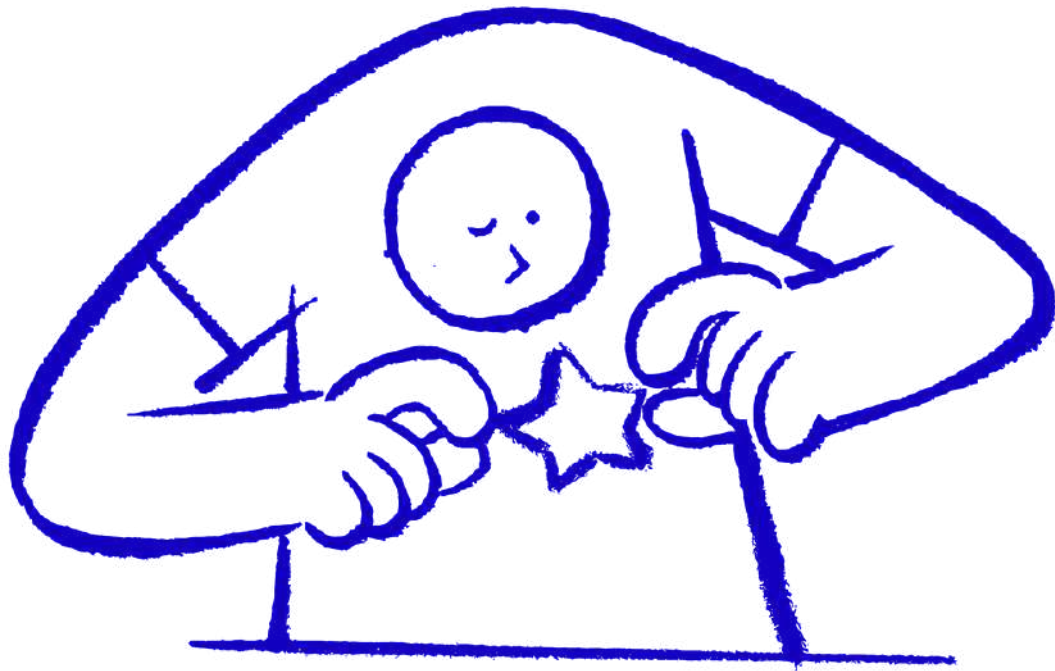


Trans+ Mental Health Toolkit

This guide was created with the help of Trans staff and people in our Trans & Non-Binary Peer Support group.



Trans, gender non-conforming and gender questioning people are more likely to battle with poor mental health, illness, self harm and suicidal thoughts than cis people...



...this guide will feature tips & resources to help you, or a friend, who is struggling...

Names & Pronouns

Your name, your choice

You can use whatever names, pronouns, and gendered terms you think suit you best.

Try them out

You can try how a new name or pronoun set feels by asking trusted friends to use them for you in private.

Ready for change?

If you want & when you're ready to, you can change your name by deed poll: <https://bit.ly/3W4SULA>

MY PRONOUNS ARE:

HELLO
MY NAME IS

Coming Out

You don't need to "come out" to everyone & it is up to you whether or not and how & when to come out.

Consider your own safety and wellbeing above all else. Ideally you should come out only for yourself and not for anyone else.

If you come out while in education or at work, you could benefit from the support of trusted authority figures, informing your classmates/co-workers and advocating for you.



Getting support from friends, family and peers...

It shouldn't be your responsibility to teach others how to respect you, but there are some things that might make it easier for people trying to support you:

- Encouragement to use trans information resources: <https://bit.ly/3FWPRPL>
- Encouragement to practice using your name/pronouns even when you're not around
- Organise gender-affirming activities with your peers
- Get the support of a trusted authority figure
- Get support from trans peers

Standing up for yourself is often much more emotionally taxing than standing up for someone else, so encouraging other people whom you trust to help can be more effective than self-advocacy.

Remember to always put your wellbeing first.

Grounding Techniques & Breathing Exercises

54321 Game

Name 5 things
you can see

Name 4 things
you can hear

Name 3 things
you can feel or
touch

Name 2 things
you can smell

Name 1 thing
you can taste

Muscle Relaxation

Scrunch
your face
up, then
relax it.

Tense your
arms in
front of you,
then relax.

Tense your
shoulders
and chest,
then relax.

Tense your
legs out in
front of you,
then relax.

Take one
deep
breathe.

