



Loving Choices



# Let's Talk about Sex Therapy: Working with Diverse Communities

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# Learning Objectives

- 1) Have a broad understanding of common sex therapy concepts
- 2) Describe some of the adaptations made to sex therapy concepts to better support diverse communities
- 3) Explore an example of adapting sex therapy concepts to better help diverse clients



# Sex Therapy Concepts

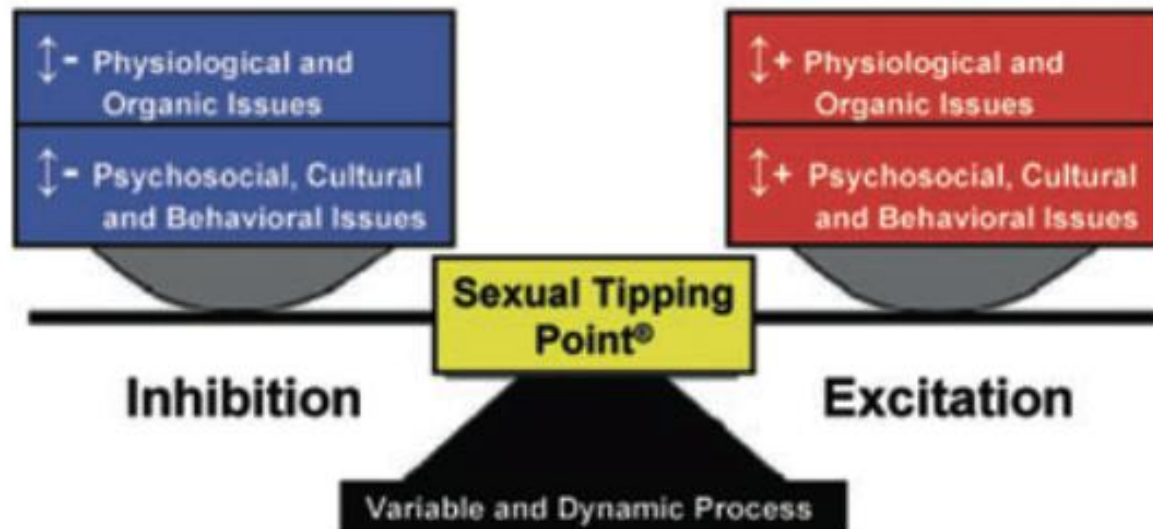
- ▶ Dual Control Model
- ▶ Human Sexual Response
- ▶ Closeness vs. Separateness
- ▶ Defining “sex”
- ▶ Trauma-informed treatment
- ▶ Attachment theory
- ▶ Lovemaps and Arousal Templates



# Sex Therapy Concepts

Pfaus, J. 2009. Journal of Sexual Medicine. Pathways of Sexual Desire, June 6(6), 1506–33.

