



Transgender people in school



Our aim is to support your understanding and provide information you need to know when supporting someone who is questioning or identifying as Transgender

- **Being Transgender Explained**
- **Supporting someone who identifies as Trans or gender non-conforming**
- **Pronouns and name changes**
- **Equality Act and positive change**
- **Body Dysphoria**
- **The impact of affirming support**
- **Resources**

What does it mean if someone refers to themselves as Transgender or Trans?

Transgender or gender non-conforming people identify with a different gender identity or expression to the sex they were assigned as at birth.

It is important to note that being Transgender (Trans) isn't the same thing as being gay, lesbian, bisexual or any other sexuality. Sexual orientation is about who you wish to be with romantically.

Gender identity or expression is about who you are, some describe it as an internal sense of self that is not always visual to others.

Terminology

Biological sex – sex as denoted by genitals at birth

Assigned gender – the gender label assigned at birth

Gender identity - a persons self concept of their gender

Gender expression – someone's performed gender

Transgender - broad umbrella term whose biological sex does not match their gender identity

Cis gender – a person whose biological sex does match their gender identity

Intersex – a person born with ambiguous/mixed genitalia or hormones

Gender binary – the idea that there is only male or female genders

Gender Dysphoria – psychological discomfort experienced with the incongruence between felt gender identity and assigned gender (Lev 2004)

Passing – being seen as your acquired gender

Cross Dressing – using clothing from the opposite sex to temporarily change gender expression (not identity)

Queer – A term used to describe someone's overall diversity (reclaimed back in 2010)

Trans umbrella

Choosing to express a gender identity that feels like a true sense of self can be challenging for some. This maybe because they do not resonate with the binary system of male – female and begin to seek what feels congruent with who they personally identify as. Here are a few examples;

Transexual	Non-Binary	Gender Fluid	Agender	Trans man	Trans Woman
An older term used to describe someone who wishes to undergo surgical transition	Define their gender as falling outside of the categories of man or woman, or somewhere in-between	A gender identity that changes and is accepted to not be fixed	A gender free expression of self, not sensing a particular resonance with any gender	Someone who has transitioned from female to male	Someone who has transitioned from male to female

Transitioning can broadly be described in two ways; social and medical

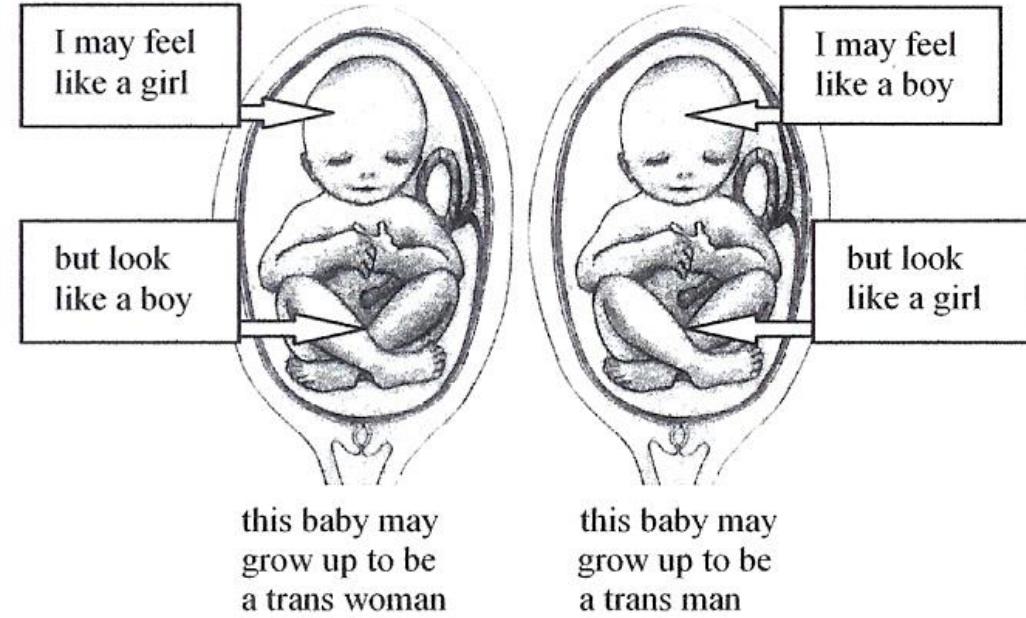
A social transition is generally the first step for a trans person. It is different for everyone and may include a name and/or pronoun change, using toilets/changing facilities appropriate to their gender, or changing the way they dress or present themselves.

