

Why should Health and Social Care Professionals do this?

"Broaching the subject ... is not easy but ... clinicians do need to include sexual issues in their health brief."

Professor Kevan Wylie

Talking about sex may not seem important in comparison with other health issues. But there are many reasons why health and social care professionals are absolutely the right people to talk about sex with clients.

Anecdotally, clients' sexual wellbeing seems to be medically significant to their general health.

Talking with clients about sexual wellbeing may help diagnosis — many sexual symptoms are flags for medical conditions. Erectile dysfunction, for example, may be a signal of diabetes, while loss of libido may be a sign of depression.

Regaining a full sex life after illness can significantly aid a client's recovery from illness, not only because it provides exercise opportunity, but because it raises confidence and hope.

Quality of sex life can significantly add to the general quality of life for clients, thus again warding off depression and increasing emotional health.

Health professionals are highly significant figures when it comes to including sexual issues in medical diagnosis and treatment. We are the ones our clients naturally turn to. They know us, they trust us, they believe in us.

Because of medical training, health professionals can truly help — whether that help is direct or by referral on, or signposting to a clinical or therapeutic specialist.

Health professionals often do not need to offer any more than a listening ear in the consulting room — and, by doing that, can be the gateway to sexual solutions for clients and so be a way of helping them to fuller physical and mental wellbeing.