

You Should be Dancing: Restoring the Rhythm of Intimacy

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Do We Need Connection with Others?

- **We are all hard wired for connection to others- it is not optional!**- Daniel Goleman, *Social Intelligence*
- **Hierarchy of Human Needs- Maslow**
- **Vulnerability is scary and we shield ourselves from hurtful emotions**
 - Brown, Brene. *The Gifts of Imperfection, Daring Greatly and Rising Strong*

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Demographics of Couples

- **US 2024 Divorce Stats, indicate 40-50% of first marriages and 60-67% of second marriages end in divorce.**
- **Those who remain together are sometimes unhappy**
- **A stable, happy marriage is a minority of marriages/couples**

<https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2024/10/marriage-and-divorce.html>
Abreu-Afonso, J., Ramos, M. M., Queiroz-Garcia, I., & Leal, I. (2022). How Couple's Relationship Lasts Over Time? A Model for Marital Satisfaction. *Psychological reports*, 125(3), 1601-1627. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00332941211000651>

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Goal of Couple's Therapy

- To create a more accepting and adaptive relationship based on the realities of each person
- Improve relationship and life satisfaction

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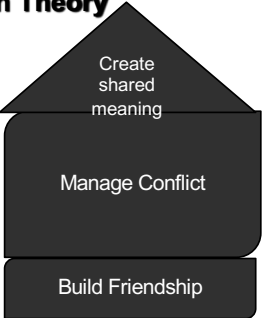
Evidenced Based Treatments for Couples

- **Non-behavioral approaches**
 - **Emotionally focused couple Therapy** (Sue Johnson)- focus on identifying and exploring emotional experiences to transform them and manage them
 - **Insight focused couple therapy**- reveal insight into each others experience
- **Behavioral approaches**
 - **Traditional behavioral couple therapy**
 - **Cognitive behavioral couple therapy**
 - **Integrative behavioral couple therapy**

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Build Your Sound House Relationship- Gottman Theory

- **Foundation- Build Friendship**
 - Build Love Maps
 - Share Fondness & admiration
 - Turn Towards
 - The Positive perspective
- **House- Manage Conflict**
- **Walls- Trust and Commitment**
- **Attic-Create Shared Meaning**



Davoodvandi, M., Navabi Nejad, S., & Farzad, V. (2018). Examining the Effectiveness of Gottman Couple Therapy on Improving Marital Adjustment and Couples' Intimacy. *Iranian Journal of psychiatry*, 13(2), 135–141. Birgane, C. A., Wastler, P. L., Freddie, A., & Sims, S. R. (2024). Gottman's sound relationship house and relational resilience through infertility for couples. *Journal of marital and family therapy*, 50(4), 933–952. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jmft.12776>

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Integrative Behavioral Couple Therapy (IBCT)

- Based on building acceptance and change as positive outcomes for therapy
- Explore behaviors and what thinking is behind them and the impact on the partner
- Three Therapeutic Methods of IBCT
 - Affective Change- compassionate discussion- empathetic joining
 - Cognitive Change- analytic discussion- Unified detachment- new perspective to fix the problem
 - Behavioral Change- practical discussion- concrete ways to improve things

Christensen, A., & Doss, B. D. (2017). Integrative Behavioral Couple Therapy. *Current opinion in psychology*, 13, 111–114. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2016.04.022> Jacobson, N.S. & Christensen, A. (1994). *Marriage Checkup: How to Save Your Marriage Before It's Too Late*. New York: HarperCollins.

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Sexuality & Intimacy

- Sexuality- intrinsic, multidimensional, dynamic characteristic that is individually and culturally defined & experienced. The sense of being male or female.
- Everyone is different and so sexual needs vary from person to person.
- Intimacy- "process by which two people attempt to move toward complete communication on all levels" -Hatfield, 1982, in Fisher & Stricker (Eds.), *Intimacy*

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Sexual Dysfunction

- Consistent impairment of a person's normal sexual interest, response and/or function.
- The persistent impairment of a couple's normal or usual patterns of sexual interest and/or response

– AFUD consensus conference, 1998 (Basson, et al, 2000)

