

Quick Tips: Trans Inclusion

A guide for service providers

- 1 Language**

Use the name and pronoun preferred by your clients, even when they aren't around. If you are unsure which pronoun a client prefers, ask. If you need to discuss "gendered" body parts with a client, echo the terms they use (such as "chest" rather than "breasts").
- 2 Manners**

If you wouldn't discuss your genitals with a colleague, it's probably inappropriate to ask a client about theirs. A person's genitals do not determine their gender for the purposes of social behavior, service provision, or legal status. Do not discuss a person's transgender status with others unless it is absolutely necessary to provide them with appropriate care or services. (Think: HIPPA.)
- 3 Focus**

Focus on what services the client is asking for. Most of the time, the services a transgender person is seeking is unrelated to their gender identity. Transgender clients should not be used as educational opportunities for yourself or colleagues.
- 4 Policies**

Make sure your agency has a written policy of non-discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. Ensure all staff know about and follow the policy.
- 5 Confront**

Ensure your agency has, shares with clients, and enforces a "safe space" policy in which prejudicial behaviors and statements by all staff and all clients are not permitted.
- 6 Paperwork**

Intake forms and other documents that ask about gender should allow clients to write in a response, or include a transgender option. Make sure questions appropriately distinguish between sexual orientation (the gender(s) someone is attracted to) and gender identity (the internal sense of being female, male, or something else).
- 7 Know & Tell**

If you need to ask a client a personal and/or sensitive question, tell the client why that information is needed before you ask. If you don't know why the information is needed, it is likely not pertinent to care and should not be asked.
- 8 Empower**

Although some clients need service providers to "take charge," many desire and are capable of helping direct their own care or services. If appropriate for that individual, ask transgender clients how they would like you to handle service provision issues.
- 9 Be Creative**

Transgender people may not fit into existing systems or forms. Respect your client by adapting the form or system to fit their needs, rather than forcing the client into a pre-determined and ill-fitting box.
- 10 Advocate**

Whenever possible, advocate for system, policy, and form changes so they better fit clients of every gender identity. If you aren't able to advocate for system change within your agency/field, consider volunteering your time at/for a transgender organization or event.

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po box 1272 | milwaukee, wi 53201 414-559-2123
AskFORGE@forge-forward.org | www.forge-forward.org