

Definition of Mental Health

‘...a state of wellbeing in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community.’ (World Health Organisation, 2018).



41% of those who identify as transgender’ have tried to commit suicide. (Psychology

Today, 2018)



Transgender

Although transgender is a new term in contemporary society, the issues that stem from being a transgender individual have been present historically and now. The American Psychological Association 2018 define ‘transgender’ as an individual that ‘gender identify, gender expression or behaviour does not conform to that typically associated with the sex to which they were assigned at birth.’ (American Psychological Association, 2018) Additionally, they state that the perception of ‘transgender’ is continuously changing as new research and knowledge lead to the awareness of the sensitive issues. (American Psychological Association, 2018)

What do Gender Roles Exist?

Gender roles have been around for centuries, Partapuoli (no dates) defines the term '*gender*'



<https://gendermusings.wordpress.com/>

'Gender is related to, and in one way or another based on sex.... Gender is normally referred to as the socially and culturally constructed differences between men and women within cultural system. Sex, on the other hand, is traditionally seen as a biologically entity....' (Partapuoli, n.d)

Important terms relating to 'Transgender'

Sexual Orientation

CARM (no dates) highlights the importance of defining an individual's 'sexual orientation' is.

Additionally they state that it links to an individual's emotional attachment to someone in an intimate and sexual way. (CARM, no dates)

Gender Identify

Refers to our process for determining gender, it is a core belief. Additionally, linking gender identify and transgender for example, An individual's gender identify does not match how the sex

does not match how the sex they were biologically allocated at birth. (Gender Spectrum, 2017)

Gender Dysphoria

The NHS (no date) state that misconception of an individual's gender identity may lead to an individual experience gender dysphoria. (or commonly known as a gender incongruence')

Gender Expression

The Human Rights Campaign (2018) report that Gender expression takes place in an individual's 'behaviour, clothing, haircut, or voice' (Human Rights Campaign, 2018)

'We receive messages from our parents, siblings, friends, peers, teachers, the media and so on, how could any of us fail to know what is expected of us with respect to being either a girl who becomes a woman, or a boy who becomes a man.' (Bolich, G.G, 2009. Page 3)

Signs to look out for

Gender Identify Development Services (2018) state honestly, there is no concrete evidence why a child, a young individual or an adult develops gender related issues. It is important to note that individuals will experience different factors that affect them differently. These include; 'biological, social, and psychological factors' However, taking into account the above factors, a person will face challenges in addition to their personal experiences (GIDS, 2018).

*** Behavioural issues**

A child may show behavioural issues when faced with the stresses of not being able to feel comfortable in their body. Significant changes will result in a loss of engagement and communication in formal and informal environments for example, at home or in school. Additionally, the particular signs will display as; buying clothes in the opposite sexes sector, creating a name that expresses their chosen sex, not when gender they were assigned, disliking their sexual characteristics (genitals), self-harming, and lastly, they the child or adult may try and hide their gender specific features for instance, bandaging their breasts to flatten them in order to exhibit a male appearance.

* **Bad Mental Health**

Psychology Today (2018) report that individuals who are classified as a part of the transgender community report that they are at risk of higher mental health issues throughout their life. (Psychology Today, 2018) Walt Heyer (2016) reveal a definite link between mental health issues and being a 'transgender' Although, it may be due to the lack of supporting services, lack of access or the nature of the problem. Furthermore, they reveal that 90% of those who identify as a transgender suffer with mental health issues indefinitely (Watt Heyer, 2016) He states that common disorders include; Depression and Anxiety disorders.

The Gender Recognition Act (2004)

The Gender Recognition Act (2004) empowers individual's to choose their gender that fit within their gender identity in comparison to their sexual characteristics. Press for Change (no date) state that there is a requirement of four aspects to complete: the individual would have to identify in their chosen gender for a minimum of 2 years, being diagnosed as having 'gender dysmorphia', by a certified psychologist or healthcare professional the individual must be unmarried, and lastly, the individual must be willing to make a commitment to their chosen gender indefinitely. (Press for Change, no date)

The Equality Act (2010)

The Equality Act (2010) came into force in the initial stages of 2010, according to The Equality and Human Rights Commission (2017). it has replaced over '116 separate pieces of legislation' into this act. (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2017)

There are 9 protected characteristics within The Equality Act (2010) they include:

- 1) Age
- 2) Disability
- 3) **Gender Reassignment**
- 4) Marriage and Civil Partnership
- 5) Pregnancy and Maternity
- 6) Race
- 7) Religion or Belief
- 8) **Sex**
- 9) **Sexual Orientation**

(Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2018)

In particular, under the Equality Act 2010, the act protects individuals who had, had or has planned to make the decision of Gender Reassignment. Additionally, the Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2018 expand on the long, on going form of transition into a transgender individual.:

'...changing your physiological or other gender attributes is a personal process rather than a medical one. You can be at any stage in the transition process - from proposing to reassign your gender, to undergoing a process to reassign your gender, or having completed it. (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2018)

Same Sex Couples Act (2013)

2013 was the year The Same Sex Couples Act was first introduced, the act allows individuals that identify of the same gender to enter in a marriage or a civil partnership. Additionally the acts obliges: 'employers,

Employees, service providers customers, public authorities, and their service users, religious organisation and their officials, as well as schools, their employees, pupils, governors and teachers.' (The Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2013 page 3) Furthermore, the act requires everyone to treat those who identify with being a transgender and or have the same or different sexual orientation to be treated fairly and equally.. (The Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2013)

Barriers Relating to Transgender

When people start the process of a changing their gender identity, the group is at risk of being isolated from society. Additionally, they will face severe consequences to their mental and physical health if they do not have effective access to important services for example: schools, universities, healthcare, employing or housing due to being discriminated unfairly.

Where to get help and support:

There are many organisations that offer their helping services to the transgender community. Additionally, it is important to note that the supporting charities and additionally organisations they offer anonymous services, and they offer online and in person services to suit the nature of the circumstances.

For example:

- Mermaids UK
- Gender Trust.Org
- The Beaumont Society
- GLAAD
- Chrysalis
- Support U

To conclude, awareness about the transgender individual and groups of our society will be key in understanding them and creating a inclusive environment for everyone.

‘I want to create a place where trans people and our allies could come together to share experiences, information and ideas. Being transgender or loving someone who is transgender can be challenging in our society and I hope that members of this site will also use this support and encourages each other. Together, we can strengthen our community and open the hearts and minds of others’

(LIKESUCCESS, 2015)

Forms of support

Counselling

Counselling services will offer the individual to express their core feelings in a confidential, protected setting.

Hormones

Due to the success of scientific research, hormone treatment is now available to men and women (the terms used are Oestrogen and Testosterone)

Surgery

After joining the journey of being a transgender, the emotional needs of the individual have been met, as a choice of the individual it is their choice if they would like to rectify their sexual organs.

(The Rainbow, 2015)

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