

Achieving an authentic Gender Identity through gender reassignment

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“A clear and accurate diagnosis of gender dysphoria might signal the appropriateness of gender reassignment surgery (GRS).

It does not, however, ensure a successful outcome from gender reassignment.”

Lynda Quick, March 2014

Content of Presentation

- ❖ Atypical gender development, puberty and adolescence
- ❖ Missattuned gender development, puberty and adolescence
- ❖ Authentic gender development, puberty and adolescence

Atypical Gender Identity Begins *in utero*

- ❖ Sex differentiation of the gonads is completed during the first trimester of pregnancy
- ❖ Gender differentiation of the brain, organizational and, perhaps, structural is thought to occur during the second half of pregnancy
- ❖ These two processes can be influenced independently, which may result in an incongruence between sex development and gender identity, the later clinical consequence of which may be atypical gender identity development

Sexual differentiation of the human brain in relation to gender identity and sexual orientation:

Dick F. Swaab, MD, PhD & Alicia Garcia-Falgueras, PhD

Stages of Gender Identity Development Following Birth

- ❖ Age 2 years: Ability to identify gender from a picture of a boy or girl
- ❖ Age 3 years: Gender identity
- ❖ Age 4 years: Gender stability
- ❖ Age 5 to 8 years: Sex role stereotypes
- ❖ Age ~7 years: Gender constancy

Thompson 1975

Atypical Puberty / Adolescence

Following progression through the childhood gender identity stages, gender identity progresses in a linear fashion through puberty and adolescence

