

I think I might be Transgender

A booklet made by and for transgender youth



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What does it mean to be transgender?

The term Transgender is somewhat fluid these days. It was used to describe a person who lives as the opposite gender to what they are anatomically, and does not necessarily mean a person is seeking hormonal or sex affirmation (SRS).

The term **Transgender** has crept into usage as an umbrella term to include many diverse conditions, identities and behaviours which explore gender. In recent years it has been used to describe most people with a gender identity quality/issue.

- When how you feel doesn't match your biological sex" (*Kai, 16*)
- To be born into the wrong body and mentally know it" (*Jayce, 19*)

That the gender you were assigned at birth is not congruent with your gender identity or experiences, and that gender is more of a spectrum than a binary" (anonymous)

- Being yourself and being comfortable with yourself" (*Drew*)

Not identifying as the gender assigned to you at birth" (anonymous)

- When your gender identity doesn't match your assigned sex at birth. Can be male, female or a range of non-binary options" (*Blythe, 18*)
- Being transgender means that your gender is different from the gender you were assigned when you were born" (*Ashton, 18*)
- To be born one gender but be another" (*Mari Willow, 17*)

Assigned a sex at birth, but don't identify with the associated gender" (anonymous)

- To be Trans is to not identify as the gender you were assigned at birth" (*Freddy, 17*)

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- To be amazing, fabulous and me” (*Sinchez*)

To identify as a different gender than the one you were born with, or somewhere in between” (anonymous, 19)

- When your gender assigned at birth does not match the gender you are” (*Rory, 14*)
- To identify as something other as your biological gender (what your genitalia is)” (*Leo, 13*)

How do I know if I’m transgender?

MYTH: People make a conscious and controllable decision to be transgendered

You may feel a sense of gender dysphoria which involve strong, persistent feelings of identification with the opposite gender and discomfort with one’s assigned sex. Gender dysphoria also involves social discomfort with the language and behavior used by others, e.g. a young transgender man may experience intense feelings of anxiety and distress when people use female pro-nouns and language when conversing with him.

A cis-gendered person will get up, get ready and walk out the door without really thinking about their gender and how the world sees their gender.

A transgender person will get up, look in the mirror, feel a complete disconnect and confusion. They will feel that the presenting gender of their body in the mirror is wrong. It does not match the gender identity within.

Then they go out the door constantly thinking about their gender and how the world sees their gender.

- *“It’s hard to explain, most of the time it’s a feeling you can’t describe” (Kai, 16)*
- *“It’s something you just know” (Jayce, 19)*
- *“This is only a question you yourself can answer” (anonymous)*
- *“Ya just do” (Drew)*

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- *“You’ll relate far more with your real gender, your ideal self will be your real gender, you’ll establish that you’d rather be another gender, gender dysmorphia”* (anonymous)
- *“You just sort of do. I’m a transman. I’ve always wanted to have a flat chest, a penis, deep voice etc. In my brain I just knew, it felt right to be a boy”* (Owen, 15)
- *“I hated being referred to as my assigned sex, e.g. through my birth name or he/him pronouns. I also feel discomfort at the more “masculine” features e.g. facial hair and deep voice”* (Blythe, 18)
- *“This is a different process for everyone, and there isn’t a clear answer”* (Ashton, 18)
- *“If you want to be a different gender”* (Mari Willow, 17)
- *“Trust me, you’ll know”* (anonymous)
- *“It’s just something that you realize, not a single epiphany, but a process of discovery over time started by a catalyst”* (Freddy, 17)
- *“You don’t know who you are”* (Sinchez)
- *“I have no idea. You feel a disconnect between your biological gender? Like I said, I have no idea”* (anonymous, 19)
- *“Some transgender people are uncomfortable with their assigned pronouns or gendered clothing and some people experience the narrative strange experience of being born in the wrong body”* (Rory, 14)
- *“If you don’t feel comfortable with the gender you were assigned to at birth you may be trans”* (Leo, 13)

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“IT’S TIME TO HEAR OUR VOICES”

Am I normal?

Being transgender makes you as normal as anyone else. Some may challenge the meaning of ‘normal’; however, if you are transgender, you are normal.

