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Use of Simulation to Promote Effective Communication Skills Through Increased Awareness of LGBTQ/Transgender Healthcare Barriers.

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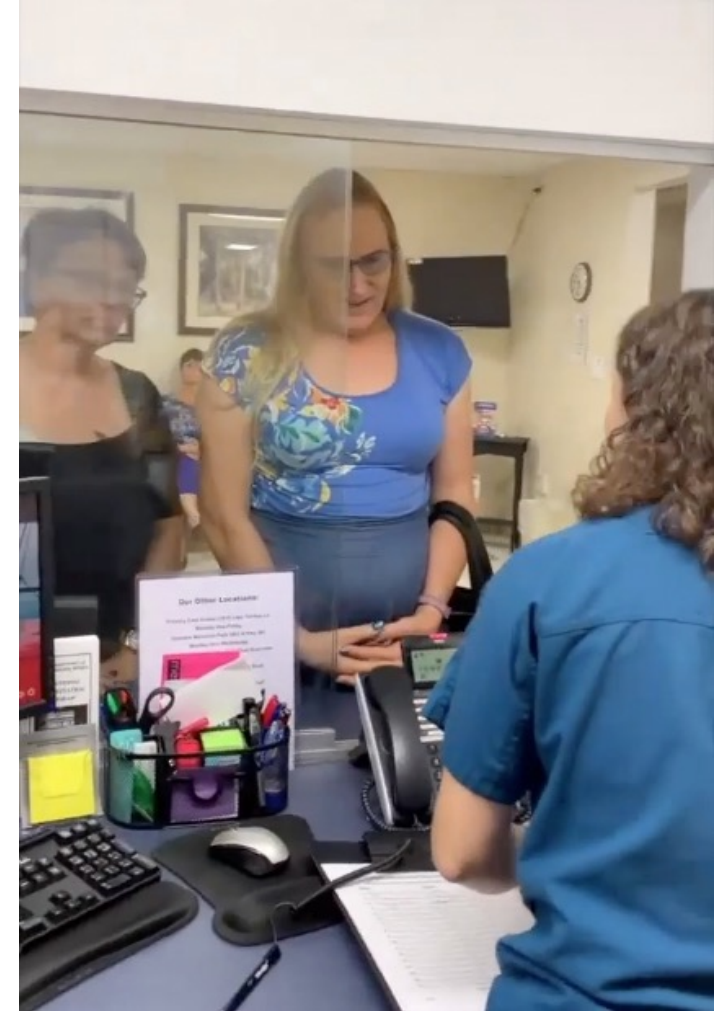
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Objectives

- Upon completion, participants will be able to describe methods to increase awareness of healthcare barriers in the LGBTQ+ community.
- Upon completion, participants will be able to identify communication barriers with the LGBTQ+ community.
- Upon completion, participants will be able to discuss how to use inclusive language when interacting with clients of the LGBTQ+ community in the healthcare setting.

