



A QUICK GUIDE TO SUPPORTIVE GENDER AFFIRMING CARE FOR MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS



GENDER AFFIRMING CARE IS A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO MEETING THE INDIVIDUAL NEEDS OF A PERSON WHO IDENTIFIES AS TRANSGENDER, NON-BINARY, OR GENDER NON-CONFORMING (TGNC). GENDER CARE IS SYNONYMOUS WITH BEST PRACTICE AND OUR CORE VALUES OF PATIENTS FIRST.

GENDER IDENTITY

A person's innate sense of their own gender, whether male, female, non-binary, or other genders, which may or may not correspond to the sex assigned at birth.

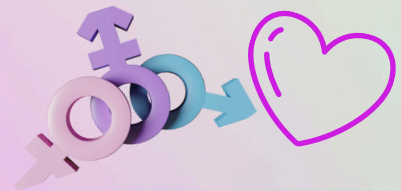
GENDER EXPRESSION

How a person chooses to outwardly express their gender, within the context of societal expectations of gender. A person who does not conform to societal expectations of gender may not, however, identify as trans.



SEXUALITY

Is a person's sexual attraction to other people, or lack thereof. It refers to whom they are romantically drawn to and with whom they engage in sexual activity.



PRONOUNS-

PRONOUNS ARE A REALLY SIMPLE AND PERSON-FIRST PRACTICE.

USING THE PRONOUNS A PATIENT PREFERS ALIGNS WITH PATIENT FIRST VALUES AND SIGNIFIES THAT YOU RESPECT THEM AND THAT YOU ARE APPROACHING THEIR EXPERIENCE AND MEDICAL CARE WITH COMPASSION. THE MOST COMMON PRONOUNS ARE SHE/HER/HERS, HE/HIM/HIS, AND THEY/THEM.

RESEARCH SHOWS THAT MENTAL HEALTH, EMPLOYMENT RATES, LIFE SATISFACTION, AND OVERALL HAPPINESS INCREASE WHEN A PERSON IS SUPPORTED IN THEIR GENDER IDENTITY.

BEING TRANS IS NOT A MENTAL ILLNESS

ACCORDING TO THE AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION (A.P.A.), MANY TRANSGENDER PEOPLE DO NOT EXPERIENCE THEIR GENDER AS DISTRESSING OR DISABLING, WHICH MEANS THAT IDENTIFYING AS TRANSGENDER DOES NOT CONSTITUTE A MENTAL DISORDER. THE A.P.A. NOTES THAT A PSYCHOLOGICAL STATE IS CONSIDERED A MENTAL DISORDER ONLY IF IT CAUSES SIGNIFICANT DISTRESS OR DISABILITY. IT IS COMMON TO FIND AN INCREASE IN REPORTED HAPPINESS AND LESS STRESS WHEN A PERSON IS ALLOWED TO LIVE IN THEIR PROPER IDENTITY AND RECEIVE PROPER GENDER AFFIRMING CARE.

PATIENT-FIRST CARE:

- GREAT GENDER AFFIRMING CARE BEGINS AT THE FRONT DESK AND CONTINUES THROUGH ALL OF YOUR STAFF'S INTERACTIONS WITH A PATIENT. IN ORDER TO ENSURE CONSISTENCY, PLEASE PROVIDE PROPER TRAINING TO ALL SUPPORT STAFF.
- ASSUME THAT A PATIENT IS AN EXPERT IN WHAT CONSTITUTES THEIR IDEAL GENDER AFFIRMING CARE.
- DO NOT ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT A PATIENT'S BODY THAT DO NOT PERTAIN TO THEIR IMMEDIATE CARE. UNNECESSARY QUESTIONS ABOUT A PERSON'S BODY OR BODY PARTS CAN BE STIGMATIZING AND OFFENSIVE.

Understanding Transitioning:

- IT IS IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND THAT PEOPLE WANT DIFFERENT THINGS FOR THEIR TRANSITION AND THAT *A PERSON DOES NOT REQUIRE SURGERY TO TRANSITION. EACH PERSON IS DIFFERENT.* SOME PEOPLE WANT GENDER AFFIRMING SURGERY AS PART OF THEIR TRANSITION AND SOME DO NOT. NEITHER CHOICE IS RIGHT OR WRONG. THIS IS A SELF-ACTUALIZING PROCESS.
- TRANSITIONING IS ALSO A SOCIAL PROCESS. THIS IS WHEN A TRANS PERSON CHANGES HOW THEY EXPRESS THEIR GENDER TO OTHERS. THIS COULD INCLUDE USING A NEW NAME, ADOPTING DIFFERENT PRONOUNS, OR CHANGING THEIR APPEARANCE. *A PERSON MAY CHOOSE TO DO ALL OR NONE OF THESE IN EXPRESSING THEIR IDENTITY. IT MAY ALSO CHANGE OVER TIME.*
- TRANSITIONING ALSO ENTAILS A LEGAL PROCESS. DEPENDING ON THE PERSON, THEY MAY WANT TO CHANGE LEGAL DOCUMENTS TO THEIR CHOSEN LEGAL NAME AND GENDER. HOWEVER, THIS CAN BE A LENGTHY AND EXPENSIVE ENDEAVOR, SO NOT EVERYONE WHO WANTS TO CAN DO THIS. *ASSUMPTIONS SHOULD NOT BE MADE ABOUT WHY SOMEONE HAS NOT GONE THROUGH A LEGAL NAME OR GENDER CHANGE PROCESS.*



TRANS PEOPLE ARE NOT THE ONLY PEOPLE WHO GET GENDER AFFIRMING CARE.

COUNTERING MYTHS:

SHARING THESE POINTS WITH YOUR STAFF MAY BE HELPFUL

- BEING TRANS OR NON-BINARY IS NOT NEW. THE TERM TRANS AROSE IN THE LAST CENTURY, BUT THERE IS DOCUMENTED EVIDENCE OF MORE THAN TWO GENDERS IN MANY CULTURES GOING BACK THROUGH HISTORY.
- LESS THAN .05% OF TRANS PEOPLE WHO SEEK MEDICAL TRANSITION REGRET THEIR DECISION. RESEARCH SHOWS A SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN HAPPINESS POST GENDER AFFIRMING SURGERIES.
- GENDER IDENTITY IS NOT LEARNED, AND YOU CANNOT BE RECRUITED INTO YOUR GENDER IDENTITY.

REFERENCES AND ADDITIONAL READINGS AVAILABLE AT WWW.TCERNOLA.ORG, TCHER@OCHSNER.ORG

