

## Topic

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### Transgender Youth

- You and your child on a unique journey. Many transgender people never take hormones or have surgery. Many transgender people do take hormones. Some have surgery also. These are complex and deeply personal issues, and I am supportive of whatever a person needs to do to feel that they are on this world the way it is meant to be.
- Stay with them, wherever they are on their journey. Try to take it one day at a time.
- Your child may not have had time to fully consider gender and what it means in our world, and that's okay.
- Reach out for support. It is a journey, and it will probably be a tough one, to be honest. But you will also be together as a team, talking about this really meaningful thing, and that will make it so much easier for both of you.
- Gender identity isn't the same as sexual orientation, and trans people can have any sexual orientation that cis people can.
- Your teen grooming and clothing routines might not conform to that of their identified or assigned gender. Your teen might also experiment with different grooming/clothing routines. All this is totally normal.
- Supporting your teen means recognizing your own limitations and knowing when to get outside help.
- Fear of doing the wrong thing might hinder your ability to support your teen. Embrace being wrong. Learn from it and accept your teen's feedback.
- Allow your teen to take the lead on how and when to come out to family and friends.
- You may have to have difficult conversations with unsupportive or invalidating relatives. The measure of your support of your teen isn't in how you act when things are easy, but how you support your teen when you need to do things that are uncomfortable for you.

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### Suggested Do's and Don'ts

- 1) Do notice how gender impacts us daily. Listen to the way that men and women talk. Notice how you feel when you see someone whose gender you can't immediately identify. Do you feel uncomfortable? Why do you suppose that is?
- 2) Do express your love and support to your child frequently. Try to spend some extra time together.
- 3) Don't be too concerned if their notion of gender evolves as they get older and get more information. Remember, the identity they are experiencing is always real to them. Be supportive of it and suggest a LGBTQ+-affirming mental health expert if they are really struggling. That person might be able to help guide them through their questioning.
- 4) Do respect their pronouns and their new name if they choose one. Of course you may slip-up occasionally - just correct yourself and move on. Be upfront with your child.