

O·H·A·N·A
means family.
nobody gets left behind or forgotten

Incorporating Ohana into the Practice of Medicine

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Health disparities are preventable differences in the burden of disease, injury, violence, or opportunities to achieve optimal health that are experienced by socially disadvantaged populations.

Health equity is the aspirational idea that all people should have the highest possible standard of health, with special attention paid to the needs of people who are at the greatest risk of poor health based on social conditions.

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License to Discriminate

- Ohio
- Mississippi
- Tennessee
- South Carolina
- Arkansas
- Illinois

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LGBTQQIAAP

- Lesbian**: A woman who is primarily attracted to women.
- Gay**: A man who is primarily attracted to men; sometimes a broad term for individuals primarily attracted to the same sex.
- Bisexual**: An individual attracted to people of their own and opposite gender.
- Transgender**: A person whose gender identity differs from their assigned sex at birth.
- Transsexual**: An outdated term that originated in the medical and psychological communities for people who have permanently changed their gender identity through surgery and hormones.
- Queer**: An umbrella term to be more inclusive of the many identities and variations that make up the LGBTQ+ community.
- Questioning**: The process of exploring and discovering one's own sexual orientation, gender identity and/or gender expression.
- Intersex**: An individual whose sexual anatomy or chromosomes do not fit with the traditional markers of "female" and "male."
- Ally**: Typically a non-queer person who supports and advocates for the queer community to any group of people. It is not the same as celibacy and has many sub-groups.
- Asexual**: An individual who generally does not feel sexual desire or attraction to any group of people. It is not the same as celibacy and has many sub-groups.
- Pansexual**: A person who experiences sexual, romantic, physical and/or spiritual attraction to members of all gender identities/experiences, not just people who fit into the traditional gender binary.

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Gender

The Genderbread Person (a person with Gender)

- Gender identity**: internal sense of one's own gender
- Gender expression**: how one presents their gender

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Gender Definitions

How someone identifies may be different than how they outwardly express themselves

- GENDER**: The state of being male or female as typically determined by chromosomes and/or physical attributes.
- TRANSGENDER**: Refers to someone who does not identify with the gender they were assigned at birth.
- CISGENDER**: Refers to someone who identifies with the gender they were assigned at birth.
- NON-BINARY**: Refers to someone who does not identify as exclusively male or female.
- GENDER FLUID**: Refers to someone whose gender identity changes over time from one end of the spectrum to the other.
- GENDERQUEER**: Refers to someone whose gender identity falls on the spectrum between male and female.

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LGBTQ+

- 5.5% of adults identify as lesbian, gay, queer, bisexual, transgender, or other sexual or gender minority
- 29% are raising children under the age of 18
- Same sex parents are 7 times more likely to foster or adopt children as compared to different sex couples
- More likely to have infants in the NICU as compared to cis-gender, heterosexual couples



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LGBTQ+ Healthcare: CAP survey 2017

- 6-9% reported difficulties with health professionals, ranging from denial of care or refusal to acknowledge their family to abusive language to unwanted physical contact
- 23% said they were misgendered or called the wrong name
- 21% experienced harsh or abusive language
- 8% of all LGBTQ and 22% of transgender respondents reported avoiding or postponing needed medical care for these reasons



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Implicit Bias of Healthcare Professionals

- One study found that while 61.7% of nurses had no preference between transgender and cisgender people, 18.3% showed a slight preference for cisgender individuals, and 9.5% showed a moderate preference.
- A 2015 study found that heterosexual healthcare providers had a moderate to strong implicit preference for straight people over gay and lesbian people.

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Why does this matter?

- NICU is a vulnerable, stressful environment
- LGBTQA+ families may face **additional stressors**: discrimination, lack of recognition, or misgendering
- Inclusive communication = better trust, mental health, and infant outcomes

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What makes a non-heteronormative family?

- Same sex parents
- Transgender parents
- Non-binary parents
- Families with surrogacy, donors, or adoption
- Key Point:** Avoid assumptions about roles (e.g., "mom and dad")



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How do we address the parents?

- Use **gender-neutral terms**: "parent" instead of "mom/dad" until clarified
- Ask: "What name and pronouns do you use?"
- Ask: "Are you in a relationship?"
- Avoid "Do you have a girlfriend/boyfriend?"
- Avoid: "Real mom/dad" → Use "biological parent," "gestational parent," etc.

