



Date: September 14, 2015

Subject: Education and Youth Committee – Serving the LGBTQ Youth  
City Council Informational Session – 15-0249R

TO: Angela Gibson

MEMO

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Please find attached a report from the Homeless Services Program for the Informational Session on “Cultural competency training to homeless service providers to assist serving homeless LGBTQ youth” scheduled for September 17<sup>th</sup> at 4pm.

Two completed packets are attached.

Please contact me with any questions.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "V. Dhanraj".

Vidia Dhanraj  
Director,  
Homeless Services Program  
410-396-2822  
[vidia.dhanraj@baltimorecity.gov](mailto:vidia.dhanraj@baltimorecity.gov)

**MAYOR’S OFFICE OF HUMAN SERVICES – HOMELESS SERVICES PROGRAM  
 COUNCIL INFORMATIONAL HEARING  
 SERVING HOMELESS LGBTQ YOUTH  
 COUNCIL REPORT SEPTEMBER 17, 2015**

The mission of the Mayor’s Office of Human Services, created in 2011, is to oversee the development and implementation of an integrated system of support for vulnerable populations. This includes the Homeless Services Program (HSP) that manages and coordinates funding which provides services for individuals experiencing or at-risk of homelessness.

HSP manages and administers federal, state and local funds in the City and contracts with service providers to provide shelter, housing and support services to the homeless population. As the Continuum of Care lead, HSP coordinates all mandated and supplemental activities addressing homelessness in the City bringing together funded and non-funded partners on a bi-monthly basis to share information and resources, provide technical support to meet regulations, and guides service delivery with trainings, problem solving and best practices.

On any given night in Baltimore, nearly 3,000 people are experiencing homeless in the City. Our most recent Point-in-Time Count showed that Baltimore City in January had more than 230 youth that were homeless and 10% were not in shelter.

**2015 PIT COUNT DATA – Baltimore City**

	<b>Sheltered</b>	<b>Unsheltered</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>2419</b>	<b>337</b>
<b>Chronically Homeless Individuals</b>	<b>423</b>	<b>166</b>
<b>Veterans</b>	<b>390</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Unaccompanied Youth (18-24)</b>	<b>196</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Unaccompanied Youth (&lt;18)</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>3</b>

This mandated activity by HUD is considered to be an undercount due to the limitations in data collection and specifically for youth who are generally considered a hidden population.

This past year the Journey Home Board engaged in a strategic planning process to outline an appropriate response to prevent and end homelessness among youth and young adults in Baltimore. In the interim report for the strategic plan precarious home environments, if they exist at all, are sited as being the main cause of youth homelessness. A disproportionate number of these youth identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning (LGBTQ) and when they are left without a supportive environment become homeless.

From 2012 to 2014, with the assistance of an Americorps VISTA worker, several tools were created to improve accessibility for LGBTQ individuals to housing programs and services. Program directors and their staff provided input, and facilitated discussions and trainings were instrumental in developing several resources that clarified guidelines and policy.

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A **Resource Guide to Serving Transgender Clients** was created for service providers with basic information around vocabulary and definitions as well as how to provide a respectful approach while engaging and assessing individuals. This guide will be included in the training tools that will be used for all providers of services to homeless individuals.

**Standards of Care for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Clients** were created that will be used across the continuum of care of services, as well. General guidelines and those specific for emergency and transitional housing programs are included. The Standards of Care are consistent with the national requirements and are mostly used already by City providers. Extra emphasis will assist with having inclusive programming for all individuals that are homeless.

Both, Resource Guide and Standards of Care are attached.

The City's emergency shelter, Weinberg Housing and Resource Center, has a **Transgender Inclusion Policy** that was developed and formally adopted by the shelter and is included in the standard operating procedures for the shelter. As a companion training aid, **Recommendations for Serving Transgender Clients** were created with questions to consider and possible scenarios to effectively provide services for staff. See attached policy and recommendations.

