

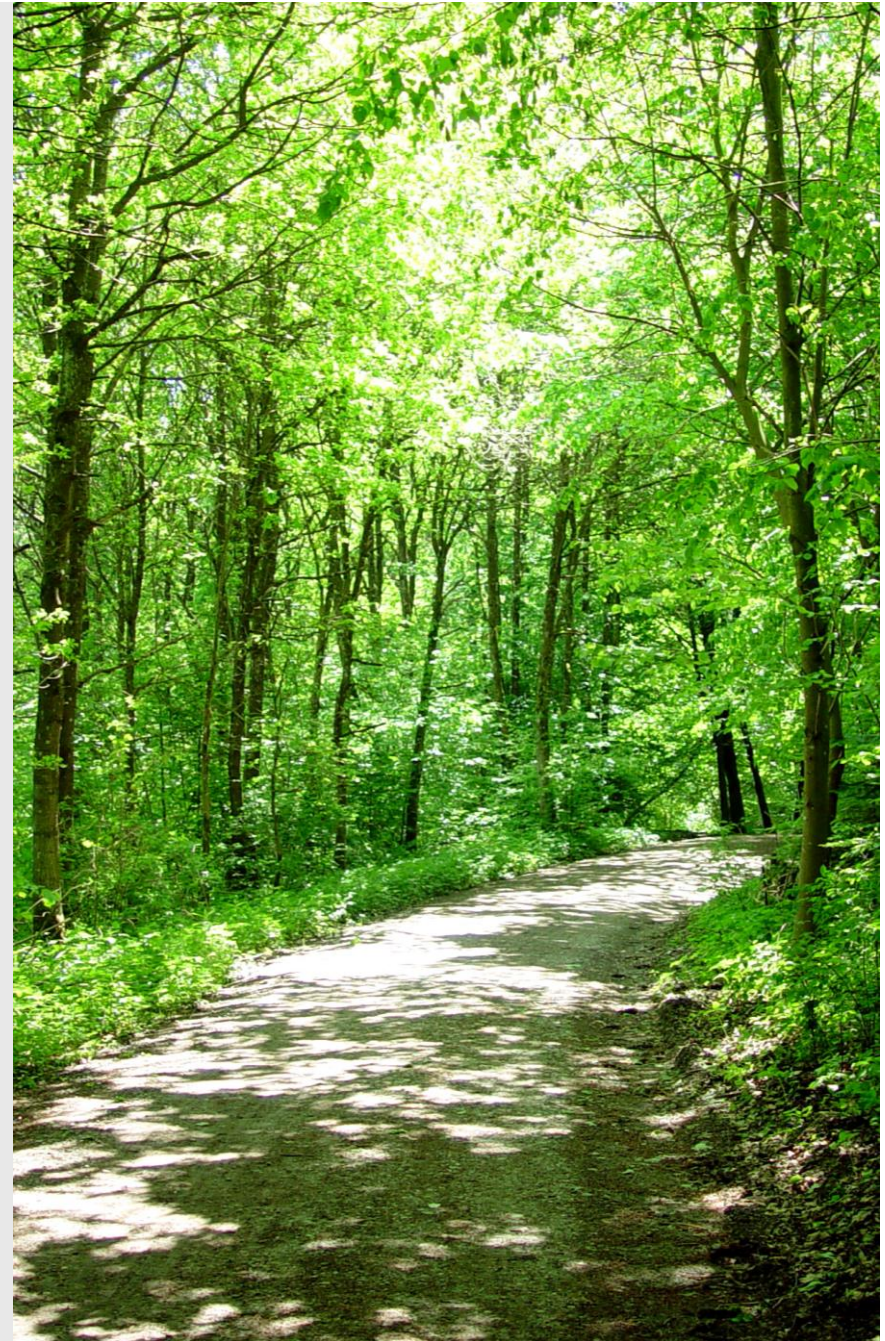


# MAKING MISTAKES WHEN SERVING GENDER DIVERSE PATIENTS AND RECOVERING

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# Learning Objectives

- Understand what constitutes a mistake when serving gender diverse people in a healthcare context
- Be able to explain to patients why certain healthcare structures are non-affirming, and use transparency to help support gender diverse patients
- Understand how to appropriately recover from making a mistake and take responsibility for your actions
- Learn the difference between allyship and cultural humility, and actions that can seem affirming but are actually harmful
- Remember the fundamental humanity of gender diverse people and cultivate empathy