It is important to recognise that a young person may just be experimenting with their gender identity and/or gender expression rather than making a decision to transition. In any case, a non-judgemental attitude, support and advice for the young person will be vital.

A medical transition is generally done through a Gender Identity Clinic (GIC). Medical treatment is provided in a series of phases that include: a psychological assessment, medical treatment that could include hormone blockers and/or hormones, and gender affirming surgeries - which are not usually carried out until a person is 18 or over. Not all trans people have the same medical treatment (or have medical treatment at all) and it is important to remember and consider this when young people express their intentions of a medical transition. **Current waiting time 6 years**

Where can this begin?

- Until eight weeks old every brain looks female, as female is nature's default gender setting.
- A huge testosterone surge beginning in the eighth week will turn this unisex brain male (Brizendine 2007).
- If this surge doesn't happen, or equally happens when it shouldn't, small parts of the baby's brain progress along a different pathway from the sex of the rest of its body. This predisposes the baby to a potential future mismatch between gender identity and sex appearance (GIRES 2009).



Listening & Communication

Trust that what a young person presents to you is the reality of their situation at the time. They may be presenting you with ideas and feelings with which you are not familiar but you can support them by giving them space to talk and explore.

There is nothing supportive about assuming that someone may be in a phase. Even if this turns out to be the case, this is still a valid form of self-expression and development.



Why do we need to listen?

- High level of presenting mental health issues **as a symptom** of not feeling heard or understood
- Puberty is a particularly difficult time and can highlight Body Dysphoria or identity incongruence
- Self harm - can begin in primary school and continue in secondary
- Suicide rates are high - over 20% of national figures - 34% of the trans community made an attempt in 2019 comparison to 2% national average

(TheTrevorProject2019)



The Stonewall School Report (2017)

Found that 77 % of trans students hadn't learned about trans identities in school. One in three trans pupils were not able to be known by their preferred name at school, and 58 % were not allowed to use the toilets they feel comfortable in.

When combined with the impact of bullying, these factors can have a significant effect on the educational aspirations and emotional well-being of trans students.

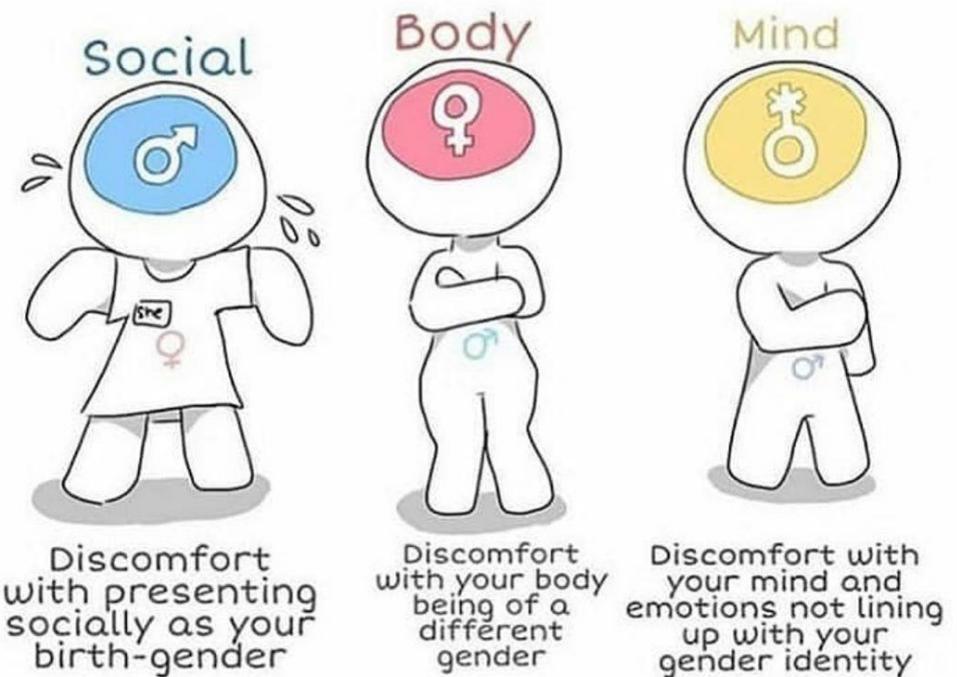
For this reason, it is essential that schools and colleges take steps to ensure that they are inclusive environments for all trans students, including those with a non-binary identity.

