



Let's talk about sex & Relationships

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Acknowledgement of country



**We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians
of the land on which we work and live.
We recognise their continuing connection to
land, water and community, and we pay
respect to Elders past, present and
emerging.**

I acknowledge the diversity in Gender expression & the use of Gender affirming hormone treatment that may create variation in sexuality

The term male/female is used to refer to the person's sex

Includes cisgender people inline with definitions provided by World Association of Sexology

'sex' refers to biological characteristics defining female & Male

Overview of Presentation

- ▶ **Clinical & Practical aspects of Sexuality / Intimacy (couple)**
- ▶ **Offer an Intersystem Framework (L3 Gottman/Sex therapy)**
- ▶ **Definitions and Research**
- ▶ **5 Questions CPD**

My Clinical Practice

Background:

I am a Clinical Sexologist & Couples L3 trained Gottman method couple therapy

Accredited Clinical Supervisor (ACA)

I have a special interest in Pelvic pain / sexual wellness after cancer

Sexology: is the interdisciplinary scientific study of human sexuality across the lifespan

“...a central aspect of being human throughout life encompasses sex, gender identities and roles, sexual orientation, eroticism, pleasure, intimacy & reproduction. Sexuality is experienced and expressed in thoughts, fantasies, desires, beliefs, attitudes, values, behaviours, practices, roles and relationships... It can include all of these dimensions, not all of them are always experienced or expressed. Sexuality is influenced by the interaction of biological, psychological, social, economic, political, cultural, legal, historical, religious and spiritual factors.” *(WHO, 2006a)*

HCP: talking about sex...

Questions

What % of

Clients
want to
discuss
sex?

85%

Clinicians
think sex
should be
discussed?

98%

Actually
discuss
sex?

10 – 35%



Common Mis-Beliefs /Barriers / Attitudes....

- 1) Some else's responsibility to ask about...
- 2) An erection is essential for satisfying sex
- 3) All physical contact must lead to sex
- 4) Sex equals intercourse
- 5) Sex should be natural & spontaneous
- 6) Sex causes cancer or can spread cancer
- 7) Older people don't have sex
- 8) All affairs end in separation



Our Brain is the most powerful sex organ!



***Better Sex through
Mindfulness***

Responsible:

- for attending to a sexual cue/trigger
- associating it with a positive or negative sexual memories
- For Eliciting a sexual response stimulus
- For Triggering the motivation for sexual intimacy

Diagnostic & Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5)

- Delayed Ejaculation: 25% only 1% complain
- Early Ejaculation(Prem): 20-30%. 18-70yrs
- Erectile Disorder: 2%<40 / 40-50% >50-80 & Fear
20% -1st Sx/ 8% actual
- Female Orgasmic Disorder: 10 to 42%.
- Genito-Pelvic Pain/Penetrative Disorders: 15-30%

Diagnostic & Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5)

- Major reformation. **DSM-5** manual: Sexual interest & Arousal Disorder(SIAD) from **DSM-IV**: HSDD & FSAD
- **Male HSDD: no change to DSM-5, research supporting the divergence in (cis)gender sexuality.**
- Gender Dysphoria: A chapter in the DSM-5 (change to language from the DSM IV)

The background features a vibrant, abstract design. It consists of numerous thin, purple lines radiating from the center, creating a starburst effect. Overlaid on these lines are several large, wavy, purple shapes that resemble stylized, elongated droplets or cells. These shapes are arranged in a symmetrical pattern, with some appearing to have small, white, circular highlights. The overall color palette is dominated by purple and blue, with a bright yellow and orange starburst in the center.

Interventions

Make no assumptions...

- ▶ Gender diversity
- ▶ Sexual Diversity
- ▶ Sexual attractions
- ▶ Neurodiversity
- ▶ Relationship status
 - Partnered
 - Single
 - Polyamorous
 - Consensual non-monogamy
- ▶ Age

“I just took a leaflet out of my mailbox informing me that I can have sex at 82!”



“I’m sooo happy, because I live at 73 so it’s not far to walk home afterwards!”

Neurodiverse Relationships

Ref: Tony Attwood



Love is: Helping and doing things for your lover.

Love is: I have no idea what is involved.

Love is: Tolerance, loyal, allows 'space'.

Love is: An attempt to connect to the other person's feelings and emotions.

Love is: Companionship, someone to depend on to help you in the right direction.

Genito-Pelvic Pain/Penetrative Disorders (GPPPD – DSM-5)

- ❖ Disorder of Pain & of Sex
- ❖ The Pain wreaks havoc
- ❖ Pain may require (Medical) interventions

A pain disorder that interferes with sex rather than as a psychosexual disorder that resulted in pain.

