

# WELCOMING OUR TRANS FAMILY AND FRIENDS:

A SUPPORT GUIDE FOR PARENTS,  
FAMILIES AND FRIENDS OF  
TRANSGENDER AND GENDER  
NON-CONFORMING PEOPLE



**PFLAG**  
[www.pflag.org](http://www.pflag.org)



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**W**elcoming Our Trans Family and Friends is a publication of Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) National. PFLAG is the nation's foremost family-based organization committed to the civil rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

Founded in 1973 by mothers and fathers, PFLAG has 200,000 members and supporters in more than 500 chapters throughout the United States. This vast grassroots network is cultivated, resourced and serviced by the PFLAG National Office located in

Washington, DC, the National Board of Directors and our Regional Directors. PFLAG is a tax-exempt, nonprofit organization that is not affiliated with any political or religious institution.

***"To be honest, I am at peace knowing my son is at peace – finally. The pronouns are still hard, but with lots of practice, it's getting easier. I am so proud to say he is my son and feel he is one of my biggest accomplishments."***

## Our Vision

We, the parents, families and friends of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people, celebrate diversity and envision a society that embraces everyone, including those diverse sexual orientations and gender identities. Only with respect, dignity and equality for all will we reach our full potential as human beings, individually and collectively. PFLAG welcomes the participation and support of all who share in, and hope to realize, this vision.

## Our Mission

PFLAG promotes the health and well-being of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons, their families and friends through:

*“We met our new daughter this summer. We were a little uncomfortable at first, but we soon realized this was the same child we have always known and loved for years. She looked different and she asked us to use her new name. We’ve adjusted to that. She still is a truck driver, rides motorcycles, and loves fishing. Not so much has changed after all.”*

support, to cope with an adverse society; education, to enlighten an ill-informed public; and advocacy, to end discrimination and to secure equal civil rights. Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays provides opportunity for dialogue about

sexual orientation and gender identity, and acts to create a society that is healthy and respectful of human diversity.

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## About this Guide

*Welcoming Our Trans Family and Friends* is copyrighted, but readers are welcome to copy it in whole or in part, with proper accreditation to PFLAG. The scope of this guide focuses on providing support to parents, families and friends of transgender and gender non-conforming youth and adults. Our experiences, expertise, knowledge and resources continue to evolve over time, and therefore, we encourage you to check with your local transgender support network, medical doctor and/or therapist for the most recent information.

Please note the experiences of intersex young people and adults are beyond the scope of this publication. If you are seeking information specific to the intersex community, please visit the Accord Alliance at [www.accordalliance.org](http://www.accordalliance.org), and be sure to review their *Handbook for Parents* located at [www.dsdguidelines.org/files/parents.pdf](http://www.dsdguidelines.org/files/parents.pdf).

To order this publication, receive a complete listing of PFLAG publications or obtain information about a PFLAG chapter in your area, please visit our website or contact us:

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## A SPECIAL WELCOME FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



For many parents, family members and others, the news that someone you know is transgender can bring an array of emotions along with it. And in many communities, there are few resources available to turn to for help and support when a loved one comes out as a transgender or gender non-conforming individual. In almost every corner of the country, however, there is

PFLAG. We understand the importance of having accurate information and, just as importantly, we understand the emotional journey that friends and family often find themselves on.

For decades, PFLAG has been proud to be a resource for transgender and gender non-conforming people, their families and friends. This new publication is inspired by *Our Trans Children*, first published in 1995 and authored by Jessica Xavier and members of the PFLAG

Transgender Network (TNET). As one of the few supportive, easy-to-understand resources available for those with transgender loved ones, that original edition sold more than 54,000 copies.

All of us at PFLAG are humbled by the opportunity to help so many people.

***For decades, PFLAG has been proud to be a resource for transgender and gender non-conforming people, their families and friends.***

This publication includes insights from the parents of transgender children . . . professional viewpoints from experts on gender issues . . . and information from educators about how to support young people at home *and* at school. And, it includes comprehensive information on terminology, a terrific list of other resources and unique advice on how to embrace your transgender or gender non-conforming loved one, and help them feel more comfortable as they strive to live openly, honestly and authentically as who they are.

PFLAG has a long history with the transgender community. We were the first national lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) organization to include transgender people in our mission statement. And we were proud to lead the way in adopting a groundbreaking policy of *only* supporting legislation that protects our entire family, including our transgender and gender non-conforming family and friends.

*Welcoming Our Trans Family and Friends*, wouldn't be possible without Roberta Berry, Kim Pearson, Dr. Michele Angello and Eli R. Green, or the board members of TNET. Their hard work and dedication is evident throughout these pages, and we are grateful for their contributions.

I hope you will find this revised publication an invaluable resource, and that you will also reach out to your local PFLAG chapter for more information on transgender issues. Our chapter leaders are available to help.

**PFLAG is here for you.**

Jody M. Huckaby  
Executive Director



# WELCOME TO OUR FAMILY

**C**ongratulations and welcome to our family! You are probably reading this pamphlet because your loved one has recently come out to you as transgender<sup>1</sup> or gender non-conforming.<sup>2</sup> While this news may come as a surprise, it is incredibly important and should be handled with care. For many parents, family members and friends, the news that someone you know is transgender or gender non-conforming can bring an array of emotions along with it: some feel sad, fearful and disappointed while others feel shocked, angry and upset, and still others feel relieved and are eager to accept and support their loved ones with open arms.<sup>3</sup>

The most important thing to remember at this moment is that you were trusted with a very important and personal piece of information about someone you love. While you may feel as if you are all alone, we would like to gently remind you that thousands of us have gone through a similar process. Your feelings, questions and concerns are incredibly important. This guide serves as a resource to help address some of them.

***The most important thing to remember at this moment is that you were trusted with a very important and personal piece of information about someone you love.***

It also serves as a resource for families and friends of young children perceived as transgender or gender non-conforming.

From our experiences, younger children typically do not *come out* as transgender or gender non-conforming. As such, guidance is provided on how to create and maintain a safe space for younger children to freely explore and determine their own gender identities and expressions with necessary time and support.

The following pages provide a wide range of information and resources to better help support you through this disorienting and sometimes difficult time, in hopes of helping you recognize your emotions and strategies on how to work through them.

The guide also provides advice on how to better support your loved one as they move along their transgender journey, and it offers several resources to help further your own understanding of your loved one's gender identity.

***There is a reason you are reading this guide. Most likely, you have some questions about what your loved one is experiencing.***

Knowledge is power. Listen to your loved one and educate yourself. The more you know about various transgender and gender non-conforming narratives and experiences, the more

you will be able to provide the kind of love and support necessary to help your loved one grow and lead a dignified and healthy life.

### Parents, Families and Friends Just Like You Share Some Advice

There is a reason you are reading this guide. Most likely, you have some questions about what your loved one is experiencing. PFLAG parents are here to offer some very basic information and advice that may help you navigate through this uncertain time:

- **You are not alone.** It is important to remember that you and your loved one are not alone. Due to the lack of available statistics, no one really knows the precise number of transgender and gender non-conforming people living in the world. Yet, some researchers estimate that one in 1,000 people are born feeling that their body does not conform to their internal sense of feeling male, female or something else.<sup>4</sup>
- **You are not responsible.** No one knows why one is transgender or gender non-conforming, but we do know that there is no evidence suggesting parenting contributes to children becoming transgender or gender non-conforming. You are not responsible, and more importantly, there is nothing wrong with your loved one. What's most important is that you were trusted enough for your loved one to share a fundamental truth about who they are and they will need your support in moving forward. Navigating this journey together may provide the opportunity to develop a stronger and richer relationship with each other.
- **Just the facts.** Gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation are NOT synonymous. *Gender identity* refers to a person's internal sense of being male, female, or something else. For many people, one's gender identity often corresponds with their biological sex (i.e. a person assigned female at birth identifies as female, or a person assigned male at birth identifies as male). People whose gender identity corresponds with their biological sex are referred to as cisgender individuals with *cis* being a latin prefix meaning "on the same side." This example differs from a person who identifies as transgender, with *trans* being a latin prefix meaning "across or over." In this

instance, one's gender identity *does not* correspond with their biological sex (i.e. a person assigned female at birth identifies as male or a person assigned male at birth identifies as female).

