

**Fig 1. Example quotes of online advice from Reddit and Tumblr.**

Instructions on lying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “TL;DR find out what they want to hear if they’re gonna give you T and then tell them just that. It’s about getting treatment, not about being true to those around you. It’s not their business and a lot of time doctors will screw stuff up for you.”<sup>a</sup></li> <li>• “...Get a story ready in your head, and as suggested keep the lie to a minimum. And only for stuff that can’t be verified. Like how you were feeling, but was too afraid to tell anyone including your family.”<sup>b</sup></li> <li>• “I’d also look up the DSM for the diagnostic criteria for transgender and make sure your story fits it, assuming your psych follows it.”<sup>c</sup></li> </ul>
Urgency to transition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “...If you don’t do it when you are young. You’ll be miserable and unhappy with your body for the rest of your life.”<sup>d</sup></li> </ul>
Vague and nonspecific symptoms called signs of GD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Signs of indirect gender dysphoria: 1. Continual difficulty with simply getting through the day. 2. A sense of misalignment, disconnect, or estrangement from your own emotions. 3. A feeling of just going through the motions in everyday life, as if you’re always reading from a script. 4. A seeming pointlessness to your life, and no sense of any real meaning or ultimate purpose. 5. Knowing you’re somehow different from everyone else, and wishing you could be normal like them...”<sup>e</sup></li> </ul>
	<p>a. <a href="https://www.reddit.com/r/asktransgender/comments/2nt8gi/having_a_psych_eval_soon/#bottom-comments">https://www.reddit.com/r/asktransgender/comments/2nt8gi/having_a_psych_eval_soon/#bottom-comments</a></p> <p>b. <a href="https://www.reddit.com/r/asktransgender/comments/4agt76/is_it_best_to_be_completely_honest_or_lie_a/">https://www.reddit.com/r/asktransgender/comments/4agt76/is_it_best_to_be_completely_honest_or_lie_a/</a></p> <p>c. <a href="https://www.reddit.com/r/asktransgender/comments/4ihwar/what_things_should_i_never_tell_my_psychologist/">https://www.reddit.com/r/asktransgender/comments/4ihwar/what_things_should_i_never_tell_my_psychologist/</a></p> <p>d. <a href="https://www.reddit.com/r/asktransgender/comments/3gpb94/at_the_final_stage_of_questioning_need_some/#bottom-comments">https://www.reddit.com/r/asktransgender/comments/3gpb94/at_the_final_stage_of_questioning_need_some/#bottom-comments</a></p> <p>e. <a href="https://transgenderteensurvivalguide.tumblr.com/post/62036014416/that-was-dysphoria-8-signs-and-symptoms-of">https://transgenderteensurvivalguide.tumblr.com/post/62036014416/that-was-dysphoria-8-signs-and-symptoms-of</a></p>

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**Table 1. Demographic and other baseline characteristics of parent respondents.**

Characteristics of Parent-respondents		n	%
Sex		254	
	Female	233	91.7
	Male	21	8.3
Age (y)		254	
	18–29	3	1.2
	30–44	74	29.1
	45–60	168	66.1
	>60	9	3.5
Race/Ethnicity*		255	
	White	233	91.4
	Other**	22	8.6
Country of Residence		254	
	US	182	71.7
	UK	39	15.4
	Canada	17	6.7
	Other	16	6.3
Education		254	
	Bachelor's degree	96	37.8
	Graduate degree	84	33.1
	Some college or Associates degree	63	24.8
	HS grad or GED	10	3.9
	<High School	1	0.4
Parent attitude on allowing gay and lesbian couples to marry legally		256	
	Favor	220	85.9
	Oppose	19	7.4
	Don't know	17	6.6
Parent belief that transgender people deserve the same rights and protections as others		255	
	Yes	225	88.2
	No	8	3.1
	Don't know	20	7.8
	Other	2	0.8
* may select more than one answer.			
** declining order includes: Other, Multiracial, Asian, Hispanic.			
<a href="https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0202330.t001">https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0202330.t001</a>			

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**Table 2. Demographic and other baseline characteristics of AYAs.**

