Female Sexuality

Presented by:

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UWA
IMED2208: Issues in women's reproductive health

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Clinical Sexology:

- Human interest/behaviours & functions
- There are presently 3 fields in professional practice in Sexology:
  - ❑ Clinical Practice
  - ❑ Education
  - ❑ Research

as a Clinical Sexologist & Counsellor…

One of my main objectives is to create a comfortable environment that allows individuals & couples to talk about their sexual wellbeing/concerns

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Overview

- Sexuality across the lifecycle
- Sexuality & function
- Disruption to sexual desire/libido

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Defining it….

" Sex & sensuality encompass a kaleidoscope of feelings & activities:

From the deepest longings for mutual affection to the simple enjoyment of the company of a loved one...

Sexuality also covers a gamut of behaviours- Touching, Kissing, Caressing and Cuddling, Genital intercourse with mutual orgasm and…

feelings of closeness & of being wanted and valued as a human being"

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Life long process...

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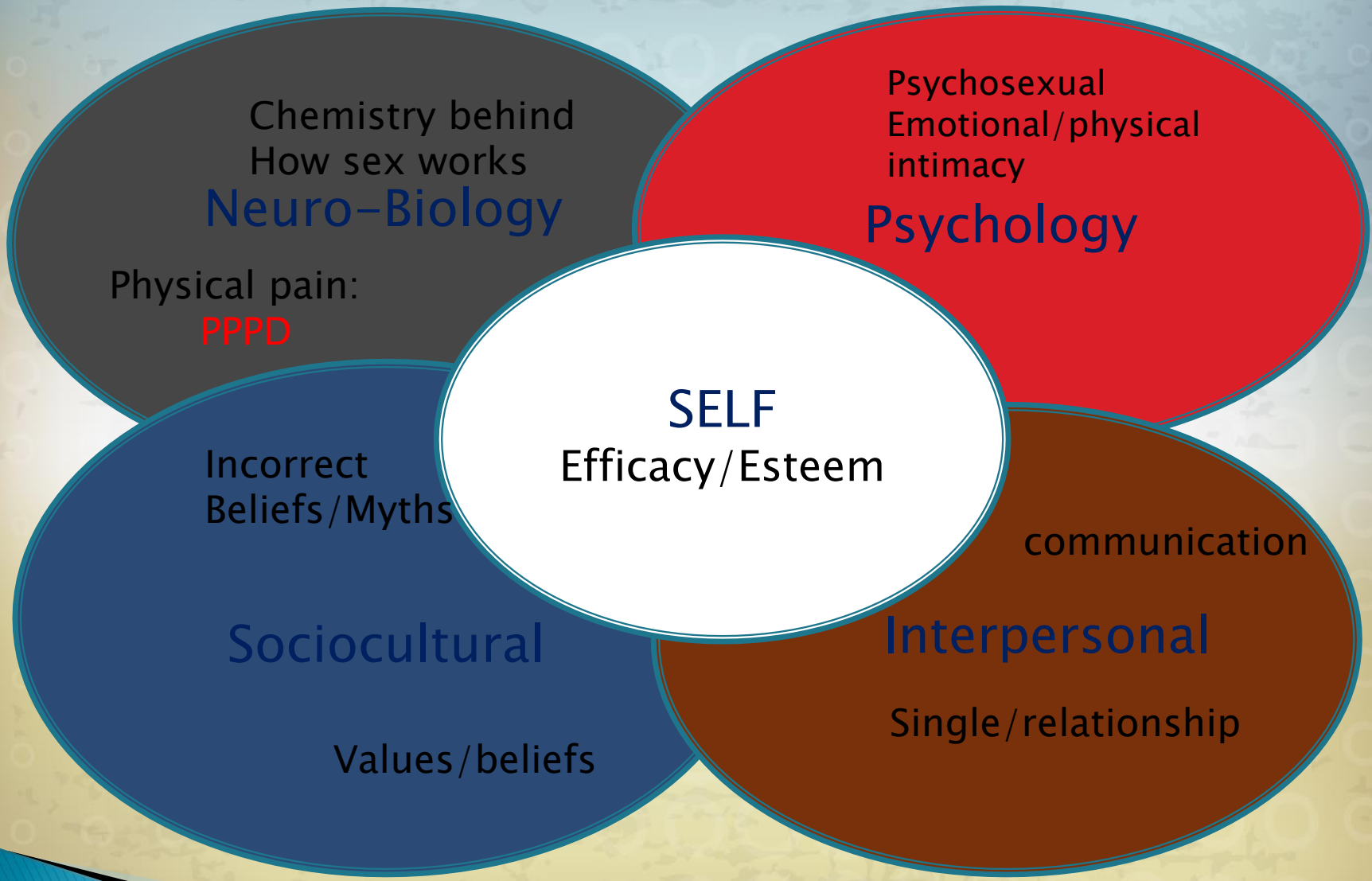
Influencing factors!



