“It’s Just Safer When I Don’t Enter”: Examining Barriers to Trans Inclusion in Binary-Gendered Locker Rooms and Restrooms

by

Ali Greey

A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Master of Science.

Graduate Department of Exercise Sciences
University of Toronto

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Abstract

This thesis explores the experiences of trans individuals within binary-gendered locker rooms and restrooms. Using a semi-structured interview method, in this study I garnered stories and reflections from 14 trans interviewees to explore how they experience these spaces. This study is initiated in response to the work of Fusco et al. (2015) and Cavanagh (2010) identifying locker rooms and restrooms as gateway spaces to trans inclusion. I argue that difficulty accessing these spaces results in exclusion from sport and the public sphere. Employing an intersectional analysis (Crenshaw, 1989), I theorize how these spaces act as crucial gateways to trans involvement in physical activity and public space. To conclude, I draw upon interviewee reflections to outline a repertoire of interventions, such as trans-positive membership policies and visual pedagogies, for making locker rooms and restrooms safer and more trans-inclusive.
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Chapter 1  
Introduction  
For many transgender and gender non-binary (trans) individuals, the mere act of entering a binary-gendered locker room or restroom may render them vulnerable to social alienation and/or physical violence, a vulnerability exacerbated for bodies that are racialized, as well as those marked by visible disability or not adhering to Western ideals of body size. This thesis outlines the results of my master’s research which examines how trans individuals experience locker rooms and restrooms, as well as their perceptions of various strategies being used by institutions across North America and Europe to make these facilities more trans-inclusive. Central to my research is an exploration into how trans experiences in these spaces are shaped not only by ideologies and assumptions of normative expressions of gender and sexuality, but also by settler colonial ideals of whiteness and middle-class respectability.

Scholars from fields such as gender studies and biology have insisted that the fluidity and complexity of humanity’s expressions of sex and gender cannot be adequately conceptualized within a two-sex, male/female binary (see Beh & Diamond, 2000; Blackless et al., 2000; Butler, 1993; Castañeda, 2015; Cavanagh, 2010; Dreger, 1998, 2013, Fausto-Sterling, 1997, 2000, 2013; Greenberg, 1999; Haas, 2013; Halberstam, 1998; Stryker, 2006; Stryker & Aizura, 2013; Sykes, 2011). Despite the volume of this scholarship, dimorphous gender classification remains ubiquitously accepted within Western society.

At birth, if not prior, babies are assigned one of two genders according to the external characteristics of their sexual genitalia. The moment that marks their arrival into the world as new human beings is accompanied with the declaration of either “It’s a girl!” or “It’s a boy!” This gender assignment will be iteratively and scrupulously enforced and inspected for the remainder of their lives. Activities such as crossing nation-state borders, visiting the doctor, applying for a license, being pulled over when operating a motor vehicle, and purchasing liquor routinely require individuals to display a piece of identification. When an individual’s gender expression does not match the mark of M or F listed on an identity card, they often face scrutiny

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1 I am using the term binary-gendered to refer to spaces designated according to binary assumptions about gender, e.g., men’s/women’s locker rooms and restrooms. As I discuss in the section Binary-Gendered Facilities (p. 16), I am using this term instead of gender-segregated because the latter term problematically equates the struggle for trans inclusion within locker rooms and restrooms with Jim Crow anti-Black segregation.
and/or violence; this is particularly true for Black and racialized trans individuals as well as for Two-Spirit\textsuperscript{2} individuals.

Moreover, not only does the built environment of Western society favour bodies which discreetly cohere to their gender assignment, but also, in many ways, it is designed exclusively for their use. Activities such as entering binary-gendered locker rooms before participating in physical activity, or using public restroom facilities when navigating public space, regularly elicit anxiety, social alienation, and violence for trans individuals. My research focuses specifically upon trans experiences in these spaces. In this thesis, I intend to demonstrate that the difficulty trans people have accessing locker rooms and restrooms constrains their ability to participate in physical activity and within the public sphere.

**Socio-Political Background**

Recently, trans rights have erupted onto the North American socio-political agenda. Between 2013 and 2016, at least 24 American states deliberated the passing of legislation that would legally prohibit trans individuals from using the locker rooms or restrooms associated with their gender identity. Additionally, fourteen of these states have considered legislation which would threaten the rights of trans students within schools (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2018). In March 2016, the state of North Carolina passed *House Bill 2*, “Public Facilities Privacy & Security Act,” commonly known as the *Bathroom Bill*, which mandated that all individuals use the locker rooms and restrooms associated with their gender assignment at birth. Additionally, the *Bathroom Bill* pre-emptively prevented the creation of municipal and county-level anti-discrimination laws, a stipulation which foreclosed the possibility of anti-hate policy being used to undermine the *Bathroom Bill*. At least six other states have debated similar legislation. In response to the *Bathroom Bill*, the Obama administration extended *Title IX* to include gender identity in May 2016. This federal directive asserted that federally funded academic institutions across the United States were legally obliged to, among other directives,

\textsuperscript{2} The term Two-Spirit may be used by First Nations individuals to self-identify an expression of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, queer, etc. gender of sexual identity. The term Two-Spirit offers a conceptual alternative to berdache, a derogatory term applied by Western anthropologists to First Nations and Indigenous individuals. Two-Spirit is an identifier contingent upon Indigeneity and is not available to settlers (Jacobs, Thomas, & Lang, 1997).
permit trans students to use the locker rooms and restrooms corresponding with their gender identity. In February 2017, however, these federal protections were withdrawn by the Trump administration; this was one of the first actions in which Donald Trump used his executive powers after he took office.

Since the North Carolina Bathroom Bill and Trump’s rescindment of the Obama administration’s federal directives, a number of businesses and organizations have protested North Carolina’s exclusionary legislation by boycotting the state. These organizations included the National Athletic Collegiate Association (NCAA), which boycotted competitions within the state and Deutsche Bank, which halted its plans to create 250 new jobs in North Carolina. A number of musicians cancelled their performances in the state, 68 businesses including Apple, PayPal, and Nike participated in boycotts; and several states prohibited publicly funded travel to North Carolina (Bort, 2016; Jenkins & Trotta, 2017). This economic and political pressure resulted in state legislators eventually repealing the Bathroom Bill in March 2017.

Trans inclusion within locker rooms and restrooms remains a contentious issue. During the November 2018 US mid-term elections, voters in Massachusetts went to the poles in a “veto referendum,” whereby the question of trans-inclusion in binary-gendered locker rooms and restrooms was put to a public decision (Connolly, 2018). A significant majority (67.8%) of Massachusetts voters voted to uphold Senate Bill 2407, “An Act Relative to Transgender Anti-Discrimination,” (Creamer, 2018), which legally prohibits individuals and institutions from barring trans individuals from using the locker rooms or restrooms associated with their gender identity. The passing of this bill was the first state-wide anti-discrimination statute passed by referendum that supports trans rights in the United States (Moreau, 2018).

In October 2018, The New York Times reported a leaked memo from the Trump administration indicating a plan to propose legislation which would essentially “define transgender out of existence” (Green, Benner, & Pear, 2018). The internal memo indicated that the Trump administration intends to legally limit a definition of gender as limited to only male and female and as immutable, based upon gender assignment at birth. In addition to trans individuals, this definition would also have significant legal and medical ramifications for
intersex\textsuperscript{3} individuals. Both of these populations would be, ostensibly, not legally permitted to exist. Reportedly, the Trump administration has tried to pressure the United Nations to adopt this definition (Borger, 2018). Such political leveraging of the definition of trans suggests that the presence of trans bodies in binary-gendered locker rooms and restrooms is not only a national issue, but also one of international concern.

In Canada, the Trudeau government passed an important piece of legislation, Bill C-16 (“An Act to amend the Canadian Human Rights Act and the Criminal Code”), in June 2017, adding gender identity and gender expression to the list of prohibited grounds of discrimination (House of Commons of Canada, 2017). Bill C-16, which was the result of over a decade of pressure applied by trans activists, rather than nation-state benevolence, operated to finally include gender identity within the Canadian Human Rights Act. Despite the passing of this legislation, transphobia persists in the Canadian political landscape. In November, 2018 the Ontario Conservative party, a majority government, voted to debate removing gender identity from the Ontario secondary school sexual-education curriculum at the following year’s convention (Jeffords, 2017). Trans activists have called the potentiality of this debate a “dangerous” one that risks undermining the rights won through Bill C-16 (Georgieva, 2018).

The explosion of trans rights onto the mainstream political agenda has been accompanied by broader conversations about trans inclusion within society. The issue of trans exclusion from public restrooms has recently received significant public and scholarly attention to the fact that many trans individuals experience significant barriers to accessing public restrooms (see Bender-Baird, 2016; Cavanagh, 2010; Herman, 2013; Kogan, 2008; Ritchie, 2017; Seelman, 2014; Slater, Jones, & Procter, 2016; Taillefer & DeVito, 2006). These barriers, as I will argue throughout this thesis, operate to prevent trans people from participating fully in the public sphere. Compared to the space of the public restroom, locker rooms have received significantly less public and scholarly attention. Locker rooms remain a space where a lack of progress for trans rights is most evident. For trans individuals, the locker room is, as Heather Sykes (2011, p. 45) insists: “… one of the most traumatic spaces within the built environment…” Although a

\textsuperscript{3} Intersex refers to expressions of sex in which an individual has a reproductive or sexual anatomy that is inconsistent with “normal” male or female biological expressions of sex (Intersex Society of North America, 2008). Between between 1.7\% (Fausto-Sterling, 2000, p. 51) and 4\% (Greenberg, 1999, p. 267) of the human population is intersex at birth. See p. 14 for a more detailed discussion of intersex identity.
growing literature suggests that locker rooms represent a significant barrier to the involvement of trans individuals within sport and physical activities (see Fusco, Milman, & De Lisio, 2015; Hargie, Mitchell, & Somerville, 2017; Ingram, Bouthillette, & Retter, 1997, p. 3; Keogh, Reid, & Weatherburn, 2006; Smith, Cuthbertson, & Gale, 2012; Sykes, 2011, p. 45; Symons, Sbaraglia, Hillier, & Mitchell, 2010; Taylor & Peter 2011), little research has examined how trans individuals experience and perceive locker rooms.

Although there exists substantial quantitative evidence that, within locker rooms and restrooms, trans individuals face elevated rates of harassment, social alienation, and violence (see Bauer & Scheim, 2014; Caudwell, 2014, p. 404; Hargie et al., 2017, p. 226; Herman, 2013; Keogh et al., 2006, p. 38; Scheim, Bauer, & Pyne, 2014; Sykes, 2011, p. 2; Taylor & Peter, 2011, pp. 15–17; Whittle, Turner, & Al-Alami, 2007, p. 60), and that many of these individuals report avoiding locker rooms and restrooms to guard against this persecution (Kosciw et al., 2016, p. 13; Kosciw, Greytak, Bartkiewicz, Boesen, & Palmer, 2012, p. 21; Symons et al., 2010, p. 58), to date, little qualitative research has explored how trans individuals describe their experiences and perceptions of these spaces, as well as which interventions they identify as necessary for making locker rooms and restrooms feel safer. In this research, I focus upon both locker rooms and restrooms for the following reasons (which I explain in greater detail in the Methodological Overview chapter, pp. 57-71): first, because of the binary-gendered design of locker rooms and restrooms, trans individuals often experience similar, albeit nuanced, barriers to accessing these spaces. Second, improving a scholarly understanding of trans experiences in either of these spaces has implications for enhancing an understanding of trans experiences in the other space. Third, both of these spaces operate as barriers to trans participation within the public sphere: locker rooms are a barrier to trans involvement in sport and physical activity and, similarly, restrooms are a barrier to trans participation in public space. Finally, lessons learned about advancing trans inclusion in locker rooms may have implications for advancing trans inclusion in restrooms, and vice versa. Therefore, examining these two spaces together is important for adequately addressing the complexity of trans experiences in these spaces.

The lacunae in the literature surrounding trans experiences in locker rooms and restrooms is significant because, without an awareness of how trans individuals characterize their experiences in these spaces, research communities and policy makers will not have the
information necessary to create and evaluate interventions directed toward fostering trans inclusion in these spaces. Establishing effective interventions for improving trans inclusion within locker rooms and restroom is essential for removing barriers to the full inclusion of trans individuals within society.

A number of North American and European institutions, universities, school boards, community centers, and private gym franchises are increasingly employing interventions for addressing the systemic barriers that locker rooms and restrooms pose to trans inclusion. Of these strategies, the most widely adopted include posting safe space signs, establishing trans-positive membership policies, and introducing all-gender or universal facilities. Several local, small-scale strategies have also been utilized, for example, The Change Room Project (Fusco et al., 2015), which I will discuss in more detail in the sections to follow. Despite the growing utilization of these interventions, scholars have yet to examine how these interventions are perceived by trans individuals. This information is also crucial for designing and implementing interventions effective at ameliorating trans exclusion from locker rooms and restrooms.

Developing an understanding of how trans people perceive interventions directed toward fostering trans inclusion is of considerable importance; a number of sport governing bodies, for example, have signaled a commitment to making sport more inclusive for trans participants (see Alberta Schools’ Athletic Association, 2017, p. 43; Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport, 2016; Canadian Collegiate Athletic Association, 2017, p. 59; NCAA, 2011; Ontario Volleyball Association, 2012). Few of these commitments, however, are accompanied by any interventions geared toward improving trans inclusion in locker rooms or restrooms. When interventions are adopted by these governing bodies, they are often vaguely worded and/or impractical.

Additionally, the representation of trans individuals in policy-making roles within these sporting bodies is, at worst, entirely absent and, at best, tokenized. Certainly, the presence of trans people in these discussions may not necessarily translate into more trans-positive policies and interventions; the magnitude of the absence of trans representation in these roles, however, raises significant concerns about the ability of these sporting bodies to translate trans-inclusive intentions into meaningful steps toward making physical activity more inclusive for trans people.

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4 For example, the Vancouver Parks Board (City of Vancouver, 2015), the University of California Berkeley (Cauterucci, 2017), the YMCA in Calgary, AB (Croteau, 2016), and the University of Bristol, UK (Samuels, 2014).
This disjunction between intention and initiative could also be understood as an indication of the lack of instructional resources available to individuals, institutions, and governments seeking to advance trans inclusion in locker rooms and restrooms; frankly put, many facilities and governing bodies do not yet know what to do. My master’s research seeks to establish a repertoire of resources for addressing trans experiences in these spaces and implementing effective and sensitive interventions for making these spaces safer and more inclusive for trans people.

**Research Synopsis**

My master’s research is directed in response to the following research questions: first, how do a diverse group of trans individuals experience and perceive of locker rooms and restrooms? Second, what strategies do they use to make accessing these spaces feel safer or less alienating? Third, how do they perceive of interventions being used to advance trans inclusion in these spaces? My research methodology, which I discuss in detail in the Methodological Overview chapter of this thesis (see pp. 57-71), involved conducting semi-structured interviews with fourteen trans individuals, ages 22-57. Care was taken to ensure that these interviewees reflected the diversity of the trans community with regards to gender expression, racialization, Indigeneity, sexuality, ability, body size/shape, class, and age.

With regards to participation in sport and physical activity, it is worth emphasizing that while the locker room is significant a barrier to trans participation in sport and physical culture, is not necessarily the most significant barrier. First, broader issues of access offer a significant barrier to involvement; individuals who are trans, racialized, Indigenous, with disabilities, and/or working class are less likely to have access to the disposable income necessary for enrolment or the membership fees required to access many of these programs. Second, the availability of leisure time to participate in physical activities is often in a shorter supply for working class individuals, e.g. those with family caretaking responsibilities, etc. Third, the “jock culture” which characterizes many spaces of sport and physical culture also acts as a significant barrier to trans involvement. Even if trans individuals did perceive of locker rooms as safer and more trans-inclusive, this perception may not necessarily result in improved participation within physical activity. For example, the masculinist, competitive, aesthetically-focused,
heteronormative, and cisnormative\(^5\) attitudes which characterize many physical activity environments also acts as a significant obstacle to the involvement of many trans as well as cisgender people (e.g., Graham, McKenna, & Fleming, 2013; Hargie et al., 2017; Johnston, 1998; Messner, 1992; Schwartz, 1986; Sykes, 2011; Travers, 2006). Similarly, within many physical cultures the presence of insidious ideologies of fatphobia, or what Hillel Schwartz (1986) has called “lean meritocracy” (p. 331), also operates to exclude many individuals by suggesting that bodies (and persons) can and ought to be evaluated according to their body size and appearance.

Nevertheless, my aim for this project is to contribute toward a growing call (by scholarly and activist voices) for the disruption of trans exclusion from locker rooms and restrooms. This thesis aims to provide a resource for individuals, institutions, and governments seeking to initiate interventions into these spaces. Crucially, the information outlined in this text provides practical recommendations for making locker rooms and restrooms more accessible, not only for white, able-bodied, and athletic trans individuals, but for trans individuals who are targeted by not only transphobia and homophobia, but also by racism, as well as ableism, and fat-phobia.

It is worth emphasizing that my research is not directed toward disrupting the underlying epistemological impulse toward classifying individuals according to the binary of man/woman. I do, however, explore how the logic of binary-gendered design is symptomatic of a post-enlightenment preoccupation with classification and categorization (according to both gendered as well as racialized signifiers). Certainly, this impulse to classify and separate bodies continues to underpin the project of white settler colonialism and its capitalist inevitabilities (Grande, 2015). Significantly, Sylvia Wynter (1994) has insisted that the process of classifying bodies and identities is both upheld by and reproduced through Western research and academia, a process which renders some bodies less human than others, particularly, for this project, those that are marked as trans and/or racialized. Thus, I recognize that the capacity for this project to advocate for substantial and systemic change is severely restricted by the institutional setting in which it occurs.

\(^5\) Cisnormative is a term which refers to the assumption that everyone, or almost everyone, is cisgender. Please see p. 15 for a description of the term cisgender.
Positionality

My scholastic interest in locker room and restroom spaces initially arose from my own experiences as an internationally competitive self-identified trans athlete. Between 2013 and 2016, I competed for Team Canada’s women’s boxing team in the middleweight and light heavyweight divisions. During this time, visiting locker rooms across Canada and the globe, my relationship with this space became increasingly tenuous. Although I also struggled to access public restrooms, I developed strategies for avoiding these spaces such as “holding it” and avoiding drinking water. As an elite athlete, however, locker rooms were much more difficult for me to avoid. Entering locker rooms, I was consistently met with curious stares and hostile glares. Many of my visits to locker rooms involved being redirected to the men’s locker room by a well-meaning locker room user. I began avoiding locker rooms wherever possible, often dressing in multiple layers to prepare for a workout. When I could not avoid using the locker room, I developed an elaborate set of strategies to avoid and/or respond to these interactions. These strategies included: modifying my workout schedule to use the facility in the very early morning when locker room traffic was at its lowest, coordinating with teammates so that when I entered I was not alone, wearing headphones playing loud music in an attempt to drown out locker room confrontations, managing where I looked, what I wore, the order in which I dressed and undressed, which lockers I used, and preparing a protective retort for when these interactions inevitably did occur.

When I returned to the University of Toronto between competitions in 2015, an installation of The Change Room Project (Fusco et al., 2015) was on display (Appendix A). A floor-to-ceiling poster at the entrance to the locker room read “If you’re questioning the gender of someone in the washroom, don’t. They know better than you. They should be here. Andrew, trans male, undergraduate student” (Fusco et al., 2015). I was amazed to find that the encounters I had grown accustomed to were replaced with welcoming nods from the women that I encountered there. Observing this phenomenon led me to pursue a master’s degree at the University of Toronto, investigating the possibilities that this model of intervention holds for transforming the lived-experiences of trans individuals within locker rooms and restrooms. My initial enthusiasm was tempered, however, by what I learned in several gender and women
studies courses. These courses encouraged me to examine how my own embodiment (as white, able-bodied, athletic, and embodying a relatively legible gender) also shapes my experiences in locker rooms and restrooms as well as my own perceptions of *The Change Room Project*. As a result, I attend to a topic that has received little attention by scholars, the ways in which locker rooms and restrooms are experienced intersectionally by trans individuals (Crenshaw, 1989), not only as sites of transphobia and homophobia but also as sites of racism, as well as ableism, and fat-phobia (cf. Cavanagh, 2010; Fusco, 2003, 2006; Sykes, 2011). Central to this research is an exploration into how, for trans individuals, locker rooms and restrooms act as spaces not only where so-called “non-normative” expressions of gender and sexuality are policed, but also as spaces where settler colonial ideologies surrounding whiteness as well as ability and body size actively shape notions of space and belonging.

**Overview**

This thesis outlines the results of my master’s research project. Chapter 2, *Review of Literature* outlines the relevant literature pertaining to this project. The *Review of Literature* chapter is grouped into five sections. The first section, *Context*, contextualizes the oppression to which trans people have been, and continue to be, subjected to by Western medicine and white settler colonialism. The second section, *Terminology and Key Concepts*, outlines several relevant terminology and key concepts that will be employed throughout the remainder of this thesis. The third section, *Geographies*, explores literature examining the relationships between sexuality and space, race and space, Indigeneity and place, disability and the built environment, as well as the geographies of sport. The fourth section, *Geographies of Trans Exclusion*, focuses specifically upon the spaces of the locker room and the restroom. In this section I examine the ways in which binary-gendered facilities are problematic for trans people, and I theorize these spaces drawing upon the work of, among others, theorists Judith Butler, Michel Foucault, Sarah Ahmed, and Frantz Fanon. The fourth section, *Sexuality and Gender in Sport Literature*, reviews literature addressing the experiences of gay, lesbian, and queer individuals in sport as well as the experiences of trans individuals in elite sport, recreational sport, and, more broadly, binary-gendered facilities.
In Chapter 3, *Methodological Overview*, I include a *Theoretical Framework* section describing the theoretical work informing this project, a *Methodology* section discussing the epistemology and rationale behind my methodological decisions, and a *Recruitment, Procedures, and Methods* section which outlines in detail the methods that I used to conduct this research and analyze data.

In Chapters 4 – 7, I discuss and interpret the results of this research. In chapter 4, “*It All Makes a Nicely Layered Sandwich*”: *Examining Trans Experiences in Binary-Gendered Facilities Through an Intersectional Analysis Framework*, I examine the ways in which interviewees experiences of locker rooms and restrooms are characterized not only by transphobia, but also by racism, as well as ableism and fat-phobia (Crenshaw, 1989). In Chapter 5, *Exploring the Lived-Experiences of Trans Interviewees within Locker Rooms and Public Restrooms*, I review and discuss how interviewees describe their lived-experiences in these facilities. In Chapter 6, “*It’s So Second Nature That It’s Kind of Hard to Think About*”: *Interviewees’ Strategies for Navigating Binary-Gendered Locker Rooms and Restrooms*, I turn to explore the strategies that interviewees use to make accessing these spaces feel safer or less alienating. In Chapter 7, “*I Feel Like There’s a Solution That Hasn’t Been Thought About Yet...*”: *Examining Interviewee Perceptions of Interventions for Improving Trans Inclusion in Locker Rooms and Restrooms*, I explore interviewees’ perceptions of interventions being used to make locker rooms and restrooms safer and more inclusive for trans individuals. To conclude, I discuss some of the implications of this research and recommend areas for future inquiry.
Chapter 2
Review of Literature

Context

In this chapter, I disrupt the rhetoric that binary gender is normal and/or universal. I illustrate how gender identities outside of a male/female binary have existed for as long, and as diversely, as the human cultures in which they are situated. To begin, I contextualize the violence which Western medicine and psychiatry have committed upon trans individuals under the pretense of “correction.” Drawing upon the work of scholars such as Scott L. Morgensen (2011), I argue that annihilating Two-Spirit and trans identities has been and remains an objective crucial to the project of white settler colonialism.

Western psychiatry and medicine have a long history of violently pathologizing trans individuals and identities. From its inception in 1952 until 2013, the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) listed transgenderism as a psychological pathology, Gender Identity Disorder (e.g., Castañada, 2015; Fraser, Karasic, Meyer, & Wylie, 2010, p. 263). Trans individuals were regularly subjected to conversion therapy, a practice of attempting to convert an individual's gender or sexual identity using psychological and/or spiritual violence and manipulation; electroconvulsive therapy, whereby electric currents are passed through the brain initiating small seizures to attempt to reconfigure brain patterns (American Psychiatric Association, 2000), and even prefrontal lobotomy, a procedure (Schmidt, 2010; Johnston & Longhurst, 2010, p. 17) that involved severing the prefrontal cortex of the brain in an attempt to cure transgenderism (Braslow, 1997; Raz, 2008).

Despite Western medicine’s assertion that trans identities are abnormal and require correction, not only does evidence suggest that trans individuals have existed in cultures across the world, but also that trans individuals have persisted for millennia. Genders that were neither male nor female have been identified across many cultures: for example, the eunuch in the Byzantine Empire (Ringrose, 1994), Two-Spirit in North American First Nation cultures (Taylor & Ristock, 2011), the waria (or béncong) in Indonesia (Boellstorff, 2004), the bayot in the Philippines (Whitham, 1992), the fa’afafine in Samoa (Schmidt, 2010, as discussed in Johnston...
& Longhurst, 2010, p. 17), and the hijra in India (Nanda, 1986). Scholars such as Evan Towle and Lynn Morgan (2002) as well Scott Morgensen (2011), however, have problematized queer and trans theories’ preoccupations with a romantic imaginary of Indigenous “third genders.” Towle and Morgan argue that conflating contemporary trans identities with a homogeneous Indigenous “third gender” erases the complexity and specificity of gender within each of these cultures. Towle and Morgan insist that this representation divorces gender from broader Indigenous socio-political contexts, and ultimately reifies Western categories of gender. Morgensen (2011) also cautions that, although many white queer and trans individuals express an interest in learning about how diverse genders have been practiced and accepted across Indigenous cultures, few settlers are invested in disrupting settler colonialism. This scholarship provokes the ethical hypocrisy of appropriating a singular aspect of Indigenous history while ignoring the oppression – state-led erasure and denial of legal, social, and spiritual title to lands as well as forced-assimilation and cultural genocide – that Indigenous Peoples continue to face.

For early white colonialists in North America, Indigenous individuals who eschewed or deviated from a male/female gender binary represented a significant threat to the settler-colonial order. These individuals, and the acceptance they reportedly received within their cultures, threatened the legitimacy of a universal male/female binary, a binary upon which the West and its gendered system of labour was deeply dependent. As a result, Indigenous individuals who expressed trans genders were subjected to supererogatory violence, they were subjected to this violence, not only because their gender expressions were considered sinful by Christianity, but also because the elimination of Indigenous Two-Spirit individuals was crucial to the erasure of Indigenous culture, religion, and languages necessary for the complete assimilation of these Peoples within white settler society. As Sandy Grande (2015) has demonstrated, state-led assimilation of Indigenous cultures was a process motivated primarily by the desire to acquire Indigenous lands; thus, the elimination of Indigenous Two-Spirit individuals can be understood as an integral part of white settler colonial nation-building. In Canada, for example, Indigenous Two-Spirit individuals were targeted for particular forms of brutalization within Christian residential schools (Evans-Campbell, Walters, Pearson, & Campbell, 2012; Wilson, 1996). Accordingly, the violence experienced by Indigenous Two-Spirit individuals is intimately linked to the project of white settler colonial nation-building.
Terminology and key concepts

In this section, I outline several terms and concepts that are important to understand this research. The concepts that I will outline are: trans, intersex, cisgender, binary-gendered, and intersectionality. The Glossary (see Appendix D) also includes a number of other terms that readers may wish to use as a reference when reading this thesis.

Trans

Throughout this thesis, I am using the term trans as an umbrella term to refer to a number of gender identities including, but not limited to: transgender, transsexual, Two-Spirit, gender non-binary, gender non-conforming, gender non-normative, agender, bigender, nongender, pangender, and genderqueer. Please see Appendix D for a glossary of these terms and others. As Tracy Robinson and Arif Bulkan (2018) have suggested, the term trans extends to include myriad gender identities in ways that those listed above cannot. Trans allows for greater fluidity and less fixity than terms like transsexual or transgender.

Intersex

The Intersex Society of North America defines intersex as “… a general term used for a variety of conditions in which a person is born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy that doesn’t seem to fit the typical definitions of female or male” (2008, para. 1). Like trans genders, intersexuality has been subjected to systematic elimination by Western science and medicine, bodies of knowledge which continue to claim that intersexuality is a rare and abnormal condition. A number of scholars have refuted this claim, arguing that, in fact, intersex genders are not uncommon but are estimated to occur in between 1.7% (Fausto-Sterling, 2000, p. 51) and 4% (Greenberg, 1999, p. 267) of the human population.

The frequency with which intersexuality occurs in humans challenges the scientific validity of a biological male/female sexual binary. As a result of the perceived universality of this supposed binary, Western medicine has identified intersexuality as a condition requiring medical intervention and “correction” (Donahoe, Powell, & Lee, 1991; Fausto-Sterling, 1997). It
is estimated that, each day in the US, five babies born with intersex genitalia are “reassigned” as female through genital reconstruction surgery (Beh & Diamond, 2000, p. 17; Dreger, 1998; Fausto-Sterling, 1997). As a result of the Western stigmatisation of bodies outside of the gender binary, intersex individuals who have not forcibly undergone “corrective” surgery at birth may be subjected to scrutiny and violence within binary-gendered spaces, particularly in locker rooms where the vulnerability of nudity may render their intersexuality visible.

As discussed in the Introduction chapter, intersex individuals, like trans individuals, have been targeted in a proposed policy that was revealed in a memo recently leaked from within the Trump administration. The memo, which indicated that gender would be redefined as an immutable category limited to only male and female genders would ostensibly operate to define trans and intersex individuals out of existence. Although, in this project, I do not focus upon intersex exclusion from binary-gendered spaces, my hope is that this research may also have important implications for intersex individuals in these spaces. Particularly in Chapter 7, I propose a number of interventions for making locker rooms and restrooms safer and more inclusive for individuals who do not or cannot adhere to society’s expectations of binary gender.

Cisgender

As identified in the preceding sections, there exists a considerable variety of terms used to denote supposedly “non-normative” gender identities, however, little terminology has been devoted to signifying “normative,” male/female, gender identities. The perceived paucity of this terminology is both based upon and serves to further stabilize the normalcy associated with the male/female binary. In response to this dearth, Schilt and Westbrook (2009) have proposed the term cisgender:

Cis is the Latin prefix for ‘on the same side.’ It compliments [sic] trans, the prefix for ‘across’ or ‘over.’ ‘Cisgender’ replaces the terms ‘nontransgender’ or ‘bio man/bio woman’ to refer to individuals who have a match between the gender they were assigned at birth, their bodies, and their personal identity. (p. 461)
The emergence of the term *cisgender* or *cis* is significant because it resists the hegemonic impulse to normatively centre the gender binary. *Cisgender* offers an alternate lexicon which implicitly works to disrupt assumptions about the normativity of binary gender.

**Binary-Gendered Facilities**

Throughout this thesis, I am using the term *binary-gendered facilities* to refer to locker rooms and restrooms designated for use exclusively by only men or women. I am using *binary-gendered* as opposed to *gender-segregated* to denote these facilities because using the latter term risks perpetuating a discourse equating trans exclusion with Jim Crow segregation (see Ganga, 2016; Pogofsky, 2018; Wheeling, 2014). Certainly, both Jim Crow segregation laws, and laws such as the *Bathroom Bill*, mandating trans exclusion from binary-gendered facilities, were and are used to forcibly separate these groups from the body politic. Leveraging the legacy of anti-Black Jim Crow segregation as a call to action for trans inclusion in binary-gendered facilities not only conflates the profound differences between these distinct systems of oppression, but also risks replicating a logic of anti-Blackness vis-à-vis an unethical appropriation of the former’s singularity. Referencing the violence of Jim Crow segregation, for example the lynchings that accompanied/accompany this legacy, as a means for advancing trans inclusion is a deeply problematic elision, particularly during a contemporary moment when anti-Black violence is still unchallenged by state actors and mainstream culture. Or, put another way, this elision risks erasing the specificity of the experiences of Black trans people in these spaces.

**Intersectionality**

*Intersectionality* is a concept developed by Black feminist scholars such as Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989, 1991), Audre Lorde (1984), and Claudia Jones (see Lynn, 2014) to respond to the multiple and intersecting oppressions that Black women experience: anti-Black racism, misogyny, class violence, transphobia, homophobia, etc. *Intersectionality* responds to an understanding of the multiplicitous nature of identity as inextricably linked and experienced. Intersecting oppressions are conceptualized in a similar manner; for example, Lorde’s experiences of oppression as a Black, working class, disabled, lesbian woman cannot be
adequately conceptualized by isolating or dividing these forms of oppression into separate parts, but only as a singular and intersectional experience.

In *Black Feminism Reimagined: After Intersectionality*, Jennifer Nash (2019) argues against a limited interpretation of intersectionality, one solely focused upon Black women, and instead pushes for a broadening of the objectives of intersectionality. Nash “… critique[s] the proprietary impulses of black feminism in an effort to reveal how the defensive affect traps black feminism, hindering its visionary world-making capacities” (p. 3). Nash rejects what she calls the “policing” of “true” intersectionality, which she suggests circumvents the possibilities for a transformative exploration into the ways in which Blackness, queerness, transness, and myriad other positionalities, are mutually experienced and constituted. In this thesis, I follow Nash’s provocation to understand an inquiry into intersectionality as one centred upon the ways in which trans experiences within locker rooms and restrooms are shaped not only by transphobia and homophobia, but also by anti-Blackness and, to a lesser degree, ableism and fatphobia.

There exists a growing call for contemporary queer and trans theories to prioritize intersectional work. There exists an argument that queer and trans studies demonstrate a tendency to replicate racist logics through centring whiteness, diminishing the importance of the experiences of queer and trans individuals of colour. Martin Manalansan (2005), in “Race, Violence, and Neoliberal Spatial Politics in the Global City,” argues that, in this contemporary moment, various institutions, such as media, private business, and the state (including the police) are catering to white queer and trans communities, furthering the negation of the experiences of queer and trans people of colour. Manalansan’s critique suggests that though many queer and trans communities may claim to be colour-blind and to promote inclusion for all, these claims may obfuscate the racialized and class exclusions operating within the communities. Additionally, Roderick Ferguson (2005) has asserted that the primacy placed upon sexual/gender identity by queer/trans communities implicitly pushes experiences of racism to the periphery, serving to “articulate racial privilege and advance racial exclusion” (2005, p. 58). This work serves to illustrate the importance of centering intersectionality in my master’s research. My aim for this research is to address the ways in which trans peoples’ experiences in locker rooms and restrooms are not only shaped by gender, but also shaped by racialization, as well as class, ability, and body size/shape.
Furthermore, Eli Clare eloquently demonstrates the importance of intersectionality in qualitative research, he writes: “[g]ender reaches into disability; disability wraps around class; class strains against abuse; abuse snarls into sexuality; sexuality folds on top of race… everything finally piling into a single human body” (1999, p. 123). Through their very existence trans individuals disrupt and, intentionally or unintentionally, resist the authority of a hegemonic discourse which presents the gender binary as an absolute and biologically sanctioned law. Nowhere, perhaps, is this resistance more visible than in binary-gendered spaces such as locker rooms and restrooms. It is also crucial to examine the ways in which trans individuals do not disrupt these spaces in a uniform or singular way. In this project I wish to explore the ways in which locker rooms and restrooms come to operate as spaces for scrutinizing the authenticity of not only binary gender, but also respectability (vis-à-vis) whiteness.

**Geographies**

In this section, I review the literature within several fields of critical geographies. I outline relevant scholarship examining links between sexuality/gender and space, race and space, Indigeneity and place, and disability and the built environment. Since many of the texts that I review speak from a multiplicity of identities and approach critical geography through an interdisciplinary approach, the task of categorizing a number of these texts is a difficult one that negates the complexity implicit within many of these texts. As Sylvia Wynter (1994) has argued, the academic impulse to sever knowledge into disciplinary siloes is, at its core, a form of epistemic violence. Moreover, Clyde Woods (2007) has insisted that “[f]ragmenting the social-spatial grid possibilities that interdisciplinary investigations open up defeats attempts to produce polyphonal forms of knowledge and knowledge-making” (p. 51). Nonetheless, I offer a review of the literature organized according to several categories; I encourage the reader to consider these categories not as delineating containers of scholarship, but rather as categories around which the literature coalesces.

**Sexualities, genders, and space**

Since the 1990s, an emerging body of scholarship has addressed how sexualities and genders are produced, enforced, and contested through space. This scholarship explores the
intricate relationships between bodies, sexualities, genders, and spaces. Within the burgeoning literature on sexuality/gender and space is an examination of the spatial practices and sexual politics through which “everyday” places are produced. Sexual geography seeks to make visible the embodied social practices of spaces such as the nuclear family home (Johnston & Longhurst, 2010; Johnston & Valentine, 1995), the workplace (McDowell, 1995), and every day public spaces (Valentine, 1993). Sexual geography examines how these spaces come to be iteratively inscribed as heteronormative and cisnormative, and how, through this inscription, these spaces come to cyclically constitute heterosexuality and binary gender (Brown, Browne, & Lim, 2009).

The first edited volume to examine sexual geography was *Mapping Desire* (1995b), edited by pioneers of sexual geography, David Bell and Gill Valentine. The chapters within *Mapping Desire* put forward a cartography of sexuality, mapping how space comes to be, or, conversely, does not come to be sexualized. In the words of the editors, the text outlines the “…ways in which the spaces of sex and the sexes of space are being mapped out across the contemporary social and cultural terrain” (Bell & Valentine, 1995a, p. 1). *Mapping Desire* includes chapters investigating the body and gender (Cream, 1995; McDowell, 1995), the home (Johnston & Valentine, 1995), urban space (Knopp, 1995), queer space (Binnie, 1995; Rothenberg, 1995), and sexuality in apartheid South Africa (Elder, 1995). Since *Mapping Desire* was published, the emerging field of sexual geography has spread steadily and is increasingly finding inclusion in many geography courses (Brown et al., 2009). A significant gap within the chapters published in *Mapping Desire* is the absence of the work of queer and trans scholars of colour.

Published two years later, in 1997, *Queers in Space: Communities, Public Places, Sites of Resistance* continues the work of mapping sexualities. *Queers in Space* explores what editors Gordon Ingram, Anne-Marie Bouthillette, and Yolanda Retter, term the “queerscape.” The chapters in *Queer Space* consider queer spaces such as gay bathhouses, lesbian bars (Wolfe, 1997), and the spatialized tactics of sexuality activist groups such as ACT UP and the Lesbian Avengers (Geltmaker, 1997; Wolfe & Sommella, 1997). The chapters in the collection offer an interrogation into how the built environment, public space, and the spatialized practices of the neoliberal nation-state operate to constrain queer mobilities and to limit queer possibilities (1997, p. 3). Despite the contributions of *Queers in Space*, shortcomings remain. While the editors point
out that discussions of race and racism remain “thin” within the broader body of queer scholarship (1997a, p. 7) this edited volume does little to disrupt that negation; in the thirty chapters, only the work of one Black scholar, Jean-Ulrick Désert (1997), is included.

One of the early texts to shift the scale and scope of sexual geography onto the body is *Places Through the Body* (1998), edited by Heidi Nast and Steve Pile. *Places Through the Body* provokes the reader to consider how:

> Bit by bit, bodies become relational, territorialized in specific ways. Indeed, places themselves might be said to be exactly the same: they, too, are made-up out of relationships between, within and beyond them; territorialized through scales, borders, geography, geopolitics. Bodies and places, then, are made-up through the production of their spatial registers, through relations of power. Bodies and places are woven together through intricate webs of social and spatial relations that are made by; and make, embodied subjects. (Nast & Pile, 1998, p. 4, also cited in Fusco, 2003, p. 75)

The volume includes, among others, chapters exploring connections between dominant constructions of body and city (Grosz, 1998), how Blackness and whiteness figured into architect Le Corbusier’s work (Wilson, 1998, also discussed in Fusco, 2003) fitness centres as locations of spatialized gender (Johnston, 1998), a text that I will return to in greater depth in the section Geographies of Sport; and the science of oral cartographies practiced by a Beothuk woman named Shawnadithit (Sparke, 1998).

In *Space, Place, and Sex: Geographies of Sexualities* (2010), Lynda Johnston and Robyn Longhurst argue “… there are no spaces that sit outside of sexual politics. Sex and space cannot be ‘decoupled’” (p. 3). Like *Places Through the Body* (1998) and *Queers in Space* (1997) Johnston and Longhurst draw upon the work of Adrienne Rich, citing her conceptualization of the body as the “geography closest in” (1986, p. 212, as cited in Johnston & Longhurst, 2010, p. 21). Rich’s concept of compulsory heterosexuality (1986) identifies and challenges the unquestioned assumption that individuals will assume heterosexual roles. Rich’s argument that heterosexuality is a hegemonic and violent institution is applied by sexual geographers to examine how cisgender heterosexuality is spatialized and how space is constituted according to these assumptions (Bell & Valentine, 1995b; Ingram et al., 1997a; Johnston & Longhurst, 2010;
Nast & Pile, 1998). Rich’s concept of compulsory heterosexuality is also central to Caroline Fusco’s (1998) work examining lesbophobia in locker rooms. Fusco demonstrates how the locker room operates as a spatialized site of scrutiny and violence for those who exist outside of the institution of heterosexuality. I will return to a more detailed discussion of Fusco’s work in the section Geographies of Sport.

A spatial analysis of compulsory heterosexuality is also examined in Kath Browne’s (2004) article “Genderism and the Bathroom Problem” and Sheila Cavanagh’s (2010) book Queering Bathrooms; both offer an examination of public restrooms and an exploration into how individuals who do not conform to binary genders experience these spaces. Cavanagh’s analysis is of particular relevance for my research on locker rooms and restrooms. She observes: “The atmosphere in these facilities is structured by an obsessive interest in gender integrity and interpersonal boundaries. There is a will to secure the signifiers and bio-politics of sexual difference” (p. 10). Cavanagh theorizes the public restroom as a space not only dedicated to “using the facilities,” but more importantly, as a site of racialized and cisnormative scrutiny, violence, and excommunication from public space. In the section Trans Exclusion from Binary-Gendered Facilities (pp. 51-56), I draw upon quantitative reports to demonstrate the extent to which trans people are excommunicated from locker rooms and restrooms.

Spaces inscribed as heterosexual spaces, for example, the home, the workplace, the public restroom, are also rendered unsexual spaces, due to the invisibility and hegemony of compulsory heterosexuality. Queer, gay, and trans spaces, on the other hand, are often represented as hypersexual spaces, marked by unnatural, illicit, deviant, and insatiable sexuality. Gay male geographies have been studied by a number of scholars (Weightman, 1980; Whittle, 1994), as well as lesbian spaces (Rothenberg, 1995; Valentine, 1993, 1995; Wolfe, 1997), and queer spaces (Bell & Binnie, 2000; Ingram et al., 1997b). Trans geographies, however, remain an underexplored area within sexual geography (cf. Browne & Lim, 2010; Doan, 2007, 2010; Hines, 2010; Nash, 2010; Rosenberg & Oswin, 2015) as does literature spatially examining the intersectional experiences of racialized queer and trans people (cf. Ahmed, 2006; Désert, 1997; Haritaworn, 2009; Manalansan, 2005; Nero, 2005; Walcott, 2007).

**Race and space**
This thesis draws upon the significant body of literature examining the relationships between race and space. Sherene Razack’s work (2002) analyzes the 1998 trial proceedings following the murder of a First Nations woman, Pamela George. During the trial, the defendants, two 19-year-old, middle class, white, male university athletes, Stephen Kummerfield and Alex Ternowetsky, were charged with the murder of George, who was working as a prostitute the evening that she was brutally murdered. Razack describes how the concepts of degeneracy, Indigeneity/race, and space were deliberately employed throughout the trial.

Razack demonstrates the importance of geography in the murder trial, arguing that the ability of the two men to enter into space marked as degenerate and to later return into respectable space unscathed was not a possibility open to George, whose Indigeneity and involvement in prostitution marked her as degenerate regardless of her geographic location, a spatialized racism confirmed by “[t]he ‘naturalness’ of white innocence and of Aboriginal degeneracy” (2002, pp. 127–128). Razack explains further:

Moving from respectable space to degenerate space and back again is an adventure that confirms that they are indeed white men in control who can survive a dangerous encounter with the racial Other and who have an unquestioned right to go anywhere and do anything. (2002, p. 127)

Razack’s work insists that portrayals of Pamela George as degenerate during the trial case were repeatedly made through references to both her involvement in prostitution and her Indigeneity, both of which were intended to justify her murder.

In addition to examining spaces marked as sexually deviant, such as “red light districts” (Hart, 1995; Hubbard, 2002; Hubbard & Saunders, 2003), scholars have examined the experiences of women (Cabezas, 2009; Nixon, 2015) and gay men (Padilla, 2007) making a living through prostitution. Scholars have also attended to the ways in which racialized women working in sexual economies resist attempts to displace and dispossess their bodies, attempts made by political and economic forces propelled by sporting mega events such as the Olympic Games and FIFA World Cup (De Lisio, Hubbard, & Silk, 2018). Razack’s work demonstrates the spatiality of prostitution, describing how “[p]rostitution emerged in its modern form as distinct and confined to sharply demarcated areas of the city at the historical moment when
liberal nation-states emerged” (p. 144). Although prostitution is a spatialized encounter represented as degenerate, race is also deeply embedded within this spatial politics of degeneracy. Racialized spaces are unfailingly represented as degenerate, and conversely degenerate spaces are frequently represented as racialized. As Razack argues, “[d]egenerate spaces (slums, colonies) and the bodies of prostitutes [are] known as zones of disorder, filth, and immorality. The inhabitants of such spaces [are] invariably racialized” (2002, p. 144). For this reason, without a basic understanding of the link between race and degenerate space, it will be difficult to understand the role of trans individuals, who often come to represent a degenerate Other, in locker room and restroom spaces.

A number of other scholars also make visible the spatiality of racism. The dominant “whitestream” (Grande, 2015), Western worldview invariably stigmatizes racialized spaces as degenerate spaces, thus justifying the over-policing, under-servicing, neglect, and even the destruction⁶ of these places (McKittrick, 2006, 2007; Nelson, 2002; Nieves, 2007). The spatialization of racialized oppression is also discussed in David Goldberg’s (1993) book, Racist Culture. The spatial practices used to produce and separate racialized space from white space have included Jim Crow segregation laws, but also persist today in the form of nuisance laws, zoning laws, and laws associated with private property (McKittrick 2007).

Included among Kathrine McKittrick’s texts examining Black geographies are Demonic Grounds (2006); Black Geographies (2007), a volume she co-edited with Clyde Woods; and “Plantation Futures” (2013). McKittrick’s work does more than demonstrate the validity of Black geographies, it insists upon a recognition that Black communities and individuals continue to “make place” despite being continually represented by the whitestream as “out of place,” as “‘ungeographic’ and/or philosophically undeveloped” (2006, p. xiii). In Demonic Grounds, McKittrick draws on the work of Octavia Butler, Frantz Fanon, Dionne Brand, Stuart Hall, W.E.B. Du Bois, Harriet Jacobs/Linda Brent, Marlene Nourbese Philip, Hortense Spillers, Toni Morrison, and Saidiya Hartman among others, to illuminate how Black theorizations of geography are, in fact, well established. These texts, McKittrick points out, do the essential work of demonstrating “the rationalization of human and spatial domination” and counter “a broader

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⁶ Examples of demolished Black neighbourhoods/spaces include: Africville, Nova Scotia; Rosewood, Florida (Nieves, 2007), Hogan’s Alley, Vancouver; and Durham Road Cemetery, Ontario (McKittrick, 2006, p. 97).
McKittrick’s concept of plantation futures theorizes how “... the plantation is an ongoing locus of antiblack violence and death...” (2013, p. 3). Although no longer enslaved, the present impoverished spatial conditions within which diasporic Black communities are often “contained” – for example, within the prison industrial complex, the factory, and the urban slums of New Orleans, Detroit, South Bronx, and Toronto – this spatial schema demonstrates the present futurity of a plantation ethic.

In his chapter in Black Geographies, Peter Hudson (2007) investigates how white perceptions of Blackness in British Columbia were sanitized through the “yellow peril” inspired by the pervasive threat associated with Vancouver’s Asian slums. In the same volume, Angel Nieves (2007) theorizes the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century settlement of Black settlers in Africville, Nova Scotia. Nieves traces how the settlement first emerged as a space for Black autonomy and community and was increasingly infringed upon by white settlers, who first used the area as a location for industrial plants and a garbage dump, and finally demolished Africville entirely (see also Nelson, 2002). Jenny Burman (2007) interrogates what the Canadian nation-state invests and secures through narratives surrounding the deportations of Black Caribbean-born women. Burman also theorizes the spatial and racialized contradictions implicit in the discourses which frame the violent removal of deportees as “sending them home.”

Several scholars have also examined how race and sexuality are intersectionally implicated in what Sherene Razack (2002) has called, the “spatialized practices” embedded within the production of space. Sara Ahmed, for example, (2006) examines how spaces (un)marked by whiteness are navigated by women of colour.

When we describe an institution as ‘being’ white, we are pointing to how institutional spaces are shaped by the proximity of some bodies and not others: white bodies gather and cohere to form the edges of such spaces. When I walk into academic meetings that is just what I encounter. Sometimes I get used to it. At one conference I helped to organize, four black feminists all happened to walk into the room at the same time. We notice such arrivals. The fact that we notice such arrivals tells us more about what is already in place than it does about ‘the who’ that arrives. Someone says: ‘It’s like walking into a sea of
Ahmed also describes the disorientation of moving through space as a queer woman,

In a lesbian relationship, I have had to reinhabit space, in part by learning how to be more cautious and by seeing what before was in the background… In a way, my body now extends less easily into space. I hesitate, as I notice what is in front of me. The hesitation does not ‘stop’ there but has redirected my bodily relation to the world, and has even given the world a new shape. (p. 101)

Ahmed’s analysis suggests not only that public spaces are centred around heterosexuality, binary gender, and whiteness, but that this centering is rendered invisible for those (un)marked by heterosexuality, binary gender, and whiteness, an (un)marking which allows some bodies to “extend” into social space much more easily than others. As Ahmed’s reflection also suggests, entering social spaces can be a profoundly disorienting experience. For trans individuals, binary-gendered spaces such as locker rooms and restrooms become difficult spaces to “extend into.” For racialized trans individuals, this difficulty becomes particularly apparent.

