



Unleashing the Power of Sex in EFT
George Faller & Laurie Watson

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Building Confidence in working with Sex

1. Sex Education & Basic Physiology
2. Ongoing Assessment
3. Knowing how to work with sex in session
4. Integratively working with the Emotional & Sexual Cycles
5. Creating powerful sexual change events



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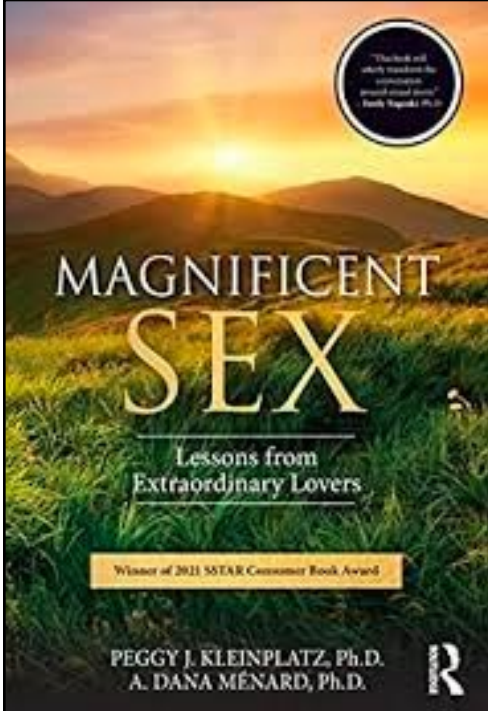


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Addressing the Sexual Cycle earlier in Treatment

Traditionally EFT addressed the sexual cycle in Stage 2 or 3, after the couple created secure attachment. THE assumption is secure attachment will take care of any sexual challenges. This is often true but not always. Besides what about those clients who need help with the sexual cycle to create secure attachment. Addressing the sexual cycle in stage 1 is important for not only de-escalation but using the triggers of the sexual cycle to get to the emotional cycle.

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Peggy Kleinplatz, Ph.D.

- “What kind of sex is worth wanting?”
- “If I had the kind of sex you’ve been having, I wouldn’t want it either.”
- “Nothing kills desire more than doing what works – relentlessly.”
- Silence and lack of engagement are the key features of bad sex – loneliness during sex is too common.

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Peggy Kleinplatz – Optimal Sexuality

8 Major Components

1. Being present, focused, embodied
2. Connection, alignment, merger
3. Deep sexual and erotic intimacy
4. Extraordinary communication and deep empathy
5. Exploration, interpersonal risk-taking, fun
6. Authenticity, genuineness, transparency
7. Vulnerability and surrender
8. Transcendence and transformation

2 Minor Components:

1. Intense physical sensation and orgasm
2. Lust, chemistry, desire, attraction

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THE DUAL CONTROL SYSTEM – Emily Nagowski, PhD

GAS PEDALS

Everyone's gas pedals are uniquely sensitive & can vary depending on context. For most people, gas pedals **turn them on** with a combination of:

- Love and Bonding
- Explicit and Erotic Cues
- Visual Cues
- Romantic Behaviors
- Feeling Success

BRAKES

Everyone's brakes are also unique. And most of the things that **turn us off** have nothing to do with sex

- Critical Body Image
- Feeling Inadequate
- Feeling Unaccepted
- Stress and Mood
- Our Sexual History

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High Levels of Engagement

- Not about a single conversation but ongoing conversations
- Encounters require high levels of interest, intent and like everything else, it requires commitment in order to see improvement. Deliberate practice. Two people have a mind to have great sex they probably will have it.
- Nature designed sex so pleasure doesn't decline with exposure - literally practice makes perfect. All about communication - movies show couples with no communication - better images is couple assembling IKEA furniture.

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Be good to focus on what is goal of sex; 1) pleasure 2) intimacy 3) tension reduction 4) self esteem 5) procreation 6) pleasing partner. Great to break down more intentionally- for example:

- *Weekly*: might be 50% stress (quickies), 40% pleasure & 10% intimacy
- *Vacation Sex*: may be 50% intimacy 40% pleasure and 10% pleasing partner.
- *Infertility Sex*: 100% procreation 😊

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If talking about sex is so important, then why?:

- Research shows that over 80% of couples regularly experience sexual discrepancy
- 5-15 % of all sexual encounters are dissatisfying or dysfunctional
- Erectile Dysfunction occurs in 90% of men by age 40
- 80% woman don't orgasm during intercourse
- Estimates posit that between 50%-67% of couples and individuals struggle with their sexuality
- **A whopping 75% of therapists on average (across models) don't talk about sex with their clients**

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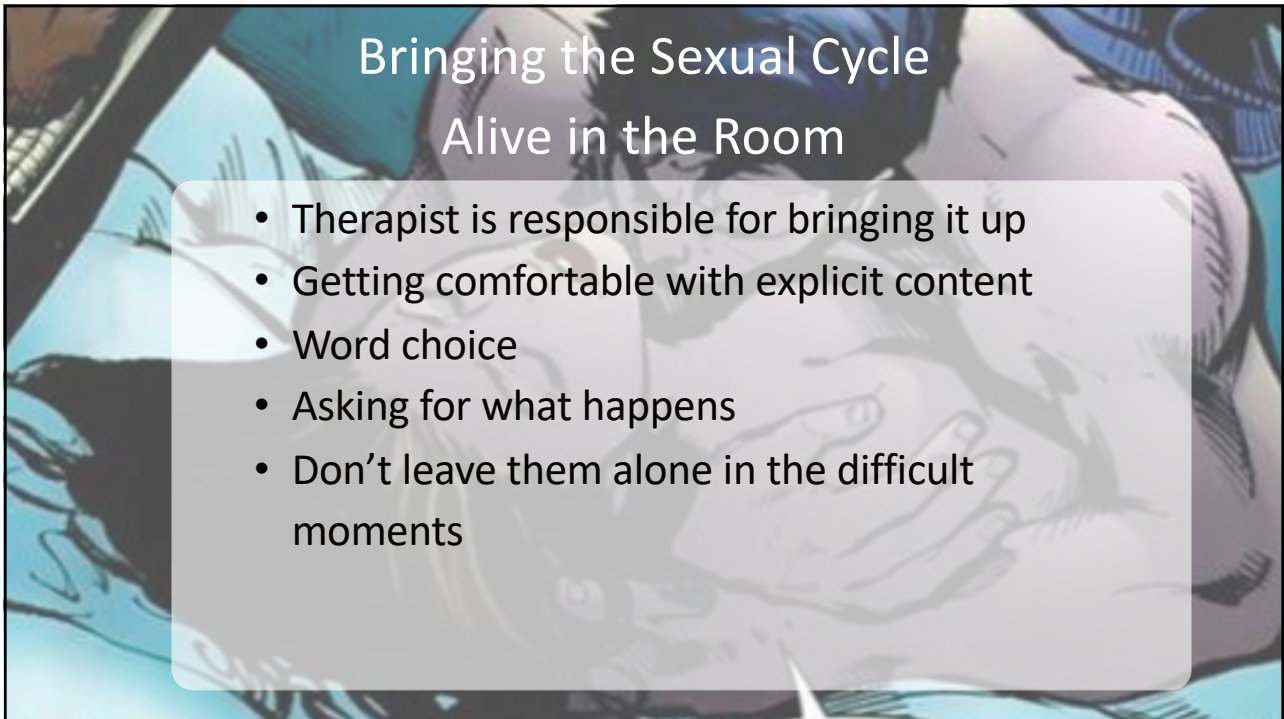
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Allowing the Silence to Lead

- Why not talk about it? We've been trained that sex is a specialty. We feel anxious, inhibited, inadequate.
- We don't have hope about resolving this in our own life. SSOT
- If we don't talk about it, we collude with the sexual withdrawer; we leave the sexual pursuer alone with their pain.
- We'll diminish buy-in to the therapeutic process from the sexual pursuer. We can't leverage the power of sex to help in the EAC
- We are unfairly leaving an anxiety-provoking task to the couple. It's our responsibility to create safety and make it comfortable.

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Bringing the Sexual Cycle Alive in the Room

- Therapist is responsible for bringing it up
- Getting comfortable with explicit content
- Word choice
- Asking for what happens
- Don't leave them alone in the difficult moments

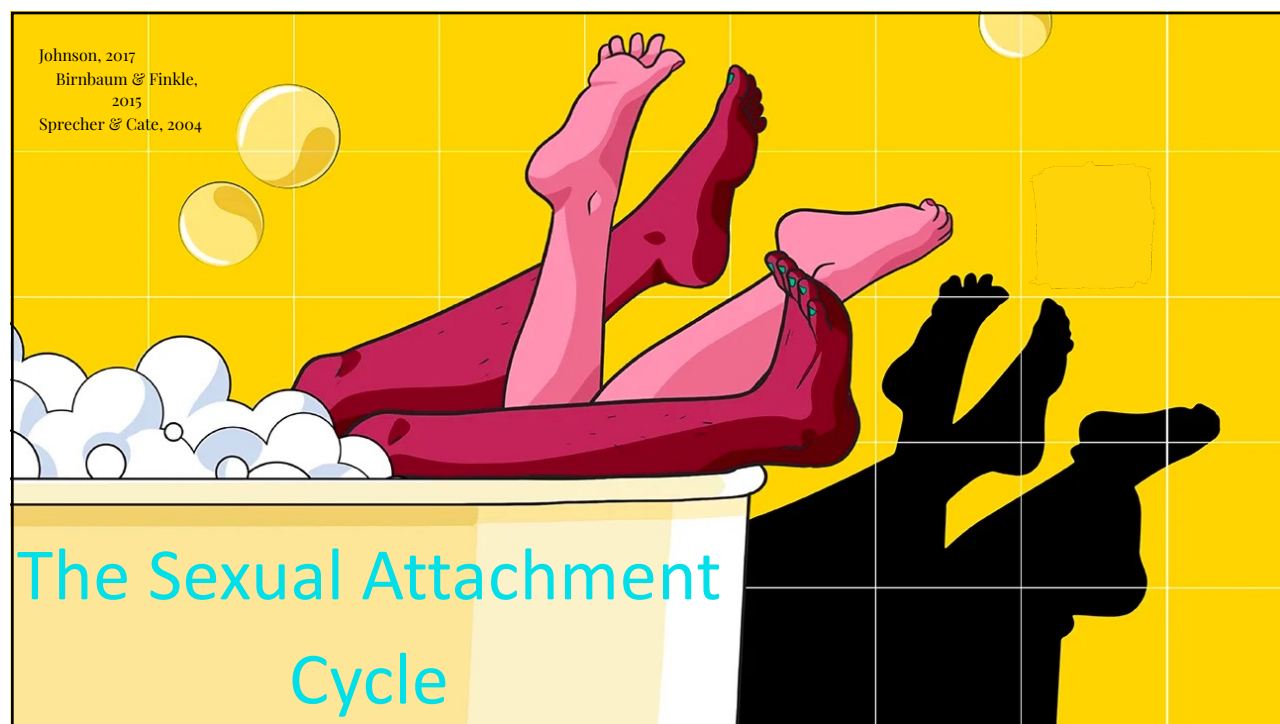
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How to Bring Up Sex

- Directly
- Softly
- In Context - hears it and makes it explicit



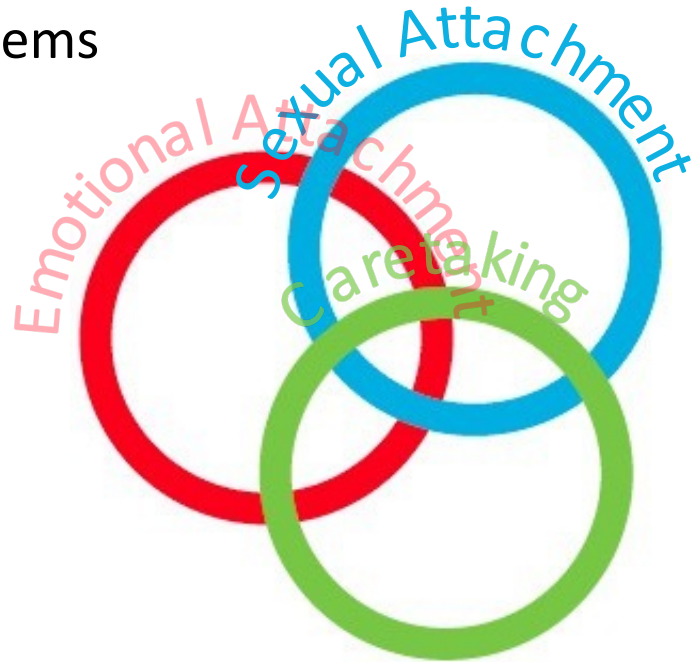
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Three Behavioral Systems in Romance

- **Emotional Attachment:** Security -
You are my home.
- **Caretaking:**
Loyalty - If you're lost; I'll come find
you.
- **Sexual Attachment:** Excitement -
My body worships you.



