

YOUR PATIENT REFUSES COLLABORATION IN A PHYSICAL EXAMINATION BECAUSE OF RELIGIOUS OR IDEOLOGICAL REASONS.

In many cultures, physical examination and physical contact may be restricted. The gender of the professional can be critical to the person and determine their willingness to cooperate in physical examinations. Professionals may be confronted with situations that change their typical routines and they need to find ways to deal with such incidents. It is crucial to remember the patient-centred approach, especially in such cases. Often, people do not feel comfortable being examined by a health professional of the opposite sex. In such cases, it is helpful to discuss with the patient the reasons of her/his refusal in order to gain a better understanding. This will give you a basis for finding creative ways of dealing with the situation.

PRACTICAL EXAMPLE

Uwe is a German physiotherapist. One day, he has a Muslim patient from Afghanistan, Mrs. Naim who wears a headscarf. She suffers from neck tension. Uwe would have to see and touch her neck to be able to treat her properly. But this part of her body is covered by the headscarf. At first, he is unsure what to do. He asks Mrs. Naim if she would be willing to take off her headscarf. She told him that this is not possible because of her religion.

SOLUTION

The physiotherapist decided to do the exercises on himself and asked her to copy them. Mrs. Naim felt good with that possibility and her neck got better soon.

OPTION 01

Explain the course of the procedures to your patient/client in simple language and ask for their consent and permission.

OPTION 02

Ask them, if they prefer to have a healthcare professional of another gender. If this is not possible, which happens often, contact an interpreter or any other person that could help you deal with the situation. You may find solutions that you would not expect.

OPTION 03

Respect the will of your patient and if possible, adjust your behaviour accordingly. Every case is different and you may have to improvise to find the appropriate solution.

OPTION 04

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Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union

The I-CARE project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.