

# COSY coPD and Sexuality

## Objective:

It is time to start communication about sexuality in COPD care. Data shows that sexuality and intimacy are important contributing factors in quality of life and well-being. People with COPD have a proven need to talk about sex. Many health professionals have misconceptions about this issue and are uncomfortable talking about sexuality.

*'COSY' should support you to hold a relaxed, two-way dialogue about sexuality and intimacy. Where individuals do not experience a fulfilling sex life, it is particularly important to gain a joint understanding of the level of limitation (1-4) they currently experience.*

## IMPORTANT!

The primary purpose is to START A CONVERSATION. You do not need in-depth knowledge about sexology nor should you expect to resolve individual difficulties right away.

If it becomes apparent in the course of the discussion that the reason for the limitation is not **level 1, COPD**, and that it can be attributed to a different level, then this is a useful outcome. The subsequent approach and course of action should be agreed with the individual concerned, taking account of their degree of motivation. It is important to outline the services available and the potential support offered by other providers (referral, self-referral).

## Approach:

A respectful and emphatic approach forms the basis of an effective, trusting relationship between the professional and the individual concerned. The ability to listen actively is an important therapeutic skill: "Talking is good for your health".

Your own notes

# COSY coPD and Sexuality

## Framework:

Summary of tools available

- [COSY: Communication leaflet](#)
- [COSY: Communication leaflet guidance](#)
- [Holistic understanding of individuals with COPD](#)
- [Visual language of sexuality](#)
- [Factsheet sexuality and COPD](#)

-  Schedule at least 15 minutes during which you will not be interrupted.
-  The initial conversation should take place without the partner present.
-  Do not sit facing the individual. If possible, sit at a 45° angle at eye level.
-  Do not carry out other tasks at the same time. Focus and pay full attention.
-  Ensure you have the 'Holistic understanding of individuals with COPD' summary and the 'Visual language of sexuality' leaflet to hand.

## Getting started:

Ask the opening question (e.g. after outlining the separate elements using the [Holistic understanding of individuals with COPD](#) summary leaflet).

### IMPORTANT!

It is important to WAIT and LISTEN. Giving the individual time to speak and listening actively will encourage communication.

Plan B

If it is still difficult to establish a dialogue, it may help to define the word 'sexuality' by means of visual language.

"It is not easy to find the words to cover the broad spectrum of what we mean by 'sexuality'. May I show you some different ways in which sexuality can be understood as the expression and manifestation of intimacy and care rather than simply as the physical act?"

Use the [Visual language of sexuality](#) leaflet to explore and identify individual perceptions/needs and the discrepancy between their current and desired sex life.

*The aim is to understand which of the 4 levels best describes the individual's current situation. This understanding is vital for a targeted, person-centred approach. The extent of limitation and motivation is recorded using a scale of 0-10.*

# COSY COPD and Sexuality

## Key question

"Do you think there is a link between COPD and the limitations you experience in your sex life?"

If the answer is yes, level 1 is the relevant level. Record the extent of the limitation using the scale 0-10 and, if the level of motivation based on the traffic-light system is 7 or above, instigate a more in-depth discussion immediately.

If the individual **hesitates** or answers with an outright **no**:

"At present, COPD is NOT the main reason for the limitations experienced in your sex life."



### REMEMBER!

It is important to WAIT and LISTEN. Giving the individual time to speak and listening actively will encourage communication.

"It is also possible that there are reasons other than COPD, such as other physical limitations, external stress factors or even your self-image."

## Show the 4 levels on the [COSY: communication leaflet, page 1](#)

If the degree of limitation experienced by the individual is 4 or above, record the extent of their motivation to change and/or give them the opportunity to distance themselves from the topic of sexuality. Accept their decision and give them the option to revisit the topic again at a later date.

"The levels shown here do not currently relate to you and/or you do not wish to take this further at this time. Do you agree that we should move away from the topic of sexuality for now/for today?"

*Your own notes*



# COSY coPD and Sexuality

## Recommended approach for level 2, 3 and 4 limitations

-  Active listening, let the individual speak
-  Establish the degree of limitation and motivation to change the situation
-  If the degree of limitation experienced by the individual is 4 or above, record their motivation to change on a scale of 0-10 next to the relevant level.

