**Common Therapist Hooks When Working with Trans\* Clients**

* **Getting stuck in problem-solving mode.** What happens if a client doesn’t have access to transition-related medical care? Or they are stuck in a work or living situation that isn’t amenable to transitioning or being out? It’s normal and natural to want to help clients find their way out of these stuck places, but sometimes we can feel stuck ourselves, especially when clients’ problems are related to larger systems of oppression.
* **Fusion with a narrow view of what “transition” means.** Things are starting to change, but most mainstream depictions of trans\* stories still reinforce the gender binary and the importance of “passing.” We, or our clients, or both of us may experience fusion with these rules about gender expression (what wo/men are supposed to look like, sound like, act like, etc.), which may then trigger unworkable action both in and out of session. Clients often equate passing with “success,” freedom, safety, or happiness, which is understandable in a culture characterized by transphobia, homophobia, misogyny, feminine beauty standards, and toxic masculinity.
* **Focusing on gender to the exclusion of other aspects of a client’s life.** Sometimes trans\* clients become extremely focused on their gender identity, expression, transition, or dysphoria, which is understandable. While these issues are no doubt important, our clients are also whole people. They have work, families, communities, interests, hobbies, friends, pets, spirituality, educational goals in addition to their experience of gender. We may get hooked by fears of alienating clients by exploring these other parts of their lives (e.g., “They’ll think I don’t get it or I’m being insensitive if I move the focus away from their gender”).