



# Quick Reference Guide: Queer Health

## COMMUNICATION BASICS

### 1. Use Inclusive/Neutral Language

Instead of..	Try using..
Wife/husband, boyfriend/girlfriend	Partner, significant other, or use the name of the person
Mother/father	Parents
Daughter/son	Child, kids
Sister/brother	Siblings
Male/female condom	Barrier device
"She needs a follow up"	"The patient needs a follow up"

### 2. Reflect Patient's Choice of Language

- Use the words that the patient uses to describe themselves
- If they say my wife, then copy that

### 3. Pronouns

- DO NOT ASSUME pronouns, gender, or sexual orientation
- Avoid using Miss, Mrs., or Mr. when addressing
- Use THEY or avoid pronouns until you are sure
- Never refer to someone as "it"
- Ask "how would you like to be addressed?" or "what name and pronouns would you like me to use?"

### 4. Chosen Name

- Name, gender, and pronouns do not always match what is on the patient record.
- Never ask someone what their "real" name is
- Ensure that chosen name is documented and this information is passed on to all staff

### 5. Be Accountable/Respectful

- If you hear someone using the wrong pronouns, terms, names, etc., politely correct them
- Apologize if you make an error
- Avoid questions that are unnecessary. Ask yourself "what do I need to know" and "how can I ask it in a sensitive way?"

(Bruise, 2020; Cahill et al., 2021; Millyard & Gilbert, 2019; National LGBT Health Education Center, 2020)

## COMMON TERMS:

**Queer:** historically used as a derogatory term, but now reclaimed and used as a positive way to include identities not covered under the LGBTQ2+ acronym

**Cis/Cisgender:** gender identity matches sex assigned at birth

**Two-Spirit:** spiritual/cultural identity to describe having both feminine and masculine spirits. used by indigenous people: First Nation, Metis, Inuit.

**Lesbian:** woman who is attracted to women

**Gay:** person who is attracted to person of their own gender (usually describes men)

**Gender Identity:** deep, internal sense of being a woman, a man, neither or both. may change over lifetime

**Gender Expression:** the way in which a person expresses their gender identity. may not match societal expectations so is not always a reliable indicator of gender identity

**Non-binary:** person does not identify with binary gender (not male or female)

**Gender Fluid/Genderqueer:** identify as male and female, another gender or gender identity changed over time

**Gender Non-Conforming:** gender identity different than societal norms

**Gender Dysphoria:** distress because assigned sex does not match gender identity. medical diagnosis that is often needed before gender affirming surgeries or hormones can be prescribed.

(Government of Canada, 2020; Lee & Kanji, 2017; Levitt et al., 2020; National LGBT Health Education Center, 2020)

## TRANSGENDER

- The word transitioning could be offensive. “Gender affirmation process” or “gender confirming process” is more appropriate.
- The words transgendered, it, transgenderism, she-male, sex-change, and tranny, should be avoided
- **Hormone therapy:** the administration of hormones, such as estrogen or testosterone, in order to match a person’s physical characteristics to their gender identity.
- **Gender affirming surgery:** surgeries used to modify one’s body to match their gender identity
- **Top surgery:** surgery used to either enhance breast size (breast augmentation) or remove breast tissue (chest reconstruction)
- **Bottom surgery:** surgical procedure used to modify the genitals to more appropriately match one’s gender identity.
  - Female-to-male: vaginectomy, metoidioplasty, phalloplasty
  - Male-to-female: orchiectomy, penectomy, vaginoplasty, labiaplasty, clitoroplasty
- **DO NOT ASSUME:** Not every transgender person goes through gender affirming surgeries or uses hormones. Additionally, people that do, could be in different stages of the process.

(Alberta Health Services, 2019; Clary & Hannah, 2018; National LGBTQ Health Education Center, 2020)

## COMMON HEALTH CONCERNS

### Lesbian

- Cervical/Endometrial cancer: less likely to get pap test
- Breast Cancer: less likely to get mammogram

### Gay Man

- Eating Disorders: bingeing and purging rates are higher
- Anal Cancer, HIV, STI

### Transgender

- Sexual Dysfunction
- Endometrial Cancer: with hormone use

### LGBTQ2+ Youth

- 2-3x more likely to attempt suicide and be homeless
- More likely to be bullied

### LGBTQ2+ Older Adult

- Isolation: diminished family support
- Discrimination when living in long term care

### Common Among the Entire LGBTQ Population

- Depression, suicide and anxiety, intimate partner violence
- Higher rates of alcohol, drug use and smoking
- Homelessness, STI, HIV
- Many face barriers to healthcare access

(Lee, 2000; Levitt et al., 2020; National LGBTQ Health Education Center, 2020)

## COMMUNITY RESOURCES

### Ontario/Canada

- Diversity Ed - Safer Spaces Canada - [www.diversityed.ca](http://www.diversityed.ca)
- Rainbow Health Ontario - [www.rainbowhealthontario.ca](http://www.rainbowhealthontario.ca)
- PFLAG Canada - [www.pflagcanada.ca](http://www.pflagcanada.ca)
- Queer Events - [www.queerevents.ca](http://www.queerevents.ca)
- Egale Canada - [egale.ca](http://egale.ca)

### Other

- LGBTQ+ Health - <https://www.cdc.gov/lgbthealth/>
- LGBTQ2 Toolkit - <https://doaskdotell.org/>

**Trans/Transgender:** gender identify does not align with sex assigned at birth

**Transgender Woman/ Male-to-Female (mtf):** assigned male at birth but identifies/lives as a woman (some just use the term woman)

**Transgender Man/ Female-to-Male (ftm):** assigned female at birth but identifies/lives as a man (some just use the term man)

**Intersex:** sex characteristics (gonads, genitals, chromozones) that are not distinct to female or male. ex. reproductive organs from female internally but male externally. (no longer called hermaphrodite)

**Bisexual:** person attracted to people of their own gender and other genders

**Pansexual:** attracted to people regardless of gender identity or sex

**Asexual:** lacks interest or attraction in sexual expression. they may still have sexual partners

(Government of Canada, 2020; Lee & Kanji, 2017; Levitt et al., 2020; National LGBTQ Health Education Center, 2020)

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