

# Strategies for Universal Washrooms and Change Rooms in Community and Recreation Facilities

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## A NOTE ON THE CREATION OF THIS DOCUMENT

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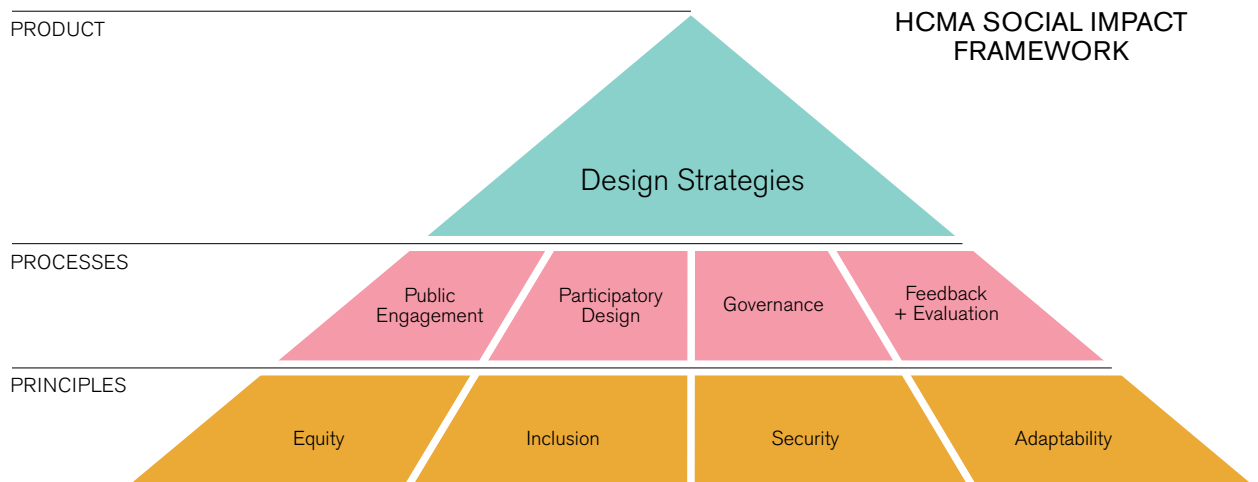
HCMA Architecture + Design created this document to help fill a gap in design knowledge around issues relating to universal washrooms and change rooms, and their provision in community and recreation facilities.

HCMA has been at the forefront of community-focused design in Canada for over two decades, and we continuously challenge ourselves to advance how we design for social impact (see below). Our experience creating community centres, aquatic centres, recreation centres, and libraries for diverse populations has informed this content.

This document, currently in its first version, is a contribution to ongoing and evolving discussions around designing for inclusivity. It shares core considerations rather than comprehensive suggestions for all groups.


We are grateful for the insight on gender diversity that TransFocus Consulting provided while advising on this content (see page 34). This focus is one of many to explore, and reinforces how strategies that reduce barriers to access for a vulnerable population ultimately improve access for everyone.

We would also like to thank the City of Surrey for contributing to, and supporting the development of this content.



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**“It is critical that we embrace the challenge to rethink even our most familiar spaces. We have a responsibility to use design to support basic rights for everyone and the evolving needs of our communities.”**

**Darryl Condon**

Managing Principal

HCMA Architecture + Design

# Executive Summary

Changing Area  
Fitness

FITNESS

# Universal Washrooms and Change Rooms: Why Do They Matter?

This document explores the benefits of universal washrooms and change rooms and their provision in community and recreation facilities. It is intended to be a resource for designers, municipal staff, facility planners, building operators and managers, and anyone interested in understanding more about this topic and why they are increasingly part of evolving best practice considerations across project and building types. The objectives of this document are to provide context, identify opportunities and challenges, and share design strategies that promote inclusivity for a wide variety of users.

The Canadian Human Rights Act and Criminal Code, updated in June 2017, clarify the right of all people to use a washroom or change room that corresponds to their gender identity and support discussions around access and how spaces can be made more inclusive. While universal washrooms (single-user and multi-stall) and universal change rooms are common in Europe, they are gaining traction in North America as demand for them continues to increase. Gender-designated washrooms and change rooms lack privacy and accessibility for many users, including those who have personal health requirements or mobility challenges, those who are transgender or transitioning, and those who may require assistance from someone of a different gender—including children and the elderly. This document discusses how universal washrooms and change rooms promote:

- Inclusivity for people with disabilities
- Inclusivity for families
- Inclusivity for transgender and non-binary people
- Increased privacy and safety
- Increased efficiency
- Forward-thinking design

The design strategies in this report offer a guide to important considerations in the design of universal washrooms and change rooms. They encourage higher standards of privacy, accessibility, and comfort than are often found in gender-designated washrooms and change rooms. They also intend to help mitigate common concerns regarding safety and privacy for various users. The five strategies are:

- 1 Strive for **inclusivity** and **access for all**
- 2 Use **openness** to **enhance safety** through activity and shared monitoring
- 3 Create **privacy** where most needed to **enhance comfort**
- 4 Welcome everyone with **signage** that **emphasizes function** and is clear, inclusive, and positive
- 5 Ensure **supportive staff operations** and communications

The provision of universal washrooms and change rooms in public and private spaces—either alone or alongside gender-designated options—is an opportunity to embrace the evolution of our communities' needs, and to champion inclusivity and accessibility for all.

# The Growing Case for Universal Washrooms and Change Rooms




## BACKGROUND

Many designers and building operators are reconsidering how washrooms and change rooms are configured. They are typically gender-designated, built for men and women separately. This separation is part of a complex history of access and inclusion in our shared spaces, and their reflection of our evolving social values.

Regulations and guides such as building codes and accessibility handbooks help make spaces more accessible for those with disabilities. However, there is an increasing shift towards washrooms (single-user and multi-stall) and change rooms that are more inclusive for a wider range of users. They are often referred to as universal or all gender, with the term 'universal' emerging as best practice. Universal washrooms and change rooms are being provided alone and alongside gender-designated options across a wide range of private and public buildings, from recreation centres to schools to private businesses.

This shift has partly been sparked by families and people with disabilities asking for facilities that can better accommodate more users, including caregivers of all genders. There is also an increasing awareness that many people feel uncomfortable and unsafe using gender-designated washrooms and change rooms, including transgender and non-binary (TNB) people (see page 13).



**“I felt as safe and secure as in any other public venue... Having been a dad taking his daughter to such places it’s nice to see something more inclusive and respectful of privacy at the same time.”**

**Universal Change Room User**

Regent Park Aquatic Centre, Toronto  
Yelp Review

## GOVERNMENT OF CANADA LEGISLATION

Bill C-16 was passed in June 2017. It updates the Canadian Human Rights Act and hate-crime and hate-speech provisions in the Criminal Code, clarifying that it is illegal to discriminate on the basis of gender identity or expression (see page 13). The bill protects the right of TNB individuals to use a washroom or change room corresponding to their gender identity (which has been supported by 20 years of case law). It also continues to enhance discussions around designing for inclusivity.



# Context for Universal Washrooms

**1778**  
Gendered washrooms are first introduced at a Paris ball as spectacle  
(see "Everyone Goes" in Additional Resources)

**Early 1900s**  
Legislation requiring women's washrooms as women enter the workplace in greater numbers

**Mid 1900s**  
Civil Rights Movement - abolishment of 'coloured' washrooms

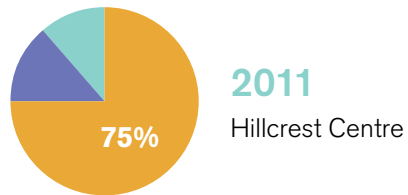
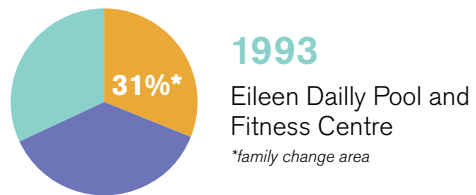
**2014**  
Document for Vancouver Park Board  
*Building a Path to Parks & Recreation for All: Reducing Barriers for Trans\* & Gender Variant Community Members*  
(link to document in Additional Resources)

**2017**  
Bill C-16 is passed in Canada, legally supporting individuals to use the washroom that corresponds to their self-determined gender identity  
(see previous page)

**2017**  
Changes to 2018 International Building Code include fixture calculations and signage suggestions for universal washrooms  
(see page 12)

# Evolution of Change Rooms in HCMA Projects

Universal Change Room Area  
Women's Change Room Area  
Men's Change Room Area



# Benefits of Universal Washrooms and Change Rooms



## **INCLUSIVITY FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**

Universal spaces accommodate people who use mobility aids such as wheelchairs, and those who have a caregiver of a different gender.

