**M1 – Transgender Son**

**Interviewer:** Tell me a little about your son (trans daughter) and her school life.

**M1:** Her school life was tough. She falls under a boy. That is how it should be. That thing about her being a girl is not there.

**Interviewer: W**hen did you realise that your daughter was son was “different”?

**M1:** She was not even 1 year old when I realized that. Most of the time, when you go to a shop, she goes to the girls’ section. If you buy her boy stuff, she throws it away. She didn’t want to wear boys’ clothes.

**Interviewer:**How did you react to her gender identity?

**M1:** I first thought that it would change, but it didn’t. She was always wearing and playing in wedding dresses… At the age of 7, she said she is not wearing boys’ clothes anymore. I told her at school they will not allow it. The school just allowed it. They just left it. *I knew that I didn't have three sons anymore, but two sons and a daughter.*

**Interviewer:** Let us talk about her schooling time and the experiences she had in school.

**M1:** She was bullied both verbally and physically. I changed her to different schools with the hope that she will have an easier life... She had a tough time in class. The children were teasing her and calling her names.

**Interviewer:** Since you were aware of the bullying, what advice do you give her?

**M1:** I told her …you are making your life hard by wearing these clothes. I told her that you didn’t choose this. Only God created you like this.

**Interviewer:** What action did you take in response to the school bullying?

**M1:** I went to the principal and told him about everything, the teasing, and the teachers ignoring this … even after my daughter told them. I was expecting him to act on my concern and provide me with comfort. The opposite happened. The only thing he ( the principal) mentioned was the issue that my daughter went to the wrong bathrooms. I did ask him why that was a problem. It was then that I decided to move my daughter to go to another school.

**Interviewer***:* what was your and your daughter’s experience at the new school?

**M1:** There was still some sort of bullying, but there she made friends with girls. They didn’t judge. For example, when they went to Durban on a trip, I would tell the teacher, “Remember, she is a girl. Don’t mix her with the boys”

**Interviewer:** How did the teachers react to your requests regarding your child’s gender identity on trips?

**M1:** She used the girls’ toilets. She is laughing.

**Interviewer:** Did the use of the girls’ toilets cause any challenges for her at school? How did the school and other students react?

**M1**: If the bullying went on, I would go to the school. The school kept quiet about these things. They only contacted me about the toilets and other stuff. I told him ( school principal) about all the things, like the bullying. He just told me he doesn't know of any such incidents. What really made me angry is that he then told me that they have had discipline problems with my son, which they can't ignore. I was in tears.

**Interviewer:** What actions did you expect the school to take to address the bullying?

**M1:** I wanted them to tell me about the bullying because I wanted to know. I wanted them to speak to the boys and tell them to accept my child as she is. Because it was not her choice.

**Interviewer:** How did the lack of communication from the school about bullying make you feel as a parent?

**M1:** I want people to be taught about these things. Some people, they grow (the other learners) like this. There is nothing about my child that is a boy.

**Interviewer:** What kind of education or awareness programs do you think schools should have for students and teachers about transgender issues?

**M1:** My actual fear started after she finished matric. I said to her, “When a boy approaches you, tell him the truth.”

**Interviewer:** How did you prepare her for navigating relationships and social situations as a transgender individual?

**M1:** My child has never told me that she was physically bullied. But verbally, yes.

**Interviewer:** Did your child ever share how the verbal bullying affected her emotionally or academically?

**M1:** I went to school about the bullying. I told the principal, “Can you please talk to those kids and their parents? It is important for them to have the knowledge. They must be taught.”

**Interviewer:** How did the principal respond when you approached them about the bullying?

**M1:** I wanted my child to be free in school like anyone. The school never told me that something was wrong at school.

**Interviewer:** Do you think the school adequately supported your child’s right to be herself?

**M1:** Even my neighbors accepted her because they saw that she was growing up like that.