

Attachment B: 2023 interviews with Trans, Gender Diverse and Non-Binary Victim-Survivors.

In October 2023, two separate interviews were conducted with trans and non-binary victim-survivors of sexual violence for the purposes of service evaluation for an Australian Sexual Violence service. Interview One included Speaker 1 (facilitator), and Speakers 2, 3 and 4. Interview 2 was between Speaker 1 (facilitator) and Speaker 5, who requested a 1:1 interview. It goes without saying that each participant demonstrated exceptional courage in their willingness to provide this feedback. They have also contributed an invaluable resource in the form of lived experience that has historically been shared in private, within community, many times over in the past, but which are now being recorded and offered to [THE SERVICE] in good faith. Their accounts speak to the innate knowledge, wisdom and insight that victim-survivors have into their own experiences, and the steps that would meaningfully support their agency, and recovery from sexual and gendered violence. We are grateful that, in receiving and considering their ongoing response to this transcript, [THE SERVICE] has demonstrated good faith in providing their consent for it to be shared with the Australian Human Rights Commission Inquiry into Current and Emerging Threats to TGD Human Rights after further redactions were made.

Edit March 2024: Speakers 2, 4 and 5 have consented for their words to be used for advocacy and specifically the Australian Human Rights Submission. Speaker 3 did not provide their consent, and their answers have been redacted for the purposes of this submission attachment.

Interview 1

Speaker 1

So on that note, I'm going to ask the first question, which is: **would you mind sharing your experiences of accessing [THE SERVICE]?** And access can mean just reading their website or just learning about them as a service and choosing not to access. Would anybody like to share? Speaker 2, I know that you've already talked a little bit.

Speaker 2

I supposed to add on to it would be that like, their website was pretty explicitly like, if you have a relationship with masculinity, uh, we do not support you. Which would have been about 2015/2016 and I haven't actually looked at the website since then.

Speaker 4

My um, first experience of [THE SERVICE] was about five years ago and was referred by another service, and I tried to push through the barriers of like, them not catering to any people that, ahh, they identify as men. Went

through a screening process where they basically said that other women would not feel safe with me attending their group.

Speaker 1

I'm really sorry that happened, Speaker 4. That's a really awful thing to happen, and I'm hoping that these are the kinds of conversations that can start to shift some of that. Did you want to add anything more to that?

Speaker 4

I think the time that I had this experience, they were in the early start sages of trying to be more inclusive, but in the end, it was just a bridge too far for them. At that point, even after they talked to me in person at their office.

Speaker 1

Speaker 3, did you want to say anything? If you want to, I can come back to the question which, is just - would you like to share anything about accessing [THE SERVICE] support or information?

Speaker 3

[redacted]

Interview 2

Speaker 1

But yeah, OK, well, let's, let's get into it. So, **would you like to tell me about your experience of accessing [THE SERVICE]'s support?**

Speaker 5

Yeah. OK. So I first accessed [THE SERVICE] maybe 15 years ago. And I wanted to access [THE SERVICE] to talk about childhood sexual abuse, and I think I only had one or two sessions. The counsellor that I got paired with, I didn't know her personally, but I knew her partner personally and, her partner is a very active, outspoken TERF. And I just didn't feel like, that counsellor didn't say anything transphobic to me, but just because [THIS CITY] is small. And I knew her, that she was associated with somebody who was not just a TERF, but very active and outspoken, I just felt that I couldn't trust her with my story and my mental health, so I stopped accessing it. And then, a few years ago, so I was living in [DIFFERENT CITY] and I was accessing [DIFFERENT SERVICE] in [DIFFERENT CITY], which is like [THAT STATE'S], [THAT CITY]'s kind of version of [THE SERVICE] and they're an all gender service. The counselling that I got at [DIFFERENT SERVICE] was incredible. It was life changing. It helped me so much and I felt, I felt quite upset that I hadn't gotten that help earlier. And I also... I guess briefly when I

left [THAT CITY] to move back to [THIS CITY], I asked for a referral and the only service that they could give me a referral to was [THE SERVICE]. That this is the only like, you know, funded, free sexual assault, specific service in [THIS CITY] and, I was shocked. I was shocked that there wasn't an all-gender service. I kind of understood the purpose of a women's only service but, anyway, I was like, quite reluctant to follow up on the referral to [THE SERVICE], but I moved back to [THIS CITY] and I was really noticing the lack of mental health support with my trauma and decided to call [THE SERVICE].

