

Gender Affirming Care - 7 Tips

To Significantly Improving Patient Outcomes

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Gender-affirming care

Gender affirming care encompasses a range of interventions to support and affirm an individual's gender identity when it conflicts with the gender they were assigned at birth. Affirming care is important because patients who experience bias or lack of empathy from their healthcare providers are at risk for not following treatment plans or avoiding healthcare all together.

Names and Pronouns

Nonbinary and trans individuals often use different names and pronouns than were assigned to them at birth. Best practice is to ask individuals, either verbally and/or on the intake forms, which name and pronouns they go by.

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Non-verbal communication

Be sure that your non-verbal communication - things like body language, gestures, vocal tone, and proximity - is supportive. Displaying LGBTQIA+ symbols and inclusive materials in waiting rooms and exam rooms is also welcoming gesture.

Patient-centered trauma informed care

Be aware that individuals in the LGBTQIA+ experience higher rates of trauma. Offering trauma informed care means ensuring safety, being trustworthy, appreciating and respecting the cultural background of the patient, offering peer support, collaborating with the patient, and empowering the patient by giving them choice.

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Practice!

There are many ways to practice gender affirming language. One is to use gender neutral word choices in your everyday language. Here are a few examples: switch brother or sister to sibling, wife or husband to spouse, and son or daughter to child. Another way is to collaborate with others in your office for support and accountability.

Be okay with being wrong

Despite your most earnest efforts to offer the best gender affirming care, mistakes will happen. Welcoming correction and suggestions from the patient will usually be interpreted as a strong sign of trust.

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Say, "Thank you"

"Thank you for sharing this with me" is incredibly affirming and encouraging to hear after taking the risk to be honest and vulnerable with someone. It will be remembered and appreciated.



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