

Housing as Gender-Affirming Care

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Abstract

Gender-affirming care (GAC) is often seen as medical and legal interventions that support trans people and affirm their identities (Budge et al. 2024; Restar 2023). This presentation expands GAC to include housing as critical to trans care and trans affirmation. Based on a longitudinal study with 83 LGBTQ youth in South Texas and the Inland Empire of California in the U.S., we show how housing is foundational to experiences of care and affirmation for trans and non-binary youth, especially trans and non-binary youth of color. As we demonstrate, trans youth's housing situations—especially whom the youth are living with—shapes experiences of affirmation, rejection, or ambivalence, whereby youth may experience gender affirmation and/or misgendering by other household members. Notably, having safe and stable housing and having supportive household members were often necessities for youth to access other forms of GAC such as hormones. Youth living in hostile housing situations often moved to more supportive environments before accessing GAC. The cost of housing can also affect youth who choose between paying rent or paying for their hormones. Ultimately, housing shaped when and how trans youth received affirmation and care; scholars need to take seriously how housing shapes these experiences.

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