

# Intimacy and Sexuality: My Rights, Your Responsibility

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Oh My!



Sex

Is hardwired

Positive,  
normal &  
natural

- A recent survey of a national (UK) representative sample of people aged 50-90+ (Lee & Tetley 2017) found that men and women remain sexually active and sexually intimate into their 70s, 80s and 90s.

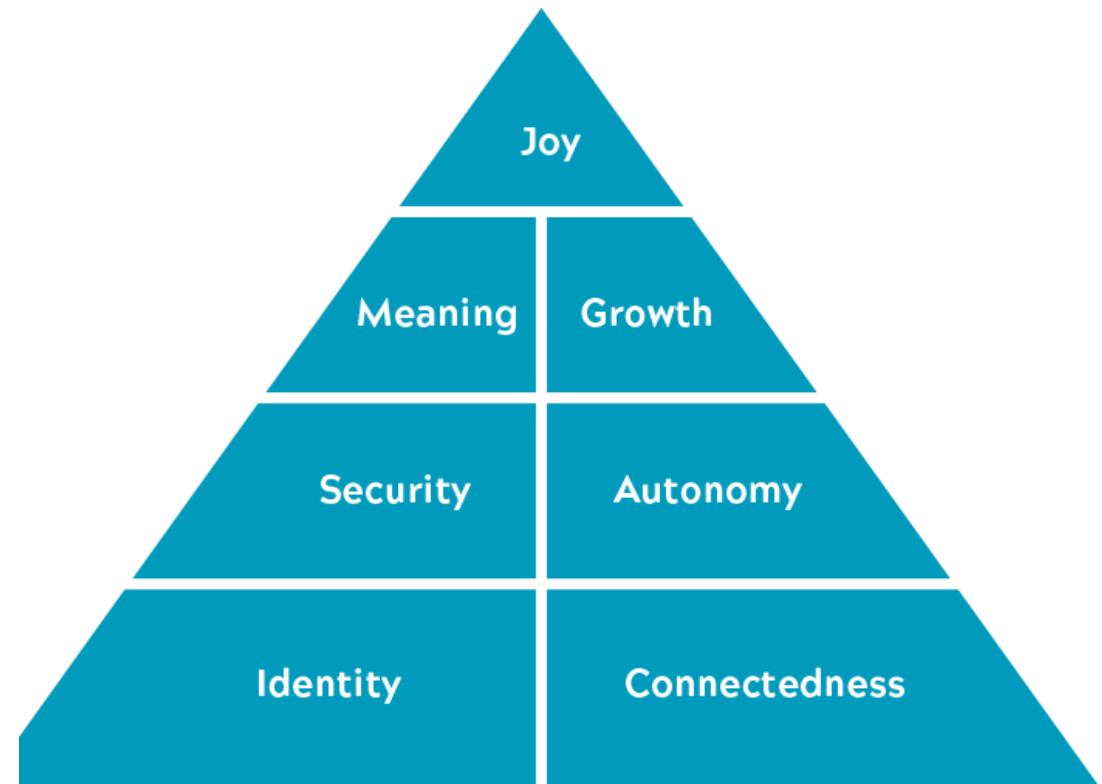
# Harmful Myths & Stereotypes

Various, conflicting myths with respect to sexuality and disability prevail in society which perpetuate and reinforce the marginalization and discrimination of people with disabilities. Examples of some myths include:

- All disabled people have the same needs
- All disabled people are heterosexual
- All disabled people are asexual or hyper-sexual
- Information and education about sex will encourage “inappropriate” sexual behaviour
- Intellectually disabled people are incapable of understanding sexuality
- Physically disabled people are unable to have sex

# Domains of Wellbeing™

- The Domains of Wellbeing™ seeks to identify all the areas of a person's life that are necessary for wellbeing.





# My Rights: Human Rights & CRPD

# United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

## **Article 15 – Freedom from torture, inhuman or degrading treatment**

Chemical & physical restraint is used, despite evidence that such restraints are harmful.

## **Article 16 – Freedom from exploitation, violence & abuse**

People are often restrained using physical limitations or given unnecessary medications in order to perceived to be challenging by people providing care.





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## United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

### Article 23 – Respect for home & family

- Eliminate discrimination in matters relating to relationships
- People have the right to live in a place of their choosing, with appropriate supports in place and with whomever they prefer to live with. Separating life partners into different residences may affect the ability of life partners to maintain relationships.



Individuals have a right to control what information is known about their sexual history


“There is no place for the state in the bedrooms of the nation. What’s done in private between adults doesn’t concern the criminal code.”  
Pierre Trudeau, 1967

- Article 22 – Respect for Privacy



# Nothing Ventured Nothing Gained (Risk Reduction)

Change the paternalistic culture



# Can a person with dementia consent to sex?

- Fundamental principle “see the person not the disease
  - Do we want legislators regulating intimate contact between people?
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## Stigma is Alive & Well “She’s a floozy!”

- In a LTC home in Ontario
- A resident takes male residents (including married ones) back to her room
- Her peers harass her calling her a floozy



Let's Talk About Sex





LGBTQ –  
“Can we  
hold hands?”



# Stigma is Alive & Well “You are married!?”

- In a LTC home in Ontario
- Man is sitting in his room talking with his daughter and her partner
- Residence enters his room and begins to interrogate the women about being lesbians





Your Responsibility!

Care systems should:

- Be person-centred
- Focus on the perspectives of individuals within the context of their unique lives and experiences
- Be open to learning about the person's significant experiences
- Promote & support human rights, dignity privacy, choice & control
- Promote clear boundaries which protect and support residents & staff



Thank You!

Questions?

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