Our Gap

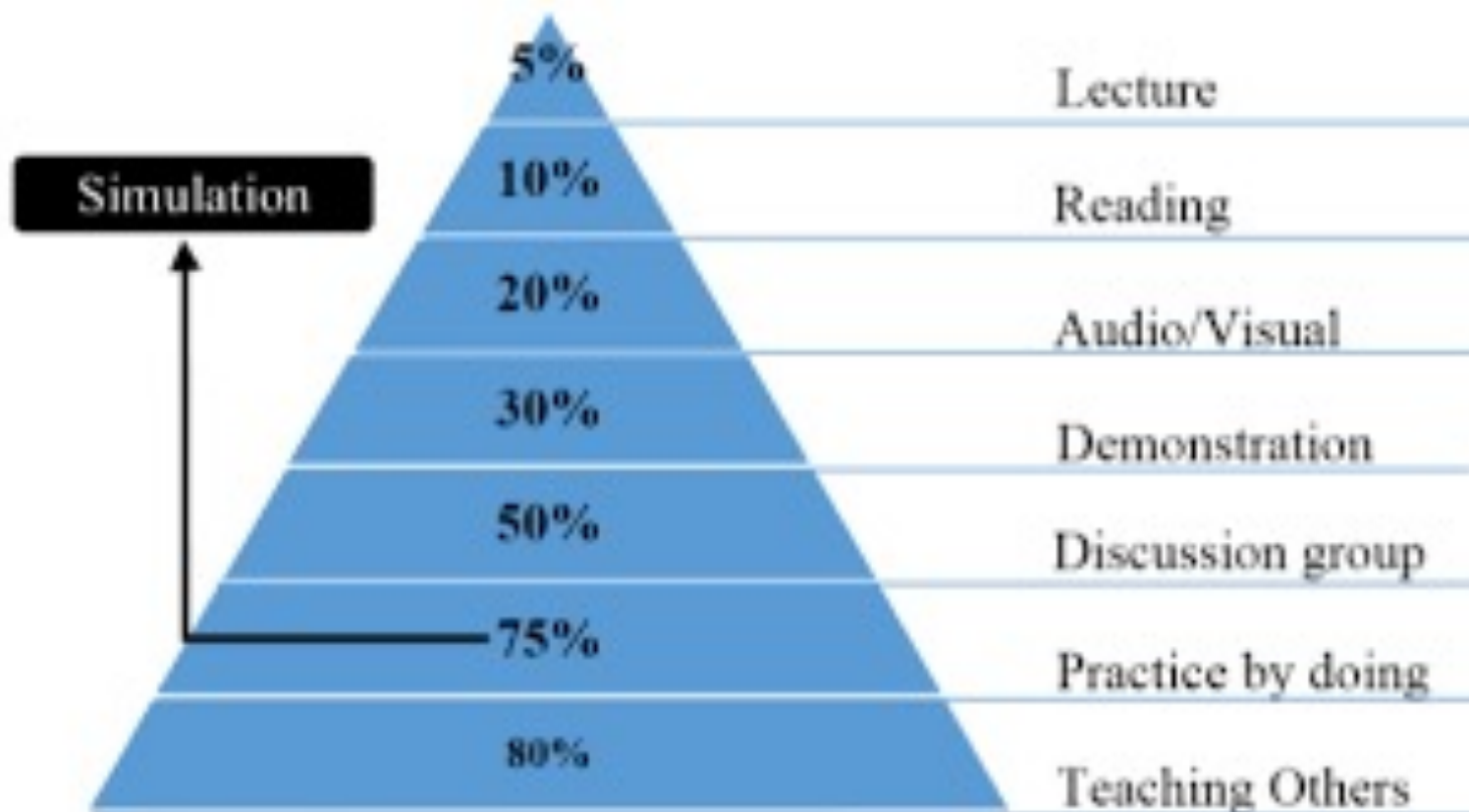
Nursing students have a knowledge deficit regarding transgender health care issues, simulation allows nursing students to practice effective, therapeutic communication with a transgender patient, this activity raises awareness of barriers to healthcare for a transgender patient.



