Affirming Trans and Non-Binary Gender Identities

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camh
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What We Do

• Diagnostic Assessment for Trans, Non-Binary, and Gender Expansive Clients

• Assess and Recommend MOHLTC funded transition-related surgeries

• Promote Systems Change/Capacity Building Across Ontario

• Reducing Waitlist/Wait Times
AGENDA

1. Transgender Health: Overview and Landscape
2. Statistics and Findings
3. Gender 101: Basic Overview
4. Gender 201: Key Terms and Concepts
5. Creating Inclusive Environments
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Transgender Health – Overview and Landscape
THEx Partnership – Ontario’s Trans Health Expansion Partnership
Expansion of Services

“Ontario is expanding access to referrals for medically necessary sex reassignment surgery (also known as gender confirming surgery). As of March 1, 2016, the Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP) has changed the funding criteria for sex reassignment surgery by allowing qualified providers throughout the province to assess patients for the surgery.”

Who Can Assess and Refer?

Physicians
Nurse Practitioners
Psychologists
Registered Nurses
Master Level Social Workers

1st letter

2nd letter
# Funded Procedures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Surgery</th>
<th>1st letter (MD/NP)</th>
<th>2nd letter (NP/MD/RN/MSW/psychologist)</th>
<th>Hormones</th>
<th>Medical and Mental Health Conditions</th>
<th>Gender Role Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mastectomy</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>Not a pre-requisite</td>
<td>“controlled”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Augmentation mammoplasty</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>12 continuous months with no breast development</td>
<td>“controlled”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gonad: Hysterectomy, or orchiectomy</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>12 continuous months</td>
<td>“well controlled”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vaginoplasty</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>12 continuous months</td>
<td>“well controlled”</td>
<td>12 continuous months of living in a gender role congruent with gender identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phalloplasty/Metoidioplasty</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>12 continuous months</td>
<td>“well controlled”</td>
<td>12 continuous months of living in a gender role congruent with gender identity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
World Professional Association of Transgender Health (WPATH)

The World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH) is the only global association devoted solely to the healthcare of transgender and gender nonconforming people. Develop and publish Standards of Care for transgender health.

As an international multidisciplinary professional association the mission of WPATH is to promote evidence based care, education, research, advocacy, public policy and respect in transgender health.
Shift in perspective: towards inclusion

“Being transgender, transsexual or gender non-conforming is a matter of diversity, not pathology.”

World Professional Association for Transgender Health. (WPATH, 2011) Standards of care: For the health of transsexual, transgender and gender non-conforming people
Gender Dysphoria

➢ Change from Gender Identity Disorder (DSM-IV)
➢ Text explicitly states that transgender identity, per se, is not a mental disorder
➢ Focus of treatment is the dysphoria/distress
Gender Dysphoria: DSM-5

A *marked incongruence* between one’s experienced/expressed gender and assigned gender, of *at least 6 months* duration, as manifested by *2 or more* of the following indicators:

1. A marked incongruence between one’s experienced/expressed gender and primary and/or secondary sex characteristics

2. A strong desire to be rid of one’s primary and/or secondary sex characteristics because of a marked incongruence with one’s experienced/expressed gender

3. A strong desire for the primary and/or secondary sex characteristics of the other gender

4. A strong desire to be of the other gender (or alternative gender)

5. A strong desire to be treated as the other gender (or alternative gender)

6. A strong conviction that one has the typical feelings and reactions of the other gender (or alternative gender)
Statistics and Findings
Gender Dysphoria – Comorbid Disorders and Symptoms

**Anxiety**
- Social Phobia
- Generalized Anxiety Disorder
- Specific Phobias

**Mood Disorders**
- Major Depressive Disorder
- Bipolar Disorder

**Suicidality/Self-harm**

**Eating Disorders**

**Body Image Issues**

**Substance Use Disorders**

**Autism Spectrum Disorder**

**Personality Disorders**
- Emotion dysregulation
- Fear of abandonment
- Unstable sense of self/feeling of emptiness
- Interpersonal difficulties
- Avoidant traits

**Intellectual and Developmental Disorders**

**Trauma**
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
- Complex PTSD
Meyer's (2003) minority stress model understands the frequency of LBGTQ+ individuals with mental health problems as a consequence of minority stress.

