

I'LL WALK WITH YOU

A Guide for
Parents of Transgender Children



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WITH YOU

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I'll Walk With You was collectively written by transgender staff and volunteers at Oogachaga, Project X, The T Project, and Transgender SG.

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**A Guide for
Parents of Transgender Children**

FOREWORD



I'll Walk With You is a timely condensed guide for parents who need information or help in navigating this bewildering world of evolving social and gender situations. The Coming Out by your child and their plans for transitioning are likely to cause distress for both of you. The feelings of Fear, Confusion, Anxiety and Doubt are understandable. Stay calm. Read this document carefully as it will help to allay some of your concerns.

As parents, our foremost reward for having children is their happiness and wellbeing. Love them for what they are, keep them good company on their journey and walk together.

Teh Tien Yong

Father of 4 children, including a transgender son

INTRODUCTION



I'll Walk With You is a guide for parents of transgender children to answer their frequently asked questions about what it means to be transgender, and to transition. Collectively worked on by transgender representatives from Oogachaga, Project X, The T Project, and TransgenderSG, this guide aims to be a companion to parents who may be feeling lost, confused, or distressed about their child's gender identity, while also affirming their transgender children.

The guide is written in a question and answer style, and has been broken down into sections based on the nature of the questions. You can skip through the guide if you know what you're looking for, but if you are not sure where to go, it's always a good idea to start at the beginning.

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transgender^{sg}

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WHY...

... does my child have to be transgender? Is it my fault?

Your child being transgender is nobody's fault, including yours. While coming out as transgender and transitioning is a personal choice, being transgender in itself is not.

It's normal to feel a sense of loss of the child you thought you knew and your expectations of who they will be, but you don't need to feel guilty of your child being transgender, especially as being transgender is not a crime in Singapore, and they are not causing anyone harm by being transgender.

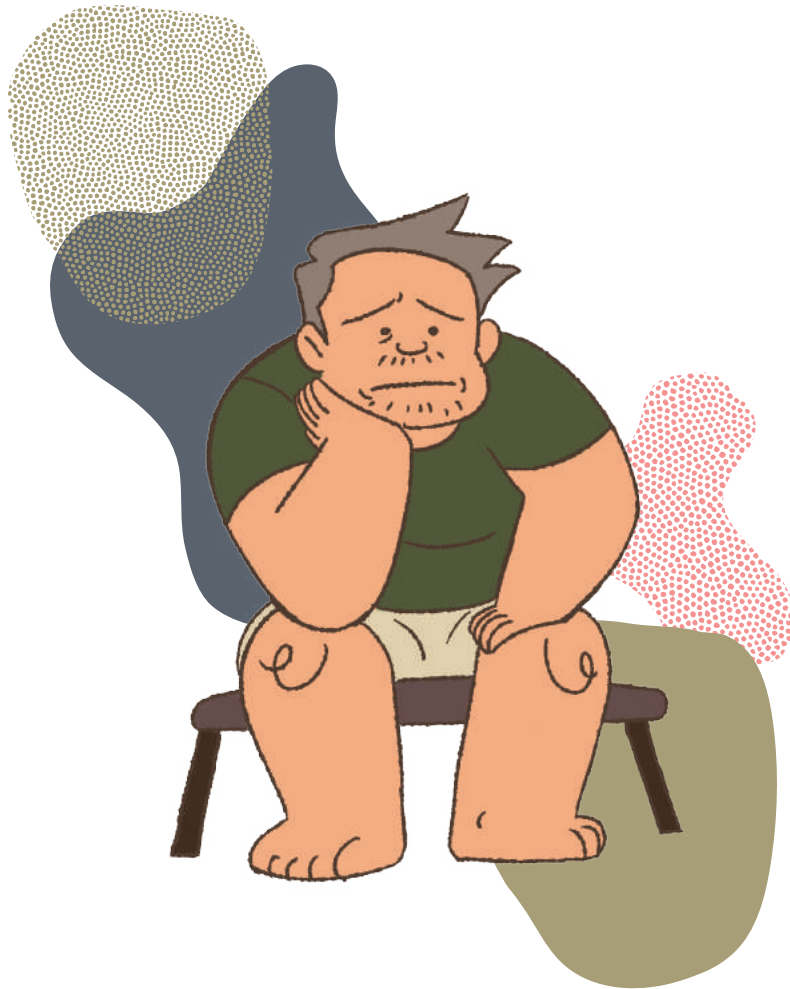
... is my child suddenly coming out to me as transgender if there were no signs before?