In addition the emergency shelter has rooms specifically designated for LGBTQ individuals should they request a private setting. This assignment would be completed at intake once the individual self-identifies. There are 4 beds in each room and one room on each floor.

### **Planned Activities**

Work and trainings centered around serving special populations continues to be a focal point of Homeless Services through the Continuum of Care. The awareness that well-informed service delivery can indeed be the turning point for those hardest to serve among our homeless will constantly challenge the work we do in the Homeless Service Program.

Upcoming events have been planned to address this need. A brief list is provided below:

- There will be CoC-wide training for all programs and their staff on sensitivity and trauma-informed care for LGBTQ and non-conforming individuals will be offered
- Smaller training opportunities will be convened in workgroups by service providers and housing type to specifically address any programmatic challenges
- The opportunity to problem solve on specific cases will be provided
- National resources will be disseminated to the CoC as well as any webinar training opportunities, conferences or regional efforts
- Successes in serving special populations will be acknowledged in CoC meetings

## *Recommendations for Serving Transgender Clients at the Weinberg Housing and Resource Center*

### **What do I do if... a client comes out to me as transgender?**

1. **Find a private space.** *A client's status as transgender is very sensitive information. It is important that you respect a client's privacy by finding a space where you do not think others will overhear.*
2. **Remind the client that this is a safe space.** *Many transgender clients come into a shelter worrying that they will be mistreated. Remind the client that they will be treated as the gender they identify and that this shelter has a non-discrimination policy protecting them. Don't forget to also ask about preferred name and pronouns.*
3. **Ask the client about their housing and showering preferences.** *Transgender clients can choose between several additional arrangements:*
  - a. *To be placed in a dorm according to the gender they identify with no additional accommodations.*
  - b. *To be placed in beds near the monitor station in whichever dorm they feel safest in.*
  - c. *To be placed in the special sleeping rooms in either dorm.*
  - d. *To be placed in the convalescent-care dorm (if space is available)*

*For showers, the options include:*

- a. *To shower normally in the facilities of the gender they identify.*
  - b. *To shower with more privacy at a different time than the other clients*
  - c. *To shower in the convalescent-care dorm,*
  - d. *To shower in a private shower on the first floor.*
4. **Keep this information private.** *Never inform other clients about a client's status as transgender. A client has the right to decide whether or not to tell other residents. You may inform other staff or administrators, but only if it is directly related to providing services for this client. Always inform the client who you are going to tell and why.*

*Here is a sample script you can use:*

**“Would you like to find a private space where we can talk?**

**In this facility we respect the gender identity of our transgender residents .What pronouns do you prefer we use when referring to you? What name do you prefer we use?**

**You are welcome to stay in the dorm according your gender identity. If you identify as a woman, you are welcome to stay with the women; if you identify as man, you are welcome to stay with the men. In the past, however, some transgender clients have felt unsafe because of some of the biases that other residents hold. As a result there are additional accommodations if you prefer. (Please refer to step 3 above for list of available accommodations).**

**Also, we can arrange various shower options if they would help you feel safer. (Please refer to step 3 above for a list of available accommodations).**

**Let us know what you prefer. I will keep this information private, but I may have to tell my supervisor about your status as transgender so that we can better help you. Do you have any other concerns? ”**

