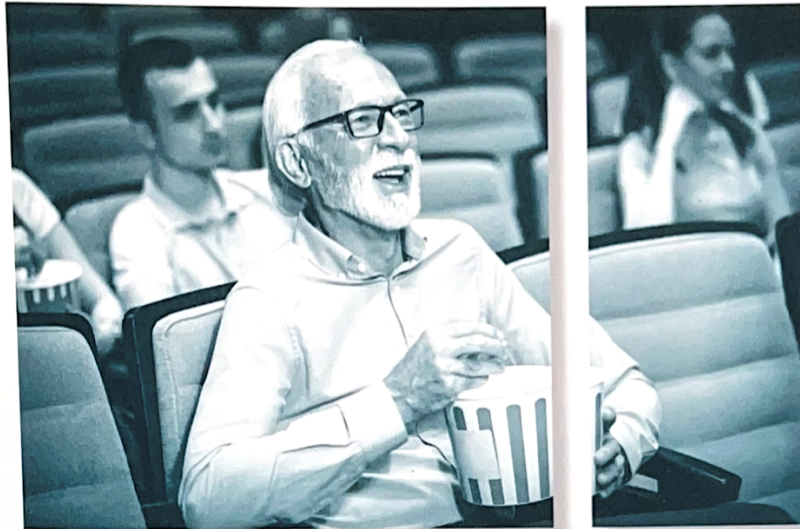


Perspectives

VOLUME 47 | NUMBER 2

NEWSMAGAZINE OF THE BC ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS



The Movie Monday Archives: Chronicling Twenty-Six Years of Showing Films in a Psychiatric Hospital

The Movie Monday Archives was a unique and innovative free weekly media arts programme that would become a valued community-arts programme that brought people together to be entertained while simultaneously addressing some of the society's most pressing and often divisive issues.

(full article on page 4)>>>

8

INDEPENDENT RIGHTS ADVICE SERVICE

Supporting patients
involuntarily detained

10

SUPPORTING TRANS, TWO-SPIRIT, INTERSEX, & GENDER DIVERSE CLIENTS, LOVED ONES & COMMUNITIES

In the context of
transphobia creeping north

14

KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE & MOBILIZATION IN SOCIAL WORK

A strategy for advocacy
and social change

17

TRUMP'S FATAL EQUATION

Fentanyl, illegal
migrants & tariffs

18

ADVOCACY AS A TOOL FOR CHANGE

Essential skills
for social
workers

Supporting Trans, Two-Spirit, Intersex, and Gender Diverse Clients, Loved Ones, and Communities in the Context of the Trump Administration and Transphobia Creeping North

WORDS | BRETT MASON, MSW, RSW

The sweeping changes in the Trump administration's first two months may have obscured his presidency's harmful effects on trans, Two-Spirit, intersex, and gender diverse (T2SIGD) people. This article will broadly overview Trump's executive orders relating to T2SIGD people, their impacts, and how social workers can support T2SIGD clients, loved ones, and communities. This article is a starting point for this conversation, and I hope it inspires further ideas and action.

On his first day in office, Trump passed an executive order that defined sex as biological, immutable, and assigned at conception, effectively denying the identity of anyone whose gender differs from their assigned sex at birth. Trump framed this as a way to protect cisgender women, based on the transmisogynist idea that trans women are not real women and are seeking to do harm in women-only spaces (such as bathrooms). This fallacy is unsupported by peer-reviewed, unbiased evidence. Trans women are no more likely to cause harm than cis women and are indeed more likely to be the victims of violent crime than the perpetrators.

This executive order greatly impacts T2SIGD people in many aspects of life, including attempting to enforce the following:

- The removal of T2SIGD from official documentation and federally-funded research, and the defunding of non-conforming organizations have hugely negative impacts. Bauer et al. (2009) describe how erasure has serious negative impacts on T2SIGD people, including erasure from research (informational erasure). For example, the failure to collect data on trans status when researching a community's needs obscures the needs of the T2SIGD residents.

