Sex Matters.....

Sex, Sexuality, Intimacy
Enhancing your sexual self-esteem in relationship & Life!

BCNA Forum 24th November 2012

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Overview

Defining sexuality

The importance of talking about sexuality & intimacy

Treatment

Quality of Life

Inhibitors & Enablers

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A clinical sexologist

Sexology: the study of human sexuality

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Life long process…

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Defining it….

" Sex & sensuality encompass a kaleidoscope of feelings & activities: From the deepest longings for mutual affection to the simple enjoyment of the company of a loved one...Sexuality also covers a gamut of behaviours- Touching, Kissing, Caressing and Cuddling, Genital intercourse with mutual orgasm and ***feelings of closeness & of being wanted and valued as a human being***"

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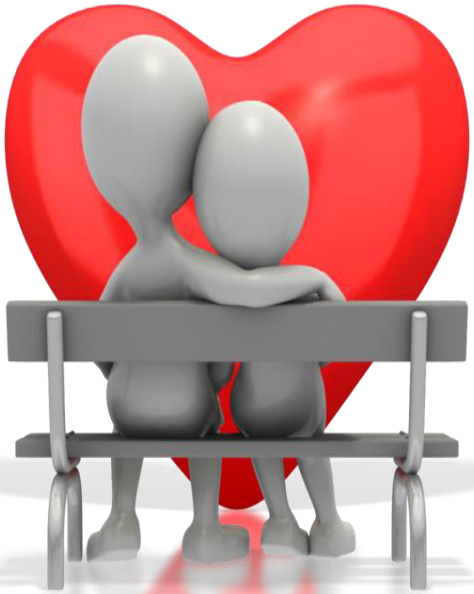
Sexuality & Sexual Wellness



Fundamental to the way in which we share intimacy or experience physical closeness

Includes but not limited to sexual function

Linked to our roles and relationships within families, work & society

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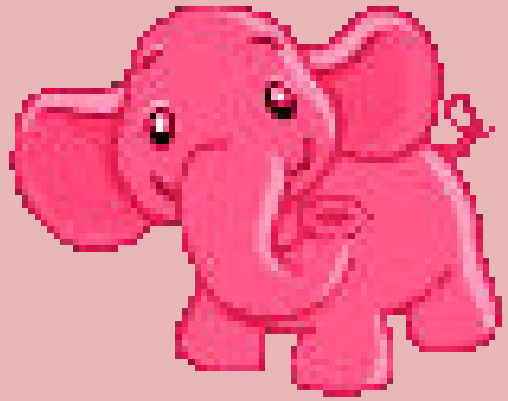
Asking for Help



The Elephant in the Room

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Barriers to talking about Sex

- **Beliefs (cultural)/ Biases**
- **Inexperience and fear of opening a 'Pandora Box'**
- **Stereotypical Attitudes (Ageist)**
- **Private Nature (own discomfort)**
- **Some one else's domain**
- **Sexual Orientation**

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Negative Impact on Sexual Wellness

Diagnosis & Surgery

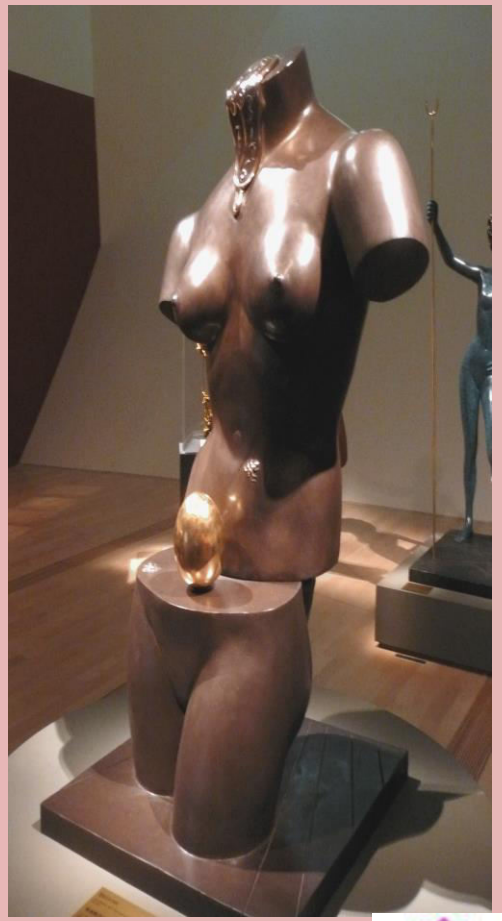
Chemotherapy/Radiotherapy

Endocrine Therapy

Medications

Concurrent illnesses

Changes: appearance, sensitivity, interest in sex, feeling self conscious



Salvador Dali

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Patient Comment:

“ I was having trouble with hot flashes and vaginal dryness after my chemotherapy, so I decided I’d ask the female intern about how to deal with this. When I told her my problem, she said that she would order some eye drops for my dry eyes!”

