

BRIEFINGS ON TRANS HEALTHCARE

TRANS YOUNG PEOPLE AND RISK FOR SUICIDE

2024



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Trans young people experience higher rates of mental health concerns in comparison to their cisgender peers.¹⁻³ There are many factors that contribute to this; it is not inherently related to being trans, but rather, because of how trans people are treated by society at large. For example, some risk factors include discrimination, stigma, family and peer rejection, barriers to achieving transition-related goals, and a lack of trans-inclusive support.⁴⁻⁶ Sadly, this can lead to an elevated risk of self-harm, suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts.⁶

One important factor that can help improve trans people's mental health is being able to access gender-affirming healthcare, if that is their wish. Research shows that appropriate use of [puberty blockers](#) appears to stabilise or improve a young person's mental wellbeing, and accessing [gender-affirming hormone therapy](#) appears to reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety, increases life satisfaction, and reduces suicidal ideation.⁷⁻¹⁷

By misinterpreting studies, misinformation often wrongly claims that gender-affirming surgery can increase a person's risk of suicide, and claims that there is no consistent evidence that gender-affirming hormone therapy improves mental wellbeing and lessens suicidality.¹⁸⁻²⁰ Other misinformation attempts to claim that trans young people are not really at increased risk of suicidality; the misinformation is dangerous.¹⁹ Because of this, some people will argue that trans young people should not be able to access gender-affirming healthcare, and that psychological therapy will instead be used to try to "resolve" their gender dysphoria.²¹ Such claims are not supported by the evidence, which consistently shows the benefits of gender-affirming healthcare for those young people and adults who need and request it.^{19,22,23} There is no scientific evidence that psychological therapy alone can relieve gender incongruence and gender dysphoria.

Timely access to appropriate gender-affirming healthcare, alongside a wider health profession trained and educated to provide trans-affirming and competent care, are

crucial protective factors that can support trans young people to thrive. Trans young people should also have equal access to evidence-based mental health care for any conditions such as depression or anxiety, which is respectful of their gender identity. Other protective factors that bolster mental wellbeing for trans young people include family acceptance and support, supportive school environments, and legal affirmation of their gender.²⁴⁻²⁹

Intended use of information

While we make every effort to make sure the information in this resource is accurate and informative, the information does not take the place of professional medical advice.

Do not use our information as a substitute for the advice of a health professional.

If you are an individual seeking medical or health information for yourself or for someone else, you should obtain advice relevant to your particular circumstances from a health professional.

More information and support

For clinicians, please contact AusPATH for resources and support. www.auspath.org.au

For families and young people, please contact Transcend Australia for resources and support. www.transcend.org.au

This resource and associated evidence briefs and fact sheets can be downloaded from www.transcend.org.au/resources/evidence

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