

# Empower – Menopause and Cancer Survivorship Pathway

Intimacy and Sexuality

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# Today

- You
- Female Sexual Distress Scale
- Sexual response cycle
- Desire
- Hopes & Solutions For The Future

# You

## Your relationship with your body?





[www.fleshafter50.com](http://www.fleshafter50.com)















# General Population

- A third of men (34%) and two-fifths of women (41%) reported having a current sexual problem.
- Mean age 50yrs
- Increased with age in men and remained the same for women.
- Vaginal dryness, Erectile problems

(Dunn KM et al 1998)

- Cleveland Clinic state 43% of women and 31% of men report some degree of difficulty in sexual function

# A Sex Snapshot

- 7x per month if you aged between 30-40 yrs old
- 6x per month if you are aged 40-50
- 5x per month if you are aged 50-60
- Over 60 continues to decline
- NB EVERYONE'S SEX LIFE IS DIFFERENT

# Post Mastectomy

Breast are identified as femininity. Beauty, motherhood & attraction not just an organ

Mastectomy evokes both negative emotions due to the loss of the breast(s) and a sense of hope related to still being alive

Many women wait after a mastectomy to look at the site avoiding the scar, fear of what they might see.

Site describes as “wreathed, horrible, scary, ugly, crooked and collapsed shape”

Social identity-women feel “diminished as a women, half abnormal and depressed”

# Post Gynaecological Cancer

- **Sexuality and Sexual Function is most important QOL issues for these patients**
  - 90% will experience some sexual dysfunction
  - 50% chronic ( greater than 12 months)
- **Ovarian Ca Pt's 2 yrs post treatment**
  - 60% stated sex lives negatively affected
  - 46% reported moderate (20%) or great (26%) sense of loss about their sexuality
- **Cervical Cancer (rt)**
  - Difficulties with sexual function 2-3x more often than aged matched control reports

# Effects of Treatment: Physical

- Changes to breast
- Change to Vagina/Genital area
- Stoma
- Changes to Arm
- Menopausal Symptoms
- Tiredness or Fatigue
- Fertility
- Sexuality
- Concentration
- Memory Problem
- Effect on Heart
- Effect on Lungs
- Effects on Bones
- Weight Gain
- Peripheral Neuropathy



# Effect of Treatment: Psychological

- Anxiety
- Depression (main cause of decreased libido)
- Illness Intrusiveness
- Loss of Feminine Identity
- Low Sexual confidence
- Decreased sexual desire
- Poor body image
- Fear of Intimacy/relapse/
- Anger (fertility)

## The Female Sexual Distress Scale-Revised (FSDS-R; revised 2005): Screening Questionnaire for Measuring Sexually Related Personal Distress in Women With Female Sexual Dysfunction (FSD)

Name:

Date:

Below is a list of feelings and problems that women sometimes have concerning their sexuality. Please read each item carefully, and circle the number that best describes HOW OFTEN THAT PROBLEM HAS BOTHERED YOU OR CAUSED YOU DISTRESS DURING THE PAST 30 DAYS INCLUDING TODAY. Circle only one number for each item, and take care not to skip any items. If you change your mind, erase your first circle carefully. Read the example before beginning, and if you have any questions please ask about them.

Example: How often did you feel: **Personal responsibility for your sexual problems.**

NEVER	RARELY	OCCASIONALLY	FREQUENTLY	ALWAYS
0	1	2	3	4

### How often did you feel

1. Distressed about your sex life	0	1	2	3	4
2. Unhappy about your sexual relationship	0	1	2	3	4
3. Guilty about sexual difficulties	0	1	2	3	4
4. Frustrated by your sexual problems	0	1	2	3	4
5. Stressed about sex	0	1	2	3	4
6. Inferior because of sexual problems	0	1	2	3	4
7. Worried about sex	0	1	2	3	4
8. Sexually inadequate	0	1	2	3	4
9. Regrets about your sexuality	0	1	2	3	4
10. Embarrassed about sexual problems	0	1	2	3	4
11. Dissatisfied with your sex life	0	1	2	3	4
12. Angry about your sex life	0	1	2	3	4
13. Bothered by low sexual desire	0	1	2	3	4

**A score of  $\geq 11$  effectively discriminates between women with FSD and no FSD.\***

Total

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\* DeRogatis L, et al. *J Sex Med.* 2008;5:357-364.

