



Sex-cessful Aging: Taboo Topic?

Your Host



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Sexual Expression is part of Successful Aging



Guest Speaker

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Somatic Sexologist



Aging

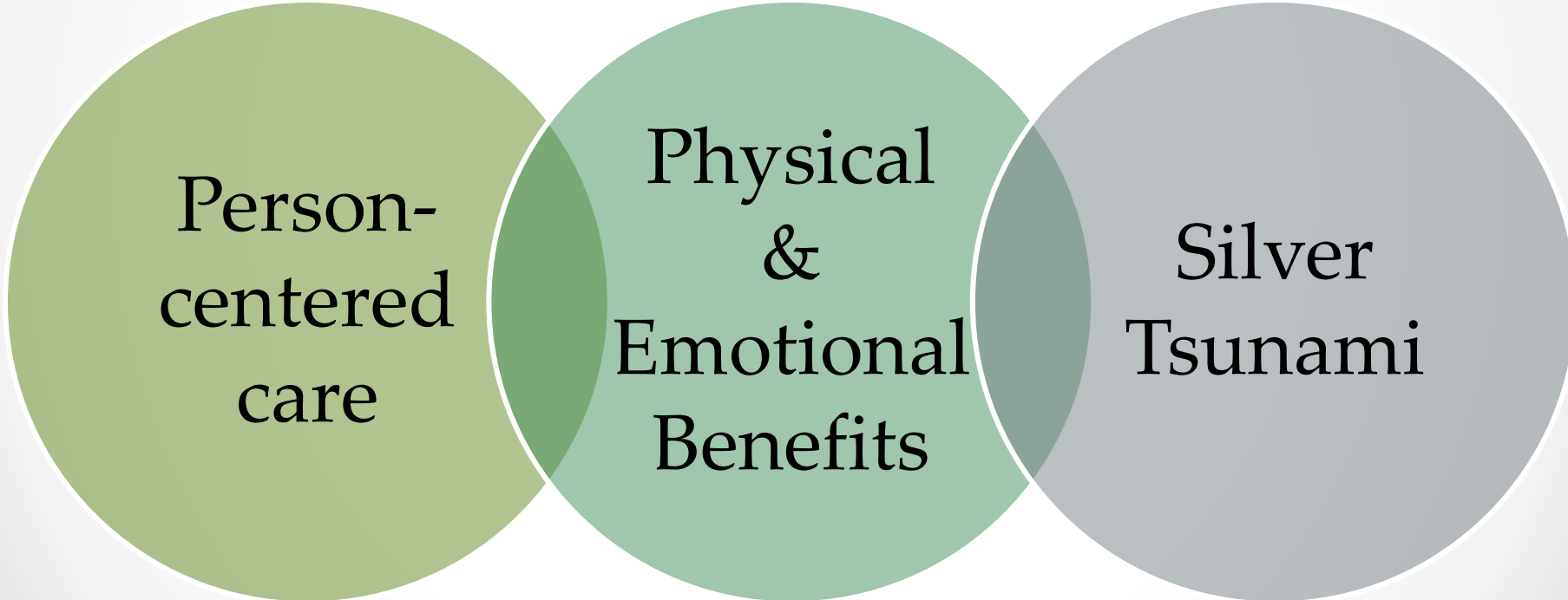
Disease

Death

Sexuality

Taboo Topics...

Is it your business?



Person-
centered
care

Physical
&
Emotional
Benefits

Silver
Tsunami

Presentation Overview

- **Definitions**
- **Sexual needs of older adults**
- **Breaking down barriers and creating solutions:**
Ageism and Attitudes
- **Training, policies and practices**
- **Related topics:** Environment, Inappropriate sexual behaviors, Sexuality and Dementia, LGBTQ Community
- **Q&A**

Encouraging healthy sexual expression means...

...**validating** the sexual needs and desires of older people & **supporting** healthy sexual expression

NOT

to make community members feel pressure to be more sexual.

