



**#DebunkingDesire**



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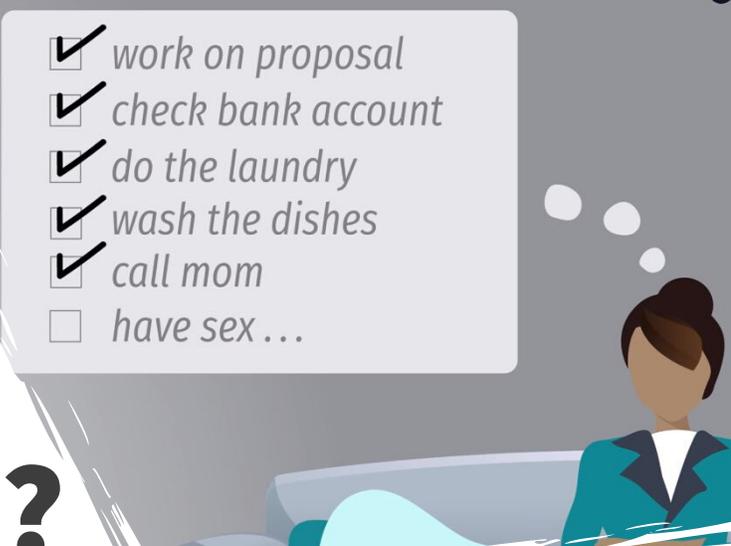
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Our goal for #DebunkingDesire is to share evidence-based information about low sexual desire in women to create and amplify lasting dialogues with women, their partners, their health care providers, and the media.



- 
- work on proposal
  - check bank account
  - do the laundry
  - wash the dishes
  - call mom
  - have sex ...

# What is low sexual desire?

Up to 40% of women may experience low sexual desire at some point in their life. Any woman of any age can experience low desire. A woman who has low desire might experience symptoms like:

- Reduced interest in sex
- No sexual thoughts
- Avoiding sex
- Reduced pleasure during sex
- Things that used to trigger your desire are no longer working
- No arousal

## What isn't low sexual desire?

You might have heard of the term 'asexuality'. Low sexual desire and asexuality are not the same. Asexuality is a distinct sexual orientation in which a person feels no attraction to anyone. Women who experience low desire feel distressed by their lack of desire, whereas asexual persons are not distressed by their lack of attractions.

Low sexual desire is also not (necessarily) just having a different level of desire than your partner. Sexual desire is different for everyone, and it's normal to not always be in the mood when your partner is!



1 in 3 women  
experience  
low sexual desire

Source: Mitchell et. al (2013). Sexual function in Britain:  
Findings from the third National Survey of Sexual Attitudes and  
Lifestyles (Natsal-3). The Lancet, 382, 1817–1829.

# What contributes to low sexual desire?



Sexual desire can be impacted by a number of things. Relationship difficulties, fatigue, mood, and body image can all have an impact on how someone feels about intimacy, but one of the biggest impacts on sexual desire is

**stress.**

Stress triggers a cascade of hormonal reactions to help our body and mind adapt to perceived threats. The more often this happens, the less effective the body is at responding to stressful situations.

***So, the more chronic the stress, the harder it is for the body and mind to adapt to it.***

As it turns out, this can impact different hormones and biological processes in the brain and body, resulting in a decrease in sexual desire.



