



In the Pursuit of Happiness

Smart Love Webinars

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FAMILY SERVICES

Gender Identity: How Parents Can Help

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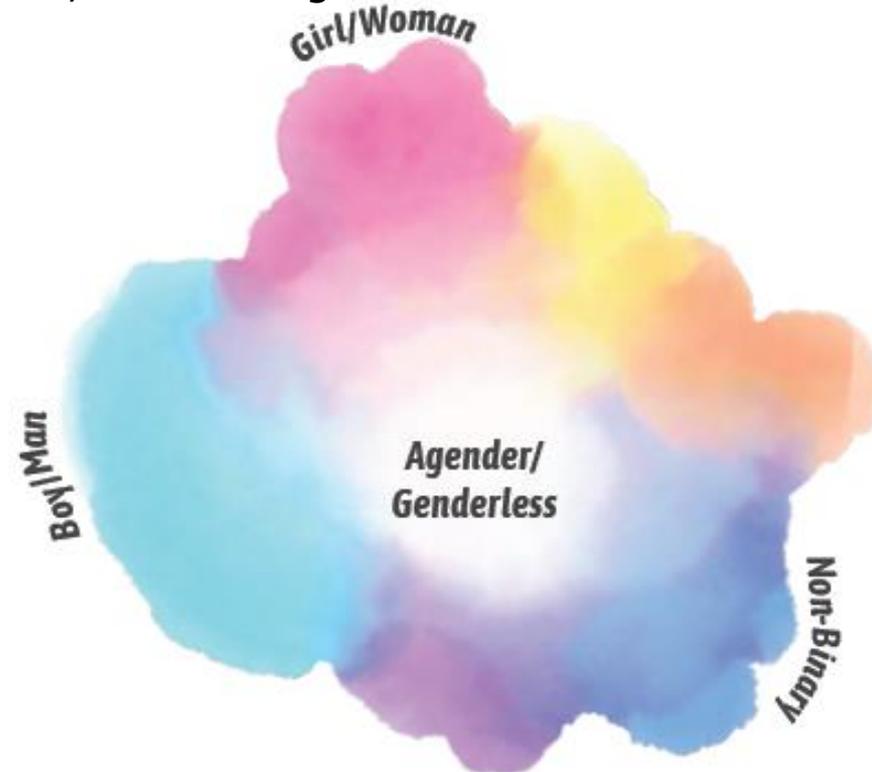
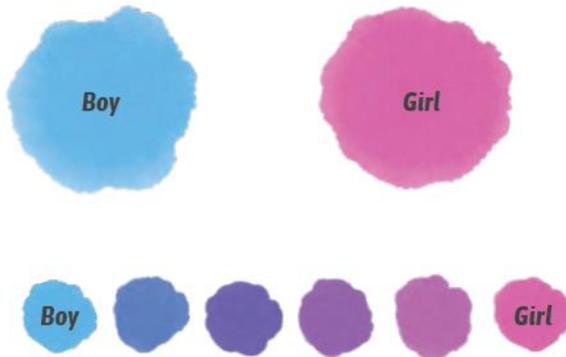
Psych Social Worker, Gender Development Program