Anxiety & Avoidance appeared to be more reliable factor to distinguish dyspareunia & Vaginismus.

Managing physical changes

Vaginal Atrophy– Medically diagnosed

Personal Lubricants



Vaginal Moisturisers



Vaginal Oestrogen



Life Stages & what is “Normal” (Is it just me)

- ❑ **Changes in sex drive (libido)**
- ❑ **Changes in sexuality can be related to health issues**
- ❑ **Changes in the quality of Erections & Quantity**

GOOD ENOUGH SEX MODEL

McCarthy, B. W., & Metz, M. E. (2008). The "good-enough sex" model

Health Benefits of Using Vibrators to Address Range of Pelvic Health Conditions



Tuning out distractions can help managing erectile issues and other sexual problems.

Frameworks to talk/assess Sex(uality)

- ▶ (Ex) PLISSIT Model
- ▶ BETTER Model
- ▶ ALARM
- ▶ PLEASURE



Therapeutic considerations

- ✓ Client Story and how they are relationally
- ✓ Taking the pressure off - sexual intercourse
- ✓ Referral to Physio or relevant AHP
- ✓ Sexual response cycle- Intimacy based (Basson)
- ✓ Questionnaire (sexual assessment)
- ✓ Resources (evidenced based)



Creating an experience through therapy:

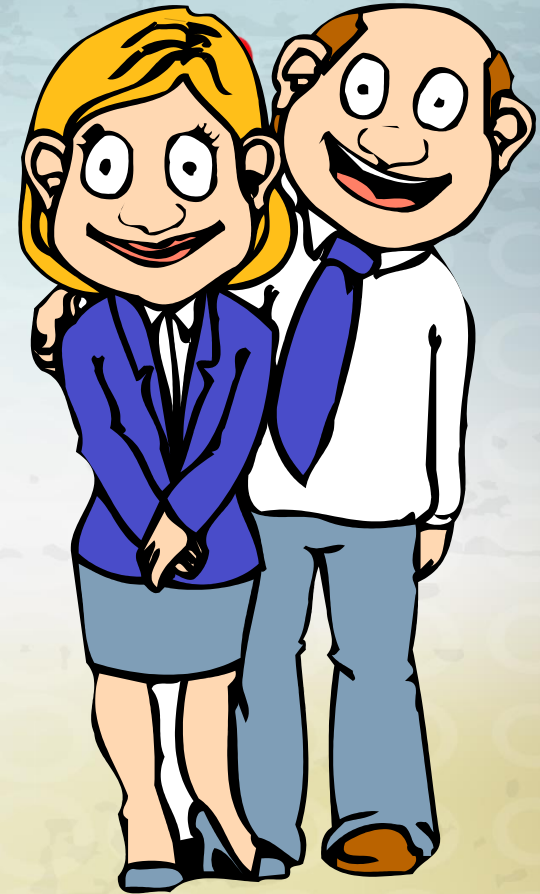
- Thoughts create emotions
- Changing thoughts changes emotions
- Thoughts, feelings, and actions build on one another

