This section provides information on three major aspects of a client’s transitioning process: personal presentation, hormone replacement therapy (HRT), and the legal name and gender change process.
2.1 PERSONAL PRESENTATION

Trans* youth work hard to ensure that their appearance matches their gender identities. Sometimes, however, they lack the experience, guidance, and resources needed to present themselves in a professional manner. Some may lack the understanding of what is appropriate attire. You should be aware that conversations about appearance can be sensitive.

COMMON PRESENTATION TRENDS AMONG TRANS* YOUTH

If a client exhibits a lack of professionalism when it comes to personal presentation, introduce the subject by telling the client that your intent is to ensure that they present themselves to employers in the best possible manner.

Case Managers may see some common trends in recently transitioned youth:

• Male to Female (MTF) trans* youth may exaggerate their femininity by wearing heavy make-up, revealing clothes, feminine colors and prints, and eccentric footwear.
• Female to Male (FTM) trans* youth may exaggerate clothing size to conceal signs of feminine curves.

Transgender individuals endeavor to ensure that their gender identities are clear. You should keep this in mind when making suggestions about presentation.

RESEARCHING A PROFESSIONAL LOOK

Providing clients with relatable examples of appropriate attire gives them a point of reference to work from. Youth admire celebrities and popular figures and often model their style and clothing after them. Using this connection you can help give clients professional presentation references.

• Sit with the client and distinguish how the looks vary. If the client’s idea of a professional outfit is not appropriate, explain why. Provide visual examples and coach them on what is appropriate for different occasions.
IN-STORE RESEARCH
After the client has been given reference cues for professional attire, give the client the option to practice obtaining a professional look. This can be done in various places such as an agency’s clothing closet, a thrift store, department/retail store, or other programs that offer free clothing closets. (See more resources in Section 5.2.) If you have access to funds or gift cards this would be a great opportunity to have the client purchase clothing to be used for employment search.

- Have the client look around the store and pick a professionally appropriate outfit.
- Ask the client to try on the clothes and explain the choice. If improvements are needed make suggestions and offer solutions.
- Ask questions about the client’s comfort. This will help ensure that the client feels confident in their professional attire.
- Decide on an outfit and either make the purchase or take a photo for the client to have as reference when the client is able to make a purchase.
- You can also assist clients by helping them create a portfolio of appropriate outfits for employment search and interviews.

ONLINE RESEARCH
- Ask the client to pick a celebrity that represents their style of choice.
- Instruct the client to go online and look up images of this person. Have the client search three looks suitable for three different occasions.
  » Casual or lounging
  » Interview or professional
  » Party or club

RESOURCES
ACCESS TO COMMUNITY RESOURCES
You may be limited in your ability to help clients improve their personal presentations, and furthermore, hearing advice and criticism from a case manager can sometimes be redundant to the client. However, professional stylists, hairdressers and make-up artists are often happy to volunteer their time to help clients achieve professional looks. Organizing an event or one-on-one sessions can have a significant impact on clients.

When it comes to addressing personal presentation, access to clothing, make-up, and accessories may be difficult for youth. Income levels and independence levels may vary from client to client. Below are some resources for places that offer free clothing:

- Dress for Success
dressforsuccess.org

- Los Angeles Free Clothing Closets
needhelppayingbills.com/html/los_angeles_free_clothing_clos.html

Access to undergarments that support a client’s gender identity

When working with transgender individuals, access to appropriate undergarments is an important element to the client’s visual presentation. If this is a service that your agency does not provide, consider using the resource list in Section 5.2 and refer clients to an agency that specializes in transgender employment services.
HORMONE REPLACEMENT THERAPY

Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) can be one of the many tools that transgender individuals use in their transitions. The process of HRT can have characteristics and side effects that cause additional difficulties while job searching. Service providers and employers should have an understanding of the effect the hormones have on a person’s physical and mental state.

WHAT IS HORMONE REPLACEMENT THERAPY (HRT)

Hormones can be prescribed as medication by general practitioners, endocrinologists, and gynecologists. HRT introduces hormones associated with the gender that the patient identifies with (testosterone for transgender men and estrogen for transgender women). The goal of HRT is to provide patients with a more satisfying body that is congruent with their gender identity.

HRT causes the development of secondary sex characteristics. While HRT cannot undo the effects of a patient’s first puberty, developing secondary sex characteristics associated with a different gender often allows individuals to be seen as the gender they identify with. This results in significant social and psychological changes. Introducing synthetic hormones into the body impacts it at every level and many patients report changes in energy level, mood, and appetite. Like all drugs, hormones should be taken with care as they can sometimes cause temporary and/or permanent side effects. Furthermore, HRT can cause serious liver damage if taken recklessly in conjunction with alcohol and drugs.

CHANGES CAUSED BY HRT

Many changes are caused in a person’s body and mind while undergoing HRT. These changes will vary from person to person and are best compared to a second onset of puberty. Below are some of the possible changes that may occur:

Female to Male (FTM) Psychological and Physical Effects of Testosterone Hormone Replacement:

Psychological

- Often reported that individuals are happier
- Possible mood swings
- Physical (Irreversible Changes):
  - Deepening of the voice
  - Growth of facial and body hair
  - Enlargement of the clitoris
  - Male pattern baldness

Physical (Reversible Changes)

- Muscle development
- Increased libido
- Redistribution of body fat
- Cessation of ovulation and menstruation
- Increased sweat
- Changes in body odor
- Prominence of veins
- Coarse skin
- Acne

Male to Female (MTF) Psychological and Physical Effects of Estrogen Hormone Replacement:

Psychological

- Emotionally heightened
- Irritability
- Increased sensitivity
- Physical:
  - Facial shape changes
  - Breast growth
  - Decrease in muscle strength
  - Nausea (in the event of over-dosing)

Physical

- Facial shape changes
- Breast growth
- Decrease in muscle strength
- Nausea (in the event of over-dosing
WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A CLIENT STOPS HRT

Male to Female
Some hormone changes, like breast growth, are permanent. Others, like the redistribution of fat, will revert. Going off female hormones can cause many of the symptoms that resemble menopause: hot flashes, night sweats, and irritability. If a person no longer has their testes, going off hormone therapy brings about a drop in hormone levels. This can increase one’s risk for osteoporosis and later bone fractures.