## *Recommendations for Serving Transgender Clients at the Weinberg Housing and Resource Center*

### **What do I do if... I think a client might be transgender?**

- 1) **Ask yourself**—“*Why do I think this person is transgender?*” It is important to remember that just because you think that a client might be transgender, it does not necessarily mean he or she actually is transgender. The only real way to know for sure is if the client tells you. People come in all shapes and sizes, so just because a man looks feminine or a woman looks masculine does not mean they are transgender. For example, there are plenty of non-transgender women who have deep voices, can grow facial hair, and even have what might appear to be an Adam's apple.
- 2) **Find a confidential place to have a conversation.** If you have taken the time to think about it, pull the client aside in a private area for a conversation. Do not inform them why you are pulling them aside, as this may draw suspicion from other residents.
- 3) **Allow the client to come out to you.** Since this can be a very sensitive subject, do not outright ask: “Are you transgender?” This may inadvertently make him or her feel pressured into telling you. Ask if he or she is having any problems with other clients. If the client does not come out to you, there is nothing else you can do at this moment. Thank them for their time and explain that you just wanted feedback about their stay. Even if you are positively convinced that this client is transgender, you cannot act on it unless he or she tells you.
- 4) **If you do find out this client is transgender, keep it private.** Only tell other staff and administrators if it is immediately relevant to providing this client with services. Proceed to follow the steps on the first page and ask about bed and shower preferences.

Here is a sample script you can use:

“Would you be willing to speak with me and share some of your feedback about your stay here? I wanted to know if you have had any concerns.

Remember, this is a safe space where we are here to help you. If there is anything you would like to share with us you are welcome to, but please do not feel as though you have to talk about anything that makes you uncomfortable. What you say here is confidential. Under some circumstances, I may have to inform another staff member or an administrator of something that you share, but I will not tell other residents.

Have you experienced any harassment or threats from other clients? If so, what happened? Do you feel targeted in any way?

Thank you for your time. If there is anything we can do to make you feel safer or any information that could help us to better serve you, please let me know.”

## Recommendations for Serving Transgender Clients at the Weinberg Housing and Resource Center

### What do I do if... I receive a complaint about a transgender client?

- 1) **Determine if the complaint is legitimate or illegitimate.** Legitimate complaints are the result of a transgender client violating a policy. If a transgender client is harassing, threatening, fighting, engaging in sexual activities, or any other violation of policy, this is a legitimate complaint. An illegitimate complaint is one that is targeting a transgender individual because he or she is transgender, not because of anything inappropriate that he or she is doing.
- 2) **If it is a legitimate complaint, treat it like any other policy violation.** Appropriate measures should be taken according to the official policy. Do not assume that a policy violation is related to gender (e.g. this transgender woman was violent so she cannot be a real woman).

Quiz: Which of these are legitimate complaints?

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| a.) I think Mary really has a penis                | b.) Mary intentionally flashed me getting out of the shower |
| c.) Mary told me that she is transgender           | d.) Mary threatened to hit me                               |
| d.) I don't feel safe because Mary is really a man | e.) Mary is very masculine, there is no way she is a woman  |

(Answers: b and d are the correct answers because they reflect an actual violation of policy)

**NOTE:** In some situations, it can be particularly difficult to determine if this complaint is legitimate or illegitimate. Many believe the myth that transgender identity is based on sexuality, and therefore attribute sexual motives to innocent behaviors. For example: a client accidentally dropping his/her towel while running out of the shower is very different from flashing someone, yet bias or fear could lead to this accident being interpreted as deliberate. Always investigate the situation carefully before making a decision.

- 3) **If it is an illegitimate complaint, take actions to educate.** Most of the time, illegitimate complaints are usually the result of either bias or ignorance. Sharing space with transgender people can be a new and scary experience for many clients. Many service providers hear complaints, especially from their female residents, that sharing space with transgender women is putting them at risk for sexual assault. Explain to concerned residents that this is not true. Transgender women are not men and are no more likely to sexually assault someone than a non-transgender woman. In fact, transgender women are at high risk for being victims of sexual assault. To assume that someone is dangerous just because they are transgender is insulting, just as it would be insulting if you were to assume that someone is dangerous just because they are Black, Jewish, HIV positive, or a veteran. Do not speak to the transgender person about an illegitimate complaint; it is not the transgender person's fault that someone does not like him or her.
- 4) **Is this client out as transgender to the person with the complaint?** Being 'out' means that the resident with the complaint was informed by the transgender person. Just because others correctly assume that a client is transgender does not give you the right to confirm it. If the client is not out as transgender, do not out him or her when speaking to someone with a complaint. When in doubt, always assume that the client is not out. If the client is not out, here is a sample script:

“I understand that you are concerned that there might be a man sharing space with you. I assure you, we do not allow men to stay in the women's floor. We accept all kinds of women here who are not safe on the streets. Women come in all shapes and sizes, just because someone looks different from you, or is not feminine enough for your standard does not make her a man. It is not our job to decide what makes someone a woman. If you say you are a woman, you are a woman as far as we are concerned. We accept that a person's gender identity is what they tell us, investigating someone's anatomy would be inappropriate.”

