

It's Okay To Wish For Gay

#LetThemBeDragons — The following article is a very personal note about parenting by author Nola Sarina reprinted with permission from her blog at www.nolasarina.com

I don't often post personal notes like this, but I have had a revelation, and this is my only real "blog" to post on. So although I usually just post book stuff and adult stuff since I write adult books, please take a moment to listen and try to understand something I've never spoken about publicly before. It has to do with my life as a parent, which is very separate from my life as an author.

As I said, I have had a revelation.

I am not the shining example of an LGBTQ ally that I wanted to be.

I advocate. I teach. I accept. I befriend. I'd escort any transgender person to any bathroom they needed help entering.

I discovered the gap in my ally-ness when I said something along the lines of, "I'm totally cool with whatever my child is! But I would never *wish* for my child to be transgender. It's a lot to deal with."

It made sense as I said it. After all, who would wish their child to face a less-than-ideal life?

But I wouldn't say, "I would never wish for my child to be _____ (athletic, geeky, smart, mechanically inclined, etc)." I wouldn't say, "I would never wish for my child to be blue eyed with brown hair and a great sense of humor."

I had such flawless rationale for the statement: "Those are all *positive* things that won't make them face adversity in life. It's not the same thing."

But are any of the letters – L,G,B,T, or Q – negatives? Or is the adversity itself the only negative in the equation?

Parents never want their children to face negatives: discrimination for being gay, or having a hard time finding a peer group



as a lesbian, or dealing with the double standards bisexual people deal with, or enduring the teasing that transgender people do. I get that. No parent wants their child to struggle to be accepted for who they are. And once an accepting parent experiences the "coming out moment," they often feel pressured to defend their acceptance by talking about our natural reluctance to deal with the stressful issues.

We, the parents of non-conforming children, are supposed to be the greatest LGBTQ allies. Is an ally someone who points out the negative in the demographic they claim to defend? Is an ally someone who expresses reluctance at the necessity of being an ally?

In saying "I would never *wish* for my child to be queer," how am I helping my queer child feel like he is every bit as valuable as his athletic/smart/geeky/musical/mechanical/humorous/blue-eyed/brown-haired cis peers?

Every time I say I'd never wish for my child to be queer – whether I have a queer child or not – I am furthering the attitude that queer = less valuable. That the double standards and

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Parents, Families, Friends and Allies United with LGBT People to Move Equality Forward

Our Mission

PFLAG promotes the health and well-being of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons and their families and friends through:

SUPPORT: To support parents on their journey to understand and accept their gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender children; and to help children, of whatever age, to understand and come out into loving relationships with their families;

EDUCATION: To enlighten an ill-informed public,

ADVOCACY: To end discrimination and to secure equal civil rights.

PFLAG provides an opportunity for dialogue about sexual orientation and gender identity and expression, and acts to create a society that is healthy and respectful of human diversity.

PFLAG is a volunteer grass-roots, tax-exempt, non-profit organization, not affiliated with any political or religious institution.

PFLAG is a welcoming place for parents and friends of all members of the LGBTQ community, but we are much more than that. Those who identify as gay, lesbian bisexual, transgender, or gender non-conforming are also encouraged to attend our meetings., with or without their family members. Parents and friends may come with or without their loved ones who are members of the LGBTQ community.

Confidentiality is assured.

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**WE'RE
HERE
FOR YOU!**

news from our chapter

Our Summer Meetings End on High Note with Two Outstanding Presentations!



(L-R) PFLAG Board members Joe Ordog and Scott Mirani with our August guest speaker, Marc Cohen.

At our August meeting, **Marc Cohen**, a Licensed Clinical Social Worker who provides outpatient mental health counseling for the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health and who has also worked with Youth Pride, Inc., spoke to our group on the current practice and the lack of validity of conversion therapy.

He provided us with a number of reasons why people may choose such therapy, such as viewing their sexual orientation as an illness or a choice, or for religious reasons, or being caused by abuse, or because of ethnic or cultural biases, or for a desire for acceptance as "normal", or for family acceptance, or because of internalized homophobia—too name a few. Currently in Rhode Island there is one therapist that still offers reparative therapy.

