

SEXUALITY, SENSUALITY, INTIMACY AND... YES, THEY DO GO TOGETHER

- ☞ Webinar
- ☞ United Spinal Association
- ☞ February 22, 2012
- ☞ Eva Margot Kant, LCSW

SEXUALITY, SENSUALITY, INTIMACY AND. . .

- ∞ ALL MEN AND WOMEN ARE SEXUAL BEINGS!
- ∞ THIS INCLUDES THOSE WHO ARE DISABLED OR
- ∞ ARE STRUGGLING WITH A CHRONIC ILLNESS.

SEXUALITY, SENSUALITY, INTIMACY AND. . .

COMMON MYTHS ABOUT SEXUALITY IN GENERAL, AND SPECIFICALLY FOR THE DISABLED

- SEX IS ONLY FOR THE YOUNG AND ABLE-BODIED (the disabled do not desire intimacy and physical/emotional connection)
- SEX MEANS INTERCOURSE
- CAN'T HAVE FUN SEXUALLY
- CAN'T BE INVENTIVE AND CREATIVE ESPECIALLY WITH REGARD TO POSITIONING
- THE GOAL OF SEXUAL ACTIVITY IS ORGASM
- SEXUAL PERFORMANCE EQUALS LOVE
- SEXUAL ACTIVITY IS NATURAL AND SPONTANEOUS
- MASTURBATION IS HARMFUL

SEXUALITY, SENSUALITY, INTIMACY AND. . .

∞ COMMON MYTHS ABOUT SEXUALITY (cont.)

∞ HOW DO THESE MYTHS IMPACT US?

∞ THEY CAN MAKE US FEEL LESS THAN, UNEMPOWERED, ABNORMAL, INFLUENCE SELF-ESTEEM, ETC.

∞ WHERE DO THEY COME FROM?

∞ MEDIA/ENTERTAINMENT

∞ FAMILY

∞ FRIENDS

∞ CLINICIANS

∞ EXPERIENCE = WE ASSUME THE PAST WILL BE THE FUTURE

∞ ANYWHERE ELSE?

SEXUALITY, SENSUALITY, INTIMACY AND . . .