The spatialized experiences of queer racialized individuals have also been examined by Jin Haritaworn (2009). In their chapter in *Queer Geographies*, Haritaworn complicates the “single-issue” approach that dominates much of the scholarship produced within the field of sexual geography:

… the exclusion of racialized, disabled, transsexual, and working-class people, including heterosexuals, from many of the privileges and ideals described as ‘heterosexual’… points to the necessity of replacing a single-issues politics of heteronormativity with a theory and practice of positionality that invites multiple perspectives. (2009, p. 103)

Haritaworn’s text, which examines the intersectional experiences of multiracialized Thai individuals in the UK and Germany, demonstrates the difficulties that many of these individuals find navigating a safe refuge in either queer or heterosexual spaces. Unsatisfied with what is unaddressed by Butler’s concept of the *heterosexual matrix* (Butler, 2006 [1990]), Haritaworn offers the provocation: “heterosexual or interracial matrix?” in order to decenter whiteness within the conceptual category of queer (2009, p. 103). With this question, Haritaworn
destabilizes queer theory’s assumption that gender/sexuality is the primary axis upon which queer/trans identities revolve.

In his chapter in *Black Geographies*, Rinaldo Walcott (2007), drawing upon the work of Martin Manalansan (2005) and Charles Nero (2005), asserts that queers of colour and working-class queers are excluded from the “we are family” discourse that characterizes the contemporary Pride movement (p. 239). In his chapter, Walcott argues that the, now mythic, Stonewall Inn represents not only the event that initiated the modern Pride movement, but also a place. The remembering of Stonewall as a place, Walcott seems to suggest, precludes the erasure of the contributions of queer and transwomen of colour, such as Marsha P. Johnson, who famously threw the first brick at police during the Stonewall riots. Conversely, conceptualizing Stonewall as a symbolic event, rather than as a place, permits the re-narration of Pride as a story of white queer resistance. Nowhere is this re-narration more apparent than in the 2015 Hollywood film *Stonewall*, in which the first brick is cast at police by fictional white male character. The director, Ronald Emmerich apparently “…defended both his narrative decisions and choice of lead, saying that he’d made the movie for as wide an audience as possible…” (Smith, 2015, para. 5, emphasis mine). This historical amnesia, Walcott suggests, operates to produce a set of material and spatialized exclusions which are reflected in the title of Nero’s chapter in *Black Queer Studies* (2005), “Why Are All the Gay Ghettoes White?” While there exists a significant body of literature examining the relationships between race and space, little of this literature has been applied to advance an understanding of the ways in which trans people experience binary-gendered spaces.

**Indigeneity and place**

In a special edition of the journal *Environmental Education Research* (2014), titled “Land Education: Indigenous, Post-colonial, and Decolonizing Perspectives on Place and Environmental Education Research,” editors Eve Tuck, Marcia McKenzie, and Kate McCoy called for the disciplines of environmental studies and geography to prioritize an examination of land-based geographies rather than space-based geographies. The editors are critical of traditional geography’s tendency to examine space as a disembodied, ever-mobile location, articulating how this approach both reflects and reaffirms white settler colonial models of space.
and place: framed as ever-replaceable in an inexhaustible quest for land and labour. In contrast, the land-based epistemology put forward by several authors in the volume conceptualizes land as shaped by unique histories of Indigenous relationships to land (Calderon, 2014; Tuck et al., 2014). In the same issue, Dolores Calderon (2014) insists upon an examination of the ways in which land is essential to the project of white settler colonialism. Calderon – like Tuck, McKenzie, and McCoy – suggests that conceptualizing space as an ever-mobile entity facilitates the undermining of claims made by Indigenous worldviews, which posit land as central to culture, language, and spirituality. Scholar Susan M. Hill (2017), in a detailed and thorough analysis of several centuries of artefacts documenting the relationships between the Six Nations Haudenosaunee and various white settler colonial governments, illustrates the sheer magnitude of land, capital, and sovereignty stolen from the Six Nations Confederacy. Hill points out that this theft did not occur in spite of legal repercussions, but was in fact enacted through a legal framework, an assertion echoed by Sandy Grande (2015) who insists that for North American Indigenous Peoples “‘democracy’ has been wielded with impunity as the first and most virulent weapon of mass destruction” (p. 50). Katherine McKittrick (2006) has also argued that geography and cartography were critical to white settler colonial conceptions of democracy, and were actively employed as tools for the (dis)possession of land and the attempted conversion of humans into property and chattel.

For these reasons, engaging discussions of space without a recognition of their geographic place can be a risky enterprise, not only because these discussions often perpetuate a white settler colonial practice which obfuscates the specificity of land and conceals First Nations’ continued contestation and refusal of nation-state boundaries and borders, but also because a space-focused geography affirms a white settler colonial worldview that assumes geography is natural, “readily knowable” (McKittrick, 2006, p. 5) and absolved of issues of Black and Indigenous displacement, exile, and abduction. Perhaps nowhere are disembodied conceptions of geography more prevalent than in sport. The standardized measurements of sporting landscapes make sport-scapes readily repeatable and ultra-mobile, a topic I will return to in Geographies of Sport (pp. 30-35).

**Disability and the built environment**
Critical disability studies scholars and activists have offered a vociferous critique of both the ways in which the vast majority of built environments are designed – in structures that implicitly conceptualize the able-bodied individual as “normal” and universal – as well as the cultural values underpinning the construction of the normalcy, which favours not only the able-bodied, but also independent, rational, and self-supporting. Existing outside the category of normal, for disabled people, is not merely an inconvenience but a limited entitlement to inclusion within humanity; as Tanya Titchkosky and Rod Michalko (2009) avow: “… the closer a human being is to normalcy, the closer he or she [sic] is to being human” (p. 5). Possibilities for interdisciplinary solidarity exist among a multitude of identities relegated to the periphery of humanity because of their non-normalcy, or non-conformity to what Sylvia Wynter (2003) has called, Man, a white, male, heterosexual, able-bodied, and middle-class personhood upon which the category human is contingent (as discussed in Bogues, 2017).

From the lack of accessible design in the vast majority of built environments, disabled people may glean the assumption that their presence is neither noticed nor valued in these spaces. Titchkosky and Michalko (2009) describe the psychic implications of this spatialized exclusion:

We recognize that the centre [the dominant conception of normalcy that presumes able-bodiedness] builds its environment – both physical and attitudinal – from the blueprint or standard of normalcy, and we recognize that, for the most part, this blueprint does not include us. (p. 7)

A two-fold exclusion occurs for disabled trans individuals. Like many other public spaces, within locker rooms and restrooms they often face multiple and intersecting attitudinal and physical barriers. Locker room and restroom interventions directed toward trans-inclusivity that do not attend to the complexity and specificity of trans disabled experiences replicate ableist architecture. These interventions operate not only to deny access to people with physical

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7 My work follows the social model of disability (Oliver, 1990), which employs the term disabled people rather than people with disabilities (Tanya Titchkosky, 2011, p. 151). The term people with disabilities reflects what critical disability scholars call the medical/individual model. The assumption underlying this model is that individuals are disabled by their impairment. The social model, on the other hand, holds that it is not impairment, but rather systemic architectural and attitudinal barriers that prevent disabled individuals’ full participation in society (Oliver, 1990). Critical disability scholars who follow the social prefer model prefer the term disabled people.
disabilities, but also to indicate that disabled trans individuals are excludable and that their participation in society is not valued.

Heather Sykes’ (2011) work insists that an imaginary of disability must include trans identities and that an imaginary of trans identities must include disabled identities. Describing the story of an interviewee named Teiresias, who is trans and also experiences chronic pain, Sykes urges us: “to consider the intersectionality between pain-free dwelling in one’s body and dwelling in the gendered home of one’s body” (p. 40). In other words, Sykes is forging a link between the pain of embodiment experienced by both trans individuals and people with disabilities. Sykes, who carefully avoids making a comparison between the experiences of these vastly different embodiments, does offer an insightful link into how both psychic and physical pain can be manifested through and compounded by an alienation from what Titchkosky and Michalko referred to as the centre.

In “Pissing Without Pity: Disability, Gender, and the Public Toilet” critical disability scholar David Serlin (2017) asserts that trans and queer activists targeting the public restroom as a space for direct action draw directly upon tactics used by disability rights activists – and I would add, tactics earlier established during the Black liberation/civil rights movement. Serlin, whose article primarily attends to issues of ableism in the public restroom, also reflects upon how the origin of this binary-gendered space is deeply imbued with racist anxieties:

The disabled toilet in the US emerged genealogically in parallel to other dilemmas of liberalism that continue to haunt discussions of difference. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the emergence of gender-segregated public and commercial spaces such as schools, gymnasiums, and bathhouses were closely linked to the influx of immigrants from Eastern Europe, Scandinavia, and the Middle East to large and medium-sized American cities. The example of the gender-segregated bathhouse did not by itself establish any legal or architectural precedents for disabled toilets, but it did make material the presumption among civic leaders that there was a demonstrable link between creating

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8 Direct action is a term that signifies an approach to activism in which individuals utilize their economic or physical power to disrupt a place, practice, or process. Direct action interventions are in stark contrast to centrist strategies that rely upon institutionally acceptable methods, for example lobbying or appealing for change through policy reform, signing a petition, etc. Either nonviolent or violent methods may be employed for direct action interventions.
accessible public and commercial spaces and facilitating the hygienic and economic uplift of those at the margins. (2017, p. 215)

For those who are located at the margins, or at what critical disability scholar Tanya Titchkosky has called “the edges of humanity” (2012, p. 83), a multitude of spaces become disorienting and/or violent. For trans individuals, binary-gendered spaces are particularly alienating and dangerous.

Eli Clare (2007), who identifies as a trans disabled activist, describes the confusion he feels when surveilled in public space:

I could tell you about not knowing why people stare at me. Are they gawking at the cripple, trying to figure out what’s ‘wrong’ with me, or at the transgendered butch, trying to figure out whether I’m a man or a woman? Or are they simply admiring my jean jacket, my stubbly red hair, my newly polished boots? (2007, p. 183, as cited in Sykes, 2011, p. 112)

Improving a scholarly understanding of how trans individuals experience homophobia and transphobia in locker rooms and restrooms addresses only one aspect of the barriers that trans individuals face to using these spaces. To ensure relevance, studies must also examine how racialization, as well as disability and fat-phobia affect the experiences and perceptions of trans individuals in these spaces.

**Geographies of sport**

One of the first explorations into the geographies of sport, within the fields of sociology of sport and physical cultural studies, is a 1993 special edition of the journal *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*. Titled “Sport and Space,” the special edition issue contains 14 articles discussing the relationships between sport and space. Since the publication of this special edition, a focus upon space in sport has been developing slowly within these fields (Friedman & van Ingen, 2011, p. 90; Silk, 2004, p. 350). In this special edition an article by Henning Eichberg (1993) analyzes the architectural designs of modern sport facilities, which tend to reify straight
lines and right angles. Additionally, John Bale (1993) theorizes the architectural design of British football stadiums as a panoptic technology of surveillance.

John Bale’s (1994) book *Landscapes of Modern Sport* uses ten conceptual frameworks to analyze the geographies of sport: sport landscapes in relation to the natural habitat and the human habitat, as well as sport landscapes as artifacts, systems, problems, wealth, ideology, history, place, and aesthetic. Bale argues that sporting landscapes provide some of the most extreme examples of the domination of the rational over nature, a domination which characterizes the project of modernity. Bale argues that “[t]he formal design exhibited in sports spaces celebrates the control of nature… To a large extent, the sports landscape is made up of straight lines, rectangles, right angles and semi-circles, all subject to precise and accurate measurement” (1994, p. 67). This design of sporting spaces is not incidental, according to Bale, but in fact strategically represents the assumptions and objectives underlying the project of modern sport, that of rationality and the domination of nature.

Caroline Fusco (2003) advances Bale’s argument to assert that the predominance of linearity in sport, as demonstrated in popular exercises such as the push-up, the stationary bicycle, and the sit-up, reflects modernity’s preoccupation with efficiency and rationality. Similarly, Jane Unan (2003) has described how the linear motions inscribed upon bodies through fitness equipment symbolically reproduce a white, normative nationhood: “The civilized, rational, and linear movement that produced civilized and normative subjects, are in contrast to irrational, incoherent, ‘swerving’ movements” (p. 90, as cited in Sykes, 2011, p. 72). Bruce Kidd (1990) has also suggested that the preference for linearity in the physical vocabularies and the architectural norms of sport can be understood as a representation of the dominance of masculinity over femininity, the latter of which is equated with curvature and irrationality.

Lynda Johnston (1998) also offers a feminist examination of the geographies of sport. In “Reading the Sexed Bodies and Spaces of Gyms,” Johnston explores how spaces within fitness centres reflect dominant constructions of masculinity and femininity and how female body builders challenge these constructions. In brief, Johnston theorizes the gendered and spatial division between the cardio/aerobic space (feminine), and the weight room (masculine).
In their co-edited ethnography of *War Memorial Gym* – built in 1951 at the University of British Columbia, Canada – Patricia Vertinsky (2004) and Sherry McKay (2004) both suggest that the use of a Corbusian architectural design imbues the facility – built and named in tribute to Canadian military projects – with a masculinizing aesthetic (McKay, 2004; Vertinsky, 2004). Fusco (2003) extends McKay and Vertinsky’s analyses of the design of War Memorial Gym to examine how Corbusian architecture is explicitly informed by anti-Black rhetoric (p. 86-88). Fusco draws upon Mabel Wilson’s work (1998), which I referred to earlier in my discussion of *Places Through the Body*, to encapsulate Le Corbusier’s anti-Black sentiment:

> Here [for Le Corbusier], whiteness metaphorically evokes purity and cleanliness… Yet, lurking menacingly below the stable surface of whiteness is [B]lackness. Blackness manifested in death, dirt, and lawlessness – posing a persistent threat to the natural order and necessitating containment and control. (Wilson, 1998, p. 147, as cited in Fusco, 2003, p. 87)

In Le Corbusier’s own words, he describes an architectural nostalgia for returning to a lost time when “international language reigned wherever the white race was” (Le Corbusier, 1967, p. 4, as cited in Wilson, 1998, p. 148). In *When the Cathedrals Were White*, Le Corbusier discusses urban areas where Black poverty is prevalent (1964 [1947]), and describes the Black communities living in urban slums there as those who “sow a spirit of death” (1964, p. 87, as cited in Wilson, 1998, p. 144). Significantly, it is with the Corbusian style, Bale insists, that a majority of sporting facilities are designed (1994, p. 67).

Bale, in the opening lines of *Landscapes of Modern Sport*, illustrates the link between the geographies of sport and white settler colonialism. Bale briefly discusses the Oka Crisis of 1990, during which the sovereign Kahnawà:ke (Mohawk) nation, after exhausting legal and political efforts, refused to allow their land, which included sacred burial sites, to be appropriated for a golf course development (1994, p. 1). Though Bale uses this example to demonstrate the importance of the geographies of sport, he offers little comment upon Indigenous sovereignty or the ways in which sport is involved within settler colonial projects of nation-building and empire. Significantly, Caroline Fusco expands Patricia Vertinsky and Sherry McKay’s analysis of UBC’s War Memorial Gym to examine how white settler amnesia has operated to legitimize
the facility’s construction upon the unceded, traditional territory of the Musqueam First Nation, an analysis omitted entirely from Vertinsky and McKay’s work (Fusco, 2003, pp. 16–17).

Similarly, Heather Sykes (2017), in *The Sexual and Gender Politics of Sport Mega-Events: Roving Colonialism*, elucidates the connections between sport, white settler colonialism, LGBT rights, and homonationalism in the places in which sporting mega-events occur, such as the 2010 Vancouver Olympics, the 2012 London Olympics, and the 2014 Sochi Olympics.

The breadth of Caroline Fusco’s work provides a spatial analysis of the geographies of sport, as well as heteronormativity and homophobia within sport. Fusco is the first scholar, either in the fields of sexual geography or physical cultural studies, to explore the locker room as a space integral to the policing of bodies deemed deviant due to their sexuality or racialization. The importance of Fusco’s work for my thesis research cannot be overstated. During her master’s research, Fusco’s interviewed eight closeted and out lesbian inter-varsity and elite athletes to explore their experiences of team sports (1995, 1998, 2002). From this research, Fusco presents the locker room as a significant and precarious space for lesbian athletes. Fusco’s work departs from other scholars’, addressing homophobia in sport by spatially situating where the athletes experience oppression. Fusco notes: “One athlete remembered that ‘people were really reluctant to be in the same room alone with [her]’ when they heard she was a lesbian. She labeled this ‘the locker room effect’” (Fusco, 1995, p. 68). Fusco extends her interrogation of the locker room effect in her doctoral dissertation, which is based on spatial ethnographic research that she conducted at a Canadian university’s athletic centre in a major urban centre (2003, 2004, 2006). In this work, Fusco interviewed locker room users, maintenance staff, and architects about their experiences in and perceptions of the locker room. Fusco’s spatial ethnographic exploration into the locker room then is not limited to examining the ways in which sexuality and gender are experienced, perceived, and surveilled in this space, but also addresses how the space of the locker room is simultaneously constituted by and replicative of white settler and middle-class imaginaries of place, sport, property, hygiene, whiteness, and respectability. Further, Fusco identifies the locker room as a place where agency is enacted. Fusco concludes “… individuals actively (re)produce, maintain, and resist the rules, codes, and conventions of physical activity spaces and the texts that organize and govern spaces and subjects” (2003, p. 304), positioning the locker room as a space of disruption and contestation. Fusco’s spatial ethnographic study of locker rooms informed the much later *Change Room Project*, the spatial intervention into locker
room homophobia and transphobia discussed in depth in the Introduction chapter (Fusco, Milman, & De Lisio, 2015). The Change Room Project can be understood not only as an installation for promoting trans and queer inclusion in this space, but also as a modality of praxis which may offer possibilities for future anti-racist, critical Indigenous, anti-capitalist, critical disability, and fat-positive disruptions of space.

Michael Friedman and Cathy van Ingen’s (2011) article “Bodies in Space: Spatializing Physical Cultural Studies,” which overviews the literature within physical cultural studies devoted to geography, draws extensively upon Fusco’s work. Another article by van Ingen (2003), “Geographies of Gender, Sexuality and Race: Reframing the Focus on Space in Sport Sociology,” applies the work of renowned space theorist Henri Lefebvre to an analysis of sporting spaces; van Ingen specifically explores how Lefebvre’s categories of perceived space, conceived space, and lived space may be conceptualized within sporting geographies (2003, pp. 202-204). Van Ingen’s work (2004) also examines the therapeutic landscapes of Toronto Front Runners, a running group led by and for the Toronto LGBT community.

Scholarship addressing the relationship between sporting spaces and race/racism have, to date, received little attention. Kevin Hylton (2009) has asserted that a “critical theorization of sport and social relations would benefit from incorporating the complexities of spatiality and intersectionality in relation to racism as there is a dearth of policy and critical academic analysis in this area” (p. 8, as cited in Friedman & van Ingen, 2011, p. 92). Significant exceptions include an article by Julie Sze (2009), which examines the proposal to build a $4.2 billion-dollar urban sport facility, the Atlantic Yards, in Brooklyn, New York. Sze examines both the rhetoric of the proposed project as well as the issues at play below: politics of racialized geographies, gentrification, and environmental justice. Yuka Nakamura’s (2012) chapter in Race and Sport in Canada addresses dominant constructions of Chinatown underpinning the spatiality of Chinese nine-man-volleyball competitions. Nakamura’s text explores how Chinatowns are often represented as dirty, disease-filled, and morally corrupt areas of “yellow peril” which threaten respectable, white bourgeois society (see also Hudson, 2007). Nakamura also elucidates how Chinese nine-man-volleyball competitions, which are traditionally played upon cement parking lots in Chinatown districts across North America, are spatialized assertions of community, collective cultural pride, and resistance to dominant representations of Chinese North American
space. In conclusion, these texts exploring race and space have much to bring to bear on my study of trans experiences in locker rooms and restrooms.

It is worth also discussing the link between the “improvement” or gentrification of racialized, poor neighbourhoods and initiatives for improving trans inclusion within locker rooms and restrooms. For example, the $14.8-million-dollar Regent Park Aquatic Centre in Toronto (Canada) facility exemplifies how the narrative of making locker rooms more trans-inclusive can be leveraged by developers seeking to “improve” an area in attempts to increase property values and foster the investment of white, middle class property owners. Regent Park is a neighbourhood where predominantly working class, racialized, and immigrant communities reside. To the north of Regent Park lies the affluent Cabbagetown neighbourhood and to the south are condominiums originally built to house athletes during the 2015 Toronto Pan American Games; further south stands Toronto’s famous Distillery District and the now gentrified Corktown neighbourhood. Regent Park’s proximity to these locations shapes the discourse that surrounds it as, simultaneously, a desirable location and as a degenerate, racialized place in need of revitalization (see Rochon, 2012; Starr, 2016). The “universal change rooms” included in Regent Park’s state-of-the-art Aquatic Centre, Canada’s first all-gender changing facilities (Canadian Architect, 2018, para. 5), cannot be, in my opinion, ethically conceptualized without an acknowledgement of how this locker room initiative is employed to signal “progress” and “inclusion” in order to legitimize the displacement of the poor, racialized, and immigrant communities who live there. The use of the term universal is ironic in that, while it represents the facility (and its attendant universal locker room) as available to all, the gentrification that this facility (vis-à-vis the narratives embodied in its universal locker room) mobilizes operates to foreclose the possibility of socioeconomically marginalized, mostly racialized, residents remaining in the adjacent neighbourhoods. The universal locker rooms are central to the Regent Park Aquatic Centre’s explicit developmental objective, of making the area more appealing for (white) middle class homeowners, an objective which erases spatial opportunities for the poor and racialized communities which call Regent Park home. The important role that the Regent Park Aquatic Centre plays in gentrifying Regent Park is demonstrated in various news media reports, which describe the facility as “restor[ing]” Regent Park’s “isolated and crime-ridden ghetto” (Starr, 2016, para. 3), working to “rescue the neighbourhood – brilliantly – from decades of marginalization” (Rochon, 2012, para. 2), and as at the “heart of the revitalization” (Canadian
Architect, 2018, para. 2). This leveraging of the Regent Park and Aquatic Centre, and thus sport, to supposedly revitalize and rescue this neighbourhood obfuscates the communities dispossessed and displaced by the economic, moral, and political processes of gentrification.

Geographies of Trans Exclusion

In this section, I focus specifically upon the binary-gendered facilities of locker rooms and restrooms. I begin by drawing upon the work of Jack Halberstam (1998) and Sheila Cavanagh (2010) to theorize the ways in which locker rooms and restrooms operate to exclude trans people from public space. Next, I apply the work of feminist policy analyst Carol Bacchi (2009) to explore the conceptual risks underpinning the framing of trans exclusion from binary-gendered facilities as a problem. Next, I situate the binary-gendered facility as a space through which Judith Butler’s (1990) concept of the heterosexual matrix is reflected and reaffirmed. I also apply Althusser’s concept of hailing (1971), Foucault’s panopticism (1975), and Lacan’s mésconnaissance (2001[1977]) to further illustrate what is at stake for trans people within these spaces.

Problematising binary-gendered facilities

Sheila Cavanagh (2010) describes the urgency of focusing scholarly attention upon binary-gendered spaces in her book Queering Bathrooms, a text which focuses primarily upon queer and transgender experiences in public restrooms. Cavanagh writes: “Little attention has been devoted to the effects of gender-segregated facilities on trans people, who are especially vulnerable to excommunication in gendered public space” (p. 52). Cavanagh argues that the impact of being iteratively subjected to scrutiny and confrontation for entering binary-gendered space is, for trans individuals, not merely one of inconvenience or nuisance, but rather one of profound trauma. Significantly, Cavanagh asserts that: “Gender recognitions consistent with self-identifications are not inconsequential or superfluous, but gateways to humanity. For those who are routinely denied access to public space, humane gender recognition is known to be essential to community membership” (p. 53). Throughout this thesis, I draw upon Cavanagh’s work as well as Fusco et al.’s (2015) to theorize how locker rooms and public restrooms act as gateway spaces for trans participation in physical activity and public space.
Jack Halberstam (1998) theorizes the experiences of trans individuals in public restrooms in his widely cited work, *Female Masculinity*. In this text, Halberstam identifies the *bathroom problem* (p. 22), which he uses to articulate how for those who violate “the cardinal rule of gender,” that “one must be readable at a glance,” using multi-stalled public washrooms is regularly a humiliating and/or dangerous experience (1998, p. 23). Halberstam theorizes the confrontation of masculine women or trans individuals in binary-gendered restrooms:

‘you’re in the wrong bathroom’ really says two different things. First, it announces that your gender seems at odds with your sex (your apparent masculinity or androgyny is at odds with your supposed femaleness); second, it suggests that single-gender bathrooms are only for those who fit clearly into one category (male) or the other (female)... Either we need open-access bathrooms or multigendered bathrooms, or we need wider parameters for gender identification. (1998, p. 24)

Halberstam’s work on the *bathroom problem* has been utilized by Sheila Cavanagh in her text discussed in the preceding paragraph (2010, p. 52). Omise’eke Natasha Tinsley and Matt Richardson (2014, p. 153) have also drawn on Halberstam’s work to examine the intersections of racism and transphobia that Black transwomen experience.

My work on binary-gendered facilities draws upon Halberstam’s work with the *bathroom problem*. I also draw upon the work of Hargie et al. (2017) – who briefly mention the existence of a “changing room problem” but do not outline it in detail (see p. 226), as well as what Caroline Fusco terms the “locker room effect” (1995, p. 68). I draw upon these texts to insist that binary-gendered spaces are, in fact, deeply problematic spaces for trans people. This problem, as my thesis work attempts to convey, is demonstrated in the violence and social alienation that trans individuals are regularly subjected to within binary-gendered facilities. The problems with these facilities, of course, cannot be simply attributed to transphobia or homophobia, but are intersectional in nature: also informed by racism as well as classism, ableism, and fat-phobia. As I will demonstrate in the later section *Trans Exclusion From Binary-Gendered Facilities* (pp. 51-57), there exists ample quantitative and qualitative evidence to demonstrate this problem’s existence.

A key contribution that I hope to make with this project is that the identification of the barrier that binary-gendered facilities pose to the involvement of trans individuals in the public sphere as a *problem* is accompanied by several conceptual concerns. Carol Bacchi’s (2009)
feminist approach to policy analysis explores the process through which certain issues come to be claimed as a problem and others do not. Bacchi identifies an approach to policy analysis that she calls *What is the Problem Represented to be? (WPR)*. Following Bacchi’s WPR approach, one can identify the multiple ways in which the problem of trans exclusion from binary-gendered facilities is represented in dominant rhetoric. For instance, the problem of making these spaces more trans-inclusive may be described as any of the following, among other, interpretations: the discomfort that cisgender individuals experience when trans individuals are present in binary-gendered facilities, the legal concerns of institutions regarding the inclusion/exclusion of trans individuals in these spaces, or the anxiety that trans individuals experience in these spaces and their resulting alienation from sport and physical activity as well as, more broadly, public life. Concerns undoubtedly arise about whether this type of problem may be represented or framed in ways that establish trans individuals as the problem, rather than the narrow parameters of gender which work to exclude these individuals from binary-gendered facilities. If this problem represents transphobic or cisnormative interests, supposed “solutions” will certainly serve to only further the alienation of trans individuals from these spaces. Consider the example of a YMCA in Tacoma, Washington which mandated that, to supposedly address the “problem” of trans inclusion in locker rooms, all pre-operative transsexual patrons could only denude in private locker stalls within the facility’s all-gender change room. Bacchi’s work demonstrates how what the problem is represented to be will impact which strategies are selected to “solve” the problem. Certainly, it is apparent that framing the inclusion, rather than exclusion, of trans individuals as the problem operates to further alienate this population from participation within the public sphere.

Scholars such as Titchkosky and Michalko (2009) have raised the issue of how the search for “solutions” is not a neutral or emancipatory process but one often deeply inscribed with problematic impulses toward “normalcy.” In their work on critical disability studies and the Western, late-capitalist, medical desire to “fix” people with disabilities, Titchkosky and Michalko warn that “… disability can be contained and managed by sustaining the one-dimensional definition that it is only a problem in need of a solution” (2009, p. 2). Titchkosky and Michalko’s warning, I think, does not only hold for bodies that challenge the ableist conception of normalcy but also for bodies whose gender disrupts “normal” binary gender. While recognizing the concerns that Titchkosky and Michalko assert, I argue that, for trans
individuals, there may be much at stake in not identifying alienation from binary-gendered facilities as a problem. As Halberstam has pointed out (2017), naming and identifying an issue as a problem can offer the issue greater access to funding and scholarly attention. Regardless, once an issue is identified as a problem, a tension often develops between the benefits of greater visibility and the risk of cooptation. Cooptation, for example, can occur if the problem comes to be seen as an opportunity for the generation of profit, rather than as an issue in need of amelioration. In this study, I aim to bear this tension in mind as I navigate the issue of trans exclusion from locker rooms and restrooms.

**Situating binary-gendered spaces within the heterosexual matrix**

Judith Butler’s (1990) *heterosexual matrix* may offer a theoretical tool for improving a scholarly understanding of binary-gendered facilities. Butler describes the heterosexual matrix as the “grid of cultural intelligibility through which [heterosexual and cisgender] bodies, genders, and desires are naturalized” (1990, p. 151). My argument is that this “grid of cultural intelligibility” is not graphed evenly upon public space, but that the heterosexual matrix is intensified upon some public spaces more than others, spaces such as locker rooms and restrooms. The very design of binary-gendered facilities demonstrates how central the heterosexual matrix is to this space. The design assumes that both heterosexuality and binary male/female genders are universal. Following Butler’s argument, locker rooms and restrooms are locations where the heterosexual matrix is constituted. The two doors reading “Men” and “Women,” through which many enter without hesitation, are sites where a system of binary gender is enacted. It is through these doors that a singular expression of gender and sexuality comes to be disciplined as normal and universal (Abel, 1999; Fusco, 2003, p. 45; Sykes, 2011).

Butler’s concept of the *heterosexuality matrix* draws upon Michel Foucault’s (1978) work on power. In the first volume of *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault conceptualizes power not as a field emanating from a single, central, fixed point, but rather as a rhizomatic multiplicity of interconnected nodes which are “always local and unstable” (p. 93). The lineage of Butler’s heterosexual matrix as a “grid of cultural intelligibility” (1990, p. 151) echoes Foucault’s description of power’s “… mechanisms as a grid of intelligibility of the social order…” (1978, p. 93). Foucault suggests that it is not, solely nor primarily, through the power of the state that the
individual is disciplined, but that power is enacted through individuals themselves. Within locker rooms and restrooms, gender identity is disciplined by other space users’ corrections, challenges, and open surveillance. These responses work to iteratively inscribe binary-gendered facilities as spaces in which only binary gender belongs, and thus designate these spaces as solely for cisgender bodies. Through repeated encounters, trans individuals can come to internalize that they are intruders in this space.

If we are following Foucault’s understanding of power, to make locker rooms and restrooms more inclusive for trans individuals, what is needed are not equality laws and trans-positive locker room and restroom policies (although, to be effective, these are likely needed too), but strategies for adjusting norms and widely-held assumptions about gender. Strategies such as posting “Safe Space” signs, implementing trans-positive membership policies, and constructing all-gender facilities may do little to nothing to alter public attitudes toward trans gender identities; pedagogical approaches, however, might be useful at this task. Heather Sykes, in their work on school physical education programs, insists upon the importance of pedagogical approaches, pointing out that, rather than:

… initiatives that seek to ‘accommodate’ transed and disabled bodies, […] the transphobic imagination needs to be a central target of accessible design; rather than the inclusion of trans and disabled others. This requires both pedagogical and architectural projects to ask how we might move the built environment of schools toward Mark Wigley’s (2002) notion of an architecture ‘that captures the fragility and strangeness of our bodies and identities…’ (2011, p. 47, emphasis my own).

The pedagogical projects that Sykes mentions may have more transformative potential than the architectural projects. Though important, architectural projects, such as all-gender locker rooms and restrooms, are limited in their capacity to alter assumptions about binary gender. All-gender facilities can risk simply creating an alternate space to “put” gender transgressors – working to stabilize the gender binary – while simultaneously reifying the institution responsible for the architectural project as inclusive and progressive. Pedagogical projects, on the other hand, such as The Change Room Project (Appendix A) present a visual dialogue which makes visible the heterosexual matrix. Other projects have also approached this goal in myriad ways, such as the
Vancouver Park Board trans-inclusive campaign (Appendix B) and University of Bristol LGBT+ Society initiative (Appendix C). These strategies work to inspire what Sheila Cavanagh has called *trans-positive ways of seeing*. Cavanagh describes how these “[t]rans-positive ways of seeing require us to expand and reconfigure gender norms so that they are less exacting and restrictive to those who can access cis-sexual privilege” (p. 78). Little research has been directed toward examining whether trans individuals experience interventions for widening and reconfiguring gender norms as more or less effective than interventions which seek to accommodate the presence of trans individuals in locker rooms and restrooms. In Chapter 7, I explore how trans individuals perceive of various interventions being used to advance trans inclusion in binary-gendered facilities.

**Hailing trans individuals in binary-gendered facilities**

For many trans individuals, experiences in the binary-gendered facilities are regularly accompanied by what French philosopher Louis Althusser (1971) has called “hailing.” Sara Ahmed (2006), in her book *Queer Phenomenology*, cites Althusser’s concept of *interpellation*, a process through which, by continuously being “hailed,” a subject comes to, internalize, and identify with that hailing. For trans individuals in binary-gendered spaces, the words that serve to hail them, “excuse me, this is the [women’s/men’s and therefore wrong] facility,” can iteratively work to inscribe an internalized belief that one does not belong in this space. Judith Butler’s work (1997) builds upon Althusser’s concept of *interpellation* to examine the social reproduction of fixed gender identities through what she calls *turning*. For Butler, *turning* is the process through which the subject comes to recognize themselves vis-à-vis the hailing directed toward them. While Butler does not conceptualize *turning* as a physical movement (1997, p. 33), for trans individuals in binary-gendered spaces the physicality of turning is, indeed, significant; as trans individuals enter these spaces, cisgender individuals *may turn* from the entrance in confusion, *turn* toward the sign in closer inspection, *turn* after the trans person in curiosity, fear, or disapproval, and so on. Butler instead focuses her argument to claim that, whether or not one chooses to either turn toward or ignore the hailing, they have internally identified themselves as the object of the hailing.
Hailing is not only directed toward gender expression but also toward racialized signifiers. In *Black Skin, White Masks* Frantz Fanon (1967) reflects upon being surveilled and hailed by the words “Look, a Negro.” Fanon describes how, through this iterative process of racialized interpellation, he is forced into an awareness of his own “historico-racial schema” (p. 84). Fanon observes how his Blackness marks him as hypervisible and constrains him as an object of white scrutiny: “I was responsible at the same time for my body, for my race, for my ancestors. I subjected myself to an objective examination, I discovered my blackness, my ethnic characteristics…” (1967, p. 84). Through being hailed, Fanon is both marked as, and made to be, a hypervisible racialized object. Through this process of hailing, Fanon becomes something less than human: “All I wanted was to be a man among other men” (p. 85), instead Fanon finds “that I was an object in the midst of other objects” (p. 82). Fanon’s work is crucial for my research on locker rooms and restrooms; trans people of colour are significantly more likely to be verbally assaulted than their white counterparts (see e.g., Kosciw et al., 2016, p. 83).

**Surveillance**

Foucault’s concept of *panopticism* (1975) offers another conceptual point of entry into understanding the ways in which trans individuals are hailed in locker rooms and restrooms. Through panopticism, Foucault theorizes the structure of Jeremy Bentham’s late 18th century *Panopticon*, a tower, built in the center of a prison yard, with one-way mirrors allowing unseen guards to surveil prisoners at all times. Foucault argues that because the prisoners are unable to determine whether or not the guards are observing them, the prisoners come to administer an internalized form of surveillance upon themselves.

Fusco (2003) has suggested that the concept of panopticism is central to understanding the locker room, both in its design and in its lineage. Fusco observes that the British social reformer responsible for the sanitation legislation in Britain which led to a number of projects such as the modern bathing house, Edwin Chadwick, was a disciple of Jeremy Bentham. Chadwick authored a document significant in universalizing modern locker rooms and restrooms, the *General Report of the Sanitary Conditions of the Labouring Classes in Great Britain* (Chadwick, 1843, as discussed in Fusco, 2003, p. 93). The connection that existed between Chadwick and Bentham suggests that the panoptic quality of the architecture which
characterizes binary-gendered facilities is linked to the broader civilizing project of nation-building.

Also, of relevance to understanding trans individuals’ experiences in locker rooms and restrooms are Lacan’s concepts of the mirror (2014 [1966]) and mésconnaissance (2001 [1977]). In Queering Bathrooms Sheila Cavanagh (2010) draws upon Lacan’s concept of mésconnaissance, or misrecognition, to examine the alienation of queer and trans individuals in binary-gendered public restrooms. Cavanagh applies Lacan’s work to argue:

There is no essence or truth about gender to recognize. Recognitions are based on illusory and externalizing visual projections of ourselves and of others, made possible by glass mirrors and by those we use as ego-friendly mirrors to consolidate our own internal self-portraits… So long as public space is gendered, it will be necessary to validate gender identifications in accordance with individual self-identification. (p. 237)

Those who cannot provide cisgender individuals with, what Cavanagh describes as, an “affirming mirrorical response” of gender are subject to scrutiny and alienation (2010, 62). Lacan’s work also explores what he calls “urinary segregation.” In Écrits: A Selection (2001 [1977]) Lacan illustrates two adjacent doors labeled “Ladies” and “Gentlemen.” Lacan describes the intent behind his inclusion of this illustration:

… to show how in fact the signifier enters the signified, namely, in a form which, not being immaterial, raises the question of its place in reality. For the blinking gaze of a short[-]sighted person might be justified in wondering whether this was indeed the signifier as he peered closely at the little enamel signs that bore it, a signifier whose signified would in this call receive its final honours from the double and solemn procession from the upper nave [cathedral congregation area]. (2001 [1977], p. 115)

While Lacan’s somewhat cryptic explanation does not specifically engage with the experiences of trans individuals in binary-gendered facilities, importantly it identifies the significance and material importance of these doors.

One can only speculate that Lacan’s attention was drawn to this topic at the direction of one of his trans “patients.” Although an argument presented in Lacan’s 1971 seminar, in which
he described trans individuals’ tendency to “confuse the organ with the signifier” (Lacan, 1971, as cited in Gherovici, 2017, p. 89), has been interpreted by several Lacanian psychoanalysts as license for the pathologization of transgenderism (Gherovici, 2017, p. 90), psychoanalyst Patricia Gherovici (2017) has prepared a compelling argument to suggest that, in fact, Lacan demonstrated an ethical and somewhat trans-positive stance to his trans patients. Gherovici argues that Lacan avoided perpetuating the standpoint, adopted by many psychiatric doctors, that tended to challenge trans expressions as delusional (pp. 89-93). Regardless of the ethical quality of Lacan’s own practice, much of Lacan’s work offers an interesting application for understanding the spaces of locker rooms and restrooms.

**Engaging an intersectional analysis of locker rooms and restrooms**

My argument, for utilizing an intersectional approach to understanding trans experiences in locker rooms and restrooms, asserts that transphobia and homophobia are not the only, nor necessarily the primary, barriers to trans inclusion within locker rooms and restrooms. A number of Black feminists have argued that the categories of man and woman are, in fact, deeply racialized (Spillers, 2003). Caroline Fusco (2003, pp. 54-56) has extended this argument to assert that the locker room is a space deeply entangled within white, middle class expectations of respectability. Sheila Cavanagh’s (2010) work also confirms that the excommunication which besets trans individuals within locker room and restroom spaces is not simply transphobic and homophobic, but is also racist and classist in nature:

> Those who are recognizably trans are subject to persecution for using the ‘wrong bathroom’ in ways that are not only callous and cruel but compulsive and curious. The urgency with which one seeks to clarify the gender identity of another or to expunge gender-variant folk from the public lavatory entirely is beset by worries about disease and disorder that, in the present day, are overlaid by angst about a racialized and class-specific gender purity. (p. 7)

The angst with which trans individuals of colour are scrutinized in these spaces demonstrates the importance of Jin Haritaworn’s question: “heterosexual matrix or interracial matrix?” (2009, p. 103), which seeks to complicate the singular primacy placed upon homophobia and transphobia by queer and trans theorists. Furthering this exploration, Omise’eke Natasha Tinsley and Matt Richardson (2014) theorize the trial of CeCe McDonald, a Black transwoman who was tried,
convicted, and incarcerated for defending herself against two cisgender, white, male attackers who spewed racist and transphobic epithets at her as they beat her.

In response to the questions posed by McDonald’s lawyer at trial, as well as in media reports of the incident, people recall two distinct kinds of insults lanced at CeCe and her companions that night: first, racist, and then, transphobic. Instead of separating these, though, we might hear them as irremediably intertwined, as forms of hate speech with a common historical genesis: the history buried in the graveyard up the street, that of a chattel slavery system… (pp. 154-155)

Here, Tinsley and Richardson are theorizing that the attempt to separate the hatred spewed at CeCe McDonald into two distinct forms is to miss the crux of the issue. CeCe was not attacked only because she is Black, nor was CeCe attacked only because she is trans. CeCe was targeted precisely because she is Black and trans, and was convicted for defending herself for the same reason. To apply Tinsley and Richardson’s work to develop effective strategies for engendering trans inclusion in locker rooms and restrooms necessitates a conceptualization of racism and transphobia as “irremediably intertwined” (Tinsley & Richardson, 2014, p. 154).

Sexuality and Gender in Sport Literature

Since the 1990s, a growing body of literature has examined sexuality and gender within sport. This section provides a brief overview of this scholarship. I begin by reviewing relevant literature on the participation of lesbian, gay, and queer individuals in sport. Next, I examine literature addressing the participation of trans individuals in high performance sport. Following this, I review the scholarship addressing experiences common to trans individuals participating in recreational sport, and finally I overview the experiences of trans individuals in binary-gendered facilities.

The participation of gay, lesbian, and queer individuals in sport

One of the first texts examining the relationship between gay men and sport is Brian Pronger’s (1990) text, The Arena of Masculinity: Sports, Homosexuality, and the Meaning of Sex. In this text, Pronger interviews 34 gay men about their participation in sport. Pronger describes how the
dominant hetero-masculinity of sporting cultures often renders sport a “place of estrangement” for gay men. Eric Anderson’s (2005) book In the Game: Gay Athletes and the Cult of Masculinity applies Pronger’s work to explore the experiences of gay male team-sport athletes. Eric Anderson, who was America’s first publicly recognized gay male coach and who recounts several occasions where his athletes were attacked on account of this, interviews several dozen gay athletes to examine how they contest dominant notions of athletic hetero-male masculinity as well as their experiences with a lack of institutional support for the homophobia they faced. The locker room figures as a particularly dangerous space in Anderson’s own accounts as well as in the stories of many of his interviewees. The locker room also appears as a significant space in Beth Cavalier’s (2011) study of gay men employed in sporting workplaces. For them, Cavalier observes, the locker room represents a “contested terrain” (p. 626). A number of other texts have also addressed the participation of gay men in sport, for example Zamboni, Crawford, and Carrico’s (2008) survey study of gay and bisexual mens’ perceptions of sport, as well as Michael Messner’s (1995) work on sport’s dominant constructions of masculinity, Pat Griffin’s (1995) work on homophobia in sport, and Brian Pronger’s (1999) provocatively titled text, “Outta My Endzone: Sport and the Territorial Anus.” Various scholars have also examined the participation of gay male athletes in professional sports (e.g. Kian, Anderson, & Shipka, 2015; King, 2017). Although some scholarship has discussed the experiences of professional, gay and queer racialized athletes, including openly gay basketball player Jason Collins (Billings, Moscowitz, Rae, & Brown-Devlin, 2015; Dann & Everbach, 2016; Kian et al., 2015) and openly gay boxer, Orlando Cruz (Zavala, 2016), few scholars have addressed the everyday experiences of gay and queer men of colour participating in recreational sport (cf. Anderson, 2015; Anderson & McCormack, 2010).

There also exists a significant body of literature addressing the experiences of lesbians and queer women in sport. Pat Griffin (1992, 1995, 1998) has written widely about how homophobia affects lesbian athletes and lesbian participation in sport. Homophobia in sport has also been the subject of a position paper authored by the Canadian Association for the Advancement of Sport and Women and Physical Activity (CAAWS) (2012). Caroline Fusco has also addressed the issue of lesbophobia within locker rooms and sport (Fusco, 1995, 1998, 2006), and a number of scholars have examined how the “lesbian” stigma operates to police the behaviour of women participating in sport (Griffin, 1992; Halbert, 1997; Lenskyj, 1994; Russell,
Gill Clarke’s (1998, 2000) work addresses the experiences of lesbian-identified women in physical education. Changing attitudes toward lesbian and queer women athletes have been examined (Anderson & Bullingham, 2015) as have queer athletes’ use of women’s sports as safe spaces for expressing queer articulations of sex and gender (Hillier, 2005). Jayne Caudwell (1999, 2003, 2007), in her study of a UK lesbian-identified soccer team, has also written extensively about how lesbian athletes and teams are challenging heteronormativity in sport.

The experiences of racialized lesbian and queer women athletes have received significantly less scholarly attention. Exceptions include Hamdi, Lachheb, and Anderson’s (2016) analysis of sporting identities among Muslim, lesbian-identified women in Tunisia, as well as explorations into the experiences of Black, lesbian and queer athletes who have gained notoriety, such as NCAA basketball player Jennifer Harris (Newhall & Buzuvis, 2008) and WNBA athlete Brittney Griner (Chawansky, 2016; Dann & Everbach, 2016).

Trans individuals’ participation in elite sport

Although the experiences of gay, lesbian, and queer individuals have received significant scholarly attention, trans participation in sport remains a largely under-examined topic, an assertion that Caudwell (2014, p. 398) among other scholars (Hargie et al., 2017; Smith et al., 2012; Travers, 2006), have put forward. In “What is the T in LGBT?” Cathryn Lucas-Carr and Vikki Krane (2011) suggest that “… transgender athletes tend to be lumped in with other sexual minorities under the LGBT umbrella. While there are some common experiences among LGBT individuals, issues surrounding gender identity differ from those related to sexual orientation” (p. 533, emphasis my own). Here, Lucas-Carr and Krane emphasize the importance of focusing upon the participation of trans individuals in sport, arguing that simply including them under the LGBT umbrella does not attend to the specificities of their experiences.

Trans high performance athletes have received significant media attention for at least three decades, but this media attention is often overwhelmingly negative. Renée Richards, a MTF\(^9\) trans individual and professional tennis player, was denied entry into the 1976 Women’s US Open because of her gender. Richards, who had undergone sex reassignment surgery in

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\(^9\) MTF is an acronym sometimes used to denote individuals who have medically transitioned from male to female.
1975, disputed the US Open’s decision. Although the New York Supreme Court eventually ruled in Richards’ favour, allowing her to compete in the US open circuit, Richards’ received overt antagonism from her competitors and the US tennis governing body. After the New York Supreme Court cleared Richards to play, 25 of the 32 athletes registered in the competition withdrew, complaining that Richards’ participation in the event was unfair (Birrell & Cole, 1990). Michelle Dumaresq, a MTF professional mountain bike racer has, like Richards, faced scrutiny from her competitors. In 2002, for example, a competitor of Dumaresq’s, Sylvie Allen, appealed to the Switzerland-based Union Cycliste Internationale insisting that “We are very impressed with her strength, endurance, speed and skill—all quite good as a man, but too suspiciously impressive for a woman. It is our contention that she is not competing on a level playing field” (Billman, 2004, para. 30). Dumaresque was, at the time, a licensed member of the Canadian Cycling Association and had undergone sex reassignment surgery a number of years prior. Four years later, at the 2006 Canadian Downhill Mountain-Biking Championships, Dumaresq was awarded the gold medal. At the medal ceremony, when the second-place finisher, Danika Schroeter, stepped onto the podium she had written on her t-shirt in marker: “100 Per Cent Pure Woman Champ 2006” (McIlroy, 2007, as cited by Lucas-Carr & Krane, 2011, p. 536).

After the previous World Cup race, in 2002, a British downhill mountain-biking magazine, Dirt, remarked that “[t]he trans-gendered thing that raced finished somewhere in the back” (Billman, 2004, para. 35). Jodi Cohen (2007)’s work engages the story of an MTF transgender ice hockey athlete, her experiences in recreational hockey, and being banned from recreational competition by USA Hockey. The athlete reported that the league director demanded that “she ‘drop her pants’ to show her genitalia” during a random gender check, of which she was the only target (Cohen, 2007, p. 6). More recently, after winning gold at the 2018 Union Cycliste Internationale’s Masters Track Cycling World Championships, Rachel McKinnon – who identifies as a transgender transwoman – received accusations that she had cheated (Casole-Gouveia, 2018). McKinnon tweeted a response to these accusations, pointing to the restrictions that stipulated her inclusion: “… I’m still forced to have an unhealthily low endogenous testosterone value…it’s virtually undetectable it’s so low...way below the average for women” (2018, para. 6). The attention surrounding these athletes often resembles a media spectacle. As the examples listed above demonstrate, media representations of trans athletes often draw upon
an explicitly transphobic rhetoric and rely upon a discourse of unfairness to preclude trans participation in elite athletics (Cavanagh & Sykes, 2006; Teetzel, 2006).