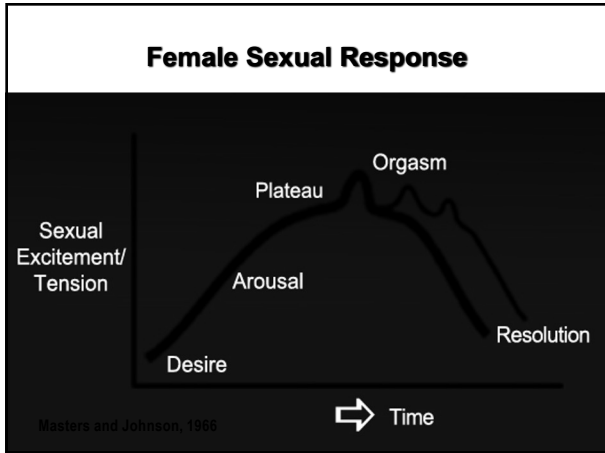
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Sexual Response Cycle

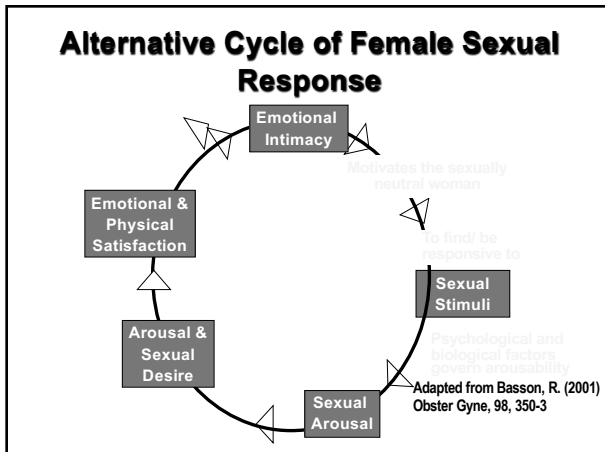
- Excitement
- Plateau
- Orgasm
- Resolution
- Male=avg. 2.8 minutes
- Female=avg. 13 minutes

– Masters & Johnson, 1966

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Classifications/Categories for Sexual Dysfunction

- Hypoactive Sexual Desire Dysfunction
- Sexual Arousal Dysfunction- ED in Men or PE, Lack of lubrication/atrophy in women
- Orgasmic Dysfunction
- Pain disorders- Dyspareunia (Deep or superficial), Genitourinary Syndrome of Menopause (GSM), Vulvodynia, Vaginismus

*Reed GM, Drescher J, Krueger RB, Atalla E, Cochran SD, First MB, Cohen-Kettenis PT, Arango-de Montis I, Parish SJ, Cottler S, Briken P, Saxena S. Disorders related to sexuality and gender identity in the ICD-11: revising the ICD-10 classification based on current scientific evidence, best clinical practices, and human rights considerations. World Psychiatry. 2016 Oct;15(3):205-221. doi: 10.1002/wps.20354. Erratum in: World Psychiatry. 2017 Jun;16(2):220. doi: 10.1002/wps.20433. PMID: 27717275; PMCID: PMC5032510.

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Erectile Dysfunction

- “The consistent or recurrent inability to attain and/or maintain a penile erection/rigidity sufficient for sexual performance/satisfaction.”

– Burnett, A.L. et al. (2018). Erectile dysfunction: AUA guideline 2018. <https://www.auanet.org/guidelines/male-sexual-dysfunction-erectile-dysfunction-2018>

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Expanded Thinking about Intimacy and Sex

- It is about pleasure
- There are many, many ways to experience sexual pleasure (don't limit you or your partner to only penetrative sex)
- The excitement comes from the anticipation and from the mystery of where intimacy will lead us today
- Intimacy is important

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What are the goals in terms of intimacy and sex?

- Intimacy is communication on all levels and connectedness
- If sex is about pleasure and connectedness there are many ways to achieve those goals
 - Men and women can both climax/orgasm without intercourse or penetration
 - There are many ways to enjoy affection, connection and pleasure
- Communication with partners is key and talking about sex doesn't come easily- practice helps!