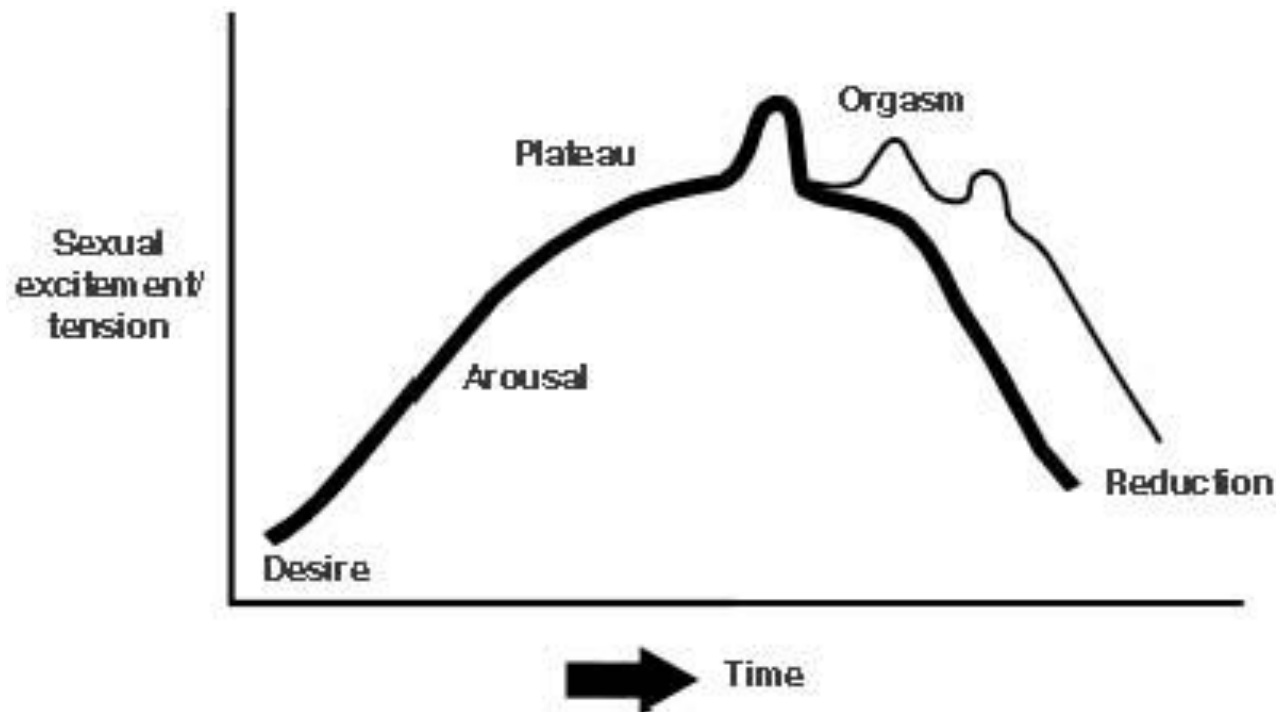
## Dual Control Model



# Sex Therapy Concepts

## ▶ Human Sexual Response

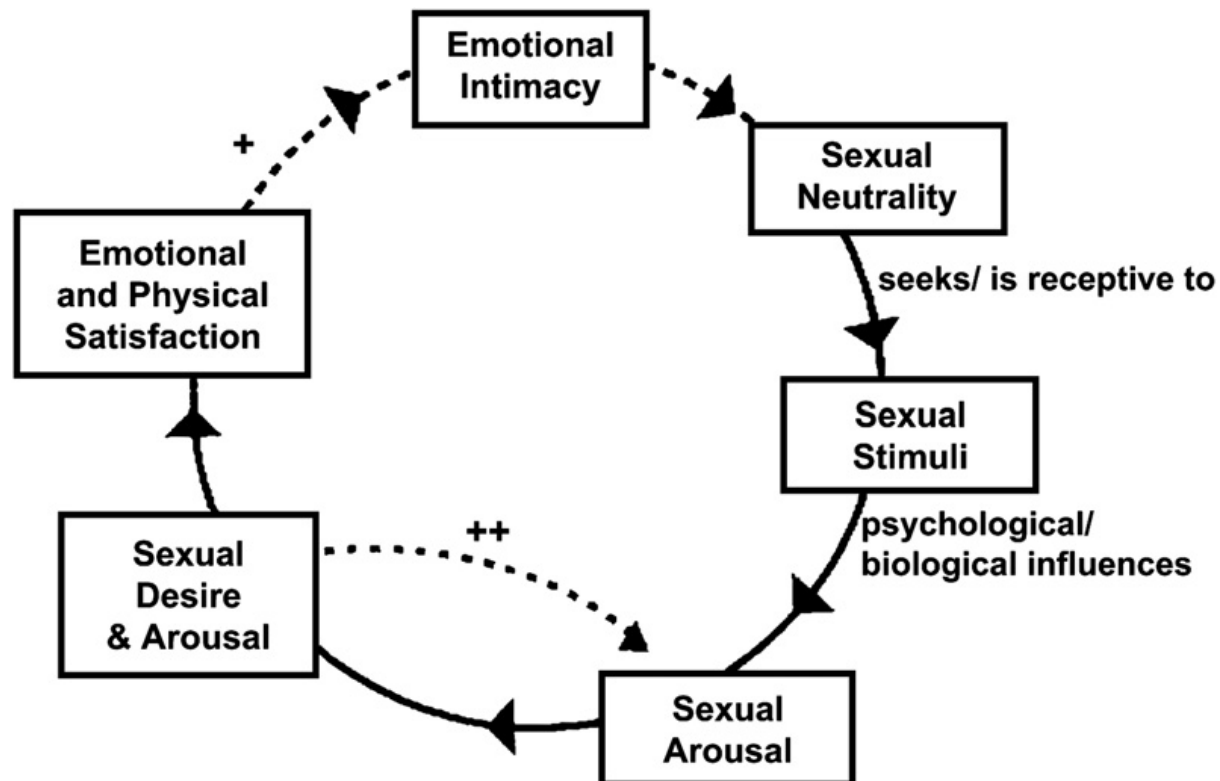
Masters, W.H., Johnson, V.E. Human sexual response. Boston: Little Brown & Company; 1966



