



## Tips for a trans-inclusive healthcare environment

Trans persons experience various obstacles in accessing general (including non-trans-specific) care. The FRA LGBTI II Survey found that 22% of trans respondents in Malta experienced discrimination in healthcare or social services settings. Creating a welcoming healthcare environment that is committed to removing all of these barriers is an essential first step as a healthcare provider.

### Making interactions more welcoming to transgender patients and clients

- Introduce yourself using your pronouns when first meeting all patients; this will make it easier for trans people to know that they can be open with you.
- Use gender sensitive or gender-inclusive language and avoid terms such as 'conversion', 'dressing up' or 'transsexual'. Learn the appropriate language to describe trans identities, and avoid making assumptions or references to stereotypes.
- Use the first name that the person asks for and address the person with the pronouns that match the person's gender identity (she/her, he/him or they/them). If in doubt, do not hesitate to ask which name and pronouns the person wishes to be addressed with – this will be experienced as more respectful than consistently using the name and pronouns which do not reflect the lived gender. Be sure to note this in the chart and administrative records for future reference, as having to repeatedly answer this question is tiring for trans people.
- Don't just focus on the person's transition related care – transgender people may need any type of care.
- If patients are called by name in the waiting room: avoid the use of 'madam' and 'sir', only call the last name if you do not know which first name the person wants to be addressed with, or work with a numerical system.

### Registration and administration

- Only register gender when this is relevant and necessary to the case or service applied for.
- Include an 'X' or 'other' option where it is necessary in the field for gender, when this is registered, if the available options do not fit the person's needs.
- Ask all patients about how to refer to them, and integrate this into systems, including for email and other correspondence.
- Use gender-inclusive words in your correspondence when the appropriate salutation is unknown (for example, by omitting 'sir' or 'madam').

## Secrecy and ethics

- Inform the patient about how data is stored and what it is used for.
- Emphasize the confidentiality of the information provided and assure that the privacy of the person is always taken into account.

## Sex specific infrastructure

- Provide gender-inclusive toilets and changing rooms. This can easily be replaced by the male/female pictograms with the word 'toilets' on the door to specify which facilities are in the room (toilets, urinal, washbasin, changing pad, coat rack, etc.)

## Physical examination

- Name body parts in gender neutral terms ('chest', 'genitalia' instead of 'breasts', 'penis', 'vagina'), or ask for the terms that the trans person uses and prefers for these body parts. Be sure to note this in the chart so that the questions do not have to be asked repeatedly on subsequent visits.
- Be aware of the stress that trans persons may experience when a physical examination must take place. Take an understanding and reassuring approach and ensure privacy and respect for dignity. Ask the patient what they need to be most comfortable with the exam (e.g. some would like to have a support person present, while others would want there to be as few people as possible in the room) and make any accommodations that are possible to this end.