Youth Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity: What Every Provider Needs to Know

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Learning Objectives

• Assess one’s own knowledge of health issues in LGBTQI youth.

• Discuss key terms, health disparities, and patient experiences related to LGBTQI youth health.

• Outline ways in which health care providers can approach LGBTQI youth to provide compassionate and informed care (group discussion).
LBTQI+ Glossary and Terms for Health Care Teams:

https://bit.ly/2HMomIm
The Genderbread Person

Identity ≠ Expression ≠ Sex  
Gender ≠ Sexual Orientation

Sex Assigned At Birth
- Female  - Intersex  - Male

Sexually Attracted to...
- Women a/o Feminine a/o Female People
- Men a/o Masculine a/o Male People

Romantically Attracted to...
- Women a/o Feminine a/o Female People
- Men a/o Masculine a/o Male People
Gender Abacus
Defining self outside of the gender binary

Anatomy
Female  |  Male

Gender Identity
Female  |  Male

Gender Expression
Feminine  |  Masculine

Sexual/Romantic Attraction
Men  |  Women
Health Disparities: What we know

• Stigmatization
• Ostracism
• Parental rejection

Top five reasons why LGBT youth are homeless or at-risk of becoming homeless (n=381)

- Ran away because of family rejection of sexual orientation or gender identity: 46%
- Forced out by parents because of sexual orientation or gender identity: 43%
- Physical, emotional, or sexual abuse at home: 32%
- Aged out of the foster care system: 17%
- Financial or emotional neglect from family: 14%

Williams Institute, 2012
Health Disparities: What we know

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Eating Disorders
- Suicidal Ideation

(Kann et al., 2017)
Health Disparities: What we know

- Homelessness
- Social Isolation
- Lack of access
- Survival Sex
Health Disparities: What we know

- Bullying
- Violence

Adolescents open about LGBTQ orientation (per Consortium of Higher Ed LGBT Resource Professions)

- Verbally harassed
- Punched, Kicked, or Injured
- Dropped out d/t harassment
Health Disparities: What we know

Rates of Substance Abuse (YRBS 2001-2009)

- Alcohol <30d
- Marijuana (current)
- Cocaine (current)
- Ecstasy (ever)
- Meth (ever)
- Heroin (ever)

- Bisexual Youth
- G/L Youth
- Questioning Youth
- Heterosexual Youth
Sexual Behavior

Percentage of high school students who were ever physically forced to have sexual intercourse

- Lesbian, gay, and bisexual students: 18%
- Heterosexual students: 5%

Lesbian, gay, and bisexual students were more than 3 times more likely to have ever been physically forced to have sexual intercourse.

Percentage of high school students who experienced sexual dating violence

- Lesbian, gay, and bisexual students: 23%
- Heterosexual students: 9%

Lesbian, gay, and bisexual students were more than 2 times more likely to have experienced sexual dating violence.

Source: CDC Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report "Sexual Identity, Sex of Sexual Contacts, and Health-Related Behaviors Among Students in Grades 9-12, 2015"
HIV and Youth

OF THE 38,739 NEW HIV DIAGNOSES IN THE US AND DEPENDENT AREAS* IN 2017, 8,164 (21%) WERE AMONG YOUTH AGED 13 TO 24.

New HIV Diagnoses Among Youth by Transmission Category and Sex in the US and Dependent Areas, 2017

- Injection drug use: 1%
- Heterosexual contact: 3%
- Male-to-male sexual contact: 3%
- Other: <1%
- Other: 3%
- Injection drug use: 11%

Other Races/Ethnicities: 6%

- Black/African American: 51%
- Hispanic/Latino: 25%
- White: 18%

Young Gay and Bisexual Men (N=6,800)

CDC, 2017
Resilience

(Harper, et al., 2014)
Other Evidence to Know

• In no situation is a referral for conversion or reparative therapy indicated (APA, IOM)

• Care should be confidential

• Informing parents/guardians about teen’s sexual identity or behavior could expose to harm
Treatment Guidelines to Bookmark

• CDC treatment guidelines for STI testing, including youth MSM

• Endocrine Treatment of Transgender Persons: An Endocrine Society Clinical Practice Guideline
Assisting Parents

• Check in regularly, offer support
• PFLAG
• Gay Family Support
• Lead with Love
• It Gets Better

I love my child, but...
things weren’t easy at first...

