

# Teens with IDD and LGBTQIA+/Gender Dysphoria

Research suggests that gender diversity and gender dysphoria may be more prevalent among people with neurodevelopmental differences, including Autism and ID/DD.

You can visit at [Among Friends](#).

# What is Gender Dysphoria?

A psychiatric diagnosis that refers to the psychological distress that results from an incongruence between one's sex assigned at birth and one's gender identity. Though gender dysphoria can sometimes begin in childhood, some people may not experience it until after puberty or much later.

## Key Considerations for Teens with IDD and Gender Dysphoria

Increased Risk- Gender-diverse youth with disabilities are at an increased risk for discrimination, abuse, and mental health challenges.

Invisibility- LGBTQIA+ youth with disabilities often feel their identities are not fully recognized in either space; they may feel defined solely by their disability

Non-Stereotypical Presentation- LGBTQIA+ youth with disabilities often feel their identities are not fully recognized; they may feel defined solely by their disability.

# Supporting the Journey

Accessible Communication- Use plain language, visual aids, social stories, and Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) devices to help the teen explore and describe their feelings.

Multiple Approach- Medical or social transitions should involve a collaborative team including the teen, family, disability support services, and gender-affirming care specialists.

Peer Connection- Connect the teen with support networks that specifically include other LGBTQIA+ people with IDD such as Pride Center of New Jersey, Rainbow Cafe, and Garden State Equality.

# Advocacy and Safety

School Advocacy- Ensure school environments and LGBTQIA+ clubs are physically and socially accessible.

Caregiver Support- It is normal for parents to experience confusion; seeking their own support groups can help process these emotions without placing pressure on the child.

For more information, visit [NAMI LGBTQ+](#).