

DELIVERING INCLUSIVE CARE FOR LGBTQ PEOPLE

BEST PRACTICES FOR HEALTH CENTER STAFF

This resource guide offers best practices and corresponding resources to help health care staff provide affirming, inclusive, patient-led care for people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ). As displayed in the diagram below, this guide is divided into ten focus areas that are critical to support the provision of inclusive care. Please note that this document is not an exhaustive list of best practices, and best practices will continue to evolve over time.



	FOCUS	BEST PRACTICES	RESOURCES
1	Buy-in	Leadership at the senior executive level (e.g., CEO, CFO, Medical Director) and the Board of Directors has made providing high-quality, affirming, inclusive health care to LGBTQ patients an organizational priority.	
2	Clinical protocols, screening, education, and service provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure clinical protocols are up-to-date and reflect clinical best practices. • Offer pre- and post-exposure prophylaxis for HIV (PrEP and PEP). • Offer gender-affirming hormone therapy (or referrals for this service) using the informed consent model. • Do not make assumptions about a patient's identity or health behavior. • Provide education, screening, and services appropriate to a patient's behavior, risk, health status, and anatomy. • Use inclusive questions when taking a medical history. • Be aware that some patients may not be comfortable with gendered terms for body parts. Ask patients what terms they use for their anatomy and mirror those during the visit. • Ask only required and medically necessary information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Book: The Fenway Guide to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Health (Fenway Health) • Guidelines: Guidelines for the Primary and Gender-Affirming Care of Transgender and Gender Nonbinary People; 2nd edition. (UCSF Center of Excellence for Transgender Health) • Curriculum: Beyond Men, Women, or Both: A Comprehensive, LGBTQ-Inclusive, Implicit-Bias-Aware, Standardized-Patient-Based Sexual History Taking Curriculum (Mayfield) • Toolkit: PrEP Action Kit (National LGBTQIA+ Health Education Center) • Website: Transline: Transgender Medical Consultation Service • Guide: Pathways to Parenthood for LGBT People (National LGBTQIA+ Health Education Center) • Commentary: Transgender Men and Pregnancy (Besse)
3	Community outreach and engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect with the local LGBTQ organizations in the area to learn about their programming, the needs of the community, and how you might be able to collaborate. • Establish a Community Advisory Committee to create an ongoing dialogue between the agency and LGBTQ communities to provide guidance and advice on the health needs of LGBTQ people. • Conduct market research and develop marketing materials that include LGBTQ individuals. 	

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4	Customer service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be mindful of language (For example, do not use gendered honorifics such as "Sir", "Miss," or "Ma'am" and use "partner," "child," "baby," and "parent" when the individual you are speaking with has not indicated the terms that they use for themselves and their family.) Ask respectfully about names (For example, "Could your chart be under a different name?" instead of "What's your real name?") When you are confused or unsure, simply ask! If you make a mistake, correct yourself, apologize, and move on (For example, "I apologize for using the wrong pronoun"). Communicate effectively and respectfully with patients about the reasons for collecting data and the ways in which the data will be used for patient care. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fact sheet: Providing inclusive services and care for LGBT people: a guide for health care staff (National LGBTQIA+ Health Education Center) Glossary: Glossary of LGBT Terms for Health Care Teams (National LGBTQIA+ Health Education Center) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> English Spanish
5	Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create accessible, clearly labeled, gender-neutral bathrooms. Provide affirming brochures, magazines, and posters in waiting, counseling, and examination rooms. 	
6	Insurance	For transgender clients, correctly code each service so visits are covered by insurance.	
7	Intake forms, data collection, and EHR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask a patient for gender identity, pronouns, and the name the patient goes by, as well as the name, sex, and gender listed on the patient's insurance if it differs. Enter data into Electronic Health Record (EHR). Reference this info when talking to and about a patient. Customize EHR templates to allow all data to be captured. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brief: Focus on Forms and Policy: Creating and Inclusive Environment for LGBT Patients (National LGBTQIA+ Health Education Center) - See section 5. EHR resources. Toolkit: Ready, Set, Go! Guidelines and Tips for Collecting Patient Data on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (National LGBTQIA+ Health Education Center) Brief: Collecting Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Data in Electronic Health Records: Taking the Next Steps (National LGBTQIA+ Health Education Center)
8	Non-discrimination policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand institutional nondiscrimination policies to include gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation. Post or provide the organization's non-discrimination policy in waiting room. Establish a system to address complaints regarding treatment of LGBTQ people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy Example: Best Practices for Including LGBTQ People in Your Nondiscrimination Policy (Fundors for LGBTQ Issues)
9	Referrals	Create and maintain up-to-date referral list(s) of local support groups, community organizations, specialists, behavioral health providers, and other organizations that are welcoming to LGBTQ people.	

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10	Training	Provide ongoing training that addresses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Clinical care B. Cultural humility C. Customer service D. Data collection and entry E. Implicit bias F. Insurance billing G. Non-discrimination policy and procedures H. Referral process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trainer/consultant: The National LGBTQIA+ Health Education Center Educational programs, resources, and consultation to health care organizations with the goal of optimizing quality, cost-effective health care for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people. • Trainer/consultant: Transgender Training Institute National training and consulting services for the benefit of transgender and non-binary communities. • Issue brief: Health and Access to Care and Coverage for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Individuals in the U.S. (Kaiser Family Foundation) • Fact sheet: Affirmative Care for Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming People: Best Practices for Front-line Health Care Staff (National LGBTQIA+ Health Education Center) • Scenarios: Learning to Address Implicit Bias Towards LGBTQ Patients: Case Scenarios (National LGBTQIA+ Health Education Center)Online Modules: LGBTQ Services (Family Planning National Training Centers)

Notes: [National LGBTQIA+ Health Education Center Resource and Suggested Readings](#) provides an extensive resource list that provides links to key health websites, health initiatives, curricula and training, textbooks, briefs, reports, referral directories, professional associations, hotlines, family and parenting resources, as well as resources specific to youth, transgender people, people of color, families, discrimination, HIV/STI prevention and treatment, and more.

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