Managing disclosure of gender dysphoria

It can be very distressing for a person to tell a health professional about conflict between their sense of self and the sexual characteristics they were born with. They will need reassurance, and careful guidance about what kinds of treatment are available.

1. Acknowledge disclosure

   - Common fears for those expressing distress about their gender identity:
     - Ridicule
     - Being judged mentally unwell
     - Dismissal
     - Judgement

   Acknowledge the person’s disclosure, and explain that people can find it hard to raise and often have reservations about disclosure.

2. Explore patient’s background

   - How long have they felt this way?
   - Have they disclosed to: Family, Friends, Others
   - Have they changed name or sex on official documents?

3. Update records

   - Clarify how a patient with a new role would like to be addressed
   - Amend records accordingly

4. Ask about self medication

   - Ask if they are self medicating with hormones from online “pharmacies.”
     - What are they taking?
     - How much/often?
     - Are there side effects?

   Advise about the risks of self-medication sensitively
   Encourage openness about self-medication if they want to continue despite risks

5. Consider Referral

   - Refer to a Gender Identity Clinic quickly, especially if person is experiencing distress
   - Explain safe, well-established treatment is available, although there may be a long wait
   - Consider referral even if the person isn’t sure whether they want medical or surgical treatment
   - Alert patients to informal support groups to explore while awaiting specialist assessment

Gender identity clinic

- Assessment: Normally 2–3 appointments
- Investigations: Psychological and endocrine
- Investigation of circumstances: Social, Occupational, Psychological, Family
- Advice about consequences: Medical, Legal, Other

Management (if indicated)

- Hormone treatment
- Speech + communication therapy
- Facial hair removal
- Psychological therapy
- Mastectomy
- Hysterectomy
- Oophorectomy
- Genital reconstruction
- Augmentation mammoplasty
- Ear, nose, and throat surgery
- Facial surgery

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