

KNOWING YOUR PROVIDER

Most healthcare providers have had no training on your kinky lifestyle

While many healthcare providers are caring and open-minded people, very few are kink aware. Medical schools provide limited training on sexuality in general, let alone alternative ones.

You may be lucky enough to locate an openly kink-friendly clinician on the Kink Aware Professionals website at ncsfreedom.org.

However, for most people, your best bet is to look for a competent clinician with whom you feel comfortable, and to build a successful relationship with that person.

You have more power than you might think!

Once you have selected a possible healthcare provider, there are many things you can do to make the relationship work.

This pamphlet should provide you with some useful tips on how to be a savvy and empowered patient who can get the most out of your healthcare.

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www.tashra.org

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Visit us at FetLife at
<https://fetlife.com/users/2294280>

Resources for Kinky Patients:

Moser, C. Health Care Without Shame.
An excellent and practical book full of information for clinicians. *Available at Amazon.com*

Kink Aware Professionals

An online directory of medical, mental health, and legal professionals. Provided by the National Coalition for Sexual Freedom at ncsfreedom.org

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THE KINKSTERS' GUIDE TO BETTER HEALTHCARE

TASHRA The
Alternative
Sexualities
Health Research
Alliance
ADDRESSING THE
HEALTHCARE NEEDS
OF SEXUAL OUTSIDERS

FINDING THE RIGHT HEALTHCARE PROVIDER FOR YOU

Knowing what you want.

What is more important to you? A clinician who spends a lot of time with you, but is always running late, or someone who is brief, but on time? Do you need someone who is an expert on your specific medical condition, or is it more important that they have appointments in the evenings or on weekends?

Making a choice

Your best healthcare practitioner may not be someone who has a lot of experience with sexuality or kink. Sometimes the right choice is simply an attentive and respectful provider who is open-minded and willing to learn. Your provider should be able to foster a trusting relationship and should be someone you feel comfortable sharing with.

Being a willing teacher

There is no getting around the fact that will have to educate your provider about your specific kink behaviors and relationships - even a kink-friendly provider may not understand exactly what you mean by certain terms.

You can be most effective if you embrace this reality and take the time to explain things in a straightforward way. Remember that even common words such as “kink,” “BDSM,” and “flogging” may be unfamiliar and need a brief explanation. The more honest and open you are, the more quickly you can determine if your provider is a good fit for you and begin building trust.

WHAT YOUR CLINICIAN NEEDS TO KNOW ABOUT YOU

Some things are no-one’s business... but others affect your healthcare a great deal.

What You Do: Your healthcare provider needs to know about any activities which may result in physical or emotional harm, or pregnancy.

Physical:

- o Explain the types of play you engage in, any common bruises, marks or injuries you may get, and whether or not you are OK with the physical consequences of your play.

- o Let your provider know about the number and gender of your sexual partners, so s/he can offer you appropriate HIV/STI screening and family planning services.

Emotional:

- o Discuss consent with your provider. Your clinician is *legally obliged* to report abuse and will naturally be on the lookout for it. Reassure your provider that what you do is consensual and gives you pleasure - but let them know *right* away if it is not, or you have concerns.

Who You Are: This is optional, but you might want to share the identities you use for yourself, and describe any communities you are a part of.

Your Intimate Relationships: Many people find it important to explain their family structure to their provider - especially if it is non-traditional. For example, if you are married *and* in a 24/7 Master/slave dynamic with another partner, you may need to inform your provider about the additional adult(s) who affect your health decisions so they can incorporate these people into your care plan.

- **First visit**—your provider needs to take your entire medical history. S/he will be asking lots of questions and it is important that you dedicate this time to provide the information and establish a solid relationship with your new provider.
- **Prioritize**—know why you are there. This will help you communicate your needs and enable you practitioner triage your care. This includes arriving prepared and organized (such as having the list and dosages of your current medications handy).
- **Be realistic**—anyone with experience going to the doctor’s office knows that time constraint is a major issue in healthcare. It is likely that your doctor will only have 15 minutes with you. Focusing on one or two specific problems will allow you to make the most out of your visit.
- **Respect limits**—both your own and your providers’. This includes not asking your provider to bend any rules (such as insurance restrictions) for you. On the flip side, if a provider is unable or unwilling to put aside a bias about your lifestyle, thank them for their time and seek another clinician.