



Beyond the Turkey Baster

Preconception Counseling & Fertility Care Redesigned

Beyond the Turkey Baster



Janine R. Stiles, CPM

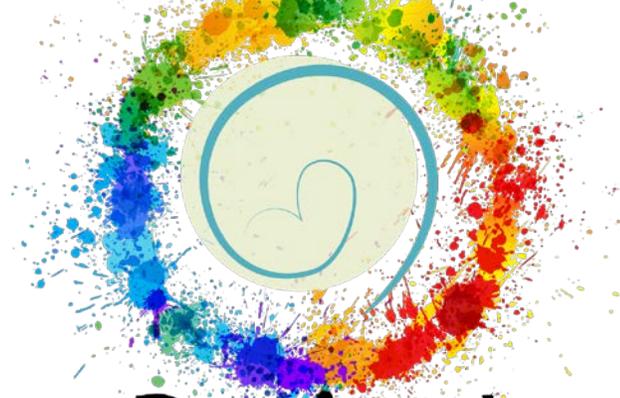


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Cofounder of
Queer Birth
Project

Queer Birth



Project

**Serving LGBTQIA Families and the professionals that serve them,
during family building and early parenting.**

www.queerbirthproject.com

Beyond the Turkey Baster

Of note – Mandala Midwifery Care recognizes that today we are on occupied territory of the Dakota people, who have been stewards of this land for generations.

Introductions - Who's in the room today?

Topics for Today

- Family / Relationship Dynamics to Consider
 - Actions to Take Before Providing Pre-conception Counseling to LGBTQIA folks
 - Preconception Counseling Additions for LGBTQIA Folks
 - Insemination Options & Guidance
 - Proper Referral
 - Further Resources and Action Steps
-
- Note – we won't be covering Ally 101 type conversations and recommendations during this presentation. Conference attendees had other opportunities for that during the conference and will find resources for that at the end of this presentation.

Terminology

Ally: A person who actively works to interrupt and eliminate all forms of oppression, such as ableism, ageism, anti-semitism, biphobia, classism, homophobia, racism, sexism, transphobia, and xenophobia, among others. An ally can be motivated by self-interest, a sense of moral obligation, and/or a commitment to foster social justice.

Cultural Competency: Ability to interact effectively with those from different backgrounds and cultures.

Cisgender: Umbrella term for those whose gender expression and/or gender identity is congruent with their sex assigned at birth or whose gender is validated by the dominant culture.

IBPOC: Acronym that stand for Indigenous, Black, People of Color

Intersectionality: The interconnected nature of race, class, gender, sexuality, etc as they apply to a person or group of people in regards to the complex way discrimination or marginalization can overlap, combine or amplify based on multiple identities.

LGBTQIA: Acronym that stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Assexual.

Queer: Reclaimed derogatory slang for marginalized gender and sexual communities. Sometimes used as an umbrella term for LGBT communities, as in, "my queer support group has been going well..." Sometimes used as a personal identity, as in "I am queer, meaning I am attracted to people of all genders." Not accepted by all who identify as LGBTQIA.

Transgender: Umbrella term for those whose gender expression or gender identity is not congruent with their sex assigned at birth and/or whose gender is not validated by the dominant culture.

IUI: Intrauterine insemination also sometimes called Artificial Insemination (AI) or Alternative Insemination (AI). Procedure where a sperm sample is deposited in the uterus, near the fallopian tubes by way of a catheter passed through the cervical opening.

ICI: Intracervical insemination. Procedure or process by which a sperm sample is placed in close proximity to or just inside the cervical opening.

ART: Assisted Reproductive Technology. Encompasses a variety of procedures to aid in pregnancy, the most common known is IVF

IVF: In vitro fertilization. A procedure by which sperm and egg are matched up outside the body forming an embryo that is then placed inside the uterus for possible implantation and pregnancy.

Ways
LGBTQIA
People Grow
Their Families

- Adoption
- Fostering/Fostering to Adopt
- Surrogacy – Traditional and Gestational
- Conception

What do LGBTQIA Families Look Like?