## What is excellent service for gender diverse people?

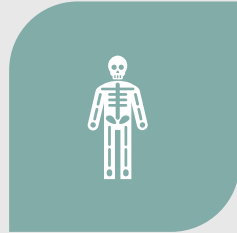
- Access that is not different from what other patients experience
- Being called by their correct name and pronoun
  - Making sure that pronouns and names are noted in the chart and communicated throughout the care team
- Not being asked questions or made to engage in action that singles them out as gender diverse
  - Ask gender identity questions of all patients
  - Ask about used name and pronoun for all patients
- Smile, be kind, be helpful, be efficient
  - Excellent service for gender diverse people is not different than excellent service for all people

# What are some mistakes that can negatively impact gender diverse people?



## **MIS-GENDERING –**

THE USE OF AN INCORRECT PRONOUN OR OTHER GENDERED WORD WITH REFERENCE TO AN INDIVIDUAL FOR WHOM THAT WORD IS NOT AN ACCURATE OR APPROPRIATE REPRESENTATION OF THEIR GENDER IDENTITY



## **DEAD-NAMING-**

THE USE, INADVERTENT OR INTENTIONAL, OF THE NAME A PERSON MAY HAVE BEEN GIVEN AT BIRTH, BUT WHICH IS NOT THE NAME THEY USE.



## **AVOIDANCE-**

SOME STAFF AVOID ENGAGING WITH GENDER DIVERSE PEOPLE OR HELPING SOLVE THEIR PROBLEMS BECAUSE THE STAFF ARE NOT SURE WHAT TO DO.



## **“OUTING”-**

STAFF MAY INTENTIONALLY OR ACCIDENTALLY ALERT OTHERS IN THE CLINIC SPACE TO THE PERSON'S IDENTITY AS A GENDER DIVERSE PERSON.

# Solutions: How to Recover From Mistakes

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**DO:** Apologize

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Say you understand what you did wrong

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Ask the person how you can acknowledge their identity respectfully

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Promise to do better moving forward

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Continue with whatever you were doing

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# Solutions: How to Recover From Mistakes

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## **DO** **NOT:**

Explain your “inclusivity credentials”

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Tell the person not to take it  
personally

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Pretend like it didn't happen

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Tell the person how you have been  
treated badly in similar/different ways

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Ask the person to make you feel  
better for messing up

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# Case: Kelley And Insurance

Kelley presents at the front desk to check in for an annual physical. Kelley has new insurance and presents their insurance card for the visit. The person working the front desk looks at the card, looks at the chart, looks at the card again, looks at Kelley, then hurries away to the back room without a word.

Kelley waits for a couple minutes, then the staff member returns. The staff member has a manager with them, and both staff do not make eye contact with Kelley while continuing to look at the insurance card and the chart.

After another minute of this, Kelley sighs in exasperation and says “Okay, look, my dead name is Lily and that is what you probably see on the card. My doctor put Kelley into my chart as my name. I’m nonbinary. Can you just check me in?”

The manager, still not making eye contact, says “Ma’am, we’re going to need to see your ID and confirm your birth date. Can you give us some ID with your real name?”

# Case Discussion: Kelley and Insurance



What are three mistakes the staff made that may have been harmful to Kelley?

How can the staff recover this situation?

What are appropriate questions to ask Kelley to get the information needed to get them checked in?

If Kelley came into your clinic, how would you navigate their insurance, chart, and day-of needs?



# Case: Monika and Registration Questions

Monika is a new patient coming into your clinic for the first time. The front desk staff provide the registration form, which Monika completes and returns.

The staff member is using the registration to check Monika in for her appointment, and sees that Monika did not answer the question about whether or not she could be pregnant. The staff member asks "Can you please fill out the rest of this form? All women need to complete this section."

Monika looks uncomfortable, then reluctantly tells the staff member that there is no way she could become pregnant. The staff member notes this on the form, and finishes checking Monika in. In the chart, the staff member lists Monika as female without looking at the form.



# Case Discussion: Monika and Registration



How could the registration form be modified to be inclusive of all genders?

Why might Monika feel uncomfortable filling out the pregnancy question?

Can you tell someone's gender identity by looking at them?

How could the staff member's assumption that Monika is a cisgender female impact Monika's care negatively?

What are sensitive ways staff could ask for more information about Monika and what she needs?



# Putting What You Learn into Practice....

- If you are unsure about a patient's name or pronouns:  
***“I would like be respectful—what are your name and pronouns?”***
- If a patient's name doesn't match insurance or medical records:  
***“Could your chart/insurance be under a different name?”***  
***“What is the name on your insurance?”***
- If you accidentally use the wrong term or pronoun:  
***“I'm sorry. I didn't mean to be disrespectful.”***

# Accountability

Creating an environment of accountability and respect requires everyone to work together.

