

Meeting the Assisted Human Reproduction (AHR) Needs of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Queer (LGBTQ) People in Canada:

A Fact Sheet for AHR Service Providers

The federal Assisted Human Reproduction Act includes a principle stating that parties who undergo AHR procedures should not be discriminated against on the basis of sexual orientation or marital status (S.C. 2004, c. 2 [AHRA], s. 2(e)). As of August 2012, trans human rights (gender identity) are protected under the human rights legislation of the Northwest Territories, Manitoba and Ontario, and hopefully soon in other jurisdictions.

Across the country increasing numbers of LGBTQ people are relying on AHR to have biologically related children and to build their families. Some fertility clinics in urban areas such as Toronto report that as many as 15-25% of their clients are from LGBTQ communities. LGBTQ people have unique needs and expectations related to AHR care and services. While AHR services typically assume that clients are heterosexual, cisgender (non-trans), partnered or married with access to two-incomes, and dealing with fertility issues, some or none of these things may be the case for LGBTQ clients. Consequently, the care they require may differ from what is typically offered.

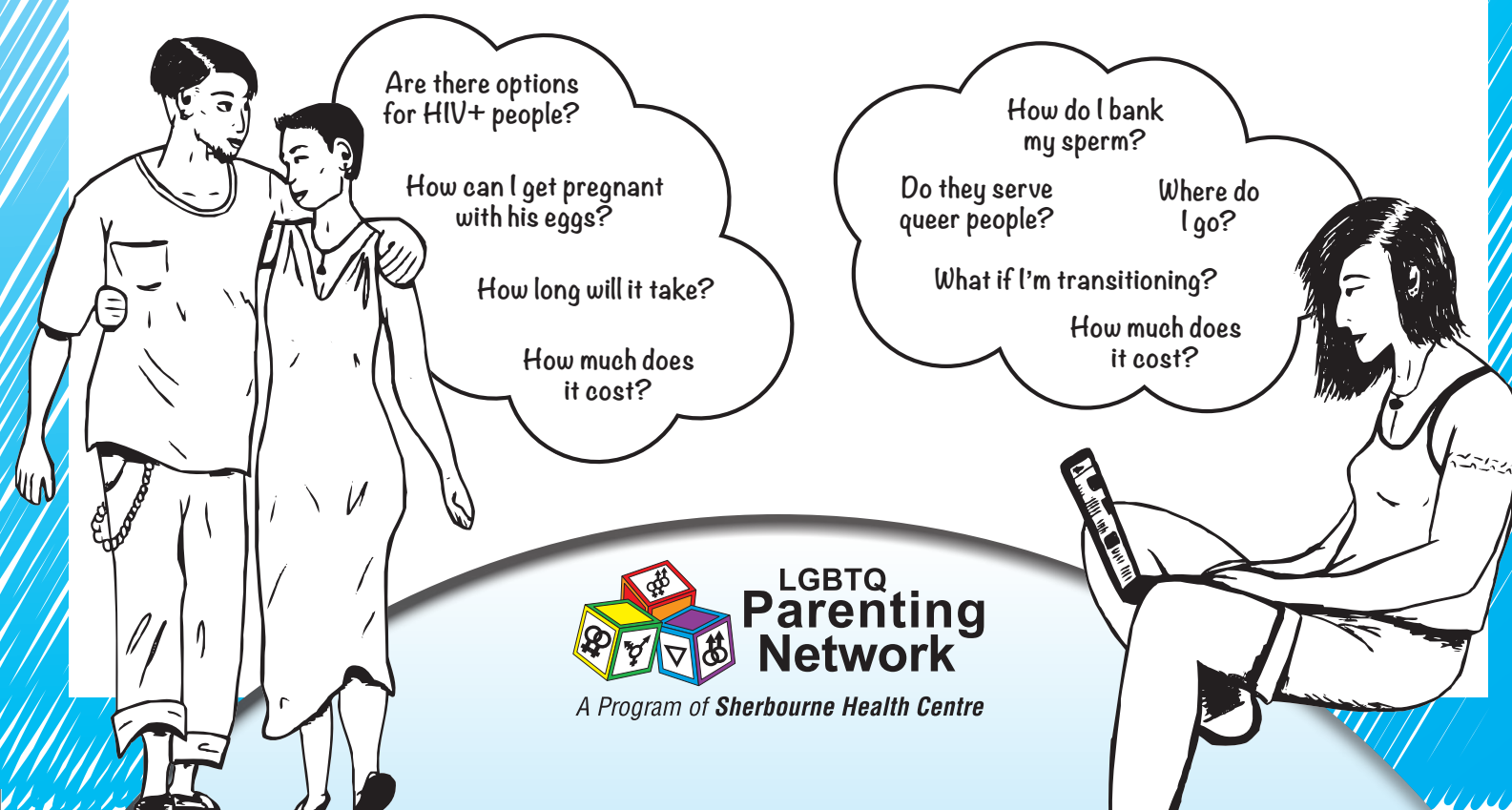
Below are suggestions and strategies to enhance the experience of your LGBTQ clients as they pursue AHR to build their families:

