

B3: Transgender and Transitioning: A spouse's reaction

Type of Exercise: Classroom activity, discussion question

Level: basic

Length of time: 15 minutes in small groups, 30 minutes total minutes

Resources needed: none

Instructions: Read the following scenario and ask students or workshop participants to discuss it in small groups of 3-4 individuals, and then share their responses with the larger group.

Scenario: A colleague, Joan, approaches you and asks if you would mind talking over lunch. Soon into the conversation Joan says, "I think my husband is having an affair. I found women's underwear and clothes in a suit case in our closet." You ask some questions about this, and soon learn that Joan doesn't really think her husband is having an affair. In fact, he recently told her that he is transgender and wants to start living as a woman.

Suggested Discussion Questions:

- Why do you think she initially told you that her husband was having an affair?
- How do you respond to your colleague? List at least two ways that you could indicate to Joan that you are supportive of her, without being negative about Joan's spouse.
- If you were Joan, how do you think you would react to your spouse saying that he/she was transgender and planning to transition to the other sex?
- What resources are available within your local community that you could refer Joan to? If you don't know, how would you go about finding local resources? What state or national resources could you recommend to your colleague? If you don't know, how could you find out?

Modifications: Ask students to access websites for information for Joan. Evaluate the book/article suggestions, movies, blogs, and other types of



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