

Cultural Competence and the LGBT* Communities

** (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender)*

TRAINING GOALS

- Define and understand LGBT terminology as it is understood in the LGBT community.
- Review health disparities of LGBT populations and gain insight into how to close the LGBT disparities gap.
- Explore practice tips for patient encounters.



SOME LGBT TERMINOLOGY

Orientation

- **Sexual orientation:** A person's emotional, sexual and/or relational **attraction** to others. Usually classified as heterosexual, bisexual, and homosexual (i.e., lesbian and gay).
 - Orientation describes how people position themselves on the spectrum of attraction and identity.
 - It is distinct from gender identity or gender expression.
 - Transgender people exhibit the full range of sexual orientations, from homosexual to bisexual to heterosexual.

LGBT are four distinct communities with different cultural identifications and health priorities.



SOME LGBT TERMINOLOGY (Continued)

Orientation (continued)

- **Bisexual:** One whose sexual or romantic attractions and behaviors are directed toward both sexes to a significant degree. Bisexuality is a distinct sexual orientation.
- **MSM:** Men who have sex with men. Usually identify as gay.
- **WSW:** Women who have sex with women. Usually identify as lesbian.



SOME LGBT TERMINOLOGY (Continued)

Gender Identity

- **Transgender:** Describes people whose gender identity and/or expression is different from that typically associated with their assigned sex at birth.
- **Genderqueer:** Describes people who sees themselves as outside the usual binary man/woman definitions.
 - Having elements of many genders, being androgynous or having no gender.
 - Also **Gender Non-Conforming (GNC)**.
- **Bigender:** Describes people whose gender identity encompasses both male and female genders. Some may feel that one identity is stronger, but both are present.



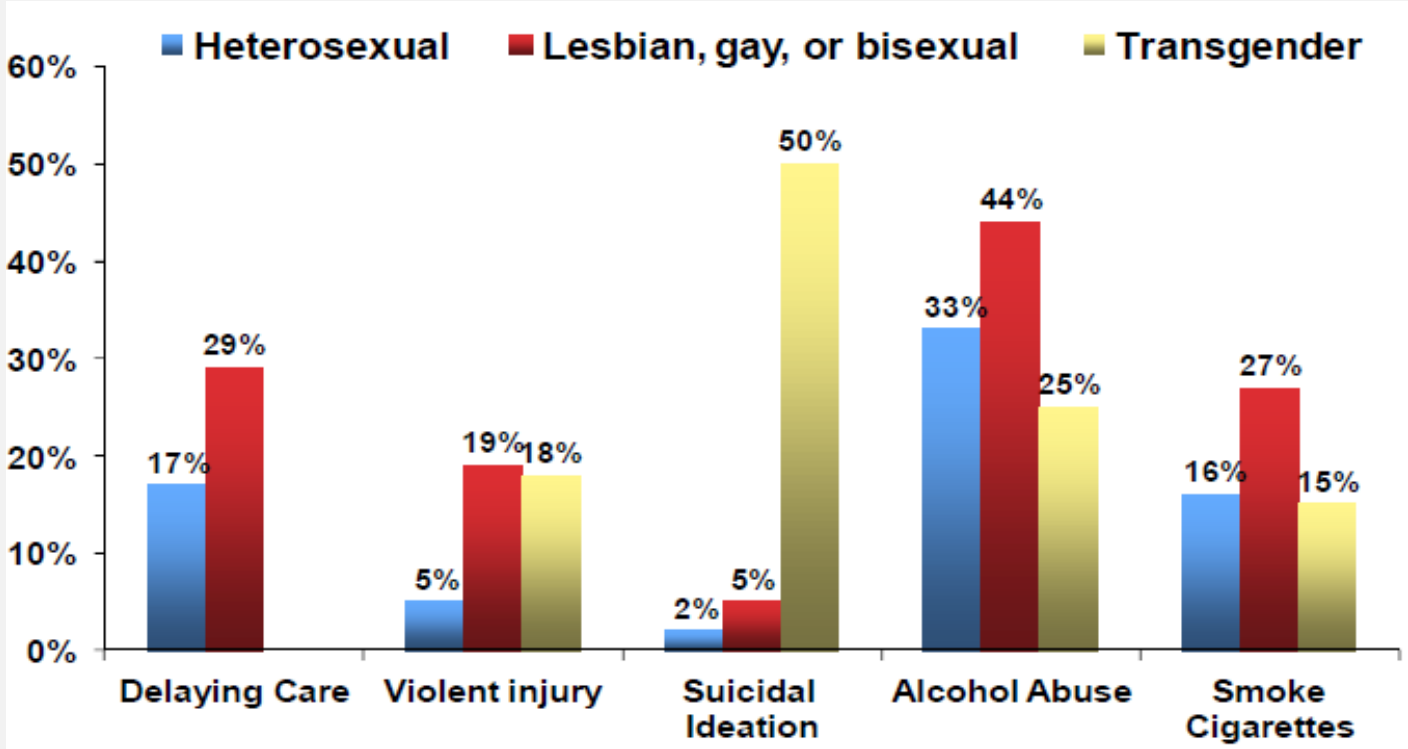
SOME LGBT TERMINOLOGY (Continued)