Additionally, legally erasing trans identities to rescind legal protections against transphobia is a step toward genocide. Legalizing discrimination is step 3 of 8 of *Stanton's Stages of Genocide*. Elements of steps 4 and 5 (organization and polarization) are also occurring in

the U.S. There are parallels between the erasure of T2SIGD people from the literature to the 1933 Nazi book burning, where Hitler youth burned thousands of academic and non-academic sources related to gender and sexuality.

This first point has perhaps the most far-reaching effect, removing trans people from legal existence and protection.

- Requiring government-issued IDs (passports and visas, etc.) to reflect assigned sex at birth rather than gender means passports won't match T2SIGD people's actual gender. Numerous cases, including an ACLU challenge, show T2SIGD people renewing passports received ones with their assigned sex at birth. Some had IDs confiscated, preventing them from leaving the US.
- Banning gender-affirming medical care for minors, even those needing ongoing care.
- Banning of T2SIGD people in the military.
- Banning veterans' benefits for gender-affirming care, potentially impacting non-trans veterans' families (spouses, children) using these benefits.
- Restricting T2SIGD youth's pronoun and name use in schools and threatening defunding for non-compliance.
- Banning T2SIGD people, including children in public schools, from playing on sports teams matching their gender identity.
- Banning teaching about gender diversity and critical race theory in schools and threatening defunding for non-compliance.
- Forcibly moving incarcerated trans women into men's prisons, increasing their risk of physical and sexual

assault (violating the federal Prisoner Rape Elimination Act) and solitary confinement (deemed psychological torture by the UN after 15 days), supposedly for their safety.

- Forcibly removing migrants who may be fleeing transphobic persecution.
- High risk of bureaucratic, physical, sexual, and psychological abuse in immigration detention centres.

To support T2SIGD people:

1. Educate yourself – engage in further education on gender-affirming care.

- Trans Care BC
- Dechinta Centre for Research & Learning: *Gender & Queer Terminology Toolkit*
- CBRC learning module
- *Erasing Gender Diversity: A Human Rights and Social Work Perspective on Trump's Executive Order*, by Dr. Hannah Kia and Dr. Karun Karki
- General:
 - Trans Care BC
 - PFLAG
 - Rainbow Health Ontario
 - We are Allies
 - Egale Canada
 - The CBRC
- Read trans narratives:
 - *Stone Butch Blues* by Leslie Feinberg
 - *Redefining Realness* by Janet Mock
 - *A Queer and Pleasant Danger* by Kate Bornstein
 - *Miss Major Speaks: Conversations with a Black Trans Revolutionary* by Miss Major Griffin-Gracy
- Train with the following BC clinicians and organizations:
 - Clinical:
 - Trans Care BC
 - Brett Mason, MSW, RSW
 - Matsui De Roo, MA, RCC

Organizational Structure:

- Lush Kumtux Tumtum Consulting, 2-Spirit Focus
- Ambit Gender Diversity
- Trans Focus Consulting Inc
- QMUNITY

2. Be vigilant about human rights abuses against T2SIGD people in the US and Canada and understand their impact on clients' daily lives.

Recently, during an appointment, my provider and I were casually chatting, and the topic of travel arose. My provider mentioned vacationing in the States and asked about my travel plans, seemingly unaware of how loaded this topic is for a trans person, due to the current transphobic policies. I felt alienated by my provider's lack of awareness and uncertain about continuing to access this care.

3. Be politically active for T2SIGD rights. Vote! Call, email and write your representatives! Attend or organize protests and actions as needed!

Many Canadian politicians seek to follow in the footsteps of the Trump government. In the fall of 2023, the Saskatchewan government passed a bill to amend the Education Act that requires parental consent for teachers and other educators to use the correct names and pronouns for youth under the age of 16, risking the forced outing of trans youth. Vote according to your candidates' views on T2SIGD rights. If an anti-trans bill is being proposed, call, email, or write your elected MLA (or MP, if federal) to support trans rights. Show up in solidarity and support T2SIGD leadership.

4. Organize around issues like mutual aid, community gardens, childcare, harm reduction, unions, immigrant rights, tenant rights, and other community-building initiatives.