- There are lots of ways to be LGBTQIA, queer, gay, trans, gender fluid, etc. – open your heart and mind to the diversity of our community.
- Sexuality can be fluid.
- People may be in varying states of coming out and in varying states of gender identity.
- Those primarily seeking preconception counseling
 - Lesbian couples
 - Couples where one or both identify as bisexual (some times both have a uterus and sometimes one has a uterus and one produces sperm)
 - Couples where one or both are trans men
 - Couples comprised of a trans man and a trans woman
 - Single parents by choice who also happen to be gay
 - Those looking to open their hearts and grow their families, including all joys and challenges having kids entails.....just like everyone else!

LGBTQIA
Families:
Cisgender Gay
Dads, family
formed through
surrogacy



Neil Patrick Harris and his husband, David Burtka, formed their family through the use of a surrogate and each of their genetic material.

LGBTQIA
Families:
Cisgender
Lesbians, family
formed through
infant adoption,
conception &
fostering-to-
adopt



Rosie O'Donnell and her first wife, Kelli Carpenter, adopted three children and Kelli gave birth to one of their children. Kelli and Rosie tried to foster to adopt in Florida but were denied adoption of a foster daughter due to their sexual orientation. Rosie also adopted a daughter with her second wife, Michelle Rounds.

LGBTQIA
Families:
Cisgender
Lesbians, family
formed through
conception



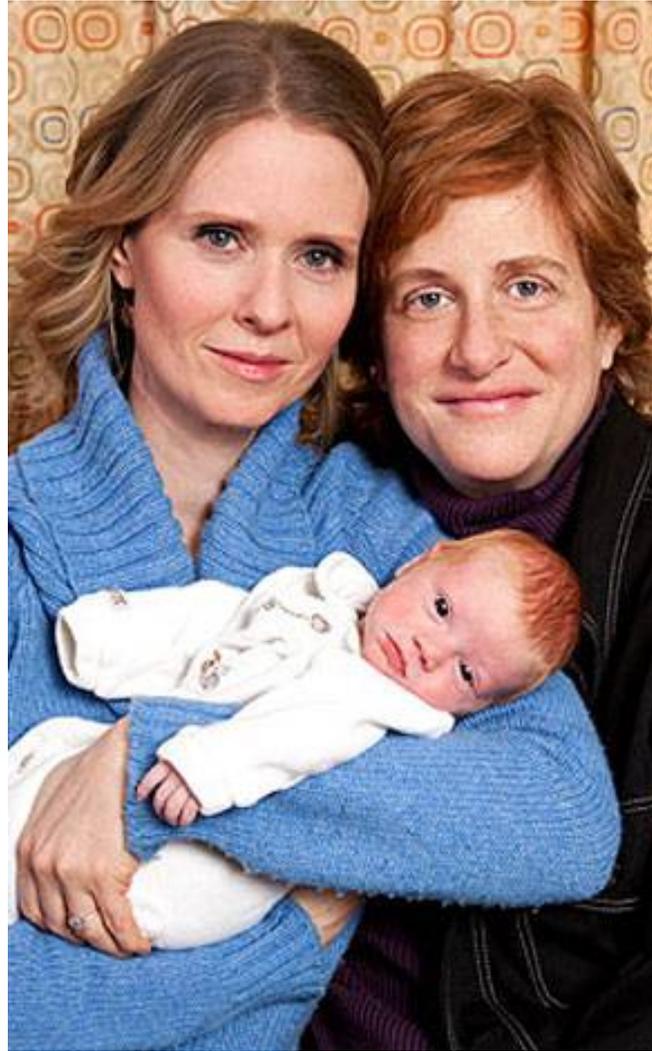
Wanda Sykes
and her
wife, Alex
Niedbalski, have
twins who Alex
conceived and
carried.

LGBTQIA
Families:
Cisgender Gay
Dads, family
formed through
adoption



Dan Savage and his husband, Terry Miller, adopted their son through an open infant adoption.

LGBTQIA
Families:
Bisexual Mom
and Queer Mom,
family formed
through previous
relationship and
conception



Cynthia Nixon has two children from a previous relationship and has a son with her current wife, Christine Marinoni. After fertility care and recurrent losses, Christine conceived and carried their youngest son.

LGBTQIA
Families:
Two Transgender
Dads, kinship
adoption and
conception



Though not Hollywood famous, Trystan Reese and his husband, Biff Chaplow, have gained notoriety during Trystan's pregnancy in 2017 when he was featured on a popular blog as a pregnant man.

