Transgender Media Lab Handbook

A Living Manual of Our Values, Guidelines, and Protocols

Version 2.4. Last updated June 1, 2024.

Written by Evie Johnny Ruddy, Jada Gannon-Day, Kate Higginson, Cara Tierney, Laura Horak & the Transgender Media Lab

Layout and Graphics by Kit Chokly

Acknowledgements: Sections edited by Kate Higginson and Orvis Starkweather. Ideas contributed by Mel Racho, Kit Chokly, Maddie Murakami, Adam Milling, and Connie Crompton.

Summary of version changes

v1.0 First publication of this report on our website in 2021.

v2.0 Updated on June 26, 2023.

v2.1 Updated on November 2, 2023.

v2.2 Updated on December 13, 2023. Removed links to internal documents, fixed broken CARFAC rates link, edited trans to trans+ where appropriate. Reformatted layout and exported as PDF. Added image descriptions and alt text. Added Aliisa Qureshi to the org chart.

v2.3 Name updates.

v2.4 Name updates. June 1, 2024.

Table of Contents

This handbook is inspired by and draws on the structure of the Civic Laboratory for Environmental Action Research (CLEAR) Lab Book.[1]

How to cite this document:

Evie Johnny Ruddy, Jada Gannon-Day, Kate Higginson, Cara Tierney, Laura Horak and the Transgender Media Lab, "Transgender Media Lab Handbook: A Living Manual of Our Values, Guidelines, and Protocols, v.2.4" (Ottawa, ON: Transgender Media Lab, Carleton University, 2024).

---

[1] CLEAR, "CLEAR Lab Book: A Living Manual of Our Values, Guidelines, and Protocols, V.03" (St. John's, NL: Civic Laboratory for Environmental Action Research, Memorial University, 2021), https://civiclaboratory.nl/clear-lab-book/.

1. Introduction

This handbook was written on the unceded and unsurrendered territory of the Algonquin Nation and on Treaty 4 lands — the territories of the *nêhiyawak, Anihšināpēk,* Dakota, Lakota, and Nakoda, and the homeland of the Métis Nation. Members of the Transgender Media Lab also live on many different territories across Turtle Island (North America).

Settler colonialism is a structure that builds a nation over existing Indigenous societies, through the elimination of Indigenous peoples and social structures. In the Canadian context, this has expressed itself in the form of cultural genocide, including the forcible removal of Indigenous peoples from their lands and exploitation of the land as a resource.

Universities have long contributed to colonial harms, including:
- stealing Indigenous lands and resources
- treating colonized and enslaved people as things
- pathologizing trans+ and Two Spirit lives and bodies
- maintaining Western colonial and sexist concepts of gender and sexuality

Colonialist research has often denied Indigenous peoples sovereignty and the right to make their own decisions. We strive to break this pattern. We aim to uphold the ways Indigenous artists, communities, and nations continue to define themselves and their rights.

Being on Anishinaabe Aki or Algonquin territory comes with responsibilities. Throughout our work, we strive to understand the obligations this creates for us here and now. We must take individual and collective action to honour our obligations and move forward in a good way.

We want to uplift Indigenous-led initiatives on unceded Algonquin territory. The [Assembly of Seven Generations](#) (A7G) is an amazing organization. They are an Indigenous-owned and youth-led non-profit focused on cultural support. They run empowerment programs for Indigenous youth. Their programs center traditional knowledge and Elder guidance. Visit their social enterprise shop, [Adaawewigamig](#) ([pronunciation](#)), in the Byward Market in downtown Ottawa, or check out their [current initiatives](#), and [donate here](#).

Chi miigwech.

The Transgender Media Lab (TML) was founded by Dr. Laura Horak in 2020 to create an institutional home for students recruited to research trans media-making and build the Transgender Media Portal (TMP), a website and database of trans+[2] and Two Spirit filmmakers and their works. The purpose of the TMP is to make audiovisual work by trans+, Two Spirit, nonbinary, intersex, and gender-nonconforming people more available to artists, activists, festival programmers, researchers, instructors, and the public. We hope to: promote the careers of today's trans+ and Two Spirit filmmakers, call attention to older works so they can be programmed and preserved, jumpstart research on these films, and provide artists and others with access to an innovative tradition of work.

The TML handbook is inspired by the Civic Laboratory for Environmental Action Research (CLEAR) Lab Book.[3] Our TML handbook is a living document, which means that it is continually evolving as we welcome new members, learn about better, more equitable ways of doing the lab's work, and engage in critical self-reflection. We are committed to creating a lab that is fair, transparent, effective, fun, and in line with trans, antiracist, anti-colonial, feminist, queer, and crip values.

1.1 How the Transgender Media Lab and Transgender Media Portal Started

The Transgender Media Portal project began at Carleton University in June 2017 when Laura Horak, a film studies professor and the project's director/principal investigator (PI), received a SSHRC Insight Development Grant (IDG) to fund the project's initial activities. Between 2017 and 2020, Horak worked with Carleton Audiovisual Research Centre developer Adam Milling, project manager Kate Higginson, trans media consultants Sam Feder and Magnus Berg, developers Neecha Klee, Eduardo Soto, and Devin Jn Pierre, designer Kit Chokly, and researchers Noah Rodomar, Jay Cooper, and Oliver Debney to build and populate a prototype of the TMP on Drupal. The team also created a public website, organised public screenings and discussions of trans-made films, sponsored trans programs at film festivals, and ran a usability test and community consultation, the results of which were published as the TMP Usability Test Report 2020.

In April 2019, with the support of an Ontario Early Researcher Award, Horak founded the Transgender Media Lab (TML) as a virtual and physical home for student researchers working on the Transgender Media Portal (e.g., lab members) and students and

---

[2] We use trans broadly throughout this handbook to include trans, nonbinary, intersex, and gender-nonconforming people.
[3] CLEAR, "CLEAR Lab Book, V.03."

scholars working at the intersections of transgender studies and cinema and media studies (e.g., lab affiliates). That year, the lab hosted trans studies reading groups and incubator sessions for students working on trans topics.

In April 2020, Horak won a SSHRC Insight Grant to create the public version of the Transgender Media Portal database. That fall, Connie Crompton, a Digital Humanities professor and Canada Research Chair at the University of Ottawa, joined the project as co-investigator, along with Evie Johnny Ruddy, the TML's first PhD Fellow. A leadership team, now named the Operations Team, was constituted in Fall 2020 made up of Horak, Crompton, Higginson, and Ruddy. In 2022, developer Mel Racho and data analyst Orvis Starkweather joined the Operations Team.

During the 2020–2021 academic year, Horak worked with Ruddy, Crompton, and Higginson to figure out how to create an ethical and fun lab experience in light of the lab's planned expansion. For the 2021–2022 academic year, the TMP team expanded from 5 to 12, including visiting Fulbright fellow Dr. Cáel M. Keegan, undergrad RAs Maddie Murakami, Jada Gannon-Day, and a student who wishes to remain anonymous, MA fellow who wishes to remain anonymous, and PhD fellow Cara Tierney. Kit Chokly rejoined the lab as Contributor Experience Designer. During this year, the team pivoted from Drupal to a spreadsheet-backed website using code from the University of Victoria's Project Endings, created written policies (including this handbook) to govern how we act toward each other and toward communities we interact with, updated the public website, and made plans for "decentering whiteness" on the next iterations of the website.

In 2022–2023, a new software developer, Mel Racho, and Data Analyst, Orvis Starkweather, joined the lab. In 2023, we hired CSS Expert Rina Khan. Currently, we are filling the spreadsheets with trans film data, completing the design and implementation of the spreadsheet-backed website, and completing the restructuring and new content for the public website. We are also doing Indigenous consultations and engaging with disability justice to make sure that the project contributes to Indigenous and crip liberation as well as we can.

1.2 How the Transgender Media Lab is Structured

TML Lab Structure
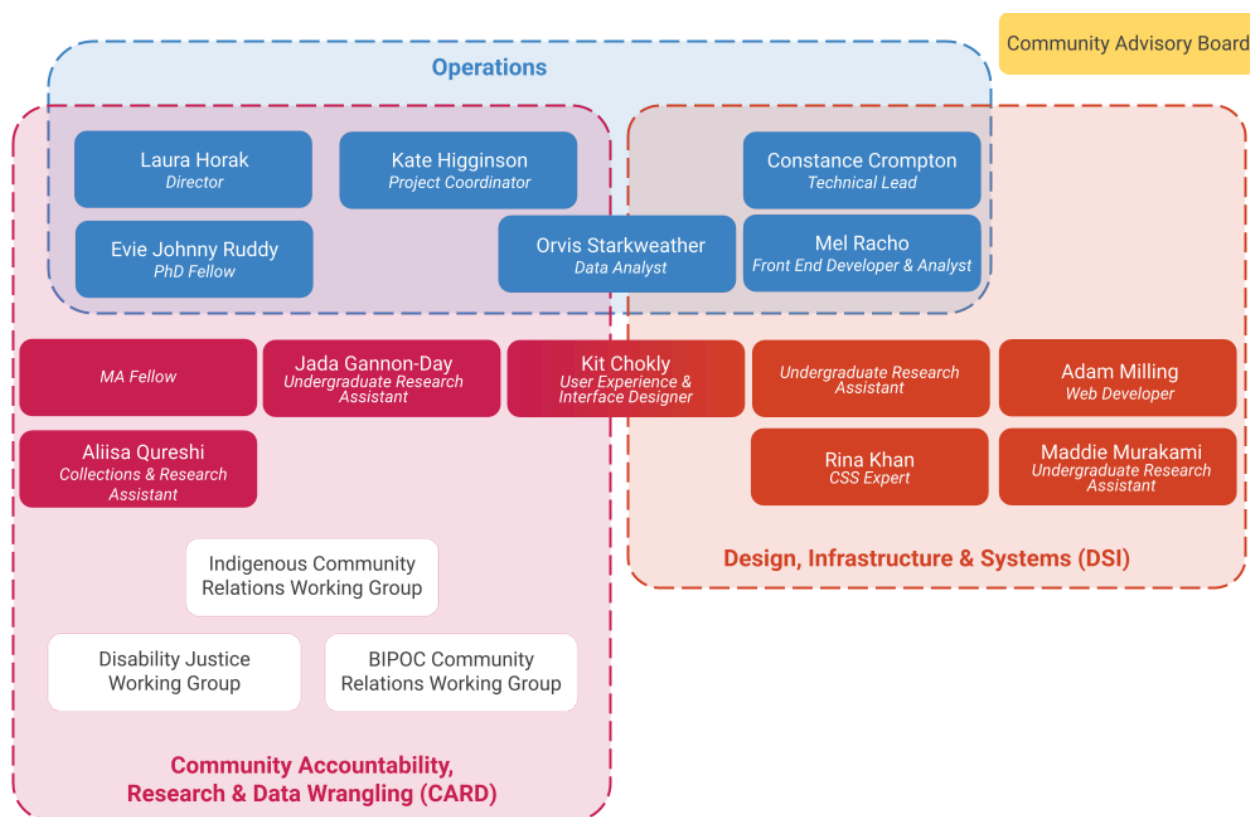
Image description: A diagram of the TML's organizational structure. Included in the Operations team is Laura Horak, Kate Higginson, Evie Johnny Ruddy, Orvis Starkweather, Constrance Crompton, and Mel Racho. Included on the Design, Infrastructure & Systems (DSI) Team is an unnamed undergraduate research assistant, Adam Milling, Rina Khan, Maddie Murakami, and Kit Chokly. Listed on the Community Accountability, Research & Data Wrangling (CARD) Team is an unnamed MA fellow, Jada Gannon-Day, Aliisa Qureshi, and Kit Chokly, as well as the Indigenous Community Relations Working Group, the Disability Justice Working Group, and the BIPOC Community Relations Working Group. External to the TML is the Community Advisory Board.

