

# Gender-affirming Care For Transgender And Gender Diverse (TGD) People Experiencing Homelessness

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# Our Roots

## Fenway Health

- Independent 501(c)(3) FQHC
- Founded 1971
- Mission: To enhance the wellbeing of the LGBTQIA+ community as well as people in our neighborhoods and beyond through access to the highest quality health care, education, research, and advocacy
- Integrated primary care model, including HIV and transgender health services

## The Fenway Institute

- Research, Education, Policy



# The National LGBTQIA+ Health Education Center

- Training and Technical Assistance
- Grand Rounds
- Online Learning
  - CE and HEI Credit
- Environmental Influences On Child Health Outcomes (ECHO) Programs
- Publications and Resources



Learning Module



Publication



Toolkit



Video



Webinar

[www.lgbtqiahealtheducation.org](http://www.lgbtqiahealtheducation.org)



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# After the Webinar

- Close the browser, and an evaluation will automatically open for you to complete
- We very much appreciate receiving feedback from all participants
- Completing the evaluation is **required** to obtain a CME certificate

# CME/CEU Information

This activity has been reviewed and is acceptable for up to 1.0 Prescribed credits by the American Academy of Family Physicians. Participants should claim only the credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in this activity.

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<b>Other Health Professionals</b>	Confirm equivalency of credits with relevant licensing body.

# Objectives

- Review relevant data about the intersection of gender identity and housing instability
- Explain unique situations and needs of people experiencing housing insecurity
- Consider how to ask about gender identity and housing status
- Describe the impact of housing insecurity on the provision of gender-affirming care
- Access resources that can be used by transgender and gender diverse (TGD) people experiencing homelessness or housing instability



**Founded in 1985, Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program is committed to a singular, powerful mission:**

*to ensure unconditionally equitable and dignified access to the highest quality health care for all individuals and families experiencing homelessness in our community.*



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***BHCHP has grown to include over 500 dedicated staff caring for more than 10,000 patients each year.***

**Key Services:**

- Public Health Interventions
- Street Team Outreach
- Mental Health Services
- Transgender Health Services
- Harm Reduction and Treatment Services
- HIV Testing, Counseling, & Treatment
- Hepatitis C Testing & Treatment
- 124 beds of Medical Respite Care
- Meal Services
- Dental Care
- Case Management
- Family and Youth Services



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# The Child and Adolescent Trans/Gender Center for Health (CATCH)

- Caring for trans\* youth since 2013
- Launched as part of the Gender Care Center at Boston Medical Center in 2017
- More than 500 patients and families seen across Massachusetts, the Northeast, and throughout the United States
- Provides multidisciplinary care with a team of medical and behavioral health providers, nursing and pharmacy staff, and patient navigators
- Supports patients and families where they are, and where they are heading

# Learning Objective 1:

Review relevant data about the intersection of gender identity and housing instability

# Intersection of Gender Identity and Housing Instability

From the U.S. Transgender Health Survey, 2015, almost 28,000 transgender respondents:

(<https://transequality.org/sites/default/files/docs/usts/USTS-Full-Report-Dec17.pdf>)

- 8% of respondents who were out to their immediate family were kicked out of the house, and 10% ran away from home.
- 23% experienced housing discrimination in the past year, such as being evicted from their home or denied a home or apartment because of being transgender
- 30% experienced homelessness at some point in their lives
- In the past year, 12% experienced homelessness because of being transgender
- 26% of those who experienced homelessness in the past year avoided staying in a shelter because they feared being mistreated as a transgender person
- 70% of respondents who stayed in a shelter in the past year reported some form of mistreatment, including being harassed, sexually or physically assaulted, or kicked out because of being transgender
- Respondents were nearly 4 times less likely to own a home (16%) compared to the U.S. population (63%)

