

## **(Combating) Gender/Body Dysphoria**

**It's hard to imagine hating my body so much that I'd want to remove parts of it – permanently.**

Many of us have had those “oh god” moments in the dressing room with bad lighting that makes a super model question what she's been eating. If we nit-pick we can always find something to change, improve or tacitly accept as the reality of genetics.

However, unless you identify as a gender other than what you were assigned at birth (AFAB, AMAB) it is probably impossible to truly empathize with a Trans\* person who HATES their body.

For example, someone who says, “I DON'T WANT BOOBS AND A VAGINA,” or, a child who exclaims, “I can't wait to grow up and have a penis” are most likely people who have gender identity issues.

I am going to venture to say that even with the most supportive friends, family, parents, siblings, and community, it is a constant battle to accept what you've been born with when all you want are parts that didn't come as part of the initial package.

Even for those who have managed to come to terms in a “big picture kind of way,” there are days when extra help is not only necessary but required. And, for parents of transgender kids, we want to be able to empathize and offer support, especially on the really bad days.

**Here are several tips\* for getting past the dysphoria – even if just for another day.**

- Recognize triggers
- Talk or text with someone
- Express yourself – write poetry, blog, create music, paint, draw
- Experiment with your aesthetic – try a new hairstyle, get a manicure, buy a new binder
- Find validating media – read positive press, watch youtube videos from those who've transitioned successfully
- Create a mantra – “I am manly” or “I am enough”
- Build community – find a support group online or in person, create a group of “go-to” people who can support each other
- Find an escape – meditate, put on headphones and listen to your favorite music, go for a run, watch a sappy movie
- Engage in an activity that makes you feel more masculine or feminine (lifting weights to build strength, taking a bubble bath with candles)
- Identify something about yourself that you really like and write it on a card that can be kept in a purse, wallet, back pocket

\*Resources for this article:

Roz Keith, Dr. Toni Caretto, BeTreatedWell.com and <http://www.pride.com/transgender/2015/6/01/6-ways-combat-gender-dysphoria>

### **For more information:**

**Blog** [www.callhimhunter.com](http://www.callhimhunter.com)

**Twitter and Tumblr** @standwithtrans

**Email** [roz@standwithtrans.org](mailto:roz@standwithtrans.org)

**Website** [www.standwithtrans.org](http://www.standwithtrans.org)

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