What is 'Gender Dysphoria'?

The NHS describes gender dysphoria as; 'Gender dysphoria is a condition where a person experiences discomfort or distress because there is a mismatch between their biological sex and gender identity.' (NHS2021)

Most trans people will experience gender dysphoria (often just called dysphoria) in some way or another and to greater or lesser extents. The feeling can be quite hard to pin down and describe. (Allsorts2021)

Types Of Dysphoria



Transition of a Pupil in School

Legislation: The Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010) applies: schools must eliminate discrimination; provide equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between minority groups and others. Religion or belief may not be used to discriminate against lesbian, gay, bisexual or gender variant/trans/ non-binary people.

Trans children in primary school

Some children realise they are LGBT at primary school, and may come out then. We generally develop a sense of our gender early in our lives, so it is not uncommon for children to question their gender identity or realise they are trans when they are young.

Often, but not always, it will be their parents or carers that raise their child's identity with you. A trans child may say 'I feel like a girl' or 'I don't feel like a boy' rather than using the word 'trans'. They may come to school wearing clothes not typically associated with their assigned sex.

However, any child might change the way they look or dress for lots of reasons and this alone should not be taken as an indication a child is trans. (Stonewall2021)

Pronouns



For a young person who is exploring their gender identity, a name change or the decision to use a pronoun which is in keeping with their gender identity can be hugely empowering and validating.

Remember that not all young people identify as male/man/boy or female/woman/girl (gender binary).

They may identify as non-binary, gender fluid, non-gendered or in other ways, and may use gender neutral pronouns (They/Them), or no pronouns at all.

The means the binary is being challenged

e.g. changes in some countries to birth certificates, introduction of gender neutral titles, in the UK title Mx being introduced.

Name and pronoun changes

Important changes and actions should be agreed and scheduled in a Memorandum of Understanding:

Name and gender-marker (pronoun) change, including on documents, school records, DfE, Parent contact information”.

Secure storage of any documents with previous name and gender marker. Reissue awards or other certificates where possible.

In exceptional circumstances, a school may be unsure as to which gender should be recorded ...
Where this occurs, gender is recorded according to the wishes of the pupil and / or parent

Social name change does not require anything other than parents'/guardians' agreement; children may obtain a Deed Poll document, but this is not obligatory if just using a social name change

16+ don't need parents'/guardians' support.

More info: <http://www.ukdp.co.uk/name-change-age-restrictions/>

Clothes & Appearance

Trans or gender-exploring young people have the right to dress in ways that are consistent with their gender identity. The choice to begin dressing in clothes associated with your true gender can be a very big and potentially daunting step for some young people. It is important to realise the significance of this step for the young person and to recognise that in dressing differently a young person may become vulnerable to transphobic bullying or discrimination.

By supporting a trans young person to dress in clothes which they feel comfortable with, you are empowering them to express themselves by bringing their outward appearance in line with that of their internal gender identity.





Toilets

Toilet and changing facilities:

These must be available in line with the young person's affirmed gender and their wishes; the school may include unisex facilities, not for the child who transitions, but for others who don't want to share or who are non-binary and prefer these.

Under the definition of 'Gender Reassignment' in the Equality Act (2010), trans young people have a right to access the toilet that reflects their gender identity. This can be a very challenging area for people who are trans. They may feel unsupported in using a facility that reflects their gender identity or unsafe when they do. Ideally, mixed gender or gender neutral toilet facilities would be available.

Uniform and facilities

A trans child or young person are much more likely to feel comfortable when all uniform items are available regardless of gender. A child or young person should be able to wear the uniform items that they feel reflect their gender.

CHANGING ROOMS It is important to ask a trans child or young person which facilities they would feel most comfortable using. School settings should ensure that a trans child or young person is supported to use the facilities matching their gender.

Under the Equality Act a school can only prevent a trans child or young person from using the facilities matching their gender if they can demonstrate that doing so is a ‘proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim’, which is a high legal bar to clear. Schools should also support the use of gender-neutral facilities or a private space, should they prefer.



Transgender' is Not a Scary Word | Samuel Rae Bernstein |
TEDxLagunaBlancaSchool 6 minutes video
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3dTcJAdRDu4>



What might a trans child or young person have concerns about?

Children and young people wishing to transition at school, college or in a setting may have concerns such as:

What toilet can I use?

How long will my transition take?

Will I fit in and be accepted?

Will I need to leave if I'm in a single-sex school?

Where will I change for p.e?