“Hell no, what is classified as ‘normal’?” (Kai, 16)

“Yes” (Jayce, 19)

“Yes, many people have many different problems and, chances are if you picked anybody off the street, transgender or not, they would all have different problems and experiences” (anonymous)

“Fuck the norms” (Drew)

“Yes – if Trans people weren’t normal we wouldn’t exist” (anonymous)

“Normal is overrated. We’re awesome!” (Owen, 15)

“Yes” (Blythe, 18)

“Yes, absolutely” (Ashton, 18)

“Yes” (Mari Willow, 17)

“Sure you are, everyone’s normal in a different way” (anonymous)

“Well you’re human, therefore, yes, you are normal” (Louie, 14)

Who is?” (Sinchez)

“Not in the sense that the average person is transgender. It’s nothing to be ashamed of though” (anonymous, 19)

“No one is normal sweetie” (Rory, 14)

“You are as normal as anyone else. You’re still human” (Leo, 13)

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What is it like to be young and transgender?

Being young and transgender is an experience that changes from person to person.

There are many ways to be young and transgender. However, it is just one part of you as a young person.

There is no right or wrong way to be young and transgender.

“It’s really good, but at the same time, it’s really shit” (Kai, 16)

“Hard” (Jayce, 19)

“Being transgender youth is just being youth” (anonymous)

“Amazing and wonderful, yet shit” (Drew)

“Hard, people will assume you’re attention seeking an SJW, and if you don’t pass you’ll have people look/yell at you” (anonymous)

“Lots of injections and appointments. You do get bullied too. But it’s worth it to be who you are. Also lots of questions” (Owen, 15)

“It can be very challenging feeling different from everyone else but it’s a huge relief to find others like you” (Blythe, 18)

“It can be difficult if you don’t have support. Surrounding yourself with supportive people and resources can make this time a lot easier! It can be confusing because young people question many parts of their identities and try to find their place in the world” (Ashton, 18)

“Honestly it’s terrible but as you get older it gets much, much better” (anonymous)

“Hell. Sorry no sugar coating it Hun” (Freddy, 17)

“Lots of appointments, tablets, surgery and injections” (Sinchez)

“Confusing?” (anonymous, 19)

“It is like being on a rollercoaster that never ends, it looks simple but once you’ve started its living hell” (Rory, 14)

“Confusing, lots of appointments, anxiety, depressing (for me), hard” (Leo, 13)

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Whom should I tell?

You do not have to tell anyone about your gender identity. However, if you do decide to share your gender identity with others, make sure it is with people whom you feel comfortable and safe with knowing. You can share your identity with anyone who you trust and feel will understand your situation. Creating a support network with a therapist, youth group, friends and family will be able to help you through this process.

“Anyone who’s important to me/who I am comfortable with” (Kai, 16)

“Trusted adults” (Jayce, 19)

“Someone trustworthy who you know will have a positive reaction. It doesn’t have to be a parent or someone in a position of authority” (anonymous)

“Anyone you are close to/comfortable with” (Drew)

“Whoever you’re comfortable with! Friends, partners, anyone you trust” (anonymous)

“Whoever you trust. People that will not judge you” (Owen, 15)

“Anyone I feel comfortable telling. So far I’ve told my psychiatrist, my parents and everyone on Facebook” (Blythe, 18)

“Tell people that you trust and that you know will be supportive. If you know someone will have a negative reaction, it’s probably better not to tell them for now!” (Ashton, 18)

“People that will help/accept you” (Mari Willow, 17)

“Parents, family, friends, co-workers” (anonymous)

“Whoever you’re comfortable telling” (Louie, 14)

“Whoever you want, you don’t have to. It’s always your choice” (Freddy, 17)

“Not the haters” (Sinchez)

“Someone who supports you” (anonymous, 19)

“Once you know you are safe you can tell your parents or once you’re financially independent. Always make sure you have a support network to keep you sane!” (Rory, 14)

“Someone you know will support you. This won’t always be your parents” (Leo, 13)

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How do I come out?

How you come out is completely up to you. This is a personal choice and experience, and should be suited to you.