TML Institutional Structure

Funding Institutions

Ontario Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation, and Trade

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada

Ontario Early Researcher Award

Insight Development Grant & Insight Grant

Home Institution & Physical Location
Carleton University

Transgender Media Lab
Building the Transgender Media Portal

Core Research Team

Community Advisory Board

Mentorship & consultation

Affiliated Scholars

Image description: A diagram of the TML's institutional structure. The primary funding institutions are the Ontario Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade—through the Ontario Early Researcher Award—and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada—through the Insight Development Grant & Insight Grant. These funds inform the Transgender Media Lab and its Core Research Team, which are located in the home institution of Carleton University. The Community Advisory Board is part of the TML but is not located at Carleton University. There are also Affiliated Scholars who contribute to the TML through Mentorship & Consultation.

2. Transgender Media Lab Statement of Values

Following CLEAR's lead, TML team members participated in a collaborative process in winter 2022 to establish our core values. These values inform how we engage in the lab's work, including how we make decisions about the TMP, run meetings, interact with one another, and resolve conflict.

The TML's core values are:

- Radical Honesty & Listening
- Community-Oriented & BIPOC Trans Centred
- Challenging Hierarchies
- Care Ethics

To determine these values, we adapted CLEAR Lab's process, which is explained in the video *Laboratory Life: Choosing our Lab Values*. CLEAR Lab's five-step process is also detailed in their Lab Book on pages 63–67.

Media activist and Tools for Change facilitator Sharmeen Khan facilitated our values-defining process. Sharmeen began by asking: "What is alive for you with the Transgender Media Lab so far?" Next, Sharmeen asked us to describe a time when something happened that made us glad to be part of the project. Lastly, Sharmeen prompted us to choose one of the following scenarios and share an anecdote with the group:

1. Tell a story about a time where you had to collaborate on a project with someone you didn't know or didn't get along with. What were the elements of the work relationship that stood out to you?

2. Describe a time when you had issues with the division of labour or differing times people put into a project. How did you address these differences to make the project successful?

3. Describe a time you received feedback on a project you were working on that made you feel proud. How did the feedback contribute to your work?

4. Tell a story of when you had to finish a project with a tight deadline that required collaboration with many people. What elements made the project successful?

From the stories we shared, we identified the repeated words that reflect the behaviours and interactions team members are already practising in the lab. As CLEAR writes,

> To start understanding what our lab culture and practices already value, we tell stories. This allows us to focus on values we already have and enact, rather than reaching for the ol' "equity, diversity and inclusion" that many institutional value statements talk about and likely support on paper, but don't necessarily have the capacity to enact. A core part of building a shared lab culture is that [it] is feasible.[4]

TML team members shared stories about feeling heard and valued, work-life balance, flexibility, understanding, generative conflict, collaboration, and community in the lab, as well as stories about how the lab challenges hierarchies and centres BIPOC trans+ people. After grouping these words into clusters, we agreed on the following four overarching core values.

2.1 Radical Honesty & Listening

We practice radical honesty and listening both in our interactions with one another and with the communities we are accountable to outside the lab. Radical honesty is more than "telling the truth;" it entails being honest in a way that benefits everyone, and extending compassion to people when they make mistakes.

During the values-visioning process, team members expressed their appreciation for how the lab encourages generative conflict and how team members productively engage in difficult conversations. Many team members expressed that they feel genuinely heard at meetings and that their opinions and contributions are valued.

Some team members also shared that the lab fosters an environment where they feel comfortable being vulnerable and honest about challenges they are facing, having limited capacity, and asking for help.

Other ways we practice radical honesty and listening in the lab include:

- resolving small conflicts before they become big, which requires open and honest communication (Guideline 3.2.5 in this handbook).

---

[4] CLEAR, "CLEAR Lab Book, V.03", 64

- listening when someone disagrees with you or "calls you in" rather than interrupting or responding defensively (Protocol 4.10.3)
- making space for everyone to speak at meetings, including taking a step back if we notice we are dominating the conversation (Protocol 4.12)
- drawing on our anti-oppression facilitation training to support full participation at meetings and to say "yes!" to principled disagreement (Protocol 4.12)

Outside the lab, we strive to be accountable to communities by listening and being honest and transparent about our processes. As the TMP BIPOC Community Relations Policy states in its guiding principles,

> We accurately and honestly represent our project and the work associated with the development and management of the Transgender Media Portal to challenge the institutional division between our lab and the communities we aim to represent. We will make our intentions and values known.[5]

Other ways we practice radical honesty and listening with communities outside the lab include:

- being and remaining open about the institutional, social, and colonial positioning of the lab and maintaining clear and accessible channels for community feedback to our public presence and operations.[6]
- proactively, not reactively, making ourselves available to community feedback on our actions, orientation, and structure and taking necessary steps to correct any behavior that deviates from our core value system.[7]
- sharing, promoting, amplifying, and uplifting the work of BIPOC trans+ and Two Spirit artists, rather than speaking for or over them.[8]
- holding usability tests with community members and being responsive to the test users' recommendations.
- publishing a yearly accountability report that audits the project's actions on incorporating more BIPOC trans+ leadership at all levels of the project.

---

[5] Jada Gannon-Day. "BIPOC Community Relations Policy, V.1.0." (Ottawa, ON: Transgender Media Lab, Carleton University, 2022), https://www.transgendermediaportal.org/policies.
[6] Jada Gannon-Day, and Evie Johnny Ruddy, "Social Media Policy, V.1.0." (Ottawa, ON: Transgender Media Lab, Carleton University, 2022), https://www.transgendermediaportal.org/policies.
[7] Gannon-Day, "BIPOC Community Relations Policy, V.1.0."
[8] Gannon-Day, "BIPOC Community Relations Policy, V.1.0."; Gannon-Day and Ruddy, "Social Media Policy, V.1.0."

2.2 Community-Oriented & BIPOC Trans Centred

Team members in the lab strive to be community-oriented and to intentionally and actively centre BIPOC trans art and lives.

During the values-defining process, team members expressed an appreciation for the sense of community they experience within the lab. One person said, "From a trans-centred perspective, where trans people and the concerns of the trans community are the framework is really enriching for me because I hardly ever get to be in an environment like that."

Some team members shared that they feel supported when discussing personal trans struggles and they appreciate being able to share joyful moments about their lives with the team.

Other ways we practise being community-oriented and BIPOC trans centred within the lab include:

- engaging in check-ins on everyday ups and downs at the beginning of team meetings;
- collectively establishing shared values;
- recognizing one another's accomplishments;
- carving out time for social activities, including creating social channels in our team Slack account;
- mentoring new members and supporting one another;
- calling one another in rather than out, and apologizing when we've been called in (Protocol 4.10).

In being radically honest and transparent about the lab's institutional positionality, we further strive to use the lab's power and position to challenge systems of domination, and highlight and support the work and activism of BIPOC trans+ creators and community members.[9]

As the TMP BIPOC Community Relations policy states,

> We challenge the dehumanizing and eliminatory nature of colonial white supremacy by prioritizing the humanity of BIPOC trans+ artists above all. We will represent the unique, varied, and complex experiences of BIPOC

---

[9] Gannon-Day, "BIPOC Community Relations Policy, V.1.0."

trans+ people beyond abstract concepts and debates, instead representing real, meaningful, and impactful experiences of complete people.[10]

Other ways we practice being community-oriented and BIPOC trans centred in our relations with communities outside the lab include:

- prioritizing and highlighting the scholarship, media, and campaigns of BIPOC and disabled trans+ and Two Spirit people.[11]
- rejecting Western settler epistemology as the sole method of conceptualizing gender and producing cultural identity.[12]
- decentring whiteness on the TMP website.
- creating online spaces that not only use and highlight the work of BIPOC, disabled, queer, and trans+ people, but are available and accessible to them.[13]
- forming working groups on BIPOC community relations, Indigenous community relations, and disability justice.
- incorporating more BIPOC trans+ leadership at all levels of the project, including prioritizing QTBIPOC and disabled candidates when making hiring decisions (Protocol 4.1).
- ensuring the Community Advisory Board has a majority (>50%) BIPOC membership and paying board members an annual honorarium.[14]
- ensuring that at least half (50%) of test users in the project's usability tests with trans+ filmmakers are BIPOC and that such usability tests have at least one Indigenous user and one disabled user, and that all test users be trans+ or Two Spirit.
- ensuring lab protocols, events, and outputs are accessible (Protocol 4.2).
- paying TMP research participants and collaborators in a timely manner, and in cash when possible (Protocol 4.9).
- Striving to be in good relations with the territory the lab is on (Protocol 4.11).

---

[10] Gannon-Day, "BIPOC Community Relations Policy, V.1.0."
[11] Gannon-Day, "BIPOC Community Relations Policy, V.1.0."
[12] Gannon-Day, "BIPOC Community Relations Policy, V.1.0."
[13] Gannon-Day and Ruddy, "Social Media Policy, V.1.0."

[14] Evie Johnny Ruddy and the Transgender Media Lab, "Transgender Media Portal Project Charter" (Ottawa, ON: Transgender Media Lab, Carleton University, 2021); Evie Johnny Ruddy with Cara Tierney and Laura Horak, "Transgender Media Lab Anti-Racist Accountability Report for June 2020-December 2021, V.1.1." (Ottawa, ON: Transgender Media Lab, Carleton University, 2022), https://www.transgendermediaportal.org/policies.