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Sexuality & Sexual Wellness

- Fundamental to the way in which we share intimacy or experience physical closeness
- Includes but not limited to sexual function
- Linked to our roles and relationships within families, work & society

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Natural aging processes in women:

we ever REALLY talk about them- Menopause & sex/sexuality

- Labia
- Clitoris
- Orgasm changes
- Sensual responses
- Hot flushes / Night sweats
- Mood changes

" Do you think it is still a TABOO subject!!??"

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Disability & Sexuality

- Negative perceptions
- Negative Experiences
- Abuse
- Confusion about the right to refuse (know they have a right) most found it hard or impossible to assert themselves in sexual relationships

These dominate the narratives of the women with ID- interviewed when asked about their sexual lives

(Journal of Intellectual & Developmental Disability, 2014)

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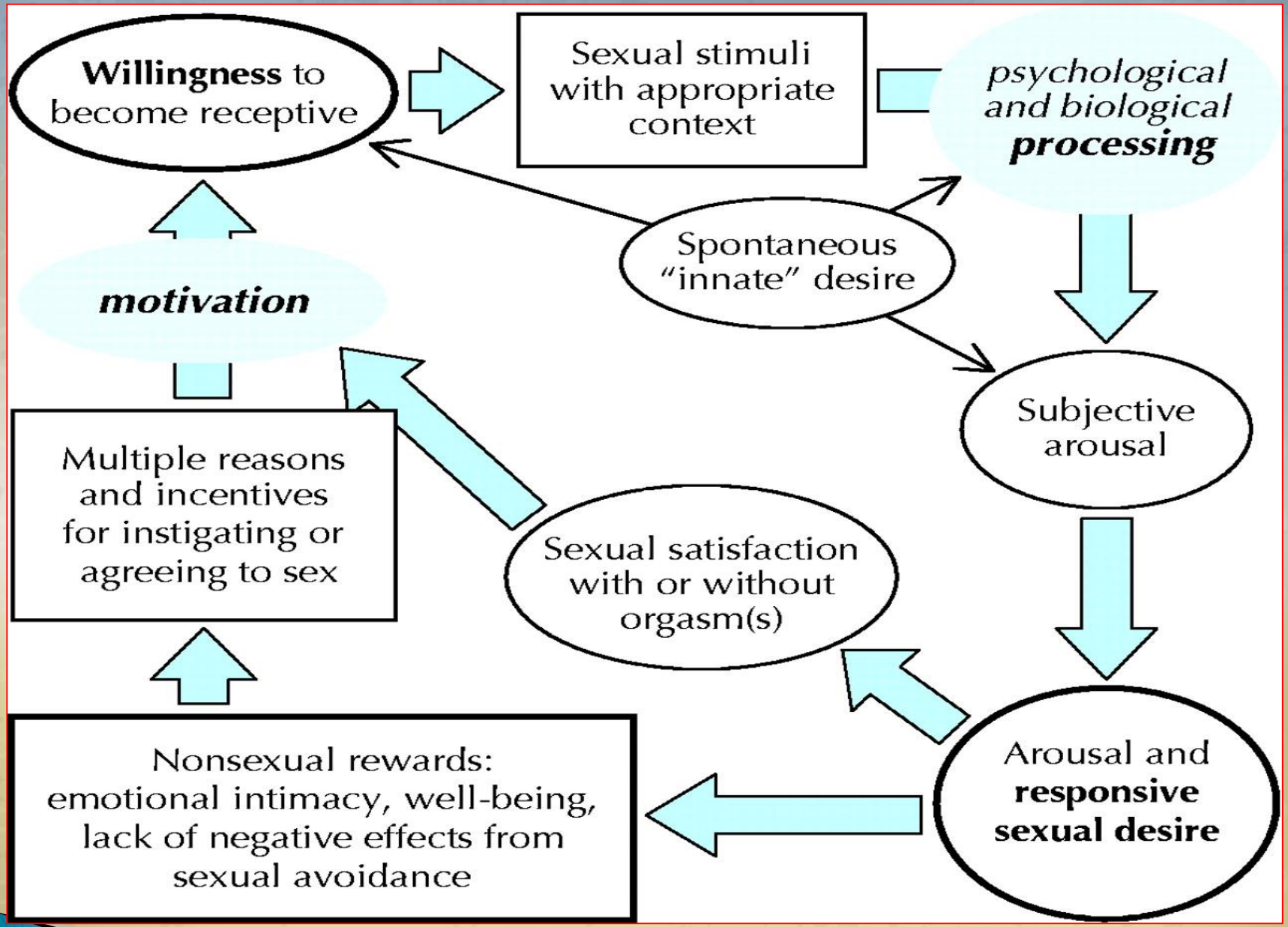