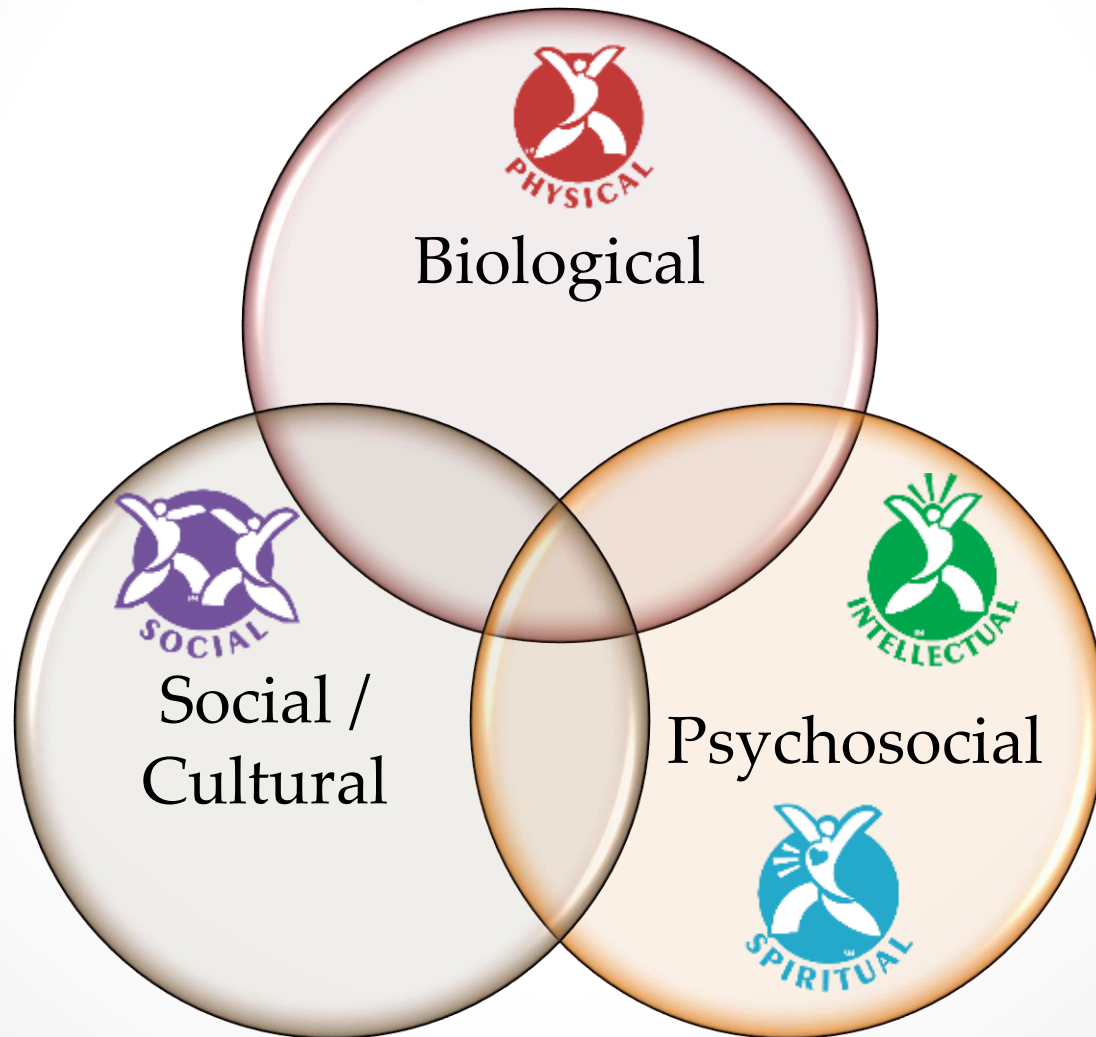


Definitions

- **Sex:** the act of intercourse or penetration
- **Sexuality:** everything surrounding sex – meaning, orientation, fantasies and desires
- **Sexual Activity:** activities that bring us to erotic experience and response
- **Sexual Expression:** ways in which we communicate and present ourselves to the world as sexual beings (may or may not include sexual activity)
- **Intimacy:** close familiarity or friendship; closeness



Sexuality Domains^{1,2}



Intimacy

Close familiarity or friendship;
closeness

The Healing Power of Intimacy

Loneliness is one of the strongest predictors of health and use of health care services.

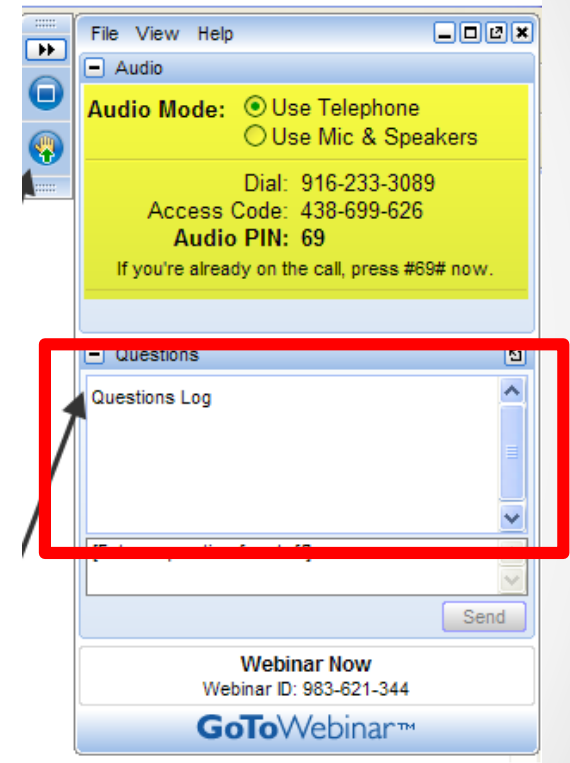
Correlation between **increased social isolation** and **loneliness** among older adults in nursing homes³

- Lack of intimate relationships
- Increased dependence
- Loss

People who are not lonely generally:

- ✓ Have a more positive view of relationships
- ✓ Accept aging and its changes
- ✓ Feel healthier

What *do you* think are some of the other benefits of healthy sexual expression among older adults?



