

APA Official Actions

Position Statement on Gender-Affirming Care for Transgender Youth

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“Policy documents are approved by the APA Assembly and Board of Trustees. . . These are . . . position statements that define APA official policy on specific subjects. . .” – *APA Operations Manual*

Issue:

Gender-diverse youth and their families constitute a vulnerable population with complex needs requiring support and intervention led by multidisciplinary teams. Transgender and gender-diverse youth are at risk for a variety of adverse outcomes including higher rates of depression and anxiety as compared to cisgender youth, higher rates of substance use disorders, increased rates of victimization, and increased rates of homelessness. Data demonstrates that gender-affirming care reduces the risk of specific adverse outcomes among youth, such as depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation. Gender-affirming care encompasses not only medical and surgical interventions, but also the following: education and assistance for families in creating a nurturing environment for the youth, mental health and peer resources, and support during the time of social transition. A supportive, affirming environment has been associated with better psychosocial outcomes. Using the pronouns of choice and encouraging youth of diverse sexual orientations have been correlated with better mental health and fewer negative outcomes (Green, Price-Feeney, and Dorison, 2021; Vance, Ehrensaft, and Rosenthal, 2014; Russell, Pollitt, and Grossman, 2018).

APA Position:

1. **Families and youth should have access to the full range of gender-affirming treatment options, and the decision-making process should remain within the purview of families, youth, and their physician- led clinical teams.**
2. **The decision-making process should be deliberate and supportive, and inclusive of: access to mental health resources; informed consent; education about the risks, benefits, and alternatives to treatment; and the risks and benefits of withholding care.**

Author: Council on Children, Adolescents, and Their Families

Collaborator: Caucus on College Mental Health