Dear Faculty Member:

No matter who is on your team, always assume you are in the presence of a transgender or non-binary (TGNB) person. If you are aware of a student who identifies as trans or non-binary:

- **Introduce yourself!** Let them know you'd like to be an ally and want to make yourself available as a resource if anything comes up for them during the rotation.
- Ask what pronouns the student uses professionally (this may change in different situations, particularly for letters and evaluations that may be seen by future programs). Then use them!
- Ensure that the student feels safe and knows who to reach out to if challenging situations arise.
- Ask if the student wishes to discuss their gender openly with their team members, and if they would like support in disclosing information about their gender to others (for example, letting a team attending or resident know in advance). In some situations, the student may feel relieved of the burden of having this conversation themselves for each new rotation or with each new team.
- Consider asking them how they would like you to handle difficult interactions should they arise.
- Many students will not want to discuss their gender in a professional context. This is their right, and we should be careful to respect that in the best ways possible. If questions come up, remember to be respectful and explain why the questions are being asked.
- How you and your care team treat and discuss transgender and gender non-binary patients matters and affects TGNB students, staff, and physicians.

**If questions arise from the team concerning a student’s gender expression being different than what the team expects/is accustomed to:**

- Discuss with faculty or team members that the student should be evaluated as any other student would be, on their clinical performance. The student’s gender identity and expression should not play a role in their evaluation.
- Be aware that it is illegal in New York State to force students to gender the way they dress.

**If situations arise where there is conflict regarding a student’s gender:**

- Ask how they want to handle questions about their gender.
- If the conflict comes from the patient or a patient’s family: options might include having an attending discuss gender with the patient in the abstract or asking the patient to clarify their concerns. Reinforce that the student is part of the team and will participate in the patient’s care as any other member of the team would.
  a. If patients or family members have questions or concerns about the student, it may be helpful to think of how you would handle a similar situation if the student was of a different race or religion than the patient.
- If there are problems on the team, discuss the case with the student, privately, if possible, and decide together how to proceed.
- If there are problems with staff, for example inappropriate comments or judgmental attitudes, do your best to address these directly in the moment. If this is not possible, check in with the student after and validate their concerns. Consider speaking with the staff member later about where assumptions or miscommunications can be harmful to the care team, or, if not effective, speaking with the staff member’s supervisor or submitting a Patient Safety Incident so that the hospital may track incidences of misconduct.
- Remember that persistent and intentional misgendering of employees is illegal in New York and are not behaviors in line with NYU SOM values.

As always, feel free to reach out to members of the NYU Office of Diversity Affairs for help and support. If training is needed, resources may be available. As always, identifying yourself as an ally with rainbow pins or stickers can indicate to others that you are affirming and supportive.  

-Office of Diversity Affairs
LGBTQ Terminology

Key Terms

- **LGBTQ**: an acronym used to refer to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, & questioning individuals
- **Lesbian**: a term for women who are sexually and affectionately attracted to other women; some women prefer to be called “gay” rather than “lesbian”
- **Gay**: a term for men who are sexually and affectionately attracted to other men; has largely replaced “homosexual”
- **Bisexual**: a term for an individual sexually and affectionately attracted to the same and other genders, though not necessarily to the same degree
- **Transgender**: an umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or expression does not align with societal expectations based on the biological sex they were assigned at birth
  - **Note**: Transgender is an *adjective*, as in “She is a transgender woman”. It is *not* a *noun* to be pluralized, as in referring to a group of people as “transgenders”, *nor* a verb to be used in the past, as in “transgendered” suggesting an event that occurred in the past and has now concluded.
- **Non-binary**: a term for people whose gender identity does not fit into traditionally binary expectations of feminine and/or masculine
- **Queer**: originally a pejorative term referring to LGBTQIA people; now being reclaimed by some as a self-affirming umbrella term for the LGBTQIA community or a term used to describe anyone who does not fit into societal norms of gender and sexuality
- **Questioning**: a term for a person who is unsure of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity

Key Concepts

- **Sex assigned at birth**: the designation of an infants’ sex at birth using genitalia, organs or chromosomes
- **Gender expression**: the way in which one presents their gender, or in which that gender is perceived by society; is not always representative of a person’s gender identity or biological sex assigned at birth
- **Gender identity**: an individual’s emotional and psychological sense of gender; not necessarily the same as their sex assigned at birth or a person’s gender expression
- **Gender pronouns**: words used in place of proper nouns, including she/her/hers and he/him/his; some individuals use gender-neutral pronouns such as the singular they/them/their or zie/hir, while some do not use pronouns at all

Other Notable Terms

- **Cisgender**: a term for someone who identifies with and expresses their gender in ways that align with societal expectations based on their sex assigned at birth
- **Same gender loving**: a term sometimes used by members of the African-American/Black community to express an alternative sexual orientation without relying on terms and symbols of European descent; sometimes abbreviated as “SGL”
- **Sexual and Gender Minority**: a term sometimes used to refer to the LGBTQ population, sometimes abbreviated as “SGM”
- **Two-spirit**: a term used by some Native or First Nations individuals who have attributes of more than one gender; these individuals have distinct social roles in their tribes and are often involved with mystical rituals
- **Gender affirmation surgeries**: surgical procedures used by some to align their internal or external sex organs with their internal gender identity; may involve a vaginoplasty/phalloplasty (“bottom surgery”), mastectomy/chest reconstruction/breast implants (“top surgery”), hysterectomy, and/or other procedures such as facial feminization, etc.
Introduction to Sex and Gender

Often used synonymously, sex and gender are distinctly different concepts. Sex, assigned at birth, refers to genitalia, chromosomes, and/or biology, and is often classified as male, female, or intersex. Gender, on the other hand, is much more difficult to pinpoint, as gender can be defined by social, psychological and emotional traits, often influenced by societal expectations that classify an individual as feminine, masculine, androgynous or something else. Gender characteristics can change over time and vary across different cultural contexts.

