

Sexual Health and the Trauma Survivor

How the Therapist Can Help

JOE KORT

Clients with sexual abuse histories often come to therapy with questions about their sexual expression and the obstacles they encounter in intimate relationships. They may find themselves engaging in trauma reenactment rather than safe, consensual sex and need a nonjudgmental space to explore what sexual recovery means for them. Even well-trained trauma therapists often lack the personal comfort, language, and skillset necessary to assist their clients through this process. This workshop will provide concrete strategies to help trauma survivors live more sexually fulfilling lives. You'll explore:

- How different types of sexual abuse and trauma manifest in sexual behaviors, and how to help clients experience healthy sexual gratification
- How to help clients differentiate between unhealthy trauma reenactment and healthy play
- Five tools to help clients manage out-of-control sexual behaviors
- The countertransference issues that often arise for therapists around clients' erotic interests, sexual expression, and behaviors in order to avoid negative judgment and inadvertent shaming

Joe Kort, PhD, is a sex therapist and Imago therapist with a specialty in LGBTQ issues. His books include 10 Smart Things Gay Men Can Do to Improve Their Lives, LGBTQ Clients in Therapy, and Is My Husband Gay, Straight, or Bi?

Sexual Health and the Trauma Survivor

How the Therapist Can Help

JOE KORT

Learning Objectives:

1. Evaluate how different types of sexual abuse and trauma manifest in clients' behaviors and relationships, and how these manifestations inform treatment interventions.
2. Analyze methods that help clients differentiate between trauma reenactment and trauma play.
3. Demonstrate five important ways to help clients manage their sexual behaviors.
4. Determine how to help clients understand what constitutes healthy sexual expression for them.

Outline:

1. Evaluate the different types of sexual abuse and trauma manifest in clients' behaviors and relationships, and how these manifestations inform treatment interventions.
 - Identify the different forms of trauma including simple trauma, complex trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder
2. Articulate methods that help clients differentiate between trauma reenactment and trauma play.
 - Identify the difference between trauma reenactment and trauma play.
 - List the different ways trauma reenactment and trauma play manifest to determine success of treatment.
3. List five important ways to help clients manage their sexual behaviors.
 - Define out-of-control sexual behaviors
 - List how erotophobia manifests from sexual abuse
4. Describe how to help clients understand what constitutes expression of sexual health for them.
 - Define PLISSIT model (Permission, Limited Information, Specific Suggestions, and Intensive Therapy)
 - Identify a SAR (Sexual Attitude Re-assessment)

Reference List:

Delisle, C., Dube, S., Tomasiello, M., & Santaguida, M. (2018). The importance of sexual context in the subjective appraisal of sexual arousal, desire, and orgasm among BDSM practitioners. *Journal of Interpersonal Relations, Intergroup Relations and Identity*, 11 (Winter), 74-89.

Jozifkova, E. (2018). Sexual arousal by dominance and submissiveness in the general population: How many, how strongly, and why? *Deviant Behavior*, 39 (9), 1229-1236. DOI: 10.1080/01639625.2017.1410607

Morin, J. (1995). *The Erotic Mind*. New York, NY: Harper Collins.

Barrett, Mary Jo (2014). *Treating Complex Trauma*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Merrick, M.T., Ford, D.C., Ports, K. A., Guinn, A. S. (2018). Prevalence of Adverse Childhood Experiences From the 2011-2014 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System in 23 States. *JAMA Pediatrics*, 172(11), 1038-1044.

MacIntosh, Heather B. (2019). *Developmental Couple Therapy for Complex Trauma*. New York, NY: Routledge

Maltz, W., & Arian, C. (2001). *The Sexual Healing Journey: A Guide for Survivors of Sexual Abuse*. New York: HarperCollins