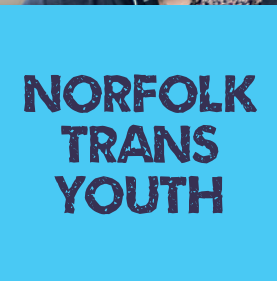
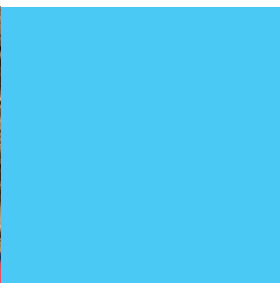


UNDERSTANDING AND RESPECTING DIFFERENCES



**NORFOLK
TRANS
YOUTH**



**NORFOLK
TRANS
YOUTH**



**NORFOLK
TRANS
YOUTH**



**NORFOLK
TRANS
YOUTH**



**NORFOLK
TRANS
YOUTH**



**NORFOLK
TRANS
YOUTH**



map.uk.net



FOR YOUNG PEOPLE
FINDING THEIR WAY



Photo by Charles Green

BARBARA ROSS OBE, 1929-2015

This booklet has been made by MAP (Mancroft Advice Project) in memory of the late Barbara Ross OBE, the pioneer of gender counselling in Norfolk, and made possible by a donation from the Barbara Ross Association.

Photography: Anita Staff
Design: Anne Reekie

This project draws upon the real experiences of Norfolk's trans youth to raise awareness about the diversity of experience and needs within the transgender community. At every stage, the project has been led by the young people wishing to have their voices heard.

This booklet accompanies videos available on our website map.uk.net that provide a more in-depth look at the issues discussed.

We believe that the views and experiences expressed in this booklet are an invaluable resource; they may be used by teachers to facilitate discussion and create lesson plans; health services, local authorities and other organisations may incorporate them into Equality and Diversity training and take the experiences of our contributors into consideration when developing their products and services.

We hope peers, family and members of the public will come to an understanding that forming positive relationships means seeing the person as a whole first and foremost, and gender identification as just one aspect of us as people.

Special thanks to the young people involved, seen and unseen, for their amazing contributions to this project.

Jen Alexander
Gender Identity Practitioner
Mancroft Advice Project

evolve

map.uk.net

MAP (Mancroft Advice Project) is proud to offer our gender identity support group to young people in Norwich aged 11-25. This came about in 2007, when young trans people approached staff who were providing support around sexual orientation, requesting a safe space where they could seek equivalent support around gender identity. These young people decided to name the group 'Evolve'.

With minimal resources, staff and volunteers gave their time and skills over the years to facilitate a friendly environment for young transgender and intersex people, including those who identify as non-binary transgender and those questioning their gender identity. We are excited to announce that in spring 2019 we received funding, from Norwich Charitable Trusts, to help Evolve diversify and continue. This support has also enabled us to employ a Gender Identity Practitioner and Youth Worker, who work with a Senior Counselling Practitioner to provide one-to-one and group support work. In September 2019, we shall be launching an additional Evolve group, specifically to meet the needs of 11-16 year-olds.

ARIADNE

TRANS WOMAN
SHE/HER

“

The most difficult thing about transitioning for me was nothing to do with clothes or makeup or medication, it was coming to terms with being hated.

Despite having the same personality, experiences, hopes, and values as I did before transition, much of the public now sees me as, at best, a joke, or at worst, some sort of deranged predator.

When you see these attitudes in the media, or hear them from your friends or colleagues, please call them out on it – not because it’s offensive or politically incorrect, but because it’s dehumanising and wrong.

We are people, just like you.

”

“BEAUTY COMES
FROM WITHIN.”





“

I struggled with my identity for a long time. When I learned about non-binary identities at college, it made sense to me instantly, and the more I thought about it the more I realised that I identified with it.

Living independently presented a chance to explore that, trying different names and presentations. And finally, as of this year, I came out to my family. There are still hurdles to overcome, but nothing has felt more right.

I couldn't have done it without the support of my university and my friends. Stand by trans, non-binary and questioning people.

It's a winding road but one we shouldn't have to venture alone.

”

“IT'S OKAY TO JUST BE YOURSELF.”



ELLIOT

TRANS MAN
HE/HIM

“

A common misconception people can hold is what makes a person “trans enough”.

