

SUPPLIES FOR TRANS/NONBINARY SURVIVORS

Tipsheet #4

After sexual assault or a forensic exam, any survivor may need new clothing or other basic materials. For trans and nonbinary survivors, having access to specific supplies is not only important in maintaining a positive sense of self and mental health, but is also critical to their day-to-day safety.

Each of these items can not only help trans and nonbinary survivors feel more comfortable in their own skin – and reduce the possibility of evoking suicidal or hopeless feelings – but they can also provide greater safety in a world that often responds violently to the breaking of “gender rules.” Obtaining trans-related supplies also offers the opportunity for building relationships with local trans and/or LGBTQ+ organizations, who can offer donations and help locate appropriate suppliers.

To obtain these supplies consider:

- Adding these detailed items to your organization’s donation list.
- Connect with a local trans organization or LGBTQ+ community center. Many have clothing banks and would be glad to donate clothing and other supplies.
- Keep gift cards or cash on hand to buy additional supplies as needed that are not in your supply closet. Direct purchases can be made from the organization or given to survivors to be able to purchase for themselves.

When stocking a supply closet at a sexual assault agency or the location of where forensic exams are conducted (hospitals or separate buildings), consider the following supplies.

1. Clothes, shoes, and underwear in a wide variety of sizes and styles

It’s important for all survivors to have access to clothes that fit their body/size. Many – though not all – trans women are taller, more broad-shouldered, and wear larger clothes and shoe sizes than non-trans women. Similarly, many – though not all – trans men are smaller, wider through the hips and thighs, and wear smaller clothes and shoe sizes than non-trans men. Meanwhile, nonbinary individuals may wear

clothing of many different sizes and styles. Stock clothing marketed as unisex as well as marketed for men and women.

Having access to clothes, shoes, and underwear that match a person's sense of self is of grave importance to most trans and nonbinary people.

{ Further, affirming clothes may help a person avoid harassment or violence, and can be critical to their safety when they leave your agency. }

2. Hats, head coverings, and wigs

Many trans women, trans men, and nonbinary people use hats, head wraps, scarves, and/or wigs to help them look and feel more aligned with their gender identity. Stock a wide variety of knit caps, baseball hats, head scarves, head wraps, and – if possible – wigs that residents may choose from.

3. Toiletries

Toiletries are often unnecessarily gendered. When stocking up on deodorants, shampoos, soaps, toothbrushes, combs, razors, and other regularly used hygiene products, consider buying “unisex” or not overtly gendered products. Scentless products are good to have on hand not only for nonbinary clients but also for anyone with chemical sensitivities. Keep in mind that a person of any gender presentation may need access to razors and menstrual-related products.

{ Keeping all toiletries in one place and accessible to everybody is better for all survivors – trans and nontrans alike – than separating toiletries for people of different genders. }

4. Makeup

For many trans and nonbinary people, makeup can be essential not only for presenting themselves in a way that helps them feel fully themselves but also in providing safety from the disproportionate violence experienced by people who are seen as being gender nonconforming; therefore, including makeup in a shelter's list of toiletries is an important component of being trans-friendly. Be sure to have a variety of makeup for all skin tones and skin types, including foundation – which is often essential for trans women who need to cover facial hair shadows. When soliciting donations for your shelter, explicitly encourage the donation of makeup, specifying foundation and other products for full face coverage.

5. Body shaping & modification supplies

Many trans and nonbinary people use specific items to help their bodies appear and feel more aligned with their gender identity, such as breast forms, hip pads, tucking devices (which flatten the genital area), binders or chest compression shirts, packing devices (which augment a genital bulge), and stand-to-pee devices. These items are not as easy to stock, since they are often expensive, highly personal, and body-specific in terms of sizing, but shelters can maintain a list of local and online trans organizations and stores that carry them, and help trans and nonbinary survivors obtain needed supplies. One additional option to help the survivor maintain safety when leaving after a forensic exam or post-assault visit is to accompanying a survivor home to get their own supplies, or supporting a survivor in having a friend bring them items to your facility while the survivor is still receiving services (before the survivor leaves).

How to make well-stocked, gender-affirming supply closets more possible?

Consider outreach and inclusion by:

- Include gender-affirming supplies as a budget line item in grant proposals and funding requests.
- Specifically outreach and ask donors for gender-affirming supplies.
- Include lists of items needed on your website or other distributed requests for supplies.
- Work with (or shop at) up-cycle clothing stores (For example, Good Will or other local previously-worn businesses.)
- Request clothing supply donations directly from stores or manufacturers. (Some examples include H&M Apparel, Target, The North Face, Bloomingdales, Both&, TomboyX.)
- Request supplies like makeup directly from manufacturing companies (many are overtly trans-affirming and have the ability to provide free supplies to emergency and service organizations). (Some examples include Sephora, Dove, Neutrogena, MAC Cosmetics, Ultra Beauty, Maybelline, Olay, Pandora (jewelry/accessories), Milk Makeup, Malin and Goetz, and JVN.)



This tip sheet is part of a series focusing on medical advocacy.

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