

## BEST PRACTICE MODELS

### BEST PRACTICE MODELS for Prevention of Mental Disorders

#### [3] Indicated Programs

- a) Biological factors
  - i Brain injury
  - ii Chronic illness
  - iii Drug and alcohol abuse
  - iv Psychosexual and gender dysphoria
- b) Psychological factors
- c) Social factors

### **[3 a iv ] Psychosexual and gender dysphoria**

The Royal Children's Hospital (RCH) Gender Service aims to improve the physical and mental health outcomes of children and adolescents who are trans or gender diverse. Being trans or gender diverse is seen as part of the natural spectrum of human diversity.

Some trans or gender diverse children and adolescents experience gender dysphoria. Gender dysphoria is a medical term that refers to the distress that a person may experience when there is an incongruence between their gender identity and their gender assigned at birth. Trans and gender diverse children and adolescents have considerably higher rates of depression, anxiety, self-harm and attempted suicide compared to their cis-gender peers. This is due to their experiences of stigma, discrimination, social exclusion, bullying and harassment. Increasing evidence demonstrates that with supportive, gender affirming care during childhood and adolescence, harms can be ameliorated and mental health and wellbeing outcomes can be significantly improved.

- The Gender Service is a Victorian statewide service. Unfortunately the Service is unable to accept referrals from interstate or overseas.
- The RCH Gender Service is not a crisis service. Should you have immediate or urgent concerns for your child's mental wellbeing please contact your regional mental health service.

The mental health service State Government website provides contact details for Victoria's regionalised mental health services and the suburbs and regions they cover <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/mentalhealthservices/>.

If you or someone you know needs someone to talk to urgently:

- [Rainbow Door](#) on 1800 729 367 (10am – 6 pm) or text: 0480 017 246
- [QLife](#) on 1800 184 527 (3pm – midnight)
- [Lifeline](#) on 13 11 14
- [Suicide Call Back Service](#) on 1300 659 467
- [Kids Helpline](#) on 1800 551 800

## Referrals

### Children and adolescents up to 17 years

We accept new referrals from across Victoria for any child or adolescent up to the age of 17 years with concerns regarding their gender identity. A referral from a General Practitioner (GP) to the Gender Service is required.

To facilitate the processing of new referrals we request referring General Practitioner's please ensure that referrals to the Gender Service:

- Provide an estimate of pubertal stage and include relevant clinical information (e.g. if the young person is pre or post menarche). Blood tests are not required.
- Ensure community based mental health support is in place
- Adolescents who are 16 years or under require a parent to be aware of the appointment and to attend with them

Once a referral has been received by the hospital a phone SMS from the hospital is sent to confirm the referral has been accepted. All new referrals will receive an appointment in the mail outlining the details of the first appointment. There is a wait time for this.

Referrals can be made to the Gender Service using the [interactive Referral form](#) which should then be faxed to (03) 9345 5034.

## Adolescents 17 years and over

The RCH Gender Service see children and adolescents for a new assessment up to their 17<sup>th</sup> birthday. Adolescents who are 17 years or over may be eligible to access adult services:

Monash Medical Centre Gender Clinic  
Referrals accepted from age 17 years  
Phone: 03 9556 5216  
Fax: 03 9556 5256

There are also a number of community adult services including Northside Clinic, Equinox Gender Diverse Health Centre, Prahran Market Clinic and Trans and Gender Diverse Community Health Services in Preston (PANCH) and Ballarat.

## Contact information

### Pre-referral

The Gender Service Clinical Nurse Consultant can be contacted on (03) 9345 4719.

### Changing new appointments

The Gender Service administration coordinator can be contacted on (03) 9345 5890.

### Changing review or follow up appointments

Specialist clinics can be contacted via switchboard on (03) 9345 6180 - specifically ask for Desk D.

## The Service

Once a referral has been received by the Gender Service you will be sent an appointment in the mail.

Families who access the Royal Children's Hospital Gender Service with their child or adolescent will be provided with a family centred approach to care. This will entail a multidisciplinary assessment of their child or adolescent regarding gender diversity or gender dysphoria. As an outcome of the assessment, support and treatment pathways will be offered.

### Assessment

When an appointment for your assessment becomes available you will be contacted by our Administration Coordinator to confirm details.

### Children under 8 years

The initial consultation for children 8 years and under will entail a review by a psychologist or child psychiatrist. They may be referred later to a paediatrician who specialises in adolescent medicine and gender diversity if required.

### Children and Adolescents 8-16 years

#### *Assessment and Support*

The initial consultation is the entry point into service for children 8 years and adolescents up to their 17<sup>th</sup> birthday. This is a one off consultation with the Gender Service clinical nurse consultant or one of our adolescent medicine doctors.

This initial consultation will involve an assessment that will allow the Gender Service team to provide you and your child or adolescent with information regarding the service. As an outcome of this assessment you will be provided recommendations to the relevant supports that are available within the Royal Children's Hospital and external community organisations.

## Treatment

Treatment provided by the Gender Service involves development of a comprehensive management plan made in collaboration with the child or adolescent and their family.

Following your initial assessment you will be offered four appointments with a child and adolescent clinical psychologist or psychiatrist and then a paediatrician both of whom specialise in gender identity.