# October 2019

- 39/48 responded
- 37 identified as having FSD

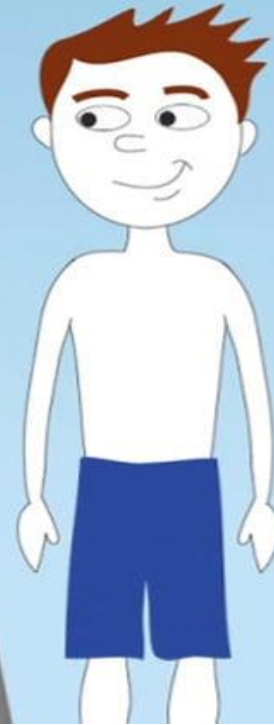
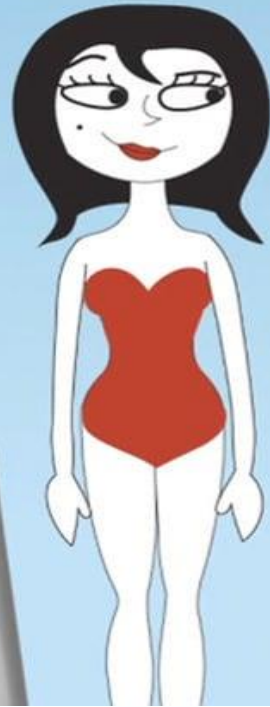
# Prevalence

- Women 35-60%
  - Mostly impaired sexual interest and arousability
  - 10-15% anorgasmia
- Men
  - Rapid ejaculation 20-40%
  - Erectile dysfunction 7-10% (25% over 65yrs)
  - Retarded ejaculation 4%

