

Bren, Chloe and Prince, Heather ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6199-4892>
(2019) Exploring the experiences of trans and non-binary participants in residential outdoor programmes. In: EOE 2019 Conference: Diversity and Inclusion in Outdoor and Experiential Learning, 25-27 September 2019, Institute of Technology, Tralee, Ireland. (Unpublished)

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Exploring the experiences of trans and non-binary participants in residential outdoor programmes: a look at current practice

Chloe Bren and Heather Prince

Trans

Currently the most inclusive ‘umbrella term’ to describe a large pool of individuals whose gender is different from their gender assigned at birth. This might include people who are transgender, transsexual, non-binary, gender fluid, agender, and many more.

Non-binary

An ‘umbrella term’ for someone who does not identify as male or female. Colloquially referred to as ‘enby’, or ‘nb’.

Cis/ Cisgender

Someone whose gender is the same as the gender they were assigned at birth. For example, if you had ‘MALE’ printed on your birth certificate, and in life you also identify as a man, then you are cis.

- 1) the current awareness, understanding, and confidence that is prevalent in outdoor practitioners in relation to working with trans and non-binary participants
- 2) the frequency with which practitioners are privy to education and resources currently in this area
- 3) specific instances when practitioners have worked with trans and/or non-binary participants and extracting best practice
- 4) the extent to which current practitioners working in the UK require and/or desire specific training in best practice
- 5) the experiences of trans and/or non-binary people who are participants and/or practitioners
- 6) solutions for both implicit and explicit inclusivity

'Would you consider yourself to have a general understanding of what it means when someone describes themselves as 'trans'?'

Yes - people are people. Your gender does not affect your ability to learn or to participate in outdoor activities.

Confident as I would treat them the same as everyone else.

Yes. I don't feel that gender fluidity confines or requires me as a practitioner to alter my delivery of outdoor activities. It may have difficulties for residential, when concerned with privacy policies and centres without gender fluid facilities.

Yes, I feel sexuality has no influence on the way I practice everyone is equal on my courses and I would work with anyone no matter what gender.

Yes, they are just people. What gender people are is not a big deal to me. I treat people as individuals my work had nothing to do with sexuality. So it's not an issue for me or at least so far it hasn't been.

Sexual preferences don't matter as much as a competent operator/instructor in the given activity.

Yes - my approach to working with young people requires me to have positive unconditional regard - I believe I can be sensitive enough to work with individuals presenting as trans/non binary. In the back ground due consideration will have been given to sharing washing and sleeping arrangements and any other issues regarding age. [Under or over 18]. Camping and huts also need more thought and attention as well as the acceptance of the accompanying young people and staff.

Mostly- I treat people as people. Ideally I would've been informed by a member of staff. I had one tell me to refer to a participant as they rather than he or she.

·Would you consider yourself to have a general understanding of what it means when someone describes themselves as 'non-binary', in relation to their gender?'

“more common” (Richards, Bouman and Barker, 2017, pp. 6)

“regarded as both ‘young’ and ‘difficult’” (Bergman and Barker, 2017, pp. 37)

“rarely acknowledged” (Vincent and Manzano, 2017, pp. 12).

I feel confident. I do worry about gender fluidity in 10-14 year olds; sharing bathrooms/bedrooms with other young members and dealing with parents views. I find dealing with the individual not a problem.

No, this is because I do not know enough about transgender or non-binary individuals to ensure I don't say something offensive or do something that is considered offensive.

Limited confidence due to lack of experience

I think it would be hard to for me to do so because of the way I address participants in general. As in if it were a female I would say "name" then love then again if it were a male I'd say "name" lad and I would find it difficult to break a habit as not to offend people. Bad habit by me don't do it.

I've heard some of the terms but I don't really understand them.

Medium confidence, could be questions about changing rooms and I don't know what might or might not be offensive to say.

Nearly 70% of respondents expressed a desire for further training in this area

Allin, L. (2000) 'Women into Outdoor Education: Negotiating a Male-gendered Space - Issues of physicality', in Humberstone, B. (ed.) *Her Outdoors: Risk, challenge and adventure in gendered open spaces*. Eastbourne: Leisure Studies Association, pp. 51–68.

Barnfield, D. and Humberstone, B. (2008) 'Speaking out: perspectives of gay and lesbian practitioners in outdoor education in the UK', *Journal of Adventure Education & Outdoor Learning*, 8(1), pp. 31–42.

Evans, K. (2014) 'The context of successful navigation of gendered norms in outdoor adventure recreation: The case of professional female adventure athletes', *All Dissertations*, Paper 1380, pp. 1–227.

Mcdermott, L. (2004) 'Exploring intersections of physicality and female-only canoeing experiences', *Leisure Studies*, 23(3), pp. 283–301.

Conclusions and discussion

Have you had any experience in this area that you would like to share?

In what format could we best deliver education to practitioners? (e.g. policy changes, inclusivity training courses, posters, articles?)