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Emotional Security



- I feel secure and safe with you
- I long to come home to you & you are my biggest support in my life's purpose (safe harbor, secure base)
- Continuum of pursue-withdraw
- Fear of engulfment & abandonment
- Vulnerability is the antidote to negative cycle

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Caretaking

- You've got my back - loyalty
- You know if I'm missing, something's wrong,
- You care when I'm hurt
- Altruistic, agape, tenderness
- Desire to alleviate suffering
- Particular area of attachment injuries:
 - chronic – can't you see all the toys laying around?!!
 - acute – you missed my father's funeral.



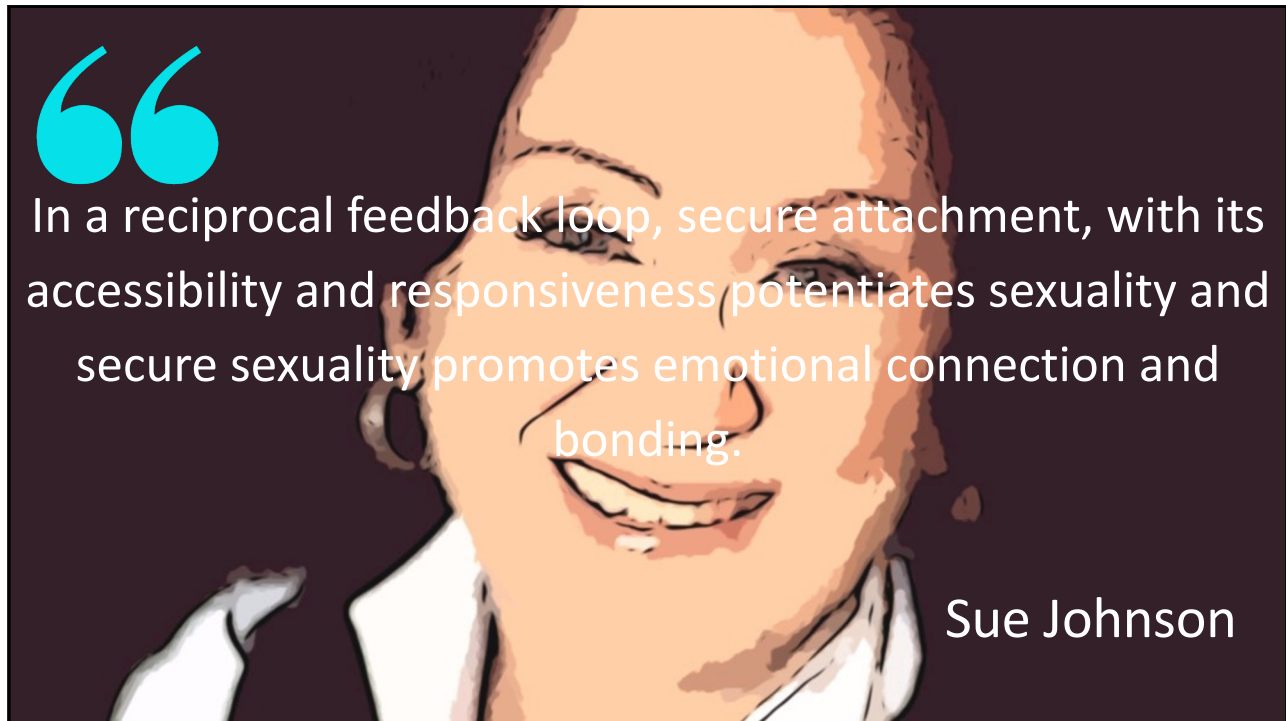
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Sexual Attachment

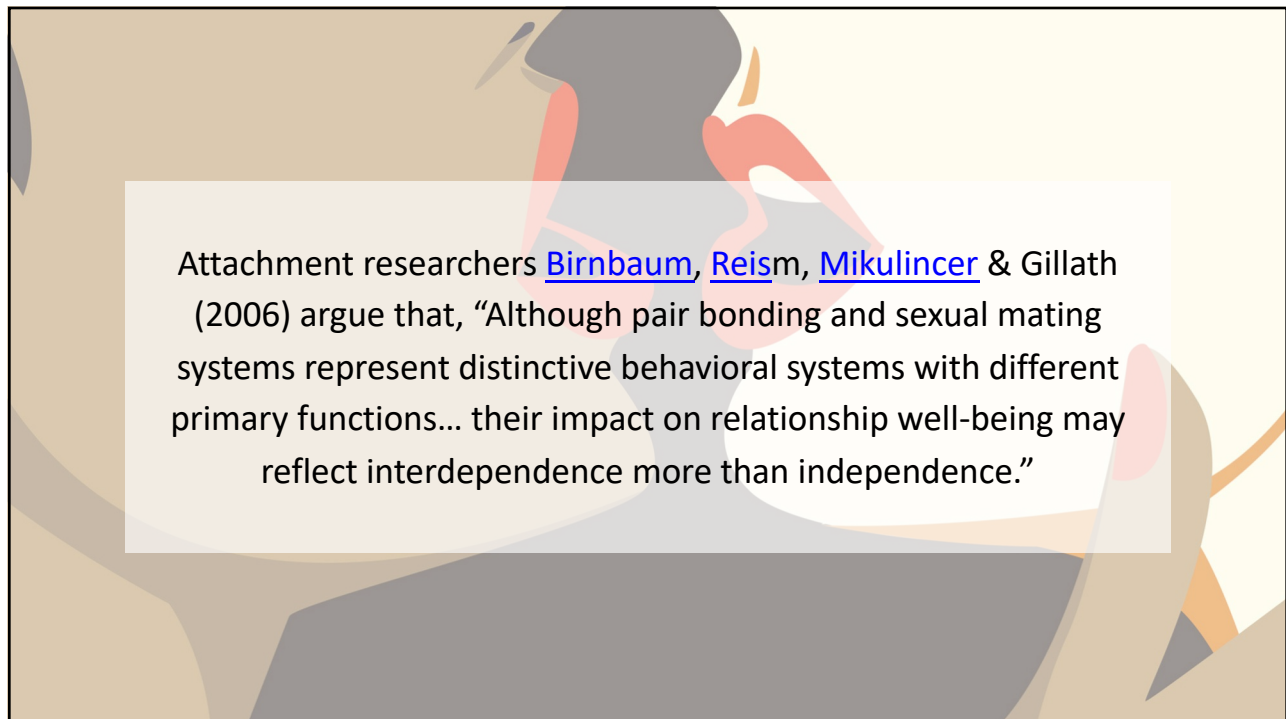


- I trust you want to share a life of physical intimacy with me.
- Sex is the romantic evolution of need for touch from childhood
- Desire is a quality between them
Also, a safe harbor (acceptance) and secure base (exploration) in sex
- Continuum of pursue-withdraw
- Can desire last?
- Action is the antidote in the sexual cycle – what does this mean? (2 longings)

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What's At Stake?

Without Secure Sexual Attachment:

- Question the love of and for their partner
- Could be tempted toward infidelity
- Cease feeling bonded; relationship destroyed

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Sexual Initiators

- Sex is Path to Connection
- Sex is Love
- Riskers, Initiators
- Wants Intensity
- Future-Oriented, Improvers
- Wants Variety
- Not Anxious

Sexual Responders

- Connection is the Path to Sex
- Sex is a Part of Love
- Responders, Like Cueing
- Controls for Intensity
- Present-Oriented
- Physically – Needs Predictability
- Responsive, Curious

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Hyperactivating Strategies

- Mental preoccupation about sex,
- Vigilance about their partner's signals of desire or rejection
- Worry about their personal attractiveness
- Efforts that become manipulative, even coercive

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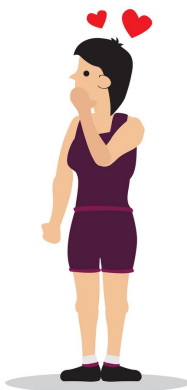
Deactivating Strategies

- Inhibition of sexual desire and dismissal of their own sexual needs
- Dismissing or disparaging a partner's sexual bids
- Repression of sexual thoughts, memories and fantasies
- Suppression of arousal and orgasm (Mikulincer, 2006)

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Cross Purposes

Emotional Pursuers
may be...



...Sexual Withdrawers
&

Sexual Pursuers may be Emotional
Withdrawers

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PROCESS
THERAPISTS
ADDRESS
BOTH CYCLES
SIMULTANEOUSLY

- We look for **direction** of the push or the pull away – toward sex or away from sex
- Sexual and emotional security is co-created and co-regulated
- Each cycle influences the other
 - Ex. Rosemary Basson's research on sex determines that women need emotional connection to feel desire. Yes! But emotional connection can be dysregulated by not addressing sexual attachment security of partner.

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The Negative Sexual Cycle

Sexual Pursuers

- *Triggered:* by partner's lack of responsiveness, partner's lack of initiation, nonchalance about sex
- *Action tendency:* asks for **more** sex, complains about lack of frequency, anger
- *Tell themselves:* VOO - they are withholding, controlling VOS - I'm not attractive enough, I'm not a good lover
- *Feels:* Angry, Anxious, Fears Deprivation
- *Vulnerability:* Abandonment, Being "Too Much"

Sexual Withdrawers

- *Triggered:* by pressure, criticism, requests for sex unaccompanied by emotional closeness
- *Action tendency:* loses desire, minimizes needs, avoids, misses cues, has sex to stop nagging (unpleasurable)
- *Tells themselves:* VOO - My partner is insatiable, VOS - I'm lousy in bed, I can't perform, I'll be discarded
- *Feels:* Inadequate, Failure, Unsafe
- *Vulnerability:* - Rejection

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Benefits of Pursuing

- **Hope for change**
- **Highlight problems that need addressing**
- **Feel a sense of control/ safety/ self-determination**
- **Not enable bad behavior/ force partner to track**
- **Feel empowered, heard, important, strong**
- **Know you are giving your all, trust the anger as friend**
- **Feeling of having value**
- **Releases pent up energy**
- **Break from beating self up, respite from hurt**

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Benefits of Withdrawing

- Reinforced/ affirmed by society
- Can feel good/ powerful
- How you fit in and get attention
- Get promoted & recognized
- Feel a sense of control/ safety
- Returns sense of balance & calmness
- Allows a reset to think more clearly/ fix
- Avoids escalation
- Not enable bad behavior
- Silence motivates partner

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Intersection of Cycles:

Sexual Pursuer initiates in sexual cycle and gets rejected, then retreats in the emotion cycle to manage the hurt.



Sexual Pursuer

Sexual Withdrawer

Emotional Withdrawer

Emotional Pursuer

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Overlap of Cycles & Losing Focus

- Example: Mission is working to get sexual withdrawer reengagement. Sexual pursuer is open to the conversation. As withdrawer explores their lack of sexual engagement- they get triggered with block and shift into emotional pursuer mode of blaming their partner for not helping out enough with house chores (leaving self). The sexual pursuer get defensive emotionally and shuts down. In a few seconds the therapist goes from open exploration of the sexual cycle to stuckness in the emotional cycle! Remember the mission!

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Its Often More Complicated

Classic Withdrawer

Receptive Emotionally

Initiate Sexually

Classic Pursuer

Initiate Emotionally

Receptive Sexually

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Therapist – “So, tell me how a little about why you’ve come to therapy.”

Janae – “Mostly what I told you on the phone; we’re just not communicating. Every time we try to talk about something, we just blow up at each other and he leaves the room.”

Therapist – “Can you tell me specifically what you fight about?”

Janae – “Well, our kids are teenagers and he’s stricter than I am. There’s also lots of tension about money. Allen wants us to save money for their college and I want them to have clothes and do the important activities for kids right now. It’s lot of stress and every time I try to talk about something, he walks away”

Therapist – “And Allen, would you agree with all that? That things are pretty stressful around kids and money?”

Allen – Yes. That’s stressful. I think Janae wishes I made more money. What is the point in talking when all she does is complain. We’re really not that close anymore. We are business partners who want different things.

Therapist – “Can you tell me more of what happens when Janae complains?”

Allen – “Its no big deal, I just tune out her criticism”

Therapist – “I imagine being criticized must hurt your feelings?”

Allen- “Not really. I’m a pretty upbeat person and her negativity cant bring me down?”

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Therapist – “Can you tell me more about not feeling close and just being business partners? ”

Allen- “What else do you want me to tell you?”

Therapist – “I guess I’m curious about your intimacy. Is there a lot of touch, affection and sex?”

