

Palliative Care & Bereavement Support

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SPECTRUM, Aging With Pride



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Introductions

- I would like to begin by acknowledging that we are on the traditional land of the Haudenosaunee, Anishnaabe and Chonnonton/Neutral people.
- Name and pronoun (he/she/they)
- **What are you hoping to take away from this presentation?**

History Of Discrimination

- Grew up in time of hostility and discrimination
- Criminal prosecution or mental health diagnosis
- Rejection by biological family and/or community

Systemic Barriers

- Lack of LGBTQ informed or friendly resources
- Invisibility: Assumed to be heterosexual and cisgender
- Fear of neglect, discrimination, discomfort in dealing with care providers
- Long-term relationships may not be recognized
 - institutions' definition of "family" can sometimes be assumed to be only biological kin

Experiences in Health/Social Service Systems

- Heteronormative values and biases
- Experience discrimination or discomfort on part of staff staff
- Historic experiences of discrimination impact levels of trust and comfort navigating these systems

Unique Considerations For LGBTQ Palliative And Bereavement Care

- 3 times more likely to be single
- Significantly less likely to have children
- Possibly estranged from their birth families
- Experienced multiple losses within LGBTQ community due to AIDS, suicide, addictions, marginalization, etc.
- Increased risk of mental health problems resulting from lifetime of marginalization & oppression

All these mean lower chance of stable, ongoing informal care

Key Experiences By LGBTQ People At End Of Life

- Anticipating discrimination
- Assumptions about identity and family structure
- Complexities of religion and LGBTQ end of life care
- Possible trauma from lifetime of oppression/discrimination and marginalization
- Unsupported/Disenfranchized grief and bereavement

Anticipating Discrimination

People approaching end of life are among the most vulnerable in our communities. This vulnerability can be made worse if people fear that services might not be accepting of them regarding their sexual orientation or gender identity.

**These fears are based on their
real life experiences**

Challenges

- Many believe they would be isolated from other patients and discriminated against by staff/residents
- May delay or avoid treatment when an LGBTQ-friendly health care provider cannot be found.
- Self advocacy difficult if not “out”
- Misgendering when no longer able to self-advocate or after they pass away
- Home care concerns

Faith/Religion

Like heterosexual people, LGBTQ people can have deeply rooted faith (residual or active) and belief structures, as well as established religious affiliations.

Religion has also been an area of great exclusion and discrimination for LGBTQ people.

Increased Pressure On LGBTQ Carers

- Lack of LGBTQ informed and safe support networks
- Desire to stay at home
- Informal caregivers may find themselves providing high level of care
- May feel pressure to “come out” about relationship

Disenfranchised Grief

Defined as: “... the grief that persons experience when they incur a loss that is not or cannot be openly acknowledged, publicly mourned or socially supported”

Impact

“Becoming seriously ill and knowing you are dying is distressing enough without the added stress of worrying that your carers may not accept you if they know you’re lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender.”

“Fear of homophobic prejudice, rejection and neglect is very real and continues to damage LGBTQ people’s lives. Many terminally ill LGBTQ people feel doubly vulnerable - on account of their illnesses and on account of homophobia or transphobia.”

If LGBTQ people are not confident and do not feel safe with services or staff, they may not seek support and/or may not feel able to be open about themselves and the people who are important to them – factors that are crucial to dying well.

Good End Of Life Care For LGBTQ People

- “Good end of life care should be about doing all we can to make people feel safe and secure to talk about their lives and the people who are important to them without worrying they may be discriminated against.”
- “We only have one chance to get end of life care right for people who are dying, which is why it is so important that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people are able to access high quality and appropriate care and support when they are dying.”

Ask open-ended questions for all clients –

- “What is important for me to know in providing care for you?”
- “What name/pronouns do you prefer?”
- “Who are the important people in your life?”

Avoid making assumptions about a person’s sexual orientation or gender identity: use gender-neutral terms such as partner(s).

Use the same words that a client does to describe self, relationships and identity

