

# Perioperative Guidelines for Transgender and Gender Diverse Patients

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### Learning Outcome

By the end of this educational activity, participants will be able to identify perioperative best practices for providing culturally competent, trauma-informed care to transgender and gender-diverse (TGD) patients. Learners will also understand how to integrate gender-affirming communication, individualized risk assessments, and interdisciplinary approaches to optimize surgical outcomes for this population.

### Overview/Abstract

The perioperative care of transgender and gender-diverse (TGD) patients demands a nuanced, inclusive approach that addresses their unique anatomical, hormonal, and psychosocial needs. This educational activity presents comprehensive, evidence-informed guidelines to support perioperative nurses and providers in delivering affirming and equitable care throughout all surgical phases. Topics include respectful communication strategies, gender-affirming terminology, and the use of trauma-informed practices to reduce psychological harm and rebuild trust. Special considerations such as hormone therapy management, airway risks associated with gender-affirming surgeries, thrombosis prevention, and pain management tailored to the TGD population are explored. The content also highlights the importance of individualized assessments over binary sex-based algorithms and recommends multidisciplinary collaboration to improve patient outcomes and satisfaction. Legal, privacy, and documentation considerations are addressed, along with recommendations for room assignments, personal item handling, and inclusive policies that uphold dignity and safety. Recognizing the healthcare disparities faced by TGD individuals, the activity underscores the need for institutional training in cultural humility and the development of provider competencies. By implementing these guidelines, perioperative teams can advance equitable, respectful, and person-centered care that reflects the evolving standards of ethical healthcare practice for TGD patients.



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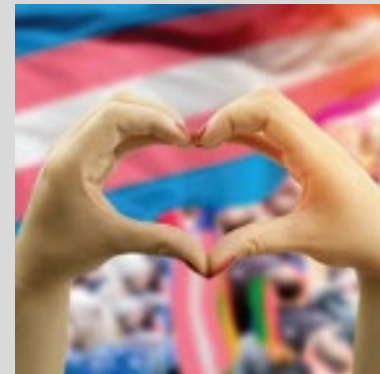
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### Gender pronouns<sup>5-11</sup>

Term	Definition	Pronouns
Transgender	An individual whose gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth	He/him, she/her, they/them
Gender nonconforming	Individuals whose gender expression does not align with societal expectations based on their assigned gender	They/them, he/him, she/her (varies)
Gender diverse	A broad term that includes individuals with a range of gender identities that do not fit within binary norms	They/them, he/him, she/her
Nonbinary	Individuals who do not identify exclusively as male or female often use they/them pronouns	They/them, he/him, she/her
Genderqueer	A term used by some to describe a gender identity outside the traditional male/female binary	They/them, she/her
Genderfluid	A fluid gender identity changes over time between different genders	They/them, he/him, she/her
Two-Spirit	Some indigenous cultures in North America use this term to describe a person embodying both masculine and feminine qualities.	Varies (often he/him, she/her, or traditional indigenous pronouns)
Agender	Individuals who do not identify with any gender may reject the concept of gender entirely	They/them
Cisgender	Individuals whose gender identity aligns with the sex they were assigned at birth	He/him, she/her

### Principles of trauma-informed care<sup>4,18</sup>

Principle	Description
Safety	Ensuring that everyone in an organization, including patients, partners, family, friends, and staff, feel physically and psychologically safe
Trustworthiness and transparency	Making decisions transparently, which helps build trust and creates clear expectations, such as explaining what a procedure will entail or the physician's or advanced practice clinician's gender
Collaboration and mutuality	Working to remove the power imbalance between staff and patients, and meaningfully sharing power and decision-making, such as informed consent models
Empowerment	Recognizing and building on the strengths of patients and their communities, helping them feel and be involved in their care
Voice and choice	Allow choice to be central in the decision-making process, and ensuring the patient's voice is present and heard
Cultural, historical, and gender issues	Implementing policies, protocols, and processes that recognize and are responsive to the patient's racial, ethnic, cultural, gender and sexuality, ability, and communication needs



### Description of Current State

Transgender and gender-diverse (TGD) patients face significant disparities in healthcare access, quality, and outcomes due to systemic stigma, discrimination, and lack of provider knowledge. In the perioperative environment, these challenges are compounded by inadequate training on gender-affirming care, limited understanding of the anatomical and physiological variations associated with gender-affirming treatments, and communication failures such as misgendering or use of incorrect pronouns. TGD patients frequently report avoiding medical care due to prior negative experiences, including harassment, deadnaming, and breaches of privacy. Clinically, providers may overlook key considerations such as hormone therapy, surgical history, and the psychosocial impact of care environments. The absence of standardized perioperative protocols for TGD patients contributes to inconsistent care and exacerbates health inequities. Addressing these issues requires trauma-informed, culturally competent, and patient-centered care approaches, as well as institutional reforms that include provider education and inclusive policy development.

### Description of Desired/Achievable State

The desired state is a healthcare environment in which perioperative clinicians are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and cultural competence to deliver safe, respectful, and affirming care to transgender and gender-diverse (TGD) patients. By completing this educational activity, participants will be able to recognize the unique physiological, psychological, and social needs of TGD individuals and apply best practices in communication, assessment, and care delivery. They will be prepared to use appropriate gender-affirming language, avoid common harms such as misgendering and deadnaming, and incorporate trauma-informed and interdisciplinary approaches to optimize perioperative outcomes. Additionally, participants will be able to advocate for institutional changes, such as inclusive policies and targeted staff training, that promote equity and dignity for all gender identities. Ultimately, learners will be empowered to reduce health disparities and foster a safer, more inclusive surgical care environment for TGD patients.

**TGD surgical patients are at greater risk of complications and postoperative death than their cisgender counterparts**

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