## **INCLUSIVITY FOR FAMILIES**

Parents or caregivers can use the same change room or washroom as other family members (i.e. a grandfather can use a change room with his young granddaughter, or a woman with her elderly father).

## **INCLUSIVITY FOR TRANSGENDER AND NON-BINARY PEOPLE**

Universal washrooms and change rooms provide a safer and more welcoming space for TNB people, and can reduce feeling unsafe and instances of harassment and abuse.

## **INCREASED PRIVACY AND SAFETY**

Universal washrooms and change rooms strive to create privacy and safety for all users. Increased privacy in toilet, change, and shower stalls promotes comfort, as well as discretion around individual health needs (for example, a diabetic needing to inject insulin and dispose of medical waste). Openness and connection in central areas promotes safety.

## **INCREASED EFFICIENCY**

They can handle higher overall usage than washrooms and change rooms separated into women's and men's, and reduce the wait times and lines often experienced by those using women's washrooms during events or other high-use times. They also facilitate cleaning by staff of any gender.

## **FORWARD-THINKING DESIGN**

Demand for universal washrooms and change rooms is growing, and they offer greater flexibility. Designs that prioritize gender-designated spaces may require renovation as community needs continue to evolve.

# Challenges and Concerns



## **CONFUSION AROUND LANGUAGE AND ACCESS**

Many people are unsure about what the terms 'universal washroom' and 'universal change room' mean and that they are for everyone—rather than solely for families or those with disabilities. In the past, universal change rooms have been called family change rooms with the expectation that families have priority use in them over individuals, especially during high traffic times. Universal spaces do not prioritize certain users over others.

## **CONFUSION AROUND USE**

Some people are unsure or unaware of what behaviour is expected in universal spaces. For example, some people don't know whether they may undress in the open locker area of universal change rooms. This report describes universal change rooms as spaces where people change or shower nude only in private stalls. Signage and user education clarify that clothing or swimsuits are required in all the areas adjacent to those stalls.

## **CONFUSION AROUND DESIGN**

As their design is not standardized, many people assume that universal washrooms and change rooms look the same as gender-designated ones. The design strategies in Part 4 promote key differences focused on privacy and comfort.

## **FEELING UNCOMFORTABLE**

Some people express that sharing washrooms or change rooms with members of another sex or with transgender and non-binary people is uncomfortable or strange—it's different than what they're used to or may challenge cultural norms. Some people also express concern that gender-designated spaces are necessary for the safety of women and children.

The best design processes involve consultation with a variety of user and advisory groups in order to mitigate concerns, while design strategies (see Part 4) can help increase comfort for as many users as possible. Designing stalls to a higher standard of privacy than found in most gender-designated washrooms and change rooms helps achieve comfort, while creating openness in adjacent areas promotes safety and visibility.

# Notes on Building Regulations

Major barriers to the widespread adoption of universal washrooms and change rooms include the language and calculation tables of regulations that govern our built environments. Opportunities and timelines for change vary due to the jurisdictional nature of these regulations.

## NATIONAL BUILDING CODE OF CANADA

Canada's National Building Code (NBC) is a model code that is adopted or modified by various jurisdictions throughout the country (British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario, and Quebec have adopted provincial codes based on the NBC). The latest version was released in 2015. It is uncertain how changes made to the 2018 editions of the International Building and Plumbing Codes (IBC + IPC), which primarily govern codes used in the United States, may influence the next version of Canada's NBC. Changes to the IPC include new signage and toilet calculation provisions for universal washrooms, initially proposed by the American Institute of Architects.<sup>1</sup>

The 2015 NBC clearly defines proportioning building users into male and female counts to determine toilet requirements for each, with the intention to provide parity in wait times—particularly for women. Universal single-user washrooms that meet accessibility requirements (including features such as grab bars and hooks) are recognized as 'universal washrooms,' updated from 'universal toilet rooms' in the 2010 NBC. Universal single-user washrooms count toward toilet requirements for small spaces such as cafes, but minimally contribute to requirements for large buildings. There is no recognition of toilets provided in universal multi-stall washrooms.

The NBC does not state that men's and women's washrooms must be physically separated. One strategy used to receive approval for universal multi-stall washrooms has been to indicate that total toilet counts are based on the assumed gender split of users—they are just co-located within a single shared space with no distinction or separation between users.

## OTHER REGULATIONS

The City of Vancouver is one of the few municipalities in Canada to issue its own code. Of note is the recognition of universal multi-stall washrooms under article 3.7.2.11 of the 2014 Vancouver Building Bylaw, which refers to them as gender neutral washrooms with individual toilet stalls. Their requirements include full height stall doors and walls, locks that indicate vacancy, and entrances with no doors (or doors with grills or open transoms).

National and provincial health regulations also affect the design of facilities. For example, the BC Public Health Act establishes the amount of men's and women's change room space required for aquatic facilities, and allows for universal change rooms in addition to gender-designated ones.

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<sup>1</sup> Spula, Ian. "An Unexpected Ally of Gender-Neutral Restrooms: Building Codes." *Architect Magazine* (September 2017). See link in Additional Resources.

# Notes on Transgender and Non-Binary Inclusion

Visible adherence to conventional notions of gender is still commonly expected in public washrooms and change rooms, though all individuals are now protected by law to use a washroom or change room that corresponds to their gender identity (see page 8).

Gender-focused advocacy has significantly advanced how we design for inclusivity. The definitions and information on this page highlight important language and context relevant to discussions about universal washrooms and change rooms.

## DEFINITIONS

**Gender Identity:** A person's innate sense of their own gender.

**Gender Expression:** How a person expresses and presents their unique relationship to femininity and masculinity through attire, hair, speech, mannerisms, etc.

**Cisgender / cis (person):** A person whose gender identity aligns with their sex assigned at birth.

**Transgender / trans (person):** A person whose gender identity does not align with their sex assigned at birth.

**Non-binary (person):** A person who does not identify as either woman or man. Other words people may use are gender variant, gender fluid, gender creative.

**TNB people:** A shorthand term for 'transgender and non-binary people.'

**Two Spirit (person):** An umbrella term sometimes used to refer to an Indigenous person who simultaneously manifests both a masculine and a feminine spirit, and assumes particular gender roles in traditional ceremonies and practices.

**Universal:** Term used to indicate spaces that can be used by people of all abilities and genders. This includes multiple users, families, caregivers, and people with disabilities. There is an emerging best practice to use the term 'universal' instead of 'gender neutral' and 'all gender.'

## STATISTICS ON HEALTH AND SAFETY

A 2015 study of over 27,000 transgender individuals in the U.S. found that 26% of all respondents were denied access to washrooms, had their presence in a washroom questioned, and/or were verbally harassed, physically attacked, or sexually assaulted in a washroom in the year prior to taking the survey.<sup>2</sup>

59% of respondents of the same study avoided using public washrooms. 32% avoided drinking or eating so that they would not need to use the washroom, and 8% reported having a urinary tract infection or kidney-related medical problem as a result of avoiding washrooms in the past year.<sup>2</sup>

A 2011 report of Canadian schools found that 52% of transgender youth feel unsafe in gender-designated washrooms and change rooms.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> James, S. E., Herman, J. L., Rankin, S., Keisling, M., Mottet, L., & Anafi, M. *The Report of the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey*. Washington, DC: National Center for Transgender Equality, 2016.