What do LGBTQIA Families Look Like?

Questions about families that may present for conception care?

Actions to Take Before Providing Pre-conception Counseling to LGBTQIA folks

1. Take an LGBTQIA ally 101 training AND a trans-specific ally 101 training—be sure any such training includes additional considerations for IBPOC.
2. Continue to seek CEUs to provide culturally aware care to this population.
3. Understand your own biases around gay people becoming or wanting to become parents, especially if they are also IBPOC.
4. Understand your own judgments about different sexualities, different gender identities and non-binary identities.
5. Assess how your entire staff will interact with LGBTQIA patients/clients. Will they run into homophobia or transphobia at the front desk? At the lab? In the exam room? All staff should be trained in LGBTQIA competence.
6. Ask yourself honestly whether you have the knowledge to help LGBTQIA patients navigate how to conceive and grow a baby.

Preconception Counseling Needs

- Respectful and consistent use of gender neutral language at every single interaction.
- Use of proper health and sexual history screenings that ask open-ended questions.
- Judgment-free inquiry about sexual partners and sexual orientation.
- Recognition of the fact that many LGBTQIA folks – especially trans people and LGBTQIA people of color – may have trauma around seeking medical care/guidance.
- True informed consent and shared decision making – be sure to fully explain all necessary testing and exams and always get consent.
- Understand body dysphoria and how your trans and non-binary patients/clients may be affected by it during their family building time.
- Provide facts, evidence, resources – not personal opinions or questions. Don't ask questions simply because you are curious.

Preconception Counseling Needs

Natural Family Planning vs. Infertility

- Most seeking preconception help are often just lacking sperm and don't have fertility issues.
- Nevertheless, due to the high cost (emotionally and financially) of alternative insemination and fertility care, proper assessment of reproductive health is a must.
 - Do they have chronic health issues affecting fertility?
 - Have they been screened for STIs and had routine gyn care?
 - Do they have s/s of PCOS, Endometriosis, Fibroids, etc
 - Are their cycles normal?
 - Is their age prohibitive of easy conception?
 - Are they currently using a birth control method?
 - History of recurrent loss?
- LGBTQIA preconception visit – somewhere between natural family planning visit and fertility consultation.

Insemination Options – No Turkey Baster, Please!

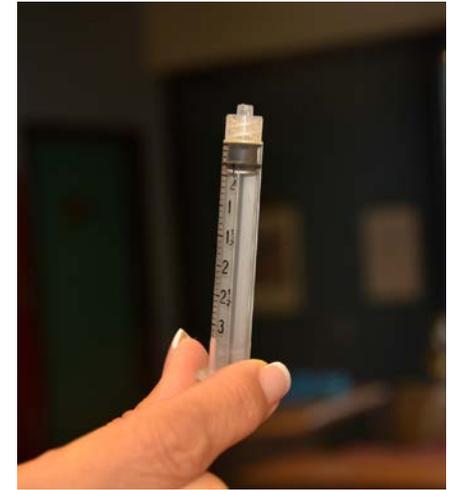
ICI – intracervical insemination,
intravaginal insemination, can be DIY

IUI – intrauterine insemination - midwife,
family practice doc, OBGYN, RE – washed
sperm only!