OK, and so I had a couple of phone, I guess, what do they call it? Phone consultations. The like, intake, kind of process phone calls with someone at [THE SERVICE]. And and I brought up to her my, like, concerns about accessing [THE SERVICE] and, I guess... I've had friends who work at [THE SERVICE], work at [THAT SPACE], and I think I'm pretty informed on what's happening at those services and the culture, the like, transphobic culture there. The worker that I spoke to there was like, look, yeah, like, they were basically like, you're lucky that you got referred to me for intake because I'm not transphobic, so I'm happy to see you as a client, but you know, potentially if I, if you got moved on to another worker, I can't guarantee that they will want to see you or that they won't be transphobic with you and... She was trying, she was she was being very delicate and was trying to, I guess, skirt around asking me questions about my identity and my gender presentation and stuff, and I felt like she was trying to gauge just how masculine I am and, I wasn't taking the bait.

I didn't want to give her that information because I felt like it was irrelevant, and I basically called her out on it and I was like, what are you getting at? And she said to me it would be best if you came to appointments wearing a dress. She asked me to wear a dress to appointments and to not dress too masculinely because I might make the other staff there uncomfortable. Just by sitting in the waiting room and other staff seeing me in the wait room. That that would make them uncomfortable. I knew that the culture there at [THE SERVICE] was bad, but that was still shocking. To me, that that was one of their strategies around it, was to tell the survivor how to dress. And I felt like if I was a cis woman, they wouldn't tell a butch cis woman to wear a dress. To make other people comfortable.

It made me feel, really gross, and objectified, and that was like, as a survivor, that was a really, just yucky feeling that's like, familiar to me as a survivor. Feeling just yucky about my body and that my body isn't a safe place, and this is one of the things that I try to treat through counselling, trauma counselling. And in particular, I won't go into too much detail, but one of the paedophiles in my family, part of his sexual abuse was making boys wear dresses...

Speaker 1

It's OK. Take your time.

Speaker 5

OK... So that was, that was, it was very upsetting to hear that, and I was very I was really disappointed, and I was also really disappointed that staff members who were hired to treat sexual assault survivors... I was going to have to change the way I dress to make staff more comfortable, it wasn't to make other clients more comfortable. It was to make the other staff more comfortable. That is just such a massive red flag. So I basically said I need to stop this process, stop the intake, take me off your books, I'm not going to be accessing your services, like this isn't OK. And then I guess as a result, I've been going for the last three years without any sexual assault specific counseling, 'cause I can't afford it. And this was the only free place to get it.

Speaker 1

Sorry. That's a terrible, terrible thing. I know that this process isn't going to do any justice for the things that have already happened, but I really do, I really, really, really appreciate and really value that you would be generous enough with your truth to even allow [THE SERVICE] to hear this feedback.

Speaker 5

Yeah, well. I am. I really feel that. One of the things that I think about [THE SERVICE] is that there's this conflict, right? There's this conflict between workers who want to, who are trans friendly and want the service to be trans friendly, or want the service to be an all gender service. And then there's this, there's these other staff that are really holding on to it being a women's only service and are transphobic and, so I know that that conflict's been going on for many, many, many years and it doesn't get resolved and as a result these workers are making these little decisions kind of on the sly with their clients, and it's just not transparent and they're not being accountable to it. And I felt like that worker told me that on the phone, and nobody's probably hearing about it in the staff room. They're not going and telling the other staff in the meeting that they did that, and so I'm actually really happy that this is happening because I want that to be read out loud in a staff meeting and for them to all sit with how ***** that was.

I remember after that phone call kind of chatting to a couple of friends about it. And friends that are kind of associated with [THE SERVICE] and [AFFILIATE ORGANISATION], and one of them said ohh, I know that worker and she's one of the good ones. She's one of the trans friendly ones and... It became really apparent to me that even the trans friendly staff that are at [THE SERVICE] are having to make these decisions to pander to, I don't know who it is, particular staff members, particular management, I don't know but, but yeah, I feel like it has to

be... Particular staff members who have names, and that their needs are being – not their needs, their prejudices, are being prioritized over the needs of their clients. Of survivors.

Interview 1

Speaker 1

OK. So the second question: **Do you think identifying as queer or trans or non-binary or gender diverse has impacted your experience of engaging with [THE SERVICE] in any way?** Which is probably, I don't know how easily I'm going to capture, like, irony, but I'm going to do it. I'm going to really do my best. Because so much of the answers are probably obvious to each of us. But, would anybody like to respond to that?

Speaker 2

I remember. OK. Oh, you go Speaker 4.

Speaker 4

Thank you. I was going to say, of that list more specifically because my presentation is more like a non-binary person than a trans woman, I believe that was what raised doubts about the safety of other women around me.

Speaker 1

And sorry, can I just double check? That sounds like it was a really hard and probably quite hurtful thing to have those doubts raised. Am I right in thinking that?

Speaker 4

Yes, but this has been one of the challenges of my transition ever since I started transitioning 8 years ago, because I'm a late transitioner and very large build I had no pretensions that I'd never get to the point where I would pass and it's like - this is not something I can fix. This is me. So it's hurtful because it's not something that I can change, even though I've been working on it.