Although there are some people who claim it works, the research on it has clearly found that there is nothing really positive about it. All leading psychological and counselling organizations have issued public statements against reparative therapy. Although there is an "Ex-gay" movement by those who claim it helped them, there is now an even larger "Ex-exgay" movement formed by those who tried it and have found that it did not work.

What does work, according to Marc, are groups like PFLAG that provide a welcome and accepting environment for all. Also key is family and community acceptance.

Bans on So-Called "Conversion Therapy"

The following is reprinted from PFLAG National's website: PFLAG National officially endorsed and participated directly in the legislative, community, and media launch in efforts to create legislation opposing so-called conversion therapy in the U.S. House and in the Administration, and the progress is palpable. In April, the White House formally announced its support of bans on so-called "conversion therapy" following years of PFLAG-inclusive federal and state-led advocacy to end this harmful

practice and after a nationwide petition. Legislatively, PFLAG National worked directly with Rep. Jackie Speier (D-CA-14) who introduced a resolution requesting bans on conversion therapy, and with Rep. Ted Lieu (D-CA-33) who introduced the first federal bill to prohibit advertising the practice to people of all ages under the Federal Trade Commission's protection against consumer fraud. Work continues, and we advocate for an upcoming companion bill in the Senate.

At the state level, California, New Jersey, Oregon, Illinois and DC have passed laws banning so-called "conversion therapy." Other states such as Colorado, Hawaii, Maryland, and Virginia had bills that would have banned so-called conversion therapy, but they were either voted down or died, while other states such as Arizona, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Minnesota, Ohio, Florida, Pennsylvania, and Vermont have all introduced bans on conversion therapy which have yet to receive floor votes. States including Illinois, Iowa, Nevada, New York, Rhode Island, and Texas have seen a bit more action regarding their proposed statutes. PFLAG National supports these efforts to ban so-called conversion therapy. Most recently, in June, a New Jersey jury delivered a unanimous verdict that the NJ-based nonprofit Jews Offering New Alternatives for Healing (JONAH) violated the state's consumer fraud protection laws by claiming it could "cure" clients of being LGBT. (See more at: <https://community.pflag.org/getinspired#sthash.4OjNWDak.dpuf>)



(L-R) PFLAG Board members Dianne & Joe Ordog and Scott Mirani with our September guest speaker Dr. Michelle Forcier.

Dr. Michelle Forcier was our featured speaker at our September PFLAG meeting. She explained to our group how gender is ubiquitous and that the seeds of our identity are in our brain and heart/soul and not in our physical genitalia.

She went on to explain that in the recent past, the medical profession did not do a very good job in treating transgender patients. However, they have begun to realize that the more they listen to patients, the better they can learn how

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Our Summer Meetings

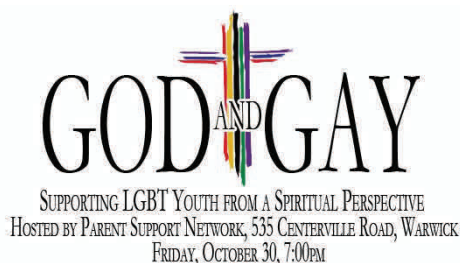
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to care for them. They now have developed a model where they are letting patients tell them where they are, what they need and then they help by developing a plan to get them where they need or want to be.

When asked how can a parent know when a child may truly be transgender versus playing with gender roles, she used three words to describe the child's behavior: consistent, persistent and insistent. When a child exhibits these behaviors about their gender identity, we need to pay attention.

In her practice, she helps families understand their child's gender journey. She has found that her patients really thrive when they have parents who love them for who they are. In her view the strongest medicine is parental love.

She went on to state that the biggest mistake the medical profession makes is not doing enough for transgender patients. However, there is hope for the future as training and services develop across the country. Last year Rhode Island held its first symposium on transgender health issues through Brown University School of Medicine and last month we had an article in this newsletter about the newly formed Thundermist Trans* Health Access Team, a group of medical, behavioral health, and allied service professionals, working to improve access to culturally and clinically competent healthcare for the trans* community.



Saint Therese Old Catholic Church, the Parent Support Network of Rhode Island, and PFLAG Greater Providence, RI come together to offer this presentation by Fr. David Martins which will address: the passages from Scripture that talk about homosexuality, ways to support LGBT Youth from a faith perspective, and the influence spirituality has had in the history of the LGBT Community.

