

## Welcoming and Inclusive Spaces

Historically many transgender people avoid seeking care due to prior discrimination or disrespect in a clinic setting. Health care organizations have a responsibility to provide a safe, welcoming and culturally appropriate clinic environment to ensure that transgender people not only seek care, but return for follow-up. Below is a list of best practices in healthcare which can guide healthcare organizations when developing a welcoming and inclusive clinic space.

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### ❖ **Revising and updating policies and procedures**

- Do your policies and procedures use gender-expansive language and address sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression?

### ❖ **Promotional materials, communications, and website:**

- Do your marketing materials and patient education materials use gender-expansive language and do visuals depict diverse people?

### ❖ **Physical spaces:**

- Are there gender neutral bathrooms in patient care areas?
- Does clinic seating accommodate a variety of body sizes?
- Is there clear signage for EXITS of clinic spaces?

### ❖ **Nondiscrimination policy:**

- Post these policies and procedures in several high-profile locations around the office and create process exists for reporting and responding to instances of discrimination. This includes creating and posting a well-defined nondiscrimination policy that includes sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression.
- Is your non-discrimination policy in job postings?

### ❖ **Quality Assurance:**

- Does your clinic have an established a well-defined process for reporting and responding to any discrimination that may occur?
- Do you have a LGBTQ specific QA project to assess gaps and identify areas of improvement?

### ❖ **Documentation forms/EHR:**

- Do your systems and intake forms ask for name, pronouns and offer space for a person to self-identify their gender?

- Do you ask about sexual orientation and gender identity in your demographics data collection?
  - Does your agency have a process for ensuring that all are using correct name and pronouns?
  - Can your pharmacy create labels using patients name to place over legal name?
- ❖ **Training:**
- Does your clinic provide LGBTQ focused training on an annual basis? This includes front office, board members, clinicians, medical assistants, maintenance technicians, nurses, and others, on LGBTQ identities, terminology, health disparities, and competency. This is essential for all staff that have even minor patient contact.
  - **Incorporate LGBTQ-specific health care needs into primary care.**
    - Clinicians should be trained to provide gender-affirming care and include specific health needs and risk factors surrounding the LGBTQ community such as: gender identity exploration, STI screening and PrEP planning, cervical cancer screenings, smoking cessation, hormone therapy, contraception, family building, menstrual management, mental health screenings and abortion.
    - Inclusive language and consent in clinical exam components.
    - Clinicians<sup>1</sup> should be training on trauma-informed care
- ❖ **Create an LGBTQ “champion” for the space.**
- Devise a task force for LGBTQ best practice initiatives,
  - Senior management must be actively engaged.
- ❖ **Outreach efforts includes LGBTQ community members.**
- Invite LGBTQ leaders to have a voice in organizational planning (i.e., board, patient advisory committee).
  - Actively reach out to the LGBTQ community to inform them of services.

## Resources

1. National LGBT Health Education Center. *Providing Inclusive Services and Care for LGBT People: A Guide for Health Care Staff*; 2016:25. <https://www.lgbtqiahealtheducation.org/wp-content/uploads/Providing-Inclusive-Services-and-Care-for-LGBT-People.pdf>
2. National LGBT Health Education Center. *Focus on Forms and Policy: Creating an Inclusive Environment for LGBT Patients*; 2017. <https://lgbtqiahealtheducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Forms-and-Policy-Brief.p>
3. Pederson, C., Knudson, L., Haggerty, Z., & Padrón, K. M. (2023). White paper: Gender affirming care in college health. *Journal of American College Health*.

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<sup>1</sup> Big 10 gender care coalition toolkit- Welcoming and Inclusive Spaces 7/2022