

GENDER IDENTITY



INFORMATION AND ADVICE FOR PROFESSIONALS

For more information and advice visit:

www.lgbtstoke.co.uk

 LGBTStokeNHS  lgbtstokenhs

A BIT ABOUT GENDER IDENTITY AND SEX

How someone feels about themselves is known as gender identity.

When someone is born, they are recorded as male or female depending on what their genitals look like. This is known as someone's assigned sex at birth.



WHEN SEX AND GENDER IDENTITY DON'T MATCH

Sometimes someone's gender identity doesn't match the sex they were assigned at birth.



Just because someone is assigned a certain sex at birth doesn't mean they need to live as that gender if it doesn't feel right. When someone's gender identity and sex at birth don't match it can cause a sense of unease and this could result in gender dysphoria.

Gender dysphoria is not a mental illness, but it can affect someone's mental health, by making them feel uncomfortable, unhappy, or anxious.

For more information visit Gender Identity Development Service:

www.gids.nhs.uk

DIFFERENT GENDER IDENTITIES

There are lots of different gender identities and ways people identify. Some of these are:

Transgender

"trans" as an umbrella term to describe people whose current gender identity or way of expressing their gender differs from the sex they were registered with at birth. Some, but not all, trans people want to transition (change) socially or medically or both.

Non-binary

Non binary is a term used to relate to someone who doesn't identify as either male or female. There are many ways in which people identify or present in a non-binary way. This may be a combination of both or neither.

Agender

Someone who identifies as having no gender or being without a gender identity (also called genderless, non-gendered or ungendered).

Fluid

A term often used by people whose feelings or sense of self in relation to their gender identity or sexuality are not fixed and can change over time; most commonly paired with another term, e.g. gender fluid or sexually fluid.

Some people find labels important and feel supported knowing others share their identity. Others may choose not to use labels, and just identify as themselves.

SUPPORTING A YOUNG PERSON

If a young person talks to you about their gender identity it is important that they feel listened to.

There is lots to learn about gender identity, which can be confusing, but there is information and support available for the young person, their family and you.

The Gender Identity Development Service (GIDS) has specific sections of their website for professionals working with young people.

Gender dysphoria is not a mental illness, but it can affect someone's mental health, by making them feel uncomfortable, unhappy, anxious and like they are struggling to cope.

Some signs of gender dysphoria include low self-esteem, becoming withdrawn or socially isolated, depression or anxiety, taking unnecessary risks, neglecting themselves.

You may need to consider appropriate onward referrals in accordance with your organisational policies and procedures.



THE EQUALITY ACT

The Equality Act 2010 protects the rights of individuals from being discriminated against because of any protected characteristics.

Sexual orientation and gender reassignment are two of the nine protected characteristics included in the Equality Act.

Discrimination is where people are treated differently because of a protected characteristic they have or are thought to have. There are 4 main types of discrimination

- Direct
- Indirect
- Harassment
- Victimisation

To find out more about a young person's rights and the Equality Act (2010) visit the Equality and Human Rights Commission at:

www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/equality-act/know-your-rights

INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENTS

Organisations may want to consider how they can provide an inclusive environment for young people.

A good starting point, is learning more about LGBT+ topics including gender identity. The team at LGBT Stoke provide awareness training sessions which may be of help. For more information email: lgbt@mpft.nhs.uk



FIVE TOP TIPS FROM OUR TEAM

1. Ask the young person what name and pronouns they would like you and others to use.
2. Support the young person in expressing their gender identity.
3. Check out useful websites like GIDS (www.gids.nhs.uk) and Mermaids (www.mermaidsuk.org.uk).
4. If a young person's legal name has to be used (e.g. on an exam paper) explain this in advance and continue to use preferred name and pronouns when addressing them in person.
5. Have open discussions with the young person about your responsibility to adhere to safeguarding and confidentiality guidance.

LOCAL YOUTH SUPPORT

Our Galaxy youth group is for people aged 13-18 who identify as lesbian, gay bisexual or transgender, or people questioning their sexuality or gender identity. It is a safe place for young people to get information and advice on any LGBT+ issues in a friendly and accepting atmosphere.

You can find out more at:
www.lgbtsoke.co.uk

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