- Many LGBTQ people have no problems with their reproductive health. They need your support to make informed choices about possible interventions;
- Promote awareness and sensitivity training for all staff regarding the needs and concerns of LGBTQ clients, including the specific needs of trans clients;
- Educate all staff about current terms used by LGBTQ communities and communicate appropriately with LGBTQ clients (i.e., use of proper pronouns). For example, a 'sperm donor' has very different legal, medical, and emotional implications when compared to a 'sperm provider' (See Glossary of LGBTQ Terms);

- Ensure that language, materials, and websites recognize and welcome LGBTQ clients (i.e., images depicting LGBTQ families, gender-neutral language, open-ended questions);
- Ensure that all intake and procedure forms accommodate diverse family configurations. Do not assume male/female relationships or a two-parent model, and recognize that there are a diversity of sexual orientations, gender identities, and parenting roles;
- Invite and encourage all parties desired by LGBTQ clients – including partners, known sperm donors and co-parents – to be involved in the AHR process;
- Educate all staff about the latest clinical information and recommendations to assist HIV-positive people using AHR. See Loutfy MR, et al. Canadian HIV Pregnancy Planning Guidelines. J Obstet Gynaecol Can 2012;34(6):575–590: <http://sogc.org/guidelines/documents/gui278CPG1206E.pdf>;
- Provide information about local LGBTQ services, supports, and resources including AHR counselling specific to LGBTQ clients;
- Be honest about what you do not know regarding LGBTQ people and ask questions respectfully.

Please contact the LGBTQ Parenting Network of the Sherbourne Health Centre in Toronto, Ontario to participate in training developed for fertility clinics interested in learning more about how to provide culturally appropriate care to LGBTQ clients: parentingnetwork@sherbourne.on.ca

For LGBTQ terms and definitions, useful publications, and community resources across Canada, visit <http://www.lgbtqparentingconnection.ca/resources.cfm>



Glossary of LGBTQ Terms*

Sexual orientation: A term for the emotional, physical, romantic, sexual and spiritual attraction, desire or affection for another person. Examples: gay, straight, bisexual, lesbian.

Sexual identity: One's identification to self (and others) of one's sexual orientation. Sexual identity is not always the same as sexual orientation and/or sexual behaviour (what people do sexually).

Gay: A male whose primary sexual orientation is to other men. This term is sometimes used by lesbians (i.e., gay woman).

Lesbian: A female whose primary sexual orientation is to other women.

Bisexual: A person whose sexual orientation is directed towards individuals of more than one sex or gender, though not necessarily at the same time.

Queer: A term that has traditionally been used as a derogatory and offensive word for LGBTQ people. Many have reclaimed this word and use it proudly to describe their identity and/or as an umbrella term for LGBTQ people or communities.