# Intersection of Gender Identity and Housing Instability

## From Voices of Youth Count, 2018:

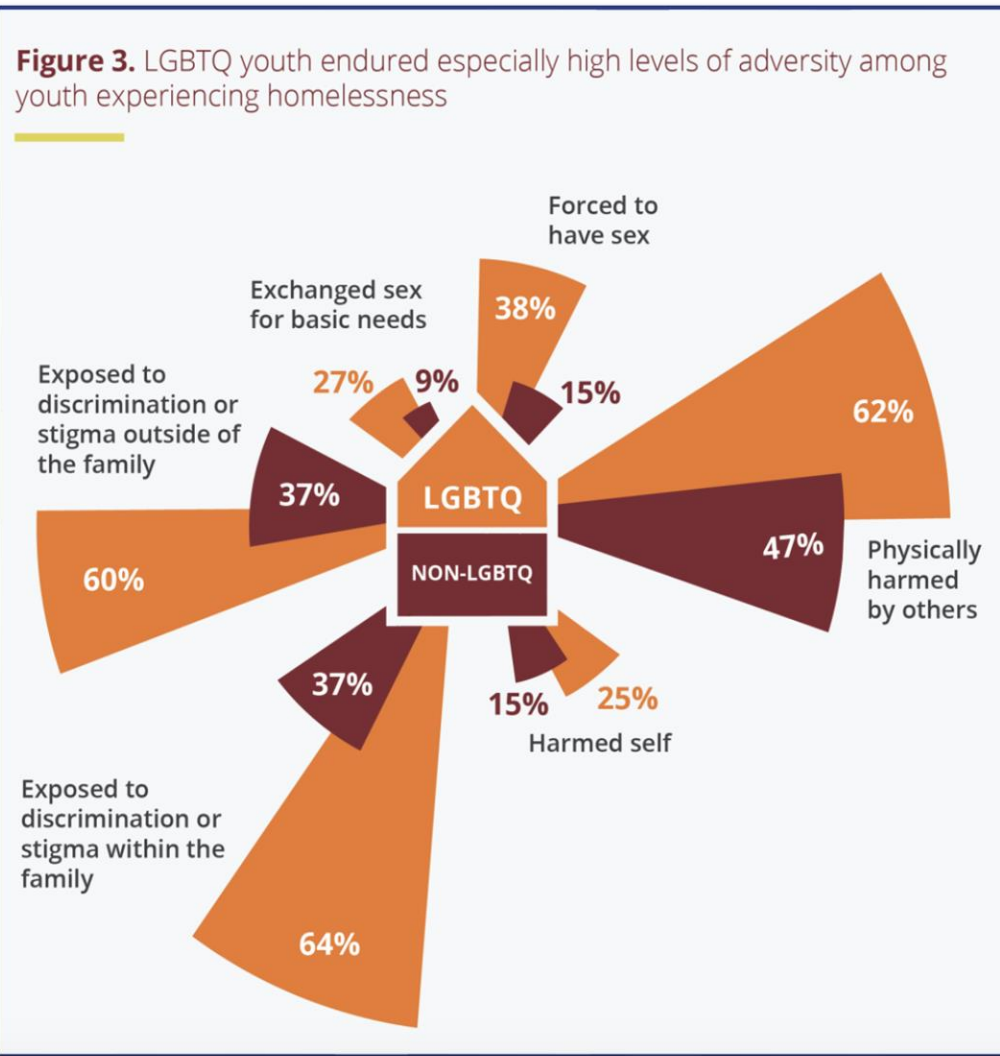
Young adults, ages 18 to 25, who identified as LGBTQ experienced homelessness within the last 12 months at over twice the rate of their heterosexual peers who identified as their birth gender (“cisgender”)

Morton, M. H., Samuels, G. M., Dworsky, A., & Patel, S. (2018).

Missed opportunities: LGBTQ youth homelessness in America. Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago.

