommodations on your Optional Mental Health Safety Form, which is included in your registration package.

### **What is a Saf(er) Space?**

A Safe Space is a community space where all members, advisors, guests, and presenters have a right to feel safe regardless of their sex, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, race, ethnicity, age, disability, cultural heritage, religion, social status, financial status, or appearance. We often talk about Safer or Saf(er) Spaces instead of Safe Spaces in order to acknowledge that despite our best efforts it is not possible to have a space that is 100% safe at all times for all people. This is because people come to spaces with different levels of education and understanding about what it means to be a ‘safe’ person or how to act in a ‘safe’ space and accidents are always possible. The best that groups can do is continually strive to prioritize safety and make a commitment to ongoing learning. The rules and behavioural norms of Saf(er) Spaces are governed by what are called ‘Community Guidelines’. The following are a list of eight key concepts that the Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity uses for Saf(er) Spaces at its events.

1. **Positive Focus:** Try to remain optimistic. Maintain positive focus for success as a group.
2. **Speaker in Charge:** Only one person speaks at a time, always others should listen. This is respectful and this way everyone gets to contribute.
3. **Speak for ‘I’:** Speak only for yourself. Talk about how you feel and what you think, not about what “we feel” or “we think”. Others might not feel the same as you. Make no assumptions.
4. **Killer Statements:** Avoid insults and negative talk. Mocking may destroy the security of a group, even if only joking. It is possible to disagree and still stay positive.



5. **Unfinished Business:** All issues are to be discussed until satisfied. A group may get into a great discussion, but might run out of time. Return to the unfinished discussion as soon as possible.
6. **Right to Pass:** Everyone has the choice whether or not to participate. Some people make feel uncomfortable in certain situations.
7. **Levelling Out:** Every person in a group is equal. This means that everyone gets a chance to speak. Everyone should be on the same level physically if possible.
8. **Business, Never Personal:** You can dislike someone's ideas without disliking the person. Don't let opinions get personal and effect relationships.

### **What are trigger warnings and why do we use them?**

Trigger warnings are brief verbal or written warnings that are given before presenting content that commonly provokes flashbacks, panic attacks, or PTSD symptoms in those who have experienced trauma. Common subjects to trigger warning include suicide, eating disorders, violence, death, racism, police brutality, sexism, sexual assault, misogyny, transmisogyny, misogynoir, slurs, heterosexism, cissexism, war, atrocities, and the like. Some people prefer to use the term 'content warning' or 'content note' to acknowledge that the range of topics that could trigger extreme adverse reactions in people who have experienced trauma may be quite broad and generally these people will give a brief description of everything they will talk about, even seemingly innocuous things, before doing so. In practice titles, workshop descriptions, and context often suffice for most common topics of conversation. The goal of trigger warnings or content notes is to give folks who have experienced or are experiencing trauma the information they need to decide if they are in the right headspace to listen to or experience a comment, video, or piece of programming. If not, they can then make the decision to zone out or step out of the room as they feel is appropriate.

### **How do I use a trigger warning?**

In writing trigger warnings or content notes can be simply listed at the start of a written piece (Facebook post, poem, book, short story, memo, etc.). If the piece of writing is long and the trigger warning only pertains to a portion of it, it can be helpful to indicate when the content associated with the trigger warning begins and ends as people may still decide to read the rest of the content.

Most of the time, however, in the context of this forum, you will be using verbal trigger warnings. Verbal trigger warnings are typically given at the start of a presentation or making a remark or comment. If it is a long presentation it can be



helpful to repeat the trigger warning when you arrive at the actual material associated with it. Also, if people step out due to a trigger warning and you move on to a different topic, it is polite to let them know this as they may wish to re-enter the room and listen to the rest of the presentation. Verbal trigger warnings simply require saying something along the lines of “Trigger warning for a description of my experiences of racism and misogyny” and then pausing long enough for someone to leave the room if they so decided (it can help to time this by briefly making eye contact with everyone in the room) before continuing.

### **Will trigger warnings always be used and will they prevent me from being triggered?**

Although we at the Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity make every effort to use written and verbal trigger warnings and to encourage everyone in the space to do the same, no, trigger warnings will not always be used and even if they were they will not always prevent you from being triggered. It is unrealistic and dangerously misleading to promise that everyone will always universally use trigger warnings at the forum and that this will ensure that you will never be triggered. This is true for several reasons, which will be briefly outlined.

Firstly, this is a learning space and people are fallible (which means, they make mistakes). The forum is an educational environment with many different people who have different levels of knowledge about and education on different issues. Some people may not know very much about trauma and have never heard of trigger warnings (or have been miseducated about them) and it is unrealistic to expect that they will be perfect at using them immediately or even at the end of the week, although we do insist that they try. Moreover, even those of us with direct experiences of trauma (and our own triggers) and a lot of education still occasionally forget or make mistakes. You might even make a mistake.