Transgender, or trans, is a broad umbrella term that can be used to describe people whose gender expression and/or gender identity does not align with societal expectations based on their sex assigned at birth. Transgender individuals do not have to experience distress around their gender, gender dysphoria, to be transgender, and therefore, transgender people may or may not choose to use hormonal and/or surgical intervention. People must self-identify as transgender for the term to be appropriately used to describe them.

Gender non-conforming is a broader umbrella term than transgender, that describes people whose gender characteristics and/or behaviors fall outside, or in between, traditionally masculine or feminine binaries. Non-binary individuals and gender diverse children, who may or may not also identify as transgender, fall into this category.

Supporting Transgender and Non-Binary (TGNB) Medical Students and Physicians

The AAMC began asking medical students about their gender identities in 2014 and most recently, in 2017, found that 0.6% of matriculating medical students are transgender and non-binary (TGNB); likewise, the Williams Institute found that 0.6% of the general US population self-identifies as transgender (“Matriculating Student Questionnaire; 2017 All Schools Summary Report” 2017; Flores et al. 2016).

We have little to no data on the numbers of TGNB physicians currently in the workforce and there has only been one study about the experiences of TGNB medical students. Despite the dearth of TGNB-specific student and physician research, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) physicians report hearing derogatory comments about LGBT people, witnessing discriminatory care, being harassed by colleagues, and being socially ostracized (Eliason et al., 2011). 36% of LGBT medical students, residents, and physicians don’t disclose their sexual orientation or gender identity for fear of discrimination (Chester et al., 2014). LGB DO students report higher rates of depression than their peers, which is inversely linked to perceived levels of support (Lapinski et al., 2014). Out of 35 TGNB students, 60% report they do not disclose their identities at school due to a variety of reasons including fear of discrimination, feeling a lack of support, and concerns about future career options (Mansh et al., 2015). As TGNB people are marginalized in unique ways compared to their LGB peers, the Office of Diversity Affairs at NYU School of Medicine is currently supporting a study (PI: Asa Radix) designed to explore and understand the experiences of TGNB medical students and physicians. The preliminary results highlight a need to shift the culture of academic medicine and medicine at large, to create supportive educational and work environments in which TGNB people feel safe and can choose to be “out” without risk to their student and/or employment status.

Transgender and Non-Binary Medical Student and Physician Rights

As outlined in the New York University Medical Student Mistreatment and Duty Hour Violation Policy, “The NYU School of Medicine is committed to ensuring a safe, respectful and supportive learning environment. This environment will be free of belittlement, humiliation or hostility and will reflect the School’s values of professionalism, respect for individual rights, appreciation of diversity and differences, altruism, compassion and integrity. Mistreatment of medical students is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Teachers and learners are expected to maintain a positive learning environment”.
Policies and Laws Affirming Transgender and Non-Binary Medical Student and Physician Rights

NYU Langone Health and NYU School of Medicine Anti-Discrimination Policy
https://nyulangone.org/policies-disclaimers/nondiscrimination-policy - Supports the rights of all students, staff, faculty, and housestaff related to sex, gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation.

NYU Langone Health and NYU School of Medicine Dress Code Policy
https://ihub.nyumc.org/psc/paprod/view/oAjcf45G744UdgV8uipNPPWDhJsKiwzpFq77KgDY51W12xbv.B0X0y8N.AMmKoVgmflxHHjmTCBmYjQJRLoLSsc7SzKljvnJxQnGrbFni3v6i00U.g--/NYU_4.8_Dress_Code-Revised_8-2017.pdf - Supports the rights of all students, staff, faculty, and housestaff to wear any clothing deemed professional within the dress code policy. This policy does not gender dress options, which is in line with NYC law.

NYU Langone Health and NYU School of Medicine Medical Student Mistreatment and Duty Hour Violation Policy
https://med.nyu.edu/school/sites/default/files/school2/NYU_Medical_Student_Mistreatment%20_and_Duty_Hour_Violation_Policy_Approved_by_Curriculum_Committee_02.05.2015_l.pdf

New York City Human Rights Law
The NYCHRL prohibits unlawful discrimination in public accommodations, housing and employment on the basis of gender. Gender is defined as one’s “actual or perceived sex and shall also include a person’s gender identity, self-image, appearance, behavior or expression, whether or not that gender identity, self-image, appearance, behavior or expression is different from that traditionally associated with the legal sex assigned to that person at birth.” The Commission can impose civil penalties up to $125,000 for violations, and up to $250,000 for violations that are the result of willful, wanton, or malicious conduct.

Gender Identity/Gender Expression: Legal Enforcement Guidance

It is illegal to:

- refuse to use the name, pronouns, or title a person utilizes
- refuse access to single-sex facilities, such as bathrooms, based on one’s perceived gender identity
- require gender expression conformity, for example you cannot impose restrictions on men/masculine-presenting individuals wearing jewelry or makeup
- impose different uniforms or grooming standards based on sex or gender
- consider gender when evaluating requests for accommodations, for example granting leave for surgery to a cisgender individual but not a transgender/non-binary individual
  
  **note: this also includes parental leave related to pregnancy**

Title IX
Title IX is a federal law banning sex discrimination in schools. Various court decisions have indicated that this includes discrimination against someone because they are transgender and/or gender non-conforming. Title IX applies to all schools that receive federal money, including NYU School of Medicine.