There's an assumption that transgender people start showing 'signs' of being transgender at a certain age, and are transgender only if they show these signs. This is not true.

Some transgender people come out earlier, and others later. Some transgender people were comfortable with stereotypically gendered clothes as children, and some weren't. Some trans people express their gender within what we know as male or female, and others express themselves in other ways. Humans are diverse in the way we identify and present ourselves, and transgender people are no different.

It could be that your child's sudden coming out was delayed as they were afraid to express their authentic selves before this point, because they were afraid of people's reactions, including yours. Or they might have considered this point a better time, compared to previous occasions.

There is no right or wrong way to come out, nor a right or wrong time, but it is a life-changing experience for many, and can be a



huge indicator that your child trusts you and wants you to be a part of their life as their authentic self.

... does my child identify as non-binary/ genderqueer/genderfluid? Are they confused about their actual gender?

It can be confusing for parents to understand their child's non-binary identity — after all, we all grew up in an environment where things were segregated into boy and girl, man and woman, and male and female.

While some people express themselves within the binary, some others identify outside the binary too!

This is not a sign of being confused — it is an understanding of gender that is different from what we were brought up to understand.

... is my child saying they're attracted to people of the same gender? Wouldn't it be easier for them to not be transgender?

Think of it this way — would you ask a non-transgender person who is attracted to someone of the same gender to transition?

Of course it would be easier for your child if they live life as their sex assigned at birth, but it's important to remember that an easy life doesn't mean a happy life.

For instance, they would have to deal with the stress of not being able to express their true self with their partner, and would have to deal with the distress of being seen as part of a straight (or heterosexual) couple, when they are not.

Gender identity is not related to sexual/romantic orientation. Just as non-transgender people can be lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, or straight etc, transgender people can also have diverse sexual orientations.



WHAT IS GENDER?

A person's own understanding of their **IDENTITY**

Some people are

CISGENDER

They identify with a gender that matches their sex assigned at birth



Assigned female at birth.



Identifies as a girl.



Identifies as a woman.

Others identify as

TRANSGENDER



Assigned male at birth.



Raised as a boy.



Later on identifies as a woman.

These people don't identify with their sex assigned at birth.

WHAT...

... are the terms to use when we talk about gender identity?

Sex vs. gender

In the local Singaporean context, many young people grow up using the word 'gender' in place of 'sex' (I'm sure you have heard your child, or perhaps other children make grotesque vomiting faces at the word once upon a time), but the two words hold very different meanings.

'**Transgender**', or '**trans**' for short, refers to a person whose identity does not match their sex assigned at birth (usually male or female). This is an umbrella term that covers lots of different identities. We will introduce a few of these below:

Transgender boys and men — boys and men who are assigned female at birth; often use the singular male pronoun (he/him).

Transgender girls and women — girls and women who are assigned male at birth; often use the singular female pronoun (she/her).

Non-binary people — used to refer to individuals assigned male, female, or intersex at birth but do not identify within the gender binary (man and woman); often use the singular gender-neutral pronoun (they/them) but may use binary (he/him and she/her) and/or other pronouns.

Gender non-conforming (GNC) people — a broad term for people who do not identify or express their gender within the binary (male/female). Some GNC folks identify as trans, but others don't. Either way, it's important to not assume! While many trans people come out and transition (whether it's socially

and/or medically), gender non-conforming people generally don't feel the need to transition but may feel uncomfortable in gendered contexts.

These are just a few, not all, terms used to describe one's gender identity. The term(s) your child uses to describe their gender identity may not be listed here, in which case, have a chat with them about it! You'll learn something new, and your child will know that their parent is actively trying to understand them. It's a win-win situation!

... is 'gender dysphoria'?

You may be familiar with the word 'euphoria', which describes feelings of extreme happiness. Dysphoria, which is the opposite term, describes an extreme sense of unease and unhappiness.

Gender dysphoria specifically refers to the sense of unease and unhappiness resulting from the mismatch between a trans person's perceived and actual gender identity, which can arise from one's physical sexual characteristics not aligning with their gender, and/or being socially read and treated as the wrong gender.

To alleviate dysphoria, transgender people often consider transitioning, whether it's socially, medically, or both. Transgender people may experience gender dysphoria to varying degrees.

On the other hand, a trans person may instead experience gender euphoria, which is a sense of rightness from being treated and respected as their true gender.