2.3 Challenging Hierarchies

As discussed in section 1.3, at base there is a hierarchical structure to the Transgender Media Lab, with Director Laura Horak and the operations team at the top. As the "Primary Investigator" on the grants which fund the TML and as the lab's official director, Dr. Horak is responsible to the funding bodies for achieving the goals set out in the grant proposals. With Drs. Crompton and Higginson, she is also responsible for hiring, supervising, paying, and potentially firing the project's Research Assistants. The operations team is responsible for the project's overall logistics, including creating and meeting project milestones.

However, all lab members participate in generating ideas and decision making as to how we pursue the goals of the Transgender Media Portal and put our values into action.

We recognize that there are many differential power relations within the lab. On our 13-person team, for example, there are tenured and tenure-track professors and salaried university staff members, as well as undergraduate, Masters, and PhD students. Lab members are trans, nonbinary, questioning, and cis, Afro-Indigenous, Afro-Latinx, Filipinx, white, and settler, neurodiverse and neurotypical.

In light of these existing hierarchies, we continually strive to be conscious of unequal distributions of power, including those created by colonialism, anti-Blackness, ableism, cis-centrism, transmisogyny, and heteronormativity. Within our lab, we actively strive to undermine these oppressive structures in order to prevent microaggressions and other harmful ways of engaging with one another. We further strive to honour the varied lived experiences of lab members and to create an environment that welcomes disagreement.

Drawing on AORTA's anti-oppression facilitation training, the operations team actively works against an authoritative, top-down decision-making structure. These efforts were recognized in the stories that team members shared at the values-visioning workshop. Some undergraduate RAs said that despite being younger and less experienced in academia, they feel their opinions are considered and valued at team meetings. Others expressed an appreciation for how the team fosters a collaborative environment through collective policy writing, encouraging RAs to co-chair meetings, and in lengthy, collective decision-making processes where all team members are invited to contribute ideas and perspectives, including dissenting opinions.

Further, some people expressed an appreciation for how the lab invests in the personal growth, development, and leadership skills of the RAs. The operations team does this by providing anti-oppression facilitation training workshops to team members, paying team members to attend public lectures, workshops, and events that are related to their work in the lab (up to 10 hours per semester), and by rotating meeting leadership so that everyone gets an opportunity to gain experience with chairing meetings.

Other ways we practise challenging hierarchies within the lab include:

- making most project decisions by voting
- adopting CLEAR's approach to deciding author order for co-written papers, which involves collaborative, transparent conversations that take social location into account.
- supporting full participation at meetings (Protocol 4.12).
- saying "yes!" to principled disagreement (Protocol 4.12).
- holding two-way reviews between RAs and their primary supervisor, which offer RAs an opportunity to provide feedback to their supervisor.

Other ways we practice challenging hierarchies in our relations with communities outside the lab include:

- designing the initial project in response to a survey of trans+ filmmakers, curators, and scholars
- making design and policy changes in response to usability test/community consultations

2.4 Care Ethics

During the values-defining workshop, team members repeatedly described the lab's work environment as flexible. In contrast to the flexibility that capitalism often demands of workers, in the lab the work conditions are flexible to meet team members' needs and support their overall well-being. Such flexibility is often lacking in capitalistic work environments where profits and productivity are valued over workers' needs and well-being. In contrast, TML team members said the lab operates as though no one on the team is disposable. Some people shared stories of how the operations team puts people before work by accommodating people's schedules and needs, being understanding when life presents challenges, promoting work-life balance, and providing care and support rather than being punitive when someone falls behind in their work or needs more time to complete tasks.

Other ways we practice an ethics of care within the lab include:

- encouraging people to prioritize their health and well-being over their work in the lab, which is the TML's only rule (Rule 3.1).
- allowing RAs to set the number of hours they work per semester and create their own work schedules based on their personal needs and life circumstances.
- paying researchers, including student researchers, and therefore never asking someone to volunteer with us (Protocol 4.7).
- paying good wages that are in line with union standards (Protocol 4.1).
- distributing an annual Team Member Survey to determine people's accessibility needs and, if necessary, further develop a formal plan to accommodate our team members' needs (Protocol 4.2).
- calling one another in rather than calling one another out (Protocol 4.10.1)
- meaningfully apologizing when you've been called in and developing strategies to change the behaviour (Protocol 4.10.3)
- developing a digital security protocol to help protect team members from online harassment (in progress).
- mentoring new members and offering support.
- holding two-way reviews between RAs and their primary supervisor to learn more about RAs' professional goals and help them achieve their goals.
- recognizing people's accomplishments and sharing kudos in the kudos slack channel.

Other ways we practice an ethics of care in our relations with communities outside the lab include:

- internally and publicly recognizing and effectively compensating the labour of BIPOC who we may consult and engage with.[15]
- engaging in slow and careful processes to ensure we are not compounding the harm BIPOC disabled trans+ people face in the data gathering process and creation of the TMP.
- ensuring that our public events are accessible and that accessible, gender-inclusive washrooms are available (Protocol 4.2).
- ensuring that our events are free to attend or by donation (Protocol 4.2).
- reading our anti-harassment statement aloud at the beginning of public events (Protocol 4.2).
- minimizing academic jargon and striving to use language that is accessible to everyday community members (Protocol 4.2).

---

[15]Gannon-Day, "BIPOC Community Relations Policy, V.1.0."

- paying screening fees and advocating for festivals to pay filmmakers screening fees at or above CARFAC rates (Protocol 4.8).

3. Rules & Guidelines

3.1. TML Rules

To date, the TML has only one rule, which is the same as CLEAR Lab's number 1 rule:

> **If you are sick, heartbroken, or exhausted, go home [or log off]. This job is not more important than your well being.**[16]

3.2. TML Guidelines

3.2.1. Attend all TML meetings

Our team meetings are how we build community in the lab. At TML meetings, we check in with one another and make important decisions about the lab's work. These decisions, and the processes that we undertake at meetings, are informed by the values that we collectively establish. At our team meetings, we put our values into practice as we discuss the day-to-day operations of the lab, potential collaborations and partnerships, suggested revisions to our protocols and guidelines, and various lab-related projects.

Although lab members are expected to attend all TML meetings, we understand that sometimes you may need to miss a meeting. In these instances, we ask that you send an email to Laura and the person running that week's meeting to let them know in advance that you can't make it.

3.2.2. Remain in good standing

As a Lab Research Assistant (RA), you are expected to remain "in good standing" in order for your contract to be renewed. To remain in good standing, you must:

- Pass your courses
- Make progress toward your degree (as defined by your home department)
- Complete assigned lab tasks in a timely manner
- Log your hours regularly and accurately (see Guideline 3)
- Maintain regular communication with your supervisor
- Abide by the protocols outlined in this handbook

---

[16] CLEAR, "CLEAR Lab Book, V.03", 15.

In order to support RAs to remain in good standing, and for RAs to provide Laura and Connie with feedback, two-way reviews with the RA's primary supervisor (Laura or Connie Crompton) will be scheduled one month after the RA position begins (typically at the end of September/early October). Continuing RAs will meet once per year with their supervisor between November and January. The purpose of these reviews is to find out how the RAship is going, discuss any issues that need to be addressed, evaluate how the tasks are fitting with the RA's professional goals, and for the RAs to provide feedback to their supervisor, etc.

Yearly RA contracts that begin in the fall semester are typically up for renewal in April. RAs will be notified about their standing and whether or not their contract will be renewed by March 1. If an RA fails to remain in good standing, their contract can be ended with 2 week's notice.

3.2.3. Log your hours

Once you join the team as an RA, we will create a Planio account for you to keep track of your assigned tasks and log your hours. Keep your Planio task tickets up to date with the amount of time you have worked on each task (rounded to the nearest quarter hour).

During the period of your contract with the TML, you will be paid every two weeks on the Carleton pay dates, with the exception of your first payment, which is typically issued approximately one month after your start date. There is no need to submit your hours for approval. Project manager Kate Higginson will have access to your logged hours on Planio and will regularly review them to make sure that your hours are being recorded. Please ensure that your Planio tickets are always up to date.

3.2.4. Practice an ethics of care: care for yourself and others in the lab

Martina Angela Caretta of the Hydro-Feminist lab at West Virginia University and Caroline V. Faria of the Feminist Geography Collective at University of Texas at Austin advocate for slow scholarship and an ethics of care within an increasingly neoliberal academy.[17] For Caretta and Faria, taking time and care in the lab and in their fieldwork involves: engaging in slow, transformative mentorship within an anti-racist, social justice, feminist framework; challenging institutional hierarchies by fostering space for peers to support one another and build meaningful friendships; engaging in regular check-ins on everyday ups and downs; creating space that prioritizes openness, informality, and shared responsibility; and cultivating a collaborative environment as opposed to one that fosters competition.

---

[17] Martina Angela Caretta and Caroline V. Faria, "Time and Care in the 'Lab' and the 'Field': Slow Mentoring and Feminist Research in Geography," Geographical Review 110, no. 1–2 (2020): 172–82. https://doi.org/10.1111/gere.12369.

We strive to create a similar environment. When new members join the lab, we welcome, support, and mentor them. If you notice a lab member is struggling, please check in with them and offer support if you're able to. We collaborate, help each other out, provide feedback on one another's work, make space for lab members to express their ideas, establish shared values, recognize one another's accomplishments, and carve out time for social activities.

It is also important to care for yourself: communicate your needs, set boundaries, take breaks when needed, and have fun. CLEAR reminds us that part of "supportive openness" is "keeping humour, fun, and personality alive and part of the lab work."[18]

3.2.5. Resolve small conflicts before they become big

As CLEAR suggests, one of the ways in which we care for ourselves and one another is through conflict resolution.[19] It is important that if you have an issue with a lab rule, protocol, guideline, process, lab member, or something someone said that you communicate the issue so that it can be addressed early on. CLEAR suggests that members voice their concerns as such: "I notice that X. Its effect on me is Y. How can we work on that?"[20]

The goal is to deal with the conflict head on while striving "to move forward together."[21] For more detailed guidelines on how to resolve conflict, see the protocol for "conflict resolution" below.

3.2.6. Acknowledge the land you are on

When you give presentations on behalf of the TML or write TML- or TMP-related papers, please always include a territory acknowledgement. The TML uses the following land acknowledgements, which were collaboratively written by the TMP Indigenous Community Relations Working Group.

Long Version

Carleton University and the Transgender Media Lab offices are located on the unceded and unsurrendered territory of the Algonquin nation. Members of our lab also live on many different territories across Turtle Island (North America).

---

[18] CLEAR, "CLEAR Lab Book: A Living Manual of Our Values, Guidelines, and Protocols" (St. John's, NL: Civic Laboratory for Environmental Action Research, Memorial University, 2017), 11, https://civiclaboratory.files.wordpress.com/2017/12/clear-lab-book.pdf.
[19] CLEAR, "CLEAR Lab Book", 20.
[20] CLEAR, "CLEAR Lab Book, V.03", 26.
[21] CLEAR, "CLEAR Lab Book", 21.