# Intersection of Gender Identity and Housing Instability

From Voices of Youth Count in-depth interviews:  
<https://www.chapinhall.org/wp-content/uploads/VoYC-LGBTQ-Brief-FINAL.pdf>



## Learning Objective 2:

Gain understanding of the unique situations and needs of people experiencing housing insecurity



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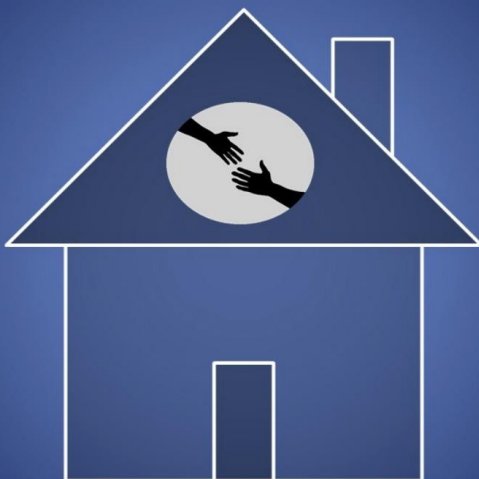


# Assumptions about People Experiencing Homelessness

- People want to be housed
- Unhoused people are substance users
- Housing is the solution to everything
- People are too busy with basic survival needs to care about gender transition



# Housing Guide



## Tips and Tools for a Successful Housing Experience

Prepared by Joanne Guarino  
on behalf of the Consumer Advisory Board of BHCHP

### FOR MORE INFORMATION AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES ABOUT...

#### Grocery Store (and other Store) Coupons

Look inside your Sunday newspaper  
Go to [RetailMeNot.com](http://RetailMeNot.com)  
Go to [CouponMom.com](http://CouponMom.com)  
Go to [CouponCabin.com](http://CouponCabin.com)  
Go to [Coupons.com](http://Coupons.com)

#### Healthy Eating

Go to [www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov)  
And for information about eating healthy on a budget, click on the "Healthy Eating on a Budget" button on the left-hand menu

#### Dealing with Stress or Anger

Talk to your Primary Care Provider or Psychiatrist  
If you need to talk to someone immediately, go to the BMC clinic at JYP (780 Albany St.) for a walk-in Open Access Therapy appointment Monday-Friday

#### YMCA and Fitness Options

Talk to your Case Manager  
Visit: [www.ymcaboston.org](http://www.ymcaboston.org)

#### Getting a Charlie Card

Visit: [www.mbta.com](http://www.mbta.com)

#### Managing Debt

Visit: [www.consumer.ftc.gov](http://www.consumer.ftc.gov)

#### Resources for Elderly Individuals

Visit: [www.cityofboston.gov/elderly](http://www.cityofboston.gov/elderly)

#### Death Arrangements

Visit: [www.funeralwise.com/plan/how\\_to](http://www.funeralwise.com/plan/how_to)

#### Finding a Credit Union Near You

Visit: [www.mycreditunion.gov/pages/mcu-map.aspx](http://www.mycreditunion.gov/pages/mcu-map.aspx)

#### Receiving Your Annual Credit Report and Credit Score

Visit: [www.AnnualCreditReport.com](http://www.AnnualCreditReport.com)  
Visit: [www.consumerfinance.gov](http://www.consumerfinance.gov)

#### Taxes

Visit: [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov)

#### Payment Assistance Programs

Visit: [www.pseg.com](http://www.pseg.com)

### ~ TABLE OF CONTENTS ~

<u>Housing Basics</u>	Page
How to Settle In	1
How to Stay Safe	2
How to Keep Rooms Clean	3
How to Buy Groceries and Do Laundry	4
Weekly Meal Planner Template	5
<u>Staying Organized</u>	
How to Keep Track of Appointments and Bills	6
How to Keep a Weekly Schedule	7
<u>Finances</u>	
How to Budget and Open a Bank Account	8
How to Write a Check	9
<u>Everyday Life</u>	
How to Stay Connected to Family and Friends	10
How to Get a Photo ID	11
How to Get a Library Card	12
How to Make the Internet Work for You	13
How to be Informed About Your Record	14
For More Information	15



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# Living In-shelter and Accessing Care

- 25 yo Transwoman
- Newly HIV +
- HepC
- PTSD
- Opioid use disorder
- Living in a shelter/sometimes the street
- Gets meds daily at an offsite engagement center – estrogen, Biktarvy, suboxone
- No phone
- Came to support group!

