

SOAR Dialogue Call

June 2024



NC COALITION to end
HOMELESSNESS

Reminders

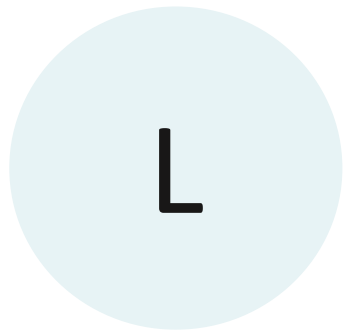
- Annual meeting date set
 - Friday, September 27 from 10 A.M. – 3:30 P.M.
 - Either in Asheboro or Winston-Salem
 - Registration will open in August
- New DDS examiner list: <https://www.ncceh.org/nc-soar/>
- Fiscal year ends 6/30 – submit your outcomes!



Providing LGBTQ+ Competent SOAR Services



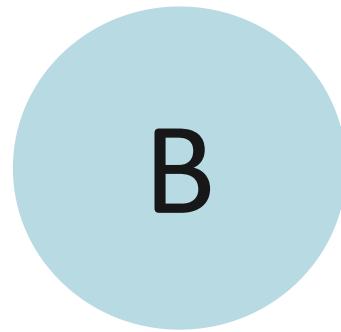
Terminology



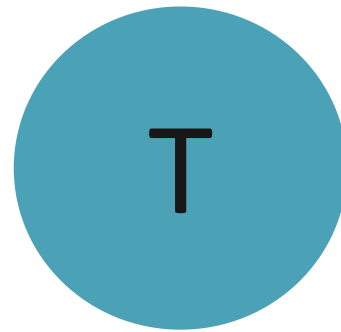
Lesbian



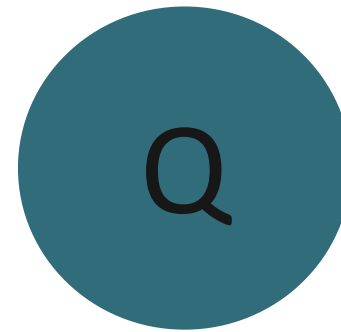
Gay



Bisexual



Transgender



Queer



And many
more!

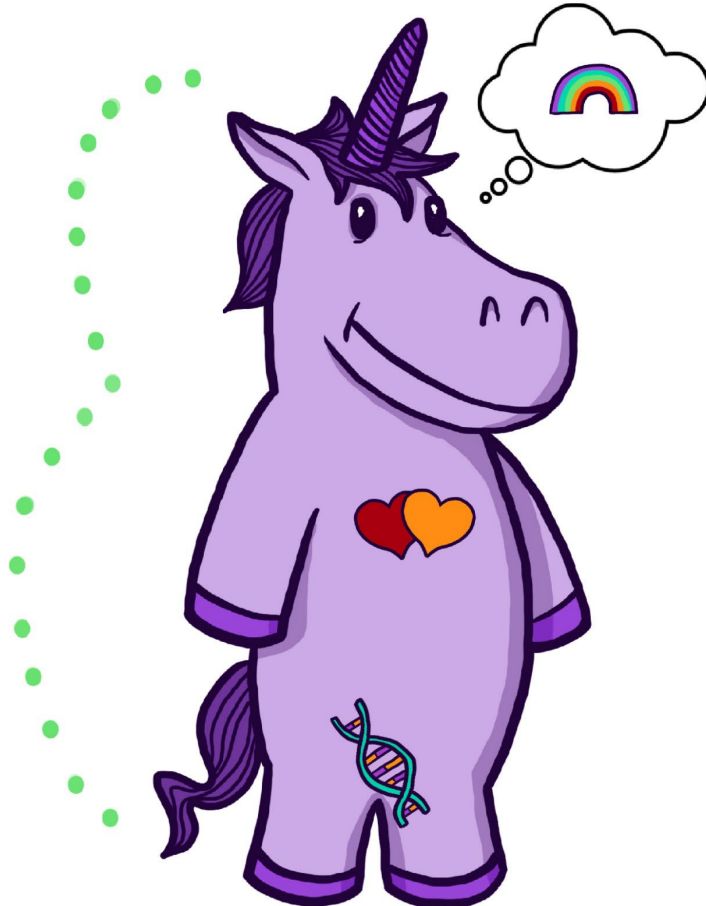
Learn more: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-CrjaFBF5dY>






