

Transgender Donors and Blood Donation in the Irish Blood Transfusion Service.

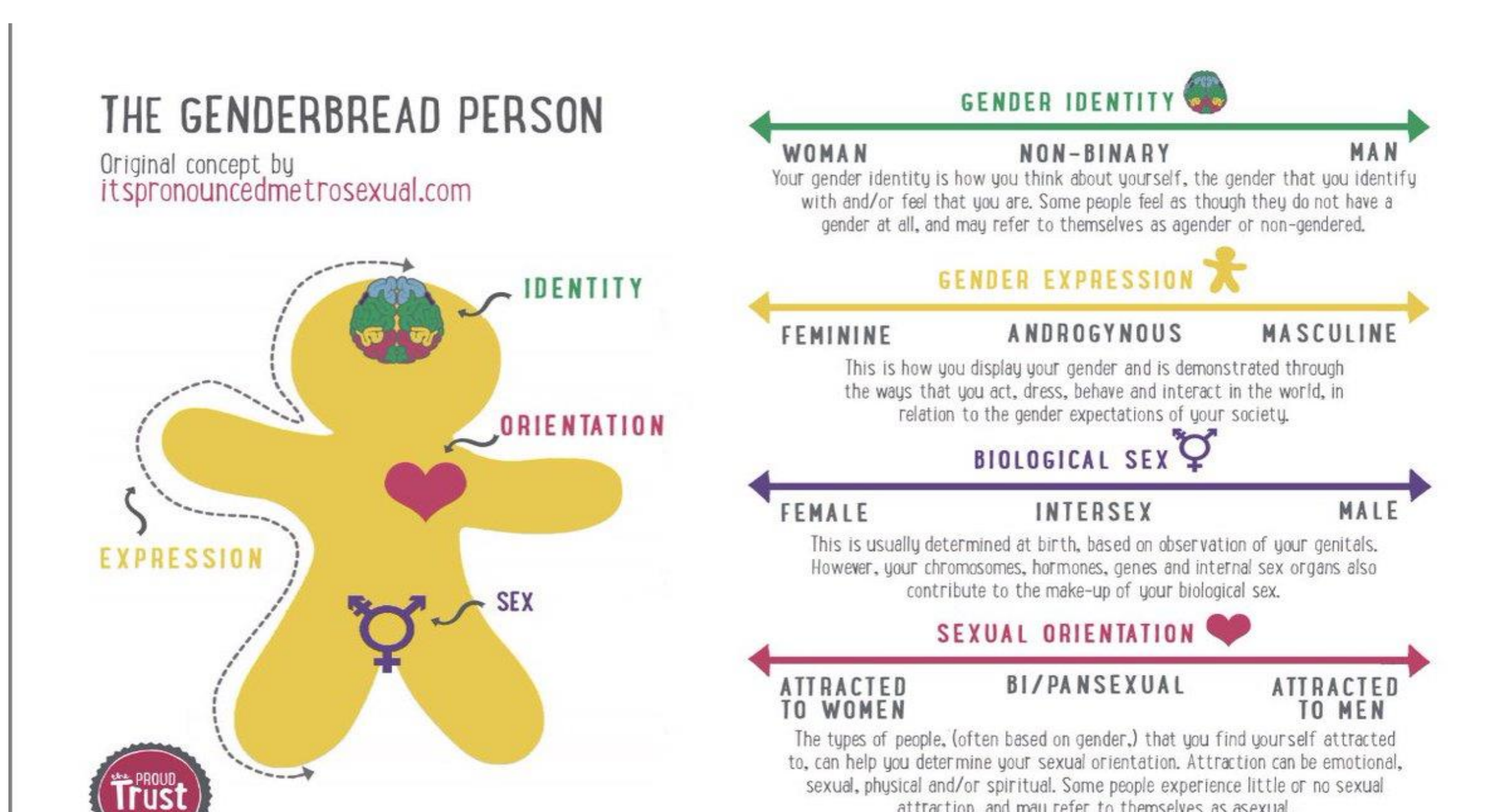
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Irish Blood Transfusion Service.

Introduction

The Irish Blood Transfusion Service welcomes potential donors, including transgender and non-binary donors and we accept the gender the donor identifies as.

Over the past two decades, the Republic of Ireland has experienced fundamental societal change, which has enhanced our awareness and acceptance of diversity. The Gender Recognition Act 2015, has led the IBTS to acknowledge the implications this may have for blood donation in Ireland. The Irish Blood Transfusion Service has actively been developing policies which recognises the needs and rights of transgender and non-binary donors, whilst carefully adhering to standards of safety for blood components and their recipients.

