

# Working With Pain Clients Who Have Sexual Concerns

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# Requirements for Working with Clients with Sexual Issues

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- ◉ Knowledge of the helping process
- ◉ General therapy/interviewing skills
- ◉ Knowledge about pain and treating pain
- ◉ Knowledge about human sexuality
- ◉ Awareness of own values and biases
- ◉ Comfort talking about sexuality
- ◉ Self-efficacy
- ◉ Specific sexual therapy/counselling skills

How might these prevent you  
or your colleagues from  
effectively dealing with clients'  
sexual concerns?

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# Sexual Concerns

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- ◉ DSM-IV
  - Disorders of: Desire, Arousal, Orgasm, Pain
- ◉ New View of [Women's] Sexual Problems
  - Discontent or dissatisfaction
- ◉ Couple discrepancies
- ◉ Key dimensions
  - Lifelong vs acquired
  - Situational vs generalized

# Other Sexual Difficulties

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- ◉ Paraphilia
- ◉ Nonparaphilic sexual compulsions
- ◉ Gender identity disorders

# Sources of Sexual Difficulties

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- ◉ Organic
  - physiological
  - medical/pain
  - drug
- ◉ Sexual tipping point (Perelman)

# Sources of Sexual Difficulties

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- Psychological
  - Misinformation/lack of information
  - negative attitudes
  - anxiety: general & performance
    - cognitive interference
  - techniques & communication
  - relationship distress
  - lifestyle
  - psychological distress

# Working With Sexual Difficulties

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- Annon's **PLISSIT** model
  - **P**ermission
  - **L**imited **I**nformation
  - **S**pecific **S**uggestions
  - **I**ntensive **T**herapy

# Interventions with Sexual Difficulties

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- Misinformation

- education

- Negative attitudes/cogn

- education, cognitive restructuring

- Anxiety

- education, sensate focus, mindfulness training

- Techniques & communication

- education, sensate focus, communications training

# Interventions with Sexual Difficulties (continued)

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- ◉ Relationship distress
  - couple therapy
- ◉ Lifestyle
  - Education, problem solving
- ◉ Psychological distress
  - Individual therapy

# Assessment of Sexual Difficulties

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- ◉ Screening question
- ◉ Presenting problem
- ◉ Information for SS or IT
  - family & childhood background
  - dating & relationship history
  - psychological functioning
  - sexual history
  - current sexual functioning

# Resource for Clients

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- ◉ ***Chronic Pain Can Interfere With Sexuality*** (Mayo Clinic Staff)

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/chronic-pain/PN00009>

- ◉ ***Chronic Pain and Sexuality*** (Church)

<http://www.nationalpainfoundation.org/articles/489/chronic-pain-and-sexuality>