

Bringing Awareness to the Experience of Detransitioners

By Jennifer Bauwens, PhD

As a trauma therapist, I've had the honor of working in a profession that aims to serve children and families during some of the most painful and vulnerable moments of their lives. I considered it a blessing to have a career focused on doing what the Bible directs every believer in Christ to do—that is, to care for the widows and orphans (James 1:27). In our modern vernacular, we might summarize this biblical passage by saying it is our duty to look for ways to advocate and care for those who are without resources and have been ignored by society. This description certainly applies to those who once identified as transgender and have decided to detransition to their biological sex.

These individuals have been repeatedly silenced and ignored, particularly by the medical and psychological professions. Before altering their bodies, many who have struggled with gender dysphoria reported that their peers, as well as their transgender advocacy, medical, and psychological groups, rallied around them and encouraged them to hormonally and surgically change their bodies to appear more like the opposite sex. Over time, many have come to regret their physiological alterations.

Only a few studies have tackled the plight of detransitioners. But one such study found that nearly [40 percent](#) of participants who detransitioned said they felt pressure from health and mental health care professionals to medically transition.

At best, it is bad practice for professionals to pressure patients to receive unscientifically validated practices that carry known risks and permanently change the body. But this social pressure isn't present at the onboarding to medical procedures only. Many report that all the encouragement and affirmation they previously received fades into the background when they decide to detransition. In some cases, hostility emerges from those who once cheered them onward to a course that could permanently alter their lives.

The fact remains that those who have identified as transgender have higher rates of [childhood physical, sexual, and emotional abuse](#) than the general population. Sadly, the vast majority of professional groups have not advocated for treatment options that address the issues that are frequently found in tandem with gender dysphoria. For example, in the aforementioned [study](#), 57 percent of detransitioners said their evaluation for gender dysphoria was inadequate. Another 65 percent said that possible contributing factors, such as trauma and other mental health issues, were not considered when assessing their gender distress.

This study's findings also showed that roughly 45 percent of biological females said their mental health did not improve while transitioning, and 41 percent detransitioned because they realized their gender dysphoria was due to something else (*i.e.*, trauma or another mental health diagnosis). It logically follows that 48 percent of these participants experienced a trauma less than a year before experiencing gender dysphoria. No wonder nearly 40 percent of these biological women said that transitioning made their mental health worse—the real issues were never addressed by the gender clinic or therapist.

On Saturday, March 12, advocacy groups and individuals who've suffered the pain of misdiagnosis and the harms of transgender physiological procedures will be gathering around the country to raise awareness about the pain and lack of appropriate treatment options for those who've struggled with their biological sex. We need mental health treatment that is responsible and accountable to the public. Please support those courageously taking a stand and [join or host an event](#) in your city.

If you are unable to participate in any events on March 12, encourage your elected representatives to hold these professional organizations and gender clinics accountable for their promotion of harmful practices. Let's call mental health and health practitioners back to their roots of truly helping those without a voice.