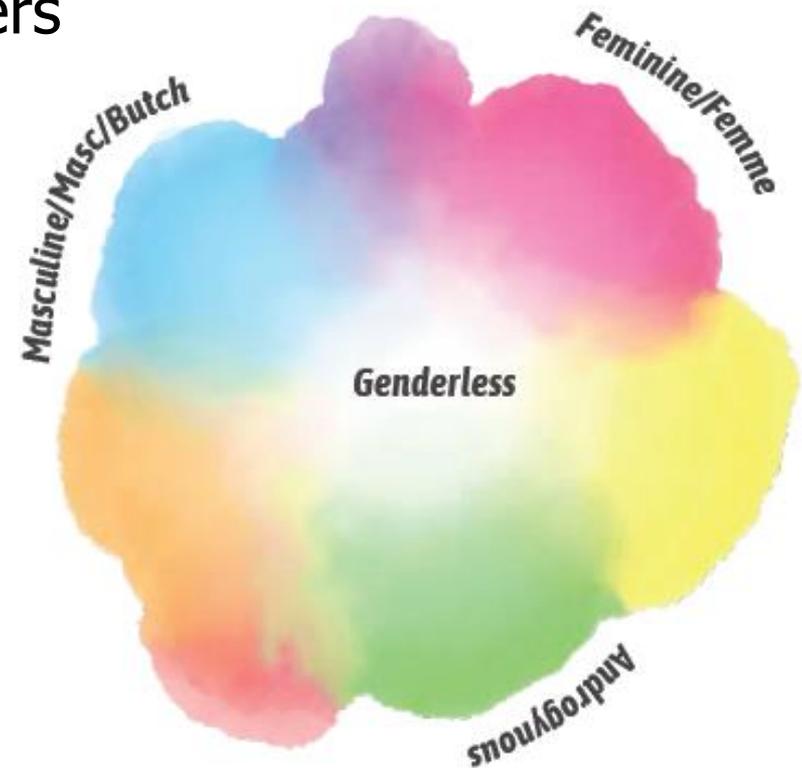
Terminology

related to gender...

- Sex Assigned at Birth/Designated at Birth:
- Female, male, or intersex
- Gender Identity:
- Personal sense of self as a man, woman, or another gender



- Gender Expression: How gender identity is communicated to others
 - name, gender pronoun
 - manner of dress & grooming
 - gait and posture
 - mannerisms and gestures

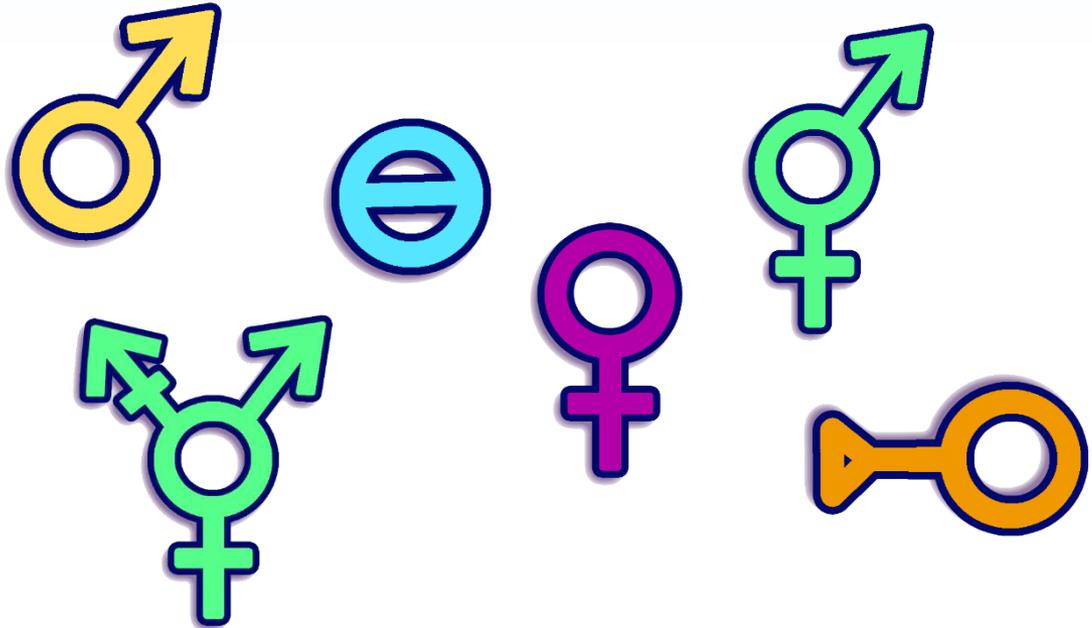


Cisgender (Cis)

Transgender (Trans)