Speaker 1

Would you like to say anything about any feelings around like, fairness or justice that come along with that feeling of hurt?

Speaker 4

When I first made contact with [THE SERVICE], it was at a time where I was very vulnerable and this only compounded the problem because the person that was abusing me and I was escaping from was also a very masculine transwoman. So I felt like, I felt hurt because it definitely wasn't the stereotypical situation that they seemed to base the whole mantra on of men being abusive towards women. This was transwomen being abusive to transwomen.

Speaker 1

Speaker 2, did you want to jump in?

Speaker 2

I've just been sort of like adding on to what you were saying, Speaker 4, about like... It definitely seems that the presentation is so frequently, from what I've heard, like the biggest thing that they're concerned about. And that, like every person that I know who's accessed the service, has, like had to back-pass as a cis woman to be able to go, and to like hide the parts of themselves that isn't a cis woman or that is a sex worker or like... I haven't even personally heard what they're like with drug users, but like.. I reckon they'd be ***** awful. And like, I remember like interacting with, sort of like their reputation around the same time, or a bit before, interacting with the reputation that [ANOTHER SERVICE] used to have around being pretty transmisogynistic and the like... It's been largely the labor of like, a small handful of trans people shifting that kind of like dynamic. But this does and is... Probably like the same thing, that's happening here with [THE SERVICE].

Yeah, definitely, definitely get the strong feeling with [THE SERVICE] that their idea of what counts as sexual violence is like, the innately violent male, using his innately violent organ of sexual penetration to commit acts of atrocity against the innately victim, woman. And, like enacting biological violence, using the organ of violence on the organ of victimhood. And just this really intense ***** like TERFy bullshit, and like, not holding room for the recognition that, like, violence can be unrelated to gender and to organs, and that people of all bodies and of all gender experiences and of all sexualities are perfectly capable of violence.

And like, definitely feeling as though if I were to try to access [THE SERVICE], to get support from them, and if I were to be able to get support, that I wouldn't actually be able to genuinely engage with support because I would have to be careful around what I disclosed so that I don't further contribute to the harmful narratives that they hold around, like especially transfemmes and like, queers that don't fit that, like, narrative, I guess. And so like... pretty huge aspects of my gender and sexuality would just be like, not allowed. And that like, if I were to go, I would need to be like staunch binary trans woman who's invested in, like, passing and getting a **** and like,

living the ***** cis narrative of transness, rather than being like, any room to hold the complexities and nuances that that's not the **** who I am.

Speaker 1

I'm just going to reread the question in case that's helpful for you, Speaker 3. So do you think identifying as queer or trans or non-binary has impacted your experience of engaging with [THE SERVICE] in any way? I think you touched on it a little bit before.

Speaker 3

[redacted]

Interview 2

Speaker 1

Do you think that who you are has impacted your experience of engaging with [THE SERVICE]?

Speaker 5

Yes, absolutely. Yeah, yeah.

Interview 1

Speaker 1

I'll jump to the next question, which is hopefully an easier one to answer. What does safety and access from a service look like to you, or look like to you today as opposed to before? Maybe I'll ask you if you've got any thoughts around what safety and from a service would mean?

Speaker 3

[redacted]

Speaker 1

Speaker 2, what does what does safety and access look like for you at the moment?

Speaker 2

I think a lot of what Speaker 3 is saying and especially like... especially, especially when it comes to places that are traditionally thought of as being women's support. If they don't explicitly state, like, not just that, they're inclusive of transfemmes, but that they also actively oppose transmisogyny... OK, like I'm very much at the point... historically, I would have been like 'safety looks like inclusion', but I'm really just ***** over passive acceptance. I'm so over passive acceptance like, no, it's not good enough to just ***** accept. It's not good enough to just allow. That's *****. Actually, like, I need, I demand like active and allied inclusion and anti-oppression and anything less than that is like laying traps.

Yeah, definitely feel like that, but also that like... been thinking about safety with NGOs a lot lately... Offering safety without accountability is meaningless, performative virtue signaling. If there is no like, meaningful route to hold people accountable for their failures to create safety or to, like, maintain safety, then the offering of safety means ***** nothing. When, like, you know like, the policies and procedures should be available publicly and that the, like, I don't know, the complaint process should be available publicly, as should like, who their funding bodies are, should be available publicly so that if shit, like, you know... a complaint process is done internally and it's very easy to shut that shit down by an organization. There has to be the option to like elevate beyond them for it to be taken seriously, and the bodies that typically exist for that, like the Anti-Discrimination Commission or like the Ombudsman or whatever, they're useless, they do **** all. Organizations, like NGOs are part of the like Industrial Charity Complex. They respond to money: threaten their money, they're much more likely to actually ***** do something. So I would say that, like, as part of the complaints thing, like, information about their funding bodies needs to be available.

