

## Handout: Transgender Teenage Voices

"Will you ever get there, to the point where you're real in everywhere, within the hearts of your parents, within the hearts of yourself?" (Kathrine, 19, she/her)

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"After 18 years of repressing her true identity, she finally mustered up the courage to come out to her immigrant parents. Terror set in: "What if they don't accept me?" (Kathrine, 19, she/her)

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"The brief talk went exactly how she had predicted. Her parents disapproved. In an instant, she was dead to them." (Kathrine, 19, she/her)

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"Depression quickly set in, and for Katherine — who had self-esteem issues since she was a child — thoughts of suicide became very real." (Kathrine, 19, she/her)

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"Living in an unsupportive household with family that ostracizes her, Katherine feels trapped. Not only is she a prisoner inside her home, but in her own body. "Maybe if I went away, it'd all be better," she would think." (Kathrine, 19, she/her)

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"People call me a "transtrender." ..... It's because of what I look like and how I'm not taking hormones for my transition, but there are plenty of transgender people who don't want to go through that process. I like how I look, I really do. It's up to other people to change their perception of me rather than for me to change myself to fit what their perception is." (A), 19, he/him)

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"I wear dresses sometimes, but that doesn't make me less of a man. I definitely have a feminine side. I enjoy having my makeup done and can still look pretty and be a man." (AJ, 19, he/him)

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"For as long as I can remember I've always been feminine. I used to always put on the princess gowns and run around, and the little plastic high heels that you can get at the dollar store. At first I was like, "Why am I having to identify as a boy? Why do I have to be a boy when I want to be a girl?" So it was kind of confusing." (Charlie, 12, she/her)

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"In fourth grade is when I started to transition. My hair started to grow out and I started pinning my bangs back, putting a bow up there. I got my ears pierced. As for now, my dad is still wishy-washy. I don't really see him anymore. I don't have visitation with him so I don't really know how that's working right now. He texts me every once in a while. He's coming around." (Charlie, 12, she/her)

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"My transition has been five years in the making. I'm very anxious to start the process. I know from research the older you get the harder it is to make the transition look better. I've seen some people who transitioned at an earlier age and how much more feminine they look." (Lucy, 18, she/her)

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"The one thing I hate the most is how much testosterone\* I have. I shaved last night; I'm growing hair back on my face, on my arms. It's just so much to do. My girlfriend, though, is super supportive and is like, "I don't care what you look like. If you have a good personality and a good heart that's what I care for." (Lucy, 18, she/her)  
Mashable

\* testosterone = hormone that is responsible for development of male characteristics

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“Not everyone’s been supportive like my parents.” (Lucy, 18, she/her)

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“I struggled with depression and anxiety ever since I was 13 or 14. The biggest thing for me as a trans person is that I feel like a lot of the depression and anxiety came from how people treated me.” (Morgan, 19, he/him)

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“People still mistreat me. On the streets in the city people will stare at me and walk past me and continue to stare at me. I was waiting in line to get into a public pool, and I turned around and looked at a couple loudly arguing about if I was a boy or a girl. Me and my friends just ended up leaving.” (Morgan, 19, he/him)

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“Soon, people won’t question me. I just started testosterone\* and am super excited. It’s all been happening very, very quickly for me in the best way. It’s a little overwhelming because I was so miserable and now I’m overjoyed about everything. (Morgan, 19, he/him) Mashable

\* testosterone = hormone that is responsible for development of male characteristics

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“Some of the biggest changes are my voice. Every four to five days I wake up with my vocal chords feeling scratchy and my voice is deeper, and it’s really cool. My facial hair is also growing in as well as my sideburns. Recently, I shaved the sides of my hair when I got a cut. It’s going to be nice when my mustache grows in hardcore.” (Morgan, 19, he/him)

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“I brought this San Francisco Giants hat with me .... My older brother said to me, “You know, now that I have a brother, I want to make sure he’s cool and has swag.” He bought me this and it makes me feel more masculine. Right now, he’s the only one who really accepts me.” (Zane, 17, he/him)

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“I didn’t come out as transgender until I was 15. To tell you the truth, I was in a very bad physiological state when I came out. I actually had a suicide attempt and then I was like, “I can’t take this anymore.” That’s what made me come out to my parents.” (Zane, 17, he/him)

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“It’s very difficult since I’m South Asian and I’m Muslim. My parents let me live with them, so I’m grateful for that. But that’s about it. They don’t accept who I am; they just tolerate it.” (Zane, 17, he/him)

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“Growing up was very difficult because my family was not supportive at all. When I was younger, they all sort of thought I was gay. That’s when my father would bully me along with my brother, older brothers, my mother, my grandmother — everyone. They would say that I’m going to hell.” (Nicole, 18, she/her)

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“My father would ... would embarrass me in front of people. He told me he was ashamed of me.” (Nicole, 18, she/her)

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“It’s actually been very difficult. I’ve been hospitalized twice and went to behavioral hospital for self harm.” (Nicole, 18, she/her)

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“The only reason I was able to transition with the hormones and the surgery was because, when I was in third grade, I was taken from my family by child protective services because they found drugs in my mom’s system. My foster mother took me in and we stayed in contact ever since. She pretty much saved my life.” (Nicole, 18, she/her)

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"I'm not in contact with my family anymore. But if I was, I would love to sit them down and let them have it. I would love if they couldn't say anything to me; for about a half an hour I'd let it all out. They still don't know how badly they hurt me. They broke my heart over and over." (Nicole, 18, she/her)

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"Both of my parents are Chinese immigrants, so they're very strict and traditional. When I told [my mother] it wasn't a phase, she broke down and started crying. My father wasn't exactly on board with it. But soon enough, he went from not using any pronouns to now calling me "him" and "he," which is cool." (Chance, 18, he/him)

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"I'm non-binary and neutral in my gender. It means I'm neither/nor but also both. I don't have a specific word or phrasing for it, but I put a lot of thought into what that means." (Eli, 18, themselves)

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"When I first started to identify as non-binary I thought I had to cut my hair super short and masculine. After a couple of months, I started to wear whatever I wanted and be more comfortable with dresses, skirts and loose jeans. I think the biggest misconception is that you have to look a certain way. Commonly, the main stereotype with non-binary individuals is that it means they are thin, white and masculine. But obviously that's not who I am and what I look like." (Eli, 18, themselves)

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"I knew something wasn't right really early on, at like three or four years old. I asked my mom one day how someone knew if they were gay. The next day, I was like, "That's not it." .... I started on puberty blockers at about 13, and that's when I started transitioning." (Quinn, 19, she/her)

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“At first, my dad and my stepmother didn’t understand or accept this transition. But later, my stepmother came around and actually convinced my dad to help me with getting the hormones I needed.” (Quinn, 19, she/her)

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“When I was younger and transitioning, I was friends with another transgender girl. At that time, people on the streets of New York would throw objects and glass bottles in our direction.” (Mona, 19, she/her)

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“My mom has been the biggest fighter for me. There are times when people look at me in a funny way or say something negative. My mom will be like, “Why don’t you keep your comments to yourself?” I’m always like, “Mom, don’t fight this, don’t worry,” but to be honest, I do get bothered by it. It’s sad that someone would want to go out of their way to ruin someone’s day. It hurts, but I feel very strong and determined to live my life this way.” (Mona, 19, she/her)

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