



## Care for Transgender/Nonbinary Patients



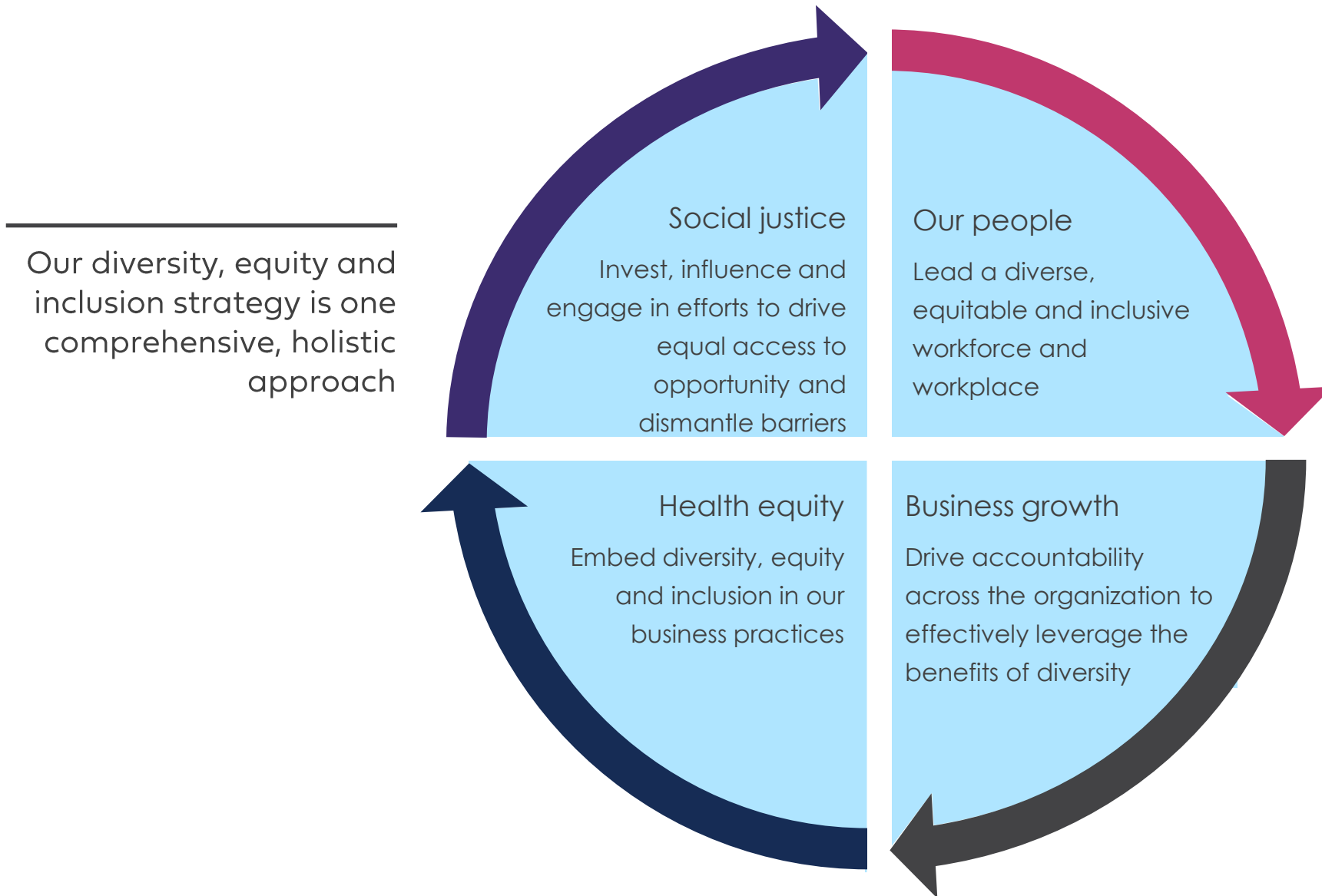


# Learning objectives

How to:

- 1 Create a welcoming environment for transgender/nonbinary patients
- 2 Discuss what hormone-related and surgery transition options are available
- 3 Explain reproductive and preventive care to transgender/nonbinary patients
- 4 Incorporate individualized considerations into physical exams
- 5 Integrate pediatric specific differences in care

# Blue Shield's diversity, equity and inclusion strategy



# Today's speakers

**Barry K. Eisenberg, M.D.**



Associate Director of the Comprehensive  
Gender Care Program  
Palo Alto Medical Foundation/Sutter Health

**Ilana Sherer, M.D., FAAP**



Co-Chair of the Transgender Provider  
Education Committee  
Palo Alto Medical Foundation/Sutter Health



MAKING A MAN | THE SCIENCE OF GENDER | GIRLS AT RISK

# NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

SPECIAL ISSUE

## GENDER REVOLUTION

"The best thing about being a girl is,  
now I don't have to pretend  
to be a boy."