And also that like... Offering safety without having, like, people that share my experiences of unsafety in positions of power also means ***** nothing. If there are no like, junky tranny whores on the management committee, they're just really demonstrating to me that they're not particularly invested in actually hearing me and my community and my people, and they're not ***** interested. Like, if they're not invested in hearing this, they can never be truly invested in my safety. Give our communities ***** money. Give our communities positions of power within your structures. Give our communities the ability to remove your ***** power if you **** up. Like, accountability means the willingness to lose your power if you demonstrate that you can't effectively use it. And, to my mind, to my autistically justice sensitive, mind, if you are unable or unwilling to do that, you don't ***** deserve that power, you don't deserve that funding. You're just one more god damn charity out to, like, exploit and pretend that you're like better than everything else because you're comparatively better than the corporate sector. It's like, great. I'm glad that you feel better about yourself.

Speaker 1

Speaker 4, did you have anything to add in terms of what safety and access looks like for you at the moment?

Speaker 4

I do, but what I've got to say is probably a lot more dry and analytical. For me, safety is like, really complicated, but both Speaker 2 and Speaker 3 said a lot of things that I was going to say, so I won't repeat those. My biggest fear is not feeling safe in an environment that I can't control, so control is very important to me and knowing whether or not I'm going to be included, or not, which brings me to access. It's very difficult to access an organization if they don't have true inclusivity. When they were saying that they were not accepting people who are male identifying, immediately I thought, well, OK, that's interesting that they will not support trans men, but it turns out that their definition of male identifying was quite broader than mine. And at the end of the day, a big thing that I am on and on about like a broken record is intersectionality. It's like autistic and transgender, autistic, transgender and a survivor, and a lot of organizations are only set up to support one of those three things. But if they're not willing to support things outside of their scope, because it might not be completely within their scope, you're going to have people falling through the gaps. And this is a big problem, not just with [THE SERVICE], but with a lot of NGO's and corporate entities and government entities, and volunteer entities, is they have a... what do you want to call it... a Commission, or a policy of supporting one particular thing, and if you don't fall within that particular thing, you fall through the gap.

Whereas I feel inclusivity: if you're going to support women, then in this day and age, you also have to be prepared to support trans women and trans men and intersex people, if you're planning to just support women. Because otherwise you're saying we're only gonna support cis women, which sounds very TERFy as it was pointed out. And I could go on to include people from more diverse backgrounds, ethnically or culturally, because like, I don't tell a lot of people this, but a lot of my family is Jewish. And I've inherited a lot of the Jewish traits and that's not meant that I'm like, always treated like a white person, and in the context of [THE SERVICE], they have treated me like a white person. But I can see that if anyone went to [THE SERVICE] that was not looking Caucasian, they would have a hard time there. And that is not acceptable either. If you're going to accept all women, you have to accept all women, regardless of their ethnicity.

Speaker 1

Thanks, Speaker 4, Speaker 2 you had your hand up.

Speaker 2

Yeah, I have another thought that popped into my head because my brain is like that. Around safety. Specifically, that like... I feel like a lot of places, especially NGOs, engage with the concept of safety from the, like the framework of risk management and risk aversion. And like, actually trying to create safety isn't about trying to eliminate risk. That the framework that's like, I don't know, pretty foundational to the way NGO's operate, but isn't actually great for like humans. And like, the relationality of just being a ***** human. And that like... being terrified of making a mistake is not the same thing as creating safety.

Actually I think a huge part of creating safety, and obviously safety being a thing that can never really, truly, exist, but is a thing that we consistently work towards, and part of that is the acceptance that you will **** up. And the acceptance and commitment to repairing after the **** up. Like, you will **** up, acknowledge it. Own it, repair it, move forward. And I think that that's like part of it, within the NGO sector that creates a huge amount of unsafety and a huge amount of harm that like... these spaces think about safety in the context of risk aversion will create safety by never creating harm. They think of safety as the lack of harm, which is impossible, when really it should be a commitment to avoiding harm where they can, and owning the harm that they cause and repairing it.

Interview 2

Speaker 1

And what does safety and access from a service look like to you? Or maybe the easier version of that question is, what did CASA do that was good and different?

