

Re-Imagining Gender in H&PE

As a provincial subject association for Health and Physical Education, Ophea recognizes that the historical structures and systems still used within our sector have the potential to cause harm to many students. This is true for transgender, nonbinary, Two-Spirit, and otherwise gender non-conforming students, especially those who also experience systemic oppression and marginalization based on other intersecting identities they hold.

Ophea reaffirms that every student, regardless of gender identity and/or gender expression, deserves quality Health and Physical Education where they feel they belong. Feelings of belonging are foundational to student learning, and expand access to the social, emotional, and physiological benefits of healthy, active living. When students are provided with opportunities to explore Health and Physical Education in identity-affirming spaces, they are supported in developing healthy, active habits for life.

Students outside the gender binary experience significant barriers to participation in Health and Physical Education, often as a result of traditional, rigid, practices such as programming that divides students along a binary of sex, creating "boys" against "girls" teams, and the improper use of pronouns, to name a few. As we work to create inclusive spaces that expand student access to feelings of belonging in Health and Physical Education, we must move towards practices that affirm and support every student, regardless of identity.

This statement was developed in collaboration with various stakeholders, subject matter experts (including those with lived experience), and community partners.