Jessica Leston and Morgan Thomas

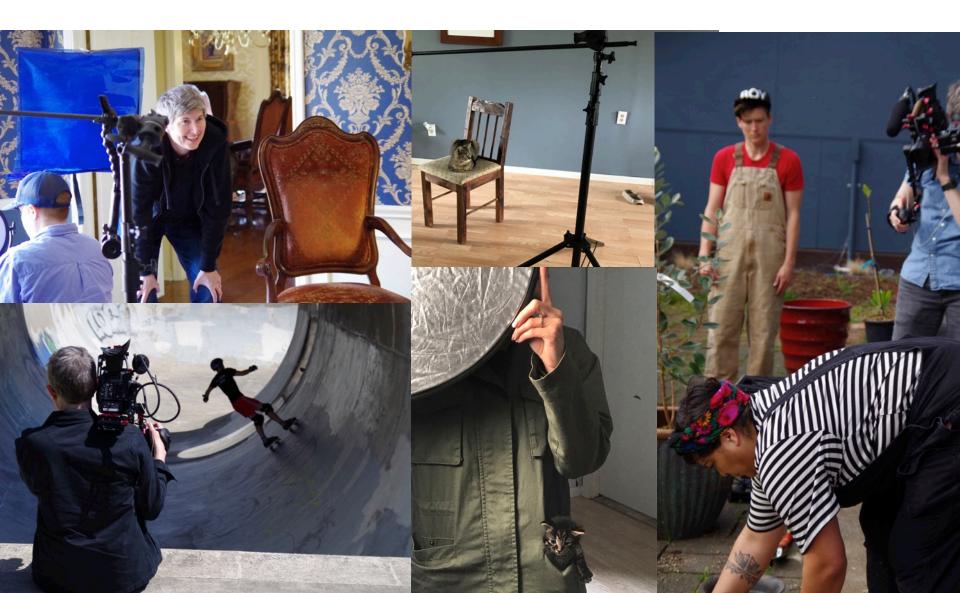
# Caring for the person first LGBTQ and Two Spirit Health

# Acknowledgements

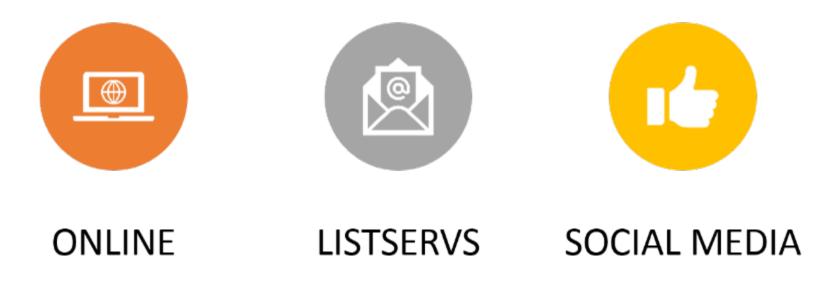
Multnomah, Kathlamet, Clackamas, Cowlitz bands of Chinook, Tualatin Kalapuya, Molalla and many other tribes	Providers, staff, and tribal leadership in the PNW	Alessandra Angelino and Seattle Children's Hospital for the creation of Celebrating our Magic Toolkit
This project was funded in part with resources from the Minority HIV/AIDS Fund.	Indian Health Service – Rick Haverkate	Boxcar Assembly – Courtney Hermann and Kerribeth Elliott

2

# Behind-the-scenes



## How can we access the documentary?



http://www.npaihb.org/2slgbtq/#film

# See me. Stand with me.

## l'm Native. l'm indigiqueer.

To hear my story, text DOCUMENTARY to 97779

This campaign is supported with funds from the Indian Health Service and the Secretary's Minority AIDS Initiative Fund.

Corn basket titled "Piyaaassskomon: Gaize," created by artist Geo Neptune



Specific aims:

- Deliver culturally grounded resources for people who identify as Two Spirit or LGBTQ, their healthcare providers, and their allies.
  - Posters
  - Rack Cards
  - Pamphlets

## FOR LGBTQ OR TWO SPIRIT PEOPLE

"When I talk about my health history, it's from a place of strength."

## We stand together.

LGBTQ • Two Spirit • Native

We are the best advocates for our health.



# Trust your journey.

Opening up to your provider may take time.

The more your provider knows about you, the better your care.

