Finding Trans Community Online

WRITTEN BY ROBIN WYLLIE-SCHOLZ

When I joined Twitter, I didn’t expect to find my biggest source of trans community there. In fact, I joined because of a D&D actual play show called Dimension 20. It was in the early months of quarantine, and this show was one of my main sources of entertainment, so I decided to go on Twitter to talk about it with other fans. I was just beginning to question my gender, at the time identifying as a cis lesbian. Twitter became a great resource for me when I was starting to test out new pronouns. Many of my friends there are trans, and asking them to try using they/them for me felt low stakes. It wasn’t nerve-wracking like I knew talking to my irl (in real life) friends would be, even though I knew they’d support me too. It wasn’t just me who was trying new things. It was a regular occurrence to see a tweet along the lines of “could a few of y’all refer to me with she/they pronouns?” or announcing a new name.
Finding Community Online (con't.)

Once I felt more confident with they/them (and eventually he/they) pronouns, I reached out to my school friends. They were all supportive, which I’m very grateful for. Even with their support, I still really value my twitter friends. Most of my school friends are cis, so it’s great to have trans people my age to talk to. I’m lucky to live in a relatively open minded city, but if you don’t, I highly recommend trying to find community online. I now have friends across the globe, from New York to France to Singapore. It is with their support that I’ve been able to come out to nearly everyone in my life, and feel confident enough to allow myself more freedom to experiment with gender expression.

Gender Euphoria: Finding Joy in Your Trans Identity
Written by Mauricio Hernandez

What’s the number one thing people talk about when talking about being trans? The pain, right? The dysphoria, and hardships. And yes, all these things are true, being trans is in no way shape or form easy. However, how does that make the young kids questioning their gender feel? They want to know when they find their community they aren’t just going to be talking about the pain they have. What is the one thing hardly anyone in the trans community talks about? Gender Euphoria. The euphoric feeling. Looking at yourself in the mirror and seeing yourself. The euphoria that you feel when looking at the way you look in a picture, or the way you feel walking down the street. Feeling like your outside finally matches your inside.

According to the “UVic” gender euphoria is “A distinct enjoyment or satisfaction caused by the correspondence between the person’s gender identity and gendered features associated with a gender other than the one assigned at birth” but gender euphoria can mean different things depending on the person, this can be a satisfaction or enjoyment due to an activity, situation, an item, etc. that someone may associated with the gender witch they identify with. Gender euphoria can be found in the simplest things like a shirt, hoodie, make up, having a girls night or bigger things like medically or legally transitioning. No matter in what form you find euphoria, the important thing is to embrace the feeling and celebrate it. Gender euphoria is one of the best feelings we can experience and sometimes it may be more difficult to move from all the negativity and dysphoria we can experience.

But it’s important to take the time and find things that can help you experience this feeling and this things can be more stereotypical or not there’s not right or wrong answer when it comes to euphoria you just need to do you and find what fits and always keep reminding yourself that you deserved it, you deserved the joy that comes with being trans not only the difficult parts but also the ones that makes us feel comfortable and safe, because every single one of us is entitled to that feeling on our own way in our own time no matter what others say. There aren’t a lot of transgender advocates who talk about the gender euphoria, it might be because they dont feel comfortable, or maybe because they haven’t felt it themselves. But one influencer who really focuses on the beauty of being trans is Mars Elliot Wright (IG @mars.wright). His slogan of sorts is “Trans joy is resistance” that when a transgender person is happy, that is resistance against all the negative people. They are showing that even when there are people who are beating them down and even though their lives may not be amazing, finding something that makes you happy, that is fighting.” Mars is big on talking about trans joy, and breaking down the toxic masculinity that so many face; there is not one right way to be trans. He shows that being trans is beautiful. That no matter where you are in your transition, that you are beautiful, that you are you. That there are people out there who see you even if you don’t see yourself. Gender euphoria is something that all trans people need to learn more about. That they need to feel. That there is someone out there who sees them, who hears them. That they aren’t invisible. And if you have none. Then let me be your first. Hi, I see you, I hear you, you are valid, you are beautiful.

~end
Growing up in a Religious Household

Written by Dino & Corvid

Transgender youth may find it challenging to grow up in a religious environment. Oftentimes, practicing family members will legitimize harmful behavior with their beliefs. Finding fault in their loved ones due to said beliefs--ultimately creating a harsh and harmful environment for their transgender relatives. Some feel as if they own the right to pass judgement on us; which can lead to a slew of psychological and emotional issues. When a toxic household is “justified” by religion it can create feelings of hopelessness in young trans people.

Coming out inspires hope in a lot of young trans people. And although it can be an important part of the LGBTQIA+ journey, religious households can dampen this experience. As a transgender individual, your safety always takes precedence, you and your identity are valid and important--you come first. So, if coming out might place you in danger, be careful how you proceed. If you feel ready to come out and it is safe to do so, there are a few ways to go about it. Communication is an incredibly powerful tool and can be utilized to help your parents better understand your identity. You may want to express some of your concerns regarding how what they say is invalidating.

