

Creating a gender expansive society within our schools

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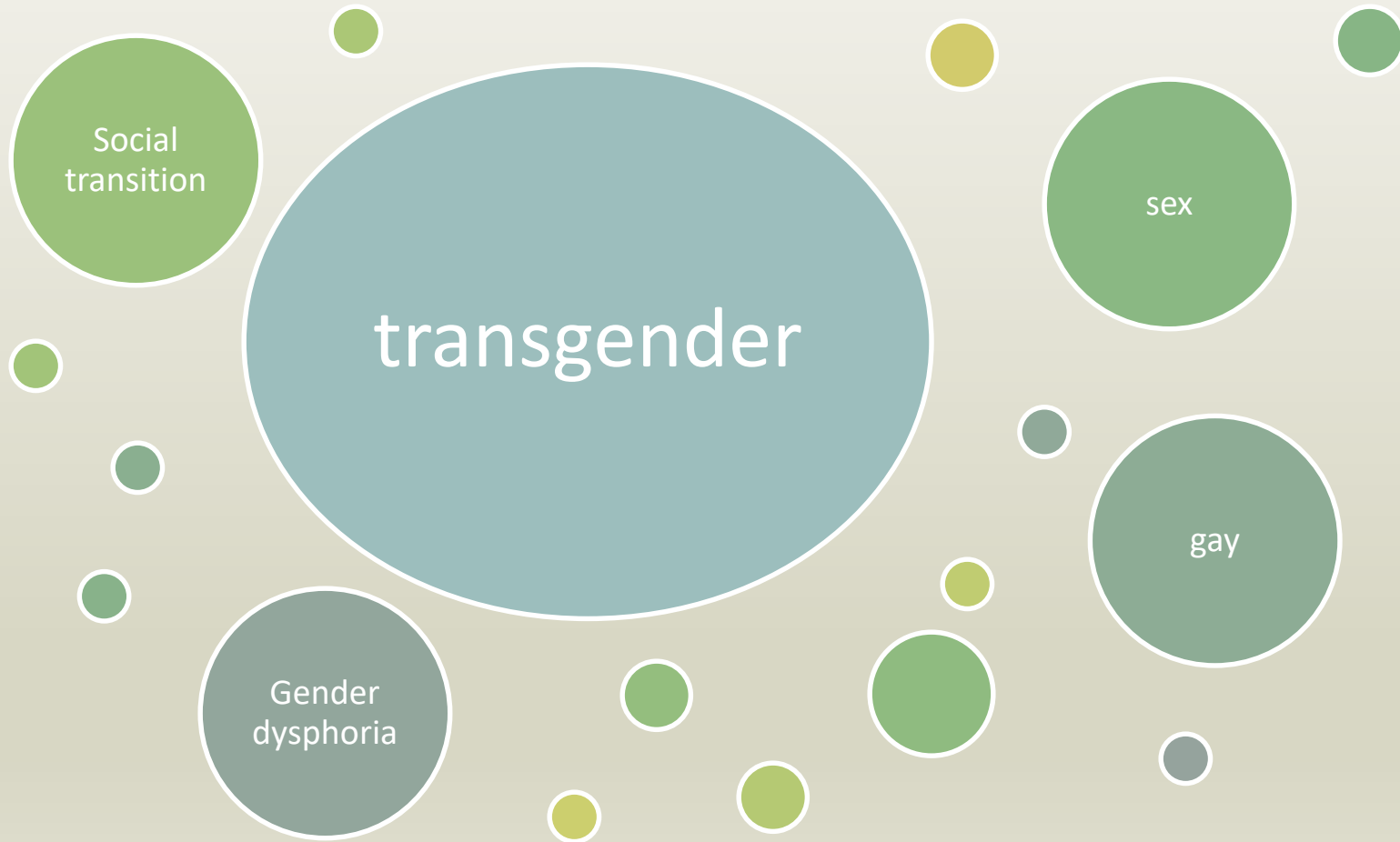


Reasons this is needed currently...

