

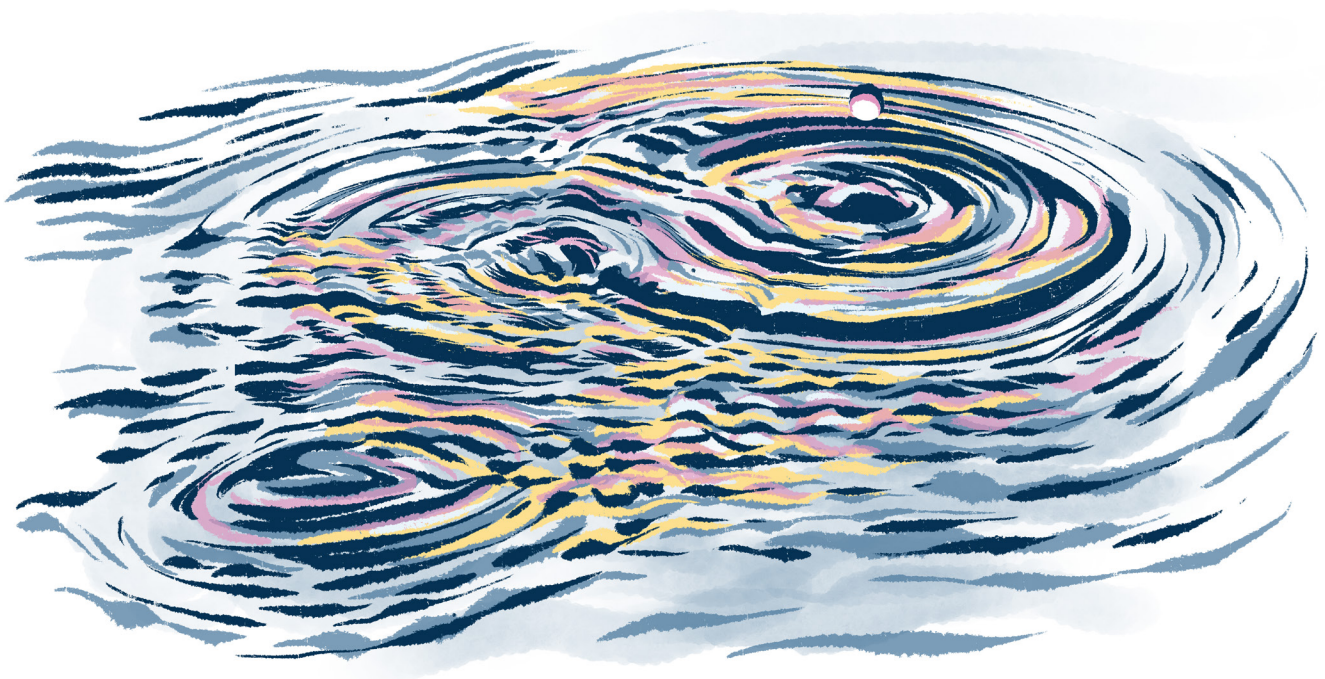
Honouring Changes

A workbook from Trans Care BC

Trans Care BC operates on the unceded lands of many Indigenous peoples. This zine was created on the unceded lands of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations, and we recognize their stewardship of this land for generations. We recognize and celebrate the contributions of Two-Spirit, Indigiqueer and trans Indigenous people within these communities, whose voices and experiences enrich our understandings of sexuality, gender and community care.

This workbook was written and created by staff and contractors for Trans Care BC in 2025. Many subject matter experts contributed to the vision and content, and we are grateful for their trust, vulnerability and contributions to this work. The ideas and activities in this workbook were inspired by the work of many authors, including:

- *Pleasure Activism: The Politics of Feeling Good*, adrienne maree brown
- *Polyvagal Exercises for Safety and Connection*, Deb Dana
- *Trans Sex: Clinical Approaches to Trans Sexualities and Erotic Embodiments*, Lucie Fielding
- *The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up*, Marie Kondo
- "Letting Go of Sentimental Items," from *Essential: Essays by The Minimalists*, Joshua Fields Millburn and Ryan Nicodemus
- *The Selected Works of Audre Lorde*



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What does it mean to honour change?

Every culture has ways to commemorate life changes or rites of passage—such as weddings, quinceañeras, birthdays, b’nai mitzvahs, funerals, naming ceremonies, or graduations.

Honouring key changes in our lives can help us acknowledge the importance of the steps we have taken.

For many trans, Two-Spirit, and non-binary people, steps in our gender journeys may not be acknowledged meaningfully, unless we find ways to do so. While there may have been historical ceremonies inclusive of our experiences, these may be out of reach or asleep.

Below are some ways you might want to honour change in your gender journey:

You might want to celebrate something, such as the beginning of hormone therapy or the anniversary of starting hormones.

You might want to symbolically close a difficult period in your life, such as waiting for surgery.

You might want to add ceremony or ritual to a gender affirmation practice, such as doing your hair or applying makeup.

You might want to commemorate the start of a new chapter in your gender journey, like using a new pronoun or dressing in new ways.

This workbook offers prompts and possibilities you can customize to honour these and other life changes.