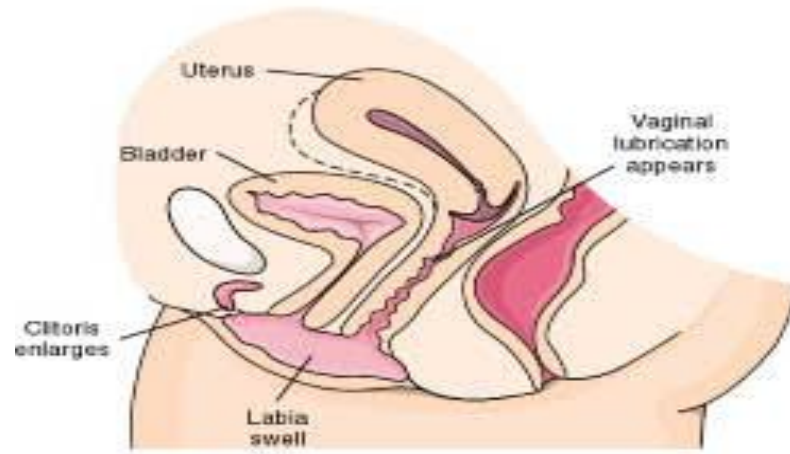
Anne Kratz 2007



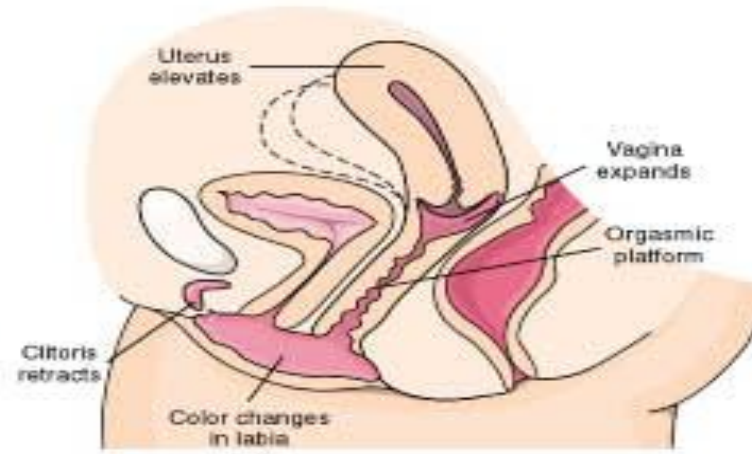
# The Sexual Response Cycle



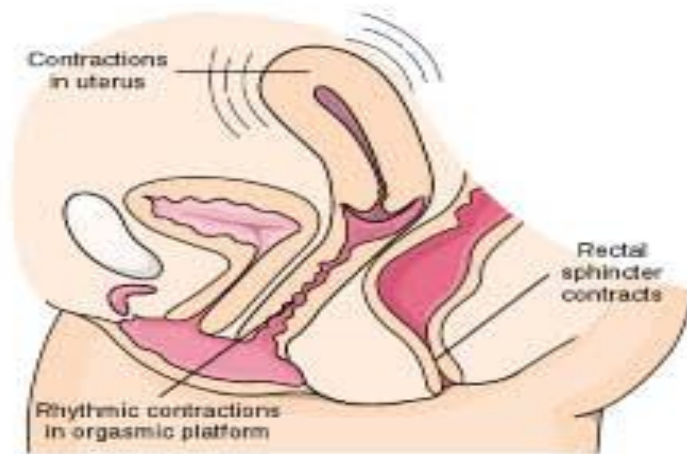
# The Female Sexual Response Cycle



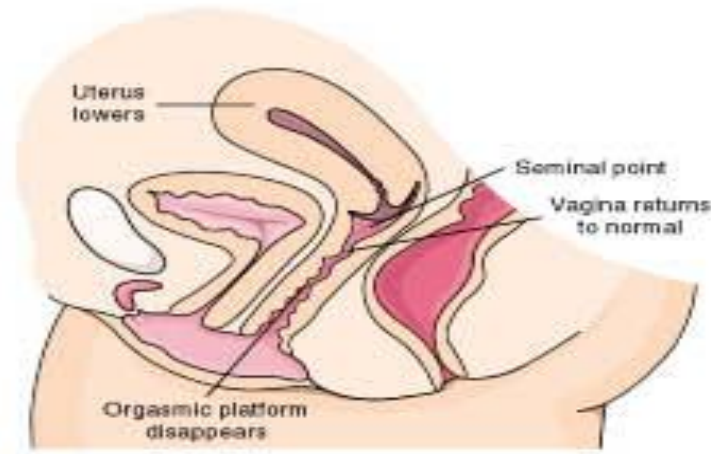
Desire



Arousal



Orgasm



Resolution

At each phase of the sexual response cycle in females, there are characteristic changes in physiology.



