



## SUPPORTING TRANSGENDER COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Systems can be intimidating settings for anyone—children, youth, and adults similarly. Teens with marginalized identities frequently experience acts of violence, specifically transgender children and youth. These tips may help child welfare professionals, caregivers, community health workers, PCHD staff, and health professionals.

“ Hey, I am not my hair, I am not this skin, I am not your expectations, no, no . . . I am not my hair, I am not this skin, I am a soul that lives within.  
- India.Arie, *I Am Not My Hair* ”

The “Gender Affirming” model of healthcare is about recognizing and acknowledging that trans people tell the truth about who we are. For trans young people, gender affirmation means being able to socially affirm their gender (with name, pronouns and expression).

### IMPORTANT TERMS

**Transgender** is an umbrella term used to describe individuals whose gender identity—one’s inner sense of being male or female—differs from the sex assigned to them at birth.

**Trans** is an abbreviation used for transgender.

**Gender identity** is an individual’s internal sense of their gender.

**Gender pronouns** are the words people use to refer to someone instead of their name—commonly used pronouns include he/him/his, she/her/hers, they/them/theirs, e/em/eirs, and ze/hir/hirs.

**Sex assigned to at birth** is the designation assigned to a child at birth, often based strictly on anatomy.

**Deadname** is the birth name of a transgender person who has changed their name as part of their gender transition.

### CREATING INCLUSIVE RELATIONSHIPS

**Names and Pronouns.** Ask the child or youth which names and pronouns to use and when they would like to use their preferred name versus their legal name (if different). The “correct” or best practice names and pronouns are those the child or youth wants us to use. The use of deadnames is an act of violence. Stand up for the child or youth and recommend others use the correct name whenever possible.

Model supportive and affirming interactions by utilizing the name and pronouns the child or youth wants us to use when talking to or about the childhood during interactions.

**Disclosure of Gender Identity.** Take the young person’s lead in any decision to disclose their identity information.

Request that all practice-related symbols and pictures are gender-affirming. This creates a nondiscrimination standard to ensure the safety of youth and children by promoting the young person’s mental and physical well-being and reducing the risk of harm.

**Impact on services.** It is the responsibility of professionals to update their policies, practices, and processes to be gender-expansive and remove potential barriers to entry in education, development, and practice.