# Lets talk about sex (transcript)

## Host:

Hello this is Angus Fowler and you are listening to The Purple Orange Podcast.

We cover issues-

*(quote from past episode) “if we don’t have the straw, we can’t drink the drink.”*

And first-person stories that matter to the disability community-

*(quote from past episode) “It’s about learning what we can do, rather than what other people think we can or can’t do.”*

In this episode we’ll be talking to Christine Priest all about-

(Montaged words from Christine) “Sex, sex, sex, sex.”

Producer Carey Scheer has the story.

## Narration:

**CHRISTINE PRIEST THINKS WE SHOULD TALK ABOUT SEX MORE OFTEN- ESPECIALLY IN THE DISABILITY COMMUNITY, WHERE IT CAN BE TREATED LIKE IT DOESN’T EXIST.**

**SILENCE ABOUT SEX HAS CAUSED CHRISTINE A LOT OF ANGUISH.**

## Christine:

I went through suicidal thoughts, depression, anxiety. I had a nervous breakdown because of it. All around sex. And I look back at it, I am not ashamed of it. If I can just get that one person to say, that’s me too. Maybe I can just get some help having sex, and looking after my own sexual health care.

## Narration:

**AND SO CHRISTINE CHOSE TO SHARE HER STORY OF OVERCOMING STIGMA AND ASSUMPTIONS, AND LEARNING TO EMBRACE HERSELF AS A SEXUAL BEING.**

**WE SAT DOWN IN THE BOTANIC GARDENS TO TALK ABOUT SEX. JUST A NOTE ON THE RECORDING, WHILE IT’S SUITING THAT WE SAT AMONGST THE BIRDS AND THE BEES FOR THIS TOPIC, IT DOESN’T MAKE FOR THE QUIETEST BACKGROUND.**

**THIS PURPLE ORANGE PODCAST DOES COME WITH A TRIGGER WARNING, WE COVER INTIMATE GROUND, AND DISCUSS TOPICS THAT MAY BE DISTRESSING.**

## Christine:

I didn't lose my virginity until about 5 years ago, and I’m now 40.

Um, I was very like insecure, I didn’t love myself. I hated myself. Cause I never thought I’d have sex. Never thought I’d experience an orgasm.

Carey*:*

*And why didn’t you feel those things were an option for you?*

## Christine:

Because the incontinence I held back. Cause I was very embarrassed. I felt really alone.

Carey:

*Did you talk to medical professionals about your desire to have sex?*

## Christine:

Never. I kept it real bottled up, until I finally cracked.

Carey:

*Why didn’t you talk to anyone before medical about it?*

## Christine:

It’s embarrassing for us.

It is not spoken about with people with disability.

The assumptions are a huge thing. We got to smash through those assumptions.

It comes from the medical model of disability, where we need to be fixed, we don't have no desire for sex, we shouldn't engage in having kids, we shouldn’t be having same sex relationships, or be transgender, or see sex workers, because you know we have movement issues.

## Narration:

**WHEN CHRISTINE WAS AT HER LOWEST, A DOCTOR DID WHAT SEEMED MIRACULOUS TO HER. HE BROKE THE SILENCE ON SEX.**

## Christine:

He just treated me like another person. He treated me like a person! He forgot about the disability.

## Narration:

**THIS WAS THE TURNING POINT FOR HER. HE OPENED THE GATE FOR HER TO TALK ABOUT SEX AND HER FEARS AROUND INCONTINENCE.**

## Christine:

He goes to me, there are lots of people with a colostomy bag that have sex. And that was like a ding-dong moment in my brain. Well if I have one of those too, I could have sex.

## Narration:

**SHE MADE THE DECISION RIGHT THEN AND THERE TO GET A COLOSTOMY.**

## Christine:

Oh my god. It was the best decision that I ever done. I think it’s opened doorways for me you know. My self-esteem is out there. I can go out. Have a good time. Not worry about it, you know.

## Narration:

**IT GOT RID OF THE BIGGEST WORRY – BUT THERE WERE STILL OTHER WORRIES.**

## Christine:

I have spina bifida, and you have paralysis, would I be able to feel anything?

What would sex really feel like for a person like me? Would I actually be fulfilled?