JANUARY 2017

# The Gender Binary is a “Modern” Construct



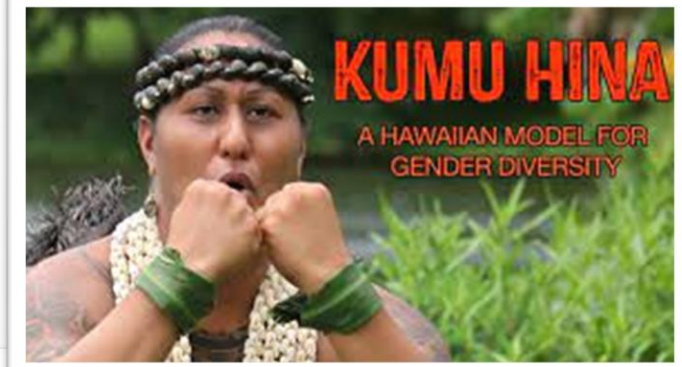
kqed.org

## Interview

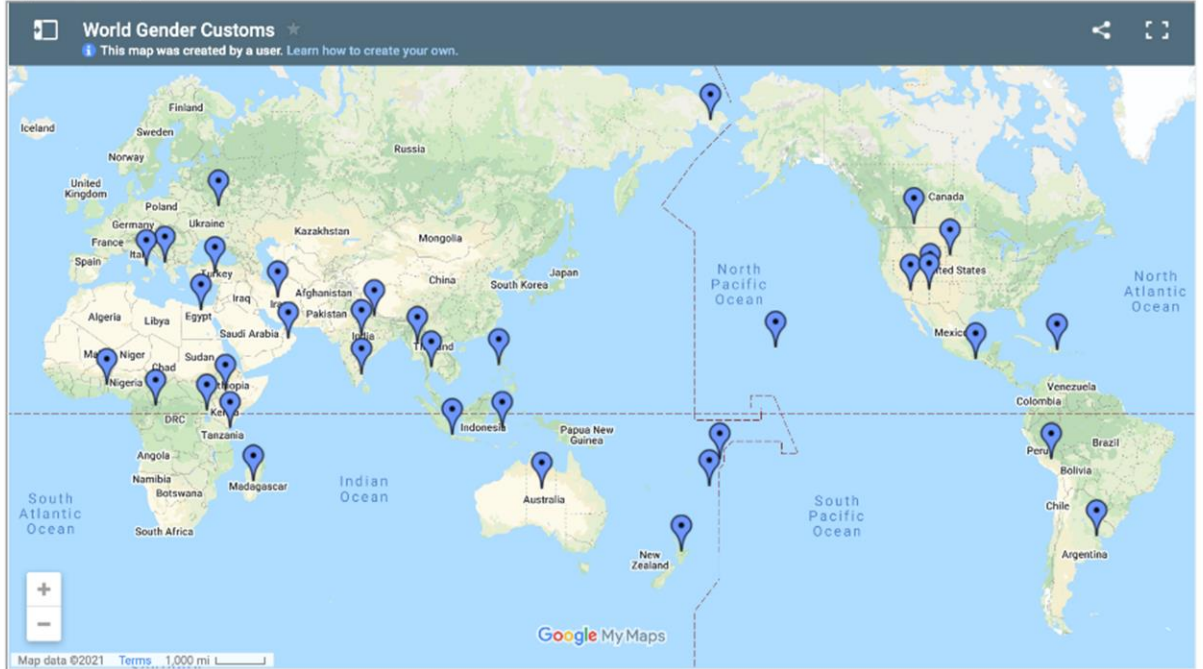
**'Trans kids are not new': a historian on the long record of youth transitioning in America**

**Sam Levin in Los Angeles**

theguardian.com



Explore the map



pbs.org

# Professional Organizations with Statements in support of Affirmative Care

- American Medical Association
- American College of Physicians
- American Psychiatric Association
- American Psychological Association
- American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
- American Academy of Family Physicians
- American Academy of Pediatrics
- American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
- American Public Health Association
- Endocrine Society
- National Association of Social Workers
- National Commission on Correctional Health Care
- World Professional Association of Transgender Health
- Dermatology
- Plastic Surgery
- Nurse Midwives
- Plastic Surgery
- School Nurses
- Nursing
- Osteopathic



# Gender Definitions



## **Sex (Gender Biology)**

Assigned male/female based on physical anatomy

## **Gender Identity**

Internal/intrinsic sense of self

## **Gender Expression**

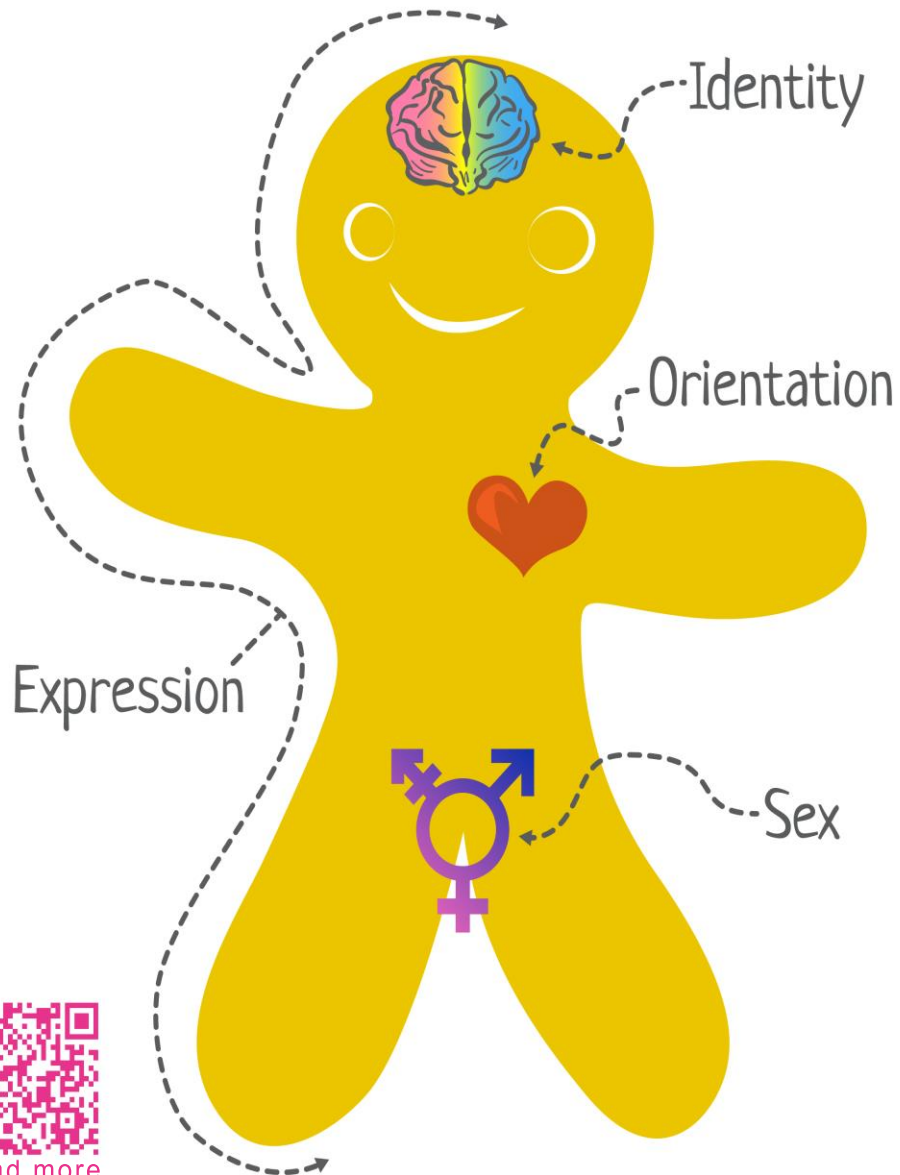
How one expresses their gender based on cultural norms and expectations