# Trust your knowledge.

Educate yourself: bit.ly/doaskdotell

Ask your provider about the care you know you need.

# Trust your community.

Ask friends or relatives to accompany you to appointments and advocate for you.

Find an LGBTQ-affirming provider: ask friends or visit wpath.org/provider/search.

## Trust your journey.

- Developing a relationship with your provider may take time.
- The more information your provider has about you, the better your care.
- If it is safe, and you feel ready, be open with your provider about gender identity and sexual orientation. This helps you and all future Two Spirit or LGBTQ patients.

## Trust your community.

• Bring a relative, friend, or ally with you to appointments.

## Trust your knowledge.

- Know your rights:
  - Under state, tribal, and federal laws, it is illegal for most healthcare organizations to discriminate against patients for being LGBTQ or Two Spirit.
  - Anything you tell your doctor is confidential.
- Know your care:
  - Know what health issues may affect you: <u>bit.ly/doaskdotell</u>
  - Find an LGBTQ-affirming provider:
    - Ask friends for referrals.
    - Use LGBTQ Resources:
      - GLMA Provider Directory
      - wpath.org/provider/search
  - Call ahead. Ask if your doctor has experience with LGBTQ or Two Spirit patients.

# Mick's Story

Mick is from the Diné Nation in the southwest desert of Turtle Island. They identify as Two Spirit and indigiqueer. They emphasize the importance of selfadvocacy in healthcare settings.

"I access healthcare now for myself and my partner, who is transitioning medically. When we go to doctors, I say, 'I just want you to know that I am interviewing you. It's not the other way around?

"Now, when we talk about my health history and my partner's health history, it's from a place of strength. That's something I had never been able to do before. I'd always felt sacred or embarrassed or weird.

"I go with my partner to all of their appointments. Being able to be a part of that process and advocate for them has meant that I can also have strength to advocate for myself."

# To hear the rest of Mick's story, text DOCUMENTARY to 97779.

"My family supports me. My healthcare provider should, too."

## See me. Stand with me.

FOR PROVIDERS

Lesbian • Gay • Bisexual Transgender • Queer • Two Spirit

### 9 in 10 patients

would disclose their sexual orientation and gender identity to healthcare providers if asked.\*

We're ready to talk about identity. Ask us.



This campaign is supported with funds from the Indian Health Service and the Secretary's Minority AIDS Initiative Fund.

> https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/28437523 https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/28235242

ASK how clients prefer to be identified-every client, every time.

Affirm the good things in your clients' lives by asking about their communities and successes.

# Acknowledge the diverse

Native concepts of gender and sexual orientation.

# Advocate for clients who are Two Spirit or LGBTQ.

## 9 in 10 patients

would disclose their sexual orientation and gender identity to healthcare providers if asked.\*

## Ask

- Ask clients how they prefer to be identified. Ask everyone. Ask every time.
- Develop a relationship to improve trust and offer better care.

## Affirm

- Use preferred names and pronouns. All staff. Every visit.
- Ensure access to gender-neutral restrooms.

## Acknowledge

- There is no universally correct concept of gender identity or sexual orientation.
- Different cultures define gender and sexual orientation in different ways.
- The word Two Spirit refers to a Native person, who expresses their gender identity or spiritual identity in indigenous, non-Western ways.

## Advocate

- Train staff to treat all clients with affirmation and respect.
- Become certified as an LGBTQ-affirming provider: <u>wpath.org/gei/certification</u>
- Find and share resources:
  - ihs.gov/lgbt/health/twospirit
  - fenwayhealth.org
  - howardbrown.org

https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/28437523
https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/28235242

# Allie's Story

Allie is Native and queer. After they had a bad experience with a psychiatrist, they avoided seeking mental health and medical care for ten years. Finally, due to trouble concentrating at work and extreme anxiety, they decided to look for a therapist.

"I needed help, and I recognized that my need for help was greater than my fear of being judged," they say.

"I found a therapist who really got me. I could talk to him about anything. I brought up being queer. He didn't bat an eye. It was no problem. I was thinking about alternative sexualities. He was all for it.

"I thought, Oh. He actually cares about my mental health. It doesn't matter to him—who I'm attracted to, my gender expression. He actually sees what I am doing. **He sees me**."

"He was very nonjudgmental. I felt safe.