Benefits of healthy sexual expression among older adults:

Intellectual

Neurochemical benefits

- ✓ Pleasure
- ✓ Pain Relief

Physical

- ✓ Release of tension
- ✓ Affirmation of physical well-being

Social

- ✓ Connection
- ✓ Sense of identity
- ✓ Security

Spiritual

- ✓ Passion
- ✓ Greater locus of control
- ✓ Increased self esteem



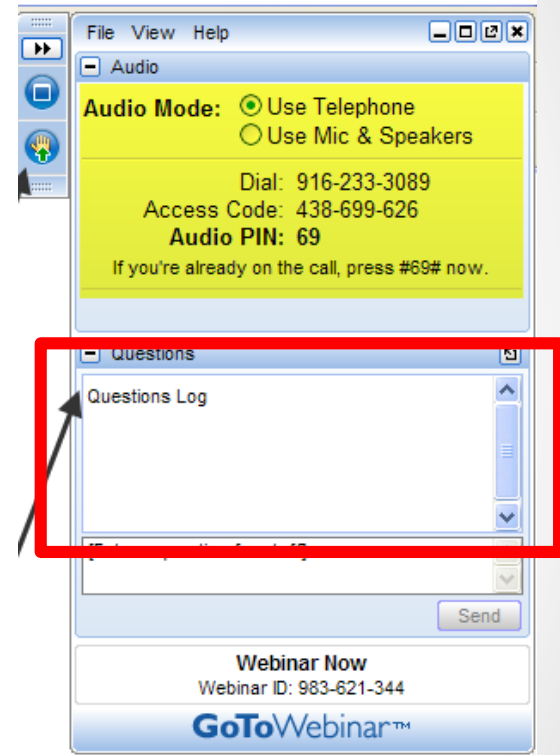
Sexual Expression

How we communicate and
present ourselves to the world as
sexual beings

[may or may not include sexual
activity]



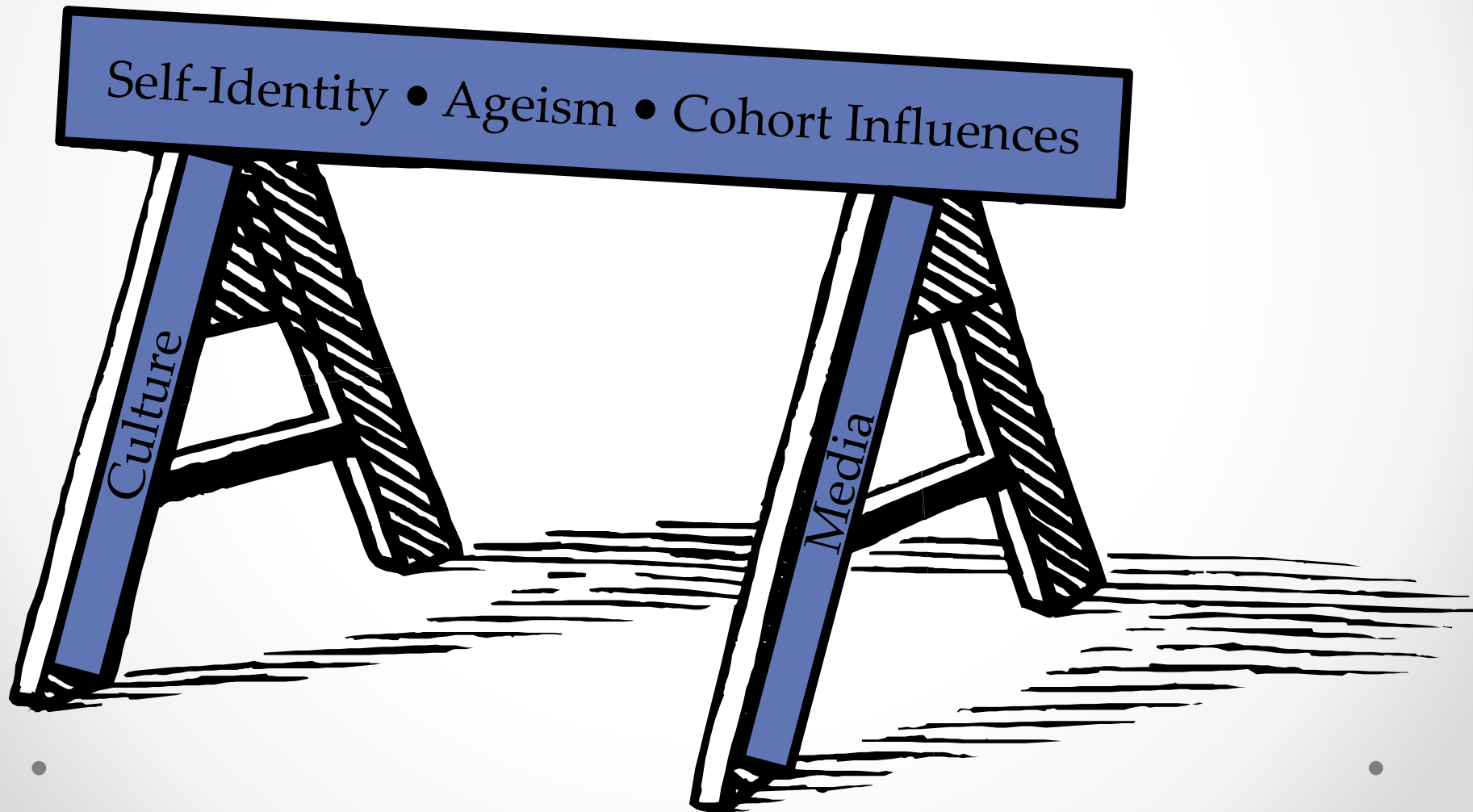
What are some healthy expressions of sexuality among older adults that you have noticed?