# The Genderbread Person

by [www.ItsPronouncedMetrosexual.com](http://www.ItsPronouncedMetrosexual.com)



read more



Gender identity is how you, in your head, think about yourself. It's the chemistry that composes you (e.g., hormonal levels) and how you interpret what that means.



Gender expression is how you demonstrate your gender (based on traditional gender roles) through the ways you act, dress, behave, and interact.



Biological sex refers to the objectively measurable organs, hormones, and chromosomes. Female = vagina, ovaries, XX chromosomes; male = penis, testes, XY chromosomes; intersex = a combination of the two.



Sexual orientation is who you are physically, spiritually, and emotionally attracted to, based on their sex/gender in relation to your own.

# US Transgender Survey 2015 - 28,000 Respondents

- 40% have attempted suicide (9x more likely)
- 40% experienced serious psychological distress in the month of the survey
- Unemployment 3x higher. Poverty 2x higher.
- 16% lost job due to gender. 1/3 have been homeless
- Rates much higher among people of color, disabilities, immigrants
- 2022 survey not yet published.

# Creating a Welcoming Environment



- Signage
- Website/marketing
- Registration Forms
- Electronic Medical Record
- Staff Training
- Provider Training



- Language/Respect
- Medical Knowledge
- Referral Service
- Epic adaptations



# Name and Pronouns Matter... A Lot



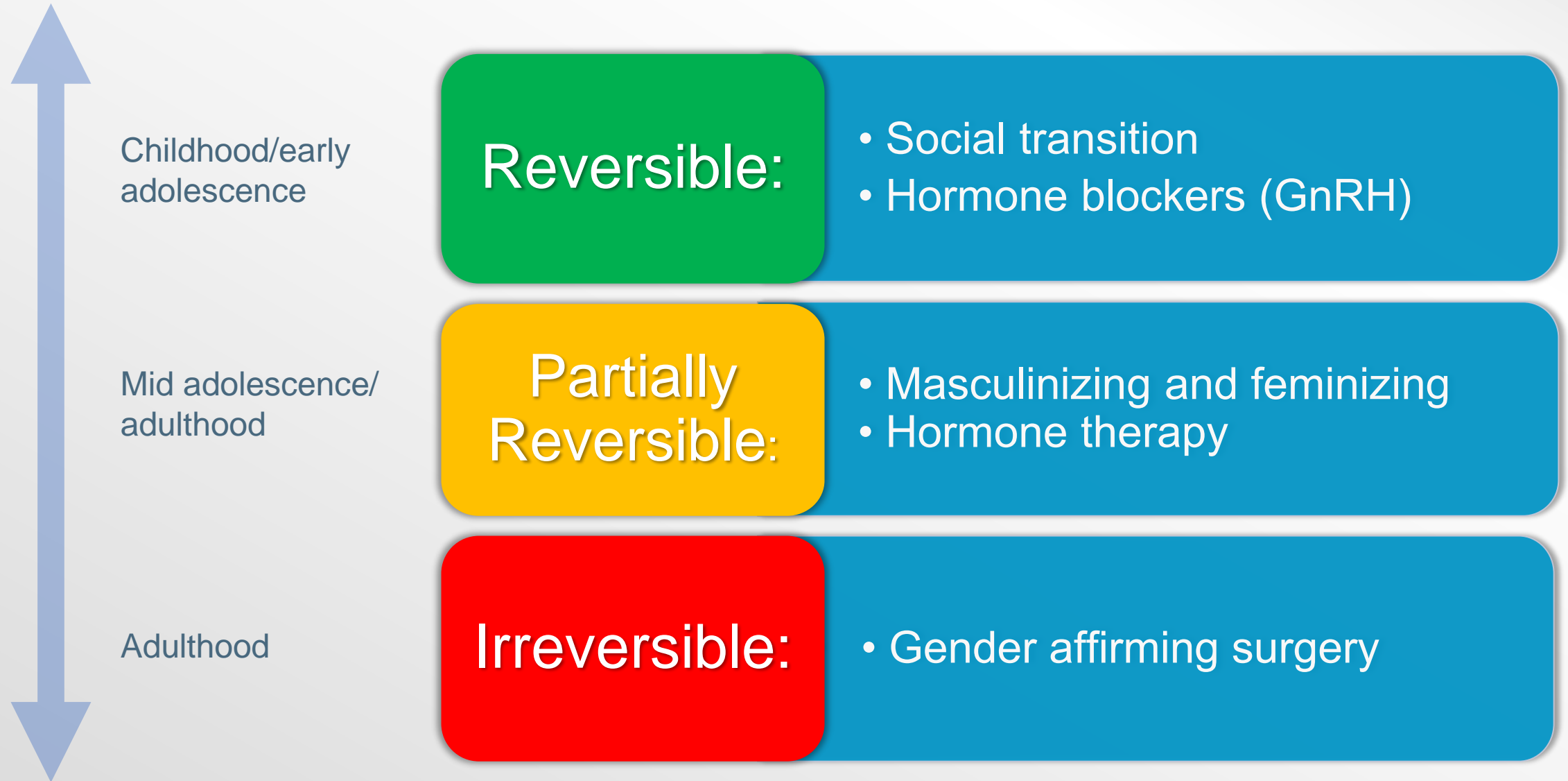
# This Matters Because...