Is your child 13-17 years old?
Is your child lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or uncertain about their sexual orientation or gender?

Fenway Health
What We Wish Our Providers Knew

interACT Youth
is a group of intersex advocates in their teens and twenties working to raise intersex awareness.

We decided it's time we told our own stories and spoke our truths. In 2012, we started a conversation about what we wish our doctors knew.

We're sharing that with you now, and we hope you'll pass it on.

Medical Exams
- Brief the nurses and medical assistants who are going to work with me.
- Don't patronize us by speaking to our guardians instead of us.
- Ask the patient how they would like the exam to go. It's okay to give us some control.
- Engage with patients as experts on their own experiences.
- It's ridiculous to think genital exams wouldn't bother a child! Even adults hate them!
- Give us the option of who we want in the room with us. This includes both family members and other medical professionals.
- Don't stick your fingers up a child's vagina if it's not absolutely necessary.
- Don't give a genital exam if it is simply for your own curiosity.
- Don't ask young kids if they have questions right after they've been shell-shocked from the genital exam you just gave them. Give them time to process.
- Help a child to understand the difference between a standard genital exam and molestation.
- Have a pediatric speculum nearby.
- Don't take pictures of my genitals!

Communication
- Don't assume I am comfortable with the medical term "DSD" versus intersex. Ask me what I prefer.
- Being intersex doesn't mean I will have a certain sexual orientation or identity. Don't assume you know how I identify, and don't assume I'm confused about it. Just tell me the facts about my body.
- Don't speak in absolutes, i.e. "This vagina will never be sufficient for marital relations."
- Don't ask me things that wouldn't pertain to my body. For instance, if you know I don't get my period, don't ask me when I had my last period.
- Please know what you're talking about. We shouldn't have to educate our doctors.
- If we DO have to educate you ... listen.
- Don't emphasize how rare this may be. That just makes me feel more alone.
- My doctors told me I'd never meet anyone else like me - it turns out I've met many!
- Do not treat me like I'm a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for you. This isn't about you.
- Please don't forget to remind me of the positive aspects of my variation.
- Encourage us to email or call you if we have questions or concerns. And mean it.

"After many years of complications, I was referred to a doctor who was one of the finest people I've ever met. She cared for me. She would sit with me for an hour and just talk. What was I feeling? What did I want? What worked and what didn't? Because she took the time to get to know me, it made all the difference in the world."
- Monica, age 26
Group Discussion: how can we improve care?
Questions and Discussion

Thank you!

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References

Durso, L. E., & Gates, G. J. (2012). Serving our youth: Findings from a national survey of services providers working with lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. The Williams Institute.


Glossary of LGBT Terms for Health Care Teams

As a provider in a health center or other health care organization, becoming familiar with terms used by lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) communities can help you provide these patients with the highest quality care. In this glossary, you will find some of the terms most relevant to the health care of LGBT people. When reading this glossary, here are a few things to keep in mind: 1) Definitions vary across communities; not all of your LGBT patients will agree with all of these definitions; 2) There are many terms not included on this list; we tried to keep the list as concise and relevant to health care providers as possible; 3) Terms and definitions change frequently; we will try to update this list to keep up with changing language. If you have a suggestion, please email us at lgbthealtheducation@fenwayhealth.org.

Agender (adj.) – Describes a person who identifies as having no gender.

Ally (noun) – A person who supports and stands up for the rights of LGBT people.

Aromantic (adj.) – An orientation that describes a person who experiences little or no romantic attraction to others and/or a lack of interest in forming romantic relationships.

Asexual (adj.) – Describes a person who experiences little or no sexual attraction to others. Asexuality is not the same as celibacy.

Assigned sex at birth (noun) – The sex (male or female) assigned to a child at birth, most often based on the child’s external anatomy. Also referred to as birth sex, natal sex, biological sex, or sex.

Bigender (adj.) – Describes a person whose gender identity is a combination of two genders.

Binding (verb) – The process of tightly wrapping one’s chest in order to minimize the appearance of having breasts. This is achieved through use of constrictive materials such as cloth strips, elastic or non-elastic bandages, or specially designed undergarments.

Biphobia (noun) – The fear of, discrimination against, or hatred of bisexual people or those who are perceived as such.

Bisexual (adj.) – A sexual orientation that describes a person who is emotionally and sexually attracted to people of their own gender and people of other genders.