Community-based initiatives are a way to get to know each other better and transcend differences. When we know each other in the community, our bonds are stronger, which helps us support each other and resist oppression. Understanding intersectionality is key to doing this work, as is having solidarity across differences.

5. Understand how clients are navigating immigration systems.

Over the last six months, I noticed several new intakes with T2SIGD clients who recently immigrated to Canada from the States to escape Trump.

I have become familiar with immigration systems in Canada, so I can understand what my clients are going through and support them in navigating these systems. We will likely see more T2SIGD migrants in the coming years. BIPOC migrants and /or migrants who are undocumented or refugees may face additional barriers to care, and to being able to immigrate easily. These are areas of care to familiarize yourself with.

continued on next page

continued from previous page

Resources for T2SIGD migrants:

- The Catherine White Hollman Wellness Centre
 - Free legal advice and services to T2SIGD people
 - Blog article: *Moving to Canada Immigration Overview for Transgender U.S. Citizens*
- The QMUNITY Legal Clinic
 - Free legal advice and services to 2SLGBTQIA+ people
- Rainbow Refugee
 - Supports 2SLGBTQIA+ refugees and helps people sponsor 2SLGBTQIA+ refugees
- Trans Care BC: Accessing Gender-Affirming Care on the Interim Federal Health Program
- I Belong Program at Mosaic:
 - Programing for 2SLGBTQIA+ Refugees and other newcomers. One-on-one support, peer groups, and counselling.

6. Support and advocate for those most impacted by anti-trans policies.

Anti-trans laws disproportionately impact T2SIGD youth, trans femmes, T2SIGD migrants, and T2SIGD BIPOC. Many Canadian anti-trans laws target youth, such as Alberta's proposed 2024 bills that limit gender-affirming care to age 16+, require parental permission for pronoun use, and restrict trans girls' sports participation. This stress significantly impacts young people, who may not have the coping mechanisms that adults do, so mental health and other supports must cater to T2SIGD youth.

Anti-trans policies are a violation of human rights, and it is our responsibility to resist them. Some health professionals avoid what they see as political activism; however, this action is significant now, as attacks on T2SIGD communities are at the macro level. Even with excellent mental health support, the removal of rights and healthcare precludes good mental health and the ability to have a good life. Many states resist these executive orders through lawsuits and do not comply with the federal decrees. Many professional colleges and bodies have released statements condemning these executive orders as they go against the codes of ethics of their professions. T2SIGD people can never be erased; we have always been here and will always be, no matter what policies or laws are enacted. What happens in the US does not need to be repeated in Canada. We can be where oppressed people find refuge—in our practices and activism.

Special Thanks

I want to give a big thank you to and acknowledge Matsui De Roo, MA, RCC, who provided substantial editing for this article. Thank you to Hannah Kia, RCSW, PhD. for her advice on citing the literature. 

Editor's Note: References and resource links available upon request. The author has asked that this article be dated March 31, 2025 as the information is ever-changing.

Brett Mason is a social worker in private practice, who has been working in gender-affirming care since 2011. Brett is also queer, trans, disabled, and of French, Irish, English, and Germanic descent. Brett is a Dad and deeply invested in the world children will grow up in and inherit.

Be a BCASW Mentor!

Share your wisdom and experience with other BCASW members, assisting with issues as varied as preparing a résumé, discussing practice challenges, exploring an ethical dilemma, assisting with career or relocation decisions, or providing guidance and support through the job-seeking process and adjusting to a new role.

Mentoring is a satisfying and mutually enriching experience. If you want to be a mentor, download the mentoring application form from the BCASW website (www.bcasw.org) or contact BCASW at bcasw@bcasw.org.

And if you are seeking a mentor, download the request form from the BCASW website and we will match you up with a fellow member who is ready to help!

BCASW's Professional Development Committee seeks proposals for collegial webinars for 2025

The webinars will be hosted by BCASW and are designed for BCASW members to share skills, knowledge, and practice strategies with their colleagues. There is specific interest in proposals that address cultural safety, working with diverse cultural groups, and ethical practice.

Please submit proposals to cpd@bcasw.org using the template accessed from the Members' Resource webpage.