

Body Image and Sexual Function for the Patient with an Ostomy

Name: Sarah Weisz

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Point criteria.

Criteria	Under performance <3 points per criteria	Basic 3 – 3.9 points per criteria	Proficient 4.0 – 4.4 points per criteria	Distinguished 4.5 – 5 points per criteria
Required content objectives	Content objectives are missing or sparsely covered.	Content objectives are not consistently addressed. Demonstrates minimal understanding of content.	Content objectives consistently addressed. Demonstrates understanding of content.	Content objectives consistently addressed. Demonstrates mastery of content.
Academic writing standards	Writing lacks scholarly tone & focus. Sparse content. Multiple grammatical, spelling, & factual errors. Reliance on bullet points rather than effective writing in speaker notes. 4 or more direct quotes per project.	Writing is unclear and/or disorganized. Inconsistent scholarly tone. Inadequate depth of content. Grammatical and spelling errors. No more than 3 direct quote of less than 40 words per project.	Writing demonstrates general exploration of content. Responses are clearly written using scholarly tone. Few grammatical and/or spelling errors. No more than 2 direct quote of less than 40 words per project.	Writing demonstrates comprehensive exploration of content. Responses are clearly written using scholarly tone. Rare grammatical and/or spelling errors. No more than 1 direct quote of less than 40 words per project.
APA formatting	References and citations have multiple errors or are missing.	References and citations have errors.	References and citations have few errors.	References and citations have rare errors.

Carefully review the assignment rubric above for how points are awarded. Using academic writing standards and APA formatting of references and citations, respond to each of the learning objectives on page two. **Each response should be 150-350 words in length.** Save the completed document as the assignment title and submit to the dropbox.

1. Explain the pelvic nerves responsible for sexual function, and how the sympathetic & parasympathetic nervous systems impact this process.

WOC nurses must understand the pelvic nerves responsible for sexual function and the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous system roles in regulating sexual function. Pelvic surgery can have long-term effects on sexual health. Men can develop a loss of libido and erectile dysfunction. A woman can experience dyspareunia and vaginal dryness (Cleveland Clinic, n.d).

The pudendal nerve is a nerve in the pelvic region responsible for sensation and function in the genital and anus areas. It controls defecation and urination. Additionally, it supplies sensory information of the penis and vagina. Damage to this nerve has many complications, one of which includes sexual dysfunction (Cleveland Clinic, n.d). The sympathetic nervous system, known as the “fight or flight”, has many functions, including regulating the heart rate, sweating, blood pressure, sexual attraction, and orgasm. In addition, the parasympathetic nervous system, also known as “rest and digest”, controls the same functions as the sympathetic nervous system but in different ways. It can slow down certain body functions allowing it to relax and bring the body to a state of calmness. Sympathetic nervous system is responsible for male erection and female vagina lubrication (Experience Health and Wellness center, 2021).

Studies show that many ostomates experience sexual dysfunction after surgery. WOC nurses need to understand why patients are experiencing sexual complications and know the appropriate intervention to help them. For example, educating females to use lubrication to help with dryness can alleviate discomfort during sexual intercourse (Carmel, & Scardillo, 2022).

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2. Differentiate between body image and self-concept.

Self-Concept is defined as how "a knowledge representation that contains knowledge about us, including our beliefs about our personality traits, physical characteristics, abilities, values, goals, and roles, as well as the knowledge that we exist as individuals" (Stangor et al., 2022). Body image is how individuals perceive their bodies. This includes emotional attitudes and beliefs. Poor body image can profoundly affect a person and lead to physical and psychological problems. In addition, body image can be affected by cultural influences and peers.

Essentially a body image is a person's mental picture of themselves, and how they think of themselves, it is an internal picture of oneself. Conversely, self-concept is a broader concept of how much a person values their existence. Healthcare providers need to understand what body image is and self-concept (Barclay, 2023). Furthermore, undergoing surgery to have an ostomy can be a very traumatic experience for patients and their families. WOC nurses must help guide patients to accept the changes in their bodies. It is pertinent to create a safe atmosphere where patients and their families can discuss questions.

Describe the potential impact of ostomy surgery on body image, self-concept, and sexuality for men and women.

Surgery can majorly impact a person's body image, self-concept, and sexuality. Thus, pelvic surgery can impact patients' sexuality due to injured pelvic nerves, causing problems such as erectile dysfunction or vaginal dryness. Patients may have many concerns regarding their ostomy surgery, including how the stoma will look, odor issues, leaking, sexual dysfunction, and body changes (Carmel, & Scardillo, 2022). WOC nurses need to make patients feel comfortable discussing any concerns. Women considering becoming pregnant after an ostomy surgery have an excellent chance on delivering a healthy baby, but it is advised to wait a year to

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recuperate from surgery. After surgery, men can experience low libido and poor body image, which can cause depression and anxiety (Carmel, & Scardillo, 2022).

Men that need to have a proctectomy should consider freezing their sperm in case the surgery affects erectile function. Patients with urostomies can experience dry orgasms and should freeze their sperm before surgery (O'Rourke, n.d.) WOC nurses should validate patients' anger and frustration as a normal response to such an invasive procedure. Usually after demonstrating compassion with the patients, they will more likely be receptive to receive and accept support from the WOC nurses and they will be more willing to learn the tools to succeed in taking care of their stoma. It is crucial for WOC nurses to obtain up-to-date information on support groups in their respective area. This way WOC nurses can recommend emotional support after such a dramatic and life changing surgery.