While the fifth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM-V) includes criteria to diagnose Gender Dysphoria, it is important to note that some trans people do not necessarily meet the diagnostic criteria, but will still benefit from some kind of transition.


... causes somebody to be transgender?

There's no specific cause that results in a person being transgender; it's likely to be a complex mix of biological, social, and environmental factors that contributes to a transgender person being who they are.

There is robust evidence for biological influences, particularly the action of sex hormones during pre-natal development, and gene variants related to sex-hormone signalling and processing. Research also suggests that factors such as prenatal hormone levels and genetic influence contribute to the manifestation of transgender identities.

Biological factors may determine how likely someone is to be trans, but whether this solidifies as a trans identity — usually early in life or on the onset of puberty — may be dependent on other factors. There is also some evidence for family history; many trans people have relatives, especially siblings, who are also transgender.





The environment in which we grow up and live in can also shape how we see ourselves and explore our identity. It can also be a factor that determines whether or not we accept ourselves for who we are. The same goes for trans people — if a trans person grows up in an environment where expressing their gender identity is not punishable by law, or will not cause them to be harmed by those around them, they will be more likely to want to come out.

At the end of the day, there is sexual diversity in all humans; biological sex is not a strict binary, and even many cisgender/ non-trans people have physical traits associated with the other sex. This is most notable in intersex people whose bodies are not easily categorised as male or female. A more common example of this would be in cisgender women with facial hair or cisgender men with breasts.

Regardless, being transgender it is not something that can be changed at will, or only influenced by upbringing. It is not an illness, nor is it something that went wrong that needs to be 'fixed'. However, there are steps that can be taken to relieve the distress that is experienced, which we will talk about later in this guide.

Fun fact: transgender and gender-diverse individuals have been recognised and embraced for a long time! This has been traced back to the early stages of human civilisation, and across cultures, from the two-spirit people of Native Americans, to our ancestors in the Asia Pacific, like the *hijras* of India and the *calalai*, *calabai*, and *bissu* of the Bugis people!

... is transitioning?

In a general sense, transitioning refers to the change from one state or stage to another. In the context of trans people, it refers to the process which one goes through to match the way they look and how they are perceived by others, to their gender identity. A trans person can transition socially, legally, and medically.



Social transition

Socially transitioning is often the first step a person takes, and it may be one of the hardest. This can involve a couple of things:

Changing one's name and pronoun(s)

Some people are lucky enough to not have to think twice about the name and pronoun we use for ourselves, but to a trans person, it can be a source of great discomfort and distress to be addressed in a way that does not affirm their identity. If they haven't already, your child may approach you to ask if you could start using their chosen name and pronouns.

Changing one's gender expression

The freedom to express ourselves in the way we want is a very affirming experience, and can boost our self-esteem and confidence. One way we express ourselves is through clothes, and it can be extremely empowering for a transgender person to be able to dress in a way that affirms their gender identity.

Young trans people are often brought up being told what they should be wearing, and they might hesitate to let you know that they want to start dressing differently. They might also not be ready to start presenting as their true gender in public, and might want your approval to start doing so at home, to build confidence in presenting in a manner that feels authentic to them.

Legal transition

Changing your name legally

This may well be one of the easiest steps in a person's transition. In Singapore, changing one's name is a fuss-free process, commonly done through filling in an online application form for a Deed Poll and getting it certified by a lawyer.

If a person is under the age of 21, they will need to obtain their parents' permission through their signature(s). This Deed Poll needs to be produced when applying for new national registration documents like your passport and NRIC.

It is understandable if you feel a sense of loss if your child expresses the desire to change their name. A person's name holds a certain significance — in the Singapore context, parents often consult geomancers, priests, or respected family elders in order to pick the perfect name for their child.

However, it may be that your child thinks of a change in their name as a new beginning, even if their birth name was already gender-neutral to begin with. What you can do in this case is to have a conversation with your child about the meaning their birth name holds, and perhaps do some research with them to think of a new name that holds the same meaning, or an entirely different one that both of you will like!

Change in legal gender marker

This is a slightly more complicated step, and unfortunately one that causes trans people a lot of distress, especially later in their transition. While some countries around the world allow trans people to change their legal gender marker upon producing a psychologist's letter, or through self-determination, Singapore unfortunately requires trans people to undergo full genital reconstruction surgery and be physically examined by a Singapore-registered gynaecologist, plastic surgeon, or urologist before they can be eligible to change their gender marker.

Medical transition

Hormone replacement therapy (HRT)

HRT is often recommended as the first step in one's medical transition, for two reasons:

- 1) To induce puberty, which is accompanied by certain physical changes
- 2) Due to its partially reversible nature.

