

Working with transgender young people



What is transgender and how does it relate to our services?

A person who is transgender believes that their gender identity at birth does not match who they believe themselves to be inside.

As a consequence of this some individuals choose to undergo surgery so that their physical characteristics match their inner conception of who they believe they are.

What does the law say?

In 2010, the Equality Act stated clearly that gender identity was a protected characteristic; therefore no service should discriminate against transgender young people.

Some guidance on working with transgender young people

It is important to note that terminology in this field is complex, for example 'transsexual' was used historically to describe an individual who had undergone gender reassignment surgery but this terminology is no longer used. Therefore it is important to ask the young person how he or she would like to be addressed. It is important as professionals that we are sensitive to this, as this makes up how the young person feels about their identity.

It may be that a young person chooses to dress differently as an expression of who they believe they are. It is important not to question this and accept that the young person may be adjusting to who they believe themselves to be. They may also change their name, so it is important when undertaking any direct work with a young person that you ask them what name they would like to be called; this name may be different from their birth name.

This may be a difficult and confusing time for a young person, so be sensitive and respect a young person's privacy when questioning about the young person's feelings about themselves, their anatomy, sex life, relationship status currently or what they want in the future.

It is likely that with time and as trust develops, the young person may feel able to disclose more readily what they are feeling and share current and previous experiences as well as hopes for the future.

What is available for transgender young people?

The NHS runs a Gender Identity Development Service (GDIS) which young people can be referred to for support.

There are also resources available from the Gender Identity Research and Education Service (GIRES) to assist practitioners in working with transgender young people.

All the local info I need is just a click away!



www.mylifeinbolton.org.uk

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