The best way to treat obstacles is by using them as stepping stones Enid Blyton

- Human rights issue more than gender
- Focus on being human not male or female
- Gender friendly teaching is foundation for equity education
- Education and health officials say that more children are questioning their gender
- How each gender behaves has become more fluid, less rigid
- The concept of gender is evolving; 100 years ago/60 years ago
- More and more families non-nuclear eg same sex
- Common for parents not to reveal baby's sex
- Gender is not necessarily 'binary' so you can be who you 'are'

Gender definitions



Traditional school practice

Never divide by gender

- Never divide class by gender
- Assigning tasks
- Bathroom passes: boys+girls?
- Deliberate opportunities
- Social media and advertising

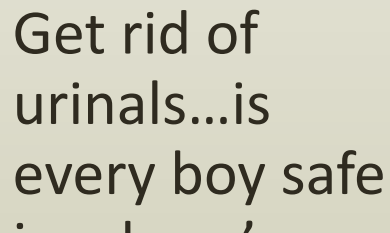
Staff training

School staff are gendered beings and products of our society

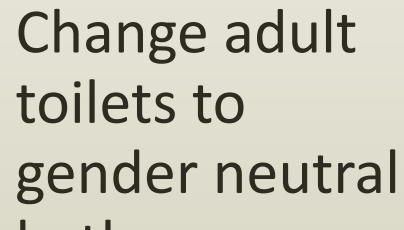
- Educate staff on gender terminology: identity + persuasion
- Teach staff to be reflective of their practice
- Develop guidelines for staff and new staff
- Review policies using this lens
- Questions to discuss regularly:
 - What is your comfort level in discussing gender diversity issues?
 - What issues of gender/gender diversity have arisen?
 - What language do I use that might be offensive to some people?
 - Do we reward our boys' and girls' differently?

Adapting your infrastructure...

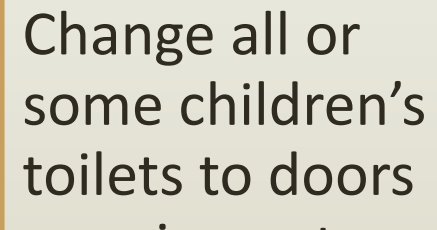
Does your home have a separate bathroom for men and women?



Get rid of urinals...is every boy safe in a boys' toilet?



Change adult toilets to gender neutral bathrooms...



Change all or some children's toilets to doors opening onto passage....



Uniforms

Why have summer and winter, boys and girls?

- Why shouldn't children wear what they wear in real life in SA?
- Universal clothing blurs gender boundaries
- If your hair touches your collar, tie it up.
- If you choose to wear earrings, you may one pair of studs.



School Language

Don't make assumptions about someone's gender or orientation

- Challenge the language used by children....
- You're such a girl! She dresses like a boy. He looks gay!
- Don't use boys and girls...too binary....use everybody, pupils..
- Don't make statements addressing one gender
- Pronouns

Gender in Sport



Curriculum adaptations

- Purposefully mix toys/books to entice everybody to play
- Look at your teaching materials through a gender conscious lens
- Include historical figures who were gender non-conformist
- Don't divide subjects or learning by gender eg physical education, dance
- Include planned gender changes in class eg drama princess sweeping the prince off his feet
- Teach gender diversity in Life Skills
- Talk about biodiversity in Science eg fish that changes sex when necessary
- Include stereotyping in your teaching
- Avoid gender specific words like fireman
- Look at poetry and books and ask questions – Why is a bear always male?
- Written by 'anonymous' – usually a woman who couldn't be named
- Ask specific questions like: Didn't Mrs George Washington have her own name?

How to challenge gender stereotypes in the classroom....

- Change your own mindset
- Create a safe place: okay to be different
- Challenge stereotypes when you hear them voiced
- Talk about stereotyping
- Create classroom signs like 'Girls are strong' 'Boys are sensitive'
- Don't label 'good boys' 'good girls'
- Use inclusive language...everybody, children, pupils
- Don't have 'boys' jobs' and girls' jobs
- Arrange talks by inspiration women and mixed sports' teams
- Explore current leaders... how does gender affect them? How? Why? Does it define what they can/can't do?
- Use theatre and books

For More Information

References

- Websites Blogs Google: creating gender inclusive classrooms
- Ron Adinall social worker sexologist 082 381 2650
- Sam Taylor's parents: Elizabeth Kelly 082 255 5688
- Darren Taylor 083 557 0095
- Story books