Speaker 5

At [OTHER SERVICE], I felt like my gender was irrelevant. It was never up for discussion. They never screened me in the same way that [THE SERVICE] did. There were times where I saw men in the wait room at [OTHER SERVICE], and I never felt unsafe because of it, and in fact, I felt happy that they were getting the support that they needed. I also felt like, I feel like transphobia and like, sex worker exclusionary feminism kind of go hand in hand, and I felt like at [OTHER SERVICE], they were really respectful about my experiences with sex work. I don't think that I would feel safe to talk about sex work at [THE SERVICE]

Speaker 1

Yeah. Yeah. We had another person in the group earlier who is also a sex worker, and said a similar thing, yeah. In terms of what safety and access means to you other than how you were supported by [OTHER SERVICE]. Is there anything that comes up in terms of like what you think safety means?

Speaker 5

I guess. I guess I felt like at [OTHER SERVICE], that my own experience was, as a survivor was unique, and my feelings about it were unique and I never felt like the. Counsellors were trying to make it fit a narrative or tell me how to feel about it. I think, like some of my trauma symptoms can kind of sometimes look a bit scary, like I get tics and sometimes I yell at myself and things like that and I felt like they were all fully there for that. Like, I never felt like I had to mask my symptoms. Yeah, I'm not sure what else to say about that, yeah.

Interview 1

Speaker 1

Possibly a very short question, but **can anyone think of an example of a time that [THE SERVICE] did something that made you feel safe?** It could be really broad, like it could be that the existence of a sexual violence organization made you connect some dots that you might not have connected in your life, for example. But I'm not going to put any answers where maybe there are no answers.

Speaker 2

I have felt, like appreciative, or a sense of gratitude for [THE SERVICE]'s existence, for the support that it's been able to offer people that I care about. And I like that in the process of like, these consultations, they haven't made me talk to a cis person.

Speaker 1

Any anyone else want to jump in?

Speaker 3

[redacted]

Speaker 1

[redacted]

Speaker 3

[redacted]

Speaker 1

So there's something there around... If there are individual workers who you trust or can have some kind of relationship of support with, then it can, like, counterbalance some of those like, larger organizational effects on safety.

Speaker 3

[redacted]

Interview 1

Speaker 1

Can you think of an example of a time that [THE SERVICE] did something that made you feel safe?

Speaker 5

Ummm. No.

Interview 1

Speaker 1

And a follow-up question is: can you think of any specific examples of things that have left you feeling uncomfortable or unsafe from [THE SERVICE], and, would you like to share that? That's an everyone question, I think that there's already been a lot of answers to this question, but if anyone wanted to share any, like specific stories or anecdotes or interactions, please feel free, but no pressure.

Speaker 2

I remember getting coffee with a person. And we were talking, just about stuff, and they mentioned that they were going to [THE SERVICE] for support, and I was like, oh, I heard that they're kind of transphobic, how's that for you? And they were like, oh no, yeah, absolutely, I back pass and they don't know that I'm non-binary and they also do not know that I'm a sex worker, and I would never tell them that, and I'm pretty sure I would get kicked out if I did.

Interview 2

Speaker 1.

Would you like to share, other than what you've already shared, any specific examples of things that [THE SERVICE] have done that left you feeling uncomfortable and unsafe? So beyond, like intake process?

Speaker 5

Yeah. Beyond the intake process, I think just... Word gets around. Like, even before accessing [THE SERVICE], I was aware that there was a transphobic culture there and that here has been multiple generations of staff that have tried to go in there and tried to change the beast from the inside and tried to advocate for trans people, change policies, and that it's been going on for years and years and years and nothing's ever really shifted. And that just tells, to me, how bad the problem is and how unwilling some of the staff there are to opening their mind, challenging their views about trans people. It's just quite shocking to me that after all of the, like, hundreds of conversations that have happened about this, that people are so stuck in their position to exclude trans people. And I feel like it's just really divorced from the reality of trans people's lives, like thinking that trans people are a threat, or not understanding the rates at which like, trans people experience sexual violence.

Speaker 1

I should also say that doing this interview like, I'm trying to be really mindful of my, like, I guess role as a facilitator, but like. I have so many of my own thoughts and ideas and stories, but like, yeah, I don't want to push you in a particular direction, I just want your answers to stay, but I hear you. I hear you.

Speaker 5

OK. Yeah, I guess what I'm trying to say is that they're notorious, they're known for being an unsafe place for trans people. Like without having my own personal experiences with [THE SERVICE], I already knew that about them, and that's something that they really need to reckon with? Like, are they OK with that? Are they happy with that? That that's their reputation?

Interview 1

Speaker 1

I feel like this question has already been answered, but for the sake of moving through this list, and helping everyone's brains with structure: have there been any changes in how you express or affirm your gender now that impact your relationship to [THE SERVICE] as a service? So, for example, were you eligible before and feel

you're not now, or you weren't eligible in the past, but now feel like you are, or that actually any changes in how you express and affirm your gender have made no difference in feeling comfortable, or being eligible for [THE SERVICE]?