"He changed the way I thought about myself. He changed the way I thought about my mental health. He changed the way I thought about health in general.

"I credit him with saving my life."

# To hear the rest of Allie's story, text DOCUMENTARY to 97779.





# Trust your LGBTQ or Two Spirit loved one.

They know how they identify and what they need from you.

Ask them. Listen.

# Trust our traditions.

Our ancestors celebrated Two Spirit and LGBTQ community members.

They are sacred.

# Trust your journey. Acceptance takes time. Your

feelings are valid.

Find support: pflag.org



This campaign is supported with funds from the Indian Health Service and the Secretary's Minority AIDS Initiative Fund.

## Trust them.

- Communicate.
  - Ask your friend or relative how they prefer to be identified.
  - Let them know you love them, and you'll learn.
  - Learn the terms: pflag.org/glossary
- Advocate.
  - Offer to accompany your friend or relative to healthcare appointments.
  - Challenge anti-LGBTQ or Two Spirit remarks.
- Celebrate.
  - Recognize their strength and courage.
  - Most importantly, offer unconditional acceptance and love.

## Trust our traditions.

- Historically, we celebrated our LGBTQ and Two Spirit community members.
- To our ancestors, they were sacred. They are sacred still.

## Trust your journey.

- Your feelings are valid.
- Accepting your friend or relative may take time.
- Find support: pflag.org

# Lane's Story

Lane identifies as Cherokee and trans. In 2013, she rode in the Remember the Removal bike ride. Now, she helps her sister train new groups of riders.

"My sister absolutely supports me and adores me. We call each other twins, because we're so close to each other. We tell each other everything," Lane says.

"When we train new riders, I'm up in the front, leading the group, and she's in the back, making sure everyone's fine. We're a team."

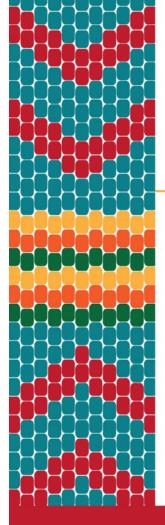
Each year, Lane's sister introduces her to the new riders. This helps ensure everyone genders Lane correctly and uses female pronouns.

"My sister helps introduce me, so people don't look at me and think, *That's an androgynous person*. It's really helpful to have my sister there. She looks at me, and she's like, *This is Lane. This is my sister.*"

## Lane's sister celebrates her.

To hear the rest of Lane's story, text DOCUMENTARY to 97779.



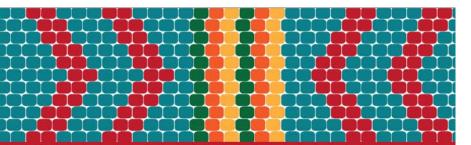


# Celebrating Our Magic:

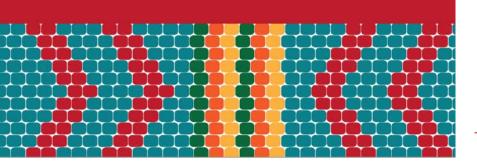
Resources for American Indian/Alaska Native transgender and Two-Spirit youth, their relatives and families, and their healthcare providers Specific aims:

- Deliver culturallygrounded resources to
  youth exploring their gender identity and/or choosing to medically transition
- 2) Provide resources and support for **families**
- 3) Increase health provider awareness of aspects unique to AI/AN transgender and Two-Spirit youth





# Section 1: BACKGROUND & OVERVIEW



#### **THE BASICS:** Overview and definitions

This section defines important terminology. Understanding these definitions will help you support the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/questioning, and Two-Spirit (LGBTQ2S) individuals you interact with—yourself, your friends, your relatives, or your patients.

Terminology may evolve over time to become more appropriate and accepted, so what you see here may change. Individuals may also identify using multiple terms or unique terms not listed here, so this list of terms is not all-inclusive. It is always important to ask individuals how they self-identify.

#### Terms related to identity:

LGBTQ2S: Inclusive abbreviation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/questioning, and Two-Spirit (may also be seen as LGBTQ2+)

Gender: Gender is socially defined and tends to dictate an individual's place and role within the community.

Gender identity: The gender that a person identifies with, or how they perceive themselves. Gender identity can be described as the sense of being male, female, both, or another gender(s). An individual's gender identity may be different from their assigned sex at birth and is separate from their sexual orientation. Gender identity may change over time.

