



# Tips for Working with Transgender Clients



**Respect Your Client's Name and Gender Expression.** Clients have a right to be called by both their chosen name and gender pronoun. Introduce yourself and ask, "What name would you like me to call you?" and "What is your pronoun?"

**Understand Gender Identity and Sex.** Current gender identity may differ from assigned sex at birth. During an assessment, you can ask, "What was your assigned sex at birth?"

**Differentiate Between Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation.** Transgender clients may consider themselves heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, pansexual, asexual, etc. Do not assume transgender clients identify as gay.

**Respect Your Client's Confidentiality.** When discussing a case with other clinicians, bring up your client's gender identity only as it relates to the case. Do not state or imply that your client is transgender unless it is relevant to their care.

**Honor Your Client's Concerns.** Be aware that, although they may have gender-related concerns, your client's primary concern and reason for seeking services may not involve their gender identity.



**Behavioral Health  
& Recovery Services**  
SAN MATEO COUNTY  
**Office of Diversity and Equity**



The Office of Diversity and Equity and the San Mateo County Pride Center are here to support you! Please visit [www.smchealth.org/pride](http://www.smchealth.org/pride) or [www.sanmateopride.org](http://www.sanmateopride.org), e-mail [ode@smcgov.org](mailto:ode@smcgov.org) or [info@sanmateopride.org](mailto:info@sanmateopride.org), or call the Pride Center at (650) 591-0133 for more information.



# Creating an LGBTQ-Supportive Culture



## Do:

1. Display symbols of significance in your office, and place LGBTQ-positive magazines and literature in your waiting room.
2. Use gender-neutral language like, "Are you seeing anyone?" or "Who do you date?"
3. Respect each client's declared vocabulary and orientation.
4. Treat LGBTQ clients with the same care and concern as you do all other clients.

## Don't:

1. Assume that you know a client's sexual orientation or gender identity.
2. Use gender-specific language when asking about a partner like, "Do you have a boyfriend/girlfriend?"
3. Assume that a client is "experimenting" or "going through a phase."
4. Assume that a client's concerns always revolve around their sexual orientation or gender identity.



**Behavioral Health  
& Recovery Services**  
SAN MATEO COUNTY  
**Office of Diversity and Equity**



The Office of Diversity and Equity and the San Mateo County Pride Center are here to support you!  
Please visit [www.smchealth.org/pride](http://www.smchealth.org/pride) or [www.sanmateopride.org](http://www.sanmateopride.org), e-mail [ode@smcgov.org](mailto:ode@smcgov.org) or [info@sanmateopride.org](mailto:info@sanmateopride.org), or call the Pride Center at (650) 591-0133 for more information.