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Working with Gender Diverse Clients Checklist

This document is intended to assist registrants in considering relevant issues when contemplating providing assessment or treatment services to an individual who is gender questioning or gender diverse (i.e., who does not conform to societal or cultural expectations regarding being female or male). Relevant Code standards are indicated in brackets following the checklist items.

General Competency Issues

- I am aware that gender identity, gender expression, biological sex, and sexual orientation may vary independently of each other, and I will avoid making potentially harmful assumptions regarding my client's position on any of these variables. **(3.3, 3.5, 3.7, 3.23, 3.24)**
- I am aware that gender is not binary, and that gender diverse clients may identify in one or more of a variety of ways, including as non-binary, multi-gendered, third gender, genderqueer, gender fluid, agender, two-spirit, or another way, and I will respect my client's self-identity. **(3.23, 3.24, 5.1, 5.26, 5.31, 5.33)**
- My services reflect my knowledge that gender diverse clients are heterogenous and that each client presents with their own clinical picture and their own individual needs and goals. **(3.5, 3.23, 5.31, 8.2)**
- My services reflect my knowledge that gender identity intersects with various other culturally and faith influenced identities and that even if a potential client is not seeking services related to gender identity, my sensitivity to gender identity issues will be important to my service provision. **(3.3, 3.5, 3.23, 3.24, 8.2)**
- I am aware that language is culturally influenced, has gender-specific elements, and changes over time, and my use of identity-related terms (e.g., non-binary, transgender, trans, two-spirit, hijra, or other term) and pronouns (i.e., feminine, masculine, or gender neutral) will reflect my client's identity, and be respectful and affirming of them. **(3.23, 3.24, 5.1, 5.26, 5.31, 5.33)**
- I will use my client's identified name and pronoun, and respect that these may change depending on circumstance or context. **(5.1, 5.26, 5.31, 5.33)**
- I am aware that gender diverse people are at elevated risk for experiencing histories of abuse, discrimination, stigma, and oppression, and that these experiences may have an impact on their mental health issues, and my assessment and/or treatment services will reflect this awareness. **(3.3, 3.5, 3.7, 3.23, 3.24, 3.25)**
- I am aware of my own gender, sex, and cultural biases that impact gender diverse people, and will monitor and assess my own biases in an ongoing way so that I can avoid making clinical judgements that may impact my clients negatively due to my biases. **(3.12, 5.1, 5.26, 5.31, 5.33, 11.27)**
- I am aware of cis-gender privilege, including my own if I am cis-gender, and I am prepared to provide sensitive, respectful, and inclusive care during all trans-specific mental health services. **(5.1, 5.26, 5.31, 8.2)**
- I have considered how my own gender identity and presentation may influence the services I provide to my client and my client's experience of our professional relationship. **(5.33)**

- I am prepared to provide sensitive, respectful, and inclusive care to all, will identify those gender diverse clients who require trans-specific mental health services, and will seek supervision or make referrals if I determine that I lack the requisite expertise to provide appropriate services to any individual. (3.3, 3.5, 3.6, 3.23, 3.24, 3.25, 3.26, 5.1, 5.26, 5.31, 8.2)
- I have determined whether the potential client is seeking services related to gender identity or other related issues, is seeking services regarding an unrelated issue, or is seeking services for both gender identity and unrelated issues, and I have confirmed that I have the relevant education, training, and experience to provide the service being sought. (3.3, 3.5, 3.23, 3.24, 3.25, 8.2)
- My assessment and/or therapy services for gender diverse individuals reflect an awareness of relevant issues, such as that: gender identity issues may exist within a broader range of identity issues; clients may or may not be experiencing gender dysphoria; there are different types and levels of gender transition (e.g., social, biological, etc.); clients may or may not desire pharmacological and/or surgical intervention; clients may choose different gender expressions in different contexts; etc. (3.3, 3.5, 3.23, 3.24, 3.25)
- I am aware that therapy aimed at changing a person's gender identity against their will to align with their sex assigned at birth (i.e., "conversion therapy") is ineffective, unethical, and may cause lasting harm, and I will not engage in this behaviour. (3.7, 3.9, 3.15, 5.1, 5.26, 8.2)
- My services reflect my knowledge of the need to consider possible comorbidity issues in my assessment and treatment services. (3.3, 3.23, 3.24, 3.25)
- I maintain awareness of research developments in the area of gender identity. (3.2, 3.3, 3.7, 3.15)
- I maintain awareness of developments in relevant guidelines and standards pertaining to working with gender diverse individuals. (3.2, 3.3, 3.8)
- I maintain awareness of legal and social issues of potential relevance to my clients where appropriate (e.g., assisting a client to consider the implications of changing gender designation on identity documents). (3.3, 3.5, 3.8, 3.24, 3.25, 18.1)
- My services reflect my knowledge of issues of specific relevance to working with individuals who are considering transitioning or gender affirming treatments, such as costs and benefits of starting hormone treatment at different ages, age-related consideration of competency to make treatment decisions, fertility preservation, the possible benefits of voice and communication training, issues related to family support or lack thereof, etc. (3.3, 3.5, 3.7, 3.15, 3.23, 3.24)
- I am aware that collaborative care and a multidisciplinary team approach may be in my client's best interests and will recommend this and seek client consent for my participation in same where appropriate. (5.1, 4.1, 4.2, 4.5, 6.2, 7.9, 7.12, 7.13)
- My services reflect my knowledge that clients need to be the decision-makers regarding their gender identity and expression, and regarding any steps they may choose to take related to transitioning. (5.1, 5.26, 5.31)

