

PEDS REFLECTION SESSION 6/26/17

Alexandra Geffey, Armen Ghazarian, David Panek, Christina Tse, Jamie Yabuno

Dear Pediatric Transgender Team, Great project! It is truly heartening to see future physicians proactively engaging with this very important issue. As you pointed out, transgender kids are at high risk for anxiety, depression, bullying, and even suicide. Having physicians who are nonjudgmental, supportive and knowledgeable, who offer a safe space for transgender kids, can give hope that not everyone is against them. As we discussed, families too can feel isolated and confused; even when they are supportive of their children, they often don't know exactly how to do so. Your project did a superb job of providing background; a clear definition of terms; the importance of appropriate STD screening and immunization; and gender transition. Your presentation made excellent points about creating LGBTQ-friendly environments and recognizing that "transition" is a state of being as well as a medical/surgical process; and is such is "complete" when the individual feels it is complete. Your honest awareness that some physicians may stumble or feel uncomfortable with gender neutral pronouns or interviews was well-taken; as was your recommended solution – practice! All in all, this was a project that educated your classmates both process and content. Very much needed, very well conceptualized and executed. Best, Dr. Shapiro

Ramin Rajali, Bharat Sampathi, Beatrice Sun

Dear Bharat, Ramin, and Beatrice, thank you for highlighting the importance of identifying psychiatric illness in pediatric care; and for raising the more general issue of how best to connect with adolescents who don't want to connect with *you!* I very much liked the way you explored the perspective of both the busy pediatrician and the angry, desperate, despairing teen. Your collage showing the various pressures on each was also a powerful visual. I especially appreciated your emphasizing that neither doctor nor patient has been able to understand each other, although both are struggling and suffering.

You provided thoughtful and insightful answers regarding ways of gaining the trust of this often skeptical population. As Beatrice observed, persistence matters. Although teens often adopt a sullen, uncommunicative stance, they can be desperate to have someone listen to them. On the other hand, as Bharat pointed out, sometimes a skillful referral can provide exactly the right outlet that the patient needs. It is always worthwhile to ask yourself, am I referring for my benefit (i.e., out of my own frustration) or the patient's? Then too, we must keep in mind that many patients do not have unlimited options in terms of physician selection, so attempting to build a relationship is always the best initial step.

Bharat, your websites looked like a great resource, for health professionals on the one hand and adolescents on the other.

Ramin, I found your supplementary story about the skateboarding kid with a dad in and out of jail very telling. As everyone agreed, it is so hard – sometimes impossible – to find the time or the "keys" to locate the patient in the context of their lives. But when this doesn't happen, as you illustrated so

well, the treatment plan will always be lacking. So the answer is unsatisfying because it is messy – always try to connect; always try to understand something of the life of your patient. Mostly, you will only be able to do this imperfectly. But whatever effort you make will matter.

Thank you for such a thought-provoking and well-conceived project. Dr. Shapiro

Nathan Birnbaum, Orli Florsheim

Dear Nathan and Orli, this project was simple – and BRILLIANT! You took the clinic as it is – than envisioned it as it *might be*. As I mentioned in class, the content of this project was excellent: a built-in pharmacy and lab solve so many confusions and problems for patients, as do on-site specialists, social workers, and dentistry. Legal aid services had never occurred to me – wonderful, and now needed more than ever. Classrooms where patients – and clinic staff – can learn about healthy eating, fun exercise, and child safety practices, as well as a food pantry, extended hours, and communal workspace where physicians are not segregated from MAs complete the dream! And all of these things should be very much within the realm of possibility, creating a true “medical home” where patients and families can address all the intersecting dimensions of health and wellbeing.

In addition to the content, the *process* of this project was really inspiring, and a great model for your classmates. We tend not to think about the spaces in which medicine is practiced – they are just the containers in which to enact the important stuff. But they matter very much, for both patients and doctors. I wish doctors would pay more attention to their environments, think creatively about how they can be improved, and be advocates for change. You provided us all with a wonderful example. Best, Dr. Shapiro

Olivia Kaminsky, David Weiland

Dear Olivia and David, I was impressed by the way you approached your project. I’ve seen many student projects on healthy eating, but yours went above and beyond by identifying specific obstacles, and then addressing them in the way you configured your suggested meals. The visuals were mouth-watering, tempting to even the pickiest of eaters; the instructions were short and simple; and the ingredients were inexpensive. I particularly liked your attention to the little details that can derail this sort of project – for example, the color coding, or the sorting out the supermarket aisles for easy location of ingredients. As I mentioned in class, I would not discount the important ingredient of personal enthusiasm! If you not only hand patients/families a resource, but share your personal enjoyment or experience, patients and parents will be interested and intrigued. It is all about keeping patient-doctor interactions human, as well as professional 😊 Excellent conceptualization and execution of a very worthwhile idea. Best, Dr. Shapiro