It is possible and safe for a person to stop HRT if they still have their sex hormone-producing organs, but needs to be continued for life after removing one's reproductive organs.

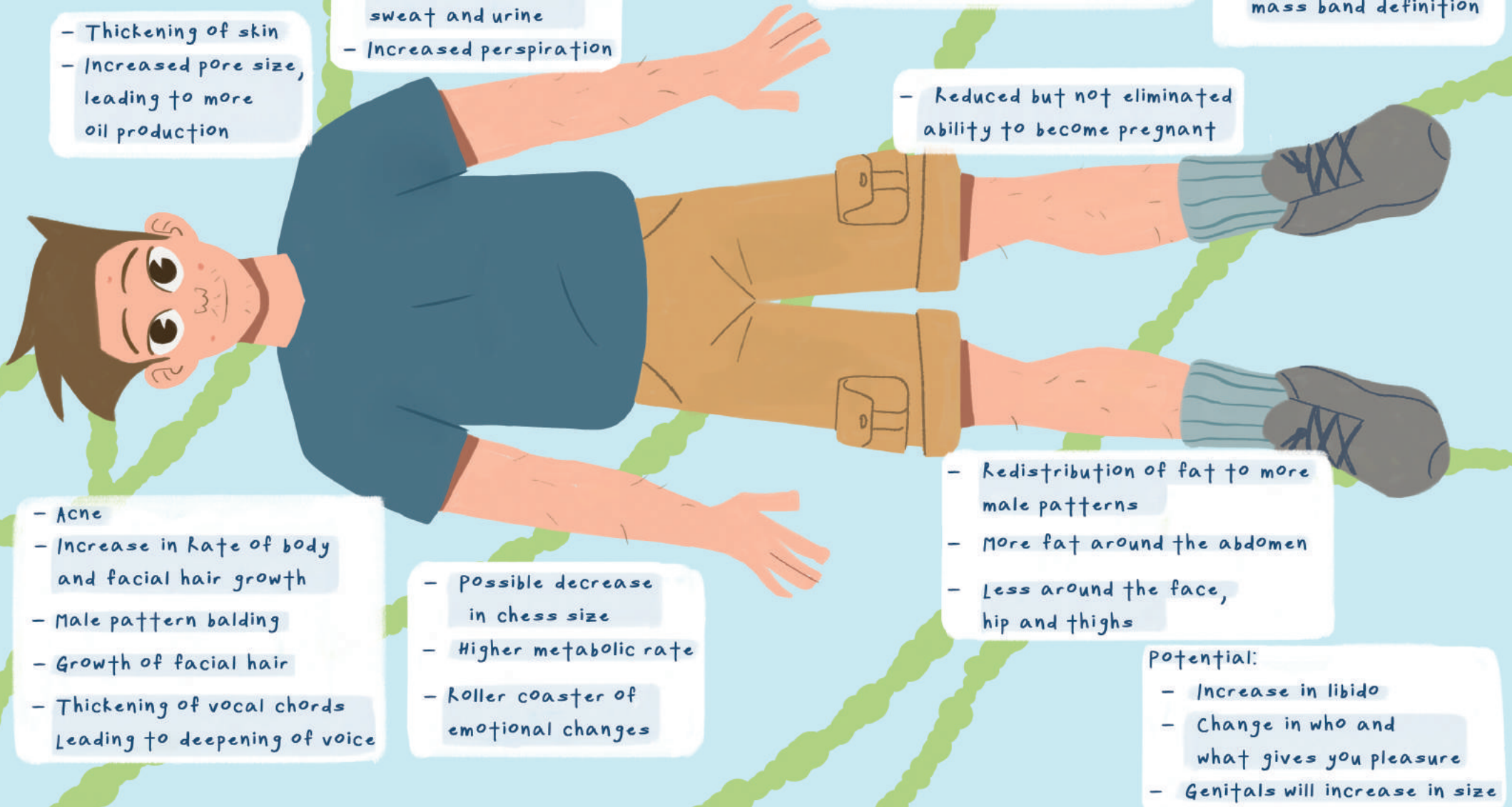
In Singapore, trans people require a letter from a psychiatrist to start HRT. This letter can be brought to an endocrinologist or local hospital, where the doctor will prescribe your child with the appropriate hormones. Your child's doctor may recommend blood tests to be done before starting HRT, and subsequently will need to perform blood tests every few months for the first year, and twice a year after that.