**Gender expression:** The manner in which an individual expresses their gender identity, typically through clothing, body shape, body language, hairstyle, makeup, voice, etc. Gender expression may change over time and can be fluid.

**Gender-expansive:** A wider, more flexible range of gender identity and/or expression than typically associated with binary gender system.

Cisgender: Someone whose gender identity is the same as the sex they were assigned at birth.

**Transgender:** Someone whose gender identity is different than the sex they were assigned at birth.

- Transfemale/transfeminine: someone assigned male at birth who now identifies (gender identity) as female (male to female, MTF)
- Transmale/transmasculine: someone assigned female at birth who now identifies (gender identity) as male (female to male, FTM)

BACKGROUND & OVERVIEW



THE BASICS: Overview and definitions

#### Pronouns

A pronoun is a word that refers to the person or people talking (such as I or you). It can also refer to someone or something that a person is speaking about (such as she, it, them, this). Gender specific pronouns such as she, he, they, and ze refer specifically to the individual someone is referring to.

Table 2 shows examples of gender pronouns. The first four rows show the most commonly used pronouns (bolded), but there are many other pronouns used (non-bolded).

Subjective	Objective	Possessive	Reflexive	Example
She	Her	Hers	Herself	She is looking. I looked at her. The basket is hers.
Не	Him	His	Himself	He is looking. I looked at him. The basket is his.
They	Them	Theirs	Themself	They are looking. I looked at them. The basket is theirs.
Ze	Hir/Zir	Hirs/Zirs	Hirself/Zirself	Ze is looking. I listened to hir. The basket is zirs.
e/ey	Em	Eir	Eirs	eirself
Ve	Ver	Vis	Vis	verself
Xe	Xem	Xyr	Xyrs	xemself

### Table 2: Common pronouns



# Section 2: YOUTH

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#### YOU ARE NOT ALONE: Youth Perspectives and Stories

## YOU ARE NOT ALONE: Youth Perspectives and Stories

During the creation of this Toolkit, we had the opportunity to speak with a young person who was excited to share their gender journey. Some aspects of their story, including their name, have been changed to keep their identity anonymous. We do not claim to own their experience or mean to trivialize their rich journey. Instead, we hope to share their story so that you can read through it and gain support and comfort through a peer's lived experience.

#### Joey's Story

Joey grew up on a reservation in the Pacific Northwest. Early on in his gender-affirming journey, Joey isolated himself and hid his gender identity because on the reservation, "you're kind of family with everyone." He was worried about how people might react to his new identity as transmasculine and wasn't sure whom to tell first. Once he found the words to describe his identity and was able to say them to himself, it took Joey about one year to share his identity with others. He first began to socially transition at school with friends because that was the most comfortable. Once Joey became more confident and certain of his identity.

he slowly shared his identity with his teachers and other friends. Over time he felt better about telling his parents and relatives, and so he was able to share his identity with them. "Everyone I've known that I've told still love me. They still respect me. That's never changed."

"Everyone I've known that I've told still love me. They still respect me. That's never changed."

Finding a therapist really helped Joey along his journey. "If you can get a therapist, I definitely encourage you

"Talk to them as often as you can, even if it's just little conversations or if you saw something that was absolutely ridiculous but made you laugh... they can help you get through your current tough situation."

to do that. Do not just settle. Find a therapist for you. If you do have to settle, make sure your therapist understands you. And if you can't get a therapist, I would talk to a school counselor."

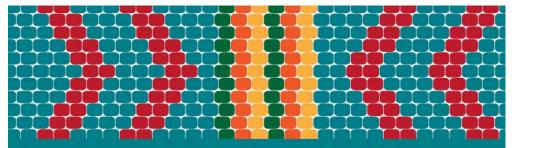
Great friends helped along Joey's journey too. "Talk to them as often as you can, even if it's just little conversations or if you saw something that was absolutely ridiculous but made you laugh...they can help you get through your current tough situation."

- уоитн 🍦 24

"I trust that my ancestors would still call me magic."

Arielle Twist Two-Spirit writer and sex educator from George Gordon First Nation, Saskatchewan "I feel like I am really part of the circle, like I belong to something bigger...things seemed to make sense once I found the Two-Spirit community. It was and is healing. Two-Spirit is healing."