- ❖ Peer pressure
- ❖ “Fitting in”
- ❖ Sexuality

Atypical Female Gender Identity Development

Mother
X Chromosome

Conception

Father
X Chromosome

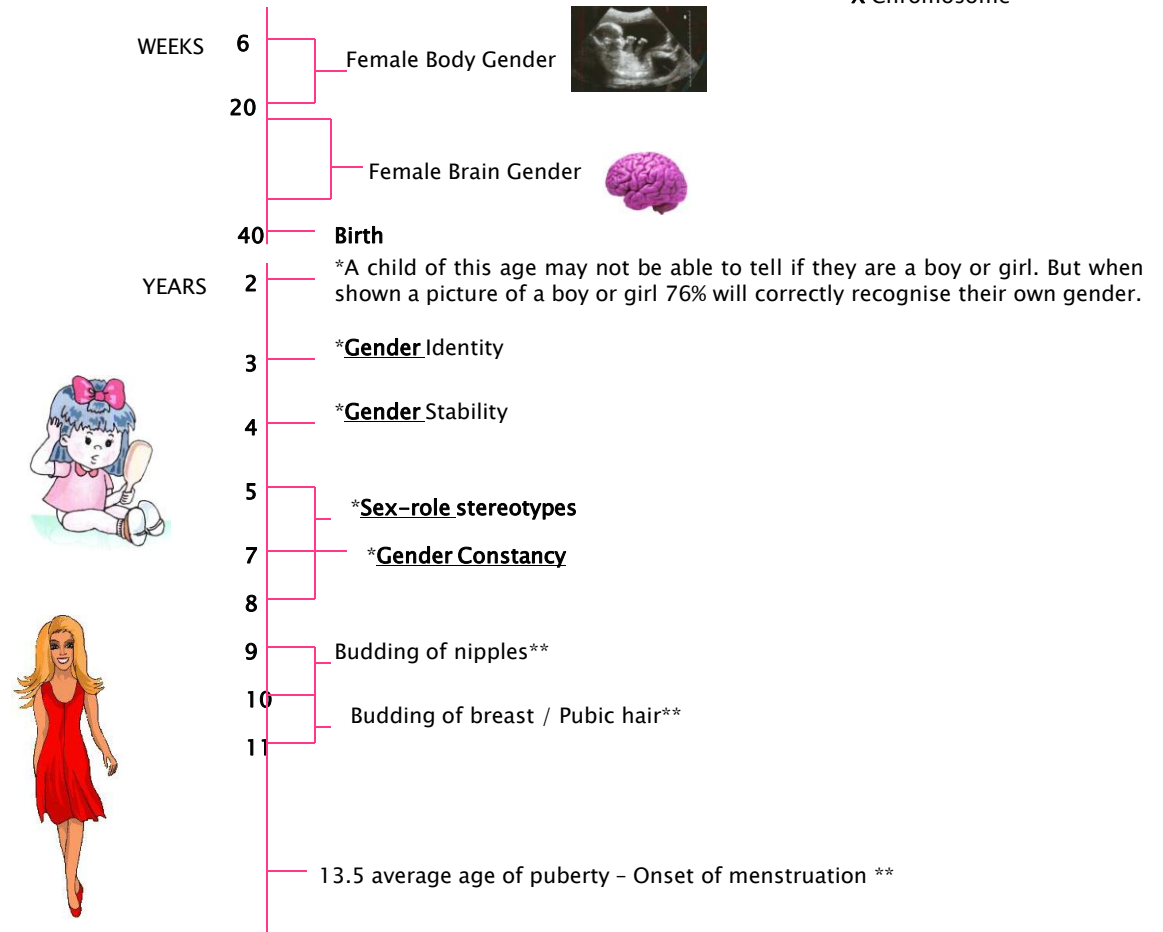


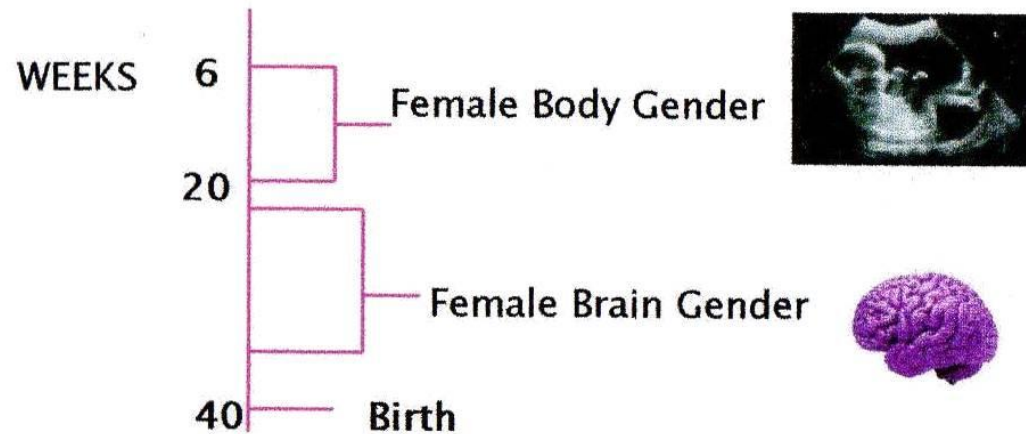
Chart 1 - Atypical female gender & anatomical gender development
*Thompson 1975, **Tanner 1962



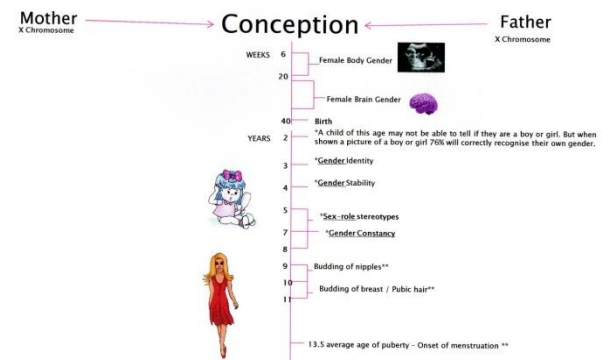
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Atypical Female Gender Identity Development