NCCEH

The Gender Unicorn

Graphic by:
TSER
Trans Student Educational Resources



Gender Identity

-  Female/Woman/Girl
-  Male/Man/Boy
-  Other Gender(s)

Gender Expression

-  Feminine
-  Masculine
-  Other

Sex Assigned at Birth

-  Female
-  Male
-  Other/Intersex

Physically Attracted to

-  Women
-  Men
-  Other Gender(s)

Emotionally Attracted to

-  Women
-  Men
-  Other Gender(s)

To learn more, go to:
www.transstudent.org/gender

Design by Landyn Pan and Anna Moore

A Brief History

1950 ' s

- **1950** - 500 “homosexuals and other sex perverts” fired from federal jobs and 438 discharged from military in “Lavender Scare.”
- **1952** - American Psychiatric Association lists homosexuality as a personality disturbance.
- **1953** - Eisenhower signs executive order banning homosexuals from working in government.

1960 ' s

- **1961** - Illinois is the first state to decriminalize homosexuality.
- **1969** - Stonewall riots occur at the Stonewall Inn in New York City, beginning the modern LGBTQ civil rights movement in America.

1970 ' s

- **1970** - First pride parade held on Stonewall anniversary.
- **1973** - Maryland bans same-sex marriage, while the APA removes homosexuality from its list of mental disorders.
- **1978** - Harvey Milk is elected to public office in January and murdered in November. The first rainbow flag is designed by Gilbert Baker inspired by Milk.

A Brief History

1980 ' s

- **1981** - The CDC publishes the first official report of AIDS.
- **1987** - Reagan publicly recognizes the AIDS crisis for the first time.

1990 ' s

- **1990** - H.W. Bush signs the Ryan White CARE Act, the first federal program to help fund people with AIDS.
- **1993** - Clinton signs "Don't Ask, Don't Tell."
- **1996** - Clinton signs Defense of Marriage Act, defining marriage as a "legal union between one man and one woman."

2000 ' s

- **2000** - Vermont becomes the first state to legalize civil unions between same sex couples.
- **2003** - Supreme Court strikes down "homosexual conduct" law in Texas, decriminalizing same-sex sexual conduct.

A Brief History

2010 's

- **2011** - "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" is repealed.
- **2013** - Supreme Court strikes down Defense of Marriage Act, ruling that legally married same sex couples are entitled to federal benefits.
- **2015** - Supreme Court strikes down all state bans on same-sex marriage, making it legal in all fifty states.
- **2016** - Secretary of Defense announces Pentagon will lift ban on transgender people serving openly in the military.
- **2017** - Trump announces his ban on transgender individuals serving in any capacity in the military.
- **2019** - Supreme Court allows Trump's transgender military ban to go into effect.

2020 's

- **2020:** US Supreme Court ruled that the 1964 Civil Rights Act protects gay, lesbian, and transgender employees from discrimination based on sex.
- **2023:** More than 600 anti-LGBTQ bills were brought forth in state and local legislatures, signifying how much work is left to be done.
- **2023:** President Biden proclaimed June 2023 "Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Intersex Pride Month,"

Heterosexual Privilege

- Heterosexual privilege is living without ever having to think twice, face, confront, engage, or cope with anything on this list. Marriage, which is a right for heterosexual people and a privilege afforded to only select LGBTQI people, includes the following privileges:
 - Family
 - Family-of-origin support for a life partner/lover/companion.
 - Adopting children and foster-parenting children.
 - Immediate access to your loved ones in cases of accident or emergency
 - Employment
 - Working without always being identified by your sexuality/culture
 - Being employed as a teacher in pre-school through high school without fear of being fired any day because you are assumed to corrupt or “convert” your students.
 - Benefits
 - Paid leave from employment and condolences when grieving the death of your partner/lover (i.e. legal members defined by marriage and descendants from marriages).
 - Inheriting from your partner/lover/companion automatically under probate laws.
 - Sharing health, auto, and homeowners’ insurance policies at reduced rates.
 - Public Recognition
 - Public recognition and support for an intimate relationship.
 - Receiving validation from your religious community.
 - Not having to hide and lie about same-sex social events.