Raise Awareness in Students

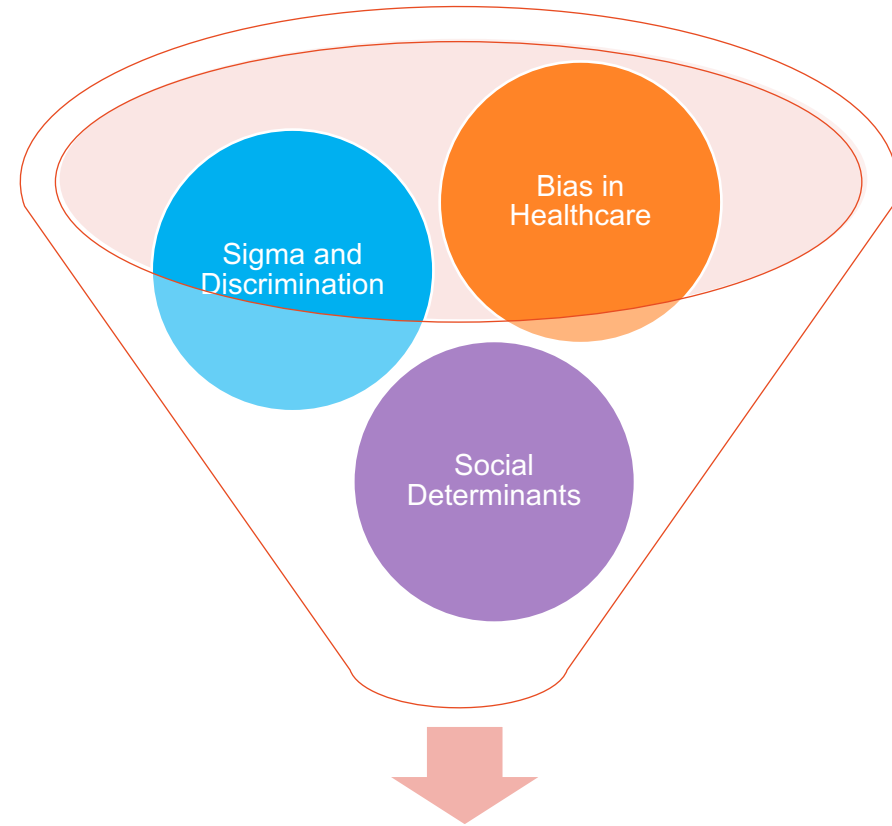
- Lecture, textbooks
- Guest speakers

- Clinical opportunity
- Simulation
- Standardized patient
- Virtual simulation



Why We Started This Simulation

In an attempts to breakdown barriers for people from diverse, underrepresented, or minority backgrounds. The initial simulation was designed to promote effective communication skills in baccalaureate nursing students through increased awareness of LGBTQ/Transgender healthcare issues.



Healthcare Disparities

Population Background

While the U.S. census does not gather data on gender identify (Rowe et al., 2019). In 2022 estimates were approximately 1.6 million people (Neria & Bowman, 2022). In 2015 a report from a U.S Transgender Survey revealing that 33% of transgender and gender diverse people reported unequal treatment or harassment because of their gender diversity when seeking medical care, 23% reported deferring necessary medical care because of fear (Neria & Bowman, 2022).



Social Determinates of Health

In 2010 the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) included LGBTQ+ as an area of interest. In Healthy People 2020 social determinants of health defined “conditions in the environment in which people are born, live, learn, play, worship, and age that affects a wide range of health, functioning, and quality of life outcomes and risks” Several area that impact social determinants of health negatively impact transgender people.

Barriers

Barriers experienced by individuals who identify as transgender can include stigmatization, discrimination in insurance coverage, medical professionals who lack experience in treating the unique healthcare needs of transgender patients (Rowe et al., 2019). In the 2015 U.S Transgender Survey 55% of participants reported being denied insurance coverage for gender affirming procedures (Neira & Bowman, 2022).



Issues Regarding Gender Diversity

Obstacles for many gender diverse people include a lack of clinical guidance, research, and health provider education related to specific health related issues (Croke,2023). The HHS reported that the population health of transgender diverse people was negatively affected by shortages in competent clinicians (Neira & Bowman, 2022). Reduced access to health services increase the risk for mental health comorbidities, being victims of violence, and use (and abuse) of tobacco, alcohol, or drugs (Neira & Bowman, 2022).

Gender Affirming Care

A transgender person's identity is not a mental illness, disease, or disorder and that gender affirming care attends to the persons physical, mental, and social health care needs and well being while respecting a person's gender identity.

Barriers to Healthcare

“Transgender people often experience emotional barriers to accessing healthcare related to healthcare providers who are disrespectful or providers who do not acknowledge their gender identity, use inappropriate pronouns, or not using the name if different than their legal name.” The use of a person’s proper name, and pronouns are crucial parts of providing patient centered care. Respectful and compassionate communication with each LGBTQ person is essential for providing individualized care (NLN, 2022).

Incorporating Awareness of Inclusive Language

“Communication with each LGBTQ+ person is essential to providing affirming individualized care by addressing them as a person. Use of proper name, gender, and pronouns are crucial parts of assessments and may change over the lifespan for each individual. Healthcare across the lifespan of LGBTQ+ people should recognize open communication, collaborative coordination of care, and profound respect for the preferences of LGBTQ+ people, their families, and caregivers that result in the uniqueness of each person’s life (NLN, 2022)”.

What Barriers Exists

Transgender people often experience barriers accessing healthcare related to healthcare providers who are disrespectful or providers who do not acknowledge their gender identity. (QSEN, 2020).



Language is Power

Respectful and compassionate communication with each LGBTQ person is essential for providing individualized care (NLN, 2022).



Some Words or Phrases to Avoid

- Hermaphrodite
- Sex change
- Transsexual
- Transvestite
- Alternative lifestyle
- Sexual preference
- Transgenderism/transsexualism
- Were you born a man/woman?
- There's a transgender is room 2.
- Transgendered or transgendering



“How Do I Ask?”

Patient care involves asking sensitive questions and performing physical examinations. Empathic and affirming language is important.

Asking about gender identity is clinically relevant. When asking about gender identity healthcare providers could use a two-step approach:

- How do you describe your gender identity?
- What sex were you assigned at birth?

