Gender Identity Disorder

Two components must be present to make the diagnosis:

1. Strong and persistent cross-gender identification
2. Persistent discomfort about one’s assigned sex or a sense of inappropriateness in the gender role of that sex.

Additionally, it should be noted that the cross-gender identification must not merely be a desire for any perceived cultural advantages of being the other sex.

The diagnosis is not made if the individual has a concurrent physical intersex condition, such as partial androgen insensitivity syndrome or congenital adrenal hyperplasia.

Typical Cross-Gender Behaviors in Boys:

- Preference for dressing in girls’ or women’s clothes
- Towels, aprons, and scarves used to represent long hair or skirts
- Strong attraction for stereotypical games and pastimes of girls
- Playing house
- Drawing pictures of beautiful girls and princesses
- Watching TV or videos of favorite female characters
- Entertaining self with stereotypical female-type dolls
- Pretending to be female figures
- Taking on the “mother” role
- Preoccupation with female fantasy figures
- Avoidance of rough and tumble play/competitive sports
- Little interest in cars and trucks
- Expressed wish to be a girl
- Assertions that they will grow to be a woman
- Insistence on sitting to urinate
- Pretending not to have a penis
- Assume that their penis or testes are disgusting
- Wish to remove external genitalia
- Wish to have a vagina

Typical Cross-Gender Behaviors in Girls:

- Intense negative reactions to feminine stereotypes
- Prefer boys’ clothing and short hair
- Often misidentified by strangers as boys
- Asks to be called by a boys’ name
- Fantasies about powerful male figures
- Prefer boys as playmates
- Little interest in dolls or any form of feminine dress-up or role-playing activity
- Refusal to urinate in a sitting position
- Claims that she has, or will grow, a penis
- No wish to grow breasts or to menstruate
- Assertion that she will grow to be a man
- Marked cross-gender identification in role-playing, dreams, and fantasies

Typical Cross-Gender Behaviors in Adolescents:

- Features resemble either those in children or adults
- Manifestation depends on developmental level
- More difficult to diagnose in younger adolescents
- Guardedness for the adolescent makes it difficult to diagnose
- Referrals come about because others are concerned about social isolation, teasing, or rejection
- Clarifying the diagnosis may require monitoring over an extended period of time
Typical Cross-Gender Behaviors in Adults:

- Preoccupation with wish to live as a member of the other sex
- Intense desire to adopt the social role of the other sex
- Intense desire to acquire the physical appearance of the other sex
- Uncomfortable being regarded by others as a member of their designated sex
- Adoption of the behavior, dress, and mannerisms of the other sex
- Private cross-dressing
- Work on the appearance of being the other sex
- Attempts to pass in public as the other sex
- Pass convincingly as the other sex
- Sexual activity with same-sexed partners is constrained by the preference that their partners neither see nor touch their genitals

Distress or disability in Gender Identity Disorder is manifested differently across the life-cycle.

Younger children – stated unhappiness about their assigned sex, preoccupation with cross-gender wishes often interferes with ordinary activities

Older children – Failure to develop age-appropriate same-sex peer relationships and skills, leading to isolation and distress; refusal to attend school because of teasing or pressure to dress in attire stereotypical of assigned sex.

Adolescents/Adults – Preoccupation with cross-gender wishes which interfere with ordinary activities; relationship difficulties are common.

Specifiers:
- Sexually Attracted to Males
- Sexually Attracted to Females
- Sexually Attracted to Both
- Sexually Attracted to Neither

For sexually mature individuals

Associated Features:
- Social isolation
- Social ostracism
- Low self-esteem
- School aversion
- Lives revolve around activities that lessen gender distress
- Preoccupation with appearance
- Impaired relationship with parents
- Self-treatment with hormones
- Self-castration or penectomy
- Prostitution
- Risk for HIV
- Suicide attempts
- Separation Anxiety Disorder
- Generalized Anxiety Disorder
- Symptoms of depression
- History of erotic arousal associated with the thought or image of oneself as opposite sexed
- Meet criteria for Transvestic Fetishism

Associated Laboratory Findings:
Psychological testing may reveal cross-gender identification or behavior patterns.

Associated Physical Examination Findings and General Medical Conditions:

- Normal genitalia
- Breast enlargement may be seen in those using hormones
- Hair denuding from epilation
- Physical changes resulting from surgery
- Distorted breasts or rashes from breast binders (in women)
- Post-surgical complications
- Higher risk in females of polycystic ovarian disease

Prevalence:
Data from smaller countries in Europe suggest 1 per 30,000 adult males and 1 per 100,000 adult females seek sex-reassignment surgery
Course:

Cross-gender interests and activities usually are first noticed between two and four years old.

Typically children are referred around the time of school entry.

By late adolescence, 75% of boys with a childhood history of Gender Identity Disorder report a homosexual or bisexual orientation (the corresponding percentage for girls is unknown).

Two different courses for adult males:
1. Continuation of Gender Identity Disorder that had an onset in childhood
2. Overt signs appear later and more gradually (early to mid adulthood)