“Whatever way makes you comfortable” (Kai, 16)

“Ask my parents to take me to a psychologist cause I have questions about my gender” (Jayce, 19)

“Making sure the person you are coming out to is supportive of LGBT people through conversation is helpful” (anonymous)

“Any way that you are comfortable with” (Drew)

“There’s no set way to – just find a way to let people know” (anonymous)

“There are many ways, just do what you feel comfortable with. You could just say it, send a text message or email, call them etc.” (Owen, 15)

“I was very direct in telling everyone that I wished to be referred to as female with a new name and she/her pronouns” (Blythe, 18)

“Try to gauge what the person’s reaction will be before you come out to them. If you know that they are accepting of transgender people, then coming out will be a lot less stressful” (Ashton, 18)

“Tell peeps” (Mari Willow, 17)

“You can say it, write a letter, make a video” (anonymous)

“Go into the living room with a Trans pride flag, stand on a chair and scream “I’M TRANS DEAL WITH IT” very loudly” (Louie, 14)

“You can drop hints or straight out say “I’M TRANS!!”” (Freddy, 17)

“To my therapist” (Sinchez)

“I don’t think there’s any one way to come out, just let someone know” (anonymous, 19)

“There are many different ways to come out and no right way to do it” (Rory, 14)

“However you want to. Throw a party. Send a text. Harness the power of the sun. Do you” (Leo, 13)

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What will happen when I come out?

There is no way to determine exactly what will happen when you come out. The experience will vary between people. Surrounding yourself with as much information, knowledge and support will make it easier for you to come out.

“Lots of questions” (Kai, 16)

“Hopefully only good” (Jayce, 19)

“Coming out, as stressful as it may seem, can be a huge relief. Things might change quickly or slowly and that might be good or bad. Transitioning has ups and downs but the hardest part is behind you” (anonymous)

“A lot of questions and being called slurs but all support” (Drew)

“Mixed reactions, most will be supportive, some will question or even challenge it” (anonymous)

“Some people will support you and help you get what you need but some people will judge you” (Owen, 15)

“So far all reactions have been positive but it really isn’t possible to guarantee what will happen before it happens” (Blythe, 18)

“Coming out can be a huge relief” (Ashton, 18)

“Hopefully everyone will accept you and you can start working on your transition” (anonymous)

“Depends. You might be infinitely happier like me or fear every second of the hate you could face – like me” (Freddy, 17)

“Who knows” (Sinchez)

“I guess it depends on your situation” (anonymous, 19)

“There is no way to predict it, depends on the situation” (Rory, 14)

“Who knows? It depends who you tell” (Leo, 13)

How do I tell my family?

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This is completely up to you. Only tell your family if you think they will be supportive and you will remain safe.

You can get some support from a therapist who can help you tell your parents.

Give your family as much information and resources as possible, to answer any questions and increase their knowledge and understanding about transgender people.

- *“Make sure it’s a convenient time, sit them down and explain”* (Kai, 16)
- *“Slowly then all at once”* (Jayce, 19)
- *“When they are calm and when you feel safe”* (Drew)
- *“Just make sure you’re ready and don’t make it a big deal”* (anonymous)
- *“Wait till you can have their full attention and explain it to them”* (Owen, 15)
- *“I invited my parents to a psychiatrist appointment and told them there. I haven’t told the rest of my family”* (Blythe, 18)
- *“Make sure they are accepting of transgender people before you come out to them!”* (Ashton, 18)
- *“However you like, in a letter, a video, however”* (anonymous)
- *“However you want/think is the “right” way”* (Freddy, 17)
- *“You don’t, let your therapist”* (Sinchez)
- *“The same way that you came out”* (anonymous, 19)
- *“As long as they are going to support you there is no right way to do it!”* (Rory, 14)
- *“You don’t have to, but only tell them if you know they’ll be supportive”* (Leo, 13)

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

This is a difficult question to answer, the following advice has been provided from a group of transgender youth:

"If it's on a dangerous level, get out and stay with a friend" (Kai, 16)

"Go to trusted ad accepting friends and try to set them psychologist" (Jayce, 19)

"There are resources in your local area and can be looked up online that are set up to provide support, such as emergency housing" (anonymous)

"Get the hell out" (Drew)

"Don't listen; wear what you want, say what you want, be who you are – you'll leave them at 18 anyway" (anonymous)

"You find someone that does and can help you get what you need or get a professional to explain it to them" (Owen, 15)

"Find someone else who is supportive, e.g. friends" (Blythe, 18)

"Try to find community support systems that you ca reach out to" (Ashton, 18)

"Keep working on it, they'll come around eventually. Try education them more and find them resources" (anonymous)

"Tell them to fuck off/teach them that it isn't something you can control" (Louie, 14)

"Find people who do. Internet helps" (Freddy, 17)

"I think it depends on your age and how much they don't accept you. If they're just unsure about the idea, let the idea settle in with them. If they don't accept you and start being cruel because your Trans, find someone else who supports you" (anonymous, 19)

"Move out sweetie!!!! Find new parents!" (Rory, 14)

"Tell a therapist, doctor, friend, friend's parents, move in with a friend" (Leo, 13)

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How do I tell my friends?

