TRANSGENDER AND GENDER NONCONFORMING YOUTH IN THE CALIFORNIA FOSTER CARE SYSTEM

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NATIONAL CENTER FOR LESBIAN RIGHTS
AGENDA

- Concepts and terminology
- Research and data
- Professional standards
- CA Laws
- Recommended practice
Source: Allegheny County Department of Human Services (2015)
**SOGIE**

**Sexual Orientation**
A person’s romantic, physical and/or sexual attraction to other people that ranges from attraction to only men/boys or women/girls, to varying degrees of attraction to both, to attraction to neither.

**Gender Identity**
A person’s core and hard-wired sense of their own identity as a man/boy, woman/girl, something in between, or something outside the gender binary.

**Gender Expression**
A person’s presentation or communication of their gender to others through hairstyles, clothing, physical mannerisms, alterations of their body, or name and pronoun.
GENDER IDENTITY:
EVERYBODY HAS ONE

Think beyond the binary!

GENDER IS A SPECTRUM
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONCEPTS AND TERMINOLOGY</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sex Assigned at Birth</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Cisgender</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Transgender</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Nonbinary</strong></td>
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Learning about terms youth use to identify themselves (and terms that are offensive to some) is helpful and important, but it can be hard to keep up.

A few guidelines:

1. Allow the young person to self-identify (when ready).

2. Mirror their language.

3. Ask questions in a respectful way that helps you understand what the terminology or language they use means to them.

4. Adjust your language if and when a youth’s identity or expression shifts. Language, identity, and expression are fluid, especially for adolescents.
A broad term referring to aspects of gender expression, identity, and interests that go beyond cultural binary prescriptions of behaviors and interests associated primarily with boys or girls. Gender-expansive includes young people who do not identify with the sex they were assigned at birth as well as those who do, but may nonetheless find themselves barraged with questions based on their dress, appearance, or interests, such as, “Are you a boy or a girl?” or “Why do you play with that? It’s a boy/girl toy!” Other words with similar meanings include gender diverse and gender creative.
OVERREPRESENTATION OF LGBTQ YOUTH IN OUT-OF-HOME CARE

- Rejection and Neglect at Home
- Unsafe Schools
- Social Isolation

- Homelessness

- Child Welfare System
- Juvenile Justice System
LGBTQ Youth in the Child Welfare System

TRANSGENDER 5.6%

LGBQ 13.4%

19.1%

LGBTQ

The Williams Institute
Sexual & Gender Minority Youth in Foster Care: Assessing Disproportionality and Disparities in Los Angeles (2014)
A clinical psychiatric diagnosis characterized by intense, continuous distress caused by the discrepancy between an individual's gender identity and their assigned sex at birth. In previous versions of the DSM, gender dysphoria was known as gender identity disorder (GID).
“Exclusionary policies perpetuate such stigma and discrimination, not only by forcing transgender individuals to disclose their status, but by marking transgender individuals as “others” who are unfit to use the restrooms used by everyone else. Indeed, the very existence of exclusionary policies targeting transgender individuals fosters stigma and discrimination.”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fuZ7AlsTczI
THE IMPORTANCE OF PRONOUNS

http://individualandcouplestherapy.com
A 2018 study studied the use of chosen names by transgender youth in four contexts (at home, at school, at work, and with friends).

Researchers found youth who were able to use their chosen names in all four contexts had the lowest levels of depressive symptoms, suicidal ideation, and suicidal behavior.

An increase by one context in which a preferred name could be used predicted a 29% decrease in suicidal ideation and a 56% decrease in suicidal behavior.
Foster Care Nondiscrimination Act

Gives foster youth:

• The right to fair and equal access to services, placement, care, treatment and benefits

• The right NOT to be subjected to discrimination or harassment on the basis of actual or perceived SO/GI
California Student Safety & Violence Prevention Act

Protects students in California public schools against discrimination or harassment based on
• Sexual orientation
• Gender identity
• Gender nonconforming appearance or behavior
School Success and Opportunity Act

Requires public schools to permit students to participate in sex-segregated programs, activities and facilities consistent with their gender identity regardless of the gender listed in their school records.
Conversion Therapy Ban

Prohibits licensed therapists from administering conversion therapy to any person under the age of 18.
Placement According to Gender Identity

Children and nonminor dependents in out-of-home care shall be placed according to their gender identity, regardless of the gender or sex listed in their court or child welfare records.
Gender Affirming Health and Behavioral Health Care

The right of minors and nonminors in foster care to health care and mental health care includes covered gender affirming health care and gender affirming mental health care.
HOW CAN YOU HELP TGNC YOUTH?
TALK TO YOUTH ABOUT SOGIE

• Familiarize yourself with SOGIE terms and concepts
• Appreciate and affirm youth when they disclose TGNC status
• Use the language they use to describe their identities
• Use the name and pronouns they currently use
• Ask about any concerns or needs
• Consult with youth about placement, roommates, privacy
ADVOCATE FOR TGNC YOUTH

• Families
• Social worker
• Placement
• Schools
• Health care
• Court
THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!

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