Allen- (looking down at the floor and shaking his head) “we haven’t had sex in 2 years. I’d never imagine when we got married that we’d reach such a horrible place like this”

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Role Play: Catching the sexual cycle

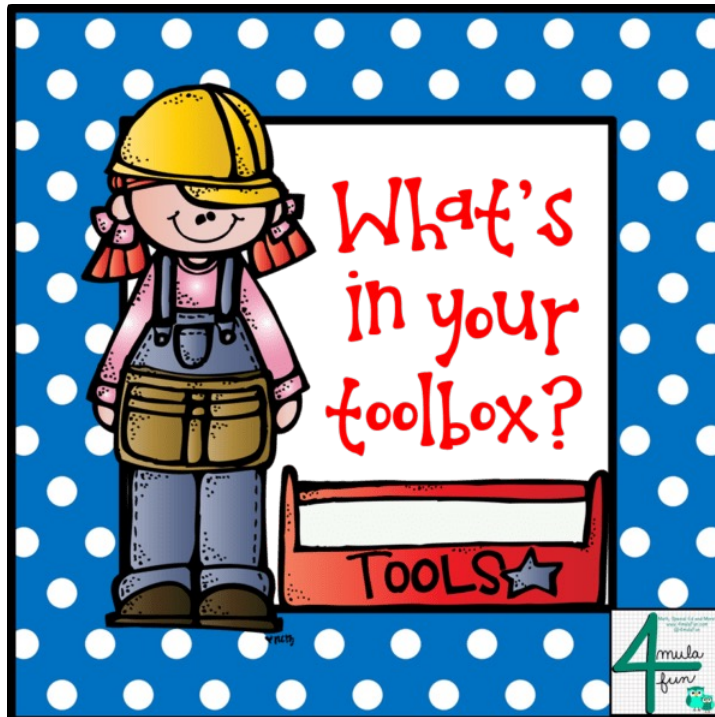
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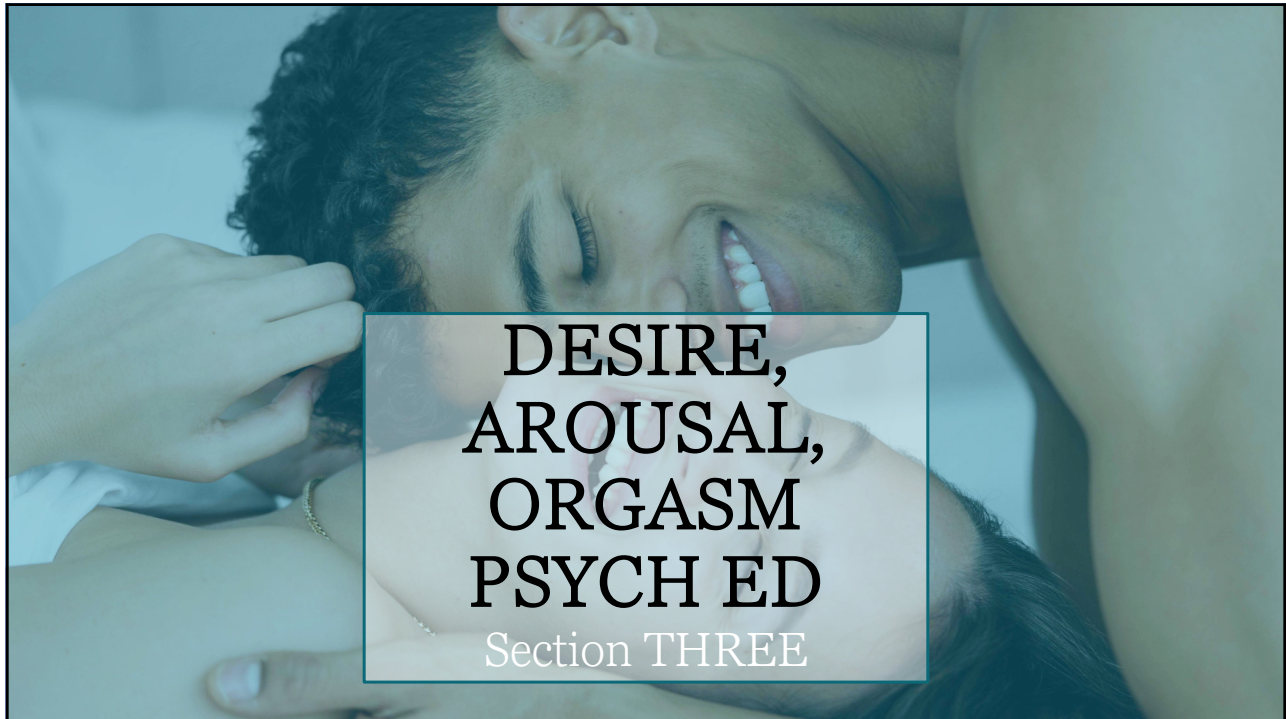
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Learning to work with the sexual cycle is a great way to add a powerful, new tool to your toolbox. If you are feeling stuck in the emotional cycle, go to the sexual cycle. The availability of new moves to pivot is the key to therapeutic flexibility!

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Spontaneous vs. Responsive

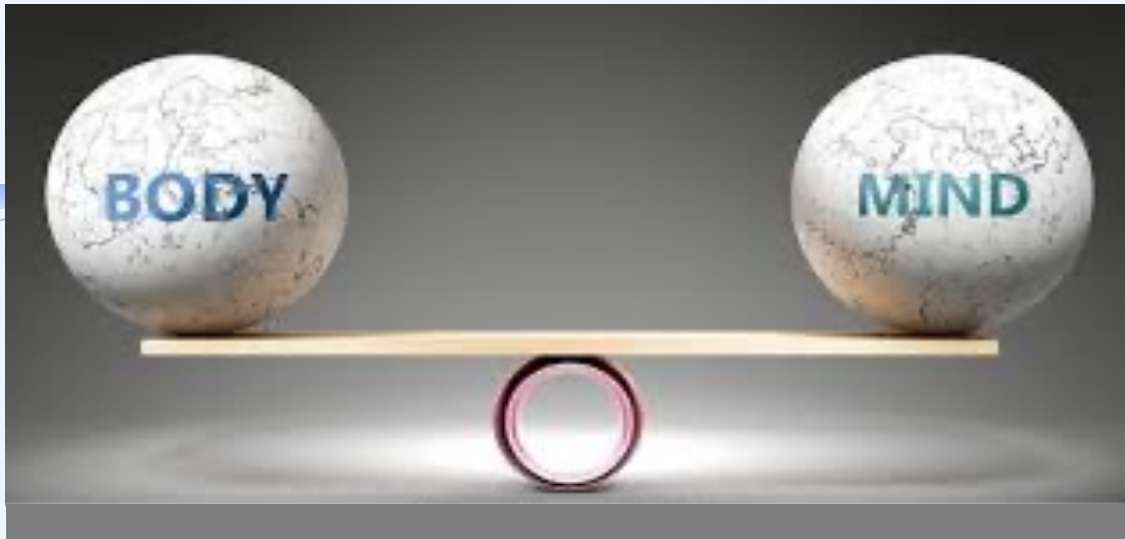
- Spontaneous desire - naturally interested in sex, arises internally, tends to initiate (50% of population)
- Sexual responsiveness - don't tend to feel sexual without an external stimulus (50% of population)

[Emily Nagoski](#), "Come as You Are"

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Organic vs. Psychogenic Factors



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What do you want?

Being sensual & sexual as foreplay

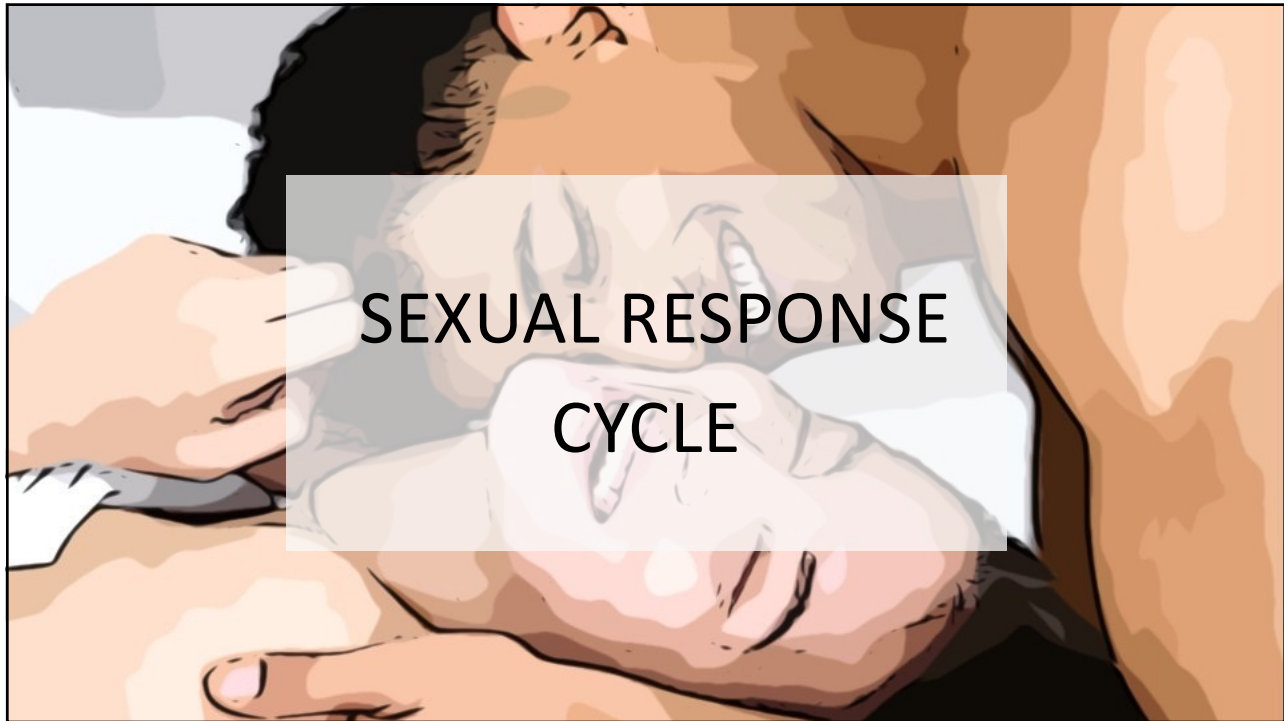
BRIDGE

Talking/connecting emotionally as foreplay

It's perfectly ok to start on either side of the bridge, but
get on the bridge and meet each other half way!

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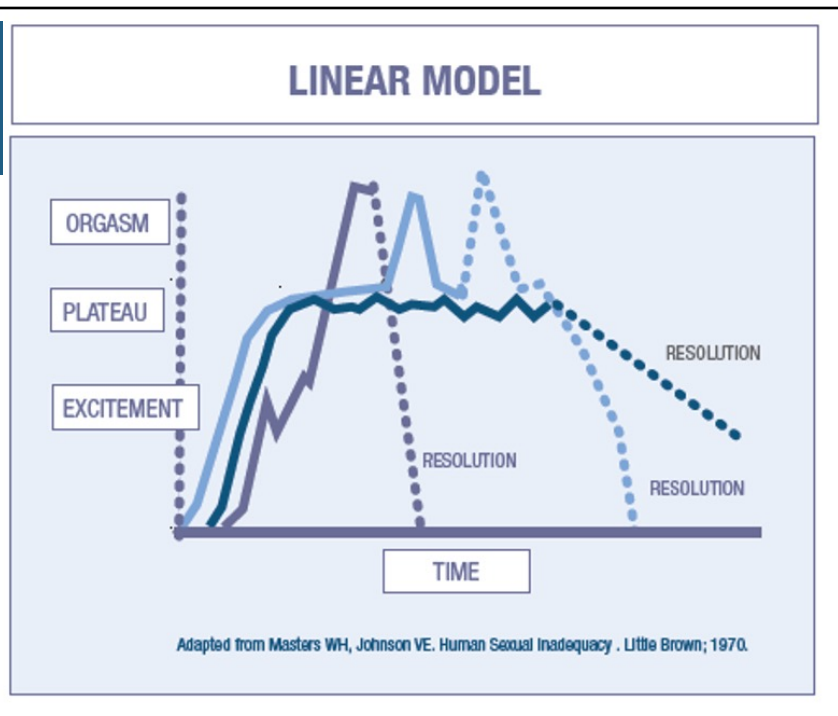
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Historical Models of Sexual Response

- In 1966, sex researchers, Masters and Johnson publish a linear 4 phase model focusing on physiological stages of the body.
- Kaplan, 1974, simplifies to three stages: desire, excitement, and orgasm. Desire includes a psychologically subjective element.



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Basson, 2001

Develops a circular model of female responsiveness showing the complexity of how psychological, relational and physiological factors interrelate.

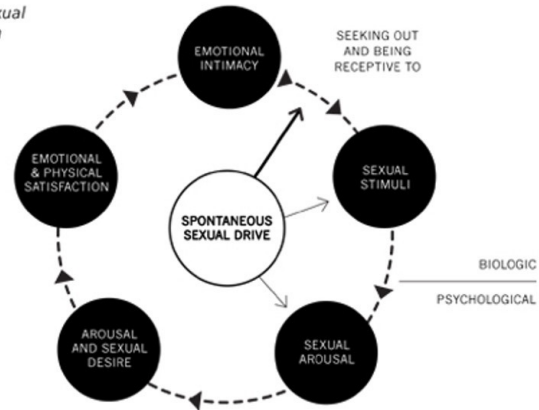
Females,

- start neutral,
- may be willing,
- but need the right conditions.