Breathing Technique

Inhale
through your
nose gently
for two
seconds

Hold your
breathe
for one
second

Breathe out
through
your mouth
for four
seconds

Repeat for
one minute,
or until you
feel calm

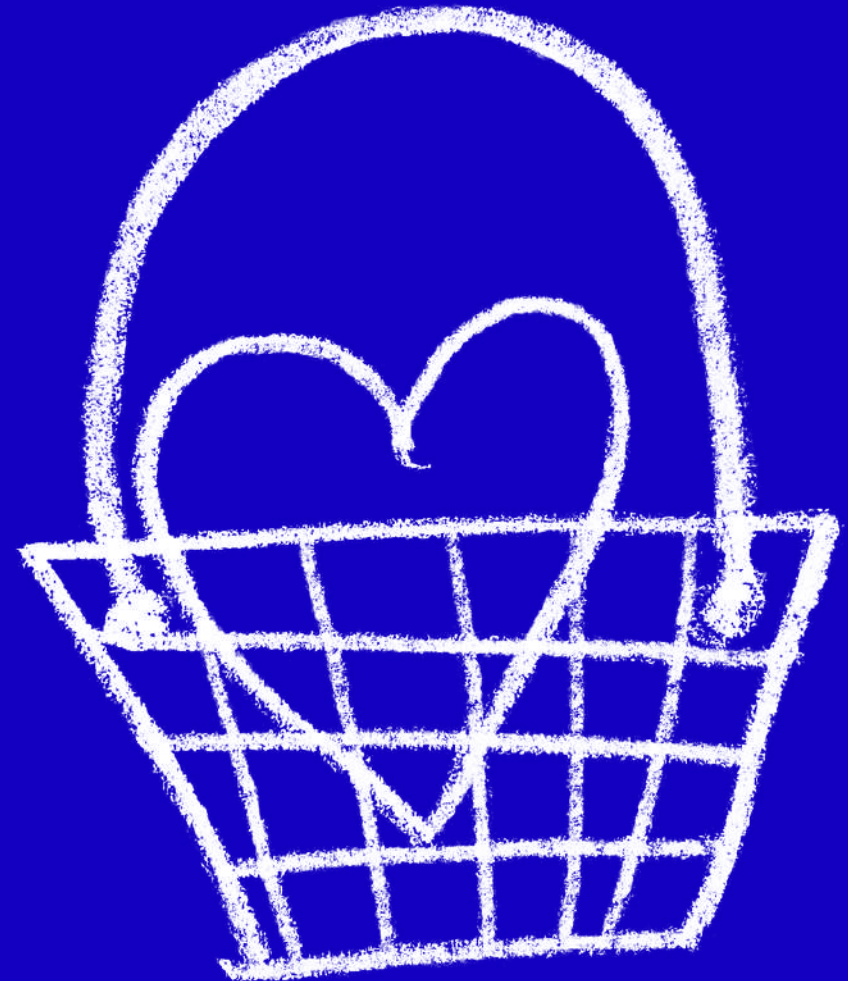
Panic Attack

Focus on your
breathing and
take long, deep
breaths from your
belly button.

Stamp your
feet to bring
your attention
from your mind
into your body.

Use your senses:
stroke
something soft
or smell
perfume or
minty gum.

Find somewhere
quiet and safe to
recover and have
something to eat
and drink.



Self Esteem & Gender Dysphoria

Gender dysphoria is the psychological distress that can come with the mismatch between sex assigned at birth and gender identity. This can have a huge impact on a person self esteem, and can often be so distressing it leads to anxiety, depression and impacts a persons life daily. [Guides around self esteem](#) can be useful to lower distress, along with some simple techniques here...

Write in a Journal

Journalling is a good technique for finding out when you feel your best. Regular writing about how you are feeling, good or bad, and what things might have lead to you feeling this way.

This can help you become aware of triggers, good and bad environments for you, and this awareness can help you in the next steps.

First steps

Online resources from trusted organisations such as [Gendered Intelligence](#) could help you find safe and easy ways to help with your affirmation.

Research to find ways of getting closer to the ways you want to present, go back to your journal to keep notes on this.

Express Yourself

Start with a few small changes to express yourself, perhaps a small accessory, or subtle changes to your style.

If a step feels too much, start with just doing it by yourself and taking pictures, perhaps sharing with close & trusted friends or having a night in with these friends.

Detox your social media

Manage in your social media in a way that suits you best, if you notice any particular accounts or communities affecting you, remove or mute them.

As well as removing negative affects, find accounts that make you feel positive, maybe some trans influencers, personalities or listening to some LGBTQIA+ podcasts.

