Working with Transgender & Gender Diverse Young Adults: Creating (and Sustaining) an Inclusive Environment

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Center for Trans Youth Health and Development
By the end of this training, you will be able to:

- Describe why supporting gender diverse young adults is important for mental and physical health
- Identify best practices for creating and sustaining safe and affirming spaces
- Integrate transgender and gender diverse care into daily practice
Reflect on Your Own Biases and Misconceptions

- Acknowledge and park judgment - no one assumes you know everything, however be willing to **LISTEN**
- Challenge yourself to confront your biases and explore feelings behind them
- Is your responsibility to care for ALL clients
  - Refer to a more appropriate provider if needed
- Apologize for mistakes and **move on!**
Structural Change

• Structural changes target an agency’s practices, programs and policies.

• Structural changes are sustainable, even after key individuals are gone.

• Assess your organization’s policies and practices to identify areas for strengthening services for transgender youth.

• Work with your transgender youth and staff in this assessment to capture richest data possible.
Center for Trans Youth Health & Development

- Developed in 2012
- Started seeing pts in 1994
- Current # of Patients: over 1500
- Ages 3-25
- Services offered:
  - Medical care
  - Case Management
  - Mental Health
  - Social Support Groups
  - Family Support Groups
# Gender Pronouns

Please note that these are not the only pronouns. There are an infinite number of pronouns as new ones emerge in our language. Always ask someone for their pronouns.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subjective</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Possessive</th>
<th>Reflexive</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>She</td>
<td>Her</td>
<td>Hers</td>
<td>Herself</td>
<td>She is speaking. I listened to her. The backpack is hers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He</td>
<td>Him</td>
<td>His</td>
<td>Himself</td>
<td>He is speaking. I listened to him. The backpack is his.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They</td>
<td>Them</td>
<td>Theirs</td>
<td>Themself</td>
<td>They are speaking. I listened to them. The backpack is theirs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ze</td>
<td>Hir/Zir</td>
<td>Hirs/Zirs</td>
<td>Hirself/Zirself</td>
<td>Ze is speaking. I listened to hir. The backpack is zirs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For more information, go to transstudent.org/graphics

Design by Landyn Pan

facebook.com/transstudent

twitter.com/transstudent
Identity as a Spectrum

The Gender Unicorn

- Gender Identity
  - Female, Woman, Girl
  - Male, Man, Boy
  - Other Gender(s)

- Gender Expression/Presentation
  - Feminine
  - Masculine
  - Other

- Sex Assigned at Birth
  - Female
  - Male
  - Other/Intersex

- Sexually Attracted To
  - Women
  - Men
  - Other Gender(s)

- Romantically/Emotionally Attracted To
  - Women
  - Men
  - Other Gender(s)
Recognizing gender in the context of privilege

A term used to describe people whose gender identity matches the sex they were assigned at birth.
An umbrella term used to describe people whose gender identity is different from the sex they were assigned at birth.

Example of use: transgender people, transgender folks, people of trans experience

transfeminine/female/woman and transmasculine/male/man
**Gender Diverse**: A person who has, or is perceived as having, gender characteristics and/or behaviors that do not conform to society’s expectations****.

People who are gender diverse may or may not be transgender and can have any sexual orientation as these two things are different.

Gender non-binary, A Gender, Gender Queer, Demiboy, Demigirl, Gender Bender, Gender Deviant, Bigender, Two-spirit, Queer, and tons more!!

*The most important thing is to respect the way someone identifies!*
Importance of Using a Person’s Asserted Name

Russel, Pollitt, Li, & Grossman (2017) found that using a youth’s asserted name (different than birth/or legal name) is correlated with a reduction in depressive symptoms and suicidal ideations.

This intervention was found to have its highest impact when youth were addressed by their asserted name in all four domains: School, Work, Home, Friends.

Chosen Name Use Is Linked to Reduced Depressive Symptoms, Suicidal Ideation, and Suicidal Behavior Among Transgender Youth (2017)
Gender Dysphoria

**DSM -5**

- Change from Gender Identity Disorder (DSM-4) to Gender Dysphoria
- Historically a barrier to care (still can be)
- Used for accessing care & services through insurance
- Receiving “diagnosis” may be pathologizing and stigmatizing

**Diagnosis**

- Does pt have hx of identifying as their stated gender for greater than 6m (persistent)?
- Does pt identify as their stated gender across situations and time (consistent)?
- Does pt emphatically assert their identified gender (insistent)?
Gender Dysphoria may be triggered by onset of puberty, though not always...

