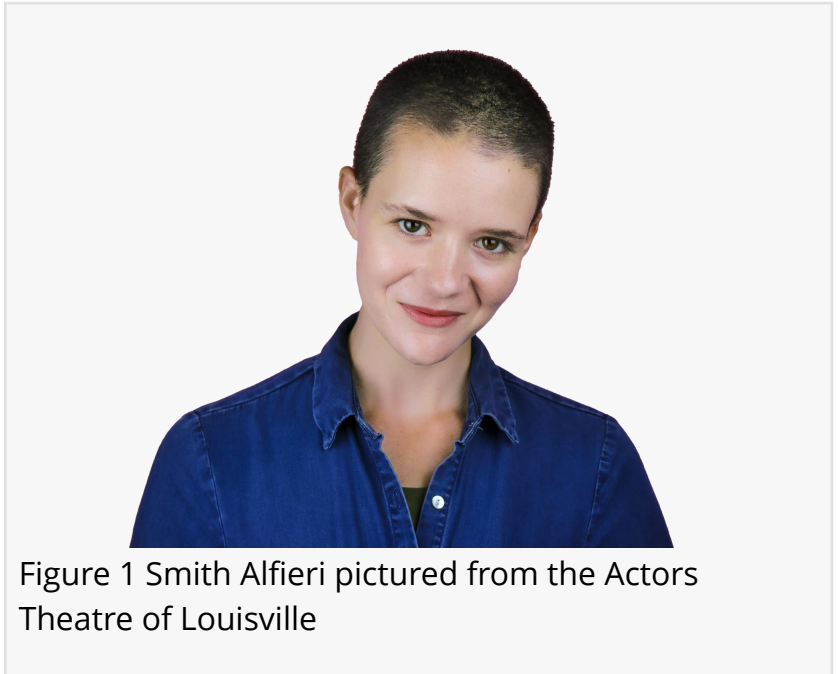


Actor Smith Alfieri Stars as Lucas Novak in SIMmersion's Gender Affirmative Therapy Training for Transition Needs

Practicing with an actor playing Lucas Novak helps mental health clinicians provide affirmative care and respond to the needs of trans and nonbinary clients.

COLUMBIA, MD, UNITED STATES, June 29, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Actor Smith Alfieri

This year, Smith Alfieri (he/they) added the role-play simulation to his already impressive acting resume. Theatrical credits include work with The Acting Company, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Shakespeare on the Sound, and A.R.T./N.Y. Television: New Amsterdam (NBC), Extrapolations (AppleTV+).



The Role of Lucas Novack

“

SIMmersion's training for gender affirmative therapy is contributing to a better understanding of the community needs.”

Dale Olsen, Ph.D.

By portraying Lucas Novack, Mr. Alfieri gave mental healthcare providers the opportunity to practice talking with a client who users met for the first-time a week ago. During that first session, Lucas shared that he is a trans man who wants support with his social, medical, and legal transition. In each practice session, the clinician's job is to create a safe and affirming environment in which Lucas can explore his goals and needs.

The Training Experience

Each time clinicians talk with Lucas about his goals, his feelings of euphoria and dysphoria and

his therapeutic goals and needs will change, allowing training system users to gain experiences talking with different clients about their transition experiences. The goals Lucas may want to explore include top surgery, starting testosterone, and a legal name change. The reasons these goals are affirming to Lucas and the barriers he faces to achieve them will also change with each play.

Role Authenticity

To ensure the training was effective and Lucas's role-play accurately represent trans and nonbinary experiences, SIMmersion partnered with Towson University and a team of clinical and research experts in counseling, gender identity, LGBTQ+ mental health and wellness, and trans and nonbinary minority stress and resilience. This team also invited a panel of individuals with lived trans experiences to review the role-play simulations scripts and provide feedback on Lucas's background, goals, needs, and responses. Additionally, Mr. Alfieri brought his own experiences and insights to the role, ensuring that mental healthcare clinicians gain real experiences as they talk with Lucas.

The Technology

This training system was created using the PeopleSim® technology, a SIMmersion proprietary technology used for a variety of applications. For this practice system, each user statement typically has from 7 to 15 responses. To choose the response given by Lucas, the PeopleSim technology calculates probabilities for each of the possible responses based on current conditions, and then uses these probabilities to randomly select a response. The probability calculations are based on one of Lucas' different randomly selected personalities and on the relationship the user has developed with him during the conversation.



Figure 2 Smith Alfieri as Lucas Novak



Figure 3 Therapist Practicing with Lucas

Lucas starts each session with a cautious frame of mind. Everything the user says is rated according to the impact it has on the relationship with him, thus as the conversation proceeds, the relationship will evolve. [Click here](#) to read more about SIMmersion's PeopleSim technology or here to [watch a video](#) about the technology.

Summary

Mr. Alfieri brings his considerable acting skills and life experiences to the role of Lucas Novack adding to a carefully written script designed to reflect the experiences trans and nonbinary individuals. The role-player training provides users a variety of realistic experiences with both ongoing and summary feedback. Multiple research studies have shown this approach provides highly effective training that lasts. [To learn more click this link.](#)

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