Changing of the Guard

August 9, 2011 By Aundaray Guess

Today I had an adjustment moment of change that took me off guard. I was going to my clinic for my check-up and as I've been going there for the past five years. Whenever I entered I was on auto pilot.

As usual I waved and said hello to the security guard who I knew by first name and proceeded to the elevator with my destination being the third floor. When the door opened and I saw unfamiliar faces at the reception desk, I wondered if I hit the button for the wrong floor. But no it was my floor. Everything from the desk to the furniture was the same, it was the people that were different.

The diva came out in me when they asked for my name and my medical card. What! Show my id. The nerve, where is so and so! But the reality was that so and so had moved on and since this person didn't know me from Adam, I relented and gave up my information.

One of the unfortunate aspect of having HIV for a long period of time is that when it comes to your healthcare, you pick out a place that you feel comfortable going. You start to create relationships. Not just with your doctor but also with the entire staff. It's like a comfort food.

You know it will always be there. it makes you feel good to see familiar faces. Yet when staff makes changes and leave for other positions or opportunities, it throws you off balance.

Last year I went through it when the doctor I saw for five years announced to me that he was leaving for an out of state opportunity. a wave of emotions wash over you as you process what you just heard. Outside you're happy for their new adventure, but inside you're screaming, NO!!!! You're my doctor what am I supposed to do now? how can you leave me!

After calming down and realizing it wasn't all about me, he let me know who would be replacing him. Yet at that moment I didn't care how good he was and how highly recommended others felt about his knowledge of HIV. I didn't want to start over with someone new.

Usually I have no problem when it comes to change but when it comes to opening myself and creating a relationship of trust, you don't adjust so easily. Adjusting to a new doctor is never easy. This is the person you shared things that sometimes you don't even tell yourself all in the sake of getting good treatment as a good doctor is never judgmental with the information you share. Yet the truth of the matter is that just like other folks with jobs and careers, they eventually move on. And although they move on you still have your HIV that needs managing so you have to come to that place of acceptance.

Yet breaking up is hard to do especially when you're on the receiving end of the information. You go through denial, then anger, then acceptance. A relationship between you and your doctor is such an intimate aspect of your care and it's understandable why someone like me would be resistance to the

changing of the guard. Although they have all your information on file, there’s still something about starting over.

Yet I can’t stress this enough, it’s not personal, it’s part of life, people move on. You have to adapt and although it may take awhile, as I can attest, give the new doctor a chance as you still have to manage the one thing that hasn’t change, your HIV status.

Since the time he left, several nurses who I was also on a first name basis left months later and like before you have a sense of sadness but wish them well in their new ventures.

It’s been a year now and the doctor I’m seeing has passed the test, so I’m open and honest with him with all details of my life as it’s the only way you can get adequate care. I knew that no matter how I felt about the new guy, by not giving him the full story, even if it sounded like I was repeating myself, it ultimately came down to my health.

After 25 years of having this virus, I’ve been through several doctors so you’d think I wouldn’t have any separation anxiety. But I’m only human and I do. And I know that the doctor I’m seeing now will eventually move on and it’s that knowing that will make the change so much easier to swallow!

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