



Supporting Gender Transitioning in the workplace

Introduction

A trans-person is someone who feels that their gender identity does not correspond to the one they were given at birth. Many trans people know from a very early age that they don't identify with the gender presumed to them at birth while others come to this conclusion later in life. Gender identity (who you are) is different to sexual orientation (who you are attracted to).

Research shows that transgender people experience higher levels of mental health problems including higher risk of suicidal behaviour. Trans people also suffer higher levels of discrimination and higher levels of verbal and physical abuse. Therefore, it is vital to know how to best support and individual going through the journey of affirming their gender identity.

What is Gender Transition/ Gender affirmation?

Gender transition is the process by which a person affirms that their gender is different to the gender assigned to them at birth. Transitioning usually involves changing their physical appearance (e.g., clothing, hairstyle, voice training) and changing their names and pronouns. Transitioning could also involve medical procedures such as hormonal treatment and surgery. It is important to note that the process of transitioning is very individual and deeply personal. There is no one way to be transgender.

Supporting an employee's gender affirmation process

When an employee communicates their intention to transition in the workplace is a critical time. "Coming out"

requires courage and usually brings mixed feeling for the person disclosing this information. It brings relief that "everything is out in the open" but also fear and worries about being rejected and discriminated.

BSS can help by:

Providing EAP counselling sessions to the employee who is going through the gender affirmation process

Providing Leader Support to the leaders/team who are responsible for the staff briefing and all other practical aspects of this process (e.g., changing records and documentation to the new names and gender, organising new uniforms and access to facilities). Developing a "Transition Plan" in the workplace is essential to smooth this process as much as possible and to create a safe environment for the employee.

We also strongly encourage the use of **specific resources** that have been designed to support individuals transitioning and to educate people around them (loved ones, work colleagues). The links below provide access to this information.

Where to go for further assistance.

Qlife.org.au

Support services for LGBTQIA+ people, information for families

freedom.org.au

Support services for LGBTQIA+ young people

transhub.org.au

Information and resources about trans health, legal rights & more

Transfolkofwa.org.au

Support groups for trans people of all ages

BSS Main Office: 1029 Wellington Street, West Perth WA 6005
Counselling available Australia-wide
National and International toll-free counselling support also available 24/7
For more information, please contact:

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1800 30 30 90 (AUS Freecall) | 0800 820 035 (NZ Freecall)