



Healing the Healers: Sexual Self-Care

Jane Fleishman, PhD, MEd, CSE

National Symposium on Sexual Behavior of Youth

February 26, 2025



Welcome and Introductions

Acknowledgements



Jane Silvosky



Natalie Malone

Agenda

Challenges to our sexual health

An update on research

Useful activities toward a better way forward

A call to action



ACTIVITIES



Body Scan



Who I Am

Reflections

1. What messages has my *culture* given me about caring for my sexual health?
2. What messages has my *profession* given me about caring for my sexual health?
3. In what ways does my *workplace* help/hinder caring for my sexual health?
4. On a scale of 1-10, how do I rate my commitment to sexual self-care?



Research Update

Impacts on our sexual health (Crivatu et al, 2023)

- Higher risk factors, trauma

Correlates with intimacy (Harris & Orth, 2020)

- Positive self-esteem, self-regard, sexual identity

Sexual wellbeing as prevention (Mitchell et al, 2021)

- Health, wellness, pleasure, justice

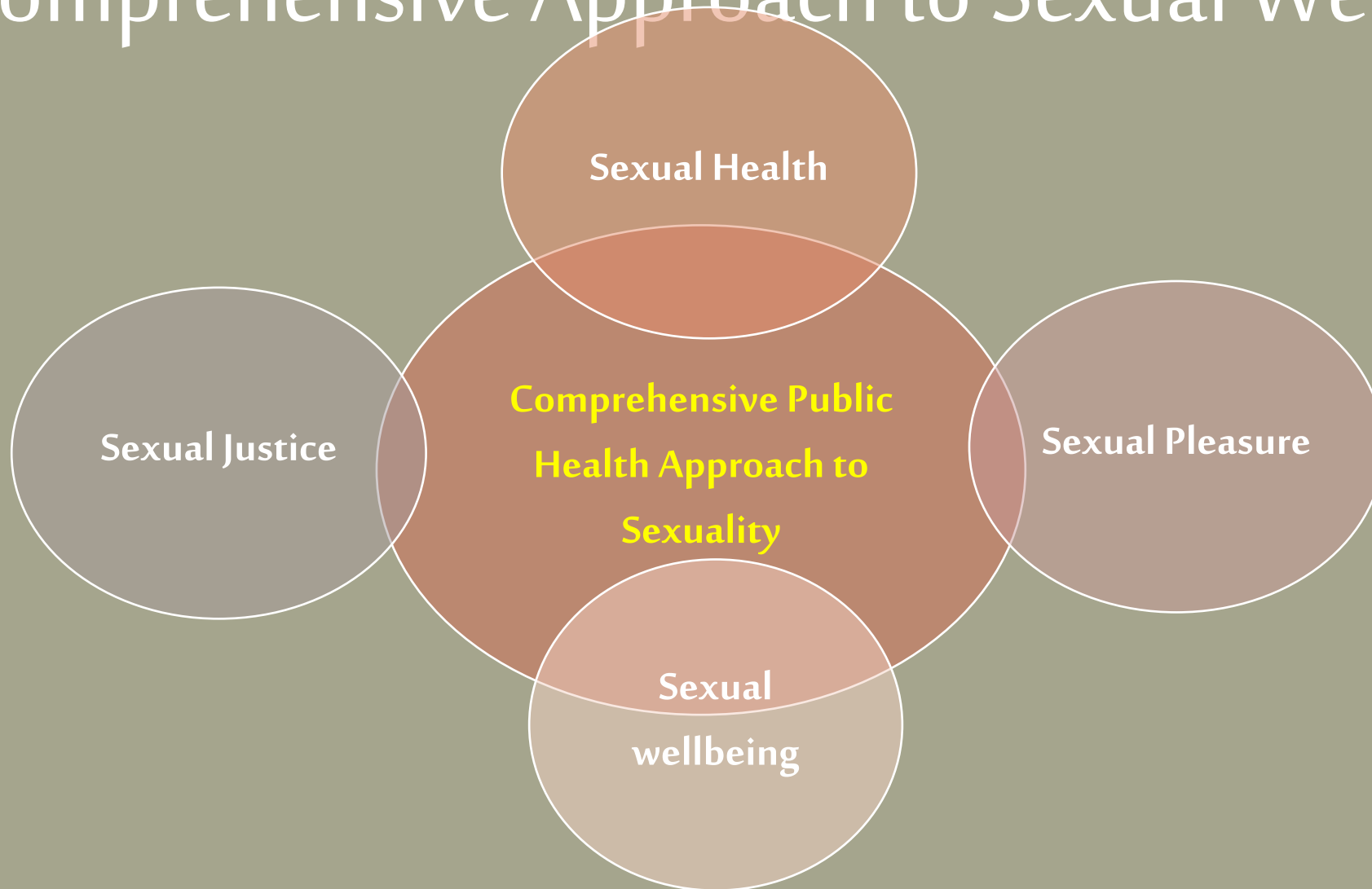
Sexual and gender minorities (Fleishman et al, 2019)

