



# GENDER DYSPHORIA

Gender Dysphoria, or Transsexual syndrome, is a clearly defined medical condition. Medical research conducted in the 1970's formed the opinion that it is a physical, biological condition originating in the womb. In autopsies carried out on Trans-gender people, all had the brain-sexing of the gender opposite that which was ascribed to them at birth. It is thought not to be hereditary.

Every baby of every mammal begins potentially female. During the second month of foetal development, hormones released within the foetus determine whether the baby will remain female or become male. The physical body and brain are strongly influenced at this stage; the child's overall sexual identity is being fixed. The crucial period, when the genetic trigger is activated to determine whether the baby should remain female or change to male is over very quickly. The process of developing into 'male' or 'female' is called sex-differentiation. These differences are programmed before birth creating a sense of 'gender identity', or 'core gender identity'.

Foetal development is a finely balanced process with the potential to go wrong. In some cases, this means that the baby is born with the body of one sex and the brain of the other, leaving it stranded across the sexes. It is now a recognised fact that the brain is dimorphic; this means it comes in two distinct types, in this instance, referring to the layout of the brain and the prioritising of thoughts which differ between males and females. We expect that someone who looks 'male' will identify as a boy and later, a man. In the same way we expect someone who looks 'female' will identify as a girl and later, a woman. With transgender people this is not the case.

This medical condition is a fact. The treatment of any medical condition has to be directed at helping the person who is suffering from it. In the unfortunate circumstances that surround the life of a Transsexual person, they have been suffering the effects of the condition all their life. So far medical knowledge does not encompass the ability to change the brain or reverse dimorphic properties. Therefore, it has been passed to surgeons to reassign the body gender to match the brain. In this way the Transsexual or Transgender person can become a whole person and lead a normal life.

Gender reassignment surgery is not automatic and is the culmination of years of effort, and in many cases a great deal of sacrifice, before the Transgender person is enabled to start living as a cosmetically whole person. The reality is, of course, that it is impossible for medical science to fully reverse the gender assigned birth defect. Unfortunately, even after gender reassignment surgery a transgender person can never actually have a full working reproductive system.

The aim of Chrysalis is to enable the Gender Dysphoric person, once sure that they are Transsexual, to transition with as much support as they and their families need. Each of the Centres has a Gender Advisor, Counsellor and Support worker. In addition, specialist speakers and advisors visit the Meetings to offer a wide range of experience and expertise.

**For more information**  
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