
APPROACHES TO WORKING WITH GENDER DIVERSITY

Unaffirming:

- Does not have knowledge of transgender and/or gender diverse identities.
- Feels using a person's chosen name and pronoun may be giving credence to mental illness.
- Believes genitalia determines someone's gender.
- Believes identifying with a gender other than the gender assigned at birth is due to mental illness.

Neutral:

- May or may not be interested in learning more about transgender identities.
- May or may not have interacted with transgender people.
- Is undecided on whether to refer to someone by their birth name or chosen name.
- Is unsure if gender is determined by genitalia or other factors.

Novice:

- Has very limited or no knowledge of transgender or gender diverse identities.
- Has very limited or no interaction with gender diverse or transgender people.
- Is interested in learning about different models of working with transgender people.

Friendly:

- Has limited knowledge of transgender identities and is willing to learn more.
- Has interacted with transgender and gender diverse people and is respectful of client's gender expression and identity.
- Feels comfortable being around transgender and gender diverse folks.
- Has created an LGBTQIA+ affirming environment via literature on a website or supportive materials in the office.

Affirming:

- Has some knowledge of gender diverse identities and refers to clients with correct name and pronouns, has gender affirmative intake documentation.
- Has developed limited clinical skills through training, consultation, or readings to help a client with initial exploration of their gender.
- Understands the history of transgender and non-binary people's relationship to the medical and mental health community.
- Has knowledge about the impact of transphobia and the various ways it impacts healthy development.
- Has begun to study intersectionality, privilege, and explored their own views of gender and gender roles.
- Believes gender diversity and gender expression of all kinds is healthy and a sign of a healthy society.
- Office staff is gender affirming, if applicable.

Competent: (Affirming plus, may also identify themselves as a Gender Therapist)

- A licensed mental health clinician who has obtained education, training, consultation, clinical experience, and engages in ongoing continuing education in working with a gender diverse caseload.
- Able to provide psychoeducation to clients regarding social and medical changes to their gender.
- Continued learning about intersectionality and their own experience of privilege such as, cisgender, heterosexual, race, education, class, etc.
- Experience writing a variety of referral letters/letters of support to assist clients in receiving gender affirmative care (i.e. gender affirming hormone therapy, name and gender marker change, surgery)
- Knowledge of local resources (i.e. support groups, endocrinologists, affirming providers) and national resources (i.e. WPATH, Trans Lifeline, Transgender Law Center).