

The Challenge of Inclusive Language in Maternity Care

Gail Anderson

School of Nursing and Midwifery



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Gina Jones – Beyond the Binary

Background



- Heteronormative environment
- Increasing number of same-sex couples, trans and non-binary people utilising reproductive health services
 - Marginalised groups
- Inclusivity not transparent for all who use the service
 - Sense of belonging
 - Acceptance
 - Respect

Inclusivity through inclusive language

- Inclusive language acknowledges diversity, conveys respect to all people, is sensitive to differences, and promotes equitable opportunities.
- Inclusive language is respectful, unbiased, accurate and consistent with the preferences of individuals/communities
 - Encourage language that avoids the use of certain expressions or words that might be considered to exclude particular or marginalised groups of people.
 - Encourage language that is welcoming and avoids assumptions
 - People first language – place the person before their condition

Recommendations to promote inclusive language

- Gender Additive Approach
 - Departmental signage/Records/Policies
- Continually re-evaluate the language we use
 - Listen to women and people who use the service to ensure continued acceptability
- One to one capacity – use language/terminology that is appropriate and acceptable to that individual – chosen names, pronouns
- Development of cultural competence

Cultural Competence

- Back to basics – separate sex from gender
- Health care providers/practitioners need to be cognizant of the unique needs of an increasingly gender diverse population
 - Listen and learn from trans and gender non-conforming people
- Awareness of implicit/unconscious bias, cisnormative blindspot
- Avoid assumptions
- Embrace that change can be positive for everyone

Enhancing Inclusivity through models of care

- Person-centred care
- Continuity of Midwifery Carer (CoMC)
- Brighton and Sussex model of care



Challenges to Inclusivity

- Societal norms - Global majority of people who utilise perinatal services identify as cisgender (female)
- Infrastructure
 - Gender identification – assumption that all birthing individuals identify as female – most data systems do not recognise otherwise
 - Lack of accurate data available on the number of people who identify as either trans or non-binary in perinatal service
- Additional challenges hidden under the surface

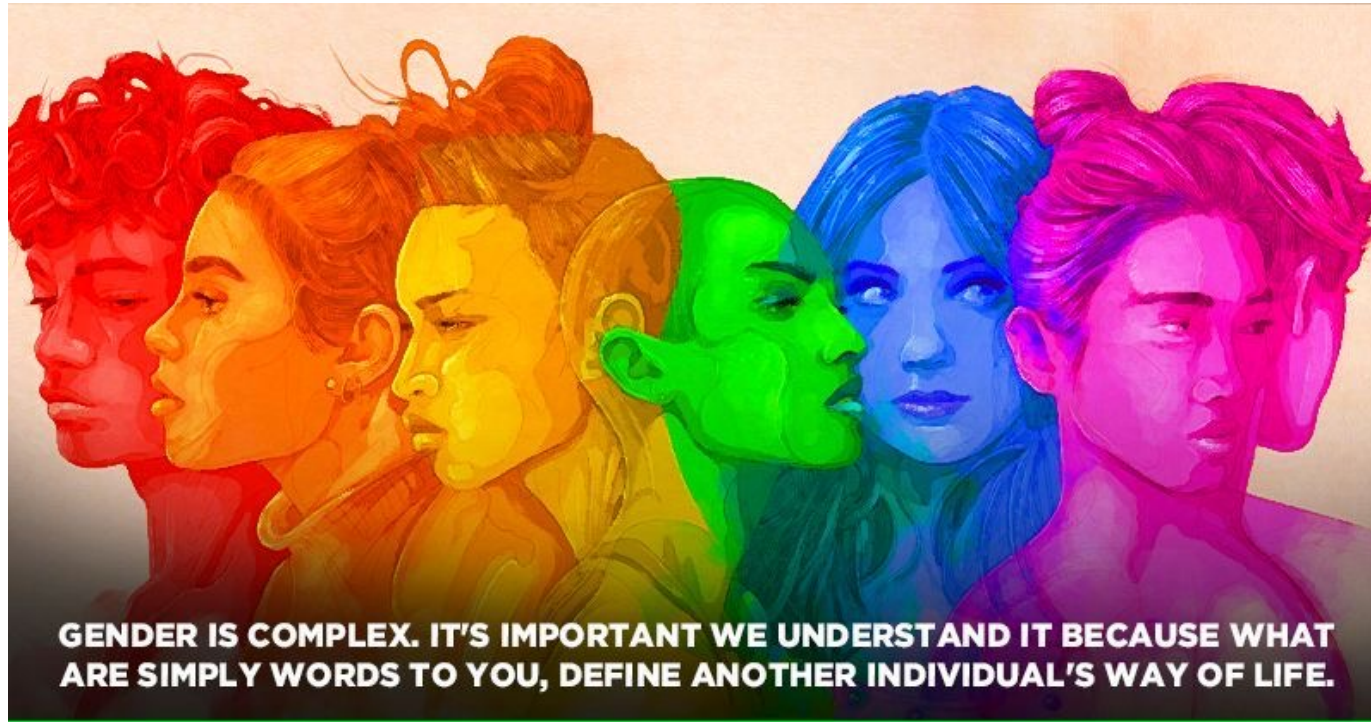
Summary

- Trans/gender diverse people are considered a marginalised group within perinatal services
- Available data suggests an increasing trend of visible pregnancy amongst the trans/gender diverse community
- Health practitioners need to be prepared to enable effective, safe and welcoming care environments
- Promoting inclusivity and inclusive language in perinatal services is multi-faceted and complex but can be sensitively achieved

Useful links

- [Inclusive Language - Scottish Perinatal Network](#)
- [List of LGBTQ+ terms \(stonewall.org.uk\)](#)
- [Transgender people: health at the margins of society - The Lancet](#)
- [Support-for-trans-and-non-binary-people-PIL.pdf \(bsuh.nhs.uk\)](#)
- [Gender-inclusive-language-in-perinatal-services,\(2\).pdf \(liverpool.ac.uk\)](#)





“Let’s be courageous in the fight for equality, health, and human rights. We can chart a new path for millions of people by embracing our common humanity.” Lois Quam

Reflection

- Have you considered that you may have an implicit bias?
- What changes would need to be made in your place of work or practice to enhance inclusivity and inclusive language?

