

# MYTHS AND MISCONCEPTIONS

## about Sexual Expression in Continuing Care

Sexual expression is not often discussed in continuing care homes, but it may still be a part of residents' lives.

There are a number of common myths and misconceptions that prevent staff, family members, and residents from anticipating these expressions or knowing how to respond to them.



### MYTH #1

*Continuing care residents are not interested in sexual expression.*



### REALITY

Many continuing care residents still desire intimacy or sexuality. Older age, chronic health conditions, or disability do not stop people from expressing themselves and moving into a care home does not mean giving up all other aspects of one's life and identity. Sexual expression can also have physical, mental, and emotional benefits for care home residents.

### MYTH #2

*Sexual expression in continuing care homes is inappropriate. These are congregate, medical settings.*

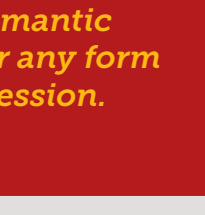


### REALITY

Continuing care homes are workplaces for healthcare staff, but they are also residents' homes. People are entitled to meaningful privacy and self-expression in their own homes. These expressions should not infringe on the comfort and safety of other residents or care staff. In order to ensure this, staff can clearly communicate with residents about when and where they are entitled to such privacy.

### MYTH #3

*If a resident has dementia, they cannot consent to engage in a romantic relationship or any form of sexual expression.*



### REALITY

There is a wide range of ways for people with dementia to express themselves and these expressions may provide comfort, connection, or pleasure. Each individual case requires nuanced assessments for consent and safety. There are some excellent resources available to assist care teams with this work.



When we do away with these myths and misconceptions, we are all much better prepared to navigate sexual expression in continuing care homes.



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