

Practical STRATEGIES for working with Trans Clients

Inclusive Environment

- Always assume patients may be trans
- Build trust by displaying materials such as trans inclusive brochures, posters, rainbow flags, positive space stickers
- Create an environment where patients/clients can feel comfortable disclosing their gender identity and asking questions.
- Use the language patients use to identify themselves. If you're uncertain, ask trans clients which pronouns and names to use to make them most comfortable.
- All staff should have access to diversity training.

Intake Forms and Process

- Instead of male/female, give choices for gender identity.
- Acknowledge the diverse forms of family.
- Have systems in place to ensure confidentiality. Use gender identity information only to the extent necessary to provide appropriate services.

Assessment and Treatment

- Educate yourself about how gender identity is a factor in treatment.
- Be aware of when direct questions about gender identity are appropriate and when they're not.
- Explain your need to know, based on your intention to offer treatment that acknowledges relevant life factors.
- Handle questions and answers sensitively – patients' experiences may be traumatic (ie, verbal or physical abuse) or they may be questioning their identity or just coming out.
- If relevant, ask about experiences of harassment based on gender identity and other forms of discrimination.
- Examine your personal biases.
- Providers who are particularly uncomfortable and are closed to learning about trans issues must make referrals to positive practitioners.

STANDARDS AND INDICATORS

I. Personnel

Standard 1. The agency shall establish, promote and effectively communicate an inclusive, non-discriminatory work place environment for transgendered, transsexual and employees.

INDICATOR: Written policies, including but not limited to non-discrimination, diversity and non-harassment policies that explicitly include transgendered and transsexual employees.

INDICATOR: Inclusion of policies in all new employee orientation programs and materials; inclusion of policies in employee handbook.

INDICATOR: Written sign-off on policies by all employees.

INDICATOR: Discussion of policies with job applicants during interviewing process.

INDICATOR: Posting of policies in all of agency's facilities.

INDICATOR: Annual review of all policies, and opportunities for ongoing employee input and training.

Standard 2. The agency shall support and encourage visibility of transgendered and transsexual employees.

INDICATOR: Active employment recruitment of transgendered and transsexual employees, including outreach to trans organizations, and advertising in GLBT media.

INDICATOR: Development and implementation or revision of existing policies to ensure effective procedures for dealing with employee complaints of discrimination or harassment based on gender identity.

INDICATOR: Written notice to all employees that discrimination or harassment of other employees on the basis of gender identification is grounds for appropriate levels of discipline, up to and including dismissal.

Standard 3. The agency shall work towards ensuring that trans employees of all ages are subject to the same terms and conditions of employment, including the same benefits and compensation, as all other employees.

INDICATOR: Written policies explicitly stating that the agency does not discriminate on the basis of gender identity in providing compensation and benefits, including but not limited to family and medical leave, bereavement leave, and such other benefits as the agency offers its employees.

INDICATOR: Written policies explicitly extending the same benefits to all families, including the families of trans employees. Such policies may allow employees to designate who shall be considered their "family" members. If the agency offers health, life, disability insurance and pension benefits to its employees, the agency shall work towards including full and equal coverage for its trans employees and their families.

INDICATOR: Comprehensive ongoing training of all human resource and other appropriate personnel in gender identity issues with regard to employee benefits.

INDICATOR: Mechanisms to appropriately convey trans-related policies and make relevant training accessible to all employees at all levels, including those with disabilities, and those for whom English is not their primary language.

INDICATOR: Benefits plans include transition related costs.

II. Client's Rights

Standard 4. The agency shall assure that comprehensive policies are implemented to prohibit discrimination in the delivery of services to trans clients and their families. The agency shall ensure that all staff use, and all written forms and policies employ, culturally appropriate language when dealing with trans clients and their families. For the purpose of these standards the terms "family" and "families" shall be broadly construed, and shall include but not be limited to relatives by blood, adoption, marriage or declaration of domestic partnership.

INDICATOR: Written policies that explicitly state that the agency does not discriminate on the basis of gender identity in the provision of services. Such policies shall specifically include families of all clients.

INDICATOR: Conspicuous posting of non-discrimination policies in all languages appropriate to the populations served by the agency, and inclusion of policies in agency brochures, informational and promotional materials.

INDICATOR: Mechanisms to ensure that non-discrimination policies and procedures are appropriately conveyed to all clients, including those with disabilities and those for whom English is not their primary language.

INDICATOR: Explicit sign-off on policy by all employees.

Standard 5. The agency shall ensure that it has comprehensive and easily accessible procedures in place for clients to file and resolve complaints alleging violations of these policies.

INDICATOR: Written complaint procedures.

INDICATOR: Designation of one or more persons responsible for ensuring agency compliance.

INDICATOR: Written notice to all employees that discrimination in the delivery of services based on gender identity violates standards of good care, and is subject to appropriate discipline.