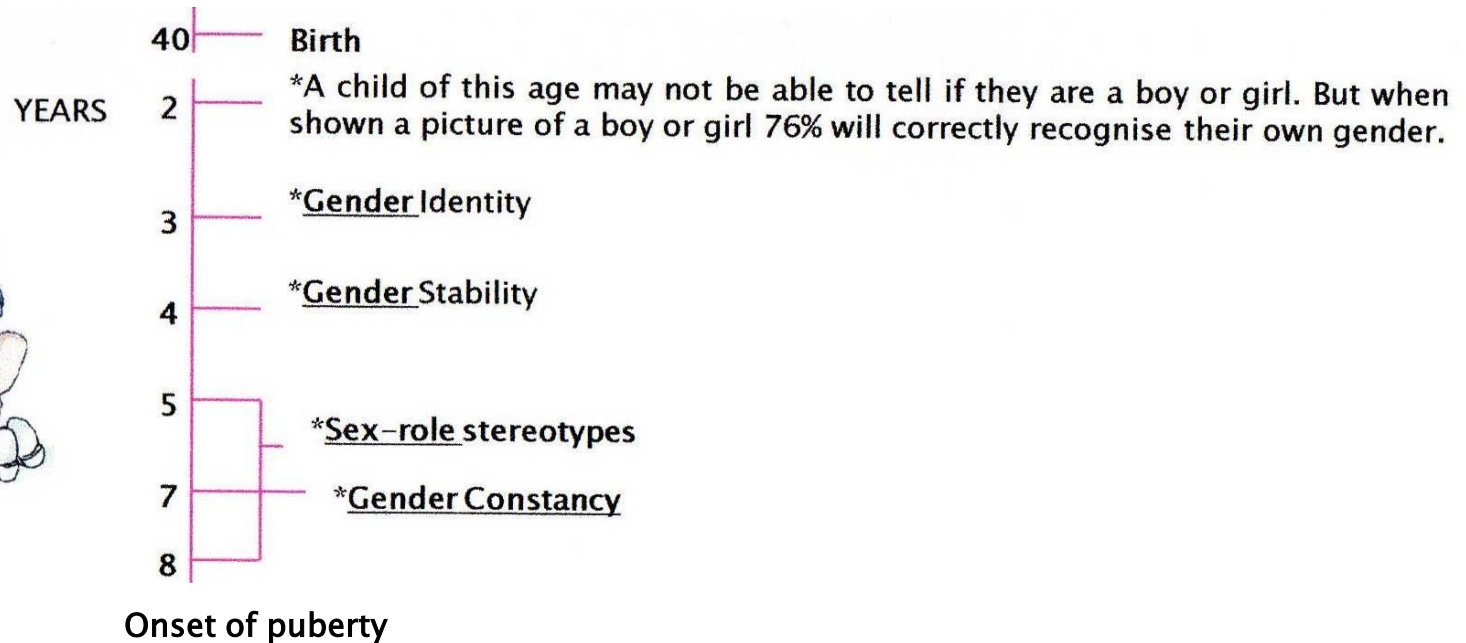
Conception



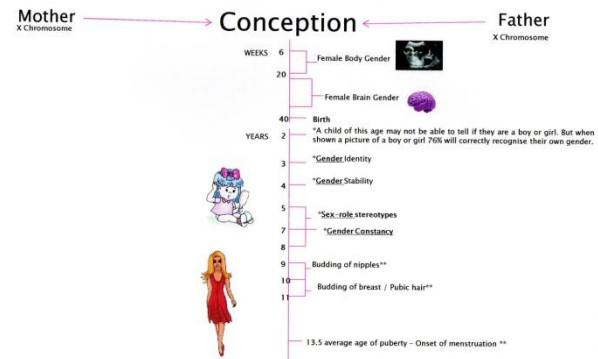
Atypical Female Gender Identity Development



Atypical Female Gender Identity Development



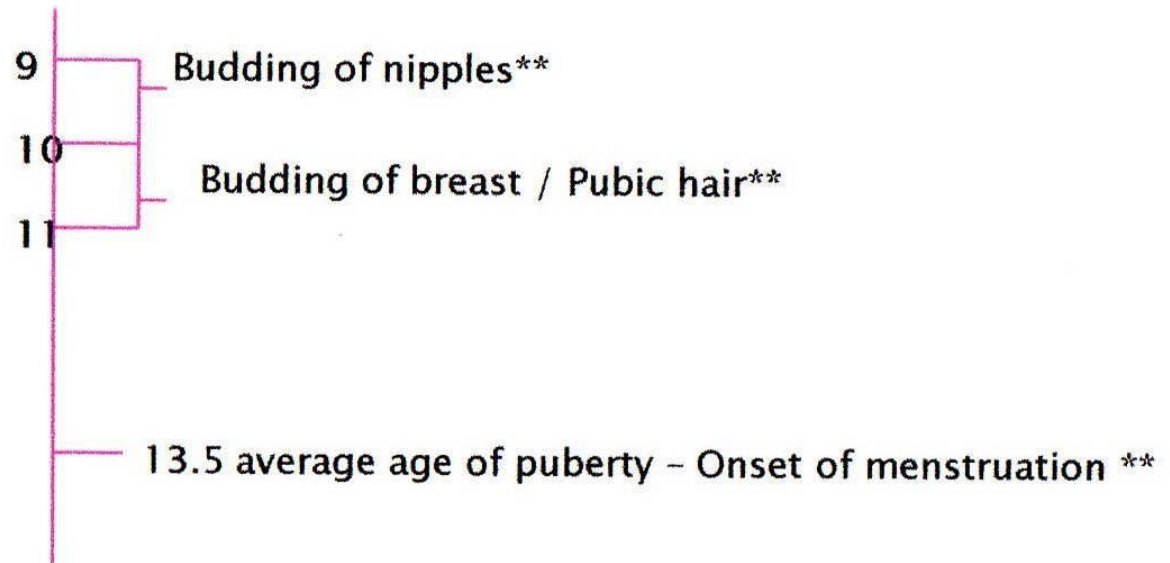
Atypical Female Gender Identity Development