# Mobile Van



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# Spectrum of Housing Instability

People are often in unsafe doubled up situations, which feel at least safer than shelter, for example undocumented people staying in abusive relationships.

- Couch surfing
- Shelters are generally binary
- People live in their cars
- Youth in foster care may not be stably housed



# An Apartment Without Food

- 18 year old nonbinary individual
- Currently renting a room in an apartment with boyfriend, other people in the apartment
- Does not have access to kitchen for cooking or refrigerator
- Feels physically and emotionally unsafe in the apartment

# Staying With Family Isn't Always So Stable

- 16 year old trans male, just moved back to state with mom
- Currently sharing a room (and bed) with mom in father's house
- Father has a history of substance use and domestic violence towards mom
- Mom struggles with her own severe mental health issues
- Patient is on injection T and has severe needle phobia

# **Learning Objective 3:** Consider how to ask about gender identity and housing status



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# Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI)

## Sexual Orientation

- Heterosexual/Straight
- Homosexual/Gay/Lesbian
- Bisexual
- Pansexual
- Queer
- Questioning/Curious
- Asexual

## Gender Identity

- Woman
- Man
- Transgender Woman
- Transgender Man
- Nonbinary
- Agender/Don't identify with any gender
- Gender not listed /My gender is \_\_\_\_\_
- Prefer not to state



# **SOGI CHEAT SHEET**

## *Definitions and Script*



*We ask all our patients about their sexual orientation, gender identity, sex assigned at birth, and pronouns so that we can know them better and care for them better.*

Use **.SOGIHELP** in EPIC to access this information when you're with patient

### Talking with patients:

We ask all our patients about their sexual orientation, gender identity, sex assigned at birth, and pronouns so that we can know them better and take care of them better.

Sexual orientation is about who you are attracted to.

Gender identity is about your sense of who you are as female, male, gender nonbinary (neither male or female), transgender, or something else. Gender identity is not the same as sexual orientation.

We ask about what sex you were assigned at birth (the sex on your original birth certificate) because if this doesn't match your current gender identity it will help us know how to better take care of your body.

We ask about your pronouns so that our staff members refer to you correctly. Some examples of pronouns are he, she, they, zir. Some people don't use pronouns and want people to only use their name.

**SEXUAL ORIENTATION**

Emotional, romantic, or sexual feelings toward other people or no people (Asexual). While sexual activity involves the choices one makes regarding behavior, one's sexual activity does not define one's sexual orientation. Sexual orientation is part of the human condition, and all people have one. Typically, it is attraction that helps determine orientation.

*Sexual orientation is about who you are attracted to.*

**GENDER IDENTITY**

A person's deeply held core sense of self in relation to gender. Gender identity does not always correspond to biological sex. Gender identity is a separate concept from sexuality and gender expression.

*Gender identity is about your sense of who you are as female, male, gender nonbinary (neither male or female), transgender, or something else. Gender identity is not the same as sexual orientation.*

**PRONOUNS**

The words used to refer to a person other than their name. Common pronouns are they/them, he/him, and she/her. Neopronouns are pronouns created to be specifically gender neutral including xe/xem, ze/zir and fae/faer. For those who use pronouns--and not all people do--they are not preferred, they are essential.

*We ask about your pronouns so that our staff members refer to you correctly. Some examples of pronouns are he, she, they, zir. Some people don't use pronouns and want people to only use their name.*

**SEX ASSIGNED AT BIRTH**

The sex assigned to an infant at birth based on the child's visible sex organs, including genitalia and other physical characteristics.

*We ask about what sex you were assigned at birth (the sex on your original birth certificate) because if this doesn't match your current gender identity it will help us know how to better take care of your body.*

**GENDER EXPRESSION  
(not in SOGI form)**

The manner in which a person communicates about gender to others through external means such as clothing, appearance, or mannerisms. This communication may be conscious or subconscious and may or may not reflect their gender identity or sexual orientation. People can present their gender via feminine, masculine and androgynous expressions.