Nevertheless, a number of trans athletes are pushing for inclusion within elite sport (Grespan & Goellner, 2014; Teetzel, 2006). These athletes include Fallon Fox, a mixed martial arts competitor; Mianne Bagger and Danielle Swope, golfers on the WPGA tour; and Kye Allums, the first openly trans athlete competing in NCAA Division I (Steinmetz, 2014; Thomas, 2010; Zeigler, 2010). Though several media reports readily discuss the transphobia that Allums has encountered because of his decision to compete in the women’s division despite transitioning, these reports negate the racism that he experiences as a Black transman. Recently, the Olympic Channel produced, Identify, a five-episode series profiling various trans athletes (Olympic Channel, 2017). The first two episodes in the series profile the careers and transitions of Chloe Anderson, an NCAA transwoman volleyball player and Pat Manuel, a transman amateur boxer. While the inclusion of the Identify series within the Olympic Channel’s programming certainly signals a promising readiness to explore trans issues, there exists a significant omission in Manuel’s story. Although in the episode, Manuel and his partner indicate that they are members of a queer and trans people of colour community and Manuel speculates about the oppression that makes some demographics more likely to compete as fighters, the issue of racism has been completely sanitized from the episode and the entire series.

Over the past five years, track and field athletes Caster Semenya and Dutee Chand have recently received considerable international scrutiny after being publicly identified as intersex athletes. In 2014 Chand, an Indian sprinter whose testosterone levels exceed the level decreed as “normal” for female athletes, was deemed ineligible to compete in the Commonwealth Games. On behalf of Chand, the Indian government appealed to the International Court of Arbitration for Sport, which regained for Chand the ability to compete (Pape, 2017a). Bruce Kidd, who has been outspoken in his support of Dutee Chand’s right to compete, asserts that: “If the proclaimed human right of self-expression is to mean anything, surely it should protect the right to name one’s own gender” (as cited in Jordan-Young & Karkazis, 2012, para. 10). Caster Semenya, a South African middle-distance runner and two-time Olympic gold medalist, has been subjected to scrutiny from athletes, officials, and media outlets. Semenya’s muscular physique and athletic performances, in which she consistently outclasses her competitors, have led a number of critics
to dismiss her victories. Pierre Weiss, the secretary of the International Association of Athletics Federations reportedly said, “She is a woman, but maybe not 100 percent” (Longman, 2016, para. 3). Through this scrutiny, Semenya’s performance is no longer simply athletic, but instead represents a panic over the authenticity of biological “woman-ness” and the corrosion of fair sport. Additionally, as Madeleine Pape (2017b) has demonstrated, the panic surrounding Caster Semenya’s gender not only reflects dominant constructions of normalcy and gender, but is also deeply rooted in racialized anxieties surrounding white womanhood. Pape, who, for her doctoral dissertation, interviewed over 50 track and field athletes (female), managers, and officials in attendance at the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympic Games, where Semenya won her second consecutive Olympic gold medal, revealed that Semenya’s victory bore the brunt of both gendered and racialized scrutiny. For example, a middle-distance female athlete speculated that “[there are] certain tribes in Africa where there are larger populations of hyper-androgynous women” (Pape, 2017, n.p.). Pape’s study also quoted a male manager of a female middle-distance athlete insisting that “[t]hey’re coming from everywhere, there’s going to be one on every African team” (Pape, 2017, n.p.). Pape’s study, as well as the rhetoric underlying many of the media reports demonstrate that, although the panic that Caster Semenya inspires appears to be primarily centered around her gender, it is also deeply entangled with racialized ideologies of white supremacy that portray Semenya as corrupt and less morally upright than her competitors on account of her Blackness. This rhetoric, which portrays the Black athlete as naturally and unfairly advantaged over the honest and hardworking white athlete, is not a new one (Azzarito & Harrison, 2008; Davis, 1990; Sailes, 1991). Nonetheless, the international scrutiny directed toward Semenya’s intersexuality reflects not only a rhetoric of fairness in sport, but also a white supremacist, settler colonial discourse of discriminating which types of bodies are, and are not, permitted to compete.

This section has aimed to demonstrate that trans, including intersex, individuals have competed, and continue to compete, at all levels of elite competitive sport, though many attempt to remain closeted in order to avoid public backlash (Cohen, 2007). For trans individuals competing in high performance sport, inclusion is often contingent upon remaining closeted. Michelle Dumaresque, the transwoman downhill mountain-biker, claims that “[t]here are hundreds of athletes out there who have a trans history… but they’re not telling anybody because of the implications” (Billman, 2004, para. 22). As Dumaresque’s quotation suggests, for trans
individuals the world of elite athletics is a hostile one that regularly interprets their inclusion as a violation of the spirit of fair competition.

**Trans individuals’ participation in recreational sport**

Having outlined the literature examining trans individual’s participation in elite athletics, I now turn to briefly examine literature exploring the experiences of trans individuals in recreational sports and physical activity, an area of focus that has received significantly less scholarly attention. Ample quantitative and qualitative evidence suggests that systemic transphobia and homophobia are significant barriers to the participation of trans individuals in recreational sport and physical activity. For instance, a survey study on transphobia in sport, conducted in Scotland by Smith et al. (2012) revealed that roughly 80% of trans respondents had either witnessed or experienced transphobic physical violence or verbal assault in sport (p. 4). The same study posed the question: “Is homophobia or transphobia a barrier to LGBT people participating in sport?” Of the 115 survey participants who identified as trans, 79% responded in the affirmative to this question (Smith et al., 2012, p. 7). Another survey study on the experiences of LGBT individuals, conducted in Lambeth, UK, demonstrated that many trans respondents chose not to participate in physical activity and sport due to fears of being rebuked by cisgender participants within single gender fitness classes and changing facilities (Keogh, Reid, & Weatherburn, 2006, p. 38). Similar findings were presented in a study by Symons et al. (2010), which examined the experiences of LGBT individuals in sport and physical activity in Victoria, Australia. This survey study (n= 307) revealed that many trans individuals reported avoiding sport and physical activity because they feared being excluded as a result of not passing\(^{10}\) within sporting environments (Symons et al., 2010, pp. 58–59). Symons et al.’s study demonstrates that discomfort and fear of violence in locker rooms was a significant contributor to many respondents’ decisions not to participate in sport or physical activity (2010, pp. 31-32).

\(^{10}\) In this context, *passing* refers to the ability/action of an individual to appear as a cisgender. *Passing* is also the conceptual and material action of inhabiting an embodiment that permits one greater access to the privileges of the “normal” Western ideal. Black, Indigenous and people of colour may *pass* and thus access white privilege; and disabled people may *pass* and thus access able-bodied privilege. Certainly, these are complex and multifaceted concepts, however, my intention is to point to the multiplicitous nature of this concept.
Trans exclusion from binary-gendered facilities

A number of reports have demonstrated the extent to which trans people struggle to access locker rooms and restrooms. One of the key conclusions in Smith et al.’s (2012) study indicated that “[o]ne of the main barriers to participating in sport raised by trans respondents was the lack of changing and leisure facilities which meet the needs of trans people” (p. 8). In the same study, a trans respondent reflected that “non-competitive individual sport is difficult to take part in if people are prevented from using the appropriate changing room” (p. 4). Smith et al. (2012), in recognition of the barrier that binary-gendered locker rooms have on the participation of trans individuals in sport, asserted that “[s]ports facility providers should be encouraged to publish or display information about the changing facilities within particular leisure facilities on their websites. This should include whether they have private cubicles or gender specific changing areas” (2012, p. 14). Similarly, a trans respondent in Keogh et al.’s (2012) survey study expressed how their fear of binary-gendered locker rooms impacts their involvement in sport and physical recreation:

I’m afraid to go to [name of recreation facility] because of what people might say. Even for going to gyms or swimming pools, there are going to be people saying you can’t go there you need to use [another changing area] …. [They need to] provide adequate facilities whether it’s in clubs and sports centres where transgender [people] can go and get changed in peace. (Keogh et al., 2012, p. 38)

Several respondents in Symon et al.’s (2010) survey study shared similar reflections on how the locker room acts as a barrier to their involvement in sport and physical activity. For instance, a 51-year-old transwoman respondent with the pseudo-name Angie, described how other women tend to flee the locker room upon hearing the timbre of her voice, which Angie describes as “deep and sounds male” (58). Angie also described how these interactions with cis-gender women in the locker room “…caused me to have reservations about joining any other sailing club” (Symons et al., 2012, p. 58). Similarly, Miguel, a 27-year-old transman, described how his apprehension about changing in the locker room acted as a barrier to his participation:

“Swimming – I am too conscious of my body and the dangers associated with being trans in a change room” (Symons et al., 2012, p. 60). In a study by Whittle et al. (2007), which surveyed
872 trans individuals across the United Kingdom, 47% of respondents indicated that they would not use changing facilities in athletic centres or health centres (p. 60).

In Whittle et al.’s (2007) study, 7% of respondents reported being redirected to use the facilities corresponding to their birth gender (p. 60). The phrasing of this survey question, however, which reads: “Have you been asked to use different toilets or changing rooms at a health centre or sports centre as a consequence of your transition or being in your preferred/acquired gender?” (2007, p. 60), did not necessarily capture other confrontations in locker rooms and restrooms, such as receiving stares and comments such as: “This is the men’s/women’s facility.” Whittle et al.’s study also revealed that one in ten respondents had experienced discrimination while using gender specific retail change rooms (p. 60), and that 5% responded affirmatively to being “refused services in a pub, restaurant, hotel or any other place providing leisure services such as a gym, because they were recognised as being trans” (2007, p. 61). One trans respondent in Smith et al.’s study (2012) reported that “Transphobia since I have come out, this is mainly in changing rooms... shouting what the f**k are you doing in here it’s a men’s room” (p. 8). A transwoman in Whittle et al.’s study (2007) described being denied access to the women’s locker room at her place of work. In a communication with the report’s authors (2007, p. 34), she described receiving disparaging comments from managers after requesting accommodation, after which point she was directed to use the “disabled” restroom and locker room which was some distance from where she worked. The respondent described having to cross the parking lot every time she needed to use the restroom or retrieve something from her bag. The respondent reflected that this situation caused her considerable distress and speculated that this distress eventually led her to snap at a customer, which resulted in her suspension from work (Whittle et al., 2007 p. 34). The statistics and respondent reflections highlighted in a number of reports demonstrate how trans individuals’ discomfort and social alienation in binary-gendered locker room and restroom spaces often impacts their participation in physical activity and the public sphere, and thus their health, wellbeing, and work life.

A number of other reports suggest that trans youth also experience locker rooms and restrooms as overwhelmingly traumatic spaces. An LGBTQ advocacy organization, Egale Canada, surveyed 3,700 secondary school students in their study of LGBTQ youth and their experiences of homophobia and transphobia in Canadian schools (Taylor & Peter, 2011). Egale’s
report concluded that 49% of the youth surveyed identified school locker rooms as the single most unsafe place in the school environment, followed closely by binary-gendered restrooms. Similarly, an American study led by an LGBTQ advocacy group, GLSEN, surveyed 10,500 LGBTQ students aged 13 to 21. The study, which has been conducted biennially since 2001, offers an opportunity to analyze trends and changes in students’ perceptions of locker room and restroom spaces in school environments. In 2011, 63.5% of LGBTQ respondents reported feeling unsafe at school because of their sexual orientation and 43.9% reported feeling unsafe at school because of their gender expression (Kosciw, Greytak, Bartkiewicz, Boesen, & Palmer, 2012, p. 20). As a result of feeling unsafe at school, 31.7% reported missing school on at least one occasion in the month prior to completing the survey (2012, p. 21). The locker room was situated as an important location of danger and alienation in this study. Roughly 38% of LGBTQ respondents reported avoiding the locker rooms and 39% reported avoiding school restrooms (Kosciw et al., 2016, p. 13). Of the trans students surveyed, over two-thirds, 70%, avoided school restrooms because they felt unsafe there (Movement Advancement Project & GLSEN, 2017); these students limited their fluid intake and practiced “holding it” in an attempt to avoid this space (p. 2). Of all the spaces within the school environment, the LGBT students surveyed in GLSEN’s study identified locker rooms and restrooms as the most unsafe places in their schools.

GLSEN’s 2011 survey study garnered responses from a number of students indicating that they had been forced to use the locker rooms or restrooms corresponding to sex they were assigned at birth. Many of these students reported that, as a result of being forced to use these spaces, they were exposed to violence and harassment from other students as well as personal discomfort (Kosciw et al., 2012, p. 77). One respondent, for example, reflected that:

Male/female locker rooms made for a difficult time. A trans friend of mine (female to male) was not allowed to use the male locker rooms. Before this incident, no one knew he was biologically female. He got made fun of mercilessly. (Female student, 12th grade, NH). (Kosciw et al., 2012, p. 77)

Another student indicated, “[t]here are no integrated gym classes and if one is uncomfortable with being in a specific locker room, they are still made to change in the locker room of their assigned sex. (Transgender student, 11th grade, CO)” (Kosciw et al., 2012, p. 77). GLSEN’s
2015 report found that 60% of trans students reported being forced to use the locker rooms or restrooms associated with their sex assignment at birth (Kosciw et al., 2016, p. 38). In the same study, only 6% of respondents identified that their schools having any policies in place for trans students (2016, p. 60).

An examination of students’ responses to locker room and restroom spaces in GLSEN’s reports from 2009 to 2015, suggests that little to no progress has made in making these spaces safer over this period. GLSEN’s 2009 report signals that 35.7% and 34.1% of LGBTQ students avoid locker rooms and restrooms, respectively, because they feel unsafe there (Kosciw et al., 2010, p. 23). In 2011 these numbers increased slightly to 39% and 38.8%, respectively (Kosciw et al., 2012, p. 21). The 2015 report signaled similar results, with 37.9% and 39.4% feeling unsafe in these spaces (Kosciw et al., 2016, p. 13). While GLSEN’s 2001, 2003, 2005, and 2007 reports do not offer a spatial analysis, the data observed between 2009 and 2015 suggest that conditions for LGBTQ youth in locker rooms and restrooms have not improved, even slightly, over this six year period.

GLSEN’s reports also demonstrate that racism plays a significant role in students’ experiences of verbal harassment. For example, while 4.7% of white LGBTQ students had experienced verbal assault, LGBTQ students who identified as “Arab/Middle Eastern,” “Asian/South Asian,” and “Black/African American” reported receiving verbal assaults at rates of 35.6%, 34.4%, and 31.2% respectively (2016, p. 83). While GLSEN’s reports do not examine these statistics by space, since LGBTQ students consistently designated locker rooms and restrooms as the unsafest places in their schools, it is fair to assume that both racialized and transphobic/homophobic verbal assaults frequently occur in locker rooms and restrooms.

Qualitative literature in sociology, sport sociology and physical cultural studies has also examined the experiences of trans individuals in locker rooms and restrooms. Fusco, Milman, and De Lisio (2015) attend to the barriers that trans individuals face to accessing locker rooms through The Change Room Project, an intervention which arose from Fusco’s career-long work on homophobia in locker room spaces.

Heather Sykes (2011, p. 2), drawing upon their work on queer and trans experiences in physical education programs, asserts that “[g]ender non-conforming students have to deal with
emotional and physical violence each time they get changed for physical education or sport in boys’ and girls’ locker rooms.” A number of Sykes’ interviewees described the locker room as a space of discomfort, homophobia/transphobia, and terror, leading Sykes to observe that “. . . getting changed for physical education was far from fun or safe in emotional or psychic terms” (p. 25). Jayne Caudwell’s (2014) work exploring the experiences of two trans individuals in sport also identified the locker room as a central theme. Caudwell recounts part of an interview with an interviewee named Finn:

F: [I] played for the hockey team and I had short, spiky hair at the time and refused to wear a skirt so was in shorts and a t-shirt, [I] walked in to this other school’s female changing room and basically got shouted out of the changing room ‘cause I wasn’t meant to be in there as I was one of the boys. . .

J: What did your teachers do?

F: They weren’t in the changing rooms at the time, I never told anyone about it ‘cause I thought it was quite embarrassing really to be told I was a boy when at the time I was female and I had it all kind of instilled in me that I’d try to let it go, deal with it… (p. 404)

On another occasion, also inside a locker room, Finn recalled being told by a classmate: “I can’t get changed ‘cause you’ll be looking at me” (p. 404). In Hargie et al.’s (2017) work on trans individuals participating in sport, transphobic intimidation in locker rooms was also found to be a central theme in interviewee accounts (p. 223).

Qualitative explorations into restrooms have also demonstrated the difficulty that trans individuals have accessing these spaces. This difficulty is pointed to in Cavanagh’s (2010) work, which I have discussed in detail over the preceding sections. Studies led by Herman (2013), and Bauer and Scheim (2014) also offer evidence that a significant majority of trans people will go to great lengths to avoid using binary-gendered restrooms. Herman’s study, in particular, points to the fact that trans people’s participation in the public sphere is often greatly impaired by the barriers that binary-gendered restrooms pose to their involvement in public space.
The implications of the literature reviewed in this chapter are that trans exclusion from binary-gendered locker rooms and restrooms operates as a barrier to trans participation in physical activity as well as public space. The literature outlined also suggests that an intersectional analysis tends to be negated in trans issues, often operating to further the exclusion of the experiences of trans people of colour. Because few studies have used qualitative research methods to determine how trans individuals experience and perceive of binary-gendered facilities, there exists a dearth of scholarship examining the lived-experiences of trans individuals in these spaces. The lack of intersectional focus in much of the literature addressing trans experiences also deepens these lacunae. In the chapter that follows, I outline my methodological process for investigating these crucial research questions: how do a diverse group of trans individuals experience and perceive locker rooms and restrooms? What strategies do they use to make accessing these spaces feel safer or less alienating? How do they perceive interventions being used to advance trans inclusion in these spaces?
Chapter 3
Methodological Overview

In this chapter, I overview the methodological and theoretical work that has contributed toward my approach to this project. This chapter begins with a section outlining my theoretical framework for this study. Next, I discuss the methodology that I have used as well as a rationale for why I have selected these methodological tools. Finally, I outline in detail the process that I have used to conduct this research.

Theoretical Framework

In this section, I briefly overview the critical scholarship that informs my master’s project and identify how this scholarship contributes to a study of trans experiences in locker rooms and restrooms. Next, I address how, central to this project is an eschewal of a positivist model of research; instead, in this project, I follow post-structuralist and phenomenological ontologies. Finally, I discuss how Indigenous methodologies (Smith, 2013) inform this research through an emphasis upon reciprocity, co-creation of research, and right relationship between researcher and interviewee.

My research is informed by a number of critical theories. Delineating between these critical theories is a difficult task since considerable overlap exists in both authorship and scope. This research engages feminist theory which seeks to critique the structures of power underlying misogynist, heteronormative, and cisnormative ideologies (Cavanagh, 2010; Duggan, 2002; Halberstam, 1998; Rich, 1986; Stryker, 2006), which I will apply to my analysis of the binary-gendered design. Similarly, this research relies on queer theory to explore how gender is materialized (Ahmed, 2006; Butler, 1993, 1997; Foucault, 1978), which I use to examine how locker rooms and restrooms are constitutive of binary genders. This research also applies trans theory’s interrogation of the binary-gendered design of public spaces and its impact upon trans individuals (Bornstein & Bergman, 2010; Cavanagh, 2010; Halberstam, 1998; Stryker, 2006; Stryker & Aizura, 2013; Sykes, 2011). Also fundamental to this research is a Black queer studies critique and a queer of colour critique, which insist that placing a primacy upon sexual/gender identity operates to perpetuate racism and white supremacy (Ferguson, 2005; Han, 2015; Johnson, 2001; Manalansan, 2005; Tinsley & Richardson, 2014). I also employ a critical
disability studies framework to understand how dominant constructions of “normalcy,” work to alienate and exclude both trans individuals and disabled individuals from many public spaces (Clare, 1999; Rice & Russell, 2002; Sykes, 2011; Titchkosky & Michalko, 2009). These theoretical frameworks were flexibly applied according to the data being analyzed.

This research is also centered upon a recognition of the importance of qualitative research methods for offering insight into phenomena that quantitative research methods can neither measure nor explore. In this research, I eschew positivist methodology’s claims that quality research is bias-free, objective, and conducted by a distanced observer (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000), instead drawing upon a poststructural feminist theoretical framework (Lather, 2000), one that Elizabeth St. Pierre and Wanda Pillow (2000) describe as both “feminist and poststructural, a relationship that gestures toward fluid and multiple dislocations and alliances” (2000, p. 3, emphasis original). Additionally, I draw upon what Sara Ahmed (2006) calls a queer phenomenological method; one that examines how “… bodies are gendered, sexualized, and raced by how they extend into space… What is offered, in other words, is a model of how bodies become orientated by how they take up time and space” (2006, p. 5). This methodology is also useful for my work because it provides a spatial analysis of both oppression and embodiment. Thus, this research follows a poststructural feminist, queer phenomenological theoretical framework which values an account of lived experiences as a valid, reliable, and effective methodology for improving insight into trans experiences in locker rooms and restrooms.

While the tenuousness of my own experiences as a trans individual using binary-gendered facilities precludes me from adopting the role of an objective and distanced observer, this tenuousness is also what has guided me to study these spaces. My own experiences suggest that locker rooms and restrooms represent precarious spaces where the legitimacy of trans genders are regularly interrogated and evaluated. Furthermore, my own discussions with trans people of colour, Two-Spirit individuals, as well as disabled trans individuals suggest that experiences in these spaces are intersectional and impacted by multiple facets of embodiment. My embodiment, as a white settler and an able-bodied elite trans athlete shapes how I understand these spaces, since the presence of my body is not confronted by racism, settler colonialism, ableism, or fat-phobia.
This research is also grounded in the theoretical praxis that Linda Tuhiwai Smith describes in her book *Decolonizing Methodologies* (2013 [1998]). Smith articulates rigorous ethical standards for research conducted within Indigenous communities. In recognition of the violent history of academic research within Indigenous communities (Castellano, 2004; Letendre & Caine, 2004; Smith, 2013; Woerd & Cox, 2006), as well as many racialized, queer, and working-class communities, I seek to conduct research that follows Smith’s (2013) protocol for ethical research relationships.

My research follows Smith’s (2013) criteria for research *reciprocity,* a mutual exchange of benefit from the research; *co-creation,* research that is generated by both researcher and research subject; and *right relationship,* one that is built upon transparency, trust, and connection rather than transaction. With regards to building a relationship of *reciprocity* with interviewees, I undertook the following steps: first, I committed to emailing each interviewee a copy of my thesis following its completion. Second, recognizing that this text may be too long or too academically written to be accessible to some of the interviewees, I committed to invite each of them for a coffee to discuss the results and/or completed thesis if they had any questions. Finally, to ensure that the research is of benefit to the broader trans community, I made a commitment to pursue several public sociology or knowledge translation dissemination activities to ensure that the results of this research extend beyond, and benefit, those outside of the academic community.

In terms of *co-creation* of knowledge, I designed and altered my project based upon the feedback I received from interviewees. One example is that initially, I had intended to direct my attention solely to locker rooms. The first two participants, however, spoke at length about public restrooms and this developed, in me, a concern that I was eliding an important aspect of their experiences. Please see pp. 61-62 for a more detailed rationale for this methodological decision. There were also several practices that I used to engender *right-relationship* in these research relationships. In addition to strictly following the REB protocols for anonymity and data protection, I also adopted several practices to disrupt the one-way flow of information that is often the norm in research interviews. I shared with interviewees about my own experiences in locker rooms and restrooms. I believe that, through following Smith’s (2013) practices for ethically and culturally sensitive research, I was able to engender greater trust with my interviewees and, thus, to elicit deeper responses. Respect and accountability were also priorities.
throughout the transcription, data analysis, thesis writing, and dissemination phases of this research.

In this thesis, I also developed my own theoretical understanding of locker rooms and restrooms as gateway spaces. The concept of the gateway space was brought to my attention by the work of Fusco et al. (2015) and Cavanagh (2010, p.53). Although both texts note how their respective binary-gendered facilities operate as a gateway space for queer and trans participation, neither theorize these spaces. Fusco et al. (2015, p. 2), for instance, note that: “The locker room is the gateway to participation in recreation and athletics, yet the experiences and bodies of students from the *transgender, lesbian, gay, and bi-sexual populations are often muted, or altogether excluded from athletics facilities.” Similarly, Cavanagh (2010, p. 53) focuses a similar attention upon the gateway that public restrooms pose to trans participation in public space: “Gender recognitions consistent with self-identifications are not inconsequential or superfluous, but gateways to humanity. For those who are routinely denied access to public space, humane gender recognition is known to be essential to community membership.” Although both texts do the important work of identifying their respective facilities as gateway spaces, neither provides a theorization of the ways in which these spaces operate as crucial barriers to trans participation in physical activity and public space. My work attends to the provocations offered by these scholars, exploring in detail the ways in which locker rooms are a cornerstone to trans experiences in sport and physical activity as well as how barriers to using public restrooms operate to diminish trans inclusion in the public sphere.

Methodology

This section outlines in detail the methodology that informs this research project. I begin by reiterating the research questions this project seeks to address. Next, I overview the repertoire of methods used for this study, interviews which will include the application of the photo-elicitation method. I describe the interview method in detail, as well as a rationale for this selection. I conclude by outlining the methodologies I used for transcription and data analysis.

In this project, I employ what Jack Halberstam (1998) has called a scavenger methodology, a methodology which seeks to “…produce information on subjects who have been
deliberately or accidentally excluded from traditional studies of human behavior” (p. 13). Tinsley and Richardson (2014), in their description of scavenger methodology, identify it as one that “…collects, deconstructs, and recombines a variety of cross-disciplinary methods…” working to “…strategize methodologies for theorizing the intersection of racism and transphobia” (2014, p. 153). I employ a scavenger methodology for this research by assembling a methodology that draws on interviews as well as the less used method of photo-elicitation.

In my master’s research, I seek to explore the following research questions: first, how do a diverse group of trans individuals experience and perceive of locker rooms and restrooms? Second, what strategies do they use to make accessing these spaces feel safer or less alienating? And third, how do they perceive of interventions being used to advance trans inclusion in these spaces? Central to these questions is an investigation into how these spaces are shaped through experiences of not only homophobia and transphobia, but also racism, as well as classism, ableism, and fat-phobia. These research questions are informed by an awareness that singular aspects of identity cannot be conceptualized in isolation from one another. Or rather, that gender and sexuality cannot be understood outside of the embodiment of racialization as well as ability/disability and body size/shape. Thus, to fully understand trans experiences in locker rooms and restrooms, an intersectional analysis is placed at the centre of this research (Crenshaw, 1989).

As mentioned briefly in the preceding section, initially my intention was to focus solely upon trans experiences in locker rooms, rather than exploring both locker rooms and restrooms. This decision was motivated by two rationales. First, because I am pursuing my master’s of science degree within the Department of Exercise Sciences, my goal was to primarily engage with the locker room, a space central to sport and physical activity. Second, because significantly more literature has been written about trans experiences in binary-gendered restrooms than in locker rooms, I envisioned a study of locker rooms as being a more significant contribution. As I began the interview phase of my project, however, I spoke with the first two interviewees, Xavier and Padraig, about this methodological decision. Both expressed confusion about my decision and encouraged me to reconsider, pointing out that trans experiences in one space tend to be quite similar to the other space. Therefore, my rationale for this methodological adjustment is: although locker rooms and restrooms have significantly different functions, for many trans
individuals, the binary-gendered design of these spaces makes exclusions from them, though nuanced and unique, similar with regards to gendered scrutiny. Additionally, throughout the interviews many of the interviewees referred to locker rooms and restrooms interchangeably, leading me to believe that, as far as my research was concerned examining the similarities between these two spaces was important to reflect interviewees’ experiences. Because of the barriers that trans people face using locker rooms, many interviewees indicated that they did not use locker rooms even occasionally. For interviewees who do not use locker rooms it would have become difficult and awkward to talk at length about their decision not to use this facility, especially when their experiences within restrooms would have brought so much to bear upon trans exclusion in locker rooms. Similarly, with several interviewees, it would have been unethical to talk only about locker rooms. Consider, for example, Candy who does not use locker rooms because she experienced physical assault there. Would it have been ethical to continue, at length, to discuss her perceptions and experiences in this space after she had already indicated that her experiences within it were violent and traumatic? For these reasons I adjusted my interview schedule to focus not only upon locker rooms, but also upon restrooms.

**Interviews**

As the *Review of Literature* chapter outlines, numerous studies, both quantitative and qualitative, are relevant to this research project. Quantitative studies, for example survey studies, are effective at evaluating trends and patterns in trans experiences of locker rooms and restrooms. Numerous quantitative studies offer statistical evidence of the exclusion that trans individuals face accessing these spaces (see Kosciw et al., 2016, 2012; Symons et al., 2010; Taylor, 2011; Whittle et al., 2007). Quantitative studies, however, are ineffective at addressing the lived experiences of these individuals.

In selecting a methodological template for this research, my aim was to establish one that would be successful at garnering stories, and thus offering insight into how trans individuals characterize their experiences in these spaces. My interview methodology for this project has been informed by five qualitative interview studies (Caudwell, 2014; Cavanagh, 2010; Fusco, 2003; Hargie, Mitchell, & Somerville, 2017; Sykes, 2011). Overviewing these studies, Hargie et al. (2017) employed interviews to investigate the experiences of trans individuals within sport.
Significantly, the locker room emerged as a central theme in interviewee accounts (p. 226). Jayne Caudwell’s (2014) interview study, which uses a small sample size (n=2), offers significant insight into the experiences of trans individuals within sport. In her study, locker rooms also emerged as a central theme (p. 404). Sheila Cavanagh’s (2010) interview study, outlined in her book *Queering Bathrooms*, explores queer and trans experiences in binary-gendered space public restrooms. Through the interviewees’ stories of these spaces, Cavanagh offers insight into the scrutiny, anxiety, and violence that these individuals regularly face in this space. Cavanagh’s work acknowledges and examines how class, racialization, and ability also shape queer and trans experiences in this space. Heather Sykes’ book *Queer Bodies* (2011) utilizes interviews to garner queer and trans stories of participating in elementary and high school physical education, as well as their experiences within locker rooms (pp. 35-47). Like Cavanagh’s study, Sykes’ work engages an intersectional analysis to explore how these experiences are shaped not only by sexuality and gender expression, but also by racialization as well as ability and body size. Finally, Caroline Fusco’s dissertation (2003) offers a spatial ethnographic exploration of a locker room in an athletic centre in a Canadian university in a major urban centre. Fusco’s study utilizes interviews with locker room users, cleaning employees, and architects to engage their experiences utilizing, maintaining, and designing this space. Through an analysis of interviews as well as locker room discourses and texts, Fusco demonstrates the ways in which gender, heteronormativity, whiteness, hygiene, and middle-class respectability shape how the locker room is experienced, ordered, and designed. Given the methodological success of the studies mentioned above, in garnering stories and offering insight into lived experiences, I propose to centre the interview method in my study which seeks to explore the lived experiences of trans individuals within locker rooms and restrooms.

The interview methodology used for this research follows the approach described by Steiner Kvale in *Interviews* (1996). Kvale’s approach conceptualizes the interview as a form of inter-subjective conversation in which an interview is co-created by both the interviewer and the interviewee. Depending on the conversations that emerge from the initial questions posed, the interview extends in scope to follow interviewee prompts and to resemble a conversation.

Throughout the interview, I also followed Kvale’s process of condensing and interpreting the interviewees’ accounts to check the validity of my ongoing interpretations. Kvale describes
this approach as one that allows the interviewer an opportunity to “send the meaning back” to the interviewee (1996, p. 189). Through summarizing and interpreting what I had heard from the interviewee, throughout the interview, interviewees were able to approve, reject, or correct my interpretations.

Although the interview method offers researchers an effective tool for garnering detailed insight into the experiences of research subjects, this method is highly contextualized within the interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee. The data collected from interviews is not transferable to a broader set of conditions or individuals, even when prepared from representative samples. As Chih Hoong Sin (2003) describes, the interview method is both strengthened and limited because it is “inherently interactional, reflexive and intersubjective” (p. 305, as cited in Thorpe, 2012). The interview is best conceptualized as a text that is co-created by both the interviewer and the interviewee. Timothy Rapley (2001) has emphasized this in his appraisal of the value of the open-ended interview technique. He points out that interview content emerges within “… the specific local interactional context which is produced in and through the talk (and concomitant identity work) of the interviewee and the interviewer” (2001, p. 303, as cited in Thorpe, 2012, emphasis in Rapley). Kvale furthers the concept of the interview as a co-created text by insisting that the interpersonal dynamics existing between the interviewer and the interviewee act as both instrument and method in interview research (1996, p. 35). For this phase of my master’s research, the dynamic shared, between each interviewee and I, not only shaped how content was shared, but also what was shared/not shared during the interview.

A number of scholars have pointed out that the interview can also be a precarious and problematic site of epistemic violence. Within the interview, an interviewer may assume the role of objective authority of knowledge, below whom the interviewee shares their experience. The precariousness of this dynamic has led scholars to advocate for methodological approaches which, instead, prioritize interviewee agency. Elliot Mishler (1986), for example, emphasizes the importance of structuring the interview for the empowerment of respondents, an approach that Mishler argues is only possible through redistributing power vis-à-vis facilitating the interviewee’s efforts to construct meaning through sharing their experiences with the interviewer (1986, p. 135). Laurel Richardson (1992) has advocated for what she calls relational ethics, a
commitment to the interviewee which requires an active process of “honouring and empowering” those “who teach me about their lives… even if they and I see their worlds differently.”

In the interviews that I conducted with trans interviewees, I relied upon several ethical methodological practices to ensure interviewee safety. These practices included both working with the interviewee to identify “off-limit” or triggering topics, as well as avoiding several topics and issues which I knew could introduce implicit transphobic or cisnormative assumptions into the interview. Although this information would have been relevant to my study, I avoided asking questions about processes that, for many trans people, accompany transitions; for example, sex reaffirming surgery, or hormone replacement therapy. If these topics were to be introduced into the discussion, it felt to me that, ethically, it was my responsibility to allow the interviewee to introduce them. For me to bring up these questions or topics would have implicitly reinforced the idea that there is a right or a wrong way to be trans.

Within each interview I also drew upon the photo-elicitation method. Photo-elicitation offers a visual method (Harper, 2002), that researchers are employing within sport and physical culture studies (see e.g., Atkinson, 2010; Curry, 1986). The photo-elicitation method allows the interviewer to explore interviewee responses to and perceptions of photographs. I selected the photo-elicitation method to explore interviewee responses to interventions currently being used to foster trans inclusion in locker rooms and restrooms, interventions that they otherwise might not have been exposed to, such as The Change Room Project (Fusco, Milman, & De Lisio, 2015) (Appendix A), the Vancouver Parks Board initiative (Appendix B), and the University of Bristol LGBT+ Society project (Appendix C). While the photo-elicitation method is useful for extending the scope of the interview, it has clear limitations since viewing images of a place or event does not replicate an experience of physical presence.

The selection of specific locker room and restroom sites is also an important methodological decision that deserves attention. Rather than selecting a single or several locker room/restroom sites to explore through an ethnographic or multi-sited ethnographic study, I encouraged interviewees to identify and discuss the locker room and restroom spaces that emerged from their own experiences. This approach allowed interviewees agency in identifying the facilities that have and have had the greatest impact upon their experiences. This approach
also allowed for greater variety and diversity in sampling of both sites and interviewees. Interviewees were also invited to select the location of each interview. This methodological approach follows Chih Hoong Sin’s (2003) assertion that the intersubjective interview is profoundly affected by the place in which the interview occurs. Sin argues that interview location not only affects the interviewer-interviewee dynamic but also shapes how the interviewee conceptualizes their own identity within the interview. Thus, for this project, allowing interviewees to select both the spaces upon which our discussion was focused as well as the site where the interview occurred not only offered interviewees greater agency in the interview process, but also informed the interview content and our, interviewer-interviewee, dynamic.

My own experiences in locker rooms and restrooms offer me sensitivity to discussions of transphobia and homophobia in this space. My embodiment, however, shields me from the racism, ableism, and fat-phobia that many trans individuals face in these spaces. To improve my understanding of how these forms of oppression impact other trans individuals, I have enrolled in courses on disability studies, Black diasporic feminism, and critical Indigenous studies. Most importantly, I engage an interview methodology which emphasizes listening without disrupting interviewee experiences through interruptions, or essentializing attempts to diminish or “explaining away” interviewee experiences by comparing them to my own (Sykes, 2017). Regardless of these methodological considerations, during the interviews I observed a reluctance for interviewees of colour to name whiteness. Instead, several interviewees used words such as “not people of colour” to describe white people. I expect that this reticence reflected the ways in which my positionality as a white person influenced what interviewees felt safe sharing.

For many trans individuals, locker rooms and restrooms are associated with trauma and social alienation and, as a result, discussions of this space can be triggering. To mediate potential discomfort and anxiety arising from these discussions, I designated the final fifteen minutes of each interview as a “check-in” with the interviewee. This debrief session follows the method outlined in Caroline Fusco’s (2003) interview study (p. 144). Rather than focusing upon data collection, these debrief sessions centred the interviewee’s experience of the interview process. Debrief sessions were unrecorded and, during this time, I invited interviewees to share their reactions to the interview process and to identify any concerns that arose for them. Given my
limited capacity and qualification to provide mental health support as a student interviewer, I brought a list of mental health resources for each interviewee. This list included trans-positive resources such as emergency phone numbers for mental health crises as well as free and low-cost therapy resources for those seeking on-going support (see Appendix E).

I recorded interview field notes for roughly fifteen minutes following the completion of each interview; during this time, I also reviewed and clarified my field notes. Field notes included my responses to interviewee accounts, questions to pose to future interviewees, and any other notes that I perceived to be informative to the research project.

**Transcription**

In the transcription phase of this research, I followed the methodologies outlined by Elliot Mishler (1986, 1991, 1995) and Steiner Kvale (1996). Mishler emphasizes that transcribing an interview with the intention of producing an objective written record of an interview is not possible. Mishler insists that an interview transcript is imbued with a researcher’s own interpretations and preoccupations. To illustrate the subjectivity of transcription, Mishler (1991) demonstrates how a single interview emerges as two distinct interview transcripts, depending upon transcription protocol. Similarly, Steiner Kvale (1996) insists that “[t]ranscripts are not copies or representations of some original reality, they are interpretive constructions that are useful tools for given purposes” (p. 165). Kvale (1996) asserts that, in order to ensure transparency, the transcription process must be, first, executed consistently throughout the interview and, second, the details of transcription protocol must be outlined within the report. The transcription process for this project followed standard protocol for a smooth-verbatim transcription style. Transcription included repetitions, pauses, laughter, sighs, rhetorical questions, verbal hesitations, and all other verbal gestures. A temporal index of the transcript, annotated for time was produced to organize the transcript according to the emergence of themes throughout the interview. Occasionally, portions of the interview that were of little relevance to the research were condensed and summarized during transcription, one of the decisions that Kvale (1996, p. 170) suggests researchers make when considering the quantity of transcripts that will be produced throughout the project. Transcription software was not used throughout this process.
Data Analysis

The analytical approach that I used for this proposed project’s data analysis is thematic analysis. Braun, Clarke, and Weate (2016) describe thematic analysis as an accessible, flexible, and systematic qualitative analytic technique, appropriate for semi-structured interviews among other types of studies (p. 191). Braun et al. point out that thematic analysis’ flexibility is due to the fact that it is unbounded by a specific theoretical framework. My employment of thematic analysis draws primarily upon the work of Braun et al. (2016), Braun and Clarke (2006, 2013), and Clarke and Braun (2017).

Thematic Analysis is the best choice for this proposed study because of its accessibility and flexibility. Braun et al. (2016) point out that the systematic nature of thematic analysis makes it useful for beginner and intermediate researchers. Thematic analysis is also suitable for the sample size of my study (n=14) as well as for comparing across (Braun et al., 2016, p. 195).

Data analysis followed the six phases outlined by Braun et al. (2016): Task one: familiarization with the dataset, involved reading and rereading the entire dataset. This approach gave me an opportunity to familiarize myself with the data in order to prepare for analysis. As I read and reread the dataset I recorded analytic notes prompted by the following six questions, which I adapted from Braun et al. (2016 p. 196):

1. Why might the interviewee make sense of it this way and not another way?
2. Why could participants’ accounts be different from one another?
3. What assumptions may be underpinning the data?
4. What assumptions of mine may be underpinning my understanding of the data?
5. What worldviews inform this data?
6. What might the implications be for this data?

Task two involved systematic and thorough coding, through which a label, or code, was applied to each segment, or meaningful portion, of the text. Each code signified the content and relevance of each segment of the transcript. Initially, an inductively generated open-coding process was used, meaning codes and themes were extrapolated from the data; however, as
dominant themes emerged, deductive coding was also used. I coded the entire dataset twice to ensure the justifiability of codes as well as to further interpret latent codes in the transcripts (2016, p. 198).

Tasks three to five included: theme development, which involved transitioning from summarizing content in codes to “clustering” codes into themes and sub-themes reflecting the importance and implications of the data; refining themes, which involved rereading the dataset to ensure that themes and sub-themes were suitable for each segment of data; and naming and defining, in which the essence of each theme was defined to further an analytic focus on the dataset (Braun et al. 2016, p. 200). The sixth and final task involved writing my final thesis.

Recruitment, Procedures, and Methods

Following approval by the University of Toronto’s Research Ethics Board (REB) in June 2018, I began interviewee recruitment using a snowball sampling method (Noy, 2008) and a virtual snowball sampling method (Baltar & Brunet, 2012), initiated by my extensive set of contacts. Additionally, I posted a number of recruitment flyers in online and physical locations (see Appendix F for recruitment flyer and a list of locations where flyers were posted). Recruitment criteria that I established for interviewees required that they self-identify under the trans umbrella and be at least 18 years of age at the time of interview (July 2018). Interview recruits were invited to complete the Demographics Chart (see Appendix G) in which interviewees self-identified in the follow areas: gender presentation, race/ethnicity, pronouns, sexuality, class, ability/disability, body shape or size, and age. During interviewee selection, I selected fourteen interviewees from nearly 30 volunteers to ensure that those selected reflected the diversity of the trans community with regards to each of the categories listed above. Particular attention was paid to (in this order): gender presentation, race/ethnicity, ability/disability, and body shape or size.

After potential interviewees had indicated a preliminary interest in participating in the study, I sent them a follow-up email or phone call. During this communication, I outlined, in detail, the anonymity and on-going consent procedures, which were approved by the University of Toronto’s Research Ethics Board; this allowed interviewees a chance to identify any questions about the interview process prior to the interview. During this communication, I informed them
about their right to withdraw their consent at any time throughout the interview or to withdraw content generated from their interview until the data analysis phase commenced, in August 2018. This information was also reiterated and discussed at the beginning of each interview when I presented interviewees with the Informed Consent Form (see Appendix H), which outlined the research procedures and processes of anonymity, confidentiality, withdrawal, data security and retention. After outlining this information, I asked interviewees if they required any further clarification.

In-person interviews were held within the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). At interviewees’ requests, several interviews were conducted over a Skype video phone call due to interviewees’ preferences on account of commuting times and accessibility requirements. In-person interviews were conducted in private locations, such as my office at the University of Toronto Goldring centre, or in public locations, such as cafés and restaurants. Interview locations were selected by each interviewee depending upon their selection and preference for privacy and confidentiality. Interviews were audio-taped using the iPhone Voice Record Pro App.

Interviews lasted between 45 and 90 minutes, depending upon the interviewee’s schedule and/or the quality and flow of conversation which occurred during the interview. Each of the fourteen interviewees were compensated with a $15 Shoppers Drug Mart gift certificate. This compensation was given to the interviewee upon the completion of the interview. Interviewees were informed that, should they withdraw from the study at a later date, they would be permitted to keep their compensation. No interviewees withdrew from the study after. Interviewees were also allocated two Toronto Transit Commission tokens to compensate them for their travel expenses to and from the interview venue. Compensating interviewees was essential to ensuring that the interviewee sample reflected diversity of the trans community. Offering no compensation may have skewed the sample toward trans individuals with more time and/or income, however, offering a modest compensation helped to ensure that working class interviewees were also incentivized to participate.

At the beginning of each interview, I invited interviewees to select their own pseudonyms and I reminded them that during the transcription phase of the project, interviews would be anonymized and any other personal information (e.g. all other names of people and places) that
they mentioned would also receive a pseudonym of my selection. The remaining time was devoted towards the interview followed by a short debrief session. Topics within interviews included: how they self-identify with regards to gender, sexuality, racialization, class, disability/ability, and body shape/size, experiences in locker rooms and restrooms, strategies for navigating these spaces, and perceptions of various interventions being used to foster trans inclusion in these spaces (see Appendix I for complete interview schedule).

To maximize the incorporation of subjective memory and to better integrate field notes, I commenced interview transcription within two to three days of each interview (Kvale, 1996, p. 32). In order to engage more fully with the interview content, I carried out transcription myself (Thorpe, 2012, p. 61). Transcription took roughly three and a half hours for each hour of interview dialogue.

Data Retention and Security

Anonymity and confidentiality of interview content have been ensured through a number of protocols. Original data has been stored in a data-encrypted folder in a password protected computer on the University of Toronto’s secure server. Handwritten field notes are stored in a locked cabinet in my office in the SPaCE lab at the Goldring Centre. During transcription, all personal identifiers were removed and replaced with pseudonyms, these anonymized transcripts are stored in a password protected computer on the University of Toronto’s secure server. Any files with identifying information have been stored in a separate, encrypted folder on this computer. Original audio recordings were digitally erased once interviews were transcribed. Anonymized transcripts will be stored on a University of Toronto secure server and password protected computer for five years, according to federal data retention regulations.11

Chapter 4
“It all makes a nicely layered sandwich”: Examining the intersectionality of trans experiences in locker rooms and restrooms

An exploration into how trans interviewees experience and perceive binary-gendered facilities, such as the locker room and the public restroom, necessitates an acknowledgement of how these experiences are shaped not only by their transness, but also by multiple and intersecting aspects of their identities. Thus, employing an intersectional analysis throughout this project is of particular importance to my work. As discussed in the Methodological Overview, intersectional analysis is derived from the work of scholars and activists Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989), bell hooks (2000), Claudia Jones (see Lynn, 2014), and Audre Lorde (1984).

My intention in this chapter is not to complete a checklist of diversity and difference, but instead to engage in a meaningful exploration into the multiple and often overlapping ways in which gender is experienced both within and beyond the locker room and restroom. This chapter is not, by any means, intended to be exhaustive; admittedly, there is much that it leaves unaddressed, for example, age, history of sexual and/or physical trauma, language, location of birth, etc. What this chapter does explore, however, are the ways in which interviewees’ experiences in binary-gendered spaces were shaped not only by their gender, but also by their experiences of racialization/whiteness, Indigeneity, ability/disability, body size/shape, and socioeconomic status. My hope for this section, and thus my rationale for selecting it as the first chapter in the Discussion section, is to preemptively eliminate the false identification of a singular or unified trans subjecthood and/or experience within binary-gendered facilities. Although, in this study, I position trans genders as the epistemological starting point, this chapter hopefully demonstrates that transness must not been centred at the expense of addressing how racialized/Black, Indigenous, disabled, body-shape diverse, and socioeconomically marginalized trans individuals experience these spaces in multiple and intersecting ways.

In this chapter, I refer to interviewees’ self-identifications with regards to their gender, racialization, class, ability, and/or body shape and size. In doing so, I draw directly upon the

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12 The term transness is a widely used term which refers to the condition or experience of being trans.
words that interviewees used when completing the Demographics Chart (see Appendix G). Though I have distilled some of their self-identifications for brevity’s sake, their words remain their own. Rather than including all of the self-identifications that interviewees listed in the Demographics Chart, I have also chosen to include only those directly relevant to the quotation or topic in discussion.

**Racialization and Whiteness**

In this section, I outline an argument that explores how racialized anxieties surrounding the purity of whiteness are fundamental to gender scrutiny within binary-gendered spaces such as the locker room and public restroom. Drawing upon interviewee accounts, I demonstrate that, in the case of racialized and Black trans locker room users, racism and transphobia cannot be properly understood as discrete or separate forms of oppression. I illustrate the ways in which racism and transphobia intersect to make the locker room a particularly scrutinizing and dangerous site for racialized/Black trans individuals. Furthermore, I argue that white settler colonial constructions of masculinity and femininity lie at the heart of embodied standards and signifiers delineating access to binary-gendered facilities. Finally, I show that, within women’s facilities, dominant transphobic and anti-Black narratives intersect to represent the Black trans body as a threat to white femininity.

The stories and reflections shared by many of the research participants suggest that public locker rooms and restrooms are spaces where racialized trans bodies are scrutinized and policed not only with regards to the legibility of their gender, but also because of their distance from whiteness. Several of the research participants that I interviewed, who self-identified as racialized, reported being subjected to surveillance, harassment, and/or violence in the locker room, in ways that did not solely communicate transphobia, but transphobic racism. The stories and fears that the interviewees shared demonstrate that, for racialized trans people, what renders locker rooms and restrooms particularly dangerous is not merely transphobia, but the fact that transphobia is compounded and accelerated by racism and anti-Blackness.

Binary-gendered spaces have been, since their inception, accompanied by a moral panic surrounding both the division between binary genders as well as the supposed purity of
whiteness. David Serlin (2017), for instance, observes that the introduction of binary-gendered restrooms to North America in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries coincided with the arrival of immigrants from Eastern Europe and the Middle East. Serlin points out that civil engineers and social planners introduced binary-gendered facilities in an attempt to mitigate the racialized panic inspired by these arrivals. These facilities, were intended to serve the purpose of ameliorating immigrants’ supposed lack of morality and respectability. Over this period, hygiene was transformed from a state of cleanliness into a state-led-institution, one foundational to and founded upon settler constructions of empire, whiteness, Christianity, and middle-class respectability (see e.g. Boddy, 2005; Cavanagh, 2010; Fusco, 2003; McClintock, 1995; Valverde, 2008).

