

# Our Trans[ition] Journey

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## Disclosure

We have nothing to disclose other than we are family.

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## Purpose and Objectives

### Purpose:

Discuss the lived experience of gender transition for a post pubertal young adult—the process, challenges, and lessons learned.

### Objectives:

1. Describe at least three communication challenges faced during transition
2. Identify four or more ways patients are impacted while accessing healthcare
3. Elucidate five or more proactive actions to minimize trauma to transgender patients and their families

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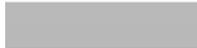
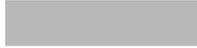
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## Data

- US Transgender Survey (2016)
  - Summer of 2015
  - Online, anonymous
  - 18 years and older (42% were age 18-24 years)
  - N ~28,000
  - 302 page report



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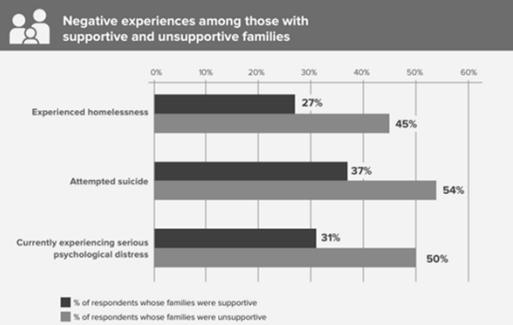
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## Lived Experiences

- Discrimination and stigma are experienced in:
  - Housing
  - Education
  - Employment
  - Health care
  - Poverty
  - Violence



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## Communication Challenges

- **Electronic Communication**

- Emails to and from providers
- Surveys
- Stored information/databases
- Texts
- Automated calls
- Reminder calls
- Preventative care reminders



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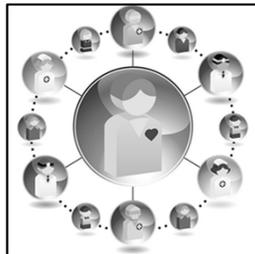
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## Communication Challenges

- **Lack of adequate language**

- Providers
- Nurses
- Front office staff
- Back office staff



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## Impact on the Patient

- **Establishing care with trans competent providers**

- Primary care doctor dropped me after I came out
- She had no idea who to refer me to
- She had no information to give me
- No “directory” for trans care

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### Impact on the Patient

- **Difficulty identifying qualified, knowledgeable, open minded providers with availability**
  - The one PCP who was the specialist wasn't accepting any new patients.
  - Primary care doctor was selected because he stated he worked with patients of "all" genders. Not because he was a specialist.
  - No one in network was qualified or knowledgeable as a counselor
  - Having to walk a QMHP through writing me a letter

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### Impact on the Patient

- **Confusion about appropriate care**
  - I've been asked about my prostate
  - Not had people talk to me about reproductive health
  - Had providers very confused about safe sex practices
  - General confusion about my anatomy

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### Impact on the Patient

- **Processes for hormones (6 months)**
  - Meet with my PCP
    - Received information on the effects of hormones, side effects, health risks
  - Get referred to a QMHP for my letter for hormones
    - Find an out of network QMHP because no one in network is "qualified"
    - Pay a couple hundred dollars out of pocket for the minimum three sessions
    - Get my letter stating that I am of sound mind
  - Meet with my PCP
    - Sign informed consent paperwork
    - Get prescribed hormones!

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### Impact on the Patient

- **Care avoidance due to fear of being treated differently**
  - Dreading going to the doctor for routine visits, and would put them off, or avoid them all together
  - Urgent care was extremely daunting
  - Put off routine lab work

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### Impact on Patient

- **What does being treated “differently” mean?**
  - 70%\* of transgender patients reported at least one of these health experiences, based on transgender status:
    - Being blamed for their health condition
    - Refusal to touch or excessive precautions
    - Harsh language
    - Physical roughness

\*Numbers were much higher for racial/ethnic minorities and low-income transgender people

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### Impact on the Patient

- **Gatekeeping**
  - Five appointments with two providers to get on hormones
  - At least seven appointments with four providers for my hysterectomy
  - Four letters over five years proving that I am of sound mind
  - Every single person involved in these appointments and processes was cisgender

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## Action

- **Prioritize EHR information with correct name and pronouns**
- **Correct all databases**
  - Visit summary
  - Labs
  - Appointment reminder texts/calls
  - Surveys
  - Internal messages
  - Emails
  - Scheduling
  - Medical record
  - Labels
  - Mail
  - Billing
  - Research
  - ID bands

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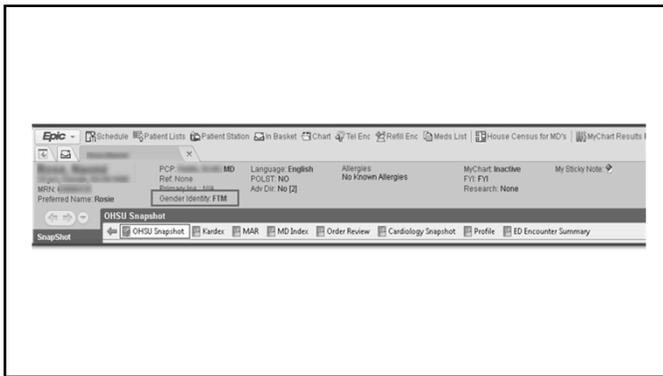
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### Action

