

Communication Tips for Providing LGBTQIAA+ Care



Terms to Know

- **LGBTQIAA+:** Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, Agender
- **Sexual Orientation:** how people characterize their emotional and physical attraction to others
- **Sex Assigned at Birth:** the sex (male or female) a doctor assigned to an infant
 - **AFAB:** assigned female at birth
 - **AMAB:** assigned male at birth
 - **Intersex:** an individual born with biological sex characteristics that aren't traditionally associated with male or female
- **Gender Identity:** a person's inner sense of their gender
 - **Cisgender (aka cis):** gender identity congruent with sex assigned at birth
 - **Transgender (aka trans):** gender identity incongruent with sex assigned at birth
 - Transman/transmasculine
 - Transwoman/transfeminine
 - Non-binary, genderqueer, gender fluid, two-spirit
- **Gender dysphoria:** psychological stress related to having a gender identity that differs from one's assigned sex at birth

Using Affirming Language

Commonly Used	Alternatives
Man or woman	Person or patient
Wife/girlfriend or Husband/boyfriend	Partner
Mother/Father	Parent
Pregnant Woman	Birthing person/birthing parent
What is your "real name?"	What name is on your insurance information?
"How may I help you, ma'am/sir?"	"How may I help you?" Or, use Mx. (pronounced Mix)

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Questions to Ask

- What name and pronouns would you like us to use for you?

Reminders

- Never make assumptions and lead with curiosity, always ask questions first!
- Use the terms that people call themselves. Ex: if someone refers to themselves as gay, use that term instead of others, like homosexual.
- Pronouns are terms used to refer to a person and are not indicative of a specific gender or gender expression (ex: someone can use he/him pronouns and present feminine).
- Remain open-minded and non-judgmental about different identities and expressions.
- Gender identity ≠ sexual orientation.
- Gender identity and sexual orientation are not fixed and exist on a spectrum, they can change over time; it's important to check in about patients' identities at different visits.
- Avoid asking unnecessary, personal questions. If the question does not pertain to the patient's medical care, refrain from asking inappropriate questions.

Correcting Mistakes

- Mistakes will happen! It's important not to dwell on them. Simply take accountability by apologizing, correct yourself, and thank the patient for correcting you. Dwelling on misgendering or other errors can be uncomfortable for LGBTQIAA+ patients.
- Correct colleagues if they use the incorrect names or pronouns for patients to create a positive environment of accountability.



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