<sup>3</sup> Taylor, Catherine & Tracey Peter. *Every Class in Every School: Final Report on the First National Climate Survey on Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia in Canadian Schools*. Toronto: Egale Canada Human Rights Trust, 2011.



# Typologies and Precedents





## INTRODUCTION

Universal single-user washrooms, multi-stall washrooms, and change rooms are increasingly used in diverse building types across Canada.

A variety of design options are being implemented as alternatives to traditional gender-designated washrooms and change rooms. Some of the designs are fully universal, while others provide a combination of universal and gender-designated options.

While many examples of where typologies have been provided are located in British Columbia, others could be highlighted from across the country.

*Below:* Universal change area opening onto the pool deck of Grandview Heights Aquatic Centre, Surrey, BC.





# Common Designs:

## ⑤ Universal Single-User Washrooms

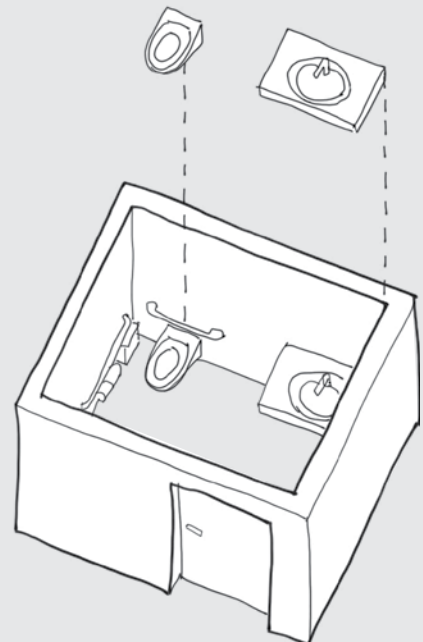
### OVERVIEW

Universal single-user washrooms consist of a single toilet and sink enclosed with a locking door and designated with appropriate signage. They are the most prevalent type of universal washroom, and are frequently built to meet accessibility requirements (see page 12).

- They offer a higher degree of privacy than universal multi-stall washrooms.
- They are often provided individually or in pairs, but it is increasingly common to find several side-by-side.
- Occasionally, a row of them is provided where only one or two have been made accessible.
- While the physical typology itself is very common, many are labeled as men's and women's. They can be designated as universal by changing signage and ensuring that waste receptacles are provided.
- Yelp has added a 'gender neutral restrooms' category to listings for those who specifically seek them out.

### EXAMPLES

Universal single-user washrooms are so common that often people do not notice or care that they are not gender-designated. Many businesses, workplaces, retail stores, restaurants, and cafes already provide universal single-user washrooms in order to meet basic accessibility requirements, or when only one toilet is available.



# Common Designs:

## **M** Universal Multi-Stall Washrooms

### OVERVIEW

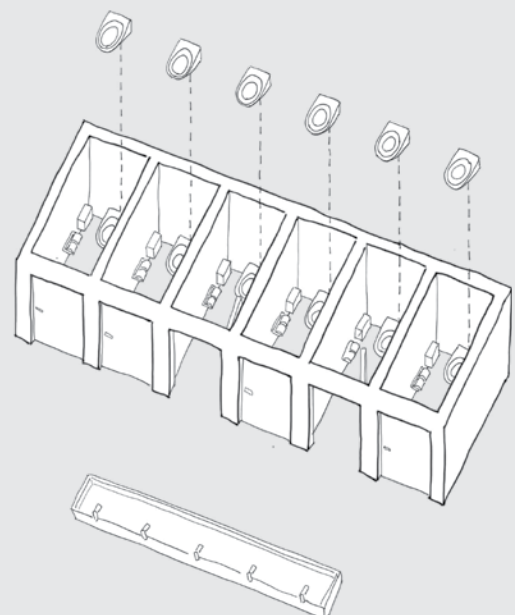
These washrooms look like common multi-stall washrooms with shared sinks, but are clearly marked as universal with appropriate signage. The key difference is that they strive for greater privacy than most gender-designated multi-stall washrooms by providing full-height enclosures for toilets, creating individual 'toilet rooms' as opposed to stalls separated by partial dividers.

- Select stalls can be made accessible and large enough to accommodate more than one person. This is important for those who are disabled or require assistance.
- Shared sinks can also be designed to be accessible to children and those in wheelchairs.
- Universal single-user washrooms can be included in multi-stall washrooms to provide users with more options.

### EXAMPLES

Universal multi-stall washrooms are currently less common than universal single-user washrooms. However, they are gaining momentum, and many restaurants are adopting this design. Examples of places where they are provided include:

- North Delta Recreation Centre
- Gibsons Elementary School
- LOCAL Public Eatery, Gastown, Vancouver
- University of Victoria
- University of the Fraser Valley, Abbotsford
- The Royal Ontario Museum



# Common Designs:

## © Universal Change Rooms

### OVERVIEW

Universal change rooms are shared spaces for all users of a facility. Typically, a central open space includes lockers, benches, and sinks. Private single-user (and often multi-user) change and shower stalls are provided, and clothing or swimsuits are required in all areas outside of these stalls.

Universal change rooms are similar to family change rooms, yet explicitly welcome all users. Sometimes they are available alongside men's and women's designated change rooms. Designs differ depending on the types of activities occurring in the building and the presence of aquatic facilities.

- Universal change rooms are standard practice in many parts of Europe. They are increasingly common in Canada and are popular with a variety of users, including families, for the flexibility that they offer. Growing demand is apparent in the increase of area dedicated to them in HCMA projects (see page 9).
- They provide a more efficient use of space when both mixed and single-gender groups use the facilities (a girls' sports meet, for example).
- Some municipalities are moving toward incorporating universal change rooms in all new buildings and renovations.

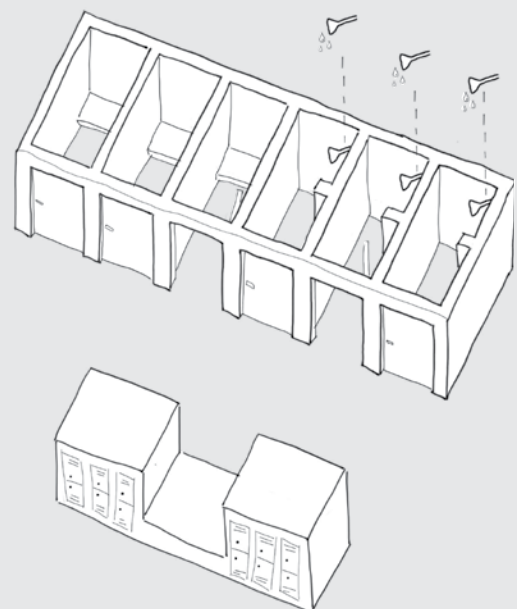
### EXAMPLES

#### *HCMA projects*

- Hillcrest Centre, Vancouver
- Killarney Community Pool, Vancouver
- West Vancouver Aquatic Centre
- Grandview Heights Aquatic Centre, Surrey
- Minoru Centre for Active Living, Richmond
- Chimo Aquatic and Fitness Centre, Coquitlam
- Legends Centre, Oshawa
- Complexe Aquatique de Laval

#### *Facilities that provide only universal change rooms*

- The North Delta Recreation Centre
- Regent Park Aquatic Centre, Toronto
- Queen Elizabeth Pool, Edmonton
- Remington YMCA, Calgary







# Design Strategies for Universal Washrooms and Change Rooms



## HCMA HAS DEVELOPED FIVE STRATEGIES FOR DESIGNING UNIVERSAL WASHROOMS AND CHANGE ROOMS

These strategies demonstrate how good design mitigates barriers to realizing inclusivity, equity, security, and adaptability.

They offer teams involved in the design of washrooms and change rooms a guide to top considerations. These strategies are to be explored, adapted, balanced, and applied within the unique context of each project—including its challenges and opportunities.

Most of these strategies highlight considerations that are generally applicable. While others are more specific in their application, it is useful to understand them all.

Many of the design strategies have been illustrated and visualized with example washroom and change room layouts.