I’ve heard too many cases of invalidation based on a trans person’s background, ethnicity, what they like to wear, when they began their transitioning journey, or even how that person wants to transition.

Being trans isn’t some tight little box – it’s a spectrum, so no matter who you are or how much you conform to the typical portrayal of ‘transness’ – you know yourself better than anybody else. If you are trans, then regardless of any other qualities, you are trans enough.

”

“EVERY PERSON’S STORY IS DIFFERENT. LISTEN TO THE INDIVIDUAL.”



HARRI

**TRANS-FEMININE NON-BINARY
THEY/THEM/THEIRS OR SHE/HER/HERS**

“

It seems strange that it took so long to realise who I truly am, but I could have easily carried on without knowing I could feel much better. Seeing a documentary on television and hearing other people talk about their gender identities enabled my own connection.

Coming out to other people – family, friends, colleagues – is probably the largest challenge, due to the significance of interaction on our wellbeing. From worrying about possible negative outcomes of trying to be myself in the workplace, to managing the breakdown of contact with loved ones – the hours spent in distress are countless.

Coming out to myself has been the best thing I have ever done. I have gone from just existing to having a life.

”

**“LEARNING
THE WORDS TO
DESCRIBE MY
EXPERIENCE WAS
THE FIRST STEP IN
MY TRANSITION.”**



NATE

TRANS MAN
HE/HIM

“

Being trans is difficult, sure, but there are times when nothing can stop me from being me.

When I attend the Evolve trans support sessions, when I look around at the other trans and non-binary people in the room with me, I feel hopeful. I feel pride! So many of us have had to struggle to find ourselves, to confide in others and wait to be accepted or rejected.

In nearly every direction, we find ourselves facing a mountain of transphobia, but we're all together and that makes us unstoppable.

”

“IT'S OKAY TO BE TRANS!
IT'S A NORMAL AND
NATURAL THING!”



NAY
TRANS/NON-BINARY
HE/HIM OR THEY/THEM

“

Schools need to teach about different gender identities. We've had two LGBT sessions in two years and gender identity wasn't covered.

Looking back, I didn't have the words to describe my feelings or know it was okay to question my gender identity - if I'd been taught about this I'd have probably figured things out much sooner. I was outed as gay last year to my year group - and again this year as trans.

Why is it so hard to understand that my gender identity is mine? It's my decision to come out - to whom, and when I want - if I even want to!

”

“DON'T OUT TRANS
PEOPLE! JUST DON'T!
WHY WOULD YOU?!”



ROBIN

**NON-BINARY TRANSGENDER
SHE/THEY**

“

Science is often misapplied as a ‘gotcha’ card against transitioning by the misinformed and the malicious. I’ve suffered from birth from the complications of a brain injury and have found my neurological issues influence a great deal of who I am, so it’s impossible for me not to consider the possibility that gender dysphoria has neuro-developmental factors.

As my own gender dysphoria increased over the course of puberty, I tried to improve my mental health in various conventional ways, to zero effect. Yet I found that my dysphoria has decreased steadily with time on hormone therapy; now 3.5 years in, I remain quite sure that transition is the only effective treatment for gender dysphoria, whatever its exact causes. It does not follow the pathology of a psychological illness, has no obvious physical causes, and all empirical evidence to date backs up my previous conclusion.

The reality is that all medical science is borne out of heuristics and observation, so to say ‘the unknown’ in the nature of gender dysphoria should rule out current medical practice in alleviating the psychological distress of people like myself is as absurd as to say that we shouldn’t attempt to treat any medical problem until we fully grasp the mechanics of the fabric of our consciousness and the universe itself.

”

“EVEN WITHIN THE LARGER PICTURE OF AN UNFAIRLY OVER-STRAINED NHS, THE PROVISION FOR TRANSGENDER HEALTHCARE PERFORMS TREMENDOUSLY POORLY COMPARED TO OTHER AREAS.”