This event is free and will take place at the Parent Support Network, 535 Centerville Road in Warwick, RI on Friday, October 30th at 7:00 p.m.

Can't Make Our PFLAG Meetings at The MET School? You Now Have Options!

As much as we love having everyone attend our **PFLAG Greater Providence Chapter**

meetings at The MET School the first Wednesday of the month, we know that sometimes life interferes and that date just does not work for you. However, we have two other fledgling PFLAG groups whose meeting dates and times may work for you. There is a group that now meets in **Attleboro, MA** on the **third Wednesday of the month from 6:45 p.m. to 8:45 p.m.** that is run by two of our chapter's board members: Joe and Dianne Ordog. They meet at the **Second Congregational Church, UCC, 50 Park Street Attleboro, MA.**



There is also a group beginning to form in the West Warwick area that is meeting on the **third Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m. at St. Therese Old Catholic Church, 1500 Main Street, West Warwick, RI.** This group is being spearheaded by Fr. David Martins, pastor of St. Therese Old Catholic Church with assistance from parishioners and our **PFLAG Greater Providence Chapter.** Their next meeting will be on **December 17th.** There is no October meeting in lieu of the October 30th God and Gay event at the Parent Support Network and no meeting in November.

If you have any questions about these two groups, please contact us at pflagprovi-



Youth Pride Annual Event 2015 Roaring Teens & Twenties

Show your support for YPI at this year's Annual Event, with Honorary Chair Jacqueline DiMera!

**FRIDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2015
5:30 to 10:00 p.m.
The Arcade, Providence (NEW LOCATION!)**

Visit the Youth Pride RI website for more details and to purchase tickets:

www.youthprideri.org/event.

Enjoy amazing food, silent auction, music, dancing, signature cocktail & cash bar from New Harvest Coffee & Spirits.

Tickets are \$50 (LOWER PRICE!)

Support this year's honorees:

- Elizabeth Roberts, Secretary, Executive Office of Health & Human Services, State of RI
- Rhode Island Foundation
- Alyssa St. Franc

100% of the proceeds of this event support YPI, the only organization in RI solely dedicated to serving LGBTQQ youth.



Become a PFLAG Volunteer!

"We make a living by what we do, but we make a life by what we give.—Winston Churchill"

Our PFLAG chapter operates with an all-volunteer Board of Directors who are dedicated to fulfilling the mission of PFLAG for its members.

We hope to grow and expand our outreach in Rhode Island, but we need your help to do so. Some forms of help are short and simple—like signing up to bring refreshments to one of our support meetings, picking up some of our new brochures to distribute in businesses and doctors' offices you frequent, or helping us plan for Pride Fest and the Pride parade in June.

Other types of volunteering may involve a longer commitment, such as serving on a committee or serve as a speaker as part of our education and outreach efforts.

We are also looking for someone to take over the design and production of this newsletter. Right now we publish every other month. If anyone is interested in taking on this task or volunteering for any of the above needs, please contact us at pflagprovidence@gmail.com.

Don't forget to "Like" us on Facebook www.Facebook.com/PFLAGGreaterProvidence, RI and "Follow" us on Twitter @PFLAGProvRI.



news from all over

Click here for more details and to purchase tickets: www.youthprideri.org/event.

The 41st Annual Fantasia Fair takes place October 18th – 21, 2015

Fantasia Fair is a week-long transgender event that again takes place this year from October 18th to the 25th in their home away from home of Provincetown, Massachusetts (a quick 2-1/2 hour drive from Providence and Boston). Part conference, part social gathering, the Fair is a "full immersion" experience, during which attendees can (and usually do) spend the entire week 24/7 presenting in their chosen gender.

Since 1975, "Fan Fair" has been the oldest and longest-running trans* event in the world, providing trans* identified people the opportunity to learn and to thrive in real-life situations. The Fair offers daily activities and events including morning and afternoon workshops where they cover topics such as gender theory, hair removal, deportment, and speaking in a feminine voice. There is a daily post-lunch Keynote speaker, and special formal and informal evening events. You'll learn from community leaders, helping professionals, and your peers in formal and social situations.