Choose the sections that resonate with you and skip anything that doesn’t feel helpful.

Contents

- What do you want to honour?
- Honouring changes with ritual
- Celebrating gender joy
- Celebrating your body
- Creating space
- Conscious reflection
- Closing thoughts

What do you want to honour?

Here are two prompts to help you think about what gender milestones or important changes you might want to honour using the exercises in this workbook:

1 What significant milestones have shaped your gender journey?

For example:

- *The day you chose a new name*
- *The season you began hormone therapy*
- *The day you met a trans mentor*
- *The month you received legal identity change documents*
- *A moment you felt truly seen*
- *A moment you let go of something*
- *The day of a surgery*

2 What everyday experiences shape your gender journey?

For example:

- *Caring for body or facial hair*
- *Doing scar care or dilating*
- *Taking hormones*
- *Feeling aligned in your gender and presentation*
- *Finding new pleasurable sensations*
- *Tucking or binding*
- *Noticing voice or body changes*

Plan – experiment – notice

As you do these exercises...

Plan

Choose what resonates with you and skip anything that doesn't feel helpful. Trust yourself to know what approaches will work best for you.

This workbook is meant to be used at your own pace. You can work through it alone, or you might share it with a counselor or friend if that feels right for you.

These exercises can become a regular practice or simply be a one-time exploration. You might plan a specific time to review the resource and pick somewhere to start.

Experiment

It may take some trial and error to find out what will work best for you. Begin with something that feels manageable and uplifting.

When trying something outside your comfort zone (but still reasonably comfortable), take time after to reflect.

Ask yourself:
How did this feel?
What worked well?
What didn't?

Remember that you can always set aside any exercise that doesn't serve you well.

Notice

Pay attention to both your emotional and physical responses (body sensations) as you work through these exercises.

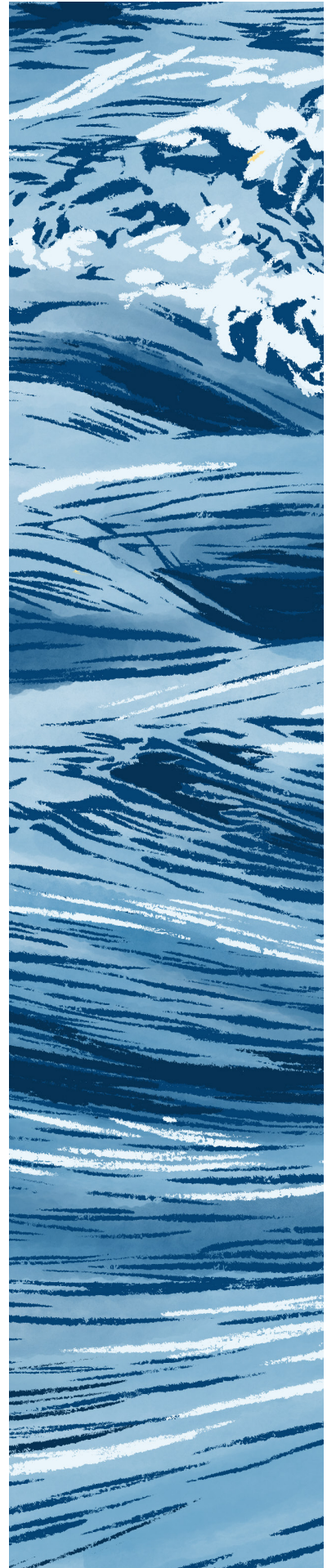
Consider whether your body is signaling that an exercise feels positive or meaningful for you.

If you experience uncomfortable emotions or difficult memories, acknowledge them with compassion.

It's okay to pause and seek support before deciding on your next steps.

1 What significant milestones have shaped your gender journey?

2 What everyday experiences shape your gender journey?



Honouring changes with ritual

One way to mark an important change is to practice a ritual.

Every culture has rituals to commemorate life changes or rites of passage—such as weddings, quinceañeras, birthdays, b’nai mitzvahs, funerals, naming ceremonies, or graduations.

If we want to acknowledge an important change in our gender journey with ritual, we can choose to adapt a ritual from our culture, or create a new one.

We’ve offered one framework for creating a ritual below. Choose what resonates with you and skip anything that doesn’t feel helpful.

Set your intention

What do you want this time to mean? Try to state it clearly.

You might be:

- Celebrating
- Honouring
- Manifesting
- Transforming
- Processing
- Releasing
- Inviting
- Making space
- _____

Choose a time and place

It can be helpful to dedicate intentional time and space to your ritual. Consider:

- When will you do this?
- How much time would you like to take?
- You might mark your calendar or set a reminder.
- Where would you like to do this?
- Is there a place that feels comfortable or special?

Get present

When you are ready to start your ritual, take some time to connect to the present moment.

You might:

- Sit quietly for a moment
- Put on special clothes
- Take a walk, a bath, or a shower first
- Stretch, dance or sway
- Sing or read a poem
- Write, speak, or think your intention(s)
- Use “box breaths”:
inhale for four seconds, hold for four,
exhale for four seconds, hold for four

Prepare your space. You might:

- Burn candles or scents, or open a window
- Play music or seek silence
- Bring photos or objects that are important to you or feel protective and place them nearby

Practice

Perform your ritual. This might involve:

- Creating, transforming or destroying something
- Moving your body in a way that feels good
- Giving attention and care to your body or a cherished object
- Sharing meaningful words

If difficult emotions arise, it's okay to pause and reach out to someone you trust.