Non-Binary Gender

Agender

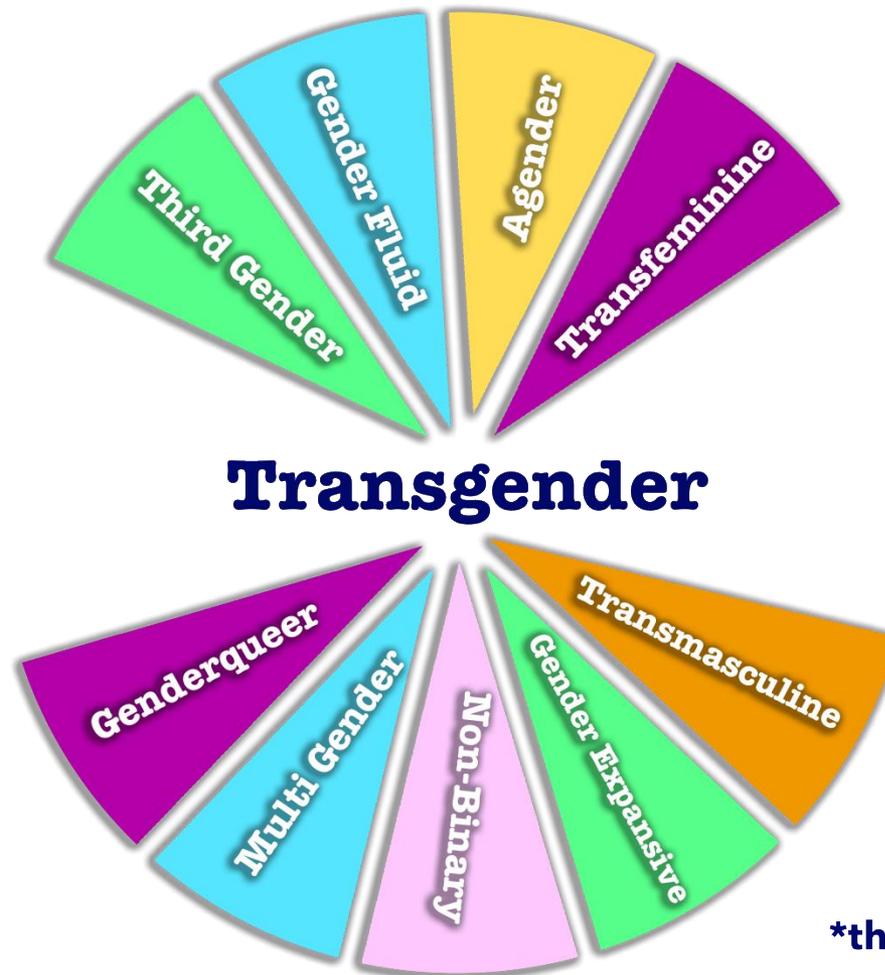


Trans is an adjective, not a noun or a verb:

- Incorrect as noun: "She's a transgender."
- Incorrect as verb: "That person is transgendered."
- Incorrect: "A transgendered person."
- Correct: "A transgender person."**