***The important thing to remember is that every gender expression is valid.***

*Gender expression* relates to how a person chooses to communicate their gender identity to others through clothing, hair, styles, mannerisms, etc. This communication may be conscious or subconscious.

While most people's understandings of gender expressions relate to masculinity and femininity, there are countless combinations that may combine both masculine and feminine expressions, or neither, through androgynous expressions. The important thing to remember is that every gender expression is valid.

*Sexual orientation* or sexual identity is not the same as gender identity. Sexual orientation describes whom we are romantically attracted to and love. A person's gender identity does not predetermine a person's sexual orientation. Just like a cisgender person, a transgender person can identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or straight. Some people often wonder why a trans person, for example a transgender man (a person assigned female at birth who identifies as male) would go through the trouble of transitioning to male if he is attracted to men or vice versa for a transgender woman. *Why can't he just stay straight? Why is he going through the trouble to transition?* Remember, the answer to this question is that your loved one is transgender, meaning your loved one's gender identity does not correspond with their biological sex. *The discussion of one's sexual orientation is beyond the scope*

*of this guide. If you need support for your loved one's sexual orientation, please visit PFLAG's website ([www.pflag.org](http://www.pflag.org)) to access our many resources related to this topic.*

For more information on the key difference between biological sex, gender expression, gender identity and sexual orientation, we encourage you to review *Transgender Basics* ([www.gaycenter.org/community/multimedia/transgenderbasics](http://www.gaycenter.org/community/multimedia/transgenderbasics)), a film produced by the New York City LGBT Community Center's Gender Identity Project. More information about this film is included in our *Resources* section.

- **The importance of self-care.** You may have to give yourself some time and grieve the loss of your loved one as you perceived them. It is important to develop a support network and work through your feelings of grief before you can truly welcome and celebrate your loved one's new identity.

Keep in mind that your initial reactions to your loved one coming out will be important in determining your on-going relationships with them. Try to share your more negative feelings of anger, disbelief, shock, or disappointment with your support system, where they can be safely expressed. Look for positives and sincere reassurance you can provide. Something as simple as "I love you no matter what," may be a good starting point in positively moving the dialogue forward. Your local PFLAG Chapter is a great place to work through your feelings, anxieties, or confusion with other parents, family members, and friends who have gone through similar experiences. Please visit our webpage to learn how you can locate your nearest PFLAG Chapter.

- **R-E-S-P-E-C-T.** Your loved one had the courage to come out to you. This action took a lot of emotional courage and integrity. Try to follow their lead and respect what makes them feel most comfortable. If you can, practice and use the name and pronouns they prefer. There is no *right* way to identify as transgender; after all, each person is an individual. Listen carefully to what your loved one wants and needs and do your best to respect their wishes.
- **Coming out.** Your loved one is the only person who can determine when they are ready for extended family and their social circle to know they are transgender or gender non-conforming. Try to honor their wishes about disclosure to others.
- **The future is bright.** Your loved one's future has infinite possibilities. Their life journey may include graduating college, a successful career or finding a life partner and having children. The way you envisioned your love one's future may need to be revised, but there is still wonderful promise for what tomorrow may bring.
- **The well-being of your loved one.** As your loved one is affirmed in their gender identity, you are likely to see positive changes. Your loved one may become a more comfortable, happy, and relaxed person. No longer will they have to posture as something that they are not. Living an honest and open life will only enable them to pursue all of their ambitions more fully.
- **We are here to support you.** PFLAG is available to support both you and your loved one through on-going meetings in your own neighborhood or by phone. A variety of books,

videos, websites and community groups are provided at the end of this guide that you might find helpful.

## Common Questions You May Have

### **What does transgender mean?**

Transgender, or simply “trans,” is an umbrella term used to describe those who transcend conventional expectations of gender identity or expression. Like any umbrella term, many different groups of people, with different histories and experiences, get associated within the greater trans community – such groups include, but are certainly not limited to, people who identify as transsexual, genderqueer, gender variant, gender diverse, androgynous, etc.

***Transgender, or simply “trans,” is an umbrella term used to describe those who transcend conventional expectations of gender identity or expression.***

A transgender person is someone whose gender identity does not correspond with their sex assigned at birth. Gender identity refers to a person’s internal sense of being or feeling male, female, or something else. For example, a transgender man is a person who is assigned female at birth and identifies as male, while a transgender woman is a person who is assigned male at birth and identifies as female. Sex assignment refers to the act of a doctor inspecting a baby’s genitals at birth and declaring, “It’s a girl” or “It’s a boy” without any degree of uncertainty. In virtually all cases, parents will raise this child as a member of the assigned sex/gender without any conscious deliberation.

## **What causes transgenderism?**

Research has examined social, biological and psychological factors; however, no single theory has been endorsed by the scientific community. Whatever the cause, supporting your loved one is critical and helps result in a more positive outcome for them.<sup>5</sup>

## **What are some differences between transgender, transsexual and genderqueer people?**

Transgender is an umbrella term used to describe any person whose gender identity does not conform to their assigned sex at birth. Often, transgender people are interested in living in the gender identity that does not conform to their assigned birth sex. The process of moving towards one's self-determined gender identity is known as transitioning. While there is no "right" way to transition, there are some common social changes that many transgender people experience such as changing one's name, adopting different pronouns, and/or wearing clothes that more accurately communicate one's gender identity.

A person who chooses to access hormone therapy or modify their body surgically to conform to their self-determined gender identity are transsexual. Transsexual persons include both female-to-male (FTM) trans men and male-to-female (MTF) trans women. A transsexual woman is assigned male at birth and identifies as female, while a transsexual man is assigned female at birth and identifies as male. Typically, transsexual people feel their bodies do not correspond with their true identities; this feeling is referred to as gender dysphoria. Transsexual people typically pursue hormone therapy along with various surgeries to overcome gender dysphoria. The high costs of hormone ther-



apy and various trans-related surgeries are prohibitive for some; however, lacking access to these treatments does not invalidate their identities. Because transsexual people desire hormone therapy treatment and certain trans-related surgeries, they are more likely to interface with legal, medical and psychiatric professionals to access this care.

A person who views their gender identity as one of many possible genders beyond strictly female or male sometimes identifies as genderqueer, gender fluid, gender neutral, bigendered, androgynous or simply gender diverse. Such people feel that they exist psychologically between genders or beyond the notion of only male and female. People who feel this way may or may not pursue hormone therapy and/or surgical body modification and sometimes prefer using gender-neutral pronouns (e.g., “ze,” hir”). Some gender non-conforming people are comfortable with their bodies as they are regardless of how they express their gender.

***Since every trans person’s narrative will be different, it is important to remember that each of our loved ones will need the space and time to determine how they wish to live and express their gender identity.***

Since every trans person’s narrative will be different, it is important to remember that each of our loved ones will need the space and time to determine how they wish to live and express their gender identity. Some may know and express their need to transition at a very young age while others may not share their needs until well into adulthood or even much later in life. Again, there is no right way to transition. What is important is to provide the support and resources necessary to help your loved one make the most informed decisions to help them along their journey.

## Is this just a phase?

If your loved one regularly asks questions about gender, has adopted a different gender identity than the one assigned to them at birth, or expresses their gender identity through clothing and accessories that go against conventional gender norms, then there is a strong possibility that this is not a phase. Also, some young children who express their gender identity in a consistent, persistent and acute manner over time, indicating that this is not a phase.

The onset of puberty is a very trying time when transgender and gender non-conforming young people realize the extent of their gender dysphoria. Some may begin to feel severely depressed. Many experts, including the American Medical Association (AMA) and the American Psychiatric Association (APA), assert that bodily interventions are the treatment of choice to add comfort to certain transgender people's gender dysphoria.<sup>6</sup> Some families and friends decide to pursue puberty suppression<sup>7</sup> treatments for their loved ones as a way to help alleviate gender dysphoria.

