

**PROVIDING MENTAL HEALTH
CARE TO LGBTQ+ YOUTH**

PRESENTED BY KESTREL

LGBTQ+ YOUTH ARE VULNERABLE

According to a recent study over half of young people 13-26 identify as something other than cisgender and heterosexual. (1) So we know there is a huge number of LGBTQ+ young people.


A disproportionate amount of LGBTQ+ people struggle with mental illness and addiction.

LGBTQ+ youth are particularly vulnerable:

- May lack natural supports
- May experience bullying and harrassment
- Many have other marginalized identities as well as being LGBTQ+
- We live in a heteronormative society that doesn't validate their identities

BARRIERS TO COMPREHENSIVE CARE

Barriers to care:

- Providers lacking knowledge about queer identities and how to talk about them
 - Mental health facilities having unfriendly environments for LGBTQ+ people
 - Lack of access to resources
- 

TERMS

How do we describe this community?

Lesbian **G**ay **B**isexual **T**ransgender **Q**ueer **Q**uestioning **I**ntersex **A**sexual **P**ansexual +
Sexuality **A**nd **G**ender **A**cceptance **community**

Queer community

Queer – An intentionally ambiguous term used to refer to variation from the “norm” in gender, sexuality, and relationship structures. It is a reclaimed slur which is also a specific academic term as in “Queer Theory”

Refer to the term sheet provided for other definitions



TRANS 101

Transgender – Someone who does not identify with the gender they were assigned at birth

Cisgender – Someone who does identify with the gender they were assigned at birth

Within the trans community there's a huge variation of experiences. Some trans people chose to modify their bodies with hormones and surgeries and some do not. Some identify within the binary of men and women and some do not.

Do not:

- Ask intrusive questions about trans peoples bodies such as if they've had surgeries or use hormones.
- Tell anyone about a queer person's identities without permission. Don't out people.
- Tell anyone what gender they are, how to express their gender, or what gendered spaces they can and can't access.
- Don't harass queer people or stand by and listen to them be harassed.

TRANS 101

Respecting gender variation

- Don't assume people's gender and sexuality
- Respectfully ask people what their pronouns are and what name they go by
- If you mess up someone's name or pronouns, say the sentence over again correctly. Don't make a big deal out the mistake.

There's an important difference between gender and sexuality. Sexuality is who you go to bed with, gender is who you go to bed as. Trans people can be lesbian, gay, straight, pansexual, asexual etc.

Gender is an identity, it's in your brain. It's your sense of who you are.