## *Recommendations for Serving Transgender Clients at the Weinberg Housing and Resource Center*

### What do I do if... I receive a complaint about a transgender client? Part II

*If the client is out publically, you need to focus your conversation on educating and building tolerance. Here is a sample script:*

“I understand that you are concerned that there might be a man this sharing space with you. This person that you are concerned about is not actually a man, she is a transgender woman. In order to create an environment where everyone is welcomed and respected we need to recognize that she is just a different type of woman, and we must make room for all types of women who are not safe on the streets. Transgender people can spend their whole lives facing discrimination and stigma, just like many of us are stigmatized because of race, religion, or disability. We want to keep our transgender residents from feeling additionally stigmatized because they are a little different from the other women.

Most of the transgender people that we have helped have been victims of sexual or physical abuse. Imagine how painful it would to tell someone with that kind of history that they are dangerous to others because of who they are, not what they have done.

I assure you that we have very strict rules about appropriate behavior which we will enforce at all times. If this individual is behaving inappropriately, do not hesitate to report it to staff. However, being transgender or talking about your gender identity is not considered inappropriate. Even if you are uncomfortable with transgender people, it is important that we respect each other's differences here and make them feel welcomed. Segregating or stigmatizing people because of their gender identity is both illegal and wrong.

I know this is a lot of information, if you have any more questions about transgender people, please let me know, I'm happy to answer any of your questions.”

#### *Optional Exercise:*

*These conflicts can serve as wonderful opportunities to build understanding about diversity. One great way to do this is to initiate a conversation about stigma. Most people have had experience being stigmatized for one reason or another. Whether it is because of race, ethnicity, religion, disability, or for being homeless, having an opportunity to share experiences brings people together and shows that they have common ground. (NOTE: This exercise is only appropriate in rare circumstances when you have time and it seems as though the client is willing to talk through these issues. It can be very helpful in the right situation, but you should use your judgment as to whether or not it is appropriate.)*

*Here are some questions to start a discussion:*

“Do you have any examples of times when someone thought you were dangerous for unfair reasons? Have you ever felt discriminated against because you have a certain skin color, or hold certain religious beliefs? Have you ever felt stigmatized? What did that feel like? Can you imagine how a transgender person might feel stigmatized?”





# WEINBERG HOUSING AND RESOURCE CENTER

## TRANSGENDER INCLUSION POLICY

### Who are Transgender People?

The word *transgender* describes many types of people. Most often, it describes a person who experiences and/or expresses gender in a way that differs from what most people expect. This includes: people who go from living full time as one gender to living full time as another gender, people who others may not think are masculine or feminine enough, and people who identify as being between a man and a woman. What all of these people have in common is that who they are differs from who most other people think they should be.

### Why is this Policy Important?

This policy is important for two reasons. The first reason is to obey the law. *Baltimore City Council Bill 02-0857* makes it illegal to discriminate against someone because of their gender identity or expression.

The second reason is the fact that transgender people tend to face discrimination and violence at very high rates. 19% of transgender people in the United States have experienced homelessness because they were discriminated against for being transgender. Of those who have experienced homelessness, 29% have been refused service at a shelter because they are transgender. Many of those who were allowed to stay at a shelter report being harassed and assaulted while spending the night.

One of the causes of this high rate of violence is when people are placed in sleeping areas where they are likely to be targeted. For example, transgender women who are housed with men are often targets of violence and sexual harassment. Because of this, many transgender people are afraid to stay in shelters or avoid them altogether. This policy is in place in order to help stop the harassment and violence that transgender people tend to face on a daily basis. At the Weinberg Housing and Resource Center, we want to make sure that all clients, transgender or not, feel welcomed, respected, and safe.

