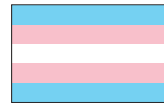


Transgender Day of Visibility 2022



UNDERSTANDING SUICIDE AMONGST TRANSGENDER AND GENDER DIVERSE PEOPLE

Many transgender and gender diverse people live happy and healthy lives; however, some also experience a higher burden of poor mental health and rates of suicidality than the general population. Within transgender and gender diverse communities there is enormous diversity, and some carry an even greater burden, including, Brotherboys and Sistergirls. This information is taken from LGBTIQ+ Health Australia's National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Strategy, which was developed in response to the need for urgent action on mental health and suicide prevention for LGBTIQ+ communities. The work has been undertaken in the context of significant national policy development, including the Productivity Commission inquiry and the work of the Prime Minister's National Suicide Prevention Advisor.

KEY FACTS

86.2%

of trans women,

90.6%

of trans men and

89.9%

of non-binary people

For the general population this is 13%.

have experienced suicide ideation in their lifetime.

4x

Transgender and gender diverse people aged 16 and over are nearly **four times** more likely to have experienced sexual violence or coercion.



Transgender and non-binary people experience **high levels** of psychological distress, compared to **moderate levels** experienced by cisgender people.

15x

Transgender people aged 14-25 are **fifteen times** more likely to attempt suicide than the general population



Across their lifetime **45.6%** of trans women, **52.9%** of transmen and **40.2%** of non-binary people will attempt to die by suicide compared to **3.2%** of the general population.



Transgender people aged 18 and over are **six and a half times** more likely to engage in self-injury.

15%

Transgender people aged 14-25 are **fifteen times** more likely to have attempted suicide.



13.2% of non-binary people had attempted suicide in the past 12 months (compared with **9.1%** of cisgender women and **6.7%** of cisgender men)



RISK FACTORS

Lack of gender affirmation

Gender affirmation is an important suicide prevention tool for transgender and gender diverse people. Gender affirmation may include surgery, hormone treatment or social practices, such as personal appearance and pronouns which all help to affirm a person's gender. These practices are shown to greatly improve quality of life for many people who are trans and gender diverse however transgender or gender diverse people may be blocked from receiving gender affirmation due to financial cost, stigma, or barriers such as inability to access appropriate care and medical professionals and legislation. It is important to highlight that not all trans and gender diverse people choose to access surgery or medical intervention.

Pathologisation

There are misconceptions about the experiences of trans and gender diverse people. Despite being a part of the human experience, when someone chooses to express their gender identity it is often met with physical and emotional violence from the wider community. As a result of this many transgender and gender diverse people are treated as abnormal or unnatural and these experiences can lead to chronic and complex trauma.

Social isolation

Many transgender and gender diverse people have experienced personal rejection and marginalisation from for example social groups, employment, family, and friendships. Lack of connection with others can undermine self-esteem and create a feeling of 'not belonging', loneliness and/or not being valued.

Mental health

Many transgender and gender diverse people live with mental health conditions such as depression and anxiety. In addition to social isolation and the stigma associated with the transgender experience, poor mental health can exacerbate psychological distress and undermine protective factors such as the ability to form and sustain relationships with others. This can lead to increased psychological distress.

Structural and Individual Discrimination

Transgender and gender diverse people can experience both structural and individual discrimination at a higher rate compared to the general population. There are many policies restricting the social justice rights of transgender and gender diverse people. In addition, transgender and gender diverse individuals are more likely to experience instances of violence and discrimination within their schools, families, workplaces or places of worship.





PROTECTIVE FACTORS

There are many protective factors that enable people who are transgender and gender diverse to flourish and enjoy good mental health and a good quality of life. From a service provider perspective these can include:

Access to services

Access to safe and high-quality care is critical in individual and collective wellbeing. Concern about the safety or quality of care can lead transgender and gender diverse people to avoid or defer accessing health services until they are in crisis. High-quality mental health services that can deliver safe inclusive practice and can demonstrate a safe environment are critical to the mental health and wellbeing of transgender and gender diverse people.

