



PROFESSIONAL
TRAINING

COURSE OBJECTIVES

PASSION & PRESENCE[®]

Mindful Couples Sex Therapy

Certificate Program

16-Month Online Training Certificate Program For Helping Professionals

Mindful Couples Sex Therapy

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COURSE OBJECTIVES Key

Capital letters beside objectives indicate AASECT Core Knowledge Areas of Sexuality

Lowercase letters indicate Sex Therapy Training

A

Ethics and ethical behavior

B

Developmental sexuality from a bio-psycho-social perspective across the life course

C

Socio-cultural, familial factors (e.g., ethnicity, culture, religion, spirituality, socioeconomic status, family values) in relation to sexual values and behaviors

D

Issues related to sexual orientation and/or gender identity: heterosexuality; issues and themes impacting lesbian, gay, bisexual, pansexual, and asexual people; gender identity and expression

E

Intimacy skills (e.g., social, emotional, sexual), intimate relationships, interpersonal relationships, and family dynamics

F

Diversities in sexual expression and lifestyles, including, but not limited to, polyamory, swinging, BDSM, and tantra

G.

Sexual and reproductive anatomy/physiology

H

Health/medical factors that may influence sexuality, including, but not limited to, illness, disability, drugs, mental health, conception, pregnancy, childbirth & pregnancy termination, contraception, fertility, HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted infection, other infections, sexual trauma, injury, and safer sex practices

I

Range of sexual functioning and behavior, from optimal to problematic, including, but not limited to, common issues such as desire discrepancy, lack of desire, difficulty achieving or maintaining arousal, sexual pain, penetration problems, and difficulty with orgasm

J

Sexual exploitation, including sexual abuse, sexual harassment, and sexual assault

M

Pleasure enhancement skills

N

Learning theory and its application

O

Professional communication and personal reflection skills

SEGMENT ONE

1. Learn how to bring up sex with clients ethically and inclusively. **A/O**

2. Establish a relaxed, authentic presence when discussing sexual issues with clients. **O**

3. Recognize and Investigate therapist countertransference when addressing sexuality. **A/O**

4. Recognize how the principles of Hakomi Mindful Somatic Psychotherapy can support sex positivity in the consulting room. **A**

5. Recognize the consequences of normative models of sexual behavior on partner's sexual self-concept. **C**

6. Understand how the Sexual Response Cycle is used for diagnostic and treatment purposes of DSM disorders. **I, b**

7. Use the six barriers to Pure Erotic Potential as a depathologizing assessment tool. **E/I, b**

8. Teach partners to report from the "Internal Observer" to stay curious and regulated when exploring feelings and sensations. **E, c**

9. Apply experiential techniques to study couple sexual dynamics in session rather than rely on reflection and discussion. **E, c**

10. Use bottom-up processes to study feelings and reactions to sexuality. **E/I, a**

11. Utilize the "Explore and Inform" model to address sexual concerns. **E/I/N, a, c**

12. Practice the steps of Deepening with Mindfulness (i.e., noticing, naming, asking permission, and studying). **E/I, a**

SEGMENT TWO

1. Describe the three stages of conscious erotic coupling (i.e., Enchantment, Disenchantment, Re-enchantment) and why most long-term partners get stuck at stage two. **B/E**

2. Demonstrate how preoccupations and performance pressure lead to erotic absence. **I**

3. Explain the difference between the "novelty solution" and the "novelty state." **I/M**

4. Differentiate between the "wide" and "deep" approaches to sexual novelty. **I**

5. Use mindfulness to create a state for creative, pleasurable, and pressure-free encounters. **I, a**

6. Explain the effect of sexual familiarity on desire in long-term relationships. **E/I**

7. Assess how automaticity and the "Familiarity Trance" are dampening erotic creativity **E/I, b**

8. Utilize the technique of "Seeing Fresh" to counter sexual familiarity. **I, a, c**

9. Describe nine benefits of mindfulness on sexuality, including sexual concordance, enhancing pleasure, letting go, accessing implicit learning, tolerating sensations, eliminating goals, reducing performance anxiety, accepting disappointing sexual experiences, and becoming aware of eros-inhibiting mindsets and beliefs. **E/I/M**

