This section of the toolkit provides general information that case managers should know when working with trans* youth. As with all young people, the first meeting and conversation is important to engage the young person and establish a good rapport. Having the correct vocabulary and knowing how to address preferred gender pronouns and legal names will help establish a good working relationship.
1.1 IMPORTANT VOCABULARY

Knowing appropriate vocabulary can help you connect with trans* youth and help inform others you may work with about the community. Below are a few common terms and vocabulary to help you get started:

COMMON TERMS AND VOCABULARY

SEX OR BIOLOGICAL SEX: The sex assigned at birth by a doctor; based on physical anatomy and hormones. Designations include male, female or intersex. Also referred to as Assigned Sex at Birth.

INTERSEX: The abnormal condition of being intermediate between male and female hermaphroditism.

GENDER: Social and cultural expression of sex; not biological sex.

GENDER IDENTITY: A person’s internal sense of their gender. Gender identity is best understood as a spectrum, which is often fluid. Some terms that are associated with this spectrum are Male, Female, Gender Fluid, Genderqueer, Trans*, Transgender, although these are not the only terms. Some individuals may identify as male and female; or even neither male nor female.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION: A person’s sexual identity in relation to the gender to which they are attracted; the fact of being heterosexual, homosexual, or bisexual.

TRANSGENDER: An individual whose gender identity differs from their biological sex.

TRANS*: An umbrella term that refers to all non-cisgender identities within the gender identity spectrum and include transsexual identities.

CISGENDER: A description for a person whose gender identity and biological sex align. (e.g., a person identifies as a man and was assigned male at birth by a doctor).

TRANSSEXUAL: A medical term historically used to identify a person who has undergone hormone and surgical procedures to attain the physical characteristics that affirms their gender identity. Although some individuals may identify as transsexual, this term is now considered antiquated.

TRANSITION/TRANSITIONING: A term used to describe the process of moving from one sex/gender to another; sometimes this is done by hormone or surgical treatments.

QUESTIONING: Being unsure of where one’s primary attraction or gender identity lies.

MALE-TO-FEMALE (MTF): a person who transitions from male to
female; a person who was assigned male at birth but identifies and lives as a female. Additional self-identifications for this term may include: transgender woman, transgender girl, transwoman.

FEMALE-TO-MALE (FTM): a person who transitions from female to male; a person who was assigned female at birth but identifies and lives as a male. Similar self-identifications for this term may include: transgender man, transgender boy, transman.

COMING OUT: The process of acknowledging one’s sexual orientation or gender identity to oneself and/or individuals in one’s life; often incorrectly thought of to be a one-time event, this is a lifelong and sometimes daily process.

PREFERRED GENDER PRONOUNS (PGP): The pronouns in which a person states they would like to be addressed. Common gender pronouns include: She, Her, and Hers He, Him, and His They, Them, and Theirs Ze and Hir

OTHER TERMS USED DURING INTERACTIONS WITH TRANS* YOUTH

GENDER ROLE: Culturally or socially determined sets of attitudes and behaviors that are expected of an individual based on her/his assigned sex at birth or perceived sex.

GENDER CONFORMITY: Acting within socially and culturally expected gender roles.

GENDER EXPRESSION: The external display of gender through a combination of dress, demeanor, social behavior, and other factors (generally measured on a scale of masculinity and femininity).

MISGENDERING: Referring to a person with a gender pronoun, name, or form of address that they don’t identify with.

OUTING: A term used to describe when someone discloses someone’s sexual orientation, or gender identity to others.

PASSING: A commonly used term to describe when a transgender person appears as the gender they identify with. The pressure to “pass” comes from a societal belief that people must be either masculine or feminine and that they must fit into societal gender norms.

GENDER NONCONFORMITY: Expressing gender and/or having gender characteristics that do not conform to the expectations of society and culture. This is also referred to as gender variant or gender creative.

GENDER FLUID: An individual whose gender identity may continually change throughout their lifetime. These individuals may not feel confined within the socially and culturally expected gender roles and in fact may identify differently from situation to situation.

GENDER QUEER: An umbrella term some people use to describe themselves when their experience of their gender identity falls out of the binary of male or female.
1.2 USING PREFERRED GENDER PRONOUNS (PGP)

Asking and correctly using someone’s preferred gender pronouns is one of the best ways to show respect for a person’s gender identity.

**TIPS**

**HOW TO ASK FOR PREFERRED GENDER PRONOUNS (PGP)**

It is important that pronouns are never assumed. In different cases we may not be able to identify a person’s PGP by just looking at them. **When you would like to know a person’s PGP, it is appropriate to ask, “What are your preferred gender pronouns?”** Although this may feel uncomfortable for you, it will show your respect for the client and build rapport. Below are additional phrases that can be used to ask client’s preferred gender pronouns:

“What pronouns do you prefer?”
“What pronouns do you go by?”

