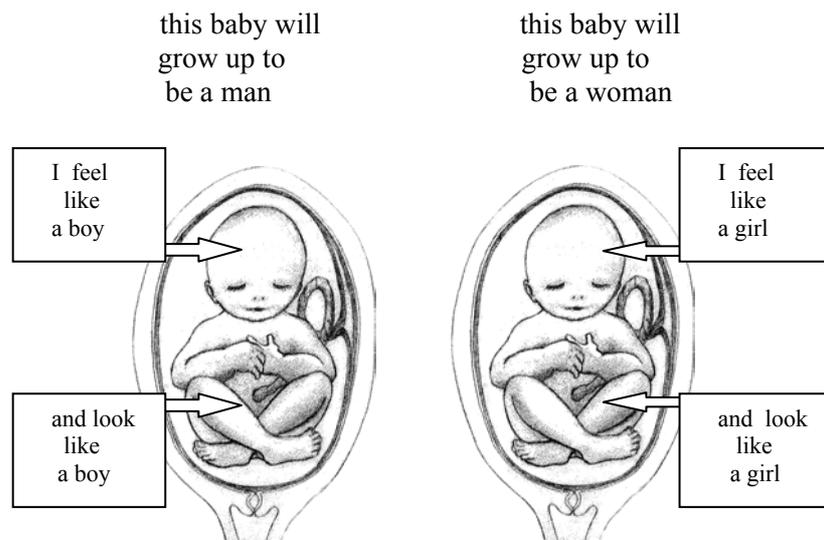


Gender Identity Research
And Education Society

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 ‘male’ will identify as a boy, and later, as a man, and vice versa for girls and women. This is usually the case.



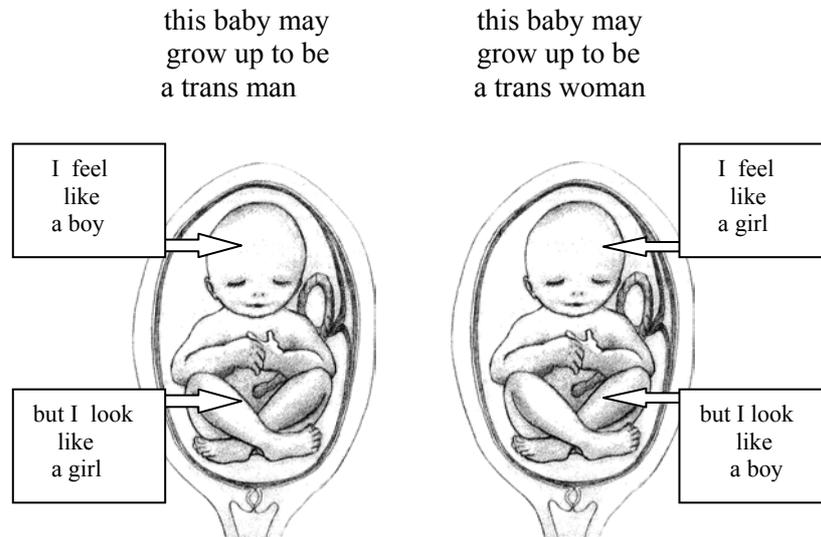
However, we are all special in our own way and people like your Dad are extra special. In them, the development of a small part of the brain seems to have occurred in the opposite direction from the sex of the rest of the body. This mismatch between the brain and the body causes great discomfort. This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

Your Dad has tried hard all his life to fit into the expectations of his family and society, and to behave and think like a man, to fulfil what we call the ‘gender role’ of a man. He loves your Mum and both of them wanted children – you. But somewhere deep inside himself, he recognises that he doesn’t think and feel like a man, and cannot go on living in that role because for him it is artificial and unreal. His brain is telling him that, despite his appearance and despite his struggles over the years to conform, he is a woman in his brain. His gender role doesn’t fit his gender identity.

(For a teenager whose father is transitioning from male to female)

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

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 woman. You will gradually become accustomed to using her new name and referring to your Dad as she, not he; her, not him. 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 Dad feels about you. Outside, she will change, but in many ways she will still be the same person inside and she will still love you very much; she 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 male to the female role may be called a trans woman)

(For a teenager whose father is transitioning from male to female)