10. Teach partners the practice of "Mindful Touch" to become more present and exploratory. **E/I, a, c**

11. Demonstrate the power of priming on desire, spontaneity, and self-expression. **I, a, b**

12. Use the skill of Erotic Mapping to help partners discover new erogenous zones and recover a sense of exploration and play together. **E/I/M, a, c**

13. Help clients recognize how expectations shape sexual experiences before they relate physically. **I, a**

14. Teach partners the "Catch & Release" technique to stay open and curious when limiting beliefs diminish presence and enjoyment. **I/M, a, c**

15. Teach partners how to establish an "Anything is Possible" mindset before sexual activity to antidote negative expectations. **I/M, a**

SEGMENT THREE

1. Explain the developmental journey from erotic fusion to differentiation in adult relationships. **B**
2. Explain three features of the "Sexual Impasse" in long-term relationships (i.e., circularity, polarization, and entrenchment). **E**
3. Use the Reciprocal Interaction Loop (RIL) diagramming process to illustrate the self-reinforcing circularity of the impasse. **E, c**
4. Explain the "Defend" and "Befriend" cycles as contrasting ways to work with triggers and pain points. **E**
5. Explain the difference between the "Protector" and "Protected" parts in multiple selves theory. **E, c**
6. Use "Mindful Co-Investigation" to identify the hidden vulnerability or "legacy state" at the core of couple conflicts. **E, a, b, c**
7. Implement the Mindful Query activity to reduce reactivity when exploring sexual themes **E, c**
8. Recognize emotion contagion and understand how "Protectors ignite Protectors." **E**
9. Clarify the meaning of the neurological "high road" and "low road" and describe Brent Atkinson's concept of 'neural hijacking.' **E, c**
10. Define Neuroception and its role in survival. **E**
11. Understand how early attachment wounds wire into the brain and surface in adult intimate relationships. **B/E, c**
12. Teach the "Self-Dialogue" technique and "Peaceful Presence" to help individuals build a good relationship with their internal parts. **E, c**
13. List four ways self-compassion contributes to relationship satisfaction and acceptance of sexual variability. **E**
14. Differentiate self-esteem from self-compassion and explain how efforts to increase self-esteem can lead to power struggles between partners. **E**
15. Use the PREP (i.e., Pause, Regulate, Explore, Peaceful Presence) process to diffuse conflict, regulate, and research legacy states. **E, a, c**
16. Use the Three Rs of the Care Cycle (i.e., Reveal, Reach, and Repair) to build a caring and collaborative alliance. **E, c**
17. Apply a 6-step repair process to heal relational ruptures and restore trust. **E, c**

SEGMENT FOUR

1. Use a guided imagery activity to identify personal beliefs, values, and attitudes towards sex. **B/C, b**
2. Explore the dynamics of "emotional learning" and how internal models of self and others shape lifelong sexual behaviors. **B/C, a**
3. Explain how sex-negative family and cultural messages imprint sub-cortically. **B/C**
4. Explore ways to dissolve eros-inhibiting imprints to access more Pure Erotic Potential. **I, a**
5. Explain how state-dependent memory can evoke body memories during sex. **B/J, a, b**
6. Use a 4-step practice (i.e., stop-study-share-adjust) to work with erotic triggers. **I, a, c**
7. Utilize the "Mindful Self-Study" skill to explore emotions, body sensations, and habitual patterns related to sex from the bottom up. **I, a, c**
8. Use a Memory Reconsolidation technique to repair early erotic wounds. (i.e., "planting hearts") **I/J, a, c**
9. Apply techniques to uncouple helplessness, danger, loss of control, and exploitation from sexuality to differentiate now from then. **I/J, a**
10. Learn how to reorient from performance to pleasure in response to erotic recovery, regardless of "functionality." **J/M, a**
11. Recognize the "hidden factors" that generate unpleasant feelings before, during, or after sex. **C/I, b**
12. Understand how automaticity and "numbing" can put survivors of sexual abuse or assault at risk of re-injury. **J**
13. Use mindfulness and somatic awareness to reduce sexual anxiety. **I, a**
14. Use the Resource Scales to determine what kind of sexual activities to engage in before a sexual encounter. **I/J, a, b**
15. Understand different types of sexual trauma, including abuse, assault, rape, and harassment. **J**
16. Gain awareness of the psychophysiology of sexual trauma response. **H/I/J, b**
17. Learn three somatic trauma healing interventions to reduce activation during sexual activities. **I/J, a**
18. Provide ways to help clients move beyond healing and reclaim desire. **I/J, a**