Transgender Umbrella



***this is not exhaustive**

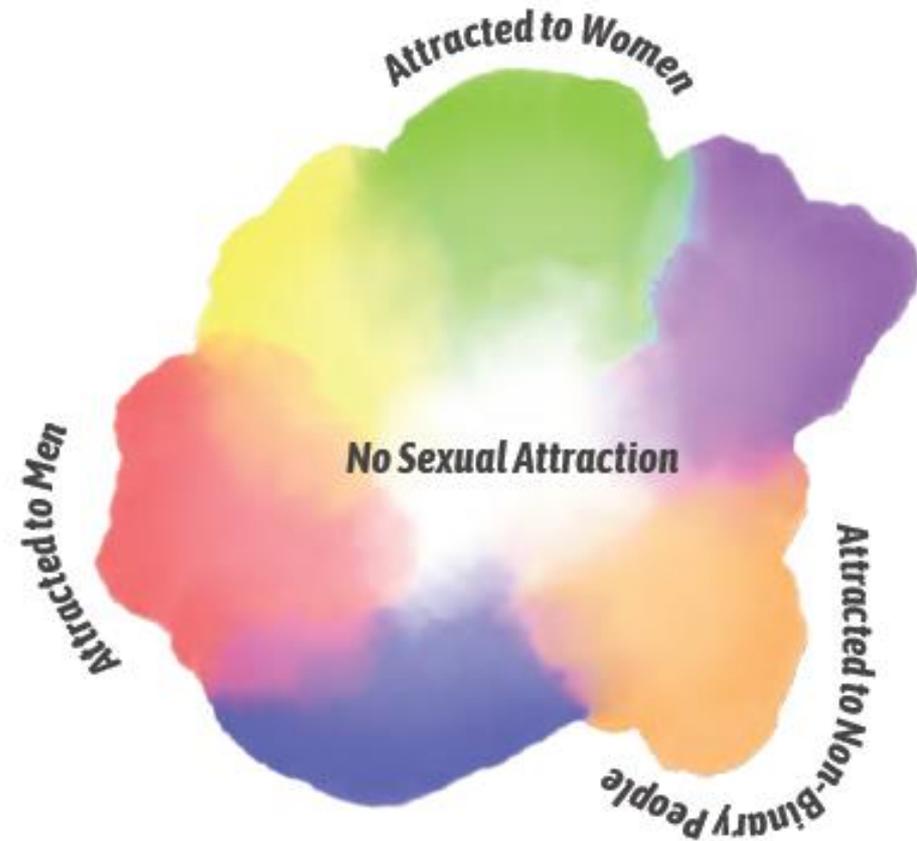
- Sexual Orientation

Sexuality

(who you are attracted to)

Gender Identity

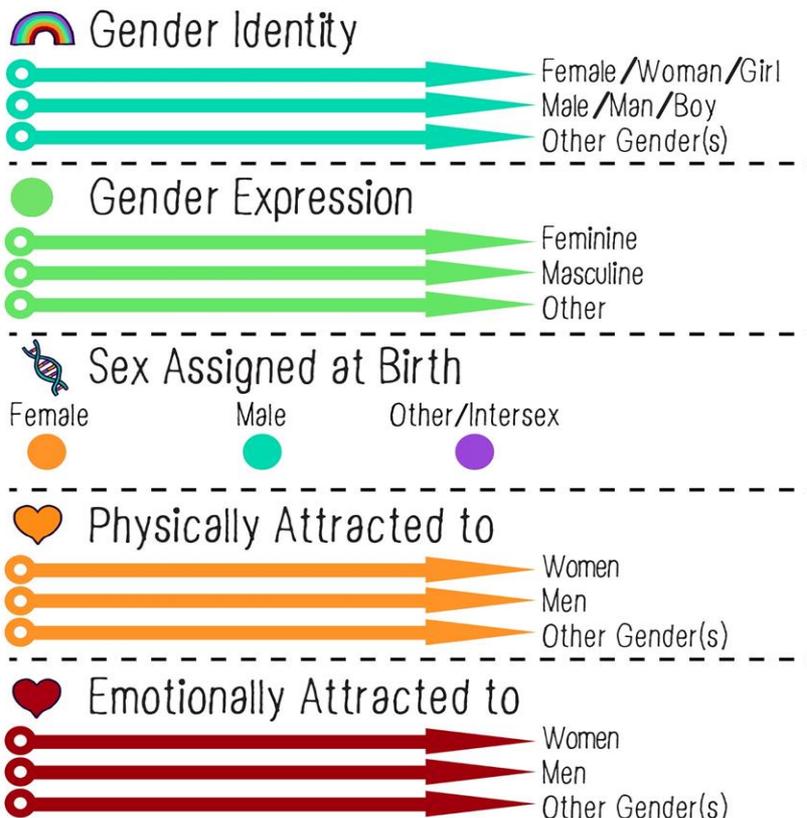
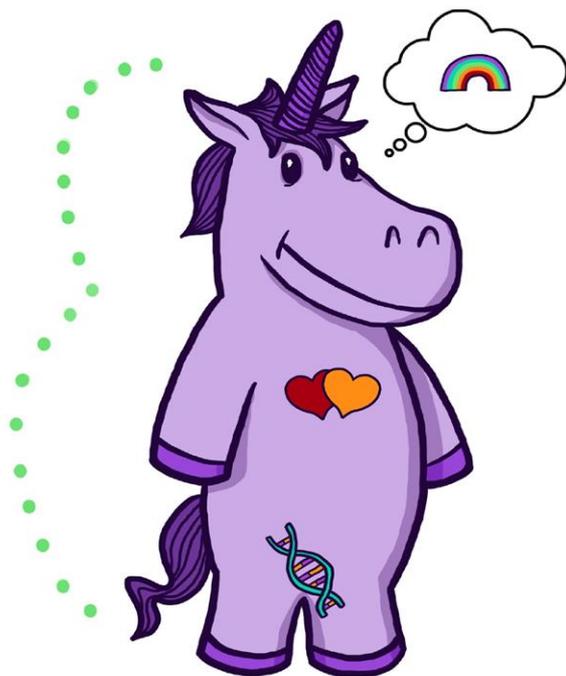
(who you are)



