ALGBTIC (Association for LGBT Issues in Counseling) COMPETENCIES FOR COUNSELING TRANSGENDER CLIENTS

Appendix A

The authors of this document recommend the following as a growing list of some of the least restrictive terms available for use with transgender people, which are derived from the Lambda Legal (2008) publication*, Bending the mold: An action kit for transgender youth* and reproduced below with permission of Lambda Legal.

***This document has been modified from the original list compiled in 2008. Please note the asterisks \* for citations.***

**Biological Sex, Sex:** a term used historically and within the medical field to refer to the

chromosomal, hormonal and anatomical characteristics that are used to classify an individual as female or male.

**Classism:** a system of institutionalized practices and individual actions that benefits people who have wealth and power.

**\*4 Cisgender:** A person who identifies as the gender/sex they were assigned at birth.

**Crossdresse**r**:** a person who, on occasion, wears clothing associated with another sex, but who does not necessarily desire to change his or her sex. Many cross dressers identify as heterosexual but can have any sexual orientation.

**Drag King / Drag Queen:** a performer who wears the clothing associated with another sex, often involving the presentation of exaggerated, stereotypical gender characteristics. The performance of gender by drag queens (males in drag) or drag kings (females in drag) may be art, entertainment and/or parody.

**FTM (Female to Male), Transgender Man:** terms used to identify a person who was

assigned the female sex at birth but who identifies as *man*.

**Gender:** a set of social, psychological and emotional traits, often influenced by societal

expectations, that classify an individual as feminine, masculine, androgynous or other.

**Gender Binary:** the concept that everyone must be one of two genders: man or woman.

**Gender Expression:** The outward manifestation of internal gender identity, through clothing, hairstyle, mannerisms and other characteristics.

**\*2 Gender Identity:** An individual’s inner sense of their own gender, of being male, female, something in between, or any other gender.

**\*1 Gender Dysphoria:** *Refers* to discomfort or distress that is caused by a discrepancy between a person’s gender identity and that person’s sex assigned at birth (and the associated gender role and/or primary and secondary sex characteristics) (Fisk, 1974; Knudson, De Cuypere, & Bockting, 2010b). Only *some* gender-nonconforming people experience gender dysphoria at *some* point in their lives.

* Some people experience gender dysphoria at such a level that the distress meets criteria for a formal diagnosis that might be classified as a mental disorder. Such a diagnosis is not a license for stigmatization or for the deprivation of civil and human rights. Existing classification systems such as the *Diagnostic Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)* (American Psychiatric Association, 2000) and the *International Classification of Diseases* (*ICD*) (World Health Organization, 2007) define hundreds of mental disorders that vary in onset, duration, pathogenesis, functional disability, and treatability. All of these systems attempt to classify clusters of symptoms and conditions, not the individuals themselves. A disorder is a description of something with which a person might struggle, not a description of the person or the person’s identity.

**Genderqueer:** a term used by some people who may or may not identify as transgender, but who identify their gender as somewhere on the continuum beyond the binary male/female gender system.

**\*3 Gender Affirming Treatment/ Procedure**: (medical) treatment and procedures, such as cross gender hormone, gender affirming surgeries, etc; which a transgender person may undertake in order to make their bodies more congruent with their gender identity, thus affirming their gender.

**Gender-Nonconforming:** behaving in a way that does not match social stereotypes about gender, usually through dress or physical appearance.

**Gender Role:** the social expectation of how an individual should act, think and feel, based upon the sex assigned at birth.

**Gender Transition:** the social, psychological and medical process of transitioning from one gender to another. Gender transition is an individualized process and does not involve the same steps for everyone. After gender transition, some people identify simply as men or women.

**Hormone Therapy:** administration of hormones and hormonal agents to develop

characteristics of a different gender or to block the development of unwanted gender

characteristics. Hormone therapy is part of many people’s gender transitions and is safest when prescribed and monitored by a health care professional.

**MTF (Male to Female), Transgender Woman:** terms used to identify a person who was assigned the male sex at birth but who identifies as female.

**Oppression:** the acts and effects of domination of certain groups in society over others, caused by the combination of prejudice and power. Systems of oppression include racism, sexism, homophobia and transphobia.

**Post-Op, Pre-Op, Non-Op:** terms used to identify a transgender person’s surgical status. Use of these terms is often considered insulting and offensive. Surgical status is almost never relevant information for anyone except a transgender person’s medical providers.

**Privilege:** social and institutional advantages that dominant groups receive and others do not. Privilege is often invisible to those who have it.

**Racism:** a system of institutionalized practices and individual actions that benefits white

people over people of color.

**Sexism:** a system of institutionalized practices and individual actions that benefits men over women.

**\*2 SOFFA:** Significant Others, Friends, Family, and Allies.

**\*2 Transgender or Trans:** An umbrella term that encompasses a wide range of people whose gender identity or expression may not match the sex they were assigned at birth.

**Transphobia:** the irrational fear of those who challenge gender stereotypes, often expressed as discrimination, harassment and violence.

**Transsexual:** a person who experiences intense, persistent, long-term discomfort with their body and self-image due to the awareness that their assigned sex is inappropriate. Transsexuals may take steps to change their body, gender role and gender expression to align them with their gender identity.

\*1 World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH) Standards of Care for the Health of Transsexual, Transgender, and Gender non-conforming people Version 7

\*2 Forge <http://forge-forward.org/>

\*3 Report of the Gender DynamiX Trans Health & Advocacy Conference 2012

<http://www.genderdynamix.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/A4-Medical-Conference-Report-Full.pdf>

\*4 Sexual Violence and Gender Violence Resources for Trans\* People and Allies

<http://outboulder.org/sites/default/files/Trans-survivors-brochure.pdf>