

**THANK YOU TO OUR
BREAKOUT SESSION SPONSOR**



Brain and Spinal Cord
Injury Specialists

Sexual Health:

Let's Talk About Sex...No
Really, Let's Talk About It.



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QLI

Omaha, NE

Post Acute Rehabilitation and
Outpatient Telerehabilitation

- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Spinal Cord Injury
- Chronic Pain
- Limb Loss
- Stroke



Objectives

- Increase motivation and competence in addressing sexual health
- Identify and acknowledge potential biases
- Destigmatize myths surrounding sexual health
- Review models that promote sexual health
- Increase comfort of the entire support system
- Increase familiarity with relevant resources



Normal Sexual Intercourse 1926

- 2 sexually mature people of opposite sexes
- Voluptuous sensations
- Ejaculation of semen into vagina
- Nearly simultaneous orgasm of both

Th. H. Van de Velde, M.D. *Ideal Marriage It's Physiology and Technique*

“

Sexual health is a state of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being related to sexuality; it is not merely the absence of disease, dysfunction or infirmity.

World Health Organization





Why **SHOULD** we talk about sex within
the context of recovery and rehab?



Recognizing the Challenges

- Personal/Societal Factors
- Professional Interferences
- Cognitive Interferences

Personal/Societal Factors



Professional Interferences

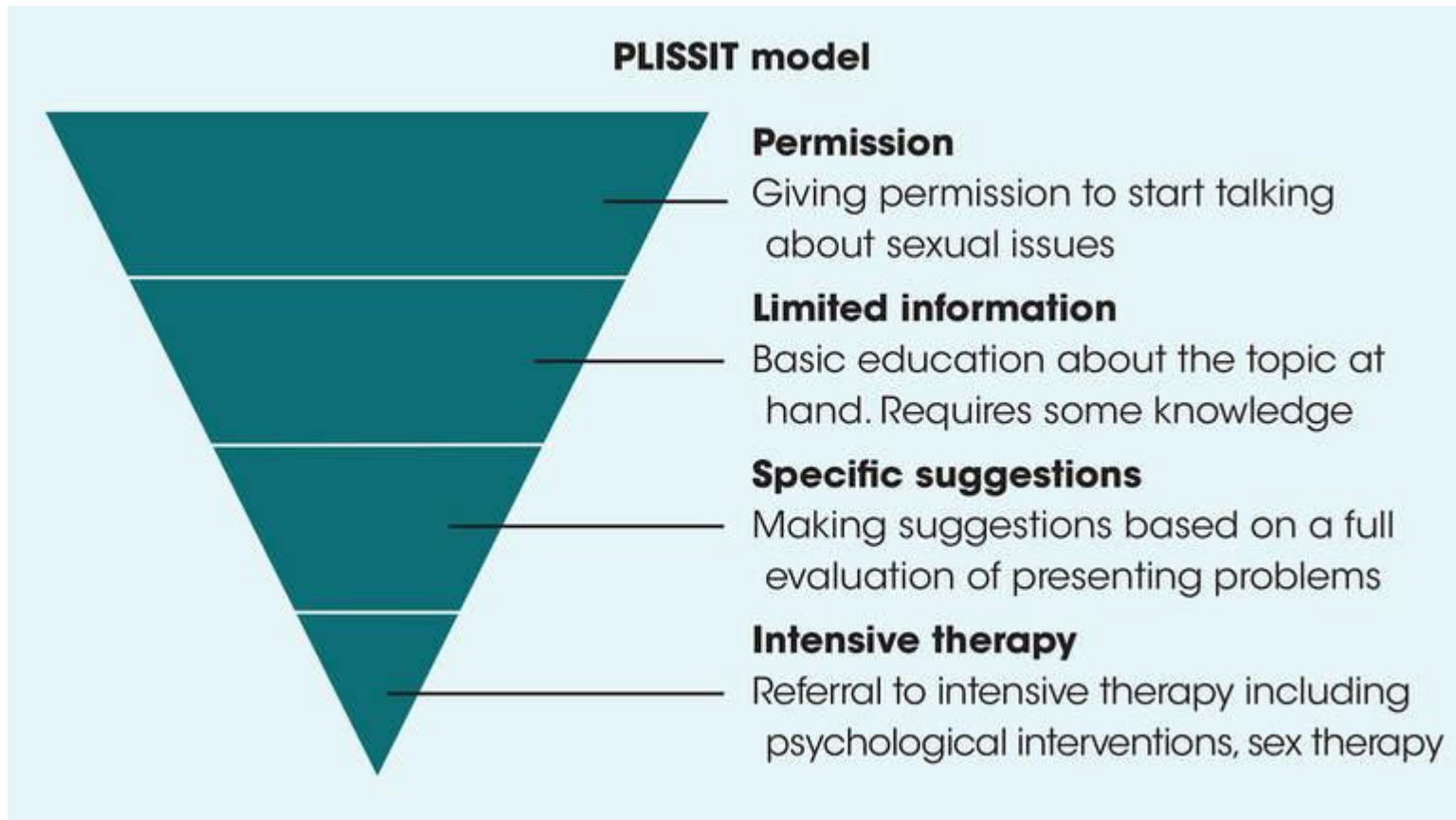
- I'm Not an Expert
- Time Constraints
- Lack of Organizational Support

Cognitive Interferences

- How will the individual/family perceive the discussion?
 - I'm planting ideas in their head
 - It's too early