Clarify what being transgender means to you and help bring your identity to light. Expressing how important their support in your transition might be to you. If you do choose to have this conversation keep in mind that many religious people have grown up with their faith and are adamant about not changing their customs.

In a Christian household you might say something like “In christianity it says “Love thy neighbor” and we are taught to love everyone regardless of what they choose to do or be.” Maybe you say “In the spirit of every person being b’tzelem Elohim (in the image of God), their diversity should be understood as adding to the divine presence among us.”

~end
How To Bind Safely

WRITTEN BY ELIJAH KEETON

As a transgender teenager it is often easy to forget about your body’s health. Fighting gender dysphoria with a large amount of dislike for your own body is hard enough on its own, without adding additional things that you need to look out for to make sure your body is in its prime health condition. Getting your first binder can feel very amazing and usually comes with a lot of gender euphoria. Putting a binder on for the first time may sometimes bring overwhelming emotion for those wearing it. Binding is a common way that a teenager might get rid of or decrease chest dysphoria, but there are great risks to one’s health if binding is done improperly.

So what exactly is binding?
Binding is a strategy used to reduce the appearance of a person’s chest. A transgender person might use binding as a way to decrease the amount of gender dysphoria they feel. Although, not all people who identify as transgender FTM and nonbinary feel the need to bind and not all people who decide to bind identify as transgender or nonbinary at all! Binding poses many risks but to those who use the method of binding it is often worth the risk for the safety and comfort it provides. Although if not used correctly a binder can cause back problems, restrict breathing and blood flow, and even cause severe damage to ribs.

You should never bind with common items such as ace bandages or duct tape as these products were never meant for binding, do not move with your body, and can cause harm. Instead you should save your money to invest in trusted companies such as GC2B which ships worldwide or Spectrum Outfitters in the UK. Measure yourself and then compare your measurements to the size charts provided on the website.

This is important because a binder too large won’t give you the best results while a binder too small will cause harm to your body. Have some fun with the colors and designs, you want the binder to be something you like. Most companies will give a general warning either when you receive your binder or purchase it. This warning includes that a binder should never be worn for more than 8 hours a day or 6 days a week. If you want to exercise or swim in a binder you should always choose a size up and take the binder off directly after the activity has finished.

If this article still hasn’t convinced you of the dangers of binding and you are still left thinking “why should I care?” maybe some of the consequences behind the dangers will divert you. According to outinperth 97.2% of chest binder users experience back pain, overheating, chest pain, shortness of breath, itching, bad posture, and shoulder pain. Some experience more severe symptoms, which are rib fractures, rib or spine changes, shoulder “joint” popping, muscle wasting, numbness, headache, fatigue, weakness, dizziness, cough, respiratory infections, heartburn, abdominal pain, digestive issues, breast changes, breast tenderness, scarring, swelling, acne, skin changes, and skin infections. Even just one of these symptoms can be deemed damaging enough for your health care provider to prevent you from top surgery or other life saving medical procedures. All of these symptoms can be avoided if binding safety procedures are followed.

To recap, never bind with commonly found items such as ace bandages or duct tape. Always measure yourself properly and make sure you choose a binder that is the right size for you. Always check beforehand to make sure that the binder is safe to exercise and swim in, and never wear your binder for more than 8 hours a day or 6 days a week.

~end
About our Authors

Mauricio, age 16, he/they, from Mexico, plays basketball and enjoys writing.
Robin C - age 15, they/they, from the US, loves animation and character design
Corvid - age 15, he/it/they/rot, from the US, he's into furbies, reading and art
Elijah - age 17, he/they, from the US, enjoys cosplay, photography and painting
Augie, age 17, he/him, from the US, trans POC, loves theatre, reading and writing
Oliver, age 13, he/they, from the US, honors student, writes poetry and loves to draw
Ash, age 17, they/them, from the US, loves music and playing video games
Jordy, age 15, they/him, from Australia, plays music professionally and loves to act
Robin W-S, age 19, they/them or he/him, from the US, loves learning new languages

Noel - age 14, she/her, from the US, loves make-up, fashion and music
Noah - age 15, he/they, from Australia, loves to skateboard, make new friends and engage in activism

About the Student News Project

Stand with Trans received a grant from the Tegan and Sara Foundation to create this Student Newspaper as a way to amplify the voices of trans and nonbinary youth. We attracted young people from the U.S., Mexico, and Australia. Managing time zones was challenging but with some flexibility, we worked it out. Our authors have a lot to say, are creative thinkers and passionate about trans causes.

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Stand with Trans is a 501(c)(3) whose mission is to provide the tools needed by transgender youth so they will be empowered, supported, and validated as they transition to their authentic life.

www.standwithtrans.org