While bodily interventions are the "treatment of choice," it is important to note that there is no cure for being transgender. In order to address and support your loved one's gender identity, it is important to take advantage of any trans-friendly resources within your local community. If you cannot locate a trans-friendly support group or professional in your area, please take advantage of the *Resources* section of this publication and be sure to reach out to your local PFLAG chapter to receive more support information.

## Will my loved one be safe from harm?

With support and resources your loved one will have a better chance of living a healthy and happy life. Being affirmed in their gender identity and expression can improve their self-esteem and relieve the stress of pretending to be something that they are not.

Discrimination against transgender and gender non-conforming people exists in employment, education, housing, and health-care. The lack of adequate federal, state, and local laws and strong enforcement fail to adequately protect your loved one. The lack of legal protections can create challenges and barriers to accessing social services and public accommodations because many tend to be gender-segregated and lack clear policies on the treatment of transgender and gender non-conforming people. One small way you can begin challenging such unacceptable discrimination is to challenge transphobia when and where you feel safe to do so.

*The future you envisioned for your loved one may look different now, but it is still filled with wonderful possibilities.*

The future you envisioned for your loved one may look different now, but it is still filled with wonderful possibilities. While coming out or transitioning will not solve all of your loved one's problems - and may in fact introduce a new set of challenges - it may make it easier for them to address them. With love and support they may be able to lead a much happier and productive life.

## Be Patient, Acceptance Takes Time

It is important to sort out your feelings, which may at times be contradictory and confusing. Some parents, family members and friends may be relieved to have discovered the source of their loved one's distress; others may be sad, fearful, angry or shocked; still others may feel as if their loved one has died. Give yourself the opportunity to explore these feelings, and then arm yourself with the facts. Good information will help you feel more comfortable and confident with what is taking place with your loved one and allow you to feel more supportive of the process.

**Be honest with yourself.** Many parents, family members and friends experience distress, fear and embarrassment as their loved one changes their gender presentation. *What do we tell people? What will they think? Will our church still accept us? Will our social status or lifestyle be affected by what our loved one is doing?* Sharing your questions and concerns with parents, families and friends who have gone through similar experiences can be invaluable. PFLAG will support you through this process.

**Transgender Network (TNET) Support.** There are more than 500 PFLAG chapters in the US, most of which have TNET representatives who can offer the support necessary to help you work through and share your experiences with parents, families and friends just like yourself. Representatives can offer you the support necessary to help you be more supportive and understanding. If you aren't ready for group support, TNET can help match you with support services you do feel comfortable with. (Please see the *Resources* section to learn how you can locate your closest representative.)

**The Importance of Self-Education.** Due to the abundance of negative media portrayals of transgender and gender non-conforming people, our culture is grossly misinformed about trans-related issues. Taking the initiative to self-educate and access reputable and trustworthy information will help allay your anxieties and concerns. It is often overwhelming for your loved one to continuously educate family, friends, and peers about the transgender and gender non-conforming community. Doing your homework ahead of time will demonstrate your commitment to understanding transgender histories, experiences, and critical issues important to the community. Your loved one will appreciate these efforts. If you have questions that you feel only your loved one can best answer, ask permission and make sure your questions are presented in a sensitive manner. (For more information on trustworthy trans information, please see our *Resources* section.)

***Taking the initiative to self-educate and access reputable and trustworthy information will help allay your anxieties and concerns.***

# WHAT THE PROFESSIONALS SAY

**D**r. Michele Angello is a certified clinical sexologist and a member of the Renaissance Transgender Association. She has over 10 years of experience working with transgender adults and youth, as well as individuals who identify as genderqueer. She is an adjunct faculty member at Widener University and at the Institute for the Advanced Study of Human Sexuality. She has graciously offered some of her professional wisdom for those of us who are struggling with how to provide support and understanding for our transgender and gender non-conforming children.

One of the scariest things for a parent is the fear that their transgender child might have significant challenges to overcome in life. When a child comes out as trans, I have found that many parents initially have several common reactions:

- **Guilt** that something they did may have “caused” their child’s gender variance.
- **Concern** that their child will be put in physical danger by presenting as gender non-conforming.
- **Sadness** that their child will not have the future that they assumed was the child’s given path.

The first reaction is usually one of protection and fear for an individual they care deeply for and would do anything to keep happy and healthy. It is incredibly natural to feel this way, and

parents sometimes just need space to grieve for the way in which their child's future might change. I used to find that most parents brought their kids in for therapy because they wanted me to "fix" them (meaning, convince them to conform to the expectations of their birth sex). I never turned these families away, because it was apparent to me that these parents were willing to fight for their kids, meaning they were determined to enlist the help of a specialist to ensure their kid's mental health. On one level, if they agree to meet with someone specializing in this field, they also understand the chance that their child may be transgender. Much of the time, however, the "fix" isn't about gender conformity, and amazingly, once parents allow themselves to wrap their brains around this rather foreign concept, they are usually their child's biggest ally.

I also encourage families to allow for fluidity in gender expression. Our culture seems to be so strict about what makes a boy a boy, or a girl a girl, that it doesn't always allow a child to truly identify as the authentic individual they are. I see many male-bodied individuals who like to engage in more stereotypical female gender roles (these are usually the kids who come into therapy earlier since it's more acceptable for female-bodied individuals to enjoy more masculine activities). Often, these boys will eventually share that they truly want to be girls in every sense. At other times though, they enjoy dressing in girl's clothing and playing in a more female gender role, yet they still feel comfortable identifying as boys. Ideally, when parents allow for this space, young people get to really understand who they are and make authentic decisions about how they need to live. Sometimes even

***I also encourage families to allow for fluidity in gender expression.***

very young children are able to make a conscious decision not to transition because they have had an opportunity to test their resiliency as well as the overall acceptance of their system (family, peers, spiritual affiliation, school environment, etc) and have determined that they do not want to risk the loss of support from any of these areas. Of course, there are kids who feel so strongly that they are gender-variant that loss of support doesn't quell their need to transition. This is when it is critical for there to be some support network in place (ideally, immediate family).

The most important thing for every child to know, at a very deep level, is that they are loved unconditionally. It seems like a fundamental concept of parenting, but when children are brave enough to look at themselves at such a deep level, it is crucial to remind them over and over about how proud you are of them for allowing for this level of authenticity. It is the bravest thing a human being can do, and when a child hears that message from a parent, it can be life-saving.



# YOUR LOVED ONE

**W**hen you are ready and the timing is right, you may want to consider the following questions which could lead to a more meaningful dialogue with your loved one about their gender identity. Remember, when asking these questions, you aren't trying to get all of your questions answered immediately. Rather you are trying to gather information for greater insight and understanding. This initial conversation will inevitably lead to many subsequent discussions that will help you more fully understand your loved one's gender identity. Here are a few suggested questions to begin this dialogue with transgender and gender non-conforming adults and adolescents:

- When did you start thinking about your gender identity?
- What caused you to start thinking about your gender identity?
- Where did you learn about the transgender community?
- Do you know any transgender people?
- Do you have support from the transgender community?

***Remember, when asking these questions, you aren't trying to get all of your questions answered immediately. Rather you are trying to gather information for greater insight and understanding.***

- Do you have friends you can talk to about gender identity issues?
- What name/pronouns would you like me to use when addressing you?
- Are there resources you have been accessing to educate yourself about this? Can you recommend any for me?
- Are you safe from harassment?
- What can I do to better support you at this time?
- Is there anything I can do to help?

Remember that you should carefully phrase your questions so that they are both sensitive and reasonable. Invasive questions that seem insensitive can easily upset your loved one and potentially shut down the conversation. Before asking your question, ask yourself if this would be a question you would feel comfortable being asked, or asking a friend, who does not identify as transgender or gender non-conforming. Remember: Only ask a question if you are prepared to hear the answer. Keep in mind that you want to pace your questions as this will be emotionally easier for both you and your loved one.