Will I be able to still have children?

Will my brother accept me as his sister?

What is Trans? I just want to be a boy...

My mum said she has lost her daughter, but I'm still here....I don't understand.

It may help if you assign them a support member of staff who they can approach with any worries or concerns before, during or after their transition.

Disclosures

To whom, by whom, how and when?

This information may only be shared when the young person feels ready to do so. They should have some options, however it is helpful if they have access to some guidance on how to go about this from a member of staff. This may include communication to class teacher, pastoral staff, school nurse and other staff; governors.

Some young people may have already disclosed to other children in the year group, but want to tell the whole school, this is their choice, but it is advised to only give information when necessary; respect confidentiality and privacy.

A new pupil who has already transitioned need not disclose.

It is also important to consider all of this for a parent/carer transitioning.

***Everyone has a right to privacy, this includes the right to keep one's trans status private. A trans person's previous name, assigned sex at birth or anything else regarding their transition constitutes as private information, and to share this information without the knowledge or consent of the young person (unless required to do so) is a breach of their confidentiality.**

Talking points

Not all children and young people will want their parents or carers to know they are LGBT.

Avoid dividing learners by gender, whether in the classroom (you could divide them by their favourite colour, month of birth or something else) or through uniform, sports activities or other aspects of school life.

A uniform policy that is non-gendered, for example giving all children and young people the option of trousers or skirts, tights or socks, a shirt or a blouse.

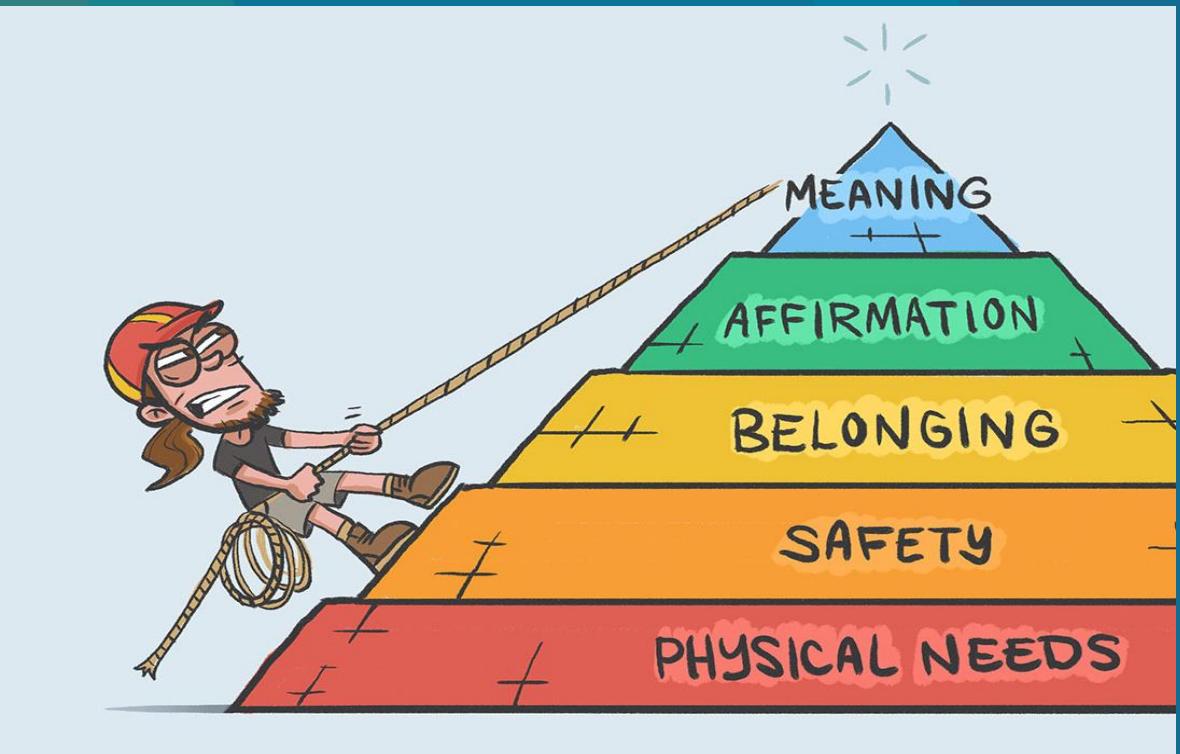
Ofsted ask for evidence that difference is valued and nurtured, and that good mental health and well-being are promoted

Stonewall Getting Started and Next Steps in Inclusive Education resources offer more guidance around LGBT-inclusive policies.