A client of mine calls these conditions: “well-rested, plus time and attention from her partner.”

Non-linear Model of Female Sexual Response Developed by Basson

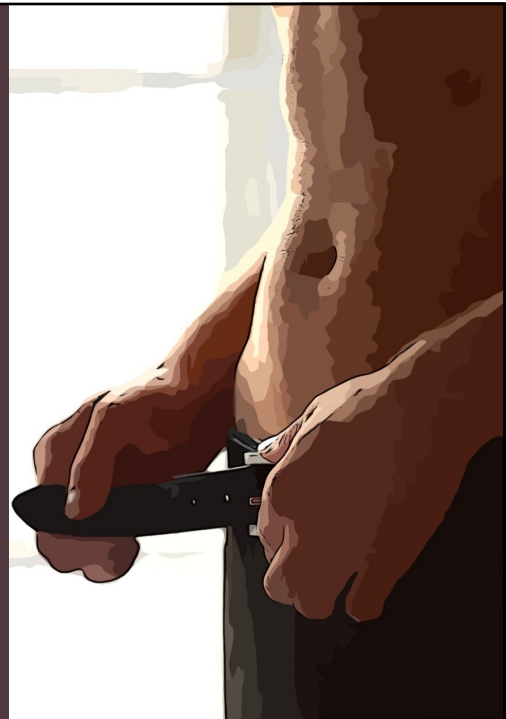
Basson's non-linear model acknowledges how emotional intimacy, sexual stimuli, and relationship satisfaction affect female sexual response.



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MALE SUBJECTIVE DESIRE

- Like a Hot Car Tanked Up with Gas
- Steady
- Plentiful
- Initiating



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FEMALE SUBJECTIVE DESIRE

- Like a Hot Car with Broken Starter
- Fragile to Stress, Distraction
- Cued/Responsive
- In Mind, Memory, Fantasy

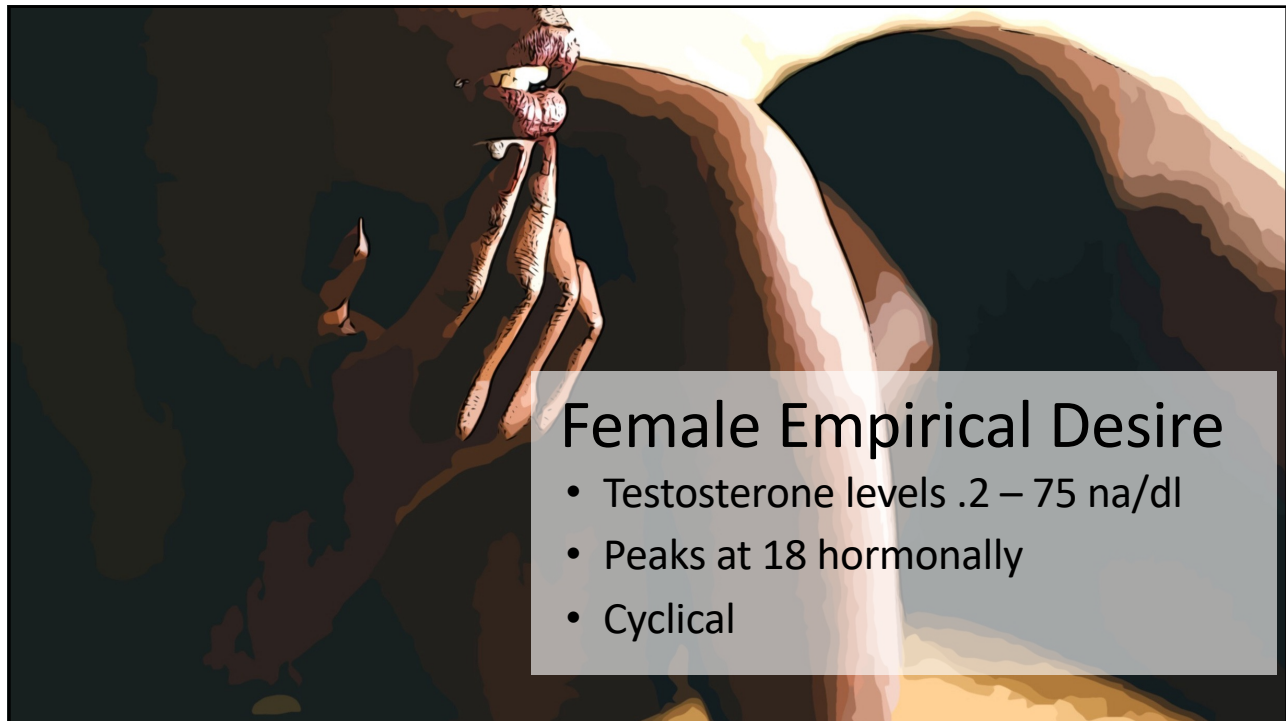
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Male Empirical Desire

- 300-1000 na/dl Testosterone
- Desire Rooted in Body
- Physiology Shapes Psychology

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Female Empirical Desire

- Testosterone levels .2 – 75 na/dl
- Peaks at 18 hormonally
- Cyclical

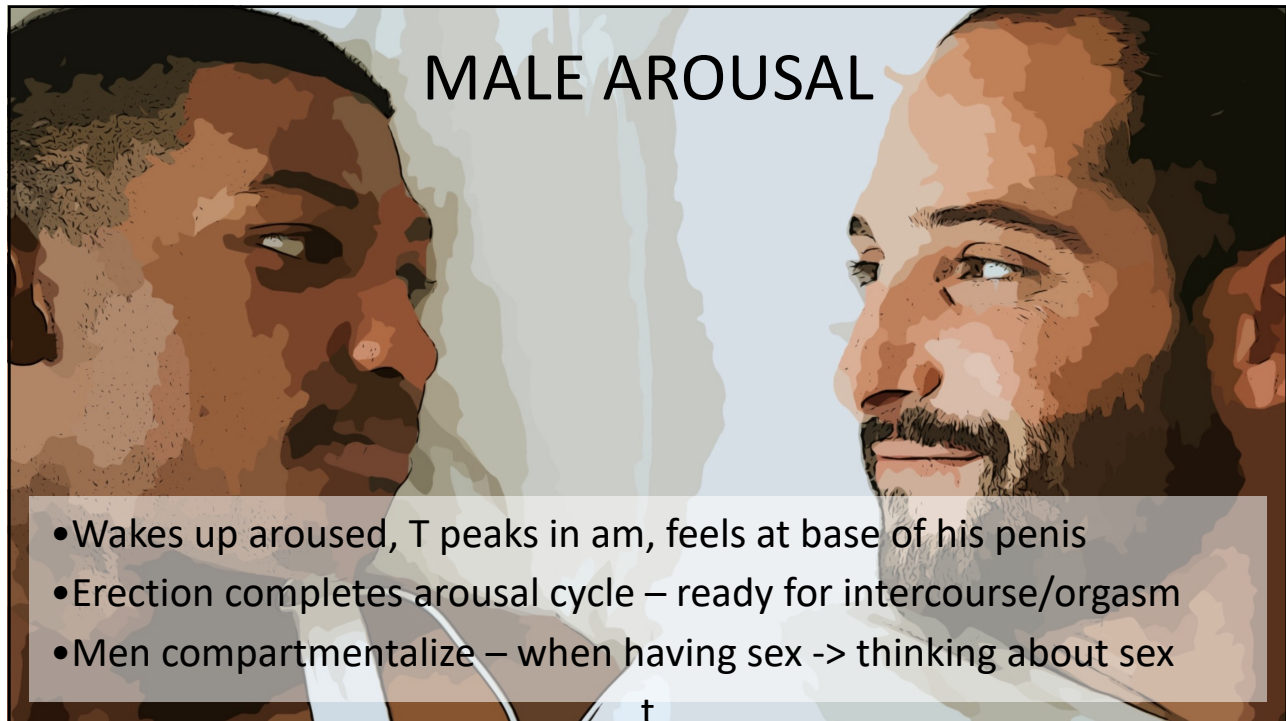
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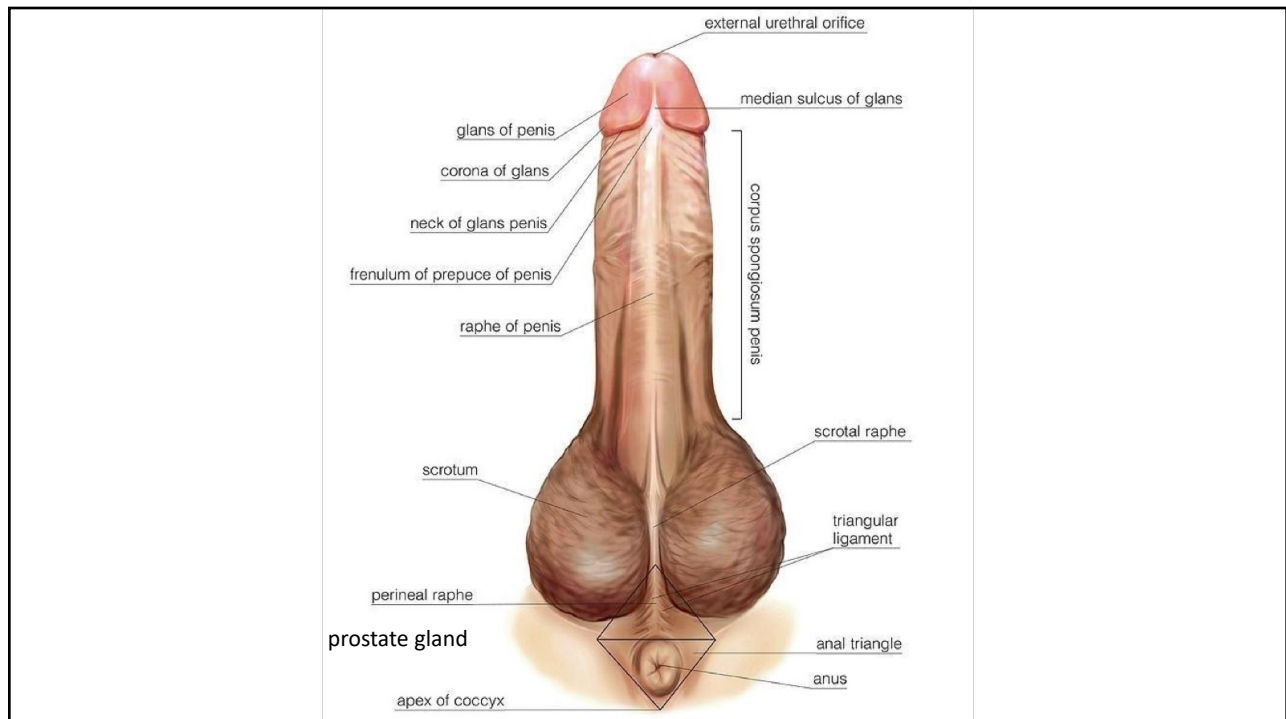
FEMALE AROUSAL

- 2 Phases:
 - 1st phase is SLOW – full body arousal, thinking is diffuse
 - 2nd phase – clitoral arousal, subjective arousal kicks in
- Learn Accelerator vs. Brakes
- Midpoint – inhibition drops; maybe lubrication starts
- What does her vulva look like/feel like when excited?
- Plateaus

