

Introduction: “We are asking all of our patients about their legal sex, sexual orientation and gender identity so we can make sure that you get the healthcare you need. This is meant to be a comfortable and safe environment where you can show up as your whole self. Whatever questions or healthcare needs you have. I am ready to try to help.”

Explanation: “Understanding a patient’s legal sex, sexual orientation and gender identity provides valuable context that may improve and enhance treatment and care. There is value in knowing who you serve so that our organization can appropriately provide the resources, training and equipment necessary to provide the best care possible.”

“What sex were you assigned at birth, on your original birth certificate?”

Explanation: “Asking for the sex you were assigned at birth helps the staff understand which organs might be present in your body, so we know what follow-up questions to ask you. This information, when combined with sexual orientation and gender identity, helps us create a care plan that best fits your needs.”

“Which of the following options best describes how you think of yourself? 1. Heterosexual or Straight 2. Gay or Lesbian 3. Bisexual 4. Other sexual orientation not listed. I can explain what these terms mean if you have questions, or you can choose not to answer.”

Explanation: A person’s sexual orientation makes up an important part of their identity. Having this information can help the service provider better tailor care to the individual so that high-quality personalized care can be achieved. They may have different needs and experiences, and the care they receive should reflect this. Asking about sexual orientation helps us address inequalities in health and social care.”

“What is your current gender identity?”

Explanation: “It’s helpful for us to know because it provides information on types of tests we may need to order, and this data helps us to understand the healthcare experiences of all of our patients.”

What is sexual orientation?

Explanation: “Sexual orientation describes your physical and emotional attraction to others. The form provides some options, but if you do not see one that fits your sexual orientation, feel free to choose “other” and describe it in your own words.”

What is gender identity?

Explanation: “Gender identity is your internal sense of your gender, regardless of the sex you were assigned at birth. Gender identity is personal to each individual.

“Why am I being asked about my legal sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity?”

Explanation: “Learning about the sexual orientation and gender identity of our patients helps us better understand the populations we are serving. It also allows us to offer culturally responsive care that focuses on a patient’s specific needs. I can explain what these terms mean if you have questions, or you can choose not to answer.”

“What if I am not sure how to answer?”

Explanation: “If you feel as though the options do not describe you, you can respond “other” and write in the terms you use to describe yourself.”

“How do I know that this information will be kept private?”

Explanation: “All our patient data is kept confidential, always. We want to provide a safe environment and provide the highest level of care to meet your specific needs. You may decline to answer any of these questions, but your responses will help us to better serve you.”