ZEUS
TRANS
THEY/THEM

“

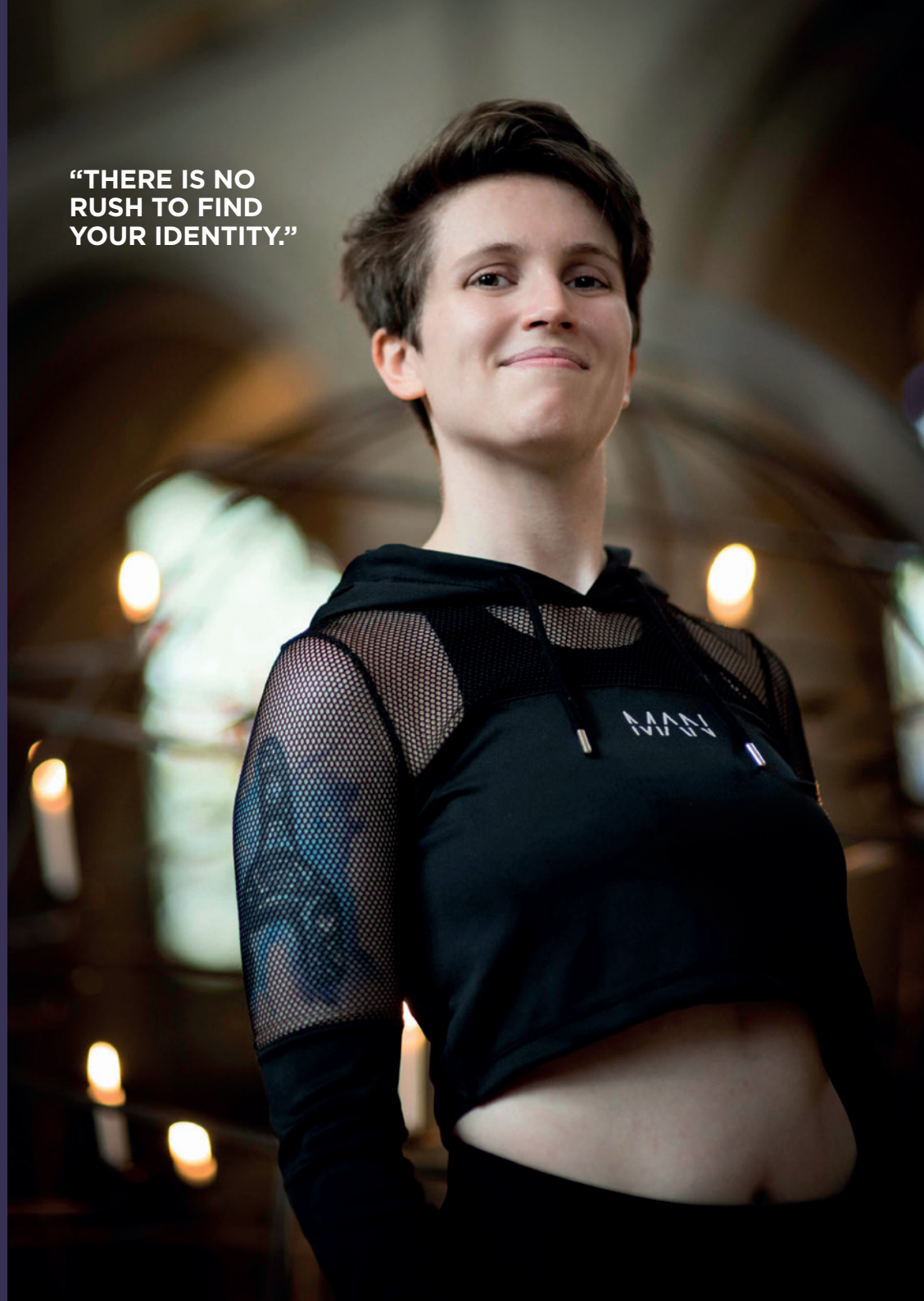
There seems to be some unspoken belief that in order to come out as trans, there is a time limit.

The pervasive feeling of ‘I need to hurry up otherwise people won’t take me seriously’ is still something I cannot shake. But, there isn’t some secret clock ticking in the background; you have as much time as you want to explore yourself. I was in my twenties when I finally understood why I didn’t feel right in my body – and it wasn’t an instant moment of realisation.

Everyone is going through their journey at their own pace; you come out when it’s right for you.

”

“THERE IS NO RUSH TO FIND YOUR IDENTITY.”



FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 11-16 AND 16-25

evolve

TRANS?
GENDER-QUESTIONING?
INTERSEX?
NON-BINARY?

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