

The Hypersexual to Ethical Slut Pipeline

Leah Timpson (she/her)



What is Hypersexuality?



- Dysregulated sexuality
- Intense and/or frequent sexual urges/activities that are distressing and affect one's life and daily functioning
- Not necessarily having a high or “overactive” sex drive

Hypersexuality is not currently recognized as an independent diagnosis, rather as a symptom of other psychiatric disorders

“When desire and the compulsive need to find relief from negative emotional states get confused, sex starts to become unhealthy hypersexuality.”
-Michael Kinsey, PhD

How does hypersexuality manifest as a trauma response?

***not* always increased sexual encounters**

- Dissociation during sex
- Regret/shame after sexual encounters
- Risky/impulsive behavior (e.g. unprotected sex, not knowing status of new/multiple partners)
- Talking about sex excessively
- Sexualizing yourself in front of others (e.g. self-deprecating jokes about sex-capades, seeking sexual validation from others)
- Centering one's life around sexuality
- One's sex life becomes an integral part of their existence and their identity,

Why do trauma survivors become hypersexual?

Reclaiming Power/Autonomy

Gain Self-Confidence

Distraction



Reclaiming Your Power

Consent

Communication

Courage

Consent

CONSENT



Freely Given
Reversible
Informed
Enthusiastic
Specific

 **Planned Parenthood®**

- Never implied
- Unambiguous
- Ongoing
- Never pre-established
 - just because you've said yes before, doesn't mean you have to now/doesn't imply you are now
- Coercion is not consent
 - "no" -> "ok"/"sure"/etc

LACK OF A NO ≠ YES

Communication

What are you
comfortable with?

Is this okay?
Is this still okay?

Do you want me to
_____?

What do you like?

Can I _____?

I would like to _____, is this
something you want?

Often, survivors of sexual
trauma find it difficult to
say no or discuss their
boundaries. This is not a
personal weakness, it is a
100% valid response to
trauma.



Courage

- You still deserve a healthy sex life if you want one.
- You still deserve physical and emotional safety.
- You still deserve to engage in sexual activity on your terms
- You don't owe anyone sex.
- Be patient - you don't need to be on a timeline
- Recovery is not linear.
- Talk to your partner about triggers.
- Focus on pleasure over orgasm.
- Prioritize yourself, check-in with yourself

Where do I start?

body scan meditations, masturbation

What challenges might I face?

difficulty getting aroused, lack of interest in sex, difficulty experiencing pleasure, high risk sexual activities

Do I always have to do the emotional labor?

No, it is up to you to decide when to disclose and begin the conversation, but it is also the responsibility of a good partner to respect boundaries, be mindful of limits, check in, etc.

“The challenge of recovery is to reestablish ownership of your body and your mind — of yourself. This means feeling free to know what you know and to feel what you feel without becoming overwhelmed, enraged, ashamed, or collapsed.”

- Bessel A. van der Kolk, The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma

Citations

- Cheng, K. (2020) We need pleasure-centered, trauma-informed, body-affirming, transformative justice-based sex education, Medium. Available at: <https://medium.com/@ladysintrayda/we-need-pleasure-centered-trauma-informed-body-affirming-tranformative-justice-based-sex-146c11f360fc>.
- Clark, H. (2021) Hypersexuality as a valid trauma response, Empoword Journalism. Available at: <https://www.empowordjournalism.com/all-articles/hypersexuality-as-a-valid-trauma-response/>.
- Elia, C. (2023) Late bloomer: A guide to orgasm after rape, Scarleteen. Available at: https://www.scarleteen.com/article/abuse_and_assault_sexuality/late_bloomer_a_guide_to_orgasm_after_rape.
- Ellis, S. (2022) 7 cases when a high sex drive may be a sign of trauma, HuffPost. Available at: https://www.huffpost.com/entry/high-sex-drive-trauma_l_623b1bd5e4b0c727d486086e.
- Hawbaker, K. (2021) Reclaiming sex and romance after assault, CAASE. Available at: <https://www.caase.org/sex-after-sexual-assault/>.
- Kingston, D.A. (2018) Hypersexuality: Fact or fiction?, The Journal of Sexual Medicine. Available at: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S1743609518301358>.
- Kinsey, M. (2022) Why Your Out-of-Control Sex Drive Could Be a Product of Trauma, Mindsplain.com. Available at: <https://mindsplain.com/why-your-out-of-control-sex-drive-could-be-a-product-of-trauma/>.
- Mann, Dr.J. (2019) How to reconnect with your body after sexual assault, InStyle. Available at: <https://www.instyle.com/lifestyle/dr-jenn-sex-after-assault>.
- Parenthood, P. (2023) What is sexual consent?: Facts about rape & sexual assault, Planned Parenthood. Available at: <https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/relationships/sexual-consent>.
- Rodriguez, D. (2023) Bipolar disorder: When sexuality is in Overdrive, EverydayHealth.com. Edited by H. Green. Available at: <https://www.everydayhealth.com/bipolar-disorder/bipolar-disorder-and-sex.aspx>.
- Survivors, H. (2023) What consent looks like, Helping Survivors of Sexual Assault and Abuse. Available at: <https://helpingsurvivors.org/what-is-consent/>.
- Trotta, S.O. (2017) Sex after sexual assault: A guide for when it's tough, Everyday Feminism. Available at: <https://everydayfeminism.com/2015/01/sex-after-sexual-assault/>.
- Weiss, N. (2021) What is trauma-informed sex?, Volonté. Available at: <https://www.lelo.com/blog/trauma-informed-sex/>.