

Flash
Transcript

TRANSCRIPT

Interactive Scenario 5 - Ms. Jones' Sore Throat

In the following interactive scenario, a dialogue will be presented between a patient, Ms. Aliyah Jones, a medical assistant, Ms. Janine Eckhart, and a nurse practitioner, Mr. Adam Locke. At the end you will be asked to critique Ms. Eckhart's and Mr. Locke's behaviors during the interaction.

Ms. Aliyah Jones is a 27 year-old transgender woman. Her birth sex was male and her parents named her Alan Jones, but her gender identity has always been female. She now lives as a transgender woman and has recently legally changed her name to Aliyah. However, she has not yet been able to change her name on her medical records, registration forms, or health insurance.

Today, Aliyah presents at urgent care with fever and severe throat pain. She is unable to see her regular provider. On the phone and at check-in, Ms. Jones explained that she has transitioned to being a woman, and that her name is now Aliyah, not Alan, but that her records are under Alan. However, the desk staff was unable to update the forms because they did not know the procedure for doing so. They also did not think to tell the rest of the medical staff on duty that day. This scenario begins with Aliyah being approached in the waiting room by Ms. Janine Eckhart, the medical assistant.

Ms. Janine Eckhart Mr. Jones

Ms. Aliyah Jones I'm Ms. Jones, but please call me Aliyah.

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Ms. Janine Eckhart I'm sorry. It says here your name is Alan Jones.

Ms. Aliyah Jones Yes, well I've changed my name and gender, but it is not on my records yet. Please call me Aliyah.

Ms. Janine Eckhart Okay.

Ms. Eckhart avoids making eye contact with Aliyah after hearing that she has changed her name and gender.

Ms. Eckhart takes Aliyah's vitals and leaves the exam room. Mr. Adam Locke, the nurse practitioner, arrives. Mr. Locke is not Aliyah's regular provider and has never met her. When Mr. Locke sees Aliyah, he looks surprised and leaves, explaining that he must have the wrong room. He talks to Ms. Eckhart, returns a few minutes later and apologizes.

After examining Aliyah, Mr. Locke calls in Ms. Eckhart.

Mr. Adam Locke Janine, can you get me a rapid strep test kit? His symptoms are consistent with strep.

Tell me, how long have you known you were a transsexual? Have you had any surgeries?

Cesar Garcia Si, I understand, the acid causes the burning in my chest.

What do you think?

In this scenario, did Mr. Locke and Ms. Eckhart use effective health communication by recognizing and adapting to Aliyah Jones' personal and cultural needs as a transgender woman?

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Scenario Question Feedback

No, Mr. Locke and Ms. Eckhart did not use a culturally competent approach to communicating with Ms. Jones.

What do you recommend?

What could Ms. Eckhart and Mr. Locke have done differently in order to recognize, adapt to, and support Ms. Jones?

Scenario Question Feedback

In this scenario, Ms. Eckhart's body language--avoiding eye contact--revealed her possible discomfort after learning that Aliyah was a transgender woman. It is possible that Ms. Eckhart had little knowledge of transgender people, and had not had a chance to reflect on her own reactions to gender variance. With prior education and training about transgender people, it is possible that Ms. Eckhart would have been more at ease with Aliyah and have acted in a more respectful manner.

After learning of the discrepancy on the medical record, Ms. Eckhart could have written a note or spoken briefly to Mr. Locke about Aliyah Jone's name and gender change before Mr. Locke began the visit. This would have avoided Mr. Locke believing he had entered the wrong exam room and would have spared Aliyah humiliation or embarrassment.

In this scenario, Mr. Locke referred to Aliyah using a male pronoun when he said: "His symptoms are consistent with strep." Most transgender people would like to be called the pronoun that aligns with their gender identity and presentation. In this case, Aliyah should have been referred to as "her."

In addition, Mr. Locke asks Aliyah about how long she has known she was "transsexual." By asking this question, Mr. Locke may be trying to educate

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himself more about the transgender experience. This is a worthwhile pursuit as professional development, but it is not appropriate in this situation. Aliyah came in for probable strep throat. She is not there to teach her provider about her life experiences as a transgender woman.

Finally, Mr. Locke assumes that Aliyah considers herself “transsexual.” However, she may not identify herself as a transsexual. There are many different terms to describe a person’s gender identity and these terms are always evolving. It is recommended that providers listen to how patients describe themselves, or ask what terms their patients prefer, or just avoid using labels altogether.

What do you recommend?

What steps could be taken on an organizational level that would have made this a more culturally competent care experience?

Scenario Question Feedback

The clinic could designate a way to enter gender changes and preferred name and pronouns on its paper and electronic records. In addition, the clinic could offer training to providers and support staff on transgender identity and health needs. This would help employees better understand the cultural, communication, and support the needs of transgender people.