Sanitation and social reform have long been linked to the project of empire. As Fusco (2003) points out, one of the first sanitary reformers, Edwin Chadwick, held executive roles on both the British social reform commission, The Poor Law Commission, and the sanitation commission, The Health of Towns Commission (see also Binnie, 1981). Interestingly, Chadwick was a disciple of Jeremy Bentham, who created the late 18th century Panopticon, a tower built in the center of a prison yard, with one-way mirrors allowing unseen guards to surveil prisoners at all times. Foucault (1975) has argued that the structure of the Panopticon, by limiting the ability of prisoners to see whether or not prison guards are observing them, administers upon the prisoners an omnipresent and internalized sense of surveillance. Both the relationship between Bentham and Chadwick and the connection between sanitary reform and social reform strongly suggest that the restroom and locker room are linked to broader civilizing projects surrounding empire and nation-building. Interestingly, Chadwick authored the General Report of the Sanitary Conditions of the Labouring Classes in Great Britain (1843), which can arguably be regarded as the nascence of the early public washhouse, and later the locker room (Fusco, 2003, p. 93).

Perhaps it is no small coincidence then, that in North America the same facilities which required the division of bodies into the categories of “men” and “women” also delineated access privileges according to imposed racialized categories of “white” and “coloured.” Through their ability to architecturally and ideologically structure these divisions, binary-gendered facilities were established as central to the project of white settler colonialism. These facilities operated as locations where state-led systems of division and classification, according to both gender and
“race,” were materialized. These systems of division and classification were central to the hierarchization necessary to justify enslaved labour, exploitative labour, and the dispossession of Indigenous land (Wynter, 2003).

Largely missing from the existing literature is an exploration into how binary-gendered facilities are inherently rooted in white settler colonial practices of white supremacy (cf. Fusco, 2003), most notably anti-Indigeneity and anti-Blackness. The paucity of such texts reflects an assumption that, for trans people in binary-gendered spaces, a primacy ought to be placed upon combatting transphobia; a focus upon experiences of racism in these spaces is, thus, rendered secondary. This logic was reflected in an observation articulated by Max, who self-identified as “masculine gender queer” and “white.” Max asserted:

Gender, it’s the base thing that people see about people. It’s the first way that we categorize people. It’s the first way we categorize our babies when they come out into this world. It’s the first way that we sort people. We do sort people based on their skin colour, based on their body size… But first and foremost when we walk into a crowd we’re sorting people based on their gender presentation and what we perceive their genders to be.

While Max’s claim, that society’s compulsive practice of sorting bodies into binary genders is pervasive, warrants consideration, his words, nevertheless, illustrate a noxious idea at the heart of much of transgender theory: that transphobia and racism can be extricated, compared, and/or ranked. A critique of the assumption that gender and racialization can be examined as isolated experiences has been well theorized by scholars such as Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989), Audre Lorde (1984), and Claudia Jones (see Lynn, 2014). Nevertheless, a pervasive assumption operates within transgender theory: address transphobia first and racism later, if at all. In relation to a study of binary-gendered spaces, the work of Roderick Ferguson (2005) offers insight into the danger that can emerge from examining locker rooms and restrooms as sites where transphobia is studied first and racism is studied second. Ferguson warns that placing a primacy upon sexual/gender identity implicitly pushes experiences of racism to the periphery, serving to “articulate racial privilege and advance racial exclusion” (2005, p. 58). The interviewee experiences outlined in the remainder of this section disrupt the credibility of a transphobia-first
framework for studying binary-gendered facilities. Through telling their stories, the interviewees refuse the violence of a simplifying delineation and assert the importance of addressing transphobic racism as a unit, rather than as the sum of its parts.

Xavier, who self-identified as “trans man/masc.” and “Arab mix,” describes his own experiences of transphobic racism in the locker room:

…when someone finds out that I’m trans - and when someone understands that I’m Middle-Eastern – it’s almost as if it fuels itself. They fuel each other in the sense that it gives them ammo to build on and stack up and use against me… This person called me a terrorist fag, terrorist because I’m brown, fag because I’m gay-looking … When I was younger I used to get called the “N word” but they’d also just throw “Osama” [in]... It’s the Middle-Eastern version of the “N word.” And so that was just straight up racism and then as I became queer it was homophobia and then they’d... you know... instead of just calling me a dyke they’d tack on other words, you know… I used to almost hide the fact that I’m an Arab-mix because it made it easier because, like I used to wear the hijab, when I was younger, which was another thing in change rooms, which was changing with a hijab on... right, like it was - there was a lot. There was a lot.

Xavier’s description suggests the racist and Islamophobic as well as transphobic and homophobic slurs and threats that he grew accustomed to hearing in the locker room were experienced as interlocking forms of oppression. His account suggests that these quotidian expressions of transphobic racism helically “fuel[ed] each other.” Xavier points out that the racialized and gendered aspects of his embodiment provide “ammo” for one another. Through this spiral, abuses are “stack[ed] up” to make Xavier’s experiences in the locker room resemble what, later in the interview, he sarcastically referred to as a “nicely layered sandwich” (hence the title of this chapter). For Xavier, hiding his identity as an Arab-mix person, a possibility that he noted became less available to him after beginning hormone therapy, is a strategy that made his experiences in grade school locker rooms less traumatic, or “easier.” In this excerpt, Xavier mentions how, when he was younger, wearing a hijab in the locker room compounded his difficulty in this space by exacerbating the Islamophobia that he experienced from his peers. When Xavier summarized these experiences, repeating the words “there was a lot,” in the
interview, he looked suddenly deflated. He slumped lower in his chair and looked out of the window instead of continuing to eagerly make eye contact. The impact of transphobic and homophobic racism in the locker room remains traumatic for Xavier. He indicates that he would love to be able to access a gym, but until he can find one with a men’s locker room that feels safe, he cannot go; he is pessimistic that he could feel safe in any men’s locker room. Reflecting upon the complexity of Xavier’s experiences in the locker room, a space that racism and transphobia intersect to make uninhabitable for many racialized trans individuals, it is unlikely that trans-inclusion locker room strategies which extricate transphobia from racism will be effective at making these spaces feel safer or more inclusive for racialized trans people like Xavier. To apply an understanding of the complexity of Xavier’s experiences, future initiatives for advancing trans-inclusion in locker rooms and restrooms would benefit from adopting an anti-racist framework to address transphobic violence and oppression in these spaces.

Goku, who self-identified as “not a male, femme, trans” and “Black,” provides another account of the ways in which racism, anti-Black racism in her case, can be simultaneously present and obfuscated behind attempts at trans inclusion. Goku described an encounter that occurred in a restroom at a cinema that advertises itself as LGBTTQ2SA-inclusive. Immediately after Goku entered the women’s restroom, she was misperceived by another restroom user as a cisgender male and instructed to leave the space. Goku described how, coincidentally, the partner of the owner of the business entered the restroom at the same moment and immediately began advocating on behalf of Goku, affirming her entitlement to use the women’s restroom. Goku described initially feeling relief as the confrontation was de-escalated by the business owner’s partner. Her relief quickly turned to surprise then panic, however, when the business owner’s partner suddenly began asking Goku about her position on Black Lives Matter Toronto (BLM-TO) and the participation of police officers in the Toronto Pride Parade. Goku described the encounter as follows:

She was asking me - ‘cause she was white - so she was asking me my opinion on that as a Black person. [She said] “Oh hey, by the way I have a few friends that are okay with the police, you know. I don’t want to say anything about that - but what do you think about them [the police] not being at Pride?”… I was just like woahh! Where is this coming from? I don’t want to have this convo’… that wouldn’t have been brought up if I was
white, you know?... I had no idea where it was coming from. It was just very strange that they would ask for my emotional labour for that and expect that. Or no - feel as though they were entitled to it [my emotional labour]. The cognitive dissonance in that she was like “you don’t have to explain yourself, the washroom is yours, this is your space, no one should ask you questions” and then went on to, you know, just like “hey, cops what are they? Are they bad? Are they good?” Like that was the span and that’s what got me the most. It was in a matter of seconds.

Goku’s description of the “cognitive dissonance” that characterized this encounter for her speaks to her experience of the abrupt shift in their discussion. This shift, for Goku, suggested that a subtle yet unsettling assumption was implicit in these questions. The assumption implicit in the timing and content of the question was that while Goku’s transness was not open to interrogation, her Blackness was. The timing and content of the intervener’s question consolidated the displacement of Goku from this space for several reasons. Goku, now cast in the role of the grateful rescued victim, is made responsible for not only offering her emotional labour to speak on behalf of BLM-TO and educate the interlocutor about anti-Blackness, but to do this while managing her own anxiety precipitated by the earlier restroom encounter. Later in the interview, Goku made clear that the quality of her discomfort during these confrontations foreclosed a possibility of returning to this space again.

In *Queering Bathrooms*, Sheila Cavanagh (2010) suggests that the gender scrutiny which polices trans people within binary-gendered facilities is inextricable from racialized and middle-class anxieties about morality and respectability:

> The urgency with which one seeks to clarify the gender identity of another or to expunge gender-variant folk from the public lavatory entirely is beset by worries about disease and disorder that, in the present day, are overlaid by angst about a racialized and class-specific gender purity. (p. 7)

According to Cavanagh’s analysis, it is not surprising that, within this facility, Goku’s trans-interrogation abruptly transitioned into an interrogation of Blackness. The binary-gendered facility, Cavanagh’s work would suggest, becomes a site of transphobia as well as racism and anti-Black racism. In this site, racialized and Black trans people are frequently hailed for
disrupting a space built upon assumptions about whiteness and binary gender. Through her confrontations, Goku is hailed and questioned, first, to evince the legibility of her femininity, and second, to mediate anxiety about her Blackness. This act of hailing, as Frantz Fanon’s (1967) work illustrates, is not reserved only for bodies that evade standards for binary gender. In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon reflects upon being the object of constant surveillance and hailing. Fanon describes how, through this process of racialized interpellation, he is forced into an awareness of his own “historico-racial schema” (p. 84). Fanon remarks: “All I wanted was to be a man among other men” (p. 85); instead Fanon finds “that I was an object in the midst of other objects” (p. 82). Through being subjected to iterative hailing, Fanon finds he is separated from humanity, rendered as something less than human.

Studies suggest that racialized/Black trans individuals are subjected to more verbal harassment than white trans individuals are. A large study (n=10,500) on the experiences of American queer and trans students has demonstrated that racialized and Black trans youth are significantly more likely to be verbally assaulted than their white counterparts (Kosciw et al., 2016, p. 83). Since several studies in Canadian and American schools have shown that a vast majority of transphobic and homophobic bullying occurs in school locker rooms and restrooms (Kosciw et al., 2016; Taylor & Peter, 2011), interventions into this space are particularly needed to make schools safer for racialized and Black trans and queer students. All of the Black trans interviewees who I spoke with (Goku, Candy, and Jane), reported being interrogated for their gender or Blackness on nearly each and every visit to the public restroom/locker room; however, they never know whether they are being interpellated for their Blackness or gender.

Another interviewee, Jane, provided a description of the norms that she has observed within her trans community. She reflects on how, in her experience, masculinity and femininity are judged according to white ideals. Jane, who self-identified as “transfeminine, non-binary” and “mixed (Afro-Pacific Islander, German),” describes how Black or POC13 trans people are held to a higher standard of gender than white trans people are. Although her discussion does not specifically discuss the locker room or restroom, her account illustrates the scrutiny that racialized and Black trans people face in everyday spaces and is worth quoting at length:

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13 POC stands for *people of colour*. 
There are much higher expectations of gender presentation, I’ve noticed, for Black or mixed people of colour than there are for white people. It seems like a lot of people of colour have to kind of prove harder, even to other trans people, that they’re actually trans than the opposite [white trans people] … I feel like only recently, in general, trans people have become more comfortable with the option of not pursuing gender reaffirming surgery\textsuperscript{14} or hormone replacement therapy\textsuperscript{15} if they don’t want to, and I’ve noticed generally it’s a lot harder for people of colour to be comfortable expressing their identities in that specific way than it is for people who aren’t people of colour because of the fact that - if a Black person was to decide that they’re transmasculine, they’re expected to fit a specific role of hyper-masculinity and if they don’t fit that, then people are going to kind of immediately assume, “oh well, you’re not fitting this stereotypical image of Black masculinity, so obviously you can’t actually be that thing [transmasculine],” then they’re viewed as failing gender. It creeps up in incredibly subtle ways and it’s never like fully talked about within the communities.

Jane speculates that the “higher expectations” placed upon Black and POC trans people constrain them to embody genders that fit neatly within strict, medicalized gender norms. The propensity for Black/racialized trans people to be dismissed as “failing gender” affects their comfort to navigate many public spaces, including the locker room. Jane’s account consolidates sentiments expressed by several other interviewees, for example, Goku, who self-identified as “not a male, femme, trans” and “Black,” and Ash, who self-identified as “non-binary/fluid” and “Filipinx/mixed.” Goku and Ash also described struggling with internalized concerns of themselves being “not trans enough” and “not trans the right way.” Wonder, who self-identified as “2 Spirit” and “Mi’kmaq/Scottish/French” also indicated that they often felt that their expression of gender was invalidated within the trans community and described, as a result, feeling pushed to medicalize in order to become seen as “authentically” trans.

This requirement to “prove harder” that is placed upon Black and POC trans people does not only operate, it seems, to deter deviations from constructions of Black/racialized masculinity.

\textsuperscript{14} Gender reaffirming surgery refers to any of the surgical options that trans people may choose to undertake to feel less dysphoric in their bodies

\textsuperscript{15} Hormone replacement therapy refers to hormone therapy that trans people may choose to undertake to feel less dysphoric in their bodies.
and femininity, as Jane points out, but also to police Black and POC trans people for their distance from white ideals of binary gender. Jane reflects upon how she has navigated white standards of feminine beauty in expressing her own gender presentation.

Jane: My nose is pretty round and a lot of people would view that on a cisgender Black woman as a form of her being more masculine because her facial features aren’t small and dainty. So, if a woman happens to have full lips and a larger nose that’s viewed as less feminine, depending on racial context which can be a lot to deal with.

Ali: How does that impact you?

Jane: Generally, for a while I used to try to find ways to, for example, contour my nose so that it would appear smaller so that my face would generally appear softer and rounder so that I could be perceived as more feminine than usual without all that make up. And I realized even at that point that I’m not going to be able to stop people from thinking about these things if they already have these biases. And that I don’t necessarily have to conform to a standard of beauty that wasn’t made for people like me.

Jane’s remark that the pressure to conform to white standards of feminine beauty “can be a lot to deal with” signals how transphobic racism manifests itself not only through external scrutiny, as demonstrated in the experiences shared by Xavier and Goku, but also operates internally to challenge self-confidence and inspire anxiety. Jane described initially using strategies, such as contouring her nose, to attempt to meet white standards of femininity, but later rejecting those standards because they inherently excluded Jane on account of her Black transness; as Jane put it, they “[weren’t] made for people like me.”

In Geisha of a Different Kind: Race and Sexuality in Gaysian America, C. Winter Han (2015) discusses how gay Asian male identities are widely viewed as more feminine than gay white male identities. Han claims that gay masculinity necessitates whiteness in order to be viewed as authentic and thus accepted (see also Berube, 2001; Han, 2007; Teunis, 2007). Jane’s assertion above, that standards of feminine beauty were not intended to include racialized/Black women or transfeminine women, is supported by Han’s work, which expounds how masculinity and femininity are constructed according to assumptions about whiteness and racialization.
Ultimately, Jane’s recognition of how her Black transness dooms her to “fail[ ] gender” led to her a subsequent rejection of hegemonic white standards of femininity. Although rejecting these standards has been affirming for her it has also made locker rooms and restrooms less accessible spaces. Rejecting the white standards implicit within dominant constructions of femininity has encouraged and enabled Jane to embrace a gendered embodiment more authentic to herself, one not determined in relation to white standards of femininity. Jane described a feeling of relief which accompanied her decision to cease pursuing a “hyper-feminine” gender presentation in exchange for one that she refers to as “butch lesbian.” Jane also indicated, however, that without the makeup and “hyper-feminine” attire, she is more frequently confronted and/or harassed for using women’s facilities. Jane’s account draws attention to a perception of increased pressure placed upon Black/racialized trans individuals to fit into narrow categories of binary gender. Jane’s account also demonstrates the ways in which embodying authentic gender presentations may be considered, for Black and racialized trans people especially, as an expression of resistance against white supremacist and hegemonic cis-heteronormative ideals surrounding binary gender, one which may subject them to increased scrutiny and violence.

Omise’eko Natasha Tinsley and Matt Richardson (2014) illustrate intersections between racism and transphobia in their article “From Black Transgender Studies to Colin Dayan: Notes on Methodology.” In their text, they discuss the story of CeCe McDonald, a Black transwoman who, while visiting the grocery store with a group of friends in 2012, was assaulted by three patrons of a nearby bar after they began shouting racist and transphobic remarks at McDonald. Tinsley and Richardson describe the assault and its repercussions as follows:

As the conflict escalated, the attackers included Dean Schmitz; his ex-girlfriend, Molly Flaherty; and Jenny Thoreson, Schmitz’s current girlfriend. Flaherty threw a drink, then broke a beer glass in McDonald’s face, leaving her with lacerations to the left cheek deep enough to cut a saliva gland. Schmitz jumped in to join the assault, and McDonald, surrounded, grabbed a pair of scissors from her purse and stabbed him in the chest, puncturing the right ventricle of his heart. McDonald – who flagged police to the scene herself – was immediately arrested. She was shackled to her hospital bed while getting stitches in her cheek, then charged with two counts of second-degree murder. Despite her plea of self-defense and the credible threat she faced, McDonald was brought to trial and
eventually accepted a plea deal with a forty-one-month sentence. She remained in a Minnesota men’s correctional facility for two and a half years. (pp. 152-153)

Tinsley and Richardson’s observation of the ways in which transphobia and anti-Blackness are intractably linked with McDonald’s story offers a significant contribution to the scope of my project.

Tinsley and Richardson also write of the legal proceedings which led to McDonald’s conviction and incarceration:

In response to the questions posed by McDonald’s lawyer at trial, as well as in media reports of the incident, people recall two distinct kinds of insults lanced at CeCe and her companions that night: first, racist, and then, transphobic. Instead of separating these, though, we might hear them as irremediably intertwined, as forms of hate speech with a common historical genesis: the history buried in the graveyard up the street, that of a chattel slavery system that “turned humans into things, beasts, or mongrels.” (pp. 154–155; citing Dayan, 1995, p. 258)

Rejecting the separation between racism and transphobia, Tinsley and Richardson identify the “common historical genesis” of these forms of hate as one forgotten, or “buried in the graveyard up the street,” namely chattel slavery, white settler colonialism, and the ideological and economic systems which allocate humanity only to some persons. The genesis of racism and transphobia that Tinsley and Richardson identify (chattel slavery) makes the binary-gendered locker room and restroom, with their own suspect origins (purification of supposedly tainted whiteness, separation from Blackness, and division according to binary gender) a particularly inhospitable environment for Black and racialized trans people. While the public restroom was described as a place that was difficult to access by all of the interviewees, most of the racialized trans interviewees I spoke with reported avoiding the locker room entirely. “I avoid it like the plague,” Xavier reports. The last time Wonder tried to use a locker room they fled from it in fear of assault. Ash gave up pursuing a second black belt in taekwondo because of anxiety in this space. Candy avoids the locker room after having been repeatedly physically assaulted in this space. Whether or not these interviewees’ experiences, and the corresponding strategy for avoiding locker rooms, are informed by transphobia or racism is not only irrelevant but also
impossible to ascertain. Within binary-gendered facilities, and beyond, racism and transphobia violently conspire to exclude racialized trans people.

Most of the research participants that I interviewed, who use women’s facilities, regardless of racialization, identified that they perceived that their presence inspired fear in women that they encountered. The quotation that follows from Lutza, who self-identified as a “masculine gnc [gender non-conforming16]” woman and “white,” reflects on how, within in the locker room and restroom whiteness can help to mitigate the threat of illegible gender:

… because I’m white I’m way less scary than I could be. Like, let’s say I was a 5-foot 9, super muscular, had top surgery, Black woman. I would scare people all the time, like way more than I do because of the racialized aspect of all this stuff. This [whiteness] helps me because I can still [pause] be just a little bit scary and not a lot scary when I go into these spaces.

Lutza’s speculation that her whiteness helps her to be perceived as less threatening or predatorial in women’s facilities contextualizes an observation made by Goku. When I asked Goku why she does not feel able to use the women’s locker room, she responded: “I feel as though I’m big and Black [and] that definitely scares people.” Goku’s observation and Lutza’s speculation point to how Blackness becomes a trigger which amplifies gender scrutiny upon Black trans people, particularly those using women’s facilities. The particular panic that accompanies the presence of Black trans individuals in the women’s locker room is, no doubt, informed by the coupling of, first, a centuries old narrative that Black masculinity is intrinsically predatorial to white femininity (see Carrington, 2001; Ferber, 2007; Richardson, 2010), and second, a narrative which dismisses the transwoman as a masquerading male. In a chapter entitled “Perfect Property: Enslaved Black Women in the Caribbean,” historian Hilary Beckles (2003) suggests that the dominant discourse surrounding the Black male as a virile and sexually aggressive force toward white women dates back to the law of *partus sequitur ventrem*, which held that enslavement and freedom were hereditary conditions. This law means literally, “offspring follows belly” (Cowling, 2013, as cited in Morgan, 2018, p. 4). According to this law, which provided a stark

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16 *Gender non-conforming* is a term that individuals may use to self-identify. It usually refers to a person whose appearance does not conform to dominant expectations about appropriate femininity or masculinity.
contrast to the European tradition of patrilineal descent, all children born to white women would inherit freedom and all children born to enslaved Black women would inherit enslavement. This legality allowed white men to claim as property all children born of enslaved mothers, including children who were born as the result of the rape of their mothers who were slaves by white men. This law, however, posed a particular puzzle for slave-owning society. Following its logic, if a white woman was to give birth to a child because of sex with a Black man, this child would then inherit her freedom and thus challenge the viability of the institution of slavery. As a result, exceptionally strong moral, religious, and social sanctions were put in place to prohibit relationships between Black men and white women. Partus created an imperative not only to police white women’s bodies and sexualities and administer violence upon enslaved Black men, but also to reconstruct Black masculine sexuality as a dangerous and predatory threat to both white women’s sexuality and the institution of chattel slavery.

The second trope which contributes to panic about Black transwomen accessing binary-gendered spaces arguably comes from a dominant discourse which represents transfeminine individuals as men masquerading as women to gain sexual access to (white) cisgender women in the locker room. This discourse is reflected throughout popular culture. These tropes in popular culture, which position the male gaze as intent upon gaining access to the women’s locker room through any means possible, including using peepholes or impersonating femininity, contribute to widespread fears about the presence of transwomen in women’s locker rooms.

In Space Invaders, Nirmal Puwar (2004) explores how the presence of Black and South Asian people in senior political positions are responded to in the British House of Commons. Although Puwar's text looks specifically at how race and gender operate in the upper echelons of political power, her work may also be useful for examining the disruptions incurred when racialized/Black trans bodies enter binary-gendered locker rooms and restrooms. Puwar (2004) describes how: “‘Known’ through a limited set of framings, these bodies jar and destabilize an exclusive sense of place. As the ‘unknown’, who defy conventions and boundaries, they represent the potentially monstrous, whose somatic arrival invades the social and psychic” (p. 11). Puwar continues, “As the incongruous, they invade the normative location of bodies in space. They bring with them indefinite possibilities. They threaten the status quo. Whether they threaten it or not, that is what is feared” (p. 51). Puwar’s description speaks to how Black and
racialized trans bodies not only challenge what Puwar calls the “somatic norm” of spaces, but also how their presence in this space is simultaneously threatening to the status quo and ushering in “indefinite possibilities.” Although the public restroom also remains an exceptionally tenuous site, many of the Black/racialized interviewees’ words reflect how their opportunities to use the locker room, and thus access physical activity, are foreclosed due to the projections made upon them because of their Blackness and racialized-otherness as well as their transness.

The interviewee reflections included above, as well as other reflections shared by Ash, Valerie, Candy, and Wonder, suggest that even a rudimentary understanding of the transphobia that racialized and Black trans individuals experience in locker rooms and public restrooms, cannot be approached without an exploration of how, in these sites, gender scrutiny is, as Cavanaugh (2010, p. 7) puts it, “overlaid by angst about a racialized and class-specific gender purity.” As an application of this understanding, the intractable relationship between racism and transphobia, strategies seeking to foster the inclusion of trans individuals in restrooms and locker rooms must address the intersecting barriers that preclude racialized and Black trans individuals from accessing these spaces. not only transphobia and assumptions about binary gender, but also how racism and anti-Blackness, in overt and subtle forms, both operate to reduce the accessibility and safety of the locker room for these individuals.

**Indigeneity**

Explorations into binary-gendered facilities which do not address how anti-Indigeneity operates in these spaces can never adequately address the ways in which hegemonic assumptions about binary gender are rooted and reflective of the ongoing legacy of settler colonialism. As Scott L. Morgensen (2011) has pointed out, much of transgender and queer theory does not acknowledge the ways in which transphobic and homophobic oppression are fruit borne of the tree of white settler colonialism. This evasion, as Morgensen puts it, operates to simultaneously annul an acknowledgement of settler complicity as well as to justify and perpetuate the continued dispossession of Indigenous land for the profit of settler colonialism. When I sat down with two of the interviewees, Cheri and Wonder, who both self-identified on the demographic recruitment form as Indigenous, I sought to find out how embodying an intersecting identity as trans and Indigenous shaped their ability to access binary-gendered spaces.
One of the interviewee’s accounts illustrated how anti-Indigeneity is implicit within dominant constructions of feminine beauty. Cheri, who self-identifies as “female” and “perceived as white, partially Indigenous,” discussed Indigeneity very little throughout the interview. Indigeneity came into the frame on only one occasion throughout our interview, when she expressed relief at phenotypically avoiding her father’s “dark hair, dark complexion, and eyes” as well as her grandmother’s “Indigenous nose, that sort of hawk nose.” When I asked Cheri what it would be like for her if she had inherited those traits, she replied simply: “I’d be ugly. I’d be an ugly woman [chuckles].” Cheri’s relief at inheriting a white-passing phenotype, perhaps, does more than express how an anti-Indigenous aesthetic may inform Cheri’s internal understanding of gender and beauty. Cheri’s relief may also suggest a belief that the pass-ability of her gender presentation is contingent upon her proximity to whiteness. Cheri spoke at length about the bone structure of her facial features, pointing out that her “husband constantly comments that I have a perfect nose” because it is small. Cheri was not the only interviewee to discuss how a white-passing nose is a central fixture to legible feminine gender presentation. Jane’s account, cited in the preceding section also explored the nose as a site of racism. The reflections shared by Cheri and Jane suggest that, for these interviewees, the fact that dominant standards of femininity may be built upon a foundation of whiteness does more than simply govern which features and bodies are identified as beautiful and which are not, it also governs which feminine bodies are scrutinized and which are not upon entering women’s binary-gendered facilities.

Wonder, who self-identified as “Two-Spirit” and “Mi’kmaq/Scottish/French,” pointed out the role that white settler colonialism has played in constraining their own imagination of possibilities for gender identity. They also mention how learning about the legacy of settler colonialism has shaped their own feeling of freedom to identify beyond that binary, and to ultimately identify as 2-Spirit:

… as soon as I started to learn about Two-Spirit roles I learned about the histories of colonization more in-depth and elders’ experiences as Two-Spirit people with colonization. Knowing that when colonizers came over, Two-Spirit people were actually highly regarded in communities… And during the process of colonization those people were deemed savage and not only were they targeted by colonizers, but the colonizers set
out communities against Two-Spirit people… So now, when I think of gender constructs and how most of those are actually brought on by colonization, and this idea of “man” and “woman,” and what the roles of those people should be mixed with the importance of Two-Spirit people. That [the Two-spirit gender] has actually been around pre-colonization and the affirmation that not only is it real and valid, but we’ve been around these lands since before these systems were here.

Wonder’s reflection not only asserts that the origin of transphobia is within Western, settler colonial ideologies, but also refers to how cultivating transphobia among First Nations was actively employed as a strategy not only for instilling Christian values that demonized Two-Spirit individuals as sinful, but also for dispossessing Indigenous lands. The very existence of Two-Spirit people was a threat to the gendered and white supremacist European settler colonial project, thus attempting to decimate this population was an objective integral to the production of empire (Morgensen, 2012). Wonder’s mention of the connection between Two-Spirit identity and land is particularly important for this reason. Not only does this connection implicitly disrupt settler origin-stories of land as terra nullius prior to colonization, but it also counters contemporary constructions which posit the acceptance and existence of queerness and transness as symbols of Western progress. What I find particularly interesting about this part of Wonder’s reflection is that through situating themself and their own gender identity within the geographic and temporal incipience of the legacy of transphobia, they identify the ways in which settler colonialism and transphobia are intractable not only historically and spatially, but also personally.

In “Unsettling Queer Politics” Morgensen (2011) cautions that, although many white queer and trans individuals express an interest in learning about how diverse genders have been practiced and accepted across Indigenous cultures,17 few of these individuals are invested in disrupting settler colonialism. Morgensen argues that, despite an apparent interest in drawing upon Two-Spirit symbols of gender, “[n]on-Native GLBT and queer people evade Two-Spirit critiques when they sustain mistaken premises about Indigenous culture and colonial history, and fail to investigate their inheritance of a settler colonial society” (2011, p. 132). This evasion that

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17 See Towle & Morgan, 2002 for a critique of this interest as fetishism.
Morgensen refers to is demonstrated in the appropriative practice of utilizing Two-Spirit symbols and identities as a method for enhancing (white) queer/trans culture, while remaining complicit with white settler colonial anti-Indigenous violence.

This practice of appropriation is not merely conceptual, as Wonder’s reflection illustrates. It functions to alienate Two-Spirit and trans Indigenous people. Wonder points out that their ability to access their own Two-Spirit identity was challenged by a “direct invalidation of my identity from the [white queer/trans] community before I could even access that myself.” This direct invalidation, Wonder described, came from white trans people who argued that Wonder could not identify as Two-Spirit unless they were “fully” Indigenous. Wonder described their initial reluctance to identify as Two-Spirit and how they overcame that reluctance through learning about and ultimately challenging white settler constructions of “blood quantum”:

When I started to hear about Two-Spirit, I heard about it in a way that if you weren’t fully Indigenous, that representing that [identity] was appropriating that. Until I gained relationships with Two-Spirit elders and learned the direct opposite – because Two-Spirit roles are only determinant [sic] on gender and sexuality based on the constructs that society puts on your gender… And it really, at the end of the day, doesn’t have anything to do with what your blood quantum is … but what role you play in your community.

Wonder’s rejection of evaluating the authenticity of Two-Spirit identities according to a settler colonial construction, blood quantum, signalled a fundamental shift for them in understanding their own gender identity. Instead Wonder placed an emphasis upon Two-Spirit peoples’ roles within the community. Echoing Wonder’s rejection of blood quantum for the currency of community, Standing Rock Sioux scholar, Vine Deloria Jr. (as cited in Brant, 1994, p. 89) once wrote: “Blood quantums [sic] are not important; what really matters is who your grandparents were.” Through a similar emphasis placed upon community over blood quantum, Wonder illustrates the historical, spatial, and ongoing challenge that Two-Spirit identities pose to the settler nation-state, a project that actively seeks to divide communities in order to dispossess First Nations’ nations and communities. One of the tenets central to the project of settler colonialism, Sandy Grande (2015) argues, is that of dividing Indigenous nations from the level of the community to the level of the individual. The violence that (Eurocentric) individualism is
intended to wreak upon Indigenous communities is resisted then, by the very identity of Two-Spirit people, whom Wonder describes as identified primarily by their role within the community.

Adopting what Morgensen (2011) calls a “Two-Spirit critique,” then, must do more than simply disrupt binary-gendered design. It must challenge the validity of the very settler colonial institutions which underlie this division. Decolonization, as Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang (2012) have asserted, is not a metaphoric project for making binary-gendered spaces more inclusive. Decolonization is a singular process which prioritizes the repatriation of dispossessed Indigenous land and sovereignty. Through this lens, the spaces of the locker room and public restroom may be limited in their capacity to bring about a meaningful challenge to white settler colonialism. But regardless, because these spaces remain sites of exclusion and/or violence for Indigenous trans individuals like Wonder, interventions are needed to make this space safer and more inclusive.

(Dis)ability

To address the full complexity of interviewees’ experiences in locker rooms and binary-gendered spaces, it is also necessary to examine how disability comes into the frame alongside gender. As discussed in the Methodological Overview section, adopting a critical disability studies framework to examine interview data is essential for examining how disabled trans individuals may experience not only architectural barriers to using the locker room and public restroom, but also attitudinal ones. This section begins with a brief description of how I apply a critical disability studies framework to an exploration of trans experiences in binary-gendered spaces. I must note that the bulk of the findings exploring intersections between gender and disability focused upon the public restroom rather than the locker room; as a result, this section focuses almost entirely upon the latter space. The absence of reflections on the locker room and the volume of reflections on the restroom may demonstrate the difficulty that the disabled interviewees have accessing the locker room. To explore this spatial tension within and across interviews, I will engage a discussion of how, for disabled trans individuals, access needs may be caught between and complicated by both gender and disability. To close this section, I will briefly address how the scarcity of restroom spaces that are physically (disabled) accessible
and/or gender-neutral often operates to position the access needs of disabled and trans individuals in conflict with one another.

What does it mean to talk about disability within the context of binary-gendered spaces? And what exactly is disability? Disability, as Tanya Titchkosky and Rod Michalko (2009) assert, is a concept that cannot be adequately or ethically measured, defined, or discussed without an assessment of normalcy; one must examine how normalcy is shaped by its distance from disability. Because the disabled individual exists outside of an imaginary which, arguably, expounds independence, rationality, and physical ability as humanity’s highest virtues, disability is surrounded by narratives of dependency, pity, and sympathy. An imperative for “overcoming” or “fixing” disability infuses fields ranging from medicine to education.

The dominant ideology for understanding disability, outlined in the preceding paragraph, follows what critical disability scholars call the medical/individual model. The assumption underlying this model is that individuals are disabled by their impairment. The social model, on the other hand, holds that it is not impairment, but rather systemic architectural and attitudinal barriers that prevent disabled individuals’ full participation in society (Oliver, 1990). The medical/individual model, which uses the term people with disabilities as a politically correct way of describing disabled individuals, is widely rejected by critical disability scholars who prefer instead the social model’s term, disabled people (Tanya Titchkosky, 2011, p. 151). Throughout this section and the sections to follow, wherever possible I employ the term that the interviewees have self-identified with, otherwise I use the term disabled people following the social model of disability.

With regards to disability, the research participants interviewed in this study reflected considerable diversity; only four of the 14 interviewees did not self-identify with any disability. Valerie self-identified as “bipolar, autistic, physically [disabled],” Mackenzie identified as: “disabled wheelchair user,” Max wrote: “trauma,” Jane: “chronic pain, mental illness,” and Wonder: “chronically ill, disabled, neurodivergent, mentally ill (PTSD [post-traumatic stress disorder] & MDD [major depressive disorder], agoraphobia, generalized anxiety disorder, eating disorder).” It would be impossible for me to address the full complexity of how interviewees’ experiences with disability impacted their experiences in locker rooms and restrooms;
nevertheless, I draw upon several interviewees’ reflections to explore how engaging an understanding of trans experiences in these spaces is incomplete without addressing disability.

Mackenzie uses male pronouns and self-identified as “masc,” as well as “wheel chair user.” Mackenzie is a lifetime athlete. He started playing sports on a co-ed disabled team at age ten and after playing competitive basketball for nearly two decades, he quit last year. Mackenzie still coaches a youth co-ed disabled basketball team affiliated with the same organization. Mackenzie came out as trans to his sporting organization when he was 23 years old. After coming out, he heard of some complaints being made about him to the board of directors, but overall the response of individuals within the organization was affirming. Mackenzie mentions receiving some very positive support from several parents and athletes in the league.

Because the disabled teams that Mackenzie played on were co-ed, the locker rooms he used were not binary-gendered. Mackenzie pointed out that, in these locker rooms, he and the other athletes would change clothes but never completely undress. Interestingly, out of the 14 interviewees I spoke with, Mackenzie was the only one to report that he had little trouble accessing the locker room. Restroom access, however, has been more of a challenge for Mackenzie, but not only because he is transgender. As Mackenzie suggested, the culture of male restrooms is exceptionally “goal-oriented” therefore there is usually very little verbal interaction or eye-contact, hence he has little trouble passing as male. Architectural barriers and dominant attitudes regarding disability do, however, make public restrooms difficult to access for Mackenzie. Many facilities, he reports, only have a single stall available for wheelchair users and if it is occupied or out of service, which Mackenzie points out is often the case, he will be forced to wait or to look for another restroom to use. Although many regions within western nation-states include building codes which mandate these spaces be accessible for disabled users, the de facto lack of accessible restrooms remains widespread (Fritsch, 2013; Tanya Titchkosky, 2011).

Attitudinal barriers toward Mackenzie’s disability can also make accessing public restrooms, as well as public spaces, difficult for him. Mackenzie reflects on how perceptions of him as disabled and trans intersect to impact assumptions about his presence in the restroom:

…I don’t know if [it’s] because I’m in a wheelchair. I feel like because I’m in a wheelchair, when I have received discrimination it’s less of an attack and more of a pity
thing… I’m also talking about disability by itself – I’m also seen as somebody who doesn’t understand what’s going on, that I might have an intellectual disability, so I’m surprised that I haven’t experienced somebody being like “oh poor honey, you’re in the wrong washroom.” If I were to imagine what that would look like I feel like it would not [be] “what the fuck are you doing?” but “ohhhh, you got lost.” But I haven’t [experienced this].

While Mackenzie makes a point of mentioning that although this pity-laced confrontation has not occurred in a restroom, encounters in other public spaces have often followed this pattern. I speculate, however, that if Mackenzie, as a masculine-presenting person, was in the practice of using the women’s restroom, a space where admission is policed with a very different urgency, these encounters would be much more likely to occur. Mackenzie points out that in “talking about disability by itself” his disability and its visibility are regularly perceived by strangers as signals that he “doesn’t understand what’s going on” and renders him an object of infantalizing concern, rather than as a potential sexual predator. This perception of Mackenzie’s disability, which illustrates implicit ableist assumptions about his physical and mental capacities, impacts his ability to participate in public spaces.

Santiago Solis (2006) investigates the restroom as a site that spatially enacts hetero-corpo-normativity. This space necessitates not only cisgender heteronormativity, but also corporo-normativity, able-bodied privilege for accessing it. Through alienating disabled bodies from it, this space, Solis argues, operates to strengthen assumptions about the normalcy of able-bodied privilege. In a chapter entitled “Calling all Restroom Revolutionaries” Chess et al. (2004) explore coalition-building possibilities between those who do not have access to able-bodied or cisgender “pee privilege.” Solidarity between queer, trans, and Crip\(^{18}\) individuals, Chess et al. suggest, engenders possibilities for direct action initiatives intended to dismantle the hetero-corpo-normativity of this space. The public restroom, as both Chess et al.’s (2004) and David Serlin’s (2017) texts point out, has been a site of disability activism since the mid-1970s. Furthermore, many of the direct action tactics, such as occupying public restrooms, used by contemporary queer and trans rights activists to disrupt cisgender heteronormativity borrow

\(^{18}\) Crip theory reclaims the term *Crip* to resist ‘able-bodied heteronormativity’ (McRuer, 2006).
directly from the strategies previously used by disability activists (Serlin, 2017, p. 224). The legacy of Black civil rights activism should also be credited for these direct action methods.

One issue that came up in several interviewees’ reflections – Goku’s, Jane’s, and Ash’s – is a concern that their need to access gender-neutral restrooms, which often double as “disabled” restrooms, reduces the availability of these spaces for disabled people. Jane summarized her shared concern as follows:

…even though I do identify with disability stuff, with chronic pain and stuff - I feel that if I walk into a single-stall washroom and it’s marked just for people with disabilities, that someone who has much more of a disability than I do, might then be locked out or be inconvenienced, and I’d prefer that not to happen if possible.

This concern toward disabled individuals being “locked out or [] inconvenienced” was validated by several disabled interviewees who are inconvenienced by repeated delays due to the scarcity of disabled restrooms. Valerie, Wonder, and Mackenzie all identified difficulty accessing disabled restrooms because they are frequently occupied by individuals they perceive to be non-disabled. Although certainly the scarcity of restrooms designated as gender-neutral and/or disabled makes accessing these spaces difficult for both disabled and trans individuals, the larger problem appears to be that the scarcity of these spaces pits the access needs of two marginalized groups in competition with one another.

### Body size and shape

In interviewees’ descriptions of their experiences in and perceptions of binary-gendered spaces, body size and shape also came to the fore. In contrast with the previous section, where the restroom was more frequently discussed, on this theme I observed that the locker room became more prominent. The data suggest that the locker room, where nudity is expected, makes accessing this space particularly difficult for trans individuals who do not conform to Western ideals of body size and shape.\(^\text{19}\)

\(^{19}\) I am a little reluctant here to follow critical fat studies’ practice of using the word *fat* to denote this relationship to body size/shape (see Wann, 2009). Although several interviewees (Padraig and Max) self-identified with the term
In this section I will explore how, for several of the interviewees, body shame operated alongside transness to deter them from using locker rooms or participating in physical activity. I will discuss how, in several of the interviewees’ accounts, body shame and transness were indelibly entangled. I will explore how this entanglement between transphobia and, what I posit to be, internalized fatphobia often renders the locker room a particularly volatile space. Finally, prompted by the reflections of one interviewee, Lutza, I will investigate how embodying an athletic body may buffer trans discomfort in the locker room.

Padraig, who self-identifies as “trans masculine” and “very fat” had this to say when I asked them what it was like to be in a locker room:

… something that you [the interviewer, Ali] can see, but the [audio] tape cannot, [is] I’m fat and I was when I was a kid too… Change rooms were a struuuuuggglleeee [elongates the word for emphasis] when I was a kid, oh God [laughter]. Oh God. And like – I hated gym class but I think the thing is – change rooms were so stressful when I was a kid... the performance of girls being girls in the change room was sort of baffling to me… I just remember being like, deeply embarrassed, deeply ashamed, and deeply afraid at all times in a change room… people would make fun of my body. People would look at my body…. So having experiences of my own body, naked, is not fun anyway and really impossible when other people are there.

Padraig’s account suggests that their negative experiences in gym class are best understood in relation to the trauma that they experienced in the locker room. Although Padraig does not explicitly outline a causal relationship between the two, the structure of their reflection (“I hated gym class but I think the thing is – change rooms were so stressful when I was a kid...”) suggests an intractable relationship. Theoretical support for the intractability of the relationship between gym class and the locker room can be found in the work of Fusco et al. (2015), who identify the locker room as a “gateway” to physical activity, as well as the work of Heather Sykes (2011) and Heather Sykes and Deborah McPhail (2011), who assert that experiences in gym class cannot be conceptualized outside of the locker room encounters which precede them.

\textit{fat}, I am, admittedly, trying to side-step using this term as well as to using terms like \textit{body diverse} which may also engender a critique. Instead, I aim to use the terms with which interviewees self-identified.
As Padraig’s reflection suggests, gender and body shaming entwined to mark the traumatic tone with which Padraig described their experiences in this space. Padraig’s queerness and transness, which positioned them at a “baffling” distance from “the performance of girls being girls,” as well as the scrutiny directed toward their body shape and body size combined to make the locker room an unbearable space for Padraig. They described feeling “deeply embarrassed, deeply ashamed, and deeply afraid at all times.” Padraig’s experience suggests that, within an exploration of locker rooms, simultaneously addressing transphobia and fatphobia is fundamental to understanding the complexity of trans experiences in this space.

Later in the interview, Padraig also spoke about their experience in a locker room at a women-only gym they attended in their twenties. In this locker room, Padraig observed bodies of different sizes, shapes, ages, and abilities. Padraig described a watershed moment within this locker room; they observed an elderly woman with a half-mastectomy walking naked confidently through the space. As a result of this woman’s apparent pride in her own body, Padraig described feeling more entitled to inhabit the space. Interestingly, Padraig also remarked that around this time they experienced a dramatic shift in their relationship to physical activity. This experience once again reflects a correlation between Padraig’s experiences in the locker room and perceptions of physical activity, and on this occasion the correlation is a positive one.

But in the middle of that what was interesting is that my relationship with activity and exercise… because I had never had a time where I had moved my body for pleasure and … I think I had always assumed that exercise was always this kind of thing that people did to themselves. Because they were sort of bad. You know? It was only punishment. And all of a sudden, I was like: Oh no, people move because they’re joyful animals! That’s why… It can be a real delight to like run not walk. It can be a real delight to walk not sit, you know? That was the first time that I ever learned that.

Here, Padraig’s experience appears to affirm Fusco et al.’s (2015) assertion that the locker room acts as a “gateway” space to physical activity. Padraig’s experiences in locker rooms may point to the importance that this space holds for making sport and physical activity not only accessible but also enjoyable. Padraig’s reflections also point to the importance of engaging an intersectional focus and suggest that making locker rooms safer and more inclusive for
racialized, “fat,” and disabled people may also have a function in making this space more trans-inclusive.

Xavier, who self-identified with gender as: “trans man/mase” and for body shape/size: as “average/slight tone” spoke about how his body image shifted as he transitioned from female to male. Prior to this excerpt of the interview, Xavier had spoken briefly about his experience struggling with bulimia and anorexia prior to transitioning.

…. before I used to look at myself and I’d see someone severely overweight looking back at me. I was 95 pounds at 5 [foot] 8, that’s not normal, that’s not healthy [laughter]. Now, I’ll look into the mirror and, like, I’ll see my chub – that’s what I like to call it – but it’s not – it doesn’t give me the same effect. I think I’m something like [one] hundred and eighty pounds, but it’s different now because with testosterone in my body a lot of my muscle has gotten bigger and heavier and a lot of my fat has redistributed to different places and just gone away altogether. So, I have a more toned look, even though I weigh more than I did six months ago… I’m more comfortable – I’m more comfortable with whatever numbers are on the scale versus before. So that’s just – a very odd, odd shift… it’s weird because society perceives me a different way now, that it’s almost acceptable for me to be okay with myself, in terms of body weight.

The shift in Xavier’s attitude toward his body shape and size that accompanied his transition bears further analysis. Over Xavier’s gender-reaffirming journey, body fat has shifted from something that he “ha[d] violent dreams of correcting” to something that he now affectionately refers to as his “chub.” This dramatic shift, Xavier’s account suggests, cannot be understood outside of the context of his relationship to masculinity as well as society’s expectations for feminine and masculine bodies.

In a chapter entitled “Fatness: Unbearable Lessons,” Sykes and MacPhail (2011) apply Sarah Ahmed’s (2004) analysis in Differences That Matter: Feminist Theory and Postmodernism to discuss how understandings of “fatness” are not only shaped by body size and shape, but also according to gendered, racialized, and classed identities. In their analysis, Sykes and MacPhail point out that the standards for fatness are markedly different for masculine and feminine individuals. They note that “fat women are positioned as too much ‘woman’” in corporeal
“excess,” while “‘men’ can have fat without being fat – yet when men are perceived to be fat, they risk being emasculated” (2011, p. 64). Xavier’s reflection, now that he presents and passes as male (“it’s almost acceptable for me to be okay with myself”) suggests how the body shame that Xavier observed was internalized from society and is reserved only for feminine bodies.

For Valerie, body size and transness are mutually constitutive in her expression of body shame. When I asked her why she did not feel comfortable using the locker room, she responded that, before entering this space, she had to: “work to a point where [pause] you’re not confusing looking.” When I pressed her further she expressed a concern that “I’m overweight. [Sigh]. I don’t want to expose my body until it’s finished evolving.” For Valerie the legibility of her gender and its ability to meet Western ideals for body size and shape appear to go hand-in-hand. Her concern that her body is “confusing looking” appears intractable from her self-identification as “overweight.” This process of corporeal evolution which Valerie insists must precede her use of the locker room, appears to be one where gender and fatness and body shape go hand-in-hand. Similar intersections between legibility of gender and body size also appeared in both Cheri’s and Melissa’s accounts.

For Lutza on the other hand, not only is developing and maintaining a muscular physique essential for ensuring that she embodies the gender that she wants to, but she also points out that having an athletic body makes it easier for her to access the locker room. Lutza describes a matrix of factors influencing her decision on whether or not to use the locker room, including gender, whiteness, and athleticism. She points out that while “feeling like [I] don’t belong in the space ‘cause [I] don’t conform to gender might be enough to make me not go,” her athleticism and whiteness “… balance it out and do make it easier to deal with the little bit of the anxiety and the confrontations that I do have.” Here Lutza’s assessment suggests that though her internal sense of entitlement to use the space is diminished by strangers’ reactions to the illegibility of her gender, her comfort in this space is bolstered by both her whiteness and her athletic body. My own experiences in locker rooms align with Lutza’s; although I am repeatedly confronted in this space because of my gender presentation, I retain a claim to it because of my athleticism as well as my whiteness.
In this section, I have attempted to argue not only that developing an understanding of trans experiences in locker rooms necessitates an acknowledgement of the ways in which transphobia and fatphobia intersect to deter trans individuals from accessing this space, but also to emphasize that without prioritizing intersectional interventions into this space, it is likely that interventions will only make this space safer and more inclusive for trans people who embody Western ideals for body size and shape.

