



THE INTERNATIONAL CENTER
FOR HEALTH CONCERNS

Sexuality as an Aspect of Treatment

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Why this Course is Needed

For years professionals told their alcoholic clients, "For one year after treatment keep your legs crossed. Don't engage in sexual relations until you have a stable period of sobriety." Patients listened and thought, "Yeah, right! For the first time in my life I can have sober sex, and you want me to do what?" The alcoholic's spouse is thinking, "Finally, I have a fully functioning partner and you want me to abstain from sexuality? Are you nuts?"

We also give patients incorrect information when we fail to tell them of the impact their substance abuse might have on their sexual performance. Even as the alcoholic came to believe that "Candy is dandy, but liquor is quicker," so too the old maxim applies, "If you don't use it, you lose it." Research clearly has demonstrated that substance abuse can interfere with sexual performance, either physically or emotionally.

It is ironic that we talk about substance abuse as a biopsychosocial illness, but tell our patients to put sexually on the nightstand for some time. "We'll get to that area of your life later." Treatment professionals need to understand of how substance abuse can interfere with sexual performance and how to assist patients in building new attitudes towards sexuality and sensuality.

This course establishes a common language when addressing sexual issues with patients. It presents the latest research findings on the relationship between substance abuse and sexual dysfunction. It provides an approach by which addiction counselors can address sexuality in recovery, in incremental stages, as greater periods of sobriety are achieved. The PLISSIT model for sexual treatment will be applied to substance abuse treatment: **P**ermission giving, **L**imited **I**nformation, **S**pecific **S**uggestions, and **I**ntensive **T**herapy (for those needing more in-depth treatment for sexual dysfunction). The course teaches how to take a sex history from patients in an unobtrusive, non-voyeuristic manner.

Course Objectives

At the end of this course, participants will be able to:

- Discuss at least three research studies about the relationship between substance abuse and sexual dysfunction and intimacy issues;
- Discuss their attitudes and reactions o discussing sexual issues with patients;
- Define and discuss key elements of the PLISSIT model of sex therapy;
- Have the knowledge and skills to take a sex and intimacy history with a patient;
- Be familiar with their issues regarding the use of explicit sexual and sensual language in therapy.



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Agenda

- Incorporating language about sexuality into substance abuse treatment;
- Overview of sexual concerns, difficulties and dysfunction;
- Alcoholism and drug abuse and Sexual Dysfunction;
- Taking a Sex History with substance abusers;
- Introduction to treating sexual issues with substance abusers;
- Incorporating the PLISSIT model into substance abuse treatment.

About the Trainer

Dr. David Powell is a graduate of the Masters and Johnson Institute PostGraduate Sexuality Program. Dr. Powell is a certified sex therapist by the American Association of Sex Educators, Counselors and Therapists and Diplomat in the American Board of Sexology. He is a Fellow in the International Council of Sex Education and Parenthood, and Clinical Member of the Society of Sex Therapy and Research. He is also a licensed alcohol and drug abuse counselor. He has 38 years of clinical experience in the behavioral health field and is the author of *Alcoholism and Sexual Dysfunction* and has trained professionals around the world on this subject. He has also authored numerous articles on the treatment of sexual problems and addiction, including the *Journal of Sex Therapy*, *Journal of Psychoactive Drugs*, and *The American Journal of Preventive Psychiatry and Neurology*.