

What if a Child or Youth has a Mental Illness?

Other factors such as mental illness or behavioural traits also should not affect one's ability to access transition related services. A youth who is not trans would never have their puberty halted because of uncertainty related to a mental illness. It is no more appropriate for trans youth to be prevented from accessing hormones or surgeries because of a mental illness or other traits, such as anger.

Is it True That Most Trans Children do not Identify as Trans as Adults?

The majority of trans and gender diverse children continue to identify as trans or nonbinary as adults. Regardless of the potential for a child's identity to change throughout their life, affirming and supporting their gender identity and expression as they express it consistently leads to improved health and wellness outcomes.

Is it True That There is no Single Best Approach to Providing Transition Related Care for Youth?

It is well documented that genuine affirming care which allows children and youth to make their own decisions about their genders, expressions, bodies and lives leads to the best health and wellness outcomes. Trans children and youth are the experts in their own lives and trans affirming care saves lives.

A trans kid's gender expression shouldn't be the doctor's choice.



STOP ASSESSING US

A Message From Trans Youth

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STOP ASSESSING US

Is Being Trans a Mental Illness?

Although “Gender Dysphoria” is listed as a diagnosis in the current DSM V, trans identities are not a mental illness. Though trans children and youth may or may not experience mental illness, this is not related to their gender identity.

How Do You Know if a Child or Youth is Trans?

If a child or youth tells you that they are trans or non-binary then they are. Children of any age can know and express their gender identity.

There is no test to determine whether someone is trans. Only the individual can know or determine their gender identity.

What is an Assessment?

Often gender diverse children and youth who require access to transition related services including hormone blockers, hormones or surgeries are required to complete an assessment before they can access these services. These assessments often include questions about one’s childhood, stereotypically gendered behaviours, sexual attraction or behaviours and distress related to one’s body or life.

Why is This a Problem?

Trans and non-binary children and youth are the only ones who can know their gender identity or transition needs. For children and youth who are not trans their childhood gender behaviours or sexual attractions would not determine their gender identity. These factors do not determine a trans or gender diverse person’s identity either.

Similarly, while some trans and gender diverse people experience distress related to their bodies or social circumstances, this is not a requirement. Many trans and gender diverse children and youth are happy and healthy. They should not be expected to exaggerate their distress to access the services they need.

When Should a Trans Child Socially Transition?

Transitioning means lots of different things to many different people.

Many trans and gender diverse children may wish to change their name or pronouns, express their gender through clothing, hair, or be grouped with other children of their gender identity. These things may be referred to as socially transitioning and should be available to any child at their request. Socially transitioning does not have any permanent or irreversible impacts and is associated with significantly better wellness outcomes for trans and gender diverse children.

When Should a Trans Youth Start Hormone Blockers?

Children and youth who indicate a desire for transition related medical care should be taken seriously and provided with the services they need. Going through an undesired puberty may be extremely distressing for some youth. To help with this, hormone blockers should be available to youth in a timely manner at any time after the start of puberty. Hormone blockers have very little risk and no permanent effects. Their goal is to delay the onset of puberty and allow a young person to make decisions about outcomes they would like for their body. Children and youth should not be required to prove their gender identity or be assessed for transition readiness to access them – their purpose is to prevent unwanted and permanent body changes and give a young person more time to make decisions.

When Should Youth Access Hormones or Surgery?

Youth should have access to other transition related services such as hormones and surgery when they request it. In Ontario there is no minimum age of consent for health care decisions and youth can make decisions about their own care and their own bodies. Given proper knowledge about a treatment’s outcomes, youth should be able to make informed decisions without the need for thorough assessment.