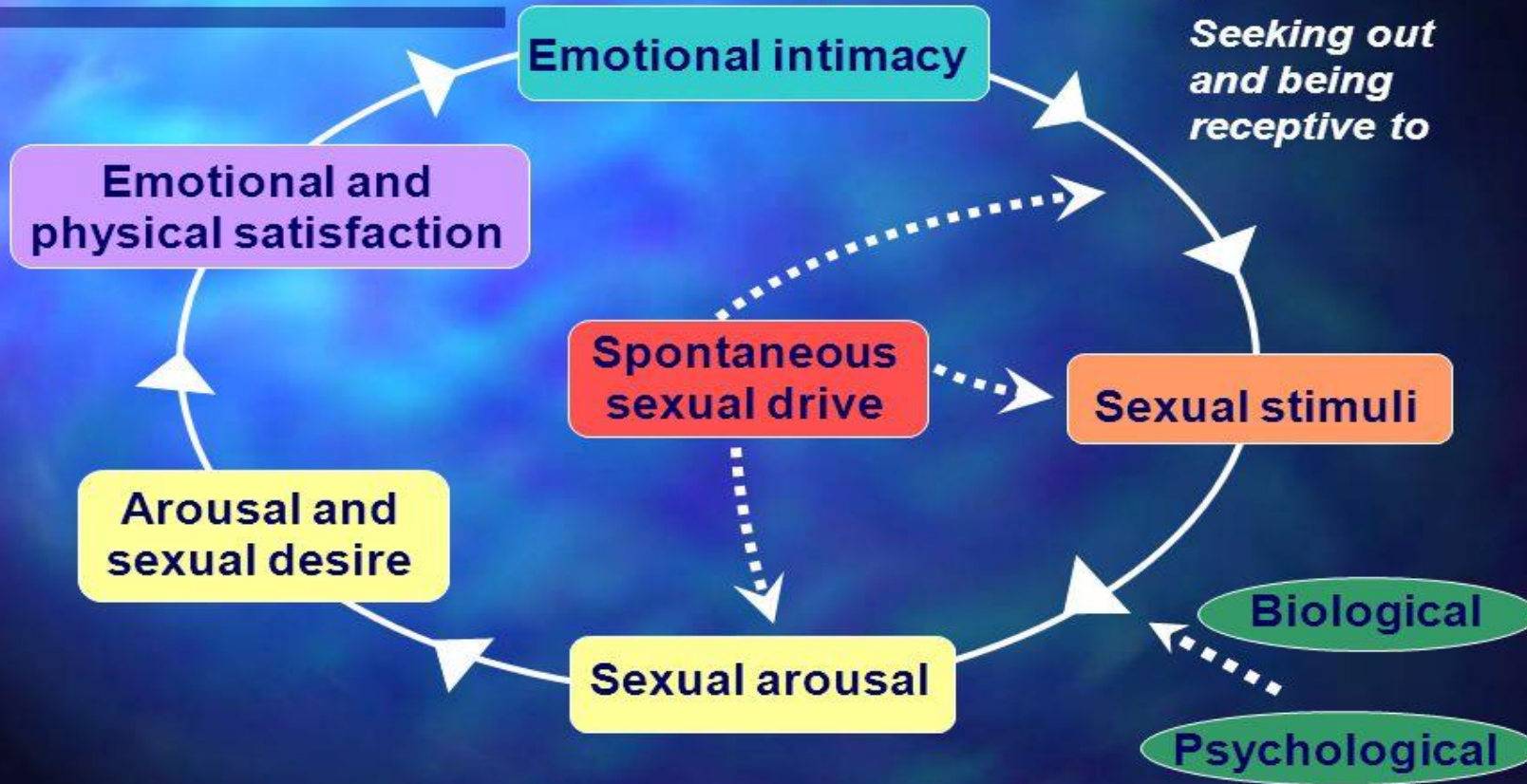


# Revised Sexual Response Cycle

- Loss of sexual desire one of the most common sexual effects of cancer treatment.
- Bason relayed that desire often follows arousal rather than precedes it.
- If motivated...in potentially arousing sexual activity....they begin to feel aroused desire will be triggered.
- Importance of enhancing motivation... understanding the fears about engaging in sexual activity.

[Masters & Johnsons The Sexual Response Cycle](#)

# Intimacy-Based Model of Female Sexual Response Cycle



Basson R. *Obstet Gynecol.* 2001;98:350-353.



Desire for Intimacy

**Shopping v's Intimacy**

**No v's Ambivalent**

# Sexual Desire

- Drive-Biological need
- Motivation-psychological component (mood relationship social context)
- Wish- Cultural component (values, expectations, rules, believes)