Tell your friends that you are transgender if you feel they will be accepting and supportive. This is also a personal experience, so tell them however you like as long as you feel comfortable and safe when doing so. You can also provide friends with information and resources to increase their knowledge and understanding of transgender people.

“Again, whatever way makes you comfortable (e.g. call, text, meeting them etc.)”
(Kai, 16)

“Slowly and medically” (Jayce, 19)

“Telling friends is a good way to build a support network before telling your family”
(anonymous)

“In whatever way you like” (Drew)

“Just outright tell them” (anonymous)

“Wait till you can have their full attention and explain it to them” (Owen, 15)

“I just made a general statement on Facebook. At first I privately messaged some close friends” (Blythe, 18)

“It can be helpful to build up a support network of friends before telling family”
(Ashton, 18)

“However you like” (anonymous)

“However you want/think is the “right” way” (Freddy, 17)

“Text them” (Sinchez)

“The same way you told your family” (anonymous, 19)

“Gather them around and go “I’m Trans bitches!”” (Rory, 14)

“Same thing with parents” (Leo, 13)

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

If you do not feel accepted by your friends due to your gender identity then you should considering changing friendship groups. You should not have to change or hide your gender identity for anyone. Find friends and social groups that are accepting of who you are and how you feel.

"Then they're not your friends" (Kai, 16)

"Drop them" (Jayce, 19)

"Then they are not your friends" (Drew)

"They shouldn't be your friend, ditch them" (anonymous)

"Find friends that will because those people aren't your friends if they don't accept you for who you are" (Owen, 15)

"Then they probably aren't very good friends" (Blythe, 18)

"You can try to give them time and more resources, but if that isn't working then they are not good friends and you should cut them out of your life" (Ashton, 18)

"Then they aren't your friends" (Mari Willow, 17)

"They're not good friends" (anonymous)

"De-friend them" (Louie, 14)

"Find new friends – those ones aren't your friends" (Freddy, 17)

"Get new ones" (Sinchez)

"I don't know" (anonymous, 19)

"Get new ones. Join local LGBT or (T) group" (Rory, 14)

"LEAVE THEM!!!!" (Leo, 13)

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What does it mean to transition? Should I do it? Who can I talk to?

- ▶ MYTH: All transgender people want Gender reassignment surgery
- ▶ MYTH: All transgender people are flamboyant and aspire to be highly visible in the wider community

Most transgender people aspire to transition and assimilate into society. Invisibility, conformity and acceptance in the roles that the transgender persons affirmed gender foster, is their key priority. There is no correct process to transition and the stages of transition varies for everyone. The three general stages include social transition, medical transition and legal transition.

Social transition involves changes of physical appearance, such as clothing and hair, behaviours and language, name or preferred pronouns. Medical transition involve medical process and medications, such as hormones and Gender Reassignment Surgery (GRS). An individual must see a psychiatrist for at least 2 years and then be approved for surgery before a surgeon will agree to perform GRS. Legal transition involves changes to gain legal recognition of gender identity, such as change of name, change of sex on birth certificate (if allowed) and passport, change of name and identity on all other documents.

If you are under 18, you will need a parent's permission to undertake medical transition

"To transition is to start making yourself on the outside to match the inside (does not have to be through hormones or surgery, whatever makes you comfortable)" (Kai, 16)

"To undergo medical procedures to physically match your mental gender. If you feel comfortable you should. Talk to your medical practitioner" (Jayce, 19)

"Whether you transition or not is entirely up to you – talk to your GP or psychiatrist and they can refer you" (anonymous)

"Transitioning can make some people feel heaps better but for some it doesn't matter. You don't have to transition. Talk to your doctor first" (Owen, 15)

"Two aspects: social and physical. Social = telling people, using name/pronouns/clothes. Physical = hormones, maybe surgery. You should do it if you feel you are currently very distressed but speak to a doctor" (Blythe, 18)

