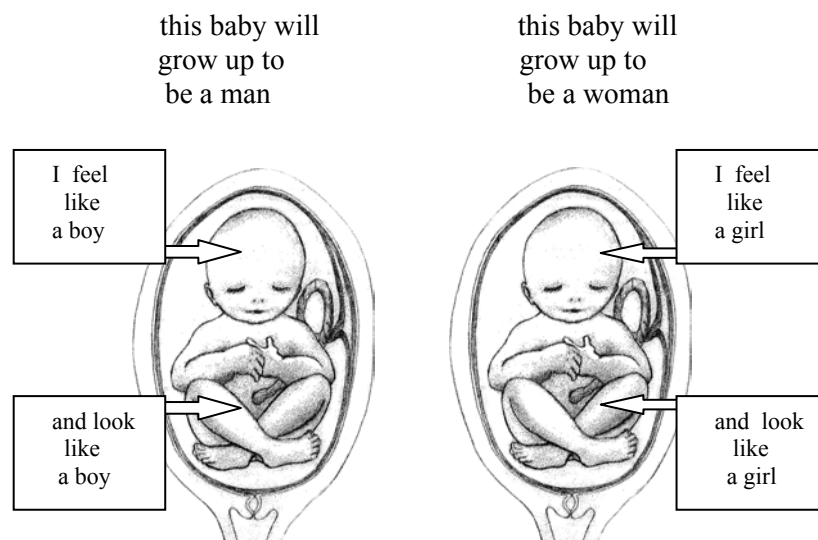


Gender Identity Research
And Education Society

Registered Charity
No: 1068137

We all know that boys and girls are different. They look different, they often behave differently, and they feel different from each other. Outside appearances of the sex of our bodies – the genitalia - are the indicators we all recognise, but internally too, the organs of reproduction are different and, importantly, science has shown that small areas of the brain are also different between men and women. The process of developing into 'male' or 'female' is called sex-differentiation.

Science also indicates that the differences in the brain are programmed before birth, and these differences are believed to be associated with the feeling of being a boy or a girl, a man or a woman; this feeling is called 'gender identity' or 'core gender identity'. We expect that the gender identity will be consistent with the outward appearance of the body. We expect that someone who looks 'female' will identify as a girl, and later, as a woman, and vice versa for boys and men. This is usually the case.



However, we are all special in our own way and people like your Mum are extra special. In them, the development of a small part of the brain seems to have occurred in the opposite direction from the sex of the rest of the body. This mismatch between the brain and the body causes great discomfort. This discomfort is called 'gender dysphoria'.

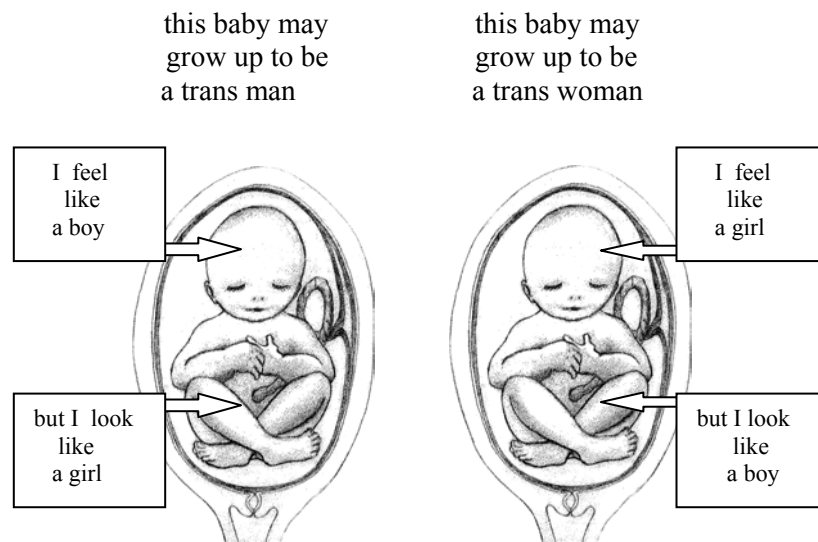
Your Mum has tried hard all her life to fit into the expectations of her family and society, and to behave and think like a woman, to fulfil what we call the 'gender role' of a woman. She loves your Dad and both of them wanted children – you. But somewhere deep inside herself, she recognises that she doesn't think and feel like a woman, and cannot go on living in that role because for her it is artificial and unreal.

Her brain is telling her that, despite her appearance and despite her struggles over the years to conform, she is a man in her brain. Her gender role doesn't fit her gender identity.

For a teenager whose mother is transitioning from female to male

She is not ill, but she is extremely unhappy and the only way to ease her suffering is to live as the man she knows she really is. She may also need to have medical treatment to bring her body more into line with her feeling of being a man.

This process of 'transition' takes quite a long time. Apart from the medical treatment, it involves using a new name, dressing differently and emerging as a man. You will gradually become accustomed to using his new name and referring to your Mum as he, not she; him, not her. This will be difficult for you but it is important for you to know that, whatever changes you may notice, nothing will change the way your Mum feels about you. Outside, he will change, but in many ways he will still be the same person inside and he will still love you very much; he will need your understanding and support.



(When gender dysphoria leads someone to the intense need to live according to the opposite gender role, it is then referred to as transsexualism. Those experiencing it may be called transsexual people or trans people. An individual who transitions from the female to the male role may be called a trans man)

For a teenager whose mother is transitioning from female to male