### What is the Policy?

- I. Staff members are **never** permitted to disclose a client's gender identity to other clients.
- II. Staff members are **only** permitted to disclose a client's gender identity to other staff if it is pertinent to shelter operations and if it is done in a private, confidential manner.
- III. At intake, staff shall ask every individual to state their gender identity and assignment of sleeping accommodations shall be based solely on that self-identification.
- IV. If a person appears to be transgender, a sensitivity-trained staff member must ask, in a private environment and with assurance of confidentiality, whether that person identifies as transgender so that special accommodations can be offered regardless of initial intake response.
- V. If a person self-identifies as transgender at any time, the staff member must explain that there are additional sleeping accommodations besides routine bed placement that are available to them, including but not limited to:
  - i. Beds in special sleeping rooms with a private toilet in the dorm of their choice. (Note: Client must be informed that these are not close to the monitor station.)
  - ii. Beds within the dorm of their choice (male and female) that are closest to the monitor station.
  - iii. Beds in the C-dorm (only if any are available).
- VI. If a client reports that their gender identification has changed, their new choice of gender shall govern how they are identified and how their dorm is assigned. (Note: If a change in gender identification occurs after beds have already been assigned, the client should be informed that the change will take effect the following day unless the individual believes that that night's safety is a concern.)

## Transgender Myth vs. Fact

**Myth:** It does not take long to change from one gender to another.

**Fact:** It can take many years of hormone therapy, voice lessons, training, legal paperwork, and/or difficult conversations with friends and family for a transgender person to get to the point where he or she is comfortable. As a result, there is a period when many transgender people are living *between* genders.

**Myth:** All you need to do to change from one gender to another is get a sex change operation.

**Fact:** There is no such thing as a sex change operation. While changing from one gender to another may include surgery, there are a whole lot of different types of surgery. It can also be very expensive (as much as \$70,000) so most transgender people cannot afford it even if they want it. Most transgender people can live successfully and happily as the gender that they know themselves to be without ever getting surgery.

**Myth:** Transgender people take advantage of the fact that they are transgender to switch back and forth between genders whenever it is convenient.

**Fact:** Living between genders is a scary thing to do. You might notice a transgender person dressing as a different gender during the day to go to work, or acting differently around certain people. Many transgender people may seem to be switching back and forth between genders because they are cautious about who knows that they are transgender, or they are trying to protect themselves from discrimination in different situations. This is one of the many ways that transgender people keep themselves safe while they are living between genders.

**Myth:** Transgender people are really just gay or lesbian.

**Fact:** Television, music, and movies often wrongly depict transgender people as gay men or lesbians trying to trick straight people. This could not be further from the truth. Most gay men and lesbians have no interest in tricking straight people, and most transgender people are just trying to be accepted as the gender they know themselves to be. Transgender people can be gay, bisexual, or straight. Who they are attracted to has nothing to do with their gender identity.

## What Does it Mean to be the Real Me?

One of the most common reasons for the problems that transgender people face is the belief that they are not '*real*' men or women. Often, you might hear people refer to a transgender person as a man disguised as a woman. This assumes that transgender women are not '*real*' women or that transgender men are not '*real*' men.

The truth is, transgender women are women who others wrongly assume are men, and transgender men are men who others wrongly assume are women. They are no less '*real*' than a non-transgender woman or man.

Sometimes, a transgender person will change their body or appearance to look more like the gender they know themselves to be. They are not '*becoming*' a man or a woman by doing this, but rather trying to get other people to see them as they really are.

## How Can I Help My Transgender Peers?

For those who are not transgender, it may seem hard to help those who are. Always keep in mind that many transgender people have faced a lot of discrimination throughout their lives

Because living as a transgender person is so challenging, many may wish to keep their status as transgender private. This is not because they want to '*trick*' anyone, but because they do not want to face the problems that often come with being known as transgender.

