

DETERMINANTS OF BEHAVIOR CHANGE

Guidance for Counseling Transgender & Gender-Diverse Individuals

Each determinant below serves as a prompt to facilitate tailored, respectful, and effective conversations. Always personalize your approach to honor each individual's unique experiences and goals.

INTERSECTIONALITY CONSIDERATION

Always approach discussions recognizing intersectionality (such as race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, disability, or culture), and how these dimensions further shape each individual's health behaviors and determinants.

PRACTITIONER SELF-REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- "Am I making assumptions based solely on gender identity rather than listening openly?"
- "Am I mindful of intersectionality and unique individual experiences in my discussions?"
- "Am I facilitating a safe and affirming space for dialogue and collaboration?"

MOTIVATING DETERMINANTS

Perceived Risks

- Invite open dialogue about the individual's specific health concerns and perceived risks.
- Sensitively explore any personal experiences or anxieties related to physical or mental health, acknowledging diverse stressors that may relate to gender identity, transition experiences, or societal factors.

Perceived Benefits

- Discuss personally meaningful outcomes the individual hopes to achieve through behavior change (e.g., increased comfort in their body, hormone optimization, enhanced well-being through food). Tailor discussions to how these benefits specifically relate to their identity or personal life context.

Self-Evaluation

- Support the individual in evaluating how their current behaviors align with personal health, transition goals, or overall well-being.
- Ask reflective, non-judgmental questions like, "How do you feel your current eating habits or patterns supports your personal goals?"

Perceived Norms

- Discuss any community or social influences impacting relative health behaviors.
- Identify if they have relatable role models or community figures they respect and discuss how these individuals may influence their health choices positively.

Self-Efficacy / Perceived Control

- Reinforce personal agency in making changes aligned with their identity-affirming goals.
- Break down goals into smaller, manageable steps, building confidence through incremental achievements.

Self-Depictions

- Explore how their gender identity experiences may shape their self-image or body acceptance.
- Support cultivation of a positive and affirming self-view through empathetic discussion and affirming practices.

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FACILITATING DETERMINANTS

Knowledge & Skills

- Offer targeted, practical education on nutrition, physical activity, and health management tailored to their specific gender identity needs or transition-related considerations.
- Provide targeted resources and education specific to health issues expressed by the individual.

Positive & Negative Emotions

- Openly address emotional factors that may motivate or discourage specific health behaviors, tailored to personal experiences around gender affirmation or transition.
- Provide emotional validation and explore constructive responses to negative emotions or fears.

Goal-Setting & Action Planning

- Collaboratively create personalized, realistic, and identity-aligned food and well-being related behavior change plans.
- Facilitate the formulation of implementation intentions with specific, achievable actions relevant to their unique circumstances.

Coping Self-Efficacy

- Discuss personalized coping strategies they've found helpful in navigating stressors, stigma, or health challenges.
- Provide additional resources or coping skills relevant to their expressed needs or challenges.
- Support developing tailored coping strategies for barriers directly related to their experiences.
- Suggest affirming resources or specialized networks for additional support.

Coping Strategies

- Personalize coping strategies to address specific stressors such as societal pressure, dysphoria, family acceptance, or healthcare experiences.
- Discuss previously successful coping mechanisms and build upon them.

Action Self-Efficacy

- Strengthen confidence through practical skills-building relevant to their personal goals, such as managing hormone therapy side effects, enhancing nutritional adequacy, or addressing specific physical activities.

Self-Regulation & Action Control

- Introduce personalized self-monitoring methods such as journals, apps, or mindfulness exercises that resonate personally and culturally.
- Provide actionable strategies to manage unique stressors like dysphoria, social transition, or navigating affirming healthcare.
- Strengthen self-management capabilities with identity-conscious meal planning, physical activity goals, or mindfulness strategies tailored to personal circumstances.