INDICATOR: Conspicuous posting of complaint procedures, inclusion of procedures in informational materials given to agency clients and their families.

INDICATOR: Translation of procedures into and provision of information in all languages appropriate to populations the agency serves.

III. Intake and Assessment

Standard 6. The agency shall develop and implement or revise existing intake and assessment procedures to ensure that they meet the needs of trans clients of all ages and their families.

INDICATOR: All reception, intake and assessment staff are trained to use culturally appropriate language.

INDICATOR: Development and implementation of intake and assessment forms which provide for optional self-identification in all categories of gender identity, sexual orientation, marital, partnership and family status, and provide clients with the option and opportunity for further written explanation.

INDICATOR: Develop mechanisms to ensure that all reception, intake and assessment staff are familiar with providers within the agency with expertise in and sensitivity to trans issues, and appropriately convey this information to clients.

INDICATOR: Development and implementation of training for all intake and assessment staff to assure medically and culturally appropriate referrals for trans clients and their families to providers within and outside of the agency.

IV. Service Planning and Delivery

Standard 7. All agency staff shall have a basic familiarity with trans issues as they pertain to services provided by the agency.

INDICATOR: Development and implementation or revision of agency training and programs on diversity, harassment, and anti-discrimination to assure explicit inclusion of trans issues.

INDICATOR: Development and implementation of training for all intake, assessment, supervisory, human resource, case management and direct care staff on basic trans issues.

Standard 8. All direct care staff shall routinely provide general care to trans clients. All direct care staff shall be competent to identify and address, within the scope of their field of expertise, specific health problems and treatment issues for trans clients and their families, to provide treatment accordingly, and to provide appropriate referrals when necessary

INDICATOR: Comprehensive ongoing training provided for direct care staff to identify and address basic health issues within their field of expertise that may particularly or uniquely affect trans clients.

INDICATOR: Creation and implementation of mechanism for identification of staff with special expertise in and sensitivity to trans issues.

INDICATOR: Provision of training for direct care staff on how, when and where to make appropriate referrals for trans clients and their families.

INDICATOR: Development of a comprehensive resource list for appropriate referrals for trans health concerns.

INDICATOR: Outreach to and development of relationships with other agencies and providers with expertise in trans health issues.

INDICATOR: Evidence of agreements or other appropriate mechanisms to ensure cooperation with other agencies and providers to whom trans clients and their families may be referred for specialized care and treatment.

Standard 9. All case management and treatment plans shall include and address gender identity where it is a necessary and appropriate issue in client care.

INDICATOR: Provision of training for all case management and direct care staff on trans health, treatment and cultural issues.

V. Confidentiality

Standard 10. The agency shall ensure the confidentiality of client data, including information about gender identity issues. Trans clients shall be informed about data collection that includes references to gender identity, including in what circumstances such information may be disclosed, whether it may be disclosed as aggregate or individual information whether personal identifiers may be disclosed, and how and by whom such information may be used.

INDICATOR: Written confidentiality policies which explicitly include gender identity, indicating that such information is to be considered highly sensitive and treated accordingly.

INDICATOR: Designation of gender identity is at client's option on forms and records.

INDICATOR: Comprehensive training for appropriate staff on data collection and reporting issues as they relate to confidentiality.

INDICATOR: Written disclosure to clients explaining when information may or must be disclosed to third parties for payment or other reasons, and in what circumstances such disclosures may include information regarding gender identity.

Standard 11. The agency shall provide appropriate, safe and confidential treatment to trans minors, unless the agency's services are inappropriate for all minors. All clients who are minors shall be informed of their legal rights, and advised of the possibility and possible consequences of any statutory or otherwise mandated reporting.

INDICATOR: Staff training regarding the legal rights of minors.

INDICATOR: Development and implementation of procedures for intake, assessment and treatment of minors that is sensitive to gender identity.

INDICATOR: Written and oral notice to minors of various mandated reporting laws and their implications, and of the minor's rights regarding confidentiality and treatment without parental consent.

INDICATOR: Reception staff trained to be sensitive to issues of trans youth.

VI. Community Relations and Health Promotion

Standard 12. The agency shall include trans people and their families in outreach and health promotion efforts.

INDICATOR: Agency advertising and promotional materials clearly indicate nondiscrimination policies regarding gender identification.

INDICATOR: Agency outreach efforts to social service, medical and other providers promote services to trans clients and their families.

INDICATOR: Agency outreach and promotional efforts accurately reflect the level and quality of services available to trans clients and their families.

Standard 13. The composition of the agency Board of Directors and other institutional bodies shall encourage representation from trans communities.

INDICATOR: The process for electing or appointing members of the Board of Directors and other institutional bodies includes outreach to and inclusion of trans candidates.

Standard 14. Agency community benefits programs shall include trans people in the communities the agency serves.

INDICATOR: Development of criteria for community benefits programs that provide for inclusion and promotion of issues of concern to trans people and their families.

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