For this reason, do not ask someone if they are transgender, even if they look like they might be. If you do find out that someone is transgender, it is also best not to share it with anyone else without asking the transgender person first. Always treat them just as you would any other man or woman. Asking questions about their bodies or if they have had some kind of surgery often makes transgender people uncomfortable or feel unsafe. **If you see an incident of harassment or violence against a transgender person, please report it to staff.**

## Definition

A transgender individual is a person whose experience and/or expression of gender differ from what most people expect.

Everyone, transgender or not, has three ways they are influenced by gender:

- **Gender Identity:** our innate, psychological sense of being a man or a woman.
- **Gender Expression:** the way we dress, appear, groom ourselves, behave, and speak that can be considered either *masculine* or *feminine*.
- **Gender Attribution:** the gender that other's view us as or assume that we are. Doctors give us a gender attribution when they fill out our birth certificates, but we are also given a gender attribution everyday when other people look at us, decide whether we are a man or a woman, and treat us accordingly.

Most people's gender identity, expression, and attribution do not cause any conflicts because they all say the same thing (e.g. they view themselves as a woman, they act like a woman, and they are treated like a woman). A *transgender person*, however, has a gender identity and/or expression which differ from their gender attribution (e.g. they view themselves as a woman, they act like a woman, but they are treated like a man). Gender tends to be fluid throughout an individual's life. Therefore, it is not uncommon for the nuances of anyone's gender identity or expression to change throughout their life.

## The Transgender Umbrella

*Transgender* is often considered an "umbrella term" which means that it encompasses a lot of different types of gendered experiences such as:

- People who seek to transition (or have already transitioned) from living their life as one gender to living their life as another.
- People who identify as a gender completely different from 'man' and 'woman', or as a combination of both
- People who express themselves in a way that is not considered appropriate for the gender that other's view them to be.

## The Lived Experience

A national survey of transgender people found that because of their gender identity and/or expression:

- 41% reported having had attempted suicide at least once (compared to 1.6% of the general population)
- 90% reported being harassed, mistreated, or discriminated against on the job
- 12% reported having traded sex for a place to stay
- 19% reported being denied housing
- 11% reported being evicted
- 19% reported experiencing homelessness
- 29% of those who experienced homelessness reported being rejected from homeless shelters
- 55% reported having been harassed in shelters
- 25% reported having been physically assaulted in shelters
- 22% reported having been sexually assaulted in shelters



## Being Respectful

Being respectful and sensitive to transgender needs is not difficult. The most important thing to remember is to always treat someone in a way that is **consistent** with their **gender identity**.

- **Names and Pronouns:** Always refer to transgender individuals using their preferred names, even if it does not match the name on their ID. The same is true with pronouns. Never use the pronoun *'it'* in reference to a transgender person; this can be dehumanizing. If you are not sure what pronouns someone uses, it is okay to respectfully ask.
- **What about gender-neutral pronouns?:** A few transgender people may prefer pronouns that you may not be familiar with. Although this may be difficult, please try your best to use the pronouns they prefer. It is never rude to ask how to use an unfamiliar pronoun.
- **Writing about Transgender People:** When referring to transgender people in writing, it is considered insulting to use quotation marks around their preferred name and pronouns (e.g. "Mary" says that "she" is a "woman").
- **Respecting Privacy:** It is never respectful to ask about transition plans, whether or not a person is going to get a particular surgery, hormonal treatment, or any questions about their genitalia.
- **Coming Out and Being Outed:** Disclosing one's status as transgender is a very difficult decision that takes a lot of preparation and forethought. If a transgender individual decides to disclose that they are transgender, it is considered private. Always ask permission before telling anyone else about someone's status as transgender. If you need to inform your supervisor or another staff person because it is directly relevant to the provision of services, it is best to tell the transgender client first. They have the right to know who is receiving this information and why.
- **Using the Term Correctly:** The term *'transgender'* is an adjective. It is incorrect to use it as a noun or a verb, such as calling someone *'a transgender'* or referring to someone as *'transgendered.'* Someone who is living and expressing themselves as a man should be called a man. If talking about their status as transgender is important it is appropriate to say transgender man or trans man. The same is true for transgender women.
- **Respecting the Transition Process:** Transitioning from living full time as one gender to living full time as another is a very extensive and difficult process. It is not something that happens all at once. Very often, transgender individuals will be living as one gender around one group of people and as another gender around a different group. This does not make them any less transgender and it is important to respect their timeline for transitioning and coming out. If they come out to you, it is important to ask if they have different preferred pronouns for different groups of people. This way you can be respectful of their transition timeline. (For more information on the transition process see "Transitioning")
- **Being the Educator:** While many transgender people are happy to educate others about transgender issues, many are uncomfortable. It is never appropriate to force a transgender individual to educate others about their own identity, especially in a housing program where their safety may be in jeopardy. If a situation arises with other clients, be the one to explain what it means to be transgender rather than forcing the transgender person to do so.
- **Stand up to Harassment:** If you see harassment or violence, be the one to stop it and explain why it is inappropriate. (For more information on harassment see "Common Forms of Harassment?")