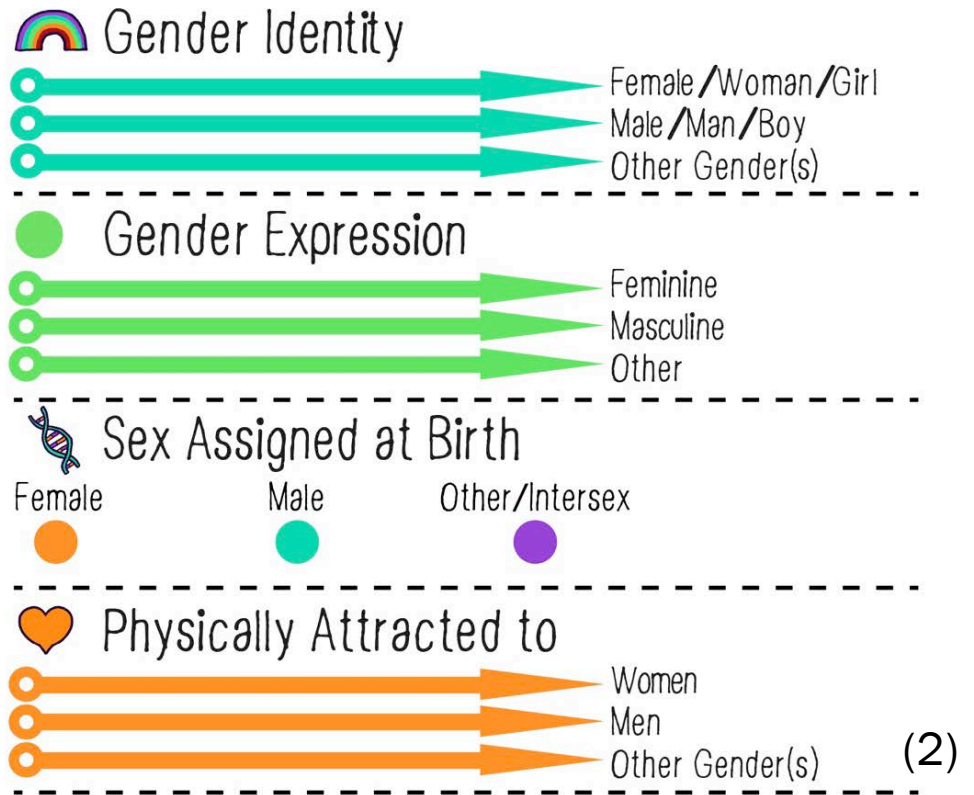
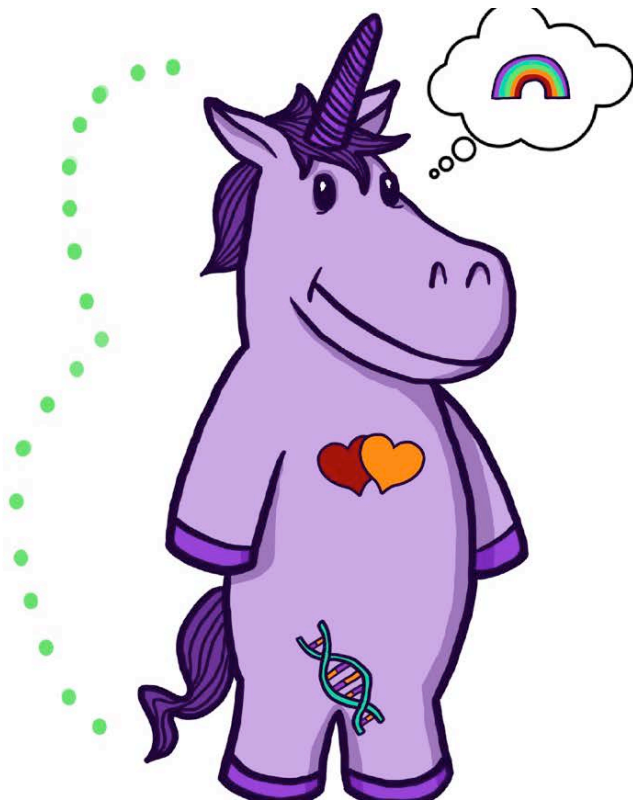
Sex is your body. It's your hormones, genitals, secondary sex characteristics, and chromosomes.

Sexuality is your sexual and romantic attractions and who those are directed towards.

Gender Expression is how you present yourself. It can be clothes, hair, accessories, body modifications, mannerisms, etc.



THE GENDER UNICORN



MAKING FACILITIES ACCESSIBLE

It's important to remember that most mental health programs and facilities weren't made with marginalized people in mind. Queer people know that these spaces weren't made for them and often have anxiety about interacting with new providers.

Tangible ways to make facilities accessible to queer people:

- Residential facilities organize roommates by gender. That means that generally transwomen and ciswomen should be roommates and transmen and cismen should be roommates. Check in with trans clients about their comfort around roommates.
- Allow people to access the gendered spaces that are most comfortable for them (bathrooms, locker rooms, groups, etc)
- Make facilities appear welcoming. Put up a cheesy poster about gender and sexuality acceptance or have LGBTQ+ magazines in waiting rooms. Is there gender and sexuality training where you work? Can bathrooms be gender neutral? Get creative.
- Find resources in your area and compile them and offer them to queer clients
- Make sure paperwork is inclusive and accurate

PAPERWORK

INACCURATE AND
INACCESSIBLE

Gender:

Male Female

- Only two options

ACCURATE AND
ACCESSIBLE

Gender:

Male Female

Transgender

other: _____

- Or if it isn' t necessary to ask, don' t ask
- Or provide even more options

CONCLUSION

Providers can do a lot to make mental health care more accessible to LGBTQ+ youth

- Understand and question internal biases and prejudices
- Don't make assumptions
- Change or advocate for change of paperwork and protocols to be inclusive
- Put yourself in the shoes of an LGBTQ+ client and identify and correct barriers to care
- Make physical facilities openly welcoming
- Take responsibility for further education and understanding and educate others

SOURCES

1 - <https://www.ditchthelabel.org/research-papers/the-valentine-study/>

2 - <http://www.transstudent.org/>

Kestrel -

bokomaru99@gmail.com (608) 669-6422