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What is Libido / Sex Drive / Desire to be sexual?

- Sexual drive is the motivation & inclination to be sexual
- A subjective awareness of desire for sexual satisfaction, irrespective of sexual activity
- Desire for sexual intimacy
- Sexual desire can be aroused through imagination and sexual fantasy's or perceiving an individual who one finds attractive

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Categories of Female Sexual Dysfunction

Sexual desire disorders	Hypoactive sexual desire disorder Sexual aversion disorder
Sexual arousal disorder	Female sexual arousal disorder
Sexual orgasmic disorder	Female sexual orgasm disorder
Sexual pain disorders	Dyspareunia Vaginismus Noncoital sexual pain disorder

Basson R, et al. *J Urol.* 2000;163:888-893.

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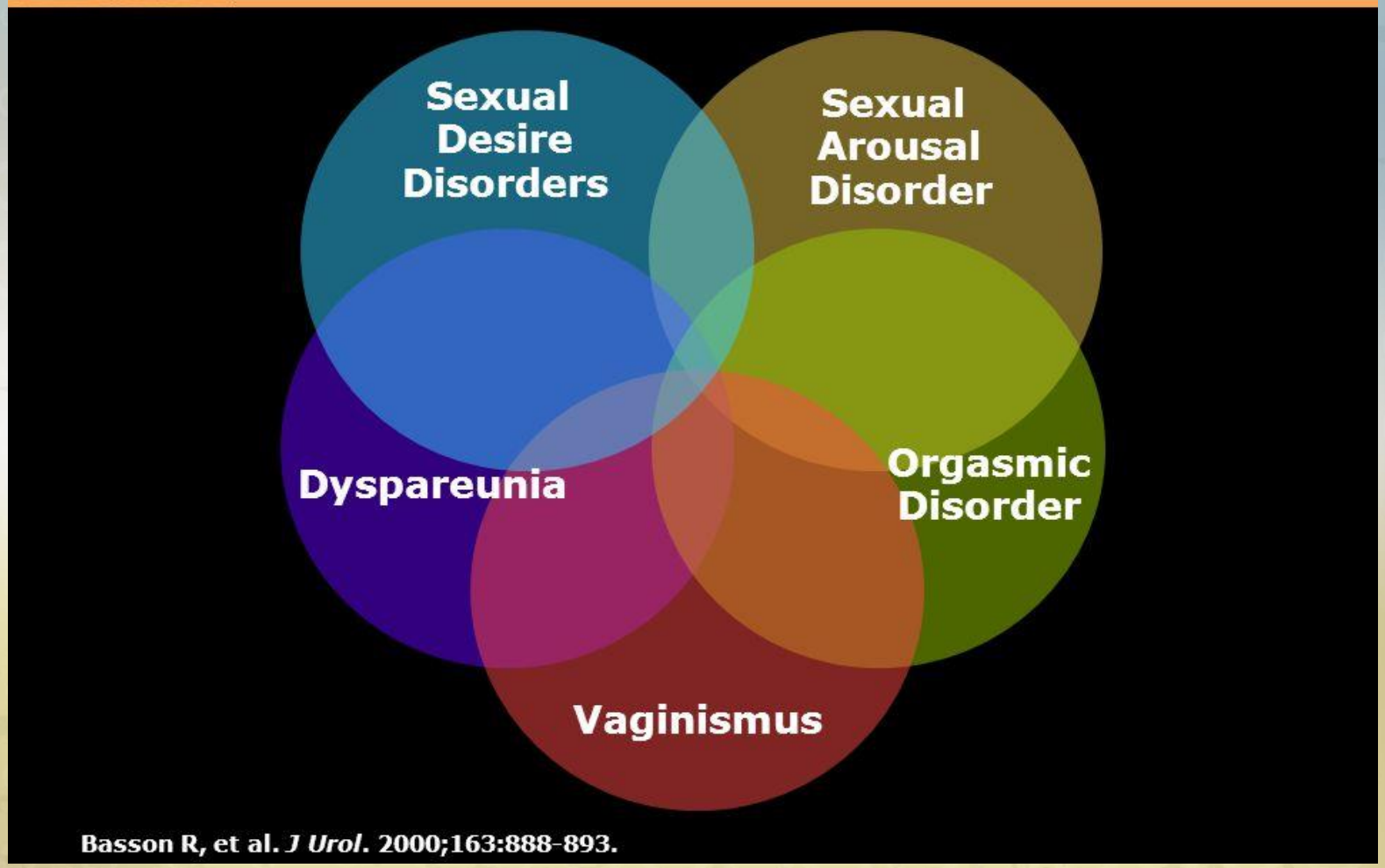
Overlap of Female Sexual Disorders