# Sex Therapy Concepts

## ▶ Sexual Response Cycle

Basson, R. Are the complexities of women's sexual function reflected in the new consensus definitions of dysfunction? *J of Sex Marital Therapy* 2001;27:105-12





# Sex Therapy Concepts

- ▶ Closeness vs. Separateness
  - David Schnarch
  - Esther Perel



# Sex Therapy Concepts

- ▶ How do you define sex?
  - Focus on Penis, Orgasm, and Performance
  - Focus on Pleasure, Intimacy and Connection
  - What counts as sex?





# Sex Therapy Concepts

- ▶ Trauma
  - Brain changes
  - Hypervigilance
  - Trust
  - Sexual Functioning
  - Working through past
  - Fearful Avoidance

How Trauma Traps  
Survivors in the Past

# Sex Therapy Concepts

## ▶ Attachment Strategies

		Thoughts of Self	
		Positive	Negative
Thoughts of Partner	Positive	<b>Secure</b> Comfortable with intimacy and autonomy	<b>Preoccupied</b> Preoccupied with relationships
	Negative	<b>Dismissive</b> Dismissing of intimacy Strongly independent	<b>Fearful</b> Fearful of intimacy Socially avoidant

# Sex Therapy Concepts

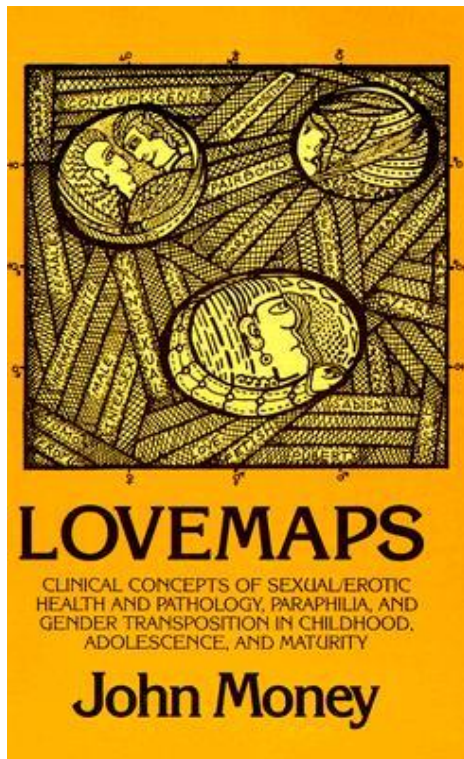
## Attachment Dynamics



Based on "The Cycle"  
by Scott Woolley, PhD

# Sex Therapy Concepts

## ▶ Love Maps and Arousal Templates



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# Expanding on Templates for Diverse Communities

- ▶ Past views of sexually “uncommon” behaviours
  - Sexual deviancy
  - Psychological pathology
  - Unhealthy relationships
  - Boredom
  - “Spicing things up”