Speaker 2

When I first learned of [THE SERVICE], and was like, coming to the conclusion of, like, oh, maybe what I've experienced does count as sexual violence. I was pretty willing to, like, accept that I probably wasn't eligible for support there. I was like, oh well, you know, I'm non-binary, but I'm also mostly kind of a faggot, and like, you know, non-binary as in, like, really loudly gay but like, not a man, but I can see how the world would like kind of think of me and treat me as that. So I'm not going to like demand access to like, women's spaces because it's not a faggot space, and my gender is faggot right now. And then sort of like, now my gender is still very much faggot, but it's girlfag. And, like, I exist and walk through the world as a transwoman, in part because it's just ***** easier. Easier... some of it's easier, but like, I am more annoyed because I do feel as though on paper and presentation wise, like I feel as though I should be able to access this space, like I am a woman, I choose to be woman. I don't feel like I could, I feel like if I were to try that, I would get turned away. Or, frustratingly, if I were to try that, there's a good chance that they might use my experiences to further attack and weaponize and marginalized transfemmes. And so like, as my experience of gender has shifted and the way that I perform it has changed, I'm actually more pissed off that, even though I should be eligible, I'm not. And even if I were eligible, I wouldn't ***** trust the place.

Speaker 1

Did anybody want to jump in?

Speaker 4

Um. What is even this question?

Speaker 1

I guess the question mostly speaks to, like what you were talking about, services that have a really narrow focus. Sometimes you are in that focus because of the relationship that you have with yourself and the ways that you describe that. And then sometimes you're out of that, and maybe sometimes you might start inside and move out, and sometimes you might start outside and move in. Because, in our communities, changes in how we name that or show that or express that are just expected. I'm just wondering how that impacts our relationship to services that might not recognize that those changes are just, a part of life?

Speaker 4

For myself specifically, I'm more masculine presenting now than I was five years ago, not my own fault, but because of complications with HRT. And if anything, now I feel I am even more, have even more right to be in that space because my intersex diagnosis has gone from a maybe to oh, right. [THIS STATE] is extremely interphobic and moving to [OTHER STATE], has highlighted that to a huge degree. And like, I want to put a plug in for the intersex community and say that intersex community doesn't even fit on this scale of male or female. It doesn't really fit onto that whole spectrum of how you present as a transgender person. It's like a completely different spectrum.

Speaker 1

Yeah. Thanks, Speaker 4. Any other final comments before I move on to the next question? Again, I feel like it's really clear in all of people's answers that that there's already been answers to this question, but if anyone had anything they wanted to say...

Speaker 3

[redacted]

Speaker 1

And it sounds like there's maybe two things there. One of which is that the feedback that a trans person is going to make women feel unsafe is an assumption because actually the organization never bothers actually checking. But then there's the second thing, which is that if the response from the people in a group or at the service was: yes, that person would make us feel unsafe, then even that is informed by transphobic ideas and beliefs about the world. And maybe both of those things are an issue.

Speaker 3

[redacted]

Speaker 1

[redacted]

Speaker 2

I feel like that assumption around, like group members will just feel unsafe if there's a transwoman there is a really good example of the ways that NGOs use like risk assessment and risk management, and risk avoidance As a stand-in for safety. Rather than as a like, an acceptance of discomfort.

Speaker 4

It comes back to the whole bathroom debate. If women's spaces like toilets are designed to make women safe because they're vulnerable, then transwomen have even more right to those spaces because they're even more vulnerable than cis women. I mean, if I was going to take next level, the current space of bomb threats against Drag storytime, is like extended transphobia and banning those events for safety reasons is another indication of: we're more interested in protecting the cis people around than the people who are actually being threatened.

Interview 2

Speaker 1

OK. So the next question is, I think also like, it can probably just be a one-word answer, but maybe it might bring up... have there been any changes in how you express or affirm your gender, over time, that have made any impact in your relationship to [THE SERVICE] as a service, like do you think that your relationship has changed over time because of differences in how you present or differences in how you identify?

Speaker 5

Yeah. Yeah, I definitely think 15 years ago when I first accessed [THE SERVICE], I'm trying to think, like, was I out at that point? I think I might have still been figuring gender identity stuff out at that point.

Speaker 1

But obviously it impacted you enough to know that you didn't want to continue even then.

Speaker 5

Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Even then, yeah.

Interview 1

Speaker 1

OK, so this question is very much related and we can probably skip through it, but have [THE SERVICE] shown that they've understood issues affecting trans gender diverse and non-binary victim survivors... Ever, at any point, now or in the past?

Speaker 2

I guess, to be gracious, they're engaging in this process.

Interview 2

Speaker 1

I mean, I am interested actually in your answer to this but like, have [THE SERVICE] shown that they understand issues affecting trans, gender diverse and non-binary victim survivors? I know, like I think that what your answers so far have been that like, in some ways, individual workers, yes. But even in the relationship between individual workers and the [SERVICE] as a whole, no?

