

GENDER IDENTITY DISORDER IRELAND

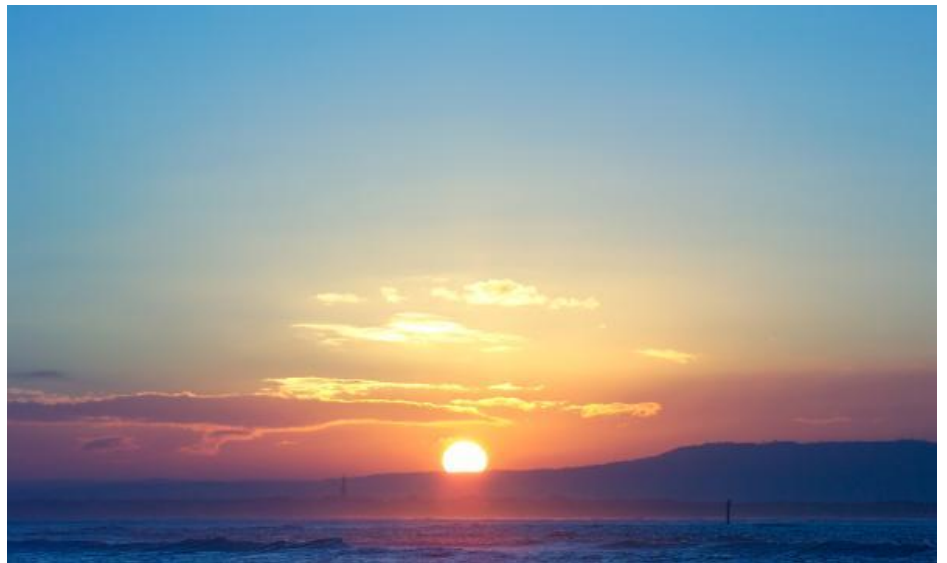
NATIONAL AWARENESS PROGRAMME 2011-2013

*Building a bright and
hopeful future for
people with Gender
Identity Disorder*

GENDER IDENTITY
DISORDER IRELAND

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Gender Identity Disorder Ireland is a national charity whose purpose is to provide support to people with **GID**, and their families.

**GENDER IDENTITY DISORDER
IRELAND**

**National Awareness Programme
2011-2013**

Contents

1.0 Introduction	Page 5
2.0 Background.....	Page 8
3.0 Access to Healthcare & Counselling.....	Page 10
4.0 Legal Issues	Page 11
5.0 Education & Training.....	Page 12
6.0 Support Groups & Services.....	Page 14
7.0 Fundraising.....	Page 16
8.0 Resources	Page 17
9.0 Board of Management.....	Page 19
10.0 Summary & Conclusions.....	Page 20

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This **National Awareness Programme** sets out our programme of activities over the coming three years. The activities are varied and in some instances quite complex, but there is no doubting our ability to deliver our programme, especially with the right support from all the relevant stakeholders and sponsors which we have identified as key to the success of this Development Strategy.

NECESSITY & COMMITMENT

- 1.2 The current situation, in which people with Gender Identity Disorder find themselves living within the Republic of Ireland, is extremely difficult, not to say traumatic. The current provision of healthcare services is still inadequate. This problem is compounded by the absence of adequate legal recognition by the state of the right of people with GID to have their birth certificates altered so as to enable them to live in accordance with their true gender identity. This is vital if they are to live normal functional lives within this state. The many and varied social implications following a diagnosis of GID/GD can be quite traumatic for those diagnosed. But even worse is the difficulties people experience before they ever get to see a gender specialist.
- 1.3 One of the best and worst kept secrets about Gender Identity Disorder/Gender Dysphoria is that it is a lifetime's disorder and if undiagnosed, lasts from the cradle to the grave. This is manifest in the fact that society only knows of adults who are affected by this condition and wrongfully attributed it to something else entire, i.e. transvestism.
- 1.4 This misunderstanding of GID/GD, in the absence of the clinical facts, has caused untold harm, not just to adults but also to children and teenagers alike. And the damage will continue to be done until the clinical facts become better known. This then is the crux of why this National Awareness Programme is so vital to all concerned, and not least the general public, whose response is vital to the lives of those individuals struggling with gender difficulties.
- 1.5 Some significant progress is being made in a number of areas including the legal issues involved. For example the Irish government have established an advisory group to consult and advise on the most appropriate approach to drawing up the relevant legislation on gender recognition. This is a welcome development and GIDI will do everything it can to support its enactment.

