

Addressing Sexual Pressure: Interventions for Couples in Therapy

This handout aims to guide therapists in handling situations where one partner feels pressured for sex, a common challenge in couples therapy. It outlines a structured approach for managing these situations, emphasizing the importance of clear communication and mutual understanding.

Implementing the 'No-Sex' Agreement

A crucial intervention is the implementation of a temporary 'no-sex' agreement. This strategy involves explicitly removing sex from the equation for a period of time, reducing pressure and ambiguity in the sexual relationship. It's vital to communicate that this is a temporary measure, not a permanent change, to prevent misinterpretation by the couple.

Facilitating Emotional Connection Without Sex

Once sex is temporarily off-limits, therapists should encourage the couple to explore non-sexual methods of connection. Suggestions include brainstorming activities or adopting practices from resources like "The Love Prescription" by John Gottman and Julie Schwartz Gottman.

Handout for Therapists

- 1 **The Six-Second Kiss:** This simple yet intimate activity involves the couple engaging in a mindful six-second kiss each day. It's designed to create a moment of connection amidst daily routines, strengthening their emotional bond.
- 2 **Stress-Reducing Conversations:** Encourage regular, brief conversations where partners can express their stresses and frustrations. The focus should be on empathetic listening, not problem-solving or advice-giving.

Managing Sexual Desire

In cases where sexual desire is a significant component, explore discussions around self-stimulation as an alternative to address sexual desire during the 'no-sex' agreement phase. Facilitate an open conversation about self-stimulation, ensuring it aligns with both partners' comfort levels and perspectives.

Key Points

- Implement a “no-sex” agreement as an initial step to alleviate sexual pressure, ensuring clear communication about its temporary nature.
- Introduce activities like the six-second kiss and stress-reducing conversations to foster emotional intimacy without sex.
- Discuss alternative methods like self-stimulation to manage sexual desire during the 'no-sex' agreement period.