For trans-masculine individuals, HRT involves introducing the hormone testosterone into the body, most commonly through regular injections, but sometimes through daily gel applications to the body (not available in Singapore).

On the other hand, HRT for trans-feminine individuals involves introducing oestrogen to the body, most commonly through consuming oral pills, but occasionally through injections.

The changes that one goes through while on HRT are exactly the same as what occurs during puberty in non-trans individuals.

EFFECTS OF: TESTOSTERONE HORMONE THERAPY



EFFECTS OF : OESTROGEN HORMONE THERAPY



- Thinner Skin
- Decreased pore size leading to less oil production

- Gradual breast development
- Size and shape varies from person to person

- Redistribution of fat to more female patterns (more fat around the hips and thighs)

- Gradual decrease in sperm count
- Likely to lead to permanent loss in ability to produce sperm

- Roller coaster of emotional changes
- Possible regrowth of hair on the scalp
- Change of odor of sweat and urine

- Decreased thickness and rate of growth in facial and body hair
- Decrease in muscle mass and definition

- Decrease in erections
- Change in amount of ejaculate (little to none)

- Potential change in what gives you pleasure
- Decrease in size of testicles (by about half of original size)

Gender-affirming surgery/surgeries

This typically comes further into one's transition, but can also happen at an earlier stage, depending on the kind of surgery in question. Due to its irreversible nature, some trans individuals prefer to wait until they have been living as their true gender and/or have been on HRT long enough for some physical changes to take place. There are two broad categories of gender-affirming surgeries — 'cosmetic' procedures and removal/reconstruction procedures.

'Cosmetic' procedures

These are less invasive surgeries that do not require hormone replacement therapy as a prerequisite. For transmasculine individuals, the most common procedure is top surgery (or a double mastectomy) which involves the removal of breast tissue and fat to construct a typical male chest.

For transfeminine individuals, there is a wider array of surgeries that are opted for, ranging from more straightforward procedures like laser hair removal and breast augmentation surgery, to slightly more complex ones, such as facial feminisation surgery (FFS), which involves several procedures.

Many trans individuals experience alleviated gender dysphoria following these procedures, but some experience dysphoria that can only be alleviated with removal and reconstruction surgeries.

Removal and reconstruction procedures

These are, as the terms suggest, procedures that involve the removal of a person's reproductive organs and the reconstruction of their genitalia. Eligibility for these procedures requires a person to be on HRT for a minimum of one year, to minimise the risks of complications.

Removal and Reconstruction Procedures		
	Transmasculine	Transfeminine
Removal	Hysterectomy Removal of the uterus Oophorectomy Removal of the ovaries	Orchiectomy Removal of the testicles
Reconstruction	Metoidioplasty Using existing genital tissue and lengthening it to construct a defined phallus Phalloplasty Using tissue from the forearm or thigh to construct a penis and longer urethra	Vulvoplasty Reconstruction of all the part of a vagina except for the vaginal canal using existing skin and tissue Vaginoplasty Reconstruction of a Vaginal canal using existing skin and tissue

There is no standard path to transitioning. Some parents panic when their child comes out as trans because they worry about how ready their child is to go through these reconstructive surgeries.

It is important to note that each trans person has a unique journey, and not all trans people may transition in the same way or at the same pace as others. This does not make them 'more trans' or 'less trans'.

... are the risks in transitioning?

The act of socially transitioning in itself is not harmful; rather, it is the stress from other factors such as potential rejection, discrimination, and being alienated that has detrimental effects on a transgender person's well-being.

On the other hand, medical transitioning, as with all medical interventions, does pose certain risks.



Risks of Testosterone Replacement Therapy

Potential increased risk of:



Diabetes



High hematocrit levels

(Blood becoming



Being overweight

overly thick)



Risks of Oestrogen Replacement Therapy

Potential (but minimal) increased risk of:



Blood clots



Heart attack



Stroke



Cancer



Diabetes

While these risks may sound worrying, trans people are no more susceptible to sex-related health issues compared to their non-trans peers. These risks can be managed with making healthy life choices and the reduction of stress levels experienced once medical transitioning has started.

... are the issues that transgender people in Singapore face?

This may be one of your primary concerns when it comes to your child, as no parent wants to see their child suffer. Though today's society is more affirming of trans people than it was 20 years ago, trans people unfortunately are still subject to being left out of local human/civil rights policies, and face societal discrimination.

