

LGBTQ+ Healthcare

Case Studies

“It’s too late for me”: Mx. Z

Mx. Z presents for therapy ‘stranded’ in the middle of their transition goals. They know they don’t relate to their assigned female sex, they know they feel male, but they are not satisfied with surgical options and social obstacles to relationships should they fully medically transition. They have undergone chest reconstruction surgery but are ambivalent about names, pronouns, coming out to others, and living in a male role. Mx. Z endorses a strong sense of “too lateness” for a major life change due to their phase of life. They often state “I have made up my mind, I will never transition, I’ll just be miserable forever.”

Considerations: *How can therapy help Mx. Z? What knowledge does a therapist need of medical options to be the most effective? What would you try to challenge as opposed to validate in Mx. Z’s mindset?*

“Like a Ken Doll”: Mr. Y

Mr. Y is seeking a letter of support for gender-affirming surgery. Mr. Y identifies as agender and is seeking genital nullification, a procedure few surgeons in the United States offer. Mr. Y stated he will not be transitioning his gender publicly and remains comfortable being perceived socially as a man; his only incongruence stems from the appearance and function of his genitals. He does not plan to change any secondary sex characteristics. Only his husband and therapist know about his agender identity; he reports that his husband is ‘on the fence’ about supporting the procedure. During your interview, Mr. Y attributes barriers to acceptance of his identity and gender-affirming treatment to stigma and lack of education about agender identities.

Considerations: *What is your reaction to this case? In what way do your own biases and assumptions about gender come into play? What is the role of a letter of support? What is it a clinician’s job to determine in this type of assessment? What else would you like to know in Mr. Y’s case that would make you feel comfortable and confident in making treatment recommendations? What would a competent and justice-oriented assessment process look like for Mr. Y?*