For pre-pubertal gender diverse children, assistance is provided to develop gender affirming environments both at home and at school. Once puberty starts, options for medical treatment include:

### 1. Puberty suppression

Puberty blockers – prescribed by a paediatrician or paediatric endocrinologist.

Puberty blockers suppress the development of secondary sex characteristics and are used for adolescents in the early stages of pubertal development. As they are reversible in their effects, should an adolescent wish to stop taking them at any time, their biological puberty will resume.

### 2. Gender Affirming Hormone Treatment

Gender affirming hormones (oestrogen or testosterone) – prescribed by paediatrician or paediatric endocrinologist.

Gender affirming hormone treatment initiates pubertal changes consistent with the young person's affirmed gender. The timing of hormone treatment is individualised based on the young person's circumstances. Trans feminine young people can be offered oestrogen treatment and trans masculine young people can be offered testosterone. These hormones are only partially reversible in their effects.

### Guidelines

The RCH Gender Service provides care that is consistent with the Australian Standards of Care and Treatment Guidelines for Trans and Gender Diverse Children and Adolescents (Version 1.3, 2020).

## Resources

### Australian Standards of Care and Treatment Guidelines

- [The Medical Journal of Australia Article-Australian Standards of Care and Treatment Guidelines for Trans and Gender Children and Adolescents](#)
- [The Medical Journal of Australia Podcast](#)
- [The Conversation - Transgender kids get their own health-care guidelines](#)
- [Policy and Practice Recommendations for Alcohol and Other Drugs \(AOD\) Service Providers supporting the Trans and Gender Diverse \(TGD\) Community](#)
- [Guideline: Trans and gender diverse inclusion in sport by the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission](#)
- [Transgender and sport](#)
- [Update personal details on Medicare card](#)
- [Application for Australian travel document](#)
- [Educational Post Trans Children and Adolescents](#)

## Parent support groups

- [Transcend Australia](#)
- [Parents of gender diverse children](#)

## Support groups for young people

- [Minus 18](#)  
youth led organisation for GLBTI
- [YGender](#)
- [Free 2 Be Me Knox & Emerge; Same Sex Attracted & Gender Diverse \(SSAGD\) Knox](#)
- Rainbow Connections is a Youth Group for GLBTIQ/ Gender Diverse children Under 12 years of age - Mornington Peninsula  
Contact: Wayne 0451 631805 or Celeste 0419 249727
- Rainbow Kids : Gender diverse children under 13 and their families in the Geelong area  
Contact Tory Wood 0421 737 323 <https://www.facebook.com/rainbowkidsgeelong>

- [Kaleidoscope](#) Banyule child and Family Support group for gender diverse and questioning children under 12 years and their families [Kaleidoscopebanyule@gmail.com](mailto:Kaleidoscopebanyule@gmail.com)
- [Rainbow network](#)- youth groups for LGBTIQ youth by region <http://www.rainbownetwork.com.au/index.php/find-a-group>

## Community information and support services

- [Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services \(CAMHS\)](#)
- [Headspace](#)
- Geelong Adolescent Sexuality Project (GASP)  
Geelong - telephone 5272 4688
- Diversity Project  
Greater Shepparton (Uniting Care Cutting Edge)
- Peninsula Pride  
Frankston - telephone 03 97696419
- [Way Out Wodonga](#)  
Telephone : (02) 6022 8888
- [Queerspace](#)  
Telephone: (03) 9663 6733
- [Transgender Victoria](#)
- [Switchboard Victoria](#)  
(Qlife): Call 1800 184 527 Chat: qlife.org.au 3pm-Midnight, every day. A phone and web counselling service that is free, non-judgemental, confidential and anonymous. All of counsellors are dedicated trained volunteers who identify as LGBTIQI.

## Education, sport and other information links

- [Kids Health Info Gender Dysphoria](#)
- [The Rainbow Network](#)  
Network for those working with same sex attracted, intersex, trans and gender diverse people in Victoria
- [Safe Schools](#)  
Helping schools foster a safe environment that is supportive and inclusive of LGBTI students
- [Gender Questioning booklet](#)  
A booklet that explores concepts around gender diversity for those who are questioning their gender identity or what it means to be gender diverse
- [The Gender Fairy](#)  
Helpful book for children
- [Kids health info for parents](#)
- [GIREG -UK based, "Gender Identity Research and Education Society"](#)  
Information for trans people, their families and the professionals who care for them
- [The Australian Story](#)  
Battling prejudice and legal challenges, 16-year-old transgender teenager Georgie Stone takes on the system to make life easier for other transgender kids and their families
- [Supporting and Caring for Transgender Children](#)  
American Academy Paediatrics
- [ZBGC Youth Project](#)
- [About A Girl](#)

## Research and evaluation

Research into trans and gender diverse children and young people has been increasing over the past 10 years however, further evaluation and research is required to maximise treatment outcomes. To provide great care to children and adolescents with gender diverse or experience gender dysphoria, the RCH Gender Service is undertaking research and evaluation to better understand gender concerns in children and adolescents. For more information, please see visit [Gender Research](#)

## Professional affiliations

- [World Professional Association for Transgender Health](#)
- [Australian Professional Association for Trans Health \(AusPATH\)](#)

## More about the RCH Gender Service

- [The team](#)
- [Background, funding and program logic](#)
- [Media advocacy](#)

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