LGBTQ+ Health Disparities

- Health disparities are preventable differences in the burden of disease, injury, violence, or in opportunities to achieve optimal health.
- Experienced by socially disadvantaged racial, ethnic, and other population groups and communities
- The LGBTQ community experiences many health disparities.



LGBTQ+ Health Disparities: Causes

- Minority stress
 - Prejudice and discrimination experienced by LGBTQ individuals contribute to chronically stressful events that may lead to negative health outcomes.
- Social determinants of health
 - LGBTQ individuals face discrimination when seeking employment and safe housing, especially LGBTQ people of color and transgender individuals.
- Lack of physician competency and training
 - A 2011 study found that medical students receive a median of only five hours of training on LGBTQ health
 - A 2018 survey of 658 New England medical students found that 80% of students felt they were “not competent” or “somewhat not competent” with medical treatment of gender and sexual minorities.

Substance Abuse, Depression, and Anxiety

- LGBTQ individuals face stressors and risks for substance abuse including:
 - Homophobia, Biphobia, Heterosexism, or Transphobia
 - Social/structural violence and discrimination
- Influencing factors of depression and anxiety in LGBTQ patients:
 - Continual concealment of identity
 - Victimization or fear of verbal or physical attack
 - Issues relating to self-acceptance
 - Social isolation and lack of social supports
 - Isolation from the LGBTQ community (in the case of transgender and bisexual individuals)

Suicide

- LGBTQ individuals are at a higher risk for suicide than non-LGBTQ individuals.
 - LGBT youth are four times more likely to attempt suicide.
- Between 38% and 65% of transgender individuals experience suicidal ideation.
- An individual with a nonaccepting family is eight times more likely to have attempted suicide than an individual with an accepting family.



Lower Rates of Healthcare Utilization

- High rates of healthcare discrimination may influence LGBTQ individuals to underutilize healthcare services for fear of being mistreated.
- A 2017 survey by the College of American Pathologists stated that of LGBTQ individuals surveyed:
 - 8% said a doctor or healthcare provider had turned them away due to sexual orientation.
 - 9% said a doctor or healthcare provider had used harsh/abusive language when treating them.
 - 7% said they had experienced unwanted physical contact from a doctor or other healthcare provider.



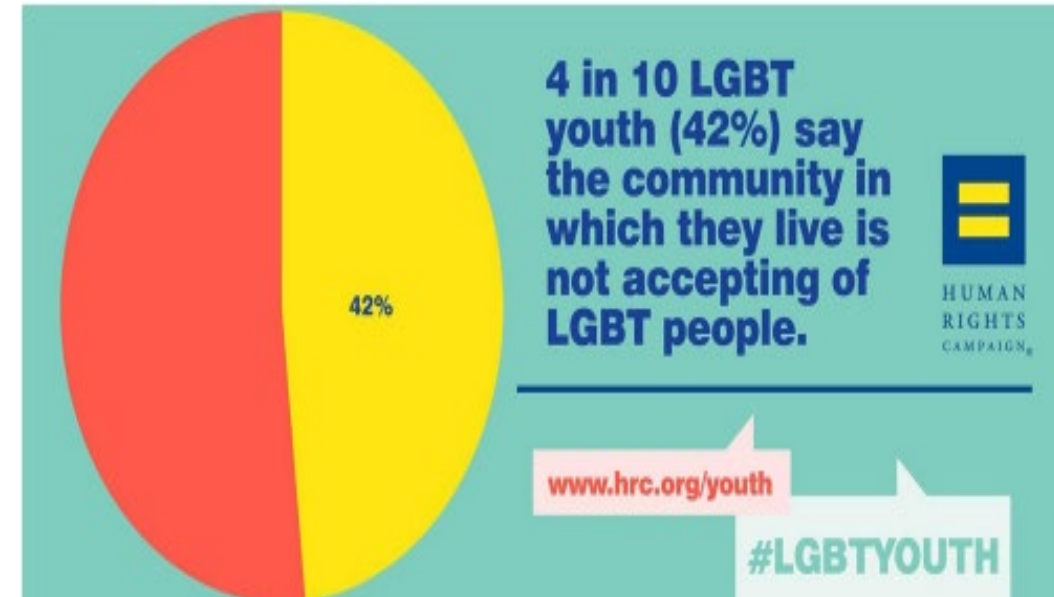
Lower Rates of Healthcare Utilization

- The **same study** reported that of transgender individuals surveyed:
 - 29% said a doctor or healthcare provider turned them away due to gender identity.
 - 23% said a doctor or healthcare provider intentionally misgendered them or used the wrong name.
 - 21% said a doctor or healthcare provider used harsh/abusive language when treating them.
 - 29% said that they experienced unwanted physical contact from a doctor or other healthcare provider.



