

Caring For Transgender Patients



Creating a welcoming and supportive healthcare environment for all LGBT patients is a critical part of patient-centered care. Getting to know your patients, including aspects of their sexual and gender identity, behavior, and desires is key to providing quality care. With the transgender community becoming more visible, some questions may arise. When people decide to make their transition public and live openly, it can be a very challenging time for them and others.

Without a doubt, this is the time when providers, family, and friends need to be supportive.

Tips

- When transgender men (born female but identify as male) and transgender women (born male but identify as female) begin to live openly in their preferred gender, the use of pronouns can become confusing. When speaking with someone who is transgender listen to hear what pronouns they are using. If you are unsure as to which pronoun to use, it is okay to ask for clarity: “What pronouns do you prefer (She/Her or He/Him)?”
- Patient records may need to be updated with the name that they now use.
- Ask open-ended questions that don’t make unwarranted assumptions when talking with any patient, such as:
 - Say “Do you have a partner?” instead of “Are you married?”
 - Say “What is your spouse’s name” not “What your husband (or wife’s) name?”
 - Say “Are you in a relationship?” instead of “Do you have a boyfriend/girlfriend?”
- The issue of which restroom to use often becomes a problem for transgender women and men. Using a “Male/Female” sign on a single use restroom is one solution, another is the use of an “All Gender Restroom” sign.



Acceptance Saves Lives

Acceptance plays a critical role in helping anyone going through transition to know that they are supported in their life choice. “Transgender people who are accepted by their family are less likely to smoke or abuse drugs and alcohol, less likely to attempt suicide, less likely to be incarcerated..... and significantly less likely to experience homelessness.”

(National Transgender Discrimination Survey)

Sexual Orientation/Gender Identity

Sexual orientation and gender identity are not the same. Find out more about these and other terms at [HRC.org/resources/entry/sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity-terminology-and-definitions](https://www.hrc.org/resources/entry/sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity-terminology-and-definitions)

Find out more at:

- **GLAAD:** Transgender FAQ: [GLAAD.org/transgender/transfaq](https://www.glaad.org/transgender/transfaq)
- **PFLAG:** Straight for Equality Transgender page [StraightForEquality.org/trans](https://www.straightforequality.org/trans)
- **Human Rights Campaign:** [HRC.org/resources/category/transgender](https://www.hrc.org/resources/category/transgender)
- **Susan’s Place:** Provides news for the transgender community and also member chats and information: [Susans.org](https://www.susans.org)