- Sexual and/or gender minority identity
- Experience identity-based stigmatization, oppression & discrimination
- Negative impact on mental and behavioural health

Homophobic and Transphobic Culture and Environmental
Gender Minority Stress Model (Testa et al., 2015)
Discrimination, Violence, and Structural Barriers in Ontario

- Everyday transphobia - 96% have heard that trans people were not normal
- Public spaces - 97% report avoiding at least one type of public space
- Employment barriers and economic marginalization
- Violence
- Identity documents
- Primary and emergency medical care
- Exclusion from communities
Prevalence of Discrimination, Violence, and Structural Barriers

- 58% could not get academic transcripts with the correct name/pronoun
- 31% of those who changed their legal names and lived genders have not changed sex designations on any legal ID
- 20% have been physically or sexually assaulted for being trans
- 13% were fired for being trans (another 15% were also fired, but were unsure if this was why)
- 10% of trans emergency room patients reported having care stopped or denied

Trans Pulse Study (2009-10; 2015)
Gender 101: Basic Overview
GENDER 101: NORMS AND ROLES

FEMALE
- Frightened
- Helpful
- Shy
- Orderly
- Pretty
- Weak
- Sweet
- Caring
- Emotional
- Sad
- Good
- Sensible
- Careful
- Cute

MALE
- Frustrated
- Fury
- Fast
- Messy
- Cool
- Hard
- Tough
- Strong
- Brave
- Anger
- Naughty
- Wild
- Loud
- Violence
Gendering Begins Before Birth
Gender 201: Key Terms and Concepts
Definitions and Terms

Transgender
A person is called transgender (in short: trans) if their gender identity – their internally experienced gender – differs from the gender identity expected on the basis of what they were assigned at birth.

Non-Binary
A person is called nonbinary (in short: enby) if their gender identity is any gender identity that does not fall within the strict categories of contemporary Western societies, which typically consider gender to be binary, e.g., either man or woman.

Two-Spirit
Aboriginal people who are trans might also describe themselves using the term two-spirit (2S), an umbrella term for Aboriginal individuals who live between socially defined male and female gender roles (Balsam et al., 2004).
Sex and Gender Identity

Cisgender person: When gender identity and expression match their sex assigned at birth (e.g. cisgender woman, cisgender man).

For transgender and non-binary individuals, gender identity or expression differ from their sex assigned at birth.

(World Professional Association for Transgender Health, 2001).
The Gender Continuum

The Gender Unicorn

Gender Identity
- Female/Woman/Girl
- Male/Man/Boy
- Other Gender(s)

Gender Expression
- Feminine
- Masculine
- Other

Sex Assigned at Birth
- Female
- Male
- Other/Intersex

Physically Attracted to
- Women
- Men
- Other Gender(s)

Emotionally Attracted to
- Women
- Men
- Other Gender(s)

To learn more, go to: www.transstudent.org/gender

Design by Landyn Pan and Anna Moore
Gender Identity

**Cisgender:** When gender identity and expression match their sex assigned at birth

**Trans and Non-Binary:** gender identity or expression *differ* from their sex assigned at birth

Gender Expression

The ways in which a person outwardly communicates gender identity to others through physical and social expressions

A person’s sex assigned at birth, gender identity, and gender expression can vary

**Sex**

Sex is assigned at birth as either female, male or *intersex*, usually based on the appearance of the external genitalia
GENDER 101: GENDER IDENTITY VERSUS ASSIGNED GENDER

Assigned Gender

Gender is assigned at birth based on physical sex – i.e. *It’s a girl!* or *It’s a boy!* – and people are generally raised in this gender role.

This is called “assigned gender”.

**AFAB** – assigned female at birth

**AMAB** – assigned male at birth

Gender Identity

An internal, subjective experience of one’s gender.

