



Frequently Asked Questions for Youth

Does Transgender mean I'm gay/lesbian?

Gender identity is who you ARE. Sexual orientation is who you LIKE. A transgender person can be lesbian, gay, bisexual or heterosexual, just like a non-transgender person can.

How do I tell my family and friends that I am not who they think I am? Coming out as transgender or gender variant can be difficult to share, especially with people who mean a lot to us. Have a well thought out plan before coming out to anyone. Research your options:

- ~ decide how you want to live as your authentic self, and how you want others to treat you.
- ~sometimes the best way to come out to someone is to write them a letter. This lets the person have some time to absorb and think about what you're telling them.
- ~be prepared for the possibility that someone you come out to might not understand or accept what you're telling them. Expect the best, but prepare for the worst. Your attitude and outlook can make a **huge** difference in the way others react to your coming out to them. Be confident and happy with yourself!

What do I do if my parents won't accept me for who I am?

Some parents will catch on pretty quickly, because they now have an explanation for a nagging feeling or suspicions they've had for a while now. They are usually able and willing to support you soon after you come out to them. Other parents might take longer. They might be in denial, feel guilty for not seeing this sooner, be afraid of what the future might hold for you or what other people might think. Their religious beliefs might also get in the way. Give them **plenty** of resources to check out. Here is a good place to start: **HYPERLINK "<http://imatyfa.org/parents/index.html>"**
<http://imatyfa.org/parents/index.html>. Also give them some time to process everything. Remember, you've had a while to figure this all out, they're only just starting to learn about it.

What if my friends won't accept me for who I am?

Friends are an important part of our lives. We value their opinions. Give your friends plenty of resources and information to help them learn more about gender identity when you come out to them. **Everyone** deserves to be respected for who they are. A true friend will stand by you no matter what. If someone isn't willing to accept or understand you, you don't need to compromise who you are to keep them in your life.

What is transition and how do I know if it's right for me?

~**social transition** is changing your outward appearance (hairstyle, clothing, gender expression) along with your name and pronouns. It is completely reversible.

~**medical transition** alters physical and sexual characteristics of the body. This can include hormone therapy and surgery, and is not reversible. Medical transition can only happen if your parents/guardians and doctors agree this is right for you.

How do I tell my school?

You shouldn't do this alone, without your parents or other trained professionals (your doctors, along with an organization such as TYFA, can train the school staff and administration). Trying to do this without getting certain safeguards and support in place can make it unsafe for you and your family.

What about dating and romantic relationships?

Everyone deserves to be loved. There is someone for everyone. Talk with your parents and/or doctors/nurse about developing healthy behaviors in relationships, and when is the best time to come out to a potential partner. Relationships are never easy, but you don't need to settle for something that isn't supportive and healthy for you--just because of your gender identity. There is someone out there who will love you for who you are.

Is it safe for me to take hormones that I buy from other people, or off the internet when my parents won't take me to a doctor?

You should **NEVER** take medication of any kind that wasn't prescribed by a doctor and approved by your parents/guardians. This could make you very ill and could even cause death.

What should I do if I feel hopeless or that I just can't go on?

Harming yourself is never the answer. If you feel like you want to harm yourself, please seek help immediately.

~ Contact the Trevor Project at [HYPERLINK "http://www.thetrevorproject.org"](http://www.thetrevorproject.org) www.thetrevorproject.org or call them toll free at 1-866-4-U-TREVOR.

~Call the National Suicide Hotline toll free at 1-800-273-8255.

~Suicide is a **PERMANENT SOLUTION** to a **TEMPORARY PROBLEM**

Will I ever have a normal life?

Transgender youth can face many challenges in their lives, but it is **absolutely possible** for them to have normal lives. Organizations, media and individuals are making big changes in society right now. Schools are beginning to meet the needs of transgender and gender variant youth. Laws and ordinances that make discrimination due to gender identity illegal are being passed in cities, towns and states every day. Society is beginning to understand. Reach out to any of the organizations below for help or support. **Your future is bright!**

HYPERLINK "http://www.imatyfa.org" www.imatyfa.org

HYPERLINK "http://www.glsen.org" www.glsen.org

HYPERLINK "http://www.genderspectrum.org" www.genderspectrum.org

HYPERLINK "http://www.pflag.org" www.pflag.org

HYPERLINK "http://www.thetrevorproject.org" www.thetrevorproject.org

HYPERLINK "http://www.transfamily.org" www.transfamily.org

P.O. Box 1471 Holland, MI. 49422-1471 1-888-IMA-TYFA (462-8932) HYPERLINK "http://www.imatyfa.org" www.imatyfa.org

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