

INTERSEX/DIVERSITY OF SEXUAL DEVELOPMENT (DSD)

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Bao is a 50-year-old woman who comes to see you because she is concerned about her clitoris. She says she has a new partner who commented on its size and she notes in your interview that it has always been somewhat painful and scarred. She recalls several visits to the hospital in childhood for surgery 'down there', but is not sure precisely what it was about. She does remember a great deal of secrecy at the time and still feels somewhat ashamed about it.

Think about:

- How might Bao's sense of shame be exacerbated by things you might do?
- Are you thinking of a (further) surgical intervention or a more psychological one? Is your training influencing your decision making process or are you endeavouring to think with the client?
- What language might you use to reassure Bao?
- How would you proceed?

It is most likely that further investigation would be necessary for a way forward to be determined. Perhaps some form of surgery is necessary – there may be a health issue and/or Bao may wish to determine the cosmetic appearance of her body. These things would need to be investigated with the assistance of the relevant specialists. Especial care should be taken not to further traumatise Bao in her communication with professionals, and questions about her identity should not be explored unless indicated specifically. Being worthy of trust and having space for such conversations is always very important.