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PSYCHOSOCIAL ASPECTS OF TRANSSEXUALISM

Abstract

There is a conviction of awareness, including the sense of one's gender, being identical with cerebral processes. People find it hard to confess to having problems with gender identification. Transsexual persons, due to the aversion they have to their own body, experience marked suffering and the desire for their personality, which is experienced in agreement with their psychological sex, to be accepted by society. Despite advances in medicine making it possible for transsexuals to adapt their body to their psychological sex, transsexual persons still experience difficulties in adapting to external demands and experience failures in their personal life. Transsexual persons are subjected to three types of social stressors. Firstly, society prefers physically and mentally healthy people and exerts pressure on transsexuals demanding that they accommodate to a certain lifestyle and behaviour that is typical of the male or female gender role. The second stressor is the family, whose members do not understand or accept such differences. Thirdly, internal conflicts, tension and anxiety experienced that the transsexual persons experience themselves connected to the incessant search for their gender identity. These three sources of stress are interconnected and interdependent.

Two models of therapy – medical and social – should be used in the treatment of gender identity disorder. Transsexuals are judged, ridiculed and rejected by their close friends and relatives. The social environment is often like a mirror portraying negative feedback from the outside, which weakens the transsexual person's relations with a given social environment. The lack of social acceptance of differences limits the freedom of functioning and heightens the feeling of loneliness in transsexual persons. The existing social bonds restrict the freedom of a transsexual person to choose their own lifestyle and the set of behaviours that corresponds to their psychological gender, which is incongruent with the biological body that they possess. Transsexual persons need the support and psychological and medical treatment that they are frequently denied. The mistake of every culture is that it discriminates people who are different, which destroys the unusual and valuable part of our culture.

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