In a Snapshot

Premature / early menopause

Libido, Sexual arousal response

Vaginal dryness / Vaginal Stenosis

Mood swings / Depression

Weight gain

Hot flushes / night sweats

Decline in sexual wellbeing / Body Image

Pelvic pain : Dysparuenia / Vaginismus

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Dyspareunia

Where is the pain?

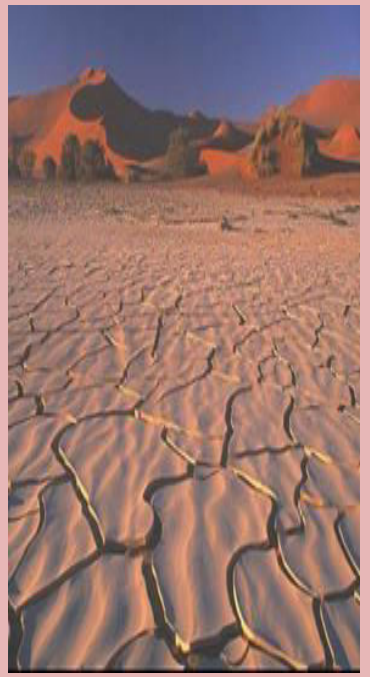
Pain at the vaginal opening as the penis enters the vagina?

Burning pain during intercourse

Pelvic Discomfort during and after

Pain elsewhere

- Arousal
- Moisture
- Positions for intercourse
- Pelvic Floor Exercises / Dilators



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Partners experience a 'ripple' and this in turn, decreases their own libido

Fear of rejection or of hurting their partner

The complexity of regaining a sense of 'normality' within their sexual relationship

Sense of being 'unwanted'/ 'undesirable'

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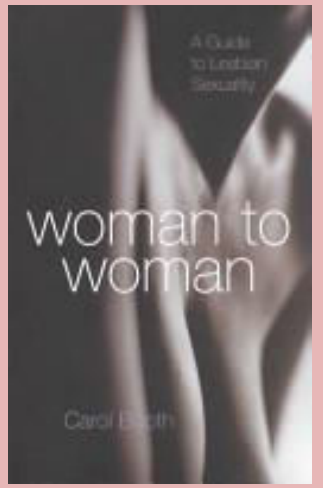
Same sex partnerships

less acknowledgment of relationship in heterosexual world/health care

Love – grieve in private

Partner faces own mortality



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Self-esteem

A feeling of self-worth, self-confidence, and self-respect

Low self-esteem *is having a generally negative overall opinion of oneself, judging or evaluating oneself negatively, and placing a general negative value on oneself as a person*

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Body- Esteem…. Image

- Physical & psychological impact of breast surgery/radiotherapy
- Affect appearance, breast sensitivity, interest in sex, feeling self conscious
- Sexuality remains with you throughout your life, regardless of age!

Dr Amanda Hordern, PhD. (The Cancer Council Victoria) **for the beautiful image.**

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Sex at 82!!!

I just took a leaflet out of my mailbox, informing me that I can have sex at 82! I'm sooooo happy, because I live at 73 ... So it's not far to walk home afterwards!

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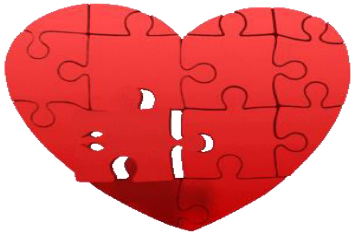
Inhibitors to sexual Confidence & Desire

Fatigue
Relationship stress
Vaginal Dryness
Loss of sexual self-esteem related:
-to body image changes
-Menopausal Symptoms
-Infertility
-Changes to one's sexual response
(reduced Arousal difficult to orgasm)



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Enhancers to sexual confidence & Desire

✓Use of lighting/candles/scents –setting the mood and feeling comfortable with physical scars

✓Self-nurturing/pleasuring & Timing of sexual intimacy

✓Sexual/intimate foreplay – agree not to go onto intercourse even if all seems to be going well

✓Remember the lube...!