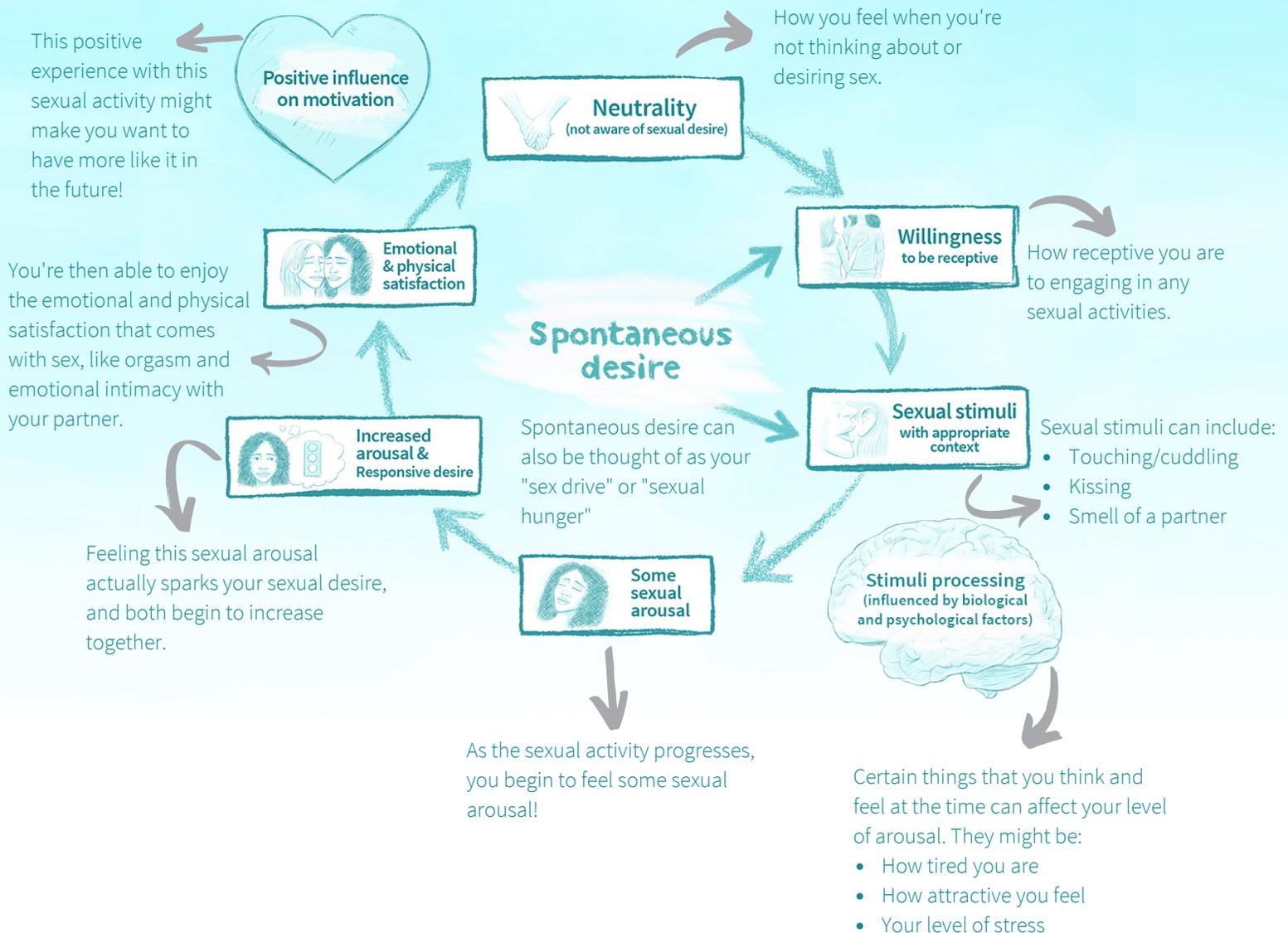
# All about **pleasure**

Sexual pleasure is the physical and/or psychological satisfaction and enjoyment from sexual experiences. This can be through partnered or solo sexual activities, and can include thoughts, fantasies, dreams, emotions, and feelings.

Having low sexual desire does not mean you are sexually broken, or are unable to have a satisfying sex life. We at #DebunkingDesire are passionate about creating pleasurable sexual experiences and promoting the use of pleasure-focused (rather than dysfunction-based) language for women with low sexual desire.

