

My name is Billy Burleigh. I used to be transgender but am no longer. I would like to share my experience with the therapy I received prior to transitioning to presenting as female, and the therapy I received when I detransitioned back to male.

As a child I had the reoccurring thought that, "God made a mistake, I'm a girl." I prayed before going to bed and, every time I prayed, I asked, "God, please make me a girl before I wake up." If I could have, I would have quickly chosen any path that would have transformed me into a girl.

When I was in my early 20s, I sought help for the disconnect between my mind telling me I was a woman, and my body telling me I was a man. In seeking help and doing my own research, the message I received was that I had to change my body to match my mind. After seeking any other path forward, I decided to take the therapists' encouragement, and the advice I read in journal articles and in books, to change my body.

In my late 20's, I started on a testosterone blocker and estrogen. In my early 30's I had bottom surgery and many other body and voice feminization surgeries. But no matter how many I had, every time I looked in the mirror, I saw a man staring back at me. I tried hard to resolve the conflict between my mind and my body, but after seven years of trying, I had more problems at that point than I had when I started on the road of transition.

In my early 40's, I detransitioned. In changing my legal identification back to male, I went through another surgery. To have female-to-male surgery, the surgeon required approval letters from two therapists. The therapists I saw said that I was not transgender and never should have been diagnosed, or affirmed, as transgender. They said I was male.

As a little boy, I had many problems. I was very skinny, had a speech impediment, had learning difficulties, was not athletic, was picked on, and I didn't seem to fit-in with the other boys. And, in the sixth grade, I was sexually abused. The therapists I saw in my early 20's never did uncover, never did delve into, these underlying issues. The therapists I saw in my early 40's did delve into these, and other, childhood issues.

In summary, I received gender-affirming health care in my 20's. The therapists affirmed my thoughts that I was a woman trapped in a man's body. As a result, I spent well over \$100,000 on my transition to presenting as female. I'm surgically modified; I have a scared body; I must take weekly testosterone injections, and I can no longer have sex. The bottom line is that receiving gender-affirming health care, and transitioning, did not resolve the childhood issues that I struggled with. I truly wish I would have received mental health care instead of gender affirming health care. I wish the therapists that I saw in my early 20's would have questioned my perceived gender identity, my confusion, and sought to help me with the underlying causes, which were my many childhood hurts and pains that I pushed into my subconscious. Gender affirming mental health care did great harm to me.

It's to late for me, but for others, please vote "No" on HB2458