Settler colonialism is a structure that builds a nation over existing Indigenous societies, through the elimination of Indigenous peoples and social structures. In the Canadian context, this has expressed itself in the form of cultural genocide, including the forcible removal of Indigenous peoples from their lands and exploitation of the land as a resource.

Universities have long contributed to colonial harms, including:
- stealing Indigenous lands and resources
- treating colonized and enslaved people as things
- pathologizing trans+ and Two Spirit lives and bodies
- maintaining Western colonial and sexist concepts of gender and sexuality

Colonialist research has often denied Indigenous peoples sovereignty and the right to make their own decisions. We strive to break this pattern. We aim to uphold the ways Indigenous artists, communities, and nations continue to define themselves and their rights.

Being on Anishinaabe Aki or Algonquin territory comes with responsibilities. Throughout our work, we strive to understand the obligations this creates for us here and now. We must take individual and collective action to honour our obligations and move forward in a good way.

We want to uplift Indigenous-led initiatives on unceded Algonquin territory. The Assembly of Seven Generations (A7G) is an amazing organization. They are an Indigenous-owned and youth-led non-profit focused on cultural support. They run empowerment programs for Indigenous youth. Their programs center traditional knowledge and Elder guidance. Visit their social enterprise shop, Adaawewigamig (pronunciation), in the Byward Market in downtown Ottawa, or check out their current initiatives, and donate here.

Chi miigwech.

[When using this acknowledgement at events, consider adding other action items tailored to that time and place…]

Short Version

Carleton University and the Transgender Media Lab offices are located on the unceded and unsurrendered territory of the Algonquin nation. Members of our lab also live on many different territories across Turtle Island (North America).

Settler colonialism is a structure based on the forceful elimination of Indigenous peoples. In the Canadian context, this has expressed itself in the form of cultural genocide and land theft.

Universities have long contributed to colonial harms, including:
- stealing Indigenous lands and resources
- treating colonized and enslaved people as things
- pathologizing trans+ and Two Spirit lives and bodies
- maintaining Western colonial and sexist concepts of gender and sexuality

Colonialist research has often denied Indigenous peoples the right to make their own decisions. We strive to break this pattern. We aim to uphold the ways Indigenous artists, communities, and nations continue to define themselves and their rights.

Being on Anishinaabe Aki or Algonquin territory comes with responsibilities. Throughout our work, we strive to understand the obligations this creates for us here and now.

We want to uplift Indigenous-led initiatives on unceded Algonquin territory. One example is the amazing Assembly of Seven Generations (A7G), an Indigenous-owned and youth-led non-profit focused on cultural support. You can check out their current initiatives and donate online.

Chi miigwech.

We encourage you to personalize the TML land acknowledgement and tailor it to the circumstances in which you are presenting.

3.2.7. Acknowledge the TML and your colleagues

When you give presentations on behalf of the TML or write TML- or TMP-related papers, please always include a slide or section acknowledging the TML, project funders, and people who contributed to the project.

3.2.8. Let us know if you're going to leave the TML

We understand that sometimes life can become overwhelming and you may need to leave the lab unexpectedly, either for a short time or permanently. That's okay. We will respect your decision and support you. Please be sure to let Laura know that you will be leaving so that we can assign your work to other lab members and follow the protocols for when a member exits the lab (e.g. scheduling an exit interview, returning keys, etc.)

4. Protocols

4.1. Hiring Equity

We acknowledge the ways that colonialism, anti-Blackness, ableism, cis-centrism, transmisogyny, and homophobia structure the distribution of power, capital, and opportunities in so-called Canada and at Carleton University. We are committed to hiring QTBIPOC (queer, trans+, Black, Indigenous, people of colour) disabled, Deaf, and neurodivergent students and staff to work at the Transgender Media Lab.

We also commit to paying good wages that are in line with union standards. Because Carleton University does not have a union-negotiated RA wage for students and staff hired through research grants, we generally set our wage scale based on the TA wages of Carleton's CUPE 4600 Unit 1 and the University of Ottawa's CUPE 2626 Unit.

To enact this commitment, we have drafted the following TML Hiring Protocol.

4.1.1. TML Hiring Protocol

In February 2020, the Transgender Media Portal team held a series of usability tests and consultations. One of the recommendations that came out of these consultations was to "incorporate more BIPOC leadership at all levels of the project." The TMP team then came up with 13 specific steps to implement this goal, including posting a yearly report assessing our progress toward these goals. In our 2021 Accountability Report, we committed to developing a more clearly defined protocol for how the TML prioritizes candidates in hiring. This is that protocol. Like our other protocols, it is intended to be a living document that evolves over time in order to put our lab's values into action. While the original recommendation focused on BIPOC leadership, we have expanded that to include disabled, Deaf, and neurodivergent candidates as part of our commitment to disability justice. We first put this protocol into action in April 2022.

How we prioritize trans+, Black, Indigenous, racialized, POC (people of colour), disabled, Deaf, neurodivergent, and queer candidates:

1. Advertising

- We include a statement in the job ad explaining that we particularly encourage trans+, Black, Indigenous, racialized, POC (people of color), disabled, Deaf, neurodivergent, and queer candidates candidates to apply. We ask candidates to self-identify in their cover letter so we can identify candidates who belong to priority groups.
- We include the following statement in the job ad: "The Transgender Media Lab provides accommodation during all parts of the hiring process to applicants with disabilities. If contacted to proceed to the selection process, please advise us if you require any accommodation. Accessible formats and communication supports are available upon request."
- We send the job ad to trans+, Black, Indigenous, racialized, POC (people of color), disabled, Deaf, neurodivergent, and queer organizations and student groups.

2. Creating the short list

- In the spreadsheet where we list all the applications received, we note any candidates that have self-identified as trans+, Black, Indigenous, racialized, POC (people of color), disabled, Deaf, neurodivergent, and queer.
- BIPOC trans+ candidates have first priority. If they have the skills and experience required for the job, they automatically get an interview. (If they are BIPOC and trans+ but do not have the correct skillset, they will not be interviewed.)
- For the other candidates, we take into account the following:
  - If they have strong skills and experience that are listed in the job ad
  - If they belong to priority groups: BIPOC, trans+, queer, disabled, Deaf, or neurodivergent candidates. Overall, the project is a transgender portal, so trans identity and experience working with trans arts communities is the second highest priority after BIPOC trans+ candidates. We particularly prioritize people affected by transmisogyny.
- Foreign qualifications outside of Western Europe, the US, and Canada are often undervalued and unrecognized in the Euro-Western world. We will take the time to research and interact with these qualifications, rather than building a standard around Euro-Western qualifications alone.
- We recognize community work, non-traditional or casual employment, relevant hobbies, self-taught, and unwaged work as legitimate qualifications, particularly

as we work with marginalized populations often excluded from traditional academia and employment.

3. Interviewing

- Before the interview, we email the selected candidates with the interview agenda and the bios of the interviewers (the ones on our website with the self-location information). We also reaffirm our commitment to address equity barriers during the interview process and that we're keen to work with them to set up accommodations so they can best showcase what they'd bring to the TML. We will also ask candidates what name and pronouns we should use for them.
- One of the interview questions will always be about working with trans arts communities and with Black, Indigenous, racialized, POC (people of color), disabled, Deaf, neurodivergent, and/or queer communities.
- We use standard questions for all the candidates that are set in advance. However, if the candidate gives a short answer, we may ask follow up questions. (For example: "In your answer you talked about your volunteer work with TransJustice. Can you tell us a little more about the kinds of tasks you were doing with them?")
- We are conscious that some neurodivergent people may interpret questions in a way that is very direct and literal. In our questions, we avoid complex metaphors and symbols without clear meaning.
- We consider how the structure of questions may covertly centre whiteness or put BIPOC into uncomfortable positions and strive to avoid this.
- The same person from the interview panel asks the same questions in each interview for consistency.
- If held over Zoom, we copy/paste each question into the chat.
- We make it clear that candidates can clarify questions and that the candidate does not need to rush through questions.
- People often overlook the cultural significance of specific activities or terms when we don't immediately understand them. We make the time to clarify things we don't understand, take note of them and ask colleagues or consultants from that cultural background.
- We make space for participants to discuss their lived experience without expecting it or reducing their existence to their oppression. We allow BIPOC trans+ candidates to talk about their qualifications and work beyond their experience of oppression.

4. Deciding on finalist & calling references

- When deciding on the finalist, we take the following factors into account:
  - Strength of skills and experience, as requested in the job ad
  - Ability to communicate clearly
  - Understanding of working well with a team and resolving conflicts
  - Experience working with marginalized communities
  - Bringing skills, experience, and/or perspectives that are not already represented within the team (or are underrepresented)
  - Marginalized social location(s)
    - First priority to BIPOC trans+ candidates
    - Second priority to non-BIPOC trans+ candidates (especially people with experience of transmisogyny) and experience working with trans arts communities
    - Next priority to all other marginalized identities
- If the hiring committee members disagree on the finalist:
  - Each member should do their best to explain their reasoning and listen openly to all members.
  - Allow ample time for a full discussion.
  - If there is an odd number of members and they can't all agree, then the majority rules.
  - If there is an even number of members and they can't agree, ask a third party to review the application material and interview notes and weigh in. This could be the TMP project director or other member of the TMP Operations team, determined in advance of the interviews.
- When contacting references
  - Ask the candidate what name and pronoun to use when calling references.
  - Try to talk to or email at least one reference (ideally two or three) before hiring.
  - Ask open-ended questions.

5. Hiring

- Let the candidate know as soon as possible that they've gotten the job.
- Once the shortlist is made, email everyone not on the shortlist to let them know they have not gotten the job.
- As soon as the successful candidate has said yes, let all the shortlisted candidates know that they have not gotten the job. For candidates that completed an interview, offer to give feedback on their application if desired.

4.2. Accessibility

Our team is committed to making the lab and the work of the TML accessible to artists, activists, festival programmers, researchers, instructors, community members, and the general public. We are also committed to disability justice. In spring 2022, we formed a working group on disability justice and have begun working through "Disability Justice: An Audit Tool" written by Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha. The following protocols will be amended as we continue to do an internal audit of the TML.

In the lab, we will:

- Ensure that TML meeting spaces are accessible to people with mobility impairments and that accessible, gender-inclusive washrooms are available.
- Include within our TML Team Member Survey questions to determine people's accessibility needs and, if necessary, further develop a formal plan to accommodate our team members' needs.[22]
- Follow CLEAR's lead in applying a team member's accessibility needs to every lab member, and embedding them into lab protocols.[23] For example, all team members participate in pronoun circles regardless of gender, or if one person needs a scent-free meeting space, we create a scent-free protocol for all TML meeting spaces, and so on.