<b>Characteristics of AYAs</b>		<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
AYA sex at birth (natal sex)		256	
	Female	212	82.8
	Male	44	17.2
AYA average current age (range of ages)	16.4 (11–27)	256	
Academic diagnoses		253	
	Gifted	120	47.4
	Learning Disability	11	4.3
	Both	27	10.7
	Neither	95	37.5
Natal female expressed sexual orientation before announcement*		212	
	Asexual	18	8.5
	Bisexual or Pansexual	78	36.8
	Gay or Lesbian	58	27.4
	Straight (Heterosexual)	75	35.4
	Did not express	57	26.9
Natal male expressed sexual orientation before announcement*		44	
	Asexual	4	9.1
	Bisexual or Pansexual	5	11.4
	Gay	5	11.4
	Straight (Heterosexual)	25	56.8
	Did not express	11	25.0
Gender dysphoria began		256	
	During puberty	125	48.8
	After puberty	131	51.2
Along with a rapid onset of GD, the AYA also:		256	
	Belonged to a friend group where one or multiple friends became transgender-identified during a similar timeframe	55	21.5
	Had an increase in social media/internet use	51	19.9
	Both of the above	116	45.3
	Neither	13	5.1
	Don't know	21	8.2

\* may select more than one answer.

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**Table 3. DSM 5 Indicators for gender dysphoria.**

Characteristics		n	%
AYAs who would have met diagnostic criteria for gender dysphoria in childhood		0	0
Number of DSM 5 indicators for gender dysphoria in children exhibited prior to puberty		255	
	Zero indicators	205	80.4
	One indicator	31	12.2
	Two indicators	9	3.5
	Three indicators	6	2.4
	Four indicators	3	1.2
Desire/Dislike Indicators (A1, A7, or A8)		255	
	Zero indicators	244	95.7
	One indicators	9	3.5
	Two indicators	0	0
	Three indicators	1	0.4
Readily observable indicators (A2-A6)		254	
	Zero indicators	212	83.5
	One indicator	26	10.2
	Two indicators	10	3.9
	Three indicators	3	1.2
	Four indicators	3	1.2
Average number of DSM 5 indicators for adolescent and adult gender dysphoria that the AYA is experiencing currently (range)			
	3.5 (range 0–6)	247	
AYAs currently experiencing two or more indicators of gender dysphoria for adolescents and adults		250	
	Yes	208	83.2
	No	40	16.0
	Don't know	2	0.8

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**Table 4. AYA baseline comorbidities and vulnerabilities predating the onset of gender dysphoria.**

Characteristics		n	%
Mental disorder or neurodevelopmental disability diagnosed prior to the onset of gender dysphoria*		251	
	Anxiety	117	46.6
	Depression	99	39.4
	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)	29	11.6
	Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)	21	8.4
	Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)	20	8.0
	Eating Disorder	12	4.8
	Bipolar Disorder	8	3.2
	Psychosis	6	2.4
	None of above	94	37.5
	(Other) Borderline	3	1.2
	(Other) Oppositional Defiant Disorder	2	0.8
Traumatic or stressful experience prior to the onset of gender dysphoria		252	
	Yes	122	48.4
	No	91	36.1
	Don't know	38	15.1
	Other	1	0.4
Types of trauma*		113	
	Family	50	44.2
	Sex/Gender related	34	30.1
	Social	23	20.4
	Moving	20	17.7
	Psychiatric	9	8.0
	Medical	7	6.2
Non-suicidal self-injury (NSSI) before the onset of gender dysphoria		180	
		81	45.0
Ability to handle negative emotions productively		255	
	Excellent/Good	34	13.3
	Fair	70	27.5
	Poor/Extremely Poor	148	58.0
	Don't know	3	1.2
Coping style for dealing with strong emotions		254	
	Overwhelmed by strong emotions and tries to /goes to great lengths to avoid feeling them	156	61.4
	Neither avoids nor seeks out strong emotions	29	11.4
	Tries to/goes to great lengths to seeks out strong emotions	33	13.0
	Don't know	25	9.8
	None of the above	11	4.3
Social vulnerabilities		255	
	During adolescence child had social anxiety	177	69.4
	Child had difficulty interacting with their peers	113	44.3
	History of being isolated (not interacting with peers outside of school activities)	110	43.1
	Child felt excluded by peers throughout most of grade school	93	36.5
	Child had persistent experiences of being bullied before the onset of gender dysphoria	74	29.0
* may select more than one answer.			
<a href="https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0202330.t004">https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0202330.t004</a>			

