



## **Trans Community Chat Guidelines**

If you have any questions about the guidelines below, please contact [education@archguelph.ca](mailto:education@archguelph.ca)

### **Confidentiality is essential**

- Anything discussed in the group should not be discussed outside of the group. Anything you share will be kept in confidence by all group members, except in the following circumstances:- You are clearly in imminent danger of seriously physically harming yourself or other person/s;
- There are reasonable grounds to suspect that you are being abused or threatened by other person/s
- There are reasonable grounds to suspect that a child or minor is being current abused, threatened, or may be in danger (does not include mentions of past abuse without implications for current danger)
- If any of these circumstances become apparent, the moderators will report to ARCH and the appropriate authorities. Learn more about ARCH's confidentiality policy on our website.

### **Respect fellow group members.**

- ARCH is proud to support a diverse community, and our peer support programming is no different. We expect all group members to listen and value each others' experiences equally. We welcome participants of all ages, genders, orientations, ethnic/cultural identities, and we do not require documentation or "proof" of trans-ness or non-cis identities in order to receive support. We accept



each other's stories without judgment. Please refer to ARCH's norms of respect for more information, available on our website.

### **Listen to the peer worker facilitators.**

- Our moderators are trained peers who have been generous with their time and compassion to support these programs, especially as they have had to adjust to suit our current needs. They have been taken on for this program because they care deeply about supporting your wellbeing and the wellbeing of our shared communities. They are responsible for the safety and success of each group chat, and they must be treated with respect at all times. If a moderator asks you to be mindful of triggering language, please accept their feedback and do not take it as a personal attack.
- Be mindful of “triggers” and things that may be especially upsetting or disturbing for other participants.
- We are here to promote best practices, self care, and the safety of all in our communities. You can certainly share what you struggle with, but it's important to understand that we are not a therapeutic or crisis service, nor are we medical professionals that can prescribe or provide medical advice – we are here to explore and support one another. Individuals can share their experiences and struggles with dysphoria, but are asked to be mindful of how this impacts others. Additionally, when discussing strategies for soothing dysphoria, we will focus on healthy and best practices (such as using binders in a bodysafe way, using prosthetics that are body safe, etc) as opposed to more dangerous approaches (using ace bandages, anything involving self harm, using “black market” hormones). If you are unsure if a topic is safe to bring up, please ask a facilitator first.
- No personal information should be shared on the chat.
  - No contact info (phone, email, social media profiles) should be shared
  - You may share your first name, but not your last name



- You can mention what city you live in, but not an address or nearby intersection
- You can discuss the type of work you do or classes you take, but not the particular company, store, school, or location
- Be mindful of other people’s experiences.

We do not make assumptions about other group members, as we have no idea where they are in their gender journey or what they may have found helpful/harmful in the past. When talking about various resources and service providers (including surgeons for gender affirming procedures), please remember that some have had negative experiences at certain places or with certain service providers; and may have varying opinions about the validity, effectiveness, or quality of certain procedures.

You may express these feelings, but do not speak broadly in a negative or critical way about certain procedures or types of care. Every type (or no type) of medical intervention is valid. Someone else may require a certain procedure for their health that you have dissimilar feelings about, and vice-versa. We are all on our own path, we ask that participants respect this.- Do not assume that everyone in the chat has had the same experience as you.

Our chat participants are in all stages of their gender journey and transition (whether social, medical, or both). Some may have had all the interventions they need, others are just starting to explore their identity. This chat may be the first, and only, resource an individual has tried, and we need to foster an inclusive environment that supports and respects every experience.

Participation is voluntary in all ARCH programs. There is no obligation to talk; participants can say as much or as little as they like, and you can always choose to step back and observe.

## **Terms of Service**



We request everyone read and understand our guidelines in their entirety. Before you share your thoughts and feelings in our trans group chats, you must understand that ARCH peer workers and staff read all of the content contributed to keep the group space supportive and safer for everyone. Should either have a concern about any content contributed, they will:

- Contact the appropriate ARCH staff members to alert them of the incident,
- Contact the individual responsible for the content,
- Ensure that the appropriate people are put into contact with the individual(s)

If you are in crisis we strongly recommend you connect with a crisis line such as the ones listed above, your doctor, therapist or a hospital immediately. Please note that Online Peer Support is not a crisis service. If you find you are struggling and require immediate help, please contact the following services that best reflect your needs:

- ARCH Support – for ARCH-related support needs, including mental health support
- If you are in crisis or in need of mental health support, contact your local emergency services or call:  
[Trans LifeLine: 877-565-8860](tel:877-565-8860)  
[LGBT Youthline](tel:1-800-268-9688) – offers phone, text, or web-based peer support for 2SLGBTQ+ people in Ontario: 1-800-268-9688  
[HERE 24/7](tel:1-844-437-3247) for addictions mental health, & crisis services: 1-844-437-3247

Take care of yourself and one another during these times

- Connect with community. A lot of local trans folks access the [Gender Intersect](#) Facebook page to post information, questions, links, and provide support. We will be checking it regularly during this time – come and join the conversation!
- Be sure to reach out to friends, family (however you define it), and loved ones during this time.



It's always important to stay connected, but especially in these times of social isolation. You can still stay in touch over social media or other means of online communication – whatever makes sense for you, just be sure to stay connected and get the support you need!

- Set healthy boundaries around social media, screen time, and following the news. It's important to stay informed, but be sure to get outside, feel the sun, and take care of yourself beyond spending hours reading the news and social media posts. Your mental health and physical health are connected, and taking care of both will help your immune system and resiliency during this time.
- Be sure to exercise, mix up your days, and keep yourself entertained. There are still ways to be active during home isolation! Try to keep moving your body and stimulating your brain however you like to do so. Look up instructional videos – do some yoga, exercise, learn some new dance moves or skills – whatever you're into, just try to keep your body and mind active.
- Follow hygiene and infection prevention practices.
  - Wash your hands and wipe down surfaces regularly
  - Refrain from touching your face
  - Limit your contact with others
  - Do your best to take care of your health. Especially if you smoke, have any respiratory issues, or if your immune system is compromised in any way

## Resources

- [The Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): What Trans People Need to Know](#)
- [Trans Health Knowledge Base \(Rainbow Health Ontario\)](#)  
A collection of FAQs about trans health and transitioning for trans and non-binary people in Ontario
- [Guidelines for Transition-related Healthcare \(Sherbourne Health\)](#)
- [General Resources \(Rainbow Health Ontario\)](#)



- [Kanopy streaming service](#) – Free with your Guelph Public Library card  
Get access to movies about trans people, LGBTQ+ folks, HIV/AIDS, drag communities, and more.
- [Instacart](#) – grocery ordering and delivery service