Friends and partners of LGBTQ clients need to feel acknowledged and respected

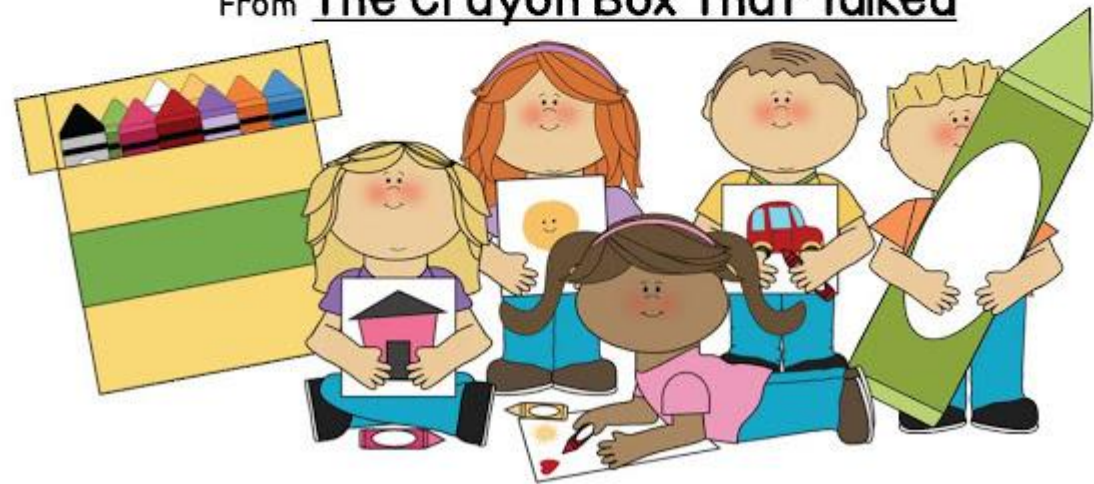
Moving Forward



**In Closing,
Share one
thought or
understanding
you are taking
away with you
from our time
together.**

**“We are like a box of crayons,
Each one of us unique.
But when we get together...
The picture is complete.”**

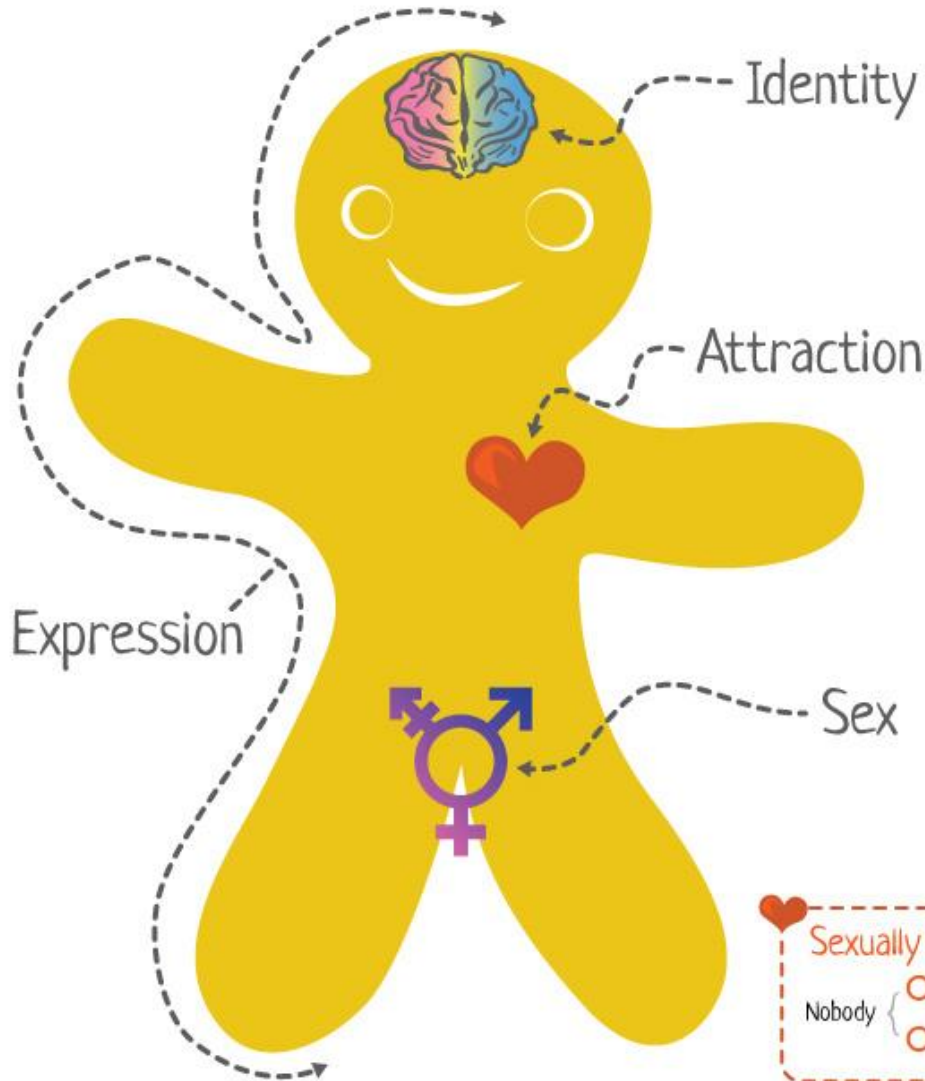
From The Crayon Box That Talked



The Genderbread Person v3.3

by its pronounced **METROsexual**.com

Gender is one of those things everyone thinks they understand, but most people don't. Like *Inception*. Gender isn't binary. It's not either/or. In many cases it's both/and. A bit of this, a dash of that. This tasty little guide is meant to be an appetizer for gender understanding. It's okay if you're hungry for more. In fact, that's the idea.



Plot a point on both continua in each category to represent your identity; combine all ingredients to form your Genderbread. 4 (of infinite) possible plot and label combos

Gender Identity

Indicates a lack of what's on the right.

Woman-ness

Man-ness

How you, in your head, define your gender; based on how much you align (or don't align) with what you understand to be the options for gender.

Labels: "woman", "man", "two-spirit", "genderqueer"

Gender Expression

Feminine

Masculine

The ways you present gender, through your actions, dress, and demeanor, and how those presentations are interpreted based on gender norms.

Labels: "butch", "femme", "androgynous", "gender neutral"

Biological Sex

Female-ness

Male-ness

The physical sex characteristics you're born with and develop, including genitalia, body shape, voice pitch, body hair, hormones, chromosomes, etc.

Labels: "male", "female", "intersex", "MtF Female"

Sexually Attracted to

Nobody

(Women/Females/Femininity)

(Men/Males/Masculinity)

Romantically Attracted to

Nobody

(Women/Females/Femininity)

(Men/Males/Masculinity)

In each grouping, circle all that apply to you and plot a point, depicting the aspects of gender toward which you experience attraction.

For a bigger bite, read more at <http://bit.ly/genderbread>