- 1.6 The new legislation will provide a number of challenges in terms of the public's perceptions and the attitudes still endemic within the health services, especially at the frontline.
- 1.7 GIDI has already consulted with the minister for Social Protection and the Advisory Group on our concerns regarding the forthcoming Gender Recognition Legislation.
- 1.8 We have also given a commitment to the Advisory Group that we will play our part in raising awareness about the need for this legislation and encourage the public to support it. This The National Awareness Programme is our response to that commitment.
- 1.9 Given the current situation and the tremendous need for action to be taken on all these vitally important issues, GIDI proposes to increase its activity across all the key areas, i.e.

- Generating greater awareness on the need to provide legal recognition for people with GID/GD, which will include the legal right to alter their birth certificates so as to recognise their correct gender identity.
- Continue with its collaboration with the Department of Social Protection, the Health Service Executive and Equality Authority, amongst others, and other stakeholders, in implementing the Treatment Path as proposed in Health Needs document submitted to the HSE in 2008, by the then working group on GID.
- To provide the practical supports necessary to enable people with GID/GD to live normal functional lives within their families and communities.
- To provide the necessary practical supports for the families of those affected by their loved ones being diagnosed with Gender Identity Disorder and all that this means in terms of emotional, financial and legal ramifications for all concerned.
- To provide the necessary education, information, consultation etc. that will inform the general public, healthcare professionals, legal services, employers, and other relevant public bodies of the issues surrounding Gender Identity Disorder.

- 1.10 These are serious challenges, but what makes them all the more difficult is the serious lack of funding for developing our much needed services and for pushing forward with the various issues that need to be addressed as a matter of urgency.
- 1.11 GIDI is committed to adopting a positive proactive approach and to looking at every available means for generating the funding and other resources to make this Programme the success it deserves to be.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Our Development Strategy 2011-2013 and National Awareness Programme, is the culmination of all we have learned and achieved over the past seven year in relation to providing support for those seeking help and our engagement with a significant number of stakeholders.
- 2.2 A significant problem to date has been the incoherent and individualistic approach taken on these issues. There has been until fairly recently a very fragmented approach to promoting the needs of people with GID and their families. It is one of GIDI's principle aims to significantly improve upon this situation, hence our broad based Development Strategy and this new National Awareness Programme.
- 2.3 GIDI has experienced great difficulty in generating funding for carrying out its work to date. This is an unacceptable situation and presents a very realistic threat to our ability to deliver on our NAP. This Programme identifies funding as a priority and outlines how we will overcome the current financial difficulties through innovative approaches to our future fundraising activities.
- 2.4 Despite our significant financial limitations over the past few years we have managed to achieve a great deal. Listed below is a number of our more significant achievements.

GIDI's Achievements to Date:

- Established as the first GID charity in Ireland;
- Initiated the first Working Group on GID/GD in Ireland, including the Equality Authority, Health Service Executive and the Department of Health and Children;
- Initiated and co-organised the first Medical Symposium on GID In Ireland, which was co-sponsored by the Equality Authority, Health Service Executive and the Department of Health and Children;
- Sara-Jane was one of the speakers at the symposium;
- Developed the first recognised Treatment Pathway for people with GID/GD, in Ireland;
- Achieved formal recognition from the Department of Health and Children and the HSE for Gender Identity Disorder as the correct term for this neurobiological condition;