- **Labels and language**
  - Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms, ma'am/sir
  - “women’s” health care- PAPs and birth control
  - “men’s” health care- prostate exam
- **Don’t make a big deal out of misgendering**
  - Acknowledge
  - Apologize
  - Move on

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### Action

- **Education for staff**
  - Send staff to education opportunities outside of the organization
  - Bring speakers/educators to the organization
  - Have a series of learning modules all staff can access

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### Action

- **Educate staff specifically to their roles**

Clinical staff

- Providers
- Nursing staff
- Medical assistants
- X-Ray technicians
- Lab staff
- Advice nurse
- Pharmacy staff

Administrative staff

- Schedulers
- Call centers
- Office personnel
- Receptionists
- Billing staff
- Referral coordinators

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### Action

- **Hire staff who are knowledgeable about transgender healthcare**
  - Make receiving quality care accessible
  - Ensure there are enough providers
  - Patient advocates



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### Action

- Ask ALL patients about gender identity and pronouns
  - Sex and gender of past/present/future partners
  - Normalize all mental health, relationships, taking care of bodies, and unplanned pregnancies
- Staff that know about
  - HIV risks
  - Safer sex practices
  - Non-invasive STI testing

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### Action

- **Transgender advisory committee**
  - To develop policy, process, and procedures
  - Receive feedback from patients
  - Provide education
  - advocate for patients
    - Establish leadership support
    - Form the committee
    - Ensure their voices are heard within the organization
    - Spread word about the resource
    - Make it accessible

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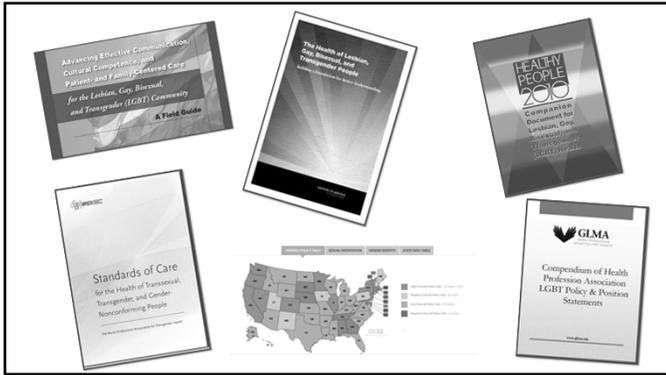
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## Resources/References

- National Center for Transgender Equality  
A social justice advocacy organization for transgender people  
[www.transgenderequality.org](http://www.transgenderequality.org)
- National LGBT Health Education Center  
Educational programs, resources, and consultation with the goal of optimizing health care for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people  
[www.lgbthealtheducation.org](http://www.lgbthealtheducation.org)
- Transgender Law Center  
Civil rights organization advocating for transgender communities  
[www.transgenderlawcenter.org](http://www.transgenderlawcenter.org)
- World Professional Association for Transgender Health  
Promotes evidence based care, education, research, advocacy, public policy, and respect in transgender care  
[www.wpath.org](http://www.wpath.org)
- The Joint Commission  
Urges U.S. hospitals to create a more welcoming, safe and inclusive environment that contributes to improved health care quality for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) patients and their families.  
<https://www.jointcommission.org/topics>
- Institute of Medicine  
<http://nationalacademies.org/hmd/repords/2011/the-health-of-lesbian-gay-bisexual-and-transgender-people.aspx>
- GLMA: Health Professionals Advancing LGBT Equality  
Mission of ensuring the health and well-being of LGBT individuals and families.  
[www.glma.org](http://www.glma.org)
- Movement Advancement Project  
Independent think tank that provides rigorous research, insight and analysis that help speed equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people  
[www.lgbtmov.org](http://www.lgbtmov.org)

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## Recommended Readings

- Mental Health of Transgender Children Who are supported in Their Identities. *Pediatrics*. (2016), 137(3) 1-8.
- Debate is Growing About How to Meet the Urgent Needs of Transgender Kids. *Scientific American Mind*. (2016), Jan/Feb, 26-35.
- Of what am I afraid? *JAMA*. 2012; 307(4) 371-372
- Transgender and Gender Identity Issues, NASW policy statement  
<https://www.socialworkers.org/da/da2008/finalvoting/documents/Transgender%20Q2nd%20round%20-%20Clean.pdf>
- Transgender-Competent Health Care  
[http://socialworktoday.com/archive/exc\\_060614.shtml](http://socialworktoday.com/archive/exc_060614.shtml)

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## Recommended Readings

The Third Gender by Jesse Bering  
The Transgender Child by Stephanie Brill and Rachel Pepper  
Helping Your Transgender Teen: A Guide for Parents by Irwin Krieger  
Trans Bodies, Trans Selves Edited by Laura Erickson-Schroth  
Transgender Explained for those who are not by Joanne Herman  
I AM: Trans People Speak <http://www.transpeoplespeak.org>  
Social Services with Transgender Youth, Edited by Gerald P. Mallon

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Thank you!

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