

SEXUAL EXPRESSION IN OLDER ADULTS WITH DIMINISHED CAPACITY

LeadingAge Oregon

A photograph of an elderly couple with white hair, wearing blue and grey shirts, lying in bed and kissing. The woman is on the left, and the man is on the right, with his hand near his face.

DATE
February 18, 2020
Wilsonville Holiday Inn

PRESENTED BY

REGINA KOEPP, PSYD, ABPP
BOARD CERTIFIED CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST

SEXUAL EXPRESSION IN OLDER ADULTS

WHY IT'S SO IMPORTANT

Studies show that older adults continue to enjoy intimate relationships throughout their lives.

In fact, sexual intimacy has many benefits for older adults. A recent study revealed that older adults who engage in sexual activity score better on cognitive tests.

Even older adults with cognitive disorders who may experience declines in functioning, often maintain a need for intimate connection.

And, in fact... **benefit** from intimacy.



BENEFITS OF INTIMACY IN COMMUNITY CARE SETTINGS

- Brings happiness, joy, & meaning to a person's life
- Provides a sense of "home"
- Creates shared trust, warmth, humor, touch, comfort, and safety
- Enhances quality of life
- Reduces risk of depression
- Improves behaviors
- Enhances general health
- Improves well being

Along with benefits, sexual intimacy among older adults with diminished capacity has many associated risks and complications, including: limits on privacy, hypersexuality, risk for falls and skin tears, and capacity to consent (to name a few).

Personal values, family values, staff values, and system values also influence decision making as it relates to sexual expression in older adults.

For these reasons, and more, organizations often find themselves facing complex ethical dilemmas related to intimacy, especially in the context of community care settings.

Thus, it's imperative that staff, clinical directors, and administrators, have opportunities to enhance their awareness, knowledge, and skills related to understanding risks and benefits of sexual expression among older adults in community care settings, as well as learning a process for resolving ethical dilemmas.

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WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

This workshop will discuss concepts of human sexuality and sexual self-determination. Intimacy will be defined, and the benefits and risks of intimacy among older adults living with dementia disorders (and diminished capacity) will be reviewed. Complicating factors, such as limits on privacy, hypersexuality, risk of bodily harm and exploitation will be discussed. The prevalence of sexuality in long-term care settings will be reviewed and include a summary of staff reactions and family reactions to sexual expression of older adults living with dementia in a community/long-term care setting.

Participants will be encouraged to reflect on their own values regarding sexuality, sexuality among older adults, and sexuality among adults living with diminished capacity. Attention will be paid to the role values of all stakeholders play when determining “appropriateness” of intimate connections. Guidelines for determining sexual decision making capacity will be reviewed. Recommendations for including sexual preferences in assessment and care planning will be provided, and there will be review of a sexual health policy from one other long-term care community.

THIS WORKSHOP WILL:

- Discuss the benefits and risks of intimacy & sexual connection in an older adult population with diminished capacity
- Review complicating factors related to individuals living with dementia (or diminished capacity) who are engaging in intimate behaviors in community care settings (e.g., limits to privacy, risk of bodily harm- falls and skin tears, and risk of emotional harm, or exploitation).
- Describe complicating factors related to capacity to consent to sexual interactions among adults living with dementia disorders and/or diminished capacity.
- Provide guidelines for assessing capacity of individuals with dementia disorders to consent or assesnt to sexual/intimate connection
- Provide a process for exploring ways in which values influence recommendations regarding intimate connections.
- Provide recommendations for creating institutional sexual health policies
- Provide recommendations for including sexual preferences in assessment and care planning

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PARTICIPANT ENGAGEMENT

To maintain participant engagement, the workshop will include video clips, audio clips, stories and vignettes, as well as a self-reflection tool to engage the audience. Workshops will incorporate a combination of didactic, multi-media, and interactive exercises. This is a high energy and interactive workshop.

WORKSHOP SCHEDULE

9am - 9:45am

Overview of Intimacy & sexual expression in the context of diminished capacity.

9:45am - 10:30am

Review of the prevalence of sexuality in long-term care settings, including a summary of staff and family reactions to sexual expression of older adults with diminished capacity in a community/long-term care setting.

10:30am-10:45am *Break*

10:45am-noon

Exploration of values that may influence recommendations and "approval" of sexual interactions among adults with diminished capacity.

Noon-1pm *Lunch*

1pm-2:30pm

Guidelines for ethically determining sexual decision making capacity in the context of competing values and guidelines (individual vs. health proxy vs. long-term care policies)

2:30pm-2:45pm *Break*

2:45pm-4pm

Recommendations for including sexual preferences in assessment and care planning. Review of a sexual health policy from one other long-term care community. Case studies and vignettes to apply concepts.

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WORKSHOP COST

LeadingAge Oregon Members

- First Registrant from a community \$149.00
- Each additional Registrant from a community \$99.00

Non-Members

- First Registrant from a community \$169.00
- Each additional Registrant from a community \$119.00



ABOUT DR. REGINA KOEPP

Dr. Regina Koepf is a Stanford trained, board certified Clinical Psychologist, and Assistant Professor at Emory University School of Medicine's Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences. Dr. Koepf was also a professor of Gerontology in the Brenau University Masters of Applied Gerontology Program for 5 years. She has been a staff Psychologist at the Atlanta VA Healthcare System for close to 10 years and currently provides direct patient care and consultation on the Gero-Psychiatry Outpatient Mental Health team. She is certified in couples therapy and specializes in older couples.

Dr. Koepf serves on several national, regional, and institutional committees aimed at enhancing care and services for older adults and their families, as well as providing ethical care. These include the Georgia Psychological Association's Ethics Committee, the Geriatric Mental Health Field Advisory Committee of the VA Central Office in Washington, DC. The Atlanta VA Healthcare System's Family/Couples Services Committee and Dementia Committee.

As a professor of Gerontology and of Psychology, Dr. Koepf teaches about the psychology of aging, therapy in the context of dementia disorders, family therapy, ethics, multicultural humility, supervision and training, and many other topics. Over the past decade, Dr. Koepf has developed training programs in Gero-Psychology and Complex Medical Problems and has provided in-depth training on the above mentioned topics to medical providers, mental health providers, and community providers alike!

Dr. Koepf recently created the Caring for Aging Parents Show and is passionate about enhancing care and services for older adults and their families!

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I bring a sense of humor and meaning to each workshop

WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING!

"Great information. The training provided education and made me think about my personal values"

*Dr.Koepp was extraordinary!
Loved her presentation!*

"I've had the pleasure of attending several of Dr. Koepp's workshops and I'm struck by not only her wealth of knowledge, but her delivery on difficult and often emotional topics. She kept me engaged and thoroughly addressed my questions so that I'm able to go back and improve my practice."

- Dr. Stella Nelms,
Palliative Care Psychologist

Dr. Koepp is deeply compassionate about topics from geriatrics, dementia, and aging in general. After attending one of her presentations, she makes you feel as if any challenge can be conquered or controlled, whether it's dealing with geriatrics in general or family dynamics that include those suffering from dementia.

- Tanesha King-Roland, MSN, RN,
CRRN, Geriatric Nurse Manager