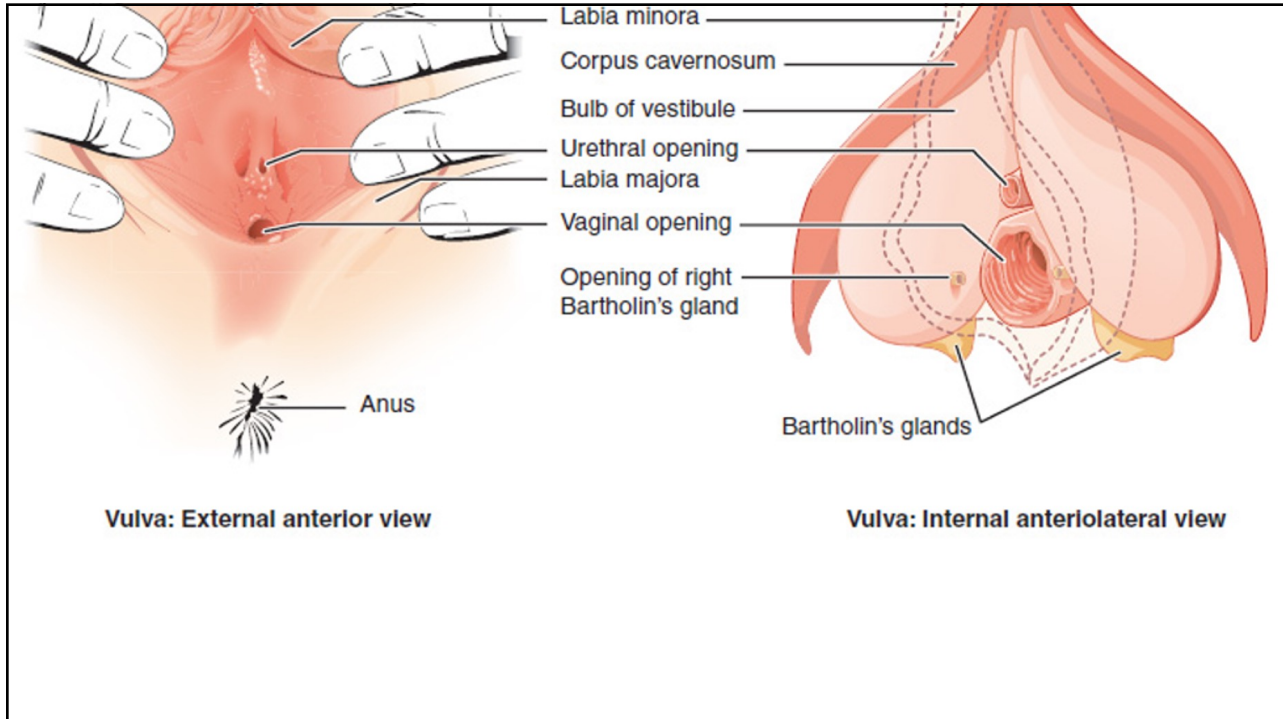
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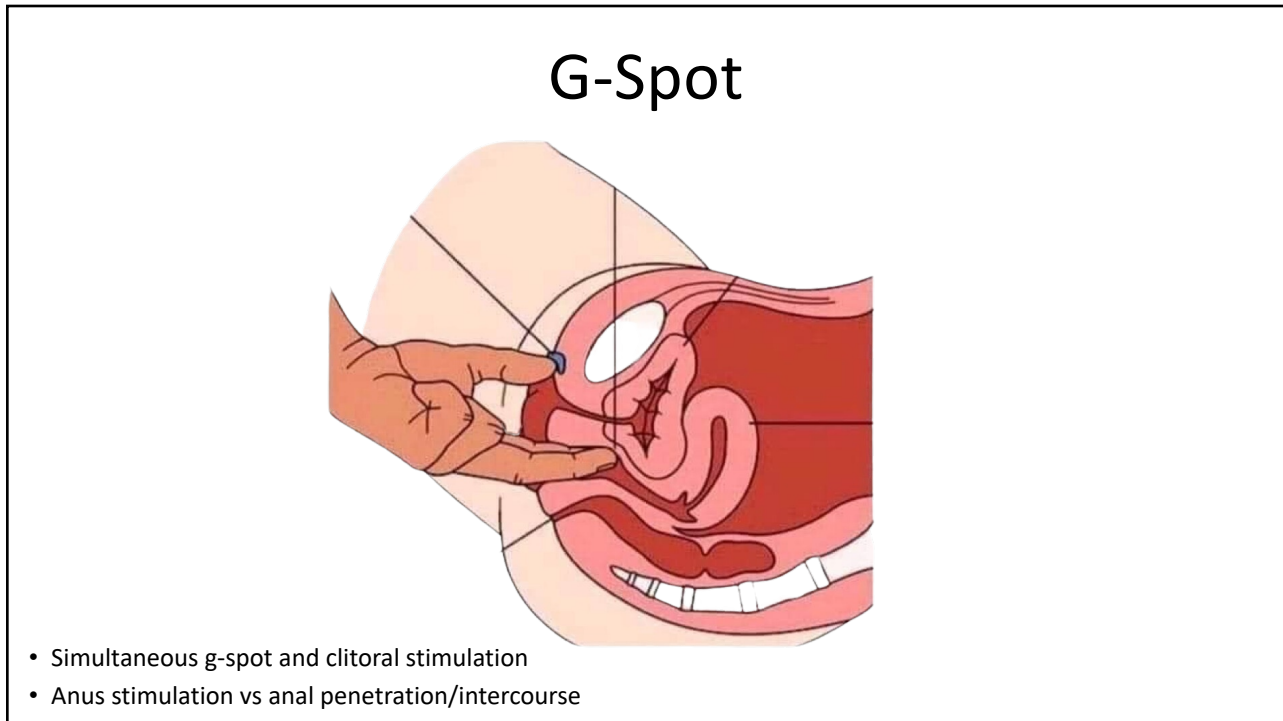
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MALE ORGASM

- Looks like; feels like
- Potential problems
- Ejaculation, Orgasm and Erection: Separate



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FEMALE ORGASM

- What it looks like; feels like
- Potential problems
- What about simultaneous orgasms as a goal?



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PROCESS CONSULTANT!

It is super important to consult with medical professionals and sex therapy experts to help with a thorough, ongoing assessment but don't abdicate your instrumental role as a process consultant for the sexual cycle. If you are a couples' therapist you are also a sex therapist!

A graphic with a grey background and a green grid pattern. The text 'PROCESS CONSULTANT!' is written in large, bold, green capital letters. Below the text is a small illustration of a person in a green suit sitting on a large, green, upward-pointing arrow.

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BEST SEX ASSESSMENT

Section Three

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First Session Questions: (**BEST SEX Conversation comes later**)

What is the quality, frequency, cycle and motivation to work on it?


- Ask permission: Can we talk for a moment about your sex life?
- 1. **Quality**: How generally satisfied are you with the sex you have with your partner? If no, is there a time when this satisfaction changed?
- 2. **Frequency**: How often do you have sex with your partner? Is this frequency okay for you? If not, how do you handle this?
- 3. **Motivation**: If there are things you would like to change in your sex life with your partner - can you discuss this together?
- 4. **Cycle**: Describe to me the typical sexual interaction with your partner; give me a play by play. Is this pattern the same as happens in the rest of your relationship or is it different?

• Johnson & Moran

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SEXUAL SELF-ASSESSMENT BEST SEX TALK

Section Three



On a 1 -10 scale, with 1 being low and 10 being high, lets measure the average scores for our gas pedals and brakes for each BEST SEX Conversations category (highlight any particular score that stands out)

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LET'S ASSESS:

- **BODY**
- **EMOTIONS**
- **SPIRIT**
- **THOUGHTS**
- **Sexual Cycle**
- **Explore History**
- **Xternal Factors**
- **Talking**
- **Amount/ Quality Orgasm**
- **Laughter/ Playfulness**
- **Kissing**

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Important Points about BEST SEX TALK

- BEST SEX TALK is just a template to do a thorough assessment. Flexibly use it to fit focus/ clients needs.
- Okay to stay on task to gather all info or to pivot and use an entry-point to do present process work.
- Critically important for partners to have success/ fun in these conversations. That is how the needle moves
- Like attachment History, flexible adjust with material you receive
- Best Sex really helpful for therapists to expand their breath and appreciate all there is to talk about sex

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BEST SEX Conversations Instructions: Each partner, please rate the strength of your alignment (1 to 10, 10 high or low/ med/ high) with the sample statements for sexual Gas Pedals (how important to getting turned-on) and Brakes (how important to getting turned-off) in each section. This is just to highlight what is important for each person.

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**Be READY!
For the**

CLASH



Fears/ Insecurities



Longings

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B ODY	
<p style="text-align: center;">Gas Pedals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I bring all my senses (taste, smell, sight, touch, hearing into the sexual experience for further excitement • I feel desire for my partner • Touching my partner is just as important as being touched • I feel relaxed & energized • I like movement & different positions • Oral Sex 	<p style="text-align: center;">Brakes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inhibitions or criticism about one's body • Partner's body is a turn off • Over/under focus on my genitals • Difficulty getting staying aroused or too long/quick to orgasm • Painful Sex • Infertility • Medication sexual side-effects

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E MOTIONS

Gas Pedals

- My partner listens to and respects me
- My heart desires romance and connection during sex
- Sex makes me feel safe and more open emotionally
- Sharing sexual feelings is a way I become transparent and deeply known by my partner

Brakes

- When my partner is disengaged with me emotionally, I don't feel like having sex
- I've been rejected by my partner so often, I rarely initiate anymore
- I get anxious about my sexual performance
- I get anxious about my partner's satisfaction with me as a lover

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S PIRITUAL

Gas Pedals

- When I have sex, I feel gratitude, joy and utterly alive
- I feel spiritually transcendent in orgasm
- Sex can make me feel like a part of God or like I am part of something sacred and bigger than myself
- When I make love to my partner, I feel like I've come home

Brakes

- Feelings of guilt or sinfulness pervade my sexual experience with my partner
- Feelings of shame over my sexual responses, behaviors with my partner cause me to disengage
- Sex can feel carnal or animalistic which feels dirty
- I do it because it's expected of me. Duty.

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THOUGHTS

Gas Pedals

- I engage my memories, thoughts and/or fantasies about sex to anticipate intimate time
- My creativity and planning enhance our sexual relationship
- I can easily focus on sex and put aside other cares and worries

Brakes

- I cannot separate intimacy time from my list of to-do's
- Fantasies feel wrong; I prefer to rely on sensation
- All my planning needs to go toward my work/child commitments; sex should just happen.
- I fantasize about others which diminishes my desire for my partner

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SEXUAL CYCLE

Gas Pedals

- I feel safe, secure, open, engaged, curious and able to surrender to my partner
- I am the initiator most of the time but feel wanted and desired by my partner
- I am usually the responder in the cycle but often get the message my partner thinks I'm good in bed
- Our balance works-Positive Cycle

Brakes

- Always checking to see if my partner is available or might reject my approach
- Worry that my partner doesn't think I'm attractive
- Can get hyper, angry, even manipulative about sex
- Hard to access my desire and sometimes dread my partner's initiation
- My partner doesn't give me time to express my desire and I must push back against their requests
- Sometimes, I just do it to get it over with but don't expect to get anything out of it

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EXPLORE history, culture, family of origin, sexual orientation, and previous romantic relationships

Gas Pedals

- My culture, family and faith supported my appreciation for my body, development and my sexual orientation
- My parents modeled a warm, affectionate romance
- My first sexual experiences were fun, safe, and meaningful
- Hearing about my partner's sexual development would help me understand them better

Brakes

- My parent's relationship was characterized by acting out, infidelities or violence
- My family in turmoil over my sexual coming of age
- My culture sent me negative or mixed messages about sexual pleasure, intimacy and who I was supposed to be
- First experience was painful, meaningless or in some way humiliating
- Partner might be threatened or uninterested in my sexual development
- Present unhealed infidelity in this relationship
- A history of abuse, sexual trauma or molestation

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XEXTERNAL

Gas Pedals

- I think toys, vibrators, lubricants and other sexual accessories to make sex more fun
- Alcohol and/or substances help me relax into the sexual moment
- Domination/submission or kink are exciting ideas to me
- Multiple partners
- I use porn or erotica to turn on

Brakes

- I feel pushed by the suggestion for sex toys and vibrators
- I worry about my partner's need to use alcohol to get in the mood
- My partner's wishes for kink or power dynamics seem a little sick or scary
- I believe my partner spends too much time watching porn and worry about sexual compulsivity or addiction

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TALKING

Gas Pedals

- Talking about sex is a perfect way to make it better for both of us
- Sexual debriefs after lovemaking add to the experience for me
- We've found a sexual vocabulary that works for both of us
- I am free in bed to direct my partner, share my explicit wishes and vocalize my pleasure

Brakes

- I have never been open talking about sex and I am pretty quiet in bed
- Evaluating a sexual interlude afterwards feels like pressure
- My partner uses sexual words for acts or body parts that leave me cold or sound crude
- My partner wants to do sex their way and doesn't listen to me or remember what I've said

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AMOUNT

Gas Pedals

- I have orgasms most of the time and find sex pleasurable
- I get turned on by my partner's orgasm
- I'm happy with the frequency of sex
- We have a good balance
- I like to masturbate and enjoy my when my partner masturbates

Brakes

- I never or rarely orgasm
- I'm dissatisfied with the frequency
- I feel pressured and over-focus on my need or partner's need to orgasm
- My partner wants sex more than me
- I don't masturbate or like when my partner masturbates

74

LAUGHTER/ PLAYFULNESS	
Gas Pedals	Brakes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laughter really helps to relax and engage • Playfulness makes me feel connected • I think my partner appreciates my playfulness • Adult playground 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joking around turns me off • My partner is too serious and focused on performance • We are on different pages and laughter is awkward • I wish my partner's initiation was passionate instead of funny • Feels like I'm with a child