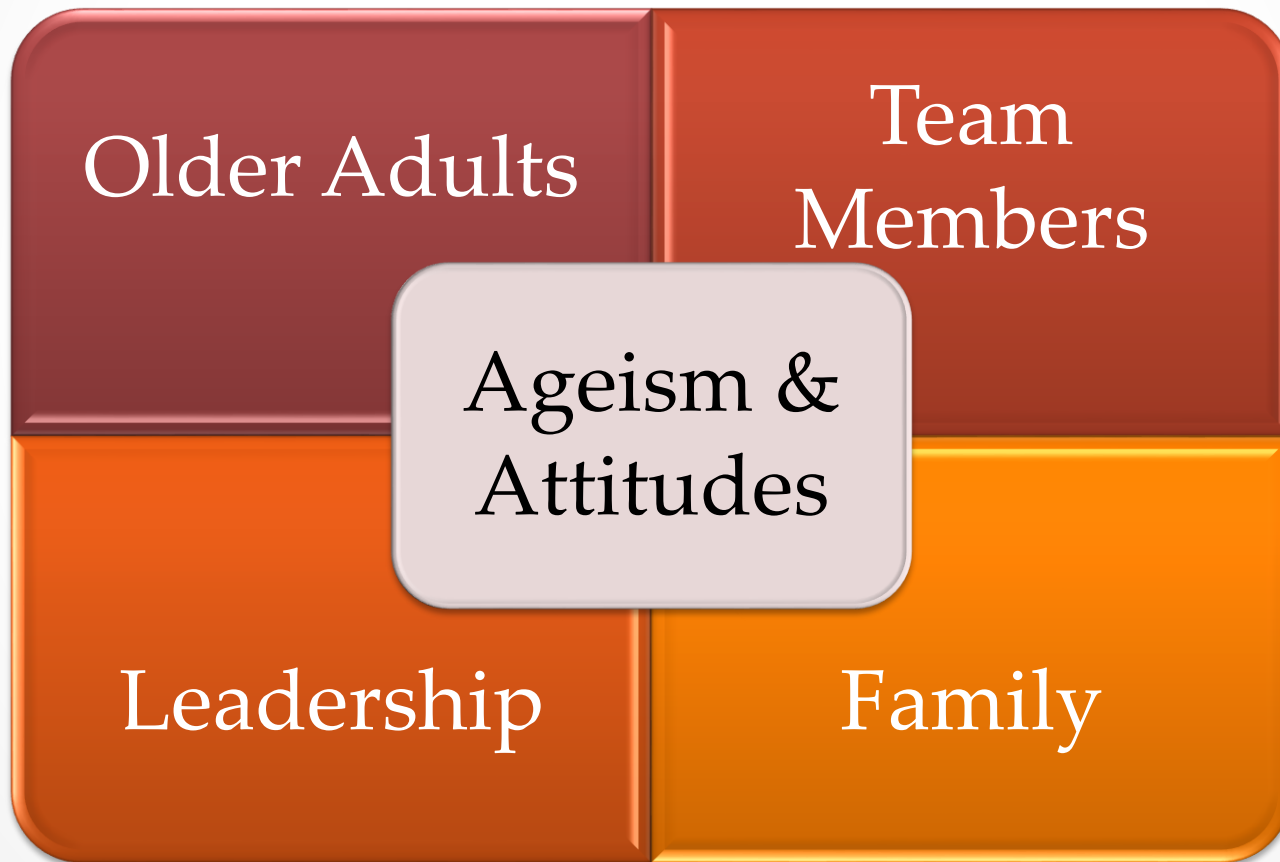
Expressions of sexuality among older adults¹

- Words
- Gestures
- Movements
- Desire to remain attractive
- Kissing / hugging
- Touching
- Masturbation
- Oral sex
- Sending roses
- Providing comfort and warmth
- Dressing up
- Expressing joy

Ageism & Attitudes: Challenges to Sexual Expression



Challenges & Solutions

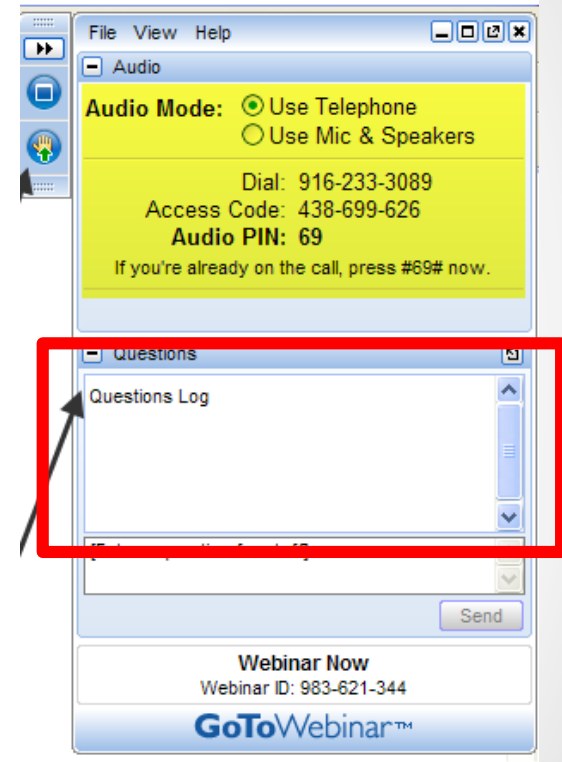


Attitudes of Older Adults

Research says...