Gender is how people interpret and view themselves. A person might identify as the gender they were assigned at birth (cisgender) or they may identify differently (transgender).
Sexual and Romantic Attraction

Who a person is sexually and/or romantically attracted to.

This is experienced as an intrinsic part of one’s self-identification with regard to emotional, physical, romantic, sexual and spiritual attraction, desire and/or affection for another/others.

I know you know this already....

A person’s gender identity does not tell you anything about someone’s sexual orientation or sexual behaviour!
Non-Binary- What Does it Mean?

An umbrella term covering individuals who do not identity exclusively in the gender binary (male or female)

Is sometimes referred to as “NB” or “Enby”

Think of it as between, outside and beyond the gender binary

“Non-binary gender identity is any gender identity that does not fall within the strict categories of contemporary Western societies, which typically consider gender to be binary, e.g., either man or woman.”
Non-binary: Another Definition

Non-Binary and genderqueer are umbrella terms used to describe many different gender identities that fall outside of the Western constructs of male and female.

The term non-binary includes people who identity with both male and female identities simultaneously or separately (e.g. intergender, bigender, genderfluid), those who do not experience having a gender identity or reject a gender identity (e.g. agender), and those whose gender falls between or outside male and female identities.
Non-Binary Identities

**Agender**: Having no specific gender identity or having a gender identity that is neutral. Sometimes used interchangeably with gender neutral, genderless, or neutrois.

**Bigender**: Having two distinct gender identities or expressions, either simultaneously, at different times, or in different situations.

**Genderfluid**: Moving between two or more gender identities or expressions.

**Genderqueer**: A catch-all term for individuals who identity as non-binary.

**Non-Binary**: The umbrella term covering all gender identities and expressions outside the gender binary. Also referred to as NB or enby.

**Third Gender**: Having a gender identity or expression that is not defined in terms of the binary options (male/female).
Do Non-Binary People identify as trans?

- Yes, some nonbinary people identify as trans; given that their gender identity is not congruent with their assigned sex at birth
- No, some nonbinary people do not identify as trans. This should always be respected
  - Some identify as both trans and nonbinary
  - Some nonbinary people experience the dominant connotation of the term transgender to only reference binary trans people.

• “The definition of non-binary situates non-binary people as trans in because disidentification with being male or female inescapably means disidentification with the binary assignment made at birth” – Ben Vincent (2019) Breaking down barriers and binaries in trans healthcare: the validation of non-binary people, International Journal Of Transgenderism)
Gender Transition

- There is a difference between gender nonconformity and being transgender. Not all people who appear androgynous or gender expansive identify as transgender or pursue transition-related interventions.

- 'Transitioning' (social, legal, medical) is the period during which trans people begin changing their appearance, names and/or bodies to match their internal identity.

- There is no single gender journey or end goal.
Considerations: social transition and non-binary clients

• Reconciling identity in a social landscape that can be intolerant and confused by gender nonconformity

• Living outside the gender binary is hard; less understood, less visible, less seen

• Social pressure to conform/ discomfort with traditional gender labeling processes more than binary trans people who tended to describe more ease of identifying applicable gender norms.

• Having a gender identity that it is not easily identifiable can be distressful and confusing and it may lead to feelings of loneliness and isolation. (Dismissiveness, invalidation, invisibility, and erasure)

• Viewed as a “stepping stone” or “only a phase” identity, as part of the process of negotiating a binary trans identity.

• Discrimination from cisgender and binary trans people
Creating Inclusive Environments
Gender-Affirming Care

“Gender-affirming care can be understood as the processes through which a health care system cares for and supports an individual, while recognizing and acknowledging their gender identity and expression”

- BC Nurses Union, 2016
Affirming Care Principles

➢ Respecting people’s autonomy and identity, validation, listening
➢ Inclusive, non-binary view of gender
➢ Intersectional
➢ Trauma informed and resilience-based
➢ Education and Competency Development
➢ Engaging in self-reflexivity in practice about our own assumptions and biases
➢ Advocating for (and with) the needs and supports of our clients
➢ Avoid making assumptions
Inclusive Environments Affirmatively Celebrate Diversity

Be diverse.
Be inclusive.
Be accepting.
Be a welcoming Safe Space For Everyone.

