

LET'S TALK ABOUT ***STRESS, BABY***

Joint problem-solving and sexual distress
across the transition to parenthood

New publication:

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A Longitudinal Examination of Common Dyadic Coping and Sexual Distress in New Parent Couples during the Transition to Parenthood

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*Scroll to the next slide,
we'll break down the
findings!*



New parents experience numerous challenges with their sexual relationships, including declines in sexual desire and frequency, and increased distress, or negative feelings, related to their sexuality.

So, how do they cope?

Common dyadic coping

occurs when partners work together to handle a common stressor (like a new baby!).

Common dyadic coping may be linked with ***less sexual distress*** by promoting intimacy, trust, and closeness.



WE WANTED TO KNOW:

Is common dyadic coping at 3-months postpartum linked to first-time parents' sexual distress throughout the first postpartum year?

We sampled **99** first-time
parent couples



at 3-, 6-, and 12-months
postpartum.

WHAT DID WE FIND?



At 3-months postpartum, when a parent reported **higher common dyadic coping**, they also reported **lower sexual distress**.

There were no significant associations between common dyadic coping and changes in sexual distress over time.

Women who gave birth—but not their partners—reported **clinically-elevated sexual distress** at 3-months, which **declined significantly** over time (although still remaining clinically-elevated).



Non-birth-giving partners' sexual distress remained low and stable over time.

WHAT DOES THIS ALL MEAN?

When new parents feel that they are **working together** to manage stress, this may help **alleviate distress** regarding novel sexual

concerns when most new parents are resuming sexual activity (3-months postpartum).



Women who give birth experience a myriad of distinct changes (such as hormonal fluctuations, changes to body image, trauma related to childbirth) which may explain the **significantly higher levels of sexual distress.**

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Common dyadic coping, or working together to handle a common stressor, may be a **helpful strategy** for new parents to try when navigating changes to their sexual relationship.



Sexual distress may be an important topic to discuss with a postpartum **healthcare provider**. Clinicians may consider **screening** for sexual distress in birth-givers.

This is a summary of our published article:

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