



National Ambulance LGBT Network

Transgender Awareness Event Guidance Notes for Presentation

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These guidance notes have been put together to support the transgender awareness event presentation which is available separately. This presentation consists of 15 slides of information and provides a basic introduction to some of the issues for ambulance services.

If used as outlined in this document, it is expected the presentation will take around 20 minutes.

Slides 1 to 4 – LGBT to Transgender

The first consideration is what trans means. Most people are aware of what LGBT means and it may be useful to restate this stands for 'lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans'.

Slide 2 shows that the term LGBT is actually two different issues, and protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act, 2010. 'LGB' focusses on sexual orientation whereas the 'T' is a matter of gender.

Slide 3 indicates that the 'T' element actually encompasses a number of different things. Some people may recall words like transvestite and transsexual which are now considered inappropriate terms.

Slide 4 is what this presentation will focus on, and this is people who are transitioning their gender. Many people who transition their gender usually do so because they believe their biological (or natal) gender does not represent the gender they feel inside. This is a condition known as gender dysphoria and it is believed around 0.005% of the population experience this.

Slide 5 – Health Inequalities

There are a number of health inequalities experienced by people who experience gender dysphoria, or who are transitioning their gender. A Trans Mental Health Study in 2012 revealed the dramatically increased risk of mental health issues, incidences of self-harm and even suicide attempts.

The same study also showed that 81% of transgender people have suffered from silent harassment. This is alarmingly high and reinforces the need for health services to understand and support transgender people more effectively.

Slide 6 – Research in Yorkshire

A recent study in Yorkshire looked at the experience of 18 people who had interacted with the ambulance service. Each was asked to complete an experience questionnaire and some were interviewed in more detail. The research and subsequent report was undertaken by Kath Henwood, a paramedic at Yorkshire Ambulance Service.

The finding showed that 58% of the people said their experience was 'above average' or 'excellent'. The remaining 42% indicated their experience ranged from 'average' to 'poor'.

Slide 7 – Positive Experiences

When asked in more detail many of the respondents talked about the clinical care they received. Most were very complimentary about the care provided for the presenting condition and the skills of the crews who attended them. Some recalled how the crew treated them with dignity and respect and one was quoted as saying the crew seems, 'not be phased by me being transgender'.

Slide 8 – Negative Experiences

Whilst most people rating the clinical care well, there were a number of comments that paint a different picture. Comments like distressing and completely unacceptable indicate some ambulance staff are not able to meet the needs of transgender people. Most of those that reporting negative experiences referred to the questioning, deeming it to be intrusive and awkward. One patient event suggested the crew seems to be unaware of how to handle people in their situation.

Slide 9 – The Patient Journey

A paramedic at East Midlands Ambulance Service, Jonny Holmes, has looked at the patient journey from point the call is made to the service, to them being handed over at hospital. This can be broken down into the three areas as shown. The National Ambulance LGBT Network is working on providing comprehensive guidance on this.

Slide 10 – Calling 999

This slide provides comprehensive guidance for call takers. As the slide suggests, the biggest issue is around misgendering the person making the call. If this happens an apology should be offered and, if appropriate, you can ask the correct pronouns to use.

Bear in mind that very often the person making the call is not the patient themselves and it may be very hard to recognise this patient is transgendered unless this information is offered.

The National Ambulance LGBT Network are currently consulting the trans community to establish some guidance about when is it acceptable to ask questions and how to do this. Obviously if the presenting condition does not warrant gathering this information, then it is not necessary.

In future we suggest that the gender of all patients is checked during the call and this would give license to a second question; 'Is that your / the patients gender from birth?'

Slide 11 – Example System Issue

A member of Emergency Operations Centre staff at Yorkshire Ambulance Service, Sally Abbott, is currently looking at how dispatch systems may be putting trans patients at potential risk. Both AMPDS and Pathways systems will base the questioning, and establish the most serious presenting condition based on the gender recognised by the call taker.

The example shows an extreme example whereby the priority concern is based on the patients assumed gender. A male to female transgender person, who may still be at risk of an Aortic Abdominal Aneurysm (AAA), would be questioned about ectopic pregnancy which is not a possibility.

Sally Abbott is currently exploring how these issues can be dealt with more effectively.

Slide 12 – Crew Arriving

The principles of inclusive practice are especially relevant to crews arriving at the patient. It is especially important that ambulance crews offer the high levels of assurance that our service is renowned for. Bear in mind that many trans people have had negative experiences of health services and so building trust may take some additional effort.

If people feel trust with the person attending to them they are more likely to disclose information. Crews also need to recognise where it is appropriate to ask direct questions

because a true diagnosis depends on it. Where establishing birth or natal gender it not relevant to the condition it is not appropriate to question, but it is acceptable to listen and understand if information is offered.

Conditions where it may be appropriate to know the person's birth or natal gender are:

- When the patient presents with abdominal pain
- Where the patient presents with a cardiac condition
- Patient presents with concerns with wounds associated with recent surgery

Slide 13 – Patient Handover

Having built trust with a patient it is important that correct information is handed over to other healthcare professionals whilst paying the highest regard to their wishes around what information is disclosed. You may wish to discuss this on the journey to hospital.

Be very aware of where you are and who can hear the handover. Where appropriate have some sensitivity about handing over personal information where others cannot hear.

Remember, the overall perception and experience of health services will be influenced by your actions. Make sure you leave every patient with a positive perception!

Slide 14 – Keeping Informed

This presentation gives a short introduction and is not intended to be the whole solution. Raising awareness of the some of the issues is the start to making our services better and more inclusive.

There are a number of organisations and booklets that are easily obtainable and designed to increase your awareness further and give practical solutions. Some of these are shown on the slide.

Slide 15 – www.ambulanceLGBT.org

The trans star of life has been designed to show our support for trans issues and we hope people will wear them with pride. Let people ask what the badge means, and we hope attendees at the awareness event can confidently explain this is an important issue.

Over the coming months the National Ambulance LGBT Network will be working on information packs for the ambulance services and everyone can keep up to date with developments by visiting the website resource pages.