Workplace Diversity:

Respecting Transgender Diversity at UHA
Welcome.

In this course, we'll explore gender-related diversity topics including Transgender People, Gender Expression, and Gender Identity. While gender-related topics are a subset of the overall, mutual respect required in our diverse workforce, these topics are often misunderstood. We will also discuss respecting diversity in sexual orientation.

Therefore, we will ask for your compliance by learning about gender-related diversity and then applying this information to your day-to-day interactions with your colleagues (co-workers and providers), our patients and their respective families.

As with all workplace diversity-related experiences, it's your responsibility, as a UHA employee or affiliated provider to act professionally, at all times, and to leave all personal bias out of your workplace communications, actions and interactions.
Before we begin, consider that we all know that it takes courage, sometimes a great deal of courage, to share about our own lives - particularly those topics that we believe may result in workplace gossip, distrust or disrespect. But respecting the ability to share our lives, our stories and our experiences has the potential to change hearts, minds and lives.

**So, we thank you in advance, for completing this required training module.**
Our objectives for this module are simple:

- Learn about gender-related discrimination that people face in our society and what can be done about it
- Learn and broaden your horizons about gender-related diversity
- Understand that you may reach out to Human Resources for additional information related to this topic

Let's get started!
We'll begin by defining Transgender Equality...
Transgender People

Per the National Center for Transgender Equality, “Transgender is an umbrella term that refers to people who live *differently* than the gender presentation and roles expected of them by society.” Therefore, many people consider themselves to be Transgender and can be straight, gay, lesbian or bisexual. That said, it’s important to understand that gender identity is *separate* from sexual orientation and that Transgender people are *equally* as diverse and varied as other diverse people in our workplace and in society.
What you may typically think of when you hear the term “Transgender” is a person who is in the process of moving from one gender to another.

But, you should know that this definition is much broader.

Per The Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM), the definition of Transgender persons includes cross-dressers, androgynous people and gender-nonconforming individuals, among others.
In some cases, some Transgender people may choose to transition from one gender to another. When the process is complete, the person most likely will use the term “transitioned” to describe their experience and, once transitioned, will identify as male or female - making it unnecessary for us refer to the person as Transgender, but instead we must use the appropriate term of male or female.
However, **not** all Transgender people want to transition.

And, whether or not someone has had surgery should **not** make a difference in how they are treated.
So, to be respectful, particularly in those cases where you are not certain about whether or not a transition will occur, you may consider asking your Transgender co-worker how to address their identity.

If your co-worker asks to be called by the name that is most comfortable for them, and referred to as she (or he), then use that name and the appropriate pronouns.

It's not a complicated request.

Consider that you are most likely comfortable with your name, and your associated pronouns, and you would feel very uncomfortable if someone referred to you by an incorrect name or used the wrong pronoun. It's no different for anyone else.
You may be wondering what causes someone to identify as Transgender -
but is that important?

First, let's be clear that the cause, or any theories about why
Transgender people exist, is unimportant in the UHA workplace. As a
group of professionals, it's our responsibility to respect everyone and
not to question someone's existence simply because we consider
them different from ourselves or different from any personal or
religious beliefs.

Second, at UHA, we believe that everyone has a right to choose whatever
gender presentation feels best. Our employees have the freedom to
express themselves in whatever way is right for them.
And, if you’re thinking that identifying as Transgender is a mental illness - don’t - as a society, we now know that this concept no longer applies. Sadly, this is one of the most common stereotypes about Transgender people and it’s up to you to adjust your thinking.

If it helps, think about a situation where you were stereotyped and how it made you feel. Consider that stereotypes, of any kind, can be very harsh and that the impact can effect peoples’ lives, jobs, homes and families.
So, how should you handle your personal or religious views? As with any topic that may challenge your personal beliefs or your religious affiliations, you must remain professional at work.

As you know, we live in a very diverse community and it’s up to us to accept each other for our differences.

Treating our all of our colleagues, patients and their families with respect and dignity is no different from how we expect to be treated by others, right?

RIGHT.
Remember, actions speak louder than words.
Hi Ricardo, I heard that our new Medical Assistant is transitioning from female to male. My Pastor says that this type of thing is against our beliefs. I don’t know how I’m going to handle working with her.
I heard that, too, Sue. But, I figure that I have differing opinions with at least half of our team. Some definitely challenge my personal beliefs, but while I'm at work, it's all about our patients and not about me being the judge about someone else's beliefs.