We have transgender patients and we want them to have the best health care experience possible

**Welcomed      Respected**

Remember, you may have transgender colleagues and community members without even knowing it. Always be respectful.

# Transition Interventions





# Feminizing Hormone Therapy

## Medications

Estradiol- feminizing hormone

Spironolactone- androgen blocker (though other options exist)

## Reversible

Decreased libido, fat/muscle changes and redistribution

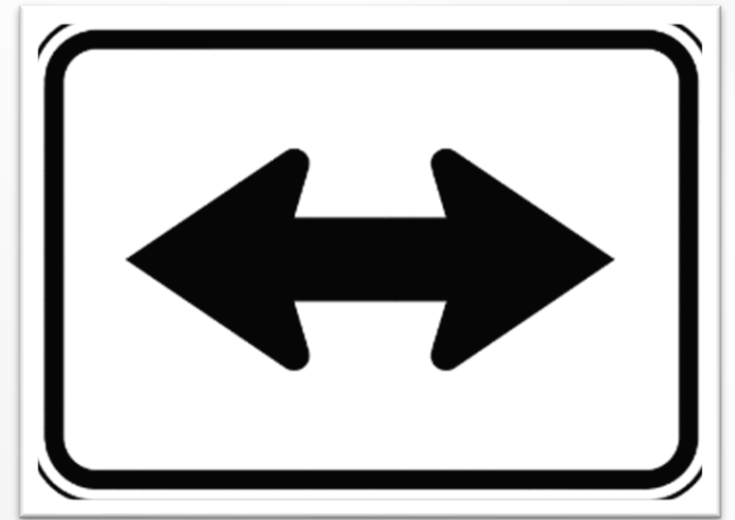
## Somewhat reversible

Testicular atrophy usually reverses, unknown effect on sperm viability, fertility

## Irreversible

Breast development  
(can slightly decrease with cessation of hormones)

Discuss sexuality and fertility, ability to cause pregnancy

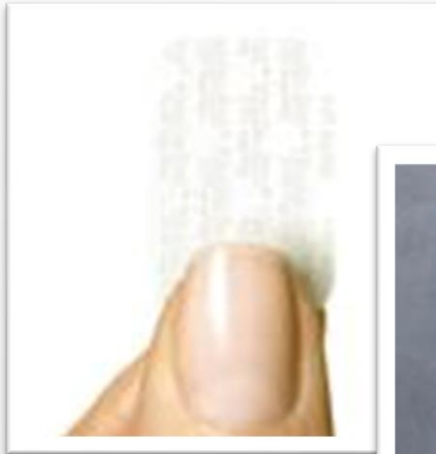


# Risks of Feminizing Therapy

Being aware of rare risks in context of benefits

- Blood Clots (rare)
- Weight gain
- Lipid changes
- Concern for increased CV risks

Risks of Spironolactone: high K, low BP



# Limitations of Feminizing Hormones

**Being a transgender woman in our culture is not easy...**

Feminizing Hormones CANNOT:

- Thin thickened vocal cords to increase pitch of voice
- Change shape, size or structure of bones
- Reduce or eliminate Adam's apple
- Eliminate facial hair follicles:
  - Need laser or electrolysis
- THUS the interest and importance of facial surgery
- And of blockers for youth to prevent these secondary sex changes





# Non-Hormonal Interventions: Trans Women

- **Padding:**

- Bras or Panties
- Likely no risk

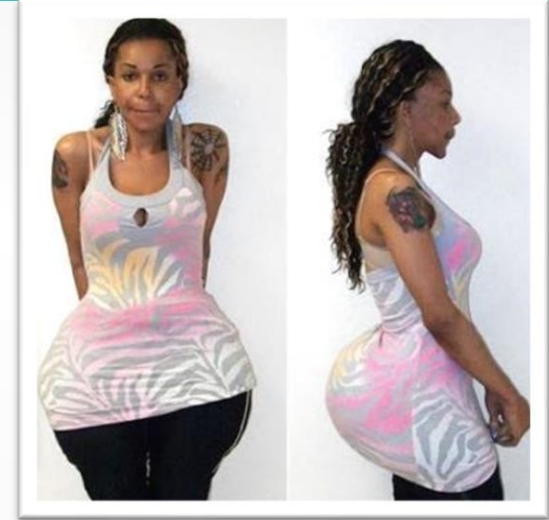


- **Tucking:**

- Using tape/garments to conceal penis and testicles in gluteal fold
- Likely minor risk

