

# When to refer to a sex therapist

**Sex therapists work with individuals/couples to help resolve sexual health concerns that affect their social/interpersonal, psychological, and/or biological selves. This includes but is not limited to:**

Erectile disorder	Delayed ejaculation	Female orgasmic disorder
Sexual Interest/Arousal	Genito-Pelvic Pain/Penetration	Hypoactive sexual desire Out of Control Sexual Behavior
Premature ejaculation	Gender dysphoria	Paraphilias
Pedophilia	Polyamory	Kink
BDSM	Consensual Non-monogamy	LGBTQIA
Infidelity	Intimacy	Sexual exploration
Infertility	Pregnancy/Postpartum	Sexual trauma

*\*Initial consultation is necessary to determine if a further referral is necessary for more specialized care is needed.*

*\*\*Deviant practices may require a higher level of care*

**Sex therapists seek certification through the American Association for Sexuality Counselors, Educators, and Therapist (AASECT).**

Sex therapists credentials may vary. Licensure may be maintained as an LPC, LMSW, PhD., PsyD., LP, and those who maintain a limited license. Many have academic training in human sexuality through formal education. There are sex therapy training programs that meet AASECT standards for the educational requirements necessary. Many therapists will begin to see sex therapy clients while in training or supervision for certification as a sex therapist. It should be noted that the term 'sex therapist' is not a protected term. So there may be clinicians that identify as a sex therapists that are not certified through AASECT and may not have received formal training. Sex therapists have a code of ethics that they maintain in addition to the ethics and standards attached to their mental health licenses.

**\*How can you find a certified sex therapist:** <https://www.aasect.org/referral-directory>

**Sex therapists work with other professional to obtain the best treatment for their clients.**

Many sex therapists work within a biopsychosocial model which helps maintain a balance of interdisciplinary (medical, mental health, physical therapy, etc) services and serves the client as a whole. This means that an open line of communication between the medical provider and mental health provider is necessary. It is always in a client's best interest to work with both parties in a joint effort to help improve the quality of life of the client.

Sex therapists also provide sexual health education and consultation.

**Refer to a sex therapist for consult when a client/patient is experiencing the following:**



Anxiety related to sex	Sexual function disorders
Interest/Arousal concerns	Pain with sexual arousal or penetration Out of control sexual behavior
Depression due to sexual changes or dysfunction	After surgery or major illness that may affect sexual functioning
Sexual trauma	Infidelity
Infertility	Sexual concerns due to medication
Age related sexual health	Sexual health concerns that affect overall health
Neurological disorders and has desire to be sexual	Chronic pain/illness, disease or disability and has desire to be sexual

*This list is not exhaustive, rather it is illustrative*

**\*\*It should be noted that not all clients that identify in the categories listed above may require a referral for sex therapy or consultation**

### **Why would I refer to a sex therapist:**

While there is no physical exam, nudity, or touching during a sex therapy appointment, a sex therapist can help individuals and couples deal with sexual health related concerns in a variety of ways. Our bodies change through puberty, pregnancy, aging, disease, disability, and substance use. It is important to work with someone that understands that change. Some experience fear in regard to being sexual for different reasons. Others have sexual trauma history, a poor understanding of attachment, sexual health, and safety, or chronic illness. Medical health professionals may not have the time or the training to address sexual health concerns for patients/clients. Most adults value intimate connection, touch, and interaction with another human being and recognize it as a fundamental part of human being. Sex therapists respect the need to do their best to treat the whole person.

**A sex therapist may refer to or request to consult with other mental health professionals, suggest support groups, and consult or refer to medical physicians, OT/PT's specializing in pelvic floor, or psychiatrists, when a client is experiencing:**

Erectile disorder	Delayed ejaculation	Female orgasmic disorder
Sexual Interest/Arousal	Genito-Pelvic Pain/Penetration	Hypoactive sexual desire/Out of Control Sexual Behavior
Premature ejaculation	Depression	Anxiety
Incontinence	Infertility	Mood swings
Severe mental health	Substance abuse	Domestic violence

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