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**Information and support needs of cis-women partnered with transmasculine persons
during their transition.**

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Abstract

Cis-women partnered with transmasculine persons during their transition experience their own struggles related to the transition process. A small body of previous literature has explored the experiences of cis-women with emphasis on their relationship with their partner and identity struggles, primarily involving their sexuality. Researchers have argued that the cis-partners go through their own transition and further research is needed, especially to consider the information and support needs of cis-partners. The present study sought to address this gap in literature within a New Zealand context. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with four cis-women who were partnered with their transmasculine partner during their transition. Participants were invited to share their experiences of the transition processes with an emphasis on their individual information and support needs. Thematic analysis (TA) was used to analyse the interviews allowing for similarities and differences among the participants to emerge. Analysis showed that the cis-women's differing relationships are all affected by the transition. Along the same lines as previous literature, their relationships with their partner and themselves were affected by heteronormative assumptions. Some of the cis-women questioned their sexuality and belonging within the lesbian community. The current study provided new insights into the experiences of cis-women with medical professionals, friends, family, and peer relationships. As New Zealand lacks in consistent guidelines for transitioning and surgical procedures, there were frustrations experienced with medical professionals, with a lack of credible information on what to expect from the transition. The cis-women also experienced struggles with obtaining non-judgemental support from their friends and family, in addition to having their time within these relationships consumed by the transition. This creates barriers to utilising their support through difficult transition experiences. Due to the lack of non-judgemental support, the cis-women sought other partners however they were not always accessible to them. When peer relationships were possible, they were able to provide the support participants needed and insights into the transition process that were helpful. Two reoccurring needs emerge from the analysis: credible information and non-judgemental support.

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