Affirming Support to improve overall wellbeing

LGBT children and young people, like all children and young people, are more likely to feel safe, happy and fulfil their potential if they:

- Feel able to be themselves and valued for who they are
- Have access to resources and information that reflect who they are
- Feel they have people to talk to and know how to access support services in school and in the local community



This not only provides a safe and affirming space for the young person but also shows unity and consistency for all.

LGBT+ in School!

Creating an Enabling
Environment for Pupils

Resources

- Allsorts Youth Project offers a range of support services for LGBTU+ children & young people (5-25)
www.allsortsyouth.org.uk
- Mermaids National service for trans children and their families.
www.mermaidsuk.org.uk
- Gendered Intelligence working with young trans people across England. www.genderedintelligence.co.uk
- Gay Glos Young person social group and parent support group
www.gayglos.org
- Young Gloucestershire www.youngglos.co.uk
- Trans Link Glos booklet - <https://www.youngglos.org.uk/young-people/practical-support/trans-link-glos>

Support & Reading

For children and families

- [Introducing Teddy: A gentle story about gender and friendship: Jessica Walton: Bloomsbury USA Childrens](#)
- [It's Okay To Be Different by Todd Parr | Hachette Book Group](#)
- [The Family Book by Todd Parr | Hachette Book Group](#)
- http://www.rcpaconference.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/W11_RCPA-Gender-Unicorn.pdf

For Staff and Parents

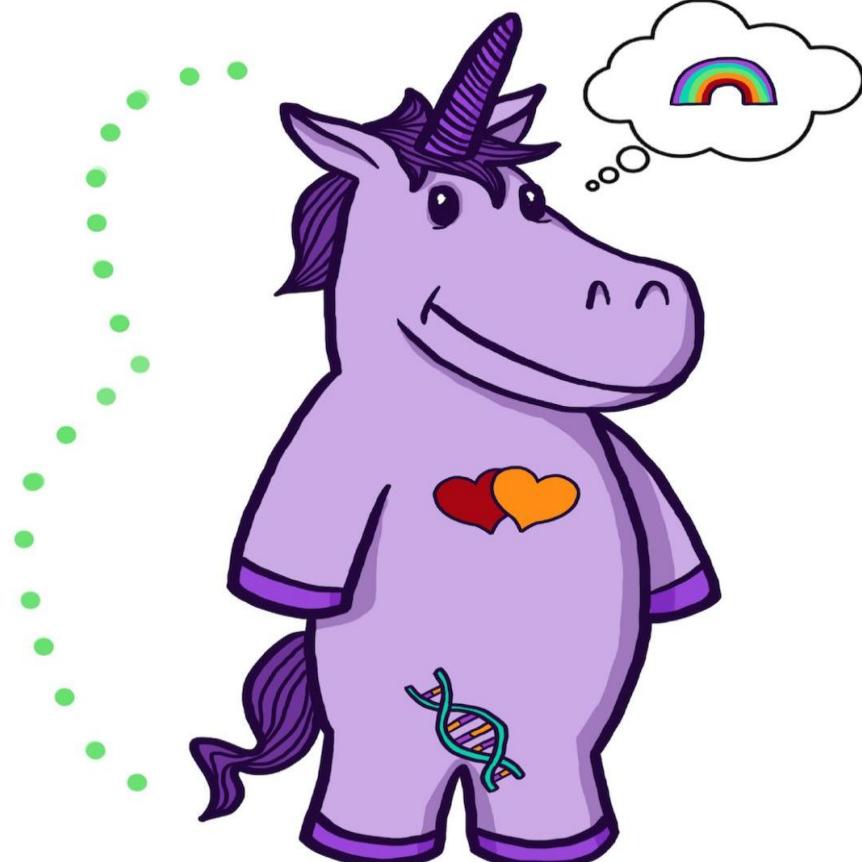
- [Allsorts Youth Project - Toolkits, Booklets & Guides](#)
- [Next steps in inclusive education.pdf \(stonewall.org.uk\)](#)
- Resources on Gender Development specifically designed for educators
<https://www.gires.org.uk/category/education/>
- Creating an inclusive curriculum [Creating an LGBT-inclusive primary curriculum \(stonewall.org.uk\)](#)

*Thank you to Stonewall,
Gendered Intelligence,
Allsorts and Gires for
providing public research and
resources on gender and
LGBTQIA+ topics.*