### IMPORTANT!

It is important that you evaluate your own skills accurately and realistically.

Act in accordance with your professional expertise.

Triage/refer/collaborate with other providers and appropriate specialists (see network list on page 5).

## Level 2 / General physical limitations

e.g. musculoskeletal pain, decompensated cardio-vascular disease, incontinence.

Also address sexual limitations, such as erectile dysfunction, pain during or after sex, arousal issues for women, orgasm issues, lack of interest.

## Level 3 / External stress factors

Stress in the individual's personal life and/or workplace, financial problems, fear and worries.

## Level 4 / Self-image

Attractiveness, shame, inhibitions, taboos around the body and physicality (upbringing, religion, culture, defence mechanism against negative experiences).

*Your own notes*

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# COSY coPD and Sexuality

## National associations and directories

### Swiss Society of Sexology

[www.swissexology.com](http://www.swissexology.com)

The Swiss Society of Sexology is a professional association whose objectives follow the concept of 'sexual health' developed by the WHO.

### Sexuelle Gesundheit Schweiz

[www.sante-sexuelle.ch/beratungsstellen](http://www.sante-sexuelle.ch/beratungsstellen)

Sexuelle Gesundheit Schweiz (Sexual Health Switzerland) is the Swiss umbrella organisation for sexual health advisory services providing counselling and education, and their professional associations. The organisation's website has a directory of advisory services in Switzerland and results can be filtered for 'sex'. The majority of services are free.

### Schweizerischer Psychologenverband Klinischer Sexologen (SPVKS)

[www.aspsc-spvks.ch](http://www.aspsc-spvks.ch)

The SPVKS (Swiss Psychological Society of Clinical Sexologists) is committed to the promotion of responsible practice within clinical sexology based on expertise, patient needs, ethical standards and regulatory frameworks. Collaboration with doctors, couples therapists, physiotherapists and other specialists, as well as sharing expert opinion relating to the interdisciplinary nature of clinical sexology.

List of clinical sexologists recognised and validated by the SPVKS.

### Fachverband sexuelle Gesundheit in Beratung und Bildung (faseg)

[www.faseg.ch](http://www.faseg.ch)

The faseg (Association of Sexual Health in Counselling and Education) is the Swiss-German association for professionals working within pregnancy counselling, sexual counselling, family planning and sex education.

The professional association aims to promote and enhance sexual health counselling and education in everyday practice. [www.artcoss.ch](http://www.artcoss.ch) is its equivalent in French-speaking Switzerland.

### Zurich Institute for Clinical Sexology & Sexual Therapy ZISS

[www.ziss.ch](http://www.ziss.ch)

The Zurich Institute for Clinical Sexology & Sexual Therapy ZISS and ZiSMed share the same premises. While ZiSMed is dedicated to clinical work, ZISS offers training and qualifications for professionals in Switzerland and abroad, alongside sexual therapies and workshops for interested parties. The theoretical basis is the 'sexocorporal' approach.

### Institut für Sexualpädagogik und Sexualtherapie (ISP)

[www.isp-zuerich.ch](http://www.isp-zuerich.ch)

The mission of the ISP (Institute for Sex Education and Sexual Therapy) is to teach people more about sex and sexuality. To this end, the Institute has launched Switzerland's first master's degree in Sexology. The Institute addresses issues relating to sex education, sexual therapy and general themes related to sexology in general. In line with the 'sexocorporal' approach, the body is incorporated into the communication of these topics.

January 2021

# COSY coPD and Sexuality

## Selected clinical services

### Zurich

#### 8004

Lic.phil. Ursina Brun del Re

Federal certified psychotherapist MAS, ZISS sexologist, EFT couples therapist (emotion-focused therapy)

[www.ausbalanciert.ch](http://www.ausbalanciert.ch)

Approach: Sexual therapy that addresses your individual concerns or project and fully evaluates your sex life. Sex and sexual capability are learnt, and sexual problems are often related to limits in the individual's previous sexual experiences.

