

## Letter Writing for Gender Affirming Care June 16, 2021

### Presenter Bio

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Dr. Kristen Eckstrand is a psychiatrist and neuroscientist with expertise in child and adolescent mental health, LGBTQ health, and the impact of trauma exposure on the brain and mental health with a focus on trauma experienced by vulnerable populations. Dr. Eckstrand is recognized nationally for their work in expanding health care professional education and health care systems to address the health needs of LGBTQ communities. Dr. Eckstrand has published on this topic widely and consults with various healthcare researchers and organizations related to LGBTQ health and organizational quality improvement.

### Name and Narrative Description of your Presentation.

#### Letter Writing for Gender Affirming Care

Letter writing is a gatekeeping practice imposed by healthcare systems that places stress on individuals seeking gender affirming care. While mental health professionals are asked to write these letters, few receive formal training in writing these letters, often resulting in refusal of professionals to write letters and delay in gender affirming services. The purpose of this session is to discuss the purpose of letters for gender affirming care in the current healthcare climate and train health professionals to write effective letters to support individuals' access to gender affirming services. Importantly, this session will discuss how to support an individual's autonomy and maintain the patient/provider relationship during an instance where the provider is a gatekeeper. (Intermediate)

#### Three (3) learning objectives

By the completion of this session, participants should be able to:

1. Discuss the purpose of a letter for gender affirming care in the current healthcare climate
2. Identify the components of a letter for gender affirming care
3. Discuss best practices in letter writing to maintain individual's autonomy and support their health

#### Three (3) current (within the past 10 years) peer-reviewed publications that support the evidence base for the content of your presentation

(1) Hembree, W.C., Cohen-Kettenis, P.T., Gooren, L., Hannema, S.E., Meyer, W.J., Murad, M.H., Rosenthal, S.M., Safer, J.D., Tangpricha, V. and T'Sjoen, G.G., 2017. Endocrine treatment of gender-dysphoric/gender-incongruent persons: an endocrine society clinical practice guideline. *The Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism*, 102(11), pp.3869-3903

(2) Coleman, E., Bockting, W., Botzer, M., Cohen-Kettenis, P., DeCuypere, G., Feldman, J., Fraser, L., Green, J., Knudson, G., Meyer, W.J. and Monstrey, S., 2012. Standards of care for the health of transsexual, transgender, and gender-nonconforming people, version 7. *International journal of transgenderism*, 13(4), pp.165-232.

(3) Budge, S.L., 2017. Barriers, challenges, and decision-making in the letter writing process for gender transition. *Psychiatric Clinics*, 40(1), pp.65-78.

(4) Budge, S.L., 2015. Psychotherapists as gatekeepers: An evidence-based case study highlighting the role and process of letter writing for transgender clients. *Psychotherapy*, 52(3), p.287.