## Harassment

Identifying harassment of transgender people is just like identifying any other type of harassment. Violence, threats, sexual posturing, or inappropriate questions are all very common form of harassment that transgender people experience.

Additionally, there are other terms that are considered especially defamatory to transgender people and should be treated as harassment, such as: *Tranny, Shemale, It, Man in a Dress, Chick with a Dick, etc.*) Sometimes transgender people may use these terms with each other, but usually this does not make it appropriate for non-transgender people to use them.

## Transitioning

To transition means to change certain elements of one's life to go from living as one gender to living as another. This can include anything from changing appearance to undergoing surgical procedures. Transitioning is done for a variety of reasons. Often, the goal is to bring one's image and presentation of gender to a place where it is closer to the individual's image of themselves and/or so that they are properly attributed by others. Contrary to popular belief, there is not one *surgery* that people can undergo, and very few even get surgery. Here are 3 types of transition:

- **Social Transition:** This is often the first stage of transitioning, usually (but not always) involving: coming out as transgender, changing wardrobe, asking others to use different pronouns, adapting voice, using a different public restroom, and changing name.
- **Chemical Transition:** This is sometimes also called Hormone Therapy. It involves taking hormones such as estrogen and testosterone in order to enhance appearance in desirable ways.
- **Physical (or Surgical) Transition:** This involves a wide variety of possible procedures. Often they are colloquially divided into two categories: top surgery—breast augmentation or chest surgery, and bottom surgery—involving a wide variety of possible procedures including: orchiectomy and vaginoplasty or hysterectomy, metoidioplasty, and phalloplasty.

## Transition Health Issues

Ideally, medical components of transitioning such as hormone therapy or surgery should be performed by a trained and qualified health professional. However, the vast majority of insurance carriers do not cover transition related care, nor can many transgender individuals afford paying the medical costs out-of-pocket.

One of the consequences of the inaccessibility of transition related care is that many resort to dangerous methods such as using non-prescription hormones acquired on the streets. Some hormones exist in an injection form, and unsafe needle use can lead to the spread of HIV. Similarly, the use of silicone to shape the body is common among trans women. This silicone is not medical-grade and is often injected directly into the body. This is extremely dangerous and can often be fatal. It is important to be aware of these unsafe transition practices.



## Vocabulary

These are commonly used terms of the community. Please keep in mind that language is constantly changing, therefore some terms which were once considered appropriate and affirming some may consider derogatory. The key is to ask which terms the individual prefers and remember to use them.