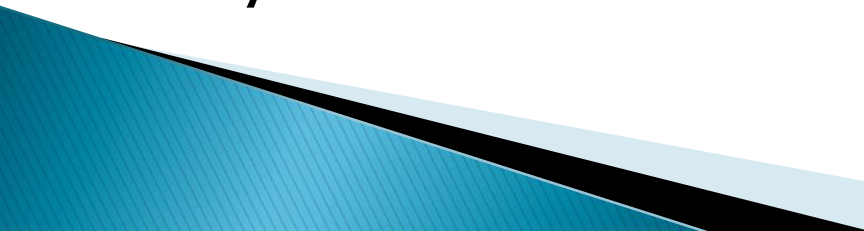


# Jessica's Masters Research

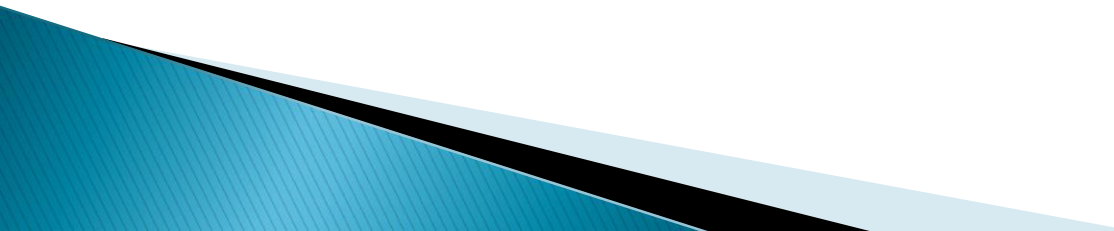
- ▶ An alternate theory of developmental sexuality
- ▶ Explored the relationships between:
  - Sexual experience
  - Sexual awareness
  - Sexual attitudes
- ▶ Compared students, members of LGBTQ community, and swingers



# Correlations

- ▶ Swingers had significantly higher levels of sexual experiences, awareness, and open attitudes
  - ▶ LGBTQ group in the middle
  - ▶ Students last (despite past research suggesting they would be first)
  - ▶ Sexual orientation was influenced by experience
  - ▶ Swingers had the most bisexual encounters by still self-identified as heterosexual
- 

# Sexual Identity and Self Identity

- ▶ One unexpected result
  - ▶ Sexual awareness development for swingers and LGBTQ were different
  - ▶ Diamond and Savin-Williams concept
    - Sexual identity and self identity do not necessarily develop at the same time
    - In therapy, one cannot assume the development of a sexual identity will also lead to sexual awareness
- 

# Developmental Sexuality

- ▶ What if an individual is much higher in one area than their partner? What if it's 2 areas? Or all 3?
- ▶ What if individuals are higher in one area but lower in another compared to their partner?
- ▶ Bridging the gaps in therapy
  - These situations will not always fit arousal templates

# Adaptations to Concepts

- ▶ Sexual rights
- ▶ Assumptions implicit in traditional models

Table 3. Summary of inclusive sex therapy principles and techniques identified in survey of sex therapy specialists/experts.

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## *Principles*

- Maintaining a stance of nonjudgmental acceptance
- Ensuring familiarity with sexual diversity
- Use of social constructionist analysis

## *Techniques*

- Normalizing (i.e. the client's sexuality and/or sexual problem)
  - Horizontalizing (conceptualizing the client's sexuality within the wider horizon of their identity)
  - Affirming-as-necessary (especially, affirming the client's identity and subjective experiences)
  - Emphasis on reflective practice
  - Maintaining a non-pathologizing stance
  - Refuse to take on a client (in cases of obstructive, self-identified clinician bias/prejudice)
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# Adaptations to Concepts

