



The Gender Quest Workbook: A Guide for Teens and Young Adults Exploring Gender Identity

By Rylan Jay Testa PhD, Deborah Coolhart PhD LMFT, Jayme Peta MA MS

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This one-of-a-kind, comprehensive workbook will help you navigate your gender identity and expression at home, in school, and with peers.

If you are a transgender and gender nonconforming (TGNC) teen, you may experience unique challenges with identity and interpersonal relationships. In addition to experiencing common teen challenges such as body changes and peer pressure, you may be wondering how to express your unique identity to others. *The Gender Quest Workbook* incorporates skills, exercises, and activities from evidence-based therapies—such as cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT)—to help you address the broad range of struggles you may encounter related to gender identity, such as anxiety, isolation, fear, and even depression.

Despite outdated beliefs, gender no longer implies being simply male or female, but rather a whole spectrum of possibilities. This fun, engaging workbook is designed specifically for teens like you who want to explore the concept of gender and gender identity and expression—whether you already identify as TGNC or are simply questioning your gender identity.

The activities in this book will help you explore your identity internally, interpersonally, and culturally. And along the way, you'll learn how to effectively express yourself and make informed decisions on how to navigate your gender with family, friends, classmates, and coworkers. The book also includes chapters on sex and dating, balancing multiple identities, and how to deal with stressful challenges when they arise.

The Gender Quest Workbook also features a brief downloadable guide for clinicians that explains ways professionals can better serve gender-expansive youth. The guide will address ways to help youth working with gender identity

build resilience against gender minority stress, among other topics.

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Gr 9 Up—A guide designed for teens who are interested in exploring gender. The authors present readers with steps to begin a "gender quest," giving the impression that developing one's identity and feeling comfortable with oneself is as easy as following a set of instructions. Through eight chapters, the writers cover gender identity, gender expression, family, school and work, friends and peers, dating and sex, multiple identities, and challenges. The definition and discussion of several terms are helpful for those unfamiliar with the subject as well as for those who are looking for ways to understand and accept their identities and expressions. Activities and exercises are provided in each chapter to help readers incorporate their discovery, exploration, and expression and reflect on the subjects discussed. The writing and layout are textbooklike, and the lack of illustrations might be a limitation for visual learners. The tone of the book is generally light but sometimes seems overly upbeat, considering the serious subject matter. **VERDICT** Recommended for collections seeking a "Gender 101" workbook for young adults.—Sujei Lugo, Boston Public Library, MA

Review

“What makes this book so powerful is the balance the authors strike between asking open-ended questions and offering readers tools from which to build answers... An invaluable resource for all young people on a gender quest.”

—**Kirkus** starred review

"From inconspicuous activities such as people watching to more task-oriented ideas for encouraging young people to broach their concerns to family members, this volume serves as a valuable resource."

—**Library Journal**

“*The Gender Quest Workbook* is an excellent resource for any young person who would like to explore gender. The authors really cover all the bases and bring to life the process by which a person can feel supported in bringing self-determination and creativity to expressing their gender. The language used is clear and user-friendly. I would absolutely recommend this to my clients. Testa, Coolhart, and Peta make excellent tour guides through this journey!”

—**Sand Chang, PhD**, clinical psychologist and gender specialist in the Kaiser Permanente Multi-Specialty Transitions Department, chair of the American Psychological Association (APA) Committee on Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity (CSOGD), and coauthor of the *APA Guidelines for Psychological Practice with Transgender and Gender Nonconforming People*

“We invite youth today to embark on their own unique gender journey. But imagine hiking into the wilderness without a map. Now, with the publication of *The Gender Quest Workbook*, Rylan Jay Testa, Deborah Coolhart, and Jayme Peta have provided just such a detailed topographical map for gender exploration. *The Gender Quest Workbook* is an invaluable resource for any youth wanting to explore their gender, and for the professionals and family members accompanying the youth on their venture. Just a

generation ago, youth gender quests remained a topic of which we did not speak. *The Gender Quest Workbook* has broken that sound barrier by giving youth a place for their voice, inviting them to put words to their own journey as they engage in the exercises so brilliantly laid out by Testa, Coolhart, and Peta.”

—**Diane Ehrensaft, PhD**, director of mental health at the Child and Adolescent Gender Center, associate professor of pediatrics at the University of California, San Francisco, and author of *Gender Born*, *Gender Made* and *The Gender Creative Child*

“This workbook is an important resource for the transgender community. I wish I’d had something like it when I was coming out to myself.”

—**Greta Gustava Martela**, cofounder and executive director of Trans Lifeline, the first national crisis line for transgender people

“Informative, supportive, and fun. These playful and engaging exercises are powerful tools for self-discovery. I wish I’d had this guide as a teenager. Any young adult exploring gender will find freedom in these pages.”