75

KISSING	
Gas Pedals	Brakes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turns me on • Makes me feel connected • Is my favorite part of sex • Is romantic • Is intimate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My partner doesn't know how to kiss me. • Too little or too much • Too wet or too dry • It's not that important • Adds pressure • I do it for my partner

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Scores for Sample Couple	JOE		JANE	
	Gas	Brakes	Gas	Brakes
• BODY	3	2	Med	High
• EMOTIONS	3	8	High	High
• SPIRIT	1	3	Med	Med
• THOUGHTS	8	2	Low	High
• Sexual Cycle	3	8	Low	High
• Explore History	2	3	Low	High
• Xternal	8	5	Low	High
• Talking	7	1	Low	High
• Amount Orgasm	7	6	Med	Med
• Laughter	5	1	Med	Low
• Kissing	5	2	High	Med

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EFT MAP

Stage One- De-escalation

- 1) Assessment
- 2) Identify negative emotional/sexual cycle- ORAL Sex example
- 3) Access underlying attachment emotions of both cycles
- 4) Frame problem – cycle, attachment needs

Stage Two- Restructuring - Withdrawer Re-engagement/ Pursuer Softening for both cycles

- 5) Assess implicit needs, fears, model of self
- 6) Promote acceptance by other
- 7) Structure emotional engagement

Stage Three- Consolidation

- 8) New positions/cycles -- enact new stories
- 9) New solutions to pragmatic issues

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Stage 1: De-escalation and Tracking Negative Cycle: Emotional and Sexual

- Looking for one dimensional experiences and rigid perceptions and interactions
- Who is seeking sexual contact and who is avoiding it or placating?
- How does each partner react to sexual rejection or lack of intimacy?
- Connecting relational negative cycle to sexual negative cycle
- Tracking patterns of emotions, thoughts, and coping strategies, including socio-cultural influences
- Priming sexual longing language
- Positive exceptions to the cycle

80

Negative Sexual Cycle – 2 Perspectives

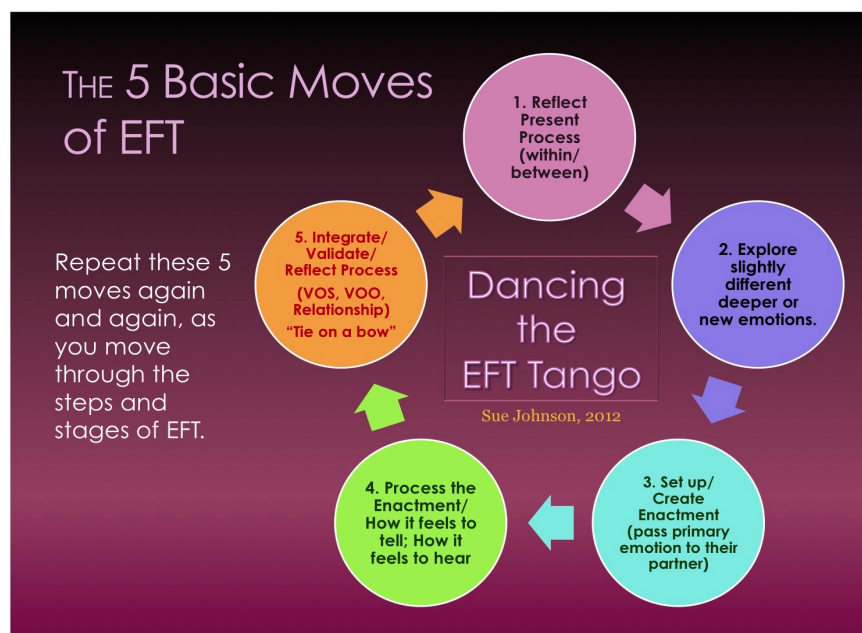
•Pursuer

- Pursues Sex
- Feels Rejected
- Increases Conflict
- Avoids Intimacy
- Disconnect
- Desire to Reconnect
- Pursues Sex

•Withdrawer

- Agrees to Sex When They Don't Want It
- Discomfort; Pain
- Sexual Dissatisfaction
- Avoids Intimacy
- Disconnect
- Guilt/Fear of Causing Rejection
- Agrees to Sex When They Don't Want It

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“TEMPO”

ATTUNING TO THE BODY'S SPECIFIC ELEMENTS OF APPRAISAL (ADAPTATION OF ARNOLD, 1960 THEORY)

TRIGGER: A STIMULUS (CAN BE EXTERNAL OR INTERNAL CUE) THAT HITS A VULNERABLE SPOT, CAUSING PHYSIOLOGICAL RESPONSE(S).

WHAT HAPPENS?

EMOTION (LIMBIC): 1ST APPRAISAL – NOTICE AND NAME FEELING, MARKER OF SENSATION IN BODY/PHYSIOLOGICAL RESPONSE. **WHAT DO YOU FEEL?**

MEANING: 2ND APPRAISAL- ATTACHMENT MEANING.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

PROTECTION: THE ACTION TENDENCY/BEHAVIOR THAT IS THE RESPONSE TO THE TRIGGER. **WHAT DO YOU DO?**

ORGANIZE: THERAPIST PUTS THE ELEMENTS TOGETHER AND VALIDATES THE SHARING.

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TEMPO

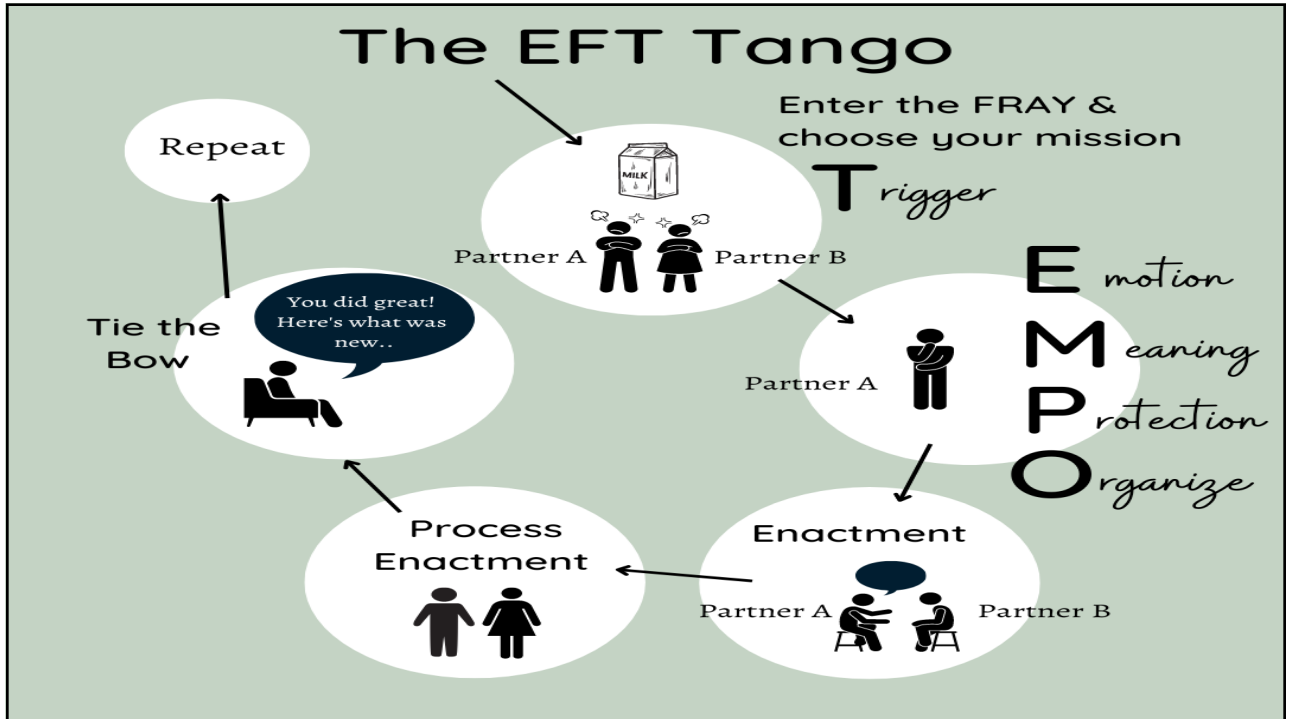
Generic

T - Trigger: a cue or external stimulus, the more vivid and clear the better
 E - Emotions: what I feel, what I tell myself, what my body feels
 M – Meaning: how I interpret the cue to mean something about the relationship, including the view of other (VOO) and the view of self (VOS)
 P – Protection: my survival mechanisms activated because of attachment risk
 O – Organization: seeing the cycle - I am triggered and my protection triggers my partner (awareness of this is the beginning of mentalization)

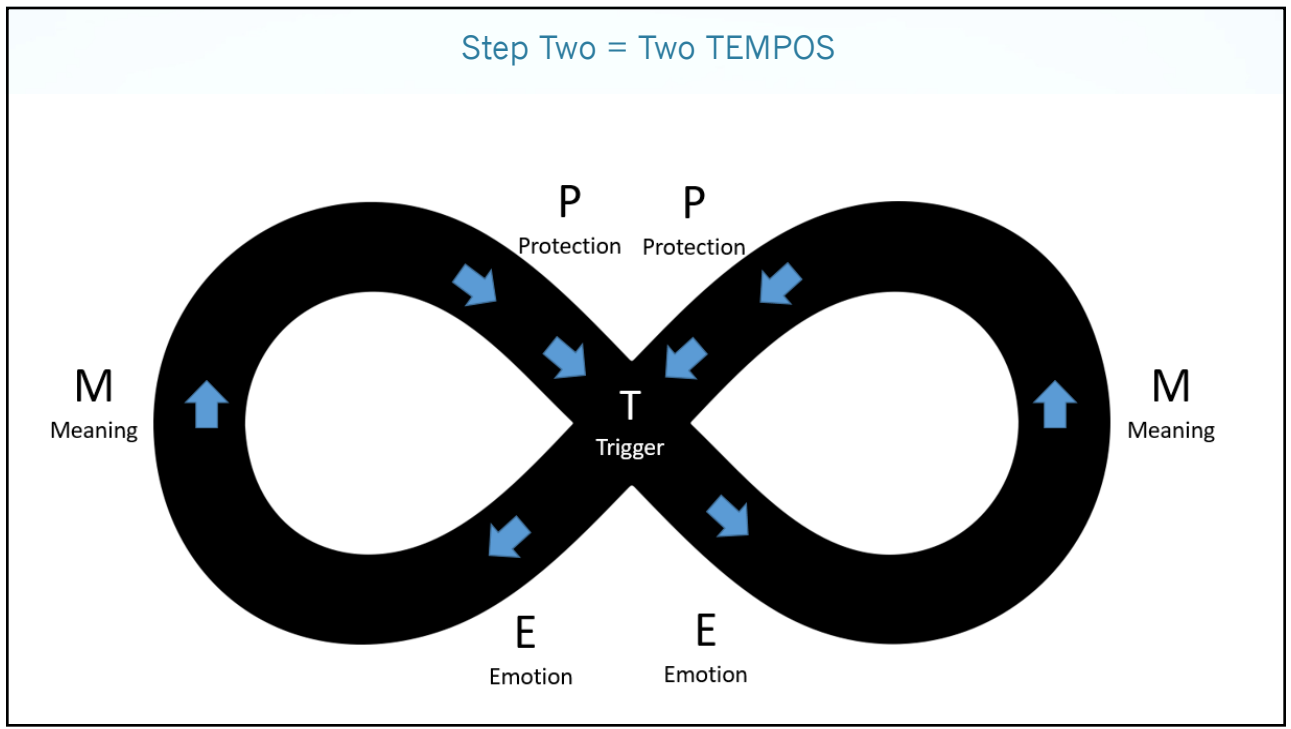
Sexual Cycle

T - Trigger: my partner rolls over in bed
 E - Emotions: I feel angry, I feel panicked about my sexual needs, my chest is tight
 M – Meaning: I tell myself they don't care about me & my needs, they're selfish (VOO), and worry that I'm not attractive enough (VOS)
 P – Protection: I say something critical, "Oh rolling over again, just like you do every night to shut me out."
 O – Organization: My anger trigger her sense of failure, causing her to pull away further, causing my increasing sense of panic and more criticism.

