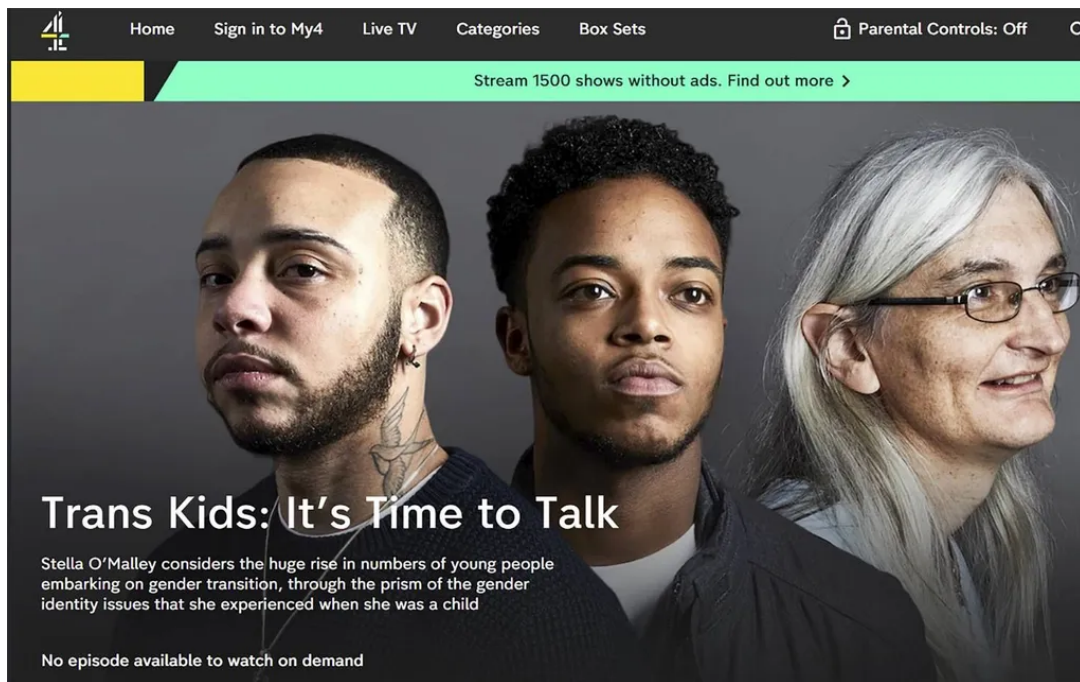


## Stella O'Malley: Transactivists' actions endanger children

Tineke van der Waal January 4, 2022 16:02



The documentary "Trans Kids. It's time to talk" on the British channel Channel4 provoked strong reactions. image Screenshot Channel4



### EDUCATION & UPBRINGING

To support parents of children with questions about gender, Stella O'Malley founded Genspect last year. The psychotherapist encounters the gender questions of young people and parents in her practice. She has major questions about the desirability of hormone treatments in young people.

The 46-year-old Irish knows what it is like to be a "trans child". "I lived like a boy, was treated and accepted like a boy. I can easily empathize with the challenges of children who don't exactly fit their gender." Still, O'Malley emerged from puberty as a woman. "I couldn't really remember the boy. I am very happy that I am a woman now, and I completely accept who I am. But what if I was a teenager today, and not in the 70s and 80s? For sure I would go online, want hormone treatments and go into transition. The question is where that would have taken me."

O'Malley presented her childhood experiences three years ago in the documentary "Trans Kids. It's time to talk" on UK TV network Channel4. It gave her a new experience. "It was painful to see



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trans activists making all kinds of attempts to stop the film. I then realized how the actions of trans activists stood in the way of the adequate treatment of vulnerable children."

In addition to being a psychotherapist, O'Malley is the author of a number of bestsellers and works for various newspapers, radio and TV programs. With Genspect she wants to support parents who are concerned about the gender treatment of their child. At the end of November 2021, the alliance, which represents seventeen parent organizations from fifteen different countries, convened a conference on ROGD: emerging gender dysphoria in a short time.

*Why is Genspect targeting parents?*

"The voice of parents is not heard in public. They are loving, liberal, progressive and well educated and they seek quality treatment for their children with gender issues. Meanwhile, they become increasingly unhappy with the treatment their child is being offered. They love their child and want to protect them from unnecessary harm."

*What's the problem?*

"There is a lack of scientifically good quality evidence for medical intervention in young people who believe they are transgender and its long-term effects are unknown. That is the problem. At the same time, we see that censorship plays a role. The summary of much scientific research, which is available for free, lists the most positive results. The fine print with negative results and restrictions is hidden behind a paywall.



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I am thinking of a British study into hormones that should ensure that a child does not enter puberty. The researchers compared children who used puberty inhibitors with the group that was still on the waiting list. In the summary you can read that after twelve months of use of puberty inhibitors, children functioned better psychosocially than the control group. The research behind the paywall revealed something very different: after eighteen months, there was no clinically or statistically significant difference between the two groups of children. In fact, the study made it clear that puberty inhibitors show no improvement."

*What do you advise young people who are uncomfortable with their biological gender?*

"There are many ways to achieve body acceptance and peace of mind. Connecting with others is often essential to one's well-being, as is deepening quality relationships. Therefore, I would advise young people to limit the time they spend online. Instead, it's good if they expand their world beyond their bedroom and their "technology." Sometimes a person benefits from psychotherapy, where you get help discovering your unconscious motivations and the inner workings of your psyche. Others prefer physical challenge, "heavy" activities that remind you of what your body can do rather than what it looks like. Gender-related suffering is not that different from other types of mental problems and it is often valuable to focus on art,

*What do you say to fellow psychotherapists?*

"This is an area in which competent therapists are urgently needed. However, many psychotherapists are reluctant to work with this group. It is useful if they master the language, the concepts and the problem, so that words or a lack of background information do not stand in the way of a real understanding of the problem.

In any case, each psychotherapist can use his own expertise. Gender-related distress manifests itself in ways that are similar to other disorders, such as eating and anxiety disorders or body dysmorphism.”

### Expanding care for transgenders

Transgender care has expanded considerably on all fronts in the past two years. For years, Amsterdam UMC (location VUmc) and UMC Groningen were the only hospitals that treated people with unease about their biological gender, Radboudumc in Nijmegen has also been doing this since March 2021. Transgenders can now also go to clinics in Velsen and Bosch en Duin for surgical procedures. Psychological care has grown by about 60 percent in the past two years, while the options for hormone treatments have more than doubled during this time.

Growth is the answer to increasing demand. In 2020, 42 percent more Dutch people sought professional transgender help than the year before, while the number of people waiting for an intake increased by a third after the summer of 2020. While the Amsterdam clinic treated 34 people in 1980, last spring 4729 people were waiting for an intake.

The fact that the demand for transgender care is growing is not typically Dutch. This development can be seen in all western countries, with the English-speaking countries in the lead. Database The Gender Map is working on mapping gender clinics for adults and children. “When I started this I thought I would discover 50-60 clinics per country,” a volunteer tweeted earlier this year. “There are currently 773 in North America and Australia and they are open every day.”

In Groot-Brittannië is het aantal mensen dat van geslacht wil veranderen twintig keer zo hoog als tien jaar geleden, rapporteerde de Britse Gender Identity Development Service (GIDS). Meest opvallend is dat het vooral tieners zijn die de stijging veroorzaken. Nederland, Nieuw-Zeeland, Finland en Canada laten vergelijkbare exponentiële groei zien.

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