

# HOW TO PROVIDE THE BEST PERINATAL CARE FOR RAINBOW FAMILIES

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

LGBTQ+ families are diverse & have unique needs.

Cultural competence means health practitioners acknowledge that:

- gay, lesbian, bisexual, & queer sexuality is treated as normal and healthy.
- many LGBTQ+ families do not conform to a model of two parents of two genders.

LGBTQ+ people still experience homophobia & prejudice in perinatal care. When staff demonstrate a positive, informed attitude & small gestures of support, it positively impacts their experience.

The non-birthing parent is an equal parent in the family who should be included as such.

Transgender men are men who were assigned female at birth & may have the physical capacity to become pregnant & give birth. Terms like 'mother', female pronouns like 'she', & gendered body parts like 'breasts' can be inappropriate.

Transgender women are women who were assigned male at birth & may have the physical capacity to produce sperm. Terms like 'man' & 'father' can be inappropriate.

Non-binary/ agender/ gender diverse people may be either able to be pregnant or to produce sperm, but usually prefer to avoid the use of 'male' & 'female' & instead often use pronouns like 'they' & 'them'.

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## WHAT YOU NEED TO DO:

**1** If you're not sure what pronoun a person uses, simply ask.

Use names instead of roles, & non-gendered terms like 'parent' to be inclusive. **2**

**3** Referring to the birthing parent as the 'mother' implies there is only one, & that the person who is pregnant identifies as female.

Be aware of your assumptions & be open to alternative possibilities. There may be one mother, two mothers, or no mother/one father, two fathers, or no father/one parent/two parents. **4**

**5** Don't be afraid to ask questions, but first think about whether they're necessary.

Ask open questions like 'Who are the baby's parents?', 'Who gave birth?' & 'What words do you use to refer to your body parts?'. **6**

**7** Avoid questions about why & how parents decided to conceive, who carried the child, or details regarding transition unless medically relevant.

Think about what it is you actually need to find out & phrase your question accordingly. **8**

**9** Avoid repeated questions & record the answers to your questions.

Source: Greenfield, M. (2017). He's not the mother. AIMS Journal, 29(2), 7-9

