Queer & Transgender Youth

Issues Affecting Access to Health Care

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Youth generally perceive themselves as healthy, and do not naturally seek out healthcare providers.

When youth do seek out care, it is usually because they are having an urgent medical need.
Barriers to Care

- Fear
- Knowledge Deficit
- Lack of Financial Resources/Insurance
- Inexperience / History of Bad Experience
- Queer/TransPhobia, Racism, Ageism
- Language/Cultural Barriers
It may take several visits to a clinic or provider before a youth feels safe enough to disclose what they need.

Be available and understanding of your client’s needs.
Breaking Down Barriers

- **Trust Building**
  - meet youth where they are
  - model respectfulness
  - don’t talk down to youth
  - avoid using medical-speak when possible

- **Outreach & Health Education**
  - learn where youth hang out
  - think “harm-reduction”
  - set reachable goals
Breaking Down Barriers, cont’d

- **Utilization of Eligibility Workers**
  - youth-friendly point of entry
  - minimally intrusive
  - explain rationale when asking for personal information

- **Access and Clear Communication**
  - ask what the client needs
  - be clear about what can/cannot be provided
  - language competency/cultural competency
Breaking Down Barriers, cont’d

- Multi-Disciplinary Collaboration
  - mental health providers
  - substance abuse counselors
  - HIV risk counselors
  - case managers
  - outreach workers
  - language/cultural competency
Youth will return to the clinic if they feel that they were listened to, respected, and given good care.
Trans & Queer Youth Friendly Clinic

- Trained Staff
- Medical Charts that can accommodate aka/gender changes/gender neutral
- Bathrooms for everyone
- Trans/Gender Queer affirming images
- Music/Media
- Yummy Snacks!
Psychosocial Issues of Queer & Transgender Youth
Transgender Youth & Queer Youth are among the most marginalized persons in our society.
Psychosocial Issues of Trans & Queer Youth

- **Identity/Body Image**
  - discordance
  - feelings of inadequacy related to body
  - exaggeration of gender expression

- **Family vs. Peers**
  - potential shift/loss of emotional support
  - loss of financial support, housing
  - loss of peer group, friends

- **School/Education**
  - high risk of school failure
  - physical/emotional safety
Psychosocial Issues, cont’d

- **Sexuality/Dating**
  - coming out issues for queer youth
  - fear of disclosure for heterosexuals
  - at higher risk for sexual abuse

- **Job Discrimination**
  - racism, ageism, queer/transphobia
  - job retention when transitioning
  - obtaining and paying for legal documents
Psychosocial Issues, cont’d

- Maladaptive Coping Mechanisms
  - isolation
  - substance abuse
  - cutting/self harm
  - sexual promiscuity
  - risk-taking behavior (youth in general)
How do we partner with queer & transgender youth to support them in achieving optimum health and wellness?
Provider as Ally

- **Acknowledge and Validate**
  - notice and admire desired physical changes
  - reality testing re: reasonable expectations

- **Encourage maintenance of supportive networks**
  - ask about family when appropriate
  - check-in about peer support
  - inquire re: job safety

- **Be available to consult**
  - school counselors, teachers
  - community advocates
  - other providers
Provider as Ally, cont’d

- **Apply Harm Reduction Model**
  - unhealthy family/peer relationships
  - unsafe sexual practice/dating
  - school failure
  - sex work/survival sex

- **Nurture**
  - healthy family/peer relationships
  - safer sexual practice/dating
  - school success/education
  - job success
The Provider Parent Relationship

Potential Allies
While some queer & transgender youth are rejected by their families of origin, many have loving and supportive parents.
Provider and Parents

- Parental consent for under 18 unemancipated
- Assess client/parent relationship
- Minor Consent Laws
- Adhere to Confidentiality Laws -sensitive services *reproductive services/sex *substance abuse *mental health
- Include parent when appropriate
Queer & Transgender youth have the same basic needs as all youth, and deserve the best healthcare that we can provide.