

## Overcoming our Blocks

*"We have endless meetings discussing our clients' sexual deprivation but nothing ever improves in practice."*

Isabel, Rainbows Hospice

Here are some suggestions of how to overcome any blocks to talking:

Feeling embarrassed... Try reading about sexual health topics to become more comfortable, then discussing topics with colleagues. If the whole issue still feels uncomfortable, find out who else in the practice is at ease with the subject, and refer clients on.

Feeling there's no time... remember that talking things through may well save consultation and treatment time in the long run. Research by Outsiders suggests that, when discussed, the average length of time spent on sexual problems is three minutes.

Not wanting to offend the client ... be aware that almost always, the client will be relieved that the topic's been raised. If still worried, use one of the gentle opening lines we suggest here.

Being worried that a sexual conversation might be misconstrued... think about asking the client if they would mind having a chaperone in the room or the conversation being recorded. For other guidance on legal issues, see the helpful page on law on this website.

Not believing there's a solution to the client's problem... know that there almost always is, In any case, very often just talking through sexual questions will help, and if more help is needed, there are now a number of medical and therapeutic solutions available.

Feeling a lack of knowledge... be reassured that there's no need to know all the answers. See Resources. Our Hand-Out provides resources for clients, with space for you to add your own local ones. It's always a good idea to get to know local sex therapists and relevant experts, so you feel you can signpost or refer on with confidence.

Thinking the client should start the conversation... remember that the client may need the health professional to take the initiative here. If the client does not want to talk about sexual issues they will make that clear and you can give them the Hand-Out, but not starting the conversation may mean missing a key opportunity to improve client health.