

Sexual History & Values

Cora Schuhmacher, Psy.D.
& Allison Momany, M.A.

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PLISSIT Model

Permission
Limited Information
Specific Suggestions
Intensive Therapy

Annon, J. (1976). The PLISSIT model: A proposed conceptual scheme for the behavioural treatment of sexual problems. *Journal of Sex Education Therapy*, 2(1), 1-15.

Level 1: Permission

- Initiated by the professional
- Extra knowledge or training not required
- Normalizing or validating thoughts, feelings, and behaviors and giving permission to be sexual
- Giving permission to grieve any loss and to discuss problems or concerns
- Provide clear guidance
- Cue questions
- Have sexual health leaflets available

Level 2: Limited Information

- Provider should have knowledge of impact of condition, medications prescribed, and effect of medical intervention on sexual wellbeing
- Need information about client's sexual behaviors and preferences
- Leaflets can be used, but need to tell client you will answer questions they have

Let's Practice!

- Consider the following in treating a client with Major Depression:
 - What is the effect of the disorder on sexuality and sexual health?
 - How can you share this information with client's to normalize their experience?
 - What information is available for clients to address some of their issues?
 - How might you respond to questions you don't have the answers to?

Level 3: Specific Suggestions

- Need to ask client about the following:
 - Sexual history
 - Sexual problems
 - Sexual aspirations
 - Expectations of the client
- Examples: conception advice, use of lubrication, sexual aids, contraception, alternative positions, trauma, insecurities and fears

Level 4: Intensive Therapy

- Specialist intervention to address interpersonal and psychological issues
- May not have these skills, but need to then refer to appropriate provider
- Examples: rape or sexual abuse, relationship problems, cancer survivors, paraplegia, post-partum intimacy, fertility difficulties

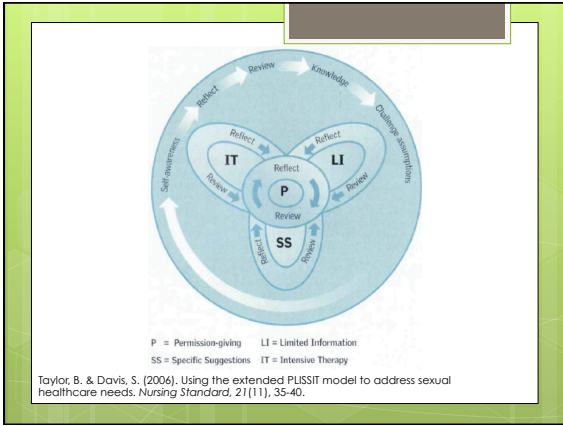
Limits of the PLISSIT Model

1. Linear format implying progression
2. Implicit and ambiguous permission-giving
3. May need to return to permission-giving level many times
4. One-way interaction with passive client receiving information

Ex-PLISSIT Model

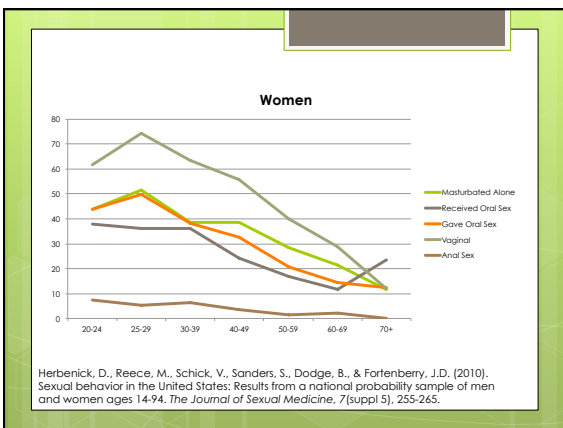
- Permission-giving is a core feature of EACH level
- Spend time reviewing all interactions with the patient
- Use reflection to increase self-awareness
 - Patient perspective
 - Self-reflection

Davis, S. & Taylor, B. (2006). From PLISSIT to Ex-PLISSIT. In Davis, S. (Ed) *Rehabilitation: The use of theories and models in practice*. Elsevier, Edinburgh, 101-129.





Herbenick, D., Reece, M., Schick, V., Sanders, S., Dodge, B., & Fortenberry, J.D. (2010). Sexual behavior in the United States: Results from a national probability sample of men and women ages 14-94. *The Journal of Sexual Medicine*, 7(suppl 5), 255-265.



