



# Building Inclusive and Welcoming Student Health Centers for Transgender Students

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## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

While health, wellness, and healthcare are essential to every human being, not much is known about the health and healthcare experiences of transgender students on college campuses. Understanding these healthcare experiences are important because when we recognize them, we can establish a healthy relationship of trust. There is a growing number of transgender students on West Chester University campus, who felt they were not getting the appropriate support and care. As a result, a project was started at student health services to help transgender students effectively access sensitive and welcoming care and support.

## METHODS AND RESULTS

### Methods:

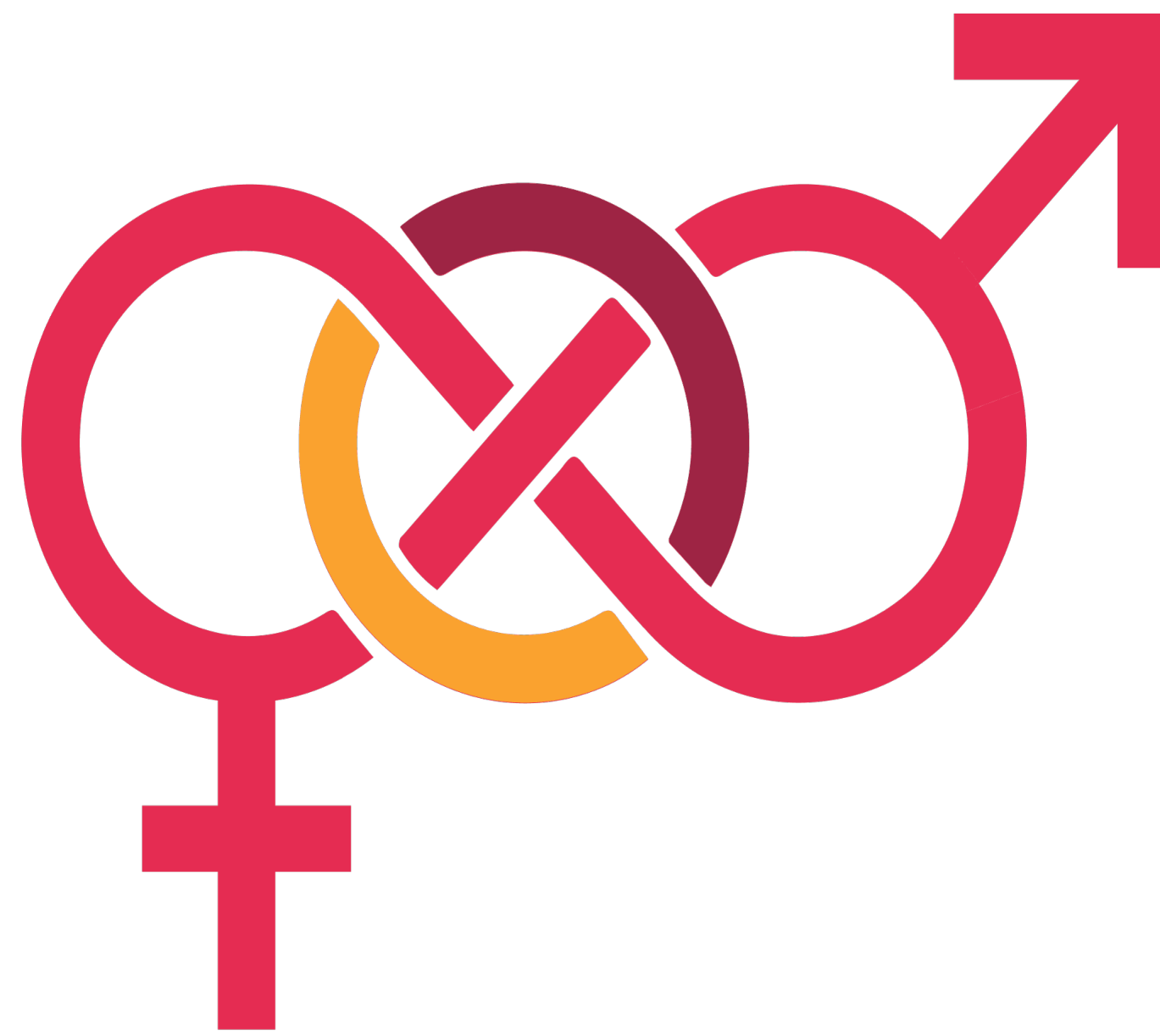
To address the needs of the transgender student population and improve the model of care at student health services, gaining a better understanding of the transgender community was a vital step. To become familiarized with their needs and health concerns, a Likert survey was created and disseminated to investigate the current issues regarding barriers of adequate care. Additionally, to identify the barriers of providing adequate care, student and health professional interviews were completed. The students involved in the interviews and questionnaires were recruited through LGBTQ Support Services Center on West Chester University's campus. A needs assessment was also created to gain a better understanding of the health needs of the transgender student community. The available resources and services provided to the LGBTQ students at West Chester University were reviewed and compared to other colleges and universities.

All data was entered into Excel for analysis.

### Results:

Students expressed that they felt the healthcare providers were underprepared to provide care and that their care could be improved upon. Through meeting with students and clinicians, a key barrier was the unfamiliarity with transgender health and in addressing transgender-specific health needs. It was also discovered that being unprepared to provide care, resulted in unconscious and implicit bias and the perpetuation of transgender exclusive practices.

## STUDENTS PERCEPTION OF A WELCOMING AND INCLUSIVE HEALTH CENTER



- LGBTQ Friendly Climate
- List of LGBTQ Allies
- Safe Space
- Open Communication Regarding Gender Identity
- Inclusive Forms and Preferred Name System
- Gender Neutral Language and Questioning
- Diversity in Staffing
- LGBTQ Health Information
- Printed LGBTQ Available Resources
- Cultural Competency
- Trans-specific Pamphlets
- Hormone Therapy

## CONCLUSION

This project identified themes, barriers and areas of concern expressed by transgender students. By identifying these elements, further research can be conducted to better understand student's perceptions and feelings when seeking healthcare, and whether these experiences impact health outcomes. The purpose of this project was to create an atmosphere geared towards providing healthcare services that are inclusive to all people of all gender identities. With the growing number of transgender students on college campuses, establishing welcoming health setting for students is very important.

### Acknowledgement of Research Project:

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## BARRIERS TO CARE

### Individual Barriers:

- Hesitation and fear in disclosing gender identity.
- Fear of rejection and unacceptance.
- Feeling of compromising their safety and identity.
- Internalized perceived transphobia of staff.
- Distrust in staff.
- Perceived lack of knowledge of LGBT health issues and concerns.
- Fear and anxiety of being called the incorrect name.
- Loss of power felt when called incorrect name.
- Fear in being asked about private parts.

### Systematic Barriers:

- Lack of accommodations (hormone therapy).
- Do not feel 100% welcomed by SHS.
- Forms are not inclusive or gender neutral.
- Belief that staff did not have LGBT specific knowledge.
- Resources for the LGBTQ community were not posted
- Perceived lack of cultural competency.
- Lack of gender-neutral language and questioning.

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