> **Dr. Alexandria Wilson** Two-Spirit professor from Opaskwayak Cree Nation



# Section 3: **FAMILIES & RELATIVES**

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### 

#### **FOSTERING RESILIENCE**

The journey you and your child have embarked on may be filled with strong emotions, unpredictable changes, and unanswerable questions. Trust in your ability to succeed along this journey, no matter the challenges you face. Trust is healing.

Your resilience is defined by how you are able to handle tough times and change for the better. Resilience is a sign of your strength.



"Human resiliency is like a willow tree branch, able to stretch, bend and then come back to almost the exact shape, but changed. When we experience life events that require us to be resilient, who we become is also changed." (Gray-Smith, 2012)

You may find the following techniques helpful in strengthening your resilience: self-reflection and coping, connecting with Native traditions, and continual celebration of your child (Figure 7).

FAMILIES AND RELATIVES 💆 63

#### Figure 7: Techniques to strengthen resilience



#### **FAMILIES AND RELATIVES**

It is normal for you as a parent or relative to feel overwhelmed by your child's journey. For many families this journey involves a lot of questions. You may feel lost, confused, and out of place. You may have a strong desire for support. The information presented here hopes to help you understand your child's journey. It also hopes to provide you with comfort and support along this journey. You have a unique role as a caregiver and have the wonderful ability to positively influence your child's journey.

Your child needs you now more than ever.

"What kind of ancestor did my ancestors envision me to be? What kind of ancestor do I want to be? What kind of ancestor do I want or envision future generations to be?"

> **Dr. Karina Walters** Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

# Section 4: **PROVIDERS**



# 

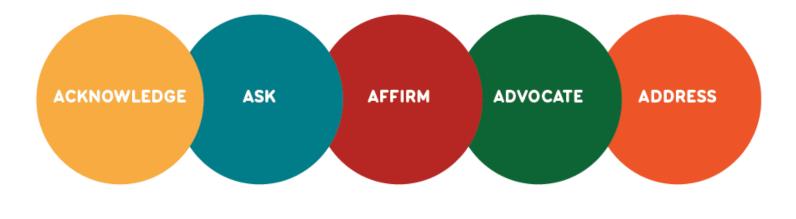
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## **ACKNOWLEDGE:** Understand your own biases

A great place to start thinking about how you can best care for your LGBTQ and Two-Spirit patients is to consider your own biases. It is difficult to accept that we may have certain biases, especially in a profession focused on helping and improving the lives of others. However, we are all susceptible to bias as a result of belief systems and exposures from a young age (Potter, 2015).

Taking time to become aware of one's own biases can help lead to equitable, gender-affirming care and the development of trust between provider and patient.

The National LGBTQ Health Education Center has developed a series of case studies focused on helping health providers address implicit bias related to LGBTQ patients. You can find the implicit bias case study guide **here.** It may also be helpful to take the Harvard Implicit Assessment Test (IAT) focused on sexuality, which can be accessed free of charge **here.** This may help providers further understand their biases associated with gender and sexuality.



#### **ASK:** How to begin the conversation with youth

There is no "right answer" to a perfect encounter with your LGBTQ2S patient. However, developing a trusting relationship with them and understanding them as a whole person are some benchmarks to aim for.

Asking questions about the child or adolescent's pronouns is a great place to start. Because gender identity is typically formed between the ages of 2-4 years old, health providers can begin asking questions about gender from an early age (Martin & Ruble, 2010).

Reminder: All URLs and references for resources in this Toolkit can be found on page 94.



ASK: HOW TO BEGIN THE CONVERSATION WITH YOUTH

For young children, ask age appropriate questions such as, "Do you think of yourself as a boy, girl, neither, both, or something else?" Other approaches can involve the use of a children's book that discusses gender identity and asking a child which book character they identify with (see list at end of Toolkit).

As children get older, you can ask more specific questions about the child's pronouns. Doing so may help you assess the child's readiness to move forward in their gender-affirming journey. It is best to ask about pronouns at the beginning of the encounter when you and patient make introductions and greet each other. You also have a second opportunity to discuss pronouns and gender identity during the sexual history portion of an encounter or in the HEADSS assessment.

It is your decision to ask these questions and have these conversations with parents in the room, especially as each child grows up. In scenarios where discussions are between youth and provider alone, it is important to explain confidentiality practices. Refer to the discussion on informed consent in the following section.

