



Creating an LGBTQIA+ Inclusive Environment

Creating an inclusive environment in a dental practice (or any healthcare setting) ensures all patients feel welcomed, respected, and understood. Here's a checklist to help guide practices in fostering inclusivity.

Physical Environment

- Signage: Display clear, inclusive signs. Consider signs indicating that your practice is an LGBTQIA+ safe space.
 [Download a sign](#) to place in the front window or reception area.
- Gender-neutral restrooms: Establish or label restrooms as gender-neutral.
- Inclusive visuals: Ensure that brochures, posters, and other displayed materials represent diverse groups, including LGBTQIA+ individuals.

Intake and Administrative Procedures

- Inclusive intake forms: Update forms to include diverse gender options, spaces for preferred names, and pronouns.
 Read [this guidance](#) from the National LGBTQIA+ Health Education Center.
- Training for front desk staff: Ensure receptionists and other frontline staff are trained in using inclusive language and managing sensitive information.
- Privacy measures: Implement procedures to protect the privacy of all patients, especially when discussing LGBTQIA+-related concerns.

Staff Training and Awareness

- Ongoing inclusivity training: Offer regular training sessions on LGBTQIA+ inclusivity, cultural competence, and unconscious bias.
- Resource availability: Ensure that staff have access to resources on LGBTQIA+ health concerns, terminology, and best practices.
- Open dialogue: Foster an environment where staff can ask questions, discuss concerns, and share experiences related to inclusivity.

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Patient Care

- Inclusive language: Always use gender-inclusive language, especially when the patient's gender identity or pronouns are unknown.
- Respect pronouns and names: Always use patients' correct pronouns and preferred names.
- Tailored healthcare: Understand and address the specific health needs and concerns of LGBTQIA+ patients.

Feedback and Continuous Improvement

- Feedback mechanisms: Implement and promote tools for patients to provide feedback on their experiences, especially regarding inclusivity.
💡 Check out [this sample feedback form](#) for inspiration.
- Safe space for communication: Ensure patients feel comfortable discussing any concerns and establish a protocol to address feedback.
- Regular review: Periodically review policies, procedures, and the clinic environment to ensure they remain inclusive and up-to-date.
- Engage with the community: Engage with local LGBTQIA+ community groups or advocates to seek advice, collaboration, or training opportunities.

Promotion and External Communications

- Inclusive marketing: Ensure marketing materials, advertisements, and online presence reflect a commitment to inclusivity.
- Transparent policies: Publicly share your commitment to inclusivity, such as on your website or in clinic materials.
- Community involvement: Participate in or sponsor community events, such as Pride Month, to share your support for the LGBTQIA+ community.

Remember, inclusivity goes beyond just checking boxes. This checklist is just a starting point. Continuously seek feedback and be ready to adapt and expand on these initiatives.