

POINTS TO REMEMBER FOR SEX HISTORY TAKING & SEX COUNSELING

1. Remember the history is a conversation between two people, so counseling techniques are important.
2. You must feel comfortable discussing sexuality. You need insight into your values and beliefs regarding sexuality. Be tolerant of attitudes and behaviors that differ from yours.
3. The patient sees the nurse as an informed authority and is receptive to her/his attitudes on sex. Think about what you consider sexually normal and abnormal for yourself and others. Think about your attitudes on premarital and extramarital coitus, premarital pregnancy, homosexuality, masturbation, abortion, conception, and divorce. Think of how your attitudes affect your interaction with patients.
4. Help patients arrive at their own answers when exploring moral issues. Don't tell the patient what is right and wrong. Don't judge the patient by your norms.
5. Let patients decide what is normal for themselves. Chez says "whatever is pleasurable and gratifying for both participants is normal for that couple as long as there is communication and mutual participation without coercion."
6. Provide privacy and ensure confidentiality.
7. Listen. Avoid note-taking.
8. Allow enough time to discuss and explore needs, attitudes, feelings, values, expectations, practices, anxieties, fears, and problems.
9. Assume that the patient is anxious.
10. Be frank, warm, objective, respectful, unembarrassed, open, nonevasive, nonmoralistic, reassuring and empathetic.
11. Consider the husband and wife as a marital unit. (Or other combinations of partners as a unit.)
12. Clarify vocabulary. Words are different emotional connotations to each of us. Help the patient to describe his or her sexual life accurately. Note the patient's choice of words. Don't over-generalize or over-simplify.