Closing

Mark the end of the process. If you created, transformed or destroyed something, you might display, bury, recycle or mail it.

Take time to reset: clean your space, or your body, as needed. Cleaning can be a way to symbolically let go of something, and welcome something new.

You might repeat the actions you used to get present:

- Change out of your special clothes, and put them away or clean them
- Sit quietly for a moment
- Take a walk, a bath, or a shower
- Stretch, dance or sway before settling in
- Sing or read a poem
- Write, speak, or think your intention(s)
- Use box breaths

Reflection

Take some time to check in with yourself.

- How did you feel before, during, now?
- What felt meaningful?
- Did next steps or new intentions emerge?
- Is there anything you'd like to remember?

However the process went, try to pause with some gratitude that you took this time and space for yourself.



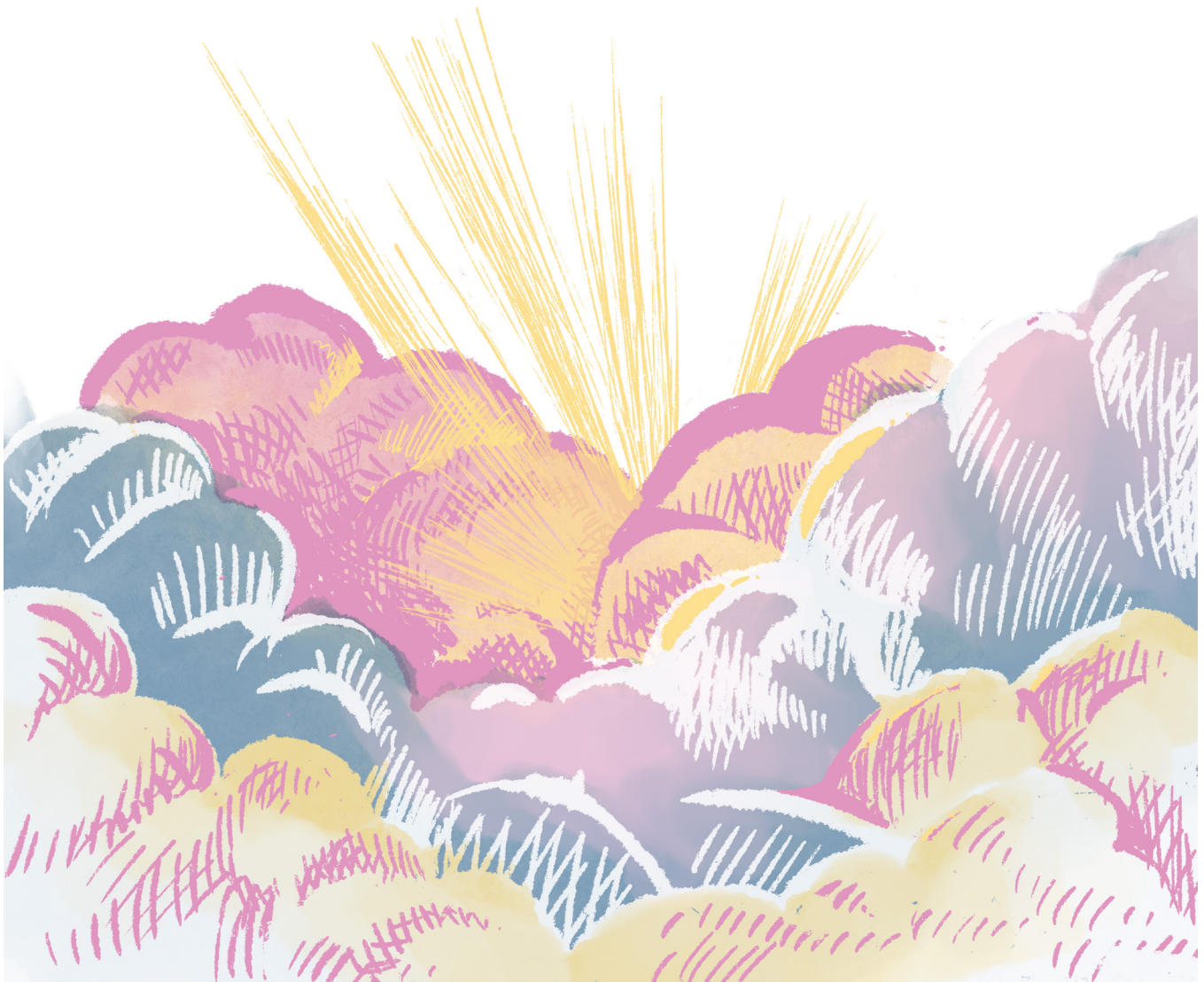
Celebrating gender joy

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Our brains are amazing at adapting! When we focus on positive experiences, we train our brains to notice these experiences more easily over time.

