

Parents/Guardians/Carers



What do you want to ask YP?

1. What do you need from us?

Young people have requested their family:

- Respond with respect and acceptance
- Give them time to explore and comes to terms with their identity
- Provide a safe space for them to explore their identity and no-pressure environments
- Have conversations about wellbeing and mental health
- Have the emotional availability to support them
- Use the name and pronouns they ask them to use and put the effort into correcting themselves and others when mistakes are made
- Listen to them and their needs
- Help them navigate social, legal, and medical transition where appropriate
- Respect requested boundaries from them

2. What name & pronouns should I use? When and where?

Ask them if they've consider using a different name and pronouns and if they would like you to try using them. Some young people may have already picked/been using a different name and pronouns prior. Ask your young person when and where they would like you to use this name and pronouns or if there are times they should avoid using it.

3. What did I do wrong?

Your young person's identity is separate from your role as their parent/guardian/carer and there is no one at fault when a young person comes out. Some parents regret missing the 'signs' earlier on or for assuming their child will grow up to be cis and straight. We live in a heterosexist society that assumes we are cis and straight until the individual says otherwise, you can't blame yourself for following this norm.

4. Can you tell me more about how you feel?

Ask your young person about their identity. It's important you develop a deeper understanding so you can better support their journey and wellbeing.

5. Are you sure? How do you know?

Parents, guardians, and carers may feel guilty for this being their first thought when their young person comes out. This is where allowing a young person to explore and develop a deeper understanding of themselves is important so they can be affirmed in their choice to pursue transition or not. Young people can consider this question distressing as they don't feel believed or accepted – we recommend re-phrasing the conversation to the above question instead. – Can you tell me more about how you feel?

6. How do you want me to be involved?

Some young people need support in organising their medical/social/legal transition and may need support with admin, like legal name change, coming out to family members or friends, and organising and attending appointments with them. Some young people feel confident in doing this as an individual and are content with the knowledge you are supporting them in their journey.

7. How do I tell my friends?

Ask your young person how they would like them to inform the people around them and their friends. Parents/guardians/carers naturally talk about their young people to their friends and it's good to have a conversation around this with your young person. Some might just ask you to refer to them with gender neutral pronouns.

8. What's wrong with being your birth sex?

A large majority (but not all) of trans and non-binary people experience gender dysphoria, which can cause a lot of distress around experiences relating to their birth sex. This can cause extreme distress, uncomfortable feelings around their body, and have a large impact on their wellbeing if they weren't to explore their feelings.

9. Do you think you might be non-binary?

You might make this comment to see if your young person is aware of all the options available to them, but some young people can consider this dismissive.

10. Is it because of something that happened?

Some young people have experienced trauma in their past, but this rarely has an impact on their identity. Consider encouraging conversations around their wellbeing and looking for professional support to manage their trauma.

11. When are you going to change your mind?

Some parents worry or hope their young person will change their mind - and they might! However, we can never guarantee how a person's identity will evolve over time and we shouldn't apply shame on however they identify.

12. Why are you choosing this lifestyle?

LGBT+ individuals don't 'choose' to be this way. Just like how you are either right-handed or left-handed (or both), we don't get to choose every aspect of our lives and identities.

13. Where's my daughter/son gone?

It is completely normal to feel the loss of your young person when they come out, but they're still the same person.

Just because someone is transgender it doesn't mean they will be a completely different person. Often, it is the exact same person as before, just with a different name and pronouns and probably happier.

14. Do you want to medically transition?

Every transgender individual is unique, and there is no right or wrong way to transition. It's worth having conversations with your young person around what is available to them and what they might realistically want to pursue when appropriate.

15. What does it mean?

Ask your child more about how they identify and learn the terminology they use. There are a lot of terminology guides and SYP has one you can access on our resources page.

16. What made you view yourself differently?

There are many ways people figure out their gender identity. Many individuals recognise they have gender dysphoria, a feeling of discomfort or distress that might occur in people whose gender identity differs from their sex assigned at birth or sex-related physical characteristics.

Another way people might identify they are trans is through feelings of gender euphoria, which is defined as satisfaction or joy caused when one gendered experience aligns with their gender identity.

17. Do you want me to tell the rest of the family?

Some young people may want your support in coming out to the rest of the family. It's important to do this with their permission and discuss together what that would look like.

What do you want to ask SYP?