Sex assigned at birth ≠ Gender identity ≠ Sexual orientation

The Gender Unicorn

Graphic by:
TSER
Trans Student Educational Resources



To learn more, go to:
www.transstudent.org/gender

Design by Landyn Pan and Anna Moore

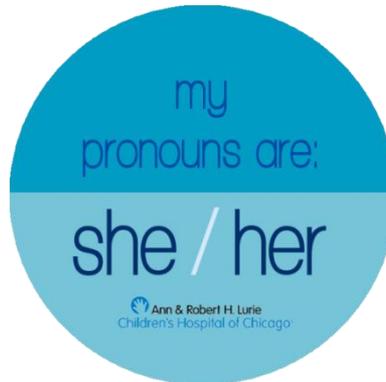
Alternate Conceptualization of Gender

May be helpful in facilitating discussions about gender

- **Gender Identity** - Personal sense of self as a man, woman, or another gender
- **Physical Body/Embodiment** - Degree to which the body is feminized, masculinized, and androgenous
- **Gender Expression** - Clothing, grooming, accessorizing
- **Social Experience of Gender** - Name, pronouns, role-identifying terms, how they are being gendered by others and how that feels

Pronouns

- It's okay to ask people what pronouns they use
 - she/her/hers
 - he/him/his
 - they/them/theirs
 - other pronouns



Misgender/Deadname

1. Apologize
2. Correct yourself
3. Move on
4. Practice!

Impact of Affirming Language

Word-choice and how we frame information matters.

- “My child is a girl.”
- “My child identifies as a girl.”
- “My child believes she is a girl.”

- “My child’s pronouns are they/them.”
- “My child’s preferred pronouns are they/them.”

- “My child’s name is John.”
- “My child’s preferred name is John.”

Gender Identity Development



Gender Development



- Children experiment with gender expression and roles
 - Play (toys, games)
 - Dress
 - Peer affiliation
- Exploring gender is a normal part of development