# What Motivates You?

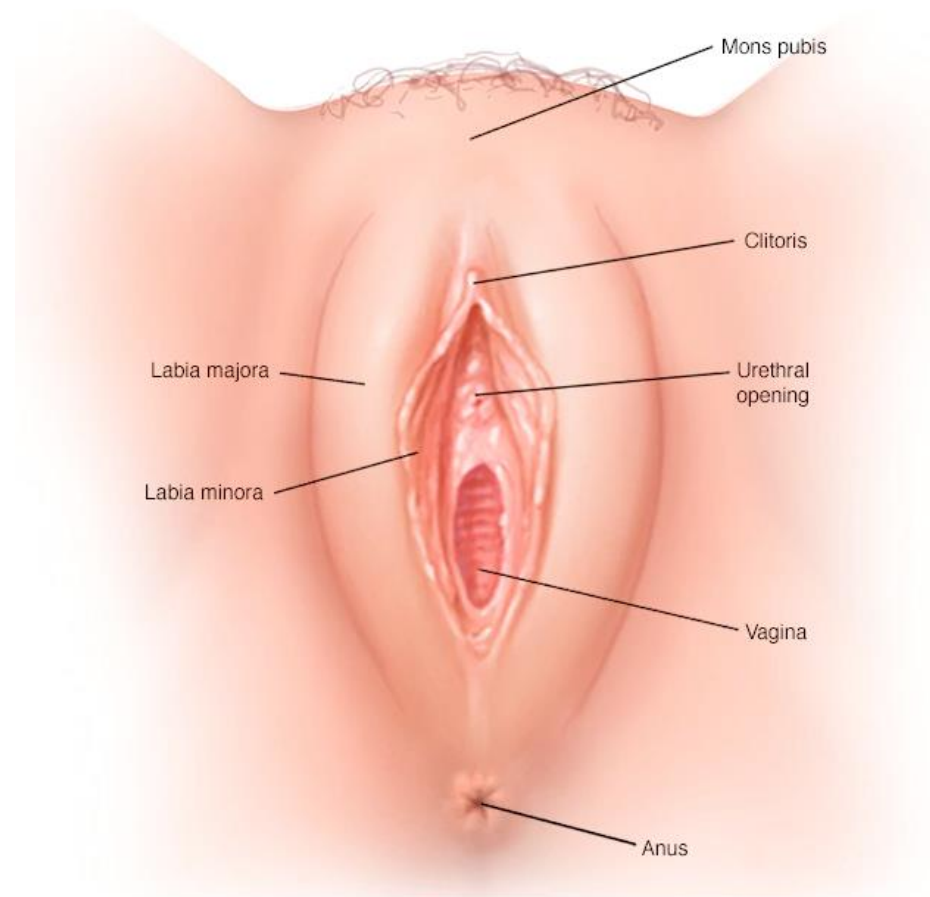
# Stop/Start



# Desire Phase

- Are there times when you spontaneously experience desire for sexual activity? If so how frequently?
- Responsive desire.
- If your partner approaches you sexually, how do you usually respond?





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# Orgasm Phase

- When you want to, do you reach an orgasm normally?
- Is the timing of it too fast/too slow?
- Stimulation is very unique-what types of stimulation works best for you in helping you reach orgasm?

# Resolution Phase

- When you reflect on your recent sexual experience how do you usually feel?
- Are you concerned with any aspect of your body in how it responds sexually?
- With your sexual relationship?
- Or your ability to be a good lover?