## **Silicone:**

Used to enhance hips/buttocks/lips or other body parts



## **Significant Risks:**

- Infection
- Embolization
- Systemic inflammatory syndrome

# Masculinizing Hormone Therapy

**Medication: Testosterone (topical or injection)**

## **Reversible**

- Menses
- Libido
- Fat/muscle distribution

## **Somewhat Reversible**

- Clitoral enlargement

## **Irreversible**

- Thickening of vocal chords
- Facial and body hair
- Adam's apple
- Male-pattern balding



Fertility needs to be discussed before starting hormones:  
Testosterone is not contraception and is a teratogen  
Ovulation can occur when on testosterone w/o menses

# Risks of Masculinizing

- Weight gain
- Male pattern baldness
- RBC increase
- Acne vulgaris
- Mood changes
- Lipid changes
- Rare liver dysfunction
- Possible blood pressure increase
- Teratogen





# Non-pharmacologic Treatment of Body Dysphoria



## Binders:

- Monitor for skin breakdown, restricted breathing
- Avoid compression bandages, duct tape, saran wrap
- Recommend: remove at night, for exercise, if sick



## Packing:

- Likely no risk

# Surgery: every person decides which (if any)

## **Trans\* female spectrum:**

Orchiectomy: removal of testicles

Vaginoplasty: creation of vagina

Labioplasty: creation of labia

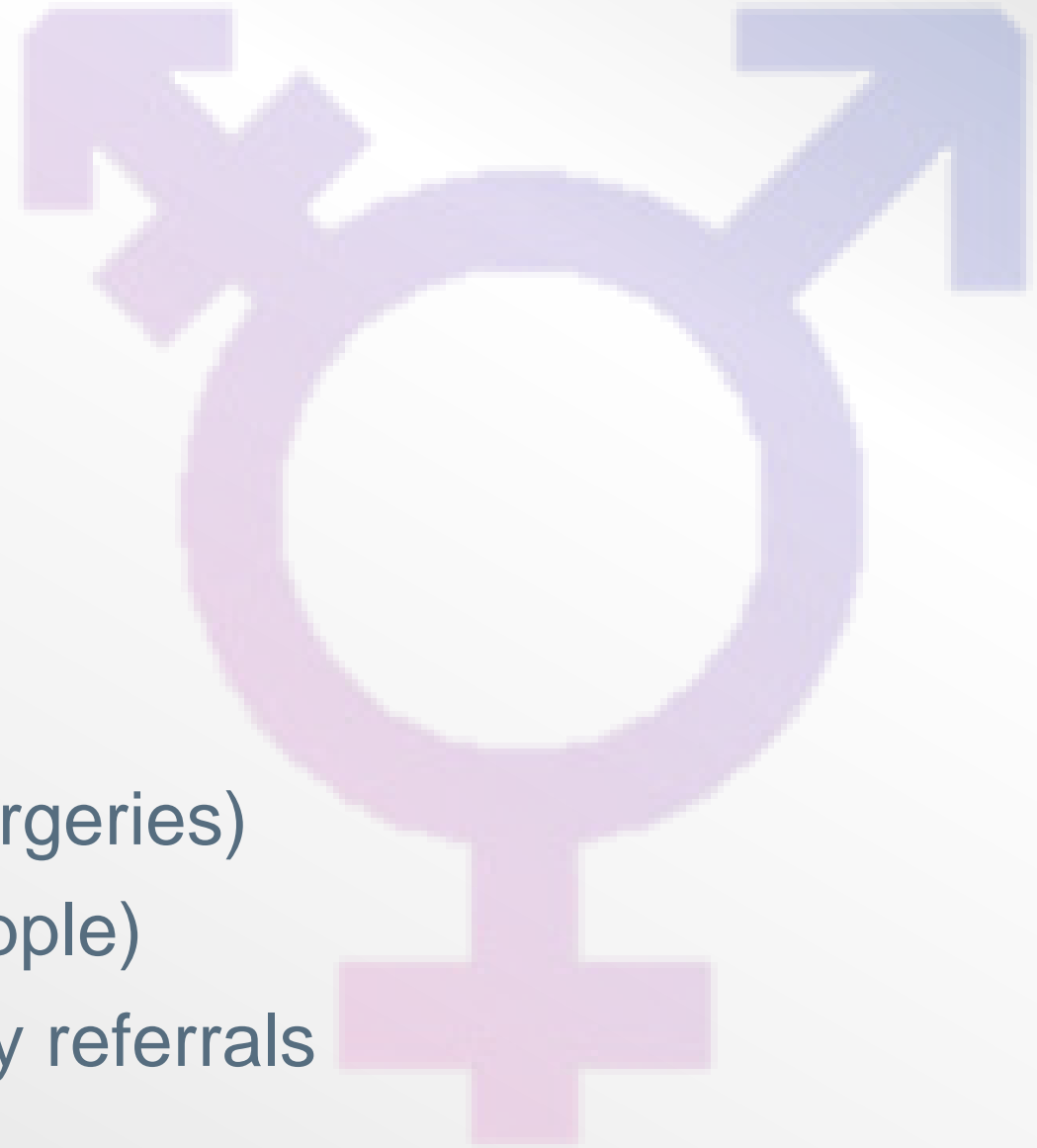
Penectomy: removal of penis

Breast augmentation

Facial feminization (facial affirming surgeries)

Tracheal shave (removal of adam's apple)

