

Nursing and Allied Health Abstracts

Title: SEXUALITY FOR YOUNG ADULTS WITH SPINA BIFIDA

Presenting Author: Susan Labhard, Shriners Hospital for Children, Portland

Background: In response to questions on sexuality from young adults affected by spina bifida in clinic and transition camp, this program was developed to facilitate learning and address unmet needs.

Method: Of all the tasks young adults with disabilities face, sexuality is often overlooked by parents as well as health professionals. Youth with spina bifida need to know that it is possible to develop a satisfactory type of sexual relationship. This workshop discusses how to approach the topic of relationships and sexuality, with options to traditional sexual expression. Media is appropriate for a variety of audiences and topic presented in a creative and professional manner. References on physical as well as developmental disabilities are provided as resources.

Results: Clinical research demonstrated that one can improve knowledge of socialization & sexuality for young adults by a one hour session or workshop.

Conclusion: Dealing with the sexual consequences of having a disability can offer unique challenges-- however, even the most severe disability need not be an obstacle to sexual fulfillment. This information is practical, based on clinical experience and facilitates discussing and learning. Today, youth with spina bifida are expected to live well into adulthood, it is time to work on the quality of their lives for tomorrow. This topic is appropriate for a one hour session for Health Professionals of all disciplines (specifically developmental pediatrics & nursing)