Spouses and Significant Others find support, friendship and caring, and can participate in workshops that explore and recognize the ups and downs of a relationship with a transgender partner.

In addition to lunches that are provided each day in some of Cape Cod's best restaurants, there are two formal banquets, a fashion show, a cabaret/talent show, receptions and special events — all to help you to socialize and let your true personality shine.

Fantasia Fair doesn't confine you to a hotel ballroom. It takes place all across beautiful Provincetown - a wonderfully accepting community where everyone can mingle in the streets in friendship, safety, and acceptance.

Longtime Fairgoers cherish the friendships they have made with trans-people from all over the world. Isn't it time for you to attend?

Please visit our website for more information at www.FantasiaFair.org.



Origami Swan Project

Chelsea Thompto is a trans artist in the Sacramento, CA area and a second year graduate student at California State University Sacramento in the sculpture department. She is requesting our help in a collective art project she is working on to raise trans awareness and support called The Origami Swan Project.

Her goal is to get 30,000 people to fold one white origami swan each in support of the trans community. One individual swan folded might not seem like much, but when that action is repeated 30,000 times, it becomes something significant. Each swan folded can be mailed to: PO Box 254525, Sacramento, CA 95865, and will be used in a large scale installation piece. Why 30,000? Because a rough estimate is 1 in every 30,000 people are transwomen.

More information, including an instructional video on how to fold a white origami swan, can be found on her website, www.ChelseaThompto.com. This project is mentioned under the "Current Projects" tabs.

The Origami Swan Project seeks to inform people about the trans community, while giving people a platform to show their support. Stereotypes, misconceptions, and flat out hatred are difficult to overcome; but through art and understanding, she hopes to help educate and inform people who may not have other methods of learning about the topic.

Please consider participating in this art piece, whether by folding a swan yourself or helping to spread the word to people who may be interested in what will be both a visually beautiful and thought-



provoking project.

1 in 3 American Young Adults Identify on Bisexual Spectrum

A new study finds 31 percent of Americans under 30 say they are not '100% heterosexual.'

On the heels of a study released by YouGov finding half of the U.K.'s young adults aren't "100% heterosexual," new research indicates one-third of American young adults feel the same way.

As with the U.K. study, researchers for YouGov used a modified Kinsey scale to measure sexuality by asking participants to place themselves on a range between "exclusively heterosexual" and "exclusively homosexual."

According to the study, "Overall 78% of Americans say that they are completely heterosexual while 4% say that they are completely homosexual. 16% of American adults say that they fall somewhere in between. In this group, the bulk of the respondents (10%) said

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1 in 3 American Young Adults Identify on Bisexual Spectrum

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that they are more heterosexual than homosexual, while 3% put themselves in the middle, and another 3% say that they are predominantly homosexual."

Yet a percentage of those who classified themselves as heterosexual admitted to having same-sex experiences. "A large number of Americans who classify themselves as heterosexual still admit to having had same sex experiences. 12% of heterosexual American adults say that they have had a sexual experience with someone of the same sex."

Notably, the study found that the older someone is, the less likely they are to say their sexuality is on the bisexual spectrum. According to the researchers, "24% of people aged 30 to 44 say that they're somewhere on the scale of bisexuality, compared to

the condition is rarely diagnosed before the teen years, when lack of breasts and periods make it apparent, most identify as female and continue to do so after diagnosis. In these cases, the medical community will accept the individual's gender identity as their medically-defined gender.

Bethan was found on an online forum, where people with the condition swapped stories and shared information with those who could relate. Bethan, along with three others, agreed to talk about what it was like growing up with Swyer Syndrome and how it affects their lives.

Georgia, who is now 22, first noticed there was something different about her when she was 15. "I was as tall as my dad, which I thought was strange—the majority of my family are very short. I still didn't have my period and still hadn't developed breasts. My feet were size 12 and I struggled to find jeans and tops that were long enough."

Bethan's mother insisted that she was just a "late bloomer." As the years passed, Bethan still didn't develop. A doctor finally diagnosed Swyer Syndrome—though he was as puzzled by it as her parents. "The doctor that diagnosed me had never come across the condition before," Bethan said, "so [he] was as new to it as me and my family were." As so little was understood about the condition, she felt isolated in the early days of her diagnosis: "I didn't fully understand my condition. I was different to my friends and I felt nobody would ever want to love someone who is, on a genetic level, male."