- Internalized homophobia, resilience, relationship and sexual satisfaction

Health benefits (Shen & Liu, 2024, Whipple et al., 2007)



Comprehensive Approach to Sexual Wellness



Mitchell et al., 2021

Sexual Health

- Fertility and regulation
- Prevention and management of STIs
- Sexual violence prevention
- Sexual functions (desire, arousal)



Sexual Health

Sexual Pleasure



- Self-determination
- Consent
- Safety
- Privacy
- Confidence
- Communications
- Negotiations
- Person-related and Event-related

Sexual Pleasure

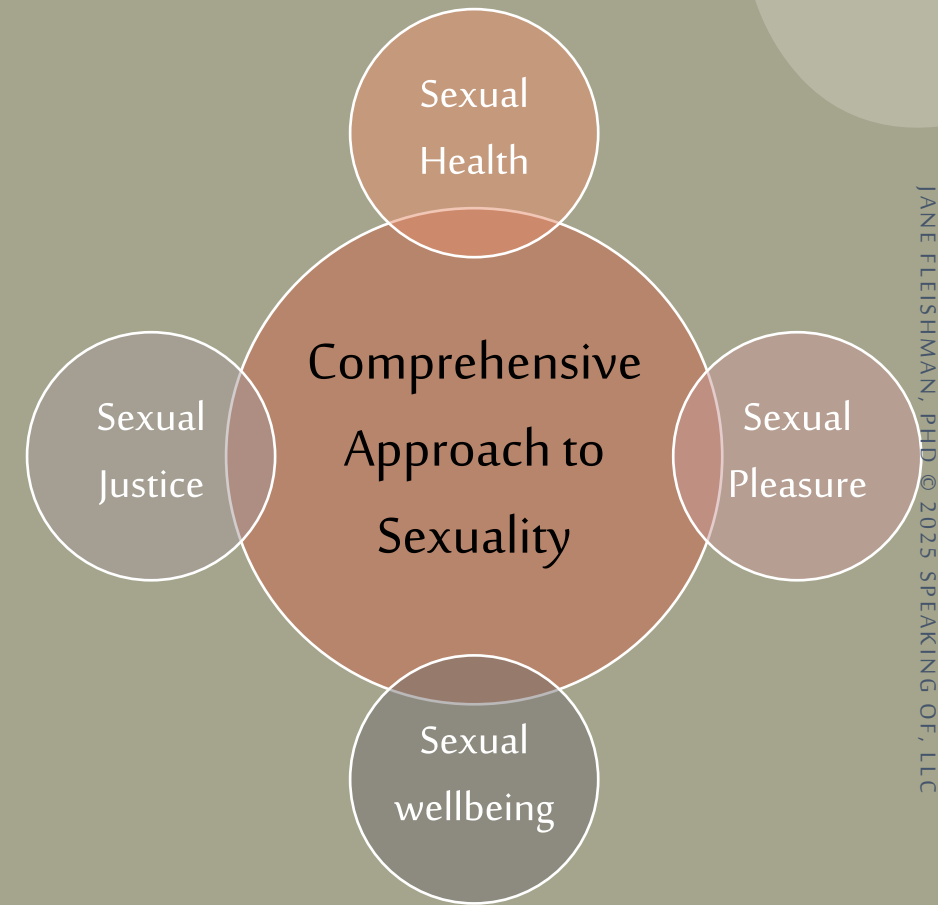
Sexual Justice

- Sexual rights
- Sexual citizenship
- Sex positive practice
- Larger efforts to ensure equity