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**Table 5. Announcing a transgender-identification.**

Characteristics		n	%
Age of AYA when the AYA announced a transgender-identification (range)	15.2 average (10–21)	255	
Living arrangement at announcement		256	
	Living at home with one or both parents	226	88.3
	Living at college or university	16	6.2
	Other	14	5.5
AYA's announcement came from "out of the blue, without significant prior evidence of gender dysphoria"		256	
	Yes	207	80.9
	No	33	12.9
	Other	16	6.2
If a time was pinpointed when the child seemed not at all gender dysphoric, how long between that time and the child's announcement of a transgender-identity?		250	
	Did not seem at all gender dysphoric when they announced and transgender-identity	81	32.4
	Less than a week to 3 months	65	26.0
	4–6 months	31	12.4
	7–9 months	10	4.0
	10–12 months	29	11.6
	More than 12 months	20	8.0
	Don't know	14	5.6
Parent suspects that when the child first announced a transgender-identity, that the child used language that they found online		253	
	Yes	175	69.2
	No	53	20.9
	N/A	25	9.9
Parent thinks their child is correct in their child's belief of being transgender		255	
	Yes	6	2.4
	No	195	76.5
	Don't know	38	14.9
	Other	16	6.3
How soon after the announcement did the AYA ask for transition?		255	
	At the same time	86	33.7
	Between less than one week to one month	33	12.9
	2–5 months after announcement	26	10.2
	6 or more months after announcement	19	7.5
	Other	16	6.3
	N/A	75	29.4
Intention and request for transition*		189	
	AYA told the parent that they want cross-sex hormones	127	67.2
	AYA told the parent that they want to go to a gender therapist/gender clinic	111	58.7
	AYA told the parent that they want surgery	101	53.4
	AYA brought up the issue of suicides in transgender teens as a reason that their parent should agree to treatment	59	31.2
AYA has very high expectation that transitioning will solve their problems in social, academic, occupational, or mental health areas		256	
	Yes	143	55.9
	No	13	5.1
	Don't know	100	39.1
AYA was willing to work on basic mental health before seeking gender treatments		253	
	Yes	111	43.9
	No	71	28.1
	Don't know	30	11.9
	N/A	41	16.2

\* may select more than one answer.

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**Table 6. Friend group exposure.**

Characteristics		n	%
The AYA has been part of a friend group where one or more friends has come out as transgender around a similar timeframe as they did		254	
	Yes	176	69.3
	No	47	18.5
	Don't know	31	12.2
Age of AYA when their first friend became transgender-identified (range)	14.4 average (11–21)	174	
Number of friends from the friendship group who became gender dysphoric average (range)	3.5 average (2–10)	138	
Where numbers known, friend groups where the MAJORITY of the friends in the friendship group became transgender-identified		125	
	Yes	46	36.8
	No	79	63.2
Order of the AYAs “coming out” compared to the others in the friendship group		119	
	First in the friendship group	4	3.4
	Second in the friendship group	52	43.7
	Third in the friendship group	33	27.7
	Fourth in the friendship group	18	15.1
	Fifth in the friendship group	5	4.2
	Sixth or Seventh in the friendship group	6	5.0
Where popularity status known, change in popularity within friend group when AYA announced their transgender-identification		178	
	Increased popularity	108	60.7
	Decreased popularity	11	6.2
	Unchanged popularity	59	33.1
Where friend group activities known, friend group known to mock people who are not transgender/LGBT		145	
	Yes	87	60.0
	No	58	40.0