This fear is shared by Georgia, who discussed her worries about the future. "I'm very scared about getting into a relationship. I feel my boyfriend might get turned away because I have XY chromosomes, and I don't want to go through IVF," she said, referencing the fertility treatment that women with Swyer Syndrome can undergo to have children. "Thinking of the day when I'd have to tell someone I have Swyer Syndrome really scares me."

For Stephanie, telling a partner about her male chromosomes was never a problem—mainly because her first doctor didn't even tell her about them. Now 43, the South Carolina resident was diagnosed with "under-developed ovaries" at the age of 16 and had them removed. When she and her husband began donor egg treatment to have a child, a doctor finally explained that she was genetically male. She was 36. At the time, his words were: "To put it simply, if you were to perish in a fire and your body was burned beyond recognition, the coroner would presume that you were male."

Intersex individuals such as those with Swyer Syndrome make up the 'I' in 'LGBTQI,' but intersex men and women are often forgotten in the rainbow coalition of queerness. But the condition can be seen as ultimate proof of the fluidity of gender identity. Most women with the syndrome don't seem 'male' (whatever that means) beyond a few arbitrary physical differences such as height. In other words, male chromosomes isn't enough to make you male. Gender transcends genetics.

8% or less of over-45s."

Credit: Eliel Cruz, Advocate.com, August 20, 2015


When Teenage Girls Find Out They're Genetically Male

Nature deals teens a pretty tough hand: Your face explodes in zits, hair appears all over the place, and your body starts to mutate like the *High School Musical* version of *An American Werewolf in London*. But some teenage girls—roughly 1 in 80,000 to be precise—never go through this. They never develop breasts or start their periods. They'll usually be much taller and broader than their peers, and have much larger feet. Thanks to a medical condition called Swyer Syndrome, these girls have been genetically male their whole lives without knowing it.

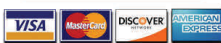

Bethan from Swansea, Wales, can relate. She encountered bullying throughout her school years as a result of her condition. "I was called names like 'man beast,' 'man boobs,' and 'Shrek,'" the 23-year-old said. "It was a very difficult time." This kind of schoolyard abuse is sadly (but predictably) the norm. A general lack of readily available information about this condition doesn't help, either. For girls with Swyer Syndrome, everything they learned about their bodies in sex ed is suddenly wrong, and many are left to flounder, wondering where they fit in.

Women with Swyer Syndrome are born with XY (male) chromosomal makeup, which means their reproductive organs don't develop properly. To outward appearances, they may seem female, though their underdeveloped organs have knock-on effects for their hormones. These girls never go through puberty, because they lack the regular hormones that a young woman usually possesses. On a basic genetic level, they are male. But as





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It's Okay to Wish for Gay

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persecutions of LGBTQ people are inescapable realities of life, and that the world is never going to change to embrace my child as every bit as valuable as a straight cis athletic comedian with wicked computer programming skills. That the negatives my child faces are acceptable.

My youngest child is valuable. She is imaginative, stubborn as hell, beautiful, and creative.

My middle child is valuable. He is hilarious, charming, noisy, and the most loving soul.

My oldest child is valuable. He is smart as a whip, prone to nuclear meltdowns, confident, and a book review blogger.

My best friend has four children, and not one of them even batted an eye when my oldest child declared he would like to be referred to by male pronouns. They rattle off a few names at a time to get it right, just as we do when we can't remember which child we're yelling down the hallway at when it's bedtime. They don't even really care that he now has a new name and is a brother rather than a sister. They just *accept*, without pointing out any potential negatives of his identity.

It's not the kids who make a big deal out of these things. The children know the truth: my child's gender does not detract from my child's worth in any way, nor is it some hushed, negative secret about my child's overall being.

I know it, too, and so do all of my incredibly, stunningly supportive friends and family members. I'm just still learning how to properly say it when I'm still fighting the social training of my generation.