### SYMBOLS

The following symbols indicate the relevance of points to the three common universal typologies:

- S** single-user washrooms
- M** multi-stall washrooms
- C** change rooms

# 1 Strive for **inclusivity** and **access for all**



Consider gender identity and expression, ability, age, culture, etc.



Provide stalls that accommodate more than one person to support those who are elderly, young, or disabled in receiving assistance from caregivers or parents of any gender.



Locate accessible amenities to enhance visibility and ease of use:

- Accessible stalls that are part of a multi-stall space should be located nearest to the entrance of the shared area.
- Accessible single-user washrooms should be prominently located within the building.



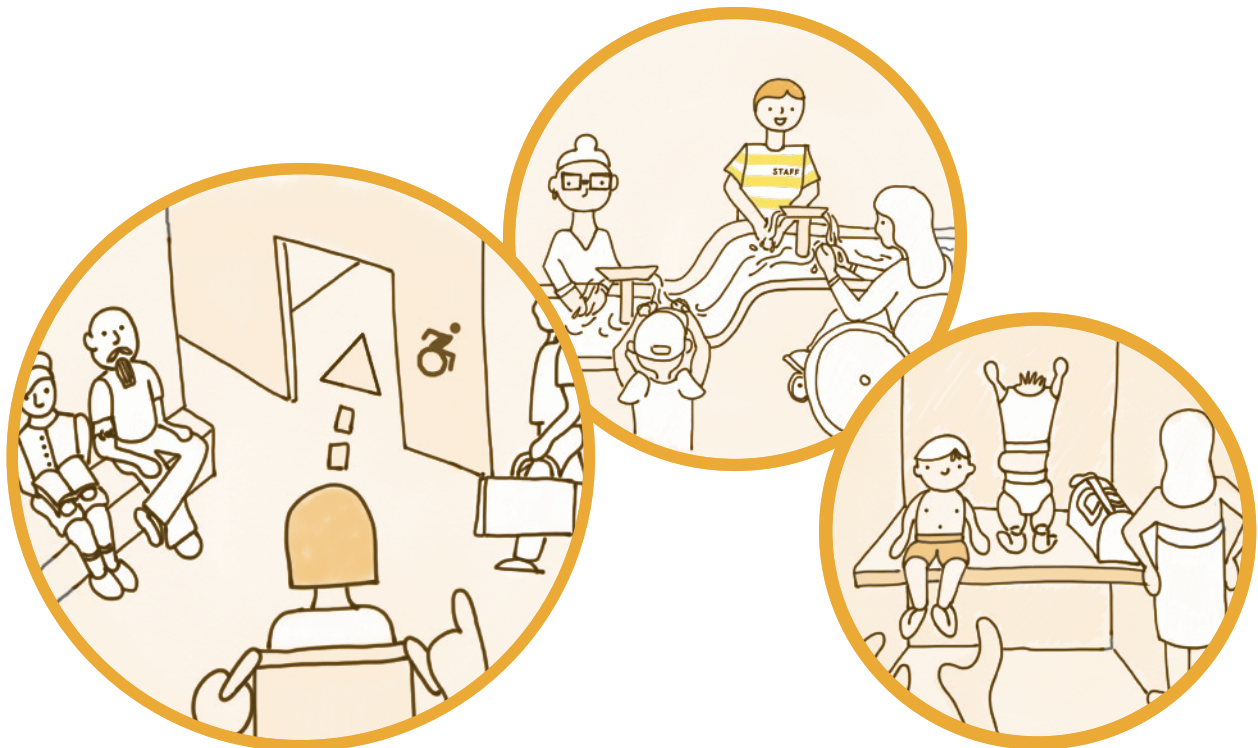
Design all sinks to meet code requirements for accessibility. Ensure that communal lockers, hand dryers, soap dispensers, and hair dryers accommodate different ages and abilities to integrate and normalize diverse needs.



Ensure access to infant and adult change tables.



Provide adequate quantities of toilet, shower, and change stalls to increase efficient use of space and reduce wait times (to minimize feelings of vulnerability or exposure).





2

## Use **openness** to **enhance safety** through activity and shared monitoring

**S M C**

Locate washrooms and change rooms adjacent to high traffic and prominent areas (such as reception desks and main hallways). Use openness between spaces to increase passive and active monitoring with sight lines and acoustic connection.

**M C**

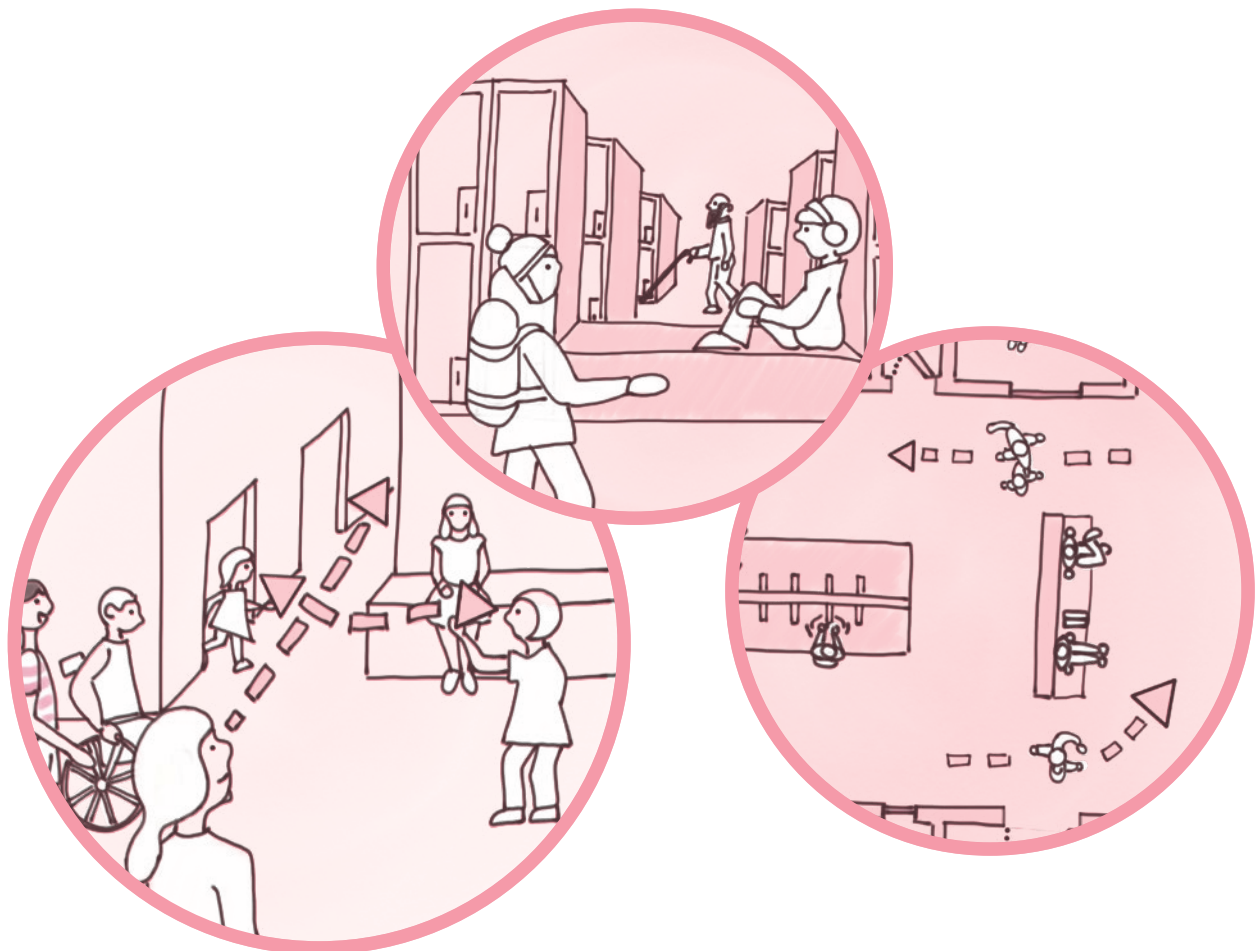
Create openness in shared sink, shower, and locker areas within multi-stall washrooms and change rooms to encourage passive observation and a feeling of shared space.

