



www.TransActiveOnline.org

Mailing Address: 1631 NE Broadway Street, 355-T, Portland, OR 97232 | Tel: 503-252-3000 | Fax: 503-255-3367

Dear Parent, Caregiver or Guardian,

A child or youth you know has been in contact with our staff regarding our “In a Bind” chest binder exchange program. We provide safe, ergonomically designed chest binders free-of-charge to youth who may not have the means to purchase one for themselves. We also assist youth from families at every economic level to have the sometimes difficult conversation with their parents about what chest binders are and why they want one.

Chest binders are compression garments used by female-bodied individuals that identify as gender nonconforming, gender fluid or male and wish to minimize the appearance of breasts. Binding helps both to increase confidence in social interactions and lessen the dysphoria (unhappiness) many of these youth experience regarding their chests.

This need to bind their breasts can be very strong and impossible to ignore. Youth unable to obtain a properly designed binder will try multiple methods to minimize the appearance of their breasts, many of which can be dangerous. The common use of “Ace” bandages, for example, can cause irreversible damage to the lungs and ribcage, especially when used by growing adolescents. In contrast, proper binders (such as those sold by “Underworks” at ftm.underworks.com¹) are specifically designed to provide safe, comfortable and effective compression.

Social acceptance and personal appearance are important to all of us, but especially to teens and young adults. Helping your child feel comfortable and confident about their body during this time is critical to developing self-confidence that will last a lifetime. The cost of a binder averages around \$40, which may seem expensive at first, but is actually less expensive than a pair of name-label jeans or shoes and will do so much more to help a youth feel good about themselves.

If this is the first you’ve heard about your child’s gender identity, gender expression or their desire to bind, it is natural to have a lot of questions. It is also natural to feel nervous, scared, or sad – but please know that you and your child are not alone - at TransActive we have conversations with youth and their loved ones every day.

¹ TransActive receives no financial benefit from “Underworks”.

Please do not hesitate to contact us for additional resources or with any questions or concerns you may have. We may be reached by calling 503-252-3000 or via email at info@transactiveonline.org.

You can also speak with a member of our “In a Bind” staff directly by calling our office on Wednesday’s between 12:00-5:00 PM (PST) or by emailing inabind@transactiveonline.org.

If you are interested in connecting with other parents or caregivers, TransActive offers an online support group through Yahoo!: groups.yahoo.com/group/transactivecc/.

Sincerely,

Kit Crosland
“In a Bind” Project Coordinator