

# BUILDING AFFIRMING RELATIONSHIPS WITH TRANS AND GENDER-EXPANSIVE PATIENTS

## RESEARCH STUDY & GOALS

Our research explores healthcare experiences and preferences of trans and gender-expansive (TGE) individuals in order to inform best practices and to provide affirming and inclusive care.

## METHODS

Our team conducted semi-structured interviews with 16 TGE individuals over the age of 18 about their experiences with primary, gender-specific, and reproductive health care services at different clinics, including Planned Parenthood.

Below are themes that emerged in these interviews, along with quotes from study participants.

## person-centered care

Participants highlighted the importance of **person-centered care** and **high-quality relationships** with their healthcare team.

*"PEOPLE MATTER AND RELATIONSHIPS MATTER. YOU CAN GO ANYWHERE FOR HEALTH CARE, BUT YOU WANT TO GO TO A PLACE WHERE YOU HAVE A CONNECTION OR YOU FEEL SEEN AND HEARD."* - Participant 05

## individualized care

Participants expressed a desire to be treated **as individuals**, with **unique health goals, barriers, and priorities** that may not match those of other TGE patients.

*"[I WANT] REASSURANCES THAT THEY WANT TO UNDERSTAND ME AS AN INDIVIDUAL AND AREN'T JUST GOING TO LUMP ME IN WITH LIKE, ALL TRANS PEOPLE THAT THEY'VE SEEN... [AND] ARE LISTENING TO WHAT I'M SAYING AND NOT JUST MAKING ASSUMPTIONS."* - Participant 14

## patients as experts

While participants expected staff to have a level of competence and knowledge, they also expressed a desire to be **treated as experts on their own bodies and lived experiences**.

*"I KNOW MY EXPERIENCES AND MY IDENTITY BETTER THAN [MY PROVIDER] COULD AS SOMEONE WHO'S JUST MET ME."* - Participant 14

## meaningful interactions

One of the most consistent themes that emerged was an emphasis on **deep, meaningful relationships & interactions** with healthcare providers and staff.

*"I LOVED THE HOLISTIC CARE AND... THE TIME AND THOUGHT [THEY TOOK] TO REALLY HEAR ME OUT ABOUT... WHAT I WANTED AND WHAT I DIDN'T WANT."* - Participant 15

## language & terminology

Participants expressed a desire for healthcare staff to **use gender-neutral language when possible** and to **ask patients what language to use for their bodies**.

*"LANGUAGE CAN HAVE SUCH A HUGE EFFECT ON BOTH WHETHER OR NOT PEOPLE ARE WILLING TO GET THE HEALTH CARE THAT THEY NEED... [AND] HOW EFFECTIVE THAT HEALTH CARE CAN BE."* - Participant 01

Overall, participants emphasized the importance of **genuine relationships, individualized care, and normalization of TGE experiences**. To provide affirming and inclusive care, health services staff should focus less on trans-specific expertise and more on the **principles of person-centered care**.