### Adapting to Your Loved One's New Gender Identity

One of the most difficult things you will experience is adapting to your loved one's new gender identity, especially when adjusting to a name/pronoun change. In particular, parents who may have invested a lot of time and energy to choose just the right name for their child may have trouble adjusting. Using your loved one's preferred name and pronoun is a huge step forward and a sign of sincere respect honoring your loved one.

Everyone will make mistakes in the beginning. It is best to quickly acknowledge them and try to move on. Some families and friends make up games to help them remember without their loved one having to draw attention to these mistakes (i.e. put a quarter in a jar for a mistake).

Another adjustment will be adapting to how your loved one presents in public. If you have not fully adjusted to your loved one's new name or choice of pronoun,

allow them to set the tone when you are in public together and work hard to use only their chosen name – avoid pronoun usage until you are confident that you are using their preferred pronouns. It is absolutely important for you to follow their lead. Neglecting to do so may invalidate their gender identity, confuse others, and potentially jeopardize their safety.

***Invasive questions that seem insensitive can easily upset your loved one and potentially shut down the conversation.***

## Important Decisions

Difficult decisions will arise regarding your loved one's transition. Some of these decisions are reversible, such as helping support your loved one in their decisions over the type of clothing they like wearing or using the name they prefer to be referred by. Other decisions are irreversible such as hormone therapy treatment and trans-related surgeries. The best way of moving forward for all parties involved is to listen to each other, consider the options, and work hard to meet each other where you are both at in the process.

Keep in mind that you should refrain from sharing overly critical advice and remember to consider all of the options. Encourage a complete conversation about these decisions, and *listen* to what your loved one is sharing with you. Always remember to be open, honest and respectful. The most recent clinical research suggests that if your loved one is certain about proceeding with irreversible transition options such as surgery or hormone therapy treatment, they have most likely already thoroughly considered this option long before sharing their decision with you. Trust their judgment; however, exercise caution if your loved one is prone to changing their mind back-and-forth.

A transgender or gender non-conforming young person approaching or experiencing puberty may be very distressed as their body develops. In particular they may be dissatisfied with the development of unwanted secondary sex characteristics. Without treatment, they are likely to be depressed or suicidal. Evaluation by supportive therapists and medical doctors is critical and will help you determine the best course of action.

Again there is no right way to transition. Your loved one will tell you how they feel. Whether they may desire medical interventions, name changes, pronoun changes, clothing changes or any combination of these things is secondary to the supportive role that you play in validating their experience. What is most important is that you listen to your loved one, consider their needs, and remember that no matter your opinion, your loved one is expressing their truest sense of self to you.

# YOUR PEERS

## Telling Your Family and Friends

**W**hen considering disclosing information about your child's gender identity to your family and friends, make sure that you first discuss your intentions with your loved one. Make sure that they are comfortable with you doing so. Your loved one may or may not wish for you to disclose their gender identity with others. Clearly, if they are physically transitioning, this may prove for difficult conversations with others if they do not know. Again, check-in with your loved one, consider your options, and take the most appropriate approach that best suits your particular circumstances.

When you are ready, visit your local PFLAG chapter. There you will have the opportunity to speak with peers who have already shared the news about their loved ones to their family members, friends, business colleagues and social contacts. They can share strategies on how to present your story factually and with confidence so that you can be prepared for the wide-range of reactions your friends and family will have when you share similar news.

***When you are ready, visit your local PFLAG chapter. There you will have the opportunity to speak with peers who have already shared the news about their loved ones to their family members, friends, business colleagues and social contacts.***

Keep in mind that you can only control how you deliver this news; you have absolutely no control over the reactions of others, which is why we encourage you to first reach out to those people you feel will be most supportive. After you have the support of some of your closest family members and friends, move onto those whom you are less certain about. Remember that there is no right way to share this information. At times you will have to take some strategic gambles – in these instances, you may very well be surprised at how someone receives this news. If a person’s reaction is negative, remember to not take it personally.

Once you share this news with your peers, you no longer have control over who knows. You very well may learn that others you did not intend to share this news with now know. When information is exchanged in this manner, people may be misinformed. If you think that someone may know about your loved one, engage them in a conversation if you are comfortable enough and make sure they have the right information. They may feel hurt that you did not tell them directly. It is because of these hurt feelings that some people choose to send out mass emails with the same information about their loved one for all to learn at one point in time. Usually, when people take this approach, they often are inundated with the same questions from multiple people. Consider this response if you are weighing your options and determine what may be most appropriate for you.

### Tips On Interfacing With Professionals

Unfortunately, transgender and gender non-conforming people regularly experience blatant and unembarrassed discrimination

from various professionals, including teachers, healthcare providers and social service professionals along with public servants. Often this kind of discrimination results in verbal harassment and threats. As a parent, family member or friend, it is important to remember how you can best advocate on behalf of your loved one, ensuring they are receiving the care and services they rightfully deserve.

The most effective thing you can do to help reduce certain forms of discrimination is to explain what it means to be transgender or gender non-conforming and sharing what your loved one is going through. In your conversation, be sure to stress that your loved one must be referred to by their preferred name and pronouns and that reasonable public accommodations must be made for them. For example, if there is a dress code, they must adhere to the one that best corresponds to their self-determined gender identity.

Sometimes it may be difficult to gauge how to best intervene if you feel your loved one is not being fairly treated. In every situation you must assess the likely consequences of intervening. Specifically, will your loved one be safer or be the target of more discrimination after you advocate on their behalf? Please be sure to refer to our *Resources* section and review the various advocacy resources that can help you better support your loved one.

***The most effective thing you can do to help reduce certain forms of discrimination is to explain what it means to be transgender or gender non-conforming and sharing what your loved one is going through.***

# TIPS WHEN WORKING WITH SCHOOLS

**E**li Green is a seasoned educator, with over eight years of experience developing and leading trans-related trainings, classes, and educational seminars. Eli has a particular passion for advocating for highly marginalized groups, such as LGBTQ youth and survivors of interpersonal violence, and has worked for places such as The Hetrick-Martin Institute - Home of the Harvey Milk High School - and the University of California. He has kindly offered some of his professional wisdom for parents, family members or friends who are seeking guidance on how to more fully support their transgender or gender non-conforming loved one in school.

**Talk with your loved one about what they want.** Before you approach your loved one's teachers or school administrators, have a conversation with them about what they are hoping for at school. It is likely that they have put a lot of thought into what their dream scenario would be.

- *What to Wear.* Be willing to compromise with your love one about their gender presentation. It is understandable to be concerned about how they will be viewed by their peers. However, it is likely that the opportunity to present their gender in a way that feels best for them will have a positive outcome.



- *Navigating Single Gender Spaces.* Ask your loved one what their expectations and hopes are for using locker rooms, bathrooms or joining gender specific teams. The options available to them will probably depend largely on the space available in the school building and the comfort of school administrators. By learning more about what your loved one wants, you are in a better place to emotionally prepare them for the possible outcomes, and to advocate for their desires.

**Request the Staff Receive Training About Transgender and Gender Non-conforming Identities.** As a parent, family member or friend, it is not your responsibility to educate your school's teachers and administrators about gender identity and gender expression issues. It is your job to advocate for *your* loved one, and hopefully work in alliance with the school to create the best possible outcome. By requesting the school to have a specialized training about gender identities and expressions, it provides the opportunity for school staff to increase their knowledge, have their questions answered by an expert, and learn more about how other schools have successfully navigated similar situations.

*As a parent, family member or friend, it is not your responsibility to educate your school's teachers and administrators about gender identity and gender expression issues.*

**Know Your Rights.** If you encounter resistance from your loved one's school, it can be helpful to have a basic understanding of whether or not gender identity and expression are legally protected in your location, and what your options might be.

Organizations such as the Transgender Law & Policy Institute {[www.transgenderlaw.org](http://www.transgenderlaw.org)} are useful resources for finding out the legal protections in your area.

