Kessler Foundation Hosts Conference on Sexuality and Relationships after Spinal Cord Injury

A one-day conference for people with spinal cord injury and their loved ones was followed by a half-day workshop for spinal cord injury professionals.

EAST HANOVER, N.J. (PRWEB) July 10, 2019 -- A two-day conference held at the Wilshire Grand Hotel in West Orange, NJ on June 21 and 22, 2019, focused on issues related to sexuality and relationships after spinal cord injury. A one-day conference for people with spinal cord injury and their loved ones was followed by a half-day workshop for spinal cord injury professionals.

Jeanne Zanca, PhD, MPT, senior research scientist at the Center for Spinal Cord Injury Research at Kessler Foundation, chaired the event, which was hosted by the federally funded Northern New Jersey Spinal Cord Injury System, a collaborative project of Kessler Foundation and Kessler Institute for Rehabilitation in West Orange, NJ, and University Hospital in Newark, NJ.

“Spinal cord injury affects sexual functioning, often raising concerns about relationships, having children, and participating fully in family and community life,” explained Dr. Zanca. “Education plays a vital role in helping people with spinal cord injury nurture existing relationships and cultivate new ones,” she added. “Through this conference, we aim to improve professional support in this area,” she explained, “and provide people with spinal cord injury and their loved ones with the knowledge and skills needed to strengthen personal connections and manage the inevitable challenges that arise while adapting to life after spinal cord injury.”

Conference topics included sexuality and intimacy, dating and relationships, family life, caregiving, and other issues relevant to cultivating healthy and fulfilling relationships. The program featured panel discussions by individuals and their loved ones, and presentations by experts in sexuality, counseling, occupational therapy, and caregiving. Listen to podcasts from the conference.

Keynote speaker, Mitchell Tepper, PhD, MPH, AASECT Certified Sexuality Educator and Counselor, shared how to regain a satisfying intimate life after SCI through trust, safety, connectedness, creativity, adaptability, and humor in "Stop, Focus, and Connect: An Introduction to the Formula for Creating or Strengthening Intimate Relationships."

Lauren A. Varriale, MS, OTR/L, an occupational therapist with Northwell Health Rehabilitation Network, gave practical advice on ways to achieve safe and satisfying sex in her talk, “Enabling Sexuality: Positioning and Assistive Technology.”

Carol Gill, MD, MSCS, VHA-CM, and Joyce Williams, LCSW, MSCS, from the VA New Jersey Healthcare System, provided their perspective on strategies for preserving healthy relationships during “Love and Caregiving,” with an emphasis on the challenges that arise when a partner also has caregiving responsibilities.

Panelists shared their own experiences with adapting to relationships after spinal cord injury in a discussion moderated by Trevor Dyson-Hudson, MD, director of the Center for Spinal Cord Research at Kessler Foundation, “Dating and Long-term Relationships after Spinal Cord Injury.” Having children and parenting was the focus of the panel on “Family Life: A Panel Discussion,” moderated by Scott Chesney, motivational speaker. Former patients at Kessler Institute talked about seeking information during their rehabilitation, and
the lessons they learned about sexuality in, “Our Perspective: Panel Discussion with People with SCI and their Partners.”

Participating in the conference’s resource fair were the Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation, Kessler Foundation, Hollister, Inc., Bayada Home Health Care, and ABC Medical. Featured resources included Fact Sheets from the SCI Model System in English and Spanish, and the Clinical Practice Guideline: Sexuality and Reproductive Health in Adults with Spinal Cord Injury.

These events were supported in part by Grant # 842 from the Paralyzed Veterans of America Education Foundation. Additional support was provided by Kessler Foundation, Kessler Institute for Rehabilitation, the National Institute for Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR), United Spinal Association, Hollister, Inc., Bayada Home Health Care, and ABC Medical. The Northern New Jersey Spinal Cord Injury System is supported by NIDILRR (grant #90S15026).

Interested in Kessler Foundation research? Visit our website to explore available studies in spinal cord injury and other disabling conditions.

About the Center for Spinal Cord Injury Research at Kessler Foundation

Kessler Foundation is one of the most active centers for spinal cord injury research in the country. Under the leadership of Trevor Dyson-Hudson, MD, and Steven Kirshblum, MD, scientists conduct investigator-initiated and industry-sponsored studies and clinical trials in spinal cord injury research and related outcomes and assessment research. Drs. Dyson-Hudson and Kirshblum co-direct the Northern New Jersey Spinal Cord Injury System, one of 14 federally funded model systems in the nation, which provides a continuum of care, research, and outreach aimed at improving the lives of people with SCI. Research funding sources include the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living & Rehabilitation Research, National Institutes of Health, U.S. Department of Defense, the Veterans Administration, the Craig H. Neilsen Foundation, New Jersey Commission for Spinal Cord Research, Dervner Foundation, and Kessler Foundation. Foundation scientists have faculty appointments at Rutgers University; selected researchers are affiliated faculty at NJIT.

About Kessler Foundation

Kessler Foundation, a major nonprofit organization in the field of disability, is a global leader in rehabilitation research that seeks to improve cognition, mobility and long-term outcomes, including employment, for people with neurological disabilities caused by diseases and injuries of the brain and spinal cord. Kessler Foundation leads the nation in funding innovative programs that expand opportunities for employment for people with disabilities. For more information, visit KesslerFoundation.org.

Call for Research Volunteers

Kessler Foundation is dedicated to changing the lives of people with disabilities and debilitating health conditions through innovative rehabilitation research. By participating in our studies, you help our researchers understand the impact of neurological and physical disabilities on cognition, mobility, quality of life, and employment. Through your time and commitment to our studies, we expand our research and develop effective interventions and potential treatments. Learn more.

Press Contacts
If you have any questions regarding information in these press releases please contact the company listed in the press release. Our complete disclaimer appears here - PRWeb ebooks - Another online visibility tool from PRWeb
Contact Information
Rob Gerth
Kessler Foundation
http://KesslerFoundation.org
973-323-3675

Online Web 2.0 Version
You can read the online version of this press release here.