Gender Identity: A person's own identification of being masculine, feminine, male, female, or trans. Gender identity is unrelated to sexual orientation; not all trans people identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or queer.

Gender Expression: The public expression of gender identity; actions, dress, hairstyles, etc., performed to demonstrate one's gender identity.

Cisgender: A person whose gender identity matches the gender they were assigned at birth; someone who is not trans.

Trans: An umbrella term referring to people who do not embrace traditional binary gender norms of masculine and feminine and/or whose gender identity or expression does not fit with the one they were assigned at birth; can refer to transgender, transitioned, transsexual, and genderqueer people, as well as some two-spirit people.

Transgender: An umbrella term describing anyone who falls outside of traditional gender categories or norms. Literally means "across gender," and conveys the idea of transcending the boundaries of the gender binary system. Not necessarily a desire to be of the "opposite" sex.

Transsexual: Someone who feels their gender identity does not match the sex that they were assigned at birth. Many transsexual people choose to go through sex reassignment, including hormone treatment and surgeries, so that their sex and gender identity match.

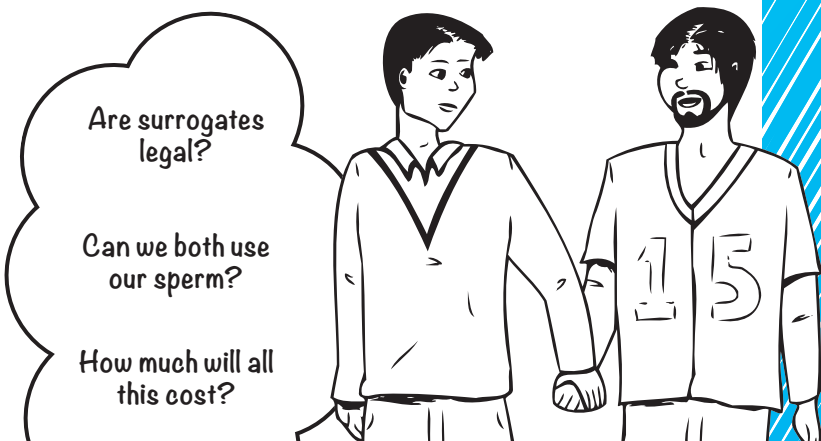
Transition: The process of changing from the sex one was assigned at birth to one's self-perceived gender. May involve dressing in the manner of the self-perceived gender, changing one's name and identification, and undergoing hormone therapy and/or sex reassignment surgeries to change one's secondary sex characteristics to reflect the self-perceived gender.

Two-Spirit: An English language term used to reflect specific cultural words used by First Nations people who have both a masculine and a feminine spirit or to describe their sexual, gender and/or spiritual identity.

Sperm or Egg Donor: Someone who is donating their sperm or egg/s with no claims and/or intention to parent the child. The person may or may not be known to the intended parent(s).

Sperm or Egg Provider: Someone who is providing sperm or egg/s with claims to the child, and/or as the intended parent or intended relation of the child.

**This glossary of terms was compiled by L.A. Tarasoff in May 2012. This is not meant to be a standardized list of definitions. Because ideas and attitudes are constantly changing within LGBTQ communities and among society at-large, these definitions may be used differently by different people and in different regions. Many of these terms have been adapted from the following sources: Barbara AM, Doctor F, Chaim G. Asking the Right Questions 2: Talking about sexual orientation and gender identity in mental health, counselling and addiction settings. Toronto, ON: Centre for Addiction & Mental Health; 2007; Bauer GR, Hammond R, Travers R, Kaay M, Hohenadel KM, Boyce M. "I Don't Think This Is Theoretical; This Is Our Lives": How Erasure Impacts Health Care for Transgender People. J Assoc Nurses AIDS C 2009;20(5): 348-361; Green E, Peterson EN. LGBTQI Terminology: <http://www.lgbt.ucla.edu/documents/LGBTTerminology.pdf>*



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