



Gender Dysphoria

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Condition Basics

What is gender dysphoria?

Dysphoria means feeling distressed or uneasy. Gender dysphoria is a feeling of emotional distress because your inner sense of your gender (gender identity) doesn't match the sex that you were assigned at birth.

For transgender and some gender-diverse people, their gender identity doesn't match the sex that they were assigned at birth. Many, but not all, have gender dysphoria.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms of gender dysphoria may include feeling:

- Uncomfortable or upset about parts of your body that don't match your gender identity.
- Anxious or depressed.
- Stressed.

Some people may feel extra stress because of discrimination in their community. Rejection, prejudice, and fear can cause long-term stress.

How is it diagnosed?

Gender dysphoria may be diagnosed when you talk with your doctor about feeling upset or distressed that your gender identity isn't the same as your sex assigned at birth. Children with gender dysphoria may have similar feelings as adults, including feeling upset about parts of their body that don't match their gender identity.

How is gender dysphoria treated?

Usually, gender dysphoria is treated by helping someone affirm their gender identity through finding ways to express it.

The types of things that help someone express their gender can vary from person to person. They can also be different for children and young people than for adults.

Non-medical options for expressing gender identity may include:

- Clothing, hairstyles, or makeup.
- Voice therapy or coaching.
- Hair removal.
- Breast binding or padding.
- Penis tucking or packing.
- Name and gender marker corrections on official documents.
- Counseling.

Medical options may include:

- Gender-affirming hormones.
- Puberty-blocking medicines.
- Gender-affirming surgeries.

If you have gender dysphoria, know that you're not alone. Many people have gone through what you're going through now. It can be comforting and helpful to talk to those people. You can find them through local or online groups. And you can find a list of websites and online organizations at the LGBT National Help Center (www.glnh.org).

How can you support someone with gender dysphoria?

Many, but not all, transgender and gender-diverse people have gender dysphoria. If someone you care about has gender dysphoria, there are ways that you can help.

- Show unconditional love and support.

Gender dysphoria can cause great distress. Feeling loved, supported, and accepted can help.

- Respect the person's choices.
 - Ask which pronouns the person prefers ("he/him," "she/her," "they/them," "ze/zir"). Then use those pronouns.
 - If the person is changing their name, always use the new name when you talk to or about the person.
 - If you mess up and use the wrong pronoun or name, don't make a big deal out of it. Just correct yourself, and move on.
- Be an advocate.
 - Step in and correct others who use the wrong pronoun or name so that the person you care about doesn't always have to do that work.
 - If you hear people saying unkind things about transgender people or making fun of them, speak up. Make it clear that you won't tolerate judgmental or bullying behavior.
- Learn all you can about gender identity.

Organizations such as Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) can help. Go to their website at www.pflag.org to find a list of other useful groups.

Credits for Gender Dysphoria

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Author: Healthwise Staff

Medical Review:

Adam Husney MD - Family Medicine

Elizabeth T. Russo MD - Internal Medicine

Christine R. Maldonado PhD - Behavioral Health

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