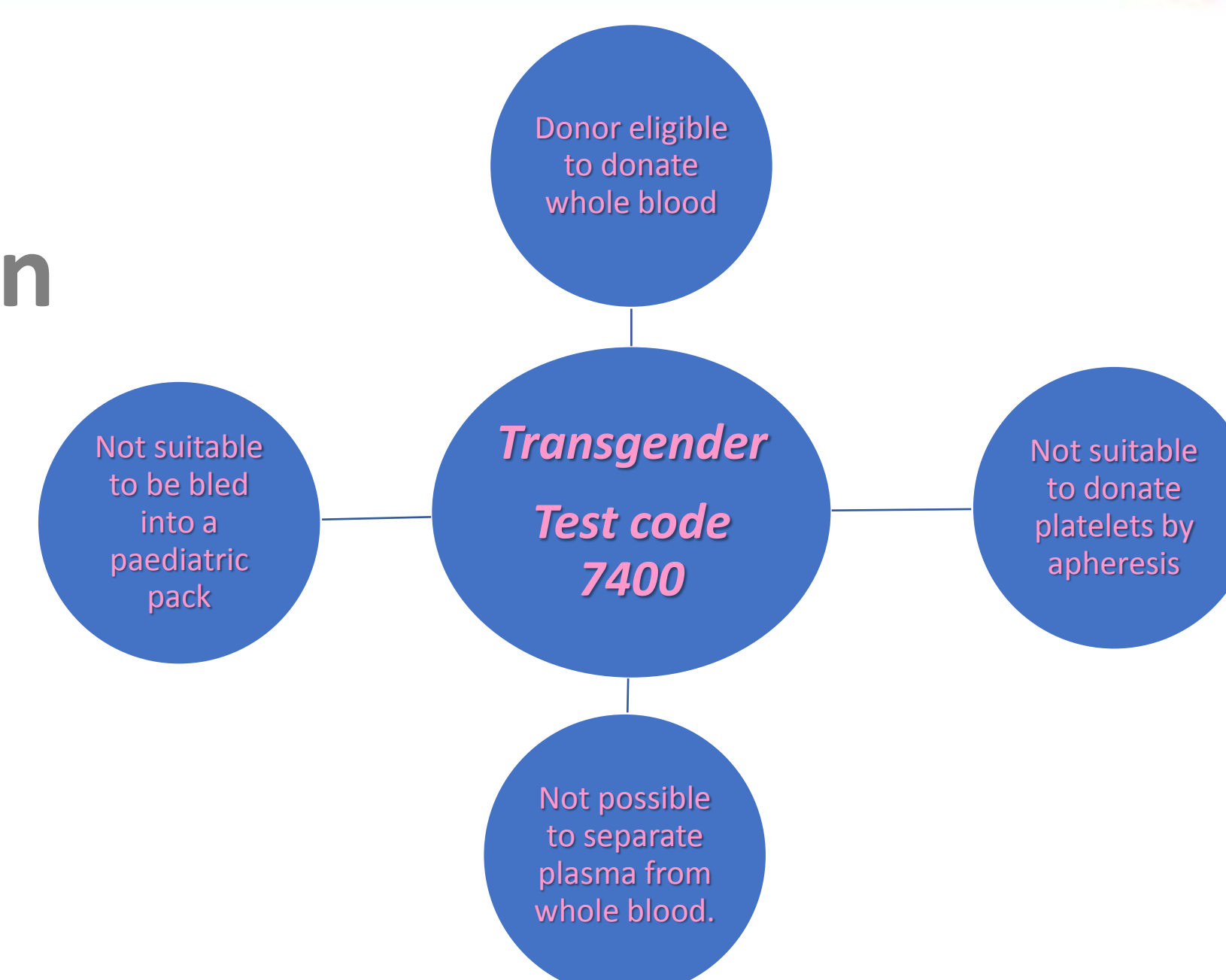
We reviewed International literature and liaised with our international colleagues to evaluate their experiences managing this group of donors. We engaged with non-governmental organisations with expertise in this area.



Terminology

- **Transgender Women** are individuals who were assigned male at birth but who have gender identities as women.
- **Transgender Men** are individuals who were assigned female at birth but who have gender identities as men.
- **Cisgender** refers to people whose current sex and gender identities match the ones they were assigned at birth.
- **Transition** refers to the personal, social and sometimes medical and surgical process by which someone's changes their gender.
- **Non binary, Genderqueer, Gender Non-conforming** Various umbrella terms for gender identities that fall outside of the binary of man or woman and thus do not conform to traditional gender roles. This includes a wide variety of gender identities.

Actions taken



Conclusion

Creating this policy for transgender donors increased staff awareness of the barriers and stigma that transgender individuals may experience. What is clearly evident from the research is the lack of training and education for healthcare providers and/or the lack of uptake of this training. Many issues that transgender individuals face in healthcare are related to a simple lack of understanding. These issues can easily be tackled with appropriately targeted mandatory training for healthcare providers. Hopefully with the raised awareness and societal changes all blood establishments will implement more inclusive guidelines that will ensure the safety of the donor and recipient alike.

Useful Advice

- Don't make assumptions- Ask the person their name and pronouns that they would like you to use.
- Be non-judgemental and understanding when talking to donors about their gender identity
- Always provide reassurance that confidentiality will be maintained.
- Educate yourself on terminology. Be aware that gender identity and sexuality are two different things.
- Approach certain topics with sensitivity, such as surgical history. (Health Service Executive, 2017).

Acknowledgements

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References:

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