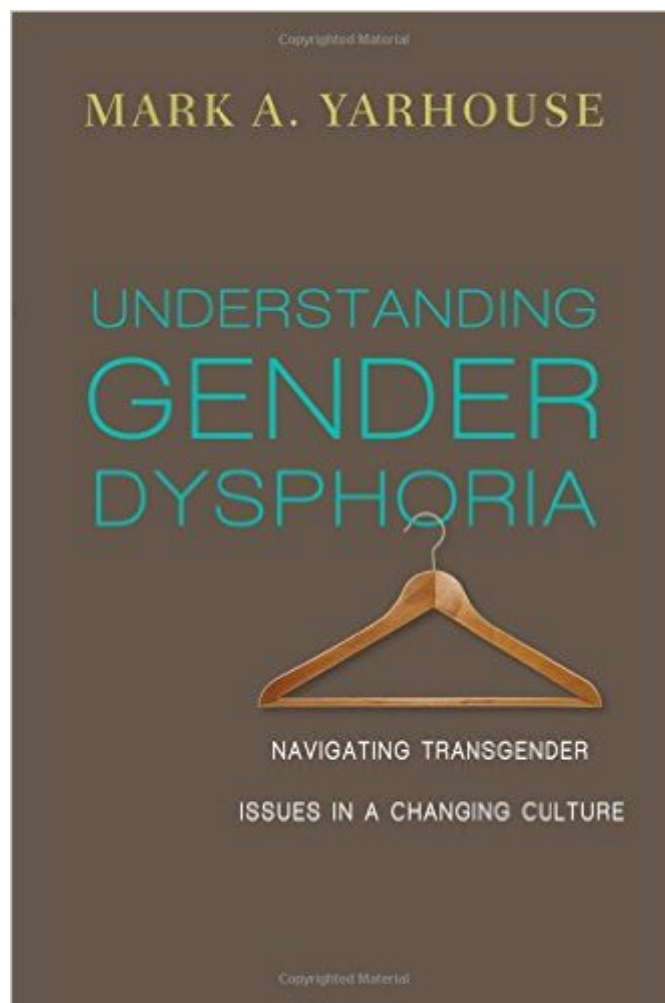


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# Understanding Gender Dysphoria: Navigating Transgender Issues In A Changing Culture (Christian Association For Psychological Studies Books)



## Synopsis

Foreword Reviews' 18th Annual INDIEFAB Honorable Mention for Psychology Few topics are more contested today than gender identity. In the fog of the culture war, complex issues like gender dysphoria are reduced to slogans and sound bites. And while the war rages over language, institutions and political allegiances, transgender individuals are the ones who end up being the casualties. Mark Yarhouse, an expert in sexual identity and therapy, challenges the church to rise above the political hostilities and listen to people's stories. In *Understanding Gender Dysphoria*, Yarhouse offers a Christian perspective on transgender issues that eschews simplistic answers and appreciates the psychological and theological complexity. The result is a book that engages the latest research while remaining pastorally sensitive to the experiences of each person. In the midst of a tense political climate, Yarhouse calls Christians to come alongside those on the margins and stand with them as they resolve their questions and concerns about gender identity. *Understanding Gender Dysphoria* is the book we need to navigate these stormy cultural waters.

## Book Information

Series: Christian Association for Psychological Studies Books

Paperback: 191 pages

Publisher: IVP Academic (June 22, 2015)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0830828591

ISBN-13: 978-0830828593

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.5 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 8.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (32 customer reviews)

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## Customer Reviews

Dr. Yarhouse's book is a unique and extremely valuable contribution to the discussion on gender identity, gender dysphoria, and how a local church can engage with people who experience gender dysphoria. The book is targeted towards Christians who are seeking to understand what gender dysphoria is and how to respond to it in a biblical way. However, I expect any person who is

interested in the topic will gain something from it. This book is unique because Dr. Yarhouse possesses a unique combination of several crucial characteristics: (1) formal Christian theological training; (2) formal psychological training; and (3) over a decade of clinical experience in treating people who experience gender dysphoria. This combination of characteristics sets him apart from almost every other Christian who has published something on this topic and makes him one of the most authoritative voices that the evangelical church has for summarizing the latest research and providing thoughts on a way ahead. I found this book to be incredibly valuable for a number of reasons that I will attempt to summarize briefly. First, the book's tone is very gracious and respectful. While this kind of respect should be the standard, in my experience it is not uncommon for people to write about transgender issues with tones of disdain. Throughout the book, Dr. Yarhouse puts in reminders that people who experience gender dysphoria are not any less worthy of respect than the average person, even saying (p. 41) "I acknowledge that we are all of us a bit disordered."

Author: Mark Yarhouse  
Publisher: CAPS Books (IVP Academic)  
Reading Level: Moderate  
Pages: 191

"We do not want to artificially endorse rigid gender stereotypes that make cultural normative expression of gender roles a marker of obedience to God or something along those lines."

(150-151) I am breaking my book review rule "I am writing in first person. Publications from IVP on sensitive subjects have a way of doing this. I requested *Understanding Gender Dysphoria: Navigating Transgender Issues in a Changing Culture* (henceforth UGD) about a month before news broke on Bruce Jenner "henceforth Caitlyn Jenner. Shortly after the Jenner nighttime news special I found myself sitting on a porch discussing transgender issues. It did not surprise me how uninformed people (including myself) were about transgender issues. What was surprising was the general lack of interest concerning the issue. The Internet went wild with defenders of Caitlyn Jenner. Her decision to come out publically put the transgender issue on the map of even the casual American. The church was lurching forward at least a decade on a subject they would rather not know existed. I tried to stay silent as I waited for Mark Yarhouse's book to be delivered. It went straight to the top of my review stack and I read it quickly despite some rather large, and current, deterrents to reading books. UGD is a phenomenal introduction to one particular portion of the transgender community "those who suffer from Gender Dysphoria. Key terms are provided for individuals unfamiliar with the issues (11). "No one navigates gender identity concerns in a vacuum" (23) and Yarhouse ensures that readers can identify Gender Dysphoria in a growing culture of many transgender issues.

While searching for resources to assist my parents in understanding transsexuality, I stumbled across this book and decided to give it a read. It's written from a Christian perspective, and my mother specifically raised concerns about being able to incorporate an understanding of transsexuality into her faith framework. So, I've been on the lookout for such resources. While I don't exactly hold the same beliefs as my parents when it comes to Christianity, I'm reasonably well educated in Christian doctrines. So, from that perspective - I found that for the most part, this book is fair and compassionate in its exploration of gender dysphoria. I also think it does a decent job of exploring the spiritual and religious ramifications of what it means to be transgender, particularly in the way it presents many different ideas on how these two concepts could be meshed together, and the pro's and con's of each. It also gives a good overview of some of the scientific theories behind the etiology of transgenderism in general. That Said. I have some issues with the book, from what I've read so far. If you're trans and are looking to give this book to someone as a resource, there are some things you need to be aware of.<sup>1</sup> This book makes certain assumptions that I don't agree with, that I find quite arbitrary, and that I think contradict reality. The most glaring of these is the author's framing of the idea of "deconstructing sex/gender" - basically, the idea that biological sex is a spectrum rather than a strict dichotomy - as radical, subversive, and "bad". In my mind, the very existence of trans and intersex people seems to demonstrate that there can be gradations in between the poles of male and female.

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