

Exploring Gender Diversity in Hypnosis

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Daniel Browne

- Hypnotherapist since 2009
- Counsellor, psychotherapist and coach
- Hypnotherapy and counselling tutor and supervisor
- Former National Hypnotherapy Society Ambassador
- Author of 'How to be an LGBT+ Affirmative Therapist'
- International speaker and trainer
- Writer
- LGBT+ activist
- Founder and Chair of Warwickshire Pride
- Former board member of the UK Pride Organisers Network
- Named among the most influential LGBT+ people in the UK
- Multi-award winner
- Background in mental health care



What to expect

- Learn how to explore gender divert in hypnosis and work confidently and successfully with trans clients.
- Understand terminology and identities.
- Gain knowledge of issues faced by trans people.
- Learn about the barriers trans people face when accessing services.
- Challenging your own prejudices and belief systems.
- Develop an action plan to start putting what you learn into practice.

Don't be afraid to ask questions and challenge your beliefs. Don't worry about saying the wrong thing or offending me. We are all here to learn, share, develop and grow. Today's session will help you with that.



Terminology

- Transgender
- Trans
- Genderfluid
- Non-binary
- Gender non-confirming
- Agender
- Two spirit
- Questioning
- Cisgender/Cis



Terminology

It's not ok to use words such as:

- Transsexual
- Tranny
- Shim
- Heshe
- Shemale

Those words are derogatory and deeply offensive.

Transsexual is now viewed as an outdated, medicalised term.



Pronouns

Pronouns relate to how you refer to a person.

Someone who identifies as male may use the pronouns he/him.

Someone who identifies as female may use the pronouns she/her.

Someone who is trans, non-binary, genderfluid or genderqueer may use the gender-neutral pronouns they/them. Another gender-neutral pronoun is 'it'.

Respecting people's pronouns and using them correctly is part of accepting the person for who they are. Not using the correct pronouns can be distressing for many trans people.



Issues faced by trans people

- Hate crimes against LGBT+ people have risen by 78% since 2013. Since the EU referendum in 2016 it's 147%.
- Two in five trans people have experienced a hate crime or incident because of their gender identity in the last 12 months (based on Stonewall research from 2017).
- Four in five anti-LGBT+ hate crimes and incidents go unreported, with younger LGBT+ people particularly reluctant to go to the police (based on Stonewall research from 2017).
- 40% of trans people who would like to undergo medical intervention as part of their transition haven't done so yet because they fear the consequences it might have on their family life.
- 48% of trans people don't feel comfortable using public toilets through fear of discrimination or harassment.
- 44% of trans people avoid certain streets because they don't feel safe.
- When accessing general healthcare services in the last year, 41% of trans people said healthcare staff lacked understanding of trans health needs.

Issues faced by young trans people

- 83% of young trans people have experienced name calling or verbal abuse.
- 60% of young trans people have experienced threats and intimidation.
- 35% of young trans people have experienced physical assault.
- 27% of young trans people have attempted suicide.
- 89% of young trans people have thought about suicide.
- 72% of young trans people have self-harmed at least once.

Issues faced by trans people

- Anti-LGBT+ attitudes and behaviours remain prevalent, despite legal equality. In particular, trans people are bearing the brunt of the hate right now.
- In 2018 a British trans woman was granted asylum in New Zealand because there is so much transphobia in the UK.
- Transphobia is common and it's increasing. Trans people are now under constant attack from transphobes and TERFs (Trans Exclusionary Radical Feminists).
- Mental health issues are very common among trans people. Much of this is due to not being accepted by family, friends and society.
- Sexual assault of trans people (trans women in particular) is also common.

Issues faced by trans people

- Discrimination
- Prejudice
- Being denied services
- Bullying
- Harassment
- Violence
- Verbal abuse
- Lack of acceptance from friends, family and society
- Isolation
- Cisnormativity
- Coming to terms with, and accepting, their own gender identity



More specific issues faced by trans people

- Hate creates so many problems such as:
 - Depression
 - Anxiety
 - PTSD
 - Self-harm
 - Internalised shame
 - Internalised homophobia, biphobia and transphobia
- Name calling – faggot, queer, dyke, tranny, shee poof... It's all damaging and an LGBT+ affirmative therapist should have an understanding of those words and their impact.
- Drug abuse.
- Self-acceptance.
- Conversion therapy.



Trans people and the law

- Trans people are protected in law under in the UK the Equality Act 2010. This means trans people are classed as having a protected characteristic and therefore any discrimination that trans people face due to their trans identity is illegal.
- Until recently, it was thought that the legal protections for trans people did not include people who are genderfluid, genderqueer or non-binary. However, a landmark legal case in 2020 extended the protections.
- In 2018 the UK government carried out a consultation on reforming the Gender Recognition Act. Not much is going to change on the back of that, much to the despair of trans people. Currently people must identify as male or female.



The process of transitioning

- In the UK, to start transitioning, a trans person must see their GP first. The GP will then make a referral to a gender identity clinic. There may be a waiting time of up to seven years for an appointment at a gender identity clinic. Not all GPs are supportive, but a request can be made to see an alternative GP.
- Once seen by the gender identity clinic, gender dysphoria needs to be diagnosed before treatment can begin. Treatment could include counselling, being prescribed hormones and/or having surgery.
- Young trans people aged under 18 used to be able to take blockers that prevent puberty from happening or slow it down if puberty has already started. That required the consent of parents. However, this is currently not permitted in the UK. Upon reaching 18, young people can make their own decisions regarding treatment.
- Trans people will need to live as their identified gender full time for at least two years before being granted a Gender Recognition Certificate. This is something that must be applied for in order to be legally recognised as the gender a person identifies as. It can be granted whether the individual has received treatment or not. However, they must have been living in their affirmed gender for at least two years and have a medical diagnosis of gender dysphoria.
- The whole process of transitioning can take around three years, once a first appointment has been attended. This may take longer due to appointment waiting times and whether the individual is deemed psychologically well enough to have surgery.