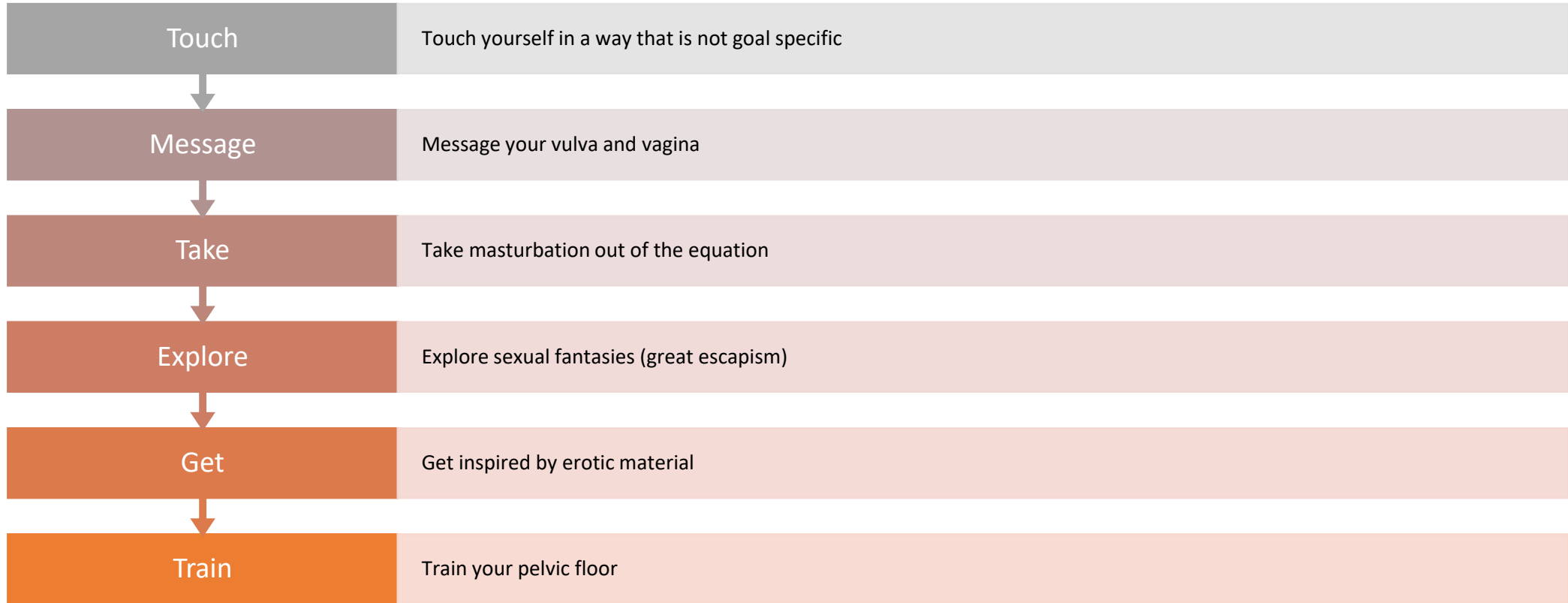
# Single?

- What to say?
- What not to say?
- Manage expectations
- No one is perfect
- Who is perfect for you?
- Time

# Integrate Sexuality into your Daily Life

- Wear sensual clothing made of a pleasant material, such as silk pajamas or nightgowns •
- After showering, take time to apply creams to your body slowly and lovingly, and focus on the sensation of your touch
- Use scented oils or put on your favorite perfume
- Light candles and create a sensual atmosphere
- Put on your favorite music and listen closely, immerse yourself without doing anything else •
- Or engage in the contemplation of a wonderful work of art.

# Connect with your body



# EXERCISE

## Exercise in chocolate!

- ▶ Take a small piece of your favourite chocolate and let it melt in your mouth for at least three minutes without chewing or swallowing. As you do this, focus on the texture of the chocolate and how it changes: the smell, the taste, the different flavours, and the way your body responds to the experience of delayed indulgence. Enjoy the pleasure of the melting chocolate with all your senses.



# TOYS

Climaxing is a combination of rhythm, pressure, and stimulation.

Why not try something new!

- Vibrators with a bent tip that are inserted into the vagina are targeted at sensitive areas in the vagina („G-spot vibrators“)
- Vibrators that are applied exclusively to the external part of the clitoris and vulva. Finger vibrators belong to this category and can be used for additional clitoral stimulation during sexual intercourse
- Combined vibrators that are inserted both vaginally and stimulate the clitoris on the outside („rabbit vibrators“)
- Air pulse stimulators, which are placed on the external part of the clitoris and apply pulsating air pressure waves for stimulation.