**Socioeconomic Class**

I also identified socioeconomic class as a significant sub-theme within interviewees’ reflections on experiences in binary-gendered spaces. This section briefly explores how class and gender interacted to impact interviewees’ experiences in the locker room and public restroom. This section outlines how, for Cheri, having ample disposable income is essential for making the purchases necessary to pass. On the other hand, Goku’s resistance to “having capitalism dictate my transness” calls attention to Cheri’s class-based assumptions about access and “making the effort” to pass. For Ash, who works in the sex trade, economic insecurity has pushed them to “regender[] [my]self coercively” in order to establish and maintain a stable client base as a sex worker. Wonder found that experiencing widespread transphobia while simultaneously enduring housing instability significantly threatened their mental health. As a young person, Padraig experienced the locker room as a site where not only their gender and body were scrutinized, but also their socioeconomic class, vis-à-vis their clothing. This section does not intend to provide a comprehensive overview of how classism or the pressures of living in a capitalist society interact with gender for the interviewees, but it does aim to engage an exploration into how interviewees’ experiences of these forces were interlocking and intractable.

Cheri self-identified her gender as “female” and her economic class as “raised top-end of middle-class suburbia, currently disabled, live well above the mean thanks to extremely upper-middle-class family.” Cheri described the issue of passing as one contingent upon transwomen’s willingness to “make the effort.” Clearly, however, within this supposed “effort” are some deeply embedded expectations surrounding class and gender.
Some people will never pass. And I know one girl who had full surgery however, she doesn’t undertake the [clears throat] mmm... options of making herself more passable… because I know that if she made the effort to do proper make up, to do something with her hair, and learn to re-pitch her voice etc., she could [pass] – but then there are those people who say “I am what I am and I don’t care what the world thinks,” but in reality we do care what the world thinks… I’m blunt… [I say] make the effort with the full presentation, [and] your life will be easier. [They say] “I shouldn’t have to!” Well, you shouldn’t, but you do. And until society is willing to accept non-binary people and really freely allow us to use whatever facility we are comfortable with, then it’s going to continue to be an issue… I have terrible hair and an inappropriate hairline. So, I invest a lot of money in high-end wigs like fronts that are glued in place like a hair-replacement system and when they’re done properly you can’t tell – and I mean even amongst drag queens, they go “is that your hair!??” Well I paid for it, so it’s mine.

The actions that Cheri recommends for transwomen to undertake, in addition to hormone therapy and gender re-affirming surgery, such as for example, learning to re-pitch one’s voice, learning to do “proper” make up, buying appropriate clothes, and investing in expensive wigs, are clearly not simply about making “the effort,” but are about having access to a significant disposable income to fund these investments. Cheri’s suggestion, that if transwomen put in the “effort” they would have less trouble in society, negates not only the significant financial costs associated with these purchases, but also the fact that trans people, as a group, are much more likely than both the cisgender population and the LGBTQ population to experience significant barriers to employment and, when employed, to receive extremely low incomes. A study by Grant et al. (2011) found that despite the fact that the average trans American has completed more education than the general population – 87% have completed at least some college and 47% have earned a college or university degree – they are almost four times more likely than the population as a whole to earn less than $10,000 USD per year. Trans people of colour are even more likely to experience extreme poverty. A recent study by James and Magpantay (2017) found that trans people who are Asian and Pacific Islander are six times more likely to report living in extreme poverty, compared to cisgender Asian and Pacific Islander people. Of Black trans respondents in a similar study, 34% reported extreme poverty compared to 9% of cisgender Black Americans (James, Brown, & Wilson, 2017). Thus, Cheri’s statement about making the effort to pass, and
Thus alleviate the transphobia one experiences, not only tends to obscure how her own class privilege helps her to access a more passable gender, not to mention avoid the mental health repercussions of enduring persistent financial crises, but also appears to propagate a troubled logic that burdens an already economically marginalized group with a responsibility for, in a sense, purchasing society’s tolerance.

Cheri’s reflection also demonstrates the importance that class has for gender as well as for accessing binary-gendered spaces. Cheri links the imperative of *making the effort* to being permitted to use the “facility we are comfortable with.” An assumption implicit in Cheri’s account suggests that, for those who do not “make the effort” it is not surprising that they are confronted when using binary-gendered facilities. Cheri’s account suggests that socioeconomic class is central not only to inhabiting a legible gender, but also to accessing binary-gendered spaces.

Contrastingly, interviewees Goku, Ash, and Wonder challenged classist constructions of gender. These interviewees resisted late-capitalism-promoted materialistic demands to evaluate their transness according to cis-normative standards for authenticity. Goku, for instance, asserted that “I’m not really a fan of having capitalism dictate my transness.” In this statement, she voices her refusal to define herself and her gender vis-à-vis the clothing that she purchases. For Goku, simply paying rent is a struggle, leaving her wary of societal pressures that suggest one “ha[s] to buy different types of clothing to say ‘yeea, this is me!’” She countered these pressures with these words: “No, I’m me because I say so!”

For Ash, who self-identified for gender as “non-binary/fluid” and for class as “low-income, uni[versity]-educated,” the economic pressures of living as “Mad” and “disabled” and working in the sex trade have had a profound impact upon their gender.

… I’ve started in the past while working as a service provider, as a sex worker. And in that process, I’ve had to adapt how I look. So, I look a lot more feminine than how I used to. And I’ve had to adapt how I think of myself, how I talk, everything. And because of

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20 *Mad* is a term used both within and beyond the emergent field of Mad Studies. *Mad* is used both to reclaim a marginalized subjecthood and foreground topics such as oppression, normalcy, labour/profit, and psychiatrization within studies of “madness” and mental health (Ingram, 2016).
that, I would find myself more aligning to, like you know, what, I don’t care if I have to
go to a woman’s washroom. This is what I have to do anyway at work, so…

In Ash’s reflection, not only does their present financial imperative influence their outward
gender presentation but it also appears to shape Ash’s internal relation to gender, impacting “…
how I think of myself, how I talk, everything.” Furthermore, their labour also impacts which
spaces Ash feels that they can and cannot access. Earlier in the interview Ash described how
when they embodied a “gender-neutral” or “gender non-binary” gender expression, they
experienced what they called, “gender euphoria” and that the binary-gendered restroom they felt
most comfortable in, or rather the least dysphoric in, was the men’s room. As Ash points out,
now they feel resigned to using the women’s restroom because, as they said “… I’m tired and
non-binary and I just want to live, so for survival means, I’ll do this.” Economic insecurity was
also interconnected with Wonder’s experience of transphobia. Wonder, who self-identified as
“Two-Spirit” for gender and “poor” for economic class, described how they experienced housing
instability as well as heightened transphobia as they began taking testosterone. Wonder reflected
that housing instability and transphobia combined to provoke a delicate mental health situation
for them.

As Ash and Wonder’s reflections illustrate, though different but similar in ways,
developing an understanding of trans experiences, both within and beyond binary-gendered
spaces, cannot be accomplished without acknowledging how transphobia not only strengthens
the economic pressures placed upon trans people, but also how within a capitalist society they
experience simultaneous systemic devaluation of both their economic wellbeing and their
humanity.

Padraig, who self-identified as “trans masculine” for gender and “lower middle” for
economic class, described how classism affected their experiences in locker rooms as a young
person:

I remember once a kid being like, “do you only have like two pairs of jeans? You wear
that pair of jeans every day.” And I’d just saved up my babysitting money to buy this pair
of jeans that had a stripe down the side ‘cause that was cool then. So, I wore those jeans
every day. And I was like “yeah, I only have these jeans.” And that conversation
happened in a change room because like these were the same jeans that I wore. Like you know? Our clothing was a site there.

The fact that the other child made these comments about Padraig’s clothing in the locker room, makes Padraig’s social class significant. Padraig’s observation that “our clothing was a site there,” or rather a site of inspection in the locker room, points to a fundamental argument that I am attempting to develop throughout this chapter: that binary-gendered facilities are spaces where not only the legibility of binary gender is policed and scrutinized, but also under scrutiny is one’s distance from a white, able-bodied, slim, middle-class ideal.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has addressed how interviewees’ experiences in binary-gendered facilities were not only impacted by sex and gender, but also by racialization, Indigeneity, disability, body shape and size, as well as socioeconomic class. Although an exhaustive analysis of how trans experiences in binary-gendered spaces are inseparable from other aspects of identity might require further interrogation, the findings from the interviews that I conducted for this research illustrate the importance of addressing intersectionality in trans experiences within these spaces. I have attempted to demonstrate that, not only is it problematic to employ a unified or singular trans subjectivity when investigating trans experiences in binary-gendered facilities, but that interventions aiming to improve trans inclusion in these spaces must target transphobia as well as the multiple and intersecting forms of oppression that occur in these particular spaces. For instance, the findings that I outlined in this chapter suggest that interventions seeking to make locker rooms and restrooms safer and more inclusive for trans people ought to be comprehensive for addressing transphobia, racism, ableism, fatphobia, and classism. Locker room and restroom interventions that focus solely upon addressing transphobia may be ineffective at making these spaces safer and more inclusive for members of the trans population who experience a multiplicity of barriers to using this space.
Chapter 5
Exploring the Lived-Experiences of Trans Interviewees within Locker Rooms and Public Restrooms

To address one of the primary concerns of my thesis project: *How can locker rooms and public restrooms be made safer and more inclusive for trans individuals,* the question: *how do trans individuals experience and perceive these spaces?* is first examined. Whereas the previous chapter focused on how trans individuals’ experiences in locker rooms and public restrooms are shaped by intersecting aspects of identity, this chapter focuses on affective experiences: how interviewees described their lived-experiences within these spaces.

Why is this focus important? In the *Literature Review* section, I reviewed a number of quantitative studies which unequivocally suggest that trans people struggle to access locker rooms and public restrooms. Despite this scholarly awareness, however, very few qualitative studies have sought to explore how trans individuals characterize their experiences in, and perceptions of, these spaces. Additionally, I should note, there is a paucity of literature that has examined the locker room. It goes without saying that in the absence of an awareness of how trans individuals experience and perceive these spaces, it will be difficult to establish effective and sensitive interventions for making these spaces safer and more inclusive for their use.

This chapter begins by first outlining the positive experiences that several interviewees shared about their participation in locker rooms and public restrooms. Although only a handful of positive reflections were shared, including them is important for both demonstrating the variety of experiences in these spaces, as well as for examining the opportunity that the particularities of these experiences provide for thinking through characteristics of effective interventions. Second, I explore interviewees’ reflections on how locker rooms and restrooms act as sites of scrutiny in which they are subjected to stares and myriad other surveillance practices. Third, I turn to examine how, within binary-gendered spaces, trans individuals are perceived as, and often come to perceive themselves as, disorienting presences that both disrupt the hegemonic practice of dividing bodies according to binary constructions of gender and destabilize the logic governing these spaces. Fourth, I turn to explore interviewees’ reflections on confrontations which occurred in these spaces; specifically, I will address confrontations that involved
exclusions, verbal assault, and physical assault. Fifth and finally, I will draw upon interviewees’ reflections to illuminate how these experiences and perceptions of locker rooms and restrooms operate not only to exclude interviewees from these spaces, but also to adversely affect their mental health.

“Let’s say they supported me… that was a wonderful feeling”: Neutral and positive experiences in locker rooms and restrooms

Although negative experiences in locker rooms and restrooms significantly outweighed positive ones, it is worth noting that several interviewees reported what were described as neutral and positive experiences in these spaces. Cheri, for instance, reported feeling comfortable entering women’s locker rooms and restrooms as long as she did not undress or use the shower or sauna. Similarly, Corey described feeling safe using the men’s locker room at his place of work, though he pointed out that he avoided undressing which meant often continuing to wear sweaty clothing. Despite foreclosure of undressing in the locker room, for both Cheri and Corey, accessing locker rooms has not been a simple process. For Cheri, the ability to pass as cisfemale has taken years of hormone therapy, surgery, voice training, expensive wigs, as well as myriad other efforts and costs. For Corey, feeling safe using the men’s locker room at his place of work – which he identified as central to keeping his job – has taken months of shopping and expenses to identify a suitable packer, underwear, and undershirts to wear to pass in this space.

Ash expressed enthusiasm about a universal locker room that they have recently begun using at the at the Toronto Cooper Koo YMCA. Ash continues to struggle, however, in other locker rooms and restrooms that are binary-gendered. Similarly, McKenzie reported little difficulty accessing the co-ed locker room that he and his wheelchair teammates use, but

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21 A packer is a prosthetic piece that many transmasculine individuals wear inside of their underwear. A packer produces a resemblance to a cismale’s phallic bulge.

22 Ash specifically indicated that they would prefer the name of this facility to be included in this report so that others might be alerted about this space.
described discomfort within the binary-gendered locker room that he must pass through to access the pool in his apartment building.

For Padraig, as I discussed in the previous chapter, a watershed moment occurred when they began seeing bodies of different sizes, shapes, abilities, and ages in a locker room at a women’s gym that they began attending in their twenties; they described this moment as crucial in helping them to feel more entitled to use the locker room. Lutza recounted finding a note on the bench near her locker which read “I struggle with body image. You gave me strength today ☺” (see Figure 5.1).

![Figure 5.1. A note Lutza found on the bench near her locker.](image)

According to Lutza’s interpretation of this note, her trans body helped widen the narrow parameters of what may be implicitly considered acceptable embodiment in this space, and thus had a positive impact on another locker room user, who may or may not be trans themselves. Melissa had a positive and powerful experience at a physiotherapy gym where the facility stood up for her after she received transphobic discrimination in the locker room there. Melissa described it this way:

You know the help I got there was amazing, but I think one of the nicest things I remember of that is a lady complained [chuckles] that I was in the women’s change room. And they asked her to leave [chuckles]. They said “you can take your things and go and we’ll assign your locker to someone else.” The club manager had a trans brother… what that lady was asking for was exclusion and discrimination enforced by a club and she didn’t get it. In fact she got booted [chuckles]… Let’s say they supported me when challenged and that was a wonderful feeling, I felt really good after that. I could go on the floor with my physiotherapist and feel that I belonged there and I made such a huge recovery.
As Melissa’s account illustrates, positive experiences in locker rooms may extend their impact beyond inclusion within these spaces and have an impact upon physical and/or mental health; in her case, the gym’s support was crucial to her continuing her physical rehabilitation.

Although interviewees did identify several positive and/or neutral experiences in locker rooms and public restrooms, many of these experiences were tenuous: In the case of Cheri and Corey, they were predicated upon significant embodied preparation; in the case of Ash and McKenzie, they necessitated a specific architectural intervention; in the case of Padraig, they were contingent upon being surrounded by bodies of particular shapes, ages, and abilities; and in the case of Melissa, they required a particular type of solidarity with the staff in the facility. Regardless of their contingencies, these positive and neutral experiences open up an optimistic sense of possibility for effective interventions into these spaces. In the remainder of this chapter, I will explore interviewees’ negative experiences in locker rooms, which, unfortunately, far eclipsed interviewees’ positive and neutral ones.

“Oh my God that stare… It breaks down my whole defence mechanism”: Surveillance

In discussing trans interviewees’ experiences in locker rooms and public restrooms, a majority of interviewees described being repeatedly subjected to stares and other forms of surveillance in these spaces. Although interviewees’ accounts of experiencing what Foucault (1978) has termed disciplinary practices of surveillance differed both from interviewee to interviewee as well as between the locker room and the restroom, striking similarities existed. The expectation of nudity within the locker room, for example, made it a particularly tenuous space with regards to experiencing surveillance. Regardless, interviewees’ descriptions of the methods used to surveil them suggest that similar tactics and techniques were used in both locker rooms and restrooms. Being subjected to prolonged stares, as well as other surveillance methods, characterized most of the interviewees’ quotidian experiences in both of these spaces. As a result, understanding how surveillance impacts trans experiences in binary-gendered facilities is integral to appreciating the complexity of barriers trans individuals experience when accessing these spaces. This section overviews how interviewees’ experiences of locker rooms and public restrooms were impacted.
by first, the gaze or stare; second, tactics for scrutinizing their gender verbally (trying to get them to speak); and finally, physical invasions of their privacy in these spaces.

Several of the interviewees identified not always knowing why they were being stared at, or rather, not knowing which aspect of their embodiment was the subject of staring. I believe this experience of “not always knowing why,” furthers supports my claim of the importance of engaging an intersectional analysis when examining trans-exclusion in binary-gendered spaces, rather than isolating gender as the sole cause for exclusion. Max for instance, described not knowing why people stare at him: “I’m fat, I’m tattooed, I’m kind of freaky looking, and I’m, like, visibly gender-queer [chuckles]. So people stare at me for lots of reasons.” Max’s description highlights how the stares and scrutiny that he receives in binary-gendered spaces are not understood as simply due to his visibly gender-queer body, but also because of his self-identified fatness and because he is often perceived to be “kind of freaky looking.” In Max’s interview, he described being repeatedly subjected to stares in the locker room and the restroom as well as in other public spaces, such as the grocery store; regardless of routinely experiencing stares, he expressed a refusal to identify with or to internalize that critical gaze. Max’s chuckling may suggest a refusal to allow these stares to cultivate self-hatred and/or self-rejection, a refusal which preserves his self-respect and agency in his own trans-embodiment, it may also signal a shielding against the persistence of a transphobic gaze which, as Sheila Cavanagh (2010, p. 7) observes is “… not only callous and cruel but compulsive and curious.” Padraig also described, how as a youth, receiving stares in locker rooms left them unable to identify whether these stares were motivated by their “fatness,” the working-class socio-economic status that their clothing signaled, their gender or sexuality, or their general awkwardness in the space. The intractable aspect of intersecting identities was demonstrated in other interviewees’ reflections, where gender, race, class, disability, and body size rose in an aggregate, rather than delineable, fashion.

Regardless of which aspect of their embodiment they believed was being stared at, interviewees had much to say about what being subjected to surveillance via ‘the stare’ felt like. The frequency and intensity with which the stare appeared across interviews leads me to believe that in order to adequately understand trans experiences in binary-gendered facilities, we must better understand how being stared at impacts them in these spaces. All of the interviewees identified being repeatedly subjected to stares as diminishing their ability to access these spaces.
Candy will not, on any occasion, enter a women’s locker room due both to fears of not passing as female as well as due to past traumas of physical and sexual assault pre-transition. Similarly, Candy will only use the women’s restroom in cases of what she calls “emergencies,” otherwise she avoids the public restroom altogether. Candy, whose words are included in the title of this section, described what it feels like to repeatedly receive stares in the restroom: “Oh my god that stare. I can’t take that. That does something to me. It aggravates me. It breaks down my whole defence mechanism.” Receiving these stares are a big part of why Candy goes to great lengths to avoid using the restroom, leading her to often hold her bladder for long periods of time. Trying to understand Candy’s perception of the stare, isolating transphobia from racism is not a possibility. Candy described the racism that she experienced after moving to Canada from the Bahamas as a “big shock,” and the scrutiny that she faces in women’s restrooms reflects how racism and transphobia are entangled.

While interviewees pointed out that stares, ranging from curious to hostile, occur in many public spaces, several emphasized that in public restrooms and, to an even greater degree, locker rooms, cisgender people seem to take license to stare longer and more openly at trans people. Caroline Fusco’s (2003) locker room study has explored the ways in which locker room surveillance is intensified vis-à-vis the fact that it is enacted through multiple nodes (e.g., locker room user, cleaner, administrator, architect, etc.). Lutza described an encounter where she and a woman, a stranger, were both waiting in the locker room for a lifeguard to open the door between the locker room and the pool. Lutza, who has had a mastectomy and wears only swimming trunks when she swims, described how the other woman “was just straight up staring daggers at my body. And I was just like, she’s not even going to say anything? She’s not even going to pretend [that she’s not staring]?” Lutza added that “people who have run out of ‘fucks’ will straight up stare at you like you’re a movie and not say a single thing and it is creepy and really unsettling and there’s nowhere to go.” Lutza’s description of the “creepy and really unsettling” feeling of being stared at “like you’re a movie” demonstrates how Lutza experiences what a number of other interviewees reflected upon as a widespread sense of cisgender entitlement to surveil trans bodies at their will. Although, perhaps, the initial intention behind the woman’s stare was to discern Lutza’s gender, the duration and intensity of the woman’s gaze, as described by Lutza, suggests that at some point the intention behind it shifted from discerning to what Lutza perceived as hostile. Regardless of the woman’s intention, a message clearly
communicated to Lutza, via the woman’s prolonged stare, was that the transness of her exposed chest made her unwelcome there. As Lutza’s reflection suggests, within locker rooms, as well as public restrooms to perhaps a lesser degree, trans people must often contend with not only inquisitive or curious stares, but also often with hostile ones.

Reflections made by Xavier who uses men’s spaces, suggested that the stare often operates to do more than make trans locker room and restroom users uncomfortable; it also often operates to make him feel physically unsafe. Xavier described how “[t]he stares I get sometimes in men’s change rooms is what makes me often feel unsafe and that’s as far as confrontation for me goes in men's change rooms.” For Xavier, the stares he receives in the men’s locker room are, as he perceives them, not intended to elicit shame, but rather to communicate a threat of physical and/or sexual assault. As a result of the stares he has received in men’s locker rooms, he avoids the locker room, and thus foregoes using gyms altogether. Xavier’s reflection also suggests the different ways that safety is inflected across spaces designated as women’s and men’s spaces.

In addition to receiving stares, interviewees pointed out a key additional way that trans individuals are subjected to surveillance. Several interviewees reported repeated situations in the public restroom or locker room where cisgender individuals tried to start conversations in order to hear their voices, with the intention of determining their “authentic” genders. Jane, for instance, described the following:

…I’ve had people try to engage me in conversation, which has been very obviously like a tactic - where they’ve been staring at me for long enough and then trying to ask me simple questions. And I’m like, I know if I answer my voice is going to come out and they’re going to deduce from that that I’m transgender, so generally in these times I just kind of give them the cold shoulder because I’d rather appear as cold or non-verbal as opposed to directly outing myself or putting myself in a position where that [outing] could be a thing that happens…

Jane’s description, as well as her daily experiences of anti-Black microaggressions that I discussed in the previous chapter, outlines the stakes that inform her decision to speak or not speak in this type of confrontation. Jane’s refusal to speak also employs, again, what Simone Browne (2015) has termed *dark sousveillance* as a method of resisting and/or retaliating against
forms of surveillance in which gender and race are inextricably targeted. Additionally, Lutza also described being solicited to speak in order to authenticate her gendered belonging in the women’s locker room/restroom.

You know, cause there’s like [fumbles for words] there’s strategies people do [use] who have a little bit of shame about either staring or not knowing if you’re a man or a woman because people will strike up conversations with me that are straight up bull shit just because they want to hear my voice.

In contrast to Jane’s approach, Lutza responds to these types of interactions by engaging in a conversation to “make people [women] comfortable, like [I] go out of my way to expend energy to be charming and not threatening and all that stuff.” Certainly, an entire chapter could be written on the racial and nuanced gender privileges which motivate and enable Jane and Lutza’s different responses to verbal gender scrutiny; however, one aspect that these interactions of surveillance indisputably share in common is that they place upon the trans individual an expectation to actively authenticate their gender. Through this type of scrutiny, the trans individual becomes responsible not only for enduring cisgender panic about their presence in the locker room/restroom, but also for actively participating in managing it. Foucault’s (1975) theorization of the *panoptic* quality of surveillance, discussed in detail in the previous chapter, may be brought to bear upon Lutza’s response to gender scrutiny. Lutza anticipates cisgender women’s discomfort with, or confusion to, her presence in women’s spaces by “expend[ing] energy” to be charming and friendly. This anticipation then, perhaps, installs a persistent sense of readiness to mediate her presence within the space, one that, though it does not negatively impact Lutza’s ability to access the space, is ever-present for her while she is within it. Lutza’s account also points to the emotional labour required of her in these exchanges. I return to a more in-depth exploration of expectations for emotional labour placed upon trans people in the section “Educating a cisgender public about trans inclusion in locker rooms and restrooms” (pp. 177-180).

Beyond being repeatedly subjected to staring and verbal interrogations, two interviewees, Jane and Max, also reported experiencing a direct and explicit violation of their privacy; both
reported experiencing these invasions in restroom settings. Max described the following encounter:

I had an experience at a club night many, many years ago at a popular queer-owned facility, where a security guard followed me into the men’s bathroom and just to be sure that I wasn’t really a man, looked in as I was urinating and after I came out demanded to see my identification and confronted me about which bathroom I used and said I couldn’t use that one. I asked if I would have had the same experience if I went into the women’s washroom and he basically told me that I couldn’t use that one either.

The difficult irony for Max in his encounter was that after being followed into the restroom and his privacy invaded, he was informed that he was the one who had trespassed. Max demonstrated, in posing the question to the security guard about whether he “would have had the same experience” in the women’s restroom, both a resistance to allowing the security guard’s trespass to go unchallenged as well as an illustration of the impossibility of safely accessing either space.

Jane also described an invasion of privacy while she was using the women’s restroom:

…thankfully it’s only been once - I had a pretty awful reaction where someone attempted to look under a stall to see what was going on. I had to kind of like move my foot in their general direction, ‘cause I was like “that’s not okay, no matter who’s in a stall - you don’t do that.” … I think I have, as a trans person, have encountered more sexual assault type things in a restroom from cis people than cis people have from most trans people in these settings, so I’m just kinda’ like - there is a possibility here [for a discussion of sexual assault regarding trans inclusion in women’s spaces], but everyone’s kinda’ looking at it the wrong way.

Jane’s argument, which references a dominant societal narrative that rates of sexual assault will increase if transwomen are permitted to use women’s locker room/restroom spaces, posits instead that “everyone’s kinda’ looking at it the wrong way.” Jane upends this narrative by pointing out that she has been targeted for sexual assault and harassment because she is trans. Jane’s experience does not stand alone. A 2005 study by sociologists Kenagy and Bostwick
(2005) found that one in two trans individuals are sexually assaulted over the course of their lives. Another study estimates that for trans people of colour this number may even be as high as two thirds (Xavier, Bobbin, Singer, & Budd, 2005). An example of the transphobic narrative that Jane references is demonstrated in an advertisement released in September, 2018 by an organization named the **Keep Massachusetts Safe Committee**. This advertisement is associated with a campaign seeking to repeal a law barring discrimination against trans people from accessing public restrooms and locker rooms (see weblink: Massachusetts Office of Campaign and Political Finance, 2018). In the advertisement, a soundtrack that might accompany a horror film plays as the camera frames a heavy-breathing white cisgender man lurking threateningly in a women’s locker room as a young girl begins to undress. Jane’s comment (“there is a possibility here [for a discussion of sexual assault regarding trans inclusion in women’s spaces], but everyone’s kinda’ looking at it the wrong way”) points out that although a dominant society’s transphobic narrative frames the inclusion of transwomen in women’s spaces as a potential source of sexual assault, in her lived-experience it is transwomen who are most likely to be victims of sexual assault in women’s binary-gendered spaces.

This section has attempted to explore how, throughout many of the interviewees’ accounts, surveillance was a focal point in their experiences of locker rooms and public restrooms. Through discussing how being subjected to stares, verbal interrogations intended to deduce “authentic” gender, as well as physical invasions of privacy, it has been my intention to illustrate how being continuously subjected to surveillance contributes to trans individuals’ difficulty accessing public locker rooms and restrooms. I now turn to examine how the trans individual, within these spaces, constitutes a disorienting presence, one which threatens to disrupt the order upon which these spaces are founded.

**“They’ll look at me, look at the sign and look at me again…”**: Disorienting presences

A persistent theme that emerged across a majority of the interviewees’ accounts was a perception that their presence as trans individuals within binary-gendered locker rooms and restrooms elicited a disruption to what Nirmal Puwar (2004) has called the “somatic norm” of space. The
**somatic norm** is an embodied template of who is expected to be encountered within a given space, and who is not. A number of interviewees perceived that they elicited disorientation, confusion, and fear for other locker room and restroom users. In this section, I will begin by illustrating several examples whereby interviewees perceived their presence provoked confusion. Next, I will explore several interviewee accounts in which they perceived their presence as provoking fear. Finally, to conclude this section, I will draw on the work of Nirmal Puwar (2004), Sarah Ahmed (2006), Judith Butler (2006), and Jin Haritaworn (2009) to engage a closer reading of these interviewees’ reflections.

Xavier described the confusion he caused when he used the women’s locker room and restroom prior to transitioning:

> So I would get a lot of the [comments] “you know this is the women’s change room.” [Or:] “This is the girls’ washroom right?” Or it’s “I think you’re in the wrong one” or they’d stare at the sign they’d stare at me, they’d stare at the sign, they’d stare at me…

Similarly, Valerie, who self-identified as “female” and “Asian, Filipino,” spoke about how people responded to her using the men’s restroom as she began transitioning to female; earlier in the interview she noted that this was the space she felt safest using at that time:

> But um, like I would [chuckles] use the male washroom and as soon as I’m going out [the door of the men’s washroom] someone will come in and then they’ll look at me, look at the sign and look at me again. And I’ll have to say to them “No, you’re in the right spot. Don’t worry about it.” And then I just leave. It’s uncomfortable…

Jane also observed a similar quality of confusion inspired by her presence in the women’s restroom:

> … if I’m in a [women’s] washroom, I’ve noticed a lot of times someone will walk in, look at me, walk out, and then come back in after trying to figure out which washroom they’re in. I’m just like [pause] “ehhh [exasperated sound]” [laughter]. I never know really how to react so I just kind of don’t. But I’ll still find it kind of funny, at the same time kind of disheartening. Like, it’s very much like I’m the root cause of this person
being like: “I’ve stepped into the wrong washroom ‘cause this person obviously appears to be a male,” when that’s not at all the actual case.

Padriag described repeatedly invoking confusion within the women’s locker room and restroom:

Because there’s a lot of “you’re in the wrong place!” “Am I in the wrong place?” “Are you in the wrong place?” “Somebody is in the wrong place here!” When I’m going to a change room everybody sort of was like “woah, woah, wooooh,” and that has happened more times than I can count.

In addition to eliciting confusion, several interviewees also indicate that their presence in binary-gendered spaces often elicits fear, and perceptions of fear were particularly notable for trans interviewees who used women’s spaces. Melissa offered this response when I asked her how other women responded to her presence in the women’s locker room:

… there’s just a dead stare and “get out, what are you doing in here?” They see me as a transwoman, they make all kinds of assumptions about my sexuality, my morals, all kinds of things. But they don’t understand, it’s just not true…

These assumptions about her sexuality and morals, Melissa later explained, positioned her presence in that space as one motivated by a desire to gain unfettered sexual access to women’s bodies. When I asked her about how this assumption about her sexuality impacts her use of locker rooms, she responded: “I avoid them like the plague. I avoid them like the plague. I would rather not deal with it. I would just rather not deal with it. You know?” Corey described a situation in a women’s restroom when a young girl turned and fled after seeing him there:

One time I was at a theatre and I used the women’s washroom and this young girl went in and ran back out and told her mom that there was a boy in the girl’s bathroom and she was kind of upset. I felt bad.

Similarly, Candy articulated her perception of the fear her presence evokes in other women when she enters the women’s restroom:

But for the most part, if there’s children, you see parents [mothers] grab their daughters and push them to one side. It’s like I’m walking with a big machine gun or machete or
something, like I want to kill you. So it’s still ignorant. Like, I get it, you’re afraid. But in 2018, I don’t think it should be that way.

The interviewees’ descriptions of how their mere presence in binary-gendered spaces elicits a disruption vis-à-vis confusion and fear is akin to Nirmal Puwar’s (2004) description, in Space Invaders, of the disruption that racialized and feminine bodies cause to the logic of a white, masculine order within the British House of Commons. Puwar writes: “‘Known’ through a limited set of framings, these bodies jar and destabilize an exclusive sense of place. As the ‘unknown’, who defy conventions and boundaries, they represent the potentially monstrous, whose somatic arrival invades the social and psychic” (2004, p. 11). Reading across these six interviewee reflections, it is clear that the presence of trans bodies in binary-gendered facilities works to “jar and destabilize” not only cis-normative understandings of the fixity of these spaces, but also the legibility of a practice of categorizing bodies according to the categories “male” and “female.”

The disorientation incurred by trans bodies in binary-gendered locker rooms and restrooms is foregrounded in the reflections shared by Xavier, Valerie, and Jane. Each reflects upon how their presence elicited a disorienting event which propelled those they encountered in the space to cyclically reference the space’s signage, the trans body, the signage, the trans body in search of some solid return to a sense of stable self-location. Trans bodies then, drawing upon the work of Sara Ahmed (2006), do more than inspire chaos through dispatching a stable sense of order organized around binary gender; they rupture the very spatial assumptions upon which the architecture of the locker room and restroom rests. The trans body, in these spaces, is thus profoundly disorienting.

Within binary-gendered spaces, however, the trans body provokes a particular quality of disorientation. Judith Butler’s (2006) seminal concept, the heterosexual matrix, penetrates the issue as to why. Butler describes the [cisgender] heterosexual matrix as the “grid of cultural intelligibility through which [cisgender heterosexual] bodies, genders, and desires are naturalized” (1990, p. 151). For trans bodies that evade, resist, forfeit, or are denied binary gender, the cisgender heterosexual matrix is, though omnipotent and all-pervading, not distributed evenly across public space. Rather, the intensity with which this “grid of cultural
“intelligibility” is graphed upon binary-gendered spaces such as the locker room and restroom is disproportionately strong. The interviewees’ reflections suggest that not only are locker rooms and restrooms locations constituted upon the premise that the cisgender heterosexual matrix is natural and universal, but also that these sites are productive of the hegemonic quality of the cisgender heterosexual matrix. Through, for example, conditioning a society of individuals to ‘self-select’ to file either (and only) through a door marked as “male” or “female” a cisgender heterosexuality is manufactured as compulsory (see Duggan, 2002).

As discussed in earlier chapters, the singular focus placed upon gender and sexuality within the cisgender heterosexual matrix is challenged by the work of Jin Haritaworn (2009), who poses the rhetorical question: “heterosexual matrix or interracial matrix?” (2009, p. 103). Their question complicates the single-dimensionality of an examination of space which privileges addressing cisgender heterosexual privilege over one that also takes up how space is racialized and impacted by racist oppression. In Candy’s account, for instance, the particular quality of terror that her Black trans body appears to invite must be read within the context of a Canadian legacy of the violent erasure of trans identities (Bauer & Scheim, 2014) as well as within the context of ongoing state-sanctioned anti-Black violence (Maynard, 2017).

Thinking through the ways in which the trans body, within binary-gendered spaces, is immediately perceived as a disorienting presence offers a way into thinking through how the trans body destabilizes the logic behind male and female facilities. Being perceived as a disorienting force on a daily basis is not, however, simply a phenomenon enacted upon cisgender locker room and restroom users, but one that works to jar and destabilize trans individuals’ own sense of belonging within these spaces. Working towards improving a scholarly understanding of how trans individuals experience binary-gendered locker rooms and restrooms requires examining the ways in which trans individuals experience themselves as disruptive and disorienting within these spaces.

There’s just a dead stare and “get out, what are you doing in here?”: Confronted for using the locker room and/or restroom
This section explores how, within locker rooms and restrooms, the presence of trans bodies not only disrupts a cisgender sense of spatial stability, but also is often regarded as a direct transgression of the normative rules governing these spaces, a direct violation which necessitates confrontation and correction. As the interviewee reflections outlined in this section suggest, these encounters take various forms, ranging from verbal confrontations to physical assaults. For example, Melissa described her experience being dismissed from using the boy’s locker room in high school in the mid-1970s:

In high school they just told me straight out. The first day of gym: “Don’t show up again!” The gym teacher just came to me and said “I had a lot of complaints about you, I’d like you to get changed in the utility room.”

These complaints, as Melissa pointed out, were directed towards her because in the locker room “… the guys were a little weirded out by me.” The illegibility of her gender, even at a young age, rendered her an excludable subject within this space.

Xavier recounted how, when he presented as a butch woman prior to transitioning, he was directed not to use the women’s locker room: “I’ve had people recommend that I use the family bathroom. Whether it’s [to] use the bathroom or to change. I’ve had suggestions that I should change before I get to the gym and then change when I get home.”

The similarity in the accounts of Melissa and Xavier, whose experiences in locker rooms span nearly 30 years (they were born in 1961 and 1990 respectively) is striking. Despite the passage of three decades, and its supposedly attendant progress – as exemplified in the passing of Bill C-16 (House of Commons of Canada, 2017) – a similarity is demonstrated in that both experience their claims to these spaces as being directly negated. The encounters that Xavier and Melissa describe, gesture to the duty to self-accommodate, which is regularly placed on trans individuals seeking to access these spaces. These verbal confrontations make clear that the illegibility of their gender expressions has exiled them not only from the space but also beyond the domain of what is an acceptable request for their accommodation. Thus, their supposed unwillingness or inability to conform to the expectations of the gender binary simultaneously works to blame them as responsible for their own exclusion and it places the responsibility of accommodation, in the face of this exclusion, squarely upon themselves.
Other interviewees reported that they bore the brunt of verbal confrontations which communicated malicious and transphobic sentiments in these spaces. Candy describes a confrontation where she was verbally rebuffed for using the women’s restroom:

I’ve even had this – this one time going in the bathroom – not so recently, a few of my friends and I were out and we went in to use the bathroom and these people burst in and were like “y’all should just use the transformers’ bathroom.”

Although the overt transphobia described in Candy’s account is apparent, this confrontation begs the following question: How can we understand the message implicit within the suggestion to use the transformers’ bathroom? Transformers® are a robot superhero franchise produced by Tonka Toy Company. Transformers are best known for their ability to shapeshift from humanoid robots into mechanized weapons and vehicles. Thus, the verbal direction that Candy and her trans friends receive, “y’all should just use the transformers’ bathroom,” functions to do more than dismiss them from the women’s restroom. It operates to do more than mock her and their femininity as put-on parodies of authentic femininity. More than that, this remark dismisses their claim to humanity. As a transformer, a humanoid or robotic imitation of the human, Candy is not only dismissed from the category of woman, she is also dismissed from the category of human (see Wynter, 2003). This exercise of power, which attempts to relegate Candy and her trans friends as sub-human, is engendered by the space of the binary-gendered restroom; in other areas within the club Candy and her friends remain unmolested, but once they enter the women’s restroom, scrutiny is heightened and the stakes of confrontation are raised. While it is beyond the scope of this chapter to evaluate what self-understanding may have granted these individuals with the sense of entitlement to administer and police the boundaries of this space in such a way, it is worth pointing out that this confrontation operated not only to exclude Candy from the bathroom, but also to erase the possibility of her return to the club again. This draws attention to the ways in which exclusion within locker rooms and restrooms may initiate a ripple effect which leads to internalized exclusion from the larger facility. In *A Cyborg Manifesto* Donna Haraway (1991, p. 46) describes how the lack of “place” for women in advanced industrial societies results in not only the displacement of women’s bodies from the public sphere, but also shapes “… geometries of difference and contradiction crucial to women’s cyborg identities.” Here, Haraway suggests a convergence between the processes of spatialized exclusion and self-
identification. Thus, applying Haraway’s analysis to the issue at hand, one could theorize that the dislocation of trans bodies from binary-gendered space operates not only to alienate them spatially, but also psychically.

Jane also described being verbally confronted for using the women’s restroom.

So I remember once, I was dressed very, very femininely this one day and so I happened to be at a comic convention with my friends and so I had to use the washroom and top up my makeup. So I go into the washroom, do my thing and – so I’m using the mirror afterwards, touching up my makeup and this one girl beside me just looks at me and she’s like, “I’m really not comfortable with men being here.” And so I’m just kind of there and I kind of like turn around and mutter: “I have a push-up bra on, I very visibly have breasts and makeup, I’m not doing this for fun, I am a transgender individual.” They were just kinda’ like - they just didn’t say anything past that...

Jane’s encounter, as well as Candy’s, Xavier’s, Melissa’s, and the dozens of others examples outlined by interviewees confirm that these spaces are governed and regulated by a normative order that trans bodies disrupt. Foucault’s concept of *disciplinary power* offers a way of better understanding the dynamics of power underpinning these interviewee reflections. Foucault theorizes disciplinary power as an organization of power that is not fixed “… in the primary existence of a central point, in a unique sovereignty from which secondary and descendant forms would emanate” (1978, p. 93). Rather, Foucault understands power as dispersed, enacted via a rhizomatic multiplicity of interconnected nodes which are “always local and unstable” (1978, p. 93). Thus, the locker room and restroom operate as sites where a form of disciplinary power particular to binary gender is constituted. Following Foucault’s theorizing, it is not primarily the rule of law that organizes and regulates these spaces – although the rule of law does often target trans people in these spaces23 – but rather, disciplinary power is enacted by *individuals* emboldened by a cisnormative/transphobic imaginary of the somatic norm of these spaces. Thus, an enactment of disciplinary power means that the regulation of binary gender in binary-gendered facilities is the purview of neither the state nor its actors but, instead, it is the

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23 I am thinking here of the legal precedents set in North Carolina and, more recently, Massachusetts. It is important to note that these laws disproportionately target transfeminine people.
responsibility of the everyday locker room and restroom user to protect these spaces from the disruption incurred by the trans body.

Disciplinary power, within interviewee accounts, was not only enacted through verbal confrontations, but also through physical ones. A fear of physical assault was a persistent theme in interviewee concerns about using the locker room and, to a lesser degree, the restroom. A fear of physical assault in the men’s locker room is the primary reason why Xavier does not work out. As Xavier put it:

Before I was a passing individual I would still feel like it was unsafe to use the men’s change room … So I just stopped going to gyms, because it just felt - I felt unsafe. And working out is not supposed to feel unsafe.

For Corey, concerns about physical and/or sexual assault in his work locker room motivated him to request a locker next to the exit. For Candy, as a result of being subjected to physical and sexual assault in a locker room pre-transition, using a locker room is not an option, no matter which facility the locker room is located within. Wonder described being spat on and physically threatened after they exited the men’s restroom:

So my first real moment where I remember being targeted besides just like stares and people trying to obviously make me uncomfortable for being in the space: I was using the washroom and two men had waited outside of that washroom to, I guess, assess what I was doing. And when I came out the one wasn’t there, I think he was using the washroom - but the other one started yelling at me. And he started spitting in my face and telling me that I didn’t belong. And I just left the situation as fast as I could and got home as fast as I could.

The centrality of the concern that physical safety holds for interviewees’ experiences in locker rooms and restrooms cannot be overstated. The primacy placed on this issue within interviewees’ reflections suggests that an adequate understanding of trans experiences in these spaces must acknowledge how a threat of physical violence is, for many trans individuals, constantly being anticipated, mitigated, and braced against.
In some places, (e.g., hotels, bars) a security guard often inhabits a crucial role in trans individuals’ confrontations in locker rooms and restrooms. This is a security guard who is employed by and for the private business space. They are often in uniform and have equipment to use (e.g., radio, flashlight, baton, keys, pepper spray) that can reference the role of a state-sanctioned police officer. Additionally, the security guard is also surrounded by a narrative of authority, protection, and surveillance. Three of the interviewees described exceptionally troubling encounters with security guards in public restrooms.

Max, as discussed in detail in a previous section, described a security guard following him into the men’s restroom and looking into the stall where he was urinating to verify his gender. Ash described an incident when a security guard at a queer event in Toronto physically forced them from a restroom entrance. Jane also described being confronted by a security guard after entering a women’s restroom:

I was at a queer prom event, I think at the Gladstone [Hotel], which is relatively well known for being LGBT-friendly, but, apparently, they didn’t pass that sensitivity training on to their security staff. And so, I walked into the women’s washroom and I got followed by a security guard who then told me that I have to leave that washroom. And then I explained that I was transgender and they just kind of stuttered and backed off. It was, again, another time where I was presenting very femininely, like I was wearing a dress, had lipstick on and was basically embarrassed in front of a bunch of people and basically having – Because at the time I thought okay, as long as I don’t speak, I feel like I can pass as cisgender pretty well, and then to be outed in front of people that I didn’t know and didn’t know if it was safe to be outed around at the time was a lot to deal with.

In all three of these interviewees’ accounts, the security guard appears to have adopted a role of supposed protector of the integrity of binary-gendered restrooms. For these security guards, the presence of a visibly trans body in a gender-segregated space is not a disorienting presence, rather it appears that they read that body as a violation, a body that these security guards thought it necessary to remove. Indeed, the stakes are higher for trans people when disciplinary power is enacted by these kind of security guards as opposed to the general public; security guards are
From looking into the restroom stall in Max’s case, using physical force to prevent Ash’s entrance into the restroom, to following Jane into the women’s restroom, these security guards had a significant role to play in these interviewees’ understandings of violence and exclusion in these spaces. Of the fourteen trans individuals that I interviewed, three of them reported being subjected to physical assault by a security guard as a result of trying to access a restroom facility: this signals a significant issue. Additionally, in all three of the interviewees’ troubling experiences with security guards, the interviewees pointed out that they were within queer or LGBTTQ2SA-friendly spaces. As I will discuss further in Chapter 7, improving the sensitivity training standards regarding locker rooms and restrooms for security guards working within the context of LGBTTQ2SA-friendly locations appear to be crucial to making these spaces, in particular, safer for trans individuals. Verbal and physical encounters shaped interviewees’ experiences in, and perceptions of, locker rooms and public restrooms. The section that follows explores in detail the lived-experiences of how these encounters affect interviewees.

“*It brought me to a place I didn’t like. I had to stop going there*”: Affective experiences, mental health, and thoughts of giving up

This section further explores how interviewees described their affective experiences of particular encounters in locker rooms and restrooms. Specifically, I illustrate how using these spaces impacted interviewees by triggering anxiety, trauma, and hypervigilant behaviour. This section also explores how several interviewees engaged in an unconscious strategy of “not noticing” the surveillance and gender panic that accompanies their presence in binary-gendered spaces. Finally, I briefly examine how suicidality, as well as survival-focused strategies, emerged in several of the interviewees’ reflections.

Anxiety was a common theme across interviewees’ experiences within binary-gendered spaces. Ten of the fourteen interviewees identified that anxiety was commonly triggered when
they entered or thought about entering either locker rooms and public restrooms. Melissa, for example, described how the discrimination that she receives in locker rooms triggered anxiety that she believed compromised her mental health:

Once I was there, getting stared at and discriminated [against] in the change room [sigh]… And it was a real problem and it brought me to a place I didn’t like. I had to stop going there. You know… It’s really tough.

Trauma was also a significant theme within trans experiences in locker rooms and restrooms. Bessel van der Kolk (2015), in his *New York Times* bestselling book *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma*, explains that trauma is a condition that alters an individual’s brain and physiology. Trauma, according to van der Kolk, results in neurological reorganization of perception in which “numbness” often provides a shield against experiencing further trauma. Additionally, van der Kolk points out that past traumas can be easily “triggered” often by seemingly innocuous situations. For many of the interviewees, merely entering into locker rooms and, to a lesser degree, public restrooms could trigger for them a reliving of past traumas. On the study’s demographic chart, under *disability*, Max, listed “trauma.” He described how past traumas in locker rooms and restrooms shape his current experiences in these spaces. For Wonder, repeated transphobic encounters in the men’s locker room and restroom not only prevented them from feeling safe accessing these spaces, but also operated to pressure them into, against their better judgement, medicalizing with the hopes avoiding of these encounters vis-à-vis passing:

I felt that I was in danger whenever I tried to dress masculine and leave the house. And that was becoming more and more… So that’s when the fear started coming in of being attacked in public places and being approached if I wasn’t seen as like fully male, or that I hadn’t medicalized in some way to become that.

In contrast to several other interviewees, for Wonder medicalization was not a life-affirming process but one that, as Wonder articulated, made them physically and mentally unwell:

I started taking testosterone. I was taking testosterone for about nine months before I figured out in my mind that that wasn’t right for me and my body. And it wasn’t doing
good things for me personally and [I began to realize] that I didn’t need to associate that with any gender at all. Medicalizing myself was in part due to pressure, but also a strong fear of not passing I guess.

Wonder’s description of their decision to medicalize was, at least partly, informed by a desire to avoid future traumas within binary-gendered spaces. This suggests that experiences of trauma within the locker room and restroom have the capability of reaching far beyond these spaces.

Several interviewees reported adopting a type of hypervigilance which was an affective response because of their anticipated confrontations in locker rooms and restrooms. Jane, for example, described the hypervigilant behaviour necessary to prepare for confrontations in these spaces:

It’s such like a big deal in the media nowadays, like there’s constantly articles about like “should transgender people be allowed to use the washrooms of their choice? Blah, blah, blah.” And with my experiences of having it happen in the past, I just kind of brace myself at this point. ‘Cause I’m like, if I’m expecting something to happen and then it does happen, then I’m not as taken off guard.

Max and Lutza, on the other hand, described conditioning themselves differently to the gender panic and surveillance that they experience in binary-gendered spaces. Both described hardly noticing these behaviours anymore. Max described a conversation with a friend who was shocked by the number of people who openly stare at him in public spaces:

They’re like “we just went to the grocery store and I spent the whole time glaring at people because they were staring at you and blah, blah, blah.” I’m like I didn't even notice. I gotta’ do my grocery shopping, I can’t live my life based on this.

Lutza also described growing so accustomed to gender scrutiny in locker rooms that it now operates as a “background noise” to her:

I don’t know, I feel like it’s such a background noise that you, like, stop forming an opinion about it. Like, I don’t know what it would be like if I always walked into any
space and never thought about who’s going to recognize me as male, or female, or whatever… it just kinda’ becomes, like… [pause] That’s life.

Iterative encounters of surveillance, confrontation, and assault in locker rooms and restrooms, as well as in other public spaces, also had a profound negative impact upon interviewees’ ideas about suicidality and survival-focused behaviour. For Melissa, the transphobia that she experienced in locker rooms was correlated to suicidal ideations. She described her decision to stop using the locker room as essential for mitigating the deterioration of her mental health. Additionally, Melissa’s account suggests that although physical activity has been essential for her mental and physical health, the transphobia that she encounters on a daily basis, both within and beyond the locker room, often makes accessing physical activity physically dangerous. As a result, her mental health was often in a precarious state:

My fitness today is one of the reasons I’m alive. It’s a double-edged sword. It makes a lot of other people happy that I’m alive. I’m not sure that it makes me happy all the time. I’m tired. Tired of all the hatred and all the discrimination that I experience all my life. I’m frankly just tired. I’m just too stupid to give up. I don’t know any better.

