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Peer Support for Parents of Gender Nonconforming Children: Benefits and Risks

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Public awareness of the transgender community in the United States has grown exponentially in the past decade. A steady flow of mainstream news reports and entertainment vehicles demonstrates that awareness. Before the turn of this century, the media coverage was minimal and focused primarily on sensationalist exposés of middle-age transsexuals, the most prominent examples being Christine Jorgensen in the 1950s and Renée Richards in the 1970s. Muted exposure continued throughout the end of the twentieth century. More recently, transgender issues have gained the attention of mainstream media: Hilary Swank won the 1999 Oscar for her portrayal of Brandon Teena in *Boys Don't Cry* (Kaplan, Koffler, Sloss, & Peirce, 1999) and repeated the feat in 2004, playing the gender-bending Maggie Fitzgerald in *Million Dollar Baby* (Eastwood, 2004). Even more eventful, in 2013 Laverne Cox became the first transgender actor to play a featured role in a television series, winning an Emmy for her portrayal of Sophia Burset in *Orange Is the New Black* (Kohan, 2013–). A few months later, *TransParent* (Soloway, 2014–2017) emerged with Jeffrey Tambor in the lead role, transitioning from Mort to Maura Pfefferman. Caitlyn Jenner's recent transition has provoked even broader coverage, occupying a prominent portion of ESPN's *Espy Awards* and spawning a reality series, *I Am Cait* (Bidwell, Jenkins, Jenner, & Metz, 2015–2016). Accompanying this exposure has been a proliferation of documentary films, books, websites, and blogs that provide support for transgender adults, helping them sort out who they are and how they fit in. Despite these examples, coverage of transgender issues remains scarce. Films and television have offered only a few transgender roles that do not reinforce stereotypes and even fewer examples of transgender performers in such roles.

The media expanded their focus beyond adults in 2007 with Barbara Walters's 20/20 episode, "My Secret Self: A Story of Transgender Children" (Arledge & Goodman, 2007). Thanks to subsequent coverage, the nation has become more

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