

Inclusive Practices for Non-Binary Clients

Identity

Non-Binary identifying people are on a spectrum of gender identity, so it is important to never assume what their gender identity is without asking politely.

(Thing to remember: Being Non-Binary is NOT about appearances).

Here are some tips for etiquette, inclusive language and creating a supportive environment for someone who might be Non-Binary in Gender Identity.

Greetings

Always start with non-gendered (gender neutral) language.

If you cannot pronounce their name or you cannot recognise anyone in the waiting room, a suggestion would be to call out your,

“11am Appointment please?”

Or you could organise a ticket system, so that each person is required to take a ticket when they arrive at your practice, so when you call out that person, you are only calling out the number. This promotes privacy and respect to the time it may take to get to know your client, before making any assumptions that might be disrespectful. In order to gain rapport with your Non-Binary client, you must be patient and open minded. This will be an exercise in disregarding all your notions of what it means to be female or male.

Transgender, Gender Diverse or Non-Binary?

In your approach to gaining a deeper understanding of your Non-Binary client, you must also understand that some are Transgender, some are Trans and Non-Binary and some are only Non-Binary. Some don't like these labels at all and may choose to just say they are Non-Binary.

***Non-Binary people can also refer to themselves as Enby or Gender Non-Conforming, GNC for short. The terms to describe the whole community are often, “Trans &/or Non-Binary or Trans &/or Gender Non-Conforming, or Trans &/or GNC.” (Sometimes the whole community, meaning all Binary & Non-Binary are referred to as the Gender Diverse Community).**

It's always best to ask politely in consultation & never forget the Agender population = Genderless.

Pronouns

Pronouns and the concept of pronouns can vary quite a bit in the Non-Binary community. A Non-Binary person may go only by the singular use of the pronoun **"They,"** or they might not use pronouns at all, in which case you would use their name instead of a pronoun or drop the use of the pronoun, for instance;

"Darcy went to the chemist to get Darcy's monthly supply of progesterone."

or

"Darcy went to the chemist to get a monthly supply of progesterone."

If your client likes the pronoun "they", then it would look like this:

"Darcy went to the chemist to get their monthly supply of progesterone."

This may take time to get right. Practice will help.

Remember to correct yourself out-loud if you make a mistake, and move on.

**Note: Some Non-Binary clients also go by binary pronouns. It is prudent to make sure there is space left on the intake form to be able to write each pronoun and some Non-Binary clients go by alternative pronouns such as Xe, Ey or Ze. Ask them politely about how to pronounce them and then use them.*

Always ask, which one is preferred in the consult.

Intake Forms, Surveys & Questionnaires

In the section for **Gender**, leave a blank space for them to fill out for themselves and have a section for **pronoun/s**.

As noted earlier, some Non-Binary clients might have multiple pronouns that they are ok with you to use or as mentioned above, they may want to write down that they do not use them.

Both spaces should accommodate the ability to write a small sentence.

Title should include all forms of gender neutral addresses, for example; Mx or Dr. The client should also have the option of not having to use a title. (When a client uses the title Mx, you need to ask how it is pronounced for them, because everyone's use of Mx is different).

**Note: There should also be a question about privacy and preferred name & title etc. on their postal address, due to some clients not being out as Non-Binary to the other members of their household.*

CALD: (Intake Forms, Survey's & Questionnaires continued).

It is important to include a section that asks if the client is **Culturally &/or Linguistically Diverse**. Some cultures have their own versions of Non-Binary identity and the client must have an opportunity to express this.

It is also important to note that not all Non-Binary people are secular. Some client's religion or spiritual expression may have a large impact on how their gender identity is determined. Respond with respect and sensitivity to their needs.

Questions About Sexuality

Sexuality and Gender Identity are not the same, so if you have no medical reason to ask about the person's sexuality, then there is no reason to bring up the topic.

Being asked questions about sexuality can be quite offensive to a Non-Binary person of any description, so keep it in the context of medical information or do NOT ask.

Genitals

If the topic of genitals has nothing to do with your consultation, then do NOT ask about the client's genitals.

If however, it is part of a physical examination, ie; pap-smear or checking for abnormalities in testes etc.,

...then care must be taken with how you ask about them and you must be mindful of how the client might refer to them. Non-Binary clients may have different names for their genitals that might assist them with any Gender Dysphoria that they may have.

If it is part of the consultation then preliminary questions in the Intake Form are necessary, to prepare you for the consult.

It is also important to be specific. Do NOT say, “do you have female or male genitals?”

Instead say, “Do you have a cervix or do you have testes?”

Surgery & Hormones

Not everyone has surgery or hormones. It is best to leave this topic to the client to bring up if they need to ask about a prescription or letter of approval for surgery.

In every other instance, **do NOT assume** that the client is or will take hormones and have surgery.

**Note: If relevant to your practice, include a question in your Intake Form that asks if they will require exploring the option of taking hormones and/ or having surgery.*

Terms of Endearment

This may be a polite question that is asked in the consultation or you may want to include this on the Intake Form.

For example; if a client says that they are Transmasculine, then you will use masculine terms of endearment, unless asked not to.

Be open to whatever the client asks you to do.

If a client says they are Transfeminine, then you will use feminine terms of endearment.

If a client says they are A-Gender, then you will do your best to not make reference to gender,

ie; saying, “well done,” instead of, “you go girl...”

Be patient and non-judgmental. This will make your practice a safe and welcoming place.

Non-Binary Clients with a Disability

Provision should be made for anyone with a disability in all aspects of communication, physical interactions, accessibility, comfort & safety.

Always ask what is appropriate language and respond with care to any need for physical aids, hearing aids, speech aids, assistance dogs – for blindness & mental health & provision, respect and space be given to any support workers, who need to be present.

Last Note;

When including flags on your official documents, always include the Non-Binary Flag.



This is usually put next to the Trans flag, which looks like the flag below.



This document was produced by Mr ML Darcy Lovely, in consultation with members of the group, Redefining Androgyny. (July 2017).