**M C**

Provide more than one entry/exit with open thresholds (no closed doors) to assist with circulation efficiency and ensure options for entering and leaving.

**M C**

Ensure effective circulation flow through the entire space to enhance efficiency and user comfort.





### 3

## Create **privacy** where most needed to **enhance comfort**

#### S M C

Use full-height enclosures and doors to create visual/acoustic/olfactory separation:

- Use solid walls for maximum privacy.
- Mitigate security concerns with design adjustments, such as translucent panels and small gaps under doors, that facilitate staff monitoring.
- If stall enclosures and doors are not full-height, ensure they are of adequate dimension to prevent looking under/over them (even when standing on in-stall benches).

#### M C

Create gradations of privacy and reduced-exposure areas (for vanity, baby change, etc) through the strategic placement of partial walls/dividers and screens.

#### S M C

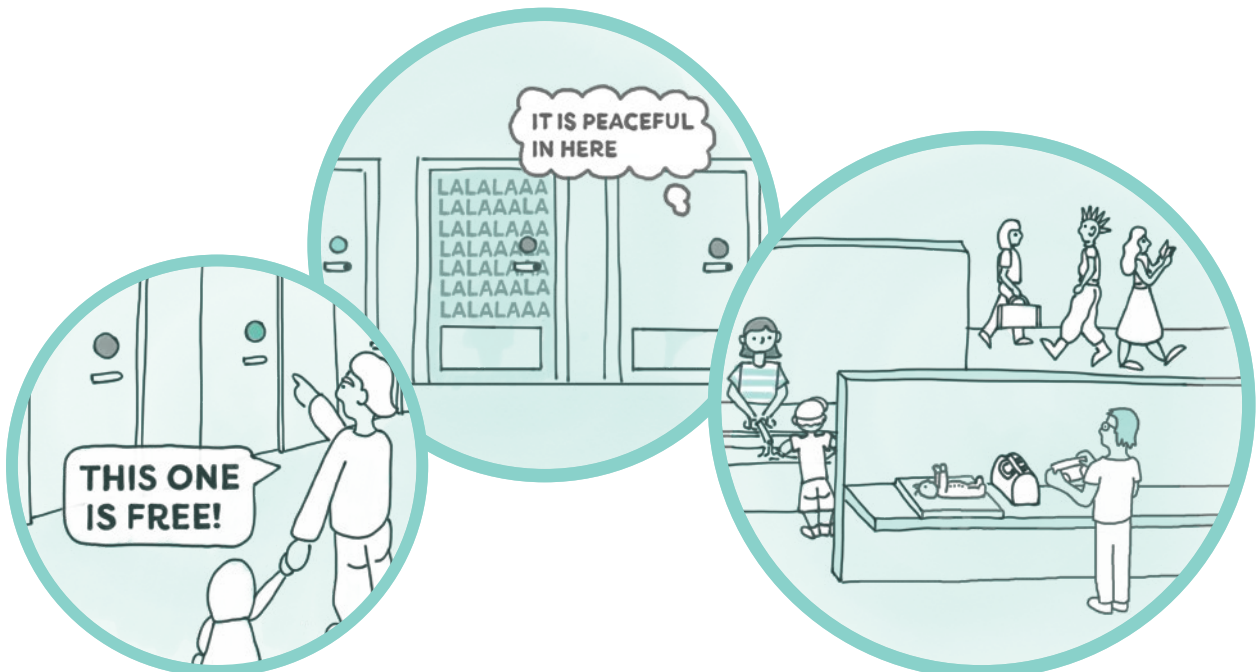
Specify door lock fixtures that clearly indicate whether or not stalls are occupied to increase user comfort and facilitate staff monitoring.

#### M C

Provide waste receptacles in each toilet stall to ensure privacy around personal health and hygiene. Also consider providing sharps containers for discrete needle disposal.

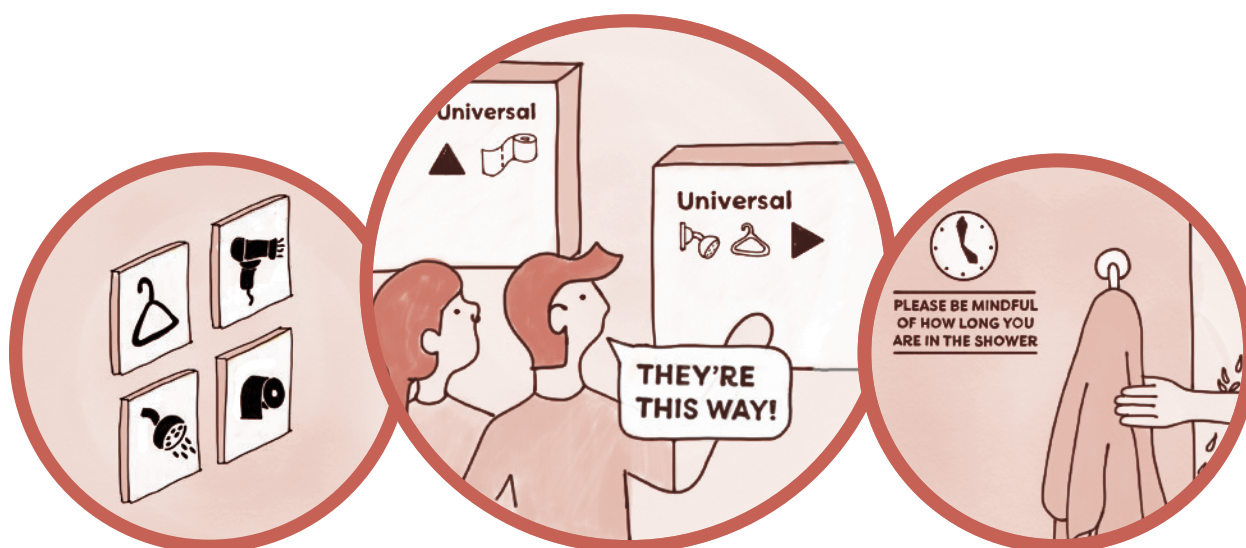
#### M C

Provide hooks in each toilet/shower/change stall to ensure clothing and personal items are within reach.



