

Supporting All: The LGBTQ Community



Gail Newel, MD, MPH, FACOG
Director of Obstetrics, UCSF-Fresno
Medical Director MCAH, Fresno Co Dept of Public Health

Learning Objectives

At the end of the session, learners will be able to:

- Understand ways that LGBTQ people are underserved as it relates to lactation
- Offer a welcoming and nurturing environment for their LGBTQ clients and their families
- Provide culturally responsive lactation support for LGBTQ clients and their families

Disclosures

None

What is LGBTQ?



An acronym used for the sake of brevity.

Includes individuals and groups whose sexual orientation and/or gender identity is seen as outside of society's norm.

Not meant to encompass every individual's sexual orientation or gender identity.

What does LGBTQ stand for?



- Lesbian
- Gay
- Bisexual
- Transgender
- Queer/Questioning
- Others

Sexual Orientation



An enduring emotional, romantic, or sexual attraction that one feels toward men or women or both

Falls along a continuum where one may not be exclusively heterosexual or homosexual

Orientation may change over a lifetime

Sexual Orientation



May be measured by:

Self-identification

Sexual behavior

Sexual attraction

Household relationships

None of these measures completely addresses
the concept

The Williams Institute, 2011

Gender Identity



Current self-identity

Man/boy

Woman/girl

Transgender

Genderqueer/Gender non-conforming

Androgynous

Other

Identification of Sex



Sex assigned at birth

Male

Female

Intersex

California Reducing Disparities Project, LGBTQ Recommendations 2013

Gender Expression



Self-defined

Measurements may include questions such as:

On average, how would people describe your appearance, style and dress?

On average, how would people describe your mannerisms, (the way you walk and talk)?

Scale of masculine to feminine

Lesbian



No standard definition

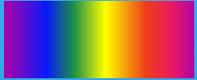
May include

- same-sex attraction

- same-sex sexual behavior

- self-identification as a lesbian

Gay



Must specify gay male in research and data collection, as LGBTQ groups may consider this an umbrella term

May include

- same-sex attraction

- same-sex sexual behavior

- self-identification

- household relationships

Bisexual



Measures may include

- sexual attraction to both sexes
- sexual behavior with both sexes
- self-identification as bisexual

ACOG, Health Care for Lesbians and Bisexual Women, 2014

Transgender



Umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from what is typically associated with the sex they were assigned at birth

Includes a wide variety of terms including:

Transsexual

Trans

Trans-man (F to M)/Trans-women (M to F)

Cross-dresser (replaces term transvestite)/Drag queen

Transitioning

Gender non-conforming/Gender queer

<http://www.glaad.org/reference/transgender>, accessed 2015

Queer



Self-identified

12% of respondents in the California Reducing Disparities Project LGBTQ Project preferred this identification

May be either sex, any sexual orientation, any gender identity or expression

May include heterosexual allies who strongly identify with the LGBTQ community

Questioning



An individual who is unsure about his/her sexual orientation and/or gender identity and prefers to identify as "questioning" rather than adhering to a label that does not designate how he/she feels.

<http://www.thewelcomingproject.org>, accessed 2015

Lesbian Youth: Sexual Identity Fluidity



79 sexual minority youth followed over 10 years

- 38 lesbian, 27 bisexual, 24 unlabeled at outset
- after year 10:
 - 67% had changed identity at least once (bisexual and unlabeled most likely to change)

Diamond, 1998

Other Terms



Intersex

Affectional

Asexual

Ally

Pansexual

Heteronormativity



The view that all human beings are either male or female, both in sex and in gender, and that sexual and romantic thoughts and relations are normal only when between people of different sexes.

Related: heterosexism

Wiktionary, accessed 2015

Cisnormativity



The assumption that a person's gender identity is the same as their sex assigned at birth.

Related: cissexism

Wiktionary, accessed 2015

Who are LGBTQ?



A diverse group of people with different needs and issues

Letters in various acronyms do not represent all gender identities or sexual or affectation orientations

Acronyms should be held under scrutiny for their accuracy and usefulness

The Williams Institute, 2013

Prevalence of LGBTQ



1 - 5% of the population, depending on the methodology

Williams Institute: 9 million in the US, (3.5% of the population)

Transgender 0.3% of the US population

Diversity among LGBTQ



- Racial/Ethnic/Primary language
- Age
- Educational Level
- Income
- Location

LGBTQ Cultural Competence

- 
- LGBTQ cultural competency work is still in its infancy
 - Growth and changes in understanding are changing rapidly
 - There is a gap in research and data for LGBTQ people of color, women, seniors and non-English speakers
 - Research has been based on convenience samples, and has focused on younger, white gay men who speak English