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Types of Menopause

- Natural: 51-55 years of age
- Surgical
- Medical
- Early:
- Premature: before the age of 40
- Peri menopause: symptoms
- Menopause: after 1yr (no menses)

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Vaginal symptoms: 50-85% of menopausal women will experience

Hickey 2008

- Vaginal dryness
- Discomfort
- Pruritis
- Dyspareunia
- Atrophic vaginitis (assoc UTIs, urinary urgency)

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Vulvovaginal Atrophy Symptoms

- Urge “to go”
- Frequent urination
- Vagina dryness
- Painful sex
- Recurrent urinary infection

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Overall 80% reported sexual activity

74% reported sexual activity with a partner

49% experienced high level of sexual distress:

- *Decrease lubrication (DL)*
- *44% reporting (DL) most of the time/always*
- *41% dissatisfaction overall sex life*
- *28% regular dyspareunia*
- *15% high levels of pain*
- *25% difficulty with orgasm*

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Healthy Vagina, Healthy Vulva: Practical Tips

- **Things to avoid:**
  - Harsh soaps, contact irritants (e.g., chemicals, perfumes)
  - Over-bathing
  - Dampness / bladder leakage
  - Mini pads

- **Recommended tips:**
  - Wear 100% cotton underwear
  - Kegel, Pilates, Yoga exercises
  - Weight loss