Concerns for Youth

- LGBTQ teens may experience:
 - Bullying and harassment
 - Bathroom bills affecting transgender students
 - Anti-bullying laws excluding bullying based on sexual orientation
 - Struggle with identity throughout puberty
 - Difficulty accessing help resources due to banned books or blocked websites
 - Laws preventing educators from talking about LGBTQ issues



Transgender-Specific Issues

- Transition services and care can be difficult to access due to:
 - Stigma
 - Discrimination
 - Legal and socioeconomic barriers
 - Lack of physician competency
 - Insurance company policies
- Trans women of color experience a higher degree of violence than the rest of the LGBTQ population, often resulting in fatalities.
- In 2018, 29 trans people died because of fatal violence. The majority were trans women of color.



Assisting LGBTQ+ SSI/SSDI Applicants: Language & Engagement

What are pronouns and why are they important?

- Pronouns are parts of speech that we use to refer to individuals when we are talking about them in the third person. An example of this is the word “she” in the sentence, “she bought me lunch today.” People often make assumptions about what pronouns to use for someone based on their name or their appearance. When someone identifies as non-binary or a gender that does not match the stereotypical appearance of their gender, these assumptions and the misgendering that results from using the wrong pronouns can be harmful. [Pronouns.org](https://www.pronouns.org) has helpful information about personal pronouns and why knowing and using someone’s accurate pronouns is important.

What do I do if I don’t know someone’s pronouns?

- Ask! It may be helpful to include your pronouns as general practice when introducing yourself, as this allows others the space to share their pronouns. For example, “My name is Mike and I use he and him pronouns. I see the paperwork here says your name is Sarah. Is that how I should refer to you?”



Assisting LGBTQ+ SSI/SSDI Applicants: Language & Engagement

What happens if I misgender someone? How can I make amends?

- Recognize, apologize, correct, and move forward. Do not go on about how hard it is; those are our own anxious feelings. It takes practice! The more that we use the correct pronouns with someone and when referring to someone, the easier it will get. We can make it more fluid for ourselves by bringing awareness to our language and practicing!

What is a deadname?

- A deadname is a name that a person no longer uses. Many transgender or non-binary people change their name from their given or birth name to feel more affirmed in their true gender. It is important to use a person's correct name and pronouns when communicating with or about them. **There may be situations in the Social Security disability application process where you need to reference the person's deadname to explain why there are discrepancies in medical records prior to their name change.** You can address this difference in the remarks section on SSA forms, and in the introduction to your Medical Summary Report.



Assisting LGBTQ+ SSI/SSDI Applicants: Social Security Administration (SSA) Forms

What gender do I put on the SSA forms when someone is transgender or non-binary?

- You should use the gender that the individual requests. In the Remarks section, you can explain that the person is transgender and when they changed their name or gender markers, and if applicable, with their correct name. If they have a deadname (described above), you can explain that some older records may reference that name. If you have date ranges for which the prior gender and name were used and discontinued, include this information in the remarks section as well.

Can individuals change their gender (sex) in their records with Social Security?

- Yes! As of October 19, 2022, individuals can self-select their sex on their Social Security number (SSN) record. To make an update, they will need to apply for a replacement SSN card. They will still need to show a current document to prove their identity, but they will not need to provide medical or legal documentation of their sex designation. Additionally, documentation that reflects an “X” gender marker is acceptable identifying documentation. If a person changes their name, it is also important to report the name change to SSA as soon as possible, so their earnings get recorded properly in their SSA record. This will ensure that the person receives all the benefits they are due if they become disabled and unable to work.



Assisting LGBTQ+ SSI/SSDI Applicants: Social Security Administration (SSA) Forms

I am working with an applicant who is transgender and currently in the process of changing their name. What do we do if their name change is finalized during the application process?