If we are going to change the way the world views sexuality and gender, we must become *more* accepting than simply *accepting*. We must celebrate. We must be as proud of the possibility of our child being LGBTQ *before* they come out (of the closet or the womb). Just like we are as we wonder if maybe he'll be a pilot, or maybe she'll be a doctor. If we treat their sexuality or gender as something to be feared because of what the world might do to them, we are, in a way, giving the world permission to inspire that fear with continued cruelty.

And we are teaching the world that our children *expect* to be persecuted, not that they expect to be treated equally. We are showing the world that we just accept our child's sexuality or gender, rather than that we'd never have things any other way.

We cannot just show this unconditional love of our child's identity/sexuality at Pride parades and through clever filters on our Facebook profile pictures. We must show the next generation of parents – by our example – that an LGBTQ child is a gift in our words every day, both in and out of earshot of our children. That they are a unique breed of human immune to the closed-minded bigotry that possessed so many in the previous generations.

The kids... they already *know* this. My friend's children are the perfect example of that, and it's so clear to me that they've been raised to accept absolutely anyone for every reason. Discrimination isn't even a thought in their heads. Only by speaking against the normalcy of our LGBTQ children can the adults change and close their growing minds.

Many parents mourn the loss of a daughter when they discover he is actually their son. Many parents ache, deep within their hearts, as they trade their transgender daughter's soccer balls for ballet shoes.

The sorrow is valid. We've bonded with a name, a pronoun, a spirit, and the true identity of that spirit shocks us. We've been taught to expect certain behaviors from our children when they pop out of their mothers' bodies based on whether they come with a penis or a vagina. *Of course* we feel sorrow when we can no longer stand beside a parenting magazine and present ourselves as a shining example of normalcy to society. *Of course* we feel loss when our calendars become schedules of hormone treatments and psychiatrist visits instead of baseball practice and singing lessons.

Of course we fear the worst for our children in a world where our LGBTQ children are not treated as the best. *Of course* we grow angry and feel horrified as friends fall off our social media lists because we choose to support rather than condemn something our children cannot change about themselves.

But this sorrow doesn't have to continue into the next generation of parents and children. If we teach our kids to be excited about their gay friend or lesbian cousin or transgender brother like it's the best thing that could have ever happened...

Well, just picture it! Imagine a world where having a transgender child is something so rare and precious you are celebrated for it, rather than forced to endure the loss of friends and family members who think you're trying to influence your child's development in a negative way. Imagine a world where your daughter comes out as lesbian and you receive congratulations cards for it. Imagine a world where your son comes out as bisexual and you can't wait to call and tell your mother: it's just what you've always dreamed he would be!

Imagine a world where you browse parenting magazines as you wait for the ultrasound on your unborn child and see a family on a magazine cover with a gay father and an intersex child below a headline reading "Quick Recipes for Busy Families" or something else totally chill, and you think to yourself, "Wow, are they ever a lucky family. I wonder what we'll have."

Imagine a world where every single parent – like my friend's children – doesn't even bat an eye at someone's gender, sexuality, or other expression of their identity.

That is not some far-off fantasy world. That is the world we can create for our children. It is the world we can teach *them* to create. And it starts with us: the parents of the next generation, whether we or our children are cis, straight, L, G, B, T, Q, or anything else. Let them be dragons if they want to be.

It's already starting. I see it every single day in groups of parents accepting their children and celebrating their true selves.

Hope for your baby to come out healthy. But also, go ahead: hope for him to come out gay. I give you permission. The same way you might hope for him to be athletic, or a successful entrepreneur, it is *okay* to hope for your child to be gay. Wish for her to be transgender. Wish to have a son and a daughter all in one lifetime, one body, one soul. Pray she will be bisexual, and not discount the possibility of a relationship based on the gender of her love interest. Wish that he will be happy no matter what he discovers about himself along the way.



Author Nola Sarina



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It is a *gift* to have a queer child or friend or neighbor or sibling. Instead of saying, "I would never wish for my child to be anything other than heterosexual/cisgender because of what he will face," say, "I would never wish for my child to be hateful. I would never wish for my child to discriminate others based on things they cannot control like race, birthplace, sexuality, or gender. I would never wish for my child to feel they are anything other than *exactly* what I wanted, queerness and all."

Those are the true demons to wish against. Take the power away from fear. Take the power away from hate.

