

How to Support a Neurodivergent Person Seeking Gender-Affirming Care

Neurodivergent trans, Two-Spirit and non-binary people face unique challenges when seeking health care. These can include anxiety, sensory overload and difficulty communicating.

As a support person, you can have a positive impact on someone's health care journey. This handout provides ideas for supporting neurodivergent people in common gender-affirming care scenarios.

Initial consultation for hormone therapy

Challenge

Many people, both neurodivergent and neurotypical, struggle to process complex medical information. It can also be difficult to get medical professionals to understand our concerns.

Ways you can support

- Help them prepare a list of questions to ask the health care provider.
- Go with them to the appointment. Support them and help communicate if needed.
- Take notes in the appointment. It will help to record key info.
- Advocate for their needs. For example, people with sensory sensitivities may struggle with needles, and concerns like this may be taken more seriously when backed up by a second person.

Resources

- [How to Start Hormone Therapy](#)
- [Understanding Referrals](#)

Taking hormones

Challenge

Some people may need help managing effects and tracking their meds.

Ways you can support

- Assist them to create a medication schedule and set reminders.
- Help them to report any side effects or concerns to their health care provider. Ways to support include encouragement, "body doubling" (sitting with someone as an accountability partner) as they communicate with their provider, or co-drafting an email.
- Provide reassurance during potential emotional fluctuations or other effects.

Resources

- [Estrogen-Based Hormones](#)
- [Testosterone-Based Hormones](#)
- [Injecting Hormones](#)
- [Hormone Shortages](#)

Preparing for and recovering from surgery

Challenge

Many people find it difficult to understand complex surgical procedures and potential risks. After surgery, many people struggle with sensory sensitivities, emotional fluctuations, or recovery tasks.

Ways you can support

- Research surgical referral pathways. Help them make informed decisions.
- Assist them to prepare for surgery. This can include scheduling and attending appointments, such as consultations, tests, and hair removal. It also can mean gathering supplies and storing meals for the recovery period.
- Help them adhere to a pain medication schedule. Neurodivergent people may have a higher or lower pain sensitivity than average, and may find it more difficult to sense when to take pain medication.

Resources

- [Gender-Affirming Surgery](#)
- [Understanding Referrals](#)

Coping with social and emotional challenges

Challenge

Many trans, Two-Spirit and non-binary people experience dysphoria, anxiety, or depression due to the stressors of existing in society as a gender diverse person.

Ways you can support

- If they are interested in therapy or counselling, research options for gender-affirming therapists. If appropriate, help book initial appointments and talk through whether the person is satisfied with the therapist.
- Provide emotional support and validation.
- Help them connect with supportive communities and resources.

Resources

- [Finding a Counsellor](#)
- [Peer Support Directory](#)

For more information, visit transcarebc.ca

This document is designed for informational purposes only and should not be taken as medical advice. Please discuss any ongoing questions or concerns with your health care team.

