

10 Top Tips for working with Trans youth

it's MY RIGHT

...to be understood



1. What's in a name? A lot, actually. Use young Trans people's preferred names and pronouns (including ones you might not have used before, like 'they' or 'hir') and make sure they are marked clearly on their records to minimise the risk of awkwardness and embarrassment. If you do make a mistake by using the wrong pronoun or name, just correct yourself, apologise briefly and move on. Apologising profusely or drawing attention to your mistake will make the young person feel worse.

2. Everyone is Trans enough. Increasingly young people identify as non-binary or gender non-confirming. They might feel that they are between male and female, a mixture of both, or beyond all conventional gender categories. They might not dress or act in a way you can easily define, but this doesn't mean that they are not transgender or 'Trans enough' to access services and be treated with respect.

3. Be mindful of your own gender expectations. Young Trans people don't need to know how successful you think they are at being a man or a woman (if that's how they identify in the first place). How would it feel to be told you're not feminine or masculine enough? Not great! But don't be afraid to use positive affirmations.

4. Confidence and humility are key. It's ok to make a mistake or not to know something. This on line elearning package will help <http://www.nlmcontent.nesc.nhs.uk/sabp/gv/>

5. Don't rely on young Trans people to be sources of knowledge in your area of expertise. For example, if you need to know how equality law relates to Trans issues, do a bit of research. Your knowledge will show that you are engaged.

6. Body Talk – references to body parts associated with someone's assigned birth gender (testes, breasts, ovaries, etc.) might cause distress. Try to use more neutral terms before you determine their level of comfort. Some people might prefer it if you say "the" ovaries rather than "your" ovaries.

7. Young Trans people should access health services or join screening programmes that are appropriate for their anatomy.

8. "Aren't you too young to know?" Avoid undermining young Trans people's feelings about their gender and decisions they make around gender based on their age.

9. Don't second guess a young Trans person's sexual orientation. Trans people can be asexual, bisexual, gay, heterosexual or lesbian - and many young people do not define within traditional categories of sexual orientation.

10. It's not all about surgery and hormones. Don't assume that all Trans people will undergo medical procedures.

For Trans youth groups - <http://genderedintelligence.co.uk/trans-youth/youth-group>

For more information about IT'S MY RIGHT - www.safetuk.org