

TALKING ABOUT INTIMACY WITH PSORIASIS PATIENTS FOR HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS

Intimacy is an important part of your patients' lives – your patients likely have questions but aren't sure if you'll be comfortable answering them or, worse, if you'll dismiss them. Talking about intimacy with patients doesn't have to be difficult and you don't have to be an intimacy expert to start the dialogue. Here are some tips to having the conversation with patients:

1: ASK EXPLICITLY

Asking directly about intimacy will reduce your and your patient's anxiety about asking questions – this way, you can be prepared to have the conversation rather than be caught off guard.

Do you have any questions or concerns about how psoriasis might be affecting intimacy or your sex life?



2: VALIDATE YOUR PATIENT'S CONCERNS

You are an expert in health care, but your patient is the expert in their experience – whether or not you may have heard of an issue before doesn't take away from your patient's challenges if they are sharing them. Validate concerns and worries they are having or anticipate having.

It can definitely be challenging to be intimate when you're having a flare up – I can understand why you're concerned about your sexual relationship.



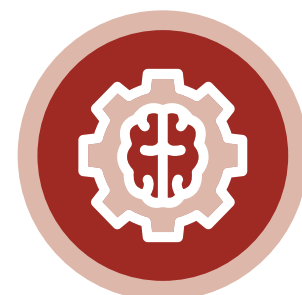
3: CREATE A NON-JUDGMENTAL SPACE

Notice when you may be imposing your own beliefs about intimacy. When we feel unsure or nervous, we are more likely to dismiss or invalidate our patients. Acknowledge that there are a variety of ways people can express their sexuality and your patients that experience challenges related to psoriasis may need to change the way they are approaching their sex lives and how they experience intimacy with partners.



4: KEEP LEARNING!

The more you know about intimacy and sex and how psoriatic disease can affect patients' sexuality, the more equipped you will feel to have these conversations. This will result in your patients feeling that they are receiving better quality of care and it can even improve trust between you and your patients.



5: PROVIDE REFERRALS OR RESOURCES

It's okay if you don't have answers – build up a few resources for your patients like handouts or videos they can watch that may address some of their concerns and have a list of referrals to other professionals (i.e., pelvic floor physical therapists, sex therapists, general therapists, etc.) for patients to receive continued care and ask their questions.