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“Transition means physically or socially changing how you present yourself so that people perceive you as your gender” (Ashton, 18)

“It means start to express your preferred gender (clothes/hair/name/pronouns/bind/hormones/surgery). You’ll be more comfortable if you do, you should talk to your GP first” (anonymous)

“Your transition is determined by you. You can have surgery, or hormones, change your name or any combination” (Freddy, 17)

“To change from who you are to who you want to be. I don’t know if you should do it or who to talk to about it” (anonymous, 19)

“Transitioning depends on YOU! Whether it’s socially, legally or physically transitioning you’re still real, your gender is valid!” (Rory, 14)

“Everyone does it differently but no matter what you’re valid” (Leo, 13)



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What does being transgender mean about my sexual orientation? Am I gay or straight or what?

- ▶ MYTH: All transgender people are gay/lesbian/ bisexual

Being transgender is related to your gender identity, which is a person's internal sense of being a man or a woman, boy or a girl. It has nothing to do with your sexual orientation which is someone's sexual attraction to others who may be of the opposite sex, the same sex, or either sex. Like other people, transgender people can be straight, gay, lesbian or bisexual, depending on who they are attracted to and what label they want to use.

"Being Trans doesn't affect your sexuality at all. So if you're a transman and you like women, you'd be straight" (Kai, 16)

"It doesn't matter. You can like whoever" (Jayce, 19)

"Gender and sexuality are very different. They rely on and influence each other, but transgender people can be straight, gay, bisexual, pansexual, asexual and anything in between" (anonymous)

"Sexual orientation is a separate factor; you can be Trans as well as gay, straight, bi, or pan, or any other orientation" (anonymous)

"If you are a transman and you like boys, you are gay. If you are a transwoman and you like girls, you are lesbian. If you're a transman that like girls you are straight, etc." (Owen, 15)

"Same as cis people, e.g. transwoman attracted to men is straight, attracted to women is lesbian etc." (Blythe, 18)

"Being transgender has no impact on what gender or genders you are attracted to. You can be transgender and have any sexuality" (Ashton, 18)

"It's got nothing to do with your sexuality" (Mari Willow, 17)

"Gender identity is separate/different from sexual/romantic identity" (anonymous)

"You're whatever you want to be" (Louie, 14)

"It doesn't mean anything. I you identify as a man and like men exclusively you're gay etc." (Freddy, 17)

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“Depends, I am pan” (Sinchez)

“Being transgender doesn’t affect your sexual orientation, it just changes what word you use to identify yourself as” (anonymous, 19)

“YOU ARE WHATEVER YOU ARE. Gay, bi, pan, ace, polly, demi, grey etc.” (Rory, 14)

“You don’t need to label your sexuality, Trans or straight. You like who you like” (Leo, 13)

What about sexually transmitted infections, HIV, and pregnancy?

Not having sex is the best way to prevent sexually transmitted infections, HIV and pregnancy. However, if you do decide to engage in sexual intercourse, it is important to talk to your partner about ways to protect you both and use contraception.

“Have safe sex” (Jayce, 19)

“Use condoms, even for anal” (anonymous)

“Practice safe sex!” (Ashton, 18)

“You can still get them if you do the sex stuff” (anonymous)

“There are the same risks as cis people” (Louie, 14)

“If you have sex these are always a risk. Use protection” (Freddy, 17)

“That has not much connection” (Sinchez)

“I’m not sure about specifics, but take the same protective measures that you would if you weren’t transgender” (anonymous, 19)

*“Dude everyone can get them. **USE CONTRACEPTION**” (Rory, 14)*

“Anyone can get those. Use contraception and birth control” (Leo, 13)



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What about dating and romantic relationships?

Dating and engaging in romantic relationships is a personal choice, however, make sure you are safe and

“Find someone who respects you and loves you for who you are, regardless of your body” (Kai, 16)

“There is no difference” (Jayce, 19)

“Find someone who loves you for who you are!!” (anonymous)

“Find someone that respects you. Explain that you are Trans because it can affect how you have kids” (Owen, 15)

“Just be honest and patient, the right person/s will come along soon and it’ll all work out” (anonymous)

“If your partner doesn’t accept you, they’re not worth it” (Louie, 14)

“They are hard. I’d say avoid them. Focus on your own needs” (Freddy, 17)

“Depends on if you want to or not” (Sinchez)

“You should tell whoever you’re interested in that you’re transgender before you start dating them” (anonymous, 19)

“Whatever you want you can do. It’s complicated” (Rory, 14)

“If you want to be in a serious relationship, make sure they aren’t transphobic or homophobic before telling them about your situation. Don’t keep important stuff like that to yourself” (Leo, 13)

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How do I learn to like myself?

