



## Gender identity

While the 'Puberty Power Up' course focuses on puberty and anatomy learning for children, the PLUS topics or add ons offer extra learning experiences across a number of topics. Some families find they need more information in other areas of learning; perhaps because their child is asking more questions about friendships, body safety, keeping happy online, gender identity or sexuality. We offer these extra topics for those parents/caregivers who wish to scale up their child's learning at home.

**'Gender identity'** is a short introduction to the difference between gender and biological sex, and how questions around gender might arise during puberty.

The online learning reiterates that nobody has to rush to figure out their gender identity, and that gender for many people can be something that changes over time. We also talk about how gender dysphoria can be hard on somebody's mental wellness, and that there are options young people can discuss with a doctor.

If a child is experiencing gender dysphoria, puberty can make it worse and make it a really distressing time and affect their mental wellbeing. We mention some of the clothing options available to those experiencing gender dysphoria, such as chest binders and compression shorts, as well as describe some of the other options for young people who decide to transition, such as puberty blockers (while emphasising that no physical changes are required for somebody to transition). We also talk briefly about hormone therapy and gender affirming therapies.

### **Related Puberty Plus topics we recommend:**

- Sexuality
- Consent
- Friendships

### **Terms we work with**

**Biological sex:** Generally describes the sex assigned at birth, determined by the genitals/private parts that somebody is born with and the chromosomes they have.

**Gender:** The socially constructed roles, behaviours, expressions and identities of girls, women, boys, men, and gender diverse people

**Cisgender:** A person whose gender identity corresponds to their sex assigned at birth

**Nonbinary:** A person who does not identify exclusively with being either a man or a woman

**Trans/ transgender:** Transgender is an umbrella term for people whose gender identity, gender expression or behaviour does not conform to that typically associated with the sex to which they were assigned at birth.

**Gender dysphoria:** A sense of unease that a person may have because of how they feel about mismatch between their biological sex and their gender identity. This sense of unease or dissatisfaction may be so intense it can lead to depression and anxiety and have a harmful impact on daily life. If a child is experiencing gender dysphoria, puberty can make it worse and make it a really distressing time and affect their mental wellbeing.