Dealing with Hate Crime

Hate crime can be a huge factor in increased anxiety and trauma among those who could be affected. Whether it is seeing hate crime numbers rise over the last couple of years causing anxiety, or dealing with the trauma of being a victim of hate crime. The most important thing to remember is your feelings are completely valid, and will likely be shared by a large part of the community.

Alternative Reporting

Police aren't the only place that you can report a hate crime, there are third party reporting services that allow you to ensure a crime is reported with the additional anxiety of going to the police.

Our Portsmouth based service [PositiveMinds](#) allows for third party reporting, as does local Trans+ charity [Beyond Reflections](#).

Trans+ Friendly venues

Finding venues, socials and groups that are explicitly friendly and supportive of trans people can be the perfect way to socialise while dealing with the anxieties around hate crime.

Whether it be LGBTQIA+ friendly social hubs, or specific groups, for example [People's Pride Southampton's](#) regular socials.

Do it with a friend

Trusting in a friend with your trauma, fears and anxieties can be a huge help at every stage of the process. They can accompany you when you want to try somewhere new, and will be aware that you might want to remove yourself from a situation that makes you uncomfortable.

You can work together to plan how you want to go about this recovery journey.

Professional Support

The best thing to do in this situation is seek professional support. Therapy and counselling allows you to share your specific fears with a professional to address them directly, as every person and situation is slightly different.

If you are anxious about this, start with LGBTQIA+ and Trans specific resources so you can be confident in them understanding.

Positive Affirmations

Writing out positive affirmations can be a simple and affective way of boosting self esteem, as well as keeping negative believes and reality separate.

Write these when you are in a good mood in a note book, or on notes, and keep them somewhere you can find when you are struggling.



**You do not owe
anyone patience
in the face of
their ignorance**

**Your name,
pronouns,
expression, and
gender identity
are for you only**

**You deserve
to feel safe
and happy**

**You deserve to
find your most
authentic self**

**Your feelings and
your experience
is valid**

**There are people
who understand
you, and will love
you as your
truest self**

Solent **Support Groups**

Solent Mind is committed to supporting the mental health of trans and non-binary people across our service. You should feel welcome and included in all of our support groups, wellbeing centres and services.

We also recognise the need for trans-focused spaces to directly address the mental health challenges that can come with being LGBTQIA+, transitioning and gender non-conformity.



Trans Peer Support

Peer support group for trans, non-binary & questioning people in Southampton (SO14-19) aged 16+. You are welcome to come no matter whether you identify as transgender, transsexual, non-binary, gender-fluid, gender-questioning – however you choose to define yourself, you will be respected.

LGBT+ Zoom Peer Support

Virtual peer support group for LGBT+ people engaged with any other support from Solent Mind; Ask your key worker to make a referral.

PositiveMinds LGBTQIA+ Group

Portsmouth based wellbeing service PositiveMinds also runs a LGBTQIA+ group for people in Portsmouth. To find out more, phone 023 9282 4795, or email positiveminds@solentmind.org.uk.

Other Support Available

Beyond Reflections

Local trans charity offering social and support groups, wellbeing drop-ins, and counselling.

Breakout Youth

Local LGBT youth groups for people aged 13-25.

Peoples Pride (Southampton)

Local LGBT charity who put on Pride events and offer wellbeing drop-ins for LGBT people.

Mayflower Society

Local trans social group, meets twice a month (one lunch, one evening) in The London Hotel.

Gendered Intelligence

National trans youth charity for trans people aged up to 30, runs support groups including online and a yearly camp-out,

Switchboard

National LGBTQIA+ mental health support.

0300 330 0630 (open 10am-10pm)

Webchat also available: <https://switchboard.lgbt/>

MindLine Trans+

National Trans+ mental health support

0300 330 5468 (open Friday evenings 8-11pm)

(run by Somerset Mind)

The Lighthouse

Solent Mind's crisis support in Southampton.

Text "lighthouse" followed by your postcode to

0745 127 6010 (open 4:30pm to 11pm every evening)

The Harbour

Solent Mind's crisis support in Portsmouth, Fareham,

Gosport, Havant and East Hampshire.

Text, or call 07418 364911 (open 4:30pm to 11pm every evening)

Reading List (Recommend by those in the Trans Community)

- Kate Bornstein & S. Bear Bergman – **Gender Outlaws: The Next Generation**
- Laura Kate Dale – **Gender Euphoria: Stories of Joy from Trans, Non-binary and Intersex Writers**
- Leslie Feinberg – **Trans Liberation: Beyond Pink or Blue**
- Historic England – **"Place of Pride: England's LGBTQ Heritage"**
- C. N. Lester – **Trans Like Me: Conversations for All of Us**
- Susan Stryker – **Transgender History**