Pre & post-operative Physical Therapy referrals



# Surgery: every person decides which (if any)

## Trans\* male spectrum:

Chest reconstruction surgery

Hysterectomy

Oophorectomy

Metoidioplasty (penis and testicles with local tissue, enlarged clitoris is phallus; can keep uterus)

Phalloplasty (penis and testicles w grafting; can keep uterus)

Facial affirmation surgery

Pre & post-operative physical therapy referrals

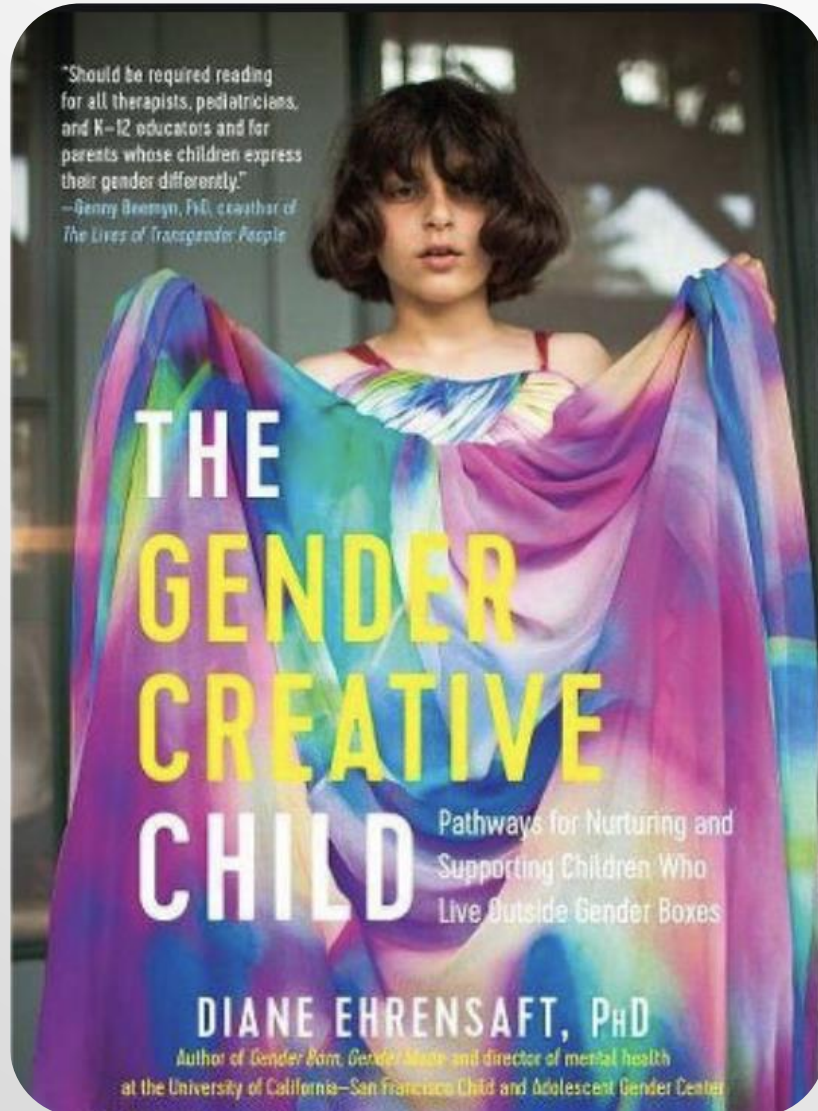


# Pediatric Specific Differences in Care

- “Gender Diverse” umbrella label
- Hormone blockers (GnRH) to block puberty when presenting younger
- Mental health evaluation prior to interventions currently recommended by professional societies
- Parent consent required.  
Medical care NOT confidential (be careful with documentation)



# Gender Diversity is Common in Young Children



# What factors predict persistence to transgender identity?

Gender Diverse Kid

```
graph TD; A[Gender Diverse Kid] --> B[Early consistent, persistent, insistent  
Prepubertal social transition  
Significant body/gender dysphoria  
Declarative statements]; B --> C[Transgender Adult];
```

Early consistent, persistent, insistent  
Prepubertal social transition  
Significant body/gender dysphoria  
Declarative statements

Transgender Adult

# What we Know: Family Acceptance Saves Lives

Higher rates of family rejection significantly associated with poorer health outcomes in LGB kids (and likely T)

- **8.4x more likely to have attempted suicide**
- 5.9x more likely to suffer depression
- 3.4x more likely to use illegal drugs
- 3.4x more likely to engage in unprotected sex

Ryan, C., Huebner, D. et al. "Family Rejection as a predictor of negative health outcomes in white and Latino lesbian, gay, and bisexual young adults."