Melissa’s reflection demonstrates how the possibility of positively impacting trans individuals through participation in sport and physical activity is precluded by the significant barriers and dangers that the locker room poses in quotidian transphobic encounters.

Wonder described how being repeatedly mis-gendered and confronted with transphobia in restrooms led to their mental health deteriorating:

I start to get into thought processes that certain parts of me are wrong and [think that] maybe if I was a different way that would help. And I start feeling really bad about my body parts and I wish they were different. I think about medicalization still occasionally. And definitely, yeah, I just feel like I’m not there. And I think that also contributes to mental health issues and that in turn creates a mass amount of suicidal ideation.24

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24 Prior to this part of the interview, Wonder contextualized these suicidal ideations within their broader self-care practices as well as ongoing support that they receive from a therapist. Contextualized within the full interview, it becomes clear that the suicidal ideations that Wonder refers to here are situated in the past tense. Despite this history
Wonder’s reflection, perhaps, best illustrates not only how cisnormative and transphobic discourses and practices impact trans people, but also how binary-gendered locker rooms and restrooms play a central role as spaces where these ideologies are enacted. Wonder referenced a desire to avoid transphobic violence as a force pressuring them to medicalize via top-surgery and hormone replacement therapy, treatments which Wonder indicated only furthered the precarity of their mental health. Returning to Foucault’s (1975) concept of panopticism, one may observe that the very need to access binary-gendered spaces operates to discipline Wonder’s own relation to their gender and thus pushes them to identify with one side of the gender binary, rather than allowing them to adopt the fluid gender which, as Wonder described, feels most authentic to them.

Survival-focused reflections also characterized a number of interviewees’ accounts. Max allegorized that “being trans and gender-queer is like walking into a battle field every day.” Ash offered a statement that encapsulates both the optimism and difficulty which characterizes their present moment:

So I’m hoping in 20 years from now when all th[ese] shifts and changes and the bathrooms are done as a basic level, that’s going to lead to people being more open.
Everything changing I guess. Big hopes. We’ll see. A lot of us are going to keep the way things are, which is a bit abysmal unfortunately.

Max and Ash’s reflections not only exemplify the difficulty that both have accessing gender-segregated spaces, but also in traversing a cisnormative society, in general, which of course they hope will change. The interviewees’ accounts suggest that accessing binary-gendered spaces is very difficult, however, also they also identified that participating within universities, health care institutions, the labour market, and myriad other social institutions, which systemically devalue and deny their existence, is equally as difficult. The locker room and public restroom are best understood, perhaps, not as singular or as pinnacle spaces of exclusion, but rather as locations emblematic of their exclusion in any cisnormative public spaces.

Wonder is clear that these ideations could return if they do not take pains to protect themselves from environments and discourses framed around binary-gendered constructions of identity.
Conclusion

Interviewees’ reflections on their lived-experiences within locker rooms and restrooms is certainly not homogenous or entirely negative. Indeed, as I noted, several interviewees reported neutral and even positive experiences. Regardless, these types of stories were overwhelmed by their negative experiences in, and perceptions of, these spaces. In this chapter, I have explored how interviewees experienced these spaces because they were subjected to increased surveillance and they perceived their presence to elicit confusion and fear in others. Within these spaces, as the interviewees’ reflections suggest, trans bodies are regularly subjected to verbal and physical confrontations, confrontations which can lead to affective responses of anxiety, trauma, hypervigilance and/or unconsciously relegating/numbing their attention to, as Lutza stated, “background noise.” Interviewees also described affective responses to the transphobia that they encounter, both within and beyond these spaces, as correlated, if not contributing to, suicidality and survival-focused behaviour.25

Although it has not been my intention to attempt to provide an authoritative or complete assessment of trans individuals’ experiences within locker rooms and restrooms, it has been my aim to illustrate the myriad ways in which a sample of trans individuals’ experiences within these spaces may foreclose the possibility of full participation within both sport and physical activity, as well as, more broadly, public space. The locker room certainly is, as Fusco et al. (2015) point out, a crucial gateway space for sport and physical activity. Feeling verbally, physically, and emotionally unsafe or at-risk of assault within, and often times excluded from, binary-gendered locker rooms forecloses the possibility of trans individuals’ participation in sport and physical activity. The public restroom, similarly, as Robin Law (in Kitchin & Law, 2001) has pointed out, has a propensity to act as a “bladder’s leash” upon the population, creating particularly significant problems for the involvement of trans individuals in public spaces. As the next chapter illustrates, many trans individuals employ elaborate strategies to avoid using and/or to feel a semblance of physical and emotional safety within binary-gendered

25 According to REB Ethics Protocol, if any concerns had been raised about interviewees at an immediate risk of suicide, it would have been my duty to report this information to the REB Ethics Board. Fortunately, though suicidal ideations were mentioned throughout several interviewees’ accounts, it was clear to me as the interviewer that no participants were at risk or expressing an immediate intention to commit suicide.
locker rooms and restrooms. These findings support the critical literatures that have identified the difficulty that trans individuals have accessing these kinds of spaces impacts their abilities to participate in public life (see Bauer & Scheim, 2014; Herman, 2013).
Chapter 6

“It’s so second nature that it’s kind of hard to think about”: Interviewees’ strategies for navigating binary-gendered locker rooms and restrooms

In the previous chapter I examined the barriers that trans interviewees face in using binary-gendered locker rooms and restrooms by exploring how they perceived these spaces. In this chapter, I turn to explore what actions interviewees took to make themselves feel safer and less excluded within these spaces. This chapter identifies both the strategies that interviewees reported using to navigate these spaces from within, as well as the strategies they employed to bypass these spaces altogether. Why would engaging a discussion of these strategies be important? Narratives from the interviewees, which I will present over the course of this chapter, illustrate that identifying the strategies that trans individuals employ illuminates the magnitude of social, physical, and symbolic violence that they experience in these spaces. The results will elucidate not only a nuanced portrait of the barriers that trans people face to accessing these spaces, but also the strategies that they deem necessary to resist exclusion from accessing them. This chapter begins by examining the strategies that interviewees used to avoid locker rooms and restrooms while still participating in public life. First, I examine interviewees’ strategies for avoiding public restrooms, second, I attend to the strategies that interviewees identified for avoiding locker rooms while still accessing physical activity. Finally, I attend to the strategies that interviewees employed to manage transphobia and cisnormativity while navigating these spaces.

Strategies

a) Avoiding binary-gendered public restrooms

Of the numerous strategies that interviewees employed to make navigating binary-gendered locker rooms and public restrooms feel safer, avoiding using these spaces altogether was the most commonly employed strategy. Interviewees employed different strategies between
restrooms and locker rooms and, indeed, these strategies and spaces held different stakes. In presenting these interviewee accounts, I hope to illustrate not only the barriers that these spaces pose to involvement in public life and physical activity respectively, but also to explore the often elaborate and ingenious strategies that interviewees employed to navigate their systemic exclusion from these spaces.

Across interviewee accounts, the strategy that made avoiding restrooms possible was “holding it,” or the practice of ignoring biological signals indicating a need to urinate or defecate until a safe restroom was reached. Of the 14 interviewees that I spoke with, only two did not employ this strategy: Cheri, who because she self-identifies as stealth,26 has little trouble accessing these spaces; and Goku, who described her readiness to use public restrooms as follows: “…it’s because of my personality though. I’m the kind of person who forces myself to quickly get it done and over, and get the fuck out of there.” The remaining twelve interviewees reported employing the strategy of “holding it” to avoid public restrooms.

The interviewee accounts suggest that the practice of holding it had significant health costs. Ash, who avoided using gendered restrooms for years described the long-term effects of this strategy on them and their friends:

I would hold it. You know? But then I would hear from a lot of my friends who are also in the same place. They were developing urinary pain and all this pain. I actually have, like, a chronic pelvic pain issue… It’s like, I was literally, I would be disabled by these institutions, would like literally make me disabled. So, it’s kind of fucked.

For Ash, the restroom operates not only to exclude them from public space, but also to directly disable them as a result of this exclusion. Ash’s chronic pelvic pain is thus a direct result of the barriers they face to accessing restrooms in which their self-identified gender is included. Max also discussed the health costs that trans individuals pay as a result of avoiding binary-gendered restrooms. He said “[t]here’s a really good reason why lots of trans people have bladder issues starting in their 40s and 50s. It’s called “holding it!” Which is definitely something that I’ve

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26 Stealth is a term used within the trans community to denote one’s ability to/condition of being, for the most part, readily and consistently perceived as a cisgender person.
experienced a lot.” Both Max’s and Ash’s comments, which reference the information they have received from other members of the trans community, point to the importance of informal dissemination of knowledge within communities. Although this knowledge is not rooted within empirically-respected methods, it reflects the lived-experiences of Ash, Max, and their communities. Despite the fact that academia and medicine have had disappointingly little to say on the health impacts of transphobia/cissexism within restrooms, within trans communities the effects of holding it are common knowledge. In her seminal work *Decolonizing Methodologies*, Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2013) explores how dominant positivist models of knowledge production tend to devalue and negate forms of knowledge not rooted in so-called objective or empirical methods. Other scholars, both Indigenous and settler, have pointed out that Indigenous forms of knowledge production, characterized by their contextualization within community processes of observations, are in fact systematic, empirical, and precise (e.g., Absolon & Willett, 2004; Heaslip, 2008; LaRiviere & Crawford, 2013). Although my project does not specifically engage with Indigenous methods of knowledge production, it offers an extrapolatable illustration of community-based knowledge. Though systemically minimized and repudiated by scientific traditions, this knowledge engages possibilities not only for accurately and affectively reassessing the lived-experiences of marginalized communities, but also for a contesting the (biomedical) positivist tradition’s supposed monopoly over the production of “truth.”

Ash’s and Max’s comments also spark an important discussion about how age impacts trans inclusion within the public sphere. As trans people age, the practice of “holding it” may become less available, thus further compounding the transphobic/cissexist barriers to their participation in public life. Because interviewees’ accounts suggest that “holding it” is a strategy central to their involvement in public life, if this strategy becomes less available – either due to age, more frequent urination due to the anti-androgen therapy that many MTF transwomen undergo, or damage to kidneys and the bladder as a result of practicing this strategy for a lifetime – these individuals are likely to be forced to withdraw from public space as a result. Further evidence from critical research illustrates the negative long-term physical and psychological health outcomes of “holding it” (Herman, 2013; Porta et al., 2017; Weinhardt et al., 2017).

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27 *MTF* is a term that an individual may use to self-identify their gender as male-to-female.
Several interviewees reported another strategy which accompanied “holding it,” namely avoiding drinking water and eating to prevent needing to use a public restroom. For instance, for Candy, the racist transphobia that she experiences in binary-gendered women’s restrooms prompts her not only to “hold it” but also to limit the amount of water that she intakes. Corey and Goku also identified this strategy as one that a number of their friends used; however, both indicated that they did not employ this strategy on a regular basis due to concerns with dehydration.

A study (n=93) by Jody L. Herman (2013) found that not only are these strategies widespread among the trans community, but also that they are associated with significant health outcomes. For example, 54% of respondents reported experiencing at least one type of health problem as a result of “holding it” (p. 75). Health problems included: dehydration (10% of respondents), urinary tract infections (8%), kidney infection (2%), and other kidney-related problems (2%). Furthermore, six of the 93 respondents reported, within the last year, visiting a doctor for treatment about health problems resulting from avoiding public restrooms (p. 76). A separate survey study led by James et al. (2016), the largest survey study of trans people to date (n=27,715), found that 32% of trans adults reported that they had limited either their eating or drinking within the past year in order to avoid using public restrooms. This study also revealed that, as a direct result of “holding it,” 8% of respondents had experienced a urinary tract infection or kidney-related medical issue within the last year (p. 17).

The impact of avoiding public restrooms extends beyond health consequences and can impede upon trans individuals’ ability to participate fully within the public sphere. A number of interviewees described how the barriers that they experience to using public restrooms regularly shape their decisions to traverse public space. For example, although Jane comes across as extroverted, she tends to avoid crowded events and spaces because crowded restrooms pose a particular problem for her; waiting in line makes her more vulnerable to being outed, reduces her ability to utilize other strategies like “getting in and out,” and raises the stakes of confrontations in this space. The barrier that restrooms pose to trans-inclusion not only compromises their ability to access public space but, most crucially, erodes their ability to access basic needs like health care. Herman’s (2013) study, for instance, found that, to avoid using binary-gendered
restrooms, 9% of respondents avoided seeking treatment in a hospital, healthcare facility, or doctor’s office (p. 76).

The majority of interviewees in my study also reported regularly going to significant lengths to access gender-neutral restrooms. For Padraig, who has difficulty accessing male and female restrooms, they regularly go out of their way to access gender-neutral restroom spaces:

So now it’s weird, I’m a grown-ass person and I’m starting to do those things where it’s like: sometimes trans people hold their pee and I’m like “yeah, yeah, doing that.” It’s like, sometimes trans people have to run around the 20th floor of the building looking for the only gender-neutral washroom. I’m like “yea, yeah, yeah, that’s one of the things that I’m doing now.” Because I can’t stand it! My experience with gender and washrooms and change rooms is getting worse, not better.

Here, Padraig’s account of going out of their way, to a metaphoric 20th floor, illustrates not only the lengths that they will go to avoid using gendered restrooms, but it also contests narrative claims of progress that are often exemplified in discourses surrounding trans issues in the West. Since about 2015, sociopolitical outcomes like the emergence of transwomen celebrities, such as Laverne Cox, and the passing of Bill C-1628 in Canada as well as Obama’s American Title IX directives29 have fueled a discursive sense of hope for the possibility of trans-inclusion as well as a sense of “progress” in this regard. Padraig’s account rejects this discourse of progress, or at the very least, its propensity for affecting their lived-experience within binary-gendered spaces. Padraig’s comments dismiss a national Canadian narrative built upon a self-affirmation of progressiveness and exceptionality, in comparison to the current events in Trump’s America.30

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28 Bill C-16 was passed by the Canadian Parliament in June 2017; it established gender identity as grounds for legal protection within the Canadian Constitution.
29 In May 2016, the Obama administration issued a federal directive regarding the inclusion of gender identity within Title IX. This federal directive asserted that all federally funded academic institutions across the United States were legally obliged to, among other directives, permit trans students to use the locker rooms and restrooms corresponding to their gender identity; however, in February 2017, these federal protections were withdrawn by the Trump administration.
30 As of October 2018, the Trump administration has sought to revise a definition of gender that is “either male or female, unchangeable, and determined by the genitals that a person is born with” (Green, Benner, & Pear, 2018). Not only is the Trump administration seeking to apply this definition at the federal level, across the United States, but it is also attempting to, ostensibly, erase trans existence from United Nations documents (Borger, 2018).
Instead, Padraig points out that, as far as binary-gendered spaces are concerned, trans peoples’ lived-experiences are getting “worse not better.”

Valerie also describes the strategies that have become embedded within her daily practice of survival. Because Valerie is a diabetic, it is a medically necessary for her to use the restroom frequently, which requires her to anticipate where she can find a gender-neutral restroom as opposed to utilizing the strategy of “holding it.” Valerie noted:

I’ll plan where I’m going depending on where the washrooms are. So, if there’s a disabled washroom in this location then I’ll go to that area and do my shopping and make sure I go to that washroom, instead of going to a specific location where I have no idea where the washrooms are.

Valerie’s reflection illustrates how the inaccessibility of binary-gendered restrooms in many ways forces trans individuals’ public lives to revolve around the availability of gender-neutral restrooms, which are safer and more inclusive for their use. Furthermore, her excerpt points to the added difficulty that trans individuals like Valerie have visiting new or unfamiliar places. The transphobia and cissexism that come to have characterized many interviewees’ experiences in public restrooms operate to further contain trans involvement in the public sphere, limiting their participation to spaces that are knowable and familiar, and hence their bodies and public presence continues to be marginalized.

Traversing public spaces requires a number of constant and unconscious strategies for many trans individuals. Max described his mental strategy of mapping out gender-neutral restrooms:

It’s almost become something that is an unconscious thing, as soon as I enter in a place that I’m going to be, whether it’s an event or I’m travelling somewhere, or that I know that I’m leaving work and I’m coming here [to the location of our interview]. I know that this place has single occupancy washrooms, so it’s fine, but if I was meeting you at Tim Hortons’s or something I would probably have made sure that I went to the bathroom before I left work, which I did anyways. Because there’s a single occupancy washroom at
work that’s not gendered that I can use before I leave. So, it’s so second nature that it’s kind of hard to think about.

At both the beginning and conclusion of this excerpt, Max remarks upon how his strategy of mentally mapping gender-neutral restrooms has become “an unconscious thing” and “second nature.” I would like to suggest that the reflexiveness with which Max employs this strategy not only demonstrates the frequency and severity of the scrutiny he has experienced in binary-gendered restrooms, but also how this strategy operates as fundamental to his participation in public life. The reflections offered by Padraig, Valerie, and Max point to the importance of the availability of single-stall and/or gender-neutral restrooms within the public sphere. Their reflections illustrate the role that these restrooms play in mediating their participation in this sphere, and suggest that without these spaces, their participation would be greatly diminished. The results of my study do not stand alone. The aforementioned study conducted by Herman (2013) found that 49% of respondents planned their routes and destinations around where they knew they could find safe restrooms (p. 76). Furthermore, 58% reported avoiding public space due to the lack of availability of safe restrooms and 30% indicated they had elected not to attend an event, for example a party or a wedding, because they did not know if there would be a restroom that they could use (p. 76). A study conducted by Bauer and Scheim (2014) found that a similar percentage, 57%, of trans-Ontarians experience barriers to public space vis-à-vis the public restroom.

Interviewees’ accounts suggest that public restrooms are fundamental to this demographic’s ability to access public space. The restroom acts as a crucial space for involvement in public life. Geographer Robin Law (in Kitchin and Law, 2001), exploring the ways in which architecture both facilitates and limits individuals’ use of public space, introduced the concept of the “bladder’s leash.” Law argued that, in the Victorian era, the lack of public facilities for women was an intentional method of limiting women’s involvement in the public sphere. Applying Law’s concept of the bladder’s leash to the trans “bathroom problem” (see Halberstam, 1998) provides a useful starting point to think through the material implications of the scarcity of gender-inclusive restrooms upon trans involvement within the public sphere. Simply put, people can only extend into public space as far or as long as their bladders will allow. Because non-passing trans people are constrained by the availability of restrooms which
they can safely use, their “bladder’s leash” is much shorter than that of cisgender individuals, thus limiting their participation within public space. Jack Halberstam (1989) and StormMiguel Florez (2010) have discussed how this “bathroom problem” becomes particularly pernicious in transit zones, such as airports, suggesting that the geographic mobility of trans individuals is also constrained by the lack of gender-inclusive restrooms.

Trans interviewees, as described previously and discussed further in the sections that follow, practiced spatial resistance, straining against the limits of their “bladder’s leash.” This resistance is manifested both in trans individuals’ strategies for avoiding binary-gendered public restrooms: namely holding it and limiting their intake of fluid and food, as well as mentally mapping and planning their routes around the availability of gender-neutral restrooms. As I will discuss in the sections that follow, interviewees also used strategies for entering binary-gendered restrooms, strategies for passing undetected, and for making these visits safer and less socially alienating. These strategies are best read, not as mundane and daily practices of needing to excrete, though they are that too, but as courageous and profoundly radical refusals to be excised from the public sphere.

Law’s concept of the bladder’s leash (in Kitchin and Law, 2001) may also offer a theoretical point of entry to think through how the inaccessibility of gender-inclusive public restrooms does not constrain trans individuals in a uniform or a “race”-neutral way. Indeed, anti-Blackness and white supremacy are also active in the excision of racialized trans folk from the public sphere (see e.g., Garza, 2014; Maynard, 2017; Tinsley & Richardson, 2014). For instance, although not specifically explored within this study, racialized trans people may be more likely than their white trans peers to be subjected to scrutiny, refusal, or violence when they attempt to access gender-inclusive restrooms designated as “disabled” (see Kosciw et al., 2016, p. 82; Xavier, Bobbin, Singer, & Budd, 2005). In this way the concept of the bladder’s leash, when taken up through an anti-racist lens, provides the kind of theoretical space necessary to explore how the availability of strategies are also taken up because of intersecting oppressions. It is not incidental that the white supremacy groups advocating for “nationalism” are also invested in eroding the juridical ability of trans individuals to access constitutional rights, such as protection from discrimination based on gender identity (see Shapira, 2018; Southern Law Poverty Center, 2018; Sunshine, 2017). The struggle that ensues over the site of the restroom is no coincidence;
excluding trans individuals from public restrooms operates to further limit the reach of their “bladder’s leash” and may be an intentional strategy, I would argue, for limiting their participation within the public sphere.

Within the current sociopolitical moment, the intensity of focus placed upon trans exclusion from public restrooms – for example in the political maneuverings of the Trump administration (USA), the Massachusetts “No on 3” campaign, and other right-wing agendas – suggests that not only is the public restroom a site of struggle for trans individuals, but it is a target space for transphobic agendas. For certain groups, the public restroom is targeted as a particularly productive mechanism for trans exclusion precisely because of the essentiality of its role to trans involvement in the public sphere.

b) Avoiding binary-gendered locker rooms

Interviewees used a different set of strategies for avoiding locker rooms than they used for restrooms, because of the harassment and violence that are specific to trans individuals’ experiences within binary-gendered locker rooms. Certainly, the lack of a medical necessity and biological need (e.g., having to use the restroom) for accessing this space widened the availability of methods for avoiding locker rooms, and also reduced the stakes of these strategies. Although for many interviewees, avoiding binary-gendered locker rooms meant reducing their access to sport and physical activity, several interviewees employed creative and often elaborate strategies for participating in these activities without using locker rooms.

To avoid public locker rooms, most interviewees simply avoided engaging in sport and physical activity. I should note that all interviewees, in either the past or present, at one point felt they could not access sport and physical activity because they could not safely access locker rooms. However, several attempted to access sport and physical activity without using binary-gendered locker rooms; these strategies are worth outlining here.

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31 The “No on 3 Campaign” was led by a group called “Keep Massachusetts Safe.” On November 6th, voters in Massachusetts voted in a veto referendum to uphold Senate Bill 2407, more commonly referred to as Question 3, which legally prohibits barring trans individuals from using the locker rooms and restrooms associated with their gender identity.
Several interviewees reported wearing their gym clothes underneath their regular clothes to the gym and afterwards returning home without changing. This strategy, however, foreclosed the possibility of working out in the winter months, when a coat and boots would be required for commuting. For Xavier, trying to bring a bag into the workout room resulted in confrontations with staff members who indicated that this was against weight room policy. His attempt to include himself in physical activity without being forced to use the men’s locker room was misread as an unwillingness to respect the rules of the facility. Xavier’s strategy, however, was used so he could access physical activity despite the systemic barrier he faces to using the locker room. Xavier reported that, for him, the key to being able to work out was avoiding the locker room. He said: “I’d make sure I was wearing my gym clothes to go to the gym so that I didn’t have to change there.”

Another interviewee, Max, described how the locker room is central to his selection of gym facilities. In this excerpt he also described his strategy for accessing the pool without using the locker room:

I picked a gym based on the fact that I don’t have to actually use their change room. So, I live here [the name of intersection]. The gym is right there [points toward a direction]. I go there [name of gym] and I live like five doors up. I change and shower at home. So that’s a huge factor for me.
I actually do. I put my swimsuit on underneath. I don’t have to change in the change room. I don’t look at anybody. I just, like, go. I go swim, and then I leave.

Although for many having a gym located near one’s place of residence is certainly convenient, as Max points out in his reflection, this proximity is not so much a convenience as it is necessary for him to access this facility at all. As Max’s reflection illustrates, compared to the difficulty that he has accessing locker rooms, wearing clothing over a wet swimming suit is a preferable option. Consider, for a moment, the severity of the conditions of exclusion that he must face in this space to make this arrangement feel like an opportunity for him.

Finding and utilizing gender-inclusive locker rooms was a strategy that Ash used.
Their enthusiasm about the universal locker room at Toronto’s Cooper Koo YMCA was palpable. Ash practically shouted with excitement:

So, what I’ve actually been doing instead, I’ve been going to the YMCA at Cherry Koo specifically. I go to it specifically because it has a gender-neutral change room. Just imagine a lovely, open, very clean change room with lockers and showers and everything – all the amenities that are in the women’s change room. And, so I’ve been taking all my gender non-binary friends. Like [telling them], “I have a YMCA one-week trial, come over, come over, let’s go swimming!” And, like, the joy that lights up on their face…

For Ash, possibilities for involvement in physical culture are engendered by the opportunity to use the universal locker room at Cooper Koo. The excitement that they express is not solely their own, but also excitement amplified through shared experience with other members of the trans community. Ash’s strategy of utilizing a universal locker room to access physical activity was not, unfortunately, available to all of the interviewees. Few interviewees reported having the opportunity to access a gender-neutral or universal locker room, and several reported that they did not even know that they existed. Certainly, this strategy had positive results for Ash’s ability to access physical activity, however, universal locker rooms are not widely available.

As the interviewees’ accounts suggest, although many avoid physical activity due to the barrier that locker rooms pose, a number employed creative strategies to access physical activity without having to enter this space. Their reflections point not only to the difficulty that trans individuals have accessing binary-gendered locker rooms, but also to the need for developing alternatives to these spaces. Furthermore, there is a need for institutions to facilitate participation that is not contingent upon the use of the locker room. For example, Xavier could have participated in physical activity if lockers were available outside of the male and female locker rooms, or if a storage area or bag check option was provided within the weight room. And Max would not have to walk home wearing a wet swimsuit if the facility he used provided even a solitary single-stall changing space or restroom. Conversely, what was responsible for the possibility of Ash’s participation, and that of a number of their trans peers, was the availability of a universal locker room.
c) Inside locker rooms and restrooms

The previous section of this chapter explored the strategies that interviewees use to avoid locker rooms and restrooms while still accessing physical activity and public space. This section, in turn, explores the strategies that interviewees employed within these spaces. This section overviews the following strategies: avoiding nudity, managing their gazes, hurrying or rushing within these spaces, utilizing the support of an ally, and finally, attempting to make themselves or aspects of themselves invisible in these spaces.

i) Avoiding nudity

Within the locker room, avoiding nudity and/or mitigating nudity were strategies that interviewees used to make this space accessible. The presence of nudity within locker rooms is, perhaps, the reason why, compared to the restroom, trans inclusion in locker rooms has received so little attention. From what I have argued so far, and from what the literature has concluded, the trans body in a space such as a locker room can be understood as a particular threat to the cisgender heteropatriarchal order. Following my findings and the research to date on other spaces where trans people are present, it is not surprising that dominant normative discourses would take up trans presence in the locker room as either a monstrous and disfigured nude body or as a predatorial voyeur of nude ciswomen. These kinds of dominant transphobic and cisnormative discourses were reflected in interviewees’ relationship to nudity in this space: in how they protected themselves both vis-à-vis preventing denuding themselves as well as shielding others’ nudity from their own gaze.

When interviewees did access locker rooms, strategies for managing nudity were central to their participation in these spaces. Interestingly, for one interviewee, Lutza, denuding was a key strategy used to access the locker room. She described how prior to her mastectomy, undressing quickly so that she could reveal her “passport” to this space, namely her breasts, was a crucial strategy. After her mastectomy, however, Lutza pointed out that this strategy was no longer available to her and that though, today, she deliberately uses nudity to claim her entitlement to be in the locker room, the affective responses of other locker room users are often
characterized by confusion and curiosity. I will discuss this aspect of Lutza’s strategy in more
detail later on in this chapter (see pp. 149-150).

For the majority of interviewees, avoiding nudity was a strategy fundamental to their
ability to access this space. Cheri described how her ability to access all of the amenities
associated with the locker room were limited by her trans embodiment: “I’m pre-op and
therefore I would never shower or completely disrobe in the women’s locker room because, well,
basically I’m stealth and that would out me.” Although later in the interview Cheri indicated that,
hypothetically, she wishes she could access the shower or the sauna facility in the women’s
locker room, her trans embodiment forecloses this possibility. Additionally, Cheri’s self-
description of herself as “pre-op” is one that references but refuses a dominant discourse about
trans bodies. To be “pre-op” is, according to normative dominant discourse, is to be progressing
toward a final and supposedly correct medicalized destination. Cheri transitioned over a decade
ago and presumably has no intention of undergoing bottom surgery. Should this decision not to
undergo surgery, however, make her any less entitled to access the amenities of the women’s
locker room?

Similarly, Corey, who uses the men’s locker room at his place of work, indicated that he
cannot undress below the layer of his undershirt and boxers because this would expose his binder
and packer, which Corey worried, if other men saw, would further ostracize him within the
space. For him the trade-off in utilizing the locker room, which he noted is important to him
being able to keep his job, often means enduring wearing sweaty underclothes on hot days, since
to change his undergarments is off limits to him. For Padraig, in elementary school, denuding in
a locker room was only possible either after all the other children had left the space or when they
were in a corner of the room safely out of sight. Today, Padraig still struggles to access all of the
amenities offered in the locker room. Padraig describes their desire, yet simultaneous reluctance
to utilizing locker room showers, and suggests that the experience of “freak[ing] everyone out”
each time they use the shower poses a barrier to their involvement in physical culture:

I like that feeling where I’m like: “I’m fresh! I worked out and I showered, now I’m out
here in the world, I feel amazing! My pores are open!” I want that too. Instead I’m like
well... if I’m not going to freak everybody out, I have to go out and be like: “I’m ratty,
I’m sweaty.” I’m going to be sitting in my own dankness for half an hour on the subway. You know? I don’t want that. It’s not great.

Other interviewees used myriad other techniques; for example, Xavier would undress and redress in the shower and Jane changes within the bathroom stall within the locker room.

Interviewees’ strategies for avoiding nudity in the locker room illustrates the effects of a dominant discourse that represents the nude trans body as monstrous and threatening to the body politic (see Koch-Rein, 2014). Recent events, namely the Donald Trump US administration’s intention to redefine gender as immutable and only ever binary, demonstrates how this discourse has been positioned as one of national and international concern. The nude trans body, understood this way, is conceived as a threat not only to the nation-state, but also to the global order – and the Trump administration’s insistence that the United Nations adopt their definition of gender points to the administration’s urgency to constrain the advancement of global trans human rights. The potentiality of nude trans bodies is perhaps the reason why trans inclusion within locker rooms has received significantly less attention than it has within public restrooms – the potential for nudity in the locker room makes it a risky conversation to engage and resolve.

It would not be surprising if a cisnormative and dominant discourse of nude trans bodies as disgusting and/or dangerous, may have had a significant impact upon how interviewees accessed and utilized locker rooms. Based on the strategies that interviewees described using, I perceived that, for the occasions where interviewees were able to access locker rooms, their presence in these spaces was contingent upon their ability to carry out their intentions (e.g., getting ready to take part in physical activity) without being nude. However, as the next section demonstrates, discomfort not only arose from their thoughts about being nude themselves, but about the nudity of other locker room users and a persistent and pervasive concern that their gaze would be misperceived as predatorial.

ii) Managing gazes

In both locker rooms and restrooms, interviewees’ strategies surrounding how they would manage the gazes of other individuals in these spaces as well as managing their own gaze, were
essential. Strategies associated with managing gazes were practiced differently and nuanced in both spaces, particularly in the locker room where nudity occurs.

‘Managing one’s own gaze’ was a strategy that a number of interviewees employed in order to feel less alienated within locker rooms and restrooms. Averting one’s gaze by “looking at the ground,” or “keeping [one’s] head down” was a strategy used by a number of interviewees to either avoid confrontation or to assuage concerns that they may be misperceived as sexual predators in these spaces. Xavier, for example, described using this strategy: “… I’d always make sure to keep my eyes looking at the ground, which made the gym experience uncomfortable.” And Max pointed out how using this strategy was central to his ability to feel comfortable using a facility:

… once I knew where I was going, I didn’t have to look at anybody, I didn’t have to deal with their looks. I knew where my locker was, I knew when the times were, I just didn’t engage with people, so I’d keep my head down.

Additionally, Padraig described how averting their gaze helped with managing the anxiety that they feel in locker rooms: “I was like... must look down at the floor at all costs. When I say it was a mess. It was a mess.” Similarly, to guard against potential violence while simultaneously following the norms of men’s locker rooms and washrooms, Corey described the following strategy: “… you have to both scan and keep your eyes to yourself. I’m making sure I’m pretty expressionless, but also trying to be calm.”

Not only did interviewees report managing their own gazes, but one, Wonder, also reported having their gaze disciplined by others. Wonder described a demand made by one of their peers when they were young:

I had to turn around and face the corner away from everybody because of their fears of my sexuality… I remember vaguely – and this was grade 7 or grade 8 – I remember vaguely someone telling me to turn around, not to watch them. So that’s what I did for the rest of my time there in the change room. Yeah.
Although interviewees’ strategy of averting their gazes was certainly in recognition of the fact that trans individuals are regularly assumed to be sexually predatorial or voyeuristic trespassers within binary-gendered spaces, there were multiple reasons why interviewees employed this strategy. For instance, for Corey, averting his gaze was a strategy used to avoid violence and assault. For Wonder, it was a strategy to avoid further bullying from their peers. For Xavier and Padraig this strategy was used to reduce their anxiety in these spaces.

Interestingly, two interviewees, Lutza and Max, described how being myopic was an advantage when they were in these spaces, and that the limitations of their eyesight actually provided relief to them. Both reported that because they are nearsighted, they are unable to accurately see the nuanced stares that they receive in locker rooms and restrooms. For example, Max commented: “…it’s helpful that my vision has deteriorated so I don’t actually see people. Like I know that people are staring at me all the time.” Similarly, Lutza described:

So I have the [pause] weird luck of being myopic, of being short-sighted, so, like, I just take my glasses off and then I can miss like the subtleties of the gaze. Which … it’s certainly kind [that] you miss the nuances of looks that you might get.

For both Lutza and Max, the ability to not perceive the gazes of other locker room and restroom users improved their experiences of accessing these spaces. Their dulled vision disconnected them from what Lutza called “the subtleties of the gaze” in ways that allowed them to be less confronted by the confused, concerned, and/or hostile gazes of others in these spaces. The ways in which interviewees describe managing their gazes, however, forecloses the possibility of the locker room becoming a space for cultivating community around a shared involvement in physical culture, as it is for many cisgender individuals.

iii) “Getting in and out as fast as I can”: Hurrying

This section examines a strategy that, 8 interviewees (of the fourteen that I interviewed) identified using: spending as little time as possible within locker rooms and restrooms. The strategy of speed and efficiency that interviewees employed, as I will demonstrate, illustrates the physical and emotional dangers that they associate with these spaces, which increase the longer they remain in these spaces.
Both Candy and Max identified the need to hurry within these spaces. Lutza described the importance of being quick and efficient with time in locker rooms, particularly unfamiliar ones. She commented: “Let’s say a friend invited me to a new gym, I would probably just use the strategies of, just, like, getting in and out as fast as I can.” For Goku, hurrying is an essential strategy for using public restrooms. She described: “…quickly, get it done and over and [then] get the fuck out of there. I’m more like in a rush. I’ll get in, out, done.” For several interviewees, within the public restroom, the action of washing hands is a particularly precarious one, not only because it places them in an open, unpartitioned, mirrored area of an already tenuous space, but also because it requires an additional time investment in that space. Valerie reported: “… even when it comes to washing my hands, I do it as quickly as possible and then I leave. I don’t want to take time.” The transphobic scrutiny and assault that Wonder has experienced in public restrooms also informs their strategy of reducing the time that they spend in this space. Wonder described balancing hygiene with a need to avoid transphobic and cisnormative surveillance at restroom sinks. Wonder grimaced: “… I don’t actually like hand sanitizer but I keep it on me for that reason.” Jane succinctly captured the rationale that informs her and other interviewees’ strategy of hurrying: “I feel like the longer I’m in these spaces, the more of a risk there is in being potentially clocked\(^\text{32}\) and outed, and then possibly being harassed about it.”

The centrality that the strategy of hurrying plays to mitigate interviewees’ experiences in locker rooms and public restrooms is significant. It is apparent that interviewees perceived the more time that they spent in these spaces, the more likely they would be to experience physical violence and/or social alienation. For these reasons, utilizing speed and efficiency appears to be a key strategy that interviewees employed to evade the physical and social violence they repeatedly and regularly experience in these spaces. Speed operates as a strategic form of resistance not only against the scrutiny and assault that trans individuals experience within these spaces, but also against absolute erasure from these spaces. Thus, resisting erasure from locker rooms and restrooms is essential to refusing excision from the activities and places for which these spaces act as gateways.

iv) “It would all depend on if I’m with somebody”: Engaging ally support

\(^{32}\) *Clocked* is a term that references the experience of being outed as trans.
Recruiting the support of an ally was a strategy that the majority of interviewees reported using to navigate locker rooms and restrooms. Interviewees described how being accompanied by a friend or supportive individual helped them feel safer and more able to access these spaces. Max described how, particularly in unfamiliar spaces, having an ally present helps him feel comfortable accessing locker rooms: “I do swim at [another gym]. I started swimming there and I got someone to come with me the first few times to be able to check it out.” Lutza also described the importance of being accompanied by an ally and pointed out that having a rapport with staff and other “regulars” also helps her feel more comfortable in this space:

I would say the regulars now know me and at the very least the staff knows me so there’s always people who can vouch for me. Um, but I do go to a bunch of gyms where nobody knows me and that’s always interesting. It’s like: how’s this going to go today? But I’m never alone at those gyms so that’s also a plus in that sense… ‘Cause someone can vouch for me… it’s always good to have somebody who’s like “no, she’s in the right place.” And [I can] just be like, you don’t have to take my word for it, I’m not a weirdo who just, like, tries to go into the women’s locker room.

For Lutza, the familiarity of her “home” gym provides her with staff and regulars to act as allies who can “vouch” for her belonging in that space. Lutza pointed out that although she often attends other unfamiliar gyms, she never attends them on her own. For Lutza, her presence in unfamiliar locker rooms is only possible if an ally is present to advocate on her behalf. These strategies that Lutza uses to access gym locker rooms, namely the presence of an ally and working out in places where she is familiar to staff and regulars, enable her to enter these spaces, albeit in restricted ways. Another interviewee, Max, also noted that familiar locker rooms were less difficult to access than unfamiliar ones.

Due to both the anti-Blackness and transphobia which pervades Canadian society (see e.g., Bauer & Scheim, 2014; Maynard, 2017), ally accompaniment may be a particularly important strategy for Black trans individuals. Jane, for instance, is frequently questioned and harassed when she enters women’s locker rooms and restrooms; she has also been subjected to invasion of privacy in these spaces. Because of the inextricability of transphobia and anti-Blackness, having an ally is crucial to her ability to access these spaces. Jane described:
… generally, if I’m with friends or whatever, I can go into whatever ones [men’s or women’s] I feel comfortable with… I feel safe if I have other people around that easily – when my said friends fit more into the category that would be viewed as appropriate with cis people – as opposed to just going in alone and kind of risking harassment.

Although Jane’s account does not specifically address the ways in which anti-Blackness compounds the transphobia that she experiences in these spaces, the heightened scrutiny that she experiences, vis-à-vis both her gender and racialization, is significant. The intersectional nature of the scrutiny that she experiences, perhaps, accounts for the conditional clause that she uses in her description of entering these spaces: “…if I’m with friends or whatever, I can go into…” This phrasing seems to suggest that her ability to access these spaces is directly contingent upon the presence of an ally. Similarly, for Goku, ally accompaniment is an essential strategy. Goku, who is regularly refused entry into women’s spaces because, as she put it: “I feel as though I’m big and Black, that definitely scares people.” Goku identified having an ally as essential to being able to access women’s locker rooms and restrooms. Goku noted: “…there will be times that I won’t use a female change room or washroom, but if I had some allies or other trans folks, then I’d feel more welcomed.” Goku also uses a conditional clause to demonstrate the importance of an ally to accessing these spaces: “… if I had some allies…” Furthermore, for Candy, who has faced ridicule and assault in women’s spaces, ally accompaniment is also referenced as an essential strategy for accessing these spaces:

And when I had to “go” [use the restroom] it would all depend on if I’m with somebody. I would normally be with a fe- [interrupts herself] a cisgender female. And we would probably go in together quickly, so that if something happened I would know that they would have my back. I’d have their support.”

For Candy her presence in women’s facilities also appears to be contingent upon ally accompaniment: “… it would all depend on if I’m with somebody…” Jane, Goku, and Candy’s remarks suggest that the presence of an ally is fundamental to their ability to access these spaces. Although having an ally was also important to, and also appeared to improve the experiences of, interviewees who self-identified as white, for example Lutza, Max, and Corey, it appears that white interviewees’ ability to access these spaces did not depend upon the availability of an ally.
to the same degree. This finding emphasizes the importance of engaging an intersectional analysis when examining trans exclusion within locker rooms and restrooms. This finding also points to how crucial it is to attend to the ways in which issues of access to these kinds of spaces are bound up for these interviewees with not only transphobic and cisnormative assumptions, but also anti-Blackness.

v) “I try to make myself invisible”: Managing one’s visibility

Several interviewees also described employing a strategy where they would make themselves or aspects of themselves invisible to other locker room and restroom users. Valerie noted: “I try to make myself invisible… Or, if someone does walk in and I’m there, I’ll look away so they don’t see my face.” For Valerie making herself invisible is central to accessing this space. For her, hiding her face is a key manoeuvre in avoiding transphobic and cisnormative scrutiny. Xavier described attempting to conceal the racialized aspects of his embodiment to feel safer in these spaces, a strategy that he speculated became more difficult after he medically transitioned to male. Xavier’s strategy signals the ways in which transphobia and racism are entangled within the lived-experiences of trans individuals, and that these experiences shape not only the strategies available to them for navigating these spaces, but also those required to do so safely. Jane described using masculine clothing to conceal her transness within male locker rooms and restrooms. Her strategy is to pack masculine clothing in a knapsack and put this clothing over top of her attire before entering male spaces in order to “back pass,” a practice that Jane employs to present herself as a cisgender male. As outlined in detail in the Review of Literature chapter, racialized and Indigenous bodies are constrained in their abilities to navigate white normative spaces. Through claiming certain privileged spaces as white, and relegating space marked as degenerate as racialized, the project of white supremacy structures a containment of race through space (see Ahmed, 2006; Manalansan, 2005; Nero, 2005; Razack, 2002). Interviewee accounts suggest that locker rooms and restrooms are implicated within this racialized colonial order.

Lutza reported utilizing a markedly different strategy when it came to managing her visibility/invisibility in binary-gendered locker rooms and restrooms. For her, hypervisibility rather than invisibility offers an opportunity for navigating these spaces. Lutza described her rationale for making her transness visible when she walks around the locker room:
So, I’m one of those obnoxious people at the locker room who goes from my locker to the shower which at [name of gym] is like half a mile, with like my towel over my shoulder. This is this body, moving through this locker room, you can have feelings about it, but I’m not going to be the one who’s like trying to hide what’s happening. Because that to me is easier, and there’s a little bit less uncertainty in that I feel like as long as I act very visibly that I know that I belong here then that’s at least a good message to be sending. I’m not affirming their position of like “I don't think this person is supposed to be here.” I’m affirming my position of “no this is my locker room and I’m here every day.”

For Lutza, rather than concealing her transness, displaying it appears to offer her a strategy for avoiding scrutiny in this space and claiming this space as her own. Lutza was the first to point out, however, that this strategy is not one available to all. Lutza continues:

[This] is a strategy that I have that comes from a form of privilege: I am a strong able-bodied person, I am a person who is white, who is relatively attractive. So generally speaking, I start off on the right foot, even if people think I am a man in the locker room, [pause] even if things come to a battle of charms I can hold my own. My strategy comes from a point of privilege. But my strategy is to not hide anything.

As Lutza suggests, using hypervisibility to manage other locker room users’ perceptions of her is not a strategy available to all trans individuals. Indeed, the results of this study suggest that the availability of strategies for moving through locker rooms and restrooms is dependent upon interviewees’ embodiment in terms of their racialization and gender as well as ability and body size. Lutza’s proximity to whiteness, the specificities of her gender, and her athletic body work on her behalf to make available strategies that, for other interviewees, might be ineffective or even dangerous.

In Dark Matters: On the Surveillance of Blackness, Simone Browne (2015) theorizes how contemporary, state-led surveillance practices are rooted in and honed from anti-Black practices of violently constraining the movements of enslaved peoples. Browne argues that to understand surveillance, Blackness must be made a focal point, a focus largely elided in the
emerging field of surveillance studies. Browne introduces the term *racializing surveillance*, to describe how hegemonic regulatory practices of surveilling tend to target racialized individuals. Browne points to a legacy of subjecting Black and racialized bodies to scrupulous surveillance. As an example, Browne (2012, p. 552) points to the *Lantern Law* of 1713, officially named the “Law for Regulating Negro or Indian Slaves in the Nighttime” which held that:

‘no Negro or Indian Slave above the age of fourteen years do presume to be or appear in any of the streets’ of New York City ‘on the south side of the fresh water one hour after sunset without a lantern or a lit candle.’

This practice, which legally enforced enslaved individuals to carry a lantern to ensure their constant visibility is not rendered to the past Browne suggests, but is carried forward within the modern passport system, a system that Browne traces back to technologies crafted to track and prevent Black enslaved fugitivity (2012, p. 548). The airport security line is, as Browne points out, another example of racialized surveillance, whereby Black and racialized bodies are subjected to greater surveillance than white bodies are. Browne also develops the term *dark sousveillance* as a form of resistance practiced by racialized people. As Browne describes it, dark sousveillance employs “anti-surveillance, counter-surveillance and other freedom practices” as “…a way to situate the tactics employed to render one’s self out of sight…” (2015, p. 21).

Understood through this context of Simone Browne’s work, Candy’s refusal to use the locker room and limiting her use of the restroom might not simply be a strategy for avoiding these spaces, but in fact, a praxis of dark sousveillance. Through this praxis Candy renders herself out of sight and refuses to be subjected to *racializing surveillance* in a space that is particularly dangerous to and scrutinizing of her embodiment as a Black transwoman. Because the public restroom acts as a gateway for the public sphere (Cavanagh, 2010), this practice of dark sousveillance is both a refusal and a freedom practice; it enables her to bypass the restroom’s threat of humiliation and violence, while still being able to access the public sphere.

Binary-gendered locker rooms and restrooms are sites that solidify universal binary gender categories; the hegemonic assumption that all individuals fall into one of these two categories is challenged by the presence of visibly trans bodies within these spaces. As the interviewees’ reflections suggest, however, to inhabit a body that visibly, socially, and culturally
challenges this binary, particularly for those that are also racialized, disabled, or fat, is to be deemed (ir)responsible for disrupting this gendered order which renders one vulnerable to symbolic, emotional, and physical violence as a result.

The strategy of making oneself or aspects of oneself invisible within locker rooms and public restrooms also forecloses the possibility of full participation in these spaces. As Hargie, Mitchell, and Somerville (2017) as well as Fusco’s earlier work (1995) have suggested, locker rooms are not only spaces where clothing is changed, but also sites of meaningful social exchange. Even if trans individuals are able to access locker rooms and restrooms, many of the strategies that they use to feel safer and less excluded within them, constrains their opportunities for accessing social and cultural benefits, which are more readily accrued by cisgender participants in these spaces, such as participation in communities built around physical activity.

Conclusion

In this Strategies chapter, I have explored the litany of strategies that interviewees employed to navigate the systemic exclusion and oppression that they experience within binary-gendered locker rooms and restrooms. These strategies were not circumscribed only by interviewees’ gender, but also by other aspects of their embodiment. The strategies that interviewees used to navigate these spaces not only illustrate the magnitude of exclusion that act as barriers to trans inclusion in these spaces, but also demonstrates the methods through which they also attempt to resist their excision from public space. Without establishing an understanding of binary-gendered locker rooms and restrooms in their full complexity, as gateways to involvement in public space and public life, it will be difficult to adequately acknowledge the importance of these spaces for trans inclusion and trans liberation. Acknowledging the strategies that the interviewees identified using is essential to establishing a nuanced understanding of the barriers that trans individuals confront when using these spaces. Without this understanding it will, likely, be impossible to identify effective and sensitive interventions for making these spaces safer and more inclusive for trans individuals, and thus enabling these communities to participate fully in a public and physically active life. Informed by the results discussed in this chapter as well as the previous two, in the final chapter, I turn my attention towards identifying and outlining possible interventions which may be able to make these spaces safer.
Chapter 7
“‘I feel like there’s a solution that hasn’t been thought about yet…’: Examining interviewee perceptions of interventions for improving trans inclusion in locker rooms and restrooms

This chapter extends the discussions explored in the previous three chapters to examine how interviewees perceived various trans-inclusive locker room and restroom interventions currently being used across North America and Europe. This chapter also outlines a number of other interventions that interviewees identified as necessary for making these spaces safer and more trans-inclusive. As detailed in the Methodological Overview chapter, the photo-elicitation method (Harper, 2002) was employed during interviews, which enabled me to introduce photographs to prompt discussions. The photographs only offered a starting point for our discussions, and interviewees’ reflections frequently departed from the images I brought to show them to focus on some other interventions that they identified as important. The photographic images introduced through the photo-elicitation method were: 1) Positive Space signs, 2) all-gender facilities/and signage, 3) the University of Bristol’s LGBT+ Society’s #transawarebristol poster project, 4) the Vancouver Parks Board’s Trans* and Gender Variant Inclusion Working Group’s “don’t stop and stare, stop and think” poster initiative, and 5) Fusco, Milman, and De Lisio’s (2015) The Change Room Project.