Atypical Female Gender Identity Development



Onset of puberty

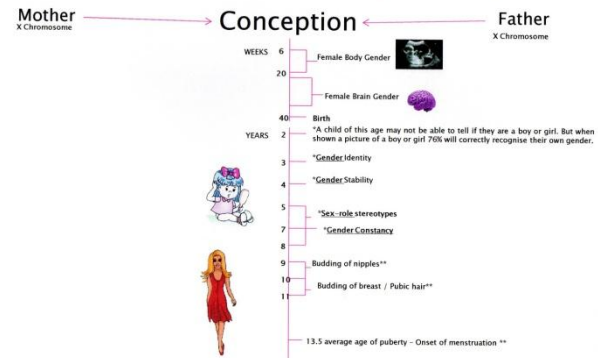


Adolescence

Adulthood

Ageing

Atypical Female Gender Identity Development



Atypical Male Gender Identity Development

Mother

X Chromosome



Male Body Gender

Female Brain Gender

Conception

Father

Y Chromosome

0 WEEKS

20

40

Birth

2

YEARS

3

4

5

7

8

10

11

12

13

14

15



*A child of this age may not be able to tell if they are a boy or girl. But when shown a picture of a boy or girl 76% will correctly recognise their own gender.

*Gender Identity

*Gender Stability

*Sex-role stereotypes

*Gender Constancy

First growth of penis & testicles**

Activity of prostate gland producing semen**

Pubic hair**

Age 14 / 15 Down on upper lip - Voice changes**

Puberty**

Chart 2- Atypical female gender & anatomical gender development
*Thompson 1975, **Tanner 1962



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Misattuned Gender Development in the Womb

- ❖ There are many possible variations that cause a mismatch between a person's biological gender and their gender identity
- ❖ There are occasions when the hormones that trigger development of gender (sex) and gender (identity) may not work properly on the brain, reproductive organs and genitals causing differences between them

Gender Dysphoria

Gender dysphoria refers to discomfort or distress that is caused by a discrepancy between a person's gender identity and that person's gender assigned at birth

The World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH) Standards of Care for the Health of Transsexual, Transgender, and Gender Nonconforming People. 7th Version.

Misattuned Gender Identity

- ❖ Age 3 – 5 years – the common age for the awareness of a person's misattuned gender identity
- ❖ True gender self becomes internalised

Consequences of misattuned gender during puberty and adolescence

- ❖ Family rejection
- ❖ Homelessness
- ❖ Education
- ❖ Fitting in (gender)
- ❖ Bullying / violence
- ❖ Health Care Discrimination
- ❖ Suicide
 - ❖ 41% of transgender and gender non-conforming people have attempted suicide, a rate far higher than the national average of 4.6%.

Misattuned Gender Identity Development F2M – Gender Dysphoria (Biological)