TRANS INCLUSION MATTERS

POSITIVE SPACE
This is a place where human rights are respected and where lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, two spirit and queer people, and their friends and allies, are welcomed and supported.
Inclusive Environments Affirmatively Celebrate Diversity

➢ Express comfort with and interest in working with trans and gender-diverse clients

➢ Post a bill of rights that demonstrates commitment to non-discriminatory care for trans clients

➢ Have information on resources for trans and gender-diverse clients

➢ Display images affirming trans identities (e.g., trans flag)
Inclusive Environments Invite and Capture Diversity

➢ State your name and your pronouns
➢ Give clients opportunity to provide their correct name, in addition to their legal name
➢ Avoid use of gendered salutations and titles (Mrs., Mr., Ms.)
➢ Ask clients their pronouns, and what pronouns to use in waiting room/ in presence of family members
➢ Include variety of options for gender on forms
Everyone gets to decide what their gender is and what pronoun they would like used when referring to them.

Important not to make assumptions about a person’s gender identity or the pronoun they use – just ask

“What pronouns/name do you use?” or “Can you remind me what pronouns/name you use?”
Pronouns

➢ A person’s gender pronouns cannot be assumed from their appearance
➢ Binary pronouns do not inform us about gender identity
➢ Can be complex depending on national, cultural, linguistic specificity
➢ **Should** be incorporated into everyday practice, but also optional (i.e. in “go-arounds” where it can be a disclosure or a feeling of misgendering)
Non-binary Identities and Pronouns

Pronoun use is an important issue for non-binary people

➢ Not all non-binary people use they/them or alternative pronouns

➢ Some non-binary people choose to use pronouns other than she/her and he/his.
Make Standard Communication Inclusive

BOYS/GUYS/GIRLS/LADIES: Y’ALL, FOLKS, PEOPLE, GUESTS

GIRL/BOY/MAN/WOMAN: PERSON, HUMAN

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN: HONORED GUESTS, DISTINGUISHED GUESTS

GIRLFRIEND/BOYFRIEND: PARTNER, DATE, DATEFRIEND, DATEMATE, BABEFRIEND, BABE, HEART, PERSON, SIGNIFICANT OTHER
Gender Affirming Environment: Washrooms

➢ Gendered washrooms are a significant stressor for trans and gender expansive people

➢ Safety issues for more visibly trans people

➢ Non-binary person is forced to make a decision between two choices, neither of which may feel right for them
Gender Affirming Environment: Washrooms
Cultural Humility and Self-Reflection

➢ Be mindful that some diagnostic labels have been used to undermine the legitimacy of transgender people’s identities and impose barriers to accessing transition resources

➢ Learn from your client and their unique context – Do not expect them to educate you beyond what is appropriate

➢ Is gender relevant to the discussion?

➢ Recognize that individuals may be afraid to disclose their gender identity or trauma history for various reasons

➢ Consider intersectionalities

➢ Be mindful of the historical and contemporary traumas that trans people have been subjected to in health care – and the trepidation in seeking care
Resources
Resources

• Education and Training
• Trans Health Mentorship Call
• Primary Care Guidelines for Trans Care
• Provincial Navigator
• Affirming Service Provider Directory
Resources

• Creating Authentic Spaces: A Gender Identity and Gender Expression Toolkit
• Community Programming (i.e. ID Clinics, Support groups, legal services, housing services, etc.)
• Primary care and programming for trans communities
• ARC – respite stay for surgical recovery
• Groups and drop-ins (i.e. Gender Journeys)
• International Standards of Care Publication
• Research, resources, and publications
• Annual conference
Transgender Youth Clinic
Services and Resource for Trans People
Sprott House
ECHO Ontario Mental Health: Trans and Gender Diverse Healthcare

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Thank You

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