

Pre-workshop preparation

It's true that the more you put into these things, the more you get out, so we encourage everyone to take the opportunity to set aside some preparation time before attending the Connections Workshop in order to ensure you get the best possible experience. Here's how...

- **Talk to your colleagues**

We know that every service works differently, so spend some time catching up with your fellow nurses in order to know what is done locally or what support is generally offered on this topic. These discussions could be informal with your Team/colleagues, learnings from formal clinical supervision or reflective learning sessions.

Bring a short reflective account of where a conversation with a patient around intimacy has not gone well. Please bring your example with you on the day as this will form part of a small group activity/discussion.

Notes:

- **Brush up on your anatomy & physiology knowledge**

Before attending the workshop, ensure you are well versed with the anatomy changes caused by colorectal and gynaecological surgery. In particular:

- 1: urology & gynaecological surgery
- 2: the effects that having the rectum removed has on the vaginal vault
- 3: the effects that low pelvic surgery has on bladder control and erectile function due to the position of the nerve endings
- 4: the effect that having the bladder removed has on a man's erectile function

- **Refamiliarise yourself with Fittleworth Connections: Connecting with yourself & others booklet**

Reading the booklet designed for ostomates will ensure you're coming prepared with all the questions you might want to ask regarding use of the toolkit with your patients.



Scan here for the online version of booklet.

- **Check in with yourself**

Never underestimate how powerful our own relationship with sex is in terms of the effect it can have on how we talk to our patients about it. The questions we ask, our tone of voice, the words that we avoid – all of these things subconsciously impact the patient's experience. It's therefore important that we do the work on ourselves as part of this process to gain an understanding of how we currently communicate and ways this could be improved.

Here are some questions you should ask yourself and do some self-reflection around:

How do you talk about sex?

How comfortable do you feel speaking about it?

What do you think some of the barriers might be for you in terms of having this kind of conversation?

What pre-conceived judgements or stereotypes might you have around intimacy and couples?