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**Table 7. Internet/Social media exposures.**

		n	%
AYAs internet/social media use just prior to announcement		255	
	Increased social media/internet use	162	63.5
	Decreased social media/internet use	3	1.2
	Unchanged social media/internet use	49	19.2
	Don't know	41	16.1
AYA exposure to internet content/advice*		251	
	How to tell if they are transgender	136	54.2
	The reasons that they should transition right away	87	34.7
	That if their parents did not agree to take them for hormones, that the parents are "abusive" and "transphobic"	86	34.3
	That if they waited to transition they would regret it	73	29.1
	That if they didn't transition immediately they would never be happy	72	28.7
	How to order physical items (binders, packers, etc) without parents finding out	67	26.7
	What to say and what NOT to say to a doctor or therapist in order to convince them to provide hormones	56	22.3
	That if their parents are reluctant to take them for hormones, that they should use the "suicide narrative" to convince them (telling the parents that there is a high rate of suicide in transgender teens.)	52	20.7
	Medical advice about the risks and benefits of hormones	55	21.9
	Medical advice about the risks and benefits of surgery	47	18.7
	That it is acceptable to lie to or withhold information about one's medical or psychological history from a doctor or therapist in order to get hormones/get hormones faster	44	17.5
	How to hide physical items from parents	40	15.9
	How to hide or make excuses for physical changes	26	10.4
	How to get money from others online in order to pay for medications, etc	25	10.0
	How to get hormones from online sources	24	9.6
	How to hide hormones from parents	21	8.4
	I don't know if my child received online advice about these topics	127	50.6
*may select more than one answer.			
<a href="https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0202330.t007">https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0202330.t007</a>			

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**Table 8. Outcomes and behaviors.**

<b>Characteristics</b>		<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
AYA mental well-being since announcement		254	
	Worse	120	47.2
	Better	32	12.6
	Unchanged or mixed	101	39.8
	Don't know	1	0.4
Parent-child relationship since announcement		253	
	Worse	145	57.3
	Better	18	7.4
	Unchanged or mixed	89	35.2
	Don't know	1	0.4
Grades/academic performance		220	
	Worse	76	34.5
	Better	14	6.4
	Unchanged/mixed	130	59.1
Range of interests and hobbies		255	
	Much broader	2	0.8
	Somewhat broader	11	4.3
	Unchanged	93	36.5
	Somewhat narrower	64	25.1
	Much narrower	56	22.0
	There are very few topics outside of transgender issues that my child is interested in	28	11.0
	Don't know	1	0.4
<a href="https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0202330.t008">https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0202330.t008</a>			

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**Table 9. AYA Cumulative mental disorder and neurodevelopmental disability diagnoses.**

Characteristics		n	%
Mental disorder or neurodevelopmental disability		243	
	Anxiety	154	63.4
	Depression	143	58.8
	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)	36	14.8
	Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)	30	12.3
	Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)	30	12.3
	Eating Disorder	17	7.0
	Bipolar Disorder	17	7.0
	Psychosis	8	3.3
	None of above	52	21.4
	(Other) Borderline	7	2.9
	(Other) Oppositional Defiant Disorder	2	0.8
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**Table 10. Additional behaviors.**

