



Supporting LGBTQ Families in the Postpartum Period

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Demographics of LGBTQ Families

- More than 547,000 married same-sex couples nationwide. (Williams Institute Report June 23, 2017)
- 3 million LGBTQ Americans are parents raising approximately 6 million children (Williams Institute Report 2013).
- Proportionally fewer same-sex couples report raising children today than in 2000.
WHY?



Anticipated Boom

- Potential four-fold increase in next decade
- Family Equality Research



Who is having babies?



- Lesbians
- Gay Men
- Couples or individuals who identify as transgender
- Coparents

AND HOW?

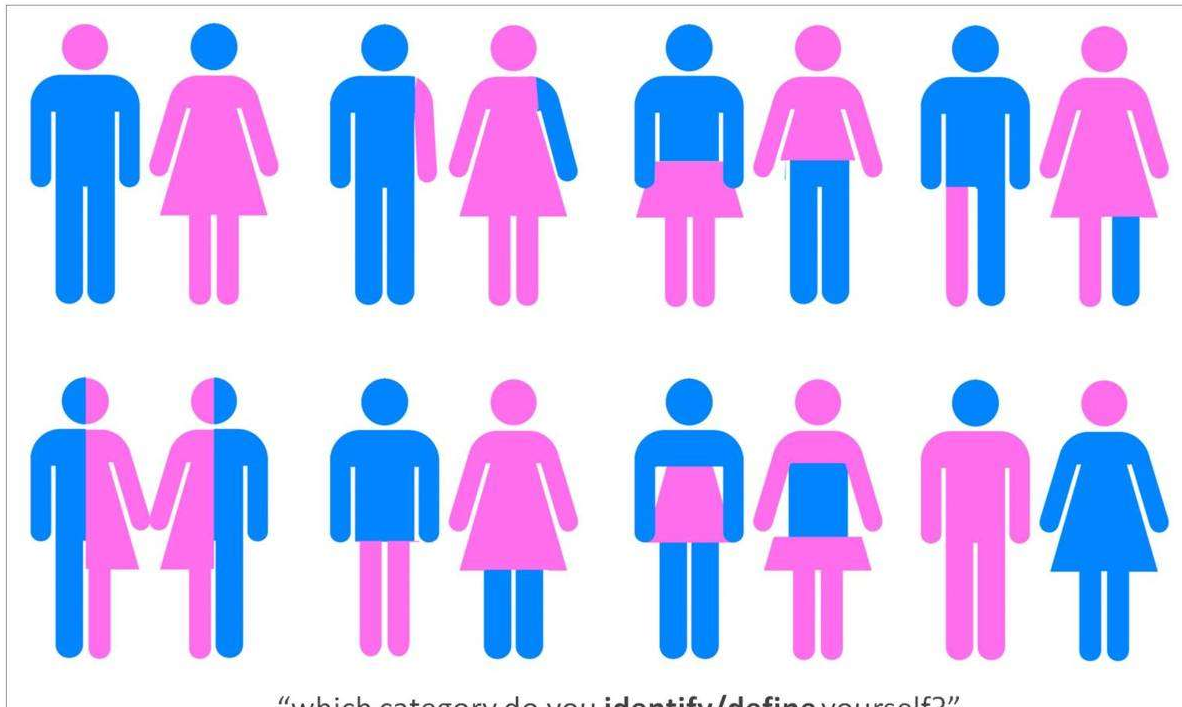
LGBTQ Perinatal Mood Disorders

- Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale average ratings at 6-8 weeks postpartum
 - ▣ ISM: 6.9, VSM: 5.4; Heterosexual women: 4.6
- Much more likely to have a trauma history
 - ▣ Adolescent sexual assault rates
 - 15.5% for lesbians, 55.5% for transgender individuals, 7.5% heterosexual girls
 - ▣ 44% of LGBTQ report prior physical assault directly due to their identity

Common Challenges in the Postpartum Period

- Transformation into parenthood tied so closely to gender roles
 - ▣ Increased risk for postpartum depression and anxiety

[flexible] gender identity



“which category do you identify/define yourself?”