LGBTQ Healthcare



Significant barriers to access appropriate healthcare exist for diverse members of the LGBTQ community

Board on the Health of Select Populations, Institute of Medicine, 2011

Lesbian and Bisexual Healthcare



Women who identify as lesbian or bisexual encounter barriers to health care that may include:

- concerns about confidentiality and disclosure
- discriminatory attitudes and treatment
- limited access to health care and health insurance
- limited understanding as to what their health risks may be

LGBTQ Providers



Sought after as an LGBTQ expert

Assigned to LGBTQ clients

Lack of training on LGBTQ healthcare

Lack of experts to facilitate training

Instructed to keep LGBTQ status hidden

Excluded by colleagues

Harassment and discrimination by colleagues,
staff and clients

Disclosure of Sexual Orientation



The majority of lesbians want their health care provider to know they are lesbian

Lesbians unlikely to disclose sexual orientation spontaneously to the provider

Importance of disclosure especially important when hospitalized

Professional Ethics



Obstetrician-gynecologists should avoid “discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, perceived gender, and any basis that would constitute illegal discrimination”

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists endorses equitable treatment for lesbians and their families, not only for direct health care needs, but also for indirect health care issues; this should include the same legal protections afforded married couples.

Code of professional ethics of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. Washington, DC: American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists; 2011

LGBTQ Lactation Support



Little research and data on LGBTQ access to lactation support

Heteronormative and cisnormative language and images are predominant in the literature and are used by providers

Presumed barrier to accessing adequate lactation support

Presumed lack of positive working environment for LGBTQ providers, who are necessary for the process of change

Heteronormativity



Seen in breastfeeding literature and practice as the assumption that families are made up of a man, a woman, and a child or children

Farrow, Journal of Human Lactation, 2014

Cisnormativity



Seen in breastfeeding literature and practices that exclude or ignore the possibility of providing service to trans clients, such as the predominant use of female gendered language when referring to breastfeeding parents

Farrow, Journal of Human Lactation, 2014

Changes!



As the cultural understanding of gender has expanded, it is now recognised that some men are able to breastfeed. In the spirit of nondiscrimination and with this awareness, La Leche League International has refined the eligibility qualifications for its volunteer breastfeeding counselors to include men who otherwise meet the prerequisites for becoming a volunteer applicant. Prerequisites include organizational experience, personal experience breastfeeding a baby for at least nine months, and a demonstrated commitment to La Leche League philosophy.

La Leche League International website, accessed 2015

Welcoming Settings



Inform receptionists and other office staff that patients of all sexual orientations and gender identities are welcome in the practice.

Train all staff that LGBTQ patients and families should be treated with the same respect as other patients.

Welcoming Settings



Have a nondiscrimination policy for your office posted in the reception area.

For example: “This office appreciates diversity and does not discriminate based on race, age, religion, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or perceived gender.”

Welcoming Settings



Modify office registration forms and questionnaires to be more inclusive.

Responses to sensitive questions can be optional and confidential.

Examples:

Are you single, married, widowed, or divorced, or do you have a domestic partner?

Are you or have you been sexually active with anyone—male, female, or both male and female partners—or are you not sexually active?

Who are you sexually attracted to—men, women, or both men and women?

Welcoming Settings



Use inclusive language with all patients and neutral terms such as “partner” or “spouse” rather than “boyfriend” or “husband” when a patient’s partner status is unknown.

Welcoming Settings



Be a resource for health information about sexual orientation and gender issues for both patients and their families.

Provide patients with educational materials that list community resources in the reception area.

Concerned families can be encouraged to obtain counseling or contact Parents, Family, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (<http://www.pflag.org>) for information and support

Best Practices: LGBTQ Healthcare



Welcoming office: encourage disclosure, be supportive

Appropriate screening (Pap, substance use, mammogram, depression, lipids, colonoscopy, BMI, IPV, etc)

Family planning discussion early and often

Power of health care decision paperwork, etc.

Involvement in the community/hospital as an advocate for LGBTQ health

Robertson, Best Practices in Lesbian Healthcare, UCSF Medical School Curriculum, 2010

Best Practices: LGBTQ Healthcare



Check your intake forms

Educate your staff

Provide diverse reading and educational material: provide also in private restrooms

Ask your patients about their sexual activity/orientation

Be supportive and provide resources

Robertson, Best Practices in Lesbian Healthcare, UCSF Medical School Curriculum, 2010