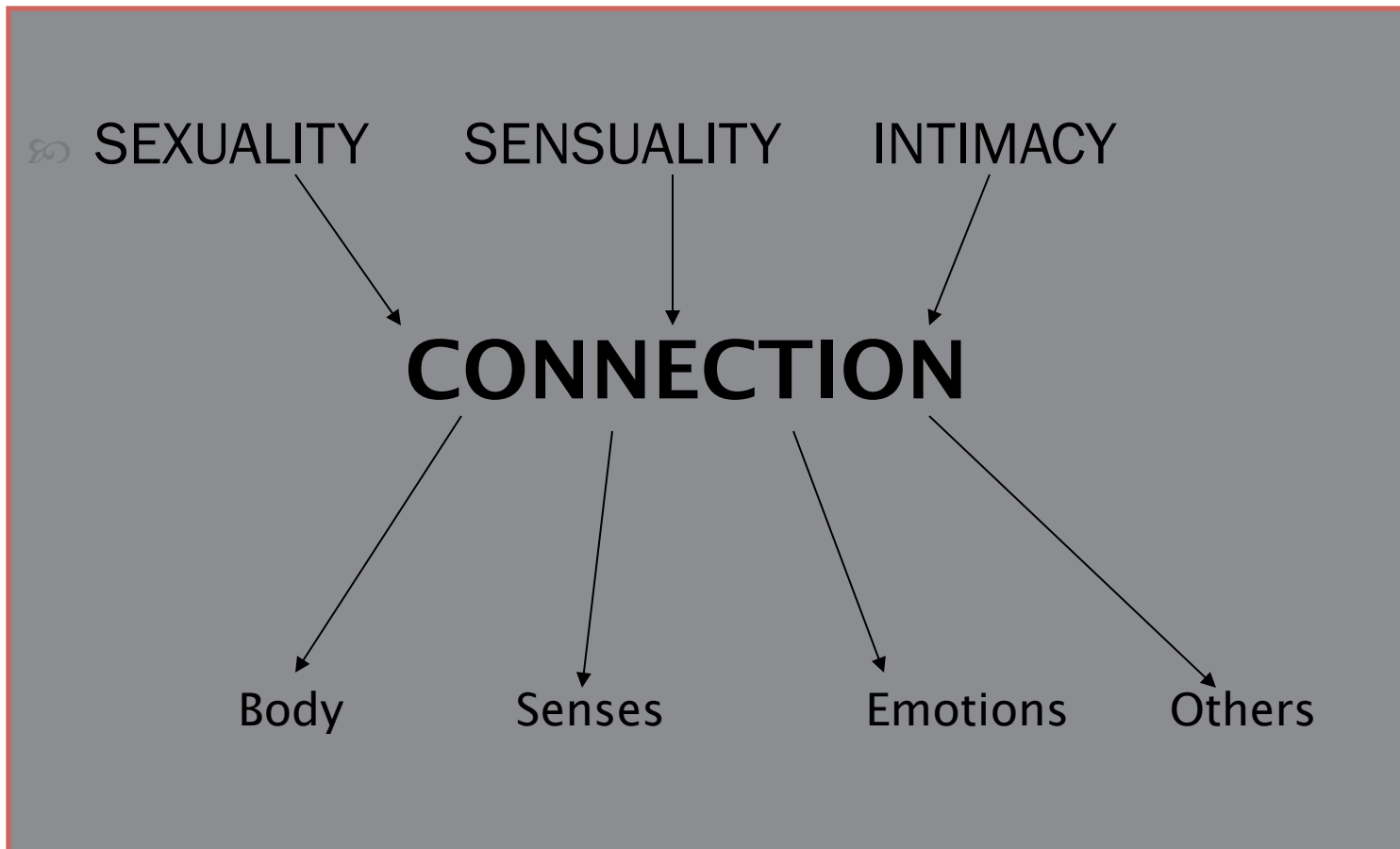
ALTHOUGH AMERICAN CULTURE IS SATURATED WITH OVERTLY SEXUAL IMAGES AND SUGGESTIVE ADVERTISING, PLACES WHERE MOST OF US NEVER HEAR TALK ABOUT SEX IS IN OUR DOCTOR'S OFFICE, OR OTHER MEDICAL SETTINGS.

SEXUALITY, SENSUALITY, INTIMACY AND...

“IF SEX IS SUCH A NATURAL PHENOMENON, HOW COME THERE ARE SO MANY BOOKS ON HOW TO?”

- BETTE MIDLER

SEXUALITY, SENSUALITY, INTIMACY AND...



SEXUALITY, SENSUALITY, INTIMACY AND. . .

☞ SEX (SEXUALITY)

☞ SENSUALITY

☞ INTIMACY

“THE HOLY TRILOGY OF SEX”

SEX (SEXUALITY)

- ∞ We use the term “sex” to mean any and all sexual acts, and IS NOT LIMITED TO INTERCOURSE
- ∞ Sex is comprised of physical acts, and/or activities, and encompasses all responses thereto
- ∞ All too often there is a gender bias regarding sexual dysfunction
- ∞ Clinicians are more likely to “address” sexual issues in men such as ED, and more often dismiss women’s issues
- ∞ Also can be cultural biases as well conditions, etc. can adversely affect sexual activity/abilities in patients of both genders and all ethnicities

SENSUALITY

- ∞ A feeling . . . a sensation. . . an interpretation . . . an impression made . . . a way of feeling and being
- ∞ Having to do with the five senses
- ∞ All too often, “patients’ senses” are assaulted, numbed, altered or blocked as a result of necessary treatment protocol and emotional challenges resulting from the treatment
- ∞ You can become unable to view yourself as a sensual being
- ∞ Can you name all five senses?
- ∞ Can you identify “things” connected to your senses that make you go “hmmm”?

INTIMACY

∞ “Intimacy, particularly touching is a great need in all of us from the day we are born until the day we die . . .

- Mary Calderone, MD

∞ Intimacy is formally defined as:

- a close, familiar, and usually affectionate or loving personal relationship with another person or group.
- an amorously familiar act
- sexual intercourse

∞ Dictionary.com Unabridged (v 1.1)
Based on the Random House Unabridged Dictionary, © Random House, 2006

∞

SEXUALITY, SENSUALITY, INTIMACY AND...

