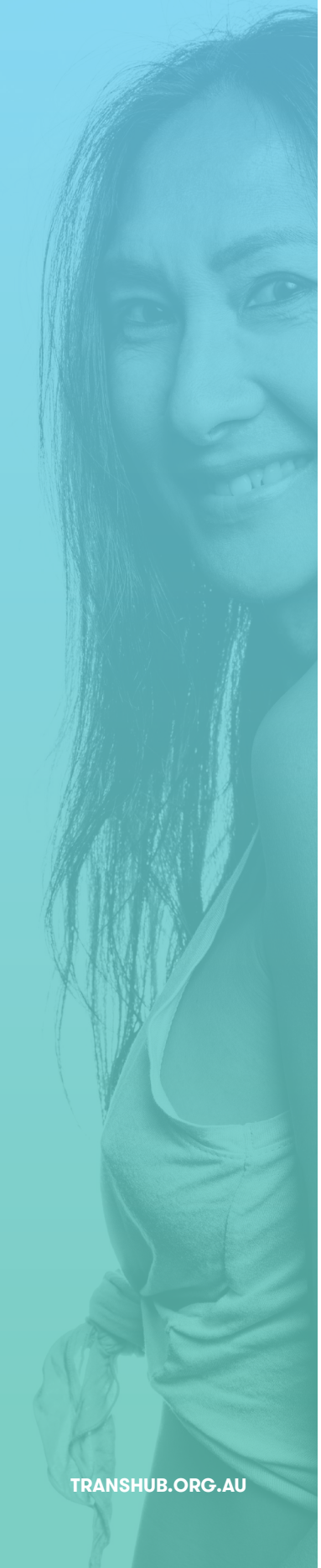
TRANS HUB

HEALTH & GENDER AFFIRMATION IN NSW



10 tips for clinicians working with trans & gender diverse people

Trans and gender diverse (TGD) people need access to the same high-quality healthcare as everyone else, even if our clinical needs may differ sometimes from those of our cisgender peers.

Though TGD people report experiencing high levels of discrimination within healthcare settings, we know that many health professionals working alongside TGD people really want to be inclusive and affirming, and so the following tips have been developed to offer guidance that will strengthen this work.

1. **Ask, don't assume**

   Just because someone 'looks like' a particular gender doesn't mean we identify that way. Ask what name and pronoun we use, note our name and pronouns on intake forms, and use it consistently.

   It's good practice to introduce yourself with your name and pronoun. It demonstrates that you're thinking and working inclusively, and you know that pronouns are universal.

2. **Often it's not even about gender**

   Asking unnecessary questions about our bodies or genitals doesn't generally support the building of strong relationships with trans people. If you are treating a sprained arm, focus on the arm. Respect the privacy of the patient, and ensure that they are treated professionally and compassionately.

3. **Being inclusive takes some unlearning**

   Describe people by features, rather than perceived gender. "The person in the blue coat" or "the patient with a red scarf" is more accurate than "that man over there".

4. **Affirming words empower people**

   Many people, including trans people, can have complicated relationships with our bodies. Asking us what terms we prefer for our body and/or body parts, and then using those terms can help us feel empowered and affirmed.

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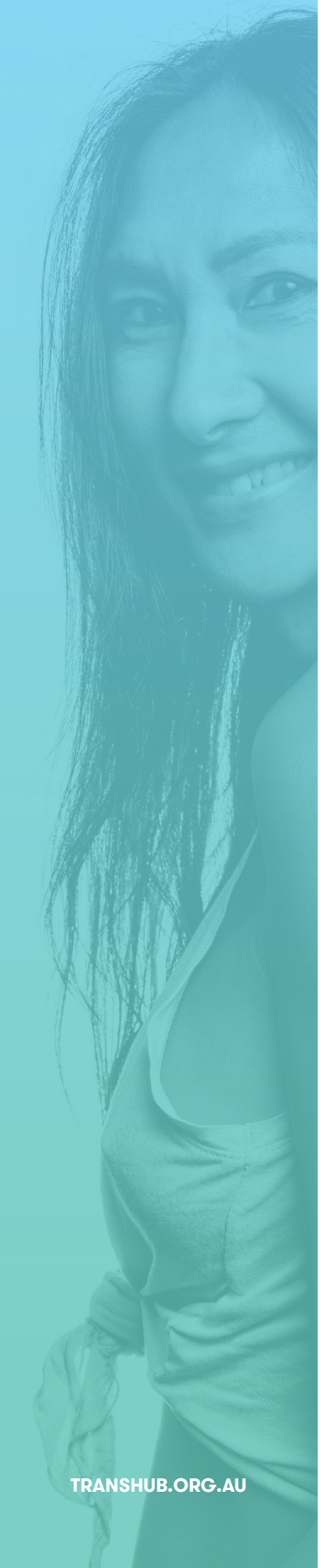

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5. Stay trauma-informed

Remember that trans people are more likely to have been harassed, shamed, and even assaulted in healthcare settings, so ask permission before touching us and give clear information about any procedures that you need to perform.

We appreciate your safe, responsive and affirming treatment.

6. Three is a crowd

Don't bring additional personnel into the room without consent (including other doctors, medical students, or nursing staff). Treating trans people like case studies can feel like you are de-personalising, shaming, or harassing us.

7. Three ain't a crowd

Respect that trans people may prefer to bring a "safe person" or patient advocate into appointments.

If you have to deliver something where another person cannot be in the room, such as a domestic violence screening, be clear about why they will need to step outside for a moment.

8. Show you care

Seeing our lives represented and affirmed goes a long way toward helping us feel comfortable and welcome. Consider visible cues such as trans-specific literature and posters in your reception and clinic rooms. Download resources at **www.transhub.org.au**

9. Treat the individual

No gender affirmation is the same – medical affirmation is deeply personal. Some trans people don't undergo any medical affirmation, and some do; and medical affirmation may or may not include surgeries.

It's important to respect that our personal needs are medically necessary and critical to our health. Ask about our needs in a supportive, solution-focused manner.

10. Remembering person-centred care

In all work with trans people, focusing on person-centred care is critical; our needs and desires should direct treatment goals and methods.

Coordinating medical care with various specialties (such as endocrinologists and peer support) should be a priority, in order to effectively treat the whole person in an affirming, empowering manner.

For more information and resources, visit **www.transhub.org.au/clinicians**

Adapted with permission from Rad Remedy **www.radremedy.org**

TransHub is a digital platform for trans and gender diverse people in NSW, their loved ones, allies and health providers.

It is an initiative of ACON, NSW's leading health organisation specialising in community health, inclusion and HIV responses for people of diverse sexualities and genders.

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