

Equality & Diversity Fact Sheet 5

Considering Trans People in Healthcare

(Taken from DH publication 'Trans people's health' 07)

<http://www.gendertrust.org.uk/n2/docs/DH04.pdf>

Who are Trans People?

'Trans' is used to capture experiences of being gender variant in behaviour and preference, as well as social and legal gender change or transformation. Trans is primarily a UK term, developed in a political context to refer to a diverse and inclusive community of people ranging from part-time cross dressers to transsexual people who undergo gender reassignment surgeries. Trans is used in the context of personal rights: that is, to support the claim that all Trans people are entitled to have their human rights upheld.

'Transgender' is an alternative umbrella term used in many parts of Europe and North America. In the UK, transgender is used as a policy term to describe those people who live part of their lives in the preferred gender role – they may use hormonal treatments to change their body form but they will generally not seek to undergo gender reassignment surgeries.

'Transsexual' describes those people who seek gender reassignment treatments, including genital reconstructive surgery where possible. Someone who is transitioning from female to male is often known as a Trans man, while male to female transsexual people are known as Trans women. After successfully transitioning to live permanently in their preferred gender role many prefer to be considered simply men or women.

'Intersex' refers to people with both male and female sex signifiers. Some intersex people will identify as Trans, and choose in adulthood to undergo gender reassignment treatments to enable them to live in their preferred sex, which maybe opposite to that in which they were raised. Most intersex people do not identify as Trans.

Communicating and Engaging with Trans People

Good communication for health professionals includes:

- Using the name and title that the person who is transitioning deems to be correct (e.g. Mr, Mrs, Miss or Ms) do not ;
- Use 'transsexual' as a descriptive term, i.e. transsexual people, transsexual individual or someone who is transsexual;
- Avoiding the terms disorder (as in gender identity disorder) or disease.
- Avoid using the wrong pronoun, i.e. using 'he' rather than 'she' and vice versa.

Meeting Other Needs

- It is important to remember that being Trans is about gender identity and not sexual orientation. Trans people can be LGB or straight (heterosexual)
- LGBT people come from all parts of the community and good access principles still apply; ensure that you provide appropriate access in terms of all equality issues (i.e. religion and belief, cultural, disability etc)

Links and Resources

Gender Trust

PO Box 3192, Brighton BN1 3WR Tel: 01273 424024 (office hours) Helpline: 07000 790347 Offers advice and support for transsexual and transgendered people, especially 'male to female', and to partners, families, carers and allied professionals. Has a membership society and produces a magazine, 'Gems'.
www.gendertrust.org.uk

FTM Network

BM Network, London WC1N 3XX Helpline: 0161 432 1915 (Wednesdays 8pm – 10.30pm only) Offers advice and support to 'female-to-male' transsexual and transgender people, and to families and professionals. Also has a 'buddying' scheme, a newsletter called 'Boys Own' and an annual national meeting.
www.ftm.org.uk

Beaumont Society

27 Old Gloucester St, London WC1N 3XX Helpline: 01582 412220 Provides advice and support for transvestite people, but also has some transsexual members. Runs local groups and produces a newsletter and publications.
www.beaumontsociety.org.uk

Mermaids

BM Mermaids, London WC1N 3XX Helpline: 07020 935066 (12 noon – 9pm when staffed) Support and information for children and teenagers who are trying to cope with gender identity issues and for their families and carers. Please send SAE for further information.

www.mermaids.freeuk.com

Press for Change

BM Network, London WC1N 3XX In emergencies ONLY, ring 0161 247 6444 Campaign for equal civil rights for transsexual and transgendered people. Also provides legal help and advice for individuals, information and training for professionals, speakers for groups. Produces a newsletter and publications. Please send SAE for further details.

www.pfc.org.uk

Depend

BM Depend, London WC1N 3XX An organization offering free, confidential and non-judgmental advice, information and support to all family members, partners, spouses and friends of transsexual people.

www.depend.org.uk