Challenging transphobic language and bullying

- It's important to challenge any homophobic, biphobic or transphobic language or bullying. This provides support for trans people, but also provides an opportunity for the perpetrator to be educated.
- When seeing or hearing transphobic language or bullying:
 - **Intervene** – You could say something like “Please stop. What you are doing is wrong.” Then explain why it's wrong. Only intervene if it is safe to do so. If it's not safe, call 999.
 - **Support the victim** – Ask the person on the receiving end of the abuse if they are ok and how you can help them. Check that the person is ok.
 - **Encourage reporting** – Ask the victim if they are going to report the incident and let them know how they can do that. If the victim does not want to report it, you can also report on their behalf via www.reportthatenow.com. You do not need the victims consent for that. At least the incident will then be logged.
- Other ways of providing support:
 - **Influence and educate others.** Tell them what you have learnt today. Don't be afraid to preach the message of equality and inclusion.

How can you make your service welcoming, safe, and accessible for trans clients?

Please consider the following questions:

1. How can you make your service completely welcoming and inclusive for trans clients?
2. What are you already doing to welcome and include trans clients?
3. How are you letting your clients know that you welcome and include trans people?
4. What could you do better?

Please consider these questions and contact Daniel if you wish to discuss them.

**What can
YOU do?**

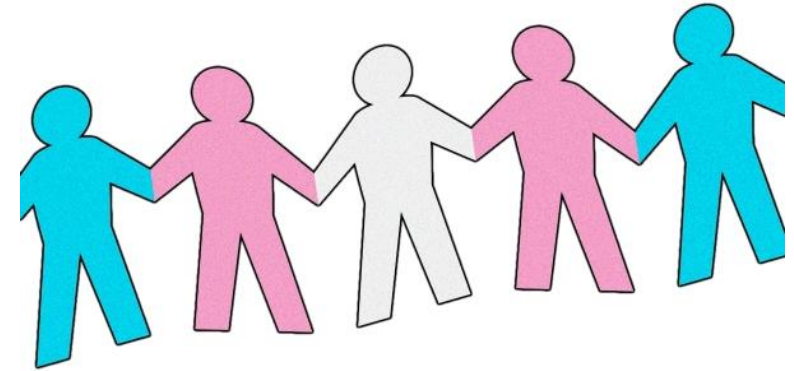
How to make your service inclusive and welcoming for trans clients



- Little things can make a massive difference.
- Greet clients with your name and pronouns.
- Use your pronouns in your email signatures, social media profiles, and on platforms such as Zoom and Teams.
- Ask clients what their pronouns are. Not just trans clients, but all clients. Normalising the use of pronouns is important.
- Wear a pronoun badge or a trans flag badge.
- Develop an equality and diversity policy to ensure trans is fully included.
- Have a presence at LGBT+ events, such as Pride festivals.
- Undertake a full trans/LGBT+ affirmative therapist training course to enhance your knowledge, skills and confidence.
- Challenge transphobia in our profession.
- Be proud of supporting trans clients.

Working with gender diversity in hypnosis

- Use the language that your trans clients use.
- Work in an affirming way. This means accepting and affirming your client's identity.
- Be very clear with your trans clients that you work in an affirmative way and that you are a safe person to be seeing for therapy.
- Be clear about confidentiality. Some trans clients may worry about being outed or spoken about. Reassure them that your service is confidential, aside from the usual safeguarding considerations.
- Techniques such as inner child work are often healing.
- Never try to wing it. If you don't understand something, clarify with your client. If you still don't get it, know when to refer a client on.
- Your trans clients may not need help relating to their gender identity. They could present with something such as anxiety and it has nothing to do with their gender identity. So, keep an open mind and never assume that a trans client's issues are rooted in their gender identity. They may just happen to be trans and that has nothing to do with their issue.



How to be an ally and friend to trans people

- Be a listener.
- Be open minded.
- Be willing to talk.
- Be inclusive and invite trans friends to socialise with you and your other friends.
- Don't assume that all of your friends, family members or colleagues are cisgender.
- Challenge anti-trans language and behaviour, including 'jokes'. Let people know that they are being offensive and how they are being offensive.
- Defend trans people against discrimination.
- Challenge your own prejudices, even if it's uncomfortable to do that.
- Believe that all people, regardless of sexuality or gender identity, should be treated with dignity and respect.



Key takeaways

- You don't need to be trans to work with trans clients. You just need to be open-minded, willing to learn, and believe that everyone has the right to be treated with dignity and respect.
- If you make a mistake, such as getting a pronoun wrong, own it. Apologise and commit to getting it right next time. Never try to fudge your way out of a mistake. Own it. Most people will appreciate that.
- It's ok to ask questions, such as what a client's pronoun is or how they want you to refer to them. What's not ok is expecting your trans clients to educate you on this topic. That will likely destroy rapport, and the client will stop engaging with therapy. I see this all the time in my practice, when clients come to see me and say their previous therapist expected them to provide education on understanding trans people.
- Further training on this topic is essential. It will boost your skills, knowledge and confidence.
- This is essential learning for all therapists. We should all be open to working with all sorts of clients. Trans inclusive therapy is really needed right now. You can be part of a positive shift in our profession.

Support that is available

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- www.thelgbttherapist.com/lgbtfortherapists

Stonewall:

- www.stonewall.org.uk

LGBT+ Foundation:

- www.lgbt.foundation

Gendered Intelligence:

- www.genderedintelligence.co.uk