**RESOURCES AVAILABLE**

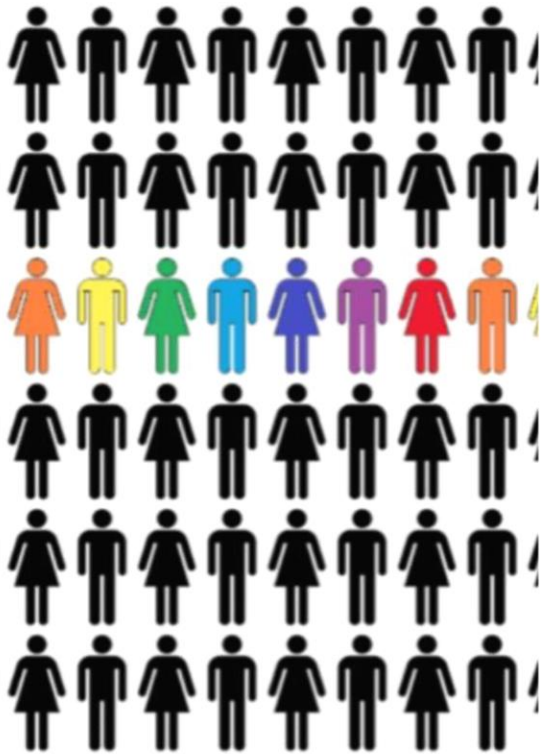
- Cheat sheet available in BHCHP wiki in Internal Resources
  - [Epic Resources](#)
  - [EBSJ Resources](#)
  - Use **.SOGIHELP** help text in Epic to pull cheat sheet
- Training videos in BHCHP Relias - SOGI

# Remember the SOGI tab!

(Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity)



Ask your patients SOGI questions annually!



## Why?

- Asking SOGI questions allows patients who are often invisible to be counted
- Asking SOGI questions allows us to look for and discover potential health care disparities
- Plus, it's a Health Resources and Service Administration (HRSA) requirement!

# Speaking with Youth

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**Clinician introduction:** *"I am going to ask you some questions that I ask all patients your age, because it helps me provide you the best care possible."* If patient is alone without parents/guardians and the law permits: *"I will not share this information with your parents/guardians or anyone else unless you give me permission to."*

---

## **Gender identity questions (3–13 years)**

*"Some kids feel like a girl on the inside, some kids feel like a boy on the inside, and some kids feel like neither, both, or someone else. What about you? How do you feel on the inside? There's no right or wrong answer."*

---

If you do not know the patient's sex assigned at birth:

*"What sex were you (was your child) assigned at birth? Girl or boy, or another sex?"*

---

## **Gender identity questions (14–17 years)**

*"What is your current gender identity? Some teens feel like a girl or woman on the inside, some feel like a boy or man on the inside, and some feel like neither, both, or another gender. What about you? There's no right or wrong answer."*

---

If you do not know the patient's sex assigned at birth:

*"What sex were you assigned at birth? Female, male, or another sex?"*

---

# Speaking with Youth

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## Sexual orientation questions (10–13 years)

---

*"Have you ever had a crush on someone?"*

---

If yes: *"Was this crush on a boy, a girl, both, or someone of another gender?"*

---

## Sexual orientation questions (14–17 years)

---

*"Are you sexually attracted to boys, girls, both, neither, another gender, or are you not sure?"*

---

Hilary Goldhammer, Chris Grasso, Sabra L Katz-Wise, Katharine Thomson, Allegra R Gordon, Alex S Keuroghlian, Pediatric sexual orientation and gender identity data collection in the electronic health record, *Journal of the American Medical Informatics Association*, Volume 29, Issue 7, July 2022, Pages 1303–1309, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jamia/ocac048>

# How to Ask about Housing Stability?

What to ask:

- Where do you live or stay?
- Who do you live with?
- How long have you lived there?
- How long can you stay there?
- Do you feel safe there?
  - Physically? Emotionally?
  - People in house? Housing quality?
- Avoid asking people if they have stable housing
- Important to understand what your institution can do to help patients and families



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# Social Determinants of Health Screeners

**WE CARE SURVEY**




Place Patient Sticker Here

We want to make sure that you know all the community resources that are available to you for problems. Many of these resources are free of charge. Please answer each question and hand it to your child's medical assistant at the beginning of the visit. Thank you!

