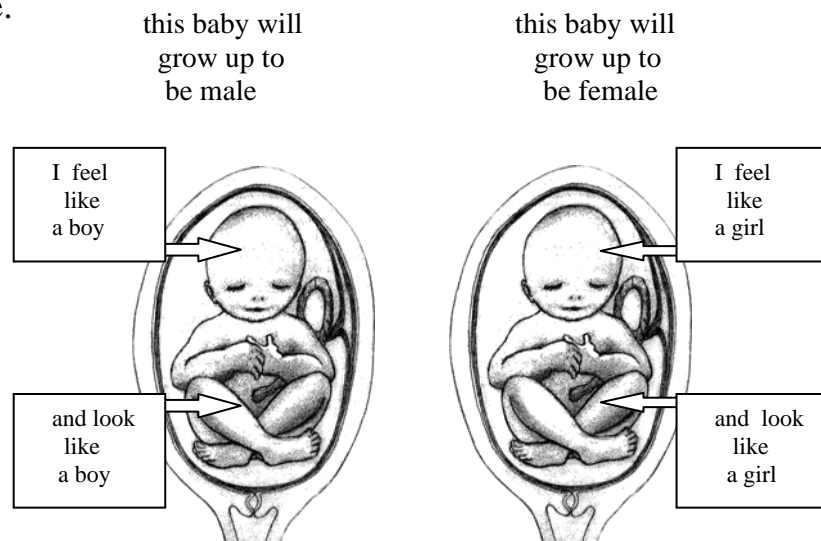


We all know that boys and girls are different. They look different, they often behave differently, and they feel different from each other. Outside appearances of the sex of our bodies – the genitals - are the indicators we all recognise. Internally, the organs of reproduction are also different. Science has shown that small areas of the brain are also different between men and women. The process of developing into ‘male’ or ‘female’ is called *sex-differentiation*.

Science indicates that the differences in the brain are programmed before birth, and these differences are understood by some researchers to be associated with the feeling of being a boy or a girl, a man or a woman. This feeling is called ‘gender identity’ or ‘core gender identity’. We expect that the gender identity will be consistent with the outward appearance of the body. We expect that someone who looks ‘female’ will identify as a girl, and later, as a woman, and vice versa for boys and men. This is usually the case.



However, we are all special in our own way and people like your Mum are extra special. In them, the development of a small part of the brain seems to have occurred in the opposite direction from the sex of the rest the body. This mismatch between the brain and the body causes great discomfort, and this is what has happened with your Mum. This discomfort is sometimes called 'gender dysphoria'.

Your Mum has tried hard all her life to fit into the expectations of her family and society, and to behave and think like a woman, to fulfil what we call the 'gender role' of a woman. She loves your Dad and both of them wanted children - you! But somewhere deep inside herself, she recognises that she doesn't think and feel like a

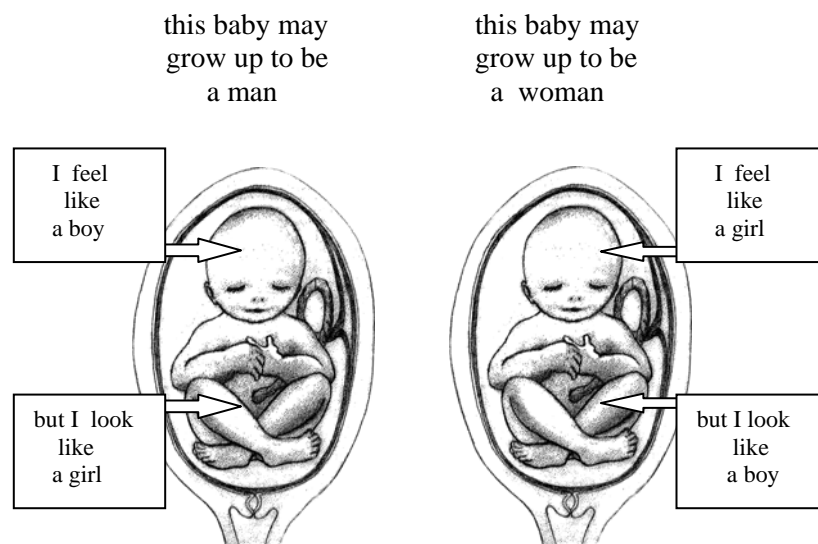
¹ For a teenager whose mother is transitioning to male.

woman, and cannot go on living in that role because for her it is pretending. Your mother's brain is telling her that, despite her appearance and despite her struggles over the years to conform, she is really a man. Your Mum's gender role doesn't fit her gender identity.

Your Mum is not ill, but she is extremely unhappy and the only way to make things right for her is to be the man she knows she really is. She cannot change her brain, so she will need some medical treatment to bring the rest of her body more into line with her core gender identity. This will make her more comfortable and be a better person to look after you, and be a better person in your life.

Apart from the medical treatment, the process of change for your Mum will include a change of name, dressing differently and being a man in the world. You will hear , dressing differently and being a man in the world. You will hear other people call your Mum 'he', and 'him'; people may use a different name. Maybe, one day you will also feel able to use the new name, and say 'he' and 'him'. This might be difficult for you but it is important for you to know that, whatever changes you may notice, nothing will change the way your mum feels about you.

Your Mum loves you more than anything else! Outside, he will change, but in many ways he will still be the same person inside, who gave birth to you, who brought you up and he will still love you very much.



GIRES offers information from the forefront of research into transsexualism.

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