For TML events, we will:

- Offer American Sign Language interpretation of public in-person events. Include the following statement in our event promotions:
  - ASL interpretation will be provided.
- Offer both ASL interpretation and CART transcription for online and hybrid events.
- Do our best to hire QTBIPOC ASL interpreters and interpreters familiar with trans+ and queer communities.
- Provide live transcripts at public online events and captions for tutorial and promotional videos.
- Ensure public events are wheelchair accessible and that accessible, gender-inclusive washrooms are available. We will include this information in our promotional materials for the event.

---

[22] Trans Pulse Canada, "Research Team Memorandum of Understanding: Accessibility and Equity," Dec. 8, 2020, https://transpulsecanada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/MOU-Accessibility-Equity-2020-12-08_FINAL_FINAL-ua-4.pdf
[23] CLEAR, "CLEAR Lab Book", 10.

- Check the poster design using a colour contrast accessibility check such as WebAIM's Color Contrast Checker or WCAG Contrast Checker and a colourblindness accessibility check such as the Coblis Color Blindness Simulator or the Colorblindness Palette Creator
- Read our anti-harassment statement aloud at the beginning of all public events with an interactive component and include it in the chat for our online events
- Ensure that events we organize are free to attend or by donation
- As is appropriate to the event, begin TML events with a land acknowledgement

For public presentations, we will not assume that everyone in the audience can see us or what's on our slides. Therefore, we will:

- Provide a short (less than 30-second) visual description of our appearance when we introduce ourselves. Here are some examples of visual descriptions as well as some guidelines for what to include and what not to include in a visual description: https://veroniiiica.com/how-to-create-visual-descriptions/
- Speak in a way that describes the visuals we refer to on our slides. For example, "On this slide is a chart that shows…"
- Ensure that our slides meet accessibility standards by checking that they adhere to these guidelines from the W3C Web Accessibility Initiative.
- Provide the audience with a link and/or QR code to our slides

For lab outputs, we will:

- Ensure they meet accessibility standards. For example, presentations should adhere to these guidelines from the W3C Web Accessibility Initiative and our websites should adhere to W3C standards.
- Minimize academic jargon when communicating with the public (e.g., on the TMP website, in surveys, when interviewing research participants, etc.). Although the TML is located within an academic institution, we strive to use language that is accessible to everyday community members.
- Test all tools created by the TML, including the TMP database, for accessibility for people with disabilities.
- Continually ask ourselves questions about the accessibility of the lab, as Maya Livio and Lori Emerson suggest, to ensure that the lab space and our outputs are accessible.[24]

---

[24] Livio and Emerson, "Towards Feminist Labs."

4.3. Onboarding Research Assistants (RAs)

Existing team members will explain and help new TML Research Assistants with the following onboarding steps:

- Send us a short bio (Protocol 4.3.1.) and headshot for the TML and TMP websites (optional)
- Send us your email address(es) for email correspondence, Google Tools, Planio and/or other project management tools
- Sign the RA contract
- Fill out Human Resources paperwork (via Kate for Carleton students and Connie for University of Ottawa students)
- Fill out annual team member survey
- Subscribe to shared Google folder, Planio and/or other project management tools
- Sign up for the TMP email list and follow our social media accounts: @TransMediaPortl (Facebook, Twitter & Instagram)
- Learn how to log hours
- For students on-site at Carleton: get a key to the project office
- Read Lab Handbook (this document) and Project Charter (write down any questions)
- Sign the TMP Project Charter
- Read the TML and TMP websites
- Read the items in the introductory reading package:
  - Excerpts from the SSHRC Insight grant proposal "Trans Mediascapes" (2020–2025)
  - Chokly, Kit, Jay Cooper, Oliver Debney, and Laura Horak. "Usability Test Report 2020." Ottawa: Transgender Media Portal, Carleton University, June 22, 2020. https://hcommons.org/deposits/item/hc:30641/
  - Horak, Laura. "Tracing the History of Trans and Gender Variant Filmmakers." Spectator: The University of Southern California Journal of Film & Television 37, no. 2 (2017): 9–20. https://cinema.usc.edu/spectator/37.2/2_Horak.pdf
  - Ruddy, Evie, and Laura Horak. "Orienting Toward Social Justice: Trans, Anti-Racist, Anti-Colonial, Feminist, Queer, and Crip Approaches to Ethical Practices in the Digital Humanities." Paper presented at the Canadian Society for Digital Humanities Conference, online, June 2, 2021.
- Start a schedule of tasks and establish set hours for the semester—what will you work on, and when?

4.3.1. Writing a Bio for the TMP and TML Websites

In their book, *Pollution is Colonialism,* CLEAR Lab Director Max Liboiron writes,

> It is common to introduce Indigenous authors with their nation/affiliation, while settler and white scholars almost always remain unmarked… This unmarking is one act among many that re-centres settlers and whiteness as an unexceptional norm, while deviations have to be marked and named.[25]

We, at the TML, have also noticed that when researching filmmakers, cisgender artists rarely mark themselves as cis in their bios. Given this, we encourage lab members to mark in their lab bios various aspects of their identities that are important to declare in a feminist, trans+ lab that is committed to antiracist and anti-colonial values. We encourage you to include, in a 150-word bio for the TML and TMP website, your pronouns, relationship to gender, and relation to the land you live on. In CLEAR's words,

> This is not an imperative to sort out exactly who is a settler and who is not, a militant categorization with roots in Western science's eugenic movement that theorized that there was an essential characteristic for different types of people. This is a call to name our land relations, which are always shifting, complicated, intersectional and in relation to others… This is why we introduce ourselves as settlers, refugees, immigrants, settlers of colour, diaspora settlers of colour, displaced peoples, locals, come-from-aways, settlers displaced by colonialism, by our family names, by naming our Indigenous nations/groups, and/or by naming whose home territories we are on and are from.[26]

We recognize that many BIPOC team members have complex relationships with the land and colonialism at large. Displacement, assimilation, and coerced relocation continue to shape racialized people's relationships to the land on which they reside and access to a homeland. By positioning settler status in bios, we aim not to flatten racialized people's identities nor do we aim to reproduce the imperialist dichotomy between West and East. We do not expect team members to share personal details about their family histories and oppressed statuses but this space is available for BIPOC to identify with global Indigenous and diasporic communities, as desired.

---

[25] Max Liboiron, *Pollution is Colonialism*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2021), 3–4, footnote 10.
[26] CLEAR, "CLEAR Lab Book, V.03", 48.

Lastly, describe your research interests and your role within the TML. For sample bios of current TML team members, visit the [Team page on the Transgender Media Portal website](#).

Please note that TML team members are not obligated to have a public presence; you may choose to opt out of having your name, photo, and/or bio published on the TMP and TML websites.

4.4. Exiting the Lab

- Participate in a round robin at a TML meeting where everyone shares what we valued about your work with us[27]
- Make sure you transfer your knowledge of the project and your work to the team in some form
- Exit interview
    - You will be offered one of three options for your exit interview:
        i. provide us with written feedback
        ii. have an in-person meeting with one or more members of the TML, or
        iii. have an in-person meeting with an external party
    - How was your overall experience working in the lab?
    - How did your fellow lab members make you feel / how did you feel in the lab environment?
    - What is the most valuable thing you learned? What else did you learn?
    - How do you think your work/experience in the lab could have been different?
        i. What would you like to learn that you didn't get to?
    - Would you like to come back to work in the lab?
        i. If so, what would you choose to work on?
    - Is there anything else about your experiences that you would like to share?[28]
- Return your office key
- We will remove your electronic access to shared Google folder, TMP, Planio, and other project tools

---

[27] CLEAR, "CLEAR Lab Book", 24.
[28] These questions are directly from CLEAR, "CLEAR Lab Book", 24-25.

4.5. Annual Team Member Survey

Our annual team member survey will be distributed to every team member each August/September.

4.6. Affiliated Lab Members

Affiliated lab members help create a community of thinkers at the intersections of cinema and media studies and trans studies. They agree to participate in lab events (e.g. incubators, screenings, trans reading group, etc.) and provide informal mentorship to other members of the lab. Many events are online so affiliated members don't need to be in Ottawa.

We are interested in affiliates who are doing work centered in transgender studies, that is, work that centers the expertise and expressed needs of trans+ people, with trans+ people in leadership positions. We are most interested in affiliates whose research overlaps with the current research interests of core lab members. We will prioritize QTBIPOC and disabled scholars who apply for affiliation.

To become an affiliated lab member:

- Email Laura and explain your research interests and why you would like to be a member: LauraHorak@cunet.carleton.ca
- Read the TML Handbook (this document) and agree to abide by the rules, guidelines, and protocols
- Agree to attend TML events and, if you're a faculty member, be available for one-on-one consultations.

Once you've been accepted:

- Send us a bio and headshot for the TML website

4.7. Volunteers

The TML commits to paying researchers, including student researchers. Therefore, we do not want to rely too heavily on volunteer labour and will never ask someone to volunteer with us. However, we want to be open to people who approach us and enthusiastically volunteer to contribute to the TMP. We will repeatedly evaluate our reliance on volunteer labour to ensure that we are not contributing to exploitation.

To become a volunteer:

- Email the lab director and explain why you want to volunteer with the TMP: LauraHorak@cunet.carleton.ca
- Read the TML Handbook (this document) and agree to abide by the rules, guidelines, and protocols

4.8. Partnerships/Collaborations

The TMP partners with film festivals, community organizations, researchers, instructors, and schools. These partnerships typically involve the following:

- An invitation from a festival or community organization to curate a program of trans-made films for their event
- An invitation from a festival to co-sponsor a trans program that they have already put together; usually this involves putting our name and logo in their program, making a short video intro or logo slide, and promoting the event to our network. In return we get publicity for our project and free tickets to the program.
- Partnering with a high school GSA on an event (e.g. screening, interviews, presentation, etc.)
- Partnering with a festival to facilitate a workshop on the TMP
- Partnering with researchers who want to use TMP data and/or tools
- An invitation from a professor, high school teacher, or community organization to give presentations about the TMP

Protocols for partnerships/collaborations:

- When we are organizing a screening, we will strive to pay screening fees to filmmakers above CARFAC rates, which are suggested minimum pay rates for artists (see section A.1.9 "Media Arts Screenings and Presentations")
- When we are invited to co-sponsor a pre-existing program, we won't require screening fees
- When we are invited to co-sponsor a pre-existing program, we will let them know that our policy is to only sponsor programs where the majority (60%+) of the films are written and/or directed by trans people
- When we are asked to curate a program, we will advocate for filmmakers to be paid screening fees at or above CARFAC rates

4.9. Paying Research Participants/Collaborators

We recognize that university funding structures present barriers for scholars collaborating with marginalized communities and often harm collaborators who rely on

timely payments to cover basic living expenses.[29] We are committed to paying TMP research participants and collaborators in a timely manner, and in cash when possible. For our usability tests and screenings, our project manager has worked with Carleton's Research Accounting department to pay testers and guest speakers in cash on the day of the events. This involves getting Research Accounting to advance the funds to Laura and accept signed statements of receipt from the payees as sufficient proof of fund use.