- Trans girls/women
  - voice, height, Adam’s apple, facial hair, body hair and body structure, genitals
- Trans boys/men
  - menstrual cycle, voice, anatomically female chest, weight distribution, genitals
Possible Transition Experiences

- Non-medical
  - Social transition: clothes, hair, toys, name/pronouns
- Reversible
  - Puberty blockers
- Partially reversible
  - Phenotypic transition facilitated by hormones (Feminization or masculinization)
  - Gender affirmation surgeries (GAS)

Important- there is correct pathway to transition!
### Binding

- **Discuss safe binding technique**
- **Can help mitigate chest dysphoria**
- **Not typically a permanent solution to dysphoria**
- **Tighter not better**

### Packing

- **Multi-Use Pack, Play, Penetrate, Pee**
- **Harness or underwear**
- **May increase or decrease dysphoria**
- **Bigger isn’t always better**
What is Gender Affirmation?

An interpersonal process that recognizes and supports an individual’s unique gender identity and expression.
An Affirmative CASA Worker...

- Recognizes all gender identities and expressions as valid and normal
- Supports authenticity
- Cultivate self-acceptance

Recognizes that gender is not a deviation from “normal”

Knows that gender is not something to be “changed”

Understands that gender is not a diagnosis to be “addressed”
What to Avoid

Shame/Blame/Guilt/

The most toxic of emotions

Leads to feeling that the whole self is flawed

Anticipation of being shamed leads to anxiety

Can overwhelm [especially the child] causing sadness, depression, loneliness

Can cause both internal and external negative outcomes...mental health, physical health, dysregulation, behavioral issues, etc.
Transphobia is not engrained.
The fear and hate towards the transgender community is learned at home and at a young age. Do what’s right and show love and support for the transgender community. It may be your loved one, just too scared to come out.
-Kaylie Love
Mental Health Grab Bag...

- Minority stress
- Stigmatization
- Lack of social support
- Lack of family support
- Environmental factors - school, work, activities
- Victimization
- Discrimination
- Health care disparities (think intersectionality!)
- Coming out process – different for each person
“It is so relieving to know that someone understands how much pain I am in and cares enough to be in that space with me”

- Many high risk behaviors are used as life saving coping mechanisms
- Substance abuse, eating disorders, self-harm, etc.
- Not everyone who is suffering knows they are systems in place to handle the suffering...
- Anxiety may be a component of depression or stand alone
- Gender diverse youth often are labeled with multiple diagnoses
- Psychiatric medications- what are we treating?
- Depression and suicidal ideations are common.
- Providers are often reluctant to ask about SI
Why Support for Trans Youth Matters

Based on a 2012 study of 433 individuals

- Trans Youth with Supportive Parents
- Trans Youth with Unsupportive Parents

**Reported Life Satisfaction**
- 72%
- 33%

**Reported High Self-Esteem**
- 64%
- 13%

**Described Mental Health As “Very Good” or “Excellent”**
- 70%
- 15%

**Faced Housing Problems**
- 0%
- 55%

**Suffered Depression**
- 23%
- 75%

**Attempted Suicide**
- 4%
- 57%

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Findings of a Study by the National Center for Transgender Equality and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force By Jaime M. Grant, Ph.D., Lisa A. Mottet, J.D., and Justin Tanis, D.Min. With Jody L. Herman, Ph.D., Jack Harrison, and Mara Keisling, October 2010
Privilege

Most people don’t constantly think about their gender
Trauma

Gender can be traumatic (BIG T, little t)
Gender is created and informed by societal norms and expectations
Diversity

Young children are fine with diversity until they see how people react to them — society is not comfortable with diversity.
Sorry, Teacher, but where do the kids whose most salient identity isn’t gender and instead self-identify as “awesome” line up?
Be Affirmative!

What are ways a parent/ peer/ provider/ ally can be affirmative to a non cis-hetero/ questioning youth?

- Change attitudes.
- Change behaviors.
- Change courses.
- Change directions.
- Change lives.
- Change minds.
- Change policies.
- Change voices.
- Be an ally.
- Be the change.
Acknowledge...