**Seek Community Support.** This can be a challenging process for anyone, and one of the best things that you can do for your loved one is to seek out as much support for yourself as you can. When you are ready, make connections with local LGBT people or organizations. Even if that person can't help you, they may know someone who can.

# SUPPORT YOU CAN PROVIDE

## The Importance of a Safe and Welcoming Environment

**Y**our loved one will be most comfortable around you if they know that you love them unconditionally and support them as they travel along their transgender journey. You can help ease their possible feelings of vulnerability by creating a safe and respectful space at home where your loved one can explore and define their gender identity without fear or rejection.

For your home to be a safe space, you must learn the appropriate terminology, respect your loved one's new name or pronoun choice and have a basic understanding of transgender and gender non-conforming issues. Reading this booklet is the first step on that journey. Additionally, engaging in dialogues with your peers about these issues in a positive, supportive manner, and using affirming language, conveys your unconditional love and support to those that you speak with – but particularly to your loved one. Positive language is critical when discussing this topic with others – without it, you may find yourself struggling to demonstrate support. Learning to

*For your home to be a safe space, you must learn the appropriate terminology, respect your loved one's new name or pronoun choice and have a basic understanding of transgender and gender non-conforming issues.*

advocate for your loved one is certainly a process and may take some time. Ultimately it helps to ensure that your loved one has a safe environment in which to live, grow and learn.

Rest assured that reading this booklet illustrates your courage to move through your feelings— both the good and perhaps the bad — empowering you to discover a renewed commitment to fully celebrate and support your loved one. Over time, what you may discover is that the source of most of your anxiety derives from your own fears and expectations that you must inevitably learn to let go in order to fully embrace your loved one as they are.

### A Father's Perspective

***One PFLAG father shares his story of how he worked through his initial emotions and feelings of fear and anxiety after his transgender son came out to him:***

My daughter was the type of kid every proud parent could only hope for – she achieved everything she set out to do, whether it was academically, socially, athletically, or, eventually, professionally. It was a blessing watching her grow up into the person that she always wanted to be. However, it was not always easy to provide the necessary support she needed when she told me she was planning to transition. The particular moment I heard those words, my whole life seemed to turn upside down. I only considered my feelings and not my child's feelings. Devastation and disappointment, coupled with fear and an endless amount of anxiety, led to my understanding that I needed to learn more about a subject matter I admittedly knew very little about. Over

time, as this process is sometimes lengthy, my unconditional love led to the acceptance of my new son. Providing him the support and guidance he was seeking allowed me to witness a changed person, not only physically, but emotionally - and it is a good change. My son seems to be more comfortable with life and less stressed and worried as compared to what I witnessed when he was going through life as a child and adolescent.

While it is hard for me to admit, this process of acceptance was not easy for me. I worked hard through my initial feelings with conversation, counseling and reading. I depended heavily on a core group of family and friends to help me work through some of my fears and anxieties. Today, thanks to the support I sought out for myself, I embrace my son's transition and have a deeper understanding of trans issues thanks to the encouragement of my son and my sincere desire to understand his experiences. I also recognize that my family and its history may not be the common experience for many. I am getting used to the fact and realize that my wife, my two sons and I are doing just fine as an exceptional family. Like all families, we have our moments, but I would not change a single thing. I love my family and would do just about anything to protect them.

Armed with my continuously growing knowledge of the trans community, I do the best that I can at dispelling myths about trans people to peers that may ignorantly use derogatory words to refer to the community – it has taken a long time for me to find my voice and express my disapproval when my peers express their misinformed “phobias” about trans folks. I try my best to be a “bell ringer” for the caus-

es of the trans community. Throughout my life, I have always been aware of the privileges awarded to me that others lacked because of their differences. I was always uncomfortable with this power structure, which explains my strong desire to help those that are oppressed by bringing enlightenment to the oppressor. I hope that I am succeeding today in this mission.

I love my son unconditionally and have come to the conclusion that he could never do anything that would diminish this love. I love the fact that he is finally happy and has a wonderful life and future. I am proud to say I now have two sons that mean more than life to me. When I pass from this world into the next, I will regret leaving them both behind. I know that someday, life will be better for the trans community and I plan on supporting this community by continuing to learn more, educate peers, and give all of my prayers and love to my son and his friends. I will also continue to advocate on behalf of trans issues and would hope that society will gradually begin to do the same.

### A Friend's Perspective

*A PFLAG member shares her experiences of first meeting a trans woman and her process of eventually becoming a dedicated trans ally.*

My first introduction to the transgender community coincided with my very first PFLAG meeting more than a decade ago.

As someone who had never met a transgender person

before, I was shocked to hear a woman, with a deep voice, and large hands and feet, speak about her life. “Why would this person, who is a man, want to dress like a woman?” I wondered.

Now, ten years later, I have learned much through PFLAG, about our transgender friends. My “T” friends, in fact, are just like many of us: Struggling for understanding; full of emotion; and loving, family-oriented people. And most of all, they are people who want to live their lives fully in the *body* that their *minds* discovered, often, at an early age.

Today, I am proud to be an ally for my transgender friends. And a few years ago, I held a conference in New England with many members of the transgender community. I was grateful for the expertise and energy they brought to the process of convening 500 people for a weekend of sharing and learning.

That same weekend, I met a remarkable young family. The parents recognized that their young child, at the age of six, was in the wrong body. The family came to the conference, bringing their child a great distance, so that he could experience being with others like him. They wanted him to learn as much as possible so that they could be better parents and better mentors as they began that journey together, as a loving family.

It was that family, in particular, that inspired me to step up my efforts with PFLAG, in working for transgender people and their families. My hope is that someday all children will be heard when they speak up about feeling different.

That's why PFLAG's work is so important. Together, we can support the adults in children's lives so that they will know how to respond – with acceptance, kindness and embrace – and give their children the encouragement to grow into successful, happy adults. I am proud to be part of that work, and proud of the extraordinary transgender people in my life.

## A Mother's Perspective

*One PFLAG mother shares her struggles to understand the source of her transgender son's distress as he began his personal transition journey.*

When our child was younger, she was often mistaken for a boy, or labeled as a "tomboy." Yes, she refused to wear dresses . . . sported a flat top haircut . . . and played baseball, basketball and Army games. But as her parents, we admired her individuality and spunk.

The spunk we so admired her for, however, soon dissipated. In middle school, she became very depressed and withdrawn. Despite counseling, we could not discern the cause of her distress. So when she finally wrote us a letter, stating that she felt she was a lesbian, we were relieved. And, we were also hopeful. We believed that, if we supported her, she would feel better and her depression would soon pass.

For a short time, it did.



Soon after, however, the depression returned, and both her life, and ours, seemed to spin out of control. Our child seemed to be disappearing before our very eyes, and the experience was frightening. In fact, it became so alarming that we refused to leave her home alone because of fear that she might hurt herself. She was failing at school, was frequently ill and was becoming distant, severing ties and disconnecting from her relationships. As her parents, we lived in constant fear that she might take her own life.

We were desperate to find a way to help her.

Following months of additional counseling, she finally told us that she had made a mistake: She was not a lesbian, but, rather, she was transgender. Our child was not a girl, but a boy trapped in a female body.

My first response, as her mother, was to sit in silence and attempt to absorb what I had just heard. The minutes passed, and it seemed as if I had been watching a movie that now captured every moment in my child's life with a clarity I have never experienced before.

I knew, in my heart, that accepting and supporting what my child had just revealed was the key to saving *his* life.

Fast-forward two years. Today, we have a happy 16-year-old son who is about to start college. He is outgoing, well-liked and works as a youth advocate on behalf of other transgender youth.

Our child is back, and we feel very fortunate. Indeed, we treasure every moment with him, and the many blessings his journey of self-discovery has brought into our lives.

Today, our son is living honestly and his family is stronger for that.

# RESOURCES

To answer your additional questions or if you would like to speak with someone in person, the best way for you to get support, receive educational materials and learn more about PFLAG's advocacy efforts is to visit a chapter.