I am not saying it's realistic to not feel sorrow when your child's life takes an unexpected turn. I think I felt more fear than sorrow, and it shows in the words I've chosen to use.

I am saying that we can shape the world – today, in the changing landscape of our entire human society – to embrace our LGBTQ+ brothers and sisters in such an all-encompassing way that we no longer *need* to feel a shred of sorrow when our children come out.

If we don't treat our queer children – and the queer children of our neighbors – like they are exactly what we wanted, then the world will not want them. If we talk about our queer children like they are *accepted*, but their situation is not ideal, the world will treat them as though they are not ideal. If we talk about the medical interventions for transgender kids as something we wish was unnecessary, the world will view it as unnecessary. If we act like we're afraid our peers will judge us for celebrating our child's homosexuality, then that's exactly what they will do.

We can change that. It starts with the parents of today's children. It starts with me. I'll never again say I wouldn't wish for a queer child. I didn't know how to embrace it with the flawless acceptance of a child. I hope I do now, and I sure as hell will keep trying. I asked my queer child to read a Word doc draft of this post before I published it, and you know what he said?

"Oh my God, Mom, you can't honestly think you're not doing a good job at this stuff."

...Okay. I can deal with that. It really is as simple as the children say it is.

So go ahead: wish for a gay child. I promise you: we *can* teach the next generation to embrace him with the simplicity and purity of today's children. We can, and we will.

Because they already know how.

Drop by Nola's Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/authornolasarina> and join her email list at <http://>

www.nolasarina.com/contact/ to get up-to-date information about all new releases, appearances, and special offers!

When Teenage Girls Find Out They're Genetically Male

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Still, this is a tricky concept to get your head around at 15 or 16, when the idea of becoming a woman in the biological sense already seems daunting enough. Adjusting to the fact that you may never go through many of the rites of passage your female friends talk about—periods, PMS, getting boobs—is a pretty massive deal.

For most young women, the hardest thing about their condition is understanding what their diagnosis actually means and explaining it to friends and family. But thanks to trans celebrities like Laverne Cox and Caitlyn Jenner, discussions of gender and sexuality have dominated this year's headlines. While women with Swyer Syndrome are not trans (and not all of them feel comfortable identifying as intersex), this means that society has come a long way since 1988, when Stephanie was first treated under the veiled excuse of "under-developed ovaries".

"Society is definitely more accepting now," she told me. "Intersex and gender issues are mentioned so often in the news that bringing the topic into a conversation is much easier. As a teenager, I'm quite positive that I would have kept my diagnosis a secret."

Alex* felt their diagnosis helped explain why their sexual identity since their early teens, though they hid it from conservative religious parents. "I knew I was queer when I was 14, but decided that since I didn't plan on burning in hell I'd just keep that to myself." Alex experienced a huge amount of prejudice. People reacted to the physical characteristics of the syndrome badly, sometimes aggressively. "Being assumed to be male, or trans, because of our typically tall stature is its own hell. I've been beaten up, chased out of bathrooms and had management called on me, just for trying to go pee as a woman."

Today, Alex has begun to transition to male with testosterone treatment, but he continues to identify as intersex. Alex wanted to make clear the complexities of how the condition affects them. Their queer and intersex identity is the result of myriad aspects of their personality and sexuality, with Swyer Syndrome simply one contributing element.

One New York specialist told us that her female patients often feel unhappy with the lack of information around the condition. Dr Heather Applebaum, who leads a project called PURE (Pediatric Urogenital, Reproductive, and Endocrine) Disorders Program at the Steven and Alexandra Cohen Chil-

dren's Medical Center, said that a more holistic medical approach was needed. "Patients can really benefit from a multidisciplinary health care team of experts who can compassionately and appropriately explain the condition and adequately treat these unique individuals."

Would greater education help these young women? What if Swyer Syndrome was taught in sex ed? "Certainly, the more informed people are, the greater appreciation they will have for people's differences."

