

Sexual Health and Relationships

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“Let’s Talk About Sex, Baby” - Salt ‘n Peppa



It's not you, it's cancer....

- According to the American Cancer Society, at least 60% of women and 40% of men experience some kind of sexual dysfunction after diagnosis

Physical Changes	Psychosocial Changes
Hormonal shifts	Roles in relationships
Fatigue	Fear of hurting partner who has cancer
Nausea	Change in desire
Changes in appearance	Feeling like a different person
Forced menopause/fertility issues	How do I talk about this with dating partners?
Females & BMT – Graft versus Host disease (GVHD)	Vulnerability (Physically and Emotionally)

Seriously?!

- Despite high rate of sexual dysfunction, many doctors do not ask about sexual function (In fact, a study of *Gyn/Onc physicians* reported less than 50% ask their patients!!! (ACS, 2022).
- Most felt there wasn't enough time to talk about it with their patients. (80%)
- Patients feel they “should” be happy to be alive, so it seems strange to talk about sex
 - Perception that sex is not part of survival



What would we discover if we did talk about sex?

Intimacy can happen in all kinds of ways...

- Increased non-sexual contact
 - Kissing
 - Hugging
 - Cuddling
 - Engaging in shared interests
- Partners experience a greater sense of appreciation of partners

- People inherently want to be understood.
- Being able to talk about our needs (physical and emotional), increases our sense of closeness.
- Feeling accepted increases feelings of well-being

when your partner or friend doesn't want much physical affection on a particular day and you respect their boundaries and needs

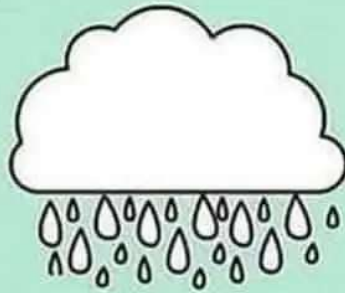


what is acceptance?



IT'S RAINING

i don't like rain.
i wish it wasn't raining.
my day would be better
if it wasn't raining. my day is
ruined. every day is like this.
it's always like this. why does
it always rain when all i want is
for it to be sunny?



IT'S RAINING

yup.

**Grief can exist in the
same space as
acceptance.**

Final Reflection

- What are some strategies that you can try to increase your sexual/intimate satisfaction?
- What are your fears/concerns about this topic?
- What do you have to lose?
- What do you have to gain?

