

Know Me: Providing Inclusive Healthcare – Key Content Reference Document *(rev. 05/19/19)*

The following information is taken from the online class z5069 *Know Me: Providing Inclusive Healthcare*:

Why it's important

Important statistics regarding the LGBTQ community and healthcare:

- Approximately 10 million Americans identified as LGBT in 2016.
- Sexual minority adults are more likely to delay or not seek medical care (30% compared to 19% of heterosexual adults)
- The transgender population is much more likely to live in poverty and less likely to have health insurance than the general population.
- Lesbian and bisexual women are less likely to receive mammograms
- 40 percent of transgender adults reported serious psychological distress
- LGBTQ young people are more than twice as likely to feel suicidal, and over four times as likely to attempt suicide, compared to heterosexual youth
- Approximately 40% of homeless youth are LGBT, and the leading reasons for homelessness among this group are due to family rejection.

Definitions and terms

Key underlying themes for regarding sexual orientation and gender identify (SOGI) include:

Attraction –

Emotional/physical attraction ranges from “nobody” to:

- Men/Males/Masculinity
- Women/Females/Femininity

Gender Expression - The ways that a person communicates a gender identity to others such as dress, behavior, hairstyle, voice, and/or mannerisms.

Gender Identity - One’s deeply held, core sense of being a man, woman, or some other gender. A gender identity can be a combination of two or more genders (such as gender fluid), and some individuals don't identify with any gender at all - described as agender.

Additional information:

- Gender identity can be the same or different from their sex assigned at birth.
- Some gender identity terms include man, woman, trans man, trans woman, genderqueer, and non-binary.

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Sex Assigned at Birth – A person’s sex (male, female, intersex) assigned at birth often based on the appearance of the genitalia.

Intersex is:

- a general term used for a variety of conditions in which a person is born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy that doesn’t seem to fit the typical definitions of female or male.
- a reference to someone’s biological sex, not their gender identity. These are different pieces of data that may or may not be related.

Sexual Orientation terms:

- Bisexual - Refers to the sexual orientation of a person who experiences sexual, romantic, and/or emotional attraction to persons of more than one gender, not necessarily equally or at the same time, in the same way, or to the same degree.
- Gay - Describes the sexual orientation of persons who are emotionally, sexually, and/or romantically attracted to persons of the same sex/gender. While the term is most often used to describe men, it can also be used more broadly to refer to both men and women (i.e., gay man, gay woman, gay people).
- Lesbian - Refers to the sexual orientation of women who are emotionally, sexually, and/or romantically attracted to women.
- Pansexual - Describes a person who experiences emotional, romantic, and/or physical attraction to persons of all gender identities and gender expressions.
- Queer - An umbrella term for anyone who does not identify as heterosexual.
- Straight (not lesbian or gay) - Another term for heterosexual. Refers to the sexual, emotional, and/or romantic attraction to a gender other than one's own.

Gender Identity terms:

- Cisgender - A term used to describe a person whose gender identity aligns with the sex assigned to them at birth. For example, a person who is assigned as a male at birth and identifies as a man.
- Genderqueer - An identity commonly used by people who do not identify or express their gender within the gender binary. Those who identify as genderqueer may identify as neither male nor female, may see themselves as outside of or in between the binary gender boxes, or may simply feel restricted by gender labels.
- Non-binary: A common term used by people whose gender is not male/man or female/woman; some people may have a gender that blends elements of being a man or a woman, may have a gender that is different than either male or female, may have a gender that changes over time, or may not identify with any gender at all.
- Transgender - An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or expression is different from cultural expectations based on the sex they were assigned at birth. Being transgender does not imply any specific sexual orientation. Therefore, transgender people may identify as straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, etc.
- Trans Woman/Man - Trans woman generally describes someone assigned male at birth who identifies as a woman. This individual may or may not actively identify as trans. It is grammatically and definitionally correct to include a space between trans and woman. The same concept applies to trans men. Often it is good just to use woman or man.

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SOGI perspective

The LGBTQ community has unique health needs and concerns, yet a majority of LGBTQ patients do not come out to their healthcare providers.

Reasons include:

- Fear of discrimination or inequitable treatment
- Discomfort around their identity or creating discomfort for providers
- Concerns about cultural competence of healthcare providers
- Simply aren't asked

Healthcare providers should be aware of their personal bias and misinterpretations when providing care and seek to know and respect our patients. Always apply our Service Standards to foster an inclusive patient experience.

Critical data!

Collecting SOGI data is considered a best practice and is in alignment with Novant Health's Service Standards and ensures we provide remarkable care to all patients.

What remarkable looks like...

Make it remarkable!

Let's start with the basics:

- **Consider the whole patient** - Sexual orientation and gender identity do not make up the patient's entirety. Remember to consider the whole patient.
- **Critical conversations** - Discussing sexual orientation and gender identity might be uncomfortable. Remember to treat these conversations with respect and offer privacy.
- **Non-verbal communication** - Our non-verbal reactions and responses will speak loudly to patients. Remember to check facial expressions, mannerisms, etc., when communicating with our patients.
- **Stereotypes** - There are a lot of stereotypes about LGBTQ people that may impact our perceptions of who is or is not LGBTQ. Remember to avoid assumptions about what someone's sexual orientation or gender identity might be.

Communication strategies - Consider the following times for effectively communicating with LGBTQ patients:

- Communicate relevant information (name the patient uses, pronouns, etc.) to team members when facilitating warm hand-offs.
- Ask questions appropriate for the situation the patient is presenting with, but avoid probing into the patient's identity unnecessarily.
- Listen to how your patients talk about their sexual orientation, partner(s), gender identity and experience, etc. and mirror that language with them.
- Identify places where biases and assumptions may show up in language, and proactively address them. (ex: referring to patients as ma'am or sir)
- Apologize if you slip up, and move forward!

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Some closing thoughts

These items capture some fundamentals for moving forward with enhancing our ability to provide inclusive healthcare:

- It is okay to still have questions about what it means to be an LGBTQ person or our own beliefs about LGBTQ people – we can still implement this change effectively.
- Our confidence and competence will translate to patients’ comfort and confidence.
- Collecting and utilizing SOGI data will increase our ability to provide a remarkable patient experience and will increase the health of our communities.

Additional resources

To learn more about LGBTQ identities and experiences:

- [PFLAG publications](#)
- [The GayBCs of LGBT+](#)
- [Human Rights Campaign](#)
- [Timeout Youth](#)

To learn more about health and LGBTQ identities:

- [Explore: Health and Aging with the Human Rights Campaign](#)
- [HealthyPeople2020: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Health](#)
- [CDC: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Health](#)

To learn more about being an ally to LGBTQ people:

- [Be an Ally & a Friend | GLAAD](#)
- [Coming out as a Supporter from the Human Rights Campaign](#)

Course references and videos:

- [Course narration script](#)
- [How to follow the SOGI Social Connect community](#)
- [Video: Michael Vaccaro and Melissa Masterton - Why SOGI data is important](#)
- [Video: Negative Experience during Office Visit \(Lack of Service Standards\)](#)
- [Video: Positive Experience during Office Visit \(Service Standards in Action\)](#)