



In his recommendations for intersex 'management, Professor Milton Diamond suggests an intersex child should be given a binary gender label which could be worn, removed, or changed as appropriate without having to be surgically (and therefore irreversibly and non-consensually) assigned a gender (my interpretation). A child/adult may at any time choose to explore surgical options, the full ramifications of which should be explained clearly and put in a context of all the other options.

And further to that, I am calling for supportive counselling of parents and the intersex person as a freely offered option available throughout their lives, including peer support (from childhood on) and clear explanations or creative education about the facts and issues involved.

Ultimately, it's nice to imagine a world where people whose only danger is the idea of binary gender could grow up openly as themselves and be loved for being just that. Lesbian and Gay people and their experience show us that what was once (only twenty - thirty years ago) highly stigmatised and pathologised (homosexuality) is now fairly well an accepted and supported part of society. (It is clear that homosexuality is not accepted always/everywhere, but the changes in the last thirty years are apparent. I point to the success of the Sydney Lesbian and Gay Mardi Gras as a classic example). So while we (as intersex individuals and as a community), like most oppressed groups, have to maintain our relationships with our past/present oppressors (the medical community and sometimes our parents/family/friends) we can start to challenge our invisibility and walk the path toward understanding, accepting and loving ourselves and being understood, accepted and loved by the rest of society.

## Footnotes

[1] I am using the word intersex as a gender description rather than intersexual which has unnecessary sexual connotations, or intersexed which makes it sound like something that has been done to us.

[2] The term 'binary gender construct' refers to what I see as the artificially created and perpetuated idea that there are two distinct genders. One element of eco-feminist thinking points to gender as being a key symbol of the Western tendency to see things in stark binary/dualist terms which is over simplified and therefore generally inappropriate.

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The Gender Centre is committed to developing and providing services and activities, which enhance the ability of people with gender issues to make informed choices. We offer a wide range of services to people with gender issues, their partners, family members and friends in New South Wales. We are an accommodation service and also act as an education, support, training and referral resource centre to other organisations and service providers. The Gender Centre is committed to educating the public and service providers about the needs of people with gender issues. We specifically aim to provide a high quality service, which acknowledges human rights and ensures respect and confidentiality.