Female to Male
Testosterone’s effects are permanent (voice deepening, hair growth), however some of these effects can be reversed by surgery. If a person still has their ovaries and uterus, menstruation will resume and fat will re-distribute. Going off testosterone when a person does not have ovaries can lead to loss of bone density and increased risk of bone breakage.

HOW EMPLOYMENT IS AFFECTED BY HRT

Changes in attitudes:
As mentioned above, youth may be affected emotionally by HRT, causing them to become reactive or argumentative. These are normal symptoms during the first six months of a client’s transition.

- During this time, you should remain consistent, non-reactive, and supportive.

Sensitivity:
Emotional outbursts are not that uncommon for trans* youth undergoing hormone therapy. This should be taken into account when working with a youth who is transitioning.

- Encourage clients to be observant about what triggers these intense emotions.
- Help the client problem-solve and overcome these triggers for an employment environment.

Lack of Motivation:
Some of the physical changes and mental changes may negatively affect a youth’s willingness to take steps towards progress on any given day.

- Referrals to doctors and clinicians are the best option in this situation.

Hunger:
Symptoms of hunger can increase with the addition of estrogen and testosterone. The hunger may appear as compulsive and affect the youths’ moods, causing them to act out. They may also fatigue and become more irritable during their work or school day. This may lead to problems with work attendance.

- It can be helpful for the youth to take extra snacks to work.
- You can support youth by guiding them towards self-care and make sure their basic needs are being met.

Attendance:
Attendance is commonly a challenge for trans* youth when receiving HRT. Some youth will prioritize their doctor appointments above other commitments, such as work. A client’s physical symptoms may cause them to feel sick, resulting in calling out of work. Transgender individuals will attend various appointments throughout their transition, including:

- Therapist visits (with varying frequency, from quarterly to weekly)
- Doctor’s office visits (usually quarterly)
- Hair Removal and Skin Care (usually weekly)

- Laser hair removal treatments (usually 4 treatments, 4-12 weeks apart)
- Time off for surgery (up to 6 weeks off work.)

It is important to help your client manage their appointments in order to maintain good work attendance:

- Work with the youth and the employer, if appropriate, to provide the best possible working schedule to set the youth and the employer up for success.
- Have a conversation with the youth about communicating the times of their appointments in advance. The youth does not need to disclose why they are seeing a doctor, but as with any employee, there needs to be communication for scheduled time off with ample notice to the employer.
- Inform the youth that they should be able to offer a doctor’s note as would any employee with excused absences.
Legal name and/or gender change processes are often avenues that transgender individuals choose to pursue. Legal documentation of a trans* youth’s name and gender change during or after transition can help youth overcome barriers to finding and securing employment.

### ABOUT THE NAME AND/OR GENDER CHANGE PROCESS

This is a legal process pursued in court that enables transgender people to change their names and/or their gender statuses to better suit their gender identities. This court order allows clients to change their state IDs and social security information; and make adjustments to their birth certificates, insurance information, school records, and employment records.

### TIPS

#### WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE NAME AND/OR GENDER CHANGE PROCESS

- Transgender people can choose to complete both a name and gender change or complete just one of the two (name change only or gender-change only). Youth often complete only one process because a name or gender change may not be a priority for their transitions; they may still be questioning their transitions, have emotional connections to their legal names, or they may not feel comfortable conforming to one gender.

- Gender reassignment surgery is not required in order to complete a legal name and/or gender change, nor does an individual need to be receiving HRT.

- Similarly, a psychological evaluation is not required in order to complete the name and/or gender change process.

#### WHAT A YOUTH NEEDS TO GET THE PROCESS STARTED

Youth must ensure that they have no outstanding tickets or warrants on their legal records.

Youth seeking a gender change will need a licensed physician to complete a form that verifies they are obtaining clinically appropriate treatment for a gender change. Your client may qualify for a court fee waiver. If not, the cost will be about $435 to complete the paperwork.

### WHAT THE NAME AND/OR GENDER CHANGE PROCESS LOOK LIKE

The name and/or gender change process can take anywhere from four weeks to a full year depending on the date of the court hearing. The paperwork itself could be completed in as little as one or two meetings. Below is a list of requirements the youth will need to complete before the name and/or gender-change is finalized:

- **Youth will need to complete a paperwork packet of about 10 to 12 forms.**

- **Youth will then need to submit the paperwork to the local courthouse clerk’s office, along with payment or a fee-waiver application.**

- **The court clerk will then give the youth a court hearing date.**

- **The youth will need to meet this court date in order for the court to grant the name and/or gender change.**

- **After the changes are approved the judge will issue a court decree that will act as proof of the name and/or gender change.**

- **The youth will then be able to take the decree to the DMV and social security office to have those documents changed. In California, the DMV requires an additional letter from the client's physician.**

### RESOURCES

**RESOURCES FOR COMPLETING THE NAME AND/OR GENDER CHANGE**

See Section 5.2 for various other agencies that provide the name and/or gender change process to youth in the Los Angeles area.