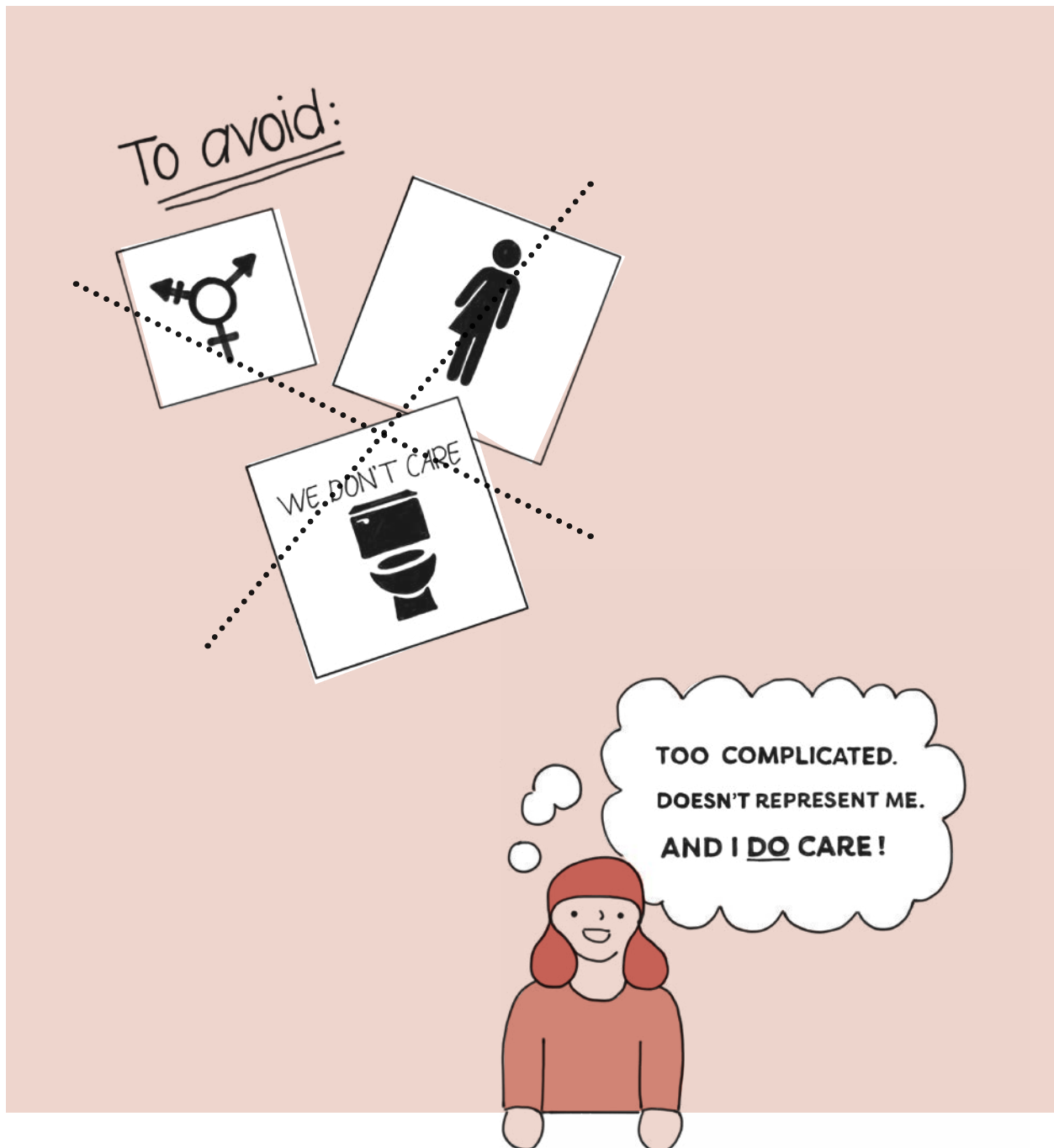
## 4 Welcome everyone with **signage** that **emphasizes function** and is clear, inclusive, and positive

- SMC** Emphasize function of space over identity of users.
- SMC** Use temporary signage to help educate users about new washrooms and change rooms.
- SMC** Ensure easy way-finding and understanding of universal washrooms and change rooms with clear signage, especially when gender-designated or inaccessible options are also available.
- SMC** Include signage near building entrance to help users identify which types of washrooms and change rooms are available and how to find them.
- SMC** Carefully consider terminology and keep it up-to-date as best practices evolve:
  - 'Universal' is the recommended term rather than 'all gender' or 'gender neutral.'
  - 'Shared' is a positive term that may be considered as an alternative to 'universal' (depending on context, it may not be as distinct or understandable).
- SMC** Include key messages in languages most prevalent in the local area.
- MC** Use signage to help clarify and reinforce appropriate use of shared space to (for example):
  - Indicate that clothing is required in locker areas.
  - Remind everyone to be mindful of how much time they are occupying stalls/showers.



## ADDITIONAL SIGNAGE GUIDELINES FOR TRANSGENDER AND NON-BINARY INCLUSION:

- SMC** Use the term 'universal' instead of 'family' for washrooms and change rooms, and support single users in these spaces, even during times of high traffic.
- SMC** Consider including 'Trans people welcome' on signage for all washrooms and change rooms when gender-designated spaces are provided.
- SMC** Work with transgender-informed translators to avoid problematic terms in other languages.



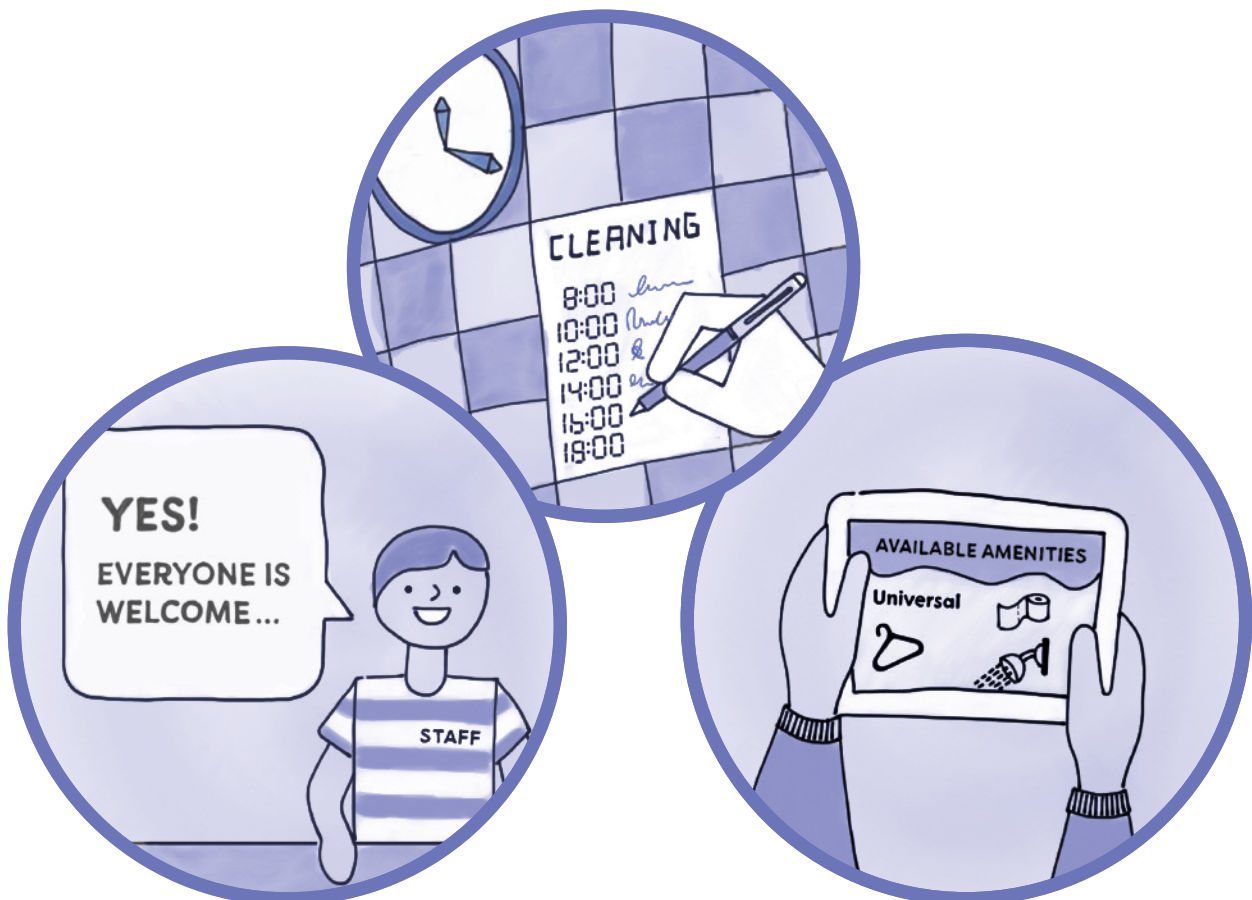
## 5 Ensure **supportive** staff **operations** and communications

**SMC** Provide staff with education and awareness training to equip them with the best practices, tools, and strategies to orient users, champion conversations around inclusivity, and mitigate potential conflicts.

**SMC** Prioritize cleanliness with adequate cleaning operations to promote user adoption and respect towards washrooms and change rooms.

**SMC** Use of universal washrooms and change rooms by staff promotes their normalization and active monitoring.

**SMC** Provide information on the website and all event/advertising materials so that users are aware of available amenities or are able to look them up.



# Notes on Improving Gender-Designated Washrooms and Change Rooms

Design strategies for universal washrooms and change rooms are an important part of the evolution of facilities and their best practice considerations. Improving the design of gender-designated washrooms and change rooms is also important due to their prevalence and familiarity, and the fact that their provision alongside universal options may continue to be the best choice for many spaces.

