

Dear East Carolina University Health Sciences Campus Community Member:

*No matter who is on your team, you should always assume you are in the presence of a transgender or non-binary (TGNB) person. If you are aware of a learner (e.g., student, trainee, intern, resident, fellow) who identifies as trans or non-binary:*

- **Introduce yourself!** Let them know you'd like to be an ally and want to make yourself available as a resource if anything comes up for them during their time with your unit, organization, department, etc.
  - Be thoughtful about doing this in a way that does not "out" learners who may not be out about their gender to others in the learning environment.
- Consider using your pronouns when introducing yourself, to normalize this as part of introductions.
  - Ask what pronouns the learner uses professionally, then use them.
- Ensure that the learner feels safe and knows who to reach out to if challenging situations arise.
  - Brody School of Medicine students may reach out to the ombudsperson at [BSOMOmbudsOffice@ecu.edu](mailto:BSOMOmbudsOffice@ecu.edu), or complete a student mistreatment report via the student affairs website. ECU learners also can contact the Brody School of Medicine Office of Diversity Affairs or the ECU Office for Equity and Diversity for a consultation. Learners at Vidant can contact Vidant Human Resources or the Chief Experience Officer.
- Ask if the learner wishes to discuss their gender openly with others in the learning environment, and if they would like support in disclosing information about their gender to others (for example, letting a team attending or resident know in advance).
  - In some situations, the learner may feel relieved of the burden of having this conversation themselves for each new rotation or with each new team.
- Consider asking them how they would like you to handle difficult interactions, should they arise.
  - Some learners may prefer to have an outspoken ally who immediately confronts difficult situations. Other learners may prefer for you to check-in with them privately after difficult interactions.
- Learners may not want to discuss their gender in a professional context. This is their right, and we should be careful to respect that.
  - If questions come up, remember to be respectful, and be clear in explaining why the questions are being asked.
- How you and your care team treat and discuss transgender and gender non-binary patients matters and affects all TGNB learners, staff, and faculty.

*If questions arise from the team concerning a learner's gender expression being different than what the team expects/is accustomed to:*

- Discuss with the team members that the learner should be evaluated as any other learner would be, on their performance. The learner's gender identity and expression should not play a role in their evaluation.

*If situations arise where there is a conflict regarding a learner's gender:*

- Ask how they want to handle questions about their gender.
- If the conflict comes from the patient or a patient's family: options might include having an attending/responsible faculty or staff discuss gender with the patient in the abstract of asking the patient to clarify their concerns. Reinforce that the learner is part of the team and will participate in the patient's care as any other member of the team would.

- If there are problems on the team, discuss the case **with the learner, privately, if possible**, and decide together how to proceed.
- If there are problems with staff, for example inappropriate comments, do your best to address these directly in the moment. If this is not possible, check in with the student after and validate their concerns. Consider speaking with the staff member later about where assumptions or miscommunications can be harmful to the care team, or if not effective, speaking with the staff member's supervisor or submitting a report to the Office of Diversity Affairs (ECU Brody School of Medicine), Office for Equity and Diversity (ECU), or Human Resources of the Chief Experience Officer (Vidant), so that the misconduct can be tracked.
- Remember that persistent and intentional misgendering of learners is not in line with ECU and UNC System values.

Feel free to reach out to the ECU Health Sciences Sexual and Gender Diversity Committee (SGDC) for help and support. If training is needed, resources may be available. As always, identifying yourself as an ally with Safe Zone or rainbow pins or stickers can indicate to others that you are affirming and supportive.

#### *Additional Resources*

- Health Sciences Sexual and Gender Diversity Committee (SGDC): <https://sgdc.ecu.edu/>
- ECU Dr. Jesse R. Peel LGBTQ Center: <https://lgbtq.ecu.edu/>
- Brody School of Medicine student Sexual and Gender Diversity Organization (SGDO): <https://www.facebook.com/groups/brodysgdo>
- National LGBT Health Education Center: <https://www.lgbthealtheducation.org/>
- Transgender Law Center: <https://transgenderlawcenter.org/>
- National Center for Transgender Equality: <https://transequality.org/>

*Note: This document is based on a similar document created by the NYU School of Medicine's Office of Diversity Affairs.*