PFLAG has more than 500 chapters and over 200,000 members and supporters located in all 50 states. We suggest you call the local chapter whose name is stamped on the back of this booklet. If there is no chapter listed, you can visit PFLAG on the web, call PFLAG National's office for a referral, or you can use directory assistance to find PFLAG in your local area.

- **Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG)**  
1726 M Street, NW - Suite 400  
Washington, DC 20036  
Voice: (202) 467-8180  
PFLAG Website: [www.pflag.org](http://www.pflag.org)  
PFLAG TNET Website: [www.pflag.org/tnet.html](http://www.pflag.org/tnet.html)
- **PFLAG Transgender Network (TNET).** PFLAG TNET began at the 1995 PFLAG National Convention in Indianapolis, where a group of activist transgender individuals, parents and friends found each other. An internet listserv focusing on trans family issues was formed that fall and quickly grew to include over one hundred subscribers, all educating and

supporting each other. Since then, TNET has organized rapidly on line. In 1997, one of TNET's major goals was reached when PFLAG voted to become officially transgender inclusive. Since 1996, Transgender Coordinators (TCords) have been identified in PFLAG chapters in most states, plus Canada. TCords organize ongoing education for our chapters, assuring a warm welcome to trans persons and their families, and to network with our local trans communities. They have provided leadership and resources, and led hundreds of workshops for PFLAG and many other organizations.

- **Contacting TNET.** For more information on the history of TNET or to get in touch with a local TCord, please visit our website ([www.pflag.org/tnet.html](http://www.pflag.org/tnet.html)). Our website also has contact information for the TNET leadership, our Transgender Helpline, a transgender reading list, other transgender organization, resources and more. Those without internet access should contact the National PFLAG office at (202) 467-8180.

*ACTP Yahoo Group* is a moderated email group for adults ages 18 and over with transgender parents. To be added to this group please email [Zephyr117@comcast.net](mailto:Zephyr117@comcast.net).

*COLAGE on-line communities* is a moderated email group for youth and adults with LGBT parents seeking to build community, get support, and meet new people. To join this group please visit the COLAGE website ([www.colage.org/programs/online](http://www.colage.org/programs/online)).

*Genderqueer and Transgender Parenting List (GQTGParenting)* is an inclusive community for parents and prospective parents who are transgender, transsexual, gender variant or genderqueer. Their homepage also features a resource list for transgender parents; ([groups.yahoo.com/group/GQTGParenting/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/GQTGParenting/)).

*TSParenting Yahoo Group* is a moderated email group for transsexual parents. You must request to become a member ([groups.yahoo.com/group/TSParenting](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/TSParenting)).

*TYFA TALK* is a moderated group for the parents of transgender and gender variant children under the age of 18. You can become a member by visiting [imatyfa.org/services/onlineforums.html](http://imatyfa.org/services/onlineforums.html).

## General Information

This information may or may not be necessary, depending on your loved one's transition goals. You may want to reference this section as time goes by. If necessary, and when you are most prepared, please review this section. If you are interested in learning more about any of these items, be sure to reach out to a trans-friendly professional. If you need referrals, be sure to contact TNET.

**American Medical Association's Resolution 122.**<sup>8</sup> Accessing and affording appropriate medical care, from psychotherapy to hormone therapy to any range of surgeries, is a major challenge for many within the transgender community because of prejudice, ignorance, and blatant discrimination. On June 16<sup>th</sup>, 2008, the American Medical Association's House of Delegates passed a resolution for "Removing Barriers to Care for Transgender Patients," which states "Resolved, that our American Medical Association support public and private health insurance coverage for treatment of gender identity disorder as recommended by the patient's physician."

The AMA's recent support is incredibly significant because it comes from the nation's most respected medical organization, denouncing the targeted discrimination of insurers towards individuals with the diagnosis of gender identity disorder. It's hard enough to access trans-related healthcare, let alone having the costs covered by insurers. The AMA's policy shift will now help health providers, litigators and legislatures ensure that insurers address gender identity appropriately – as a condition that is treatable and one that insurers must cover without discriminating against diagnosis.

For more information about this resolution, please visit the Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders fact sheet, online at [www.glad.org/uploads/docs/press-releases/AMA-resolution-fact-sheet.pdf](http://www.glad.org/uploads/docs/press-releases/AMA-resolution-fact-sheet.pdf), along with the American Medical Association copy of this resolution, available at [www.ama-assn.org/ama1/pub/upload/mm/16/a08\\_hod\\_resolutions.pdf](http://www.ama-assn.org/ama1/pub/upload/mm/16/a08_hod_resolutions.pdf).

**The Standards of Care.**<sup>9</sup> The World Professional Association for Transgender Health, Inc. ("WPATH") - formerly known as "The Harry Benjamin International Gender Dysphoria Association, Inc." - has established internationally accepted Standards of Care (SOC) for the treatment of people diagnosed with Gender Identity Disorder (GID). This diagnosis can be found in the American Psychiatric Association's (APA) *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, more commonly referred to as the DSM. This diagnosis is controversial within and beyond the transgender community because it implies that a person's transsexuality is a "disorder." Regardless of the controversy, it is medically necessary to work with a trans-friendly therapist and have your loved one diagnosed in order to access both hormone therapy and trans-related surgical treatments. The current SOC recommends an individualized approach, consisting of a medically appropriate combination of mental health

care, hormone therapy, and/or sex reassignment surgery. For many, hormone therapy may be sufficient to treat GID. Others will require a different therapeutic regime, including surgery. The correct course of treatment for any given individual, though, is best decided between the treating physician and the patient, in order for the patient to achieve genuine and lasting comfort with his or her gender. To learn more about current SOC, please visit [www.wpath.org/publications\\_standards.cfm](http://www.wpath.org/publications_standards.cfm).

**Accessing Trans-Related Medical Treatments.** As affirmed by the AMA, both hormone therapy treatment and various trans-related surgeries are medically appropriate treatments for gender-related body dysphoria. If your loved one wishes to seek any trans-related medical treatments, including puberty suppression treatment for young people under the age of 18, they must first consult with a mental health professional to receive their diagnosis before moving forward with their transition goals. While the GID diagnosis may be controversial to some, it is a useful tool in accessing both hormone therapy treatment and sex reassignment surgeries (SRS), also referred to as gender realignment surgeries (GRS) by some. Such treatment typically results in improved self-esteem and satisfaction with the overall treatment results. Of the very limited research that exists, studies have suggested that the majority of people who transition have no regrets in doing so – this is true for both transgender youth and adults. Other research concludes that people who undergo transition at younger ages function better psychologically, socially, and sexually as compared to those that transition later in life.

## Laws Protecting Your Loved Ones

Certain states and jurisdictions have worked tirelessly to address the inordinate rates of discrimination that many transgender people experience by establishing real remedies, such as passing laws protecting transgender and gender non-conforming people. As you become more comfortable with your loved one's gender identity, we encourage you to become familiar with certain jurisdictions that have established nondiscrimination laws that protect transgender people.

- For a complete listing of jurisdictions that explicitly protect transgender people, please visit the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force's "Jurisdictions with Explicitly Inclusive Transgender-Inclusive Nondiscrimination Laws" located at [www.thetaskforce.org/downloads/reports/fact\\_sheets/all\\_jurisdictions\\_w\\_pop\\_4\\_08.pdf](http://www.thetaskforce.org/downloads/reports/fact_sheets/all_jurisdictions_w_pop_4_08.pdf).
- If your locality does not have existing laws protecting your loved one, be sure to review the following resources and learn how you can help expand such protections:
  - "52 Things You Can Do For Transgender Equality," a fact sheet developed by the National Center for Transgender Equality located at <http://nctequality.org/52things.asp>.
  - "Transgender Equality: A Handbook for Activists and Policy Makers," an excellent guide produced by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force at [www.thetaskforce.org/downloads/reports/reports/TransgenderEquality.pdf](http://www.thetaskforce.org/downloads/reports/reports/TransgenderEquality.pdf).