Sexual Orientation Definitions and Terminology

- **Asexual**- a person who has minimal or no sexual attraction to other people.
- **Bisexual** – a person who is attracted emotionally and physically to men and women
- **Gay**- an umbrella term for people whose sexual orientation is directed at people of their same gender. (Can refer to men who are attracted to men)
- **Lesbian**- refers to women attracted to other women.
- **Pansexual** – describes the sexual orientation of a person who is attracted to all gender identities.
- **Queer**- a descriptor that has been used as a slur in the past. However, maybe used by younger generations in terms of an overarching manner to describe their sexual orientation or gender identity as being different from cisgender and straight.
- **Sexual orientation** – the attraction between a person and other, This is multidimensional, encompassing physical, emotional, romantic, and sexual attraction.
- **Straight**- describe heterosexual sexual orientation.

Gender Terminology

- **Cisgender-** people whose gender identity is congruent in the gender assigned at birth.
- **Gender-** the attitudes, feelings, and behaviors a society expects of a particular gender
- **Gender dysphoria-** a feeling experienced by an individual that a person is not the gender he or she appears to be. Their reproductive organs and physical attributes do not align with gender how they feel.
- **Gender expression-** outward display of one's gender.
- **Gender identity-** the gender in which one identifies- male, female, transgender.
- **Gender incongruence-** when gender identity and/or gender expression differ for what the person gender assigned at birth is.
- **Genderqueer-** a gender expression that is not male or female but is on a gender continuum.
- **Sex-** a person biologic status. Based on sex chromosomes, reproductive organs and external genitalia.
- **Transgender-** a person whose gender identity of expression is different from the gender assigned at birth.
- **Transsexual-** a person who seeks to change gender assigned at birth through medical interventions (hormones, surgeries).


Collaborations

Our clinical partners at the James A. Haley Veterans Hospital and Clinic shared their educational resources to help us build our awareness simulation. Having subject matter experts to consult with was essential for this simulation encounter.


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A Provider's Guide:
Best Practices for LGBT Patient-Centered Care



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Putting Awareness Into Practice

Developing simulation encounters.



Our Simulation Was Placed in the Mental Health Course

Transgender people experience HIV, STI, psychiatric disorders, victimization, and suicide prevalence rates compared to heterosexual and other LGBTQ groups (Rowe et al., 2019). In one study of a 1000 transgender people clinical depression was experienced by 44%, anxiety by 33%, and somatization by 28%. Transgender people attempt suicide at a rate 9 times higher than the general U.S. population (Rowe et al, 2019).

Our Simulation Description/ Scenario

Simulation Student Learning Objectives:

1. Perform appropriate assessments to formulate a treatment plan for a patient.
2. Demonstrates therapeutic communication with patients from diverse backgrounds .
3. Describe barriers faced by transgender patients in the context of receiving healthcare.
4. Identify communication methods to incorporate into healthcare practice that are sensitive, informed, affirming, and empowering to transgender patients.

The scenario, Jennifer (Robert) Jones has arrived at the local emergency room. She has been sent for evaluation for a possible appendicitis. She is a transwomen. She has not been received well by the admission clerk and is considering leaving the emergency department despite feeling very ill.

Our Simulation Preparation

We built our simulation using materials shared by the VA which included a recorded virtual simulation encounter. In this encounter learners observed “good” and “bad” patient interactions by the the registration clerk. We used this as our pre simulation prep.



Mixed Modality Simulation

Students enter the simulation room to find Jennifer upset and tearful. She is questioning why she came to the hospital.