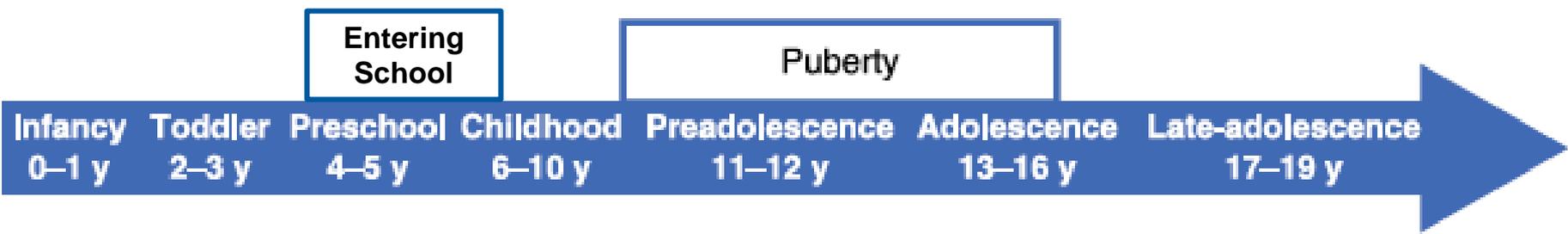
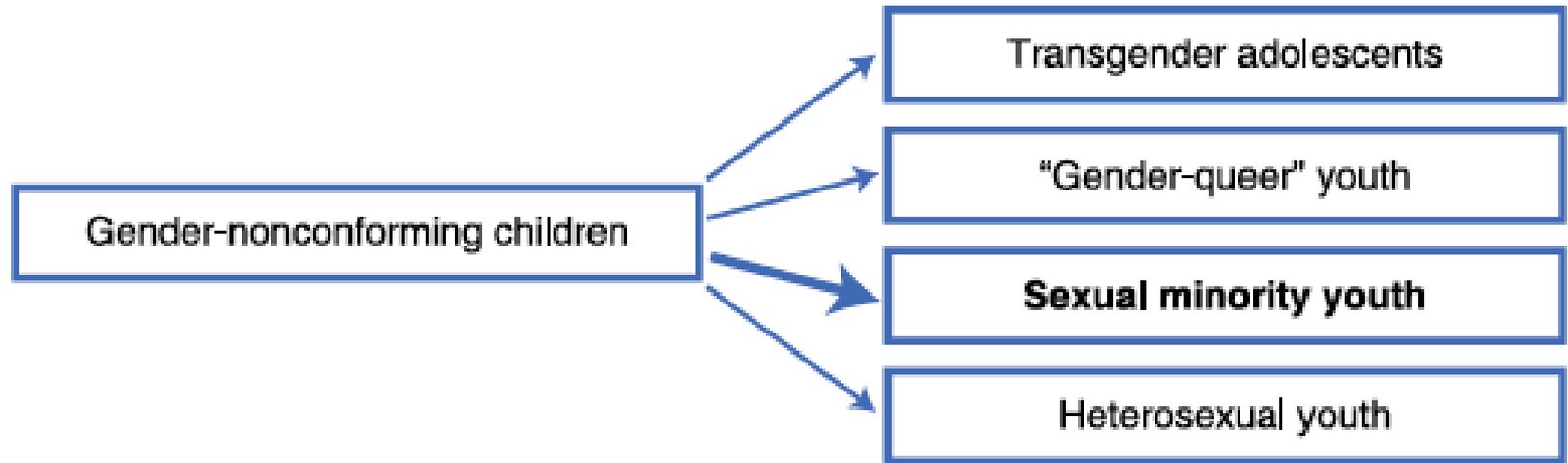
Gender-expansive and Gender-creative

Previously described gender-nonconforming presentation

- Outward expression and behaviors not matching the gender norms or stereotypes of the gender assumed with sex assigned at birth
- Long-standing occurrence (e.g., 6 months or more) – not a fleeting curiosity or interest
- Gender nonconformity is a normative variation of human diversity
- Gender nonconformity is seen throughout history and across cultures



Gender-expansive presentation in childhood



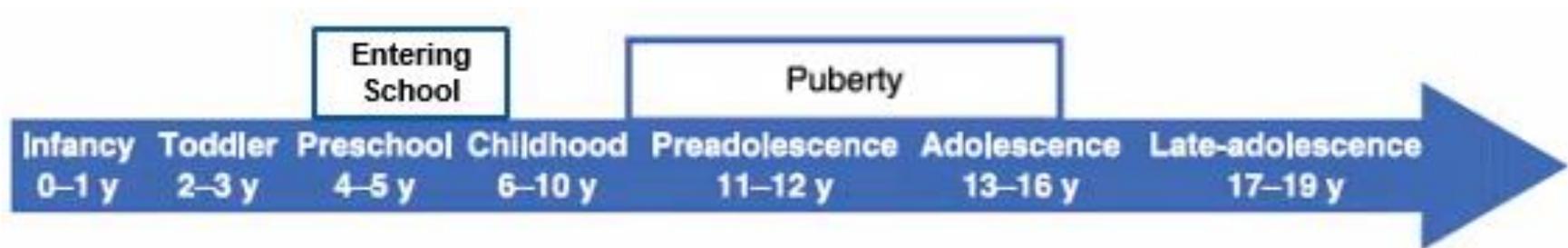
Leibowitz & Telingator, C. Assessing gender identity concerns in children and adolescents: Evaluation, treatments, and outcomes. *Current Psychiatry Reports*, 2012

Gender development occurring at puberty and later

Pre-pubertal bodies are more similar than not, especially when considering what can be perceived by others (genitals are covered with clothing).