—**Nick Krieger**, author of *Nina Here Nor There*

“The only book of its kind, *The Gender Quest Workbook* is an invaluable resource for transgender and gender-questioning youth, their families, the professionals in their lives, and anyone who is interested in ‘undoing gender brainwashing.’”

—**Zander Keig, LCSW**, coeditor of *Letters for My Brothers* and *Manning Up*, and featured in the documentary *Zanderology*

“*The Gender Quest Workbook* is a wonderful new resource for exploring the evolving landscape of gender. Providing a road map for young people of any gender to examine their own experiences and understanding of this core aspect of self, this important tool also affirms the authenticity of individuals who find themselves in the less crowded terrain somewhere along the gender spectrum. Whether cisgender or gender expansive, more and more young people are personalizing their gender stories. *The Gender Quest Workbook* will play a critical role in shaping the narratives they create.”

—**Joel Baum, MS**, senior director of professional development and family services at Gender Spectrum, and founding member and director of education and advocacy at the Child and Adolescent Gender Center at the University of California, San Francisco

“*The Gender Quest Workbook* is the perfect answer for anyone who is tired of textbooks and looking for a little fun! What better way to explore this topic than to get a chance to think about all the aspects of your gender in a step-by-step book.”

—**Laura Erickson-Schroth, MD, MA**, psychiatrist and editor of *Trans Bodies, Trans Selves*

“*The Gender Quest Workbook* took me, a well-balanced adult transsexual, on a journey of gender discovery, showing me parts of myself I did not know existed. The overwhelming benefit of this kind of self-examination for our transgender youth is an utmost necessity for early identification. A positive future for

our transgender children is greatly enhanced by teachers, clinicians, and parents utilizing this outstanding resource.”

—**Rachael Rose Luckey**, filmmaker and transgender rights advocate

About the Author

Rylan Jay Testa, PhD, is assistant professor in the psychology department at Rhodes College, and research affiliate of the Center for LGBTQ Evidence-based Applied Research (CLEAR). As a clinical psychologist, his research focuses on understanding and preventing self-destructive behaviors and health disparities, particularly among transgender and gender-nonconforming people. He is highly respected for his work in both the field of psychology and in the transgender and gender-nonconforming community.

Deborah Coolhart, PhD, LMFT, is a licensed marriage and family therapist, and assistant professor at the Syracuse University Marriage and Family Therapy program. Her clinical and scholarly work focuses on the strengths and challenges of transgender people and their loved ones, and she has published several journal articles and book chapters on transgender-related topics. Coolhart created a clinical team of master’s students who work specifically with transgender clients, their partners, and their families in a free university clinic—providing a valuable service to the transgender community in New York.

Jayne Peta, MA, MS, has been working with and for transgender and gender-nonconforming youth for over fifteen years. Peta holds a master’s degree in counseling psychology from Naropa University, and is a doctoral candidate in clinical psychology at Palo Alto University. Peta has given numerous trainings and workshops on working with transgender populations, and taught as an adjunct instructor in Naropa University’s psychology department. Peta’s current research examines the childhood experiences of transgender adults.

Foreword writer **Ryan K. Sallans, MA**, is a public speaker, diversity trainer, consultant, publisher, and author of the book *Second Son*. Sallans specializes in health care, workplace, and college campus issues surrounding the LGBTQIA community, with a specialized focus on the transgender community. For the past fifteen years, he has worked with organizations and universities on LGBTQ social issues, creating transgender-inclusive environments, and media literacy related to eating disorders, body image, and gender.

Afterword writer **Arlene Istar Lev, LCSW-R, CASAC**, is founder and clinical director of Choices Counseling and Consulting and TIGRIS: The Training Institute for Gender, Relationships, Identity, and Sexuality in Albany, NY. She is a lecturer at the University at Albany, and project director of the Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Project (SOGI). Istar is also clinical supervisor for Center Support Counseling Services at the Pride Center of the Capital Region. She is author of *The Complete Lesbian and Gay Parenting Guide* and *Transgender Emergence*, winner of the APA Division 44 Distinguished Book Award.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

James Lindberg:

As people who live in the actual modest era should be revise about what going on or facts even knowledge to make these keep up with the era which can be always change and move ahead. Some of you maybe may update themselves by studying books. It is a good choice for yourself but the problems coming to anyone is you don't know what kind you should start with. This The Gender Quest Workbook: A Guide for Teens and

Young Adults Exploring Gender Identity is our recommendation to make you keep up with the world. Why, as this book serves what you want and wish in this era.

Howard Kincaid:

Information is provisions for those to get better life, information today can get by anyone at everywhere. The information can be a knowledge or any news even an issue. What people must be consider while those information which is in the former life are challenging to be find than now could be taking seriously which one is suitable to believe or which one typically the resource are convinced. If you get the unstable resource then you buy it as your main information you will see huge disadvantage for you. All of those possibilities will not happen inside you if you take The Gender Quest Workbook: A Guide for Teens and Young Adults Exploring Gender Identity as the daily resource information.

Tara Smith:

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