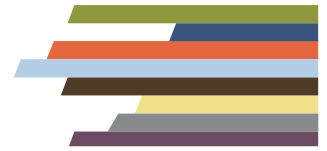


Treating Substance Use Disorder Among Gender Diverse People



The term “Gender Diverse” encompasses a broad universe of gender identities and expressions. “Transgender” is often used as an umbrella term for the community, though not all gender expansive individuals consider themselves to be Transgender. Other terms in common use include Nonbinary, 2Spirit (used by Indigenous people only) Enby, Genderqueer, Gender Fluid, Agender, and Pangender, among many others.



Gender is a unique experience for every human; accordingly, no one explanation of a gender identity label resonates with all members of the group. Though general definitions can be found on the internet, the best way to learn the meaning of an identity word is to listen closely to the person who uses it. Two people who use the same term may have very different understandings of what it means and how it applies to them.



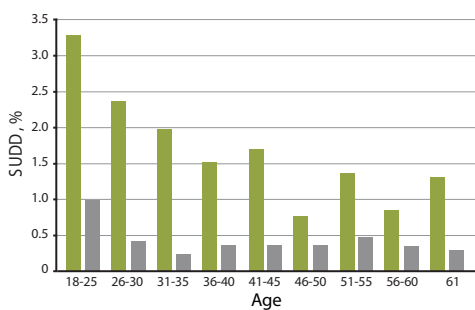
Due to stigma and discrimination, many people who are Gender Diverse have encountered uninformed, humiliating, or abusive medical and mental health care. Well-justified mistrust causes many people who are not cisgender to avoid care. The most critical step to providing services to the community is to earn trust through consistently respectful, empathetic, and knowledgeable encounters.



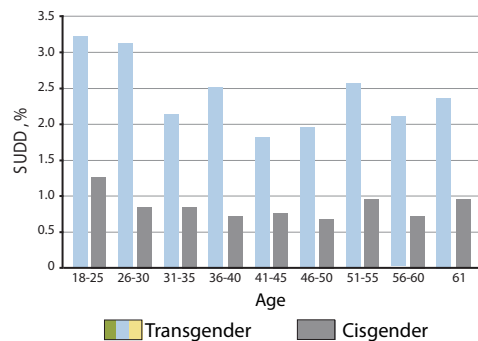
PREVALENCE OF SUD DIAGNOSES AMONG US TRANSGENDER AND CISGENDER ADULTS, 2021¹



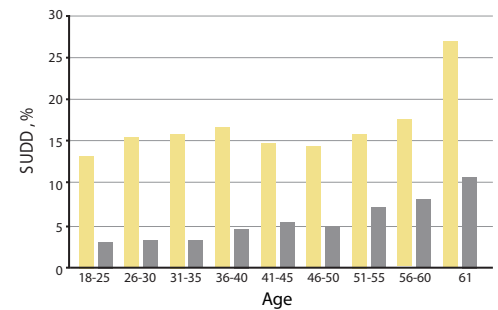
POLYSUBSTANCE



ALCOHOL



NICOTINE



RISK FACTORS^{2,3,4}

Higher rates of Substance Use Disorder among transgender individuals were associated with:

- Intimate partner violence
- PTSD
- Public accommodations discrimination
- Unstable housing
- Sex work

Further, “psychological abuse among transgender women as a result of non-conforming gender identity or expression is associated with:

- 3-4x higher odds of alcohol, marijuana, or cocaine use
- 8x higher odds of any drug use
- Among transfeminine youth, gender-related discrimination is associated with increased odds of alcohol and drug use⁴

“Higher SUD prevalence increasingly viewed as downstream effects of chronic gender minority stress.”⁴



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1 Hughto JMW, Quinn EK, Dunbar MS, Rose AJ, Shireman TI, Jasuja GK. (2021) Prevalence and Co-occurrence of Alcohol, Nicotine, and Other Substance Use Disorder Diagnoses Among US Transgender and Cisgender Adults. JAMA Netw Open. 2021;4(2):e2036512

2 Poteat, T., German, D., & Kerrigan, D. (2013). Managing uncertainty: a grounded theory of stigma in transgender health care encounters. Social science & medicine (1982), 84, 22–29.

3 Wilson, E. C., Chen, Y. H., Arayasirikul, S., Wenzel, C., & Raymond, H. F. (2015). Connecting the dots: examining transgender women's utilization of transition-related medical care and associations with mental health, substance use, and HIV. Journal of urban health : bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine, 92(1), 182–192.

4 Keuroghlian, A. S., Reisner, S. L., White, J. M., & Weiss, R. D. (2015). Substance use and treatment of substance use disorders in a community sample of transgender adults. Drug and alcohol dependence, 152, 139–146.

FIRST STEPS

Welcoming Transgender, Nonbinary and other Gender Diverse people starts with a few fundamental basics.

- Gender-neutral bathrooms
- Gender-congruent residential placements (e.g. Transgender women are housed with other women)
- Visible anti-discrimination statement
- Environmental welcome cues (Transgender Pride stickers, LGBTQ pamphlets)
- Many gender identity options and a fill-in area when asking for gender on forms
- Collecting SO/GI (Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity) data at intake
- Electronic Health Records (EHR) provide data fields for chosen names and pronouns
- Model sharing pronouns
- Multiple opportunities to self-identify, without pressure to disclose
- Mindful use of gender-affirming language
- Including “families of choice” in treatment
- Approach care from a Cultural Humility perspective⁵



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TREATMENT PROGRAMS



Graphic Source: Sunshine Behavioral Health⁶

General Substance Use Treatment Programs⁵

- “Transgender workers on staff -- Not only are such staff members sensitive and empathetic, but they may also serve as positive role models, since they may be the first transgender professionals the clients have encountered.”⁵
- Training for staff AND clients – Ongoing training addressing questions and respectful interactions
- Peer support group – Many 12-Step groups and other community-based supports hold in-person and virtual meetings especially for gender diverse people
- Community ties – Aftercare includes support for finding work and housing, arenas where gender diverse people frequently face discrimination

Specialized Transgender Treatment Programs⁶

- Use gender minority theoretical frameworks and theories to identify specific issues that affect transgender individuals and then target them when developing interventions
- Community-based participatory intervention design methods can help identify salient issues that need to be addressed specific to the transgender community
- Multicomponent interventions that address co-occurring issues are warranted⁷



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⁵ Cultural humility versus cultural competence: A critical distinction in defi... (1998) Melanie Tervalon; Jann Murray-Garcia Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved; May 1998; 9, 2; Research Library pg. 117

⁶ Bitsoli, S. (2022, April 1). Transgender Addiction Resource: Transgender Community & Addiction. Sunshine Behavioral Health.

⁷ Glynn, T. R., & van den Berg, J. J. (2017). A Systematic Review of Interventions to Reduce Problematic Substance Use Among Transgender Individuals: A Call to Action. Transgender health, 2(1), 45–59.