		<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Parents have been called “transphobic” or “bigoted” by their child for the following reasons*		240	
	Disagreeing with their child about the child’s assessment of being transgender	123	51.2
	Recommending that their child take more time to figure out if their feelings of gender dysphoria persist or go away	107	44.6
	Expressing concerns for their child’s future if the child were to take hormones and/or have surgery	97	40.4
	Referring to their child by the pronouns that they used to use before announcement	91	37.9
	Telling their child that they thought hormones/surgery would not help them	90	37.5
	Calling their child by the child’s birth name	80	33.3
	Recommending that their child work on other mental health issues first to determine if they are the cause of their dysphoria	80	33.3
	Recommending therapy for basic mental health issues (not related to gender)	74	30.8
	Recommending a comprehensive evaluation before starting hormones and/or surgery	50	20.8
	None of the above	87	36.2
Distrust and isolating behaviors exhibited by AYAs*		251	
	Expressed distrust of information about gender dysphoria and transgenderism coming from mainstream doctors and psychologists	130	51.8
	Tried to isolate themselves from their family	124	49.4
	Expressed that they ONLY trust information about gender dysphoria and transgenderism that comes from transgender websites and/or transgender people and sources	117	46.6
	Lost interest in activities where participants aren’t predominantly transgender or LGBTIA	81	32.3
	Lost interest in activities that were not related to transgender or LGBTIA issues	65	25.9
	Stopped spending time with friends who are not transgender	63	25.1
	Expressed distrust of people who are not transgender	57	22.7
	Expressed hostility towards people who are not transgender	46	18.3
	None of the above	44	17.5
Other behavior and outcomes for AYAs*		249	
	Withdrawn from family	112	45.0
	Told other people or posted on social media that their parent is “transphobic”, “abusive”, or “toxic” because the parent does not agree with the child’s assessment of being transgender	107	43.0
	Refused to speak to parent	71	28.5
	Defended the practice of lying to or withholding information from therapists or doctors in order to obtain hormones for transition more quickly	41	16.5
	Tried to run away	17	6.8
	Been unable to obtain a job	25	10.0
	Been unable to hold a job	18	7.2
	Dropped out of college	12	4.8
	Dropped out of high school	12	4.8
	Needed to take a leave of absence from college	12	4.8
	Been fired from a job	9	3.6
	Needed a leave of absence from high school	1	0.4
	None of the above	86	34.5
For any of the above, is this a significant change from the child’s baseline behavior?		161	
	Yes	115	71.4
	No	46	28.6

\*may select more than one answer.

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**Table 11. Interactions with clinicians.**

		n	%
Did the AYA see a gender therapist, go to a gender clinic or see a physician for the purpose of transition?		254	
	No	151	59.4
	Yes	92	36.2
	Don't know	11	4.3
Did the therapist/physician/clinic staff explore issues of mental health, previous trauma, or any alternative causes of gender dysphoria before proceeding?		100	
	Yes	21	21.0
	No	53	53.0
	Don't know	26	26.0
Did the therapist/physician/clinic staff request any medical records before proceeding?		99	
	Yes	21	21.2
	No	49	49.5
	Don't know	29	29.3
Of parents who knew the content of the visit, did the AYA receive an Rx for puberty blockers and/or cross-sex hormones at their first visit?		80	
	AYA received an Rx for puberty blockers and/or cross-sex hormones at their first visit	17	21.2
	AYA was offered a Rx for puberty blockers and/or cross-sex hormones at their first visit, but AYA or parent declined	2	2.5
	Total number of AYAs who received or were offered an Rx at first visit	19	23.8
	AYAs who did not receive/were not offered an Rx at their first visit	61	76.2
Did AYA misrepresent their history to the doctor or relay their history accurately?		96	
	Parent is reasonably sure or positive that their child misrepresented or omitted parts of their history	64	66.7
	Parent is reasonable sure or positive that their child relayed their history completely and accurately	12	12.5
	Don't know	20	20.8

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**Table 12. Transition steps and disposition.**

		n	%
Transition Steps*		256	
	Changed hairstyle	216	84.4
	Changed style of clothing	210	82.0
	Asks to be called a new name	188	73.4
	Asks for different pronouns	175	68.4
	Taken cross-sex hormones	29	11.3
	Legally changed name on government documents	19	7.4
	Taken anti-androgens	11	4.3
	Taken puberty blockers	7	2.7
	Had surgery	5	2.0
	None of the above	14	5.5
Disposition		256	
	Still transgender-identified	213	83.2
	Not transgender-identified any more (desisted)	14	5.5
	Seems to be backing away from transgender-identification	7	2.7
	Parent doesn't know if the child is still transgender-identified	22	8.6
	De-transitioned (also counted in desisted category)	3	1.2
Duration of transgender-identification overall	Median duration 11 months, Mean duration 15.0 months (range 0.1 months-120 months), median 11 months	225	
Duration of transgender-identification if still transgender-identified	Median duration 11 months, mean duration 14.4 months, range (0.1 months-72 months)	204	
Duration of transgender-identification if no longer transgender-identified	Median duration 12 months, mean duration 24.2 months, range (.75 months to 120 months)	13	
Duration of transgender-identification if backing away	Median duration 12 months, mean duration 15 months, range (3 months-36 months)	8	
*may select more than one answer.			
<a href="https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0202330.t012">https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0202330.t012</a>			

