

A Mother's Day Reflection on Being a Mom of Someone Who Is Transgender

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A few things I have learned since 2005 (when my son told me he was a boy)...

1. Finding out your child is transgender and supporting your child's gender journey is important. But sometimes this can be a struggle for parents, especially in the beginning. While you are supporting your child, I also encourage you to get help with any difficult or painful feelings you are experiencing. You are "allowed" to express your own feelings, fears, and needs in a safe and supportive space. Parents usually choose to explore these feelings away from their child so they can freely and openly express themselves, without concern for hurting their child's feelings or damaging their relationship.
2. Behavior matters! Learn the difference between accepting and rejecting behaviors so you can be an accepting, affirming parent. Accepting behavior starts with using your child's affirmed name and pronouns, allowing them to express their gender identity, and having supportive conversations about any transition plans. You may need a Social Worker help you navigate those conversations. Remember: transgender children who are affirmed in their true gender have mental health outcomes that are similar to their cisgender peers!
3. Be hopeful and optimistic about your child's future. Seek out examples of transgender children and adults who are living happy, healthy, productive lives. It is important to know that our children can also have bright futures. We need to communicate this to our children (and ourselves), not just once, but time and time again!
4. Find other parents of transgender children, in person, on the Internet, or both. Parenting someone who is transgender can be scary and lonely and meeting other parents helps a lot. You can learn from one another and share resources. Perhaps most importantly, you will connect with others with shared experiences and concerns.
5. It can be confusing when your child has a new name and identifies with an unexpected gender. Your child may look completely different, or their voice may have changed. No matter what transformations have occurred, never forget this is still your child. You still have your shared memories, shared history, and parent-child bonds. Embrace the child you have and celebrate the joy of seeing your child live their authentic truth!