Peer-led services

Transgender and gender diverse people often prefer to access peer led and community-controlled health and wellbeing programs and services. Lived and living experience peer support can aid recovery and engage people in a way that mainstream services are unable to do. Peer led services and programs reduce the marginalisation and stigma that triggers much of the poor mental health experienced by transgender and gender diverse people.

Best practice for service providers

Ensuring staff members are well trained and able to provide safe and high-quality services to transgender and gender diverse people is a key component to effective service provision. Many transgender and gender diverse people will not seek support from mental health services if that service appears to be unwelcoming or unknowledgeable of transgender and gender diverse people. Engaging in co designing services with transgender and gender diverse people and regular evaluation processes supports the delivery of safe and appropriate care and support.



**Full
Strategy**



PROTECTIVE FACTORS

More broadly there is an urgent need for a paradigm shift that embraces gender and bodily diversity. Action is needed to address the impact of minority stress and the chronic stressors that transgender and gender diverse people are exposed to.

Creating a more supportive society that is welcoming and knowledgeable about the experiences of transgender and gender diverse people is a critical protective factor for mental health and wellbeing. Protective factors may include:

- Building a strong sense of self-esteem through positive transgender and gender diverse role models and experiences of acceptance.
- Having a sense of purpose in one's community. This may include activism.
- Having positive relationships, including relationships with family, friends, chosen family and intimate partners create a sense of belonging, and can affirm one's identity and value.
- Self-determination and human rights, especially for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and people with disability, play a critical role in supporting social and emotional wellbeing.
- Community connectedness, including connectedness to LGBTIQ+ communities and culturally diverse communities, creates a sense of belonging and can affirm identity and value.
- Gender affirming surgeries, hormones and practices (such as correct pronoun use) can connect people positively to their body and help build a stronger and more autonomous sense of self.

USEFUL TERMS

Brotherboy: A term used by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to describe gender diverse people who have a male spirit and take on male roles within the community. Brotherboys have a strong sense of their cultural identity.

Sistergirl: A term used by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to describe gender diverse people that have a female spirit and take on female roles within the community. Including looking after children and family. Many Sistergirls live a traditional lifestyle and have strong cultural backgrounds.

Binary gender: Genders that are inside the binary of female and male. This can include people who are gender nonconforming. Many trans people consider trans their history or experience and not their gender. They describe their gender simply as women or men. Others may include trans in their gender, such as trans women or trans men.

Non-binary gender: Genders that exist outside of female and male, including people whose gender is not exclusively female or male. Non-binary can be a distinct identity or be an umbrella term that includes other genders such as genderfluid, genderqueer, agender, bigender, and many others. Some non-binary people will see themselves as trans, and others will see themselves as not.

Cisgender: People whose gender is the same as what was presumed from them at birth. 'Cis' comes from Latin, meaning 'on this side of' whereas 'trans' means 'across' in Latin. We use cisgender to mean anyone who is not trans and gender diverse.

Gender dysphoria (diagnosis): From the DSM-5: Gender dysphoria is the distress a person feels due to a mismatch between their gender and their sex presumed at birth. Not all trans and gender diverse people experience gender dysphoria, and not all people who experience gender dysphoria are trans and gender diverse.

Gender dysphoria (experience): The distress some trans and gender diverse people experience when being misgendered or facing barriers to gender affirming care.

Gender euphoria: A feeling of happiness, enjoyment, excitement and/or positivity some trans and gender diverse people experience about their gender. This can be due to feeling positively about their gender, being gendered correctly, feeling seen and respected, or affirming their gender how they want.

Transgender and gender diverse: Transgender and Gender Diverse is an umbrella term for people whose gender is different to the one assigned to them at birth. Not all people who are non-binary, genderqueer or gender diverse relate to the term transgender.

QLife: Call 1800 184 527 or web chat qlife.org.au from 3pm to midnight 7 days a week.

Lifeline: Call 13 11 14
24 hours / 7 days a week; crisis support

Beyond Blue: Call 1300 22 46 36
24 hours / 7 days a week;
Chat online 1pm – 12am / 7 days a week www.beyondblue.org.au