4.10. Conflict Resolution

When people work together, conflict and tension are bound to happen. As Maya Livio and Lori Emerson note, conflict within feminist labs is welcomed and necessary.[30] Livio and Emerson suggest that the way in which disagreements are dealt with "is significant for establishing affirming feminist spaces."[31] As such, we encourage you to hold space for respectful disagreement and to communicate any concerns you may have so they can be dealt with as soon as possible.

4.10.1. How to call someone in

We follow CLEAR's protocol for calling one another in, rather than out. As CLEAR notes, calling in allows us "to address relationships with accountability, respect, and love."[32]

Protocol for calling someone in:

- Call the person in privately, not during a meeting or in front of others.
- If harm is being caused during the meeting, and you need to address it in the moment, here are some [guidelines](#) from [Seed the Way](#) for how to do that.
- As CLEAR suggests, "This is about behaviour, not people."[33] Rather than accuse someone of being a bad person, focus on the behaviour. CLEAR suggests using the phrase, "When you _____, I feel _____."[34]
- If, after you have called someone in, they have not changed their behaviour, remind them. If the person still doesn't change their behaviour, let your supervisor (Laura or Connie) know. If the person causing the ongoing issue is your supervisor, see the section below titled "If an RA has an issue with a supervisor."

---

[29] Danielle Cole et al., "Accounting and Accountability: Feminist Grant Administration and Coalitional Fair Finance," in *Bodies of Information: Intersectional Feminism and Digital Humanities,* ed. Jacqueline Wernimont and Elizabeth Losh, Debates in the Digital Humanities (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2018), https://dhdebates.gc.cuny.edu/projects/bodies-of-information.
[30] Livio and Emerson, "Towards Feminist Labs."
[31] Livio and Emerson, "Towards Feminist Labs," 293.
[32] CLEAR, "CLEAR Lab Book, V.03", 54..
[33] CLEAR, "CLEAR Lab Book, V.03", 55.
[34] CLEAR, "CLEAR Lab Book, V.03", 55.

4.10.2. How to apologize

We follow CLEAR's protocols for how to apologize "in ways that are feminist and anticolonial, rather than the ways many of us have learned that tend to foreground logic, self-preservation, judgment, or demands for other people's apologies rather than focusing on our own accountability."[35]

CLEAR's protocol for apologizing entails two steps:

1. Articulate the wrong done and take ownership of it
2. Make reparations[36]

CLEAR draws on the work of disability justice organizer Mia Mingus, who suggests there are five components of an apology:

1. Say "I'm sorry."
2. Name the harm/hurt
3. Name the impact (not the intention)
4. Name the actions
5. Commit to not doing the harm again[37]

4.10.3. What to do if you've been called in

If you've been called in, CLEAR suggests that you "take a moment to centre yourself. You are not being attacked. This is not about who you are, but something you're doing that is impacting others."[38]

Protocol for if you've been called in:

- Don't interrupt the person calling you in
- Don't try to defend yourself
- Unless the person asks what your intention was, do not steer the conversation toward your good intentions, which are less relevant than the negative impact your behaviour has caused
- Apologize (see above for how to apologize)
- After you've acknowledged the impact of your behaviour and committed to not doing it again (as part of your apology), it is up to you to develop strategies for

---

[35] CLEAR, "CLEAR Lab Book, V.03", 57.
[36] CLEAR, "CLEAR Lab Book, V.03", 57.
[37] CLEAR, "CLEAR Lab Book, V.03", 57; Mia Mingus, "How to Give a Genuine Apology, Part 2: The Apology – the What and the How," Dec 18, 2009, https://leavingevidence.wordpress.com/2019/12/18/how-to-give-a-good-apology-part-2-the-apology-the-what-and-the-how
[38] CLEAR, "CLEAR Lab Book, V.03", 55.

changing your behaviour. On your own time, establish specific steps or actions that you will take in order to change.

4.10.4. If an RA has an issue with a supervisor

- If possible, the RA should communicate the problem to the supervisor
- If that's not appropriate/sufficient, the RA could go to the other TMP supervisor (Connie or Laura)
- If that's not appropriate/sufficient, the RA could go to the TML ombudsperson (TBD from the advisory board), or to the departmental chair of the relevant supervisor/lab director.
- If that's not appropriate/sufficient, the RA could follow their institution's Human Rights Policy and Procedures.
  - Carleton's Human Rights Policy and Procedures can be found here:
    - [Human Rights Policies and Procedures](#)
    - [Sexual Violence Policy](#)
    - [Workplace Harassment Prevention Policy](#)
    - [Workplace Violence Prevention Policy](#)
  - UOttawa's Human Rights Policy and Procedures can be found here:
    - [Complaints of Harassment/Discrimination Initiated by Employees](#)
    - [Complaints of Harassment/Discrimination Intitiated by Students](#)
    - [Prevention of Harassment and Discrimination Policy](#)
    - [Prevention of Sexual Violence Policy](#)
    - [Sexual Harassment Policy](#)
    - [Violence Prevention Policy](#)

4.10.5. If a supervisor has an issue with an RA

- The supervisor should communicate the problem to the RA, and the supervisor and RA should make a plan together to rectify the problem
- If the plan is not followed and the problem is not resolved, the supervisor may end the RA's contract

4.10.6. If an RA has an issue with another RA

- If possible, the RA should communicate the problem to the other RA
- If this is not sufficient to resolve the problem, the RA should let their supervisor (Laura or Connie) know

4.11. Being in Good Relations with the Territory the Lab is on

The TML operates within Carleton University, a colonial cisheteropatriarchal institution located on the unceded and unsurrendered territory of the Algonquin Nation, including the [Algonquins of Pikwakanagan First Nation](#) and [Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg First Nation](#). Both Carleton University and the TML have benefitted and continue to benefit from generations of theft of land and resources. In addition to acknowledging this, we must also strive to understand our obligations, including how to meaningfully enact being in good relations with the territory the lab is on. These efforts are guided by the following questions:

- How can we, as members of the TML, be in good relations with this territory?
- What are the obligations for those of us who are non-Indigenous on this territory? And what actions would be useful for us to take as a project to address these obligations?
- What can we best do to support local contemporary Two Spirit experiences, or to benefit local Indigenous communities or Two Spirit artists and filmmakers?

In fall 2021, we created an Indigenous Community Relations Working Group to respond to the above questions. The members of this working group have been meeting with Carleton staff and faculty with expertise in Indigenous education and research, and/or Two Spirit research and initiatives. Some of our questions are about the complexities of using the umbrella term, Two Spirit: whether we should define it more broadly or narrowly in the data gathering process for the TMP, and how to create space in the data-gathering process for Indigenous trans+ people to self-identify using their own language and non-Western concepts. We have also been asking and reflecting on how to navigate global Indigenous identities without racializing Indigeneity and discussing what protocols to draw on when we're not sure about someone's Indigenous identity for inclusion in our Two Spirit or Indigenous trans+ filmmakers listings.

Some of the ways we enact our aspirations to support Indigenous justice throughout the project are:

- Through our [BIPOC Community Relations Policy](#), which describes our aims to amplify the voices and support the work of BIPOC Two Spirit and trans+ artists, and to address our institutional position and subsequent responsibility to BIPOC communities and individuals.

- Rejecting Western settler epistemology as the sole method of conceptualizing gender, sexuality, and race, and recognizing Indigenous sovereignty and Indigenous communities' ability to form and define their own identities.[39]
- Providing education and training to team members
  - Three team members participated in the Centre for Indigenous Initiatives' 4-part *Kinàmàgawin* workshop series on allyship and decolonization in 2022.
  - In fall 2022, we began reserving some of our all-team meetings for invited guest speakers to discuss their projects with us. Projects and topics have included Kin Theory, a global Indigenous media makers database, an alt-text as poetry workshop, and research on image descriptions of race, gender, and disability.
- Decentring Whiteness on the TMP website
  - In 2021–2022, the TML Community Accountability, Research, and Data Wrangling (CARD) team embarked on a process of decentering whiteness on the TMP website in an effort to improve our commitment to supporting BIPOC trans+ filmmakers. Through this process, team members identified ways to better reflect our commitment to prioritize the work of BIPOC trans+ artists and be more welcoming to BIPOC communities through our web presence. These recommendations include:

    - Adding a land acknowledgement to the website's main footer
    - Adding a welcome in Anishinabemowin (Algonquin) and English
    - When referencing indigeneity, explicitly stating that we are focused on Indigenous filmmakers on Turtle Island
    - Adding a statement about the project's limitations
    - Encouraging self-identification and information about the territories/treaties where we are from in team bios (following CLEAR Lab examples)
    - Adding more Indigenous and Two Spirit resources to the Teaching and Bibliographies page
    - Adding subheadings such as Two Spirit and Decolonization to the Teaching and Bibliographies page
    - Highlighting the work of Afro-Indigenous filmmakers on the Two Spirit and BIPOC filmmakers pages

---

[39] Gannon-Day, "BIPOC Community Relations Policy, V.1.0."

- Creating new web pages such as a list of Two Spirit Filmmakers, and a page listing Indigenous Initiatives, organizations, and resources

- Prioritizing inviting Two Spirit and Indigenous people to the TML's Community Advisory Board and paying board members an annual honorarium.
- Publishing a yearly anti-racist accountability report that audits the project's actions on incorporating more BIPOC trans+ leadership at all levels of the project.
- Ensuring that at least half (50%) of test users in the project's usability tests with trans+ filmmakers are BIPOC and that such usability tests have at least one Indigenous user and one disabled user, and that all test users be trans+ or Two Spirit.

The Indigenous Community Relations Working Group is also starting to build relationships and meet with arts administrators working with Indigenous and/or Two Spirit organizations and festivals to discuss potential collaborative initiatives with the TMP. Some of these initiatives could include using our tool to promote the work of Two Spirit filmmakers, sharing festival programs with us to increase the number of Two Spirit filmmakers in the TMP, and guest curating a program of Two Spirit films. From these meetings, we are also interested in learning how the TMP tool could best meet the needs of Indigenous and Two Spirit artists and implementing those aspects and features wherever possible.

