



MODULES

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We make a binding commitment to examine our spaces and facilities to identify barriers for trans, intersex, and non-binary athletes and develop creative and lasting solutions.

What do spaces have to do with trans, intersex, and non-binary (TIN) participation in sports?

1. The design and layout of spaces can lead to situations in which discrimination occurs

Mo uses a wheelchair, is non-binary, and uses the name “Mo” in place of a pronoun such as “he” or “she.” Mo finds a self-defense club online that offers training for trans, intersex, and non-binary people. Mo writes to them, and the club invites Mo to join them for a training session. As Mo approaches the gym, Mo finds an old wooden wheelchair ramp in a state of disrepair, but luckily it is wide enough for Mo’s wheelchair. The facility only has women’s and men’s changing rooms. After considering it for a moment, Mo opts for the men’s changing room, because the coach told Mo that the bathroom there is wheelchair accessible. But inside the changing room, the benches are arranged in a way that blocks access to the bathroom. A couple of boys from the school sports program that just finished are still hanging out in the men’s changing room. They give Mo a wary look, whisper to each other, and then run out of the changing room, laughing.

A common problem with gender-inclusive sports programs is that spaces must often be shared between many different groups, not all of which are sensitive to the needs of trans, intersex, and non-binary participants. This can lead to uncomfortable situations,

even in “safe” spaces (like a TIN sports group). These spaces present three different accessibility barriers for Mo: First, as a non-binary person, Mo is not accommodated by either the men’s or women’s changing rooms. Second, Mo encounters discrimination in the men’s changing room. Third, neither the gym itself nor the changing room or bathroom facilities are wheelchair accessible.



Designing spaces (e.g., facilities, changing rooms, bathrooms) that are accessible and gender-inclusive

Not many organizations have their own facilities. However, if your organization does have its own spaces, you can make them more accessible by considering the following points:

- Think about the **gender assignments** for bathrooms, changing rooms, and showers: How many changing rooms are available? Could you consider installing individual stalls, particularly in the shower facilities? How could you optimize the layout to make your facilities accessible for all genders? The coaches could speak with their groups about what kinds of signs to place on the stalls and what those signs would mean. Even better, the group could work together to decide which stalls are needed for which people in the group.
- Do you have wheelchair-accessible bathrooms, showers, and changing rooms? Are they in **good condition**? Do they comply with current accessibility regulations? Do some of your facilities or equipment require repairs or modernization?

This is frequently a challenging task, and you will not always be able to suit everyone. If you have at least three rooms, we recommend designating one room for all genders, one for men, and one for women. Some TIN people are (also) men or women, so they should also be able to use the men’s or women’s spaces. If you have two rooms, you could designate one changing room for women and one for all genders.

- Clearly label your changing rooms using images or inscriptions (e.g., “All-Gender Changing Room”) on the doors.
- In addition, your organization should follow the convention that all TIN people are welcome to use the changing rooms, bathrooms, and showers in which they feel most comfortable. All members of your organization should be informed of this decision.
- The aim is not necessarily to create three fixed options but to flexibly adjust your changing facilities to suit the needs of the people in your organization. You should clearly communicate your changing room policy on your website (→ EM 9 Communication).

Creating safer spaces: No space is completely free from discrimination. When we talk about “safer spaces,” we are not referring to physical spaces or rooms, but rather to an idea about how we can interact with one another while minimizing violence and discrimination. A first step toward creating safer spaces might be to offer courses specifically for marginalized groups (e.g., swim practice for TIN people). Programs like this provide TIN people with a space in which they are likely to experience less discrimination for being trans, intersex, or non-binary. In addition, your organization could implement as many measures as possible to prevent violence. In the example above, the self-defense coach could have spoken to the teachers of the school class in advance to make sure they were aware of TIN issues. The idea of safer spaces should include ensuring that people know what to do if they experience or witness discrimination: Are there specific contact people in the organization that Mo might have turned to speak about the situation (→ EM Protection)?

2. Training schedules can lead to exclusion

Lea, a trans woman, has enjoyed playing soccer on the SV Berlin 1920 women’s team for many years now. At the first training session after the team’s summer vacation, she has to break the bad news to her team: “I can’t come to practice anymore,” she says.

“I got a promotion at my company, and I can’t leave early three times a week now.” Her teammates all nod – everyone knows that 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. is an unpopular time slot. Unfortunately, the board says they “can’t do anything about it.” The later time slots are generally reserved for the men’s teams, even now that the women’s team is playing in the regional league.

Facilities or pitches are often allocated in ways that favor some types of sports (e.g., soccer) or groups of people (e.g., men or adults) over others. The reason for this is frequently that “it’s always been that way.” This unequal distribution of “space” limits many people’s ability to participate in sports.



Helping promote equality through space allocation

There are major differences in the ability of individual sports organizations to participate in decisions on how facilities or time slots are to be allocated. If the facilities or time slots for your organization are simply allocated to you by the local or national authorities, you could attempt to take a more active role in the decision-making process by speaking to a



representative of the agency in charge. If you are in charge of allocating training times and facilities to your teams, you could take some time to make a critical assessment of your current allocation plan. Do certain groups always receive the most popular time slots, and if yes, why is that? Are some groups failing to grow because they always train at less favorable times? One option for fair allocation of time slots and facilities would be to survey all sports groups once a year, asking them to list their top three choices, and to create your schedule and allocation plan using their answers. If there are teams that have been unhappy with their time slots or facilities for many years, you could prioritize those teams when creating the new plan. Here, too, seek out dialog with other members of your organization, and work together to develop constructive solutions. Organizations can influence which participants they support and which potential participants they attract.



Questions for consideration

- Which teams practice on grass and which practice on gravel fields? Which teams have flood lights, and which do not? Who gets to practice in modern facilities, and who plays in old, dilapidated gyms?
- Who is responsible for ensuring that the athletes in your organization have sufficient suitable spaces for their sports activities?
- Which teams take up the most (or the least) space in your organization? Which teams tend to practice overtime, and which are particularly loud?
- What are your concerns with regard to allocating spaces in an accessible, gender-inclusive way? Which of these concerns are based on prejudices or preconceptions?
- What ideas do you have to increase the accessibility and safety of the spaces at your organization for TIN people?

Additional reading:

<https://nullbarriere.de/din-18040-1-sanitaerraume.htm>
(German only)



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