	Do you go to school?	Yes	No			
	↓					
	If NO, would you like help with going to school, getting your GED, or going to college?	Yes	No	Maybe Later		
	Do you have a job?	Yes	No			
	↓					
	If NO, would you like help with finding employment and/or job training?	Yes	No	Maybe Later		
	Do you want to be in after school activities?	Yes	No			
	↓					
	If YES, would you like help finding it?	Yes	No	Maybe Later		
	Do you think you or your family are at risk of becoming homeless?	Yes	No			
	↓					
	If YES, would you like help with this?	Yes	No	Maybe Later		
	↓					
	If yes, is this an emergency?	Yes*	No			

<https://www.bmc.org/pediatrics-primary-care/we-care>



AMERICAN ACADEMY OF  
FAMILY PHYSICIANS

## Social Needs Screening Tool

**PATIENT FORM (short version)**

Please answer the following.

**HOUSING**

1. What is your housing situation today?!

I do not have housing (I am staying with others, in a hotel, in a shelter, living outside on the street, on a beach, in a car, abandoned building, bus or train station, or in a park)

I have housing today, but I am worried about losing housing in the future

I have housing

2. Think about the place you live. Do you have problems with any of the following? (check all that apply)!

Bug infestation

Mold

Lead paint or pipes

Inadequate heat

Oven or stove not working

No or not working smoke detectors

Water leaks

None of the above

**TRANSPORTATION**

5. In the past 12 months, has lack of transportation kept you from medical appointments, meetings, work or from getting things needed for daily living? (check all that apply)!

Yes, it has kept me from medical appointments or getting medications

Yes, it has kept me from non-medical meetings, appointments, work, or getting things that I need

No

**UTILITIES**

6. In the past 12 months has the electric, gas, oil, or water company threatened to shut off services in your home?!

Yes

No

Already shut off

**PERSONAL SAFETY**

7. How often does anyone, including family, physically hurt you?!

Never

Rarely

Sometimes

Fairly often

Frequently

[https://www.aafp.org/pubs/fpm/blogs/inpractice/entry/social\\_determinants.html](https://www.aafp.org/pubs/fpm/blogs/inpractice/entry/social_determinants.html)

# From EPIC

**LIVING SITUATION**

What is your living situation today?

0=I have a steady place to live

1=I have a place to live today, but I am worried about losing it in the future

2=I do not have a steady place to live (I am temporarily staying with others, in a hotel, in a shelter, living outside on the street, on a beach, in a car, abandoned building, bus or train...)

Declined

Think about the place you live. Do you have problems with any of the following?

1=Pests such as bugs, ants, or mice     2=Mold     3=Lead paint or pipes     4=Lack of heat

5=Oven or stove not working     6=Smoke detectors missing or no...     7=Water leaks     0=None of the above

Declined

Number of positive responses to housing questions

1

**Help Desired**

Would you like assistance with any of the above items?

0=No     1=Yes



# Learning Objective 3: Understand the interplay of housing insecurity and gender-affirming care

Housing can impact access to gender-affirming care  
- AND -  
Gender-affirming care can impact housing



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# Ready to Start Estrogen (E), but...