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Role Play: Double TEMPO

- Tempo Sexual Pursuer
- Tempo Sexual Protector
- Put two together, therapist practice finding words to describe the cycle

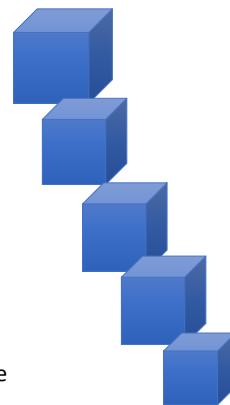
87

87

Stage 1: Working with Blocks

Expect Blocks

- Not trusting therapist's interventions at start
- Intra psychic block going deeper
- Fear of sharing with partner
- Fear of other responding back
- Fear of taking in other family member's response



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Have a plan and be ready to Pivot: Protection vs Openness



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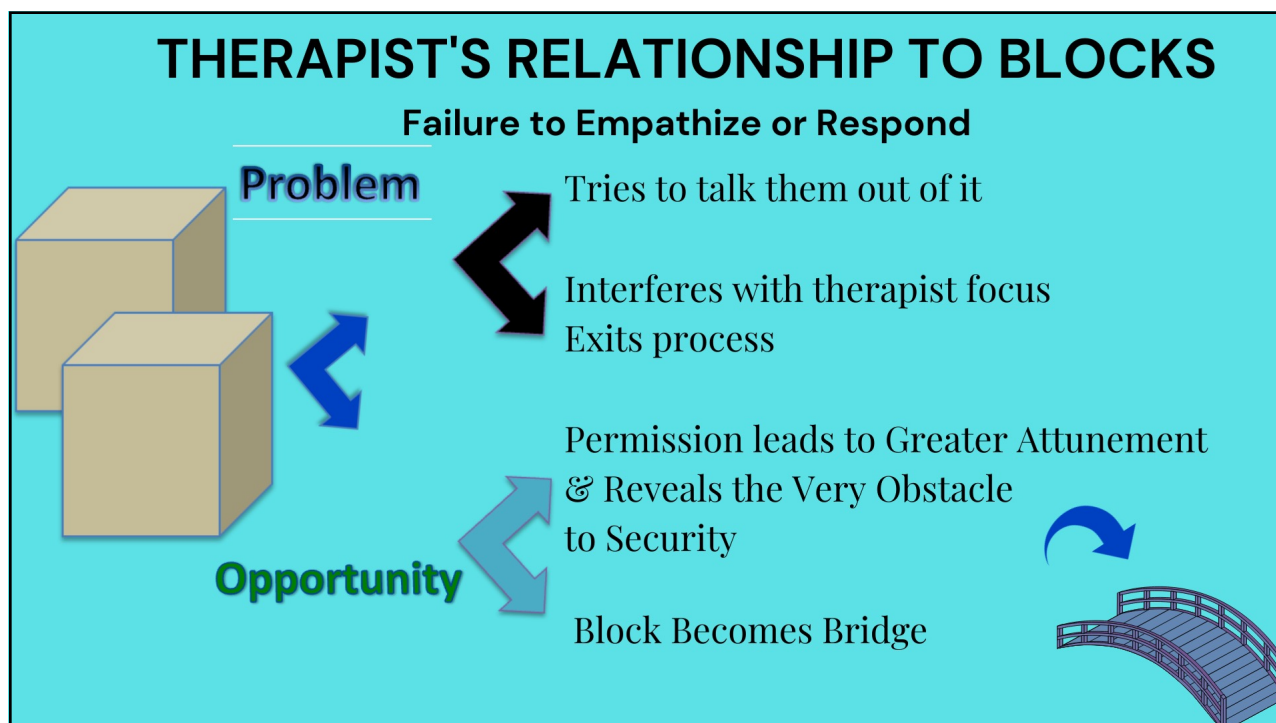
89

Getting Ready for the Predictable Blocks/ Anchors

An action to regulate emotion that interrupts attuned responses and understanding resulting in reactivity (hyperactivating / deactivating), which increases the likelihood of greater negativity, rigid responses, and cascading dysregulation.

- Evident in **present moment**.
- Rooted in emotional experience.
- Informed by expectancies - predictions of what will happen.
- Defines relational interaction often confirming expectancies (view of self / view of other).
- Often **process demanding a pivot** by therapist

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Two Main Types of Blocks

1. Intrapyschic- focus on attuning with one partner & they go in different direction
2. Interpersonal- witnessing partner reacts (rolling eyes), interrupts or an enactment

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Understanding Blocks = Protectors/ Motivators

- We need to translate and add attachment meaning to the blocks.
- If you don't understand the function of the block, you can't use it. Don't avoid it.
- Helpful to get the partner's buy in to explore the other's block.
- Find the positive intention in the defenses.
- Look for markers of a "honored block"- client saying, "you totally get it." That is when you are ready redirect.
- Most therapists get training for when their therapeutic process works, but not when it doesn't.

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Can you catch Classic Withdrawer moves in sex conversation ?

- I don't know/ not engaging/ turning away / I just don't want it
- Being too tired, lets do it tomorrow
- Don't want to talk
- Not enough time
- Anger to push away message, especially when exposed
- Humor to relieve stress
- Focusing on positive/ everything going to be OK
- Focus on facts/ logic/ details/ kids etc.
- Deflection/ Distraction/ introducing new topics-kids
- Minimizing/ Conserving energy
- Focus on the partner, away from view of self

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Can you catch Classic Pursuer Moves in sex conversation?

- **Manage/ Push to schedule sex**
- **Multi-Task/ Constant reminders**
- **Control/ Surveillance – constantly checking in**
- **Educate on sex**
- **Test to see if interested, going to initiate**
- **Correct/ discipline**
- **Shift from view of self to other**
- **Diagnose partner's low desire**
- **Express mistrust (BUT)- don't respond when partner initiates**
- **Use Guilt/ hurt to motivate**
- **Anger to motivate change**
- **Withdrawal/ Silence to motivate change**

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Handling Blocks

Catch the block live in session by noticing and naming it.

Provide permission for the block by validating its perfect timing and its function to protect.

Refocus to the moment right before the block showed up or to explore the impact/ costs of the block

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Common Blocks in Sexual Withdrawer Re-engagement

- **SW-Why are we talking about sex!** The sexual withdrawer/emotional pursuer is reluctant to want to talk about sex, don't want to be pressured. Need to get their buy in for the sex conversation. **Its okay for partners to not want to have sex but its not okay to never talk about it! (Intra-psychic block-typical first block)**
- **SW-Maybe I would want more sex if they talked to me more!** You try to reengage the sexual withdrawer and the emotional pursuer part of them gets triggered and they take over the space **(Intra-psychic block- most common)**
- **SP-You are not trying hard enough!** You start to get the sexual withdrawer to reengage and the sexual pursuer gets triggered and interrupts the re-engagement
- **SP-Now I'm not in the mood!** Sexual withdrawer finally initiates and the sexual pursuer doesn't respond, tries to motivate their partner to get what its like to be rejected. **(Interpersonal-block)**

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Common Blocks in Sexual Pursuer Softening

- **SP-I wouldn't feel so bad if my partner enjoyed Sex.** Trying to get the sexual pursuer to focus on their experience and they shift to focusing on their partner's actions. **(Intra-psychic block- most common)**
- **SP-I don't know what it feels like to be rejected.** Sexual pursuer start to soften and share their hurts which triggers their emotional withdrawer part to clam up. **(Intra-psychic block)**
- **SW-Maybe I would want more sex if they talked to me more!** Sexual pursuer starts to soften which triggers their sexual withdrawn partner's emotionally pursuer part to get reactive and criticize them for not emotionally engaging enough. **(Interpersonal-block)**
- **SW-You are not confident enough in bed!** Sexual pursuer starts to soften which triggers the sexual withdrawer to get turned off by their partner's anxiety **(Interpersonal-block)**

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Roleplay Exercise Catching a Sexual Block

- Play a withdrawer or pursuer and use one of their strategies to turn down/up emotions during a sexual conversation
- Therapist; CPR- catch the move and help them in real time understand/organize their attempts to regulate emotion

99

Trust the Process

- If a couple cannot maintain de-escalation then they are telling you to spend more time organizing their secondary emotion
- Their stuck places point out where we need to go!

100

100

How do we do Step 4: Uniting Against the Cycle

“When you understand the implicit positive, connection- seeking intent in the destructive behaviors of the negative cycle, you will be able to see the couples’ distress more clearly through the attachment lens. The EFT cycle is rigidly maintained by each partner’s way of managing the disconnection between them, while searching for closeness.”

Sue Johnson

101



**GETTING
SPECIFIC**
Stage Two

102

Why is it so hard to ask for what you want?



ASK FOR
WHAT YOU
WANT

103

The only Difference between Master Couples & Disaster
Couples in both the Emotional & Sexual Cycle



104

Underneath every protection
(anger/withdrawal) there is a ouch!



105

Stage 2 Change Events Process

- **Option 1**
- Emotional Withdrawer Re-engagement
Emotional Pursuer Softening
- Sexual Withdrawer Re-engagement
Sexual Pursuer Softening
- **Option 2**
- Emotional Withdrawer Re-engagement
Sexual Withdrawer Re-engagement
- Emotional Pursuer Softening
Sexual Pursuer Softening
- **Option 3**
- Any combination of the above or “follow the couple”

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Sexuality in EFT Stage 2

- Sadness, fears about rejection and abandonment, and fears and shame about an inadequate or unacceptable self, repressed desires are explored and placed in the context of attachment needs
- Withdrawer Re-engagement or Pursuer Softening
- Tune in to **View of Self/View of Other** related to sexual issues, including socio-cultural influences
- Step 7 of expressing sexual or relational needs
Facing the dragon of sexual trauma together
- Celebrate successes

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EFT – Stages and Steps

STAGE TWO – RESTRUCTURING THE BOND

- Step 5: **Intra**
- Step 6: **Acceptance**
- Step 7: **Reach**
- Every fight is a failure in co regulation and going away is a success in self regulation.
We need to change the numbers.

Step 3- deal with blocks, step 5- can go deeper in fear, step 7 ask
for need

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These are antidote/bonding events.

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Step 5: How Deep is Deep Enough

1. New Information/ Experience- not knowing on track
2. View of Self
3. Risky to share- look for blocks- enactments are target
4. Felt sense of vulnerability- slowness, calm, tone
5. Look for markers of safety/ success along way
6. Therapist responsiveness necessary along the process of going deeper

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The Goal of Step 5 is helping the withdrawer/pursuer experience vulnerable parts of themselves that they typically hide because life has given them many reps to teach them to guard these areas.

To help them stay to convey, the therapist must be able to tolerate the **not-knowing space** as the client struggles to find their words. There is no short cut to helping them find their words, clients need to limbically experience these disowned parts in session. You cant talk them into re-engaging or sell EFT, they need to experience success with their vulnerable emotions in real time. Clients don't make this process easy, as they often don't know what they feel or give vague, generalized labels like "failing or lonely". Too many therapist get excited when they get a primary label like "failing" and rush them to share it through an enactment. The key is to linger and help the clients touch their affective disowned parts in **vivid**, specific details. This is the process of shifting their focus from external to **view of self!** Everyone wants to do this but there is often very little training on how to it!

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In the play-by-play details of the sexual encounter, we often find a doorway into the most vulnerable of emotional fears and longings!



111

Step 5 Fears

Sexual Pursuers

Mourning, letting go, you can't be 100% of who you want to be because the other person has their own sexual reality.

Fears

- Too much; am I dirty; am I a pervert.
- Insatiable
- I wanna role play – show this part myself, stifled
- Unattractive
- Undesirable
- Too needy
- Will wither away; dying
- Too old

Sexual Withdrawers

How do you get people to want to explore themselves.. Their fears comforted... once there's a little space... the safety of emotional cycle... frees them to explore the desires of the sexual cycle..

Fears

- Intense; out of control
- I'm a broken sexual person
- Need to be something I'm not – a porn star
- I'll be annihilated with your need
- Desire is shameful, fearful, too intense, unheard
- I'll never be enough

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Transitioning to Step 6

- Partner jumps in and not sure what to do Step 5;
- **Decision Tree for Transitioning**
 1. **Green Light** -If empathy for partner, great - facilitate support
 2. **Yellow Light** -Often both self/other, try validate self and then go for other. If can't, go #3
 3. **Red Light** -If about self, then need to explore block- make sure tie bow (tourniquet) around step 5 work before exploring
 4. Get off the Road-Always option to go up and organize in cycle

Therapist transitions w/o tying bow = abandonment

Therapist getting permission with tying bow = help

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EFT Step 7 – Fears & Longings – What You Need Deepest Parts of View of Self

- Step 7 involves the last stage of the process in which new emotional experiences and expressions are used to change interactional positions in the couple pattern.
- It is at this point in the EFT process that key change events associated with successful outcomes in EFT occur. The completion of Step 7 for the withdrawn partner, results in a change event called “**Withdrawer Re-Engagement**”
- **Differentiate “reaching with need” from “letting into their world”**
- **Realize it is change event for both: pursuer empowered, withdrawer healed**
- **Test for Secure Attachment**
- ***ADD “S” to OIL- Solution to the problem- longings met***

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Let's repeat: **Solution:** The longing inside the pain at the deepest view of self is the solution to the problem



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EFT Step 7 – longings – what you need

- **Honor the Risk**
- Rejection of deep needs does not just hurt it is obliteration- confirmation of worst fears!
- Need to align the needy vulnerability with strong/ confident response – active, encourage responder to show how they are moved
- Remember: it's an ask, not a tell
- Step 7 – the ask of the pursuer is not a critique to stop bad, old behaviors but a desperate request for a new behavior!