3. Identify safe sex considerations that should be taught to the person with an ostomy.

Patients with an ostomy need to practice safe sex considerations, which applies to anyone without any ostomy needs too. For example, to protect from sexually transmitted diseases, condoms need to be used. Any woman that does not want to become pregnant should use contraceptives. Women with an ileostomy need to be aware that birth control pills will not work effectively because the pills will not be absorbed through the digestive tract correctly (Carmel, & Scardillo, 2022). They need to speak to their doctors about what contraceptives would be appropriate for them.

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Ostomates must know that their stoma cannot be used for sexual purposes. Putting any firm object into their stoma can cause problems with mucocutaneous injunctions, bleeding, and constriction. Ostomates will not feel any pleasure from stimulating the stoma since it is not an erogenous area. Therefore, having sexual intercourse through a stoma is dangerous and should not be done. If patients feel coerced to have sexual intercourse and they are not comfortable with their partner's sexually aggressive behavior, especially if this involves being forced to have sex using an ostomy as a sexual orifice (Carmel, & Scardillo, 2022). In such cases resources are available to help them, such as the National Domestic Violence Hotline. WOC nurses need to make patients feel comfortable so that they can express any sexual concerns. Additionally, they must be trained to identify signs of abusive behavior.

4. Describe how each of the following categories can help to promote a healthy body image for the person with an ostomy. Be sure to include at least one example for each category.

a. Undergarments

It is important for WOC nurses to be aware of the different products that are available to help patients have a healthy body image. There are many types of underwear for men and women with ostomies that can help patients with their body image. Ostomy Secrets have a wide range of different products. This company sells underwear that can cover a pouching system and has an inner pocket that supports the pouch. For example, on its website there is an underwear called illusion bikini brief, that not only keeps the pouching system secure on the body, but it can also help a woman feel more comfortable and beautiful (Ostomy Secrets, n.d.). Ostomy Secrets also sells high waisted underwear that do not restrict the flow of output and hold the pouching system firmly

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in place. Another option ostomates can choose is a wrap that covers the pouching system. These wraps come in a variety of colors and materials, and can provide extra support for the pouch and help conceal the pouching system under the patient's clothes (BrittenC, 2017).

b. Odor control

Patients with ostomies might have concerns with odor control. They need to be taught about different odor-controlling agents. The purpose of these products is to eliminate odor caused by bacteria. Bismuth subgallate is an oral medication that reduces odors and flatus. The clinician needs to explain that this medication will turn the stool dark green. Contraindications for this medication, is that it may interfere with pelvis x-ray imaging. Additionally, large doses can result in metal toxicity. This medication should not be given in patients with renal failure. (R. B. Turnbull, Jr. MD School of WOC Nursing Education, 2022). Additionally, patients should also be taught which food causes odor and gas. For example, beans, dairy products, and cucumbers are gas producing food. An example of odor producing foods are baked bean, fish and eggs. WOC nurses should be able to explain each ostomy product's pros and cons and be able to discuss patients' lifestyle modification to reduce ostomy odor and gas (Carmel, & Goldberg, 2022).

c. Pouch modifications

Many different pouching modifications can be made that can make patients feel more comfortable with their stoma. For example, a pouch cover is used to absorb moisture from the skin. It decreases the rustling sound from the pouch and can make patients

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feel more comfortable when they are intimate (R. B. Turnbull, Jr. MD School of WOC Nursing Education, 2022). Pouch covers are available for both men and women. In addition, many websites such as Etsy and Ostomy Secrets, sell all different colors and patterns that patients can choose from. Patient can use a combination of a pouch cover and stoma belt when being intimate. The pouch cover will cover the stoma and the belt will help keep the pouching system firmly in place. WOC nurses should speak to patients and ask them what their specific concerns are so that WOC nurses know which products would be appropriate for patients.

5. Explain how the PLISSIT model guides the conversation on sexual intimacy.

PLISSIT stands for permission, understanding-limited information, specific suggestion, and intensive therapy. These four nursing interventions help healthcare professionals improve patients' sexual wellbeing. The first task is making patients feel comfortable and creating an environment that patients feel safe enough to ask questions or any concerns about how the surgery will affect their body image or sexuality (Jiménez & Ordóñez, 2021). WOC nurses must offer emotional support and attentive listening to help patients feel comfortable asking questions. Using an open end question can help start a conversation. For instance, asking if having an ostomy has changed any aspect of the patient's life can be a great ice breaker to start such a delicate but important conversation.

The understandings-limited information stage is when an assessment is done to see if patients need a referral. Identifying any sexual problems or goals is crucial so that healthcare providers are aware that a plan of action is required. Providing patients with resources and support groups is essential. An example of a well-known organization helping patients with ostomies is the United Ostomy Association of America (UOAA). The next stage of this process is called the intensive therapy stage. Here is when the WOC

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nurses address any psychological or physical needs (Carmel, & Scardillo, 2022). Therefore, it is imperative that WOC nurses need to know what resources are available to them in order to provide proper patient care.

6. List the references used to develop and cite this assignment.
 - a. See the course syllabus for specific reference requirements.

References

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