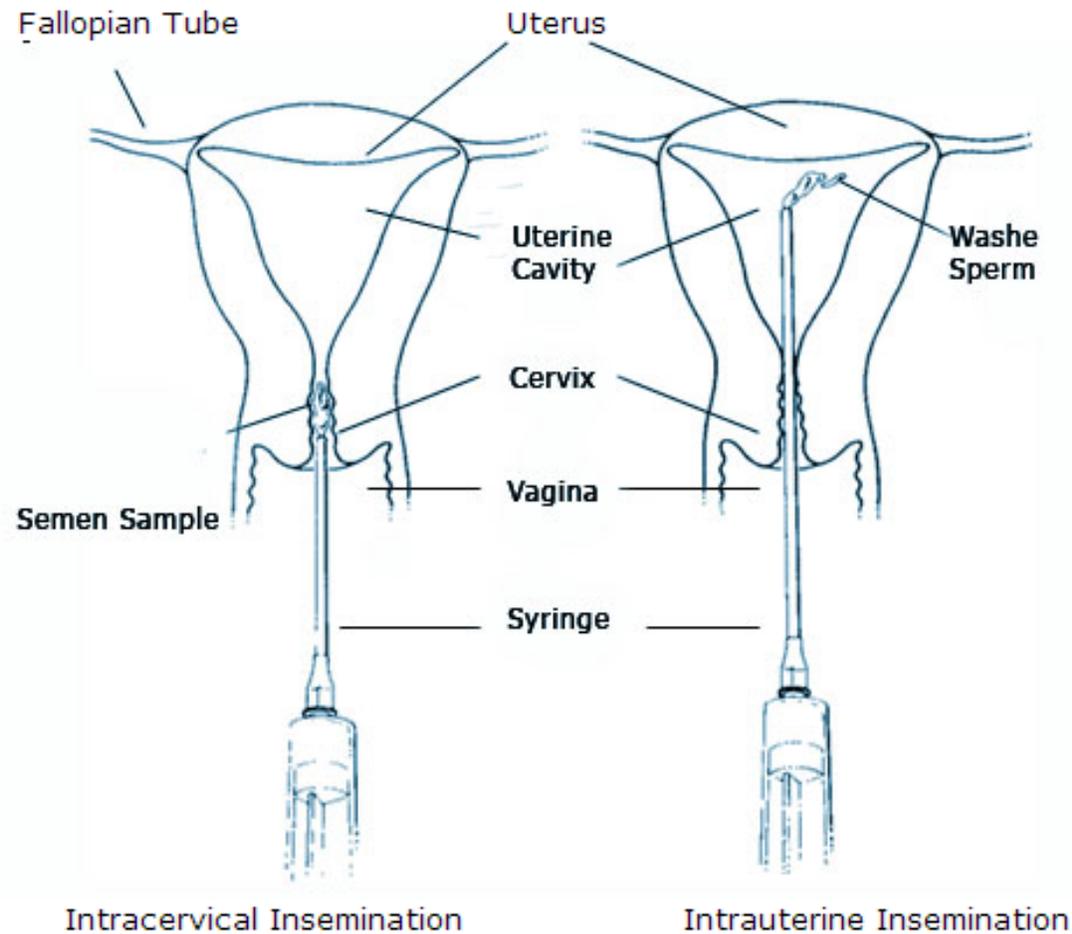
IVF – in vitro fertilization – RE

Reciprocal IVF – RE

Typical equipment used – needle-less
syringes, catheters, speculums



Insemination Options – No Turkey Baster, Please!



Let's Talk Sperm

- Known donor vs. cryo specimens – considerations
 - Availability
 - Cost
 - Legality
 - Open ID/possible relationship with donor
 - Genetic connection for partner – brother, cousin, etc.
- Known donor – STI testing, semen analysis, legal concerns
- Trans women

Let's Talk Sperm

- Cryobank considerations
 - Reputable
 - Queer friendly
 - Testing
 - Cost per vial + shipping
 - Open ID vs. anonymous
 - Provider sign-off – clinic process
 - Fairfax in Roseville



Provider Options

What level of service and options exist for insemination services?

- DIY
- Midwives – some offer in-home services
- Family practice doctors - similar scope to midwives
- OB-GYN
- Reproductive endocrinologists

Cycle Tracking & Testing

- Need to review normal cycle terms and parameters
- Tracking options
 - OPK Tests – LH Surge – a word of caution on digital tests
 - Basal body temp
 - Cervical mucous
 - Mood changes
 - Mittelschmerz (ovulation sensation)
 - Feelings of arousal/dreams
 - US monitoring
 - Fertility apps – tend to be straight focused
- Fertility based labs on cycle day 3, progesterone checks, HSG, Ultrasound – some families want testing and some don't.

How Many Tries?

- Lack of data on healthy, fertile LGBTQIA patients and insemination.
- Data for IUI success rates often based on straight couples experiencing fertility issues
- Anecdotal - on average – 4-6 tries low tech and natural
- Many fertility doctors do 3-4 tries before the next step.
 - “next steps” may include – changing donor, OI medications, IVF, etc.
- Over the age of 40 – should move to IVF more quickly
- MMC protocol – for healthy people with normal cycles, move onto “next steps” after 4 tries.

