Brendan Leahy

Speaker Key:

BL Brendan Leahy

OT Onscreen Text

UM Unidentified Male Speaker

BL My name is Brendan Leahy.

OT Brendan Leahy

User Involvement Co-Ordinator

The Advocacy Project (SURGE)

BL My name is Brendan Leahy and I’m from The Advocacy Project here in Camden and I’m a User Involvement Co-Ordinator for people with learning disabilities. And today, we gave a role play on what is good and what could be better about people with learning disabilities when they go to see their doctor.

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So today, the SURGE team that I help gave a couple of role plays to show what is not so good and what could be better about a person with a learning disability, and their experience when trying to get a doctor’s appointment and actually visiting the surgery.

In the role play, the main points that we tried to get across were that it can be really difficult when somebody phones up. There can be lots of music, lots of numbers. There can be fast-speaking, which is really difficult. So we would much prefer that it was either slowed down or that someone actually got through straight to someone on the other end of the phone, a receptionist. That would be much easier for them. They can relate to a person much easier when they hear somebody’s voice.

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The second element that we tried to show was the problems in the waiting room. So people can find it really difficult in the waiting room. It can be noisy, it can be busy, they don’t get asked the right questions by the receptionist, there’s long queues. So, you know, if there can be quieter rooms for people – we tried to mention that. We tried to suggest that the receptionist gets into a conversation with the person and explains what’s going to happen and what will happen next and what the process will be.

The next stage, obviously, is seeing the doctor themselves. And we showed that the loud noises can mean they don’t hear their name called and that’s really, really difficult for them. So maybe the doctor could come down and get them. That would be a really great suggestion for people. It’s something that they can feel comfortable.

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Surgeries are quite big places now, they’re complicated and difficult for people to find their doctor’s room. And it’s not always the same room, they don’t always see the same GP. So again, we accept that happens, but obviously the more easier it can be for them to find that different GP, that’s even better. And it gives a personable introduction to one another as well, which we find really, really good.

The last thing, obviously, is when they actually go up to the doctor themselves, the doctor will talk lots. Sometimes, they’ll talk just to the support worker or to the family member. We try to encourage people to talk directly to the person with the learning disability. They want to know what’s going on. They do understand a lot more, sometimes, than we will give them credit for, but they will also ask questions. But they’ll also feel part of the whole process if you, as the doctor, actually talk directly with them.

The last thing that we were trying to get across, that sometimes it’s necessary to give information to people with a learning disability. And we prefer that to be an easy read. Now, easy read is a letter or a document or a leaflet that’s in what we call an accessible format.

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So it’ll have pictures, it’ll have letters and words in a larger print. And it’ll be usually, hopefully, to give a really simple, non-jargon description of what the thing is, going to happen, maybe what the person’s illness is or what’s the procedure that they might be having; you know, if you’ve referred them to another doctor or a hospital or for a blood test. And then we would really encourage that you try to work with your learning disability patients to achieve that. That would be really helpful for us at The Advocacy Project.

UM Where can GPs find out more?

BL So SURGE, The Advocacy Project, is based here in Camden. And we have a website which give details of the meetings we undertake, the type of work we do. We do training and easy read teams that look at that type of work here in Camden.

BL That website address is the advocacyproject.org.uk, and you can find out lots of information about the things we do. And we’re more than happy, as a team, to be contacted directly by email.

OT surge@advocacyproject.org.uk

BL And that email address is surge@advocacyproject.org.uk.

OT NHS Camden Clinical Commissioning Group

Thanks for watching What is Good, What Could Improve in Primary Care? (short summary)

Learning Disability Education Event 17th May 2017

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