Conversation Frameworks

The Permission Framework (PLISSIT & Ex-PLISSIT)



Permission

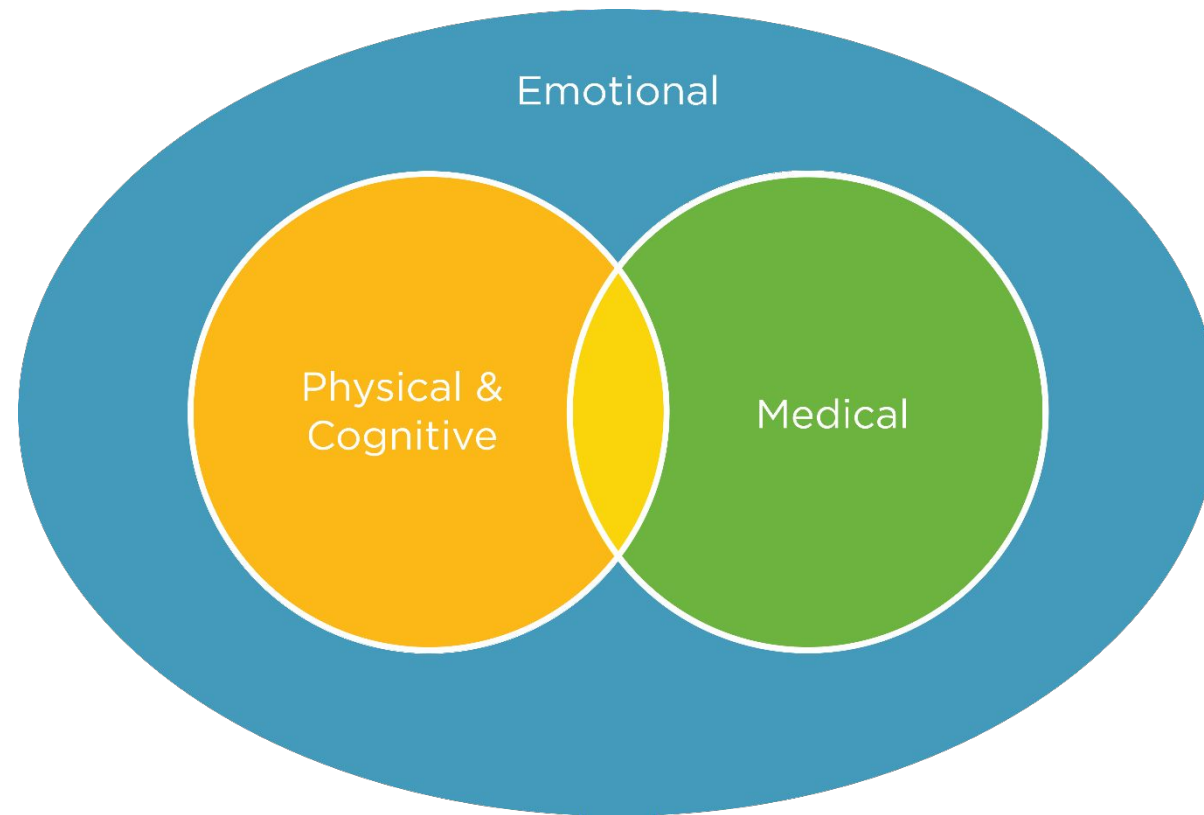
“How are you feeling about your relationship since injury?”



“It’s normal to have questions about sexuality after injury. If that’s something you’d like to talk more about, or if questions come up along the way”

Person Centered Rehab Model

A Multidisciplinary Approach



QLI Sexual Health Team

- Building trust
- Bringing concerns to the team
- Cross-discipline collaboration

Takeaways

- Sexual Health is part of holistic rehab
- We ARE the WHO and all disciplines can contribute
- Models exist that can guide our conversations
- Conversations can be simple, focusing on giving permission



Resources

- OT After Dark podcast (otafterdark.com)
- Cole & Charisma - Youtube (@coleandcharisma)
- www.sexualitysci.org
- Take Look at this Heart (film)
- Facingdisability.com
- Come as You Are by Emily Nagoski, Ph.D.
- The Ultimate Guide to Sex and Disability by Miriam Kaufman, Silverberg, and Odette

Conversation Frameworks

Gentle Permission Statements

- "Many people with injuries like yours notice changes in sexual function. Is this something you'd like information about?"
- "Part of whole-body wellness includes intimacy. If you ever want to discuss it, I am here to support you."
- "If this is ever something you want to talk about, it's absolutely appropriate in rehab."
- "You don't have to discuss it now, but I want you to know it's a safe topic here."
- "We care about quality of life, and that includes intimacy."

Sample Opening Lines

- TBI/Stroke:
 - "As part of holistic rehab, we also check in about relationships and intimacy. Would it be okay if we spent a minute on that?"
 - "Changes in communication can affect romantic relationships too. How has that been for you?"
 - "Do you feel like it has been harder to talk about personal or intimate topics since your stroke?"
 - "Brain injuries can affect emotions and relationships. I want to make sure we're supporting all areas of your life."
 - "Have there been any changes in how you feel about dating since your injury?"
 - "Partners often have questions too. Would it be helpful to bring them into this conversation?"
 - "Rehabilitation and recovery can sometimes shift roles in a relationship. How are you both navigating that?"

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