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Oral Agents

INTERVENTION: MEDICAL TREATMENTS - Oral Therapies

PDE Type 5 inhibitors primary drug class - oral erectile dysfunction therapy

Sildenafil (Viagra) 25-100mg

Vardenafil (LeVitra) 5-20 mg; Staxyn 10 mg disintegrating tablet

Tadalafil (Cialis) 5-20 mg on demand and 2.5-5mg Daily

Avanafil (Stendra) 50-200mg

Drugs are potent, selective inhibitors of type 5 phosphodiesterase - improve erectile function by inhibiting breakdown of cyclic GMP - smooth muscle relaxation enhanced

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Sexual Dysfunction

INTERVENTION: Vacuum constriction device (VCD)

FDA approved for over the counter distribution - efficacy rates of 80%-90% reported

Apply negative pressure to flaccid penis, drawing venous blood into the penis, retained by elastic constriction band at penile base



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ED Treatment

INTERVENTION: Intracavernosal Injections

FDA-approved self-injections - alprostadil sterile powder (Caverject Impulse) and alprostadil alfadex (Edex)

Compounded formulas- bimix, trimix, & quad mix (contain combinations of prostaglandin, phentolamine, &/or papaverine- off label/non-FDA approved)

Injected at the base of the penis with a diabetic needle

Hatzimouratidis, K. et al. (2016). Pharmacotherapy for erectile dysfunction: Recommendations from the 4th International Consultation for Sexual Medicine [ICSM 2015]. *JSM*, 2016(13), 465-488. American Urological Association. (2005, June 2007). Management of Erectile Dysfunction. 3rd Edition. Retrieved October 15, 2012, 2012, from <http://www.auanet.org/content/guidelines-and-quality-care/clinical-guidelines.cfm?sub=ed>.

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Treatment for Vaginal Atrophy and Lack of Lubrication during Sex

- Clinical guidelines for atrophic vaginitis concluded that local estrogen replacement is the first choice to improve vaginal mucosal thickness, decrease vaginal pH and diminish vulvovaginal atrophy.
 - Johnston, S.L. et al. (2004). SOGC Joint Committee-Clinical Practice Gynaecology and Urogynaecology. The detection and management of vaginal atrophy. *Journal of Obstetrical Gynecologic Cancer*, 26, pp. 503-515.
- Vaginal rings, creams and tablets work equally well for local estrogen replacement-follow prescribing information
 - Suckling, J, Lethaby, A., and Kennedy, R. (2006). Local oestrogen for vaginal atrophy in postmenopausal women. *Cochrane Database Syst Rev* 18, CD001500.
- Variety of Non-hormonal Moisturizers and Lubricants Available

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Non-hormonal Moisturizers or Soothing Creams

- Neogyn Vulvar Soothing Cream- non-medicated cosmetic cream formulated with Cutaneous Lysate to sooth/comfort vulva; free of parabens, propylene glycol, color additives, fragrances, analgesics that can dull sensation. Applied BID for about 6-8 weeks.
- Coconut oil
- Vitamin E vaginal suppositories
- Replens, Luvena KY Liquibeads moisturizer
- Hyaluronic acid vaginal moisturizers
- NeuEve Natural Feminine Suppository-vaginal moisturizer and odor eliminator. Contains palm oil, beeswax, tapioca starch, inulin, fructos-oligosaccharides, soy lecithin, orange oil, tocopherols (vitamin E) and proprietary blend

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Desire Disorders Non Hormonal

- Rule out and treat underlying causes
- Psychotherapy/Psych referral for avoidance due to traumatic past experience
- **Simmering/Bibliotherapy**
 - Groljohann, Yvonne. (2001). Cognitive-behavioral Bibliotherapy for Sexual Dysfunctions in Heterosexual Couples: A Randomized Waiting-list Controlled Clinical Trial in the Netherlands. *Journal of Sex Research*, 38(1), 51-67
- **Sensate Focus- planned loveplay- series of progressive exercises with the goals of increasing willingness to be sexual, relaxation with sex/intimacy, increased sensuality. Individualized to couple**
 - Masters and Johnson, *Human Sexual Inadequacy*, 1979

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Resources for Patients

- <http://www.northshore.org/urological-health/patient-education/sexual-health-videos/>
- www.drjeffalbaugh.com
- www.drjeffsextalk.com
- <http://www.sexualhealthmatters.org>

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Key Points

- Sexual & intimacy are part of the human journey and connectedness and belonging are basic human needs
- Sexual & intimacy issues can be addressed successfully
- Don't underestimate the power of being fully present with the patient and acknowledging their issues

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