What happens at puberty?

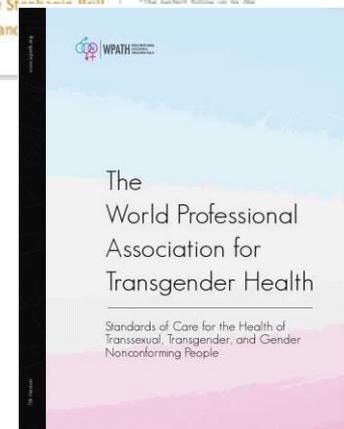
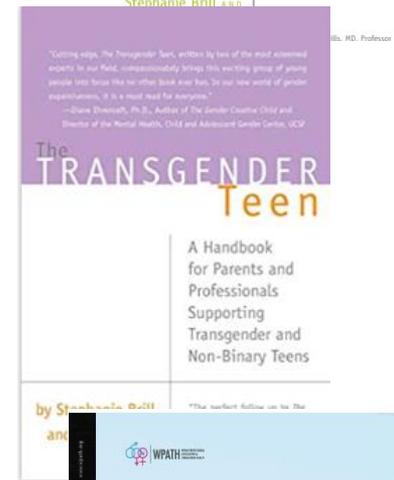
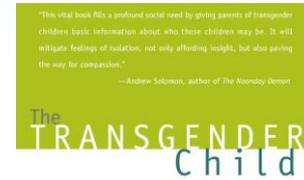
- Body changes- including gender aspects of the body, which others use as visual markers to gender a person
- Social roles/expectations/limits
- Brain development allowing for more understanding of abstract, complex, and nuanced concepts and experiences



Supportive Role of Parent or Caregiver

Steps parents or caregivers can take when a child comes out:

- Consider thanking your child for telling you and expressing pride that they came to you. Through doing this, your child is communicating that they trust you to be supportive and affirming.
- Follow your child's lead- provide space for your child to describe their individual experience and ask your child about support they need
 - For example: are they requesting you use a different name for them? Different pronouns?



Supportive Role of Parent or Caregiver (cont'd):

- Accept ambiguity/unpredictability of a child's gender journey- your child may not have it all figured out right now and that is ok.
- We recognize this is a process for caregivers and that caregivers are entitled to their emotional responses. We **STRONGLY** recommend caregivers connect with other caregivers of trans/nonbinary children and youth and consider individual therapy for themselves if they are having feelings that are difficult to process. Seeking individual therapeutic support can give caregivers a space to explore their responses that is not in front of their child.
- Continue to the child to explore their gender and their gender identity. This exploration is a normal part of development.

Impact of Support Systems

■ = transgender youth with family support

■ = transgender youth without family support

Having **one** supportive adult cuts the chance an LGBTQ+ youth will attempt suicide by **40%**.

(Trevor Project, 2019)



Employment

Experience
homelessness

Report experiencing
*serious psychological
distress*

Attempted
suicide

Types Of Dysphoria

Social



Discomfort with presenting socially as your birth-gender

Body



Discomfort with your body being of a different gender

Mind



Discomfort with your mind and emotions not lining up with your gender identity

- Gender Transition: process by which an individual begins living in their affirmed gender
 - Social
 - Legal
 - Medical
 - May or may not include hormonal and/or surgical treatment



No one way to be trans; therefore, no one way to transition

Medical Transition Options

- Puberty blockers:
 - After first signs of puberty development
 - shot given quarterly or implant for 1-2 years
 - reversible
- Hormones – earliest ages: 14-16
 - Testosterone
 - Estrogen (usually with anti-androgen)
 - some reversible and some irreversible changes
- Gender Affirmation Surgeries
 - Top surgery: earliest age- 16
 - Bottom surgery (SRS): earliest age- 18
 - Facial feminization or masculinization surgery



