

How can I access the Sexual Wellbeing Service?

Parents and young people on the Paediatric Programme will be informed of the service through their rehabilitation team and will be offered the opportunity to avail of the service. Parents may also self-refer.



Parent Comments

“ Parents may find it extremely beneficial or vital in understanding how to help their children deal with and accept feelings and risks associated with this area ”

Parent of child with brain injury

Contact details:

**Pauline Sheils, Clinical Nurse Specialist
in Sexuality and Disability**

NRH Sexual Wellbeing Service

Telephone: (01) 235 5288



National Rehabilitation Hospital
Rochestown Avenue, Dún Laoghaire, Co. Dublin
Telephone (01) 235 5000
www.nrh.ie



The **National Rehabilitation Hospital** is accredited by CARF (Commission for accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities) for a range of services, confirming they meet recognized international standards



An tOspidéal Náisiúnta Athshlánúcháin

Sexual Wellbeing Service



**A Guide for Parents, Guardians
and Young People following
Acquired Brain Injury**

What is the Sexuality?

Sexuality is an integral part of who we are, what we believe, what we feel and how we respond to others. It encompasses all the feelings, attitudes and behaviours that contribute to a person's own sense of being a man or a woman.

What is the Sexual Wellbeing?

This has been described as a person's satisfaction with the emotional and the physical aspects of relationships, satisfaction with sexual functioning and the importance of sexuality in their life.

Consultation with parents and guardians on these sensitive issues is advisable. Many may find the subject of sexuality in relation to their child or young person difficult, and may need information and support. This information is available within the service—please ask a member of the rehabilitation team for details.



All young people, whatever their ability, develop physically and emotionally, and all need help to understand their bodies and their feelings.

Some patients following an acquired brain injury may lack confidence and need opportunities to develop the following skills with additional information:

- Developing positive self esteem
- Social and communications skills
- Appropriate expression of feelings
- Safety and protection skills and consent
- Understanding of their body and the changes that take place at puberty
- Age Appropriate Sex Education; this follows the 'Relationship and Sexuality Programme' delivered in schools.

Developing knowledge and communication skills about their body depends on the person's individual communication and their language skills.

Acquired brain injury can often result in difficulties with cognition (understanding things through thinking, experience and the senses), communication and language. The education of the child or young person will depend on their individual needs.

Assessing the person's emotional readiness and the level of understanding can be done in consultation with the parents or guardian and the interdisciplinary team.

Specialised Services provided by the Sexual Wellbeing Service

The Sexual Wellbeing Service provides information and advice in a private and confidential setting and in a non-judgmental way for the following:

- Maintaining self esteem, positive body image and consent
- Dealing with the impact of illness or disability on a person's sexuality
- The direct and indirect effects of illness or injury on sexuality
- Advice and information on practicing safe sex and contraception for future reference
- Safe use of social media and the internet