“Still trying to figure that out” (Kai, 16)

“Mmm...Acceptance” (Jayce, 19)

“Still trying to figure that out” (Owen, 15)

“Surround yourself with positive, accepting and supportive people who make you feel good about yourself” (Ashton, 18)

“Tell yourself what you want to hear, be positive to yourself, cut out all the negative people/stuff” (anonymous)

“Connect with others in the community and learn to embrace it” (Louie, 14)

“Slowly” (Freddy, 17)

“I have never not liked myself. What’s not to like?” (Sinchez)

“Be who you want to be” (anonymous, 19)

“It’s a journey” (Rory, 14)

“Do what makes you feel comfortable. Do what you must to be happy unless it’s hurting/killing people, including yourself” (Leo, 13)



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What resources exist for transgender youth?

Online resources include:

ReachOut.com - <http://au.reachout.com/Wellbeing/Personal-Identity/Gender?gclid=CN2Q7rnulswCFQskvQodStlOrg>

Trans Youth Equality Foundation - <http://www.transyouthequality.org/>

The Gender Centre Inc. <http://www.gendercentre.org.au>

OK2BME - <http://ok2bme.ca/resources/kids-teens/>
<http://www.glaad.org/transgender/resources>

Minus18 - <https://minus18.org.au/index.php/about-us>

“Schools have set procedure and support for trans youth. The Gender Centre” (Kai, 16)

“Gender psychologists, GPs, Transtopia (The Gender Centre)” (Jayce, 19)

“Headspace, The Gender Centre, 2010, GPs, Psych’s” (anonymous)

“There are many groups, online and in person” (Owen, 15)

“The Gender Centre” (Blythe, 18)

“The Gender Centre” (Ashton, 18)

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“Google it love” (anonymous)

“The Gender Centre, Twenty10, Counsellors that specialise in gender identity” (Louie, 14)

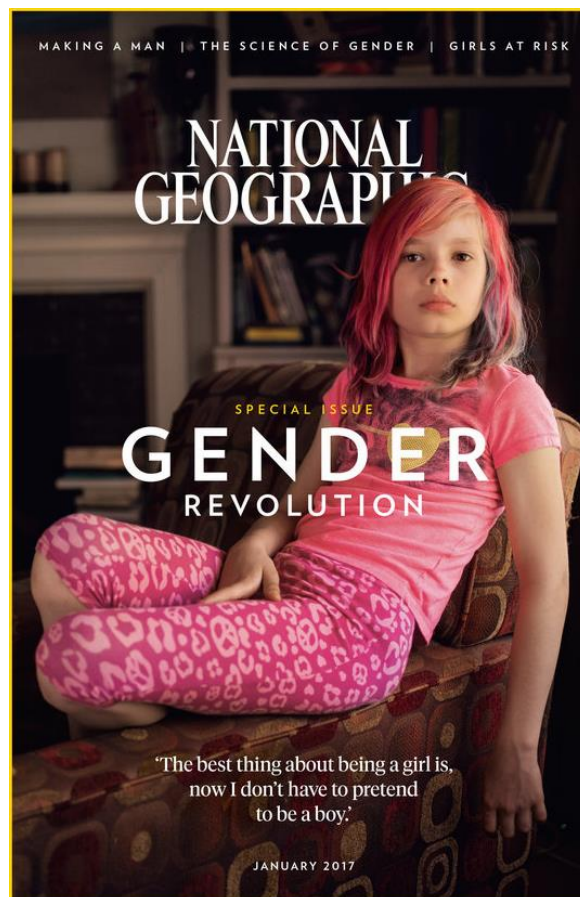
“The Gender Centre, internet can be a friend!” (Freddy, 17)

“Anyone that can listen to/care about you” (Sinchez)

“Things on the internet” (anonymous, 19)

“Our local LGBT. Our schools, Facebook – RBSC Pride Alliance. Websites: Trans Youth Families Allies. The Gender Centre” (Rory, 14)

“RBSC Pride Alliance” (Leo, 13)



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