It is also helpful for service providers to address PGP when clients are in group settings. This will allow the client to express their preferred gender pronouns with other case managers or clients in the room. The best time to address this would be during group introductions. Below is an example of a group introduction that addresses PGP:

Case Manager: “Good morning everyone, welcome to the resume workshop. To start things off, I would like you all to introduce yourself by telling me your name, PGP (preferred gender pronouns, He/Him, She/Her, They/Them or Ze/Hir) and how many jobs you have had. I’ll start, my name is Christopher, I use he/him pronouns and I have held three jobs”

**HOW TO RECOVER FROM USING THE WRONG PRONOUNS**

Mistakes will happen and the wrong pronoun may slip out now and then. Recovering from the mistake quickly is important. Respond with a “sorry” then use the correct PGP. Showing the effort to correct yourself will be greatly appreciated.

Example: “Would you grab his resume from the printer please…sorry, her resume.”
1.3 NAVIGATING PREFERRED AND LEGAL NAMES

Transgender individuals commonly choose a new name that better matches their gender identities. If they have not changed their legal names, as discussed later in 2.3, their preferred names will differ from their legal names.

When assisting clients with employment, using a legal name is often a requirement for paperwork. You must be able to ask for this information in a manner that does not cause clients to feel stress or the need to out themselves.

NAVIGATING CLIENT CONFIDENTIALITY

You should be aware of the right to confidentiality regarding a client’s transgender identity and the implications of disclosure and outing:

- A person’s transgender identity is confidential information.
- The decision to disclose being transgender is a personal choice that should only be made by the client and not assumed or asked by the case manager.
- Clients should be allowed to disclose this information when they feel comfortable to do so.
- Disclosing transgender identities to others could cause safety concerns for your client.

TIPS

ASKING A CLIENT FOR LEGAL NAME

There will be instances when you need to know your client’s legal name. As with asking clients about their PGP, using the appropriate language is important:

- Use the terms “legal name”, “previous name” or “birth name” e.g., “What is your legal name?”
- Avoid using phrases like “What is your boy name?” or “What is your real name?”

Making additions to your agency’s intake process can also help you gain this information:

- Add sections to your intake paperwork to allow clients to present their preferred names.
- Clearly label sections with “Legal Name” and “Preferred Name”.
- Include additional options to the gender section
  - Male
  - Female
  - MTF or Trans Woman
  - FTM or Trans Man
  - Other
CASE MANAGEMENT TIPS

Culturally sensitive language and actions will support a productive work environment for your clients. The following are various tips that will help you create this positive space.

**TIPS**

**TRANSITIONING IS DIFFERENT FOR EVERYONE**

- There is no one way to transition. Every transgender individual experiences a unique, personal journey.
- A transition can be facilitated by many factors including gender expression, family acceptance, medical support, and mental health support.

**KNOW YOUR LIMIT AS AN ALLY**

- Offer to help the client find appropriate resources if you are unable to help the client with a situation that is particular to transgender identity.
- Be open to admitting you do not know something or do not understand terminology.

**RESPECT THE TERMINOLOGY A TRANSGENDER PERSON USES TO DESCRIBE THEIR IDENTITY**

- Use the same terms that they use to describe themselves which may include transgender, transsexual, or genderqueer.

**AVOID UNHELPFUL COMMENTS**

- While some of the following comments may have good intentions, they can be perceived as hurtful or insulting:
  - “I would have never known you were transgender, you look so pretty.”
  - “You look just like a real woman.”
  - “You’re so brave.”
  - “You would pass so much better if you wore less make up and had a better wig.”

**AVOID ASKING PERSONAL QUESTIONS ABOUT A CLIENT’S TRANSITION**

- Use information and resources in this toolkit to educate yourself about the transitioning process. It is not the client’s responsibility to educate case managers.

**AVOID ASKING SOME OF THE FOLLOWING INTRUSIVE QUESTIONS:**

- Have you had surgery?
- What are hormones like?
- Does your family accept you?

**UNDERSTAND THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN COMING OUT AS LESBIAN, GAY, OR BISEXUAL (LGB) AND COMING OUT AS TRANSGENDER**

- Coming out as LGB involves revealing a fact about yourself to others.
- Coming out as transgender reveals a change in gender expression. This is much more visible change and is often met with greater misunderstanding.

**UNDERSTAND THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GENDER IDENTITY AND SEXUAL ORIENTATION**

- Sexual orientation and gender identity are different things.
- A person’s sexual orientation should never be assumed.
- Transgender individuals can be straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, asexual, etc.

**REMEMBER HOW IMPORTANT LANGUAGE CAN BE**

- Avoid terms such as transsexual, transvestite, transgendered (as a verb), drag queen, tranny.