∞ SEXUAL REHABILITATION PRINCIPLES TO HELP MAINTAIN A SEXUAL AND INTIMATE RELATIONSHIP

- ∞ Plan sexual activity for the time of day when you have the most energy and your health problems are least intrusive
- ∞ Be sure you are rested and relaxed
- ∞ Wait at least two hours after eating to have sex (kind of sounds like swimming but is important)
- ∞ Take any required pain medication 30 minutes before sexual activity
- ∞ Remember alcohol and tobacco can affect sexual function
- ∞ Try alternate ways to experience sexuality: holding hands, stroking, touching caressing, etc. as physical contact is important even when you don't plan on having intercourse

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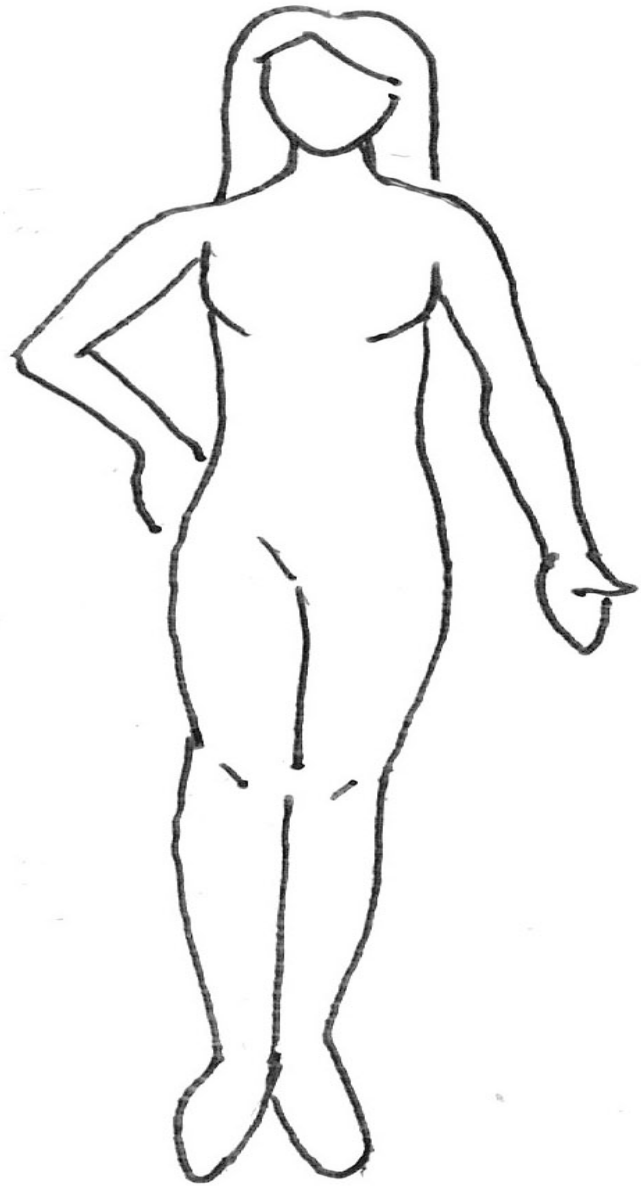
∞ SEXUAL REHABILITATION PRINCIPLES TO HELP ∞ MAINTAIN A SEXUAL AND INTIMATE RELATIONSHIP ∞ (CONT.)

