

Sex Therapy

At the Mood Treatment Center we offer sex therapy by a certified sex therapist, Gray Moulton. Below is a general description of sex therapy (from the Mayo Clinic):

Sex therapy is a type of psychotherapy — a general term for treating mental health problems by talking with a mental health provider. Through sex therapy, you can address concerns about sexual function, sexual feelings and intimacy — either in individual therapy or in joint therapy with your partner. Sex therapy can be effective for adults of any age, sex or sexual orientation.

Sex therapy can help you resolve various sexual issues, from concerns about sexual function or feelings to the way you relate to your partner. Through sex therapy, you may focus on issues such as:

- Concerns about sexual desire or arousal
- Concerns about sexual interests or sexual orientation
- Compulsive sexual behavior
- Erectile dysfunction
- Ejaculating too quickly (premature ejaculation)
- Trouble reaching orgasm (anorgasmia)
- Painful intercourse (dyspareunia)
- Intimacy issues related to a disability or chronic condition
- Concerns regarding past sexual trauma

Talking about sex and intimacy may initially feel awkward. Remember, certified sex therapists are trained at putting you at ease and are skilled at identifying and exploring sexual concerns. Through sex therapy, you can learn to express your concerns clearly, better understand your own sexual needs and better understand your partner's sexual needs.

Before your appointment

Prepare for your appointment by making a list of:

- Details of the problem you have, including when it started, whether it's always present or comes and goes, professionals you've seen, and treatments you've tried and their outcomes.
- Key personal information, including your medical conditions and any major stresses or recent life changes
- All medications, vitamins, supplements or herbal preparations that you're taking
- Questions to ask your therapist about your sexual concerns

Remember, effective sex therapy requires trust and good communication between you and your therapist. If you don't feel enough rapport with your therapist to lead to effective resolution of your concerns, consider finding another therapist.

What you can expect

You'll likely begin sex therapy by describing your specific sexual concerns. Sexual issues can be complicated, and your therapist will want to get a clear idea of all the factors involved. Once your therapist understands the situation, he or she will discuss ways to resolve your concerns and improve your communication and intimacy.

If you're in a relationship, it's usually most helpful to involve your partner in meetings with your sex therapist. You and your partner may be assigned a series of homework exercises, such as:

- Communication exercises with your partner
- Slowing down and focusing on what you're sensing during sexual encounters (mindfulness techniques)
- Reading or watching educational videos about sexual techniques
- Changing the way you interact with your partner during sex

Sex therapy is usually short term. Some concerns can be addressed quickly, in just a few visits. Typically, however, a number of counseling sessions are required.

As sex therapy progresses, you'll use your home experiences to further identify and refine the issues you'd like to work on. Remember, sexual coaching that involves physical contact is not part of mainstream sex therapy.

Keep in mind that concerns about sex and intimacy are often linked to other underlying issues, such as stress, anxiety or depression. In other cases, sexual function is affected by chronic illness, medication side effects, surgery or aging.

Depending on your concerns and your physical health, seeing only a sex therapist may be enough — or your sex therapist may be part of a team that includes your doctor, psychologist or physical therapist. For some sexual concerns, medication may be helpful. A complete medical evaluation can help determine the nature of your problem and the full range of treatment options that may be appropriate for your situation.

—Adapted from *Mayo Clinic*

about whether the following options would be right for you:

Sildenafil (Viagra), tadalafil (Cialis), Vardenafil (Levitra), bupropion (Wellbutrin), buspirone, mirtazapine (Remeron), trazodone, yohimbine, cyproheptadine, ginkgo, maca root, zestra, arginmax.

—Chris Aiken, M.D., Updated 9/8/2014

Sex, Depression & Medication

One of the most common symptoms of depression is a loss of libido (=sex drive). Unfortunately, many medications for depression have side effects which can impact sex drive. Usually they cause a delay in orgasm. You may be able to work with your partner to accommodate this change (such as increasing foreplay), but for some people this change disrupts their entire sex life.

Medications for depression with few or no sexual side effects include:

Bupropion (Wellbutrin), nefazodone (Serzone), mirtazapine (Remeron), vortioxetine (Brintellix), Selegiline (Emsam), pramipexole (Mirapex), ropinorole (Requip), cyproheptadine, agomelatine (available only in Europe), buspirone (Buspar, for anxiety), lamotrigine (Lamictal, for bipolar depression), modafinil (Provigil), armodafinil (Nuvigil).

If you are not able to come off a medication that is causing sexual side effects, we may be able to add an antidote to relieve the problem. Talk to us