Sometimes, I think about how wonderful it is that we're all so different from each other.
You’re right, as always. I should consider that we do have the freedom to believe whatever we’d like and that I don’t have the right to deny that freedom to anyone else.
Respectful communication is key in a diverse workplace - this is no different for any communications with the Transgender community at UHA.

Consider that you should avoid making assumptions. For example, don't assume that everyone is straight by referring to relationships as only husband and wife or boyfriend and girlfriend pairings. Listen for clues from your co-workers and adopt to their definitions for their individual relationships.

It's up to you to always be inclusive and use the right terms - straight, gay, bisexual or transgender.
To put all of this information into perspective, consider this dialogue:

So, Zachary, what did you do this weekend? I bet you, of all people, did something interesting!
We had a nice weekend, Chanel.
We went to a party with some friends.
What kind of party was it? Did you take a date?
Uh, I have two patients waiting in the reception area.
Sorry, I didn't mean to ask so many questions. I'm glad that you had a good weekend. Let's see who the first patient is.
If privacy is an issue, for any co-worker, respect his/her decision not to share information with you.

And, don't jeopardize your co-worker's trust by engaging in small talk that is only meant to satisfy your own curiosity or prejudice. If it helps, think about a situation where you didn't want to share personal stories with your co-workers - it might have been that you were embarrassed, or maybe you just didn't feel like sharing that day. It's no different for anyone else.
Let’s look at one more dialogue...

I don’t understand why you hired her. What are we going to do about the “bathroom” situation? I’m not going to share the bathroom with her, that’s for sure.
Tim, I understand that you're uncomfortable, but we have to accept everyone as they are - we don't decide who identifies as male or female. The new employee will use the restroom that is appropriate for his identity. It's not up for discussion, but I do need you to put aside your personal feelings on this and be the professional that I hired.
Well, I've already talked to the team, and we don't like where this situation is going.
I’m disappointed that you feel the need to waste time discussing why it’s not okay to be inclusive. Do you remember a time when you felt like an outsider? I bet you didn’t like it. Think about the environment you’re creating with this discussion - it’s not welcoming and it’s not what we want for our organization or our patients and families.
As you know, gossip, rumors and negatively charged discussions can be damaging to the workplace. Our patients and family members want to receive care in an environment that is friendly and where they perceive all of us as a respectful and inclusive team.

Anytime that our team respect is compromised, we risk losing our patients and their ability to trust our work and our attention to their care.

So, be careful about what you say and ask.
So, what can you say, ask or express when talking to or talking about a Transgender co-worker... or a patient?

That’s an interesting question, but it requires you to use **common sense**. Consider what you would say, ask or express to a non-Transgender person – whether he or she is an employee, patient, provider or visitor - and then think about what you say, ask or express that might be considered **appropriate** dialogue at UHA. It’s all about how you choose to filter your dialogue and respect others by keeping personal beliefs and opinions, that don’t belong in the workplace, to yourself.

When you have collected your thoughts about how you would handle communications with a non-Transgender person, simply connect that **same** set of guidelines to communications that you have with a Transgender person. It really is that easy and, most importantly, it’s the right thing to do.

Don’t forget that you can always contact Human Resources for additional information about these topics.

**Let’s look at this more closely...**
THAT’S A LOT TO THINK ABOUT.

Remember, only you can tell your life story.

So, be respectful of the life stories of those around you.

You may not agree or you may not fully understand someone else’s choices, but you must be inclusive while working at UHA. We won’t tolerate your intolerance - it’s just not acceptable behavior for our organization.
Again, thank you.

If you'd like to learn more about the topics covered in this module, please use the Resources button (top-right) to access the course resources and web links.
As a reminder, at any time, if you have concerns about handling questions or concerns related to gender diversity, please contact Human Resources.
Before we wrap up, we want to take this
tportunity to remind you about our UHA
Harassment Policy (includes Sexual
Harassment). This policy demonstrates our
guidelines and expectations for professional
work behavior.

In addition, this policy outlines our commitment
to prohibiting retaliation in the workplace. We
must ensure that we do not act out or retaliate
against our co-workers, patients or visitors -
regardless of the circumstances.

Please take time to review the policy by clicking
the Resources link (top right-hand corner of
this window).

You will be required to acknowledge your
acceptance and understanding of the policy
in the online test that follows. Please close
this window to return to HealthStream.