

## Alternatives

Unfortunately, gender-neutral bathrooms can sometimes be unfeasible, due to resistance from community members or restrictive building codes.

Gendered bathrooms can benefit from clearly posted statements that welcome people into whichever bathroom they feel most comfortable in. These statements can also welcome caregivers and children who are accompanying a parent or guardian. These statements should set a clear expectation that harassment and gender policing are not permitted within the bathroom. Unfortunately, people with non-binary gender identities are still excluded by such a system.

Libraries without gender-neutral bathrooms can also compile a list of gender-neutral bathrooms in the area, and provide this information to patrons in a pamphlet or website.

## Publicity

Once you have designated gender-neutral bathrooms, it is helpful to publicize that information. This can include usual library channels, such as emails, memos, press releases, library websites, social media, or campus newspapers.

It can also be valuable to announce your bathrooms outside traditional library channels. Inform local transgender or LGBTQ groups that your library includes gender-neutral bathrooms. You may also choose to add it to a directory of gender-neutral bathrooms, such as *Refuge Restrooms* (Widmer, 2014). Advertising your bathrooms in this way will help to convey that your library is committed to serving patrons of all gender identities.

## Controversy

Many people in this society are not yet used to the idea of gender-neutral bathrooms outside the home. They may express concerns about the safety or discomfort within gender-neutral bathrooms.

It is important to address these concerns in a respectful, professional way. Many of these concerns stem from a lack of knowledge about transgender and gender-variant people, so it can be valuable to provide some education to the complainant. Challenge the assumption that transgender people are more dangerous or violent than cisgender people. Explain that transgender and gender-variant people can face discomfort, harassment, and even physical violence when entering gendered bathrooms. Make sure that the complainant knows that gender-neutral bathrooms are important in

## Introduction

Gender-neutral bathrooms are bathrooms that any-body can use, regardless of their sex, gender, or perceived gender. Gender-neutral bathrooms are also sometimes referred to as \all gender bathrooms."

These bathrooms can bene t several di erent groups of people:

Transgender and gender non-conforming people

Parents whose children are a di erent gender than

they are

People with caregivers or personal attendants who

are a di erent gender than they are

Gender-neutral facilities are particularly bene cial for transgender and gender non-conforming people, who often experience harassment and even physical violence in gendered bathroom facilities.

## Re-designating bathrooms

Providing gender-neutral bathrooms to library patrons and sta typically does not require complex facilities work. Often, it can be as simple as replacing a sign.

## Single stall bathrooms

Re-designating single stall bathrooms rarely attracts much controversy. In fact, some jurisdictions require that single-stall bathrooms be open to people of all genders (*Safe bathrooms DC*, 2014). Once your library has decided to designate such a bathroom as gender-neutral, you merely need to replace its sign and educate your sta and volunteers about the change.

## Multiple stall bathrooms

While the process for re-designating a multiple stall bathroom is no di erent than re-designating a single stall bathroom, it can be a more controversial change. Be prepared to provide education to sta , volunteers, and patrons. It can also be helpful to support this change with a policy that includes a rationale for gender-neutral bathrooms.

