

# Inclusive Interview Tips for LGBTQIA+ Patients

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Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual, and all sexual and gender minority (LGBTQIA+) people<sup>1</sup> often have a history of discriminatory care from health care providers.<sup>2-5</sup> Miscommunication underlies many patient experiences of health care bias and hampers accurate information sharing, diagnostic accuracy, medication taking, and overall engagement in healthcare.

**SAFE** is a framework for inclusive interviewing to improve patient-provider interactions. **SAFE** stands for **S**tart With Yourself, **A**ssume Diversity, **F**ocus Your Questions, **E**xplain Why.

## Start With Yourself

Many LGBTQIA+ patients report poor health care experiences resulting from provider discomfort, lack of information about LGBTQIA+ community concerns, and feelings of judgment. To improve this, each provider must address their own values, attitudes, and beliefs.

### Example Questions for Providers:

- How do I feel about people who have a different sexual orientation or gender identity than me?
- How can I manage my discomfort with these differences? What can I do to feel less uncomfortable?



## Assume Diversity

Structuring every interview in an inclusive way creates a safe environment for patients to disclose differences, stigmatized experiences, and their own truths.

### Example Questions for Patients:

- You've told me that you don't have contact with your parents. Did you hear anything about family members having heart disease or diabetes when you were younger?
- Tell me what you know about how starting testosterone will affect your risk of heart disease.



## Focus Your Questions

To support patients in achieving their goals, it is important to understand their sexual practices, parental status, and interest in childbearing or child-rearing. Asking specific questions will allow for accurate assessment and avoid unnecessary testing and miscommunication.

### Example Question for Patients:

- Does the kind of sex you have put you at risk of getting pregnant? If so, we might want to change your blood pressure medications to ones that are safe during pregnancy.



## Explain Why

Discussion of sex and sexuality is difficult for many people, particularly those whose gender identity and sexual practices are stigmatized. Providers need to take particular care to only ask relevant questions.

### Example Questions for Patients:

- I'm interested to know about the hormonal therapy you are using to affirm your gender because some of those medications can affect blood pressure.
- When you start testosterone-blocking medications, they will decrease your energy and how many calories you burn. What plans can we make to help you manage your blood sugar during these changes?



For more information access Cardi-OH's expanded resource on creating a **welcoming environment for LGBTQIA+ patients**.

### References

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The Ohio Cardiovascular and Diabetes Health Collaborative is funded by the Ohio Department of Medicaid and administered by the Ohio Colleges of Medicine Government Resource Center. The views expressed in this document are solely those of the authors and do not represent the views of the state of Ohio or federal Medicaid programs.

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