



Institute for
Relational Intimacy

Couples Conference
2022
Workshop

Facilitating Intimate Connection:

CLINICAL STUDIES IN DESIRE DISCREPANCY

Martha Kauppi, LMFT

AASECT Certified Sex Therapist and Supervisor

Copyright 2020, 2021, 2022

How to Get a Strong Start Videos:

- Video 1 is why I think every therapist should talk about sex in therapy
- Video 2 is Will Lily in depth



Willingness

When your partner is interested in a sexual interaction, do you feel willing?

Rule out coercion, violence, pressure, consent violations

Libido

Are you interested in sex? Do you think about sex? Experience desire?

ASAP abstain from the painful activity, treat the pain. Refer to MD, and then

Pain

Does any kind of sexual touch feel uncomfortable or painful?

vulvar pain specialist, pelvic floor PT, urologist, sexual medicine MD

Arousal

Do you experience body signs of arousal? Flushing, increased heart rate, hardness? wetness?

Use lubricant, address hormonal issues, and refer erectile dysfunction to MD, cardiologist, etc. Rule out vascular issues

Orgasm

Are you able to reach orgasm when you want to? With or without partner?

Satisfaction

At the end of the interaction, do you feel satisfied? Would you do it again?

Stops Desire Every Time:



- Pressure for sex
- Sex pain
- Performance anxiety

Autonomic Nervous System:

Anxiety
Aversion
Resentment
Guarding
Withholding
Reacting

Relaxing
Appreciating
Luxuriating
Lingering
Savoring
Expanding



Dual Control Model:



- Developed by Janssen and Bancroft at The Kinsey Institute in late 1990
- There is a balance between excitatory and inhibitory influences on sexual response
- Can be likened to a gas pedal and a brake



Dual Control Model:

An opportunity
for a collaborative conversation
between partners



Pressure for Sex

Martha Kauppi, LMFT

Copyright 2022

Subtle Pressure for Sex:

- Expressing an expectation rather than a desire for sex
- Expecting Birthday/special occasion sex
- Keeping a sex calendar
- Expressing lots of disappointment about not having sex
- Assuming that any physical intimacy indicates consent for more



What is Consent?

- Agreement, permission, invitation, willingness
- Relevant to both giving and receiving
- Can be revoked, shifted, altered at any time
- Freely given
- Specific and non-transferable to other activities
- Often life-changing



Asking for Consent:

- Figure out what you want
- Ask for what you want
- Wait for cues that indicate the other's desire to participate
- If you don't get enthusiastic endorsement, invite partner into the conversation with curiosity and openness
- Willingness is sufficient, but only if the partners are able to respond to subtle cues, and speak up for themselves accurately under stress
- Check in often as events unfold
- Be willing to pivot at any time and give permission for that



Giving Consent:

- Figure out what you want
- Say what you want; be prepared to elaborate or set a boundary
 - Might be an enthusiastic YES to the offer
 - Might be willingness without enthusiasm
 - Might be a specific counter-offer
 - Might be a tentative counter-offer
 - Might be a vague counter-offer
- Continue to monitor what you want and speak up. Pivots are just fine and to be expected
- Exit the situation if you don't feel heard and respected



Modeling Consent in Therapy:



- Ask permission to share your perspective, change topic, or ask questions
- Give permission to push back or disagree and invite other opinions
- “Just because I ask you a question doesn’t mean you have to answer it”
- Give strokes for self-defining
- Access curiosity when receiving feedback

Differentiation of Self:

- Self-awareness
- Hold steady, speak your truth, pare away the drama and distraction
- Listen with curiosity, stay grounded, hold multiple perspectives



Sexual Differentiation:

Are you connected to yourself?

Are you in touch with your body, and sensation?

What fans your desire?

What might you like to try?

Can you notice when you shift internally from “yes” to “maybe” or “no”?

Would you like to ask for what you want?

Do you know you can give yourself pleasure? Desire?

Sexual Differentiation Superpowers



Need more information?

www.instituteforrelationalintimacy.com