The Financial Burden

- Insurance coverage is sporadic and usually limited - many insurance plans deny coverage for any treatment considered to be for infertility
- The cost adds up for LGBTQ families (estimated ranges based on feedback from families)
 - Pre-conception counseling - \$90-650
 - Cryobank costs – \$600-1200 per vial including shipping and storage fees.
 - Insemination fees - \$250- \$1000
 - Andrology lab fees – \$50-250
 - Sperm banking, including testing (known donor & trans women) \$1000-2500
 - Misc - ?



Referrals

- LGBTQIA-competent reproductive care is much more than just knowing how to perform insemination. Proper health screening and guidance is a must!
- It's okay to refer to other care providers if you aren't fluent on culturally aware reproductive care.
- Referring trans folks – special considerations
- Refer to a higher level of care if it will expedite the process for the family – e.g., ovulation induction, IVF
- Don't forget about alternative care providers – Mayan abdominal massage, acupuncture, etc.
- Legal referrals

Resources for Families

- Path2Parenting, Family Building Guide
- Family Equality Council
- Maybe Baby Class – partnership between Family Equality Council, local M&FT Trisha Falvey and QBP – every October
- QBP – LGBTQ Childbirth Ed classes, Insemination 101 Classes, New and Prospective Parenting Support Group, etc.
- Mandala Midwifery Care consultations



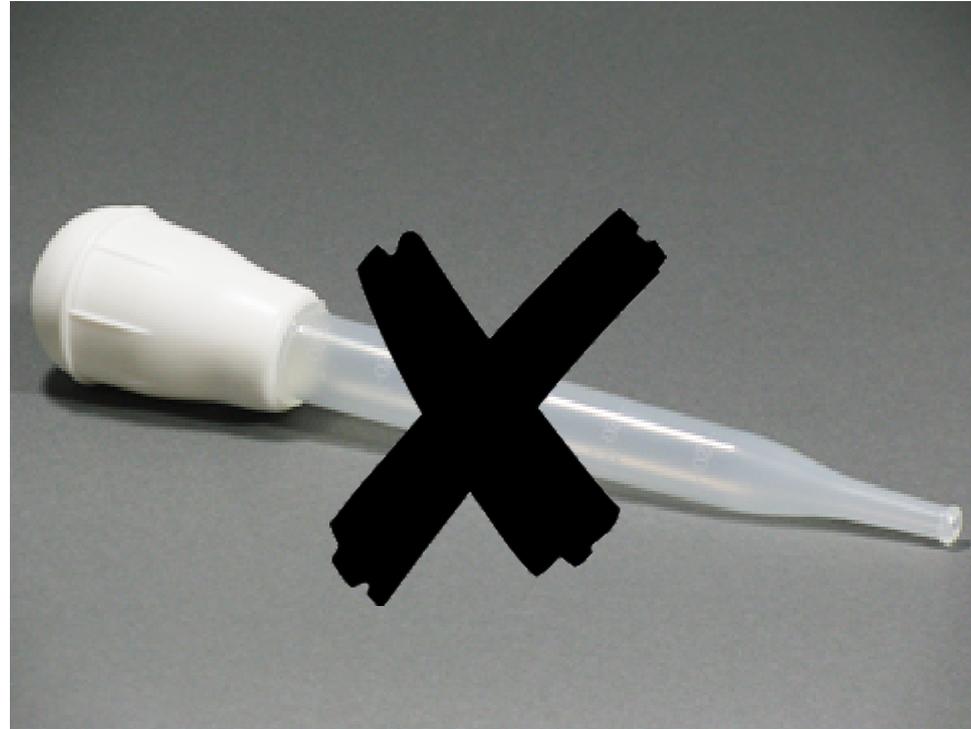
Resources for Providers - Further Learning

- Family Equality Council, Open Door Training Program
- Maia Midwifery – online courses for families and providers
- Fenway Health
- Resolve – The National Infertility Association
- Cardea. Clinical Care for Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Patients, eLearning webinar.
- Center for Excellence for Transgender Health
- WPATH
- QBP – customized trainings on providing culturally aware care during the childbearing year.

Questions

Lessons
Learned

Discussion
Points



Thanks for
Attending
Beyond the
Turkey Baster!



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