Feelings of contentment, peace, and joy are often more subtle than difficult emotions or sensations. Many trans, Two-Spirit and non-binary people have needed to disconnect from their bodies and emotions to cope with dysphoria or unaffirming environments. This can make it harder to notice when we feel good.

It's worthwhile to notice, commemorate and celebrate moments of joy, especially when we are exploring our gender or helping others learn about our gender.



Celebrating gender milestones

There are many ways we mark big changes in our lives through community celebrations and ceremonies: graduations, birthdays, weddings, coming of age ceremonies, and more.

How would you like to mark and celebrate important moments in your gender journey?
Are there people who would help plan an event like this?
Who might share these celebrations with you?

Some ideas:

Host a gathering to celebrate a step you've taken in your gender embodiment, such as:

- A new name or pronouns
- An upcoming procedure

Re-do a celebration in your affirmed gender, such as:

- A graduation
- A coming-of-age ritual

Invite loved ones to witness and celebrate you in affirming ways.

Plan an online celebration for your milestone commemoration.

- Think about who you'd most like to witness, support or celebrate you.

Host a clothing swap where you can let go of old items and find new, affirming ones.

Have a bonfire and burn something you have written that you want to let go of.

Share a special meal with a loved one or loved ones before an important appointment.

Make art, alone or with others, that honours a moment in your gender journey. You might:

- Collage
- Create a group painting with friends

Share stories with loved ones, and ask them to share:

- What they love about you
- Ways they've seen you grow and change

Invite friends to:

- Volunteer with you
- Host a fundraiser for a trans-positive organization

What feels meaningful to you?



Collect moments of joy

You might:

- Keep notes on your phone
- Save photos in a special album
- Place items in a special box
- Create a playlist

Your collection doesn't need to be perfect or complete. It can be a work in progress and provide comfort when you're feeling down.

Gender joy & gender pleasure

When have you felt gender joy recently?

You might feel gender joy from...

- Hearing your pronouns or name.
- Clothes, hair, makeup—seeing you be you!
- Moving your body in ways that feel good.
- Feeling at peace with the world around you,

A simple practice for positive moments

When you have a positive emotion, try to...

Notice it. How does pleasure, joy, happiness, and contentment feel in your body?

- Hold the sensation.
- Can you name it?
- Focus on putting words to the sensations, rather than the reason you feel it.

Acknowledge it. Mark the moment in some way.

- This could be as simple as thinking, “I’m feeling happy.”
- You could write the moment down in a planner or phone notes app, take a photo to commemorate, or record a voice memo.

Share it. Consider sharing the moment with loved ones.

- You might be surprised by how happy others are to hear about when you’re feeling good—even small moments of joy are worth sharing!
- You could text or call a friend, or save it to share when you next meet.

More ideas

To commemorate an important change, milestone, or gender anniversary, you might...

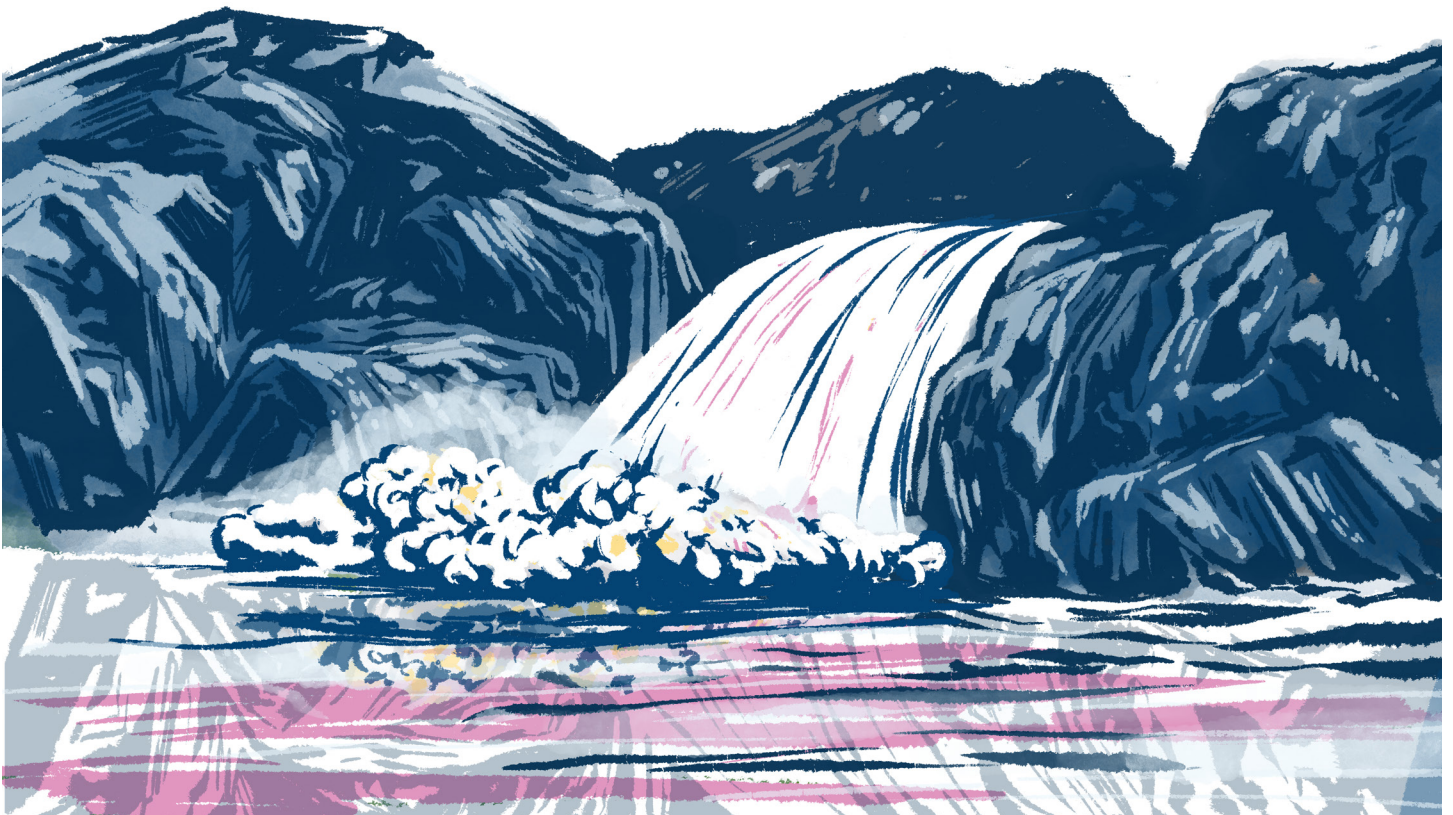
Treat yourself to something special.