Speaker 5

Yeah, I think no, because I think even the trans friendly workers are, yeah, under influence of the like organizational culture. I think really if even that, even that worker that I spoke to at intake, if they really understood my experience and were prioritizing my like, my safety, they would have just been transparent and said: no, I don't think this is a safe service for you. Rather than trying to convince me to change my gender expression. That is not a safe thing to ask a trans person to do.

Interview 1

Speaker 1

OK, I'm going to switch the last two questions because I think that Question 8 probably a longer thing, but: do you feel like you could recommend [THE SERVICE] as a meaningful support to other trans people? You can keep your answers brief. You can make them long. You can skip.

Speaker 2

I employ a harm reduction approach when it comes to seeking support from professional services, and sometimes bad support is better than no support.

Speaker 3

[redacted]

Interview 2

Speaker 1

Do you think that you could recommend [THE SERVICE] as a meaningful support to any other trans people?

Speaker 5

No, absolutely not. And in fact, I would warn them to not access it.

Interview 1

Speaker 1

Can you think of anything that's changed for the better in your life or in yourself that has come out of knowing about [THE SERVICE], engaging with [THE SERVICE], having some relationship to the organization, directly or indirectly?

Speaker 2

I really enjoy adding fuel to the fire of rage and fury of like, embodying the stereotype of the angry tranny. And [THE SERVICE] has contributed to that.

Speaker 3

[redacted]

Interview 2

Speaker 1

Can you think of anything that's changed for the better in your life, or in yourself that's come out of engaging with [THE SERVICE]?

Speaker 5

No

Interview 1

Speaker 1

Can you think of anything that you would like to see changed or improved about how [THE SERVICE] supports trans, victim survivors?

Speaker 3

[redacted]

Speaker 1

I have many thoughts that I'm not going to share, but thank you, Speaker 3. I think it's a good point, like... Yeah, I... I will say this. That this question and the questions about change, I should say these are not a guarantee of change. And I have very little control over how these suggestions are going to be received, and also that there are probably a whole bunch of things that would need to happen before [THE SERVICE] was even able to think about any of the suggestions that might get made, you know? So like, if there was a suggestion of: [THE SERVICE] should support people of all genders, just as a matter of course, there are probably other things that would need to happen to make sure that people would actually feel safe going there. You know, even if on paper, they were allowed to. But if you wanted to say anything, or contribute anything, it would be very valued.

Speaker 4

I think it's obvious to everyone that there's at least two people in the upper management of [THE SERVICE] that are resistant to change. Now, I wouldn't be one advocating that they stepped down, but that is what has happened in other organizations in the past, who regress after a period of progressing. So I would suggest that they take our suggestions seriously because the alternative is becoming completely irrelevant, particularly since the new generation is very open minded, so they're going to be, you know, become dinosaurs very quickly.

Speaker 2

I would be willing to suggest that they step down... I think a lot of the stuff that I was talking about in safety would be suggestions that I would make, like **** Put identified, multiple identified trans positions in the board or the management committee or whatever ***** like, governance structure they've got. And like, have a ***** like, team of staff for like, trans community, that is providing services to trans community, and that is also helping this organization drag themselves into the ***** here and now. And specifically a team and not just one person. And like, have accountability processes where, you know, like the information about their funding body is available. The information about how to contact the board is available. I think that would be cool, I think... I do think that just opening up. Like support for sexual violence to be for anyone of any gender experience actually does just make sense on an organizational basis, like - people of all genders experience sexual violence. The more that we just sort of like, be like ohh, we're a no men's space because men are the ones that do sexual violence. It just kind of like feeds this ridiculous notion that like, victim and perpetrator are a binary and that that binary is defined by gender. And I think that's a little bit ***** and like, it makes sense to have

specific spaces that are for specific experiences of gender and you can do that by having a like, women's group, and a men's group, um...

Speaker 1

But not necessarily at an entire service level.

Speaker 2

Yeah, I think having an entire service level says we see this... phenology, as abusive, or this phenotype as abusive is, is pretty *****.

Interview 2

Speaker 1

What would you like to see changed or improved about how [THE SERVICE] supports trans, gender diverse and non-binary victim survivors?