Specific Assessment Issues

- I have reviewed the Practice Support general Psychological Assessment Checklist and I am in compliance with the requirements outlined in that document. (3.1, 3.5. See CPBC Practice Support Psychological Assessment Checklist.)
- I have obtained any necessary education, training, and experience, and I engage in ongoing consultation as appropriate, to ensure my competence in assessment services for gender diverse clients, including if I offer specialized assessment services, such as a client's suitability and readiness for gender affirming treatments. (3.5, 3.23, 3.24, 3.25, 11.1, 11.2)
- I am aware that an assessment regarding a person's suitability and readiness for gender affirming treatments, especially surgery, may lead to significant and potentially irreversible decisions, and I take care to ensure that my evaluations, interpretations, and analysis, and my recommendations, are based on information and techniques sufficient to address the assessment questions, and that I have adequately considered developmental considerations, possible comorbidity, and any other issues that might influence my opinions and recommendations. (3.5, 3.7, 3.14, 3.15, 3.16, 3.23, 3.24, 3.25, 11.1, 11.3, 11.6, 11.22, 11.32, 11.33)
- My assessment services reflect an awareness of relevant confidentiality issues, including that clients may seek or be referred for a psychological assessment for different reasons, and that my report needs to reflect the intended assessment purpose and the intended audience, including by limiting information to that appropriately required for the intended purpose and audience. (4.2, 4.6, 5.1, 5.13, 5.26, 6.1, 6.4, 11.1, 11.4)
- I am aware of the limitations of any standardized assessment tools I use, including the basis for their norms, and I will ensure that I interpret results with caution and provide statements regarding any limitations to my opinions. (3.10, 3.11, 3.13, 3.18, 3.23, 3.25, 11.9, 11.11, 11.15, 11.28)

- I will be sensitive to the role that social, environmental, and cultural factors may be playing in a gender diverse client's symptom presentation, and carefully consider this issue in the event I am providing a diagnostic opinion. **(3.5, 3.18, 3.23, 3.24, 11.11)**

Developmental Issues

- I have obtained any necessary education, training, and experience, and I engage in ongoing consultation as appropriate, to ensure my competence in providing assessment and/or treatment services to gender diverse clients at the developmental level of the client I am seeing. **(3.2, 3.3, 3.5, 3.7, 3.15, 3.23, 3.24, 3.25)**
- I am aware of considerations related to developmental level, and of professional and research developments in the area, and the services I provide to gender questioning and gender diverse children and adolescents reflect this knowledge. **(3.2, 3.3, 3.5, 3.7, 3.15, 3.23, 3.24, 3.25)**
- I am aware that gender diverse individuals may begin to display gender diverse behaviour and identity expression at varying life stages and that this may influence their clinical presentation and needs, and I will ensure that my services are developmentally appropriate. **(3.3, 3.5, 3.23, 3.24, 3.25)**
- I am aware that the treatment approach and protocols for treating gender diverse clients vary depending on the clients' developmental stage (e.g., working with gender diverse children vs. youth vs. adults), and will provide mental health services that are based on the individual needs and developmental stage of the client, and seek consultation or make referrals as necessary should I lack the requisite expertise to provide appropriate services to the client. **(3.3, 3.5, 3.6, 3.23, 3.24, 3.25, 3.26, 8.2)**
- I am appropriately attentive to informed consent and assent issues when dealing with minor clients with gender identity issues. **(1.2, 4.2, 4.3, 4.6, 5.1, 5.13, 5.26. See also the CPBC Practice Support Informed Consent and Assent Checklist.)**
- If the client is a minor, I will advocate for a treatment approach that reduces harm and promotes the best interests of the child, ensuring I have sought and carefully considered the child's perspective on these matters. **(5.1, 8.2)**