- 19 year old transfeminine patient
- Lives with mom, dad, and younger siblings
- History of emotional and physical abuse
- Embodiment goals align with estrogen effects
- Does not feel safe starting E while living with family
- Unable to find affordable housing

# Living in a Truck

- 24 year old transmale
- Moved with family a month ago from the West Coast
- Live in their truck -mother, father, 2 children, a dog, and 2 cats
- Came to our attention after ER visit for premenstrual dysphoric disorder (PMDD) - threatened to cut off breasts
- Needle phobia but can't take topical due to close (very) living quarters (lots of insurance hurdles to get pellets)
- Plan: Coming every 2 weeks to clinic for testosterone injection by a nurse; received a chest binder and underwear from clinic and very pleased

# Shelter to Home

- 35 year old transwoman
- Living in a shelter
- Following up sporadically with housing appointments
- When she learned she could not have a vaginoplasty without stable housing, she became very motivated
- S/p NVG surgery, short-term recovery in respite

# Value of Respite

- Barbara McInnis House is a 104-bed medical respite facility that provides 24/7 care for patients who are too sick for life in shelters or the street, but not sick enough to occupy a hospital bed.
- Has enabled people to be able to undergo gender-affirming procedures that otherwise would have been out of reach



# Other Respite Examples

- 18 year old student wishing for chest reconstruction. Lived at home with unsupportive parents. Guidance counselor referred.
- No-depth vaginoplasty surgery and recovery for a 70 year old patient living alone.
- Multiple breast augmentation surgery patients who recovered before returning to the shelter.

# Considerations for Youth?

- Consent is a unique issue for youth seeking medical care
- There are generally more housing resources for youth
- Youth shelters are generally more inclusive around gender
- Potential increase in unstably housed youth d/t anti-trans legislation



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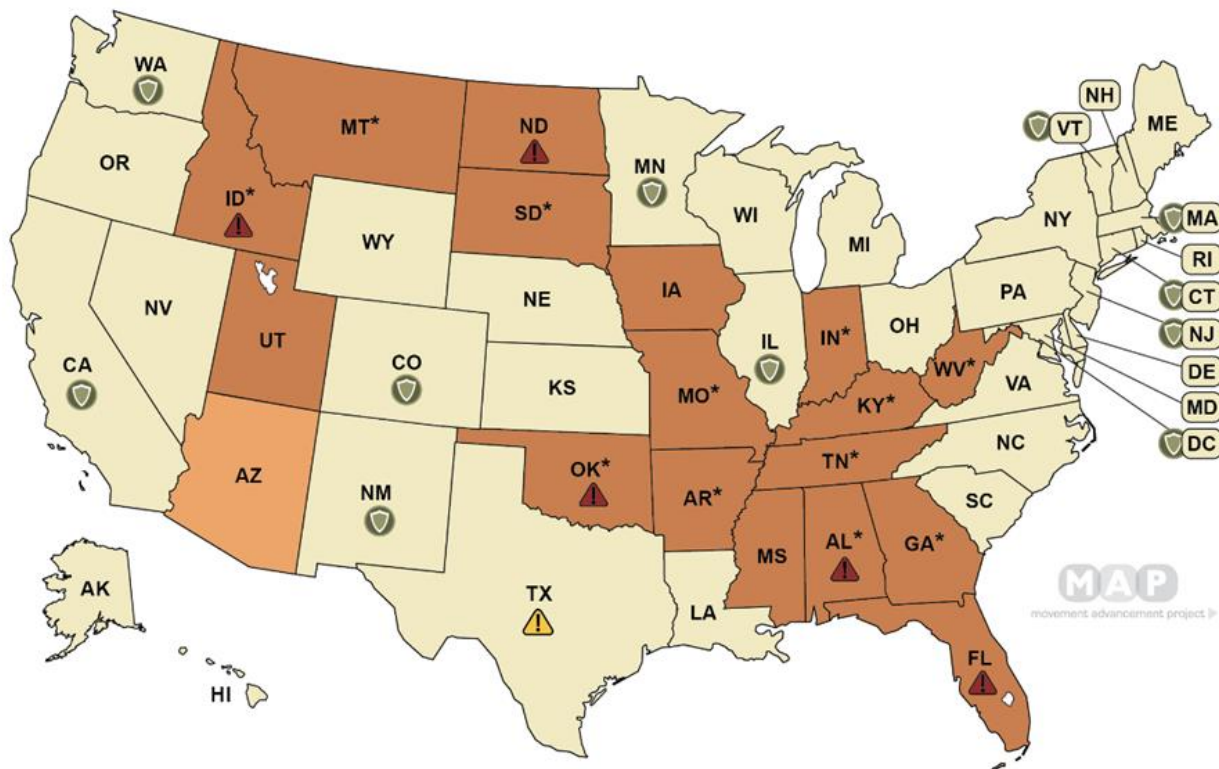
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As of 6/1/23