Bottom surgery (noun) – Colloquial way of describing gender affirming genital surgery.
**Cisgender** (adj.) – A person whose gender identity and assigned sex at birth correspond (i.e., a person who is not transgender).

**Coming out** (verb) – The process by which one accepts and/or comes to identify one’s own sexual orientation or gender identity (to come out to oneself). Also the process by which one shares one’s sexual orientation or gender identity with others (to come out to friends, etc.).

**Cross-sex hormone therapy** (noun) – The administration of hormones for those who wish to match their physical secondary sex characteristics to their gender identity.

**Disorders of Sex Development** (DSD) (noun) – Group of rare conditions where the reproductive organs and genitals do not develop as expected. Some DSDs include Klinefelter Syndrome and Androgen Sensitivity Syndrome. Sometimes called differences of sex development. Some people prefer to use the term intersex.

**Drag** (verb) – The performance of one or multiple genders theatrically. Those who perform are called Drag Kings and Drag Queens.

**Gay** (adj.) – A sexual orientation that describes a person who is emotionally and sexually attracted to people of their own gender. It can be used regardless of gender identity, but is more commonly used to describe men.

**Gender affirming surgery** (GAS) (noun) – Surgeries used to modify one’s body to be more congruent with one’s gender identity. Also referred to as sex reassignment surgery (SRS) or gender confirming surgery (GCS).

**Gender binary** (noun) – The idea that there are only two genders, male and female, and that a person must strictly fit into one category or the other.

**Gender dysphoria** (noun) – Distress experienced by some individuals whose gender identity does not correspond with their assigned sex at birth. Manifests itself as clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning. The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) includes gender dysphoria as a diagnosis.

**Gender expression** (noun) – The way a person acts, dresses, speaks, and behaves (i.e., feminine, masculine, androgynous). Gender expression does not necessarily correspond to assigned sex at birth or gender identity.

**Gender fluid** (adj.) – Describes a person whose gender identity is not fixed. A person who is gender fluid may always feel like a mix of the two traditional genders, but may feel more one gender some days, and another gender other days.
**Gender identity** (noun) – A person’s internal sense of being a man/male, woman/female, both, neither, or another gender.

**Gender non-conforming** (adj.) – Describes a gender expression that differs from a given society’s norms for males and females.

**Gender role** (noun) – A set of societal norms dictating what types of behaviors are generally considered acceptable, appropriate or desirable for a person based on their actual or perceived sex.

**Genderqueer** (adj.) – Describes a person whose gender identity falls outside the traditional gender binary. Other terms for people whose gender identity falls outside the traditional gender binary include gender variant, gender expansive, etc. Sometimes written as two words (gender queer).

**Heteronormativity** (noun) – The assumption that everyone is heterosexual, and that heterosexuality is superior to all other sexualities.

**Heterosexual** (straight) (adj.) – A sexual orientation that describes women who are emotionally and sexually attracted to men, and men who are emotionally and sexually attracted to women.

**Homophobia** (noun) – The fear of, discrimination against, or hatred of lesbian or gay people or those who are perceived as such.

**Intersectionality** (noun) – The idea that identities are influenced and shaped by race, class, ethnicity, sexuality/sexual orientation, gender/gender identity, physical disability, national origin, etc., as well as by the interconnection of all of those characteristics.

**Intersex** (noun) – Group of rare conditions where the reproductive organs and genitals do not develop as expected. Some prefer to use the term disorders (or differences) of sex development. Intersex is also used as an identity term by some community members and advocacy groups.

**Lesbian** (adj., noun) – A sexual orientation that describes a woman who is emotionally and sexually attracted to other women.
Men who have sex with men/Women who have sex with women (MSM/WSW) (noun) – Categories that are often used in research and public health settings to collectively describe those who engage in same-sex sexual behavior, regardless of their sexual orientation. However, people rarely use the terms MSM or WSW to describe themselves.

Minority stress (noun) – Chronic stress faced by members of stigmatized minority groups. Minority stress is caused by external, objective events and conditions, expectations of such events, the internalization of societal attitudes, and/or concealment of one’s sexual orientation.

Outing (verb) – Involuntary or unwanted disclosure of another person’s sexual orientation or gender identity.

Pangender (adj.) – Describes a person whose gender identity is comprised of many genders.