Common Challenges in Postpartum Period



- Breastfeeding/chestfeeding
 - ▣ Lesbian couples
 - ▣ MtF individuals
 - ▣ FtM individuals and chestfeeding

Common Challenges in the Postpartum Period

- Unique support systems
 - ▣ More peer-based
- Isolation
 - ▣ Less family support, fewer friends with children
- Hesitation to seek support
 - ▣ Judgement around LGBTQ parenting
 - ▣ Tried very intentionally to start family

Common Challenges in Postpartum Period

- Non-gestational parents
 - At mercy of health care provider
 - Attachment concerns
 - Desire for social recognition
 - Identity issues
 - Lack of support groups
 - Postpartum depression

Common Challenges in Postpartum Period

- ❑ Concerns about legal/policy barriers
 - ❑ Second parent adoption
 - ❑ Birth certificate



Creating Safe and Inclusive Perinatal Spaces

- Review and revise written and virtual materials
 - ▣ Carefully evaluate use of terms and consider changing to more neutral terms such as birthing parent, client, pregnant person, coparent, partner, spouse
 - ▣ Include photos of LGBTQ and gender non-conforming individuals/couples
 - ▣ Include rainbow sticker or pink triangle on materials
- Offer visual cues that show support
 - ▣ LGBTQ magazines, rainbows, pink triangles

Creating Safe and Inclusive Perinatal Spaces

- Ask about preferred pronouns/titles/roles and convey to staff
- Only ask questions pertinent to the care you're providing
- Language is important! Take their lead and note in chart
- Anticipate assumptions providers might make and attempt to be an advocate for patient

Creating Safe and Inclusive Perinatal Spaces

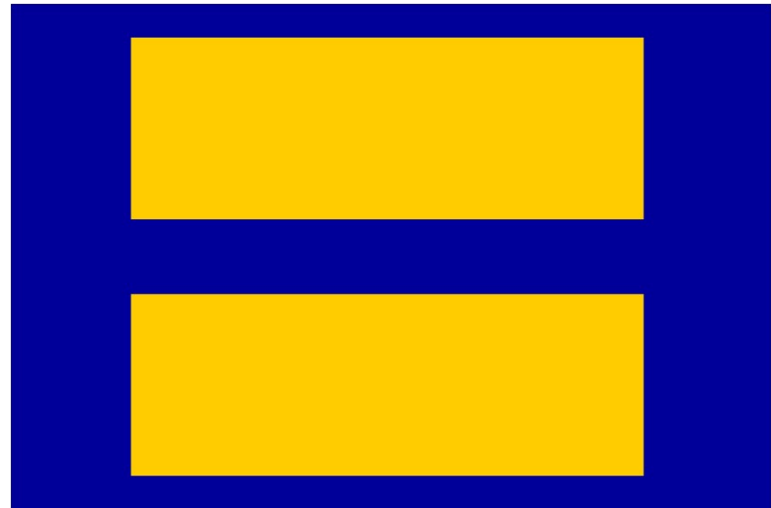
- Engage non birthing parent in care of infant
 - Skin-to-skin
 - Bathing, changing diapers
 - Breastfeeding/chestfeeding? ASK, don't assume
 - Baby ID band

Creating Safe and Inclusive Perinatal Spaces

- Breastfeeding/chestfeeding support
 - Determine plan
 - Engage both partners
 - Support WHATEVER decision is made around feeding
 - Offer SNS (novel to many)

Creating Safe and Inclusive Perinatal Spaces

- Encourage institution to participate in Healthcare Equity Index (HEI) through the Human Rights Campaign.
 - ▣ <https://www.hrc.org/hei/>



Resources and Referrals for Postpartum Support

- Community is critical (virtual and in-vivo)
 - ▣ Meet-ups
 - Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Parent Meet-up
 - ▣ FaceBook Groups
 - Trans-parent Chest Feeding Group
 - Nongestational Parent Group
 - Queer Mamas/ Gay Fathers
- Legal Support for Adoption
 - ▣ Gay Family Law Center
- Postpartum Doula Support
 - ▣ Trans Birth and Radical Doula



Q&A

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