Secondly, this forum works with community partners including, workshop presenters, interpreters, outside presenters, tour guides, and the like. While we can and do provide them with resources about trigger warnings it is not within our capacity to train each person individually. Nor can we predict or control what other people say, as much as we might like to. Some external partners may not use trigger warnings, may use them inconsistently, or not use them at all. We work to prevent and mitigate this but we do want to inform attendees that this is the reality.

Lastly, not everything can be conceivably thought of in a trigger warning or a content note. Triggers are diverse and unique to individuals and their specific experiences with trauma. They are not even always topics. Sounds, a specific word,





tones of voice, smells, the sight of people who look like an abuser, colours, tastes, experiences, music, tactile experiences, and more may trigger people. Even if everyone always universally used trigger warnings appropriately there is still a chance that you could be triggered by something that falls outside the scope of a general trigger warning. For these reasons, and because this is an educational space where we are specifically and explicitly discussing heavy topics such as suicide, oppression, discrimination, and violence, we ask folks to treat this not only as a Saf(er) Space, but also as a Brave Space where you acknowledge the possibility of being triggered and engage anyways. If this space is not healthy for you at this point in your life, that is also okay and you are not obliged to attend this forum if you believe it will negatively impact your mental health.

### **What is a Brave Space?**

Brave Spaces are community spaces for social justice learning. These community spaces acknowledge that we are all at different points on a journey of learning and growing. While violence, including emotional, verbal, and psychological is antithetical to the goals of social justice learning, there is acceptance that authentic learning about social justice involves risk, difficulty, challenge, discomfort, and controversy. Everyone takes risks by participating fully and truthfully in difficult conversations and critical dialogue on heavy topics through conscious questioning and active listening. Although all are expected to make their best effort to engage respectfully, there is an understanding that someone may say something that results in unintentional offense and hurt feelings for others around. A Brave Space assumes that everyone speaks with the positive intent of seeking greater knowledge and understanding. There is also an acknowledgement that the content of discussions will be on topics that may be emotionally difficult and participants are encouraged to challenge themselves to engage with the understanding that there is some potential to be confronted with negative emotions (shame, guilt, sorrow, anger, frustration, hopelessness, vulnerability) or to be triggered. Participants are also questioned to interrogate why they are experiencing their emotions and if they do not choose to participate in a conversation or activity what has prompted them to make that choice and how it might relate to their privilege or what impact choosing not to challenge themselves may have.

### **What else can I do to prevent being triggered?**

The responsibility for your mental wellbeing, thankfully, rests not solely with other people, but also with you. There are several things that you can do to help prevent being triggered (although nothing is 100% effective). This includes, firstly, making a judgment about whether or not the forum and its content are a good fit for



you at this time. If not, that is okay. Things like illness, recent trauma, a recent death in the family, or a period of mental health crisis may mean that you do not feel ready or able to deal with the expectations and content of the forum at this time, but perhaps you will in the future. Trusted adults like a parent, guardian, older sibling, teacher, counselor, or doctor can help you make this decision. If you do feel that the forum is a good fit for you at this time, also be mindful of the workshops you choose to register in. You may be emotionally ready for the forum as a whole, but perhaps taking only workshops with extremely heavy topics and many trigger warnings is not the best idea for you right now. Again, your own feelings and the help of trusted adults can help you in this. Also be sure to read workshop descriptions and any trigger warnings thoroughly

Generally speaking, people are more resilient to being triggered (as well as other kinds of emotional and psychological distress) when they are in good physical health and take care of themselves. So things like remembering to take all medications as prescribed (including supplements), staying hydrated, getting enough sleep, eating well and regularly, avoiding excessive sun exposure, and showering/bathing regularly can really make a positive difference.

You can also be proactive in making sure that staff and the people around you know about your specific triggers. For instance, if we know in advance that someone is triggered by the topic of 'aliens,' for example, then we can try to avoid that topic in group discussions and maybe leave our favourite alien t-shirts at home for this trip, we can also encourage others to do the same (within reason). Lastly, you can also take advantage of many different tools for coping, stress, and anxiety including breathing exercises, physical exercise, fidgets, extra paper to doodle on, grounding exercises, stress-busting apps, colouring, etc.