4.12. How to Run a Meeting

We follow CLEAR's equitable meeting practices[40] in order to challenge power dynamics that are often at play in meeting spaces and to ensure that space is created for everyone who wishes to provide input into the decisions of the lab. At TML meetings:

- We will always begin with **a check in** to see how everyone is doing
- **One person speaks at a time**; to discourage people from interrupting one another, we ask that you raise your hand if you wish to speak, and the person chairing the meeting will call on you when it's your turn.
- **We rotate meeting leadership** so that this task is shared amongst team members and everyone gets an opportunity to gain experience with chairing meetings.
- **We collaboratively draft agendas,** which entails creating meeting agendas in Google docs so that everyone can add to them beforehand.

---

[40] CLEAR, "CLEAR Lab Book", 5.

- **We draw on our anti-oppression facilitation training to:**
  - remove barriers to support full participation (see below)
  - say "yes!" to principled disagreement (see below)
  - make space for everyone to contribute to discussions and be heard. Similar to CLEAR, we strive to "step up to advocate for another person's work or ideas if they are quiet, modest, or absent, and to step back if we have taken up more space than others during a conversation."[41]

4.12.1. Facilitating Meetings

As mentioned, we rotate who chairs our team meetings on a volunteer basis. PhD Fellow Cara Tierney took on this role many times and shares the following reflections and advice.

This role may sound more intimidating than it turns out to be and is great practice in learning how to gently lead and give shape and context to a group discussion.

Your role is to facilitate the conversation – help keep the meeting moving forward – and the easiest way to do this is to literally treat the agenda as a script. As a facilitator, you are not expected to produce content that isn't on the agenda/script or isn't related to your other roles within the lab.

Other than announcing/introducing the agenda items, your role is to pay attention to the conversation, call on individuals who raise their hands to speak, and keep an eye on the chat – if someone adds a comment in the chat (that isn't just a hilarious joke) you can speak it into the conversation for them, or for anyone who might not be reading the chat. This will also help the notetakers to catch any comments that appear in the chat that should make their way onto the agenda notes.

If a conversation involves a decision, once the topic has been explored and options for the decision have been put forward (usually numbered, option 1, option 2, option 3), you can call a vote and invite people to write the option they vote for in the chat.

Again, like with the agenda, the TML members are a community-minded group, and everyone likes to help each other. You will most certainly be well supported in your facilitation. In fact, many times, group members will,

---

[41] CLEAR, "CLEAR Lab Book", 5.

unbeknownst to them, do some of the facilitation themselves out of enthusiasm for moving the conversation forward (for example: they may read a chat comment out loud, or put something to a vote).

### 4.12.2. Drawing on our Anti-Oppression Facilitation Training

Each year, the TML covers the costs for a few team members to participate in AORTA's (Anti-Oppression Resource and Training Alliance) three-hour workshop, "Facilitate for Freedom Fundamentals Training." The following is from three team members' collective notes during the Fall 2021 workshop and AORTA's slide deck (shared with permission).

- **We strive to support full participation at meetings:** As AORTA points out, not everyone comes to meetings with fully developed opinions. Therefore, they suggest that when facilitating meetings, we should strive to provide lab members with the "ingredients they need to 'cook up' their opinion and create the dish together" within the meeting. Here are three strategies that AORTA suggests for supporting full participation at meetings:
    1. **Open multiple and varied channels for participation:** Open many doors into the conversation by inviting participants to type in the chat, use post-it notes, or vote on different options, etc.
    2. **Keep participation right-sized:** "What do you think?" and "how does that land with you?" are huge-sized questions. Try to meet people where they're at by:
        a. <u>Mapping a feeling:</u> e.g. How surprised are you on a scale of 1–5? Write three words in the chat to describe how you're feeling. Put three emojis in the chat that illustrate how you're feeling about this.
        b. <u>Making imperfect lists:</u> e.g. Let's take 1 min to come up with as many examples as we can
        c. <u>Limiting the length of response</u>: e.g. What are three words that describe your response to this?
        d. <u>Choosing between a few options</u> e.g. "Yes, Maybe, No"; Thumbs up, thumbs down, or to the side.
        e. <u>Limiting the type of responses</u>: e.g. describe how this makes you feel; share one question this raises for you, etc.
        f. <u>Limiting the number of responses:</u> e.g. What's one strength, and one challenge about this proposal?
    3. **Build a gentle ramp:** Starting with questions that require fully developed opinions tends to block full participation. Therefore, as AORTA suggests, we try to work backwards by identifying the big question we want the group to tackle and building a gentle ramp up to it. Here are some

examples of ramp-up questions to gently work your way up to the larger question. In this scenario below, the big question is "Should we partner with this organization?"

    a. "How familiar do you feel with the work of XYZ organization?"

    b. "When you imagine being in partnership with XYZ organization, what are 3 feelings that come up for you?" List these in the chat.

    c. "Let's take a moment to think of 1 area of alignment and 1 area of tension between our organization and XYZ."

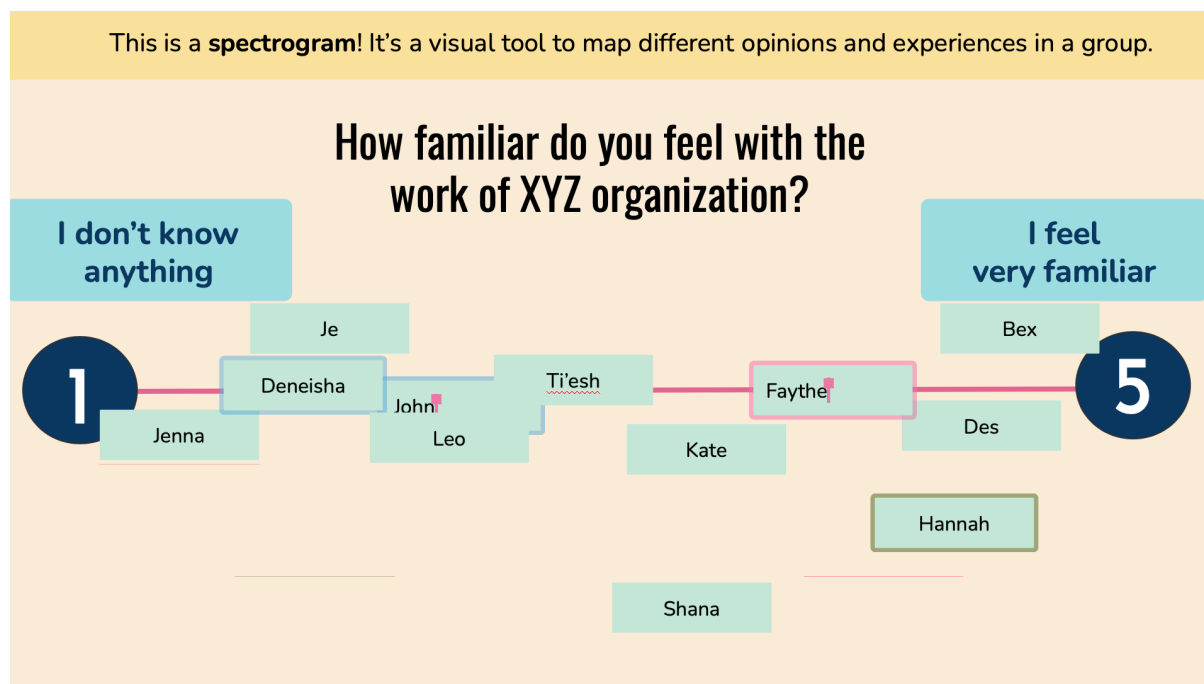   **d.** Final question: "Should we partner with this organization?"

Build a gentle ramp illustration
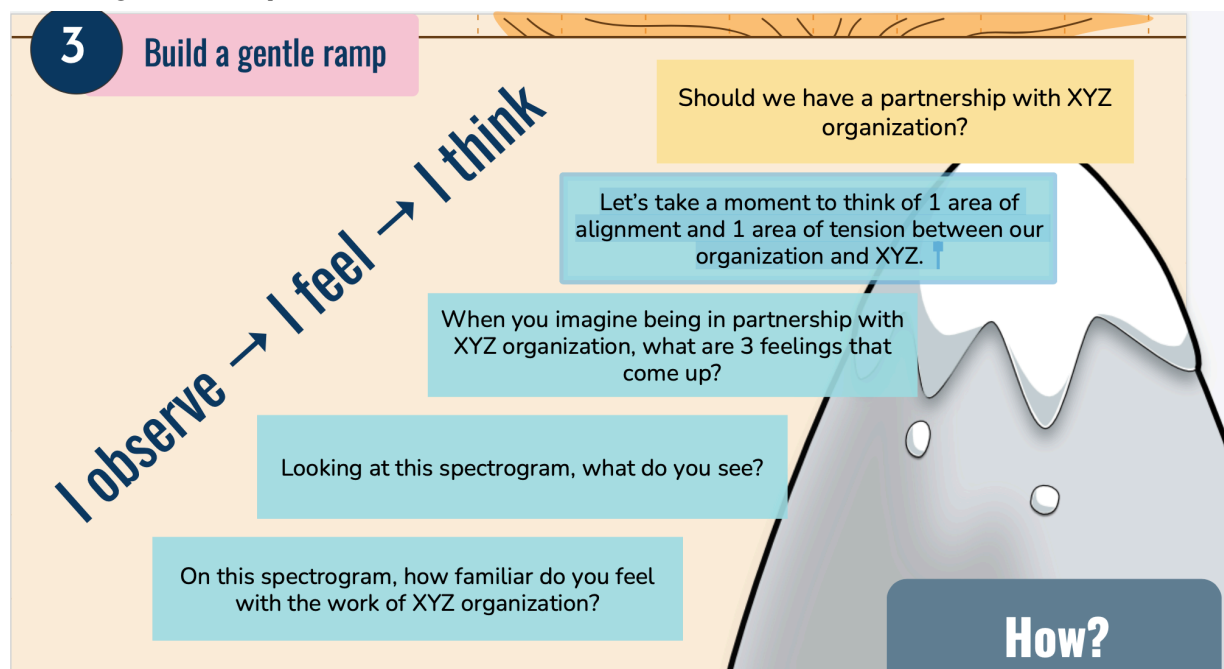
Image description: An illustration titled "Build a gentle ramp" which shows several text boxes with the example questions listed above. These questions are ascending a cartoon mountain and are labelled, from the bottom to the top, "I observe" "I feel" and "I think."

- **We strive to say, "yes!" to principled disagreement.** Here are five strategies that AORTA suggests for encouraging and welcoming principled disagreement:
 1. **Make different perspectives easily visible:** e.g. create a spectogram

Spectrogram example illustration

This is a **spectrogram**! It's a visual tool to map different opinions and experiences in a group.

How familiar do you feel with the work of XYZ organization?