Lack of human/civil rights


Limited access to gender-affirming healthcare

Some of you may remember or have heard of the days where Singapore used to be a hub for trans people, particularly trans women, to access gender-affirming healthcare. In fact, one of our former Presidents, Dr Benjamin Sheares, pioneered the Sheares' vaginoplasty — a surgical technique to construct vaginas to people born without one — a technique used for gender-affirming surgeries for trans women to this day.

However, gone are the days where surgery for trans people is easily accessible in our home country. In fact, trans-specific healthcare, including hormone replacement therapy or even doctors and specialists who are trans-affirming, are not easily accessible. In fact, many trans people have experienced discrimination from general practitioners, some adamantly refusing to treat patients purely based on their gender identity.

Difficulty in attaining legal recognition of gender identity

Singapore has made it increasingly difficult for transgender individuals to have their gender legally recognised on their national identification documents, like their passports and NRICs.



While it used to be that trans people were eligible to change their gender marker on their legal documents upon undergoing the removal of their reproductive organs, the Immigration Checkpoint Authority (ICA) now requires trans people to undergo full genital reconstruction surgery, and to undergo a physical examination by a Singapore-registered urologist, gynaecologist, or plastic surgeon before they can even apply to change their gender marker.

In the meantime, many trans people try to make do by selecting a salutation that affirms their gender identity (e.g. on plane tickets, e-commerce websites, university applications etc). However, some institutions like banks and insurance companies also do not allow trans people to select a salutation that affirms their gender identity, even after a person writes in to request for a change.

Social stigma

Family

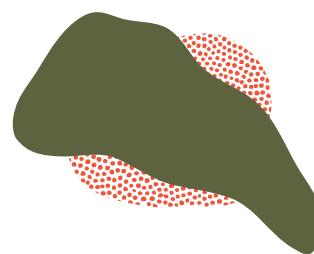
One of the things children in Singapore are taught from a young age is the importance of family. We are encouraged to share our trials and tribulations with them, and to regard them as trusted individuals. It can be extremely discouraging, then, for trans people to get a negative response from their family members when they come out. For young trans people, especially those under 21, potential results of these negative responses, such as being kicked out of the house and being financially cut-off, are feared much more as most, if not all, are not able to financially support themselves.

It is not just being financially cut-off that is a problem — living in an environment where you don't feel loved, let alone respected, can be extremely damaging to a person's mental health. Some trans people have also recounted instances of physical abuse from family members as a result of their coming out.

Wider society

Oftentimes, trans people also have to face discrimination from society. Daily events like going to school or work, or even going out and about in general can pose challenges and risks. For instance, going to a public bathroom might not be possible without risking being confronted or chased out by another bathroom user.

Young trans people also have to contend with discrimination in schools. As of now, the MOE syllabus does not teach children about diverse sexual orientations and gender identities, let alone in an affirming manner. Trans and gender non-conforming students are also often prone to being bullied in schools, especially since there is a lack of awareness in staff about how to prevent or tackle bullying directed at these children.

- 
- ▶ 77.6% of openly transgender students report negative experiences in school ranging from bullying to sexual abuse
 - ▶ Less than a third said they feel safe at school
 - ▶ Only 24% felt they can go to a staff member for support

Things might not always get better outside schooling years, as experiences of discrimination can continue well into a trans person's working years. While guidelines on fair hiring and treatment in the workplace do exist, such as those in the Tripartite Alliance for Fair & Progressive Employment Practices (TAFEP), they do not specifically address the rights of employees of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities. However, some multinational companies do have their own guidelines which often protect the rights of their LGBTQ+ employees.

You may be feeling a little overwhelmed and uncomfortable reading this, and that's ok. The issues that many trans people face are difficult ones and it can be distressing to know that your child may experience these issues as well, which is why it is especially important for you to support your child, so they have someone to turn to if they are in a difficult spot, and can build resilience to confidently deal with life's challenges as the years go by.

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WHEN...

... are children sure of their gender identity?

Children start to grasp the concept of gender identity from the time they are 3 years old, and start to categorise themselves soon after, when asked questions like “are you a girl or boy”?

Just as a non-trans person is sure of their gender identity from a young age, a trans person is equally capable of being sure of their gender identity from childhood as well. The complexity comes in because their gender identity does not match their sex assigned at birth, and so they are not taken seriously when they express this.

Not all children who identify their gender as different from their sex assigned at birth are transgender. While some children may experience some gender fluidity and later identify as cisgender, a trans identity and/or gender dysphoria that persists after the start of puberty is typically permanent.

