

**Q&A from National Center Webinar:
Gender Inclusion in Fatality Review
April 11, 2024**

Q: Are we doing anything to collect data on gender identity for biological parents?

Thank you for this question. The National Center will consider adding questions that collect the gender identity of the biological parents in a future version of the National Fatality Review-Case reporting System (NFR-CRS).

Q: Currently, gathering information about gender identity and pronouns is challenging, especially without family interviews. What pronouns do you recommend using in meetings when we don't have information about pronouns used?

When the pronouns used by the child, their parents, and/or their caregivers are not known by the review team, the National Center recommends the use of they/them/their pronouns. It is appropriate to use singular pronoun "they" to refer to a person with unknown or unspecified pronouns.

Q: We can more easily obtain data about gender identity from the living. How are you proposing we identify the gender identity of deceased individuals without this becoming a subjective identification?

We appreciate this question. The National Center does not recommend assuming the child's gender identity to complete question A41 in the NFR-CRS ("What was child's gender identity?"). If the child's gender identity is not clearly stated in the records obtained for review (e.g., coroner, medical examiner, law enforcement, school, child welfare), you may select "unknown" for question A41.

We recognize the challenges to collecting gender identity information about people who have died. For example, death investigators are often reliant on the knowledge of the child's family. However, the child may not have been open about their identity to family members. Such challenges are amplified by a lack of training for death investigators in eliciting gender identity information from friends and family in an accurate and sensitive way (Blosnich, et al., 2022; Haas, et al., 2019).

Therefore, a great place to start is supporting training and education for the improved collection of gender identity information during the death investigation. Find information about one available training at <https://www.lgbtmortality.com/training>. In addition, some fatality review programs and investigative agencies have developed death scene investigation tools that

include questions about gender identity, encouraging investigators to attempt to document this information. For example, the El Paso County, Colorado Coroner's office trained their investigators on the collection of gender identity and added this data point to standard death scene investigation forms. By doing so, more consistent data were collected, and subjectivity was reduced (Colpe, et al., 2024).

Resources:

1. Blosnich JR, Butcher BA, Mortali MG, Lane AD, Haas AP. Training death investigators to identify decedents' sexual orientation and gender identity: a feasibility study. *The American journal of forensic medicine and pathology*. 2022;43(1):40-5. <https://doi.org/10.1097/PAF.0000000000000705>
2. Haas AP, Lane AD, Blosnich JR, Butcher BA, Mortali MG. Collecting sexual orientation and gender identity information at death. *American journal of public health*. 2019;109(2):255-9. <https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2018.304829>
3. Colpe L, Blair JM, Kurikeshu R, Mack KA, Nashelsky M, O'Connor S, Pearson J, Pilkey D, Warner M, Weintraub B. Research, practice, and data informed investigations of child and youth suicide: A science to service and service to science approach. *Journal of safety research*. 2024;88:406-13. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsr.2023.12.005>