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Proceedings Paper:

Horne, M orcid.org/0000-0002-6153-8547, Brown, LJE, Youell, J et al. (3 more authors) (2019) *Let's Talk about the 'S' Word: what do care home staff want from training resources to support care home residents sexuality, intimacy and relationship needs*. In: Brown, LJE, Youell, J, Brown Wilson, C, Dickinson, T and Simpson, P, (eds.) *British Society of Gerontology 48th Annual Conference - Resilience and Living Well in Local Communities*. British Society of Gerontology 48th Annual Conference, 10-12 Jul 2019, University of Liverpool. British Society of Gerontology .

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Let's Talk about the 'S' Word: what do care home staff want from training resources to support care home residents sexuality, intimacy and relationship needs

Horne, M., Brown, L.J.E., Youell, J., Brown Wilson, C., Dickinson, T. & Simpson, P.

Abstract

The sexuality, intimacy and relationship needs of older care home residents are often unnoticed, ignored, or dismissed (Simpson et al., 2015), but are important for maintaining health, wellbeing and personal identity (RCN 2018; Buttaro et al 2014). Care home staff find supporting residents sexuality and intimacy needs challenging and report an urgent need for training and guidance on this sensitive issue, as they are often faced with complex moral and legal dilemmas, when attempting to balance residents' individual rights to sexual freedom with the need to safeguard vulnerable adults in their care (Simpson *et al.* 2016, 2017). We aimed to understand more about the specific training needs of care home staff in this area, to develop and evaluate a training resource to enable care home staff better support residents' sexuality and intimacy needs. This paper presents the findings from: (i) a survey of UK care home managers about how they help residents who have sexual or intimacy needs, and any training they provide staff on this topic and (ii) four workshops with care home staff to explore their views on existing resources for supporting residents' sexuality and intimacy needs, their previous experiences of training, and their everyday approaches to supporting residents sexuality, intimacy and relationship needs. The findings from the audit and workshop will be presented as well as suggestions for how this research might inform the development of an interactive training resource designed to help care home staff to better support their residents' sexuality, intimacy and relationship needs.

Words: 241

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