Gender Identity (continued)

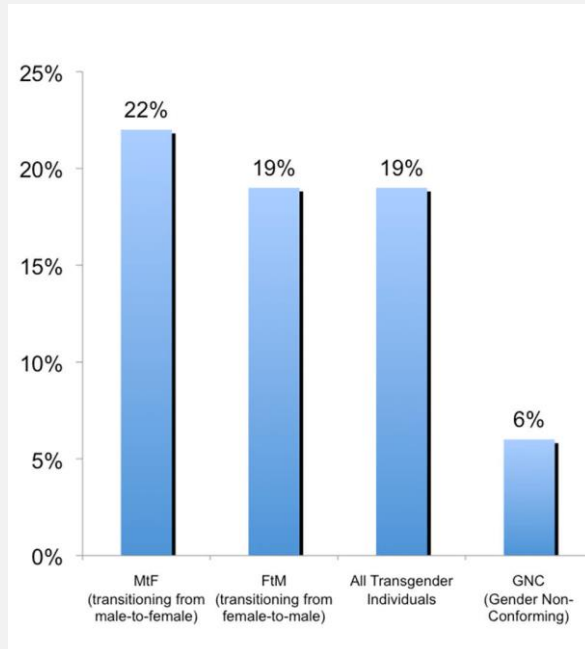
- **MtF:** Male-to-female; a person who was assigned the male sex at birth but identifies and lives as a female. Also, trans woman.
 - MtF persons will still need to have prostate exams according to standard guidelines.
- **FtM:** Female-to-male; a person who was assigned the female sex at birth but identifies and lives as a male. Also, trans man or trans male.
 - FtM persons will need to have breast exams and Pap tests according to standard guidelines.
- **Transsexual:** Medical term for people who have used surgery or hormones to modify their bodies. Some trans people find this term offensive.



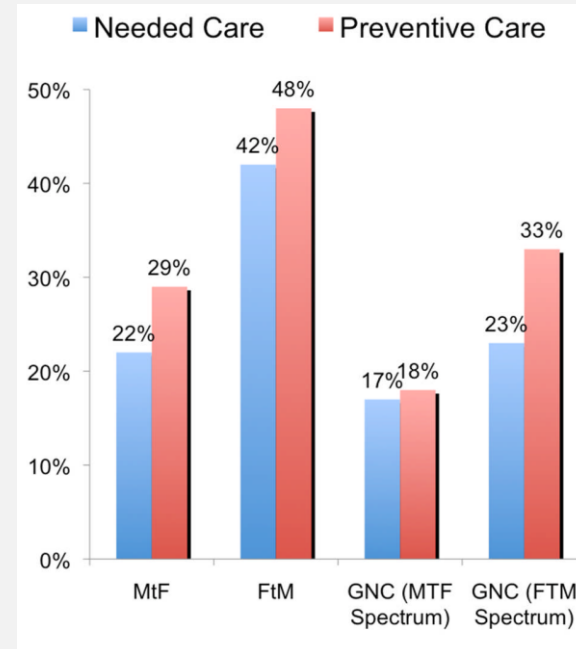
HEALTH DISPARITIES OF LGBT POPULATIONS



TRANSGENDER INDIVIDUALS BURDEN DISPARITIES IN LEVELS OF CARE



Refused Care Based on Gender Identity/Expression



Postponement of Care Due to Discrimination by Providers



CULTURAL COMPETENCE AND THE LGBT COMMUNITIES

Here's What We Wish Our Health Care Team Knew...

- A general understanding of the terms used by us for orientation/identification.

Here's What Your Team Can Do...

- Listen to how patients refer to themselves and loved ones (pronouns, names).
 - Use the same language they use.
- If you're unsure, ask questions.



CULTURAL COMPETENCE AND THE LGBT COMMUNITIES

(Continued)

Here's What We Wish Our Health Care Team Knew...

- We come to you with an extra layer of anxiety.
- Verbally or physically abused.
- Rejected by families due to our sexual orientation/identity.
- Discriminated against within the health care setting.

