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Press release

## **GLOBAL FESTIVAL ON LOVE, SEX AND DISABILITY**

The world's first virtual festival of love, sex, and intimacy for disabled people consisting of 29 sessions and 50 presenters is taking place online in October 15 - 19.

The aim is to challenge the belief that pleasurable sensations, orgasms and ecstatic states don't figure for people with physical disabilities.

Ever wondered what is the best sex toy if you're in a wheelchair or how to discuss dating, love and sex education if your child has a disability? The global gathering, called Love Abilities, is being chaired by Singapore-based relationship counsellor and clinical sexologist Dr. Martha Tara Lee and Michelle Donald, a psychosexual expert in the UK who specialises in helping people with their sex lives after a spinal cord injury.

While it is often a subject that people are inhibited from discussing, the 5-day festival is aimed at everyone including disabled people, carers and health care professionals such as physios, counsellors and GPs.

So far, the festival's packed agenda features 29 engaging and interactive sessions with 50 presenters, including renowned US-based experts Barry Komusaruk and Dr Marcalee Alexander, spans 6 countries.

Organiser, Dr. Martha Tara Lee, said: "Part of the problem is a lack of positive role models, so there's lots of sexy able-bodied people featured in the media but not disabled. Add in inhibitions and lack of positive conversation and the whole subject becomes difficult to talk about. We're going to bring fun, imagination – a bit of science – and lots of practical tips, techniques and tools so everyone enjoys sex and is able to express their sexuality with confidence and ease."

Co-chair Michelle Donald, who's worked at a range of spinal injury centres including the world-famous Stoke Mandeville, added: "We're going to literally make the earth move – move on perceptions, misconceptions and smash the idea that having a disability is the end of intimacy. I had a motorbike accident when I was 27 which brought me a new way of living in a wheelchair. Able-bodied people have some very strange ideas of what we can and cannot do so a global festival is a great way for people to learn from each other and ask each other questions."

Program consultant Dr. Mitchell Tepper adds: "To my knowledge, the Love Abilities festival is the first of its kind, to bring people with disabilities and their allies together from all over the world to share their sexual expertise and experiences with others who have disabilities, their loved ones, and health care professionals."

The festival runs online with a series of Zoom conferences from 15-19 October with tickets available from [www.loveabilities.org](http://www.loveabilities.org). Nobody will be turned away for lack of funds.

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