- State has "shield" law protecting access to transgender health care (see this map for more information) (10 states + D.C.)
- State bans best practice medication and surgical care for transgender youth (17 states)
- State bans best practice surgical care for transgender youth (1 state)
- State does not ban best practice medical care for transgender youth (32 states, 5 territories + D.C.)
- State ban makes it a felony crime to provide best practice medical care for transgender youth (5 states)
- State has taken steps to ban or restrict best practice medical care for transgender youth, but state law does not ban this care (see note) (1 state)





# Considerations for Adults?

- Not many resources available for those between ages 24-65
- Shelters are often gendered: can go to the shelter based on your (binary) identity
- Shelter policies may exist to support transgender individuals, but...

## Learning Objective 4:

Learn about resources that can be accessed by transgender and gender diverse people experiencing homelessness or housing instability

# Youth-specific Resources

- NationalHomeless.org
- National Runaway Safeline (1-800-786-2929 / [www.1800runaway.org](http://www.1800runaway.org))
- The Ali Forney Center – Housing for Homeless LGBT Youth (NYC)
- Host Homes / BAGLY (Boston)
- Larkin Street Youth Services (San Francisco)
- NAEHCY | The National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth
- My Friend's Place (LA)
- National Network for Youth
- True Colors United | Housing & Supportive Services Directory
- New Alternatives (NYC)
- [Gender Spectrum](#) (support for families, trans youth, and educators)
- [Trans Youth Equality Federation](#) (support for families and trans youth)
- The Trevor Project

# Additional Resources

- [National Center for Transgender Equality \(NCTE\)](#) (advocacy)
- [Transgender Legal Defense and Education Fund \(TLDEF\)](#) (legal services)
- [Transgender Law Center \(TLC\)](#) (legal services and advocacy)
- [Sylvia Rivera Law Project \(SRLP\)](#) (legal services)
- [Trans Women of Color Collective](#) (advocacy)
- [Black Trans Advocacy](#) (advocacy)
- [Trans Latina Coalition](#) (advocacy)
- [TransTech Social Enterprises](#) (economic empowerment)
- [SPART\\*A](#) (advocacy for trans military service members)
- [Transgender American Veterans Association](#) (advocacy for trans veterans)
- [The Network LaRed](#) (assists victims of partner abuse)

# Some Take-home Points

- Do not assume that people want to be housed
- Do not assume how people identify
- People may be fluid in their gender presentation - sometimes due to safety concerns
- Respite is an intervention that may enable people to get certain services
- Shelter can be especially challenging for nonbinary people

# Q&A



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# Participant Resources

[Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender & Queer Health - National Health Care for the Homeless Council \(nhchc.org\)](https://nhchc.org)

[Protecting and Advancing Health Care for Transgender Adult Communities - Center for American Progress](#)

[Housing insecurity and intersecting social determinants of health among transgender people in the USA: A targeted ethnography - PMC \(nih.gov\)](#)

[Mayor London Breed Announces Plan to End Trans Homelessness by 2027 | Office of the Mayor \(sfmayor.org\)](#)

[Patient-Centered Care | For Health Care Providers | Transforming Health | Clinicians | HIV | CDC](#)

[Trans health and Medical-Legal Partnerships: https://medical-legalpartnership.org/mlp-resources/transgender-health](https://medical-legalpartnership.org/mlp-resources/transgender-health)

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