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Developmental Sexual History

- What was the primary culture were you raised in and are there any subcultures?
- What (if any) religious faith were you raised in?
- Have you experienced any kind of trauma/abuse/ or confusing sexual situations?

Infancy (0-2 years)

- What do you know about your conception?
 - Planned or not? Hospital vs. home birth? Any birth trauma?
- Do you remember younger siblings and how your parents handled body functions and diaper changes?
- How do your parents handle these things with your children?

Early Childhood (2-5 years)

- Do you have sexual memories from this stage?
- Does family talk about whether you were a child who enjoyed touching themselves?
 - How was that handled?
- Did you play doctor with friends?
- How was privacy handled?
 - Did you shower with same or opposite sex parent?
 - Were you allowed to say no to touch you didn't like?
- What did you observe about sexual behaviors (between PCGs, family, friends)?

Middle Childhood (6-8 years)

- How were you first exposed to sexual content?
 - Movies, TV, internet, print media?
 - Was it pornographic?
- Was there pornography in your house?
- How did your parents handle questions about sexuality?
- Did your parents talk to you about puberty and the basics of reproduction prior to your puberty?

Late Childhood (9-12 years)

- Did you share a bedroom?
- Was there a space for you to seek out self-pleasure?
- How (or were) you informed about puberty?
- When did puberty begin?
- Did your friends hit puberty at the same time?
- Did you develop early or late?

Late Childhood (9-12 years)

- Who taught you how to shave, use pads/tampons, deodorant, etc.
- How did you obtain supplies?
- What values were you taught about sexuality?
- What did you learn from family, faith community, culture, peers?

Adolescence (13-19 years)

- How were you aware of whom you were attracted to?
- How did you feel about your body?
 - Did you feel at home in it?
 - Do you now?
- How have you experimented with the same sex?

Adolescence (13-19 years)

- When was your age of first relationship?
- Did that relationship involve physical intimacy?
 - Was it mutual?
 - Did you enjoy it?
- How did you learn about and/or obtain birth control?
- When was the first time you had intercourse?
- What kind of risky sexual behavior did you engage in at this age?

Emerging Adulthood (20-40 years)

- How did you choose sexual partners?
- Were you looking for a spouse or more casual connections?
- During sexual experiences, did you find enjoyment?
- What STIs have or do you have?
 - Do you know how you received them?
 - What kinds of treatment do you go through with your diagnosis?
- What methods of birth control do you use?
 - Do they impact your sexual functioning?

Adulthood (40-60 years)

- When have you experienced sexual dysfunction or found sexual relationships lacking?
- What would you like to be different in your current sexual relationship?
- In long term relationships, how has your sexual experience changed over time?
- Have you experienced infertility?
- How has pregnancy changed your relationship?

Adulthood (40-60 years)

- How has parenting changed your relationship?
- How does your work impact your sexual desires/drive/ functioning?
- Have you experienced menopause or noticed hormonal changes?
 - Are you still menstruating?
 - Have you had a hysterectomy or vasectomy? Any sexual changes as a result?

Older Adulthood (60+ years)

- What does a satisfying sexual relationship look like to you now?
- What age-related changes have you encountered?
- How does your physical body impact your sexual functioning?
- Are you presently sexually active with a partner?
- Are you sexually active with yourself?

Reflection Questions

- 1.) What stereotypes about sex do you hold? What messages were you given (explicitly or implicitly) about gender, orientation, reproduction, STIs, and sexual activity?
- 2.) In what ways might your values and beliefs about sex differ from those in the population you work with? How can you work to be nonjudgmental about sexuality?
- 3.) How might you define sexual health? How does culture impact beliefs about sexual health? Compare and contrast two cultures.
- 4.) Discuss a few ways to introduce the topic of a client's sexual health in the context of the setting in which you practice.

From Buehler, S. (2017). What every mental health professional needs to know about sex, second edition. New York, NY: Springer Publishing Company, LLC.

Resources

www.sexedlibrary.org
"The most comprehensive online sex ed resource in the nation."

www.siecus.org
Sexuality information and education counsel of the United States.
<https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/topics/sexuality>
National Institute on Aging – Sexuality in Later Life

www.ardvocatesforyouth.org
"The only organization that works both in the US and in developing countries with a sole focus on adolescent reproductive and sexual health."

www.iswsh.org
International Society for the Study of Women's Sexual Health

www.religiousinstitute.org
Multifaith organization dedicated to advocating for sexual, gender, and reproductive health, education, and justice in faith communities and society.

www.worldsexology.org
World Association for Sexual Health

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