

What is Sexuality?

Sexuality is an integral part of who we are, what we believe, what we feel and how we respond to others, regardless of age, gender, health and physical ability.

Sexuality encompasses all the feelings, attitudes and behaviours that contribute to a person's own sense of self.

Sexuality is an important component of sexual wellbeing.



Some Frequently Asked Questions

- How do I cope with changes in my sexual behaviour?
- How do I cope with loss of desire or interest in sex?
- Will I be able to have sex?
- How do I talk to my partner?
- How will I hug my partner?
- Will my partner still want me?
- How will I meet people?
- Will I be able to have children?

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**National Rehabilitation
University Hospital**

An tOspidéal Náisiúnta Athshlánúcháin

Sexual Wellbeing Service



**A Guide for Patients
and their Partners
or Families**

What is the Sexual Wellbeing Service?

Sexuality and intimacy are often difficult subjects to talk about. The Sexual Wellbeing Service at the NRH provides a safe space for individuals (and their partners) to discuss their concerns and understand changes in their sexual wellbeing since their injury or diagnosis.

The experience of having a disabling injury or illness can often have a traumatic effect on patients, which can result in issues such as:

- relationship difficulties
- damage to self esteem or body image
- difficulty with sexual function
- problems with fertility, in some situations

The Sexual Wellbeing Service provides information and counselling within a sensitive, supportive and confidential setting.



About the Sexual Wellbeing Team

The NRH Sexual Wellbeing service was founded in 2002 by Pauline Sheils, Clinical Nurse Specialist in Sexuality and Disability. Pauline's late husband had a spinal cord injury and this inspired her dedication for delivering comprehensive care to individuals with disabilities.

Today, the service continues Pauline's legacy of specialist knowledge and expertise in the area of sexuality and disability, along with psychosexual therapy, bringing a holistic approach to the care and support provided.

The Rehabilitation Consultants at the NRH are also available to address any medical concerns of patients and their partners.

The NRH has a visiting Consultant Urologist whose expertise is also available to patients to answer concerns in relation to sexual function. The Urologist has an important role in some of the fertility programmes that may need to be undertaken.

Who can access the Sexual Wellbeing Service?

The Sexual Wellbeing Service is available to all patients of the NRH, their partners and family members who may have questions or concerns about sexuality and disability.

Individuals or couples can self-refer by contacting the service directly, or can be referred through any member of their rehabilitation team.

Specialised Services provided by the Sexual Wellbeing Service

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

- Dealing with the impact of a disability or illness on a person's sexuality.
- The direct and indirect effects of illness or injury on sexuality.
- Information on aids to enhance sexual function.
- Information and arrangement of appointments for fertility programmes.
- Individual and couples counselling.
- Psychosexual Therapy if required.

In addition, the Sexual Wellbeing Service is available to assist other health-care professionals and agencies to address the sexual wellbeing concerns and issues of their patients.

Customised workshops and presentations can also be provided by the Sexual Wellbeing Service on request.