

Say What? Inclusive Communication

62 y/o male patient (according to the EMR) with osteoarthritis for TKA.

Colleague says to you with a laugh: "Hey, just so you know- his name is John on the chart but he wants to be called Jane."

How many have encountered a similar situation?

What was your colleague implying?

How would you respond to your colleague in this situation?

Does the EMR have a role in facilitating respectful and inclusive communication with our patients?

How would you introduce yourself to the patient?

How do you build rapport?

Later on during the case, the circulator nurse proceeds to repeatedly refer to the patient as "he." The patient is under anesthesia so they are not hearing it, do you just ignore the RN or do you address her?

What are micro-inequities, micro-messaging, micro-aggressions?

What is unconscious bias? How do we mitigate unconscious bias?

What are the risks of health inequities and who is at risk?

What can we do to ensure all patients feel welcomed?

How do you improve inclusive communication at your institution?

How do we create an inclusive environment in our hospitals?

How do we build a better culture?

What other terms that we routinely use should we alter to foster inclusion?

Table 1. Definitions of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and “+” (LGBTQI+). ¹⁵		Table 2. Sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) terminology. ¹⁵	
Lesbian	A woman who is emotionally, romantically, or sexually attracted to other women.	Sex	The 2 main categories, male or female, into which humans are divided on the basis of their reproductive functions.
Gay	A person who is emotionally, romantically, or sexually attracted to members of the same gender. Although usually associated with men, some women and nonbinary people may identify as gay.	Sex assigned at birth	The sex (male, female, or intersex) used to describe a child at birth based on their external anatomy.
Bisexual	A person emotionally, romantically, or sexually attracted to more than one sex, gender, or gender identity.	Sexual orientation	An inherent emotional, romantic, or sexual attraction to other people. Sexual orientation is independent of gender identity.
Transgender	An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or expression is different from cultural expectations based on the sex they were assigned at birth. It does not specify a specific sexual orientation, and they may identify as straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, etc.	Gender	Male or female as defined by social and cultural differences rather than biological ones. It is also used to indicate a range of identities that do not correspond to established ideas of male or female.
Queer	Although previously used as a slur, queer has been reclaimed by the LGBTQI+ community. Queer can be used to express a spectrum of identities and orientations including nonbinary people and those with gender-expansive identities.	Gender identity	A person's perception of self (male, female, both, or neither) and what they call themselves. This can be similar to or different from their sex assigned at birth.
Intersex	People born with differences in their biological sex traits including chromosomes, reproductive anatomy, and hormone production.	Cisgender	A person whose gender identity and expression aligns with their sex assigned at birth.
Plus (+)	Other sexual identities not listed, including but not limited to asexual, nonbinary, gender fluid, and pansexual.	Transgender	An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or expression is different from cultural expectations based on the sex they were assigned at birth. It does not specify a specific sexual orientation and they may identify as straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, etc.
		Nonbinary	Describes a person who does not identify exclusively as male or female and used as an umbrella term for different identities that fall outside of the gender binary. Can be seen as transgender, but not all nonbinary people identify as transgender.

One Final Thought.....

“Some may ask why we should put effort into accommodating a patient population who may make up fewer than 1% of all patients we may see. The answer is simple: medicine should not merely be about improving large scale outcomes to the betterment of the many. If we cannot respect one person, respecting many means far less.”



Respecting Transgender Patients in the Perioperative Setting

Veronica Gross, MD, PhD

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