Speaker 5

Yeah, I think. Whatever their policies are around trans and gender diverse clients, that they need to be transparent about it, it needs to be written on their website. They need to disclose it to their clients at intake. I think it should be an all gender service. People of all genders experience sexual assault. We all need support. Especially given that they're the one organisation in [THIS CITY] that gets funding to provide free counselling. I think it's pretty essential that they're an all gender service. I think that being trans inclusive, it needs to become a priority for them to resolve. Yes, it's such a big issue, for that organization, and I think they need to, like really heavily screen new staff. There should be multiple questions about this in the job interview process. I think that they really need to commit to only hiring staff that are going to be, one, trans friendly, two, like informed about trans people's survivor experiences. There should be training. I think, I'm actually not sure where the office is currently, like, the first time when I accessed them 15 years ago, they shared the same space with [SERVICE]. OK, I think that needs to change. I think they need to be in separate buildings. Because I wonder, I wonder like, what the influence of [SERVICE] is on all of these issues that are happening. And, I feel like that they won't be able to use the excuse of, oh we're at [SERVICE], so it can, you know, be women's only or wear a dress or whatever. Yeah, I think they need to separate.

Interview 1

Speaker 1

OK. Final question. Yay. Congratulations everyone. What is a take away message that you would like [THE SERVICE] to hear from this process that has not already been said? Feel free to pass, because a lot of really amazing things have been said.

Speaker 3

[redacted]

Speaker 1

Yeah. I have a specific question and don't feel obliged to respond, but I wonder whether you've got any thoughts or concluding remarks around, not just trans women, but anybody who is getting or has been getting support from [THE SERVICE], who stops identifying or presenting as a woman, because that's also another experience. The like, being OK with and then affirming something that should be really beautiful and celebrated becomes a barrier to support just because your relationship with yourself improves?

Speaker 3

[redacted]

Speaker 1

I mean, I just, I'm going out on a limb, but I'm very much like, my take-away message from this is that [THE SERVICE] wouldn't support that at all and doesn't support that. And it means that people choose to be silent and not have open relationships with themselves and be open about who they are or who they might be, and [THE SERVICE] actively makes that really hard. Speaker 4, did you have any final take away message or messages that you'd want [THE SERVICE] to hear from this process?

Speaker 4

Oh, certainly. I think progressing to the point of having a group of people who were not all women, and the progression of having a group for women who were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander was a halfway step. And the ultimate step would be integration with the entire organization. I'm not advocating that there shouldn't be a group for cis women who were assaulted by men, who can't be around men and need to be separate. I'm saying that it is good to have separate groups that represent separate interests under the [THE SERVICE] umbrella, but ultimately all women need to be integrated under the [THE SERVICE] umbrella at the highest management level. Otherwise it's not going to be seen as inclusive

Speaker 1

Thanks Speaker 4. Any final take away messages for you, Speaker 2?

Speaker 2

Stop being SWERFy TERFy *****... But maybe more, like, give us support. Give us power within your spaces and give us ***** money. Like, support us, employ us, and like, refer to us.

Interview 2

Speaker 1

I've just got one question left basically, which is like, have you got any other take away messages that you want [THE SERVICE] to hear from this process?

Speaker 5

Just that, I want them to reckon with the fact that they're not only excluding trans and gender diverse people, but they're actively harming us. Yeah, to, to think about: is that what they want to be doing, and what do they need to do to change that?

Speaker 1

Is that, just jumping back to that last like question of, like, meaningful change and this idea of, like, reckoning and resolving. Have you got any thoughts? Obviously like you've said there's this theme, and I know it as well as you that this, this thing has been years long. You know this problem, this being stuck is years and years long. And like, what are some of the things that it would take to bring that to light, or to address it, or to reckon with it in a meaningful way? Sorry, and that's not to like, your job is not to solve [THE SERVICE]'s problems. It's [THE SERVICE]'s job to solve their problems. But if you had anything to add.

Speaker 5

Yeah, yeah. I think that they could, I think that they could employ trans people. They could employ, one, trans staff, trans counsellors, but two, I think that they could employ trans, I guess like a.. I don't know the right word for it, but like some kind of, like representative role to like oversee this kind of change. Yeah, I'm. I'm not exactly sure how to do it, but I think I think that the staff that are there, that are on board with being a trans friendly, or gender service, like I do think that they could be doing more. They could be organising around this, they could be striking, they. I don't know. I don't know.

Speaker 1

That's OK, I think. Did you have anything that I haven't asked or is there anything that you haven't had an opportunity to say that you'd like to say?

Speaker 5

Just that there is, in general, there there's a massive gap in trans people's healthcare. Yeah, mental health is a huge one. And I think that they should be looking at it from a, I can't remember what it's called, but there was like a recent. What's it called? Like a?

Speaker 1

Sorry, like, a like an inquest?

Speaker 5

Inquiry. Yeah, there was an inquest or inquiry recently about about the gaps in mental health care for trans and gender diverse people, and the barriers to trans people accessing mental health support, and also the gaps in mental health outcomes and suicide rates. And there are things in that report that they should be looking at. Yeah, I know personally that I've just seen way too many trans people in my life die from lack of mental health support. I think [THE SERVICE] should want to be a part of helping fix that.