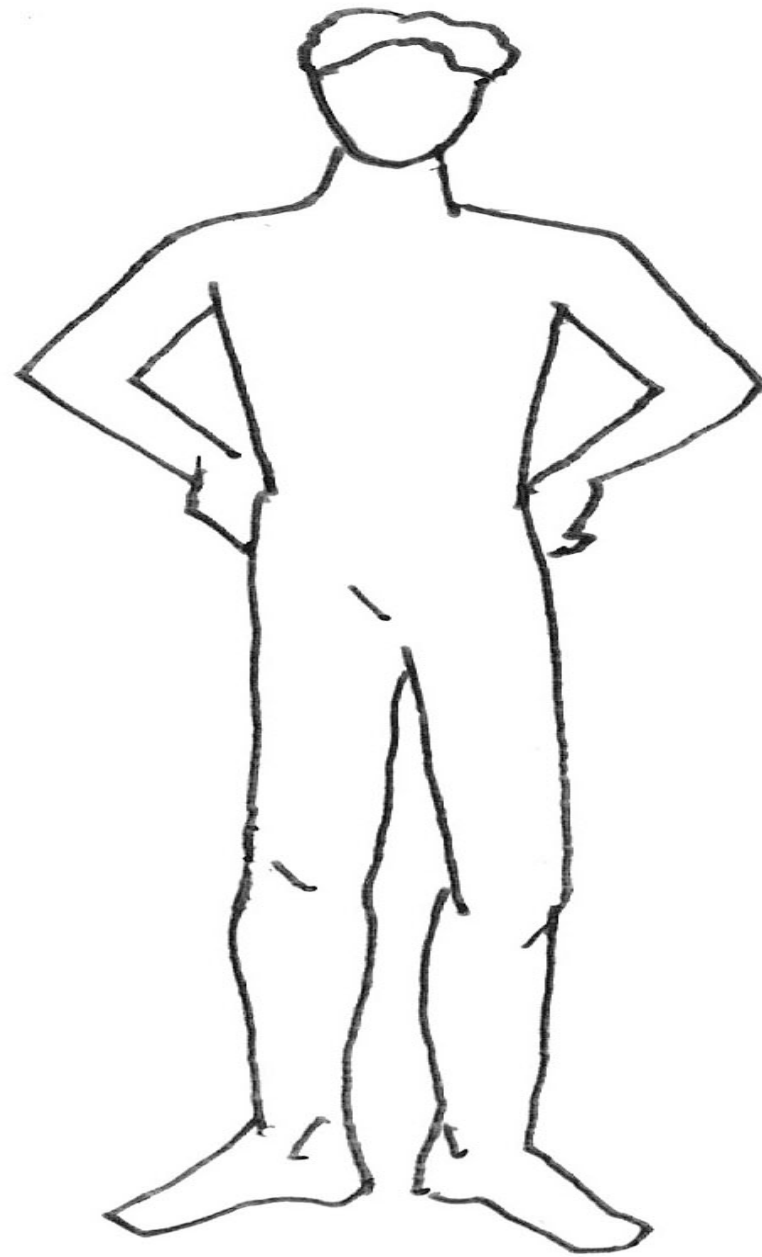
- ∞ Adapt to limitations and make adjustments where necessary
- ∞ Alter positions, rotate who initiates, etc.
- ∞ Stay positive and open to experiences

SEXUALITY, SENSUALITY, INTIMACY AND...

FOCUS ON SENSUALITY

- ∞ Re-establish a connection with your body and all its senses
- ∞ Begin to see what you enjoy and can therefore share with others
- ∞ Though your senses may have been altered due to illness and treatment, others remain and can be heightened to replace those lacking
- ∞ Practice body mapping to see where you are most able to be pleased





SEXUALITY, SENSUALITY, INTIMACY AND...

SEXUALITY AND INTIMACY - COMMUNICATION

Need to clarify with professionals in your life regarding any restrictions, etc. then go forward – full steam ahead!

COMMUNICATION IS THE KEY BETWEEN PARTNERS

∞ Ask each other:

- What type of intimacy is most important to you?
- What kind of touch would feel the best for you? What feels good, feels sexy and gives the most pleasure!
- How can I best fulfill your physical needs?
- What concerns you the most about physical intimacy or sex?

SEXUALITY, SENSUALITY, INTIMACY AND . . .

- ☞ Aim for connection, not for perfection
- ☞ Being disabled and/or having an illness does not define you as a person or sexual being
- ☞ You are NOT just a person with . . .
- ☞ You deserve to have a life filled with sex, love and intimate connection
- ☞ View your body as more than something to be stuck, poked, prodded, observed, measured, etc.
- ☞ Keep re-discovering the wonders of your body and all its senses – focus on sensuality
- ☞ Open communication with partners and loved ones is vital

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THANK YOU