

# Introduction to Gender Affirming Patient Care

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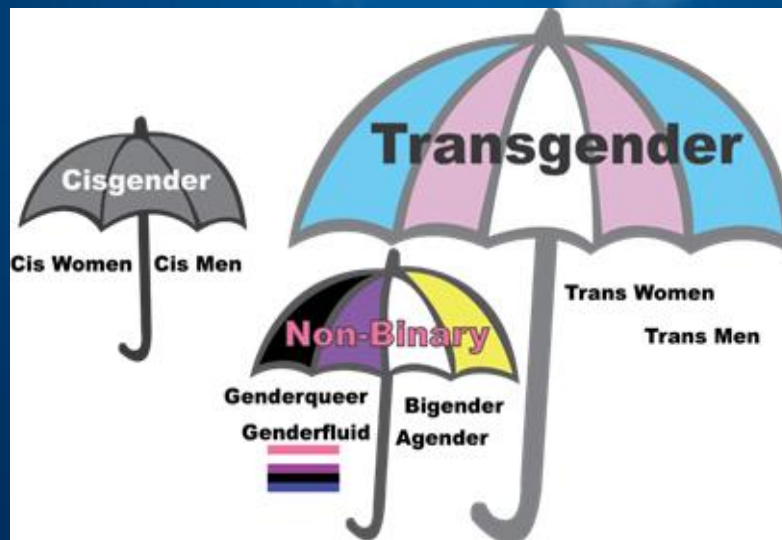
# Language & Definitions :

- Language is a moving target - current lexicon is inadequate
- Individualized, exists within cultural and historic context
- “Sex Assigned at Birth” - generally based on genitals (not always binary)
- “Gender/Gender Identity” - internal sense of who you are with regards to gender (not always binary)
- “Sexual Orientation” - how an individual defines oneself based on who they are sexually and/or romantically attracted to (based on identity, not behavior)



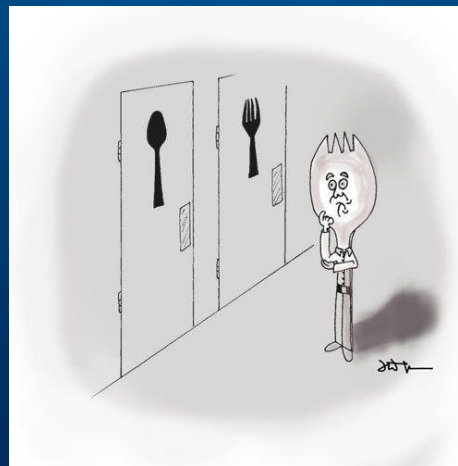
# Transgender Defined:

- An umbrella term used to describe people whose gender identity is different from the sex or gender they were assigned at birth.



# More Definitions :

- Non binary Gender Identity
  - Gender identity that is neither exclusively male nor exclusively female
- Cisgender
  - A term used to describe people whose gender identity aligns with the sex or gender they were assigned at birth (i.e. someone who is not transgender).



# Gender Dysphoria:

- Widely described as persistent emotional, physiological and/or social distress due to discomfort with one's assigned gender.
- For young kids **PERSISTENT, INSISTENT, CONSISTENT**
- Gender dysphoria is **NOT** always experienced or expressed as being related to one's genitals or secondary sex characteristics
- Not all transgender people experience gender dysphoria

# LGBT+ Specific Healthcare

## Needs: Health Disparities:

- Sexual & gender minority youth are at increased risk for negative health outcomes:
  - Depression & Anxiety
  - STIs (including HIV)
  - Suicide
  - Substance Use Disorders
  - Disordered Eating
- Also at increased risk for:
  - Homelessness
    - 40% of homeless youth are LGBT+
  - Victimization & Bullying
  - Discrimination



# Barriers to Accessing Health

## Care:

- Stigma, including outright refusal of care, or inadequate care
- Provider knowledge and training deficits
  - Real or perceived provider knowledge
- Lack of health insurance or inadequate coverage
- Fear of talking to doctor about sexual health



# Basic Do's & Don'ts:



- Affirm self-identity in charting and patient interactions
- Avoid being dismissive of pronouns, chosen name or gender identity
- Be an ally
- Connect patients and families to support
- Use inclusive language regarding gender identity & expression
  - Don't assume someone's gender identity or which pronouns they use
  - If you are not sure, just use the person's name in place of a pronoun or respectfully ask
  - Don't ask someone what their "real" name is. Respect and use identity terms and name that the patient uses



# Best Practices to Support Trans Youth



- Understand that health care settings can trigger anxiety and/or gender dysphoria
- Collaborate with patient to minimize harm (dysphoria) during exams
- Narrate Care - describe what you are going to do and why
- Don't forget preventative health screenings
  - You have to take care of the parts that you have
- Gender neutral physical exams
  - Use gender neutral terms for body parts if possible (genitalia instead of penis/vagina)
  - Explain what parts will be examined and why, ask for consent

# New Model for Care

- “Family Systems” approach
- Comprehensive biopsychosocial assessment
- Individualized care plan
- Multidisciplinary Approach
  - Endocrinology
  - Adolescent Medicine
  - Social Work
  - Plastic Surgery

# Family Systems Approach

- A recent study found that transgender children who are supported in their identities by their primary care givers, experience normative levels of depression and anxiety (Olson 2016)
- Most parents feel unprepared when young people come out with a gender identity that is different from what they were assigned at birth.
- Parents need a non-judgmental space to connect with medically accurate information and resources



# Where We've Been

- 2011 Drs. Marinkovic and Newfield started treating trans youth in Endocrinology department
- 2018 hired consultant from Children's Hospital of Philadelphia – Gender & Sexuality Development Clinic
- 2019 hired Clinic Director for Center for Gender Affirming Care
- 2019 moved into stand alone clinic space
- 2020 addition of new Adolescent Medicine Division and Dr. Inwards-Breland joins as Medical Director

# Center for Gender Affirming Care

- Interdisciplinary approach to care
  - Multiple specialties within single clinic
    - Endocrinology
    - Adolescent Medicine
    - Behavioral Health
    - Gynecology
    - Vocal Therapy
    - Plastic Surgery
  - Triage & Individual Care Planning
  - Family Education & Resources from first contact
  - Collaboration with primary care, school and therapists