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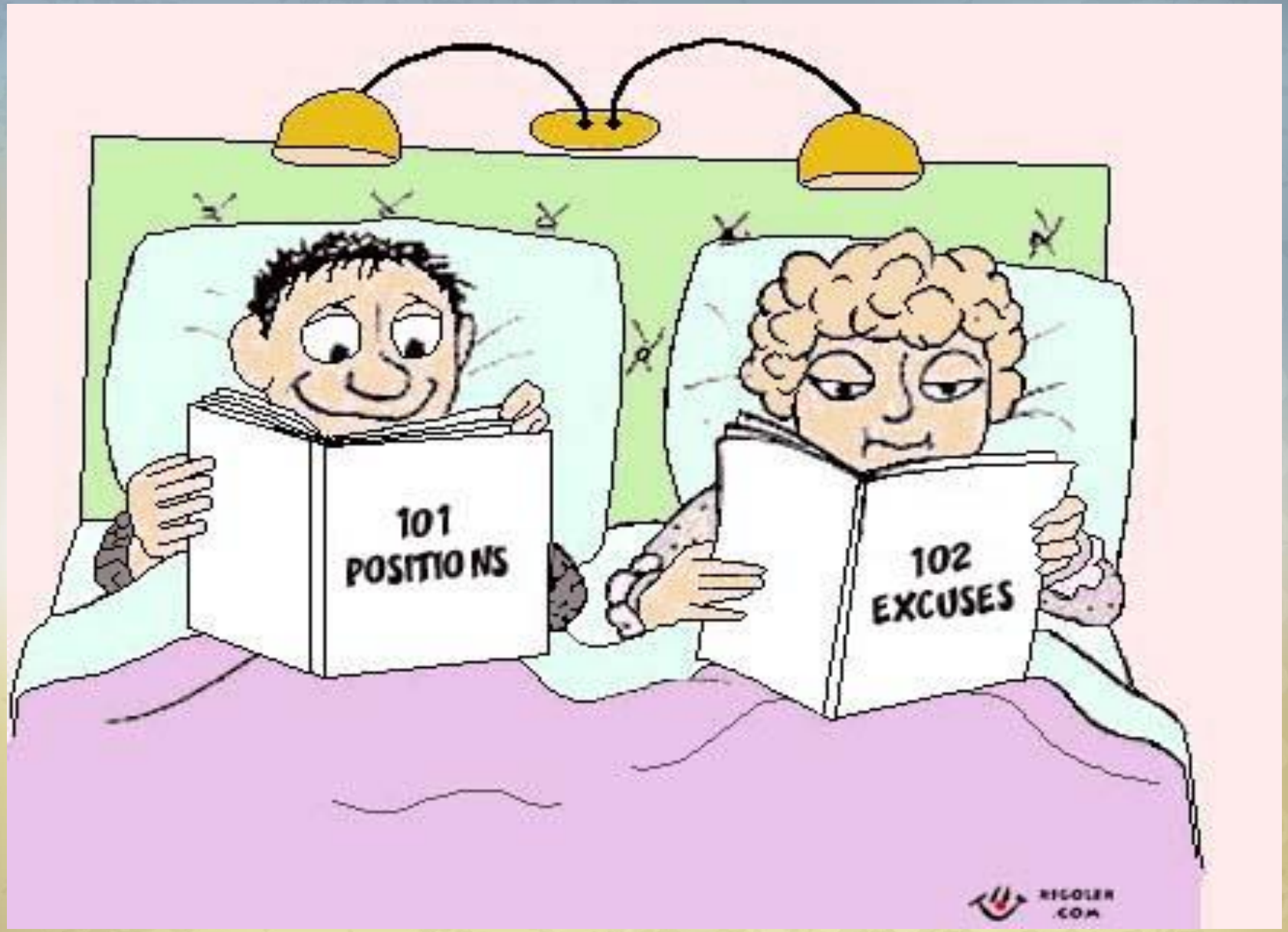

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Barriers to talking about Sex

- Beliefs (cultural)/ Biases
- Inexperience and fear of opening a ‘Pandora’s Box’
- Stereotypical Attitudes (Ageist)
- Private Nature (own discomfort)
- Some one else's domain
- Sexual Orientation

The Elephant in the Room

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- **PARTNERS** EXPERIENCE A 'RIPPLE' AND THIS IN TURN, DECREASES THEIR OWN LIBIDO
- FEAR OF REJECTION OR OF HURTING THEIR PARTNER
- THE COMPLEXITY OF REGAINING A SENSE OF 'NORMALITY' WITHIN THEIR SEXUAL RELATIONSHIP
- SENSE OF BEING 'UNWANTED'/ 'UNDESIRABLE'

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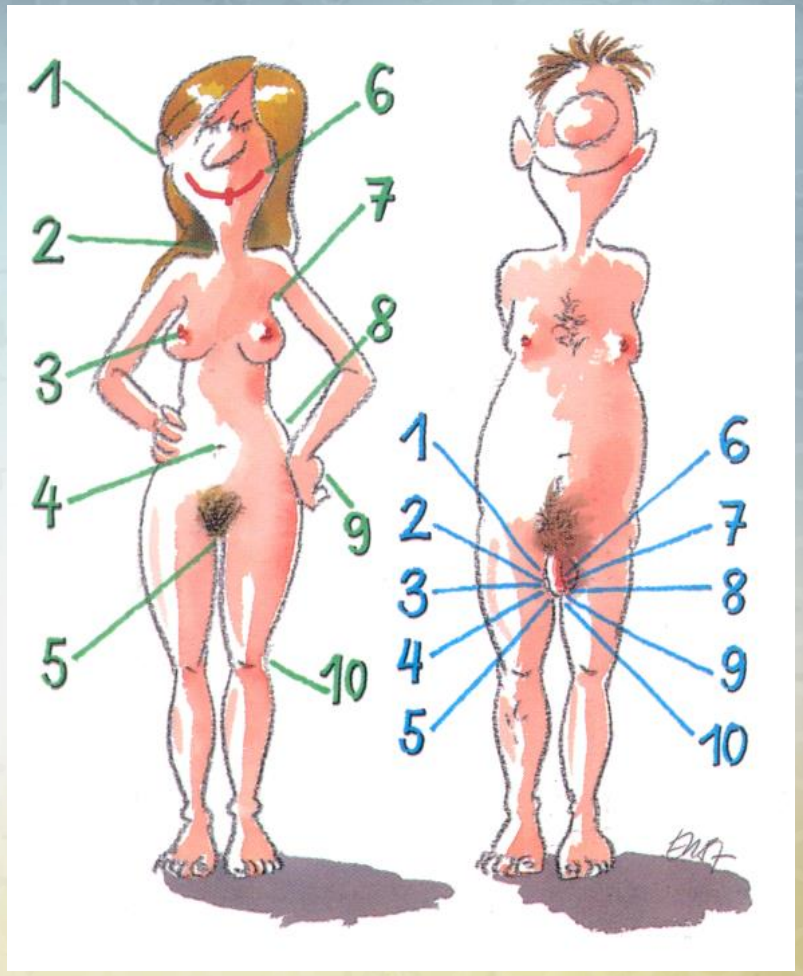
Creating Intimacy

