

Tackling issues of sexuality among people with dementia

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This is Dr. Cindy Jones. Credit: Griffith University

Managing the delicate issue of sexual expression amongst people with dementia is the focus of a new education resource produced by Griffith University researcher Dr Cindy Jones.

The first resource of its kind and the subject of funding from the Department of Health and Aging and Queensland [Dementia](#) Training and Study Centres (DTSC), Sexualities and Dementia: Education Resource for [Health Professionals](#) is aimed at assisting health professionals working across care settings.

Based on national and international literature and research by Dr Jones from Griffith's Centre for Health Practice Innovation, the free eLearning resource aims to increase awareness of intimacy, sexualities and [sexual behaviours](#) specific to people with dementia and to guide their carers on how to better support them.

First resource of its kind to address the LGBTI community

It is also the first e-learning resource in Australia to include concerns and issues faced by non-heterosexual people with dementia, including those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI).

"It became apparent that there was a real gap in the education of health professionals regarding sexualities and dementia, with no other comprehensive resource which specifically addresses the needs of this group," says Dr Jones.

"Our research revealed that when presented with these challenging situations, interventions taken by health professionals are often quite reactive rather than proactive, with many staff simply not knowing what to do.

"The resource provides a framework to guide the development of policy and guidelines to address issues of sexual expression in care settings. There is also a facilitator guide providing workshop information for

which 'train the trainer' education can be applied."

"The important message is that expression of sexuality is a part of life no matter what age we are and that older people with dementia therefore also need to be considered," says Dr Jones.

Meredith Gresham, Senior Dementia Consultant - Research & Design, HammondCare was part of the expert panel reviewing the new resource.

"The modules really produced thoughtful discussion. The conclusion points are fabulous. I would like to congratulate Dr Jones on the work," she said.

Provided by Griffith University

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