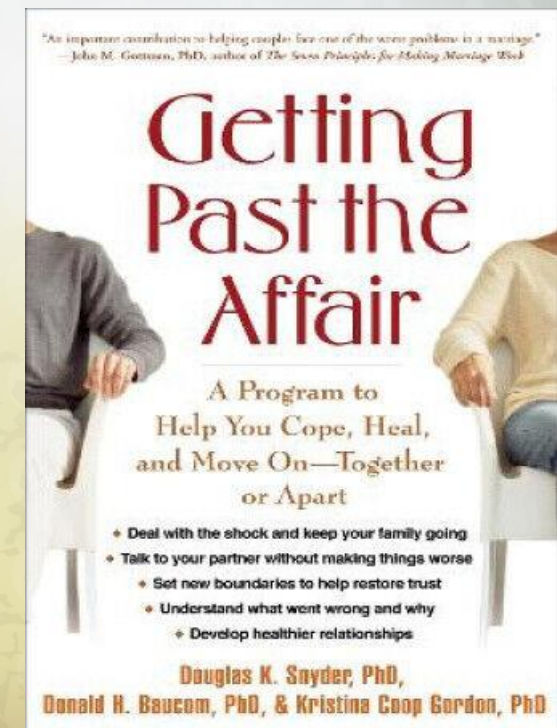
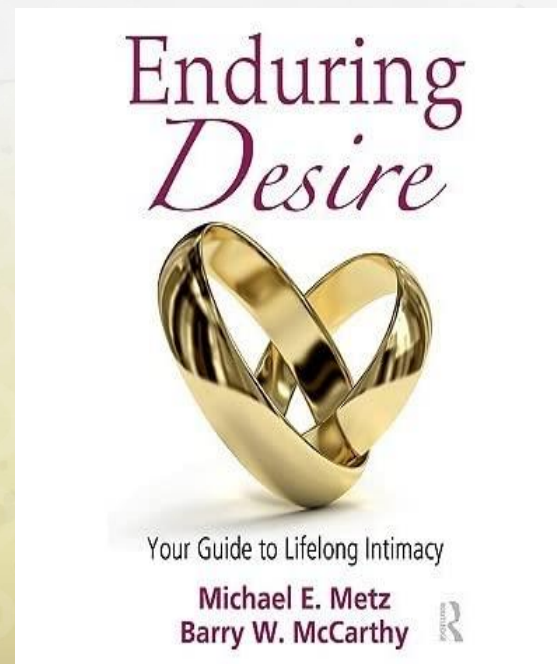
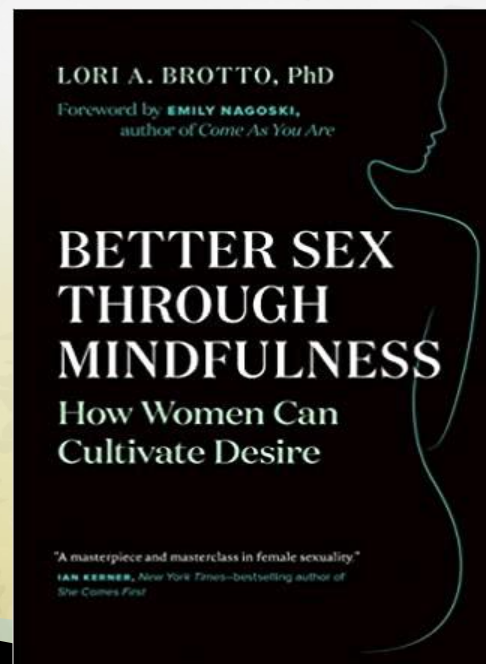
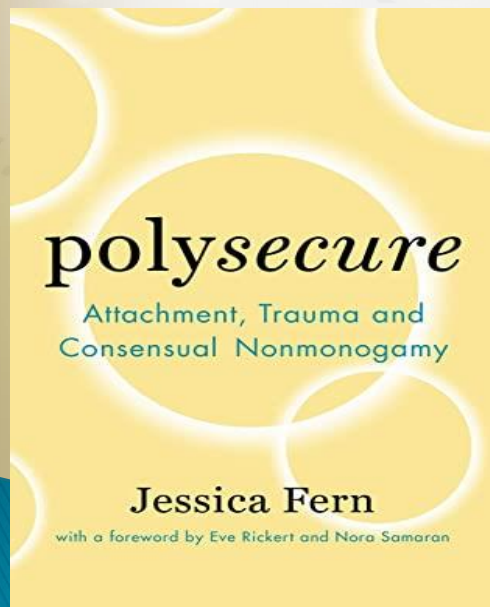
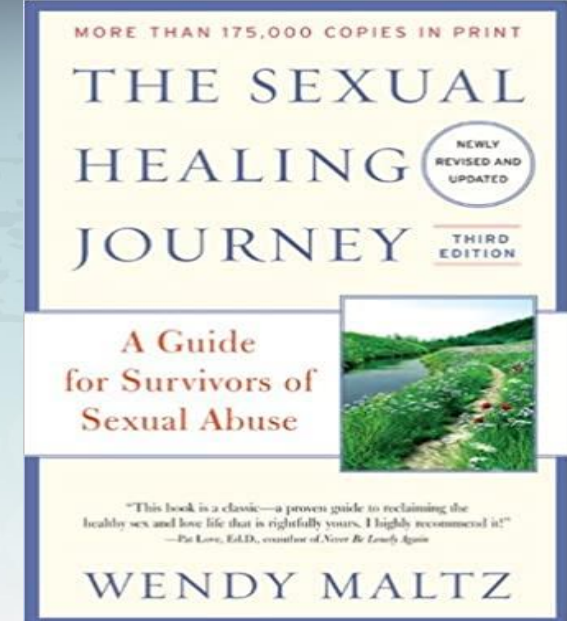
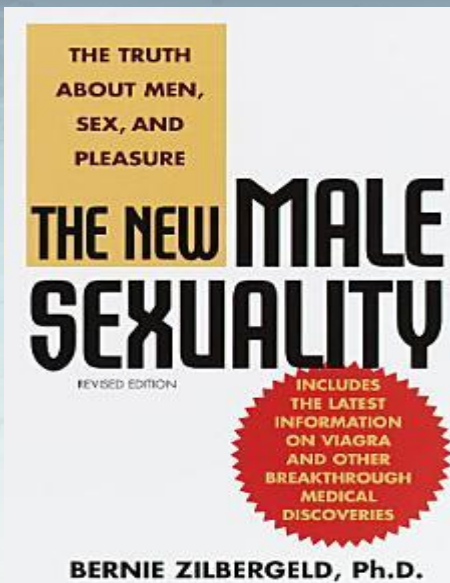
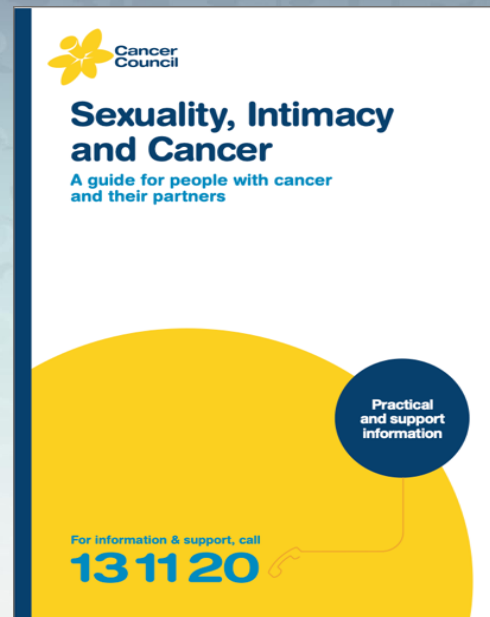
Pleasant sensations create desire for
More Thoughts
Actions
Sensations
Emotions



