

WHERE CAN I GET FURTHER SUPPORT?

Not everyone will be certain about their gender or sexual orientation. It's OK not to be sure or to be curious. It might be helpful to seek further support if you:

- are still experiencing sleep difficulties despite trying the tips in this leaflet
- are having long-lasting negative or confusing thoughts about your identity that are having a significant impact on your mood

Talking to a member of staff at school, or booking an appointment to see your GP can be a good first step.

Mermaids

Mermaids supports transgender, nonbinary and gender-diverse children and young people until their 20th birthday, as well as their families. They also currently offer web chat support to students up to the age of 25.

mermaidsuk.org.uk

The Proud Trust

The Proud Trust offers helpful information covering a range of different things such as coming out, faith and religion, and staying safe.

www.theproudsttrust.org

If you need to talk to somebody right now, these organisations can help:

 NHS 111 ChildLine 0800 1111 Shout 85258 Samaritans 116 123  In emergencies, call 999

USEFUL APPS



Calm App



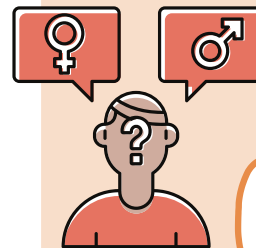
MoodTools



Headspace



Sam



GENDER IDENTITY & SEXUALITY



PICK-ME-UP



[pik-mee-uhp] *noun*

A pick-me-up is something that restores a person's energy, improves their mood, or generally lifts their spirits.

WHAT IS IT?

Gender identity is a way to describe how someone feels about their gender. For example, some people may identify as a boy or a girl, while others may find neither of these terms feel right for them and identify as neither or somewhere in the middle.

Although people often confuse them, gender identity is different from someone's assigned gender at birth and from sexuality (which is who someone's attracted to). For some people, they know and feel certain about their gender & sexuality, whereas for others it may not be as clear and can take time to fully understand their thoughts and feelings.

Whilst we hope that the world is becoming a more understanding and accepting place, we know that coming out or sharing thoughts and feelings about gender identity and sexuality may be a source of real worry, doubt, confusion or stress.

WHAT MIGHT IT LOOK LIKE?

If you are struggling with your gender identity or sexuality, you might notice:

- Feeling withdrawn, isolating yourself and being less communicative
- Disrupted sleep (difficulties getting to or staying asleep, waking very early in the morning and not being able to get back to sleep)
- Resistance to doing things, feeling unmotivated and disinterested, avoiding seeing friends or doing activities you ordinarily enjoy
- Frequent changes of emotion, more sensitive (e.g. irritable, upset, anxious)
- Low self-esteem and confidence
- Starting to use different terminology to describe your sexual orientation or preferences
- Feeling discomfort around gender based school uniform, or distressed around PE and changing in front of others
- Distress around clothes shopping and gender expression

WHAT CAN I DO?

Talk to others

Talking to somebody you trust about how you're feeling and what you've experienced can really help. You could talk to close friends, family, parents, a teacher you get on with, a counsellor or mentor. You might not know exactly what to say and that's okay. Talking to someone can help you to understand how you feel, and helps people around you think about how they can support you.

Write it down

If you don't feel comfortable talking to anyone or you're not sure what you want to say, writing your thoughts down can help. You could also write down positive quotes or messages that help you feel good and stick them up in your living space so that you can look at them each day.

Be kind to yourself

Make time for unrelated activities such as hanging out with friends, reading, going to the gym. It's okay to just have fun sometimes and give yourself a break. Remember you don't owe anyone a label; although it might not feel like it, you have no obligation to prove yourself to anyone. You are entitled to space and time to discover yourself.

Surround yourself with positive people

Finding supportive groups can be a great way to meet people with similar experiences to you and a shared understanding of what you're going through. They can be safe spaces and create a sense of community for you, whether in person or online. A good place to start is seeing if there are any LGBTQIA+ youth groups in your local area or school.

