

**BRIEFINGS ON TRANS HEALTHCARE**

# **FACTSHEET: DETRANSITION**

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## FACT SHEET: DETRANSITION

### What does “detransition” mean?

Sometimes, trans people may later re-identify with their birth-registered sex, and no longer identify as trans. This is often referred to as “detransition” or “desistance.” “Detransition” has been defined and measured in different ways. A lot of the older research was done at clinics that aimed to stop or prevent people from being trans, which gives inaccurate results. Other research over-estimated the rates of people who stopped identifying as trans by including people who are still trans but stopped treatment for other reasons. Now, we talk about people who re-identify with their birth-registered sex, which means someone simply no longer has a trans identity.

Re-identification is sometimes equated with regret for transitioning. They are not the same; not everyone who re-identifies regrets transitioning. In fact, in the rare instances when people do re-identify, it is often because of external factors like pressure from family, social stigma, and discrimination. A small number of people do feel regret at some time in the future and wish that they had not had gender-affirming medical or surgical treatment. It’s important to understand that this is possible, and think about it seriously; however, it is not common. Other people feel that their gender identity has authentically changed but still don’t regret having had gender-affirming treatment.

### **A young person I care about wants to access gender-affirming healthcare, but I am worried they might change their mind in the future.**

Best practice gender-affirming healthcare is never rushed; in Australia, young people who want to access gender-affirming healthcare must go to a specialist clinic, which take a coordinated, multi-disciplinary approach. This means young people and their families see a range of different specialists, and that any decisions are made collaboratively and with the agreement of young people, families, and clinicians. Extensive discussions occur with family to ensure that everyone is well-informed and everyone can express their views. Australian research tells us that most paediatric patients who reidentify with their birth-registered sex do so during assessment and before medical treatment. This suggests that these discussions might help young people to explore their identity and wishes.

Rates of re-identification are very low. High-quality Australian research shows that in one Western Australian clinic, 5.3% of young patients re-identified with their birth-registered sex while enrolled at the clinic. For young people who had started gender-affirming medications (such as puberty blockers or hormones), only 1% later re-identified and stopped identifying as trans while they were at the clinic. In this study, people who re-identified did so quickly after beginning treatment, meaning any effects were largely reversible.

Research shows that the majority of young people who strongly express a trans identity at an early age, and receive family and social support, continue to identify as trans as they grow older.

### **What happens if someone re-identifies with their birth-registered sex?**

Australian clinics encourage honest conversations with families and clinical teams to help understand young people's wishes if they change. Gender clinics continue to support patients for as long as they need, or connect them with appropriate community mental health support, including those who re-identify with their birth-registered sex. If people wish to pause or stop any gender-affirming medications, their specialists will be able to support them through that process. Importantly, clinics also continue to provide any mental health support someone might need during this time.

### **Where can I learn more?**

You can read our scientific evidence brief on re-identification [here](#), which includes references to the research we have mentioned.

### Intended use of information

While we make every effort to make sure the information in this resource is accurate and informative, the information does not take the place of professional medical advice.

Do not use our information as a substitute for the advice of a health professional.

If you are an individual seeking medical or health information for yourself or for someone else, you should obtain advice relevant to your particular circumstances from a health professional.

### More information and support

For clinicians, please contact AusPATH for resources and support. [www.auspath.org.au](http://www.auspath.org.au)

For families and young people, please contact Transcend Australia for resources and support. [www.transcend.org.au](http://www.transcend.org.au)

This resource and associated evidence briefs and fact sheets can be downloaded from [www.transcend.org.au/resources/evidence](http://www.transcend.org.au/resources/evidence)