



**The Norman Knight Nursing Center
for Clinical & Professional Development**

PCAs Quick Reference: Caring for the Transgender and Non-Binary Patient Population

What is a Transgender patient? a person whose gender identity and assigned sex at birth do not correspond (sometimes abbreviated as trans). Other helpful definitions include:

Cisgender - a person whose gender identity and assigned sex at birth correspond

Gender non-conforming - describes a gender expression that differs from a given society's norms for males and females

Genderqueer - describes a person whose gender identity falls outside of the traditional binary gender paradigm of identifying as either a man/boy/male or woman/girl/female

This is important to understand because the population is changing nationally, in Massachusetts and at MGH.

- Disproportionate health disparities in the transgender & nonbinary population has led to higher rates of suicide, social stressors
- 1.4 million adults identify as transgender or nonbinary in the U.S.A., 29,900 adults identify as transgender in the state of Massachusetts.
- MGH is committed to providing a welcoming environment for LGBTQ Patients, Visitors and Staff.

What do you need to know?

- Transgender patients are vulnerable and it is important for them to feel SAFE.
- Treat patients with DIGNITY and RESPECT.

What is the role of the PCA (under the direction of the RN)?

- Create a **safe** environment by asking questions such as “what name do you go by?”
- Introduce yourself by stating your name and the pronouns that you prefer. This invites the patient to feel open in stating their preferred pronouns also. **Honor** their identity.
- It is important to **listen to, understand, and mirror the terms** that patients use to describe themselves. Keep in mind that some people do not like to label their sexual orientation or gender identity.
- Avoid assumptions: Don't **assume** you know a person's gender identity or sexual orientation based on how they look or sound.
- If you make a mistake (we all make mistakes- we're human!), **acknowledge it, apologize and move on.**
- **Create a trans-affirming environment:** transgender patients are especially vulnerable when coming to the hospital.
- For more information please refer to the Healthstream course: *Creating a Welcoming Environment for LGBTQ Patients, Visitors, and Staff* or contact the Transgender Health Program at 617-643-7210.