### **What can I do when I am triggered?**

Accepting the reality that, if you are someone who has experienced trauma and has triggers or if you have certain neurodiversities, you will at some point be triggered (if not here during the forum, then elsewhere at another time) can be more liberating than hoping that if you just try hard enough you can avoid it all together. One of the things that this allows you to do is to have a plan for when it happens! It helps to share this plan with family, friends, teachers, and certainly the staff at the Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity if you feel comfortable (there is space on your Optional Mental Health Safety Form for this). Things that might be a part of your plan could include: Leaving the room, entering a quiet space, asking for a hug, distracting yourself (music, colouring, fidgets, taking a walk, shower, watch a funny video), drinking some water, taking prescription medications as prescribed, talking to someone about it,





breathing exercises, grounding exercises, napping, or meditation. Again, trusted adults and medical professionals can help you design plans and coping strategies that work best for you!

### **What is the difference between being triggered and emotional discomfort?**

Being ‘triggered’ generally refers to having on or more of the following (or related) reactions ‘set off’ by a specific trigger: traumatic flashbacks, anxiety attack, panic attack, rage attack, or a dissociative state. This may happen fairly routinely to folks who are survivors of trauma (war, sexual assault, physical abuse, etc.) or who have certain neurodiversities (PTSD, Anxiety Disorders, Panic Disorders, etc.).

Emotional discomfort is less serious and usually unrelated to trauma. It can include feelings of anger, guilt, shame, annoyance, or sadness that do not rise to the level of a crisis. Some people might feel uncomfortable learning about statistics of violence against trans women, but may not have serious trauma-related psychological and physiological reactions to learning about it if they are not a trans woman or a survivor of violence. It is normal to feel angered or saddened in discussions of difficult topics, but this is not necessarily the same thing as being triggered. Never discount someone’s trauma-based reactions because you are able to cope with your feelings in a positive or unobtrusive way. Also, do not shut down progressive conversations because you feel uncomfortable with the discussion because you are approaching it from a place of privilege (i.e. white guilt, straight guilt, cis guilt, etc.).

### **What do I do if I accidentally trigger someone?**

Unfortunately, this situation does occur, especially in learning environments with lots of people. Firstly, recognize that you simply made a mistake; it is not the end of the world and you are not an awful person. Beating yourself up about it (especially in front of the person you triggered) does not help anything, there will be time to process your own feelings about your actions later. The most important things that you can do are to apologize (don’t worry if the person is not in a space to accept your apology at the moment) and ask if there is anything you can do to help. The person might not want (your) help, but you should still inform a staff member, Adult Ally, or youth mentor so that they can check-in with that person. At a later point, after the person has recovered, you can have a conversation where you apologize again and commit to changing your behaviour so as not to repeat the situation.



**Can I disclose addiction, suicidality, sexual assault, abuse, or an unsafe home situation to staff, volunteers, and Adult Allies at the GSA Forum?**

You may disclose addiction, suicidality, sexual assault, abuse, or an unsafe home situation to staff, volunteers, and Adult Allies at the GSA Forum. You should be aware that the Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity's confidentiality policies do not extend to any situation in which you or another person is at imminent risk of serious harm. Should you disclose any of these things, we will help you to connect with the appropriate resources or authorities. While we will make every effort to obtain your consent and walk you through the process, should you at any point refuse your consent to share information with Children's Aid, the RCMP, the police, or another organization that is necessary to share information with in order to ensure your safety or the safety of others, we will proceed to share that information without your consent as per our legal and moral obligations. Youth under the age of 16 will have already signed a 'Limits of Confidentiality' form.

**Can the Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity connect me to a resource in my own community around mental health?**

Yes. The Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity has many local community partners across the country as well as national partners. We will work to connect you to appropriate mental health (or other resources) in your community should the need arise or should you so desire.

**Can the Support Team continue to provide support for me after the GSA Leadership Forum come to a close?**

The forum Support Team is a group of staff and volunteers that is designed to support you for the duration of the forum. Some of those individuals, due to their jobs (as social workers, youth workers, distress line workers) may continue to do so after the forum in some ways in their professional capacities. It is important to note, however, that the Support Team return to their individual lives after the Forum and are not individually or collectively a youth crisis line or distress centre. They may not be available through phone, instant messenger, or email on any consistent basis and will likely not be able to provide ongoing support. We suggest that you let the Support Team connect you to resources in your own community before the end of the forum or immediately after. Should you be in crisis post-forum we advise you to call a local Distress Centre or one of the following national numbers:



**Emergency Services:**

9-1-1 (or visit your local emergency department)

**Youth Line:**

1-800-268-9688 or text 647-694-4275

**Trans Lifeline:**

877-330-6366

**Kids Help Phone:**

1-800-668-6868 (24/7 365 days a year)

**Anishnawbe 24/7 Mental Health Crisis Management Service:**

416-891-8606 (Indigenous clients)