

University Health Network Policy & Procedure Manual People & Culture: Gender Identity

Policy

University Health Network (UHN) is committed to a supportive work, service, and learning environment where everyone is welcomed and treated with dignity and respect. UHN will not tolerate any form of stigmatization, discrimination, or harassment, including that which is based on an individual's sex, sexual orientation, gender expression, or gender identity.

This policy is consistent with UHN's [Fostering Respect in the Workplace](#) policy 2.50.007, Ontario's [Human Rights Code](#), and applicable law.

Note: This policy uses **LGBTQ+** to mean lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, questioning (curious), intersex, asexual, pansexual, two-spirit, and gender non-conforming identities. The LGBTQ+ identities listed in this policy are not intended to label individuals, but to assist in understanding this policy and the legal obligations defined under the [Human Rights Code](#). See [Appendix A](#) for a general list of definitions.

UHN will ensure the comfort, inclusion, wellness and human rights of LGBTQ+ individuals while maximizing their safety (for example, while transitioning in the work or learning environment).

UHN will promote inclusive practices and provide guidelines and procedures to protect the rights of individuals based on their sex, sexual orientation, gender expression or gender identity in the work, service, or learning environment.

Application

This policy applies to all members of the **UHN community**, including: employees, interns, students, educators, volunteers, researchers, and contractors.

Patients, patient family members, or visitors with concerns about their experience based on their sex, sexual orientation, gender expression or gender identity while receiving services at UHN should be directed to contact [Patient Relations](#).

This policy applies to all activities taking place within the UHN environment including, but not limited to: offices and buildings, cafeterias, food courts, lounges, patient rooms, washrooms, change rooms, locker rooms, work sites, as well as work assignments off UHN property, off-site work-related social events, functions, fundraising events, work-related seminars, conferences, training or teaching programs, work-related travel,

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communications, tele-networking activities (including email), and all social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, YouTube, Twitter).

UHN Community Member Rights

All individuals in the work, service and learning environment at UHN have the right to:

- Be identified and referred to in accordance with their stated identity or expression.
- Dress in accordance with their stated identity or expression where clinically safe to do so.
- Be communicated with in a respectful and inclusive manner.
- Be treated in a supportive, respectful, and equitable manner.
- Be free from stigmatization, discrimination, harassment, and violence.
- Request accommodation or changes under UHN's policies without fear of reprisal.
- Have records (including all internal and external directories, email addresses and business cards) changed at their request.
- Use the facilities of their choice, including all-gender washrooms, locker and change rooms.
- Be required to disclose personal information **only** for clinical reasons in a manner consistent with the law.

Responsibilities

Leaders (including Managers, Directors, Primary Researchers)

- Provide a safe, supportive, and confidential environment where individuals can choose to make their gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation known, share details of their transition and/or transition plan relevant to the workplace.
- Ensure that policies, documentation, and resources related to [LGBTQ+](#) are in plain language and are easily accessible.
- Enforce policies, procedures, and expectations identified in this policy.

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- Encourage ongoing inclusive LGBTQ+ awareness, learning and training to develop and deepen cultural competence understanding.
- Ensure the safety and equitable treatment of the LGBTQ+ community.
- Respond to claims about discrimination, incivility, harassment, stigmatization as outlined in [Fostering Respect in the Workplace](#) policy 2.50.007, or violence as outlined in [Violence & Domestic Violence in the Workplace](#) policy 6.30.004.

Healthcare Providers/Teams

- Address and refer to all persons in accordance with their identity or expression.
- Provide services to [LGBTQ+](#) patients in a manner that ensures confidentiality, privacy, respect, safety and human rights.
- Accommodate LGBTQ+ patients according to their gender identity or gender expression in room or bed assignments, etc.
- Request and disclose a patient’s assigned at-birth sex, genital status and/or reproductive organ physiology **only** when this information is directly related to their care.
- Review/update the options offered to patients in identifying their gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation.
- Interact with all members of the [UHN community](#) in a respectful and non-discriminatory manner.
- Participate in ongoing inclusive LGBTQ+ education and training to develop competence in cultural safety and health equity.
- Collect health equity data (as required) to improve services for LGBTQ+ people.

Employees, Volunteers, Students, and Physicians

- Ensure all information regarding patients’ gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation is kept confidentially, as required by law.
- Understand and follow the procedures described in this policy.
- Participate in education, awareness and cultural competence training about appropriate interactions with members of the [LGBTQ+](#) communities.
- Treat everyone in the workplace civilly, respectfully and without discrimination, stigmatization or harassment.

