



**Acquired
Brain Injury
Network**

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Conference Presentation Abstract ~ Workshop

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Title:

Sexuality and Brain Plasticity Post ABI

Author:

Marta Helliesen, Ph.D., M.S., L.M.T.

Presenter:

Marta Helliesen Ph.D, M.S., L.M.T., Sex Therapist, Private Practice, New York, NY

Summary:

Sexuality is inherent in human beings and is always present, but the extent to which it is expressed varies greatly. The brain's ability to change itself (plasticity) means that formation and modulation of neural networks is an ongoing process, and actions and thoughts can promote neuronal and behavioral change.

The brain, (our biggest sex organ), as well as our sexuality, continues to develop and change throughout life. After a brain injury a client's sense of sexuality might change and continue to do so through all stages of recovery. All sexual functions (i.e. sexual desire, arousal, orgasm etc..) derive from interaction of several brain regions, and numerous neural networks are involved in any sexual event. Due to the brain's plasticity these networks are changeable, both pre and post ABI, especially if we "awaken" the brain by providing new, non-habitual input.

While sexual expression post ABI is important for quality of life it's not essential for a client's ability to function at work and home, thus it's easily overlooked in neuro-rehabilitation. In this experiential workshop the participants will learn how to work with sexuality in a safe, non-intrusive way. This interdisciplinary approach of neuroscience, psychotherapy, body- and breath-work will focus on the mutual interaction between the brain and the body. The participants will engage in simple, interactive exercises that aim to provide new proprioceptive and sensory input to the brain, and thereby stimulate modulation of dysfunctional sexual patterns and formation of new ones.

Outcomes/Objectives:

The participants will, through interactive exercises, enhance their skills as therapists by learning how to work with sexuality in a safe, non-intrusive way. The participants will acquire a theoretical and clinical understanding of the brain-body connection of sexuality.