Sexual Justice

Sexual Wellbeing exists *only* in the context of:



Sexual Wellbeing



- Sexual safety and security
- Sexual respect
- Sexual self-esteem
- Resilience in relation to past sexual experiences
- Forgiveness of past sexual experiences
- Self-determination in one's sexual life
- Comfort with sexuality

Sexual
wellbeing

What about my sexual health?

- What challenges do you face in your work?
- How might those impede the fullest expression of your sexual wellbeing?



Pause



How can we be OK?

Connect with others

Feel the feels

Express your creativity

Find joy

Notice your capacity

Reach out

Protect your time

Trust yourself

Grieve and rage

Get real about power

Envision a positive future

Natalie Malone, 2024



Social Ecological Model



Personal



Family



Organizational



Policy

Bronfenbrenner, (1977)

Levels of Care



Numbing



Self-Care



Sexual Care



Soul Care

A FEW MORE ACTIVITIES

Self-Care Scavenger Hunt

What do you see that you love?

What sound brings you joy?

What smells really good?

What feels good on your skin?

What reminds you of great memories?





Loving My Body



How Do I See?

Checklist for Work

- ☐ Notice what constitutes your day
- ☐ Leave work on time
- ☐ Set effective boundaries
- ☐ Say *no* (when you can)
- ☐ Ask Marie Kondo
- ☐ Take MH days
- ☐ If you were gone tomorrow...
- ☐ Systems accountability
- ☐ Acknowledgements
- ☐ Gratitude



--Thanks to Natalie Malone



Natalie-Malone

A Call to Action

What can you do to take care of your sexual health?

Choose something within your reach

Find someone to be your ally

Create a check-in system

Be kind to yourself



References

- Crivatu, I. M., Horvath, M. A., & Massey, K. (2023). The impacts of working with victims of sexual violence: a rapid evidence assessment. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse, 24*(1), 56-71.
- Fleishman, J. M., Crane, B., & Koch, P. B. (2020). Correlates and predictors of sexual satisfaction for older adults in same-sex relationships. *Journal of Homosexuality, 67*(14), 1974-1998.
- Harris, M. A., & Orth, U. (2020). The link between self-esteem and social relationships: A meta-analysis of longitudinal studies. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 119*(6), 1459.
- Mitchell, K. R., Lewis, R., O'Sullivan, L. F., & Fortenberry, J. D. (2021). What is sexual wellbeing and why does it matter for public health?. *The Lancet Public Health, 6*(8), e608-e613.
- Shen, S., & Liu, H. (2023). Is sex good for your brain? A national longitudinal study on sexuality and cognitive function among older adults in the united states. *The Journal of Sex Research, 60*(9), 1345-1355.
- Whipple, B. (2008). The benefits of sexual expression on physical health. *Sexologies, 17*, S45-S46.

Photo credits

All pottery photos by Emma Tabachnick

Follow Emma on Instagram at

[#emma_tabachnick_pottery](https://www.instagram.com/emma_tabachnick_pottery)



A close-up photograph of a lamp. The lamp has a conical, textured beige shade. The base is made of a reddish-brown, matte-finished material, possibly ceramic or wood, with a bulbous, organic shape that tapers to a small cylindrical neck. The background is a dark, solid color.

With Gratitude

Let's stay connected!

Jane Fleishman, PhD, MEd, CSE

jane@janefleishman.com

www.janefleishman.com



Photo Credit: Paul Shoul

JANE FLEISHMAN, PHD © 2025 SPEAKING OF LLC