

Privacy and intimacy - Hono ā-tinana

If you are in a relationship, you and your partner may be working through some big feelings together, but this doesn't mean you can't enjoy physical intimacy, especially if it brings you comfort and pleasure.

Physical intimacy is about sharing close, physical contact with someone you care about. It's a way of showing affection and feeling connected to another person.

As your health changes, it's important to find ways to maintain that physical closeness, adapting together to ensure that your bond remains strong and comforting.

Stay physically connected

Touching, cuddling up together, or having your partner massage or care for you physically can bring great comfort. Having a space where you can be alone and connect without interruptions is key. Friends, whānau, or medical staff might forget that you still have physical and intimate needs and as awkward as it may seem, you may have to remind them.

When your health changes, your needs can too

Expect things to sometimes change daily or weekly and be open to discussing these changes with your partner. If you are in pain or experiencing fatigue, you may find that it affects your ability to enjoy or have energy for intimacy. If you are finding the shift in your relationship challenging, it may help to discuss these challenges with a member of your support team or a counsellor.



Consider the role you want your partner to have in your care

If your healthcare team are assuming your partner is the best person to support you with daily care like showering or getting dressed, and this is not what you want, be honest. Your team can then help you explore other options for home or hospital help, leaving you free to continue with the relationship you want to have with your loved one.

Tip

If you have other people coming in and out of your room, put a 'do not disturb' room sign on your door and let your healthcare team or whānau know that you don't want to be interrupted.