GIDI National Awareness Programme 2011-2013

- Received the first ever commitments from both the Department of Health and Children and the HSE to put the necessary resources in place to provide people with GID/GD with proper healthcare and support;
- Consulted with government ministers and the Advisory Group on Gender Recognition regarding the forthcoming legislation on Gender Recognition;
- Advised legal team in the Lydia Foy landmark case before the High Court;
- Invited by the European Commission and Equality Authority to roundtable discussion on the **Social Reality Study**. The Social Reality Study was undertaken throughout all countries within the EU.
- Consulted with leading Human Rights organisations, e.g. Irish Council of Civil Liberties (ICCL) etc., on the **Third Shadow Report** which was presented to the International Convention on Human Rights in Geneva.
- Sara-Jane has already made over seventy media appearances, including the Late Late Show. It is through these appearances that she has been instrumental in affecting real change in the way most media in Ireland now report on issues about and people affected by GID/GID.
- Sara-Jane is the author of the first two books to be published in Ireland on GID. She has donated her second book *Wrong Body, Wrong Life* to GIDI, for inclusion in the National Awareness Programme.
- All 1,000 copies of Sara-Jane's book will be distributed as part of the various training workshops which will be organised across the country over the next twenty-four months.
- Sara-Jane's credentials in this area were further recognised when her paper on Gender Identity Disorder/Gender Dysphoria was published in the Irish Medical Times.

2.5 These achievements point to even greater future successes. The remainder of this document will focus on the practical steps GIDI will take to ensure that the aims outlined within this programme are achieved.

3.0 ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE & COUNSELLING

3.1 **Centres of Excellence:-** The ideal situation within this country would be the establishment of a Centre of Excellence or Gender Clinic for the treatment of people with Gender Identity Disorder. These centres already exist within a number of countries, e.g. Holland, Germany, Russia, Canada, U.S., etc. and follow best international standards of care. There is also access to all the necessary health care facilities within the UK.

Such a centre would include the following services:

- Psychiatric & Psychological Evaluation
- Gender Reassignment Surgery
- Cosmetic Surgeries
- Counselling Services
- Advice on Transition, i.e. Physical Appearance, Dress etc.
- Assimilation back into society in the new gender role.
- Support services for families during the treatment and assimilation stages of reassignment

3.2 In the interim, these services could be funded by the various areas of the Health Service Executive.

3.3 Travel is a major problem for people as they have to travel from all over the country to Dublin in order to receive medical intervention, especially from consultant endocrinologists. So having a gender clinic in a central location will be a great benefit for all concerned.

3.4 The more people come forward seeking medical intervention the more obvious will be the need for a centralised gender clinic.

3.5 Realistically speaking, the establishment of a centrally located gender clinic is some way off, but this does not prevent us from starting a debate regarding its necessity.

3.6 In this regard GIDI is already working with a number of clinical psychologists and psychiatrists to promote the idea of establishing a Gender Clinic at a central location within Ireland.

4.0 LEGAL ISSUES

GENDER RECOGNITION LEGISLATION

- 4.1 GIDI welcomes the recent developments in relation to the setting up of the Advisory Group on Gender Recognition. We are fully committed to cooperating with the Advisory Group and to seeing the introduction of appropriate legislation at the earliest possible date.
- 4.2 The Advisory Group on Gender Recognition raised the issue of the need for the forthcoming legislation to be properly explained to the general public in order for them to understand its necessity and thereby make it more acceptable and supported.
- 4.3 GIDI is in complete agreement on this matter and is one of the primary reasons for bringing forward the NAP.

GENDER EQUALITY

- 4.4 Although gender identity is recognised and covered within a number of equality legislation and the Passport Act, 2008, there is still widespread ignorance across our society and amongst employers and service providers in particular. This problem needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency.
- 4.5 We will devote ourselves to raising issues of equality across the social spectrum, with special emphasis on employment, access to healthcare, education etc.
- 4.6 Our various education and training programmes will include a strong emphasis on equality issues.
- 4.7 We will also work with employer and union bodies, individual employers, and other organisations in developing effective policies and procedures for the effective integration of people with GID/GD.

5.0 EDUCATION & TRAINING

- 5.1 GIDI is committed to launching an extensive and wide-ranging Education and Training Programme. The Programme will cover all the main stakeholders mentioned below.
- 5.2 Included within the programme is the
- Distribution of 1,000 copies of “Wrong Body, Wrong Life”;
 - “Wrong Body Wrong Life” to be made freely available online;
 - Publishing several new booklets covering specific GID/GD related subjects will then be distributed to the relevant stakeholders;
 - Redesign the website to make in more interactive and up to date.
- 5.3 **We aim to commence this programme no later than June 2011.**

