Intimacy & Parkinson’s
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March 16, 2019
Agenda

- Sexual Challenges
- Expanding the opportunities for physical intimacy.
- Communication
- Emotional Intimacy
- Talking to health care professionals
Today is going to be about...

Going from...

To...
Physical Sexual Challenges

- Slowness of movement, tremor, and rigidity can interfere with lovemaking.
- Reduced desire due to fatigue or medications.
- Men often struggle with getting or keeping erections, or delayed ejaculation.
- Women may experience dryness and pain.
Other Things That Impact Sexuality

- Self Esteem
- Memory or cognitive changes
- Desire Differences
- Depression
- Communication Difficulties
- Distractibility
- Inability to read nonverbal cues
- Body Image
- Role Changes
Tips for All of Us
Expand How You Think About Sexuality

View sex as an opportunity for pleasure
Sexual Activity should not be...

Instead it should be connecting!
Make Affection a Destination
Practical Solutions

- Lubricants
- Satin sheets
- Oil for sensual touch
- Don’t wait until bedtime, make afternoon dates.
- Different positions
- Stimulation in different ways
Physical Intimacy Options
Patience

• It might take longer to get aroused or to reach orgasm.

• Sometimes orgasm is hard to find.

• Focus on pleasure. Enjoying where you are rather than where you want to go. (Mindfulness)
Changes in responsiveness
Masters & Johnson model

Sexual Response Cycle

- Excitement
- Plateau
- Orgasm
- Resolution
Rosemary Basson’s Model of Desire

1. Decision to have sex/Willingness to be receptive
2. Sensations of a partner’s touch
3. Responsive Desire (more arousal)
4. Awareness of being aroused
5. Physical and/or Emotional Payoffs
More Hints

Make physical intimacy a priority.

Schedule it. (naked time/sex date)
Plan time of day/medications
A Word About Planning

Parties, vacations, a good meal, and sexuality all involve planning.
Derole and just be a couple (not patient/carepartner)
Transitioning to Sensuality/Sexuality

“Bridging Time” is a buffer of time before being physically intimate to let go of “doing”.... drop into your body, and connect with your own sexual energy.
Communication

Talk before...
During...

- Ask for what you DO want.
- “What would take my arousal up a notch?”
- “You know what I would love?”
- Learn the value of pausing.
Conversations After Sex

- “One of my favorite parts of last night was...”
- “Next time I would like you to...”
- “Next time I will...”
- “There was a moment when you...”
- Was that a “No,” “Not now,” or “Not ever?”
What hinders communication?
What hinders communication?

- Hopelessness
- Lack of knowledge
- Limited sexual vocabulary

- Shame
- Cultural messages
How Do We Talk About It?

- Talk about sex out of bed.
- Ask about a good time to talk.
- Bring ideas to the discussion.
- Be vulnerable.
- Decide to take one small step.
Communication Reminders

2. Be specific, don’t hint or use euphemisms.
3. Refrain from demands, blame, or complaints. Be positive.
4. Remember the value of appreciations.
Tips to Manage Anxiety

- Be sensitive to old expectations or “should’s.”
- Let go of your thoughts, come back to your body.
- “What am I a “yes” to?”
Keep Your Pilot Light “On”

Making an effort to do those things that make YOU feel sexy (“accelerators”)
Minimize brakes
Look at your physical environment
Make sex comfortable

Try new positions or use pillows for support.

Care for your body.
Emotional Intimacy: Connect With Your Hearts

- Have fun together.
- Share a joy and a challenge.
- Step away from technology.
- Use specific appreciations frequently.
- Remember to empty your “frustration/anger tank.”
Talk to your doctor
Remember you have a whole team of support

Medical doctor/PA/NP
Physical therapist
Occupational therapist
Social worker
Nurse
How Do We Ask Medical Professionals?

“Things have changed sexually for us and I’m wondering if I can talk with you about that?”

“What are the sexual side effects of these medications?”
Take Home/Open Book Quiz

- What is working well in our relationship?

- What could we do to create more intimacy? (physically and emotionally)

- My favorite way you express physical intimacy is...

- One thing I would like more of is...

- How can we adjust to the way PD/aging is impacting our sexual life?
Questions?
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