## Literature

*The Agony of Nurturing the Spirit: A Mother's Recount of Raising a Transgendered Child.* Stephanie, 2006. One mother's



story, 10 frequently asked questions, and The Parent Process to Acceptance. Booklets can be ordered online for \$2 through PFLAG-Philadelphia. [www.pflagphila.org/orderform3.html](http://www.pflagphila.org/orderform3.html).

*Bending the Mold: An Action Kit for Transgender Youth.* A joint publication by Lambda Legal and the National Youth Advocacy Coalition (NYAC), available on line:  
[www.nyacyouth.org/nyac/Bending%20the%20Mold-final.pdf](http://www.nyacyouth.org/nyac/Bending%20the%20Mold-final.pdf)

*Fluff the Bunny.* A children's story about a bunny's journey of gender discovery, available at  
[home.comcast.net/~fluffbunny/fluff.html](http://home.comcast.net/~fluffbunny/fluff.html)

*From Within.* Jeffreys, Victoria. An on-line book recounting one child's experiences: [www.tsroadmap.com/early/from-within/index.htm](http://www.tsroadmap.com/early/from-within/index.htm)

*Gianna Israel's Gender Library: Family by G. Israel* - Articles by a therapist giving advice to transgender people and their families, including a few essays for transgender parents about coming out to their children.  
[www.firelily.com/gender/gianna/sections/family.html](http://www.firelily.com/gender/gianna/sections/family.html)

*He's My Daughter: A Mother's Journey to Acceptance.* Langley, Eve. Indra Publishing, 2002.

*I Think I Might be Transgender, Now What Do I Do?* A 2004 brochure by and for transgender youth by Advocates for Youth. Available online at [www.advocatesforyouth.org/youth/health/pamphlets/transgender.pdf](http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/youth/health/pamphlets/transgender.pdf).

*If You Believe in Mermaids...Don't Tell.* Philips, A. A. Dog Ear Publishing. ISBN: 978-159858-359-5. A story about gender nonconformity for ages 11 and up. <http://believeinmermaids.net/default.aspx>.

*Let's Talk Trans: A Resource for Trans and Questioning Youth.* A 2006 joint publication by Vancouver Coastal Health, Transcend Transgender Support & Education Society and Canadian Rainbow Health Coalition. Available online at [www.vch.ca/transhealth/resources/library/tcpdocs/consumer/youth.pdf](http://www.vch.ca/transhealth/resources/library/tcpdocs/consumer/youth.pdf).

*Mom, I need to Be a Girl.* (Just) Evelyn. Online versions available in Arabic, English, French, German, Portuguese and Spanish. [community.pflag.org/Page.aspx?pid=725](http://community.pflag.org/Page.aspx?pid=725).

*My Daughter, My Son, Myself.* Wiley, J., 2006, August 22. *Globe and Mail*, A14. An Ontario mother's story about loving her trans son. Available on line at [www.pflagcanada.ca/pdfs/stories-parents.pdf](http://www.pflagcanada.ca/pdfs/stories-parents.pdf).

*My Mommy Is a Boy*, an article discussing issues of transgender parenting with advice for parents coming out. The title is taken from the children's story 'My Mommy Is a Boy' which can be ordered at [jcarsner.tripod.com/id23.html](http://jcarsner.tripod.com/id23.html).

*The Transgender Child: A Handbook for Families and Professionals.* Brill, Stephannie and Rachel Pepper. Cleis Press, June 2008. [www.genderspectrum.org/book.htm](http://www.genderspectrum.org/book.htm)

*Transgender Emergence: Therapeutic Guidelines for Working with Gender-Variant People and their Families.* Lev, A.I., 2004. (pp. 271- 314). New York: Hawthorn Press.

*Trans Forming Couples, Trans Forming Families: Therapeutic Support for Trans People and their Loved Ones.*" *Journal of GLBT Family Studies.* Raj, R. (in press).

*Trans Forming Families: Real Stories of Transgendered Loved Ones.* Published by PFLAG Transgender Network. Third Edition, 2008. Available at [pflagtnet@triad.rr.com](mailto:pflagtnet@triad.rr.com).

*True Selves: Understanding Transsexualism for Families, Friends, Coworkers and Helping Professionals.* Brown, M. & Rounsley, C.A., 1996. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

*Transgender Issues in Books for Youth, Children and Their Allies* (multi-page listing), compiled by Nancy Silverrod, Librarian, San Francisco Public Library, [nsilverrod@sfppl.org](mailto:nsilverrod@sfppl.org).

## Films

*The Day I Decided...to be Nina* (2000), a documentary directed by Ingeborg Jansen from the Netherlands, featuring 11 year old Guido, born male, who, with family support, is now living part-time as the girl she's always wanted to be. English subtitles, 15 mins.

*Girl Inside* (2007), a Canadian documentary directed by Maya Gallus that follows Madison, a 26-year-old trans woman, over her three-year transition. Focuses on family relationships. 78 mins.

*Just Call me Kade* (2002), a documentary directed by Sam Zolten about 14-year-old Kade Farlow Collins, a trans boy living with his understanding family in Tucson, Arizona. 26 mins.

*Ma Vie en Rose* (1997), directed by Alain Berliner. A fictional story of 7-year-old Ludovic, born a boy, who is convinced she was meant to be a girl. Wide-release.

*Middle C* (2007), produced by Carma Jolly and Tristan Whiston for CBC Radio One (Outfront). A multiple award-winning two-part radio documentary of Tristan Whiston's story of female-to-male transition, including family discussion and perspectives.

*Red Without Blue* (2007), a multiple award winning American documentary directed by Brooke Sebold, Benita Sills and Todd Sills. Shot over 3 years, this is a poignant and compelling story of 20-something Mark and Clair, born identical twins, coming out as a gay man and a trans woman, respectively. Featuring candid interview material with family members, the film examines a family's transformation over time. 77 minutes. [www.red-withoutblue.com](http://www.red-withoutblue.com).

*The Queer Issue, Two Dads With a Difference - Neither of Us Was Born Male* - P. Califia-Rice. Village Voice. June 21, 2000; [www.villagevoice.com/issues/0025/califia-rice.php](http://www.villagevoice.com/issues/0025/califia-rice.php)

*Transgender Basics* is a 20 minute educational film on the concepts of gender and transgender people targeting service providers and others working with the LGBT community; [www.gaycenter.org/community/multimedia/transgenderbasics](http://www.gaycenter.org/community/multimedia/transgenderbasics).

## Websites

COLAGE offers information helpful for transgender parents and families looking for resources, support or advocacy opportunities. You can request more information by emailing [kidsoft-rans@colage.org](mailto:kidsoft-rans@colage.org) to connect with the Kids of Trans Fellow, Monica Canfield-Lenfest, for more information about specific COLAGE programming.

*Family Equality Coalition.* The Family Equality Council works to ensure equality for LGBT families by building community, changing hearts and minds, and advancing social justice for all families; [www.familyequality.org/](http://www.familyequality.org/).

*FTM International* is an international organization serving the FTM community. FTMI\_AFLOAT is a listserve for significant others, family, and friends of FTMs. [www.ftmi.org](http://www.ftmi.org)

*Genderology* is a directory of transgender resources located at [genderology.com](http://genderology.com)

*Gender.org* is a national organization focused on the needs, issues and concerns of gender variant people in human society. It focuses on education and advocacy for all people who suffer from gender-based oppression in all of its many forms; [www.gender.org/](http://www.gender.org/).

*Gender Spectrum Family* is an organization dedicated to the education and support of families raising gender variant, gender non-conforming, gender-fluid, crossgender, and transgender children and adolescents. [www.genderspectrumfamily.org/](http://www.genderspectrumfamily.org/).

*Linda's Transsexuality Retreat: Links and Information for Transsexual Parents and Their Families* - Website with links to various transgender family websites. The best links provide personal stories from a few trans families; [www.lasimpson.org/PARENTS.html](http://www.lasimpson.org/PARENTS.html).

*LiveJournal Community - Transgendered Parents and Parents-To-Be* - This is a LJ community for transgender people and their partners who are parents, parents-to-be or are trying to conceive. You need a LiveJournal account to join this group; [www.livejournal.com](http://www.livejournal.com).