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Pronouns for Non-Binary Individuals

- **They/Them/Theirs** (most widely used)
 - Example: "They are the baby's parent."
- **Ze/Hir** (less common, but some may prefer)
 - Example: "Ze is caring for hir child."
- **Other Neopronouns** (xe/xem, ey/em, etc.) – always confirm with the person

Genderqueer or non-binary Transgender Androgynous Female Gender fluid Male Agender or genderless Bigender

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Communication Tips

HELLO I'm Dr. Smith SHE/HER	HELLO I'm Dr. Smith THEY/THEM	HELLO I'm Dr. Smith HE/HIM	
Introduce	Mirror	Document	Correct
Always introduce yourself with your pronouns ("I'm Dr. Smith, I use she/her")	Mirror the language the family uses for themselves	Document pronouns clearly in the chart so the whole team is consistent	Correct mistakes promptly and respectfully

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Avoid Assumptions

- Don't assume pronouns from appearance, name, or family role.
- Use **gender-neutral language** until you know:
 - Instead of "mom" or "dad," say "parent" or "caregiver."
 - Instead of "ladies and gentlemen," say "parents," "family," or "everyone."

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Situations You May Encounter

- **Scenario 1:** Two moms present → Don't ask "Where's the dad?"
- **Scenario 2:** Trans woman breastfeeding → Support, don't pathologize
- **Scenario 3:** Non-binary parent → Respect chosen name even if legal docs differ

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Check Yourself

- Recognize unconscious bias in yourself and your team
- Pause before assuming, debrief as a team, model inclusive language

It's somewhat odd. Every Thursday I take Pua to the beach a present better weather...
Pua controls the weather.

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This is my family. I found it all on my own. It's little, and broken. But still good. Yeah, still good. - stitch

Support the Whole Family

- Involve all caregivers in rounds and updates
- Acknowledge partner(s) equally in decision-making
- Offer resources (LGBTQ+ support groups, social work, mental health support)

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Family Centered Care

GENERAL PRINCIPLES	NICU PRINCIPLES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dignity and Respect • Information Sharing • Family Participation • Family Collaboration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect • Diversity • A Strengths-based Approach • Choice • Flexibility • Information Sharing • Support • Collaboration • Empowerment

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Key Considerations

- Actively involve co-parents in infant care
- Screen co-parents for depression
- Treat partners as equals
- Pay attention to language and assumptions
- Ask rather than assume
- Open-ended questions
- Make notes for future visits
- Be an advocate

PEOPLE SHOULD
SERIOUSLY
STOP EXPECTING NORMAL FROM ME



WE ALL KNOW IT'S
NEVER GOING TO HAPPEN!

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Resources for Healthcare Professionals

- The Joint Commission guidelines on LGBTQ+ care
- Human Rights Campaign - Healthcare Equality Index
- GLMA: Health Professionals Advancing LGBTQ+ Equality
- Local hospital diversity & inclusion policies



It's not what we have in
life, but who we have in
our lives that matters.

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Take Aways

- **Respect → Inclusion → Better outcomes**
- Use neutral, affirming language
- Build trust through openness and listening
- Every family deserves to feel safe and valued in the NICU

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Correct Pronoun Use for Non-Binary People

- 1. Common Pronouns**
 - They/Them (These aren't widely used)
 - *Ex: They are the baby's parent.*
 - Ze/Hir (less common, but some may prefer)
 - *Ex: Ze is caring for the child.*
 - Other Neopronouns (xe/xem, eylem, etc.)
 - *— always confirm with the person*
- 2. Best Practices**
 - Ask first: "What pronouns do you use?"
 - Normalize sharing: Introduce yourself with your pronouns so families feel comfortable
 - Document clearly in the chart so the whole team is consistent
 - If you make a mistake → correct yourself briefly and move on ("Sorry, I meant they.")
- 3. Avoiding Assumptions**
 - Don't assume pronouns from appearance, name, or family role
 - Use gender-neutral language until you know
 - Instead of "mom" or "dad" say "parent" or "caregiver"
 - Instead of "ladies and gentlemen," say "parents," "family," or "everyone"
- 4. Sample NICU Phrases**
 - ✓ This is [Name], they are the baby's parent.



WE
are never
too old for Disney

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