



## Exploring the medicine experiences and needs of patients from under-served communities

### Transcript for Ricky

#### Consider Ricky's story

I'm Ricky, I'm a non-binary transgender person. That means that I don't fully identify as either male or female, but I'm going through a testosterone transition, medical transition, so I'm becoming more masculine in my secondary sexual characteristics. As a result of being transgender I've experienced a lot of depression and anxiety throughout my life.

#### Discrimination

People treat you like a third class citizen. People look down on you, they treat you like you're weird, they treat you like, I mean I'm a professional, you know, I'm experienced, I'm knowledgeable, I've got a degree, but people treat me like, I dunno, you're a freak show.

#### Minority stress

Well, there's a thing called minority stress, which is a known phenomenon which means that the kind of the cumulative effect of all these experiences of discrimination add up to something that is identical to trauma basically. It makes you more anxious to leave your home, to go outside your door. It makes you worry about every interaction you're going to have with people, are they gonna hurt me? Are they gonna upset me? And so therefore it limits your interaction with the rest of the world. It has created a lot of anxiety for me and a lot of worry. A lot of sleepless nights and a lot of sadness as well, a sense of grief and loss as well that the worlds not gonna accept me easily. So yeah, it's been hard.

#### Tell me about your medicines

I take quite a lot of different medicines. I take citalopram and amitriptyline for my migraines and lots of herbal supplements and stuff like that. I buy sleeping pills off the internet because that's the only thing I've found that works for me. Pain wise I've been prescribed naproxen before, but it caused me really bad stomach problems, so I've become quite reliant on codeine and I really worry about that because it's addictive. I probably take it a lot more than I should.

#### Have you ever been offered an MUR?

No, I've never been offered a Medicines Use Review. I wasn't aware until this research that they existed, so actually it would've been really really helpful.

### **How do you think an MUR would benefit you?**

It would've been incredibly helpful to sit down with somebody and look at what I'm taking, whether there are other drugs out there that would've been better; understand a bit more about pain management drugs, how medicines interact. It would have been very helpful. I suspect that medical practitioners shy away from trans-people because we're on hormonal treatments. Sometimes people think that they won't understand how we work biologically and how to treat us, so they back away from helping us with other normal everyday stuff. But the reality is that hormones don't make us any different from anybody else really. They have very little interaction with other medicines. So what we find sometimes is that we're underserved sometimes in healthcare generally. And yeah it would be really nice if people realised that actually because we have co-occurring things like depression and anxiety just because of how difficult it is being trans. That actually we're probably the people who most need these kinds of services.

### **Relationship with pharmacy staff**

It's friendly, I feel like we've built up a better relationship because I've been going in so much. There was at first a few problems with mis-gendering me or mis-identifying me. I've got a transgender partner as well and they used to muddle us up because we're having very similar medication I guess.

### **Fostering relationships**

People are worried about getting things wrong and so they kind of back away and that means we often walk through the world with people at a distance and we don't really have supportive relationships around us and that can lead to a lot of isolation and can increase our stress and anxiety. So just that friendliness and warmth really helps. People have a relational approach they don't see us as objects or tick boxes to get through but actually see us as people and treat us as people.