### Gender Terminology:

- **Coming Out**—The act of publically disclosing one's status as transgender. To be *outed* means to have someone else disclose one's status as transgender.
- **Dysphoria**—A sense of frustration and/or despair experienced by transgender individuals because their gendered appearance, experience, and/or treatment is inconsistent with their desires or expectations.
- **Gender**—The innate psychological condition of embodying a particular category such as man or woman and the social expectation that is assigned to people according to these categories. This contrasts with the term *sex*.
- **Passing/Being Passed**—To be attributed as a gender that is affirming to one's gender identity.
- **Sex**—A term distinct from gender. Sex is the coming together of several biological traits including genitalia, chromosomes, secondary sex characteristics, and hormone balances order to form the categories of male and female.
- **Sexual Orientation**—Who someone is sexually attracted to. This is different from someone's gender identity. Everyone has a sexual orientation regardless of their gender identity. Transgender people may be gay, straight, bisexual, or asexual.
- **Stealth**—A term used to describe people who have transitioned and choose not identify as transgender or who pass full-time and keep their transition history a secret (Some may consider this term outdated, biased, or offensive).
- **Transitioning**—The act of changing from living as one gender to living as another.
- **Transphobia**—Hatred, fear, or disrespect of transgender or gender non-conforming people.

### Different Gender Identities and Expressions of the Transgender Community:

- **Agender**—Someone who does not identify as having a gender
- **Cross-dressing**—Dressing in clothing considered appropriate for a gender other than the individual identifies. This term refers to expression not identity, therefore a trans woman who wears a skirt is not considered to be cross-dressing.
- **Drag Queen/King**—A performer who caricatures a woman or a man by cross-dressing for the purpose of entertaining. Although transgender individuals and drag queens/kings are different, some transgender people may perform drag because it is a safe space to explore gender before they feel safe coming out.
- **Gender Non-conforming (GNC)**—When someone experiences or expresses gender in a way that is inconsistent with society's rules for appropriate masculine and feminine behavior.
- **Genderqueer**—Term referring to individuals who identifies or expresses as neither a man nor a woman, either identifying as something in-between or something completely different.
- **Intersex**—The state of having some kind of ambiguity in biological features that determine sex. This is different from being transgender though some intersex individuals may identify as transgender.
- **MtF (Male-to-Female) /FtM (Female-to-Male)**—A term for someone who has or seeks to transition from one gender to the other. (Some may consider this term outdated, though it is still very commonly used).
- **Trans Man**—A transgender individual who identifies and/or expresses as a man.
- **Trans Woman**—A transgender individual who identifies and/or expresses as a women.
- **Transsexual**—A term used to describe transgender individuals who have transitioned (Many consider this term outdated or offensive).



## Standards of Care for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Clients

### General Guidelines

- All programs should include prohibitions against discriminating on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression in their official policy.
- LGBT sensitivity trainings should be conducted for staff members at on at least a yearly basis. It is recommended that attendance at these staff trainings be mandatory.
- Program intake should provide clients the opportunity to disclose their identity as LGBT if they so choose.
- Transgender clients should be treated solely as their *self-identified gender*, and be given access to all facilities and services offered to individuals of that gender. This includes dormitories, restrooms, and showers where applicable.
- Information about a client's status as LGBT should be kept confidential and only be shared with other staff members if this information is immediately relevant to the provision of services for that client.
- Staff should ask clients who self-identify as transgender of their preferred name and pronoun and use this preference in all interactions with the client.
- The ability of a transgender individual to meet a staff member's standard of appearance for their gender identity should not inhibit their ability to access affirming services.
- Programs should make their LGBT-accessibility visible to clients by publically posting signs, symbols, or non-discrimination policy.

### Guidelines for Emergency and Transitional Programs

- When dealing with complaints from clients about sharing space with an LGBT individual, staff members should offer to accommodate the person with the complaint, not the target of the complaint.
- Staff members may offer alternative sleeping, restroom, and shower arrangements to LGBT clients but these accommodations *must* be optional and only offered if an LGBT client expresses discomfort with the standard accommodations.
- Efforts should be made to ensure that restroom and shower facilities provide sufficient privacy for all clients.