... should my child transition?

As mentioned earlier on, every trans person’s transition is different; likewise, there is no specific age at which your child should start their transition. However, in the case of medical transition, the standard age to commence hormone replacement therapy (HRT) is 16-17, when most pubertal changes have already occurred.



If your child is thinking of transitioning socially, it is ideal for a child to have the support of their nearest and dearest as they start transitioning socially, but it is not a must-have, nor is it always possible. If part of your concern is that your child is in the exploration or experimental phase of their journey and has not settled on their name, pronouns, or how exactly they identify, talk through this with them to see what they are most comfortable with at this point in time. Some people, whether they are trans or not, go through several name changes in a lifetime, and the people around them adapt in some way or another. It will be no different with your child.

If your child is thinking of transitioning legally, unlike applying for a change in their gender marker, this can be done anytime, as it's not a hassle to obtain a Deed Poll for a legal change of name. In Singapore, there are no limits to the number of times you can change your name legally, but it is of course recommended that your child be sure that they want to go by their chosen name permanently, or at least for the foreseeable future.

If your child is thinking of transitioning medically, they will first need to be formally diagnosed with gender dysphoria by a psychiatrist before they are allowed to undertake this step. This is the part that often causes the most concern from parents, due to the partially irreversible nature of hormone replacement therapy, and the permanence of surgical procedures.

If your child is pre-pubescent or in the early stages of puberty, and you happen to be living in a country where puberty blockers can be prescribed (as this is not possible in Singapore), that can be an option to explore before they are eligible for masculinising or feminising hormones. This is a safe way to help alleviate the dysphoria your child may be feeling, and its effects are reversible upon cessation of treatment.

However, if your child is already well into puberty, inducing pubertal changes of the opposite natal sex will only be possible if hormone replacement therapy is prescribed. Likewise, gender-

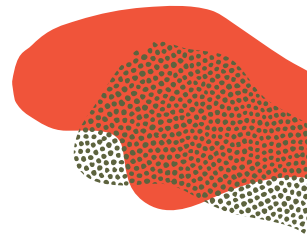
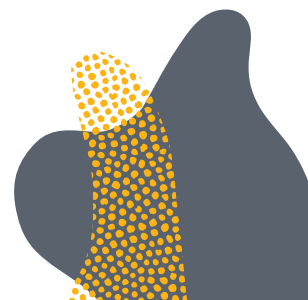
affirming surgeries are also available for physical changes that are not possible, or not as significant solely with hormone replacement therapy.

This is a conversation you will need to have with your child, to gauge if they are mentally prepared for the effects of this part of their transition, such as the changes their body will go through, and how they are perceived by others. However, as mentioned, not all trans people want to medically transition, and they may or may not feel the need to undergo hormone replacement therapy.

It remains important not to assume that your child *will* transition in all of the above ways or want to do so, since they may be unsure, may wish to do so later in life after school, and so on and so forth. Some may be content with transitioning socially and legally, or even just partially so as long as they can freely express their gender with those who are close to them.

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How...

... can I deal with this?

It can be difficult to process the changes that your child is making in their life. Parents have often described the experience of their child coming out to them as trans as a sort of loss — a loss of the child they thought they knew and expected them to be. It may even seem that you might not be able to accept your child's gender identity at all.

We cannot tell you exactly how you should deal with this, because there is no one correct way to do so. However, there are some things you can do that might help you along this journey.

Remind yourself why you love your child, and let them know that you do. This doesn't have to be through words, but it can be through the love language that you and your child share — keep going for those weekend cycling expeditions together, continue to cook together, or make it a point to watch that evening television programme you both enjoy together. Your child will appreciate that you are not cutting them off or avoiding them, and you might just realise that your child's gender identity doesn't really change much about them at all.

Talk to someone you trust. It can be your spouse/partner, a family member, your parents, or even a friend. They might not be able to give you advice, but they can certainly be someone who can listen, and a shoulder to lean on if things are difficult to deal with.

Consider seeking professional help. Seeking mental healthcare may not be the first thing on your mind, and it can be daunting to do so, especially if this is your first time. However, just as you go to the doctor when you are under the weather, it is perfectly ok to see a counsellor to help you process your thoughts and feelings, if you feel you are ready to take that step.



... can I talk to my child about their gender identity?

Oddly enough, this can be one of the harder things to do. Perhaps you didn't have the warmest reaction to your child's coming out, or you have concerns about what their journey will look like and don't know how to bring it up without distressing or hurting them.