HEALTH SERVICE PROVIDERS

- 5.4 As part of the **National Awareness Programme** GIDI will organise a number of workshops over the next two years designed to provide and understanding of the diagnostical and treatment pathway for people diagnosed with GID/GD. This will be achieved through educating the various medical professions about the complex issues involved in both the diagnosis and treatment of people with GID/GD.
- 5.5 There will be a particular focus on frontline health service providers, e.g. A & E Departments, Ward Staff etc. This is especially important where issues about where to locate GID patients, especially those who have not yet completed their Gender Reassignment Surgeries.
- 5.6 The key organisations we will work with to achieve the above objectives are the Irish Medical Organisation, Royal College of Psychiatry, Irish Association of Counsellors and Psychotherapists, School of Nursing, Trinity College etc.
- 5.7 **This programme and that of the book distribution are currently underway and ahead of schedule.**

EMPLOYERS

- 5.8 GIDI will also provide an advice and training service to employers, trade unions and other employment bodies on appropriate strategies for the accommodation and integration of people with GID into the workplace. This is essential for the minimising and elimination of bullying and harassment of such employees.
- 5.9 It is with this in mind that GIDI will approach IBEC, SFA, ISME, ICTU, SIPTU etc., with the aim of designing and delivering training programmes on awareness of GID/GD and the obligations employers have under the relevant equality legislation. We will also provide assistance for employers in devising policies and procedures for the integration of employees with GID/GD into their respective workplaces.
- 5.10 **This project has the potential to continue on well past the life of the NAP.**

SCHOOLS & COLLEGES

- 5.11 As with Employers etc., it is essential that schools and colleges are adequately aware of gender identity issues and the need to ensure adequate facilities are in place to enable students and staff to respond appropriately to those who may be going through gender reassignment.
- 5.12 GIDI proposes to distribute some of its current stock of Wrong Body, Wrong Life amongst a number of school and college libraries. We also plan to publish a booklet for schools and colleges which will provide them with useful information of how to respond to the needs of those students who seek support during their change in social gender role. The booklet will include a sample **Code of Practice** for addressing gender related issues.
- 5.13 GIDI will also organise workshops for schools and colleges and train teachers etc., in how to deal with students presenting with gender identity issues.
- 5.14 We aim to meet with the minister of Education with a view to raising our concerns about the treatment of students in the past. We will also request that they draw up a clearly defined Code of Practice for all schools covered under the Department of Education, which they would be required to implement.
- 5.15 **It is envisaged these workshops will commence in October 2011 and will continue after the NAP is concluded in 2013.**

6.0 SUPPORT GROUP & SERVICES

SUPPORT GROUPS

- 6.1 GIDI will work towards establishing support groups which will be set up in a number of key locations around the country.
- 6.2 We envisage establishing support groups in Cork, Dublin, Limerick and Athlone. It is hoped that these groups will be established over the next eighteen months at the latest.
- 6.3 The services we will provide through the support groups include:
- Group Support
 - One-to-One Support
 - Advice on Transitioning, e.g. Style, Makeup etc.
 - Advice and Training in Deportment
 - Voice Coaching
 - Social Skills
 - Communication Skills
- 6.4 The Support Groups will be managed by qualified facilitators and those with the required leadership experience. GIDI will be proactive in recruiting such personnel and though these are voluntary positions, recruitment will be on the basis of a written Job Description.
- 6.5 Support Group Facilitators will be appointed by the board of management and will report to the Chief Executive.

WEBSITE & ONLINE

- 6.6 The website is an essential component in our awareness education and support strategy. The website in its current form is seriously inadequate and is not delivering anything like the potential it has if redesigned to include interactive forums providing users with a range of online supports, latest research etc..