For many women, sexual desire is not spontaneous. A sexual encounter can be triggered by any physical or emotional reasons, like the need to be close to a partner or the wanting of desire, even if you don't feel it in the moment. After beginning to engage in sex, and with the right stimulation, a woman might experience sexual arousal. In response to feeling this arousal, sexual desire becomes triggered. That's right, arousal first, desire second! This is known as:

## Basson's Sexual Response Cycle.



## Basson's Sexual Response Cycle

*“Low or absent sexual desire is without a doubt the most common sexual complaint of women of all ages.”*

- Dr. Rosemary Basson

Director of the BC Centre for Sexual Medicine



# What is mindfulness?

Quite simply, mindfulness can be defined as present moment, non-judgmental awareness. It involves the practice of moving one's attention to the here-and-now and focusing on sensations of the body and breath.

It is well known that women can be quite judgmental of themselves, especially when it comes to sex. Mindfulness is a skill that helps women to be less judgmental and to observe sensations as they arise, and accept them for what they are.

Our research over the past 15 years has found mindfulness practices to help women be less judgmental, to be much more present during sexual activity, and ultimately to have improved sexual desire and arousal.

# #DebunkingDesire video



created by UBC Studios

# How to help

- Share our [video](#)
- Use our hashtag #DebunkingDesire
- Follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#)
- Like our [Facebook Page](#)



# Tweet with us!



1 in 3 women experience low sexual desire. If you experience low sexual desire, know that you're not alone and you can improve your desire. #DebunkingDesire



When you're feeling low sexual desire, sex feels like a shameful secret. It doesn't have to be that way. #DebunkingDesire



Did you know that experiencing chronic stress can impact sexual desire? A UBC study found that #mindfulness can help manage chronic stress and improve desire. #DebunkingDesire



"For a long time I had little or no interest in sex, even though I really wanted to feel more" is often heard by women dissatisfied with their sex lives. In fact, up to 30% of women experience sexual desire difficulties. #DebunkingDesire



Feeling low sexual desire? Talk to your healthcare provider about ways to improve your desire through #mindfulness and #meditation. #DebunkingDesire



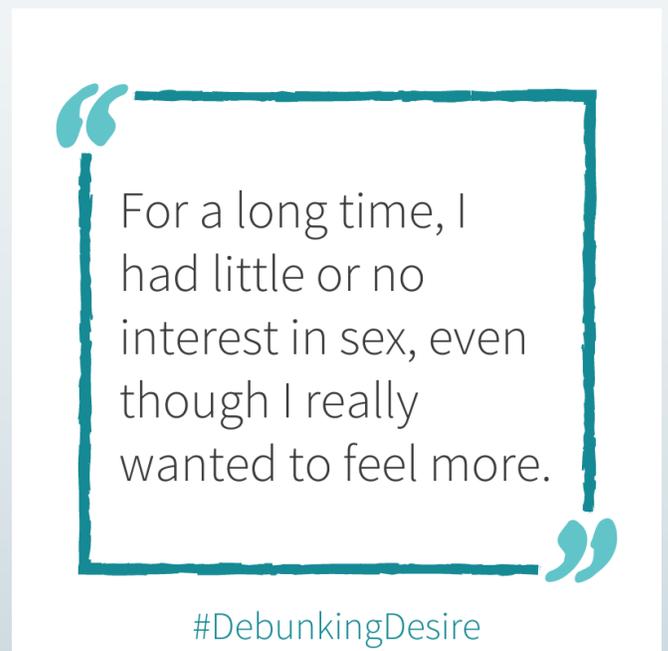
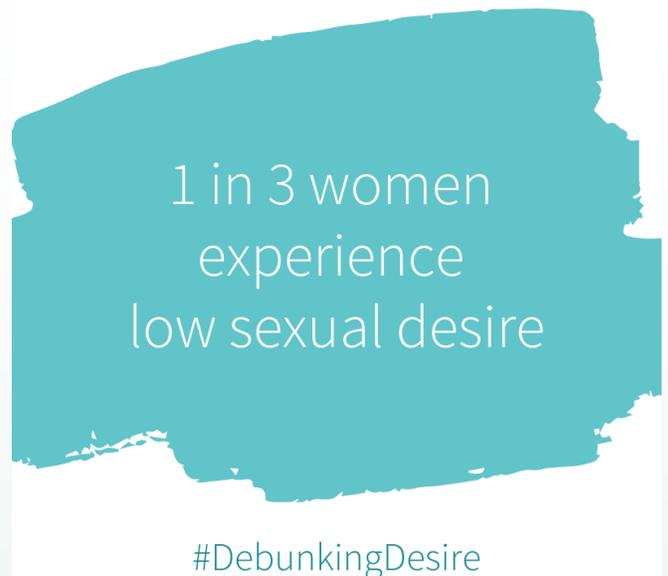
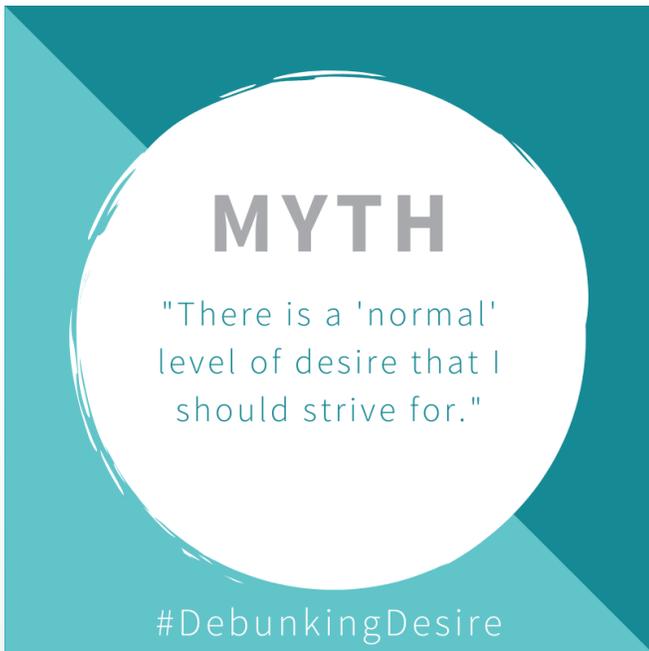
Having low desire doesn't mean you are sexually broken. A UBC study found that #mindfulness can help manage chronic stress contributing to low sexual desire. #DebunkingDesire



