



Transgender Health Care Toolkit

Thank you for your interest in improving health care for transgender and gender diverse individuals. Your contributions to transgender health care are important. In fact, they can save lives. We hope you find the insights and resources in this toolkit helpful. We wish you and your patients well in the journey to better health.





Key areas of concern

Health risks and challenges

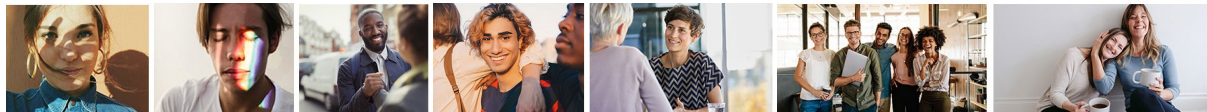
- Barriers in primary and specialty care, including denied access or coverage
- Complexities of transgender health care
- Fear of negative health care experiences
- Health care avoidance and higher rates of health issues like suicidal ideation
- Inaccurate electronic health records (EHR) and care coordination mismatches

Stigma, stress, and discrimination

- Active and historic policy exclusion and anti-transgender legislative initiatives
- Incorrect name and gender on identification with legal change barriers
- Social, familial, and religious rejection
- Socio-economic barriers in employment, housing, and related societal needs
- Victimization and broken trust across societal functions, including health care

Common areas of misunderstanding or risk

- Persistence of gender diverse individuals throughout history
- Differences between gender identity and sexual orientation
- Differences in appropriate health care for transgender individuals
- Lack of knowledge about correct terms, language, and cultural nuances
- Lack of knowledge about changing gender norms



Ways you can help

Issue	How you can help
Education/Trust: Providers may lack knowledge about the transgender and gender diverse community.	Learn about transgender individuals through background resources on the community and its challenges. Become involved in a transgender organization to gain community familiarity. Know that culturally competent care leads to positive health outcomes.
Education/Trust: Providers may feel underprepared to help the community and may not understand how they can help transgender individuals.	Start by listening to the patient’s situation and needs as every transgender journey is unique. Know and reflect that, just like everyone else, transgender individuals are people with the same kinds of needs as everyone else.
Education/Trust: Transgender patients may not trust the health care system and may fear negative care experiences.	Communicate your commitment to inclusivity via small signals. Effective signals include having LGBTQ+ welcoming language on your website and patient communications, offering your own name and pronouns when meeting new patients, and displaying “Ally” badges or signs in your office. Try not to make assumptions about how people identify. Instead, affirm a patient’s identity by asking for their name and pronouns to build immediate patient trust.
Education/Trust: New pronouns and vocabulary may be unfamiliar to providers.	Take time to learn basic vocabulary for the gender diverse communities. Use the pronouns the patient requests. Be familiar and comfortable with three primary pronoun sets (he/him, she/her, they/them) as a starting point.



Systems/Process: Patient intake forms often do not contain sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) options that fit the patient.

If collecting SOGI data is necessary, expand answer options on intake forms to include the LGBTQ community. Allow patients to provide pronouns. Make answering questions optional. Recognizing context matters, check with recognized LGBTQ health organizations for best practice guidance. (Our resources section has more help on understanding pronouns.)

Systems/Process: EHR systems can be inflexible in gender identity and sexual orientation data.

Leverage EHR and account management system notes sections to input identity information for better patient servicing.

Systems/Process: Transgender individuals may find the health care system difficult to navigate.

Build a personal network of providers with transgender health care expertise for more seamless research and referrals.

Barriers to Care: Socio-economic barriers may prevent transgender individuals from care and meeting basic needs.

Know local and online communities and groups that can help. Have a printed list of local resources that you can share.

Barriers to Care: Transgender individuals experience discrimination which can result in isolation and suicidal ideation.

Know mental health hotlines and resources that can help. Recommend local and virtual transgender communities which can be a support system.

Barriers to Care: Like others, transgender individuals may live far from health care providers who can help them.

Provide phone and/or video telehealth provider services to eliminate distance as a barrier.



Resources for more information

Resources for building community knowledge and familiarity

- [Tips for allies of transgender individuals](#): The Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation's (GLAAD) simple tips to help improve interactions with the transgender community
- [Human Rights Campaign \(HRC\)](#): Selection of public education resources about the transgender and gender diverse community
- [Trans Lifeline Resource Guide](#): Resource guide covering over 30 topical areas of concern for transgender individuals

Resources for medical knowledge and patient needs

- [World Professional Association for Transgender Health \(WPATH\)](#): Education and standards of care guidelines for transgender patient care
- [Fenway Health](#): Transgender care-focused research and support for providers and patients
- [UCSF Transgender Care](#): Deep selection of provider- and patient-facing transgender health care resources like clinical research and best practices

Resources for patients and families

- [Coming Out: A Handbook for LGBTQ Young People](#): The Trevor Project's guidebook for learning about identity and how to share identity with other people
- [Included Health](#): Health care concierge service for employees with gender diverse family members that also helps providers become more inclusive through education and a database of transgender-friendly providers
- [Our Trans Loved Ones](#): PFLAG's in-depth transgender and gender diverse question and answer guide for parents, families, and friends



Resources for mental health support

- [**The Trevor Project**](#): Trained counselors available 24/7 for young people in crisis (**866-488-7386**)
- [**Trans Lifeline Hotline**](#): Transgender-operated 24/7 support line for crisis and non-crisis situations (**877-565-8860**)
- [**Q Chat Space**](#): A safe online community for LGBTQ+ teens to connect

Resources for improving your policies and practices

- [**GLMA: Health Professionals Advancing LGBTQ Equality**](#): Online repository of resources for patients and providers
- [**Human Rights Campaign Foundation**](#): Resources for policy and practice guidance, housing topics such as EHR, pharmacy, patient interaction for health care providers
- [**Advocacy & Services for LGBT Elders \(SAGE\)**](#): Research on LGBT seniors and resources for caregivers and improving cultural competency
- [**Ready, Set, Go**](#): National LGBT Health Education Center's document featuring guidelines and tips for handling SOGI data