It is not up to children to accommodate to those around them who are feeling uncomfortable.

It is OUR responsibility to make children comfortable and affirmed in their identity
Hold Space

Knowing about: When you have knowledge about a topic, work or specialize with a certain population BUT do not have personal experience

Knowing of: When you have personal experience about something
Societal Perception Regarding Changes in Status
“It is revolutionary for any trans person to choose to be seen & visible in a world that tells us not to exist.”
What is an ally?

A person who works toward the inclusion, safety and respect of folks who identify differently than they do.

For the populations we serve, this could comes in the form of straight and/or cisgender-identified adults who advocate for a better world full of opportunities for LGBTQ youth.
“Ally-ing” 101

Being an Ally to any Community requires more than simply saying “I am an ally”.

Ally is an Action, Not an Idea

- See Something. Do Something
- Reflect and mirror back the language a young person uses with you
- Use gender-neutral language when talking about relationships
- Ask about names and pronouns
- Revise forms to be inclusive of all genders and sexual orientations

Being an ally takes time, effort, ability to cultivate trust & empathy
Elements of Disclosure

- Code Switching
- Fear or reality of abandonment
- Sense of responsibility about having to educate others about trans identity
- Fear of rejection or experience of rejection
- Repetition of Coming Out
- Issues of safety and security
Parents/Caregivers

- Emphasize importance of parental process OUTSIDE of child needs
- Parent perceptions of minority stress and developmental process – for child and themselves
- Understand their own systems of support or lack thereof
- Always approach strength based
- Understand parenting style/beliefs, culture/history, expectations and upbringing
- Empathize with parents and safely challenge grief and loss
- Address fear, confusion, guilt and adjustment
So Now What?

Honestly reflect on your own biases, judgements and misconceptions

• Acknowledge and park judgment
• Challenge yourself to confront your biases & explore feelings behind them.
• Apologize for mistakes and move on...

Maintain Confidentiality

• Confidentiality is especially important to trans youth who are still vulnerable to discrimination.
• Discuss scope of confidentiality with youth, including which other staff will have access to their information.
• Don’t record gender identity and other sensitive information without explicit consent.
Use inclusive language regarding gender identity and gender expression

- Don’t assume someone’s gender identity or which pronouns they use.
- If you are not sure, just use the person’s name in place of a pronoun or respectfully ask.
- Don’t ask someone what their “real” name is.

Be an advocate for trans youth

- Help create an environment where derogatory language, misinformation or jokes about trans people are not accepted.
- Recognize biases and privilege in your environment
- Support youth in advocating for their needs and rights (i.e., challenging unnecessary exams or questions)
Inclusive Forms & Environment
• Modify all forms where gender identity or sex assigned at birth is required, to allow identities across the gender spectrum
• Build an inclusive environment with clear cues that signal to all that trans people are welcomed.
  • Ex. posters, staff buttons & stickers, & literature
  • Have accessible bathroom facilities.
  • Trans inclusive materials

Physical Exams / Screening
• Don’t Forget Preventative Health Screenings
• Provide health screening based on patient’s present anatomy
• Gender Neutral Physical Exams
• Using gender neutral terms for body parts, if possible
• Explain what parts will be examined & ask for consent
CHLA supports gender diversity.

All are welcome to use the restroom consistent with their identity. A gender neutral bathroom is available on the 4th floor upon request.

CHLA apoya la diversidad de género.

Todos son bienvenidos a utilizar el baño consistente con su identidad. Un baño de género natural está disponible en el 4º piso a petición.
• CHLA Center for Transyouth Health and Development
  – http://www.chla.org/transyouth
• UCSF Center of Excellence for Transgender Health
  – http://Transcare.ucsf.edu
  – St John’s Transgender Health Program
  – http://www.wellchild.org/transgender-health-program
• Transforming Family
  – http://www.transformingfamily.org/
• Gender Spectrum
  – https://www.genderspectrum.org/
• World Professional Association of Transgender Health

• Family Acceptance Project
  – http://familyproject.sfsu.edu

• Fenway Institute
  – http://www.lgbthealtheducation.org

• GSA Network
  – http://www.gsanetwork.org
THANK YOU!

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