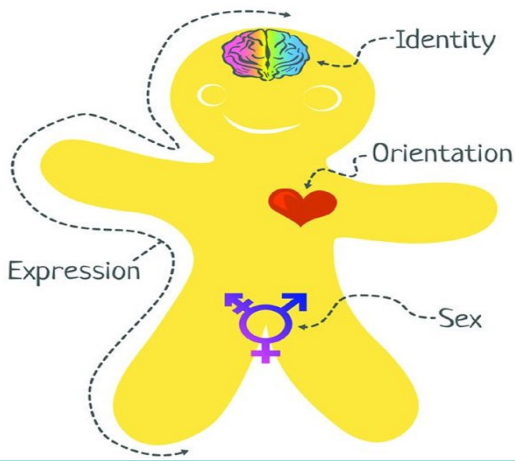


# SOGI Quick Reference Guide



## People over documents

Client's self-identification overrules what is listed on one's state-issued ID. Gender identity, sexual orientation and pronouns are categories that people identify for themselves, and are not dictated by legal definitions or documents.

## Terms differ

Not all people use the same SOGI terms. Identities mean something different for each person that holds them and do not dictate behaviors and experiences. Ask your client what their identities mean to them and how they translate in their lives.

## People change

The answers to these questions are not fixed and may change over time. Please let your client know that if the answers to these questions change at any time, they may inform you and their intake information will be updated.

## Gender Identity vs. Sexual Orientation

Gender identity and sexual orientation are independent categories. Who you are [gender identity] does not determine who you find attractive [sexual orientation]. As an example, transgender/non-binary clients can have any sexual orientation because how they feel [internally] about their gender does not dictate who they feel attraction towards [externally].

## "Another option, please specify"

This option is for individuals whose sexual orientation and/or gender identity is not included in the categories presented. Terms used to describe individuals' identities are constantly changing. This option empowers clients with the opportunity to self-identify.

## Gender Pronouns

Pronouns (she/her, he/him, they/them, and others) refer to how people identify their gender. You can't tell by looking, so share your pronouns and ask others for theirs.

## Intersex

General term for several conditions resulting in a reproductive or sexual anatomy that doesn't seem to fit the typical definitions of female or male at birth. May be genetic, hormonal, or physical. About 1 in 2,000 people are born intersex. Very few intersex conditions require medical intervention.



Gender identity is our internal sense of self as man, woman, a blend of both, or neither. Can be the same or different from assigned sex at birth. Does not have to adhere to binary identities of man and woman.

**Gender Identity** terms vary by individual, but may include:

- ◇ Woman/Female
- ◇ Man/Male
- ◇ Transgender woman
- ◇ Transgender man
- ◇ Genderqueer



Gender expression is how you demonstrate your gender through the ways you act, dress, behave and interact (clothing, hairstyles, and mannerisms, etc.). Gender expression can be different across cultures.

**Gender expression** and gender identity do not always match. Some reasons for this can be fear of discrimination or violence, uncertainty about how one's community will respond, or simply personal choice.



Biological sex refers to the objectively measurable organs, hormones and chromosomes in a person's body. On the SOGI form, this is referred to as "assigned sex at birth."

**Assigned Sex at Birth** is what shows up on your birth certificate based on the doctor's decision at birth. The first Intersex birth certificate was given to parents of a child in New York in 2017.

**Sexual Orientation** terms vary by individual, but may include:

- ◇ Lesbian
- ◇ Gay
- ◇ Bisexual
- ◇ Queer
- ◇ Asexual



Sexual orientation is who you find physically and emotionally attractive. People who experience little to no attraction may identify as asexual.

## What does SOGI stand for?

SOGI stands for Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

### Why are we asking about SOGI?

We want to provide each person with the best possible care! Knowing each client's SOGI helps us understand their individual strengths and needs, and the only way to know is to ask. Collecting this data also helps us identify and track disparities in care.

### In addition to collecting SOGI data from our clients, what else can we do to make sure that our services are inclusive of LGBTQ+ clients?

Visibility is another key way of demonstrating that your office is inclusive and affirming of LGBTQ+ community members. Consider visual cues in areas such as waiting rooms and within the provider's office. In addition, it is important to be aware of local LGBTQ+ community resources when thinking about making appropriate referrals for clients.

### What do I do if a patient refuses to complete the form or prefers to talk to their provider?

Always respect your client's wishes. Keep in mind that for some clients, this may be the first time someone has asked them about SOGI, and it can be unfamiliar. If a client is unsure about answering SOGI questions, inform them that the information will help their provider deliver appropriate services, assure them that their information is confidential, and answer any questions they may have.

Let them know that many of the questions have a "decline to answer" option. If they prefer to talk to their provider, coordinate with their care team.

### Is the information confidential?

Yes! All patient health information (PHI) is protected by patient privacy laws, and that includes SOGI. Only a client's care team and those who are authorized to view PHI should view their SOGI answers.

### How can we support our community partners with collecting SOGI data?

Informing community partners about the resources available within the San Mateo County Pride Center and the Office of Diversity and Equity will strengthen coalitions between county and community entities in supporting LGBTQ+ community members.

### Which clients should be given the SOGI form?

Please give every client age 12 or older the SOGI form. Clients who are age 12 or older seeking mental health services should be able to answer these questions as they would any other demographic question. A client can choose to update their answers at any time.

### Can a SOGI training be requested for providers outside of the trainings currently offered?

Yes, SOGI trainings can be offered to providers who would like to schedule trainings for their staff by contacting The Office of Diversity and Equity or the San Mateo County Pride Center at the email addresses provided below. CEU's may be available for these trainings based on training request.

### What resources do I have? Who can I contact if I have more questions?

The Office of Diversity and Equity and the San Mateo County Pride Center are here to support you! Please contact the Office of Diversity and Equity at [APakhchian@smcgov.org](mailto:APakhchian@smcgov.org), or contact the Pride Center at [info@sanmateopride.org](mailto:info@sanmateopride.org) or (650) 591-0133 if you have questions or would like more resources. In addition, The Office of Diversity and Equity will provide online resources that will strengthen our collective approach to gathering SOGI demographic data.

