

I found out my daughter was being socially transitioned by her elementary school teacher and therapist when she was in 5th grade at 10/11 years old. The therapist and teacher were using male pronouns and a new made up name. This was something my child was trying on like a teen would have tried a style like punk or goth in years past. The problem is that it's hard to get out of once they go down this road, for many reasons, not the least of which are the adults who are encouraging them.

My daughter's therapist told me my daughter wanted to be in the boys' cabin for 5th grade overnight camp. It was presented to me as if my daughter requested this but later, after she desisted, I asked my daughter where she got the idea from and she said, "It wasn't my idea, my teacher asked me if I wanted to be in the boys' cabin. I wanted to be with my friends, the girls." She ended up not going on the overnight trip at all because she asked us if she could stay home, but her teacher hadn't asked her what she wanted; he was saying "Isn't this what you want?" and she felt like she had to answer yes. He was leading her. I believe this is happening on many levels throughout public and private schools and mental and medical health institutions. I think her teacher thought he was being helpful, but he was actually causing harm to my child and to our family by attempting to do something behind her parents' backs. Furthermore, the therapist was being dishonest with us by telling us our daughter had made this request. How are we to respond correctly when we are told lies about our child's behavior?

The therapist who was treating my daughter was affirming her as a boy from the first half hour she sat down with her. I was never told throughout their sessions together that this was the case even though I asked several times if anything noteworthy was discussed which was my legal right to know as the mother of my 11 year old daughter.

I did not believe my daughter's issues were related to confusion over her sex. When I found out this therapist was treating my daughter as if she was a boy, I rescinded my permission for her to treat her. I tried to discuss my concerns and observations about my child with the therapist but she didn't listen to me. She treated me as if I didn't know my child and she knew her better after a grand total of 5 hours with her. She was not working in partnership with me. Rather, she was causing a wedge between me and my child and positioning herself as the savior. This was not good for our family.

We removed our daughter from all of the influences that were affirming her as a boy. We found another therapist who treated our daughter's real issues and our daughter eventually became comfortable in knowing she is a girl. It took time and serious measures to repair the harm this therapist did to our child and our family.

Later my daughter remarked that the affirming therapist “didn’t really help me much.” All she seemed to be doing was helping our daughter advocate for herself when someone “misgendered” her (called her a girl) which was causing conflict between my daughter and other students. She didn’t address the issues my daughter asked her to help with.

It is exceedingly difficult for a child to reverse course once they have been socially transitioned. Social transition is a powerful psychotherapeutic treatment and it concretizes an identity for a child even though it may not be a permanent identity if the child were left to their own natural exploration. Many of them go on to have medical procedures and take drugs to help them appear like a facsimile of the opposite sex.

Many of these children have some form of vulnerability such as issues due to autism, trauma or difficulty being accepted as a gender stereotype non-conforming child. The idea they may be the opposite sex is packaged in a way that is enticing to children and presented as an answer to all of their problems. When it doesn’t solve their issues they often feel they have to level up and do the next, more extreme step with the promise of a “feeling of euphoria” that is short lived or not present at all. Now they have to deal with more medical and mental health issues created by medical “transition” on top of their original mental health issues. It’s like they are chasing a rainbow for a pot of gold they will never reach.

We removed our daughter’s access to the internet and took her out of public school and found her a therapist who explored with our daughter what might be causing her discomfort. she is now comfortable knowing she is a girl. The exploratory therapist worked in partnership with us and treated us as a whole family unit. Our daughter is now happy and flourishing and we are stronger and closer as a family.

If we had not removed our daughter from all of the influences that were affirming her as a boy at age 10 or 11, she could likely have gone down the path of medicalization. I believe school and medical and mental health professionals would have encouraged it. I have learned that I cannot trust these blindly-affirming professionals with my daughter’s medical and mental well-being.

I believe we have only just begun to see the tidal wave of young detransitioners who were irreversibly harmed. I count our daughter as one of the lucky ones, in that we were able to put up guardrails to keep her safe from that particular harm even though the affirming therapist she first saw was working against us. Our daughter is doing well now in large part due to the exploratory therapy that got to the root of her real issues.

This conversion therapy ban would have made it impossible to address my daughter's real problems. This bill has the potential to cause untold harm to children. Vote No on HB 2458.

Thank you,
Jennifer Krohn