

# Things to Remember when Working with Transgender Clients:

- It's not about you! Remember that your clients are their own primary agents and deserve to be treated with respect and kindness.
- There are as many ways to be transgender as there are transgender people. While you may hear the phrase “transgender community,” it should not be taken to mean that all trans people are identical, that they have the same experience or understanding and view of gender.
- The language trans people use to describe themselves, their bodies, their gender and their sexuality varies from person to person.
- Medical and surgical treatments are part of some, but not all trans people's gender expression.
- Remember to offer unbiased information to your client so that they can make decisions for themselves.
- If you are unsure of a person's gender, ask them what pronoun(s) they prefer and use it consistently. (There may be times when clients request that you use other pronouns—ex: when talking to welfare case manager—just remember to ask)
- Your client may have a chosen name that they prefer. It is okay to ask someone what name they prefer and then to respect their wishes.
- Use gender-neutral language and open-ended questions during intake or interviews.
- Respect a person's right to privacy about their past and their body.
- When appropriate, mirror the language a person uses to describe body parts and feed it back during discussion.
- Treat knowledge of a person's transgender status as confidential.
- Admit lack of knowledge or experience. (Remember it is not the client's responsibility to educate the provider. However, you may ask for resources to learn more.)
- Remember that many trans and gender variant people have had negative experiences with social service providers. It is not possible for you to undo this history, only to acknowledge it and work to establish trust.
- Many social service providers are not sensitive to trans people's needs. Try not to minimize this- remember that your primary relationship is with your client, not with other members of your profession. Provide an honest assessment of your colleagues' knowledge and experience with trans clients before making a referral.

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