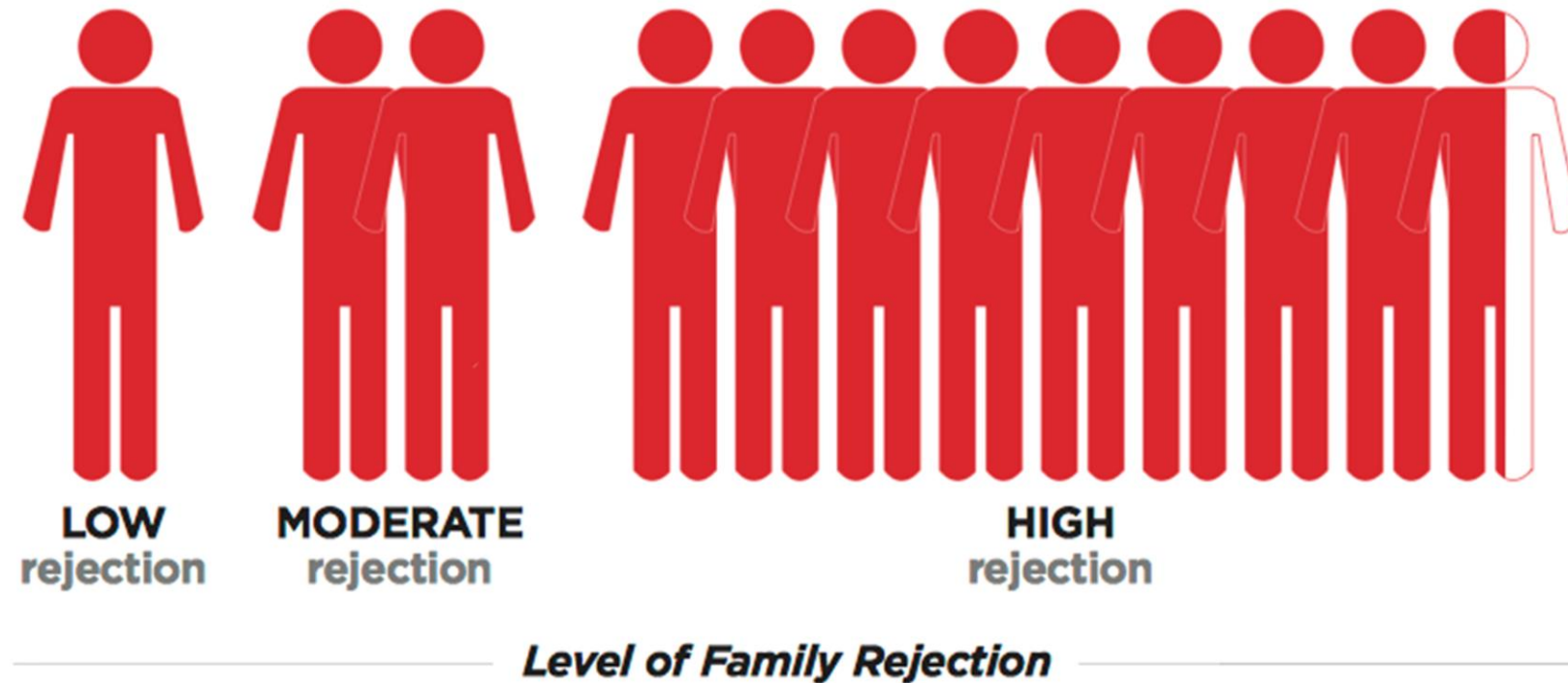
Pediatrics 123/1 (2009): 346-352.



# A Little Support goes a Long Way

## Lifetime Suicide Attempts by Highly Rejected LGBT Young People

*(One or more times)*



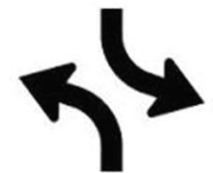


# Interventions for Youth



## Reversible:

- GnRH agonists (puberty blockers)
- Social transition
- Mental health support



ONLY

## Partially Reversible:

- Cross sex hormones (estrogen and testosterone)

ONE  
WAY



## Irreversible:

- Surgery for gender confirmation (not discussed in this talk)

# The Benefits of Puberty Blockers for Transgender Patients

## Pros

Buys time to explore gender identity  
Non-binary gender identity (spectrum)

Prevents the need for costly and invasive surgery as an adult

Improved mental health, functioning, and self esteem

Reduced doses needed for cross sex hormones

# Puberty Blockers: Avoid Later Surgery



# The Risks of Puberty Blockers

**Bone mineral density decreases**

**Fertility considerations**

**Brain/cognitive maturation**

**Pain/bruising/bleeding/sterile abscess at site**

**Mood changes**

**Weight gain**



# Well Person Care

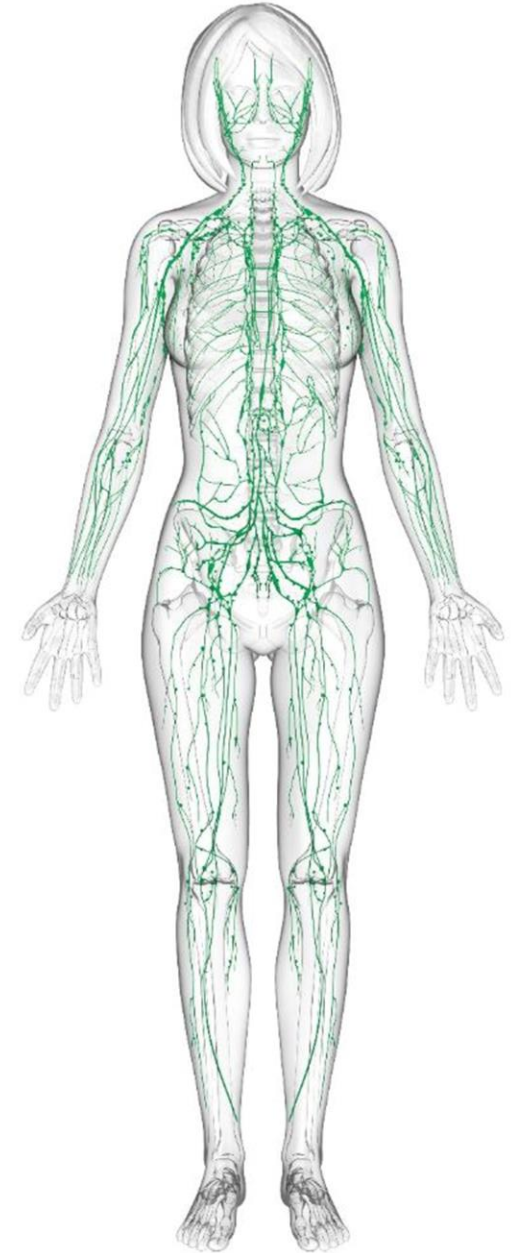
- Primary care provider who is willing to learn and CARES
- Awareness of Trauma and Trauma Informed Care
- Discuss Sexuality, Fertility, Pregnancy and Parenting Planning

# Preventive Screening

*This is not too complicated!*

If you have '*an organ*,' it must be screened according to current guidelines....

