

CARING FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WITH GENDER DYSPHORIA

Michelle and Ken have four children, Jack 17, Emily 15, Danielle 13 and Stephen 10. Michelle and Ken are very religious, attend church every week, and are heavily involved in church committees and fund raising activities.

From the age of three, their youngest child has consistently preferred to play with Emily and Danielle's toys, and Michelle has often found them wearing Danielle's clothes. When asked about this, their youngest child stated that they like the toys and clothes because they are a girl, and asked to be called Stevie. Michelle and Ken have insisted that they will only call the child Stephen, and that god made them a boy and that can't be changed.

Michelle and Ken's youngest child has struggled to fit in at school due to teasing and bullying, particularly with regard to their preference for playing with girls. In the past these issues at school played out at home in the form of anger, though more recently the child has expressed suicidal thoughts and exhibited signs of depression which have been noticed by Michelle and Ken.

At a loss about what to do, Michelle decided to take her youngest child to the family GP to discuss her concerns about the suicidal thoughts. At the appointment the child told the GP nothing was wrong, because they knew that speaking about their gender in front of their mother would lead to troubles at home. The GP suggested to Michelle that she should take the child to see a psychologist, to talk further about the suicidal thoughts and depression and their underlying causes.

After several sessions with a psychologist, first in conjunction with the parent and then by themselves, the child opened up and explained that they had been reading a lot on the internet about transgender people. The psychologist took this as an invitation to ask the child about how they experienced their gender, with the child stating that they are a girl, and that they wanted to be called Stevie.

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