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EFT Step 7 – Micro Moves- Mistrust + Longing

1. Go last mile- flesh out the deepest fear/pain-Step 5- **Get body marker**
2. Heighten Fears of Reaching-View of Other- “No one would ever want to come to this place” Make mistrust explicit
Use partner to reduce fears- make sure they are shored up before asking the ultimate risk- make sure **Green Light St 6**
3. As fear is reduced go for longings-**View of Self**- what they need but never receive. Expect them to not to know-Give permission to not know
4. Ask from place of :
 - A. **View of self**
 - B. **Uncertainty, not knowing answer**
 - C. **Key is in the room/NOW- what body needs now**
 Components of ask- **start view self, add what need partner, highlight opportunity- I feel lost, can you find me, no one ever wanted to before?**
5. End goal is longings being met Positive Affect as marker of shift

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2 Levels of LONGINGS- Sexual Secure Attachment

1 Emotional Cycle: Comfort/ Reassurance/ Safety in my vulnerabilities & fears (Intimacy)

2 Sexual Cycle: Access to sexual expression of wants/longings and experience sexual satisfaction (Pleasure/ Positive Emotions)

Catch those glimmers of longings and reflect what you want to grow!

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What are Withdrawer's Longings?

Emotional

- Understanding/ Acceptance
- Appreciation for my receptiveness
- Its ok & healthy to not want sex if you aren't in the mood
- Will you accept my no as not being personal
- Reassurance when I'm blocked sexually
- Hug me - no words, Presence- physical reassurance
- Loved regardless of performance

Sexual

- Expression of sexual needs- exploration, curiosity
- Listen to my sexual needs, let me describe my body
- Can you tell me my sexual desire is a good thing?
- Success when sex is working

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What are Pursuer's Longings?

Emotional Cycle

- Look for opposite of fear being too much->than wanted, accepted, just right-I'm enough
- Reassured- Will you tell me my needs aren't too much?
- Desired, Wanted, Seen, Chosen, Believed In
- Appreciated for my initiation
- Reassured when feeling rejected
- Seen/ permission for grief, resentment

Sexual Cycle

- Promise to engage/ initiate
- Being matched in intensity/mood
- Great sex- celebrate it
- Regain sexual confidence, creativity and vitality

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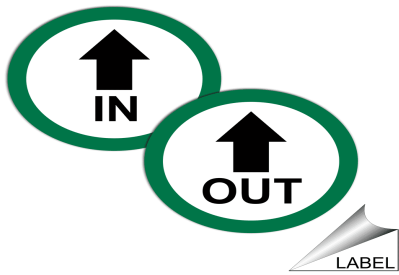
120

What are Withdrawers/ Pursuer's Longings-Access Sexual Expression

- Can you look at me as you orgasm? (Merger- Great Sex)
- Can we try something different tonight and maybe you can spank me? (Exploration, risk-taking)
- Can you take charge tonight? (Surrender)
- Can we have a night of less romance and more raw sex? (Extraordinary Communication)
- Can we make love tonight by the fireplace? (Communication)
- Can I share a fantasy with you tonight? (Erotic Intimacy)
- Can you go a little slower? (Communication)
- I'm feeling like I let you down tonight, can you help me understand your experience? (Vulnerability, transparency, genuineness)
- Can you let go and lets see where we go together? (Transcendence)

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BODY



- Body In- where is the fear/ pain held
- Body Out- the release of fear/ pain and the transition to positive affect ie pressure shifts to relaxation
- Signs of Securely Attached Lovers

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Unmet Needs Met = Secure Attachment

In EFT we try to strengthen the emotional bond to create the safety needed to then allow partners the space to risk new sexual behaviors. Reassuring fears frees up the energy to tap into desires. Completion of Step 7 with the sexual cycle is both partners successfully asking for what they need sexually. Its an invitation not a request. Great Sex is wanting it for both yourself and your partner!

123

Replace a negative cycle with a positive one

- The antidote to fear/ shame (avoidance) is connection & vulnerability
- The responsive sharing of a positive cycle creates safety for new moves;
 - Pursuer more patient and seducing
 - Withdrawer initiating and exploring their own sexual needs

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Role Play

- Sexual Withdrawer Reengagement- Step 7, Pursuer not reactive-
 - Honor protection
 - Get Primary- Helpless, Failure
 - Set up Enactment to ask for what you need:

Part 1 (Emotional Cycle): When, deep inside, I feel _____, I need your help to (you do have to ask!)

Part 2: (Sexual Cycle): Now that I feel safer, can I ask you to do this _____ in the bedroom

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Amazing Opportunity

- Highlight the huge opportunity for partner to be the one person on the planet to give this gift of responsiveness. Encourage to be active and add the missing ingredient. This conversation unleashes longings.
- If the conversations are incomplete that is perfectly normal- it's a great start and heading in right direction.
- Not knowing what to do proves you are in a new place. Often our need for certainty kills curiosity. Embrace the "not knowing"
- **Simple Rule- No Asky = No Getty**
- **Unmet needs met is the solution to the negative cycle!**

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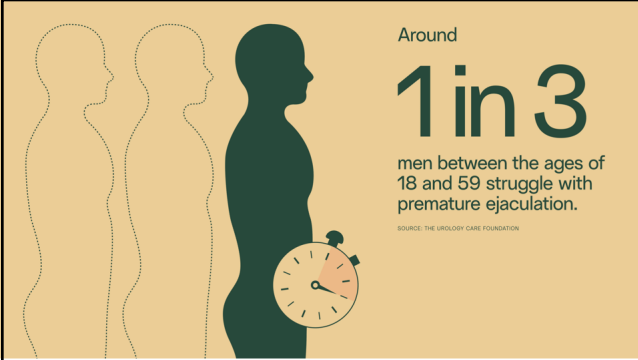
Low Libido	
Female	Male
Absent Sexual Thoughts, Fantasies, Unresponsive to Sexual Initiation Insufficient Arousal, Reduced Pleasure, 6 mos	Absent Sexual Thoughts, Fantasies, Reduced Initiation, 6 mos
Prevalence: 30-40%	Prevalence: 15-25%
Etiology: Lack of Connection, Hormones, Poor Body Image, Stress, Affect (SSRIs), Resentment, No/Low Orgasms, Poor Partner Technique, Waiting for Overt Cues; Low Communication, Tired, Trauma, Affairs, Pain, Loss of Attraction, Boring Sex, Negative SAC	Etiology: Low Testosterone, Performance Anxiety, Low Communication, Stress, Affect (SSRIs), Prefers Masturbation, Trauma, Affairs, , Conflict Over Gender Preference, Porn, Relational Conflict, Loss of Attraction, Boring Sex, Negative SAC
Considerations: SAC, Arousal can Preceed Desire; Confirm Orgasm, Facilitate Communication, Explore Body/ Fantasies/Imagination/Memories	Considerations: SAC, Check T Levels, Learn to Ask for Erotic Stimulation, Explore Fantasies (Bridge/Block), Confirm Sexual Orientation

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Female Orgasm

- 100% have orgasms with clitoral stimulation; 15% w/ SI
- Takes ~ 20 minutes of general arousal followed by 20 minutes clitoral stimulation
- Multiple orgasms possible
- Anal orgasms unlikely
- Her orgasms build libido
- Too sensitive to touch without arousal
- Primary Anorgasmia/ Partner Specific

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PREMATURE EJACULATION

- Climaxing before man or partner wants to
- Ejaculation before or within 15-60 seconds of penetration
- Less pleasure for man himself
- Anxiety
- Lifelong – from first sexual encounter (frequent 1st experience)
- Acquired – from a normal experience to recurrence
- Causes - anxiety, low serotonin, stress, physiological

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PREMATURE EJACULATION COUPLE CONSIDERATIONS

- Anxiety feeds negative loop
- Feeds into low initiation
- View of Other – Angry/Rejecting
- View of Self – Shame/Guilt/Broken
- Partner VOO – Selfish, Doesn't Care
- Partner VOS – Alone, Hurt, Rejected
- 95% respond to behavioral modification
- Start/Stop method/ 6 month treatment
- SSRI treatment an option

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Cause	Percentage
Vascular	40%
Diabetes	30%
Medication	15%
Pelvic surgery or trauma	6%
Neurological causes	5%
Endocrine problems	3%
Other	1%

Physiological Causes of ED

ERECTILE DYSFUNCTION

- Inability to achieve/maintain an erection 75% of the time
- Decrease in erectile rigidity interferes with penetration
- 1/5 men over 20 years old experience ED
- Lifelong/Acquired; Risk increases with age


Causes:

- *Decreased Arterial Blood Flow:* increased cholesterol, weight, lack of physical activity, tobacco use, indicates early ❤️ disease, venous leakage, **Diabetes**,
- *Neurogenic:* stroke, Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, **Diabetes**,
- *Endocrine:* Hypogonadism, Low T
- *Surgery:* Prostate Cancer
- *Medication/Substance:* SSRIs, Blood Pressure Meds, Alcohol, Cocaine, Cannabis

Treatment: Increased eroticism, Viagra

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ERECTILE DYSFUNCTION



ERECTILE DYSFUNCTION COUPLE CONSIDERATIONS

- All ED has a couple/partner impact
- Therapist jurisdiction when psychogenic
- Questions to help discern cause:
 - Age of onset?
 - Do you have morning erections?
 - Do you have difficulty with masturbation as well?
 - Does the ED happen with all partners?
 - Does it happen every time?

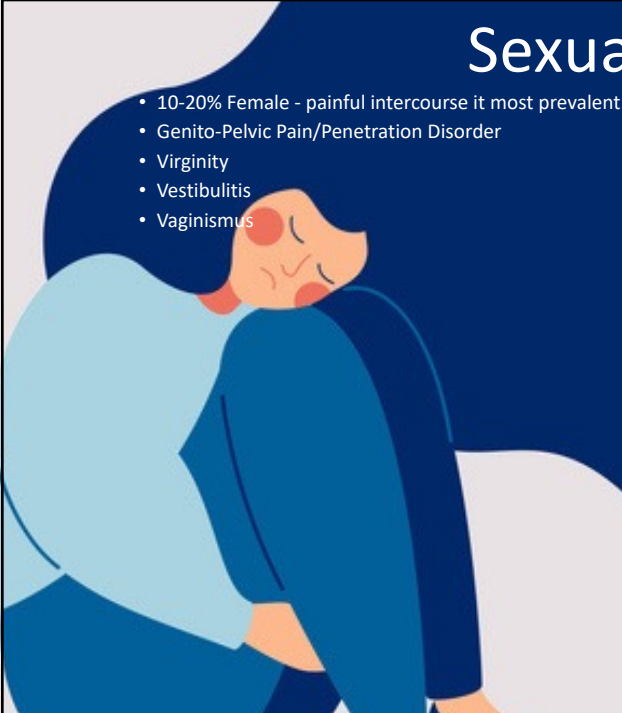
Causes: performance anxiety, stress, porn

- VOO – Rejecting, Critical, Controlling
- VOS – Failing, Not Good Enough, Fear
- Partner VOO – Disappointing, Uncaring
- Partner VOS – Unattractive, Unwanted

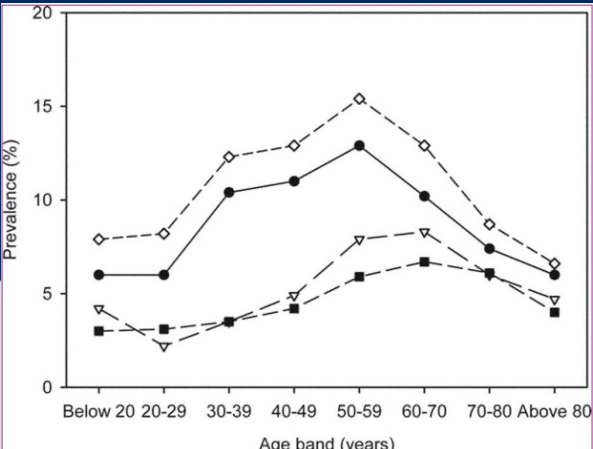
133

Sexual Pain

- 10-20% Female - painful intercourse it most prevalent type of female sexual dysfunction, 5% Males affected
- Genito-Pelvic Pain/Penetration Disorder
- Virginity
- Vestibulitis
- Vaginismus



Shifren, Monz, Russo, Segreti, Johannes (2008)



Age band (years)	Sexual pain prevalence (%)	Low desire (%)	Arousal problems (%)	Orgasm issues (%)
Below 20	8	6	4	3
20-29	8	6	2	3
30-39	12	10	3	3
40-49	13	11	5	4
50-59	15	13	8	6
60-70	13	10	8	7
70-80	9	7	6	6
Above 80	6	6	4	4

Diamonds sexual pain prevalence, circles low desire, triangles arousal problems, squares orgasm issues.

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Help us with our mission by
referring to our PODCAST:

**Foreplay – Couples and
Sex Therapy!**



Thank You!