- Of 1,604 adults **aged 65-97**
 - 40% had sex an average of 2.5 times per month
 - **69% of men and 49% of women** reported that sex was important in their lives (Clements, 1996)
- **45% of men and 8% of women** think of sex at least once a day (Fisher, 2009)
- Of 3,005 people ages 57-85:
 - Older adults believe sexuality is an important part of life
 - **26% of 75-year-olds** and above are sexually active (Lindau et al., 2007)

What are some stereotypes that may affect our beliefs about sexual expression among older adults?





Attitudes can be the
greatest challenge.

Older
Adults

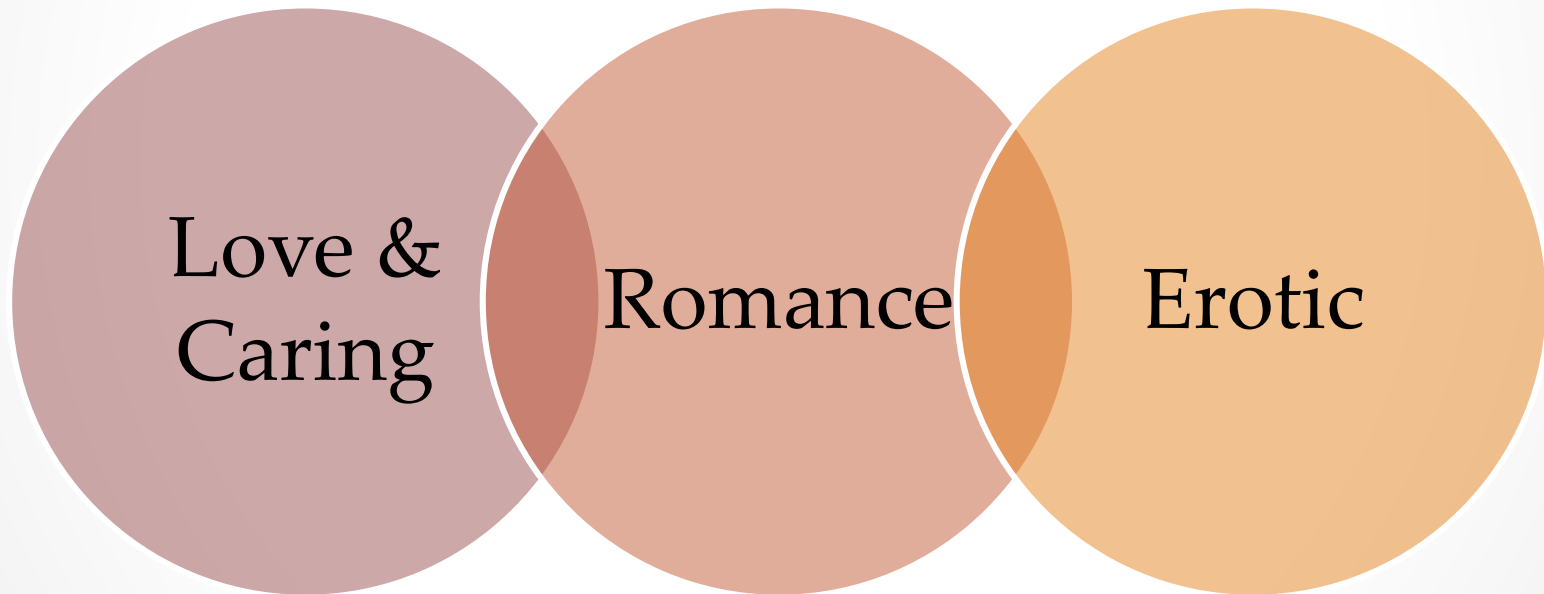
Team
Members

Family

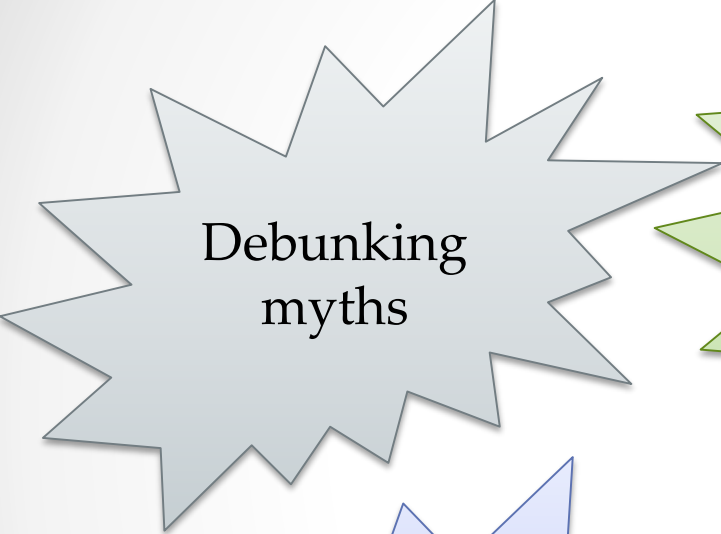
Leader-
ship

Team member attitudes¹

Three primary types of sexual expression among older adults in communities:



Changing Attitudes



Debunking
myths



Education



Resources

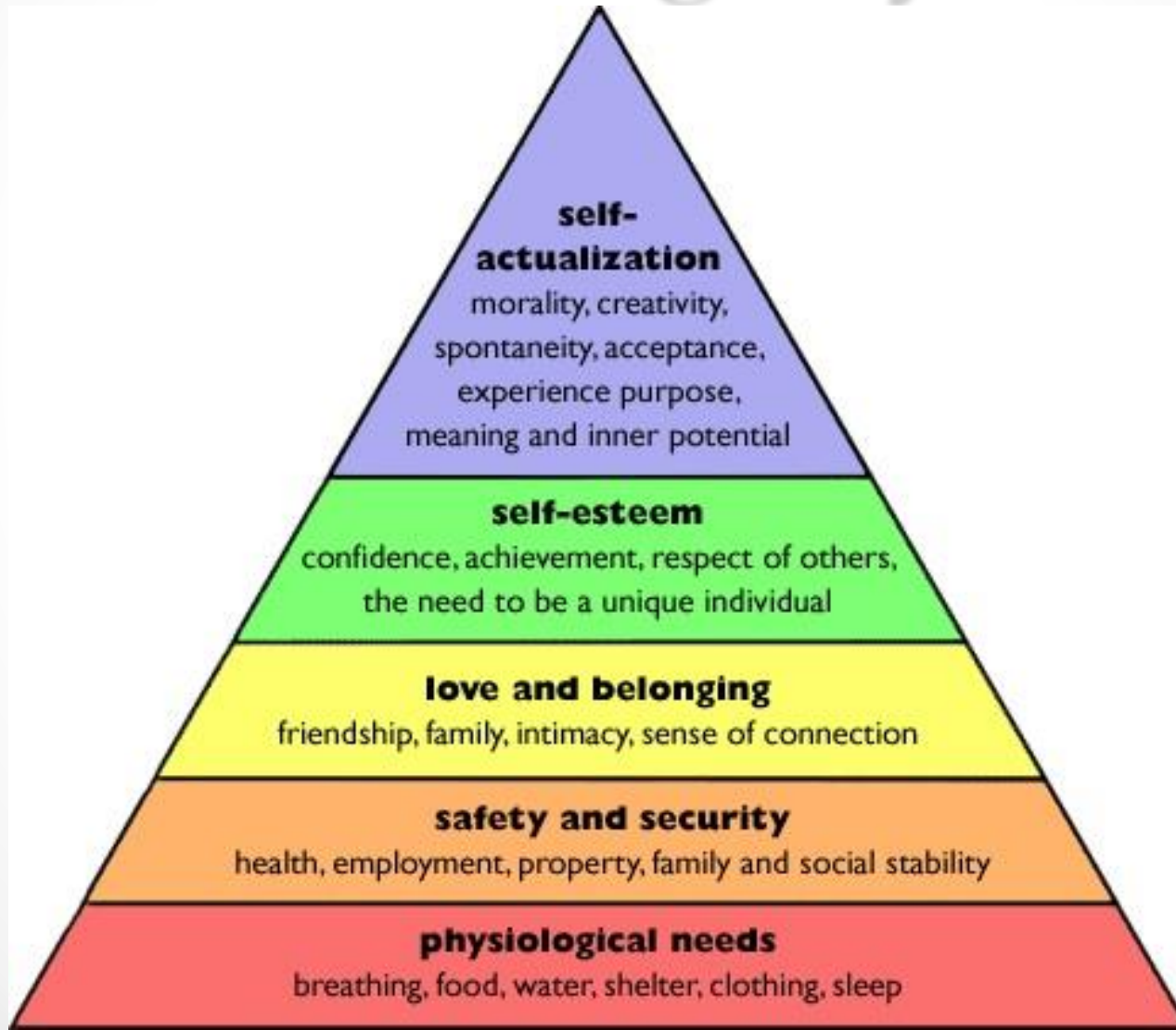


Policies



Educate
on
regulations

Debunking Myths



Education / Training

- ✓ Promote empathy
- ✓ Self-assessments
- ✓ Resources
- ✓ Education
- ✓ Support
- ✓ Empowerment
- ✓ Confidentiality
- ✓ Tactfulness
- ✓ Opportunities for intimacy