- It doesn't need to be expensive.
- Choose something that will remind you of this moment.
- Enjoy the feeling of celebrating yourself.

Give back to community.

- Donate time, money, or resources to others on their gender journeys.
- Sharing clothing, post-surgical supplies and even baked goods can be a nice way to mark your big moments of gender joy.

If you're looking to get connected with an organization in your area, try browsing Trans Care BC's [*Peer Support Directory*](#).



Celebrating your body

One way we might honour changes on our gender journey is to celebrate and give gratitude to our bodies. Here are some suggestions:

Collect honouring images

Gather images that honour bodies like yours.

You might collect them:

- In an account online
- In a folder on your phone
- On a wall in your home, or by a mirror
- In a scrapbook

Consider including non-human images that relate to the body qualities you are honouring.

Write your body...

- An ode
- A love note
- A thank you
- A promise to listen
- A list of things you are grateful for
- A welcome or goodbye, to a part undergoing surgery

Mindful gender self-care

What are your moments of gender self-care?

This might include:

- Hair removal or styling
- Tucking, padding, binding
- Applying makeup
- Taking hormones
- Dilation
- Scar massage
- Post-operative care

How would it feel to use these moments to express honour and gratitude to your body?

Is there anything you can change or add to your care routines to make them special?

You might use:

- Candles
- Special products
- Self-massage
- Music
- Affirmations
- A deep breath before your care routine

Make art about your body

You might:

- Paint
- Create a playlist
- Sculpt
- Commission an artist
- Collage
- Make music
- Photograph
- Write a poem

You could base this art on your body in a mirror, photos, or using animals or plants that are meaningful to you.

When the art is done, you might display or listen to it near a mirror, integrating your image with your creative expression.

When celebrating is difficult

Many of us find it difficult to celebrate our bodies.
If “celebration” feels difficult, you could try to...

Describe your body in neutral, descriptive terms.

- Avoid judgement, shame or “shoulds”: describe things exactly how they are.
- For example: “My ears poke out from the side of my head and are shaped like question marks. The tops of them are at the same height as my eyebrows...”
- Try to just notice, without criticism.

Find gratitude for the sensations your body brings you.

- Consider touch, taste, sight, smell, and sound.

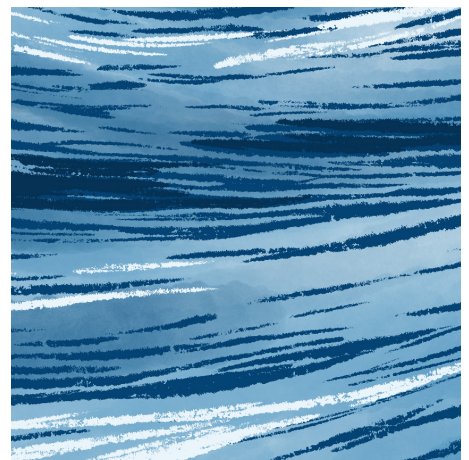
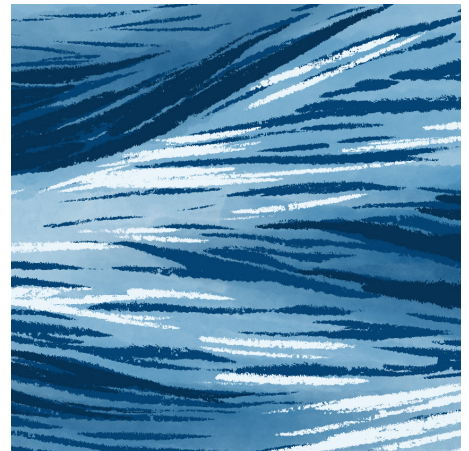
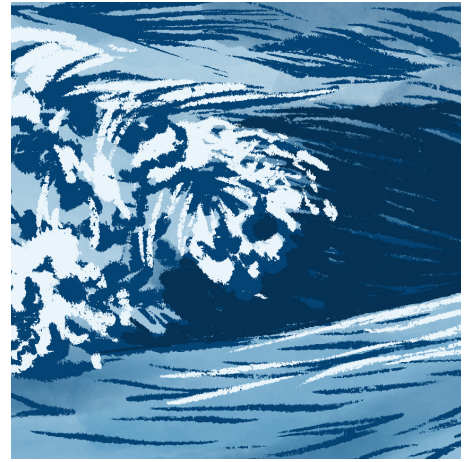
Focus attention on just one specific part of your body, and try to cherish and celebrate it.