Here's What Your Team Can Do...

- A little warmth can make all the difference!
- Signage or intake form verbiage that is safe, judgment-free, and non-discriminatory.
- Policies indicating nondiscrimination for sexual orientation/identity displayed in common areas.



CULTURAL COMPETENCE AND THE LGBT COMMUNITIES

(Continued)

Here's What We Wish Our Health Care Team Knew...

- The assumptions/attitudes that we are all heterosexual (aka "straight") dissuade us from seeking care in the future.
- Discrimination in health care may delay or defer treatment.

Here's What Your Team Can Do...

- Anticipate that all patients are not heterosexual.
- Use “partner” instead of “spouse” or “boy/girlfriend”.
- Replace marital status with relationship status on forms.



CULTURAL COMPETENCE AND THE LGBT COMMUNITIES

(Continued)

Here's What We Wish Our Health Care Team Knew...

- We feel our HIPAA rights to privacy are not honored.
- Amazingly, some personnel...
 - Openly discuss our orientation/identity with coworkers.
 - Don't realize or care that we can see or hear them making fun of us with coworkers.

Here's What Your Team Can Do...

- Protect the patient's rights.
 - Sharing personal health information, including sexual orientation, is a violation of HIPAA.
 - Confirm that the patient's rights are protected under the HIPAA Privacy Rule.



CULTURAL COMPETENCE AND THE LGBT COMMUNITIES

(Continued)

Here's What We Wish Our Health Care Team Knew...

- We may be more sensitive to the use of PPE.
- Some doctors put on gloves after learning about our sexual orientation.
- Some show a reluctance to touch us at all.

Here's What Your Team Can Do...

- Treat patients as you would any other patient.
- If it's not contagious, take the gloves off.
- Acknowledge and use the power of touch.
- Let the patient know that gloves are used for every patient, if true.



CULTURAL COMPETENCE AND THE LGBT COMMUNITIES

(Continued)

Here's What We Wish Our Health Care Team Knew...

- We've experienced harshness.
 - Many of us have been unkindly ordered around.
 - Some handle us roughly.
 - Some of us have even had people drop things on us on purpose.

Here's What Your Team Can Do...

- Please use common courtesy.
 - If you wouldn't say or do it to heterosexual patients, please don't say or do it to us.



CULTURAL COMPETENCE AND THE LGBT COMMUNITIES

(Continued)

Here's What We Wish Our Health Care Team Knew...

- We are sensitive to displays of intolerance.
- We have seen doctors being judgmental or showing signs of intolerance, aversion, or disgust.
- Doctors have walked out on us, as in “I can't believe I have to see THIS patient”.

Here's What Your Team Can Do...

- Show signs of acceptance and welcoming.
- Identify your own LGBT perceptions and biases as a first step in providing the best possible quality care to us.



CULTURAL COMPETENCE AND THE LGBT COMMUNITIES

(Continued)

Here's What We Wish Our Health Care Team Knew...

- Check your surprise, embarrassment, or confusion.
 - Many of us do not disclose our orientation because we don't feel comfortable, or we fear receiving substandard service.
 - Your assumptions might be wrong when determining whether we might be LGBT – most of us don't fit the stereotypes.
- Recognize that “coming out” to you does not mean we are “coming on” to you.

Here's What Your Team Can Do...

- Practice some helpful phrases:
 - “Do you have sex with men, women, or both?”
 - “What pronoun do you prefer I use when referring to you?”
 - “I'm glad you shared that with me. I know that might have been difficult to tell me. Is there anything else in connection with your health care that I should know about?”



CULTURAL COMPETENCE AND THE LGBT COMMUNITIES

(Continued)

Here's What We Wish Our Health Care Team Knew...

- Transgender patients have specific health concerns.
- May experience more trauma during removal of clothing or pelvic examinations.
- Not all transgender people want to use hormones or surgery to align with their confirmed gender.

Here's What Your Team Can Do...

- Always use preferred name and pronouns, even when we are not in the room.
- The topic of body modification activities should be approached with care.
- Do not let curiosity lead you to examine body parts that are not involved with the medical issue at hand.



RESOURCES AT HEALTHY.NY.GOV

The New York State Department of Health maintains a list of very helpful LGBT-related resources for:

- Affordable Care Act
- Census and LGBT Demographic Studies
- Drug and Alcohol Abuse
- Gender Identity
- Health Disparities
- HIV/AIDS
- Homelessness
- LGBT Health Resources
- LGBT Health Organizations
- LGBT Curriculum in Schools
- Mental Health
- Legal
- Teen Health



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Thank you