SEGMENT FIVE

1. Mindfully explore how both partners respond to how the other initiates sex. **E/I, a, b, c**
2. Debunk common myths that undermine a couple's chances of having a satisfying sex life. **N, c**
3. Recognize a common therapeutic error in assessing and treating diminished desire. **I, b, f**
4. Use a bio-psycho-social model to understand diminished desire. **B/I, b**
5. Explain the cultural causes of diminished desire among women, especially those partnered with men. **C/D/I, c**
6. Explain why desire discrepancies are hidden at the start of a relationship. **B/E, a**
7. Explain why feeling "warm and connected" may diminish desire. **I, c,**
8. Describe the effect of unpaired ruptures on desire. **E/I, c**
9. Use positive sexual priming to enhance desire in partners with Responsive Desire. **I, a**
10. Understand the relationship between safety and desire according to Polyvagal Theory. **I**
11. Explain six ways to increase oxytocin before sex to generate a state of relaxed surrender. **I/M, a**
12. Recognize the effect of body-mind states on desire and how to shift from eros-inhibiting to eros-expansive states. **I/M, b**
13. Recognize how medical factors affect sexual functioning. **G/H, b**
14. Recognize how stress diminishes desire and arousal. **G/H, b**
15. Apply elements of Lori Brotto's model for enhancing female desire **I, a, b**
16. Use six mechanisms to antidote the de-eroticizing effect of stress. **I/M, a**
17. Utilize the Dual Control mechanisms for sexual inhibition and exhibition to enhance desire in long-term relationships. **I/M, a, b**

18. Use an exercise to create "willingness" in partners with Responsive Desire. **I, a**
19. Explain the causes and remedies of the Pleasure Gap in heterosexual relationships. **C/D/I/M, a, b, c**
20. Identify female sexual anatomy, both internal and external, and the function of these structures, as well as common medical and psychological factors that may impact functioning. **G/H/M, b, d**
21. Use the technique of "Re-perceiving" to overcome genital aversion. **I, a, b**

SEGMENT SIX

1. Understand the social and cultural challenges to monogamy. **C/F, c**
2. Use a three-phase affair recovery model to help partners work through infidelity. **E/F, c**
3. Guide couples to create sustainable and flexible monogamy agreements that contribute positively to relational change. **F, c**
4. Examine biases and countertransference around monogamy and non-traditional relationships. **F/O, f**



SEGMENT SEVEN

1. Discuss the five levels of "safe sex" in committed relationships and how they can paradoxically imperil a committed relationship. **E, a, c**

2. Illustrate the concept of sexual "leftovers" coined by the sexologist David Schnarch. **E**

3. Recognize how differences in erotic preferences can lead to erotic expansion and renewed creativity. **E/M, c**

4. Name three ways that shame contributes to hiding and shrinking in long-term relationships. **C**

5. Mindfully explore socio-cultural imprints that generate shame, guilt, and erotophobia. **C, a, b**

6. Understand the notion of "queer space" regarding sexual expression. **D/F**

7. Debunk myths regarding BDSM and Kink. **D/F**

8. Establish a 3-phase plan based on caring, sharing, and daring to heal shame. **E/M, a, c**

9. Identify and revise implicit contracts that prevent growth and self-expression in long-term relationships. **C/E, c**

10. Practice the skills of "Mindful Co-Investigation" to cooperatively explore sexual aversions. **E, a**

11. Explain the physical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual dimensions of sex using the Passion Pyramid. **F**

12. Implement a Whole-Person, Multimodal Sex (WPMS) protocol to help partners become integrated and self-expressed. **M, a**

13. Practice "embodied consent" to recognize the somatic indicators of "yes" and "no" and set boundaries accordingly. **E, a**

14. Differentiate between role-playing and parts play. **F**

15. Practice erotic empathy to share sexual fantasies safely. **E, c**

16. Explore fantasies to identify parts that want to play on the couple's erotic stage. **F/I, a**

17. Facilitate the seven "Parts Play" levels and how they can free partners from oppressive roles and scripts. **F/I/M, a, c**

