

# 5 Ways to enhance the care you give to GLBTQ families

## **Use gender neutral words from the first phone call. ( and on your forms )**

Are you partnered?

Would you like your spouse/partner to join you for the first session?

## **Know some history of GLBTQ families**

Until recently in the US, the non - birth parent had limited or no legal rights to their child. Some states still do not acknowledge the non - birth parent unless they are genetically connected to the child, regardless of marriage. Culturally there are still biases around same sex parenting. These negative messages may come from media, friends, or even their own families. It is not uncommon to hear “So, who is the Mom?” on the street or even within a Doctor’s office.

## **It may be more difficult for GLBTQ couples to reach out for help**

No GLBTQ person has been able to miss the fact that some people do not believe they should be parenting. Consequently, admitting to a provider that they are struggling during the perinatal or postpartum period can take a lot of courage. Most people with PMADs feel concerned they will be judged for being a bad parent and GLBTQ folks have experienced this judgement even without a PMAD in various ways. As providers we need to ensure we are affirming of diverse families in our practices and know that it may be more difficult for GLBTQ families to reach out for help.

## **Oftentimes members of the GLBTQ communities lean on friends in addition to or in lieu of family.**

Consequently it is important to include friends in their circle of support. It may also be helpful to know local and national resources for LGBTQ families.

## **Keep an open mind around gender in general**

Use first names until you are certain of preferred gender pronouns.

Be aware that men who are transgender are becoming pregnant and may seek your services.

## **Know Thyself**

If you are not comfortable working with GLBTQ couples or their families either:

A) Consult to gain more competency and personal comfort

B) Know providers in your community who are GLBTQ affirming and competent and refer. If you are in a rural area where a referral would be difficult please reconsider A)

*Remember, while you may not have experienced legal or social discrimination you most likely have felt “other” at some point in your life. These were the times you needed more validation, acceptance and support. As postpartum providers we are invited into a very intimate time of a couple’s life. Let us error on the side of being too affirming and supportive, especially with families who may have limited familial or community support and a history of discrimination.*