

Where: PR2 - Topic 4 – Module 4.2 – Second video on Video resources section: “The Ethics of Sexuality and Aging “.

<https://edusexage-mooc.eu/topic4/>

VIDEO: The Ethics of Sexuality and Aging

Sexuality in regards to most healthcare professionals is something we are unprepared for and we are uncomfortable with it and uncomfortable addressing sexual issues that occur in our facilities and even with older adults. I want to tell you, that in all my training in nursing in all these years, I have to tell you, I have never had this brought up in class or in a nursing classroom, with sexuality. And only today are we beginning to see this more and more commonly. But let me say this to you, that when you read the statistics of the number of schools, whether it's social work, whether it's nursing, whether it's medical school, the profound lack of guidance for us in dealing with the geriatric population is pervasive. And so how would we be prepared to deal with this. So, it's something that I think we have to be more open to more study for. But in order to deal with sexual issues, among the aging, it's imperative that we understand the physiologic changes that complicate sexuality among other older adults and allow them the full pleasure of sexuality as they age out. The statistics from AARP, any place that you want to go, show that older adults are very sexually active, how they define sexuality, whether or not at the intercourse or not, is different and all of those provide different definitions. But in the end, it's a form of sexuality and it's inherent in us as human beings, as something that is very natural and something we really have to work with in our frontline workers to understand, that this is not something to snicker about, this isn't something for them to be embarrassed about. But to accept is a beautiful part of our beings and our human nature. We must become more knowledgeable about safe sex, sex and seniors. Now I want you to know that most of the folks who are in facilities with us today, that are 85 years and older, we're not discussing sex. When they were younger, their parents weren't having the discussion with them so they very uncomfortable bringing this up with their physicians. This is not the topic they're going to bring up on their own. Incredible literature in the book, that I showed you before, and lots of research, about how to bring up sexuality and talking with people. But should it be any different, then talking about any other aspect of their life. We've become very open in the last few years about pain and depression, but we very seldom talk about their sexuality. And if we're not comfortable bringing it up, how will they ever bring it up at their age. Then the next thing is, that we have to understand, what are the interventions, that we can make to promote healthy sexuality among other, among older adults and is that a private room, is that a private space and we're going to see some things also that are very interesting and uncomfortable for people to talk about. But sexual stimulation and sexual satisfaction may have been for somebody, for their whole life, let's say masturbation. Well that's very uncomfortable to watch in a group setting, nor should we have to. Because if you go through the ethical principles that does interfere with the rights of others, but that doesn't mean that we don't have the responsibility to find a place for them to be alone and to be able to have the privacy to proceed as they want. These are all issues, that we're afraid to talk about and ethically even among ourselves we should be talking about it and talking about it before we have to deal with it and getting used to our own opinions and our own ideas. We didn't used to talk about sex, this is for sure, but I want to tell you some other things, that really have affected and why we're dealing

with these ethical issues more. Let's think about this. The Viagra's and the Cialis when we talk about erectile dysfunction, all the things that have happened medically to make this not a problem any longer for people, allows people to remain sexually active after far longer in their lives, maybe their entire lives. Online dating was not available to my grandmother, it was not available actually even to my mother, who is no longer with me. But it has opened up a new world of communication and opportunity for today and we don't talk about that. Senior communities were not common years and years ago, where today we have 55-year and older communities. I was just with my sister in Fort Mayer's Florida and I was absolutely blown away by the number of senior communities, all different types of communities that are available, that are bringing people together, that may have been independent in their own homes living and not having opportunity. The other thing, that is affecting us is the higher divorce rates. So, one of the articles here is that you may not be able to see it as well but I want to just read you, but it says that STDs are running rampant in a retirement community. Ethically, we as caregivers have a responsibility no matter what our job is, to make ourselves more knowledgeable, more comfortable and more willing to deal with this issue. And when it becomes an ethical decision making, we should be making them as informed decisions, but then of course our codes of conduct within, what we know about, also trying to remember these four ethical principles that we deal with we're talking about dealing with older adults, so I hope that helps you a little bit in regards to thinking about sexuality.