

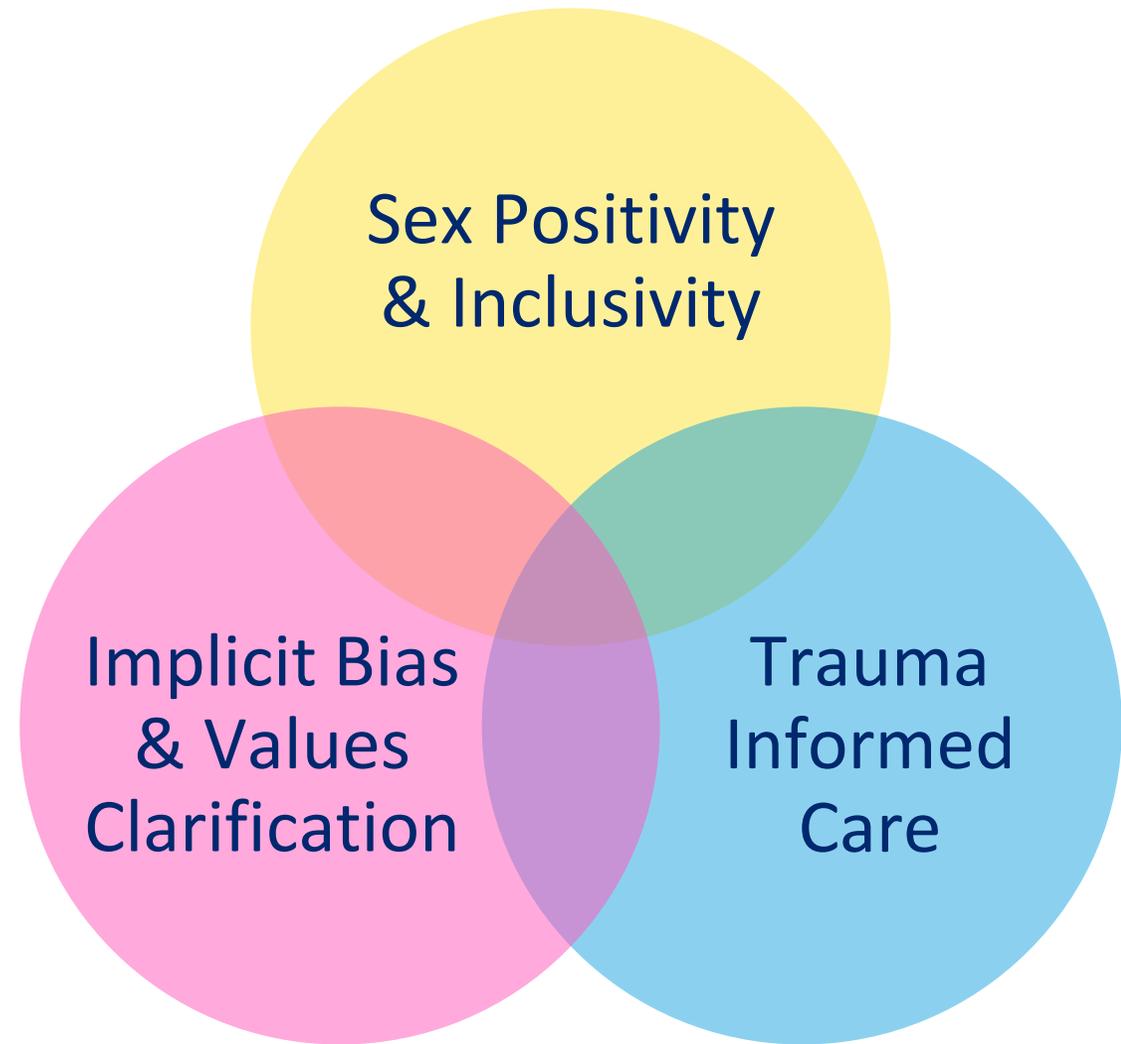
Taking a Sexual History

PLANNED PARENTHOOD OF NORTHERN NEW ENGLAND
ELLIE DOIG, NP ADAPTED FOR THIS TALK BY
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“Sexual health is a state of physical, mental and social well-being in relation to sexuality. It requires a positive and respectful approach to sexuality and sexual relationships, as well as the possibility of having pleasurable and safe sexual experiences, free of coercion, discrimination and violence.”

-WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

Frameworks for
a thorough
sexual health
history



Sex Positive	Risk based/Traditional
Sex is healthy	Sex is risky
Normalizes	Stigmatizes, shames
Focus on disease prevention as well as sexual pleasure, relationship building, lifespan changes	Focus on disease prevention only
Encourages development of healthy sexuality and relationships	Ignores developmental and relational aspects of sexual health
Welcomes diverse identities, orientations, practices	Makes assumptions
Patient centered	Provider/risk centered

Approaches

A broad understanding of trauma

- Physical abuse/assault
- Sexual abuse/assault
- Emotional abuse/maltreatment
- Neglect
- Serious accident, illness, or medical procedure
- Survivor or witness to domestic violence or community violence
- Historical trauma
- Bullying
- School violence
- Natural disasters
- Forced displacement
- Traumatic grief or separation
- System induced trauma or re-traumatization

The sexual history gives us opportunities for:

- Screening
- Prevention
- Evaluation of sexual function and pleasure
- Education and support of sexual development
- Developing relationships w/ patients based on mutual respect and trust



National LGBT
Health Education
Center

The sexual history

When?

- Routine wellness visits
- STI visits
- Contraception visits
- Problem visits

How?

- Introduce it
- Normalize it
- Ask permission
- Invite the patient's agenda

The 5 P's of sexual history taking

Partners

Practices

Past history

Protection

Pregnancy/Parenting

Partners

Openers:

- Have you been sexually active in the past year?
- How do your partners identify?
- How many partners have you had in the past year?

Additionally:

- Ask about partners outside of primary relationship
- Screen for intimate partner violence
- Positivity questions
 - How satisfied are you with your sex life?
 - How is sex for you? Pleasurable? Painful?
 - How is communication with your partner(s)?
 - What does a good sexual relationship look like to you?

Practices

- Which parts are going where?
- History of sharing needles or other drug paraphernalia?
- Exchanging sex for needed things (money, housing, etc)?
- Any partners with these histories?
- Ever having sex while drunk or high?

- Does my asking these questions bring anything up for you?

Past Histories

- STIs
- Hx of treatment and/or ongoing monitoring of STIs
- Violence, coercion
- Prior STI screens
- Hx partner STIs

Protection

- Could you tell me how you protect yourself from STIs?
- How often do you use barrier methods?

Sometimes:

- How do you decide when/if to use barriers?

Never:

- There are a lot of reasons people choose not to use condoms. Can you tell me about yours?

Pregnancy/Parenting

- Do you have plans/desires to have [more] children?
- or
- Are you or your partner planning a pregnancy this year?

No:

- How important is it to you to prevent pregnancy?

Not sure:

- Can assess timing, how important prevention is, do preconception education

Yes:

- Assess timing, prevention until that time, preconception education

Pregnancy/Parenting

Based on prior questions/interest in contraception:

- What have you been doing to prevent pregnancy?
- How have those methods gone for you?
- What is most important to you about your birth control?
- What information do you need to plan for a healthy pregnancy?

