

Transgender specific problem situations experienced during transition

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Development of a Transgender Coping Questionnaire part 1

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Background

Transgender people experience specific problems during transition and part of their wellbeing depends on the way they cope with transition-related problems (Budge, Chin, & Minero, 2017). Budge et al. (2018) noticed that the unique experiences of transgender people are hardly mentioned in literature and Mizock et al. (2017) mentioned the absence of a scale to measure coping with transgender and mental health related stigma. Therefore a transgender coping instrument, is lacking. It is vital for care providers to understand the coping behavior of transgender people in subsequent stages of transition to be able to help them adequately. We inventoried the specific transgender problem situations during transition for the development of a Transgender Coping Questionnaire (TRACQ).

Method

A focus group of transgender people (9), practitioners (3) and a transgender expert were asked to name as many transgender related problems as possible that transgender people can experience during transition and formed statements, according to the Concept Mapping method (Kane & Trochim, 2006). During this session a two-dimensional concept map was made clustering concepts and their importance for the participants, using the software program Ariadne 3.0 (Severens, 2015).

Results

Seventy-four problems, specifically experienced by transgender people during transition, were formulated. The concept map revealed five clusters, in order of importance:

Problems arising from the healthcare process (15

statements) about practical matters concerning the healthcare system such as: waiting time for treatment, dependence of care providers and consequences concerning the medical process.

Financial consequences of the transition (1 statement)

Consequences of the transition in relation to yourself (17 statements) about the effects of the transition on the transgender person, for instance worrying about a loss of sexual desire, or fear for future surgery.

Consequences of the transition in relation to (near) others (11 statements) concerning 'what to wear', reactions of friends, and the fear of participating in an activity.

Problems arising from society (30 statements) the most important were job loss and being laughed at on the street.

Conclusion

In the questionnaire these statements are combined with the four coping strategies Baumstarck et al. (2017) distinguished based on the Brief Cope (Carver, 1997): Social support, Problem solving, Avoidance and Positive thinking, for example: If I am uncertain about the consequences of medical interventions, then ... I assume everything will be fine (Positive thinking).

Transgender specific problem situations and coping strategies are currently tested in an online survey to develop and validate the TRACQ. This questionnaire can be used by practitioners to discuss the ways transgender people deal with transgender specific situations during the transition process.

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