

Sexual Talk in Long-Term Relationships – **WHAT'S BEING LEFT UNDER THE COVERS?**

Does what you say during sex matter? What about how responsive you think your partner is to your sexual talk?

**NEW
PUBLICATION!**



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



Sexual talk (i.e., verbal communication that happens *during* sex and is *about* the sexual interaction) comes in two forms:



Mutualistic:

focuses on sharing the experience with your partner (e.g., "I feel so close to you")



Individualistic:

focuses on one's own sexual experience (e.g., "You're mine now")

What is perceived partner responsiveness (PPR)?

PPR is how much you feel your partner is accepting, understanding, validating, and caring when you use sexual talk.



WHAT DID WE WANT TO KNOW?

1. Are *mutualistic* and *individualistic* sexual talk associated with sexual satisfaction, sexual functioning, sexual distress, and relationship satisfaction?
2. Does *perceived partner responsiveness* to sexual talk moderate these associations?

We recruited **303** sexually active people, of various gender and sexual identities, in **long-term relationships**.



Participants completed an online **questionnaire** asking about their use of **sexual talk**, perceived partner responsiveness to sexual talk, and their levels of sexual satisfaction, sexual function, sexual distress, and relationship satisfaction.

WHAT DID WE FIND?

- When a partner was perceived as **very responsive** to sexual talk:



- *More mutualistic talk* → less sexual distress
- *More individualistic talk* → greater sexual satisfaction

- When a partner was perceived as **unresponsive** to sexual talk:



- *More mutualistic talk* → more sexual distress
- *More individualistic talk* → poorer sexual satisfaction



WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

Sexual talk is important—but how a partner **responds** to sexual talk (or how their responses are viewed) may matter more!

Mutualistic talk:

beneficial for sexual and relationship well-being.



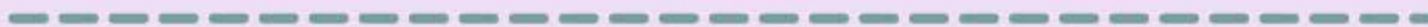
Individualistic talk:

associated with poorer sexual and relationship well-being.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Sexual and relationship well-being are extremely important for mental and physical health. Yet, **many couples** in long-term relationships experience **declining sexual and relationship well-being** over time.

Sexual talk may be one of the unique ways these couples can **maintain** (or even **enhance!**) their sexual and relationship well-being—resulting in greater overall health!



This is a summary of our published article:

Merwin, K. E., & Rosen, N. O. (2020). Perceived partner responsiveness moderates the associations between sexual talk and sexual and relationship well-being in long-term relationships.

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