

A place for everyone at Gender Dynamix

There's a place for everyone dealing with transgender issues at Gender Dynamix.

The organisation is based at Tauranga's Historic Village and has seven staff, five of them trans themselves. There's also an Eastern Bay group working out of Whakatāne.

Senior Gender Counsellor Einstein Hale says they specialise in working with the most at-risk of the LGBTI+ community, working with all age groups and their families.

“As the kids are transitioning, so are the families. We also work in schools and the workplaces to grow understanding.”

Through SocialLink it offers Transgender 101 training, with another course starting in June. Staff have also taken part in SocialLink's fundraising training.

They work with 450 to 500 clients ranging from small children aged five to 10 and their parents, teens, and adults who are transitioning.

Hale says in two months they would have seen 1000 contacts, with 20 to 23 one-on-one meetings a week. They offer peer support, therapy with a psychologist - whatever the client needs.

“It may be social - changing their clothes, their names or their pronouns. We can go shopping with them and guide them through the medical and legal transition.

“A lot of work is helping them deal with cultural wounds. They may have internalised transphobia, and may have been in a family where there has been physical and emotional abuse. We meet their needs.”

Hale says trans people are twice as likely to suffer addictions, suicide ideation and suffer physical, sexual or emotional assault.

“A lot are attacked and the community has normalised aggression. We focus on a community of love, support and validation, teaching them how to tolerate and protect themselves, building self love and acceptance.”

The group works in schools and workplaces, teaching cultural sensitivity and offering training for psychologists, nurses and doctors on how to meet this marginalised community's needs. It works with DHB mental health transgender services.

“Our culture is changing. While homophobia is still there, it's harder to see these days with the LGB community. But the trans community is still decades behind.”

Photo: Intentional Peer Support Specialists Rebecca Milne and Cameron Wright with Einstein Hale (centre).