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Psychological Issues

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Sexuality Educator Rips the Bandage Off America's 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' Sore Spot

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Communication on Sexuality Often Lacking Between Medical Staff & Patients



(HealthNewsDigest.com) - New York, NY - Let's face it, most of us don't like to talk about what happens behind closed doors and between the sheets. It's often difficult to share our thoughts and fears with friends, partners, or strangers. It can be an awkward subject for everybody; and besides, pillow talk should be private, right?

However, sex is a vital part of life. So whom do you turn to if you have questions regarding your sexual health? According to Eva Margot Kant, LCSW-R, a nationally-acclaimed educator, speaker and sex/psychotherapist in private practice, "Open and honest discussions about sexuality and sensuality is not only normal, but it's also healthy."

Kant who teaches Human Sexuality at New York's Columbia University Graduate School of Social Work, explains, "It's important to address these personal issues to achieve total overall health. Unfortunately, research shows that medical professionals don't always have the time or the mindset to engage in these discussions with patients."

Quantum leaps have been made in recent years in the diagnosis and treatment of life-threatening diseases and chronic conditions, as well as in how to communicate with medical professionals. But when it comes to caring for one of the most vital and interconnected of all human conditions, sexuality, it seems society too often suffers from lockjaw.

According to a study in the March, 2012 issue of *The Journal of Sexual Medicine*, University of Chicago Dept. of Medicine researchers learned that only 40% of 1,150 OB/GYNs surveyed routinely asked patients about sexual problems or dysfunctions (Lindau, et al, 2012).

Research indicates that while 90% of doctors, nurses, physiotherapists and occupational therapists agree that addressing sexual issues is important to holistic patient care; most lack specific training and 94% are unlikely to initiate discussions on sexual topics. (Haboubi and Lincoln, 2003) · Less than one-third of medical schools surveyed in the U.S. and Canada require / or even offer a course on human sexuality to future medical professionals. (Solursh, et al., 2003)

As we appear to get closer to "Treat 'em and Street 'em" medical practices Kant believes the climate surrounding interpersonal communication between healthcare clinicians and patients continues to worsen. "There's a widening divide between healthcare consumers and



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professionals, whereby both sides feel pressured and misunderstood. Developing better communication leads to patients' ability to speak to their doctor about *anything* that affects their overall health. Being able to make a quicker and more accurate diagnosis as a direct result of this open communication will not only save on expenses, but quite possibly save lives too". More than 75% of cardiovascular patients surveyed experienced some type of difficulty with sexual function. 98% of these surveyed patients believe sexual functioning should be addressed relative to overall treatment. Although most would opt-in to having a discussion about their sexuality and cardiac care with their cardiologist, only 15% of these patients have had that conversation. Sadly, the truth is that regular physical exertion, including sexual activity, has been associated with a *decreased* risk of cardiac events (*Vazquez, et al, 2010*).

Talking to their clinician would dispel myths.

"No general conversation between a doctor and their patient is complete if it doesn't at least provide the opportunity for people to express concerns or raise questions about sexual issues," Kant says. "People of all ages have questions about their sexual health but are afraid to bring them up during visits with healthcare providers. This can result in undiagnosed or misdiagnosed health issues."

Kant is often asked to speak to various healthcare and consumer constituencies on ways to bridge the communication gap between doctor and patient, especially in regards to sexual health. "My workshops educate, advocate and empower consumers to learn how to speak up for themselves and navigate through the often scary waters of the today's healthcare system. This guidance helps healthcare providers better address their patients' concerns about sexual needs."

Click here to see a list of Ms. Kant's Seminars & Workshops <http://www.evamkantlcsw.com/seminars-workshops>. For more information about Eva Margot Kant, LCSW-R or to arrange for her to speak at an upcoming group seminar or workshop, call (917)951-0599, email her at: evamargotkant@yahoo.com or visit <http://www.evamkantlcsw.com>. You are also welcome to take part in the ongoing dialogue on sexual health issues by following Ms. Kant on Twitter at @LCSWSpeaks. [About Eva Margot Kant, LCSW-R](#)

Eva Margot Kant, LCSW-R is a requested speaker, educator and sex/psychotherapist in private practice, and the creator of the nationally acclaimed workshops: "Wait, Can I Ask You Something", "The Holy Trilogy of Sex", and "Sex Takes Two But Starts With You" (and author of the upcoming book of the same name), among others. Through her workshops and private practice, Ms. Kant helps men and women learn how to both identify and communicate their needs on many levels.

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