

WHO CAN YOU TURN TO FOR HELP?

Your GP can help if you wish to talk to someone more about your gender identity. They can also refer you to a gender identity clinic. These clinics can perform a personal assessment and provide any support you need.

Suppressing your feelings about your sexual orientation or gender identity can become very distressing and can lead to feelings of low mood, self-harm and suicide.

Seek help if you begin to feel this way as soon as possible.

Gender Identity Research and Education Society (G.I.R.E.S)

UK wide organisation whose purpose is to improve the lives of trans and gender non-conforming people of all ages, including those who are non-binary or non-gender.

www.gires.org.uk

01372 801554

Mermaids

Offers support for children, young people (up to the age of 19) and their parents/ carers about gender identity issues.

Monday to Friday 9am to 9pm (answer phone available)

0344 334 0550

Trans-Staffordshire

Peer to peer support for trans people. Including social meetings and confidential spaces. They also run groups for young people and a dedicated group for friends and families. See website for dates/times/venue.

<http://trans-staffordshire.org.uk>

01785 283425 or 07470 485425

NHS direct

24/7 phone line to help advise you. They can signpost to services, make GP appointments or call an ambulance if they feel it is needed.

Dial: 111

Childline

Anyone under the age of 19 can confidentially call, email or chat on-line about any problem big or small.

0800 1111 (24/7 service)

www.childline.org.uk

Samaritans

If you are in distress or need support, you can ring the Samaritans for free at ANYTIME of the day or night.

116 123 (24/7 service)

**Numbers correct at time of publishing.
Some numbers may incur a charge.**

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NHS

University Hospitals
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NHS Trust

SEXUALITY AND GENDER IDENTITY INFORMATION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG

PEOPLE



Please note the information provided in this leaflet is for guidance only and not designed to diagnose a specific condition. Contact your GP if you are concerned about any of your symptoms.



**PROUD
TO
CARE**

YOUNG PEOPLE AND SEXUALITY

Teenagers go through a lot of hormonal and physical changes, during which they may notice an increase in sexual feelings. It can take time for people to understand who they are and who they are becoming.

Sexuality is part of who you are. Feeling comfortable with your sexuality is part of your healthy development.

Sexuality isn't just about sex, it is about how your body is developing, how you understand and express emotion and affection to others, and how you can develop respectful relationships.

Most teenagers will experiment with sexual behaviour at some point however this does not mean that they are having sex.

Being interested in the same sex does not necessarily mean that you are gay.

Most medical experts believe that sexual orientation is not a choice but a natural part of who the person is.

Thoughts and confusion about your sexuality can make day to day activities such as attending school even harder as you try to decide whether you should tell your friends and family about how you feel.

GENDER DYSPHORIA (UNHAPPINESS)

Gender dysphoria is where a person experiences distress or discomfort because of a mismatch between their biological gender and their gender identity.

Biological gender is assigned based on the genitals at birth. Gender identity is the gender that the person "identifies" or feels themselves to be.

Gender dysphoria is a recognised medical condition for which treatment is sometimes appropriate. It is not a mental illness.

Some people with gender dysphoria have such a strong and persistent desire to live according to their gender identity that they will opt to change their appearance to match how they feel they should look. These people are known as trans people. Some go on to have treatment to make their physical appearance more like their gender identity.

SEXUAL ATTRACTION AND SEXUAL IDENTITY

These two things are not the same. You can be attracted to people of the same sex, opposite or both. You may refer to yourself as heterosexual when it seems you are attracted to the same sex however you identify as being a different gender. There is no right or wrong way as far as this is concerned. What matters is how you feel and how you want others to refer to you.

WHAT CAN YOU DO AS A PARENT/ CARER

They may ask you questions that you feel embarrassed about answering for example, about sex or masturbation, but it is important you answer their questions to demonstrate your openness to the topic.

Try to see things from their perspective and empathise with them as they may be going through a lot of internal conflict and confusion and trying to find their own identity.

If they ask you a question and you don't know the answer be honest and suggest you find out the answer together.

CONSENT—make sure that your child understands consent and that they have a right to say "no" to something they don't want to do.

SAFE—educate your child about keeping safe and using contraception, not just against pregnancy but against sexually transmitted diseases.

You need to make sure you support your child in making informed, positive and safe choices.

GENDER IDENTITY

Parents will find this a hard issue to consider and will have feelings of frustration and anger about why their child has identity issues there could also be an element of blame that parents might feel.