(of course, EHR and insurance may not agree that a 'male' needs a PAP ...)



# USPSTF Cancer Risk & Screening

- **Breast**
  - Trans Man  
(no mammo if chest surgery)
  - Trans Woman  
(no data, but later exposure to estrogen changes risk and onset of screening; at least 5-10 yrs on HT)
- **Cervix & Anus**- PAP intervals no difference if on hormones
- **Ovarian & Uterus**
  - no data to support increase in cancer risk with testosterone
- **Prostate** – no different if on estrogen



# Physical Exam Considerations

- Gender affirming- use preferred terminology and be sensitive to prior negative experiences in the healthcare setting
- Examine only what is relevant to the visit
- Preventive screening and exam should be relevant to the anatomy that is present
- Special Considerations: vaginal exams in transgender women, pelvic exams in transgender men, binding and tucking complications

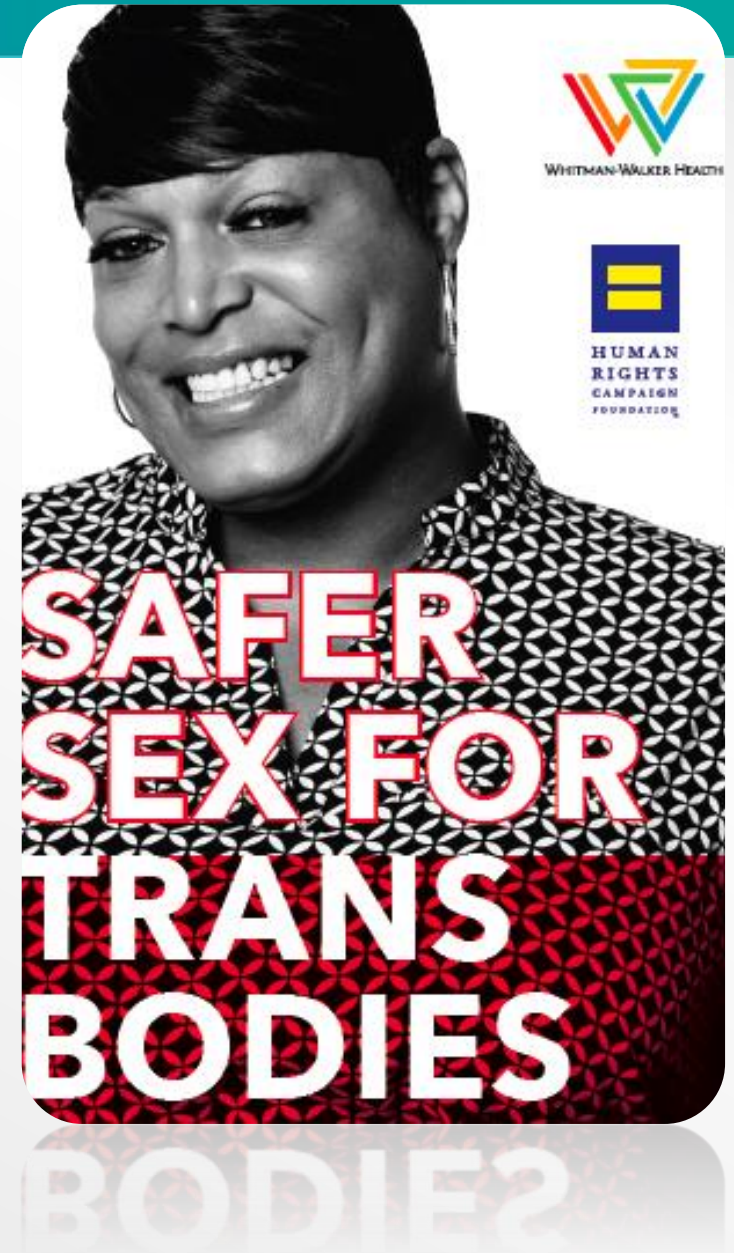


# Sexuality and Gender

Don't make assumptions:

Sexual identities, attractions, and behaviors may shift, change, or evolve with transition

40% of 605 trans men recruited online from 19 different countries who had begun using testosterone reported a shift in their sexual orientation (Meier 2013)



# Prevention of HIV Trans\* Community

- Increased awareness has led to data collection recommendations so that trans population will be counted
- We now have trans specific interventions with increased awareness of high risk and specific needs
- PREP AND PEP are lifesaving
- Strategies that you can integrate into your work with the transgender populations you serve
- Trans youth have the highest rate of HIV acquisition

# Family Creation Options

Historically, LGBTQ individuals' reproductive choices have not been recognized ...

“...it was assumed that trans women would forgo the ability to ‘father’ a child, that trans men would forgo the ability to ‘mother’ a child, and that ‘true transexuals’ would be uninterested in doing so.”

“Family Creation Options for Transgender and Nonconforming People,” I dickey, K Duchamps, R Ehrbar, Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity 2016



# Thank you

## Comprehensive Gender Care

Presented by the Transgender Provider Education Committee of  
the Sutter Gender Care Program





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