The Vancouver Park Board Trans\* and Gender Variant Inclusion Working Group developed recommendations to improve the design of existing or new gender-designated washrooms and change rooms.<sup>4</sup> They aim to increase privacy within gender-designated multi-stall washrooms and change rooms—to the benefit of all users. The following strategies were informed by these recommendations, and many reiterate ones previously described for the design of universal washrooms and change rooms:

- Consider including 'Trans people welcome' on signage. Universal washrooms and change rooms can create stigma for TNB people if presented as their only option when gender-designated spaces are also available.
- Increase the number of private toilet, shower, and change stalls, paying special attention to men's washrooms or change rooms where private spaces are typically omitted.
- Provide waste receptacles in each toilet stall to ensure privacy around personal health and hygiene. Also consider providing sharps containers for discrete needle disposal.
- Incorporate door locks that clearly indicate vacancy.
- Extend stall doors and walls from floor to ceiling.
- Extend privacy dividers between urinals further out from the wall and increase their height.

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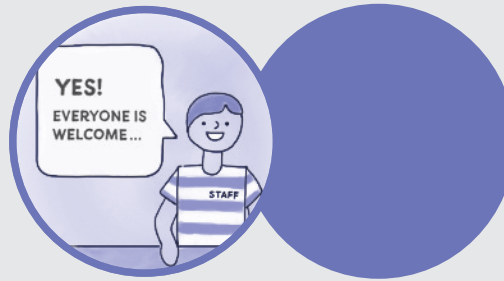
<sup>4</sup> See "Building a Path to Parks & Recreation for All" in Additional Resources.

# Visualizing Design Strategies

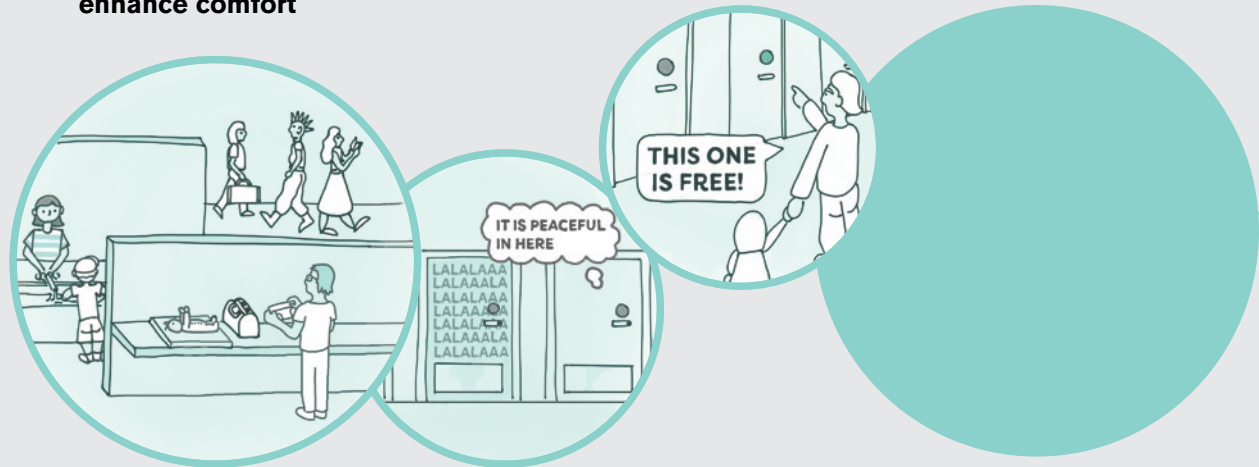
## **S** Universal Single-User Washrooms

## **M** Universal Multi-Stall Washrooms

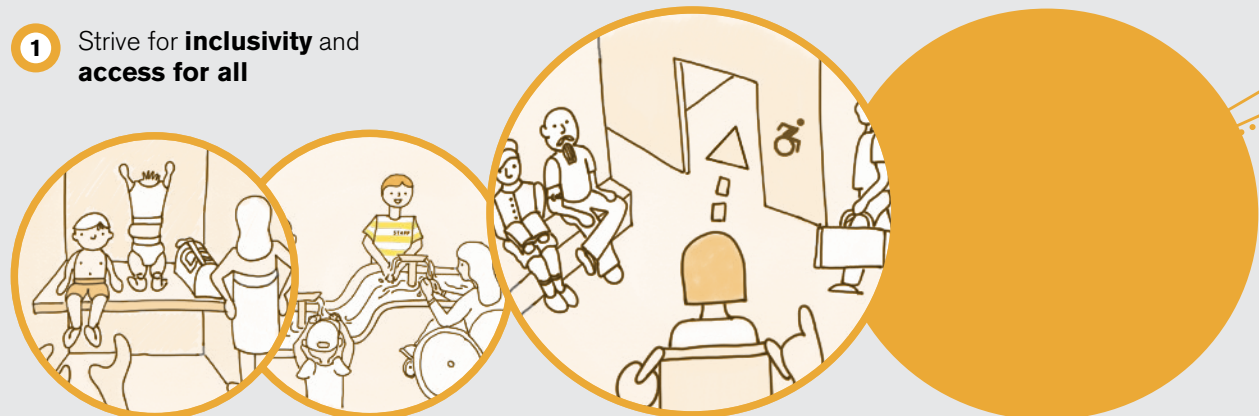
- 5** Ensure **supportive** staff **operations** and communications



- 3** Create **privacy** where most needed to **enhance comfort**



- 1** Strive for **inclusivity** and **access for all**

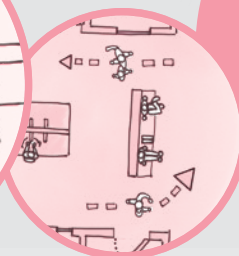
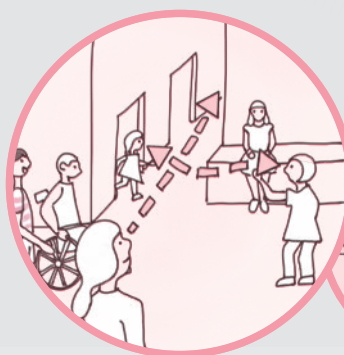