Mother

X Chromosome

Conception

Father

Y Chromosome

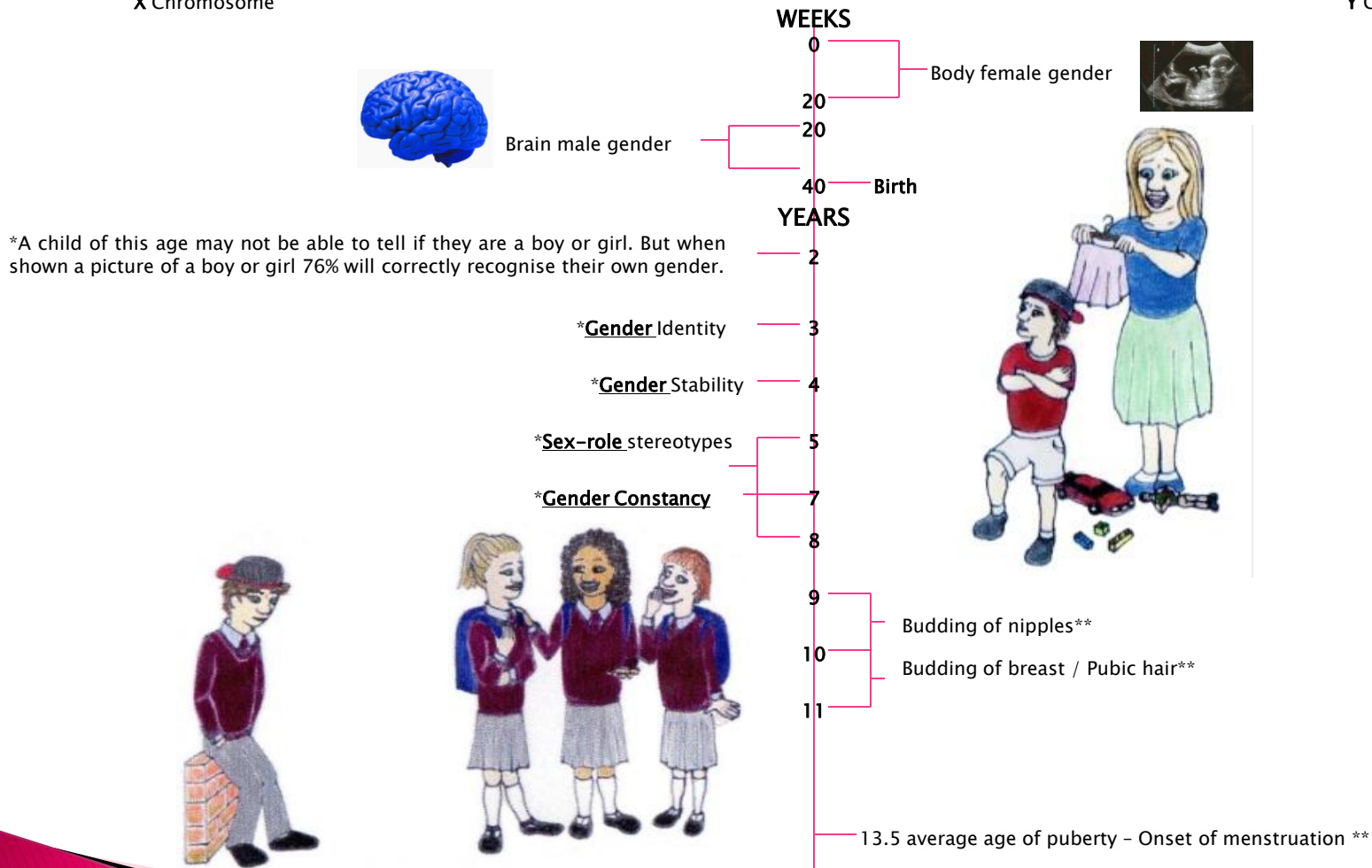


Chart 1 – Atypical female gender & anatomical gender development
*Thompson 1975, **Tanner 1962



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Authentic Puberty & Adolescence

- ❖ Cross-sex hormone treatment will contribute to psychosexual development associated with an authentic puberty
- ❖ However, there is a need for the mind and body to evolve in tandem

Achieving an Authentic Gender Identity

“reclaiming your inner child involves going back (to the time) in your life and finishing your unfinished business”