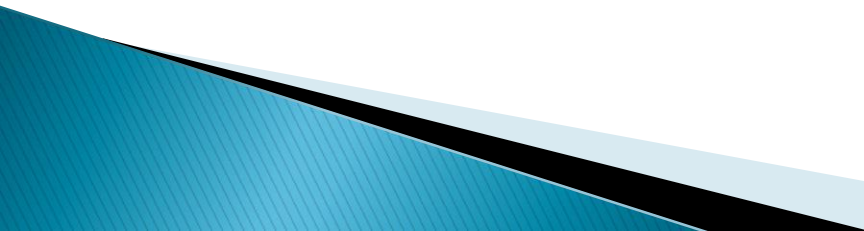
- ▶ Is intercourse the defining characteristic of sex for everyone?
  - ▶ Is the definition of hypersexuality/ sex addiction the same for everyone?
  - ▶ Does everyone go by the DSM to assess their sexual functioning? Are all client's goals the same?
  - ▶ What about sex therapy for solitary sex?
  - ▶ What role has trauma or mental illness played in sexual development?
  - ▶ What is the role of society's non-acceptance of diverse sexualities?
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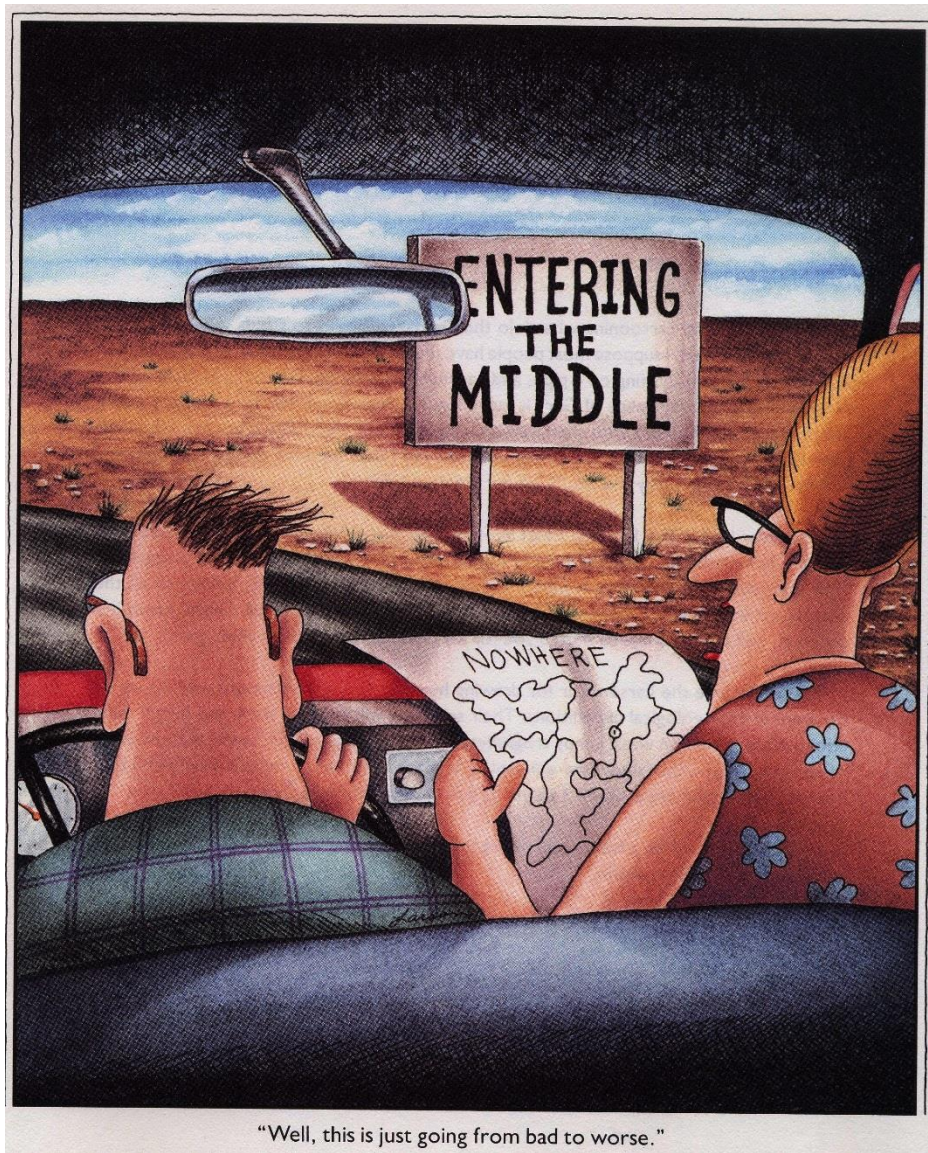
# Take Home Messages

- ▶ There is no “one size fits all” theory or therapy.
- ▶ Used as road maps – but DO NOT tell the topography of the land or terrain
- ▶ Adaptation and Accommodation – It does not have to be perfect
  - Used to meet clients needs
  - Offer an explanation – but not exclusively
  - Go where the client is



# Take Home Messages

- ▶ Acceptance is always key
    - Normalization
    - Enjoyment
  - ▶ There are no “weird” fetishes or kinks
    - (Only fun ones)
  - ▶ Be prepared for how “normal” sex therapy can be
  - ▶ Fantasies do not always become real life
- 



"Well, this is just going from bad to worse."

Well, this is going from bad to worse...

# Questions

- ▶ Thank you
- ▶ Jason Jones
  - Registered Psychologist
  - Certified Sex Therapist
- ▶ Jessica Blake
  - Registered Psychologist



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