

LGBTQ Provider Best Practices

For Yourself:

- Check your assumptions and expectations
- Beware of placing responsibility of education on LGBTQ patients
- Be patient with yourself and others – we all make mistakes
- Ask yourself: How would YOU want to be treated when at your most vulnerable?
- Be conscious of own heterosexual and/or cisgender privilege
- Read blogs/books; Watch docs/youtube; Attend LGBTQ events/conferences
- Ask yourself: Do I have LGB friends? Do I have trans friends? How does this inform my work as a provider?
- Allyship (and being a safe provider) is an ACTION; It's not enough to just be "not homophobic/transphobic"

For Others:

- Use open-ended questions about partners, sexual histories, etc.
- Use gender neutral pronouns or "client" until pronouns can be established
- Mirror the language an individual uses for self or significant others
- Trans clients: *What words do you use to describe your body parts? I'm asking so I can use the correct terms*
- If a person comes out, acknowledge it and talk about it: (1) *Thank you for telling me.* (2) *Can you tell me more about what that means to YOU?* (3) *Is there anything I can do as your provider to make your healthcare experience better?*
- Confidentiality: Explain and get consent to share sexual orientation / gender ID info when transferring care
- Use "assigned male/female at birth" (instead of "natal", "biological", "real" male/female)
- Avoid using a trans person's previous name or pronouns, even when referring to their past
- Use indirect role modeling and, if needed, direct accountability conversations when others make mistakes
- Apologize and explain when needing to use non-preferred name/gender marker on forms, calls, etc.
- Give option to keep articles of clothing on when possible
- Apply harm reduction model to choices/needs of what people do for psychological health and public safety

For Your Organization / Agency / Institution:

- Option: use "client" as gender neutral term in narratives
- De-gender all single occupancy restrooms; advocate for single-use restrooms on new construction projects
- Ensure gendered groups/space are for ALL of that gender (such as women's support groups)
- Recruit LGBTQ employees, volunteers, board members, etc.
- Ensure staff have access to ongoing education and training
- Visible LGBTQ cues: marketing, pictures, health resources, bulletin boards, posted non-discrimination policies
- Intake forms should include:

Chosen / Preferred Name: _____ Sex Assigned at Birth: F M
Legal Name: _____ Gender Identity: Woman Man _____
Pronouns: She/Her He/Him _____
Name as appears on Insurance: _____ Sex as appears on Insurance: F M X

Additional Resources:

- *Fenway Health* – Boston LGBTQ healthcare center/services (fenwayhealth.org)
- *Center of Excellence for Transgender Health* - (transhealth.ucsf.edu)
- *World Professional Association for Transgender Health* – (wpath.org)
- *Trans Lifeline* – Transgender suicide hotline & resource (translifeline.org | 877-565-8860)
- *The Trevor Project* – LGBTQ youth suicide prevention (thetrevorproject.org | 866-488-7386)
- Trans Bodies, Trans Selves edited by Laura Erickson-Schroth