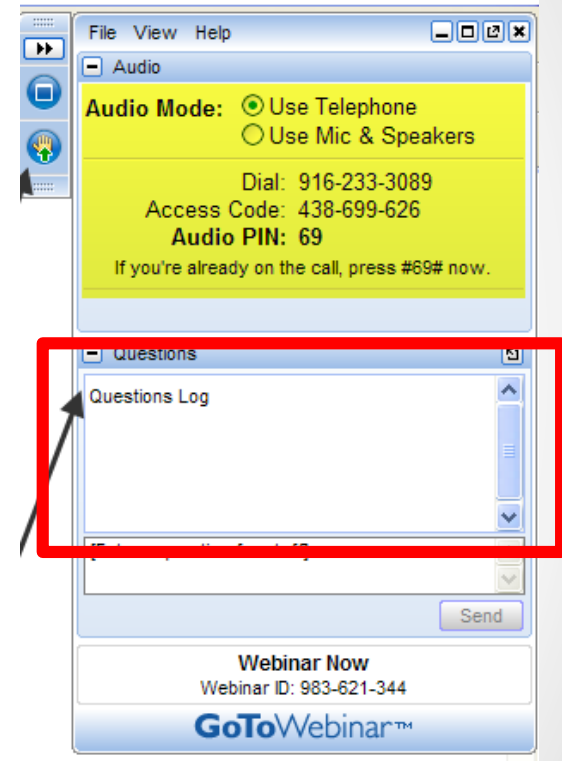
Education on CMS Federal Regulations

- The resident has a **right to share a room with his or her spouse**
- The resident has a **right to privacy and to have his or her needs met**
- The community has a responsibility to meet a resident's ... **mental and psychological needs**

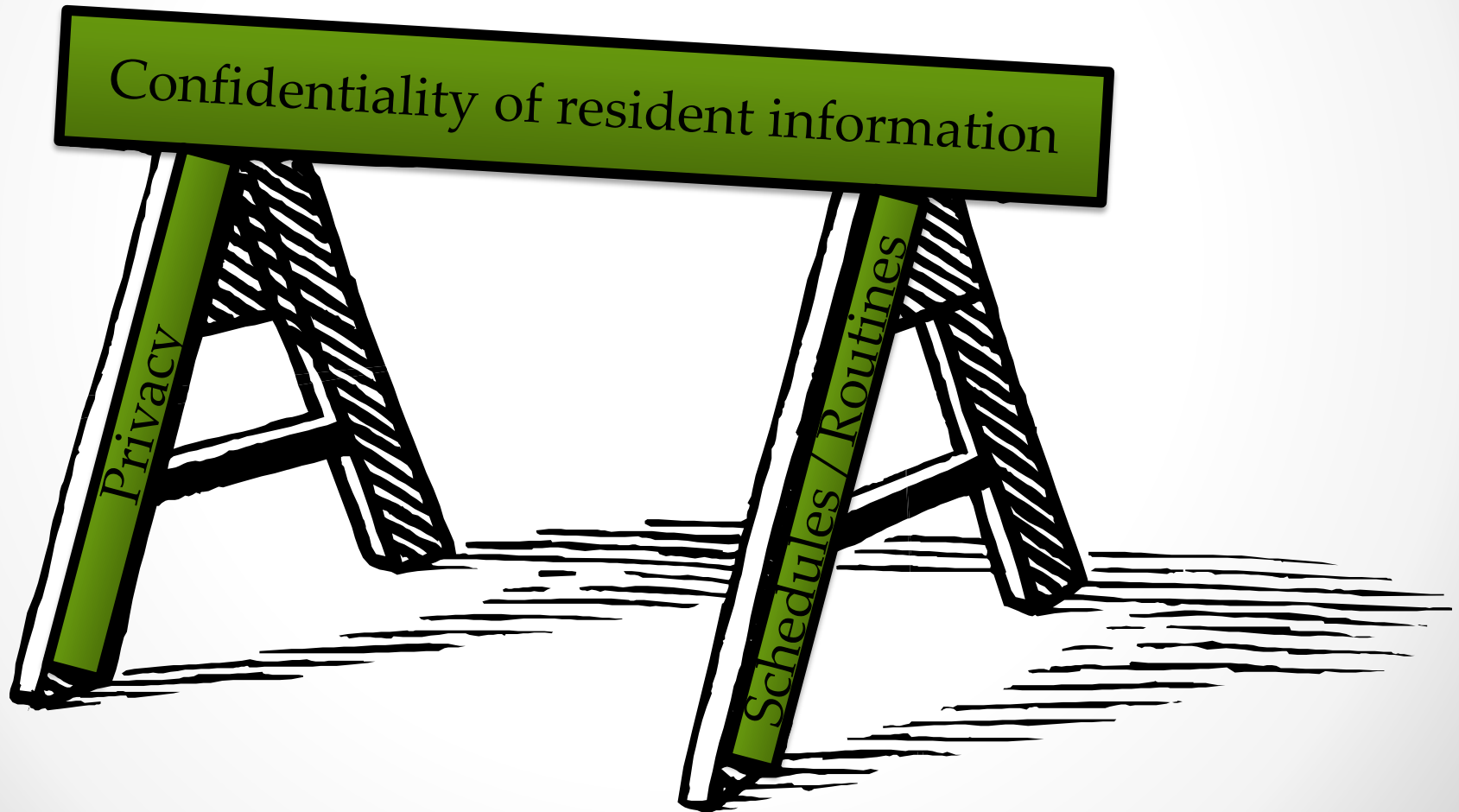
We know this, but...

The provision of privacy *may not fit comfortably* in the model of efficiency that most caregiving organizations adopt.

What challenges do you face in creating an environment for healthy sexual expression?