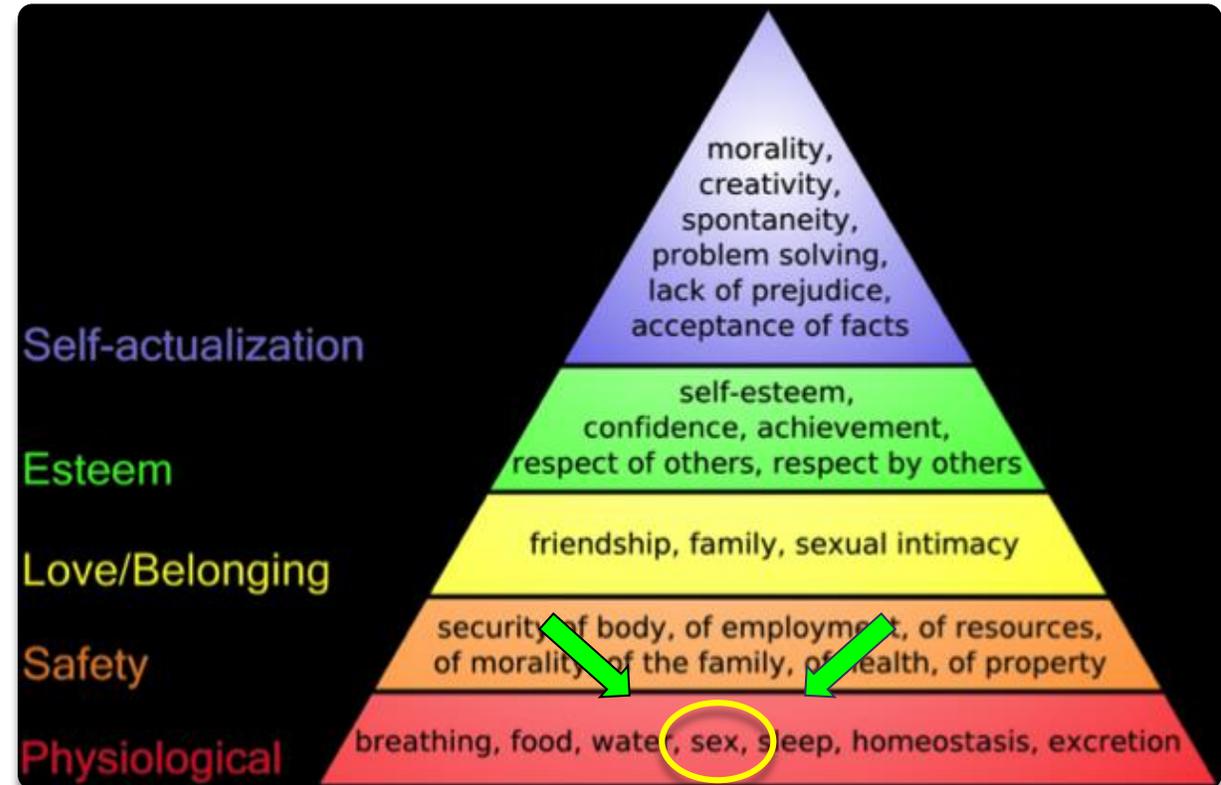
Beyond the 5 P's

Ask about sexual health, function, and identity

- Do you have any concerns/What concerns do you have about your sexual function or the sex you're having?
- Have you had any changes or concerns about your sexual desire/satisfaction/pleasure?
- Do you have any questions/Would you like to talk about anything related to your sexual orientation, identity, or desires?

How has this changed in the time of COVID?

- ▶ It hasn't!
- ▶ People are still having sex with new partners
- ▶ Cannot assume that sex stops during stay at home orders/pandemic
- ▶ Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



Sexual history over Telehealth

- ▶ Create a safe space for the patient
 - ▶ Make sure there are no distractions on your end (children yelling, dog barking, staff walking by) to ensure that patient feels comfortable in the virtual visit.
 - ▶ Use video whenever possible so the patient can see who they are speaking to.
 - ▶ Be aware that for adolescents and patients experiencing intimate partner violence, they may have privacy concerns.

If you don't
have time...

- Validate
- Explain time constraints without dismissiveness
- Engage the patient in their care

Resources: Sex Positivity & Inclusivity

National LGBT Health Education Center
www.lgbthealtheducation.org

Resources: Implicit Bias & Values Clarification

Sexual Practices Values Clarification: An Exercise for Health Care Professionals and Students

American Medical Students Association.

http://www.amsa.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Jennifer-Kaiser_Sexual-Practices-Values-Clarification.pdf

Challenging Patient Encounters Digital Module

Innovating Education in Reproductive Health, Bixby Center for Global Reproductive Health

<http://innovating-education.org/learning-module/values-clarification/>

Implicit Bias in Healthcare (Quick Safety, 23)

The Joint Commission

https://www.jointcommission.org/assets/1/23/Quick_Safety_Issue_23_Apr_2016.pdf

Project Implicit (self assessment of implicit biases)

Harvard University

<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/>

Resources: Trauma Informed Care

Handbook on Sensitive Practice for Health Care Practitioners

SAMHSA

<https://www.integration.samhsa.gov/clinical-practice/handbook-sensitive-practices4healthcare.pdf>

American Association of Sexuality Educators, Counselors, and Therapists

www.aasect.org

Resources: Taking a Sexual History

Sexual health and your patients: A provider's guide
National Coalition for Sexual Health
www.nationalcoalitionforsexualhealth.org

Sexual History Toolkit
National LGBT Health Education Center
www.lgbthealtheducation.org

A Guide to Taking a Sexual History
Centers for Disease Control
<https://www.cdc.gov/std/treatment/sexualhistory.pdf>

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Thank you!
