

TOP TIPS

For working with trans children and young people

Inspired by CAFCASS

1

Avoid making assumptions about a young person's gender identity based on their appearance. Always ask them for their preferred pronoun (he/she/they), don't assume this is obvious. It is helpful if you share your pronoun with them first when you introduce yourself, eg "My name is x and my preferred pronoun is x, how about you?" If you have not had the chance to ask the young person about their gender identity, be sure to use gender neutral pronouns (they/them) when referring to them, until they are sure.

2

If a young person has shared with you that they are trans, it is only appropriate to ask them to disclose details of their gender identity if it is relevant to the issues you are working with them on.

3

Ask the young person whether they need trans specific support (but don't assume they do). Update yourself on available resources and local support services for both young people and parents/carers.

4

Explore with the young person how they feel comfortable sharing information about their identity to other professionals working with them, on a need to know basis only. Sharing information about a young person's trans status without their knowledge or consent (unless legally required to do so) is a breach of their confidentiality.

5

Don't encourage the young person to 'come out' about their trans status to their parents/carers if they are unaware, unless they have told you that they want to. Pushing a young person to disclose that they are trans before they are ready could be detrimental to their wellbeing and/or safety. There is never any obligation for a young person to 'come out'.

6

Consider that a child/young person living with a parent or carer who doesn't respect their identity can be at emotional risk and this may be a potential safeguarding concern.

7

Don't make the young person feel like they're creating extra work for you being sensitive to their needs.

8

Make your office a trans friendly area by displaying posters, badges and stickers that show support – and then make sure you show that support yourself!

9

Never ask, suggest or dismiss a young person's trans identity as a phase. This is invalidating their identity and could inhibit trust between you.

10

Consider creating a gender neutral toilet in your building. Trans people have the right to access a toilet that reflects their gender identity and being prevented from doing so can cause trans young people significant distress.