Sarah Bolton-Locke
www.aspace2be.co.uk

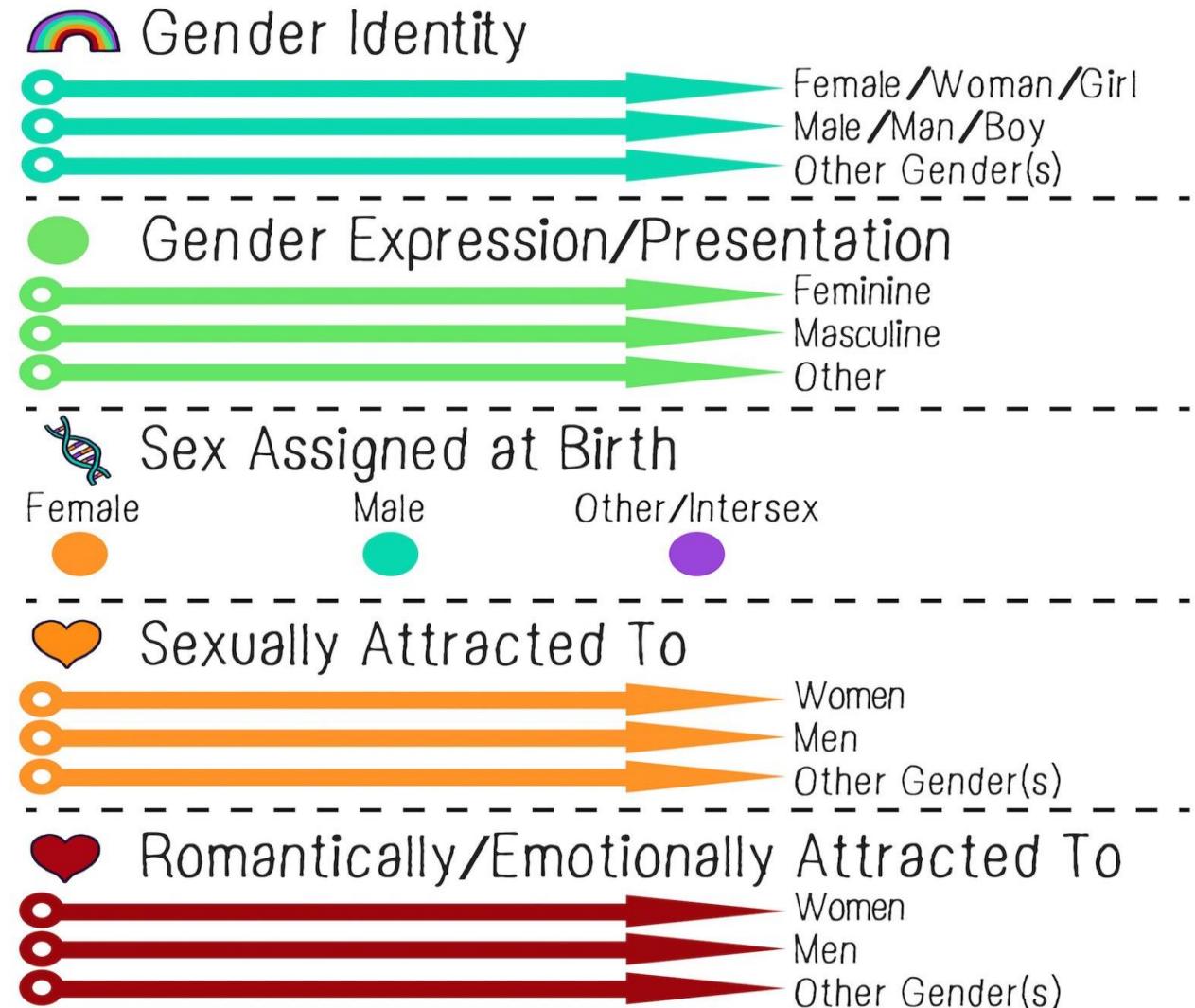
The Gender Unicorn

Graphic by:
TSER
Trans Student Educational Resources



To learn more, go to:
www.transstudent.org/gender

Design by Landyn Pan



Included

- Slides from presentation
- Glossary of Transgender terminology
- Glossary of gender identity/expression language
- A list of short Transgender films
- Managing Dysphoria Booklet
- Top tips for working with gender exploring young people booklet
- Creating an LGBT inclusive primary education booklet
- Transition of a teacher guidelines
- Transition of pupil guidelines