

## FOR MORE INFORMATION ON TRANS ISSUES:

*World Professional Association for Transgender Health*  
[www.wpath.org/publications/soc](http://www.wpath.org/publications/soc)

*National LGBT Health Education Center*  
[www.lgbthealtheducation.org](http://www.lgbthealtheducation.org)

*USCF Center of Excellence for Transgender Health*  
[www.transhealth.ucsf.edu](http://www.transhealth.ucsf.edu)

*International Foundation for Gender Education*  
[www.ifge.org/](http://www.ifge.org/)

*LGBT Health Channel*  
[lgbthealthchannel.com/transgender](http://lgbthealthchannel.com/transgender)

*TransLine Project Health*  
[transline.zendesk.com](http://transline.zendesk.com)

*National Association of Social Workers (NASW)*  
[www.socialworkers.org/Practice/LGBT/LGBT-Tools](http://www.socialworkers.org/Practice/LGBT/LGBT-Tools)

*American Psychological Association (APA)*  
[www.apa.org/practice/guidelines/transgender.pdf](http://www.apa.org/practice/guidelines/transgender.pdf)

*Lev, A. (2004)*  
Transgender emergence: Therapeutic guidelines for working with gender-variant people and their families.

## REFERENCES

1. Bockting, W. O., Miner, M. H., Swinburne Romine, R. E., Hamilton, A., & Coleman, E. (2013). Stigma, Mental Health, and Resilience in an Online Sample of the US Transgender Population. *AJPH*.
2. FORGE. (2004). Transgender Sexual Violence Project: Summary of Wisconsin Data. For Ourselves: Reworking Gender Expression.
3. James, S. E., Herman, J. L., Rankin, S., Keisling, M., Mottet, L., & Anafi, M. (2016). The Report of the U.S. Transgender Survey. Washington, DC: National Center for Transgender Equality.
4. Meyer, I. H., Brown, T. N. T., Herman, J. L., Reisner, S. L., & Bockting, W. O. (2017). Demographic Characteristics and Health Status of Transgender Adults in Select US Regions: Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2014. *AJPH*.
5. Rood, B. A., Puckett, J. A., Pantalone, D. W., & Bradford, J. B. (2015). Predictors of Suicidal Ideation in a Statewide Sample of Transgender Individuals. *LGBT Health*.
6. Russell, S. T., Pollitt, A. M., Li, G., & Grossman, A. H. (2018). Chosen Name Use Is Linked to Reduced Depressive Symptoms, Suicidal Ideation, and Suicidal Behavior Among Transgender Youth. *JAH*.
7. Testa, R. J., Michaels, M. S., Bliss, W., Rogers, M. L., Balsam, K. F., & Joiner, T. (2017). Suicidal ideation in transgender people: Gender minority stress and interpersonal theory factors. *J. Abnorm. Psychol.*

## DEFINITIONS & KEY TERMS

1

### TRANSGENDER/TRANS & GENDER DIVERSE

Umbrella terms covering individuals whose gender identity is opposite of or not congruent with their sex assigned at birth.

2

### TRANSITION/ING & AFFIRMATION

The process of coming to recognize, accept, and express one's internal gender identity - most often referring to medical, social, and legal changes observable to others that may include hormones and/or surgeries.

3

### NON-BINARY, GENDERQUEER, & NON-CONFORMING

Encompassing term(s) for individuals who do not identify or express within a gender binary (female/male). Not everyone who identifies with these terms identifies as trans or with other labels in this group.

4

### GENDER AFFIRMATION SURGERY & GENITAL RECONSTRUCTION SURGERY

The surgical alteration of one's primary or secondary sex characteristics, including genitals, to more accurately reflect the person's gender identity. Not all people want or need GAS/GRS.

5

### STEALTH & BLENDING

A person who does not disclose their gender affirmation history to others, or they 'blend into' society in their correct gender. This is not the same as closeted.

## PREVENTING TRANS SUICIDE

An Introduction for Health and Services Providers



[www.fenwayhealth.org](http://www.fenwayhealth.org)



[www.massstpc.org](http://www.massstpc.org)



[www.mass.gov/dph](http://www.mass.gov/dph)



[www.masspreventsuicide.org](http://www.masspreventsuicide.org)



[www.samaritanshope.org](http://www.samaritanshope.org)

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## WARNING SIGNS

If the following are observed, take action ASAP to protect the individual, refer to a mental health professional experienced in working with a range of gender identities, For further guidance, contact the GLBT Helpline (1-888-240-4528), Samaritans (1-877-870-4673), Trevor Project (1-866-488-7386), and/or call 911.

### Signs of Acute Risk

- Threatening to hurt/kill oneself or thinking/expressing desire to hurt/kill oneself, or better off dead. Excessive focus on death or suicide.
- Current access or seeking access to firearms, pills/substances, or other lethal means.
- Purging personal items, especially those connected to trans identity (wigs, dresses, packers, binders, etc.).

### Additional Warning Signs

- Marked changes in mood, sleeping, and/or eating (increase or decrease).
- Expressing there is no reason for living, no sense of purpose in life, or feeling hopeless.
- Withdrawing from friends, family, and social activities - isolation.
- Risk taking and reckless behavior, particularly if a change from regular behavior.
- New or increased substance use.
- Lost interest in things previously enjoyed.

## PROTECTIVE FACTORS AGAINST SUICIDE

- Effective clinical care for mental, physical and substance use disorders. Regular attendance in appointments.
- Easy access to a variety of clinical interventions and support for seeking help.
- Restricted access to highly lethal means.
- Strong connections to family, and family support of gender identity.
- Others using and respecting chosen name and pronouns.<sup>6</sup>
- Community support.
- Support through ongoing medical and mental health care relationships.
- Skills in problem solving, conflict resolution, and emotional intelligence.
- Cultural and religious beliefs that discourage suicide and support self-preservation.



## PREVALENCE OF MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS

While literature is limited, trans individuals report greater negative physical health outcomes and mental health concerns than non-trans individuals, greatly due to discrimination and stigma.<sup>3,4</sup>

### Systematic Stressors

Pressure is exerted by others to conform to social gender norms of behavior and appearance. The more a person varies from gender-specific roles, dress, and behaviors, the greater risk of social disapproval and violence. In efforts to reduce this stigma, some people work to conceal their gender variance or history.<sup>1</sup> Combined, these experiences contribute to feelings of fear, anger, not belonging, and invisibility. Due to these experiences, nearly 40% of trans individuals report experiencing serious psychological distress.<sup>3</sup>

### Depression & Anxiety

There is some evidence that trans people may be less likely to seek treatment for depression - fearing that their gender issues will be assumed to be the cause of their symptoms, and that they'll be negatively judged.

### Suicide & Self-Harm

Studies report higher rates of suicidal ideation (45-77% vs. 14%) and lifetime suicide attempts (40% vs. 4.6%) in trans adults compared to non-trans adults,<sup>3,7</sup> with transwomen being more likely to attempt suicide than transmen. Anecdotally, trans persons are less likely to complete suicide once they have medically/surgically transitioned.

### Experiencing Violence & PTSD

Many trans people experience violence in relation to their gender identity or gender expression.<sup>5</sup> These range from harassment and discrimination to verbal, physical, and sexual assault (including rape and homicide). As with other populations, violence is rarely reported to police.<sup>2,3</sup> Experiencing violence or discrimination based on gender identity and transition status significantly predicts suicide ideation.<sup>5</sup>



"It is not enough to be compassionate. We must act."

~ Dalai Lama