- 6.7 We will upgrade our website from its current flat information format to a livelier interactive site which will include a number of chat forums allowing users to communicate with each and provide mutual support.
- 6.8 The website will include an extensive range of information sheets providing practical advice on a variety of subjects, including referral, coping with a diagnosis, how to tell family and friends, change name by Deed Poll and other documents.
- 6.9 We will look at the feasibility of using Facebook as a suitable way of raising awareness, providing information and support.
- 6.10 **We expect to achieve this within six months of the launch of this programme.**

7.0 FUNDRAISING

- 7.1 It is recognised that delivering our National Awareness Programme depends upon sufficient financial and other resources being made available.
- 7.2 We recognise that generating funds in the current economic climate is extremely difficult and presents us with a great challenge; however we are determined to succeed in financing this National Awareness Programme through funding from several sources and from the generosity of the business sector.
- 7.3 We will seek financial support from a number of fundraising agencies including the HSE, Pobol, and the National Lottery etc. We will also seek sponsorship from the corporate sector.
- 7.4 Apart from seeking financial sponsorships we will also be seeking “sponsorship in kind.” By this we mean we will seek sponsors who will provide transport, office equipment, stationary, petrol, car insurance etc.
- 7.5 We will be charging a fee for our training workshops which will make them self-financing. The fees have yet to be decided.**
- 7.6 Some of the funding and sponsorship will be achieved through public appeals as part of the publicity campaign that will get under way as soon as we have secured enough resources to officially launch the NAP.
- 7.7 GIDI will recruit a new Fundraising Co-ordinator. We aim to achieve this no later than the end of 2012.
- 7.8 We aim to hold a fundraising concert towards the end of the NAP. It is felt that this will work better after we have raised the profile of GID and the enactment of the forthcoming legislation of on Gender Recognition. The concert will generate further awareness at the public level and at the same time secure funding for GIDI’s work into the future.
- 7.9 We envisage the concert taking place between January and June, 2013.**

8.0 RESOURCES

8.1 We recognise that not even the best of intentions or, our past achievements, are any guarantee that we will succeed in delivering our National Awareness Programme. We are reliant upon having the right resources too. The following list outlines the resources we need to get the programme underway.

8.2 Required Resources:

Transport:-

- Car
- Petrol/Diesel
- Tax & Insurance
- Servicing

Office:-

- Phone
- Printer
- Software:- Microsoft Office
Desktop Publishing
Accounts Software

Training:-

- Overhead Projector
- OHP Screen
- Training Materials
- Training Notes

Publications:-

- Booklets:- GID Guide for People with GID and their families
GID Guide for Employers
GID Guide for Health and Emergency Service Providers
GID for Schools and Colleges
- Leaflets:- Guide to Gender Identity Disorder

- 8.3 Between our proven ability to get results and acquiring the necessary resources, we have every reason to be confident that we can deliver a very successful National Awareness Programme.

9.0 BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

- 9.1 GIDI's current board of management is comprised of five members. The optimum number is nine, which leaves us with a shortfall of four members.
- 9.2 Given the logistical difficulties of organising meetings with board members at such long distances from each other, it is necessary to devise ways in which regular meetings can be held without causing too much inconvenience in terms of time and travel.
- 9.3 The current situation regarding the small number of board members, the difficulties of travelling and the need for a consistent quorum, all points to the need for a more centrally based board of management. With this in mind it is proposed to increase the number of board members by four and to recruit them from the Munster region.
- 9.4 We also propose to acquire online communications facilities that will enable the entire board to meet through online conferencing.
- 9.5 As part of the new changes we intend to recruit more qualified members to the board, i.e. We will be looking for personnel qualified and experienced in Accounting, PR, Fundraising etc., along with those with psychiatric, psychological and counselling qualifications and experience.
- 9.6 We believe that by taking the steps outlined in sections 9.3 to 9.5 that we will not only have a greater and more consistent quorum, but that we will have a more professionally based board of management. We can be confident that the new board will be able to secure the long-term viability of GIDI, which is one of the primary objectives of our overall Development Strategy.

10.0 SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS

- 10.1 This National Awareness Programme is designed to run over the coming two years, in order to bring about a more positive situation for all those diagnosed with or seeking a diagnosis of Gender Identity Disorder/Gender Dysphoria.
- 10.2 This Programme is vital if Gender Dysphoric people and their families are to ever experience normal, happy and functional lives within the Republic of Ireland.
- 10.3 The Development Strategy will also help to consolidate the organisations work and act as a platform for further development in the longer term.
- 10.4 It is anticipated that this Programme will be expanded over the next few years as the various activities are more fully established and as we identify new issues that will need to be addressed.
- 10.5 We invite all stakeholders and funding bodies etc., to join with us in delivering the best possible service to this very worthy cause.