- A single nail, a hair, the lines on your palm, the skin on your knee...

Find gratitude for how your body keeps you alive.

At a mirror: pause, and seek silence.

- When you’re ready, look at a body part that feels neutral, perhaps a knee or toe.
- Notice any negative self-talk and practice letting it pass.
- Once this becomes easier, move to another body part, then another.



Creating space

Pick a drawer, cupboard, bag, or category of items to sort through and refresh.

Sometimes, the objects we own hold emotional weight, representing fears, regrets, hopes, grief, and longings.

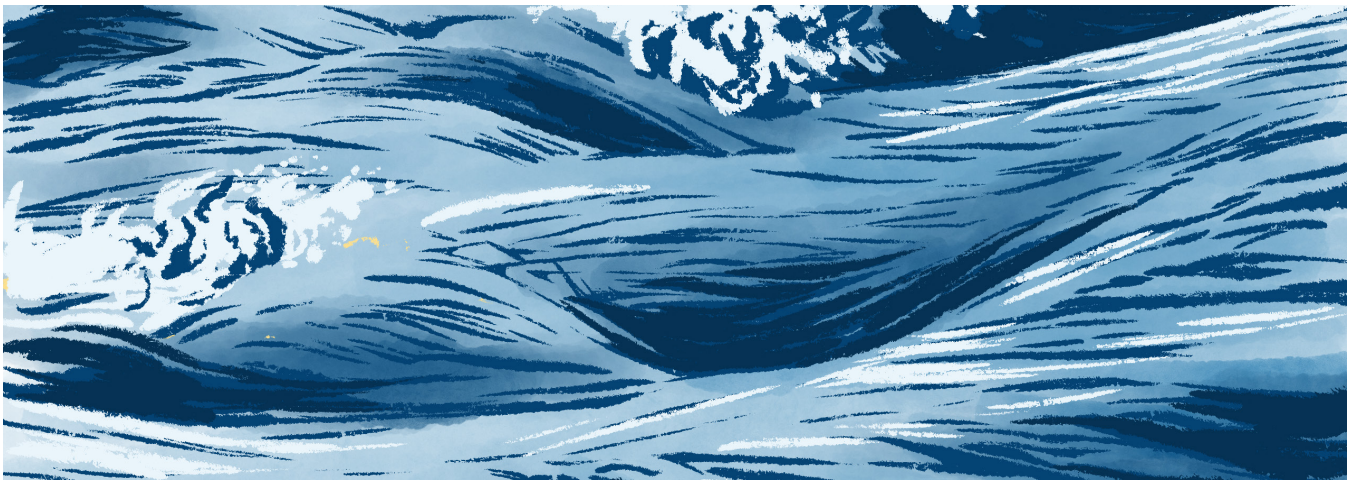
- When we choose to let go of these objects, it can be a way to choose to let go of these feelings as well.

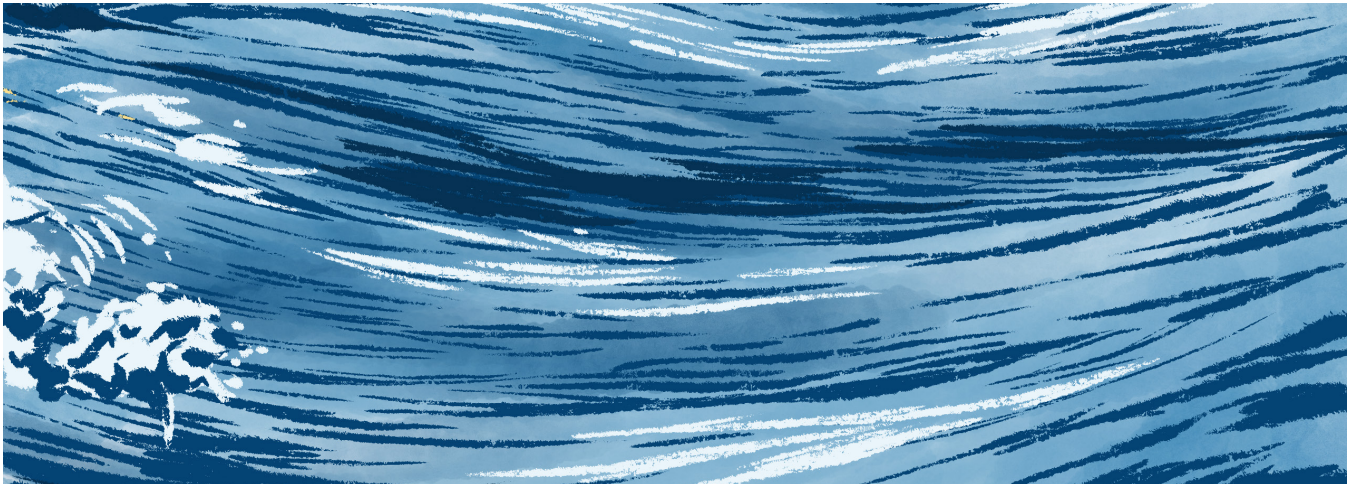
Creating space allows us to:

- Make room for what truly matters now.
- Honor our past while moving forward.

As you create space, consider:

- What thoughts, feelings or worries am I ready to let go of?
- What am I making room for?
- What do I want to keep?





Sorting through documents and papers

Look through your papers, cards, and letters with care. Consider which ones you:

- Need to keep for practical reasons
- Want to keep because they bring you joy
- Are ready to release

For important documents you want to keep digitally, consider scanning them to a secure folder.

Notice how you feel as you hold each paper. Are there documents that feel uncomfortable? Perhaps they use a name you no longer use or connect to a difficult time in your life.

When you're ready to release papers, choose a method that feels right.

You might:

- Recycle them
- Rip them into pieces
- Feed them to a paper shredder
- Snip them up with scissors
- Toss them in the trash
- Bury them in a compostable bag
- Collage them into a work of art
- Burn them

Pay attention to how you feel during this process.

Is there lightness or relief?

Do you feel mixed emotions?

Decide how you want to store the items you chose to keep.

As you put them away, try to notice how you feel.

Is there spaciousness, comfort, calm?

Plan a gentle transition after this process: maybe drinking a cup of tea, taking a walk, or calling a friend.

Refreshing your wardrobe

Take everything out of your wardrobe and consider each item individually.
How do you feel?

Try to locate where in your body these feelings appear, and describe the sensations.

- *Are they soft, spiky, slippery, achey?*
- *Do the clothes represent hopes, dreams, disappointments?*
- *What dreams might you imagine for their next life?*

You might be surprised to realize what isn't working for you any more.

For many of us, weight or shape changes mean that some of our clothes fit differently.

Some pieces of clothing might be gifts that you don't like to wear, but keep out of a sense of obligation. It may help to think of these gifts as objects whose purpose was to be received.

Many of us have clothes that we were excited about when we got them, but didn't end up wearing.

You might give yourself permission to let go of clothing that doesn't fit you any more.

If a gift does not suit us, especially months or years after we received it, we can take a moment to honour the love shown to us when we received the gift, then let it go.

Give yourself permission to let go of items that feel painful, cluttered, or unwanted. If it feels right, take a moment to say goodbye to each item.

You could speak out loud, write something down on a piece of scrap paper, or just say something in your heart.

Say goodbye in any way that feels right, whether that's "Sorry it didn't work out," "Thank you," or "Good riddance!"

Place the clothes you've chosen to keep back in your wardrobe.

How does it feel to hold these items?

To see them in your wardrobe?

When you're ready to let go of the clothes you chose to declutter, you could:

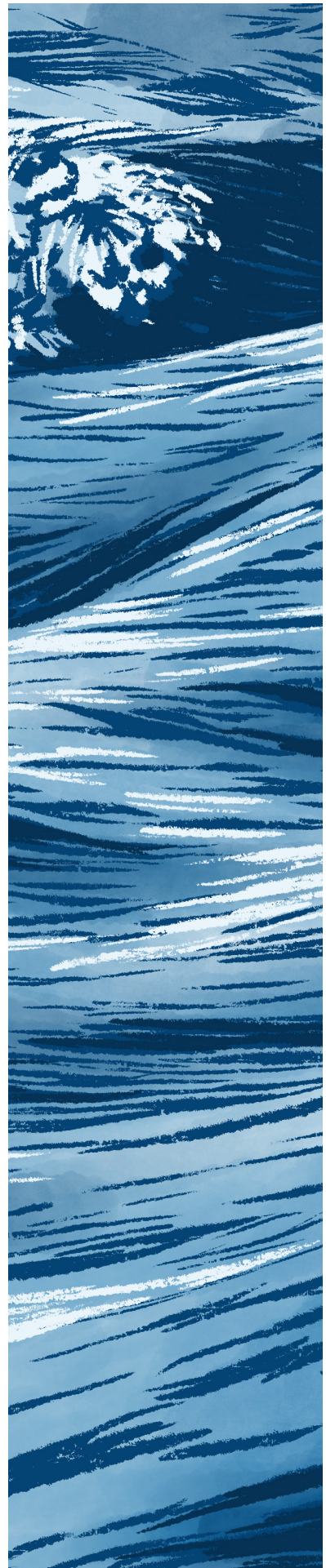
- Give them to friends and family, a community organization, or a thrift store. Many 2SLGBTQ+ centres have gender-affirming clothing trunks.
- Leave them in a "FREE" box on a curb
- Throw them in the trash!

