

Humans of Our Community: Maddy Wall

Maddy is an inspiring young trans woman with a passion for making sure LGBTQI+ voices are heard. Maddy shared with us how her transition has been so far, her work with Headspace, and her hopes for the future.



What's your name story?

Maddy was just a name that I really liked. I don't mind being called Maddy, or by my birth name Nash. I hear a lot of people call the name they were born with their dead name, but I really don't think like that. I'm pretty either/or. I answer to a heap of different names at home.

You're at the very beginning of your transition, who has been your biggest support in your journey so far?

In my personal life, my Aunty has been absolutely incredible support for me all my life. When I'm around her I'm able to dress in the clothes I want to dress in and really just be me. It's amazing to have her around, knowing that she will be there for me no matter what.

I have also got a really awesome group of friends who are really encouraging of me and my journey. A couple of friends and I went out to the movies and they encouraged me to dress in female clothes and be myself. I'm quite a chatty person, but I went really, really quiet when I was dressed up. I think I was just really scared of what other people would think of me. Then I realised it doesn't matter what other people think, because I was being myself.

Another huge inspiration for me is the reality TV star Jazz Jennings, who has a TV show about being a trans teenager. I think she has really brought trans issues to the public eye, and I know that her family have received a lot of negativity over being so visible. Crazy things like death threats! But she continues to do what she does. One thing that I really love that I've seen her do is fundraisers for people who can't afford the surgeries they need to transition.

How does it feel being dressed as yourself?

It feels incredible, I am at my most comfortable when I'm in female clothes. It really feels like I am truly myself. It's hard at home because my Mum doesn't want me to dress any different or begin transitioning, so at the moment we are trying to find our boundaries together. It's one of the reasons that I love spending time with my Aunty and doing volunteer work, because I get to dress as who I want, and it really just feels amazing. I have started wearing female underwear under my clothes, which is my covert way of feeling like me even if on the outside I still look the same. I actually had the most amazing experience at Bras N Things. I went in there looking for a bra,

and the staff there treated me with so much respect and were so helpful. For some people it might just seem like clothes, but for me, it's really about being who I really am.

Is it hard to not be dressed in the clothes you want to be in?

The community I live in is really judgemental and ignorant, so I really do have to make the decision as to whether or not I want to be myself. Lots of people are scared to be themselves and it can be dangerous to be visible.

When I came back from a trip where I'd spend days dressed as myself, it was incredibly hard mentally to switch back into having to dress differently. Fortunately I was able to get on the phone and seek out the support I need through Headspace and Yourtown. I know this will always happen when I go for long periods of time dressed in female clothes and then have to go back to male outfits, but it's getting easier and I know that it won't be forever. It's actually quite trippy, sometimes after I've been wearing a bra for a few days, I'll feel one on me even if I'm not wearing one.

“What’s really helped me is finding people in the community who accept me for who I am”

Why did you come out now?

I just got sick and tired of hiding it. I have always had wild thoughts and a vivid imagination. When I was younger I used to draw pictures of magical machines that could change people's gender. I would bin these sketches before Mum would have a chance to see. Things have been quite bad mentally, and when I was 14, I actually tried to end my life. I'm so glad now that I survived, because I'm at a stage in my life now where I feel comfortable with myself. I'm in a totally different position than I was when I was 14.

What has helped you be comfortable with who you are?

What's really helped me is finding people in the community who accept me for who I am. I know a lot of people now and doing things like organising times to hang out and go shopping has been incredible. Little things like looking at clothes can really break down the boundaries of who you are.

How have your relationships changed with your transition?

I find that the females in my life are a lot more open with me now. I've always been a very open, chatty person, but I find that some people are telling me more things than they used to before. In terms of romantic relationships, I've had a couple since transitioning. Ultimately what I want to do at the moment is become solid with who I am before I start to think about romantic relationships.

What do you think we need to do to encourage acceptance and tolerance within the wider community?

I think that we need to continue doing fun and motivating things. We need to continue to give people information and explain things clearly. Of course, funding comes into play and often it's not possible to send people out to spread the message. I think it's also hard as well because there is danger with being visible. So, it's bit of a fine line of being visible and promoting acceptance whilst also making sure you're safe. It's painful to be misunderstood, but I think with more information we can fight ignorance and eventually land in a good place.

I think we are so incredibly lucky to live in a country like Australia. Whilst it's not perfect, compared to countries where you can die for being gay, it's definitely a lot safer.

What are your thoughts about your future as you begin your transition?

I'm scared of absolutely everything, but I'm also really excited. I want to move out of home and start hormone therapy and start living my life in the clothes that I want to be in. I am taking everything day-by-day and am really stepping back and just letting things happen. I also would like to be in a relationship. Really though, I don't have a plan and just want to take each day as it comes.

You do a LOT of volunteer work – tell us about what you're involved in.

I'm involved heavily with Headspace and their National Youth Reference Group. We do a lot of events where we go to schools and talk about mental health. We also run fund-raisers to raise money for Headspace. What we want to do is let people know that it's ok to have a mental illness, and let's have fun whilst we work through it. It's been a really fun, but really busy time. I've done a certificate in community services and am just so passionate about youth mental health. I have had so many opportunities through the volunteering I do, and I feel so lucky to have been able to help people. A highlight for me was, through volunteering with the organisation Yourtown, having the opportunity to do the coin toss at an NRL game. As a huge rugby fan, this was just awesome.

What advice do you have for people who are beginning to question their sexuality or gender expression?

1. Go to bars and do drag and see how that feels, or just get together with a group of friends who know you are. Hang out with them and just talk about how you're feeling.
2. During my time in high school when I was being bullied, I made up a saying. "*always try, never give up, no matter how hard it gets*". Life can be really hard, but you have to push through the hard days so you can have better days. The last year of coming out as trans has had lots of ups and downs, but right now I really feel like I'm on top!



***"Always try,
never give up,
no matter how
hard it gets"***



Interview conducted & written by James Fowler