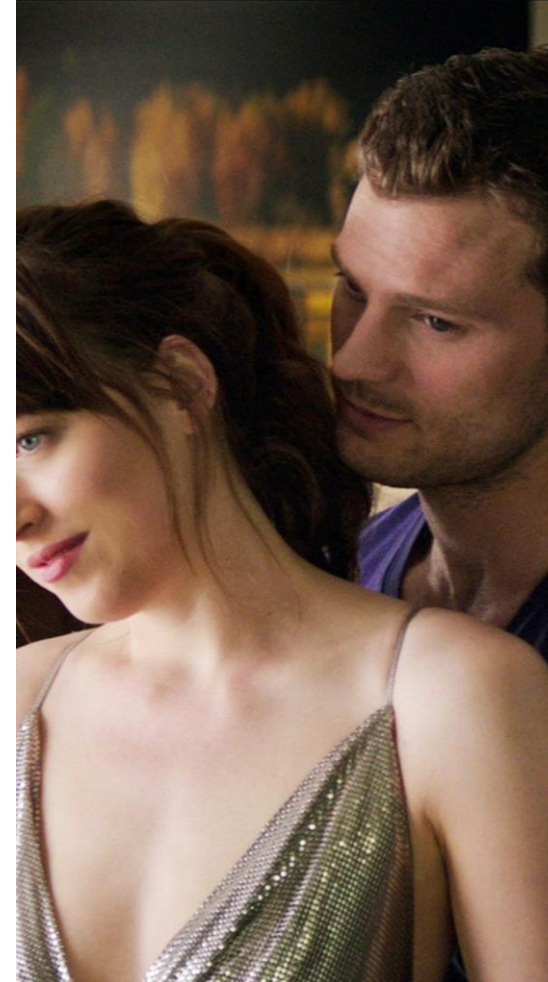
*L'appetit vient en manegeant”*

*Or*

*“Appetite comes while we eat”*

# What to do?

- Talk about sex!
- The influence of drugs and diseases on desire
- Sex is not a formula like the movies!
- Good intimacy can be planned
- Swap rolls
- Stay flexible
- You can have an a la carte rather than a set menu!



# Shimmering

- Hold Hands
- Put your arm around your partner
- Hug each other
- Cuddle up in the sofa
- Kissing
- Message each other
- Dance
- Caress your partners face
- Shower/bath together





Imagine responsive desire as glowing embers at a campfire. When you blow at the embers softly and carefully, a small flame appears. And with time, aptitude and patience, the embers will slowly but surely turn into fire again.

The key point is: You don't have to be sexually aroused to engage in sexual activity if you are in an open and neutral mind-set. This might require pushing yourself out of your comfort zone in actively trying to get in the mood, instead of waiting for spontaneous desire to happen. However, recognize your boundaries and don't force yourself to sexual activities, you don't want to engage with. Sex should never turn into a chore or cause stress!

# Communication is key

- Health Care Professionals
- Partner (lower desire for intercourse may lead to high levels of emotional intimacy) (include your partner)(Partners play a key role)
- Peers

# Exercise

- Improves sexuality
- Improves body image
- Reduces anxiety
- Reduces depression

# Vulvalvaginal Health

- Topical or systemic estrogen therapy is a treatment option for vaginal atrophy
- These hormones are applied to and absorbed into the genital area gel, ring, cream and tablet form
- **Moisturisers** Hydrating types (Hyalofemme, Replens, Yes VM)
- Natural oils Vitamin E coconut oil
- **Lubricants** short term and for intimacy
- Water Based Yes Astroglide, sliquid
- Silicone Based (sensitive skin) Uberlube Astroglide silicone safe to use with condoms
- Oil based lube Yes and natural oil based coconut oil



# Resources

- [PrCa Sensate Focus Exercise\(1\) \(2\).pdf](#)
- Mindfulness can also assist you getting in the mood.
- <https://soundcloud.com/hachetteaudiouk/the-raisin-meditation>
- To help you get in the mood try listening to some sexy stories
- [Dipsea | Short and Sexy Audio Stories \(dipseastories.com\)](#)
- [Sexuality and U](#). A website devoted to providing up-to-date, factual information on sexual health and education.

# Books

- “Come as you are” Emily Negoski
- “Love Worth Making How to have ridiculously great sex in a long-lasting relationship” Stephen Snyder

# Body Scan

- Look at yourself in the mirror and say 3 + things about your looks
- Look at yourself in the mirror naked-give yourself at least 3 compliments
- Change your thoughts-; write them down and counter each negative thought with a positive one...

# Take home

- Talk about it (normalize it)
- [thisisgo,.ie](http://thisisgo.ie)
- VulvalVaginal Health
- How to Fantasise
- Body Scan
- Sensate Focus Exercise
- Mindfulness
- Coping –Exercise
- Hope
- [www.bodygra.ie](http://www.bodygra.ie)

# Thank you!