## Narration:

**SHE STILL DIDN’T FEEL ABLE TO TALK ABOUT THESE CONCERNS. BUT SHE WAS DETERMINED TO FIND OUT. AND SHE DIDN’T HAVE TO WAIT LONG.**

## Christine:

I was out shopping in a supermarket, there was this other guy, he kept checking me out, and you know I introduced myself, he introduced himself, we joined on Facebook at the moment

That weekend I went to his place,

We just jumped into

And we had sex

That’s all I wanted. To feel what it was like to have sex. Because I could. Cause I have a colostomy.

Carey:

*Did you guys have a conversation about it, when did you tell him you had a colostomy?*

## Christine:

He did not find out until I was naked. He did not know. No. And he wasn’t ashamed of it or anything. He was very open about it. It is not an identity. It is just another thing on your body – who cares.

## Narration:

**AND HER FEARS ABOUT BEING FULFILLED- SHE NEEDN’T HAVE WORRIED.**

I can’t say what is the normal experience cause everyone experiences sex differently, but for me it was great, I could feel things, I experienced an orgasm which was euphoric. We got no sleep that day mind you. Hahaha.

Carey:

*How did you start to change the way you felt about yourself after having sex?*

I started to like myself a lot more. You know. I love myself now. I am not saying that in a stuck up way, but I really like who I am. The confidence went skyrocketing. That’s how deprived I was of my sexual health.

## Narration:

**CONSIDERING HOW IMPORTANT SEX WAS FOR HER OWN MENTAL HEALTH, I WONDERED IF SHE THOUGHT NDIS HAD A ROLE TO PLAY***.*

Carey:

Do you think that the NDIS should cover sexual services?

## Christine:

Definitely. I could not agree more. The NDIS should be providing anything to do with sex because it is part of your health and overall wellbeing.

Carey:

Sexual pleasure is that a human right?

## Christine:

Absolutely it is a human right. Just cause someone has no arms they might be able to be intellectually stimulated, or physically through massage or someone masturbating them. Sex is a human right. It should not be excluded in education. By the courts system, by health professionals, nobody. That is your individual right as a person and you should be empowered to have those rights.

Carey:

You know I’ve met so many people who were pulled out of sex ed.

Christine:

Yep it’s baffling. People with disability do have sex and we need the knowledge and education to protect ourselves.

Carey:

Because what do you think the impact of that would be on somebody?

Carey:

You are socially excluded from society, that’s what’s happening.

You are more at risk of getting hurt by somebody else, because she’s vulnerable.

You are not important enough to be included in sex ed. You are not a human being. You are just another animal.

You are disadvantaged, really disadvantaged and it shouldn’t happen. Not in this day and age. Come on.

If you don’t have the education. It puts you at a higher risk of mental health, sexual, sexual diseases, sexual assault because some guy thinks she’s vulnerable.

## Narration:

**CHRISTINE IS NOW ON A MISSION TO CREATE A WORLD WHERE ALL PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY FEEL SAFE AND EMPOWERED TO TALK ABOUT SEX. SHE’S FUELLED BY HER OWN PAST HISTORY OF SUFFERING IN SILENCE.**

## Christine:

I didn’t have that person to talk about anything sexually related. But I want to become that person you can do that with. And I am interested in the sexual health side of disability, and working with health professionals, and officers of the court, police officers, and you know help to communicate better with people disabilities and have this community where everyone feels safe talking about sex. You know that is my calling in life.

## Narration:

**CHRISTINE IS CURRENTLY STUDYING A GRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN DISABILITY WITH PLANS TO DO A RESEARCH DEGREE ON SEXUAL HEALTH AND DISABILITY. I THINK AND HOPE WE WILL BE HEARING MUCH MORE FROM CHRISTINE.**

## HOST

So what do you think. Do we need to talk about sex more often? Were you included or excluded in sex ed? Do you feel empowered to advocate for your needs.

Let us know your thoughts on this episode on the Purple Orange Facebook page. Please note, we can not offer any therapeutic services. If you are feeling distressed by any topics covered in this podcast please contact Lifeline on 13 11 14.

We thank Christine Priest for sharing her experiences.

You can get in touch with us at [admin@purpleorange.org.au](mailto:admin@purpleorange.org.au). Phone 08 8373 8388. Or visit our website at [www.purpleorange.org.au](http://www.purpleorange.org.au)