- SSA recommends that the applicant ask their SSA field office to make a special note of this for the Disability Determination Services (DDS) and, once the application has gone to DDS, to touch base with the disability examiner to remind them. As the SOAR case worker, you can indicate that a name change is in process in the Remarks Section of all SSA forms, as well as in the Medical Summary Report. You could also include the name change document with the completed SOAR application. By keeping up good communication with DDS, the examiner will know that the applicant's name and gender may not match all medical documentation. SSA also suggested informing the applicant's medical sources to ensure they are aware for medical records purposes.

Are same-gender partners or spouses eligible for benefits based on their partner or spouse's record?

- Yes! Same-gender couples and their families may be eligible for SSA benefits based on their marital status, including non-marital legal relationships like civil unions and domestic partnerships. These benefits may include retirement, survivors, Medicare, and disability benefits. SSA has [helpful information about eligibility](#).

Assisting LGBTQ+ SSI/SSDI Applicants: Medical Records & Treatment

How might medical records differ for someone who identifies as transgender or nonbinary?

- Many people who identify outside of the gender binary experience discrimination and delayed healthcare when interacting with medical providers. Nearly half of transgender adults report negative or discriminatory experiences with a healthcare provider. This can look like higher institutionalization rates, misdiagnoses, and/or refusal to provide treatment for the individual's stated symptoms.
- Additionally, you may find diagnoses related to a person's gender identity that they may or may not agree with or feel comfortable about receiving. For example, "Gender Dysphoria" is a current DSM-5 diagnosis used among physicians. This has evolved over time, and previous diagnoses may reflect the out-of-date language, such as "gender identity disorder" and/or "transsexualism." Due to the history of discrimination, any of these diagnoses could be a source of discomfort for individuals.



Assisting LGBTQ+ SSI/SSDI Applicants: Medical Records & Treatment

- You may find that individuals who have experienced discrimination or fear discrimination from medical providers based on their gender identity or sexual orientation do not have thorough medical documentation of their disabling condition(s). This is where it helps to get creative about collecting medical evidence: [Creative Strategies for Tracking Down Medical Evidence: SOAR Team Tips](#).
- Don't forget to rely on community partners! Many communities have LGBTQ+ Community Centers which frequently include small clinics or medical staff. While these typically aren't full-service medical facilities, they can be excellent resources for updated records and co-signatures while ensuring culturally competent care for the individual.
- Additionally, when faced with this challenge, remember that the Medical Summary Report, especially when co-signed by an acceptable medical source, is a valuable tool for demonstrating functional impairments.

How to be a Personal Ally

An Ally is an advocate for LGBTQ+ folks

- Listen
- Be open-minded
- Be willing to talk
- Be inclusive and inviting to your LGBTQ friends
- Don't assume that all your friends, clients, and coworkers are straight or cisgender
- Speak up when you hear others making anti-LGBTQ jokes or comments
- Confront your own internal prejudices and biases, even if it is uncomfortable to do so
- Help to defend your LGBTQ friends, clients, and coworkers against discrimination



How to be an Ally at Work

- When introducing yourself, share your pronouns and ask the other person for their pronouns
- Replace gendered words and phrases like “Hey, guys” to inclusive ones, such as “Hi, folks”
- If your agency or organization has gendered intake or other client forms, advocate to change these to be more inclusive by offering additional options to select (or write in) their identity and pronouns
- Employ respectful, nonverbal body language, such as maintaining eye contact and keeping your posture and stance open and welcoming. This demonstrates that you aren’t merely tolerating the individual, but instead respecting and validating them.
- Remain open minded and curious about learning more and always be willing to accept corrections for missteps.



Being an Ally Goes Beyond Supporting LGBTQ+ People

- The LGBTQ population is as intersectional as any population. Supporting LGBTQ people means supporting all other minority populations and their struggles in American society.
- LGBTQ people of color, especially transgender women of color, are in much more dangerous positions than others in the community.
- Individuals of multiple minorities suffer multiple levels of discrimination.
- Being an ally means listening and learning from others and using your privilege as a tool in situations of injustice towards people of color.

Keep Learning & Growing!

- It is not the responsibility of someone who identifies as LGBTQ+ to educate you on common issues they may face or about generalities surrounding societal backlash they may have experienced.
- As a social worker, it is your responsibility to take the initiative to learn as much as you can on your own.
- <https://www.samhsa.gov/behavioral-health-equity/lgbtqi>
- <https://thesafezoneproject.com/>
- <https://buffer.com/resources/lgbtqia-resources/>



Thank you!

Questions?