

TRANS AND GENDER DIVERSE COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Prepared by TransFolk of WA

TERMINOLOGY

Gender: Gender is in the brain, it's how you feel inside when you ask the question "am I male or female?". It is not biology or body parts. It's also important to distinguish between gender and sexuality as they are not the same. Gender is who you are, sexuality is who you love.

Pronouns: Pronouns are words used to refer to a person other than their name. When a trans person comes out they may have new pronouns they want to use. 'They', 'She' and 'He' are all examples of common pronouns. Some people also prefer other pronouns. Read more about pronouns [here](#). *

Cisgender: this is the word for those in the community whose gender identity is the same as the sex they were assigned at birth

Transgender: your gender does not match the one you were assigned at birth.

Gender Non Conforming: an umbrella term to refer to someone who does not conform to the usual norms of gender in society.

Non Binary: an umbrella term for any number of gender identities that sit within, outside of, across or between the spectrum of the male and female binary. A non-binary person might identify as neither male nor female both or other such as terms like gender fluid, trans masculine, trans feminine, agender, bigender or in many other ways on the spectrum.

Gender Dysphoria: this is a persistent distress relating to one's physical sex characteristics or assigned sex not aligning with gender. Lots of transgender people experience this but not all.

AMAB/DMAB: Assigned Male at Birth/Designated Male at Birth

AFAB/DFAB: Assigned Female at Birth/Designated Female at Birth

Transition/Affirmation: the process of moving towards living as their true gender. It may involve only a social transition or can extend to medical and legal changes.

Conversion Therapy: a harmful process of trying to divert the person back to their gender assigned at birth.

FACTS

Transgender and gender diverse people have always existed throughout every society in the world. Due to Transphobia, violence, mistreatment and discrimination many don't feel it's an option to affirm their gender in our society. Transgender people, as a result, are much more likely to experience mental health problems, homelessness and unemployment due to this lack of support and affirmation by the community.

It is reported that the number of school aged young people who identify as trans and gender diverse is currently 1.2% and 2.5%, as cited respectively by the Telethon Kids Institute at the Princess Margaret Hospital in WA and The Royal Children's Hospital Gender Service in Melbourne. This translates into a very large number of school aged children across Australia.

The Trans Pathways Study conducted by the Telethon Kids Institute in WA found that 4 out of 5 transgender adolescents have self harmed, with almost 1 in 2 rate of respondents having attempted suicide. These rates

are much higher than those in the rest of society. Studies have also shown that when a transgender child's identity is affirmed by their peers and family their rates of self harm and suicide fall back to similar rates to that of the general population. Medical advice and research indicates that the best course of action is to affirm a child's gender and let them progress at their own rate as they are ready.

Common causes for concern from parents and society, especially when talking about children, are typically that a child might be too young to know. Research has now shown that transgender children and children in general have quite a fixed sense of gender from the earliest ages and there is very little difference in this for transgender children. Think about at what age you knew you were a girl or boy. There is no medical intervention and no harm in letting a child see what fits them best, given that for young children the only treatment is social transition, whereas the potential harm done by refusing them that opportunity is significant. The outcome for a transgender child is largely impacted by support they receive around them from family and friends.

This is an individual's journey and there isn't a right or wrong way for them to navigate it, it's about listening to the child and following their lead.

PROCESSES

It's worth noting that there is nothing wrong with a transgender child, they are not mentally ill just because they are transgender. However they, like anyone else, can still suffer from mental illness; they are in fact at higher risk for this especially when they aren't surrounded by supportive peers and family. It's therefore appropriate to ensure a young person has access to a counsellor or psychologist experienced in gender diversity to help them through any challenges they may face should they need one. Education on gender diversity isn't standard for psychologists and counsellors so it is advised finding one that has been recommended for gender diverse folk to receive positive and supportive care. There are "conversion therapy" practices, which are destructive to a child's wellbeing.

Social Affirmation

In young children the process is simply to socially affirm their gender. This means letting the child live as their affirmed gender, using the correct pronouns (she/her, he/him, they/them). There will likely be changes to hairstyles, clothing and all that entails affirming their chosen gender. There is nothing medically done.

Puberty Blockers

When Transgender children progress far enough into puberty, this can be quite distressing when their body changes in ways they don't want it to. The only medical intervention made is to commence puberty blockers after a thorough evaluation and review by a medical team. This is like hitting a pause button on puberty and is completely reversible. If the child stops the blockers, their puberty will recommence like normal. For a transgender child this is an important pause, to stop irreversible unwanted changes to the body and give the child more time to mature and be in a position to make educated decisions on future treatment.

Hormone Replacement Therapy

At approximately age 16, should the teen wish to proceed with their medical transition, they can then commence Hormones for their affirmed gender. This will have the affect of letting their bodies develop the way they need them to in line with their affirmed gender. Both the hormone stage and blockers stage are only given after exhaustive reviews by a team of specialist doctors. In WA, this is handled by the Perth Children's Hospital Gender Diversity Service.

Gender Affirmation Surgery

This is not available as an option until the child is over 18. In some circumstances trans men might be able to be considered for breast reduction surgery (Top Surgery) from age 16 up. It's important to note that not all transgender people need or want surgery.

PEER SUPPORT SERVICES:

Trans Folk of WA

TransFolk of WA is a support service for all transgender people and their loved ones in Western Australia.

<https://www.transfolkofwa.org/>

<https://www.facebook.com/TransFolkofWA>

Living Proud

Living Proud provides support, information and resources to WA's gay, lesbian, bisexual, trans and intersex community.

<https://www.livingproud.org.au/>

PFLAG WA

PFLAG Perth have been supporting WA families and friends understand and support their LGBTI loved ones with knowledge, acceptance, love and pride. Every PFLAG in Australia strongly believes in "Keeping Families Together".

www.pflagwa.org.au

<https://www.facebook.com/pflagperth>

Parents of Gender Diverse Children

PGDC exists to provide peer support to those who are parenting trans and gender diverse children of any age. It is founded and run by a group of mums.

www.pgdc.org.au

<https://www.facebook.com/parentsofgenderdiversechildren>

Transcend

Transcend was founded by Rebekah Robertson OAM, the proud mum of Georgie Stone OAM. It was the first parent led peer support network for parents and carers of trans, gender diverse and non-binary kids in Australia and has provided information, advocacy, parent support and community networking to this day

<https://transcendaus.org/>

<https://www.facebook.com/transcendsupport1>

MEDICAL SUPPORT SERVICES:

Perth Children's Hospital Gender Diversity Service

A specialist outpatient service for the assessment and care of children and adolescents experiencing gender diversity issues.

<https://pch.health.wa.gov.au/Our-services/Mental-Health/Gender-Diversity-Service>

QLife (Free LGBTI Peer Support Counselling)

QLife provides Australia-wide anonymous, LGBTI peer support and referral for people wanting to talk about a range of issues including sexuality, identity, gender, bodies, feelings or relationships.

<https://www qlife.org.au/>

1800 184 527

Lifeline

Crisis support. Suicide prevention.

<https://www.lifeline.org.au/>

24 hotline: 13 11 14

Suicide Call Back Service

1300 659 467

HeadSpace

National mental health support service

<https://headspace.org.au/>

Minus18

Champions for LGBTIQIA+ youth

<https://www.minus18.org.au/>

* sourced by Minus18