

TRANS YOUTH MORAL PANIC (*DEBUNKED.*)

A zine
debunking
the anti-trans
moral panic.



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Inspired by the article : *Deferral: The Sociology of Young Trans People's Epiphanies and Coming Out.* (Kennedy, 2020)

CONTENT WARNING: DISCUSSION OF TRANSPHOBIC RHETORIC.

PANIC! AT THE INTERSECTIONS OF MEDIA AND IDENTITY.

Texas's recent **anti-trans legislation** is fueled by a moral panic in right-wing media which claims that trans youth are **threatening** to American life.



- This idea relies on the concept of trans youth as **passive victims** to their gender identity.
- *In other words*, this idea claims that **transness** is a kind of social disease that children can *catch and spread*.

The **moral panic** has deep roots in the history of LGBTQIA+ people being **criminalized**, **institutionalized**, and **pathologized** as a way of correcting or protecting society from their *sexualities and gender identities*.

THE SUPER DEBUNKED DESISTANCE MYTH.

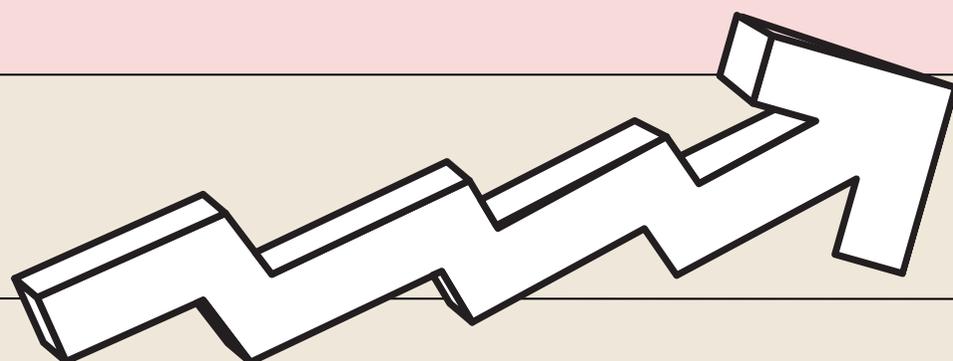
The **Desistance Myth** is the false claim that the majority of trans children do not become trans adults.

This myth is based on a **discredited** study that relied on **flawed methods** and **falsified data**.

In reality, **less than 4%** of trans children detransition.

(i.e. do not become trans adults)

And there is nothing wrong with detransitioning!
Gender identity is **fluid** and *always changing*.



EARLY DYSPHORIA IN TRANS CHILDREN.

Studies, stories, and autobiographies all suggest that trans children experience gender dysphoria before they have words for it.

Timeline of Revelation (Kennedy, 2020)

- **Tacit Deferral** - the time before the trans epiphany.
 - During this period, *youth will typically experience **gender dysphoria** but not have any words for it.*
- **Discursive Deferral** - the time between the trans epiphany and coming out.
 - During this period, *youth acquire **trans terminology** and being self-assessing and reflecting. This often occurs by accessing **queer communities** semi-anonymously, usually online.*
- **Epiphany** - the transition between tacit and discursive deferral.



RAPID ON-SET GENDER DYSPHORIA (ALSO DEBUNKED).

Rapid on-set gender dysphoria (ROGD) is a **highly criticized** pathology that describes a *very short time span between epiphany and coming out*.

“Teachers and parents need to understand that, **while a child coming out as trans may seem sudden to them**, the likelihood is that, in one way or another, **they have understood themselves to be trans for a significant time period and experienced gender dysphoria for considerably longer than that.**” (Kennedy, 2020)



*ROGD is not recognized by any medical authority, and has been **explicitly rejected** by many.

COMING OUT IS AN ON-GOING PROCESS.

Trans adults report recognizing their trans identity at a young age, but face a **cultural barrier** that makes it *difficult* (and sometimes *dangerous*) to **come out**.

- This societal barrier is known as **cultural cisgenderism**.
- **Cultural cisgenderism** is the common but rarely articulated “cultural process of **passive discrimination against trans people**.” (Kennedy, 2020)
- This other barriers **lengthen** and **complicate** the coming-out process for many trans people.



VOCABULARY ACQUISITION & COMMUNITY.

“Acquisition of vocabulary is significant because **the existence of a term that describes their experience also suggests there must be others like them.**”
(Kennedy, 2020)

Many trans folks’ epiphanies coincide with **learning queer and trans terminology** for the first time.

Such as:

GENDER EUPHORIA

AMAB

COMING OUT

AGENDER

TRANSGENDER

GENDER DYSPHORIA

GENDER NON-CONFORMING

AFAB

NON-BINARY

TRANS SCREEN BIRTHS & POLITICAL VISIBILITY.

Observing and **connecting** to the queer community can *facilitate epiphanies* in young trans people.



A "**screen birth**" refers to the moment of **recognizing one's own trans identity** observing other trans people documenting their transition online.

“This process [is] profoundly **empowering** as well as **political**...showing, and **making visible their transitions** over time, [in a] way trans people had **previously been encouraged to conceal** their prior identities.” (*Kennedy, 2020*)

OUR HOT TAKE.

Queer and trans representation is increasing. In turn, trans language and vocabulary are **more available than ever before**. Accordingly, young trans people are able to access (and identify with) these terms in greater numbers than ever before.

(This is a good thing!)

The **passive victim** narrative assumes that young trans children have **no agency**. However, studies suggest the opposite.

Young trans people **actively participate** in their own **identity construction**. It's not something that just "happens" to them.

**AGENCY IS ESSENTIAL TO YOUNG
TRANS PEOPLES' SURVIVAL.**



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