- 4 Welcome everyone with **signage** that **emphasizes function**

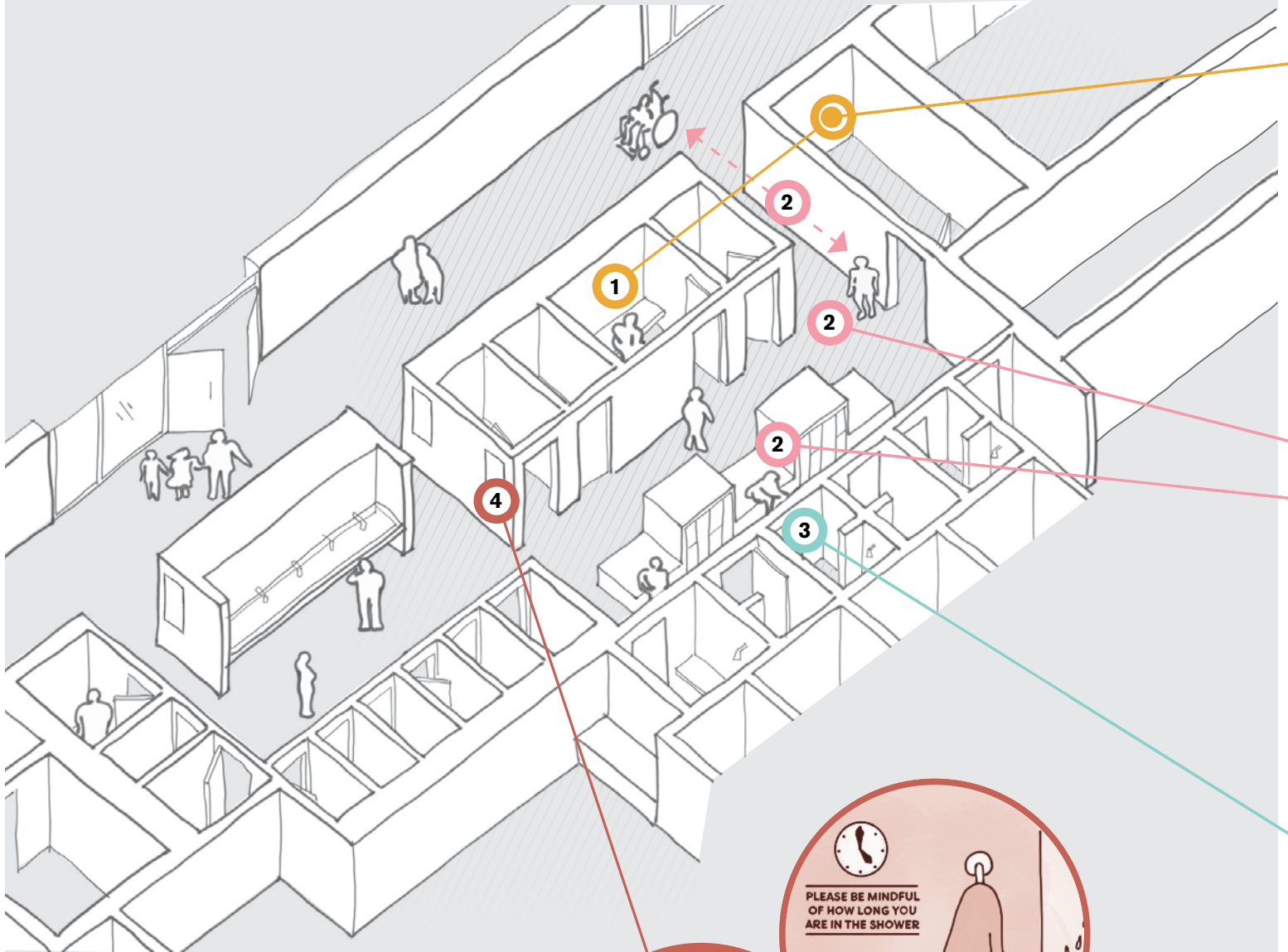


- 2 Use **openness** to **enhance safety** through activity and shared monitoring



# Visualizing Design Strategies

## © Universal Change Rooms



- 4 Welcome everyone with **signage** that **emphasizes function**

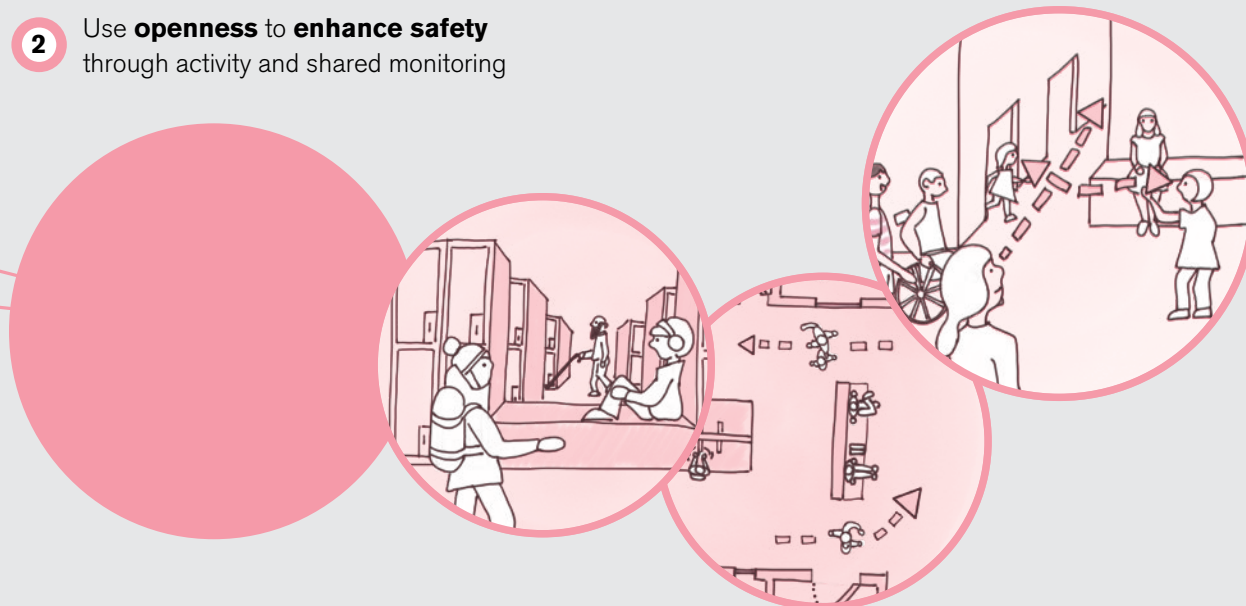




- 1 Strive for **inclusivity** and **access for all**



- 2 Use **openness** to **enhance safety** through activity and shared monitoring



- 3 Create **privacy** where most needed to **enhance comfort**



# Conclusion and Next Steps

Developing solutions for universal washrooms and change rooms is a single yet important aspect of a broader strategy for improving community and recreation facilities to better serve the widest range of users—as is improving the design of gender-designated spaces, which was only touched upon in this document.

Our commitment to design for equity, inclusion, security, and adaptability requires ongoing engagement with diverse users, stakeholders, and collaborators. We will continue to ask, listen, and learn in order to develop and refine tangible strategies that promote design as a tool for social impact. We welcome your thoughts and experiences that could help shape those recommendations in the future. Please get in touch with us at [office@hcma.ca](mailto:office@hcma.ca).

Design matters, and even the most common spaces are sites of potential impact for many members of our communities.

# Additional Resources

## GENERAL MATERIAL

*Everyone Goes: Why It's time to reimagine sex-segregated washrooms*  
Erin Anderssen, Globe and Mail, March 2016

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/life/home-and-garden/design/potty-parity-public-bathroom-redesigns-aim-to-flush-old-gender-norms/article29100856/>

*The Politics of Bathrooms*

Joshua Rothman, The New Yorker, May 2016

<http://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/the-politics-of-bathrooms>

*Building a Path to Parks & Recreation for All: Reducing Barriers for Trans\* & Gender Variant Community Members*

The Trans\* and Gender Variant Inclusion Working Group, for the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation, April 2014

<https://transgendervariant.files.wordpress.com/2014/05/building-a-path-to-parks-recreation-for-all-2.pdf>

## DESIGN-FOCUSED MATERIAL

*Architects Propose Design Solutions for Equitable Restrooms*

Anna Fixsen, Architectural Record, June 2016

<http://www.architecturalrecord.com/articles/11749-architects-propose-design-solutions-for-equitable-restrooms>

*The Simple Design Solutions That Can Make Bathrooms Better—For All Genders*

Lisa Selin Davis, Quartz, March 2017

<https://qz.com/933704/how-to-design-transgender-friendly-bathrooms-that-make-people-of-all-genders-feel-safe/>

*Why Architects Must Rethink Restroom Design in Schools*

JoAnn Hindmarsh Wilcox & Kurt Haapala, Metropolis Magazine, November 2016

<http://www.metropolismag.com/architecture/educational-architecture/why-architects-must-rethink-restroom-design-in-schools/>

*An Unexpected Ally of Gender-Neutral Restrooms: Building Codes*

Ian Spula, Architect Magazine, September 2017

[http://www.architectmagazine.com/practice/an-unexpected-ally-in-gender-neutral-restrooms-building-codes\\_o](http://www.architectmagazine.com/practice/an-unexpected-ally-in-gender-neutral-restrooms-building-codes_o)

## TRANSGENDER INCLUSION ASSESSMENT MATRIX FOR FACILITIES DESIGN

TransFocus Consulting is a firm that provides practical transgender inclusion measures to organizations in five key areas, including facilities design, gender data, human resources, communications, and products and services.

TransFocus has a tool to quantify the level of transgender inclusion and safety as a way to highlight strengths and opportunities for improvements to washrooms and change rooms (whether existing or planned).

TransFocus' assessment criteria informed the design strategies in Part 4 of this report. TransFocus offers additional details about the unique considerations and variables that collectively ensure smoother experiences for transgender people with benefit for people of all genders.

Request the tool on the TransFocus website:

[www.TransFocus.ca](http://www.TransFocus.ca)