Bradshaw, J, *Home Coming* 1999, p56

Client Story



Achieving an Authentic Gender Identity

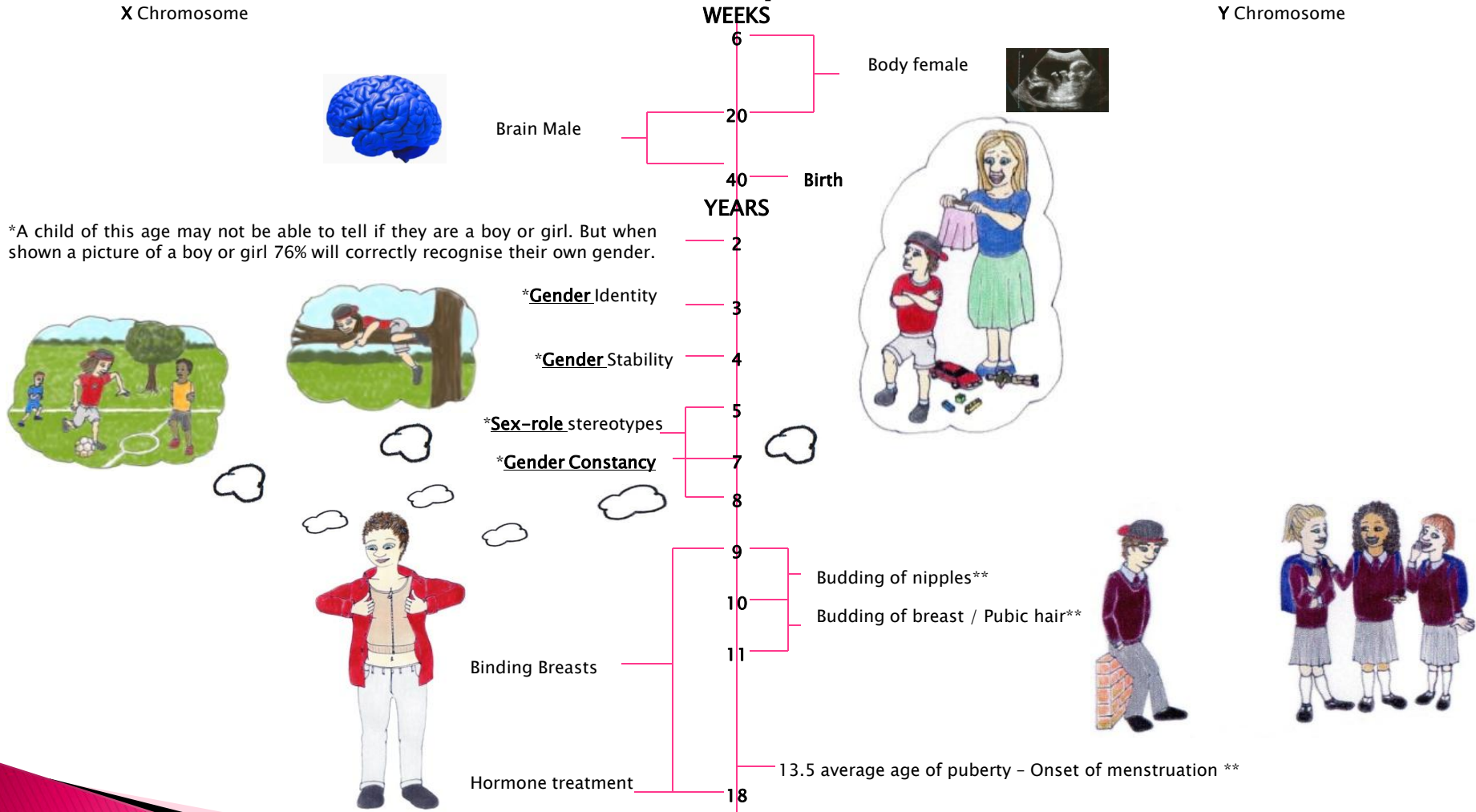
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Recycling of the Developmental Stages

- ❖ Stage One – The Power of Being...
- ❖ Stage Two – The Power of Doing...
- ❖ Stage Three – The Power of Thinking...

Adapted from Cycles of Power – Pam Levin 1988

Recycling of the Developmental Stages (Cont)

- ❖ Stage Four – The Power of Identity...
- ❖ Stage Five– The Power of Being Skilful...

Adapted from Cycles of Power – Pam Levin 1988

Recycling of the Developmental Stages (Cont)

- ❖ Stage Six– The Power of Regeneration...
- ❖ Stage Seven – The Power of Recycling...

Adapted from Cycles of Power – Pam Levin 1988

Completing Gender Reassignment Surgery

- ▶ Completion of Gender Reassignment Surgery is getting to the end of one journey
- ▶ It is also the beginning of the next journey, because there is a life after Gender Dysphoria

Completing Gender Reassignment Surgery

- ❖ Following GRS an unconscious process begins
- ❖ The person having completed GRS will reach *Gender Constancy*, attained at around age 7 with typical gender identity development
- ❖ This will be the time when they finally gain the awareness that their biological gender is now correct

Completing Gender Reassignment Surgery

- ❖ The person is now content with being a man or woman, and take it as a given
- ❖ They progress through life with the knowledge that their internal perception of their gender is in tune with their external gender
- ❖ However, they will be inexperienced as a man or woman

Thank You

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