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Eating and Identity: Challenges and Opportunities for Trans and Gender Diverse Folks

The eating behaviours of trans and gender diverse (TGD) people are shaped by an interplay of gender identity, neurodivergence, and environmental influences, as detailed by Schweizer and colleagues (2025) in their recent article in the [International Journal of Transgender Health](https://doi.org/10.1080/26895269.2024.2447765). Their study underscores the importance of addressing unique barriers to healthy eating faced by this population.

Key Findings

Intentional eating practices, such as focusing on nutrient-rich foods or adjusting dietary habits to support gender-affirming goals, were identified as health-promoting behaviours. However, harmful patterns, including restrictive eating and binge-purge cycles are prevalent. These behaviours are often linked to gender dysphoria and societal pressures, particularly around achieving an "ideal" body type that aligns with gender identity. Such pressures can exacerbate disordered eating and contribute to mental health challenges.

Food insecurity emerges as a critical barrier, with many TGD people lacking access to nutritious food options due to socioeconomic disadvantages and discrimination. The study also highlights gaps in healthcare: the absence of gender-affirming nutritional guidance leaves people navigating these challenges without adequate support.

Schweizer and colleagues advocate for a multi-disciplinary approach to tackle these issues. Healthcare providers must adopt gender-affirming, person-centred practices, integrating insights from dietitians, psychologists, and exercise professionals. Community programs that provide affordable, nutritious food options can further bridge gaps in access and support.

Supporting Healthy Eating



Shift focus away from weight to overall health



Improve screening and prevention of disordered eating



Enhance access to gender-affirming care



Connect to community and peer support

The study's findings remind us that healthy eating for TGD people is not just about nutrition—it's about fostering self-acceptance and well-being. Addressing systemic barriers and providing inclusive, evidence-based guidance will empower trans people to develop positive, sustainable relationships with food.



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