As I discussed in the previous three chapters, my study’s findings point to the fact that trans experiences in locker rooms and restrooms are shaped not only by gender and gender presentation, but also by racialization, as well as ability and body size/shape. The results presented in these chapters eschew the possibility of identifying a unified or singular trans experience. Accordingly, the findings discussed in this chapter problematize the prospects of a singular “solution” or method for fostering trans-inclusivity in these spaces. Nevertheless, the results of this chapter do suggest that there are a number of interventions that have the potential to make locker rooms and restrooms more accessible for trans individuals. My objective, in presenting these findings, is not to offer a singular or static solution, but to suggest a tool-kit of strategies that consider the ways in which multiple aspects of embodiment are, and could be, brought to bear upon interviewees’ experiences of interventions.
I begin this chapter, first, with a discussion of how interviewees perceived “Positive Space” signs as limited in their ability to make locker rooms and/or restrooms safer. Second, I turn to explore membership policies, which many interviewees identified as an essential intervention if structured effectively. Third, I explore the benefits and difficulties that interviewees identified with all-gender locker rooms and restrooms. Fourth, I examine interviewees’ responses to the three campaigns/research installations listed above, and I outline their reflections upon how, to be effective, this type of intervention must be structured and supported. Finally, I discuss interviewees’ reflections on which other interventions they propose for making these spaces safer and more trans-inclusive, namely: informal and formal education of both cisgender public and facility staff, changes to locker room and restroom signage, structural changes to existing male and female facilities, and intersectional direct-action methods.

1) Positive Space signs

Positive Space signs, which also include those labelled as “Safe Space” and “Safe Zone” signs, come in a variety of styles, shapes, and symbols. *Figure 7.1* demonstrates three examples of these signs. Positive Space signs are frequently posted by institutions and individuals to indicate an intention for a space to be safe, or safer, for LGBTTQ2SIA individuals. Interviewees’ accounts suggested that Positive Space signs are widely posted; all of the interviewees noted frequently seeing these signs.
When I asked interviewees how seeing these signs makes them feel, only two interviewees, Cheri and Goku, identified Positive Space signs as a meaningful signal of LGBTTQ2SIA inclusion. Cheri even noted that seeing these signs posted at the doctor’s office helps her to feel safe accessing medical care. Many more interviewees, however, reported mixed or negative feelings about Positive Space signs. A number of interviewees asserted that they doubt this intervention is effective at preventing transphobia. Lutza, Ash, and Max, for example, pointed out that Positive Space signs do very little to make secluded spaces like locker rooms and restrooms safer. A comment by Candy, for example, captured the scepticism that many interviewees have toward Positive Space signs: “A lot of people – around our community – use them for monetary reasons or to appear more inclusive, whereas in their personal values, they’re not... I wouldn’t feel that [safer].” Ash also expressed their mistrust toward this intervention:

It’s kind of like lip service. Like: “yeah, we’ll put a rainbow on it, but our trans customers – we’ll still fuck you over.” That’s how I feel when I see it on a deeper level. But on a surface level, I’m like: no one’s going to kick me out here.

Ash’s comments signal a degree of ambivalence toward Positive Space signs. On what they call a “deeper level,” they interpret the sign as “lip service,” an intervention that has little impact upon how trans individuals are treated. On a more “surface level” the signs do elicit some relief, in the form of feeling somewhat confident that they will not be overtly discriminated against. Both Candy’s and Ash’s comments, as well as comments from other interviewees, demonstrate how this intervention is often leveraged for corporate profit, a leveraging which often makes interviewees suspicious of the intent and efficacy of these signs.

Several interviewees reflected on their own experiences to point out that Positive Space signs are, in fact, often posted in places that are unsafe for them to go. Goku, for example, described being confronted, on two consecutive occasions, for using the restroom at a business that had posted Positive Space signs. Goku reflected on how these encounters affected her perception of this intervention: “… it made me kind of wary of stuff like that, even when they have signs like that. It’s like are you [a safe space]? Or is this for show?” Goku’s words demonstrate how the widespread use of Positive Space signs could be understood as problematic,
rather than beneficial for trans inclusion. Because she observed Positive Space signs at this business, Goku assumed that she would not face transphobia in these spaces, an assumption that proved incorrect. The posting of Positive Space signs unsupported by other, more meaningful, interventions not only encouraged Goku to use a space that was, in reality, not safe for her to access, but also led her to question the reliability of these signs. As a result, in the future Goku may be reluctant to access any spaces with Positive Space signs, even those that are supported by other more meaningful interventions.

Wonder’s comments capture the importance of having meaningful interventions, such as staff training, in place to support Positive Space signs:

> I feel that folks who put this up in their space should be mindful that they should be actively going through workshops and training to make sure that it’s positive space and keep working on that consistently because the implications are: you’re inviting folks into this space who you want to feel like it’s positive space, but then if you don’t have the tools to protect them or de-escalate situations, then you’re not actually creating that space.

Wonder’s comments suggest that if a facility is not actively utilizing interventions to make the space safer, then posting Positive Space signs is not only inaccurate and false, but also dangerous and unethical. Corey, for example, has repeatedly been confronted with homophobia and transphobia in spaces where Positive Space signs are posted. Corey pointed out that although this intervention indicates an intention to make these spaces safer, his affective response to them is a scepticism informed by his own experiences.

> I guess what that [Positive Space sign] indicates to me is that someone in that space wants it to be a positive space… It doesn’t mean that the place is going to be chill… I don’t know that homophobia won’t be tolerated.

Here, Corey suggests that this intervention offers only an intention to be safe, rather than an indication that the space is safe. For several interviewees, learning that Positive Space signs communicate an intention rather than reality usually involved them experiencing an encounter that further alienated them in a space where these signs were posted.
Overall, interviewee accounts suggested that Positive Space signs are not meaningful interventions unless they are accompanied by other, more consequential, interventions. Interviewee accounts suggest that without this accompaniment, Positive Space signs may, in fact, do more harm than good for trans inclusion in locker rooms and restrooms. Interviewees reported that they did not simply want to see Positive Space signs posted in work out facilities and public spaces, they wanted to know how these facilities were making their locker rooms and/or restrooms safer and more inclusive for trans people.

2) Membership policies

Trans-positive membership policies are another intervention or method being used by facilities and institutions to make locker rooms and restrooms safer. This intervention usually includes a clause in membership policies explicitly prohibiting transphobic behaviour. Membership policies are, however, not without controversy. In 2015, at a private Planet Fitness franchise in Midland, Michigan (USA), a cisgender female member, Yvette Cormier, was quietly asked by staff to leave the facility after she repeatedly complained to other members about the presence of a transwoman in the women’s locker room (Risdon, 2018); Cormier later successfully sued the gym. After Cormier complained to a local media network, the identity of the transwoman involved was made public. Since then, the transwoman involved has been forced to participate in media events and court proceedings; she has also received repeated death threats as a result. This case suggests that further examination is needed to evaluate whether this intervention may be effective at fostering trans inclusion in locker rooms and restrooms, or if it may operate to further subject them to scrutiny and exclusion in these spaces and beyond.

Interviewees had mixed feelings about how membership policy interventions would affect their ability to access locker rooms and restrooms. One interviewee, Corey, doubted that membership policies would be effective. Still, several others – Wonder, Max, and Xavier – perceived this intervention as essential for fostering trans inclusion in restrooms and locker rooms.

When I asked interviewees about how they would like this intervention to be constructed, they had a number of responses. Drawing upon these suggestions, I have established five criteria
for this intervention: intersectionality, enactment, restorative justice, staff education, and focus. First, membership policies need to be intersectional in their design, targeting not only transphobia, but also racism. Second, individuals and institutions creating these policies need to consider, as Padraig put it: “…how [to] put teeth to those policies?” In order to be meaningful and effective, all members need to know how these policies will be enacted and what the consequences are for violating them. Third, several interviewees stressed the importance of restorative justice when issues of transphobia occur in locker rooms and restrooms. Wonder, in particular, was vocal about the need to use restorative justice to avoid the further pitting of two marginalized communities against one another (trans individuals against cisgender women) and to, wherever possible, utilize trans-positive membership policies as an opportunity to educate and inspire awareness, rather than to alienate individuals. Fourth, the majority of interviewees suggested that, for this intervention to work, all staff, particularly those working closest with members and/or the public, need to receive education about trans inclusion. Although I return to discuss staff education in more detail (pp. 179-181), education was seen as essential to making this intervention work. Finally, in the case of facilities where signing up is required for members to participate in the space, focusing on trans-positive clauses in the membership policy, rather than relegating them to small print, was seen as essential. Melissa suggested that to accomplish this, when new members sign up, the staff should emphasize that transphobic behaviour is unwelcome:

… instead of ingratiating themselves with the person, [the staff should] give them the lay of the land. Say “if you’re going to use our facility, this is how we operate. These are the principles we believe in. If you don’t agree with these, you’re not going to like it here.”

Max also suggested that raising these issues while members sign up offers an opportunity for a “jumping off point to have a conversation” between staff and new members.

Even when the five criteria listed above are included within trans-positive membership policies, significant shortcomings remain. Although trans-positive membership policies may offer an opportunity for recourse when transphobia occurs within locker rooms and restrooms, standing alone, this intervention will likely do little to prevent the quotidian transphobic microaggressions that the trans individuals, who I have interviewed, have experienced in these
spaces. A significant limitation of this intervention is that it may not necessarily challenge the assumption that binary gender is natural and universal. As a result, this intervention may not function to adjust the fact that the burden of educating the cisgender public remains squarely on the shoulders of trans people.

3) All-gender locker rooms and restrooms

All-gender locker rooms and restrooms are facilities available to individuals of all genders. These may be multi-user facilities, for example “universal,” “family,” or “all.gender,” or they may be single-use facilities, such as “unisex.” Interviewees perceived significant differences between what I am referring to as separated facilities, which were an option in addition to male and female rooms, and universal facilities, spaces which all individuals were required to use. Increasingly, all-gender facilities are being hailed as the solution to trans inclusion within public restrooms (see e.g., Cauterucci, 2017; Croteau, 2016; Martinez, 2017; Ritchie, 2017; Rubinoff, 2016), and to a much lesser degree, locker rooms. In Toronto, for example, Regent Park’s award-winning Regent Park Aquatic Centre offers a solitary multi-user universal locker room with private stalls that all patrons must use in order to use the facility’s pool (Rochon, 2012).

i) Separated all-gender facilities

Although the majority of interviewees indicated that the availability of separated all-gender locker rooms and restrooms is important, only four of the fourteen interviewees indicated that this intervention would help them to access these facilities. For Corey, having the option of an all-gender locker room has helped him access several new climbing gyms, but he prefers to use the male facility for changing so that he does not stand out. Having the knowledge that there is a separated space available if he does not feel safe using the men’s locker room reduces some of his anxiety of visiting these new climbing gyms. Corey also described his experience of using a separated gender-neutral changing facility, which was one that required him to telephone the staff prior to arriving. Corey emphasized how needing to ask to be accommodated made it logistically difficult as well as embarrassing for him to access this space. As a result, this

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33 Please see pp. 181-183 for a discussion of how different names for these spaces affect trans inclusion within them.
suggests that to reduce barriers to trans inclusion, separate locker rooms ought to be structured so that they are available without request. Ash expressed excitement about a separated all-gender changing facility that they use at the Cooper Koo YMCA in Toronto. For Ash, not only does this facility offer an opportunity to participate in physical activity, but its availability also prompts them to invite other trans individuals to enjoy the pool at the facility.

Lutza articulated a concern about separated all-gender facilities suggesting that they may serve to further ostracize trans individuals from a sense of community that often emerges within locker rooms and restrooms. Lutza reflected:

[Sigh]. I’m always personally conflicted about them [separated all-gender facilities], while acknowledging that they’re super important. It’s just like, alright separate yourself. Think about it. You know for some reason it just makes me feel uneasy, and the other thing is too, it’s like - for better or for worse the locker room does foster some kind of interpersonal stuff. Like you can chat there, you can do your thing. And obviously some people hate it. I just don’t know that being separated is the right thing…

In this reflection, Lutza signals her ambivalence towards the separated all-gender intervention. Although Lutza acknowledges that this intervention may play an important role in helping some trans people access this space, she is “uneasy” about how separating trans individuals from cisgender individuals in these spaces may operate to alienate trans people from the sense of community that often occurs there. Several other interviewees had concerns about how this facility may be used as a place to put individuals who do not conform to society’s strict definitions of male and female, which would operate to further the exclusion of these individuals from binary-gendered locker rooms and restrooms. Jane expressed a concern that these spaces could become the only spaces that trans people are permitted to use. Jane noted:

I mean it’s great to have a space to change or go to the washroom that isn’t gendered but it’s also like... I’m a little mistrustful. Does this just become a space for clocking trans people? Because that’s a real concern. Like are ciswomen going to point to that space and

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34 Clocking, like outing, refers to the action of identifying an individual as trans.
say “You should be in there with the gender ‘others’?’” Before I get on board with this I need to know that’s not going to happen.

Wonder shared Jane’s concern and offered the following comments:

I’m assuming - whenever I see this [all-gender restroom sign] – I assume this is the only washroom that transgender and non-binary folks can go into. When I see things like this, in schools that will only put in things like this as soon as somebody comes out, trying to advocate for this or for themselves, they’re then segregated to that one washroom. Everybody else can use it, but they [trans student] can’t use their [gendered] washroom, even though it’s labelled as an accessibility [single-stall] washroom.

Here, Wonder begins by sharing Jane’s concern that trans individuals will only be permitted to use the separated restroom or locker room, that they will be prohibited from accessing the facility that they associate with their gender identity. All of the interviewees insisted that if this intervention is used to advance trans inclusion in locker rooms and restrooms, this intervention must be accompanied by an assurance that trans individuals are not relegated only to this space.

Cheri and Corey both expressed concerns that if they were observed using separated facilities (locker room or restroom), they would risk outing themselves. Cheri described her concerns as follows:

…if you are a woman going into a universal washroom or locker room, then you’re almost outing yourself - regardless of what gender you’re presenting as, if you’re using that space people go “oh why are you using that space?” And then they start to look: attention. [Sigh].

Interviewees had a number of other concerns about separated all-gender facilities. Max, Corey, and Ash for instance, pointed out that all-gender locker room facilities are often significantly lacking compared to male and female locker rooms. Several interviewees pointed out that they have used facilities where they were able to change in an all-gender locker room, but because there were only two entrances to the pool, one through the men’s locker room and the other through the women’s, they were ultimately forced to declare a binary gender to access the pool.
This structural barrier was a significant deterrent to a number of interviewees participating in aquatic activities.

**ii) Universal facilities**

In contrast to separated all-gender facilities, universal facilities provide a single locker room or restroom space that all individuals use, regardless of gender. While the majority of interviewees had positive perceptions about this initiative in public restrooms, fewer perceived this intervention as effective or desirable with regards to locker room facilities. Furthermore, a number of interviewees who had expressed concerns about separated all-gender facilities expressed optimism about universal facilities; the rationale that several expressed for this distinction between the two interventions was that the latter did not risk ostracizing trans individuals.

In contrast to these positive perceptions, several interviewees expressed a concern that this intervention would, in fact, create barriers to them accessing locker rooms or restrooms. Cheri, who reported a history of violent sexual trauma, expressed a concern that the possibility of cisgender men leering at her in this space would trigger anxiety for her. Specific to universal locker room facilities, Max and Lutza expressed reluctance at the idea of not being able to denude or shower without a swimsuit on.

Interviewees had much to say about the possibility of, or fear of, sexual violence in universal locker rooms. Padraig suggested that at the heart of the dominant normative discourses criticizing universal facilities is a rhetoric about the sexual violence that could occur if binary-gendered design was eliminated. Despite the apparent entanglement of the two issues, Padraig asserted the necessity of recognizing sexual violence and universal facilities as separate issues:

Are we preventing sex and violence by segregating change rooms? Is that primarily a preventative measure? Is it working? Does it work? Is it effective? Is it a sufficient measure? That’s another question. It’s like “okay cool, now we’ve got gender-segregated change rooms, now we’ve done what we can about preventing sexual violence.” Is that a sufficient measure?
In asking “Is that a sufficient measure?” Padraig troubles the assumption that binary-gendered design on its own is an adequate measure for preventing sexual violence in these spaces. Padraig and several other interviewees, two of whom were assaulted within binary-gendered facilities, asserted that a binary-gendered design is an insufficient measure for deterring violence and sexual violence in locker rooms and restrooms, and that additional interventions are needed.

Several interviewees suggested that an open-concept design could make these spaces feel safer. Wonder reflected on the universal restroom that they regularly use at Prints, a not-for-profit art centre for street-involved and at-risk youth. Wonder described how the restroom’s open design contributes to the sense of safety that they feel when inside it:

> I think the best example of a washroom that I can think of – it’s at Prints… everybody who uses the space uses the same washroom… that’s the space that I’ve felt most comfortable in. It’s so comfortable that they leave the door open and people can walk in and out and use that washroom and feel comfortable… with open space for people to hang out outside of that. So, it feels kind of like home.

Wonder’s reference to how the openness of the space makes it “feel kind of like home” points to how this design makes the centre feel less like an institution and more like a dwelling place, and it also points to the comfort that Wonder feels being there. Xavier also commented on how an open design made using a universal restroom facility feel safer:

> I’ve been to a few places where the only bathrooms in the facility were gender-neutral bathrooms, that means everyone was using these bathrooms. They all had stalls and there were no doors [to the entrance], so you’d just walk in. Like, there were no doors to the bathroom, so that you can hear whatever goes on in the bathroom, which felt safe. It was not gendered at all.

For Xavier, the way that sound traveled between the restroom facility and the rest of the building contributed to his sense of safety and diminished fears of assault in this space. Corey also

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35 Location pseudonym.
discussed how open space can operate to make universal facilities feel safer. His words are worth quoting at length:

If there’s concerns over safety then maybe we just need to design it in another way, in [a way] that the whole space is going to be safe for everyone and have one universal locker room. Supervision: I know one thing I’ve heard an argument for [in] universal washrooms – one thing I’ve heard – is that if we would just make it socially acceptable to have it as a more open space then there wouldn’t be all of this fear of entering this enclosed space where you know there are no cameras. Yeah, I mean I guess we’ve made two separate spaces [male and female], we have rules and policies, and those are the barriers, but physically that doesn’t stop anybody [from committing violence in that space]. The only good option I’ve heard is opening up the space. I think that is pretty interesting.

For Corey, open spaces are essential for making universal facilities feel safer. It’s curious that Corey only mentions the word supervision. Perhaps for example, locating the lifeguard or staff office inside the universal locker room might be another method for increasing the movement of people in and through these spaces.

To conclude this section, I would like to emphasize that interviewees did not suggest that binary-gendered facilities should necessarily be replaced with universal ones; several interviewees pointed out that this replacement would only create further barriers to them accessing locker rooms and restrooms. It is important to acknowledge, however, that without all-gender or universal facilities many trans individuals remain unable to access locker rooms and restrooms. Interviewees’ experiences in these spaces were diverse and also varied greatly depending upon the specificities of the facility. My hope is that this section has outlined some of the complexities surrounding this type of intervention.

4) Visual pedagogies (campaign exhibitions/research installations)
This section explores interviewees’ perceptions of the efficacy of visual pedagogies (in the forms of campaign exhibitions/research installations) for making locker rooms and restrooms more accessible for them. I am employing the term visual pedagogies to refer to posters, exhibitions, installations, and other visual media that were created and posted with the intention or function of fostering trans inclusion (and LGBQ2SIA as well in the case of The Change Room Project) in locker rooms and/or restrooms. Increasingly, visual pedagogies are being utilized as a praxis for communicating a facility’s commitment to trans inclusion, or educating cisgender individuals about trans issues, such as why trans individuals experience barriers to using these spaces. As discussed in detail in the Methodological Overview chapter (see pp. 57-71), I employed a method called photo-elicitation in each interview, which led me to introduce a selection of images to prompt discussion. I introduced images of three visual pedagogies, which I outline in detail in the sections that follow. These initiatives were: first, the University of Bristol’s LGBT+ Society’s #transawarebristol poster project (see Appendix C); second, the Vancouver Parks Board’s Trans* and Gender Variant Inclusion Working Group’s “don’t stop and stare, stop and think” poster initiative (see Appendix B); and third, Fusco, Milman, and De Lisio’s (2015) The Change Room Project (see Appendix A). The results of my study suggest that, although visual pedagogies on their own are insufficient for fostering trans inclusion in locker rooms and restrooms, when supported by other interventions such as staff education, targeted programming, and gender-inclusive facilities, visual pedagogies may play an important role in a repertoire of interventions. I suggest, given my findings, that visual pedagogies may improve the efficacy of a range of interventions because these particular interventions can function to contextualize both the issue of trans exclusion and the necessity and imperative of combining these visual strategies with other interventions. Crucially, effective visual pedagogies may offer a praxis for reducing the burden that a majority of interviewees reported, the burden of educating cisgender individuals about trans identity and trans participation in binary-gendered locker rooms and restrooms.

i) The University of Bristol LGBT+ Society’s #transawarebristol initiative
In 2014, a poster initiative displayed at the University of Bristol inspired both widespread support and critique. In only three days, the initiative, which was featured in the English newspaper *The Telegraph*, was the subject of over a thousand tweets on Twitter, tens of thousands of “likes” on Facebook, and over 100,000 posts on Tumblr (Samuels, 2014). The poster, see Figure 7.2, consists of the following message: “If you’re in a public bathroom and you think a stranger’s gender does not match the sign on the door, follow these steps: 1. Don’t worry about it, they know better than you.” Using the photo-elicitation method discussed in the *Methodological Overview* chapter, I introduced images of the Bristol initiative during the interviews to explore interviewees’ perceptions of this approach.

![Figure 7.2: The University of Bristol LGBT+ Society’s #transawarebristol initiative.](image)

Several interviewees responded positively to the Bristol initiative. Lutza described how the words on the poster captured the irony of other women assuming that they knew her gender better than she did:

> Yea, I love that sign. [Laughter]. I have posted that sign [on social media] myself. That’s pretty much it. In order for people to get to the point where they tell me to leave a public restroom, they have to assume that they either know my gender better than I do, or [that] I absolutely have no fucking clue where I am. Which are both pretty bold assumptions.

Although Xavier, overall, viewed the Bristol intervention as too confrontational to be effective, his perception of the poster was a positive one. He said simply: “As a trans person seeing that, it
makes me feel *seen* [pause] and validated.” Padraig speculated that the poster provides an instructive benchmark for cisgender behaviour in these spaces. McKenzie pointed out that cisgender people often have strong emotions about trans people being in binary-gendered locker rooms and restrooms; he was hopeful that the Bristol intervention could function to calm cisgender locker room and restroom panic.

The majority of interviewees, however, dismissed the intervention as ineffective. Not only were interviewees concerned that this intervention would be ineffective at changing transphobic attitudes and behaviours within locker rooms and restrooms, but also that the Bristol posters would *exacerbate* their experiences of transphobia in these spaces. Jane, for example, pointed out that:

If someone already has bigoted views, it’s not going to do much to deflect that and may actually make someone even *more* enraged – even if it’s not necessarily in a way where they’ll be like mad and attack someone, more like start complaining on like, for example, social media or to whoever put these signs up. And it feels like at that point it can be counter-productive… it doesn’t do a lot to really dispel any notions of bigotry that already exist and it just kind of, if anything, kind of ends up becoming a thing that’s really good in theory but can be perceived as antagonistic and therefore enrage bigots. And, therefore, can lead to more issues in the long run.

Several other interviewees echoed Jane’s concern that these posters would be counter-productive, that instead of advancing trans inclusion in locker rooms and restrooms they would operate to further the exclusion of trans individuals from these spaces. Mackenzie expressed a concern that cisgender people will find the posters abrasive. Ash speculated that the poster is not what they called a “heart changer,” which Ash described as “… something that turns that empathy, or like ticks it like ‘woah, okay I *get* it now.’” In many interviewees’ reflections they evaluated this intervention as unable to be, drawing again upon Ash’s words, a heart changer. This initiative would be, based on their perceptions, ineffective at provoking empathy or awareness in cisgender individuals holding transphobic or cisnormative assumptions.

The Bristol initiative did, however, evoke interviewee reflections upon how various interventions, including but not limited to visual pedagogies, might be more effectively designed.
Mackenzie pointed out that adopting an instructive approach makes visual pedagogies simpler and more readable. Reflecting on the Bristol poster, he said: “it’s very, like, eas[y] to read ‘cause it says, like, 1. Do this.” Wonder emphasized that on their own, unsupported by other interventions, poster interventions are inadequate at advancing trans inclusion in locker rooms and restrooms; their words are worth quoting here at length:

… I don’t like when I just see these and I don’t see things on direct action and direct support on how they can help trans and non-binary students who need help. And to point them toward resources for that. Because I feel like sometimes - I don’t know, I don’t like the term “lip service” – I feel like I could come up with a better term than that – but I feel like sometimes that’s what I worry about when I see this… The other thing is why wouldn’t the gender match the sign on the door if all the doors were accessible for men, women, and non-binary folks, and there was space for accessibility? They need to put a lot more focus on their infrastructure.

Wonder’s call for visual pedagogies to be accompanied by direct action was the only occasion, throughout any of the interviews, when an interviewee called for or mentioned direct action. This is a significant omission considering how public restrooms, in particular, have been an important site of queer and trans disruption, through direct action, for example, occupying these spaces and altering signage; interestingly public restrooms have been sites of direct action for both queer/trans and disabled activists (Serlin, 2017; West, 2010). Wonder’s reflections, however, do reference a direct-action imperative. They call for more than mere accommodation or inclusion within binary-gendered spaces; they demand a reorganization of these spaces according to gender-free or gender-inclusive design. Wonder calls for an intervention that does more than post ten cent posters on the wall, but instead calls for one that allocates resources to trans students and actively invests in infrastructure intended to reduce the spatialized exclusion of these individuals. Later in this chapter I return to discuss direct action interventions in more detail (see pp. 185-186).

Wonder’s alignment of the needs that trans individuals have for inclusive locker rooms and restrooms with the needs of disabled people for accessible spaces is not tangential, but rather, central to their demand for meaningful interventions and trans-inclusive spaces.
Throughout their interview, Wonder identified the ways in which their own embodiment, which they experience as both physically disabled and trans, intersects to exclude them from myriad locker rooms, restrooms, and other public spaces. Thus, Wonder’s words suggest that effective and equitable trans locker room and restroom interventions are not directed toward advancing trans inclusion at the cost of displacing or maintaining the exclusion of another group of individuals marginalized within these spaces. Instead, Wonder argues for a radical reimagining of how these spaces are conceived, as well as for an open dialogue about how trans and disabled, as well as Black, racialized, Indigenous, and fat bodies are regularly excluded from within these spaces.

Overall, the Bristol intervention did not provide a promising model for visual pedagogies advancing trans inclusion. The intervention did, however, spark discussion about criteria that interviewees appeared to implicitly reference when evaluating visual pedagogies. Interviewees identified several aspects of visual pedagogies that maximized their efficacy, including instructive language and content that evokes empathy. A number of interviewees perceived the “confrontational” approach of the Bristol intervention negatively, and suggested that this approach might create further problems for them in locker rooms and restrooms.

**ii) The Vancouver Parks Board Trans* and Gender Variant Inclusion Working Group’s “don’t stop and stare, stop and think” poster initiative.**

In 2013, the Vancouver Parks Board established a *Trans* and Gender Variant Inclusion Working Group to identify and ameliorate barriers to trans-Vancouverites accessing Vancouver Parks’ facilities. The working group, comprised of volunteers, produced a number of posters after a one-year community engagement process (City of Vancouver, 2015). The three that I discussed with interviewees are shown below (see Figure 7.3).
Although several interviewees expressed positive sentiments about the Vancouver Parks Board initiative, only two, Candy and Jane, indicated that seeing these posters in or outside of a locker room or restroom would make them feel safer in or less alienated from these spaces. Other interviewees perceived the initiative negatively and expressed concerns. Melissa, for example, felt that the posters did not adequately represent her gender identity, leading her to remark: “they don’t apply to me at all.” And Cheri, who was concerned that they would risk outing her if placed in locker rooms or restrooms, dismissed them as “trying too hard.”

Several other interviewees suggested that the Vancouver Parks Board initiative would be ineffective at advancing trans inclusion in locker rooms and restrooms. Lutza, for example, expressed a concern that the use of images would further alienate her from women’s locker rooms and restrooms:

I feel like they’re [the posters] incomplete and they reduce a way bigger community to the five people who agreed to get photographed and tell their things [quotations]…
because I look like these folks - I could be lumped in with these folks, but that’s not my experience at all. That’s kind of the thing that makes me personally not as comfortable as I could be… once you put personal faces and personal experiences, then you risk everybody getting generalized to just the things [identities] that you’ve shown.

Here, Lutza expresses a concern that the images used in the Vancouver Parks Board initiative could operate to flatten the diversity of the trans community, specifically with regards to gender. Lutza’s comments suggest that this flattening of diversity is not only problematic for her accessing these spaces, but also for the community as a whole. Several other interviewees also critiqued the use of images in the intervention. Xavier pointed out that the images make the posters resemble advertisements, which ultimately discourages users of these spaces from reading them. Ash expressed a concern that the use of images made the posters vulnerable to defacement. And Cheri offered the following appraisal of the images:

You know a picture is supposed to be worth a thousand words... This one isn’t. I swear those are actors. That is not a real family. And a family is probably far less likely to be featured on a poster where they are outing their daughter everywhere.

For Cheri, the images appear to detract from, rather than enhance, the authenticity of the Vancouver Parks Board poster initiative.

Interviewees offered several other critiques of the intervention. Mackenzie and Cheri, for example, indicated that the content of these posters needs to be contextualized within the locker room, rather than simply referring to an ethereal trans identity. Mackenzie expressed uncertainty about why these posters were posted in locker rooms and critiqued the lack of context provided in them: “… in terms of the[m] being in there, I was kind of like – why? You know, why is it in there? Otherwise, I’m just like [shrugs] I don’t know.” Cheri offered a similar critique: “If anything, it has to do with like ‘out in public’ rather than locker rooms because the full family isn’t in a locker room.” Several interviewees also remarked that the “flowery” language used in the posters made them feel uncomfortable and that they preferred language that was more direct.

In conclusion, interviewees did not perceive the Vancouver Parks Board posters as effective at making locker rooms safer or more inclusive for their use. Regardless, the posters
furthered a dialogue about which qualities do make visual pedagogies effective. The use of photographs in these posters was, for interviewees, not an effective, appealing, or safe method for this medium. They wanted to see a greater diversity of genders represented within visual pedagogies, although I should note that I only showed them three of the five images available. They also wanted the information on posters to be contextualized within locker rooms and restrooms in language that was forthright and straightforward.

**iii) The Change Room Project (Fusco, Milman & De Lisio, 2015)**

In 2015, Fusco, De Lisio, and Milman created *The Change Room Project*. The project was created in conjunction with the 2015 Pan/ParaPan Am Games that were held in Toronto in the summer of 2015. This particular research project consisted of a) interviews with students at the University of Toronto who identified as LGBTTQ2SIA and b) a knowledge dissemination component in the form of photographic, digital and poster exhibitions that were displayed in athletic facilities and student centres on the University of Toronto’s three campuses – St. George, Scarborough and Mississauga. The exhibitions were accompanied with extensive parallel programming in the form of film presentations, panel discussions, and workshops. *The Change Room Project* sought to respond to the difficulty that many LGBTTQ2SIA individuals have accessing the locker room. As stated above, the intervention included a tri-campus installation of large, floor-to-ceiling, posters placed in visible areas in athletic centres and in and around locker rooms. These posters included quotations from those LGBTTQ2SIA who were interviewed for the research and offered insight into the discomfort that many LGBTTQ2SIA individuals experience in these spaces. See Appendix A for examples of The Change Room Project.

Interviewees had mixed responses to *The Change Room Project* posters. Overall, however, of the three visual pedagogies that I introduced into the interviews, this one sparked the most discussion. Although my interview schedule did not prompt interviewees to rate the three poster interventions, five indicated that they preferred *The Change Room Project* over the other poster initiatives shown. I should note that the order in which I showed the initiatives (first, Bristol; second, Vancouver Parks Board; and third, *The Change Room Project*) may have impacted how interviewees compared the three poster initiatives to one another. For Padraig, seeing posters of *The Change Room Project* elicited the following response: “… to me, what this
signals, is that maybe I can go to this gym.” For Lutza, who experienced the actual installation at the University of Toronto, seeing the posters where she worked out helped reduce some of the anxiety that she experiences in the locker room there. Mackenzie and Valerie appreciated that *The Change Room Project* installation posters were spatially contextualized within the locker room. Mackenzie pointed out: “I like the fact that it’s specifically talking about a locker room, it’s not just like ‘trans identity!’” In contrast to feedback provided about the Vancouver Parks Board initiative, several interviewees indicated that they appreciated that the text was direct and to the point. Padraig reflected that he felt encouraged by the first-person language that the intervention uses. Wonder appreciated the fact that the quotations reflect real peoples’ lived-experiences in these spaces: “I thought the representation was important and that these are, like, words from real people. Not just from real people, but from people’s lived experience.” For Xavier, the intervention’s efficacy rests in its ability to evoke empathy through simulating a dialogue, or what he identifies as a non-verbal conversation, between the poster and the reader. He suggested:

> It’s words from a trans person. It makes it - when you’re having a conversation with someone, the easiest way - at least for me - is to say something relatable. So that, like, we can be coming from different points of view but, like, if I can say something that, kind of, you can pull apart to make apply to your life in any way then we have more, not necessarily common ground, but more of a mutual respect.

Xavier understood *The Change Room Project*’s strength as its ability to evoke empathy within cisgender locker room users. Xavier suggested that establishing a “common ground” or basis of “mutual respect” is the most effective way to cultivate empathic awareness and, ultimately, to adjust assumptions about binary gender and shift cisnormative attitudes. His suggestion was echoed in the comments of several other interviewees. Padraig had the following to say about the potential that *The Change Room Project* has for evoking empathy in cisgender locker room and restroom users:

> What is interesting to me about this, is that this is about empathy building. And empathy building is really important. The thing is that any projects which would increase awareness - but not awareness, F[uck] awareness… Increase empathy for what it is that
trans and gender non-conforming people experience in change rooms and restrooms. It’s a good thing because there’s a surprising absence of that in public discourse around this: empathy.

Padraig’s comments raise interesting questions about the distinctions between awareness and empathy. What is the relationship between the two? Are they intertwined or independent? Does one need to establish awareness before one can experience empathy? Padraig identifies a need to target empathy over awareness and observes an absence of the former in public discourse.

Interviewees also commented on the size of the intervention. Several reflected that the extremely large text would make The Change Room Project’s posters less likely to become part of the background, and thus more likely to be read. Several also indicated that the size communicated an implicit message that the facility stood behind its trans members. Mackenzie reflected: “something about the size of it says to me like “don’t fucking question this,” [rather] than a small worded thing even saying the same sentence and being, like, ridiculed.”

Interviewees also expressed several concerns about The Change Room Project. One interviewee, Cheri, worried that the posters might out her in these spaces. Several others, Ash, Melissa, and Jane, expressed doubt that the posters would prevent or even curtail explicit transphobia. Padraig and Xavier wanted to see quotations from many more genders and racialized positionalities than were represented in the three that I showed them. Additionally, Lutza, who experienced the actual installation, pointed out that there were many people that The Change Room Project could not reach; she recounted an encounter that occurred in the locker room:

And [sigh] this woman, I swear to God, she read the whole thing [The Change Room Project pamphlet] while she was filling her water bottle. And then she turns to me and she said “I don’t understand these young kids who are uncomfortable being naked in the locker room, like it doesn’t matter, just be naked!” And I was like: you read the thing and you just “phhht” [with her hand, makes a motion to simulate something whizzing over her head] completely didn’t get it. So, missed the point! So, I feel like… anything that

36 The actual installation consisted of dozens of quotations on pamphlets and posters.
was subtle to a straight, gender-conforming person was completely missed. So, I think there were definitely people who read the quotes and were none the wiser about them.

Lutza’s anecdote raises some critical feedback to those who are doing work on designing practical visual pedagogies. Without a basic understanding of trans and gender identity issues, many cisgender locker room and restroom users may not be able to empathize with, much less understand, visual media communicating the experiences of trans people in these spaces. Lutza’s reflections reinforce a critique leveled by several other interviewees, who argued that if this kind of intervention is to be effective, it would need to be supported by other interventions, such as formal and informal education directed toward various parts of the population.37

Furthermore, a majority of interviewees expressed a conviction that these posters should not stand alone. Wonder was emphatic that wherever these posters are posted, there need to be policies in place ensuring that transphobic and cisnormative behaviours are discouraged. Padraig pointed out that the posters establish an impression that the facility has trans-protective policies in place and that staff have been adequately trained to support these policies. Both Wonder and Padraig pointed out that if these interventions are not in place, the facility could risk misrepresenting its locker rooms and restrooms as safe places for trans individuals, when in fact they are not.

Envisioning visual pedagogies

Interviewees offered a number of reflections about how effective visual pedagogies could be designed. The results identified in the previous sections suggests that establishing the efficacy of visual pedagogies requires continued attention. Cheri, for instance, wanted to see visual pedagogies that directly challenged a dominant narrative that transwomen are sexual predators who use women’s locker rooms and restrooms with the intention of gaining sexual access to cisgender women. Cheri also asserted that visual pedagogies need to address the experiences and

37 It is important to note, as mentioned earlier in this section, that The Change Room Project was supported by many other forms of interventions, such as a LGBTTQ2SIA panel on sport and inclusion, film presentations, workshops, and myriad other interventions. Because my primary research objective was to better understand interviewee responses to The Change Room Project model, rather than to showcase the project in its entirety, I made a methodological decision not to discuss the The Change Room Project in detail with the participants. Regardless, it is worth emphasizing that The Change Room Project was, in fact, supported by many supplementary interventions.
needs of stealth trans individuals. Ash wanted to see posters that normalize trans bodies and challenge biomedical assumptions that gendered bodies have specific genitalia and secondary sex characteristics. Jane emphasized the need for visual pedagogies that outline acceptable non-confrontational locker room and restroom behaviours for cisgender people who are unfamiliar with the experience of encountering trans people in these spaces. She pointed out that, because a considerable amount of the discrimination that happens in these spaces is not inspired by overt transphobia, but rather by confusion or surprise, interventions like membership policies may not be effective at targeting these microaggressions because they do not necessarily violate rules or policies (see also Sue, 2010). Jane argued, however, that an effectively designed visual pedagogy could target these microaggressions. She suggested the following:

Like, just smaller signs posted within locker rooms or bathrooms stating some general ground etiquette rules for how to act in those areas to begin with. And also including transgender people and noting that that kind of discrimination is still discrimination and will not be tolerated, and explain things like staring at a transgender person, or making comments about a transgender person are still forms of discrimination. And just because it’s not directly attacking a person, still doing that stuff is a form of discrimination and harassment, even if it’s not literally shouting at someone to leave the washroom.

Jane’s words offer further insight into what effectively designed visual pedagogies could contribute to a repertoire of trans-inclusive locker room or restroom interventions. Visual pedagogies, unlike membership policies and all-gender locker rooms, may have the capacity to target the assumptions which lead to the microaggressive behaviour of some cisgender patrons. Visual pedagogies, if effectively designed and supported by other interventions, could contribute to what Corey called a sense of a “critical mass,” an impression for cisgender dominated space users that diverse gender identities are welcomed and that, within the facility, trans-positive behaviour is the norm. Effective visual pedagogies can also operate as what Ash called a “heart changer,” eliciting empathy and operating to adjust cisnormative assumptions about binary gender. I do not intend to put forward the argument that transphobia in locker rooms and restrooms can be ameliorated simply by hanging posters on a wall; interviewees were clear, in fact, that for visual pedagogies to be effective they required support from other, more tangible, interventions. Nevertheless, within these spaces, visual pedagogies may be an effective method
for reducing the substantial burden placed upon trans people to educate the majority of cisgender people about gender identity. By challenging cisnormative assumptions about binary gender, effectively designed visual pedagogies may be a useful addition to a repertoire of interventions.

5) Education

The majority of interviewees indicated that informal and formal education was a crucial component of an effective repertoire of interventions geared toward making locker rooms and restrooms more trans-inclusive. Following the imperatives identified in interviewee reflections, this section is divided into two sub-sections, educating the cisgender public and educating facility staff.

i) Educating a cisgender public about trans inclusion in locker rooms and restrooms.

Several interviewees indicated that since the primary barriers to their ability to access locker rooms and restrooms are the attitudes of some cisgender individuals in these spaces, an effective intervention for making these spaces more trans-inclusive must include educating many of the cisgender public. According to interviewees, this education would address: first, basics about trans identity, establishing an understanding of gender identity and the diversity and fluidity of both social gender and biological sex. Second, interviewees indicated that they would like to see a predominantly normative public educated about the barriers that binary-gendered locker rooms and restrooms pose to trans inclusion in physical activity and public space, and as a result, why universal or all-gender spaces are needed. Interviewees emphasized the importance of educating the public about the physical and social violence that trans people face on a daily basis. Interviewees also wanted people in normative and non-marginalized groups to be educated about how to recognize transphobia and they also wanted these people to receive training in de-escalating transphobic confrontations. Several interviewees suggested that without education, a cisgender public will be unable to empathize with trans people’s struggle to access locker rooms and restrooms.
Many interviewees reported being frequently expected to educate cisgender people on the topics listed in the preceding paragraph. Several interviewees emphasized the importance of placing the responsibility for self-education upon cisgender people. A number of interviewees experienced the emotional labour required to educate cisgender people in locker rooms and restrooms as exhausting. Lutza observed that many cisgender people assume trans people are both responsible for and willing to accept the role of educating cisgender people. She worried that the people who need information on trans-inclusivity the most, will be the least likely to seek out this information through self-education.

Although several interviewees indicated that they frequently assume the role of educating cisgender people, not all interviewees seemed to perceive this role as one imposed upon them. Cheri conceptualized her role of teaching cisgender people about trans issues as a “good thing” and as an effective way to realize change. Candy also appeared to expect trans people to assume the role of educator. She suggested: “… if one of us – somebody who is trans – is present, then I guess that dialogue can happen. And that back-and-forth [discussion] with someone if the [trans] person feels safe. I think that would be beneficial.” Here, Candy appears to use a conditional clause to describe the social benefits that can occur when trans people choose to educate cisgender people: “… if the person feels safe.” Nevertheless, the frequency with which interviewees were expected, rather than requested to educate cisgender people, suggests that consent is rarely considered. Lutza, for instance, reflected that, within these spaces, cisgender people regularly expect her to do the work of educating them. She also pointed out that trans people are often not equipped to do this work. Her words are worth quoting here at length:

The fact that I’m gender non-conforming is not an invitation … to stare at my body. So, I feel like… that sort of almost dehumanizes you temporarily and they don’t treat you the same way as somebody [cisgender] in their regular experience of that community… I don’t know how to really phrase it, but people don’t have less of a life or less of their own business to do because you have this question about gender now that you saw them… I don’t have to take my time to do all these things so that - which I do, I frequently take my time and make people comfortable, like go out of my way to expend energy to be charming and not threatening and all that stuff. But I think there should be some discussion about that, even the people who are capable and willing to do these
things experience, at the very least, a toll on their energy. But there’s definitely [trans] people who aren’t willing or aren’t capable [of doing this work] and then they experience it way worse than I do when these situations come up and you’re expected to educate or diffuse a situation or whatever. That’s the best-case scenario when it’s emotional labour and then it obviously only goes down from there: when you feel like you can never go back to that same spot again…

In her reflection, Lutza asserts that her transness is “not an invitation” to expect her to do the “emotional labour” of educating cisgender people. The best-case scenario, as Lutza points out, is that being expected to repeatedly educate cisgender people costs trans people time and emotional energy. The worst-case scenario that Lutza proposes, however, is that trans people may feel unable to return to that location because that place has come to be associated with these encounters. As Lutza also notes, many trans people are unequipped or unwilling to take on the role of educating cisgender people. Sara Ahmed (2006), drawing upon Jack Halberstam’s (2011) concept of *queer failure*, theorizes how an unwillingness or failure to perform a particular function for the service of the dominant body politic, makes legible the implicit expectation placed upon an individual or group. Ahmed uses the analogy of an object breaking to conceptualize the stakes associated with this failure.

Failure, which is about the loss of the capacity to perform an action for which the object was intended, is not a property of an object (though it tends to be attributed this way…), but rather of the failure of an object to extend a body… (p. 49)

The failure of trans people to assume the role of cisgender educator can be read as a refusal to extend a body, more specifically, their bodies into the hegemonic body politic which, at the present moment, appears to be characterized by hatred, discrimination, apathy and indifference toward trans inclusion.

The refusal of trans people to play the role of the “good trans person,” ceaselessly making their energy available to educate cisgender people in these spaces, is punished through a number of methods. As the interviewee accounts suggest, these methods include: social alienation, calling security guards, physical violence, etc. The option to refuse or fail to educate, or rather to adequately justify one’s presence to, cisgender people in these spaces is not equally available to
all trans people. Reflections offered by Goku suggest that Black trans people, particularly those using women’s locker rooms and restrooms, are immediately perceived as threatening because of anti-Black assumptions, and thus, they are required to exert more emotional labour to justify their presence there. For many trans interviewees, as Lutza’s account suggests, a refusal or failure to play the role of cisgender educator results in an inability, either internally or externally administered, to access these spaces.

A dearth of public education, formal and/or informal, on trans issues places the burden of educating the cisgender public upon trans individuals. At both the systemic and individual levels, it may be both inappropriate and ineffective to expect trans individuals to take the role of educators. Being expected to repeatedly assume this role is not only dehumanizing for some trans people, as Lutza’s reflection identified, but also operates to contribute to the barriers that these individuals experience accessing locker rooms and restrooms.

ii) Educating facility staff about trans inclusion in locker rooms and restrooms

A number of interviewees identified educating staff who work in recreation centres etc. as essential to an effective repertoire of interventions. Although interviewees did not dismiss the importance of educating staff in managerial roles, they identified the education of “ground” staff as most crucial, because these are the individuals who come into contact with trans individuals most frequently in locker rooms and restrooms. Corey, for example, pointed out what he said is a common problem: management have received trans-inclusive training, but ground staff have not. According to Corey, this results in a disconnect among the staff whereby “they didn’t all get the memo.” Max’s experience in a university facility locker room also demonstrates the problems that occur when ground staff have not received trainings similar to those received by management. Max described how facility management invited Max to choose which locker room he felt most comfortable using, however, Max later found that the ground staff repeatedly made assumptions about his gender and which locker room he ought to use. Additionally, as Jane’s, Ash’s, and Max’s experiences of being followed into restrooms by security guards suggest, employees in authority roles have a particular need for training on the topic of trans inclusion.
Interviewees had a number of suggestions for staff training. Ash, Corey, and Wonder wanted to see staff receive training on a reoccurring, rather than one-time, basis. Ash asserted the importance of finding a way to make these trainings relevant and engaging “as opposed to for the sake of ticking off the boxes.” Interviewee reflections also suggested that staff needed instructive education on trans-positivity in order to improve trans inclusion in binary-gendered locker rooms and restrooms and they also needed training on anti-racism, as well as anti-ableism and fat-positivity. Overall, interviewees identified that ground staff education was essential for making these spaces more inclusive.

Several interviewees pointed out that the presence of a trans-positive advocate in a managerial or leadership role could be instrumental in shaping the culture of a facility and the environment of this facility’s locker rooms and restrooms. I will briefly highlight several examples of programming put in place by a staff member at a university athletic centre to illustrate the potential that individuals in managerial roles have for making sporting spaces more inclusive. Although this particular staff member’s work does not focus specifically upon locker rooms or restrooms, it provides a useful example of using intersectional methods to advance the inclusion of trans people in sport and physical activity.

After reading a report (American College Health Association, 2016) demonstrating the low rates of LGBTTQ2SIA participation in various physical activities a staff member initiated a trans-positive drop-in swim program at the university’s athletic centre. Created with an awareness that many trans individuals face multiple barriers to accessing pools, the trans-positive swim program identifies educating staff as crucial to the program’s success. The training that facility staff receive includes establishing a basic understanding of: trans identities, the barriers that trans people face to participating in sport and physical activity, de-escalation strategies, as well as a number of other important topics. Not only is this training mandatory for all life guards, but the program also mandates training for all of the staff that trans participants may encounter on their way to the pool, including staff at the customer service desk, the turnstiles, and the towel counter. Additionally, these trainings reoccur each year. The systemic barriers that trans individuals face in using binary-gendered locker rooms and restrooms have also been considered by the trans-positive swim programming. The pool where the program is located is feet from a disabled, accessible, single-stall, all-gender locker room with a shower as well as a number of
single-stall, all-gender restrooms. The trans-swim program is exemplary for a number of reasons but, first and foremost, because it provides a template for effective staff education.

6) Signage

Interviewees indicated that they wanted to see a number of changes made to signage posted on locker room and restroom doors. With regards to multi-user all-gender spaces, several interviewees pointed out that they preferred signage identifying the spaces as universal or all-gender as opposed to family spaces. Several interviewees indicated that entering family spaces unaccompanied by a child was not an option for them, as they worried that they would be misperceived as a sexual predator. This was particularly true for the Black transwomen that I interviewed: Candy, Goku, and Jane.

Corey had the following to say about locker rooms and restrooms designated as family spaces:

It’s not at all an option… it’s not an option. In fact, there’s [sometimes] even a sign “You do not enter if you’re not accompanied by a child.” Even if there wasn’t a prohibition against it, I still would not use it because it seems inappropriate.

Interviewees Max, Candy, Ash, and Corey instead expressed a preference for these spaces to be labelled as universal or all-gender spaces. They indicated that although spaces designated as universal or all-gender are useful for and inclusive of multi-gendered families, this signage does not explicitly exclude trans individuals, unaccompanied by a child, from using the space.