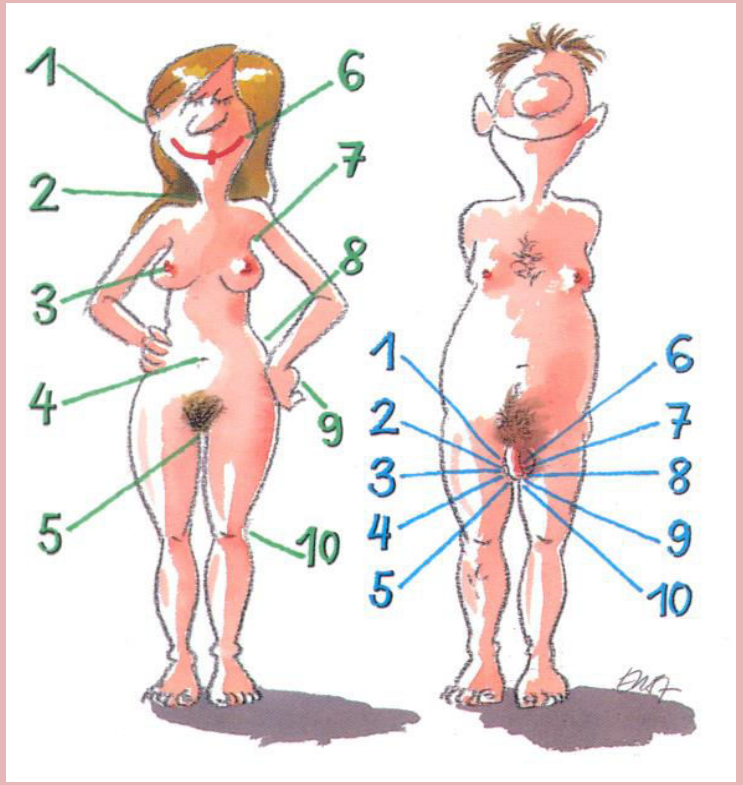
✓Use of lingerie – dress up/dress dow

Creating Intimacy

Celebrate the good in life
Words & actions
of love & appreciation

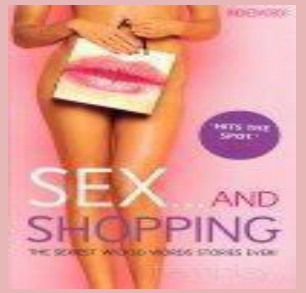
Create opportunities for intimacy : Take time out to be together as a couple

Explore new ways of being together and deepening your level of intimacy



Why Viagra doesn't work in women!

Male & Female Erogenous Zones



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No Magic Pill!!!!

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HEY, LOVER BOY! YOU DROPPED A VIAGRA ON THE FLOOR AGAIN!
BAYNHAM
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Explore Your sensuality & Playfulness

- Touch/Massage
- Warm baths
- Music
- Lighting
- Different textures
- SEX IS FUN!
- Take emphasis off physical act…

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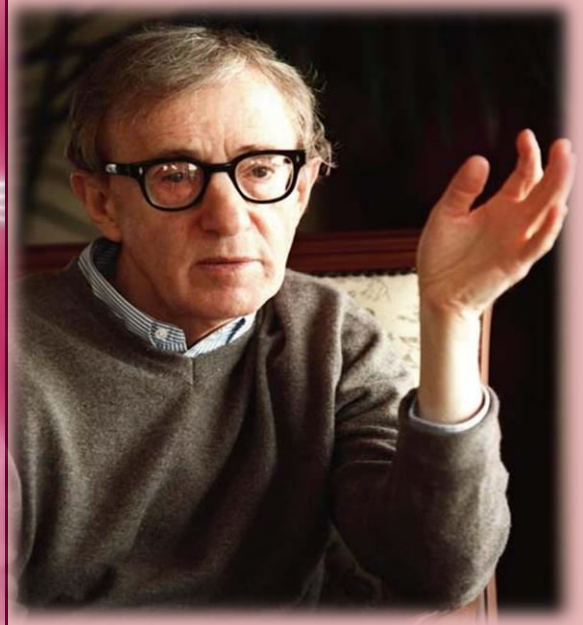
In the words of Woody Allen..



“ Love is the answer- but in the meantime sex brings up some really interesting questions…”

Resources:

Menopausal Symptoms after Cancer Clinic (MSAC) KEMH
Keogh institute
Jean Hailes Foundation for women
The Cancer Council (state specific)
Cancer Australia
BCNA
Adult shops: www.forplayandpleasure.com.au/contact
Femplay (sex toys for women) www.femplay.com.au
Becoming orgasmic: www.bettersex.com
The Australian Society of Sex Educators, Researchers and Therapists (ASSERT)
FPWA: Family Planning WA
SECCA: disability relationships sexuality
Women's health Physio
Continence specialist
BOOKS: Good Loving Great Sex / Sex Matters for Women /

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Questions?

" If even a day should go by when I don't say I love you,
May never a moment go by without you knowing that I do"

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