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**Table 13. chi-squared comparisons for exposure to social influence (SI) vs not exposure to social influence (NSI).**

		SI n (%)	NSI n (%)	P
Sex		222	34	.123
	Female	187 (84.2)	25 (73.5)	
	Male	35 (15.8)	9 (26.5)	
<b>Indicators of childhood GD</b>		221	33	<b>.004</b>
	<b>0–2 indicators</b>	<b>216 (97.7)</b>	<b>29 (87.9)</b>	
	<b>3–4 indicators</b>	<b>5 (2.3)</b>	<b>4 (12.1)</b>	
Currently have two or more GD indicators		214	34	.808
	Yes	179(83.6)	29 (85.3)	
	No	35(16.4)	5(14.7)	
<b>No mental health or NDD diagnoses before onset of GD</b>		222	34	<b>.036</b>
	<b>Answered “None of the above”</b>	<b>87(39.9)</b>	<b>7 (20.6)</b>	
<b>Mental well-being since announcement</b>		220	33	<b>.001</b>
	<b>Worse</b>	<b>114 (51.8)</b>	<b>6 (18.2)</b>	
	<b>Better</b>	<b>24 (10.9)</b>	<b>8 (24.2)</b>	
	<b>Unchanged/Mixed</b>	<b>82 (37.3)</b>	<b>19 (57.6)</b>	
<b>Parent-child relationship since announcement</b>		219	33	<b>.006</b>
	<b>Worse</b>	<b>134 (61.2)</b>	<b>11 (33.3)</b>	
	<b>Better</b>	<b>13 (5.9)</b>	<b>5 (15.2)</b>	
	<b>Unchanged/Mixed</b>	<b>72 (32.9)</b>	<b>17 (51.5)</b>	
<b>Range of interests and hobbies</b>		220	34	<b>&lt;0.001</b>
	<b>Broader range of interests and hobbies</b>	<b>10 (4.5)</b>	<b>3 (8.8)</b>	
	<b>Narrowed range of interest and hobbies</b>	<b>139 (63.2)</b>	<b>9 (26.5)</b>	
	<b>Unchanged range</b>	<b>71 (32.3)</b>	<b>22 (64.7)</b>	
Distrust and Isolating Behaviors		222	34	
	<b>Tried to isolate themselves from family</b>	<b>114(51.4)</b>	<b>10 (29.4)</b>	<b>.017</b>
	<b>Expressed that they ONLY trust information about GD and transgenderism that comes from transgender sources</b>	<b>107 (48.2)</b>	<b>10 (29.4)</b>	<b>.041</b>
	<b>Lost interest in activities where participants aren’t predominantly transgender or LGBTIA</b>	<b>76 (34.2)</b>	<b>5 (14.7)</b>	<b>.023</b>
	Stopped spending time with non-transgender friends	59 (26.6)	4 (11.8)	.062
	Expressed distrust of people who are not transgender	52 (23.4)	5 (14.7)	.255
	<b>Told people or posted on social media that their parent is “transphobic,” “abusive,” or “toxic” because the parent doesn’t agree with the child’s assessment of being transgender</b>	<b>102 (45.9)</b>	<b>5 (14.7)</b>	<b>&lt;0.001</b>
	Defended the practice of lying to or withholding information from doctors/therapists to get hormones for transition more quickly	38 (17.1)	3 (8.8)	.219
	Brought up the issue of suicide in transgender teens as a reason parents should agree to treatment	55 (24.8)	4 (11.8)	.093
Did the AYA misrepresent their history to the doctor or relay it accurately?		68	8	.075
	Parent is reasonable sure or positive that their child misrepresented or omitted parts of their history	59 (86.8)	5 (62.5)	
	Parent is reasonable sure or positive that child relayed their history completely and accurately	9 (13.2)	3 (37.5)	

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