#### 8006

Dr Andrea Burri

Psycho-sexologist, sexual and couples counselling and innovative sexual research

[www.iscss21.com](http://www.iscss21.com)

Approach: Diagnosis and counselling for sexual and relationship problems.

Services for men, women and couples of all ages. We work together to help you rediscover a fulfilling sex life and relationship, irrespective of your lifestyle or type of relationship.

Counselling available in German and English.

#### 8032

Dr Helke Bruchhaus

Specialist in psychiatry and psychotherapy FMH

[www.helkebruchhaus.ch](http://www.helkebruchhaus.ch)

Approach: Couples and sexual therapist. Specialising in relationship issues, couples therapy and sexual therapy.

#### 8032 and 8057

Ben Kneubühler

Federal certified psychotherapist (Specialist psychologist in psychotherapy FSP)

[www.der-psychologe.ch](http://www.der-psychologe.ch)

Approach 1: Sexual therapy: Diagnosis, counselling and therapy for sexual problems. Services for men, women and couples of all ages. Treatment is predominantly based on cognitive behavioural therapy. Also works with the 'sexocorporal' approach. In the sexocorporal approach, critical importance is attached to the physical, in addition to thoughts and emotions.

Approach 2: Couples workshops. The 'Hold Me Tight' approach is based on emotion-focused therapy (EFT).

[www.holdmetight.ch](http://www.holdmetight.ch)

# COSY coPD and Sexuality

8032

ZiSMed

The Center for Interdisciplinary Sexology and Medicine

[www.zismed.ch](http://www.zismed.ch)

Approach: A diverse range of professionals works at ZiSMed, including doctors, complementary medical specialists, sexologists and psychologists. These varied and complementary disciplines combine to address the complexities of the human body and the human experience.

8091

Dr Eliane Sarasin

Gynaecologist, specialist in sexual medicine, epidemiologist

SexMed clinic at the Clinic for Reproductive Endocrinology at the University Hospital of Zurich

Breast Centre Zurich and Swiss Breast Care

[www.repro-endo.usz.ch/fachwissen/seiten/sexuelle-stoerung.aspx](http://www.repro-endo.usz.ch/fachwissen/seiten/sexuelle-stoerung.aspx)

Approach: At the sexual medicine clinic, individuals and couples experiencing sexual dysfunction and sexual dysfunction related to physical illness have the opportunity to receive an assessment and advice.

8706 Meilen

Dr Sebastian Haas

FMH specialist in psychiatry and psychotherapy

Clinic for Psychiatry, Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics, Hohenegg;

[www.hohenegg.ch](http://www.hohenegg.ch)

Approach: Restoring and maintaining mental health

## Bern

3000

Ben Kneubühler

Federal certified psychotherapist (Specialist psychologist in psychotherapy FSP)

Approach: Couples workshops. The 'Hold Me Tight' approach is based on emotion-focused therapy (EFT).

[www.holdmetight.ch](http://www.holdmetight.ch)

3,010

Chiara Marti

Clinical sexology clinic

University Clinic for Urology, Inselspital (Bern University Hospital), Bern

[www.urologie.insel.ch](http://www.urologie.insel.ch)

# COSY coPD and Sexuality

3011

Sybille Stahlberg

Sexologist and system therapist

System and sexual therapy practice

[www.sybillestahlberg.ch](http://www.sybillestahlberg.ch)

Approach: A holistic view of the individual incorporating all their sexual experience, capabilities and resources. Support and guidance during personal processes of change. The aim is growing contentment and an enjoyable sex life.

3013

Fabienne Zay

[www.sexualitaeten.ch](http://www.sexualitaeten.ch)

Approach: Sexual expression epitomises individual experience.

Providing advice and knowledge through courses and presentations around all aspects of sex and sexuality.

## Lucerne

6004

Ben Kneubühler

Federal certified psychotherapist (Specialist psychologist in psychotherapy FSP)

Approach: Couples workshops. The 'Hold Me Tight' approach is based on emotion-focused therapy (EFT).

[www.holdmetight.ch](http://www.holdmetight.ch)

January 2021

### Contact:

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We would like to thank: AstraZeneca, GlaxoSmithKline, Novartis, Lungenliga Schweiz and Verein LUNGE ZÜRICH