Don't be afraid to politely correct your colleagues if they make insensitive comments.

***“Those kinds of comments are hurtful to others and do not create a respectful work environment.”***

# Take-Aways

- Gender diverse people should be given the same respect, autonomy, and access as any other patient.
  - Delivering this experience means using the person's correct pronouns, name, and helping them navigate a health care system that is not inclusive of gender diverse needs
- Your charting system may not give you the information you need to understand a patient's gender identity.
  - Respectfully ask all patients about their name, pronouns, and how they would like to be addressed in your clinic.
  - As much as you are able, make notes of a person's name, pronouns, and needs so that the providers and other staff don't have to ask the patient the same question over and over.
- If you do something that hurts someone, take responsibility, apologize, and move forward while ensuring you don't make the same mistake again.
- Making a mistake is not the end of the world. We are all people and we are all in this together. If you apologize with sincerity and demonstrate an effort to change, most people will meet you with patience and gratitude.





**COVID-19 CONSIDERATIONS  
FOR SEXUAL AND GENDER  
MINORITY PATIENTS  
(AND EVERYONE ELSE)**

# A brief word about COVID-19 and Fenway Health

- Fenway Health provided care at the forefront of the AIDS epidemic
  - We are using the lessons learned during that acute health crisis to inform best practices for COVID-19. Some of these include:
    - Practicing kindness, compassion, and beneficence
    - While staying safe, not avoiding physical contact with patients out of fear
    - Providing equal and optimal care for all patients, regardless of infection status
    - Helping each other to understand, stay safe, and care for those who have less ability to do so (dropping off food and necessities, running errands, etc)



# COVID-19 and Sexual and Gender Minority Patients

- Sexual and gender minority healthcare is **medically necessary** and critical care, and cannot abruptly stop because of COVID-19
  - For example, transgender patients need their hormones refilled, and this is medically necessary and critical. Providers must not ignore these patients.
  - For patients who are using PEP (post-exposure prophylaxis) or PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) for preventing HIV, medication filling and monitoring must continue
  - If you are able to make the time to take care of your diabetic patient's needs, you can make time to take care of your sexual and gender minority patient's specific health needs.

# Safety and Well-Being Concerns for TGD Patients during the pandemic

- Young people may be returning to unsafe/uncomfortable households (i.e. college students)
- Access to medication may feel insecure or be challenging (i.e. a young person is on gender affirming hormones at school but their family doesn't know and now they're going home; testosterone and other medications are controlled substances and it is difficult to get more than a 1 month supply; prescriptions may not cross state lines...)
- People are worried about doing their own shots
- In-person groups/supports/social structures are unavailable (though many groups are moving online and have a wider reach than ever)
- Isolation increases depression and anxiety, which are already disproportionately high in the gender diverse community
- TGD people are more likely to face discrimination in hospital settings

# Using Reliable Sources of Information and Limiting Media Exposure

- Misinformation can be toxic to you and your community. It is important to get your information from well-vetted sources who have the ability to get the most up-to date facts
  - Here are great places to get accurate info:
    - [The CDC Website on COVID-19](#)
    - [The World Health Organization \(WHO\) COVID-19 Page](#)
    - [The Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health COVID-19 Page](#)
- It is also important to limit your media exposure. It is easy to spend all day reading and thinking about the pandemic, and this can be harmful to you and the people you need to care for. Instead take time to do something you love, watch a show, make food, sing in the shower...

# Online Resources to Support Gender Diverse People During Physical Distancing (from our friends and Gender Spectrum in San Francisco)

[Online Pre-Teen Group](#)

[Online Teen Group](#)

[Instagram Live: Gender Q&A](#): Tuesday, March 24, 4pm PT

[Online Group for Asian-Pacific Islander \(API\) Parents, Relatives and Caregivers Raising Gender Diverse Children and Teens](#)

[Online Grandparents Group](#)

[Online National Parents Group](#)

Grupo de padres en Español (Spanish Language Parent Support Group): Si desea unirse al grupo de apoyo mediante llamada mensual, o si tiene alguna pregunta, por favor contáctenos a [espanol@genderspectrum.org](mailto:espanol@genderspectrum.org)

[Online Facilitator Support Group](#)

[Webinar: Understanding Gender for Parents, Families, and Friends](#) (June 1)

[info@genderspectrum.org](mailto:info@genderspectrum.org)

# Other Online Resources Specific to Gender Diverse Folks

[The National Center for Transgender Equality COVID-19 Page](#)

[The Massachusetts Transgender Political Coalition Covid-19 Statement](#)