

Dr. Karina Zeidler

Family Physician | Vancouver Community

What does it mean to you to inspire inclusion and support gender equity?

Inspiring inclusion requires a deliberate effort to dismantle barriers to access and empower those who are underrepresented within structures of power such as businesses, governmental entities or educational institutions. This extends past simply adding a gender-diverse person to an organization. It means reconfiguring organizations to accommodate gender-diverse people and construct a safe space for them.

We must ask ourselves: Are there gender-diverse bathrooms available? Is there an easy and accessible way for people to change their name, gender identity and/or pronouns within the organization's operating system without having to legally change them, or without having to tell their parents? Is there coverage for gender-affirming health care, including hair removal and facial feminization surgeries? Is an individual able to take time off for health-related needs? Do hiring practices recognize non-credentialed experience or knowledge? Are people then paid accordingly?

Supporting gender equity involves structural reform that mandates disability justice, anti-capitalism, anti-oppression and anti-racism work. There are a variety of complex intersections within the framework, with people being at the centre, and it needs to be accepted as a whole entity. To support gender equity, we must recognize particular gender-specific vulnerabilities. For instance, in my practice, a disproportionate number of women and trans people have been impacted by long COVID compared to men, which highlights the intersection of gender and disability.

Most importantly, inclusivity is not passive. It means redistributing power and standing in solidarity, even at personal expense. It is a commitment to giving those who have been historically marginalized a platform and creating environments where all individuals can thrive.