Benefits of Gender Affirmation

- Prepubescent children allowed to socially transition have similar rates of anxiety and depression as their cisgender peers
- Use of chosen name is associated with lower rates of depression, suicidal ideation, and suicidal behavior for transgender youth
- Puberty blockers should be used for transgender/GNC adolescents because of the psychological benefits and prevention of worsening dysphoria
- After use of gender affirming hormones for 12 mo, patients reported less anxiety, depression, psychological symptoms and functional impairment
- Surgical interventions for chest dysphoria lead to decrease in symptoms for young trans men

Approach to Care

Developmentally-Informed Affirmative Approach

- Prominent modern approach to care
- Underlying tenets (many shared with “wait and see” approach) include:
 - Gender variations are not disorders
 - Gender may be fluid and not binary
 - Gender development is multifaceted, involving biological, developmental, and cultural contexts
 - Recognition that psychopathology, if present, more often is the result of cultural reactions rather than from within the child

Approach to Care (continued)

Developmentally-Informed Affirmative Approach (continued)

- Therapeutic approach:
 - Actively support gender exploration (gender identity/expression/roles/behaviors) in developmentally appropriate level
 - Informs whether social transition is what a gender diverse child needs or wants
 - Follow child's lead—Is the child clear about their gender identity and has it persisted without wavering for a substantial period of time? Is the child able to articulate/relay that transition is critical for their psychological/emotional well-being?
 - The therapist will work with parents to understand diverse gender presentations, accept ambiguity/unpredictability of a child's gender journey, and learn ways to support them
 - Follow international guidelines/recommendations regarding appropriate use of hormonal interventions for adolescents

Evidence Base for Affirmative/Supportive Approaches

- Children rejected and not supported are at increased risk of the following during adolescence:
 - Depressive symptoms, low life satisfaction, self-harm, isolation, posttraumatic stress, incarceration, homelessness, and suicidality
- Family acceptance and support during adolescence tied to the following in young adults:
 - Greater self-esteem, positive mental health, less depressive symptoms, greater life satisfaction (compared with youth whose families were non-supportive)

Lurie Gender Development Program Care Model

- We are a multidisciplinary team including medical providers (Endocrinology, Adolescent Medicine Providers), Behavioral Health, Social Work, Outreach, and Research
- We provide
 - Gender-affirming Medical Care
 - Support with social transitioning
 - Medical interventions (puberty blockers, hormone therapy, surgical referrals)
 - Fertility preservation
 - Mental Health Support
 - Social Support
 - Groups
 - Gender affirming teen/caregiver group
 - Pre-teen group
 - Play group
 - Vocal therapy
 - Trainings for school and other organizations
 - Policy and Advocacy



Professional Organizations with Affirming Transgender Policy Statements



American Academy
of Pediatrics



DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®

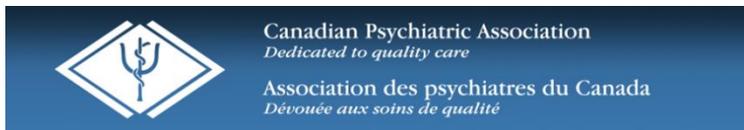


AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

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CHILD & ADOLESCENT
PSYCHIATRY
WWW.AACAP.ORG



National Council of
Teachers of English



Resources

Websites:

Genderspectrum.org

Books for parents and young people:

The Transgender Child: A Handbook for Families and Professionals

The Gender Identity Workbook for Kids

The Transgender Teen: A Handbook for Parents and Professionals Supporting Transgender and Non-Binary Teens

The Conscious Parent's Guide to Gender Identity: A Mindful Approach to Embracing Your Child's Authentic Self

The Reflective Workbook for Parents and Families of Transgender and Non-Binary Children: Your Transition as Your Child Transitions

My Parenting Journey with a Transgender Child: A Journal

Thriving Through Transition: Self-Care for Parents of Transgender Children

Feedback? Questions?

Please email us at contact@smartlovetfamily.org.

Next Webinar: College Decisions

Thursday, March 10, 2022 | 10 a.m. CST

Provide parents a framework on how to help their children figure out which path is the right one for them and how parents can support them during the application process.

www.smartlovetfamily.org/smart-love-webinars

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