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- Participate in processes to address claims of incivility, harassment or discrimination, as outlined in [Fostering Respect in the Workplace](#) policy 2.50.007.

Inclusion Diversity Equity Accessibility (IDEA)

- Support education, training, and awareness to the [UHN community](#).
- Advise and provide consultation to leaders and employees, as needed.
- Receive and address complaints in accordance with [Fostering Respect in the Workplace](#) policy 2.50.007.
- Review policies, documents including forms and recommend amendment as required.

Education & Training

UHN will provide anti-stigma and awareness education, inclusive training, and the ongoing development of initiatives to ensure that employees, interns, volunteers, students, and physicians develop skills and competencies to deliver appropriate service to all communities, including [LGBTQ+](#) communities.

Review of Policies & Procedures

IDEA will review policies and documents (including forms), and recommend amendments to existing UHN policies, where appropriate, to ensure the inclusion of the [LGBTQ+](#) people who provide or receive services at UHN.

Inclusion Protocols

All-Gender Washrooms, Change & Locker Rooms

Individuals may use the facilities of their gender identity or gender expression. Self-identity and the individual's personal safety are the only criteria to determine the facilities a person uses.

- **All-gender washrooms** provide access and privacy to any member of the [UHN community](#), regardless of their gender identity or gender expression. Any person who has a need for increased privacy will be provided access to an all-gender washroom. No person will be required to use an all-gender washroom if they do not wish to do so.

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- **Interns, employees, physicians, students, patients, visitors, and volunteers** have the right to access safe and appropriate washroom facilities that corresponds to their gender identity or gender expression, regardless of their biological sex or sex assigned at birth.
- **Inpatients** have access to washrooms in their room.
- **Outpatients** attending clinic appointments or the Emergency Department have access to the washroom corresponding to their gender identity or gender expression. Self-identity and personal safety are the only criteria to determine the use of a washroom. UHN will make available an all-gender washroom that can be used by any patient who requests increased privacy.
- **Locker/change room:** All individuals have the right to use the locker/change room that corresponds to their gender identity or gender expression, if they wish to do so. Any person who has a need for increased privacy may be provided with a reasonable alternative area to change (i.e. an all-gender locker/change room), where possible. Any alternative arrangement for a trans person will be provided in a way that allows the individual to maintain confidentiality. Use of an all-gender locker/change room should be an **option** and never imposed on a person because of their gender identity or gender expression.

Patient Intake, Interviews & Forms

During patient admission, intake or interviews, healthcare providers and any person providing a service at UHN will provide options for gender identification on forms, unless for otherwise required for medical reasons. Healthcare providers will review and update the choices offered to patients in identifying their gender identity or gender expression. Refer to [Appendix B](#) for possible gender identities and pronouns.

Patient Room Assignment

During admission, healthcare providers will accommodate trans, intersex and two-spirit, and gender non-conforming patients by assigning a room according to their gender identify and gender expression.

Bed Assignments

Patients will be provided appropriate bed accommodation options (e.g. private room or semi-private room; male or female designated room) at admission, if requested. If it is not possible to meet a request for a private room, the patient's comfort and safety will be ensured by providing individual bed assignment options. Each situation will be addressed on an individual basis.

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Hiring, Onboarding, Interviews & Forms

During the hiring, interview and onboarding process of interns, employees, physicians, researchers, students, and volunteers, UHN will provide options for gender identification. Refer to [Appendix B](#) for possible gender identities and pronouns.

Privacy

At UHN, all people providing or receiving a service have a legal and ethical right to personal privacy about their [LGBTQ+](#) status. There should be no disclosure of information related to an individual's LGBTQ+ identity, unless medically required. Such disclosure constitutes sensitive personal information under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. Refer to UHN's [Personal Information Protection](#) policy 2.10.013.

Collection of Information

Where data or information about sex/gender is not essential to a form, questionnaire or survey, any questions related to sex/gender will be removed or clearly marked as optional.

Records & Documentation

Official records will be changed to reflect the employee, intern, patient, physician, researcher, student, or volunteer's name and gender on request. Certain types of records, such as payroll or pension information, may require a legal name change before the name can be changed on official records; however, most records can be changed to reflect a new name without proof of a legal name change.

UHN will make every effort to update records, including photographs, to ensure that a transitioning individual's gender identity and gender expression are accurately represented. If a transitioning individual has questions about their records or identity documents, they should speak to their department manager.

