In Step With My Trans-Partner
» Developed with members of Trans+
» Through the Equity Partnership
» Survey- 30 responses-
  https://bradford.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/in-step
» 10 interviews, not all completed
» Not focusing on being trans but on ‘being with’ a trans person

The research
» ‘Trans’ – A person who is starting to, is in process of or has transitioned gender
» Partner – a ‘significant other’ who has a recognised relationship with a person entering, going through or leaving the transition journey
» Female partner of male transitioning to female
» Female partner of female transitioning to male

» Male partner of female transitioning to male
» Male partner transitioning to female
Invisibility?
‘Every aspect of my partners transition has affected me’
The disclosure - which was four years ago - but seems like only yesterday, was and has been life changing in every sense - and not just for him //her. It has been the most devastating event in my life and the most difficult to deal with at every level.
I have become an appendage/assistant during transition and now feel surplus to requirements post surgery. I went through all the hell with none of the admiration for how "brave" I was. No support whatsoever.
» Initially most of my support came from an online forum aimed at trans people... Other than that there was very little available to me at the time

» Yes... There aren’t any

» None available, tried one and they said leave my partner as it wouldn't work.

» GP’s were helpful

» Samaritans were not helpful
» All the attention is on the transitioning partner
» Partners are often present but not part of the discussion
» Often the decisions impact on the mental health of the transitioning partner, or cause stress and concern in the relationship
» Partners describe themselves as ‘helpless’ ‘frustrated’ ‘isolated’
» No-one reported receiving help from the gender clinic
» I think hormones and dealing with his second puberty was difficult. Mood swings and everything from hot flashes to dealing with anger.

» When he had his hysterectomy that was another big moment. I acknowledged the need for this surgery and had convinced myself that it was fairly minor. However seeing him lying in the hospital bed afterwards, very out of it, was quite distressing.
Travelling a long distance for surgery
Loss of important physical parts of the body- breasts, genitals
Changes in sex life- ‘intimacy with changing bodies’
Isolation from family and friends
Impact on family making, for instance sperm storage

Issues to deal with
Testosterone injections. I was expected to administer these. I had never had any medical training, and a few demos at the local GP's surgery didn't make me feel confident. I really didn't like doing it as I was terrified every time that I would cause him some harm.
Partner Impacts

decisions being made that will affect me - but I have no control over
When he finally told me, I had a mental breakdown, started cutting myself, for some insane reason I felt I had to punish myself, I would get in a red hot shower to hurt myself. I was diagnosed with clinical depression and dissociation disorder, this is caused by a shock. I have to take meds for life.

In 2011 we renewed our vows.
I gave up all other responsibilities and just looked after the kids, and only just coped. My memory and ability to think was affected negatively too, and I still don't feel I ever recovered fully from that (11 years on).

I had been with my husband for 12 years, before he told me. I had a mental breakdown.

Increased anger, aggression and violence

I cannot be bothered with nice clothes/make up/jewelry at all any more. Don't see the point in bothering, feel less feminine,
» Loss of friends, family, church membership
» Silence and secrecy at work: Loss of social contacts
» Heterosexual, lesbian, gay?
» How to dress, How to act in public
» Who can you tell?

Sense of Place
At first I was embarrassed, I like to touch and show my affection, but I felt that I couldn't do that because people would think I was a lesbian, which I'm not. If we were in a bar and not near people we would hold hands.

I've had to come out too, to avoid being pitied for staying. It's much easier to be invisibly bisexual than it is to be out!

She's way more into girly stuff than I used to be and it's brushing off a lot already while we are only part-time lesbians because she has not transitioned yet, she's not even fully out yet
» Coming out to friends and neighbors has been a great relief

» We have a good marriage, are well matched, have brought up two well balanced kids, I am proud of the journey we have made

» As scary as it was in the beginning, I now wouldn't change it

» It's also been very rewarding to reach out to other partners since my wife transitioned