External Barriers



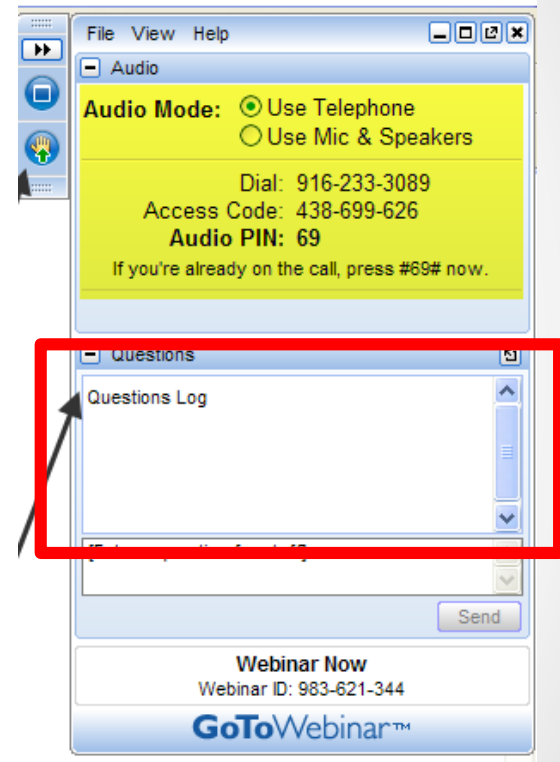
Why & Why Not?



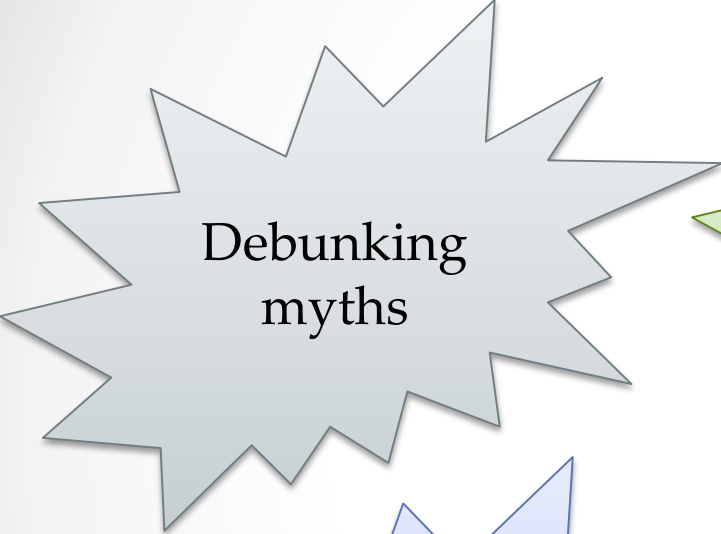
Policy Examples

- Support staff **knock on doors and wait** for a response before entering
- Support staff **avoid placing notes** about resident sexuality in care charts or avoid raising issues at team meetings unless essential to resident care
- **Support staff and life enrichment coordinators find activities outside the room for a roommate** while a couple shares private time
- **Review sexual needs** as part of comprehensive approach to support successful aging
- **Delineation of a private room** for sexual expression among couples


What policies do you have that support sexual expression among older adults?



Changing Attitudes



Debunking
myths



Training



Resources

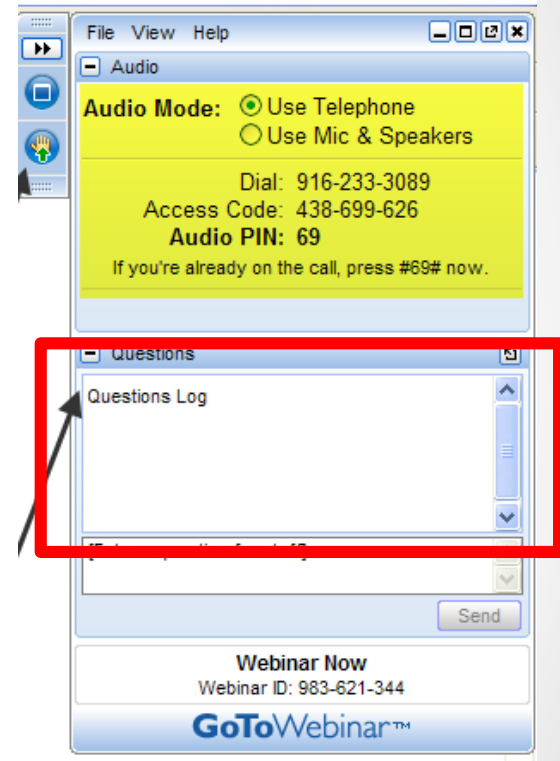


Policies



Educate
on
regulations

What is one specific change you plan to make as a result of this webinar?



Summary

- Sexual expression impacts all 4 components of successful aging
- We can challenge ageism through examining our own beliefs and attitudes about sexuality and older adults
- Challenge: consider organizational policies around sexual expression through a lens of successful aging

Additional / Related Topics

- Environment
- Inappropriate Sexual Behaviors
- Sexuality and Dementia
- Creating inclusion for LGBTQ Community

Others? *Write in chat box*



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Thank you!

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