A majority of the interviewees indicated discomfort with the male/female signage that is used to designate most unisex restrooms (see Figure 7.4). These interviewees pointed out that this signage excludes all genders beyond the gender binary. Interviewees felt more comfortable with signage that also includes a third gender, such as the second symbol in the signage shown below (see Figure 7.5). Three interviewees, Max, Ash, and Lutza also requested signage that would signify the space with an image of the facilities inside instead of including gender to signify a locker room or restroom space; for instance, Lutza, suggested using an image of a shower to denote locker rooms and a toilet for restrooms (see Figure 7.6).
Interestingly, several interviewees suggested that male and female locker room and restroom signage be adjusted to indicate that individuals who “identify as” male or female are welcome to enter. One example of this type of signage is currently posted at one university.
college’s gym facility. The text in the sign reads: “Gender diversity is welcomed here. All are welcome to choose the change room that best fits their gender identity.” Unfortunately, this sign was not posted until after I had completed the data analysis phase of my research, so I was unable to discuss it with interviewees, but the interviewee who brought this sign to my attention had positive reflections about it. Xavier also reported positive experiences in male locker rooms that included “identify as” signage:

… the bathrooms have signs that say “This a washroom for people who identify as men.”
That means that if anything happens to me, [if] anything is said to me, I’m not in the wrong. I know that… this is my space too.

For Xavier, the identify as signage functioned not only to help him feel protected from transphobia in this restroom (“I’m not in the wrong”), but also to feel more entitled to access this space (“this is my space too”). As discussed in the previous sections of this chapter, interviewee accounts suggest that signage of this type should only be posted when accompanied by other, more substantial, interventions, such as staff education and trans-positive membership policies.

7) Structural changes to existing binary-gendered locker rooms and restrooms

Interviewees identified a number of structural changes that would make men’s and/or women’s locker rooms and restrooms more accessible for them. The availability of private stalls was seen as crucial to trans participation in both of these spaces. Within binary-gendered locker rooms, a number of interviewees identified a need for separate stalls where they could change or shower. Melissa, Cheri, Corey, and Valerie expressed a preference for these stalls to extend from the floor to the ceiling to ensure privacy. Explaining the need for floor-to-ceiling stalls, Valerie lamented that if standard restroom stalls enabled more privacy for her, she would have less difficulty accessing women’s restrooms. Valerie has a physical disability, which necessitates that she remove her leg braces before sitting down. She must spend roughly five minutes removing her leg braces each time that she sits down to use restroom facilities. Valerie indicated that

38 Because the location of this signage has been identified, following University of Toronto Office of Research Ethics’ protocol, this interviewee remains nameless to ensure that their anonymity is not compromised.
standing up to use the facilities is not a safe or appropriate option for her because the existing structure of restroom stalls do not allow much privacy. Restructuring restroom stalls to offer more privacy would also help transmasculine interviewees like Corey and Xavier, who indicated that the height of most restroom stall doors does not offer them enough privacy, and that they regularly feel unsafe using men’s facilities as a result.

Corey, who uses men’s facilities, pointed out that he has visited many men’s restrooms that either do not have stall doors or that have stall doors with latches that do not work. Corey indicated that he is unable to use these facilities, demonstrating that improperly maintained stalls and door latches also operate as a barrier to trans individuals’ ability to access these spaces. Unfortunately, because individual privacy may be seen as less of a concern for men’s spaces than for women’s spaces, stall latches may be inadequately maintained in men’s restrooms and locker rooms.

Several interviewees emphasized that for facilities to be inclusive of all trans individuals, locker rooms and restrooms must be accessible to disabled individuals. Wonder observed that the scarcity of disabled single-stall restrooms puts disabled and trans communities, who are often both alienated from accessing public space, in competition with one another. Valerie and Mackenzie both speculated that most of the binary-gendered multi-user public restrooms they have encountered only have one stall that disabled individuals could access.

When they were speaking about the barriers they experience accessing aquatic facilities, interviewees pointed out that often pools can only be entered through either a men’s or women’s locker room. Lutza, Mackenzie, and Wonder pointed out that it is problematic to have an all-gender changing space when swimmers still have to pass through the binary-gendered locker room to access the pool. Having an additional, all-gender entrance is essential to fostering trans inclusion in aquatic activities. Similarly, the availability of day-use lockers outside of binary-gendered locker rooms enables trans individuals to securely store their belongings without having to enter a binary-gendered locker room. One university’s athletic facility provides an excellent example of this type of infrastructure (see Figure 7.7).
8) Direct action interventions

Although only one interviewee identified direct action as an important intervention method for making locker rooms and restrooms safer and more inclusive for trans individuals, I believe that direct action methods are important to explore given the legacy of direct action in restroom spaces. Direct action is a term that signifies an approach to activism in which individuals utilize their economic, cultural, social, or physical power to disrupt a place, practice, or process. Direct action interventions are in stark contrast to centrist strategies that rely upon institutionally acceptable methods, for example lobbying or appealing for change through policy reform, signing a petition, etc. Either nonviolent or violent methods may be employed for direct action interventions. Direct action can be a unique, important, and effective method for change because it is initiated from a fundamental rejection of neoliberal, rights-based claims (Rowe & Carroll, 2014). Restrooms have been disrupted through direct action interventions by trans activists resisting transphobia and cisnormativity, and disabled activists combatting ableism, as well as civil-rights activists resisting anti-Black racism and Jim Crow segregation. Direct action disruption of public restrooms has included, for example, adjusting or defacing signage by trans activists (Pissed Off Trans* People, 2013; West, 2010); occupying restrooms by disabled and trans activists (Serlin, 2017; West, 2010); and, during the Jim Crow era in the USA when these
spaces where racially segregated, Black civil-rights activists’ direct action interventions including entering these spaces despite facing legal prohibition and violence (Abel, 1999).

To date, little scholarly attention has been focused upon the ways in which restrooms have been a site of direct action for multiple groups demanding inclusion within the category of human (Wynter, 2003). Missing from most of texts examining trans inclusion in restrooms, is an analysis or acknowledgement of the ways in which Black civil-rights struggles, as well as, to a lesser degree, disabled activism, have essentially laid the groundwork for current trans restroom activism. Not only do the direct-action methods used by today’s trans activists draw directly upon the direct-action methods used by Black civil-rights activists, but also, for both of these groups, accessing these spaces operates as a fundamental refusal of their exclusion from the category of human (Wynter, 2003). As mentioned, this analysis is omitted from most texts discussing trans inclusion in restrooms. There are only a handful of exceptions that exist. Terry Kogan (2007, p. 18), for instance, offers only one page to discuss the intersectional implications of this space. Tobias Wolff (2012, p. 47) explores how, rather than be forced to integrate municipal swimming pools, several municipalities closed their pools altogether, a decision that was found in the USA 1971 Supreme Court ruling, *Palmer v. Thompson*, not to be a constitutional violation. Without addressing the ways in which locker rooms and restrooms are sites of multiple exclusions, the complexity of these spaces is elided and future possibilities for solidarity work and resistance through direct action are negated.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, the findings presented in this chapter suggest that interviewees’ perceptions surrounding which interventions they find most effective at making locker rooms and restrooms more inclusive are neither uniform, nor singular. These findings reject the notion of a simple solution and instead suggest a repertoire of interventions must be considered to begin the important work of making these spaces more trans-inclusive. Without a doubt, the efficacy of these interventions is largely, if not entirely, dependent upon the trans-positivity of the

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39 For a discussion on some of the concerns associated with equating the struggle for trans individuals to access binary-gendered public restrooms with African-American resistance of Jim Crow era racial segregation, please see, for example, a statement issued by Project 21: Black Leadership Network (2016).
environments in which these interventions are located. Certainly, no magical, one, formula exists to make locker rooms and restrooms safer and more inclusive for all trans people, in all spaces.

Regardless of the limitations of these recommendations, the following seven interventions may offer a method for advancing trans inclusion in these spaces: first, membership policies which clearly state and consistently enforce prohibitions against explicit transphobia; second, the availability of all-gender locker rooms and restrooms, either separated or universal, which serve as a space that trans people may access, but never as a space that trans people are mandated to use. Third, visual pedagogies that may engender a dialogue that challenge assumptions about binary gender as natural or universal are required. Fourth, utilizing informal or formal education for cisgender locker room and restroom users as a method for establishing an awareness of why trans people struggle to access these spaces, and best practices for acting as an ally in order to help them access these spaces. Fifth, educating ground staff about respecting gender diversity and de-escalating situations of transphobia. Sixth, making adjustments to locker room and restroom signage. And finally, seventh, making structural changes to existing men’s and women’s facilities in order to reduce barriers to trans inclusion in these spaces.

It is worth repeating that the sole intention for utilizing trans-inclusive interventions must be, unquestionably, to advance the inclusion of trans people within locker rooms and restrooms. It cannot be overstated though that if an institution employs these interventions as a superficial method for promoting its facilities as exceptional it would not only be an unethical leveraging of trans exclusion, but also a fundamentally dangerous and misleading practice that could place trans people at risk of social, emotional and physical violence. The singular objective of these interventions must be to address the systemic barriers that trans people face to accessing locker rooms and restrooms and to, thus, respond to the ways in which these barriers serve to limit the participation of trans people in physical activity and public space, respectively. To do this work effectively, these interventions need to not only address the systemic transphobia that occurs within these spaces, but also to address the racism, as well as ableism and fatphobia that also occurs within them.
Chapter 8
Conclusion

In review, this thesis has illustrated the ways in which binary-gendered locker rooms and restrooms have and continue to operate to preclude trans people from fully participating in both physical activity and public space. Through the centring of an intersectional analysis, this thesis has suggested that though targeting transphobia and cisnormativity is crucial to making binary-gendered locker rooms and restrooms more accessible for trans people, targeting racism as well as ableism and fatphobia is crucial to making these spaces feel safer and more inclusive for all trans people. The intersectional nature of identity (Crenshaw, 1989) that I explored through my interview questions and which was reflected in the interviewees’ own accounts of the complexity of their experiences, negates not only the possibility of a singular or uniform trans experience of locker rooms and restrooms, but also the idea of a single or solitary action or policy for mitigating trans exclusion from these spaces. Instead, as I suggested in Chapter 7, what is most needed is an intersectional repertoire of interventions selected and implemented in consultation with the appropriate trans communities. Interventions should be directed toward making locker rooms and restrooms inclusive for racialized trans people, as well as those who are disabled and body diverse; this method is the only one that may be effective at making these spaces safer for all trans people (The Combahee River Collective, 1977).

Conducting this research has had a significant impact on my own understanding of my experiences as a trans (gender non-binary) individual who often struggles to access binary-gendered spaces. At times during the research, I experienced fascination, a sense of startling humility, and affirmation as I related many of my own experiences to the stories that interviewees shared in response to my questions. At other times, interviewees’ stories threw into sharp relief the vast differences between our experiences of these spaces; I perceived, with what felt like uncomfortable clarity, the privileges that also inform my ability to access these spaces, namely my whiteness, athletic background and body shape, and class privilege. Conducting this research has given me a more nuanced understanding of the complexity of the role of activist/researcher, because this role disrupts the idealized notion of an objective and distanced researcher. Conducting this research has also instilled in me a passion for this type of work.
Future research is needed to explore a number of other barriers to trans participation in physical activity as well as public space. For instance, other foci could include gendered uniforms. In this study, for example, Padraig described school sport uniforms having a significant influence on their experiences of physical activity. Padraig pointed out that once they were allowed to wear an alternate uniform, much of the suffering and anxiety that they had previously associated with physical activity diminished, enabling them to enjoy the activity considerably more. Future studies could explore how interviewees’ experiences of alienation within gendered physical activity uniforms contributes to difficulty participating in these activities. As other scholars have argued, athletic uniforms are not only imbued with significance in terms of performativity, homogeneity, and team identity, but they also exist as instrumental to the ongoing legacy white settler colonialism and imperialism.

Specific to public restrooms, on the other hand, future studies could address how difficulty accessing binary-gendered restrooms operates as a barrier to trans individuals’ ability to access medical health facilities. The only study, to date, that examines these implications of trans exclusion from public restrooms, Herman’s (2013) restroom study, found that difficulty accessing public restrooms is, for a majority of trans people, a deterrent to accessing medical facilities such as hospitals and clinics. It is worth noting here that the intersections between white supremacy, biomedicine, and transphobic stigma can operate to make these institutions particularly difficult for trans people to access. Since a majority of interviewees identified struggling with mental health and accessing institutional mental health resources, future research could also address how trans experiences in binary-gendered facilities impact perceptions of trans inclusion and accessibility within these institutions.

One area that I am particularly interested in examining in future research is the locker room and restroom experiences of trans individuals living in rural areas or small cities. Because all of the research participants interviewed for my thesis reside in Toronto, ON, the findings speak to trans individuals living, working and playing in a particular context. Additionally, while my study has sought to examine how gender identity shapes trans individuals’ experiences in and perceptions of locker rooms and restrooms, future research may, conversely, examine how these spaces impact trans individuals’ experiences and their own relationships to gender. Several interviewee reflections, for example, suggested that their discomfort and trauma being surveilled
and confronted in binary-gendered locker rooms and restrooms contributed significantly to their desire to embody gender in a way that enabled them to pass as male or female. Future projects could also explore the ways in which binary-gendered locker rooms and restrooms may be central to the project of white settler colonialism. This research could build upon the work of Caroline Fusco (2003, 2004, 2006) who has argued that the locker room is a space within which colonialism, imperialism, and white supremacy are inextricably embedded. Furthermore, inquiry could be directed toward exploring the ways in which time is crucial to trans experiences in locker rooms and restrooms. For instance, while I engaged a detailed spatial analysis, future research could explore interviewees’ temporal strategies, such as hurrying, delaying, waiting, stopping, and so on. It would certainly be interesting to explore the temporality of transness in binary-gendered spaces; I am interested in widening an investigation to include not only space as an axis of trans experience, but also time. In my doctoral research I intend to explore these areas of future study. To conduct this research, I plan to draw upon the methods refined in this study to examine the experiences of trans individuals living in rural and small city areas across Ontario.

I hope that this work will contribute to a new understanding of the ways in which binary-gendered locker rooms and restrooms act as barriers to trans people participating in physical activity and public space. I also hope that this thesis contributes to a growing conversation about how these barriers can be addressed in order to make all public space feel safer and more inclusive for trans individuals.
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Appendix A: *The Change Room Project* Installations

*Figure 9.1* Change Room Project installation located at the entrance to the University of Toronto’s Athletic Centre (Fusco et al., 2015).

*Figure 9.2* Change Room Project installation located at the University of Toronto’s Goldring Centre, near the entrance to men’s/women’s locker rooms (Fusco et al., 2015).
Figure 9.3 The Change Room Project poster display (Fusco et al., 2015).
Appendix B: Vancouver Parks Board’s Trans* and Gender Variant Inclusion Working Group Initiative

Figure 9.4 Posters displayed at Hillcrest Community Centre in Vancouver, BC. These posters are part of an initiative created by the Vancouver Parks Board Trans* and Gender Variant Inclusion Working Group. The small print reads “We are making our community facilities more friendly, safe, and open to everyone – including transgender and gender variant people” (City of Vancouver, 2015).
Appendix C: University of Bristol LGBT+ Society

Figure 9.5 Poster distributed by the University of Bristol LGBT+ Society
Appendix D: Glossary

**Back-pass**: A practice that trans individuals may employ to avoid transphobic/cisnormative scrutiny, by presenting themselves as the gender that they were assigned at birth.

**Binder/Binding**: A method of compressing breast tissue to produce a flat chest.

**Bottom surgery**: A gender reaffirming surgery involving surgical changes to genitals.

**Cisfemale/ciswoman**: A person assigned female at birth who identifies as a woman.

**Cisgender**: The gender identity of someone whose sex assignment at birth conforms to their gender identity.

**Cismale/cisman**: A person assigned male at birth who identifies as a man.

**Cisnormative**: *Cisnormative* is a term which refers to the assumption that everyone, or almost everyone, is cisgender.

**Clocking**: *Clocking* is a term that references the action outing someone as trans.

**Crip**: *Crip* is a term created by Crip theory to refer to disabled individuals in ways that resist ‘able-bodied heteronormativity’ (McRuer, 2006).

**Dysphoria**: Sense of profound anxiety, dissatisfaction, or uneasiness with one’s gender presentation and/or body.

**E**: Estrogen.

**FTM**: Female-to-male.

**Gender non-conforming**: (Gender identity): an individual whose understanding or presentation of gender does not conform to “normal” expectations of male/female.

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40 These terms are now vernaculars and need not be cited. As discussed on p. 15 of this thesis, I would draw attention to Schilt and Westbrook’s contribution (2009) regarding the term *cisgender.*
**Gender reaffirming surgery**: Any one of several surgeries that trans people may elect to undergo.

**GNB**: (Gender identity) Gender non-binary.

**Hormone replacement surgery**: *Hormone replacement therapy* refers to hormone therapy that trans people may choose to undertake to feel less dysphoric in their bodies.

**Intersex**: Intersex refers to expressions of sex in which an individual has a reproductive or sexual anatomy that is inconsistent with “normal” male or female biological expressions of sex (Intersex Society of North America, 2008).

**Masc**: Masculine, used as an alternative to male.

**MTF**: Male to female

**NBN**: (Gender identity): non-binary.

**Outing**: *Outing* is the process by which a trans individual isouted as trans.

**Packer**: A *packer* is a prosthetic piece that many transmasculine individuals wear inside of their underwear. A packer produces a resemblance to a cismale’s phallic bulge.

**POC**: People of colour.

**Pre-op**: Prior to undergoing gender reaffirming surgery.

**Stealth**: *Stealth* is a term used within the trans community to denote one’s ability to/condition of being, for the most part, readily and consistently perceived as a cisgender person.

**STP**: (stand to pee device): A technology used to enable female-born trans individuals to pee standing up.

**T**: Testosterone.

**Top surgery**: A gender reaffirming surgery involving surgical changes to breast tissue.
Trans-identified: Self-identifying as trans

Transition: Process of transitioning from one gender identity to another. This process may or may not be accompanied by medical assistance or name and pronoun changes. This process often means something different for each individual.
Appendix E: Free and low-cost emergency and long-term mental health resources.

Collected from (Free / Low-Cost Mental Health Resources Toronto, 2017)

**Emergency Helplines**

All of these numbers are AVAILABLE 24 / 7 and are ANONYMOUS and CONFIDENTIAL!

Please, do not hesitate to call if you feel out of control, or unsafe in any way.

**Kids Help Phone** - 1 800 668 6868 - Free, national, bilingual, telephone / online counseling

**Suicide and Crisis Hotline (Canada Wide)** - 1 800 448 3000

**Youthline LGBTTQQ2SI Ontario** - 1-800-268-9688 / text 647-964-4275 / online chat / email

**CAMH Telephone Support Ontario** - 1 800 463 6273 Monday-Friday 3pm-9pm

**Scarborough Hospital Mobile Crisis Program**: 416-495-2891;
Provides Telephone Crisis Response and community mobile crisis visits to individuals over 16 years of age who are experiencing a mental health crisis in Scarborough and East York.

* Not only are they a 24h help phone, they are also able to send a team out to see you in person

**Suicide & Distress Hotline** - 416 408 4357

**Drug & Alcohol Information Line** - 416 595 6111

**Mental Health Crisis Line** - 1 888 893 8333

**Victim Support Line** - 416 314 2447

**Toronto Rape Crisis Centre/Multicultural Women Against Rape**
Address: 25 Esplanade
Phone: 416-597-8808 – Crisis Line
Email: info@trccmwar.ca or crisis@trccmwar.ca

**Assaulted Women’s Help Line**
Phone: 416-863-0511; Toll Free (Ontario): 1-866-863-0511
Email: awh@io.org
Website: [http://www.awhi.org/](http://www.awhi.org/)

Free, anonymous and confidential 24-hour telephone and TTY crisis telephone line to all women in the province of Ontario who have experienced any form of abuse.

**Gerstein Centre**: provides crisis intervention to adults, living in the City of Toronto, who experience mental health problems. The service has three aspects: telephone support, community visits and a ten-bed, short-stay residence. All three aspects of the service are accessed through the crisis line.
Address: 100 Charles Street East
Phone: 416-929-5200
Email: admin@gersteincentre.org
Website: [http://www.gersteincentre.org/](http://www.gersteincentre.org/)
Distress Centres of Toronto: 151 languages and interpreter service
Phone: 416-408-HELP (4357)
Email: info@TorontoDistressCentre.com
Website: http://www.torontodistresscentre.com/
The Distress Centre offers 24/7 emotional support, crisis intervention, suicide prevention and linkage to emergency help when necessary.

Saint Elizabeth: 416-498-0043; Offers a 24/7 Community Crisis Response Program which serves residents of Etobicoke and North York. Services include immediate telephone crisis intervention and support, mobile crisis visits in the home or the community, and referrals to other community services. Check out http://www.sarahchanaradcliffe.com/help-lines.htm for additional numbers in the GTA.

Free / Low-Cost Mental Health Resources Toronto

Youth Crisis Response - 416 410 8615

Drugs Support Line - 416 543 1092

Free / Low Cost Outpatient Mental Health Care
There are publicly funded programs which provide free therapy and other outpatient mental health services. Most often you can access these programs by getting a referral through your GP / family doctor. Sometimes walk-ins may provide referrals or necessary resources for obtaining counselling. However, not everyone is comfortable with this process - so I am trying to provide some alternatives.

* Some services that involve addiction issues will allow you to self-refer, without needing a doctor referral

Connex Ontario http://www.connexontario.ca/
Offers non-judgmental listening, support and information about counselling and other services in your community. They do not provide counselling over the phone. Their job is to provide information about services where you live.

Provides three ANONYMOUS & CONFIDENTIAL helplines:
Drug & Alcohol Helpline: 1-800-565-8603
Mental Health Helpline: 1-866-531-2600
Gambling Problem Helpline: 1-888-230-3505

Consumer / Survivor Info Centre: an information resource centre providing assistance and referral to Consumer/Survivors and others in the Greater Toronto Area. All of our staff and volunteers are consumers of the mental health and/or addiction systems.
http://csinfo.ca/index.php 416 595-2882 csinfo@camh.ca

Access Point: The Access Point is a centralized point where you can apply for individual mental health and addictions support services and supportive housing. The Access Point provides coordinated access to a number of services within a large network of Toronto service providers through one application and intake assessment process. (APPLY ONLINE!)
http://theaccesspoint.ca/

Ontario Psychotherapy & Counseling Referral Network http://referrals.psychotherapyandcounseling.ca/ offers appointments with experienced psychotherapists - offers low cost psychotherapy / sliding scale

CAMH DOES NOT OFFER INDIVIDUAL THERAPY FOR ADULTS - Groups only.
CAMH - Access CAMH
Call (416) 535-8501 and select option 2.
For mental health and addictions information, eligibility requirements and instructions on making a referral to CAMH, and to refer yourself for addictions services. Most patients looking for help with drugs, alcohol or other addictions will be scheduled for their first appointment in one call.

CAMH - Youth Addiction and Concurrent Disorder Service
416-535-8501 extension 1730
Assists people ages 14-24 who have mood / anxiety issues & use drugs / drinking / sex / gambling / internet in order to cope with these issues. Provides outpatient services in both group & individual therapy programs, as well as help with getting medication. As of July 2012 they also offer inpatient services to people with severe mood / addiction issues.

This program is self-referred - which means you DO NOT need a family doctor's referral in order to get help. Just call and leave a message explaining your situation.

CAMH - Mood and Anxiety Program
http://www.camh.ca/en/hospital/care_program_and_services/mood_and_anxiety_programs/Pages/mood_and_anxiety_programs.aspx
* Referral Required

CAMH - Gender Identity Clinic
http://www.camh.ca/en/hospital/care_program_and_services/CATS_centralized_assessment_triage_and_support/Pages/gid_guide_to_camh.aspx
The Adult Gender Identity Clinic at CAMH offers consultation / support to anyone over 18 who is experiencing issues related to their gender identity / gender dysphoria (including any degree of transgender expression.) They also assess for transsexual clients seeking hormone treatment and/or sex reassignment surgery. This is a somewhat complicated and involved process, so I can't summarize it here - please follow the link!
* NOTE - there have been reported experiences at this clinic that have been very negative, please approach with caution

Scarborough Health Centres - Counselling and Support Services
416-642-9445
Provides basic therapy services with a social worker - I had a very positive experience with my worker at SHC but I needed a more intensive program, it was here that I was encouraged to contact CAMH. Clinics located at 2660 Eglinton Avenue East and 4002 Sheppard Avenue East

The 519 Church St Community Centre
416-392-6878 Ext. 4000
Provides access to professionally trained and supervised counsellors who donate their time. A volunteer counsellor will see you up to 6 times - for longer term counselling or group therapy, you will be referred to another, affordable, service. Counsellors are familiar with LGBTQQ agencies and therapists, as well as doctors, lawyers and other professionals. They will make referrals to other services. Just call and leave a message.

Sherbourne Health Centre
Free counselling and referrals for a variety of issue - no referral necessary to begin assessment. Links to local groups and workshops as well! 416-324-4180 http://www.sherbourne.on.ca/programs/mentalhealth-faq.html
* NOTE - there have been some reported experiences at this clinic that have been very negative, please approach with caution
North York General Hospital, Mental Health Program
http://www.mentalhealthhelpline.ca/Directory/Organization/1621
416-756-6655
NYGH provides services including crisis intervention, inpatient care, consultation, acute day hospital, day treatment and community outreach. We provide services for populations with specialized needs including those with serious mental illness, the elderly, and persons with substance abuse problems, those in difficulty with the justice system as a result of mental illness and child/youth populations.

The Scarborough Hospital
http://www.tsh.to/areas-of-care/mental-health/

Walk-In Support

WoodGreen Community Services (Walk-in counselling): 815 Danforth Ave. #202; (416) 645 - 6000 ext. 2512 or 1367; The WoodGreen Walk-in Counselling Service offers free, immediate drop-in counselling on Wednesday evenings to address a wide range of concerns. They open at 4:00 p.m. with the latest arrival at 6:45 p.m. No appointment or referral is needed. There are no restrictions to access.

Family Service Toronto (Walk-in counselling): 355 Church St.; 416-595-9618; Family Service Toronto provides free, immediate drop-in counselling for a wide range of concerns to individuals, families, and couples on Wednesday evenings, opening at 4:00p.m. with the latest arrival at 6:45p.m. No appointment or referral is needed.

416 Community Support for Women: 416 Dundas St. E.; (416) 928-3334; 416 Community Support for Women is a daytime drop in program for women looking to gain or give support while coping with, isolation, addiction and/or mental health issues and other difficulties. It is open M-F 8:30am-6:00pm and Sat-Sun 8:30am-4:30pm. Basic services include daily breakfast and lunch, weekly food bank, social/recreational programs and life skills training. The centre also offers weekly medical clinics and mental health and addiction case management services on a daily basis.

Counselling & Psychotherapy

Consumer / Survivor Info Center: an information resource centre providing assistance and referral to Consumer/Survivors and others in the Greater Toronto Area. All of our staff and volunteers are consumers of the mental health and/or addiction systems.
http://csinfo.ca/index.php 416 595-2882 csinfo@camh.ca

Ontario Psychological Association: The Ontario Psychological Association has a referral service to link individuals with psychologists for treatment or assessment. Visit the web page:http://opajoomla.knowledge4you.ca/index.php/findpsychologist or call: (416) 961-0069 or toll-free 1-800-268-0069 Monday to Friday, 10:00am-3:30pm

Psychology Today: Psychology Today maintains an online directory of therapists all over Canada and the U.S.A., with information about their location, therapy type, experience, insurance coverage etc.http://therapists.psychologytoday.com/rms/prof_search.php

Psychotherapy Referral Service: PRS is a referral service that, based on an intake interview, matches individuals with trained psychotherapists in Toronto. prs.toronto.com; (416) 920-0655
No / Low-Cost Counselling & Psychotherapy

WoodGreen Community Services: 815 Danforth Ave. (416) 645-6000 ext. 1367; WoodGreen offers no-cost counselling to individuals who are experiencing problems with mental health. They aim to work with people from a recovery strengths-based perspective.

Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic: 489 College Street, Suite 503 (416) 323-9149 ext. 234; Barbra Schlifer offers no-cost group and individual counselling as well as legal and interpretation services to women who have experienced violence.

Family Service Toronto: Various locations; (416) 595-9618; Family Service Toronto provides sliding-scale individual, family, couple, and group therapy for a range of difficulties including trauma therapy. They also offer internet counselling. No one is turned away for inability to pay.

Catholic Family Service Toronto: Various locations; (416) 921-1163 (Central Toronto); (416) 222-0048 (North Toronto); Catholic Family Service Toronto provides sliding-scale individual, family, couple, and group therapy to people of all backgrounds – clients need not be Catholic. No one is turned away for inability to pay.

OISE Psychology Clinic: 252 Bloor St. W.; (416) 978-0654; Sliding scale psychotherapy is provided to individual adults by Counselling Psychology graduate students who are supervised by licensed Psychologists. The clinic is open from September through April. Low cost, with sliding scale; this service is free for University of Toronto students.

Information and Support Self-Injury Outreach & Support: sioutreach.org is a Canadian website devoted to providing information, coping resources, and personal stories related to self-injury. The website is directed by psychologists specializing in this area, and is recovery-friendly – meaning that efforts are made to ensure the content will not be triggering.

Helpguide.org: http://www.helpguide.org/mental/self_injury.htm provides information to help understand non-suicidal self-harm, as well as coping resources and tips for both self-injurers and people who care about them to aid in talking about the behaviour.
PARTICIPANTS NEEDED FOR A STUDY

*Must be 18 years of age or older to participate*

Do you experience discomfort in binary-gendered washrooms or locker rooms? Does your presence there seem to invite people to stare at you or to direct you to leave the space?

Your experiences can inform research and future strategies. Eligible participants are eligible to receive a $20 Shoppers Drug Mart gift card as compensation for approximately 1 hour of your time.

I am particularly interested in engaging the experiences of queer, trans*, gender non-binary, and intersex people who are also Black, Indigenous, and people of colour as well as individuals with invisible and visible disabilities.

Ali Greey is a first year Master’s student at the University of Toronto in the Faculty of Kinesiology and Physical Education. For their research projects they want to examine the experiences of queer, trans*, non-binary, and intersex people in change room spaces. This research may inform future strategies for making change rooms more accessible for queer, transgender, gender non-binary, and intersex people.
To apply or learn more about the study, the interview process, and compensation details please contact the principal investigator and researcher: Ali at (416) 902-7299 or via email: transgenderinthechangeroom@gmail.com

List of recruitment locations:

*All locations are within downtown Toronto.
Flyers were posted on public bulletin boards in the following locations:

1. Online post on the Facebook group “Queer Exchange Toronto”
2. In print at the 519 Community Centre
3. In print at the Native Canadian Centre of Toronto
4. In print at the Regent Park Community Centre
5. In print at the Regent Park Aquatic Centre
6. In print at the Parkdale Community Recreation Centre
7. In print at the Parkdale Queen West Community Health Centre
8. In print at the First Nations house at University of Toronto
9. In print at the Anishnawbe Health Toronto (both Queen Street and Gerrard Street locations).
## Appendix G: Demographics Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Gender presentation</th>
<th>Pronouns</th>
<th>Sexuality</th>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lutza</strong></td>
<td>masculine gnc [gender non-conforming]</td>
<td>she/her</td>
<td>lesbian</td>
<td>white</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class</td>
<td>Ability/Disability</td>
<td>Body Shape or Size</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lower middle</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>athletic/thin</td>
<td>33</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PADRAIG</strong></td>
<td>TRANS MASCULINE</td>
<td>THEY/THEM</td>
<td>QUEER</td>
<td>WHITE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOWER MIDDLE</td>
<td>ABLE BODIED. ANXIETY. E.D. ATHSMA…</td>
<td>VERY FAT</td>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mackenzie</strong></td>
<td>Masc</td>
<td>He</td>
<td>Queer</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working, Some disposable income</td>
<td>Disabled wheel chair user.</td>
<td>overweight.</td>
<td>28</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Xavier</strong></td>
<td>Trans man/masc Man w a vagina Soft Masc.</td>
<td>He/Him They/Them</td>
<td>Queer</td>
<td>Arab mix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty</td>
<td>Invisible Disability (Chronic Pain, Mental Illness)</td>
<td>Average/Slight Tone</td>
<td>28</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Melissa</strong></td>
<td>FEMALE</td>
<td>SHE/HER</td>
<td>STRAIGHT</td>
<td>CACAU.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRIV. “rags to riches to rags”</td>
<td>[Check mark]</td>
<td>ATHLETIC. BMI CHALLENGED</td>
<td>57</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Candy</strong></td>
<td>Woman Trans-woman</td>
<td>She/her</td>
<td>Hetero</td>
<td>Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>consciousness class</td>
<td>[left blank]</td>
<td>Athletic</td>
<td>28</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Max</strong></td>
<td>Masculine Gender queer</td>
<td>he/him</td>
<td>Queer</td>
<td>White.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>working class</td>
<td>- Trauma</td>
<td>fat</td>
<td>42</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Valerie J.</strong></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>she/her</td>
<td>Demisexual/ Lesbian</td>
<td>Asian Filipino</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Poor</strong></td>
<td>bipolar autistic physically</td>
<td>Pluss [sic]</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goku</strong></td>
<td>assigned male at birth, masculine clothing, not a male, masc. and femme. trans</td>
<td>they/them or she/her.</td>
<td>pansexual</td>
<td>Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Invisible disability</td>
<td>Bulky Boy! Big Wazowski!</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ash</strong></td>
<td>non-binary/fluid</td>
<td>they/them</td>
<td>queeeeer</td>
<td>Filipinx/mixed - settler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- low-income</td>
<td>- uni-educated</td>
<td>Mad, disabled (pelvic pain fatigue) hard of hearing</td>
<td>- thin privileged -</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Corey</strong></td>
<td>masculine</td>
<td>he/him</td>
<td>queer</td>
<td>white</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>working class</td>
<td>able-bodied</td>
<td>slim</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Jane</strong></td>
<td>Transfeminine Non-Binary</td>
<td>She/Her</td>
<td>Lesbian</td>
<td>Mixed (Afro-Pacific islander German)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chronic Pain</td>
<td>Average? (5'5/150 lbs)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cheri</strong></td>
<td>female</td>
<td>she/her</td>
<td>heterosexual, attracted to men</td>
<td>perceived as white, partially Indigenous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>raised top end of middle-class suburbia, currently disabled live well above the means thanks to extremely upper middle-class family</td>
<td>I have a few, post concussive syndrome, PTSD, nerve damage which causes mobility issues in that I walk with a cane.</td>
<td>voluptuous</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wonder</strong></td>
<td>2 Spirit, Non-Binary &amp; Nondefined</td>
<td>They/Them</td>
<td>Queer Reclaimed &amp; Undefined</td>
<td>Mi'kmaq Scottish &amp; French</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor, history of housing instability</td>
<td>Chronically Ill, Disabled, Neurodivergent, Mentally Ill (PTSD- &amp; MDD, Agoraphobia, 5'10&quot;, 120-130 pounds, shape (unsure how to answer this one so I'm doing it by contributing)</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generalized Anxiety Disorder, Eating Disorder</td>
<td>factors to what I could end up talking about with gym, washroom/change room settings) thin to athletic build-past history: at or over weight, non-atypical features, chest tissue (visibly transgender), curves dependant, surgery + scarring (visibly disabled)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix H: Informed Consent Form

Research Project: Gender Transgressors: Exploring the Intersectional Experiences of Transgender and Gender Non-Binary Individuals in Locker Rooms

Introduction

I would like to your permission to interview you. I’d also like, if you use locker rooms often or sometimes, to invite you to record an audio-diary journal entry. This research is part of a study. Please review the following pages that explain what the study and the interview are about. If you feel safe about participating with the research process as outlined below and agree to be interviewed as part of this study, then please sign the last page.

Purpose of Research

The purpose of this research is to examine the experiences of transgender and gender non-binary individuals in change rooms and to find out how these individuals perceive and imagine strategies for making change rooms safer and more inclusive for their use. This knowledge is important to better inform scholars, policymakers, and facility management seeking to make sport and physical activity more accessible for transgender and gender non-binary individuals. This study involves interviews with transgender and gender non-binary individuals who experience barriers to using change rooms.

Research Procedures

- After obtaining your written consent, you will be asked to take part in one 60 to 90-minute interview. If you use change rooms frequently or occasionally at the time of this interview you will also be invited to take part in a 5-10 minute audio-
diary journal entry. **An audio diary is an audio file that you may record independently. In an audio-diary entry you can choose what you do or do not share without prompting from, me, the interviewer.**

- **You may decline to answer any interview questions without negative consequences.**
- The interview with me will take place at time agreed upon by both of us, in either a private location at the University of Toronto or a public location of your selection.
- During the interview, you will be asked questions about:
  - Your experiences as a transgender or gender non-binary person;
  - Your experiences in change rooms and washrooms;
  - Your perceptions of strategies currently being used to make change rooms more inclusive for transgender and gender non-binary individuals;
  - Your perceptions of what strategies might be more effective at making change rooms more inclusive for transgender and gender non-binary individuals.
- This research project will involve 7-12 transgender and gender non-binary individuals.
- Once I have gathered all the research information, I will make arrangements to send you a copy of your transcript. This will give you an opportunity to look over the transcript of the interview and provide any corrections or further feedback or clarification to me.

**Expenses**
- The study will involve no expense on your part: TTC/parking costs will be covered in the event that costs are incurred when traveling to and from the interview.

**Compensation**
- To compensate you for your time you will be provided with $20 Gift Card for Shoppers Drug Mart upon the completion of both interviews. You will be asked to sign a form to confirm that you have received this compensation. **If you withdraw your participation at a later date (up until August 1, 2018, after which time what you have shared cannot be withdrawn) you are entitled to keep your gift card and tokens/parking money as compensation.**

**Confidentiality and Anonymity**
- Standard principles of protection including the right to refuse (say no), withdraw or stop an interview will apply to both interviews and audio-diary entries. A number of steps will be taken to ensure anonymity (no one will know what you said) and confidentiality (no one will know that you participated) of the research and the reports. Notes, audio-tapes, transcripts and your audio-diary
(i.e., all electronic data) will be stored on a secure server (i.e., password protected computer and encrypted file folder) which only Ali Greey the Principal Investigator (PI), will have access to. The audio-tapes will be digitally erased immediately after they have been transcribed in order to further ensure your anonymity.

Anonymity

- The PI will verify transcribed (transfer into a written form) interviews by listening to the audio-tapes while reviewing the transcripts. During this process, all personal identifiers will be removed and a subject/interview code will be assigned to protect confidentiality. The resultant anonymized transcripts will be stored on a secure server (at the University of Toronto) on a password protected computer and encrypted file folder for use in any subsequent member-checking and analysis by my supervisor and committee members.
- Hard copies of anonymized interview transcripts will be kept in my locked filing cabinet in room 407 of the Goldring Centre at the University of Toronto. As well as being in a locked cabinet to which only I have key access, the room is also only accessible by key and the 4th floor is only accessible by fob.
- Every precaution will be taken to ensure the confidentiality of your information, and any reports created from the data will use anonymized data. No information that would allow people to identify you will ever be used.
- To guarantee anonymity, any published material based on any data collected will have all identifying details (names of participants, names of locations) changed, and pseudonyms (fake names) will be assigned.

Confidentiality

- Confidentiality will be respected and no information that discloses your identity will be released or published unless required by law by a representative of the University of Toronto Office of Research Ethics through a Quality Assurance Project. The limits of my ability to ensure your confidentiality are if a legal or ethical obligation requires me to share confidential information with third party (for example, suspected child abuse or infectious disease, expression of suicidal ideations). This only occurs in the unlikely case where research documents are ordered to be produced by a court of law and where researchers are obliged to report to the appropriate authorities.

Data destruction

- At the end of the project anonymized transcripts will remain in a locked filing cabinet at Dr. Caroline Fusco’s (Ali Greey’s MSc supervisor) office for 5 years (2023), after which time Ali Greey will dispose of them via secure shredding.
- Original tape recordings of interviews as well as interview transcripts will be digitally erased immediately after transcription.
Dissemination of Findings
- You should know that the researcher intends to publish the findings of the study and to make public presentations based on the research. Your name will not be given in any verbal or written reports or publications. At the end of my project, you can receive a summary of the study’s findings by email: (If you are interested in receiving research summary, please provide your e-mail:

Timing for Dissemination
Your transcript will be completed, at the latest, three months following our interview. At that time, I will provide you with a copy to review, and provide changes or clarification if necessary. As well, I will provide all research participants with a summary of the study’s findings if they wish to receive one. This will occur within one year following the end of my observation and interviews (approximately June 2019).

Interview Risks
Due to the theme of the interview, there may be some emotional discomfort. You may feel vulnerable and sensitive to what is being discussed during portions of the interview. There are no right or wrong ways to talk about gender or your experiences in change rooms, nor right or wrong answers to the interview questions. Some individuals may not have that much to say about change rooms, and this is not out of the ordinary. You do not have to answer any question that causes discomfort, and choosing not to answer any questions you will result in any negative consequences. Moreover, you are free to withdraw from the interview or from the study altogether at any time up until I begin data analysis August 1, 2018. If unanticipated disclosures (See section titled “Confidentiality” within this consent form) were to occur, I would follow the protocol of the University of Toronto’s Office of Research Ethics.

Mental Health Resources
- Please see the provided list of free and low-cost mental health resources. These resources offer guidance for seeking immediate (crisis) help as well as medium to long-term support (e.g. low cost therapy).

Potential Benefits
- There will be no direct benefit to you from this research, however, it is hoped that this research will fill an important gap in knowledge regarding the experiences of transgender and gender non-binary individuals in change rooms and how barriers to change room use may impact opportunities for physical activity within this population. Moreover, this research may inform future
policies and strategies for making change rooms more inclusive in Canada.

**Voluntary Participation and Right to Withdrawal**

- Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to answer any questions in the interview without penalty or explanation. If you choose to withdraw from the study, you will also have the option to withdraw the information that you have so far provided without prejudice. Should you make the decision to leave the interview before its completion, you will be provided with transit or parking costs but you **will not receive a $20 gift card compensation**. Once the second interview is complete, you will receive **the $20 gift card compensation**. If you withdraw your data at a later date after the completion of the interview, you can keep the $20 compensation. You may withdraw your data from the study at any time up until the first draft of my Master’s thesis is completed, December 1st, 2018, by contacting Ali Greey: transgenderinthechangementoom@gmail.com

**Questions and Clarifications**

- If you have questions about the study and its procedures please feel free to contact the Ali Greey now or at a later time, should you consent to take part in the study. Similarly, you may request further clarification about any part or condition of this study by contacting Ali Greey: transgenderinthechangementoom@gmail.com

If at any time you have questions about the rights of yourself as a research participant, you may also contact Office of Research Ethics-ethics.review@utoronto.ca or 416-946-3273.

**Acceptance of the Conditions and Consent**

I have read the consent form about this study. At the time of signing this form, I understand what this study involves. The researcher has given me the opportunity to ask questions about the study and its procedures and these questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I know that if I have further questions about the study and its procedures in the future, I may contact the Principal Investigator or the Office of Research Ethics. I know that my participation in the research is voluntary and that I am under no obligation to participate in the study. I know that I am free to stop my participation in this study at any time. The possible discomforts and the possible benefits of this study have been explained to me, but in no way does signing this consent form waive my legal rights nor does it relieve the researchers or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. I know that if I sign the present form, I grant permission to the researchers to interview me as part of the study. By signing the present form, I
consent to the recording of the interviews, recording an audio-diary and for the interview transcript to be digitally recorded and kept by the researchers.

_______ YES (signature required)    ____ NO

I further grant permission to the researcher to use parts of the interview transcript (once all details allowing my identification have been deleted) for research publications and teaching or demonstrations at professional meetings. I have been given a copy of this consent form for my records.

_______ YES (signature required)    ____ NO

___________________________________________
Participant’s Signature                      Date

I, the undersigned, have, to the best of my ability, fully explained the nature of this study to the participant. I believe that the participant whose signature appears above understands the implications and voluntary nature of his/her participation in the research procedures.

___________________________________________
Researcher’s Signature                      Date

If at any time you have questions about the research, please contact the Principal Investigator, Ali Greey: transgenderinthechangeroom@gmail.com
# Appendix I: Interview Guide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Range</th>
<th>Activities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-5 (I)</td>
<td>Thank you for coming. Introduce the project. Emphasize the importance of intersectionality to the research. Discuss project goals. Review Informed Consent Form (Appendix D)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-10 (II)</td>
<td>Offer interviewee opportunity to ask questions or raise concerns about interview process</td>
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<td>10-15 (III)</td>
<td>Invite interviewees to select their own pseudonym. Inform them that during the transcription phase all other people/places they mention in the interview will also receive pseudonyms and that <strong>interviews will be de-identified/anonymized</strong></td>
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<td>15-20 (IV)</td>
<td>One of the priorities of this research is to examine some of the ways in which the experiences of gender transgressors in change rooms are impacted intersectionally, not only by gender/sexuality but also by race, class, ability, and body size. With this in mind, could you tell me more a bit about how you self-identify with regards to sex/gender, race/ethnicity, ability?</td>
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<tr>
<td>20-30 (V)</td>
<td>Tell me about your past experiences in sport and physical activity. What did you play? When? What did you like about it? What did you dislike about it? What are you involved in now? What are the biggest barriers to playing/competing now?</td>
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<tr>
<td>30-40 (VI)</td>
<td>1. Have you ever been confronted in sport because of your gender, race, sexuality, class, ability, or body size? 2. Could you tell me a bit about this/these confrontation(s)? 3. Where did this/these confrontation(s) happen? 4. How did you feel during the confrontation? 5. How do you feel about the confrontation now? 6. Do confrontations like this often occur for you? If offers another example, repeat questions 2-5 &amp; 7. 7. Why do you think people confront you? 8. Are there any other responses that you receive in sport, ones which might not necessarily involve confrontations (e.g. inappropriate looking, comments, moving away/toward, etc.)? 9. How do you think these (repeated) confrontations/responses effect your participation in physical activity?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-50 (VII)</td>
<td>1. Let’s turn our attention toward sex-segregated spaces now, like the men’s/women’s bathrooms and locker rooms. Could you tell me a bit about how you experience and feel in these spaces? 2. What is worse for you the bathroom or the locker room? Why? 3. How do people respond to your presence in these spaces? 2.A. If mentions confrontation repeat VI 2-5 &amp; 7.</td>
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</table>
4. How do these responses impact your experiences in these spaces?
5. Why do you think people respond to you this way?
6. What kind of people tend to respond this way? Tell me about this.
7. How do you avoid people responding to you like that in these spaces?
8. Do these responses impact how you use this/these space(s)? If yes, how?
9. People talk a lot about “intersectionality” how our experiences are not shaped by just a single part of who we are, but that our experiences are shaped by all of our parts, as a [refer to multiple self-identifications they outlined earlier in the interview] how do you experience the locker room in ways that other people transgressing the gender binary might not?

(VIII) Do you currently use change rooms?
   If yes, would you be willing to record an audio diary recording?
   If yes, outline process and give prompt sheet (Appendix F)

| 50-60 | 1. Discuss available strategies for making change rooms more inclusive:
   2. Perceptions of the efficacy of safe space signs (SHOW SAFE SPACE SIGN IMAGE [Appendix G]):
      2. A) Have you been any place where Safe Space Signs have been included?
      2. B) What do you think of them?
      2. C) What do you think they do well?
      2. D) What do you think they don’t do well?
   3. Trans-positive membership policies (Offer description and example):
      3. A) Have you been any place where they have been included?
      3. B) What you think do you think of them?
      3. C) What do they do well?
      3. D What do you think they don’t do well?
   4. All-gender change rooms (SHOW IMAGE OF ALL-GENDER SIGN [Appendix H]. Describe & provide example):
      4. A) Have you been in an all-gender change room?
      4.B.i) If yes, how did you feel there?
      4.B.ii) If no, how do you feel about the idea of going there?
      4. C) What do you think are positive about all-gender change rooms?
      4. D) What do you think are negative about all-gender change rooms?
      Or what doesn’t work well about them? |

| 60-65 | Show and discuss Vancouver Parks Board Initiative [Appendix I] |
| 65-70 | Show and discuss University of Bristol LGBT+ Society Poster [Appendix J] |
| 70-75 | Show and discuss Change Room Project [Appendix K] |
| 75-85 | *Turn recorder off* Debrief |
| Plans to be in touch re: sending a copy of completed transcripts and research summary (project end debrief). |
Appendix J: Ethics Protocol Approval Letter

Dear Alison Greer:

Re: Your research protocol application entitled, "Gender Transgressors: Exploring the Intersectional Experiences of Transgender and Gender Non-Binary Individuals in Locker Rooms"

The Health Sciences REB has conducted a Delegated review of your application and has granted approval to the attached protocol for the period 2018-06-22 to 2019-06-21.

Please be reminded of the following points:

• An Amendment must be submitted to the REB for any proposed changes to the approved protocol. The amended protocol must be reviewed and approved by the REB prior to implementation of the changes.

• An annual Renewal must be submitted for ongoing research. You may submit up to 6 renewals for a maximum total span of 7 years. Renewals should be submitted between 15 and 30 days prior to the current expiry date.

• A Protocol Deviation Report (PDR) should be submitted when there is any departure from the REB-approved ethics review application form that has occurred without prior approval from the REB (e.g., changes to the study procedures, consent process, data protection measures). The submission of this form does not necessarily indicate wrongdoing; however follow up procedures may be required.

• An Adverse Events Report (AER) must be submitted when adverse or unanticipated events occur to participants in the course of the research process.

• A Protocol Completion Report (PCR) is required when research using the protocol has been completed. For ongoing research, a PCR on the protocol will be required after 7 years, (Original and 6 Renewals). A continuation of work beyond 7 years will require the creation of a new protocol.

• If your research is funded by a third party, please contact the assigned Research Funding Officer in Research Services to ensure that your funds are released.

Best wishes for the successful completion of your research.