Pansexual (adj.) – A sexual orientation that describes a person who is emotionally and sexually attracted to people regardless of gender.

Polyamorous (adj.) – Describes a person who has or is open to having more than one romantic or sexual relationship at a time, with the knowledge and consent of all their partners. Sometimes abbreviated as poly.

QPOC (noun) – An acronym that stands for Queer Person of Color or Queer People of Color.

Queer (adj.) – An umbrella term used by some to describe people who think of their sexual orientation or gender identity as outside of societal norms. Some people view the term queer as more fluid and inclusive than traditional categories for sexual orientation and gender identity. Due to its history as a derogatory term, the term queer is not embraced or used by all members of the LGBT community.

Questioning (adj.) – Describes an individual who is unsure about or is exploring their own sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

Same gender loving (SGL) (adj.) – A term used as an alternative to the terms gay and lesbian. SGL is more commonly but not exclusively used by members of the African American/Black community.
**Same-sex attraction** (SSA) (noun) – A term that is used to describe the experience of a person who is emotionally and/or sexually attracted to people of the same gender. Individuals using this term may not feel comfortable using the language of sexual orientation (i.e., gay, lesbian, bisexual) for personal reasons. Use of this term is not indicative of a person’s sexual behavior. It is used most commonly in religious communities.

**Sexual orientation** (noun) – How a person characterizes their emotional and sexual attraction to others.

**Social stigma** (noun) – Negative stereotypes and social status of a person or group based on perceived characteristics that separate that person or group from other members of a society.

**Structural stigma** (noun) – Societal conditions, policies, and institutional practices that restrict the opportunities, resources, and well-being of certain groups of people.

**Top surgery** (noun) – Colloquial way of describing gender affirming surgery on the chest.

**Trans man/transgender man/female-to-male** (FTM) (noun) – A transgender person whose gender identity is male may use these terms to describe themselves. Some will just use the term man.

**Trans woman/transgender woman/male-to-female** (MTF) (noun) – A transgender person whose gender identity is female may use these terms to describe themselves. Some will just use the term woman.

**Transfeminine** (adj.) – Describes people who were assigned male at birth, but identify with femininity to a greater extent than with masculinity.

**Transgender** (adj.) – Describes a person whose gender identity and assigned sex at birth do not correspond. Also used as an umbrella term to include gender identities outside of male and female. Sometimes abbreviated as trans.

**Transition** (noun) – For transgender people, this refers to the process of coming to recognize, accept, and express one’s gender identity. Most often, this refers to the period when a person makes social, legal, and/or medical changes, such as changing their clothing, name, sex designation, and using medical interventions. Sometimes referred to as gender affirmation process.

**Transmasculine** (adj.) – Describes people who were assigned female at birth, but identify with masculinity to a greater extent than with femininity.

**Transphobia** (noun) – The fear of, discrimination against, or hatred of transgender or gender non-conforming people or those who are perceived as such.
**Transsexual** (adj.) – Sometimes used in medical literature or by some transgender people to describe those who have transitioned through medical interventions.

**Tucking** (verb) – The process of hiding one’s penis and testes with tape, tight shorts, or specially designed undergarments.

**Two-Spirit** (adj.) – A contemporary term that connects today’s experiences of LGBT Native American and American Indian people with the traditions from their cultures.

## Outdated Terms to Avoid

The following terms may have been used in the past, but are now considered outdated and sometimes offensive. We recommend replacing these words with the suggested terms provided.

- **Berdache**  
  See [two-spirit](#).

- **Hermaphrodite**  
  See [intersex/disorders of sex development](#).

- **Homosexual**  
  See [gay or lesbian](#).

- **Sexual preference**  
  See [sexual orientation](#).

- **Transgendered/A transgender/Tranny**  
  See [transgender](#).

- **Sex change**  
  See [gender affirmation surgery](#).
A Note about Acronyms

There are many acronyms that are used in the LGBT community. The National LGBT Education Center uses LGBT: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender. When discussing adolescents or youth we use LGBTQ: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer. Other acronyms may use any combination of the following: LGBTQQIAAP2S: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, Ally, Pansexual, Two-Spirit.

Sources

Definitions for this glossary were developed and reviewed by the National LGBT Health Education Center and other experts in the field of LGBT health, as well as adapted from glossaries published by the Safe Zone Project and the UCLA LGBT Resource Center.