1. How do you manage puberty changes? Facial hair? Periods? Voice dropping?

We recommend checking out these resources to help you navigate discussing puberty with your young person:

- [Ten Easy Tips for Trans Inclusive Education on Puberty and Bodies](#)
- Books
 - *Youology: A Puberty Guide for EVERY Body* by Trish Hutchinson and Kathryn Lowe
 - *It's Perfectly Normal: Changing Bodies, Growing Up, Sex, and Sexual Health* by Robie Harris
 - *The Every Body Book: The LGBTQ+ Inclusive Guide for Kids about Sex, Gender, Bodies, and Families* by Rachel E Simon

2. How do we approach conversations around discrimination in an age-appropriate way?

We recommend checking out these resources to help you navigate discussing discrimination and transphobia with your young person:

- [What is Discrimination?](#)
- [Discrimination, Hate Crime, and Equality](#)

3. How do we approach conversations around medical transition in an age-appropriate rate?

We recommend checking out these resources to help you navigate discussing medical transition with your young person:

- [NHS Gender Dysphoria](#)
- [Transgender: An Easy-Read Guide](#)

The toughest part of the conversation may be around the age limitations and time constraints to accessing medical transition. A young person finding out they can't access medical transition until they are 18 (at a minimum) can be incredibly distressing to their wellbeing so it's important you also facilitate conversations around building coping skills and resilience.

4. Where can I find positive resources?

Some resources can appear trans friendly initially, but actually spread misinformation and harm. Be cautious around language like trans-identified, ideology, rapid onset dysphoria, and emphasis on biological sex.

Check out our [resource page](#) or [external support page](#) to find inclusive organisations who have further resources on their websites!

5. How can I support trans and non-binary individuals outside of my child?

We recommend checking out these resources to help you navigate being an ally to trans and non-binary individuals:

- [Guide to Being an Ally to Transgender and Nonbinary Young People](#)
- [Easy Actions You Can Take](#)

6. How can I help my child?

Many trans young people just wish to be loved and accepted after coming out and feel continuous support throughout their journey. We recommend checking out these resources:

- Mermaids - [Supporting Your Trans Child](#)
- Action for Children - [Supporting Your Child With Their Gender Identity](#)
- Human Rights Campaign – [Transgender Children & Youth: Understanding the Basics](#)
- Young Minds – [Gender Identity & Mental Health](#)

7. What happens at the youth groups and Space Family Day?

At our youth groups, our young people plan all the sessions activities. This often includes arts and crafts, healthy cooking, and informative workshops. You can check out what's planned for each group in our newsletter or our website calendar.

7. What is in place to keep my young person safe in a group?

We have numerous policies and procedures in place that are available on our website. We also have membership conditions all our young people agree to when signing up as a service user.

8. What mental health do you offer?

We are not a specific mental health provision but can refer or signpost you to numerous organisations who can offer mental health support.

9. How does SYP benefit my child?

Our services aim support young people who are or may be LGBT+ and empower them to have positive self-esteem, to know they are supported, to have a sense of community and to overcome issues caused or intensified by prejudice in order to facilitate freedom of expression.

10. Are you brainwashing/persuading my young person?

We can't force anyone into being LGBT+ young people, we simply give them a place to explore their identities, encourage critical thinking, and access safe, factual information.

11. Is there a cost?

All our youth groups and family support is free, but 121 services, awareness training, and events sometimes have costs attached. It's always worth getting in touch to find out more.

12. How can I donate?

We greatly appreciate any donations people would like to make, there's even some ways you can donate through no extra cost to yourself. Check out [our donation page](#) to find out more.

13. Why did you decide to help LGBT+ young people?

All team members have a different reason to work within the project. Some are LGBT+ themselves, some are allies, and some were even previous SYP young people who want to give back to the service they benefited from.

You can find out more about the start of SYP on [our website](#).

15. What can SYP offer us?

Space Youth Project offers a variety of services including:

- [Youth Groups](#) – Free drop-in youth groups for LGBT+ young people, including a Bournemouth-based group specifically for trans, non-binary, and gender questioning young people

- [Peer Leadership Programme](#) – Supernovas is an opportunity for our young people to get more engaged in the organisation to access volunteering and training opportunities
- [Family Support](#) – Bi-monthly Space Family Days provide support for the families of trans and non-binary young people happening all across Dorset. Families can also access our 121 services to access individualised support
- [121s](#) – We can offer individual support within our youth groups for free or outside our groups at a cost. Some external organisations can refer or provide funding for young people to access 121s
- [Awareness Training](#) – We can provide inclusivity training such as self-taught classes and zoom/in-person training sessions to individual, organisations, and local authorities. Our volunteer Mel also offers workshops to schools on diversity and inclusivity.
- Events & Trips – We also go on trips and plan events throughout the year including National Trust trips, Pride events, young people planned activities, and exclusive development [opportunities](#)
- Support with Resources – Within any of our services you can request resources or help with anything, even non-LGBT+ issues. We can signpost or refer you to who can help
- Admin Support – We can provide support in navigating legal transition, including witness on a name change and letters of support/evidence
- Counselling – Sometimes individuals volunteer with us as part of their counselling training and we can, on occasion, provide counselling sessions within group times. We also have a volunteer counsellor in the BPC groups who can provide counselling to 18+ young people