

## WHAT IS GENDER DYSPHORIA?

Folks of all gender identities experience dysphoria. Gender dysphoria is the experience of distress or discomfort with your body's characteristics or the gender role assigned to you. It is experienced differently by everyone, and it can change over time. There is no one way to deal with dysphoria, and different things work for different people.

Enclosed are some ideas that could help trans, gender diverse, and questioning youth cope with dysphoria. Some are specific to gender dysphoria, others are more general coping strategies.

Try some out and make a list of what works for you. Remember that what works at one time may not be the same at another time, so trying different strategies at different times can be useful too.

In addition to this resource, try putting together a portable coping care package, with your list of things you can do to deal with dysphoria and any small supplies you need for the strategies that work for you., eg. a sensory toy, a lip balm, affirmation cards, a picture of your pet. That way you have it any time you might need it.

Remember that you know your identity better than anyone else! You're awesome!

## ADDITIONAL SUPPORTS

If you are feeling really down, or thinking of suicide it's important to get as much support as you can, including professional support.

You can call the following 27/7 resources:

**Suicide Crisis Helpline** 988

**Trans Lifeline** (877) 330-6366.

**Klinic Crisis Line** 1-888-322-3019

**Manitoba Suicide Prevention & Support Line** 1-877-435-7170

**Emergency Medical Responders** 911

## QUESTIONS?

Youth (ages 21 and under) are welcome to contact Tia (they/them), Youth Support Counsellor at [tiao@rainbowresourcecentre.org](mailto:tiao@rainbowresourcecentre.org) 204-474-0212

If you are 22 or older, please contact [info@rainbowresourcecentre.org](mailto:info@rainbowresourcecentre.org) or call 204-474-0212 ext 201



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# MANAGING GENDER DYSPHORIA

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[info@rainbowresourcecentre.org](mailto:info@rainbowresourcecentre.org)



# TIPS AND COPING STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING GENDER DYSPHORIA

- **Express your feelings**- shared them in a notebook, or blog, or express how you feel through an art, craft, or music project.
- **Talk to someone** who understands. Talk to a supportive friend or family member, If you have a counsellor, or therapist you feel safe talking about your gender dysphoria with, make time to bring it up.
- **Listen to someone** who has similar feelings to you. Talk to friends who have experienced dysphoria, watch videos of folks' experience with dysphoria, read books written about dysphoria or trans and gender-diverse identities
- **Use items that aid in expressing your gender** and that make you feel more confident in yourself. Try binders, packers, stand-to-pee devices, breast forms, gaffs, makeup, clothes, shoes, accessories, and hair products.
- **Make plans, research or take small steps towards your long-term transition goals.** Ex. Looking into the name change process!
- **Affirm your identity** - do small or big things that affirm who you are! Whether it's wearing a small accessory that makes you feel good, or re-styling your hair.
- Find ways to do **everyday things that reduce your dysphoria**- steam up or cover the bathroom mirrors, use a big sponge for bathing, cuddle a pillow to cover your chest while you sleep, or wear a big comfy t-shirt.
- **Remind yourself, out loud that your body does not define your gender.**
- Take a moment to point out a few **positive things** you love about your body, things you are great at, or things you like about yourself.
- Remember to **be easy on yourself.** Remind yourself of the diversity of all people's bodies
- Take time to **explore what feels right for you** when it comes to your identity and expressing yourself and your gender. Forget beauty standards and gender stereotypes: what expressions and identities feel right for YOU.
- **Move your body;** a healthy amount of exercise can improve your mood. Do what you like - dance your heart out in your bedroom, do some yoga, ride a bike, go to circus classes, use local gym equipment, or look up exercises that will help reduce your dysphoria.
- Remember that you've made it to this point. **Practice being proud of yourself.**
- **Stimulate your senses**- smell something (perfume, flowers), taste something (something strong flavoured or something that you really like), listen to something (nature sounds, or your favourite music), touch something (fabric, a pet, a teddy bear), stimulate your vision (looking at a colour you like, or pictures of baby animals).
- **Avoid places or people that will bring you down,** whenever possible.
- **Make time for pleasure** - make sure you are doing things that make you feel good everyday. Schedule it if you have too!
- **Switch off social media** and devices if they are bringing you down.
- **Pamper yourself** - dress in your favourite clothes, wear your favourite makeup, eat your favourite food, get a haircut, take care of your body.
- **Connect with nature**- go for a walk outside, do some gardening, watch the birds, trees or stars, swim in a river, enjoy the sunshine.
- **Go to bed early!** Make sure you prepare to sleep by turning off devices, doing something relaxing, making your room peaceful and quiet.