It's the complexity of the condition that causes frustration for sufferers and the medical community alike. Teenagers and young girls already grapple with their sense of self, let alone their place on the gender spectrum. Bethan has overcome the bullies of her past, so I asked her what she'd say to a young girl with Swyer Syndrome. "There is no way to be completely normal," she said. "Everyone has their quirk that makes them individual. Swyer Syndrome is my 'quirk.' I wouldn't be the person I am today if I hadn't been through what I have. If anyone with Swyer Syndrome feels that they're not 'normal' I'd encourage them to question what they think of as 'normal' anyway. I bet that they won't find one person in this world who's completely normal."

* Name has been changed

Credit: Abby Moss, <https://broadly.vice.com>, September 16, 2015

Notice to All PFLAG Newsletter Subscribers!

Effective in 2016 we will no longer be mailing out copies of our bi-monthly newsletter. Other than a



few copies at our meetings, our newsletter will only be available digitally. If you currently receive a printed copy

in the mail and want to continue to receive our newsletter, please send your full name and email address to us at pflagprovidence@gmail.com and include "Newsletter" in the subject line. We will add you to our email list to receive our newsletter as soon as it is published. You can also access our newsletter, including back issues on our website at www.pflagprovidence.org.

Chapter Meetings

PFLAG/Greater Providence meets the first Wednesday of each month from 6:45 p.m. to 8:45 p.m.:

The MET School (Unity Building)
325 Public Street
Providence, Rhode Island

Upcoming Meetings

November 4, 2015
December 2, 2015

**Also: December 17, 2015
at 7:00 p.m.**

**St. Therese Old Catholic Church,
1500 Main Street, West Warwick, RI**

Contact Us

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pflagprovidence@gmail.com



Ideas for Topics/Speakers?

Do you have a specific topic you would like to have addressed by a speaker or know of anyone whom you would like to recommend as a speaker for our Chapter? If so, please contact **Scott** at scmpmr33@gmail.com.

Member Resources

Rhode Island Bi Resource Network

<http://www.ribinetwork.org>
<http://www.facebook.com/TheOtherBWord>

SAGE Rhode Island

235 Promenade Street, Suite 500, Box 18
Providence, RI 02908
401-528-3259
sageriinfo@gmail.com

TGI Network of Rhode Island

PO Box 40365, Providence, RI 02940
info@tginetwork.org
(401) 441-5058 (voicemail)
Family Support Group meets 2nd Monday each month from 6:30-8:30 pm at Bell Street Parish House, Bell Street, Providence

Youth Pride, Inc.

743 Westminster Street
Providence, RI 02903
(401) 421-5626
info@youthprideri.org
<http://www.youthprideri.org>

LGBT Caregiver Support Group

Child & Family Elder Care
Calvary United Methodist Church
200 Turner Road, Middletown, RI 02842
jgrapentine@childandfamilyri.com
(401) 848-4119
1st & 3rd Tuesdays each month from 10:00—11:00 a.m.

Options Magazine

www.optionsri.org

Blogs of Interest

Faith Topics

Susan Cottrell

<http://www.FreedHearts.org>

Kathy Baldock

<http://www.canyonwalkerconnections.com>

LGBTQ Issues

Think Progress

<http://thinkprogress.org/lgbt/issue/>

The Huffington Post

<http://www.huffingtonpost.com/tag/lgbt-blogs>

Parenting a Transgender Child

Gender Mom

<http://gendermom.wordpress.com/>

Raising My Rainbow

<http://raisingmyrainbow.com/>

Facebook Groups of Interest

Interweave Channing

Parents of Transgender Children

(Closed Support Group)

The Facebook Transgender Alliance

(Closed Support Group)

The Rhode Island LGBT Center



Check us out on Facebook at
www.Facebook.com/PFLAG
Greater Providence, RI



**Greater
Providence
Chapter**

Membership Application

Yes! I want to be a supporting member of PFLAG.

Please provide the information requested below and make your check payable to: **PFLAG/Greater Providence**. You may bring this form with your payment to the next chapter meeting or mail to: **PFLAG, P. O. Box 41344, Providence, RI 02940**. You can also join or donate on-line by visiting our website at www.pflagprovidence.org.

☐

Household \$36

☐

Individual \$24

☐

Student/Limited Income \$16

☐

Additional Contribution \$ _____ in ☐ Honor or ☐ Memory of: _____

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Phone No. _____ E-mail _____

☐

I'll do my part to help save a tree. Please send me the newsletter via email only (.pdf format).



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