Insurance Benefits

Where insurance benefits apply, employees seeking transition-related care must check with the provider to confirm the specifics of the coverage before, during, and after their transition.

Names/Pronouns

All individuals have the right to be addressed by their name and pronoun that aligns with their gender identity and gender expression in conversation, records, internal and external directories, email addresses, and business cards.

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Dress Codes

UHN does not have dress codes that require clothing or appearance based on gender or biological sex. Where uniforms are required, trans and gender non-conforming individuals have the right to comply with UHN's dress codes in a way that is consistent with their gender identity and gender expression.

Transitioning

UHN leadership and People & Culture will support transitioning individuals during any phase of their gender transition while employed or during the period that they provide service on behalf of UHN. The individual's department leader and People & Culture (including People Consultants, IDEA, and Health Services) will collaborate with a transitioning individual to help ensure a successful workplace transition. Refer to [Appendix C](#) for UHN's Gender Transition Plan.

Discrimination/Harassment

It is a breach of UHN's [Fostering Respect in the Workplace](#) policy 2.50.007 and the [Human Rights Code](#) to discriminate in any way (including, but not limited to, the intentional or persistent refusal to refer to the individual by their name or pronoun, failure to hire, failure to promote, refusal to accommodate or unlawful termination) because of the individual's actual or perceived LGBTQ+ identity. Any reported incident of incivility, discrimination, harassment, including those based on gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation will be addressed by providing appropriate resources, including, but not limited to, education, mediation, or investigation of the incident(s), and taking appropriate action up to and including termination.

Despite UHN's commitment to provide accommodation based on LGBTQ+ identity, an individual may feel that discrimination has occurred based on an unresolved accommodation. In these cases, UHN will take reasonable steps to address the unresolved issues raised by the affected person.

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Appendix A: Definitions

Bisexual: A person who is emotionally, physically, spiritually, and/or sexually attracted to people of more than one gender, though not necessarily at the same time.

Gay: A person whose enduring physical, romantic, spiritual, emotional, and/or sexual attractions are to people of the same gender. The word can refer to men or women, although some women prefer “lesbian.” Sometimes used as an umbrella term for the LGBTQ community.

Gender: Gender is based on the expectations and stereotypes about behaviours, actions, and roles linked to being a “man” or “woman” within a particular culture or society. The social norms related to gender can vary depending on the culture, and can change over time.

Gender expression: How a person publicly expresses or presents their gender. This can include behaviour and outward appearance, such as dress, hair, makeup, body language, and voice. A person’s chosen name and pronoun are also common ways of expressing gender. Others perceive a person’s gender through these attributes.

All people, regardless of their gender identity, have a gender expression and they may express it in any number of ways. For trans people, their chosen name, preferred pronoun and apparel are common ways they express their gender. People who are trans may also take medically supportive steps to align their body with their gender identity.

Gender identity: A person’s internal and individual experience of gender. It is a person’s sense of being a woman, a man, both, neither, or anywhere along the gender spectrum. A person’s gender identity may be the same as, or different from, their birth-assigned sex. A person’s gender identity is fundamentally different from and not related to their sexual orientation.

Intersex: A term used to describe a person born with reproductive systems, chromosomes, and/or hormones that are not easily characterized as male or female. This might include a woman with XY chromosomes or a man with ovaries instead of testes. Intersex characteristics occur in approximately one out of every 1,500 births. Typically, intersex people are assigned one sex, male or female, at birth. Some intersex people identify with their assigned sex, while others do not, and some choose to identify as intersex. Intersex people may or may not identify as trans or transgender.

Lesbian: A woman who is emotionally, physically, spiritually, and/or sexually attracted to women.

Queer: Formerly a derogatory slang term used to identify LGBT people. Some members of the LGBT community have embraced and reinvented this term as a positive and proud political identifier when speaking among and about themselves.

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Questioning: A period where a person explores their own sexual and/or gender identity, reflecting on such things as upbringing, expectations from others, and inner landscape. The person may not be certain if they are gay, lesbian, bisexual, or trans, and may be trying to figure out how to identify themselves.

Sex: The classification of people as male, female or intersex. Sex is usually assigned at birth and is based on an assessment of a person’s reproductive systems, hormones, chromosomes, and other physical characteristics.

Sexual orientation: The direction of one’s sexual interest or attraction. It is a personal characteristic that forms part of who you are. It covers the range of human sexuality from lesbian and gay, to bisexual and straight.