Learning to Advocate

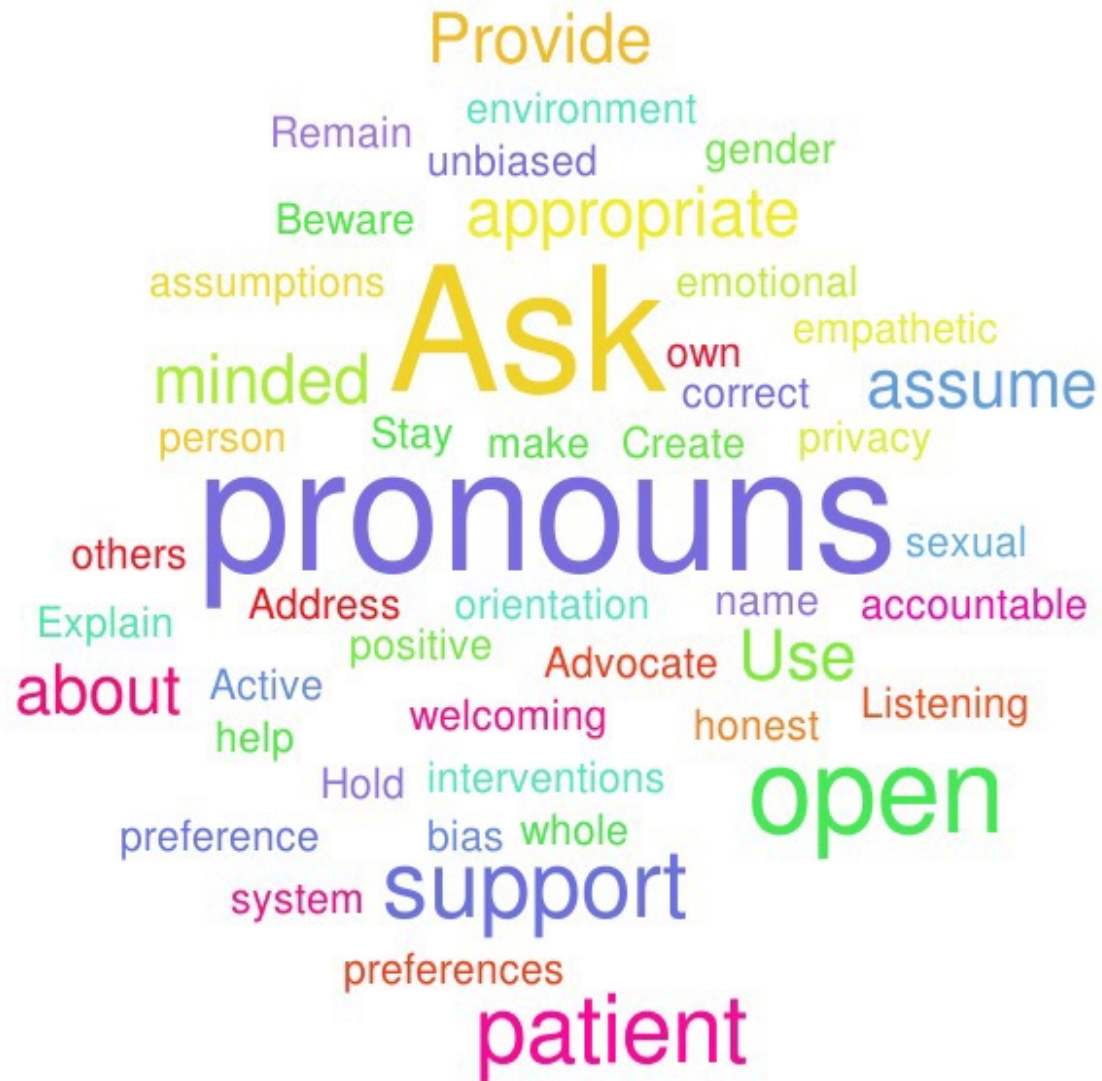
During the simulation learners navigate caring for their patient while calling other members of the healthcare team and informing them of Jennifer's medical record list her legal name which has not been changed yet. The learners inform the surgical consult the patient's condition, assessment, where she is located and her preferred name, and pronouns. The learners also call admissions for a post operative bed assignment, and they need to decide which type of room to request.

Simulation Debrief

In debrief the simulation faculty facilitated discussion from the learner's regarding their perceptions of their therapeutic communication skills. This provided the opportunity to discuss the importance of using appropriate names, and pronouns. It also provided the opportunity to discuss the “how do I ask” or “can I ask” questions form the students.

Student Reactions /Feedback

The mixed modality simulation provided 3 hours of clinical time and provided valuable communication practice. Evaluation of this mixed modality simulation consisted of a modified SET-M simulation survey and a pre-and-post activity survey. Overall feedback from the first SET-M survey revealed a 4.84 out of 5 satisfaction and student comments were positive. Comments included “Nice to get something new and focus on psychosocial aspect of nursing care” and “I liked how it focused more on communication”. The second semester the SET-M simulation survey revealed 5 out of 5 satisfaction and student comments included “I really enjoyed this simulation! Trans health is an important topic that needs to be covered in the curriculum. Really important experience!”



Resources

American Medical Association: <https://www.ama-assn.org/delivering-care/population-care/creating-lgbtq-friendly-practice>

Gay Lesbian Bisexual and transgender Health Access Project:
<http://www.glbthealth.org/CommunityStandardsofPractice.htm>

Healthy People 2030: <https://health.gov/healthypeople/objectives-and-data/browse-objectives/lgbt>

Human Rights Campaign Foundation: <https://www.thehrcfoundation.org/professional-resources/transgender-patient-services-support-for-providers-and-hospitals-administrators>

National LGBTQIA+ Health Education Center:
<https://www.lgbtqiahealtheducation.org/resources/>

University of California San Francisco Center of Excellence for Transgender Health:
<https://prevention.ucsf.edu/transhealth>

Questions



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