18. Create a sexual menu to promote erotic expansion in long-term relationships. **I/M, a**

SEGMENT EIGHT

1. Demonstrate how goals and models limit expression and increase performance anxiety. **E/I/M**

2. Distinguish between "inside-out" and "outside-in" pathways to expression, pleasure, and arousal. **I/M**

3. Teach a mindful movement practice to cultivate "inside-out" pleasure pathways. **I/M, a**

4. Use body-scan exercises to promote embodied self-attunement. **I/M, a**

5. Understand the mechanism of "automaticity" and its impact on eroticism. **M**

6. Employ the "stop and start over" technique when defaulting to an automatic routine. **E, a**

7. Understand the mechanism of erotic "emergence" and why uncertainty, anxiety, and creativity can lead to better sex. **I/M**

8. Practice "Erotic Attunement" to follow the flow of energy that is unfolding within and between partners rather than taking familiar pathways to arousal. **I/M, a, c**

9. Implement the four "Eros Cycle" stages to engage in an improvised call and response. **I/M, a**

10. Increase erotic creativity by relinquishing goals and reference points and returning to the center point of the EROS cycle. **I/M, a**

11. Use the "working the edge" technique to help partners overcome sexual inhibition. **I/M, a**

12. Assess ability to "embody and attune" and make recommendations to overcome barriers. **I/M, a, b**

13. Assess ability to "relax and relate" and make recommendations to overcome barriers. **I/M, a, b**

14. Assess the ability to "open to impulses" and make recommendations to overcome barriers. **I/M, a, b**

15. Assess the ability to "savor pleasure" and recommend ways to overcome barriers. **I/M, a, b**

16. Work with barriers to expression using the "What's your impulse" exercise. **I/M, a**

17. Explain the Plane of Possibility Map (created by Dan Siegel, M.D.) and its relation to Pure Erotic Potential. **I/M**

18. Use the brain's resonance circuitry to practice leading and following. **E/M, a**

SEGMENT NINE

1. Define sexual, gender, orientation/attraction, and relationship diversity and identify inclusive language. **D**
2. Identify common concerns of sexually marginalized clients when meeting with mental health providers. **D**
3. Identify techniques for indicating sex-positive and affirming spaces for marginalized populations in physical locations and online modalities. **D, a**
4. Discuss techniques for addressing consent concerns with sexually marginalized populations. **A/D, f**
5. Assess your own level of "kink-phobia" and "poly-phobia" and how this may enter the room and impact clients. **D/F, e**

SEGMENT TEN

1. Describe how physiological changes of aging relate to sexual function. **G**
2. Describe the effect of health/medical factors on sexual identity and function. **H**
3. List three components of postmenopausal vulvar care. **G, H**
4. Understand how erectile instability leads to sexual avoidance and incorporate elements of Barry McCarthy's "Good Enough Sex," model. **G, H, a, b, c**
5. Broaden the script of "real sex" to include activities that may not involve the genitals, orgasm, or penetration. **D/F/G/M, a**
6. Help aging partners adopt a playful, pleasure-based spirit of engagement that enables eros to expand amidst physical and genital decline. **E/I, a**
7. Differentiate between "genital prime" and "sexual prime" as it relates to maturation. **B/G**
8. Use three types of dates to tend eros ongoingly in long-term relationships. (i.e., Fun and Romance, Erotic and Tending) **E, c**
9. Create a "Sustainability Plan" to ensure eros thrives for a lifetime. **I, a**
10. Identify eight features of "Optimal Sexuality" that can support aging couples. **M**
11. Help aging couples Use Mindfulness and Befriending to open to the next leg of their erotic journey. **E/I, a, c**
12. Apply research on the relationship between mindfulness and relationship well-being and affection and the state of being "in love." **E**
13. Understand how erotic challenges can support growth and transformation across the lifespan. **B**
14. Use the "pain point" diagram to explain why erotic "perturbations" are an inherent part of the growth cycle. **B**
15. Understand how avoiding erotic challenges prevents partners from growing into your fuller self. **B**
16. Describe the benefits of Awakened Intimacy and the qualities of Stage 3 relationships. **E**