

## **Caring for Challenging Patients Exercise: Jail Health Service**

### **Learner Handout**

Carolyn Sufrin, MD, MPH

Jody Steinauer, MD, MAS

University of California, San Francisco

#### **Objectives:**

1. To discuss patient interactions that might make you feel uncomfortable.
2. To provide an opportunity to reflect on your own feelings and values about people who are in the criminal justice system.
3. To use this awareness of judgment to identify strategies for maintaining a therapeutic relationship with patients who make decisions about health or life with which you may disagree.

#### **Section I: General feelings about women in criminal justice system**

1. I am comfortable taking care of a woman who was arrested for suspected:
  - Shoplifting
  - Drug possession- marijuana
  - Drug possession- crack/cocaine
  - Child abuse
  - Sex work
  - Murder
  - Car theft
  - Stabbing her abusive partner
  - Driving while intoxicated and killing a pedestrian
  - Robbery
  
2. I am comfortable taking care of a pregnant woman who is in jail and who was arrested for suspected:
  - Shoplifting
  - Drug possession- marijuana
  - Drug possession- crack/cocaine
  - Child abuse
  - Sex work
  - Murder
  - Car theft
  - Stabbing her abusive partner
  - Driving while intoxicated and killing a pedestrian
  - Robbery

## **Section II: Behavior Challenges**

1. You are seeing a 26 year old woman at 34 weeks gestation, for prenatal care in jail. The only other care she received this pregnancy was one visit to triage at SFGH. When she is not in jail, she uses crack or heroin almost daily.
2. You are seeing a woman who is HIV+ with a history of dysplasia. Outside of jail, she hasn't followed up for pap smears or colposcopy. While in jail this time, you diagnosed her with CIN2 on a biopsy and you arrange for a LEEP at SF General. On the morning of the procedure, she "refuses" the transport from the jail to SF General.
3. Your patient tells you about her history of depression and her history of ongoing abuse from her partner, who is also incarcerated. She is very tearful and asks for your help. She also asks you for a "chrono" for a bottom bunk and some medicine stronger than Tylenol for her chronic pelvic pain.

## **Section III: Expectations of patients**

1. You are seeing a 30 year old G7P4Ab3 patient who was arrested one week ago. She comes to you reporting vaginal discharge. She does not have custody of any of her 4 children. As part of your routine counseling you talk to her about contraception. She is not currently using any method of birth control.

## **Section IV: Discussion Questions**

- How do these scenarios make us feel? What are our reactions?
- How might our feelings come across to the patient?
  - Verbal and nonverbal cues?
- What strategies can we come up with to maintain a healthy relationship with the patient?
- How can we recover from a judgmental moment with a patient?