

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 5, 2021

CONTACT: Amber V. Hammond
202-403-6902
ahammond@air.org

NEW RESOURCE DISCUSSES SEXUALITY AND INTIMACY AFTER BURN INJURY

CRYSTAL CITY, VA. — “Many burn survivors don’t feel comfortable talking about sexuality and intimacy with their partners or health care providers,” said Cindy Cai, PhD, project director of the Model Systems Knowledge Translation Center (MSKTC) and principal researcher with American Institutes for Research. In response to this need, the MSKTC has released free online resources designed to raise awareness about how a burn injury may affect sexuality and intimacy.

The *Sexuality and Intimacy after Burn Injury Hot Topic* module (<https://msktc.org/burn/Hot-Topics/Sexuality-and-Intimacy>) is a suite of free resources—videos, factsheets, and quick reviews of research studies—that help individuals with burn injury understand the importance of openly discussing physical and emotional components related to sexuality and intimacy after burn injury. All resources are grounded in research and clinical practice from Burn Injury Model System centers, which were created to improve care and outcomes for individuals with burn injuries.

The module’s primary video highlights burn survivors and their partners who share their experience navigating sexuality and intimacy after burn injury. It also includes the perspectives of health care professionals at the North Texas Burn Rehabilitation Model System, who explain why discussing sexuality and intimacy after burn injury with the clinical team is important.

“The topic of sexuality and intimacy following a burn injury is most often swept under the rug,” added Radha Holavanahalli, PhD, co-principal investigator of the North Texas Burn Rehabilitation Model System. “It’s time to remove the barriers and normalize the conversation as we have done in this video presentation.”

In addition to the main video, the module includes short video clips that highlight various aspects of sexuality and intimacy after burn injury. Burn survivors, their partners and caregivers, health care providers who care for burn survivors, and others can watch these brief video segments to learn more about the topic.

“This is a vital topic that can be difficult to discuss, but needs to be addressed with burn patients and can’t be ignored. Sexuality and intimacy are an integral part of life!” said Cindy Rutter, RN, a burn survivor.

The videos are accompanied by factsheets (available in both English and Spanish), narrated slideshows, and quick reviews of research studies. Materials explain challenges individuals with burn injury experience after addressing the immediate, physical needs for survival, including sexuality and intimacy. Since a burn injury can change the way the body looks, feels, and functions, the materials also provide practical tips on understanding and improving body image after burn injury.

Visit <https://msktc.org/burn/Hot-Topics/Sexuality-and-Intimacy> to learn more.

ABOUT THE MODEL SYSTEMS KNOWLEDGE TRANSLATION CENTER

The Model Systems Knowledge Translation Center (MSKTC) is a national center that supports the Model Systems programs in meeting the information needs of individuals with spinal cord injury (SCI), traumatic brain injury (TBI), and burn injury by summarizing research, identifying health information needs, and developing and disseminating information resources. The MSKTC is funded by the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR). NIDILRR is an office within the Administration for Community Living, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. NIDILRR funds Model Systems to conduct innovative and high-quality research, provide patient care, and offer services to improve the health and overall quality of life of individuals with SCI, TBI, and burn injury. For more information, visit <http://www.msktc.org>.