Again, there is no fixed way of having conversations with your child, as each parent and child relationship is different, as are their ways of communicating. The most important thing to remember is to let your child know that they can trust you.

Your child will likely appreciate it if you initiate conversations (not confrontations) with them, about their gender identity and how they feel after they come out to you, and likewise will be open to hearing about your thoughts and feelings. It's good to be open and honest with them, as long as you let them be open and honest with you too.



to be consistent in using their name and pronouns, and will be understanding if you make mistakes now and then, as long as you correct yourself too.

Give them the space to explore and express their identity. This can involve many things, like allowing them to stop activities that trigger their dysphoria (e.g. pulling out of gendered CCAs like the Boys Brigade, Girl Guides etc), letting them dress differently, or even exploring new hobbies and interests that affirm their gender identity.

Check in with your child to see what other support they need from you. Your child's needs will change as they transition, and the support you are currently providing may no longer be needed at the same degree, or may need to be changed. For instance, if your child has transitioned socially and does not need you to help explain that they are trans any longer, they might gently let you know not to continue doing so (e.g. distant relatives who might not remember them, new friends, or strangers) as this will 'out' them.

... can I support my child through their journey?

There are many ways of showing support to your trans child, and it doesn't necessarily need to involve you going to Pink Dot! It's really the little, everyday gestures that mean the most. Here are some ways to get started with letting your child know that they have your support:

Use their chosen name and pronouns in all conversations, with and without them. With your child's permission, this is a great and easy way to show that you support them. It can be hard at first to adjust to the change, but as people say, practice makes perfect! Your child will greatly appreciate you doing your best



Be there for them, physically. Many of the things that non-trans people do and not think twice about, like going to public toilets or using gendered changing rooms, can be incredibly stressful to trans people. Where possible, especially in the early stages of their transition, your child may find it incredibly reassuring and affirming to know that a familiar person is there for them, and ready to step in in any way they can if needed.

References:

Gender identity, diversity and dysphoria: supporting your child. Raising Children Network. (2021, March 15). <https://raisingchildren.net.au/pre-teens/development/pre-teens-gender-diversity-and-gender-dysphoria/gender-identity,-diversity-and-dysphoria-supporting-your-child>

WHO...

... can I trust with this matter?

You may be feeling a little lost with everything that is happening, and it is understandable that you might not be sure about who you can turn to among your family or social circle, or if you even should at all. Perhaps you might also be worried about the reactions you might get from others if you do tell them about what's going on.

There is no specific person or group of people that we can tell you to trust. They need not be an expert on the subject; what is most important is choosing someone who you feel comfortable and safe with, whether it's your spouse, partner, sibling, parent, or another child. If you feel that you cannot turn to anyone you know, help is also available through local trans-affirming professional services and community-run groups.

WHERE...

... can my child/I go for help?

There are a number of trans-friendly and trans-affirming spaces available for you and your child to seek help, whether individually or together.

OOGACHAGA[®]

Oogachaga (www.oogachaga.lgbt) is a non-profit, community based organisation working with LGBTQ+ individuals, couples, and families (including family members of those who are LGBTQ+) in Singapore since 1999. The organisation offers professional face-to-face counselling and WhatsApp counselling services.



SAFE Singapore (www.safesingapore.blogspot.com) is a space specifically made for family and friends of LGBTQ+ individuals. It aims to provide:

- ▶ information and resources to help friends, parents, and family members of LGBTQ persons understand their loved ones better
- ▶ a channel for sharing personal experiences on working or living with LGBTQ persons





The T Project (www.thetprojectsg.org) began as Singapore's first and only shelter for transgender individuals. With their dedicated work, they have now expanded their services to include:

- ▶ Counselling services from qualified mental health professionals
- ▶ Alicia Community Centre, a safe space for the trans community and home base to partner trans-run and trans-affirming organisations

... can my child and I go to get more information about being trans and transitioning?



TransgenderSG is a comprehensive guide for transgender individuals living in Singapore. These include resources and a list of available services available for the transgender community and their allies.

You can access these resources at www.transgender.sg.



ASIA PACIFIC
TRANSGENDER
NETWORK

The Asia Pacific Transgender Network (APTN) is a trans-led organisation that advocates for the rights for trans and gender-diverse people in Asia and the Pacific. They have a wide range of resources tailored for trans and gender-diverse individuals, which can also be consumed by families, friends, and allies of the community.

You can learn more about APTN and access their resources at www.weareaptn.org.



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