

## How to Navigate Common Client Questions

***Client Question: “Why are you asking me these questions?”***

Script: “We ask because your health is determined by many factors such as gender, education, income, and more. So by answering these questions, they help us provide the best care possible. For example, by asking about your income we can provide programs and services that meet your needs.”

***Client Question: “What does this have to do with my care?”***

Script: “We want to provide care based on our client needs. We don’t want to make any assumptions about client needs or who our clients are. For example, when we know a client doesn’t speak English, we can get interpreter services.”

***Client Question: “Why is this necessary? I’m just here for a quick appointment.”***

Script: “This information is for both now and future visits as well”.

***Client Question: “This has nothing to do with me - so what if I say (e.g. straight)?”***

Script: “We ask everyone these questions. Depending on the client’s response, we may be able to refer them to services or talk to them about any needs they have.”

***Client Question: “Do I have to answer these questions?”***

Script: “No, it’s completely voluntary and you can choose ‘Prefer not to answer’ to any or all of the questions.”

***Client Question: “Who will see this information?”***

Script: “Your provider(s) will see this information, and it will become part of your medical record. In addition, a few other staff will have access to this information. Your information is confidential and protected by law, just like all of your other health information.”

“If used in research, data from all clients is grouped together and no one will be able to identify individuals.”

***Client Question: “How will this information be used?”***

Script: “Your provider(s) will use this information to help meet your health care needs. In addition, gathering this information from all clients allows the health center to see if there are gaps in care or services across different populations. Learning this tells us if we need to improve the care we give to our clients.”

## How to Navigate Asking Sociodemographic Questions

***LANGUAGE: What language would you feel most comfortable speaking in with your health-care provider?***

Script:

“If you don’t feel comfortable speaking in English/French we can request a translator.”

***BORN IN CANADA: Were you born in Canada?***

Script:

“If you are new to Canada, we can refer you to programs and services for newcomers.”



***RACIAL/ETHNIC GROUP: Which of the following best describes your racial or ethnic group?***

Script:

“There are certain risk factors that depending on your race, for example, you may be at higher risk for certain health conditions. And so knowing that information can be really important to make sure that we provide the best care.”

***DISABILITY: Do you have any of the following?***

Script:

“We can plan for better care when we know what your needs are. This includes any disabilities you might have.”

***GENDER: What is your gender?***

Script:

“We can use this information to provide better care for our clients, for example specific medical tests or refer our clients to specific services/programs.”

**\*\*Client responds “Can’t you see I’m a man?” or “Isn’t it obvious?”\*\***

“We don’t want to make any assumptions so we ask everyone.”

**\*\*Client laughs or makes jokes about trans people or others\*\***

“We ask because we welcome everyone here and don’t want to make assumptions.”

***SEXUAL ORIENTATION: What is your sexual orientation?***

Script:

“Learning about sexual orientation will help us to deliver appropriate health services. Some people have different health needs than others.”

“It’s helpful for us to know because we don’t want to assume someone’s sexual orientation when we provide them with care.”

“We like to know in case we can refer clients to LGBTQ2S+ services and/or programs.”

**\*\*Client responds “I’m the normal one”\*\***

“All sexual orientations are normal. Did you mean heterosexual?”

**\*\*Client asks “What is sexual orientation?”\*\***

“Sexual orientation is how a person describes their emotional and sexual attraction to others.”

**\*\*Client laughs or makes jokes about LGBTQ2S+ people or others.\*\***

“Everyone is welcome here and we treat everyone with respect. We don’t make assumptions about our clients.”

***INCOME: What was your total family income before taxes last year? & How many people does this income support?***

Script:

“We ask because we know that income can have an effect on care planning for some clients. For example, we may need to explore options for affordable medications.”



## Plain Language Glossary

### Disability

**Disability** is a physical (your body), mental (your mind) or intellectual (the way you process information) condition that limits your movements, senses or activities. Disability includes:

**Chronic illness** is a disease or health condition that lasts for a long time (e.g. asthma, cancer, diabetes and HIV/AIDS).

**Developmental disability** (also known as intellectual disability) affects your ability to reason, plan, think, communicate, and do everyday social and practical activities/tasks.

**Drug or alcohol dependence** is the feeling that you need drugs or alcohol or are not able to control when you drink alcohol or take a drug.

**Learning disability** affects the way your brain understands, remembers, organizes or uses information. It can create difficulty in the way you listen, speak, read, write and/or do math.

**Mental illness** is a condition that affects the way you feel, behave or think (e.g. depression, bipolar disorder).

**Physical disability** is a condition that affects physical movement.

**Sensory disability** is a condition that affects what you can hear or see (e.g. hearing or vision loss).

### Gender and Gender Identity

**Gender identity** is your sense of self, specifically your sense of being male, female, both, or neither. It may be different from your biological sex (i.e. anatomy, physical body) and includes:

**Intersex** describes people whose bodies, reproductive systems, chromosomes and/or hormones are not easily grouped as male or female.

**Trans Female to Male** is a person who identifies as male but was born as a biological female.

**Trans Male to Female** is a person who identifies as female but was but was born as a biological male.

**Two-Spirit** refers to Aboriginal lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people. It means having both female and male spirits within one person.

### Racial/Ethnic Group

**Race** is a term used to separate people into groups based on skin colour and other physical traits. 'Race' is not based on biology but on differences that society has decided are important. These differences can be used to treat people differently.

### Sexual Orientation

**Sexual orientation** is who you are attracted to romantically. People define their sexual orientation in various ways including:

**Bisexual** is a person who is attracted to both men and women.

**Gay** is a person who is attracted to people of the same gender; for example, a man who is attracted to men or a woman who is attracted to women. This term is used by both men and women although many women prefer to be referred to as 'lesbian'.

**Heterosexual ("straight")** is a person who is attracted to the opposite gender; for example, a man who is attracted to women or a woman who is attracted to men.

**Lesbian** is a woman who is attracted to other women.

**Queer** is a term used by people who reject traditional sexual orientations.

**Two-Spirit** refers to Aboriginal lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people. It means having both female and male spirits within one person.

\*\*\*The script and plain language glossary have been adapted from materials produced by the "We ask because we care" initiative.\*\*\*

