Guidance: Adopting a Patient-Centered Approach to Sexual Health

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Figure 1: Components of a Patient-Centered Approach to Sexual Health Care

INFORMATION & RESOURCES

Sexual health-related information and resources are accessible in multiple languages and formats to meet diverse needs, includingthose of patients who are LGBTQIA+, >50 years old, live with chronic disease or disability, engage in sex work or transactional sex, use substances, have experienced trauma, or require housing or social services.

INCLUSIVE SETTING

A safe, welcoming, and affirming healthcare experience is provided for all patients regardless of their sexual identity, expression, orientation, or history. Care providers and staff avoid stigmatizing language and practices and take an open, supportive, nonjudgmental approach to sexual history discussions.

EMPOWERMENT

Patients are encouraged and given the time to move at their own pace in self-defining gender identity, sexual orientation, and experience, free from assumptions based on their appearance. Shared decision making is the norm, as is respect for patients' rights in making sexual health—related decisions.

PATIENT-CENTERED SEXUAL HEALTH CARE

Sexual health is multifacted and integral to an adult's health and healthcare throughout their lifespan.

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

Care providers recognize all aspects of reproductive health and support patients in safely avoiding, achieving, terminating, or carrying a pregnancy to term through informed decision-making and protection of patients' rights.

HARM REDUCTION

Care providers support patients in recognizing and disclosing potentially harmful activities or experiences, help identify and encourage adoption of manageable options for harm reduction, and link patients to prevention and other services as needed.

WELLNESS

Care providers address not just disease prevention and treatment but also barriers to pleasurable sex and options for harm reduction. Care providers assist patients in managing the effects of chronic disease, disability, or dysfunction that may affect sexual health.