Similarly, asking questions about pronouns helps to normalize talking about gender identity in the healthcare setting. You can further normalize asking about pronouns by:

- Asking all patients these questions so it becomes part of your routine practice
- Telling your patients that you ask these questions each visit with all patients

Be cognizant of the fact that you may be the first person your patient is sharing this information with. It is important to educate and help connect your patient with resources, and to be supportive and celebrate with your patient throughout their journey.

ASK: HOW TO BEGIN THE CONVERSATION WITH YOUTH

"There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives"

A helpful initial exercise is to speak with your colleagues, youth, family, friends, and community members to determine what "welcoming" means to them. Seeking out community opinions and building upon traditions often helps inform this. There is much diversity even within communities, so having this conversation can help address the needs of as many individuals as possible. Similarly, spaces should recognize that individuals may be experiencing discrimination and oppression as a result of their multiple identities. For example, a Two-Spirit adolescent may be struggling with their gender identity in addition to cultural identity as a Native American.

#### Audre Lorde

#### AFFIRM AND ADVOCATE: Creating a welcoming space

The creation of a safe, inclusive, and welcoming space is critically important in providing genaffirming care. It is also important to recognize that, no matter how safe of a space we creatit may not always be safe for LGBTQ2S individuals (and their allies as well) to be out to their families and communities. In these scenarios we need to remain supportive and allow LGBTG individuals to trust us in a space of support and respect. Youth may present in other settings besides a primary care or specialist office, such as schools and dental clinics; gender-affirmin care is critical across all of these settings. Creating spaces that address this intersectionality and are as safe as possible is a continual process; one that requires accountability and buy-in from everyone who creates the space and accesses it. There are a number of ways that we can work towards the goal of creating welcoming spaces, especially in the clinical environment.

Creating clinic ground rules and posting them in the waiting room and patient rooms can demonstrate a commitment to upholding the safe clinic space. Posting and sharing nondiscrimination, diversity, and harassment policies that include sexual orientation and gender identity may also be helpful.

Next, place yourself in a patient's shoes. Think about what they see and hear from the moment they enter the clinic until they leave.

#### - PROVIDI

#### Intake

How do front desk staff address patients? Do they ask for a patient's pronouns? Where is this information listed?

- Ask: What is your preferred name?
- · Ask: What are your preferred pronouns?

#### Intake

- What forms are being used?
  - Is office staff handing out pink and blue colored intake forms or handouts? → Switch to white or a color uniform for everyone
  - Are there opportunities to disclose pronouns, gender identity, and sexuality on intake forms?
    - Legal first and last name & chosen name (if different)
    - "Gender" "Sex" → sex assigned at birth
    - Gender identity
    - Sexual orientation
    - Sex listed on insurance plan
- Are staff and forms using gender neutral language?
- Does the office/clinic have gender neutral ID bands and stickers?

#### Waiting room and patient rooms

- Is gender neutral language used in posters and advertisements?
- · Are gender-neutral bathrooms available?
- · Are there signs that read 'menstrual products' rather than 'feminine products'?

#### Encounter

- Does the provider introduce themselves using their own pronouns, and clarify the patient's preferred name and pronoun (see section above)?
  - "How do you identify your gender?"
  - "I ask all patients what gender pronoun they'd prefer I use for them. What pronoun would you like me to use for you?"
- Does the provider ask a thorough history that includes gender-affirming care?
  - "To help assess your health risks for \_\_\_\_\_/ to better understand your risk factors...can you tell me about any history you may have had with hormone use?"
- Does the provider mirror patient's own language regarding their history, identity, body parts, partnership, etc.? Do they incorporate gender neutral language into the encounter?
- Are records in the EMR appropriate and accurate?
- Does the provider ask appropriate questions related to the medical/mental health issue for that encounter, rather than ask about gender related issues out of curiosity?

## **AFFIRM AND ADVOCATE:** How to be an Ally and Supporter

By following suggestions provided in this Toolkit, you are well on your way towards becoming a supportive figure for your Native LGBTQ2S patients, even if you do not identify as LGBTQ2S yourself.

### Other considerations include:

- Listening to your patients and their families.
- · Asking about gender pronouns, gender identity, and chosen name.
- Respecting confidentiality.
- Understanding that not all patients you interact with will be out to their friends, families, and communities.
- Considering patient safety when developing care plans.
- · Avoiding judgmental comments by thinking before you respond.
- · Asking how you can be helpful and provide support.
- Showing respect, even if you do not agree with a decision.
- Recognizing your limits as an ally.