Do what feels right to you.

*What are you
making space for?*







Conscious reflection

Reflection is a powerful tool that can allow us to learn from our experiences, gain deeper understanding, and make more mindful decisions. It can also help us accept and even transform difficult feelings like loneliness, frustration, confusion, anger, and sadness.

Taking time to reflect can also be a way to honour and celebrate changes in our lives.

The **quality** of reflection matters more than the quantity. Even two minutes of thoughtful reflection each day can be valuable.

Simple ways to reflect:

- Record voice notes
- Take a quiet walk
- Sit in stillness for a few minutes
- Create art
- Enjoy a relaxing bath or shower
- Use a mood tracker app
- Journal
- Scrap-booking, such as with:
 - Photos
 - Receipts
 - Scraps of fabric
 - Small mementos

Gender reflection prompts

- What felt aligned today?
- What would I like to experience tomorrow?
- What has felt awkward?
- What has felt comfortable?
- What do I imagine for my future?



If you're going through a significant change, consider setting aside regular time to reflect, such as once a week.

You might keep these reflections private, or, you might share them with trusted people so they can affirm and support you on your journey.

You might ceremonially release or destroy them, to mark moving through a phase of your journey. Or, you might keep them safe and revisit them to celebrate your growth.

An important object

Choose an object that is significant to you and symbolizes your gender intentions. This could be clothing, a photograph, a small trinket...

Take a few moments to consider your connection to this object. You might:

- Write about what it means to you
- Make a pin board
- Scribble a drawing or make collage inspired by it
- Hold it and appreciate its significance

This object or the art you created can serve as:

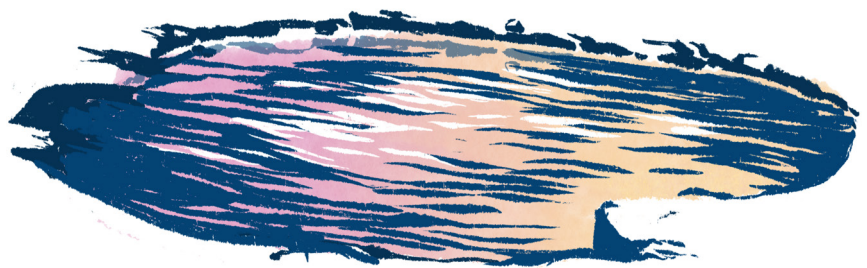
- A reminder of your authentic self
- A connection to your sovereignty over your body and gender
- A way to honour changes you've undergone
- An anchor during challenging times
- A reminder to revisit and re-imagine your ways of being

Hearing your voice as it changes

If your voice is changing due to hormones or voice training, or if you're curious about the ways your voice might change with age, you can honour this change with a voice diary.

Record yourself reading a poem, humming, or singing a song every few months or once a year.

These recordings can serve as a history of your voice over time.



Connecting with past & future selves

Take some time to reflect on your past experiences, and your hopes for the future:

Your past selves

- Ways you were
- Ways you learned to act
- Who you thought you would be
- Who you thought you were
- Things you miss
- Things you need to grieve

Try to revisit without shame or judgement. Offer love and kindness to the people you used to be.

Your future selves

- What makes you...
 - Excited?
 - Curious?
 - Delighted?
 - Nervous?

Exploration often involves uncertainty.

Give yourself permission to discover and evolve, even when the path isn't perfectly clear.

Listen to yourself with compassion

When you notice recurring thoughts or feelings, approach them with gentle curiosity:

- What might these thoughts or feelings be trying to tell me?
- What would help me feel more at ease right now?
- What small step might support me in this moment?

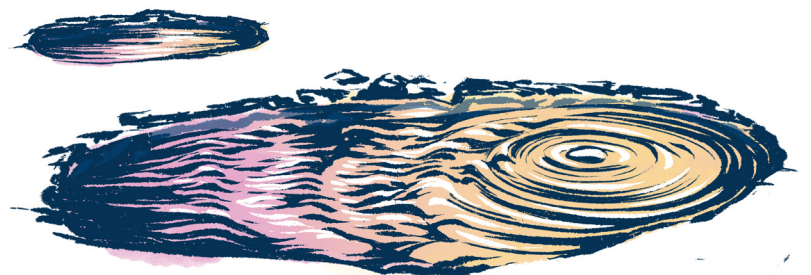
Remember that all feelings and thoughts are temporary. You don't need to judge them or push them away.

Write to yourself

Consider writing a letter to yourself that:

- Celebrates your courage and resilience
- Acknowledges steps you've taken, no matter how small
- Offers encouragement for challenges you're facing
- Expresses hopes for your continuing journey
- Reminds you of moments of connection and joy

Speak to yourself as you would to a dear friend: with kindness, patience, and genuine care.



Closing thoughts

As this series of exercises draws to a close, you might consider some closing questions similar to those with which we began:

1 How have you honoured important moments in your gender journey?

What moments would you like to mark or celebrate in the future?

2 What everyday practices help you honour your gender journey?

What new practices would you like to try?

