



Balancing Life's Transitions Through Help, Hope and Healing

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Let's Talk S-E-X
***Open Communication about Taboo Topic Key to
Happy Relationships***

LINCOLN, Neb. – Tuesday, June 1, 2009 – Pick up any women's' or men's magazine and you'll most likely find tips and techniques for improving your sex life. Flip through the TV channels and it won't be long before you see a commercial, sitcom or drama with sexual themes. Type "sex" in an online search and stand back; the results will number well into the millions.

It seems like everyone is talking about sex except those who really need to – couples. For intimate couples, sex itself is a primary form of communication and must be made a priority.

"Sex is designed to be a wonderful shared experience and is a form of dialoging that's essential for coupling," said Mary Spitsnogle, MS, marriage and family counselor with Red Tent Counseling in Lincoln, Neb.

Often the breakdown in sexual relations stems from different needs of men and women, she said. In general, men crave sexual communication and women crave verbal communication.

"For men, going without sex is like women going without conversation," said Spitsnogle. "As a woman, imagine your husband or boyfriend not talking to you for two weeks. You'd feel rejected, hurt and lonely. That's how men feel when sex is denied."

Often times, instead of treating sex as a vital communications tool, many couples use it to manipulate or bargain.

“A common example is ‘If my partner doesn’t do this, I won’t have sex!’” she said. “Sexual practices should not and will not support dysfunctional relationship issues.”

Losing interest and not connecting physically can cause great damage to a relationship. Some couples have sex only a few times a year and some – not at all.

“Most couples plan when to have time for sex,” she said. “I recommend a couples plan when not to have sex. Do it well and do it often. Sex is a connective communication and relationship tool.”

How often do “normal” couples have sex? Average established couples have sex three to four times a week, and more often for some, said Spitsnogle. “However, the true answer is found with you and your partner as to what is agreed upon.”

Good sex takes time and an investment. Spitsnogle offers five sex communication tips:

1. Talk about sex openly. This will bring you closer.
2. Make it a priority in the relationship.
3. Good sex requires risk-taking and openness to learning techniques. Never stop learning.
4. Do it well and do it often.
5. Be creative together. Keep it fresh. Enjoy.

Spitsnogle recommends two books: “The Joy of Sex” by Dr. Alex Comfort and “SEX: How to do everything” by Em and Lo.

Couples should feel comfortable seeking professional counseling, as well, said Spitsnogle. Call Red Tent Counseling at (402) 570-4605 or log on to www.redtent.org. The initial consultation is free.