No one is born with a fixed level of desire. Desire can change over time, and with life stressors. If you are feeling unsatisfied with your level of desire, managing stress through #mindfulness may be key. #DebunkingDesire

# Post with us!

Click the images below to download and post with us on Twitter, Facebook, or Instagram and use the hashtag #DebunkingDesire.



# Accounts and hashtags



**@ubcshl**

@DrLoriBrotto

@RaykaKumru

@womensresearch

**#DebunkingDesire**

#HazzinHakikati

#SexualDesire



# Resources

## [Controversies of Women's Sexual Arousal and Desire](#)

Chivers, M. L. & Brotto, L. A.

European Psychologist (2017), 22(1), 5–26.

DOI: 10.1027/1016-9040/a000274

## ["Better Sex Through Mindfulness: How Women Can Cultivate Desire"](#) [by Lori Brotto](#)

Dr. Lori Brotto looks at treating women's sexual difficulties through practicing mindfulness.

## ["Come as You Are: The Surprising New Science that Will Transform Your Sex Life"](#) [by Emily Nagoski](#)

Dr. Emily Nagoski explores the uniqueness of women's sexuality through science.

## [brottolab.com](http://brottolab.com)

The UBC Sexual Health Lab's website, where you can find our publications on our studies, read about our lab members, and view some of Dr. Brotto's media appearances.

## [sexandu.ca](http://sexandu.ca)

SexandU.ca provides accurate, credible, and up-to-date information and education on topics related to sexual and reproductive health.

## [Reclaiming Female Sexual Desire - Pam Costa](#)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Sn\\_UhcXZm4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Sn_UhcXZm4)

## [The secret to desire in a long-term relationship - Esther Perel](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sa0RUMGTCYY>

## [ThePleasureProject.org](http://ThePleasureProject.org)

Putting the sexy back in safe sex education! Pleasure-focused sex ed resource.