

CASE STUDY

#3

The patient is a 28-year-old male who underwent a below-knee amputation six weeks ago. He is in an outpatient clinic using a walker. The patient states that using the walker when going through doorways is cumbersome. He comes to the session without family and lives in an apartment alone. The patient can complete most household tasks but has trouble moving items while maneuvering through his environment with the walker. He gives the example of moving around in the kitchen while trying to put away dishes. The patient also states he feels isolated since his accident and has been unable to share his loneliness for fear of alarming his friends and family.



CONSIDERATIONS

Something to consider is that the patient feels the walker is hindering his ability to engage in functional tasks. Consider the option of adding a tray or bag to move items around the home more easily. The patient may be eligible to use other assistive devices that work better for his life and circumstances. Another consideration is his loneliness and inability to reach out to friends and family about this. Resources and interventions can be trialed to fit the patient's needs.

INTERVENTIONS

Sometimes, the patient's needs are unmet, leading to other problems during the healing process. The patient could be struggling with the walker because of a lack of family and social support. The goal for this session can be to figure out how best to problem-solve the patient's issues on this visit. First, the patient can try adding a bag or basket to the walker to assist in transporting items while using the walker. Another option is to trial other ambulation devices. One option that comes to mind is crutches. This will need to be addressed by the physical therapist on the patient's team so determine options before bringing it up with the patient for trial. Next, it is time to understand the patient's social supports and needs. Connect him to possible resources and involve a peer mentor if needed. A referral to a psychologist can be made as well.

AT A GLANCE

Challenges

- Walker is cumbersome and inhibits functional independence
- Feelings of loneliness and isolation from others

Benefits

- Patient is young with ability to learn new ways to complete tasks
- Many resources to reach out to others