*My Father, She...* - A blog created by the son of a transgender parent who was publicly fired from a private college when she transitioned. There are posts from the son and both parents; [blog.myfathershe.com](http://blog.myfathershe.com).

*My Husband Betty Message Board* created and moderated by Helen Boyd, author of *My Husband Betty*, with a focus on partners. Includes a forum devoted to raising kids. Users must log-in to view message board contents; [www.myhusbandbetty.com/community/forumdisplay.php?f=34](http://www.myhusbandbetty.com/community/forumdisplay.php?f=34)

*A Seat on the SOFFA* is a blog written by Monica Canfield-Lenfest about her work to increase visibility and develop resources for people with transgender parents; [supersoffa.blogspot.com](http://supersoffa.blogspot.com).

*Susan's Place, Transgender Resources* is a good place to search for Transgender information, articles, groups and so on; [www.susans.org](http://www.susans.org).

*Trans-Academics.org* is a place where people of all genders can discuss gender theory, the trans community and its various identities, both as a part of the academic world and day-to-day life. This is a trans-friendly space and is open to people of all gender identities and is located at [www.trans-academics.org](http://www.trans-academics.org).

*Transfamily* is based out of Cleveland, Ohio and is a support network created by the parents of a transgender person. This website includes links, email lists, books, and other resources for family members of transgender persons; [www.transfamily.org](http://www.transfamily.org).

*Transparentcy* is a great website, dedicated to the protection of transgender people's right to be a parent, and their love for their children; [www.transparentcy.org](http://www.transparentcy.org).

*Transsexualism FAQ for Significant Others, Friends, Family and Allies* is a Trans 101 for people close to someone undergoing a gender transition; [www.tsfaq.info/cgi-bin/index.cgi](http://www.tsfaq.info/cgi-bin/index.cgi)

*TransYouth Family Allies* empowers children and families with tools and resources to successfully negotiate life with a gender variant or transgender child; [www.imatyfa.org](http://www.imatyfa.org).

# SUPPORT PFLAG

**P**FLAG (Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) works to promote a society where all people are treated with respect, dignity and equality. Help support our mission of support, education and advocacy by sending in a gift today.

YES! I want to help PFLAG parents, families and friends stand up and fight for equality and a fair chance for the LGBT community. Enclosed is my gift of:

\$25       \$50\*       \$100       \$\_\_\_\_\_

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Name

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Address

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City State Zip

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Phone number

Keep me informed with PFLAG updates:

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Email address

\*Annual gifts of \$50 or more entitle you to full PFLAG National membership benefits.

Please send all contributions to PFLAG National  
1726 M Street NW, Suite 400, Washington, DC 20036



# OTHER PFLAG PUBLICATIONS

**P**FLAG provides numerous additional resources to meet the diverse needs of our parents, families, friends, allies, and LGBT people.

If you are a current chapter member in good standing, you can visit our new PFLAG publications store at:

**<http://pflag.hbp.com>**

If you are not a chapter member, but are interested in purchasing any publications, please contact PFLAG Publications staff at:

**[Publications@pflag.org](mailto:Publications@pflag.org)**

Our publications include:

*Be Yourself - Questions and Answers for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Youth.* Today's youth face more social pressures than ever, especially since young people are coming out at increasingly younger ages. This publication offers a supportive approach to common questions asked by teens who may be questioning their sexual orientation. It also provides hotline numbers for teens and a list of resources.

Also available in Spanish language version *Se Tu Mismo*

*Guide to Being a Straight Ally* - This is the first official Straight for Equality publication and intended for allies of all levels. Not sure how to speak up for your gay friends...or if you even should? Ready to speak up, but not certain if you've got the right vocabulary? Looking for a way to voice your opinion without sounding like the office downer? This is your book. Find out what it means to be a straight ally, read real-life comments from other allies who talk about their experiences, and get five solid ways to get started in coming out as an ally, speaking up more often, and joining in the effort to achieve equality for all.

*Opening the Straight Spouse Closet* - Finding out a spouse is gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender can be difficult. Questions about sexual orientation, fidelity, self-esteem and fear often go unanswered. This recently updated and expanded publication provides insight into issues facing spouses, including coping stages, identity crises, concerns about children and support avenues.

*Our Daughters and Sons - Questions and Answers for Parents of Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual People*. One of our most popular publications, this is a "must read" for parents who are forming new and honest relationships with a loved one who has come out to them. This booklet answers several commonly-asked questions about having a gay child. It also includes a list of related resources.

Also available in Spanish language version *Nuestras Hijas y Nuestros Hijos*

PFLAG Brochure. This latest edition of the PFLAG membership brochure outlines how PFLAG is moving equality forward through support, education, and advocacy. The brochure is full-color and measures 8.5 x 14 (folded to 8.5 x 5.5) and will fit into a standard #10 business envelope.

Safe Schools : Cultivating Respect The Top 10 Ways to Make Schools Safer... For All Students. PFLAG's guide to making schools safer for all students includes "the top 10 ways to make schools safer...for all students," and well as key facts and resources for people who want to make sure our schools are welcoming places for everybody.

# REFERENCES

<sup>1</sup> *Transgender* people are those whose gender identities do not correspond with their sex assigned at birth. Gender identity refers to a person's internal sense of being or feeling male, female, or something else.

<sup>2</sup> While some of our loved ones are now men or women, others are genderqueer, gender non-conforming, gender variant or gender diverse and may reject notions of both male and female gender identities. It is common to feel confused and disoriented by this concept of gender nonconformity. Be patient and allow yourself the time and space to work through these emotions.

<sup>3</sup> Hubbard, S. *Parents' reactions to transgender youths' gender non-conforming expression and identity* (2005). *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Social Services*, 18, 3-16.

<sup>4</sup> Children's National Medical Center. *If you are concerned about your child's gender behaviors: A guide for parents* (2003). Washington, DC: Children's National Medical Center.

<sup>5</sup> The American Psychological Association. *Answers to Your Questions About Transgender Individuals and Gender Identity*.  
[www.apa.org/topics/transgender.html](http://www.apa.org/topics/transgender.html)

<sup>6</sup> The American Psychological Association. *Report of the Task Force on Gender Identity and Gender Variance* (2008).  
[www.apa.org/pi/lgbct/transgender/2008TaskForceReport.pdf](http://www.apa.org/pi/lgbct/transgender/2008TaskForceReport.pdf) . 60-65.

<sup>7</sup> *Puberty suppression* is a reversible medical intervention to a select group of at-risk transgender patients in order to suppress their production of estrogen or testosterone, but only after these patients have entered puberty. This reversible treatment gives patients time to reach an age when they can decide, with their families, whether to begin cross-sex hormone therapy. If they decide not to transition to the opposite sex, pubertal suppression will be discontinued, genetic puberty will resume, and patients will inevitably attain full maturation.

<sup>7</sup> Cohen-Kettenis, P.T., & Van Goozen, S.H.M. *Pubertal delay as an aid in diagnosis and treatment of a transsexual adolescent* (1998). *European Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, 7.

<sup>8</sup> The American Medical Association. *AMA House of Delegates Resolution 122*. [www.gires.org.uk/assets/AMA122.pdf](http://www.gires.org.uk/assets/AMA122.pdf).

<sup>9</sup> HBIGDA, 2001. "The Harry Benjamin International Gender Dysphoria Association's Standards of Care for Gender Identity Disorders-Sixth Version." [www.wpath.org/Documents2/socv6.pdf](http://www.wpath.org/Documents2/socv6.pdf).

\* Central Toronto Youth Services. *Families in TRANSition: A Resource Guide for Parents of Trans Youth* (2008). [www.ctys.org/about\\_CTYS/documents/FamiliesInTRANSition-CTYS-080608.pdf](http://www.ctys.org/about_CTYS/documents/FamiliesInTRANSition-CTYS-080608.pdf). 4

\* This resource was a model used for *Welcoming Our Trans Family and Friends*.











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