I don't know anything

I feel very familiar

1

5

Je

Bex

Deneisha

Ti'esh

Faythe

Jenna

John

Leo

Kate

Des

Hannah

Shana

Image description: A spectrogram illustration which shows an example that arranges team member names on a line from "I don't know anything" to "I feel very familiar."

2. **Set the stage:** Let everyone know that we are in the realm of disagreeing time. e.g. "After break we will spend 15 minutes disagreeing about this thing."

3. **Warm up:** Don't start with the hardest topic. Start a little light.

4. **Set the tone:** As a facilitator, you can set the tone. Model enthusiasm, confidence, and familiarity.

5. **Break the monologue flow:** Zoom promotes this type of separated monologue, so here are some tips for how to get a better dialogue going.

Break the monologue flow illustration
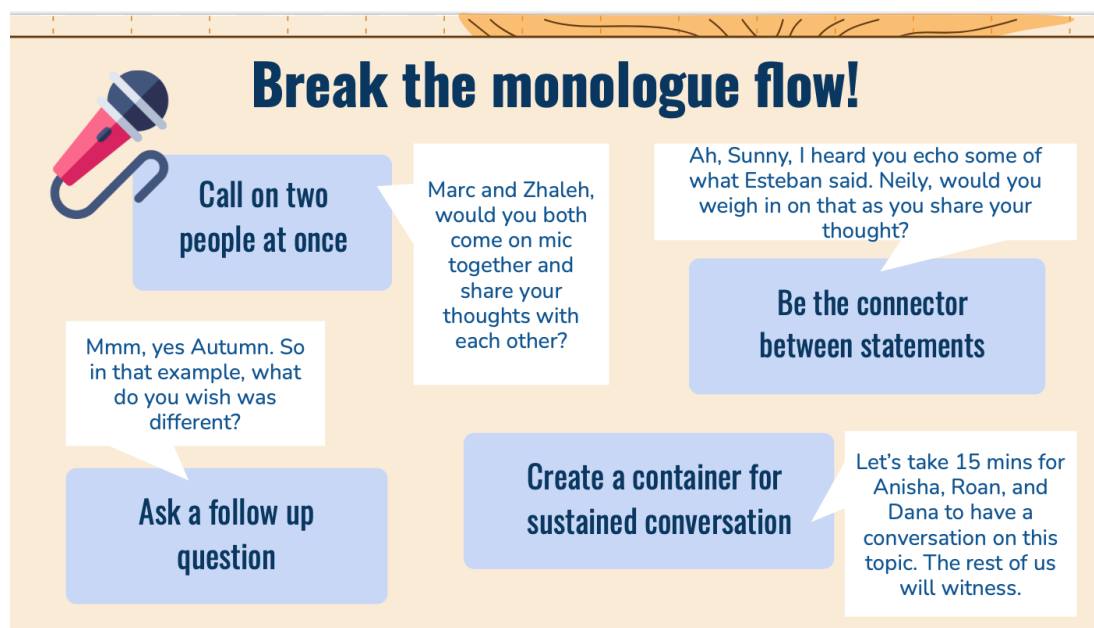
Image description: A bulletin board illustration listing examples of opportunities to break monologues. This includes examples like "Call on two people at once," "Ask a follow up question," "Be the connector between statements," and "create a container for sustainer conversation."

4.13. TML Office Space

The TML is a shared space that we want to be welcoming and accessible.

- The office is accessible via an elevator.
- The nearest gender-inclusive washroom is on the same floor as the office.
- There is a no-scent policy in the office. Please refrain from wearing perfume, cologne, and scented lotions, etc.

4.14. Shared Documents

- Store all of your work for the TMP/TML on the shared Google drive so that all team members can access it
- For details on how to name files and which folders to store them in, please refer to the project guidelines on this (view internal links document)
- Our shared Google drive will be backed up monthly by a member of the DSI team.

4.15. Collaboratively Deciding Author Order

The TML has adopted CLEAR Lab's approach for deciding author order on collaboratively written policy documents and papers. This involves having transparent conversations at lab meetings where all team members are present. We start by asking who contributed in any way to the development of the paper. Contributions can include providing feedback or support to a writer, brainstorming ideas, copy editing, etc. What's unique about this approach is that when deciding on the final author order, we strive to prioritize equity over equality and take team members' social locations and varying professional needs and situations into account.

You can learn more about CLEAR Lab's Equity in Author Order Protocol by watching the video, Laboratory Life: Author Order, and/or reading the following paper: Liboiron, Max, Justine Ammendolia, Katharine Winsor, Alex Zahara, Hillary Bradshaw, Jessica Melvin, Charles Mather et al. "Equity in author order: a feminist laboratory's approach." *Catalyst: Feminism, Theory, Technoscience* 3, no. 2 (2017).

4.16. Anti-Harassment Statement for Online TMP Events[42]

The Transgender Media Portal is committed to providing a harassment-free online experience for everyone who attends our events. We do not tolerate harassment of any form, including anti-trans, cissexist, racist, homophobic, ableist, sexist, fat-phobic, ageist or sexually inappropriate comments and will promptly remove anyone who participates in such commentary. We may further expel someone from future TMP events if they violate these rules.

Harassment can include, but is not limited to:

- Written or verbal comments that reinforce social structures of domination related to gender, sexuality, disability, race, ethnicity, physical appearance, body size, age, mental health, neuro(a)typicality, or religion
- Deliberate intimidation
- Deliberate misgendering or use of a person's deadname
- Sustained disruption of speakers
- Unwelcome sexual comments/attention
- Threats of violence or incitement of violence toward someone
- Deliberate "outing" of any aspect of a person's identity without their consent
- Comments/behaviour that makes a participant feel uncomfortable or unsafe

---

[42] Adapted from the following anti-harassment statement licensed under Creative Commons Zero License: https://geekfeminism.wikia.org/wiki/Conference_anti-harassment

The TMP prioritizes marginalized people's safety.

If you are being harassed, notice that someone else is being harassed, or have any concerns, please contact _____ in the chat immediately, and we will do our best to address the issue.

Thank you for joining us. The event will begin shortly.

4.17. Amending the Handbook

If a team member wishes to amend this handbook, they should present a written proposal at a team meeting where the proposal will be reviewed, discussed, and decided upon. Once the handbook has been amended, the date for when the document was last updated will be amended and the citation statement for how to cite this document will be revised to include the current version, e.g. V.02. The amended document will then be saved to the shared Google drive. If the document is posted to a public website, the new version will replace the outdated one. The lab will officially review and revise the handbook at least once every two years.

5. Bibliography

Caretta, Martina Angela, and Caroline V. Faria. "Time and Care in the 'Lab' and the 'Field': Slow Mentoring and Feminist Research in Geography." *Geographical Review* 110, no. 1–2 (2020): 172–182.

Chokly, Kit, Jay Cooper, Oliver Debney, and Laura Horak. "Usability Test Report 2020." Ottawa: Transgender Media Portal, Carleton University, 22 June 2020. https://hcommons.org/deposits/item/hc:30641/

CLEAR. "CLEAR Lab Book: A Living Manual of Our Values, Guidelines, and Protocols." St. John's, NL: Civic Laboratory for Environmental Action Research, Memorial University, 2017. https://civiclaboratory.nl/clear-lab-book/.

CLEAR. "CLEAR Lab Book: A Living Manual of Our Values, Guidelines, and Protocols, V.03." St. John's, NL: Civic Laboratory for Environmental Action Research, Memorial University, 2021. https://civiclaboratory.nl/clear-lab-book/.

Cole, Danielle, Izetta Autumn Mobley, Jacqueline Wernimont, Moya Bailey, T.L. Cowan, and Veronica Paredes. "Accounting and Accountability: Feminist Grant Administration and Coalitional Fair Finance." *Bodies of Information: Intersectional Feminism and Digital Humanities.* Eds. Jacqueline Wernimont and Elizabeth Losh. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2018. https://dhdebates.gc.cuny.edu/projects/bodies-of-information.

Gannon-Day, Jada. "BIPOC Community Relations Policy, V.1.0." Ottawa: Transgender Media Lab, Carleton University, 27 April 2022. https://www.transgendermediaportal.org/policies.

Gannon-Day, Jada, and Evie Johnny Ruddy. "Social Media Policy, V.1.0." Ottawa: Transgender Media Lab, Carleton University, 26 April 2022. https://www.transgendermediaportal.org/policies.

Horak, Laura. "Tracing the History of Trans and Gender Variant Filmmakers." *Spectator: The University of Southern California Journal of Film & Television* 37, no. 2 (2017): 9–20. https://cinema.usc.edu/spectator/37.2/2_Horak.pdf

Liboiron, Max. *Pollution is Colonialism.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2021.

Livio, Maya, and Lori Emerson. "Towards Feminist Labs: Provocations for Collective Knowledge-Making." *Critical Makers Reader: (Un)Learning Technology.* Eds. Loes Bogers and Letizia Chiappini, 286–97. Amsterdam: Institute of Network Cultures, 2019.

Mingus, Mia. "How to Give a Genuine Apology, Part 2: The Apology – the What and the How," 18 Dec. 2009, https://leavingevidence.wordpress.com/2019/12/18/how-to-give-a-good-apology-part-2-the-apology-the-what-and-the-how

Piepzna-Samarasinha, Leah Lakshmi. "Disability Justice: An Audit Tool," Northwest Health Foundation, 2020, https://www.northwesthealth.org/djaudittool

Ruddy Evie and the Transgender Media Lab. "Transgender Media Portal Project Charter." Ottawa: Transgender Media Lab, Carleton University, 21 September 2021.

Ruddy, Evie, and Laura Horak. "Orienting Toward Social Justice: Trans, Anti-Racist, Anti-Colonial, Feminist, Queer, and Crip Approaches to Ethical Practices in the Digital Humanities." Paper presented at the Canadian Society for Digital Humanities Conference, online, 2 June 2021.

Ruddy, Evie, Tierney Cara, and Laura Horak. "Transgender Media Lab Anti-Racist Accountability Report for June 2020-December 2021, V.1.1." Ottawa: Transgender Media Lab, Carleton University, 15 September 2022.

Seed the Way. "Interrupting Bias: Calling Out Versus Calling In." Accessed 13 May 2022. http://www.seedtheway.com/uploads/8/8/0/0/8800499/calling_in_calling_out__3_.pdf

Sins Invalid. "Access Suggestions for Public Events." Accessed 22 August 2021. https://www.sinsinvalid.org/news-1/2020/6/8/access-suggestions-for-public-events

Trans Pulse Canada. "Research Team Memorandum of Understanding: Accessibility and Equity," 8 December 2020, https://transpulsecanada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/MOU-Accessibility-Equity-2020-12-08_FINAL_FINAL-ua-4.pdf