### For non-Indigenous providers:

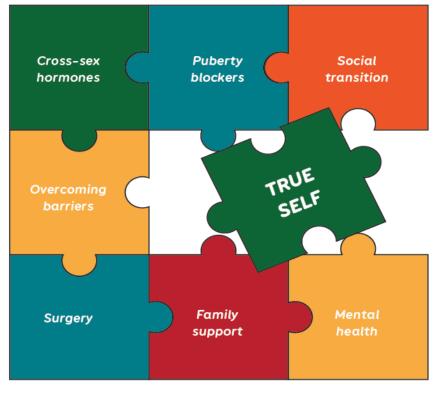
Another component to standing as an ally for the youth you work with is being able to better understand their history and culture. Of course, each nation has its own customs and traditions, but there are a few common themes that one should think about when working in Native communities. The following Toolkit created by the Montreal Urban Aboriginal Community Strategy Network offers wonderful suggestions and thought exercises to help allies listen, ask, build, and support Indigenous cultures and practices (Swiftwolfe & Shaw, 2019).



### **ADDRESS:** The Transitioning Process

The information in this Toolkit includes general recommendations about the transition process and links for specific guidelines regarding medical transition. This Toolkit is intended to help you start thinking about the social and non-clinical aspects related to transition so you can better support your patients. As such, the included information is not official medical advice. It is meant to serve as a starting point for your exploration surrounding the multifactorial nature of the transition process (Figure 9).









### TRAININGS AND CURRICULUMS FOR PROVIDERS

The following trainings and informational lectures provide foundational knowledge that may help you advocate for and provide gender-affirming care to this subset of patients.

### click me!

#### Trainings

- WPATH certification program: offers 50 hours of core training for medical and mental health providers
- Cultural competence webinar series aimed at understanding health needs of LGBTQ2S people, creating a welcoming clinic environment, and sharing tips for clinical care.
- Online modules and exercises to help individuals and organizations support LGBTQ2S youth, from A Way Home Canada.
- Seattle Children's Hospital Grand Rounds "Transgender Care" \*opportunity for continuing education credit\*
- Transgender Health Echo web-based trainings for health centers and health organizations

#### click me!

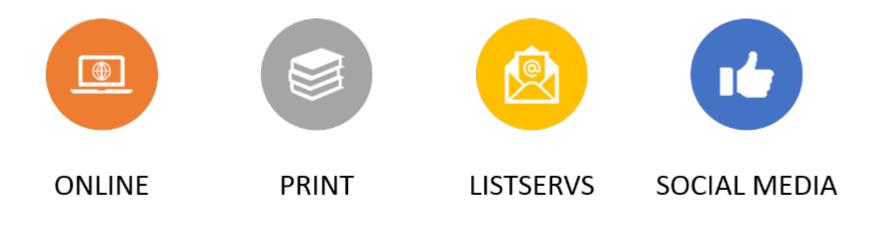
#### Trainings

These webinars help raise awareness of Two-Spirit history, culture, and issues faced by Two-Spirit individuals. Having an increased understanding can help providers affirm, acknowledge, and better advocate for their Two-Spirit patients.

- SAMHSA: webinars related to justice, gender identity, general resources for Two-Spirit individuals
- Indian Health Service: information regarding Two-Spirit peoples and links to additional webinars
- "(W)righting Our Relations- Working with and For Two-Spirit Individuals"
- "Walking in Good Way- Cultural Considerations when Working with Two-Spirit Individuals"



## How can we access the Toolkit?



http://www.npaihb.org/2slgbtq/#print

## Small Group Discussion

• What barriers limit your ability to support your Two Spirit and LGBTQ community members?

Write down your top 3 barriers.

## Small Group Discussion

• How will you use these resources in your clinic or community?

Write down 1 way you could use them.

## Small Group Discussion

• What resources or information do you need to better support your Two Spirit and LGBTQ community members?

Write down 1 topic you need more information about.

"If doctors want to offer the best care, that means working toward equity."





## www.npaihb.org/2SLGBTQ

Jessica Leston jleston@npaihb.org

Morgan Thomas <u>mthomas@npaihb.org</u>