Trans/transgender: Umbrella terms that describe people with diverse gender identities and gender expressions that do not conform to stereotypical ideas about what it means to be a girl/woman or boy/man in society. “Trans” can mean transcending beyond, existing between, or crossing over the gender spectrum. It includes, but is not limited to, people who identify as transgender, transsexual, cross-dressers, or gender non-conforming (gender variant or gender-queer).

Two-spirit: A term used by indigenous people to describe, from a cultural perspective, people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, trans, or intersex. It is used to capture a concept that exists in many different Indigenous cultures and languages. For some, the term two-spirit describes a societal and spiritual role that certain people played within traditional societies; they were often mediators, keepers of certain ceremonies; they transcended accepted roles of men and women, and filled a role as an established middle gender.

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Appendix B: Options for Gender Identity & Pronouns

Gender Identities

- Two-spirit
- Trans
- Man
- Woman
- Agender
- Pangender
- Bigender
- Genderqueer
- Intersex
- Cisgender
- Open

Gender Pronouns

- He
- She
- They
- Ze
- Zie
- Xe
- Sie
- Hir
- Ey
- Open

Titles

- Mr.
- Mrs.
- Ms.
- Mx. (option for people who do not wish to reveal their gender)
- Open

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Appendix C: UHN Workplace Gender Transition Plan

These suggested steps are intended to support active employees and individuals (including, but not limited to: interns, fellows, physicians, researchers, volunteers, and business partners actively providing service to the UHN community) during any phase of their gender transition. This plan should be guided by the transitioning individual and may be modified as needed.

Advance Preparation

- It is recommended that the transitioning individual should speak to their immediate manager, People Consultants, and Inclusion Diversity Equity Accessibility.
- With the transitioning individual's agreement, a meeting with their immediate manager and director should be scheduled to discuss the transition plan. **Managers and directors:** The following questions may be helpful during the meeting:
 - a. What is the best way that we can support you in this process?
 - b. How and when would you like to discuss this transition with your co-workers, managers, and any others people that you work with?
 - i. Will you attend the announcement meeting?
 - ii. Do you prefer an informal discussion or a presentation with awareness?
 - c. Do you prefer to discuss your transition privately and address questions on a one-on-one basis before the official announcement?
 - d. Do you think that you will be taking a couple of days off after this information has been disclosed?
 - e. Which washroom/locker room are you most comfortable using?
 - f. How can I/we best support you in feeling comfortable using these facilities?
 - g. When and how would you like to start being addressed by your proper pronouns and name?
 - h. How you like would to be supported if/when people make a mistake and use the wrong pronoun and name?
 - i. Are you aware of the medical coverage that is offered by our insurance provider?
 - j. If you are planning any medical leave? Do you have dates or a timeline in mind?
 - k. Have we addressed the issues that feel most important to you? Help me/us understand what else needs to be put in place for you to feel supported.

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Preparing for the Transition

- Arrange to change gender markers and name changes so that badges, ID, email address, and other references to the new name are updated and effective on the day of transition.
- Explore dates for change in expression (clothes, make-up, use of facilities, e.g. washrooms/change rooms and locker rooms).

Announcing the Transition to the Work Team

- The manager should use a scheduled team meeting or call a special meeting.
 - a. In-person meeting, not by email.
 - b. Tele- or video conferencing options may be used if the department is located across sites. Alternatively, a series of meetings may be scheduled.
 - c. Include everyone in the work team.
- The leaders (i.e. director and manager) of the department/unit should announce the transition to show support for the transitioning individual. The speaking leader(s) should:
 - a. Emphasize that the transitioning individual is a valued member of the team and fully supported by the leadership.
 - b. Set the tone for expected behaviour. (Refer to UHN's [Civility & Respect @Work](#) awareness resources and [Fostering Respect in the Workplace](#) policy 2.50.007.)
 - c. Confirm the date that the transitioning individual will begin presenting themselves in accordance with their gender identity. Share the transitioning individual's new name and pronoun to be used in all official, unofficial, written, oral, formal and informal, communication.
 - d. Emphasize that the transition will not change the workplace and that everything should continue as it did previously.
 - e. Provide a Q & A period and refer unanswered questions to the workplace transition team.

First Official Day of the Individual's Gender Transition

On the first day of transition, the manager should take the same steps as they would for a new or transferred individual. Ensure that:

- The individual's ID badge (and photo, if necessary) has been changed.

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- The individual's name is updated on their nameplate/door/desk/cubicle/ workstation, assignment(s), schedules, email address, business cards, organization charts, and mailing lists.
- The manager should be on-site on the first day to provide support.

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