

Respectful Care and Support for LGBTQ Clients and Colleagues Part 1: Introduction to LGBTQ Culture and Terminology

Facilitators: Jean Clipsham & Dianne Roedding

January 14th, 2015 12:00 - 1:00pm

Questions:

Q: I'm a little confused on the difference between Bi- and Pan-sexual...

A: The term bisexual recognises only 2 genders – male and female. The term pansexual recognises that gender is more diverse.

Q: Is there a term for a gender male or female who is attracted to the opposite sex and attracted to trans individual?

A: I do not know of any term for these specific attractions. The most important thing is that people self-identify, and choose the term they feel appropriate for them. Pansexual and perhaps even bisexual could describe their attractions. Remember that sexual orientation and gender identity are separate. When a person realizes that they are trans, their sexual orientation may or may not change.

Q: is it appropriate to ask others which pronouns they wish me to use? or should i wait for them to bring it up if they chose?

A: When a person identifies that they are trans, it is not only an appropriate question to ask, but indicates that you are aware of the issue. Consider adding this to intake/history questions – you can't tell by looking if someone is trans.

Q: Why do some people use the pronouns we/them instead of using he/she?

A: They are using inclusive language. He/she only applies to people who identify as male/female.

Q: Are more public places incorporating bathrooms that are not gender specific?

A: There is some improvement, as people are becoming more aware of trans issues.

Q: What can I do to make my workplace more accepting and supportive of LGBTQ patients and their families?

A: This will be a focus for Part 3. If you can't attend, check the archives after March 5 or check the reference list emailed to you before this series for the link to the positive space manual.

Q: When or is it ever appropriate to ask someone their gender/sexuality?

A: When doing a history, it is appropriate to ask **everyone** if they identify as male, female, both or neither. Also, if their sexual partners (current and past) are male, female, both or neither.

Q: I, of course, can understand if it is a client, but what about colleagues and peers? How does someone come across as supportive without invading privacy?

A: Regarding colleagues and peers, it depends whether someone has come out to you or not – it is important to never “out” someone. If your peer is out, ask questions just like you would with anyone – about partners or children, their weekend. You can demonstrate sensitivity by using appropriate language, like partner, instead of boyfriend/girlfriend/husband/wife; you can bring up current events about LGBTQ issues; talk about this webinar series – your experience of the coming out stars activity; we will be talking about symbols one can wear that let people know you are supportive.

Q: Referring to gender identity, when you say the person identifies as male, does that mean they identify with societal male gender roles?

A: Some men do and some men don't. You know a lot of people who identify as male – some are more stereotypically male than others, it is unique to each person

Q: What does the term gender fluid mean?

A: Gender fluid refers to people whose gender identity is outside the typical categories of man or woman. Another term is genderqueer.

Q: What does queer mean.

A: Queer is a word that was reclaimed by the LGBTQ community. In the past it was a word used to bully and hurt people, but the community has taken it back and named themselves queer so the word no longer has the power to hurt. It is an umbrella term that describes the LGBTQAA community and an academic word describing the various communities. Of course people must self-identify as queer – some don't.

Q: Androgynous people has not been addressed can you please touch on that thank you.

A: Androgynous is a gender expression denoting a person who does not identify as exclusively male or exclusively female, but as someone in between. Gender expression is how we communicate our gender identity to the world. We will discuss people who are neither male nor female in our 4th web cast. Some androgynous people use the term genderqueer as their gender identity. But all language is fluid and if someone identifies as androgynous as their gender identity, that is their gender identity.