Therapy Consideration

- ✓ Self Compassion & Kindness / Self Care
- ✓ Creating Rituals of connection
- ✓ Communication-
Practical strategies -managing Conflict
- ✓ Couple/Individual counselling





Psychosexual therapeutic support.....



70% of improvement in how the individual or couple manages their sexual relationship/s

Question 1

What percentage of HCP willing to discuss sex?

AND

Would you or your Doctor be comfortable to bring up or check in with you about a sexual concern?

Question 2 :

***Can you add to this list? If you want
let us know in the chat box!***

Question: 3

What are your thoughts of having, for example sexual arousal as a disorder as part of the DSM : Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders”?

(not that long ago that homosexuality was in the DSM)

Question 4

What is the difference between a Pjur & Hyaluronic acid

Questions for Self-Reflection

What do the terms
'sexuality & intimacy'
mean to me?

How comfortable do I feel
discussing issues of intimacy and
sexuality in my personal world or
with Clients?

How does the way I
think about
sex/sexuality
influence my
personal view?

Attitudes and Beliefs about Sexuality addresses the following topics:

Awareness of your sexuality including sexual scripts, attitudes about gender, & sexual values.

Awareness of your sexological worldview.

Awareness of your cultural & familial values related to sex, sexuality & gender.

Awareness of your sexual, gender biases & prejudices

Willingness to challenge your sexual, gender assumptions & stereotypes.

Interpersonal awareness.

Useful links / information

Society of Australian Sexologists: www.societyaustraliansexologists.org.au

<https://www.loribrotto.com/dr-brotto>

Australasian Menopause Society www.menopause.org

Jean Hailes Foundation www.jeanhailes.org

Cancer Australia: <https://www.canceraustralia.gov.au/affected-cancer/cancer-types>

Prostate Cancer: <https://thepenisproject.org/>

The Cancer Council

<https://www.blinkist.com/magazine/posts/simplify-lori-brotto-make-sex-more-mindful-transcript?>

<https://headspace.org.au/assets/download-cards/17-Sexuality-and-Mental-Health-headspace-fact-sheet-WEB-V4.pdf>

<https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/lgbti>

<https://www.pridetraining.org.au/pages/pronoun-page>

<https://aifs.gov.au/resources/practice-guides/inclusive-communication-lgbtq-clients>

<https://services.unimelb.edu.au/counsel/resources/relationships/diverse-sexuality-sex-and-gender-lgbtqa>

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teşekkür ederim
dank je
gracias tapadh leat
moichchakkeram
go raibh maith agat
sukriya kop khun krap
arigatō takk dakujem
merci
terima kasih
감사합니다
ευχαριστώ
sagolun
ije