



HOW TO talk with patients about erectile dysfunction (ED)

Before you open a discussion about erectile dysfunction with your patient, take care of your own discomfort with the topic. Breathe slowly to calm your nerves and remind yourself that your patient is looking to you for compassion and support. Talking about ED can be difficult for most people. Your patients will take their cue from you — if you are relaxed, casual and comfortable, they are more likely to be relaxed as well.

When a patient opens up about his ED, appreciate how difficult this is for him to discuss. Listen as compassionately as possible. Put down your electronics, turn towards him and have good eye contact to show that you care.

Men who have ED tend to feel disappointed, frustrated, alone and emotionally exhausted. Listen and be supportive. Let your patients know that their feelings of frustration with ED are common. More than 39 million men in the United States have this problem.¹ If the patient is uncomfortable talking about ED, offer to communicate their needs and concerns to their doctors or to members of their medical team.

Patients will take their cue from you

1

You have to be **COMFORTABLE** with the topic before you can talk to someone else

2

Be relaxed, casual, comfortable, **LISTEN AND BE SUPPORTIVE**

3

UNDERSTAND that any man with ED is most likely drowning in disappointment, frustrated, alone and exhausted

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It is not unusual for men to occasionally have difficulty with their erections. It is time to seek assistance when the problem occurs often or causes a great amount of distress for them or their partners.

There can be many physical issues, such as poorly controlled diabetes, that promote the development of ED. Emotional factors, such as stress, anxiety, guilt, depression and low self-esteem can also cause ED to develop. Examples of how to open up the discussion:

Include: ED in the list of diabetes complications you recite. Pause after saying it to give the patient time to react



Mention: "Poorly controlled diabetes can cause problems in the bedroom. Has that ever happened to you?"

Ask: "Has having diabetes affected your romantic relationship in any way?"



Mention: The link: "Diabetes, heart disease and problems with erections are all linked. Changes with your erections can be a warning sign for serious heart concerns. Have you experienced changes with your erections?"

When patients open up about having ED, help them identify a "silver lining" about their concerns. For example, mention that because they chose to discuss their ED today, they can now get help. You can also suggest that their partner's complaints about their sex life can be a sign of how much they value it and you.

Don't rush the discussion. If your patients become emotional while discussing their ED, let them know that you appreciate how difficult it is to talk about. Then stay quiet and attentive. Allow them to gather their thoughts and continue the conversation when they feel ready.

Keep the names of a few caring, competent mental health professionals handy and share them with patients with ED. Erection problems can be caused by psychological issues and can greatly impact a man's self-esteem and relationships.

There is hope...

...every man should be able to hear those words, there are many treatment options. Tell your patient they don't have to live like this and they don't have to give up their sex life.

You don't have to be an expert in ED issues to offer help. Be a resource for reliable information. If your patients have had little success with pills, vacuum pumps and other ED treatment options, they might be excellent candidates for a penile implant. Refer them to a prosthetic urologist who routinely treats men with sexual dysfunction and performs penile implant procedures.

Send your patients to EDCure.org to learn more about ED treatment options, to watch real patients' stories and to find an ED Specialist.

EDCure.org is a website sponsored by Boston Scientific.

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Boston Scientific Corporation
300 Boston Scientific Way
Marlborough, MA 01752-1234
www.BostonScientific.com

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