- Celebrate the good in life
- Words & actions of love & appreciation
- Create opportunities for intimacy: Take time out to be together as a couple
- Explore new ways of being together and deepening the level of intimacy



- Why Viagra doesn't work in women!
- Male & Female Erogenous Zones

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Body- Esteem…. Image

Dr Amanda Hordern, PhD.
(The Cancer Council Victoria)
for the beautiful image.

- Physical & psychological impact of breast surgery/radiotherapy
- Affect appearance, breast sensitivity, interest in sex, feeling self conscious
- Sexuality remains with you throughout your life, regardless of age!

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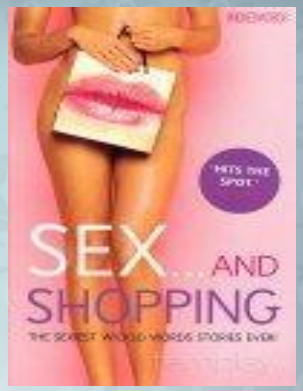

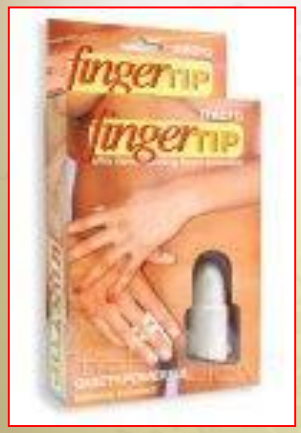

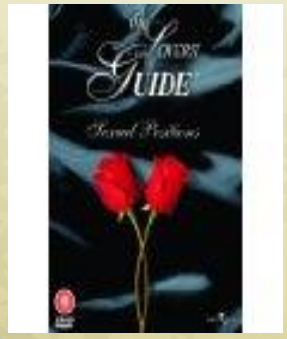

Our attitude towards sex

Ref: Pjur :website: google images

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Top complaints mentioned with this' pink pill' are tiredness, headaches and Drowsiness…*ironically reflects why its need in the first place?*

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No Magic Pill…

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Treatment will include: Education goal setting, anxiety reducing strategies & interventions:

- No penetrative sex until Pelvic health assessment (Physio)
- strategies to maintain connection/communication
- Or therapeutic interventions (individual/couple)
- Validating the experience of pain
- Demystifying the pain / Anxiety
- Refer to appropriate HCP if necessary

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Sex at 82!

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

I'm sooooo happy, because I live at 73 ... So it's not far to walk home afterwards!

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Resources:

- Sexologist (ME) ☺
- Menopause & Menopausal Symptoms after Cancer Clinic (MSAC) KEMH
- Keogh institute
- Jean Hailes Foundation for women
- Cancer Australia
- Australasian Menopause Society
- Adult shops: www.forplayandpleasure.com.au/contact
- Femplay (sex toys for women) www.femplay.com.au
- Becoming orgasmic: www.bettersex.com
- The Australian Society of Sexologists
- Sexual Health Headquaters
- SECCA: disability relationships sexuality
- Women's health Physio
- Continence specialist
- GPs – with interests in womens health
- **BOOKS:** Good Loving Great Sex / Sex Matters for Women
- www.pelvicpainfoundation.org

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Thank You

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