



Best Practices When Delivering Legal Navigation Support to Clients Who Identify as LGBT+

1	<p>Resources and referrals - When delivering legal navigation support, be aware that there may be legal organizations that specialize in serving the LGBT+ community (for example, the National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR) and Oasis Legal Services). If your client is experiencing intimate partner violence, remember both the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and CA law protects people of all genders including LGBT+ people. It is also helpful to become familiar with LGBT+ community based organizations and centers in your county (therapeutic, mental and physical health, employment/job placement services).</p>
2	<p>Intake forms - When completing intake forms with your client, be aware of inclusivity around gender identity, sexual orientation, and relationship status. Reassure clients that their information will be kept confidential. Provide the option for clients to “choose not to disclose” for all questions, when possible. Share why you collect the data (examples: “to be able to continue to offer free services,” “to make sure we are reaching all members of the community”) and that you ask all clients the same questions. Do not skip questions based on assumptions about the client’s gender or sexual orientation.</p> <p>Substitute the terms spouse/partner for husband/wife and parent(s)/guardian(s) for father/mother. Relationship status options: single, married, domestic partnered, romantic partner(s), separated, divorced, and widowed. If asking about gender identity, when possible include non-binary as an option in addition to man and woman and provide a write-your-own term option. The only time it is appropriate to ask about someone’s physical anatomy or sexual behavior is when it is medically relevant in a healthcare provider setting.</p>
3	<p>Names and pronouns - Best practice is to use the terms “name” and “pronouns” rather than “preferred pronouns.” Be careful to not make assumptions about anyone’s sexual orientation or gender identity. Use gender inclusive language - for example, they/them/theirs when you have not learned someone’s pronoun, and say “hello everybody” instead of “hello ladies,” or “hey guys.” Include pronouns on name badges, at work stations, and on Zoom. Introduce yourself with your name and pronoun verbally and ask clients if they would also like to share their pronoun (keep this optional). Don’t assume the gender or sexual orientation of a client’s partner(s). If you make a mistake with pronouns, correct yourself as quickly as possible and use the correct pronouns moving forward. Notice if someone is correcting the pronoun you are using for someone else, and confirm the person’s pronoun.</p>
4	<p>Bathrooms - If there are bathroom passcodes make all codes available without presuming the person’s gender identity. Use “sanitary products, tampons, pads” on waste bins instead of “feminine products.” If you provide free sanitary products make them available in all bathrooms. If there is a sanitary product machine in the “women’s restroom,” but not in the “men’s restroom” or “gender neutral” bathroom, provide products in those bathrooms. Make it easy to find “gender neutral” bathrooms.</p>
5	<p>Pregnancy + breastfeeding - Cisgender women, transgender men, and nonbinary people with uteruses are capable of pregnancy and breastfeeding. Best practices - rather than, or in addition to, “breastfeeding,” use the terms “lactating” or “currently nursing.” This wording is inclusive of those who do not identify as a woman or mother. Provide privacy rooms regardless of gender and include baby diaper changing stations in places other than a “women’s restroom.”</p>

6	<p>Inclusive organization cues - Place LGBT+ affirming art, LGBT+ flags, and other visual inclusivity cues in your office (such as: art; posters; stickers; buttons; name plates that include staff pronouns; and rainbow, transgender, and non-binary, etc. flag name badge lanyards for LGBT+ staff interested in wearing them. Make sure depictions of LGBT+ people on art and signage are also intersectional and multicultural (examples: gender, race, (dis)ability). Represent multiple forms of "family" (examples: solo parents, more than two parents, seniors/elders, multiple romantic relationship structures, people with one partner, and those with more than one romantic partner).</p>
7	<p>Self awareness and education - Create a safer space for clients to talk about their LGBT+ identity. Be aware of your verbal and nonverbal cues when clients share about their identity and lived experiences, including any hopes and fears they may have. Familiarize yourself with LGBT+ affirming terms and do not use outdated or derogatory terms. If someone shares that a term that you used is offensive, be willing to use suggested alternative terms. Engage in self-education including professional development opportunities around implicit bias, diversity, equity and inclusion, and supporting clients impacted by historical marginalization.</p>
8	<p>Last but not least, learn the letters of the rainbow LGBT+ alphabet. The list below is not an exhaustive list of terms, but includes definitions most commonly referenced by the term LGBT+:</p> <p>Lesbian - a woman whose physical, romantic, and/or emotional attraction is to other women Gay - people with physical, romantic, and/or emotional attraction to people of the same gender Bisexual - a person who has the capacity to form physical, romantic, and/or emotional attraction to those of the same gender as themselves, or a different gender from themselves Transgender or trans - includes a wide variety of identities, is an umbrella term that includes those whose gender identity is different from their sex assigned at birth Queer - describes people whose sexual orientation is not exclusively heterosexual, is an umbrella term; may be considered a pejorative term by Generation X, Boomer Generation, and the Traditionalist Generation; is commonly used by Millennials and Generation Z Questioning - a person who is questioning their current gender identity, and/or sexual orientation Intersex - an umbrella term describing people born with reproductive, or sexual anatomy and/or a chromosome pattern that can't be classified as typically male or female Agender - a person who does not identify with any gender, or intentionally doesn't follow expectations of gender); different from Androgynous - a person who identifies with more than one gender with both masculine and feminine qualities Ally - people who support the LGBT+ community as an ethical stance Accomplice - people committed to supporting the LGBT+ community and are willing to serve as upstanders to disrupt bias, discrimination, targeting and harassment in real time interpersonal interactions and who actively participate in efforts to change laws and policies that discriminate Asexual - people who do not experience sexual attraction, but may experience romantic attraction Pansexual - a person who has the capacity to form physical, romantic, and/or emotional attractions to any person, regardless of gender identity Polyamorous- describes people who have consensual romantic and/or sexual relationships with more than one adult person; polyamorous identified people can be in monogamous relationship structures; may describe a "made family" unit (pod, polycule) where not all people are sexual, or romantic with one another Two (2)-Spirit - an umbrella term for intersex and transgender people used specifically by North American Indian Indigenous community</p>