

## **ABOUT THE HVCCT**

The HVCCT is one of the leading psychotherapy practices in the Hudson Valley region and adheres to the philosophy that the client's well-being is the top priority. Our therapists treat their clients with respect and warmth while also utilizing state-of-the-art methods. Our therapists accept the responsibility of providing quality care and aim to help their clients to address their problems with an effective, hopeful, and engaging approach.

Therapists at the HVCCT work with children, adolescents, adults, couples, and families. Some of their areas of specialization include the following:

- Depression and Mood Disorders
- Anxiety (Panic, OCD, Social Anxiety, Phobias, Worry)
- PTSD / Trauma / Abuse Issues
- Family Therapy and Marital / Relationship Issues
- Insomnia / Sleep Difficulties
- Academic / Learning Difficulties
- Child & Adult Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD/ADHD)
- Anger Management
- Impulse Control Difficulties (e.g., Hair Pulling)
- Grieving and Loss

## **PARENT TRAINING**

For parents with a child in therapy, parent training is offered to help reinforce the strategies their child is learning.

## **TESTING SERVICES**

Areas of assessment include intelligence, academic / learning disabilities, developmental disabilities, personality and emotional issues, and pre-surgical evaluations for gastric bypass/bariatric surgery candidates.

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

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10/07

# Sexual Disorders

## **Do You Experience:**

Impaired Sexual Interest?

Reduced Sexual Arousal?

Orgasmic Dysfunction?

Pain During Sexual Activity?

## **You Are Not Alone!**

 **HUDSON VALLEY CENTER  
FOR COGNITIVE THERAPY**

*Mood & Anxiety Disorders • Substance Abuse • Sexual/Relationship Issues*

## SEXUAL DYSFUNCTION

Sexual dysfunction can be defined as persistent impairment in sexual interest and response. It is characterized by a disturbance in sexual desire and/or the physiological changes that accompany sexual excitement. Sexual dysfunction can also cause marked distress and interpersonal difficulty.

## COMMON SEXUAL PROBLEMS

**Impaired Sexual Interest:** Desire for sexual activity is deficient or absent. Sexual interest is reflected in frequency of sexual acts with partner, masturbation, and sexual thoughts.

**Impaired Sexual Arousal:** There is a failure of normal physiological responses and/or lack of sensations that are usually associated with sexual excitement. In women, there may be an absent or minimal lubrication-swelling response. In men, there may be difficulty in attaining or maintaining an erection.

**Orgasmic Dysfunction:** Orgasm is delayed, very infrequent, or absent following sexual excitement. In some cases, orgasm can be premature rather than delayed.

**Sexual Pain Disorders:** Sexual intercourse is impossible or extremely painful. These problems can occur in men and women.

## WHEN TO SEEK TREATMENT

1. When sexual problems occur for at least six months.
2. When efforts by the individual or couple to solve the problem are unsuccessful.
3. When the problem causes conflict in the relationship between the partners.
4. When the problem may be caused or maintained by psychological factors (e.g., negative previous sexual experience, performance anxiety, low self-esteem, poor body image).

## COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL THERAPY (CBT)

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is one of the most state-of-the-art and extensively researched methods of psychotherapy. A central idea in CBT is that perception of an event or experience powerfully affects emotional, behavioral, and physiological responses. Clients learn to identify thought patterns that keep them locked into dysfunctional mood and behaviors. Since these patterns become ingrained, they are experienced as automatic. Nevertheless, they have a profound effect on the way one is feeling and behaving.

CBT has also been shown to be effective for Depression, Anxiety Disorders, Eating Disorders, Anger Problems, Procrastination, Assertiveness, Hypochondriasis, and Psychosomatic Disorders, such as headaches, hypertension, and irritable bowel syndrome. Longer-standing issues, including low self-esteem and feelings of inadequacy, loneliness, dependence on others, and mistrust can also be addressed using this approach.

## ADVANTAGES OF CBT

**Proven Effective:** There are hundreds of research studies demonstrating that CBT is an effective treatment. For many disorders, CBT is a more effective treatment than other forms of psychotherapy and equivalent to medication.

**Short Term:** Cognitive Therapy aims to achieve results as quickly as possible. Most clients experience positive changes in approximately 12-25 sessions. The course of treatment tends to be considerably shorter than for traditional approaches to psychotherapy, as it is structured, problem-focused, and goal-oriented.

**Cost-Effective:** The active and focused psychotherapeutic approach makes the cost of treatment less expensive than other forms of therapy. The focus on skill building and client independence minimizes the length of treatment and reduces the risk of relapse.

**Lasting Results:** CBT emphasizes many practical strategies that can be used when therapy ends to cope with life more effectively.

## OVERVIEW OF CBT FOR SEXUAL PROBLEMS

Below are the major components of treatment. Each receives varying degrees of emphasis depending on the particular case.

**Education:** At times, misinformation can be an important contributory factor in sexual dysfunction. Usually at least one session is devoted to discussing sexual anatomy and/or stages of sexual arousal. Additional information is provided as needed.

**Cognitive Restructuring:** Self-statements, thoughts, expectations, and beliefs play a large role in sexual arousal and reactions. The couple learns to identify self-statements that interfere with sexual response. Thoughts that contribute to anxiety, anger, and aversion are identified and modified. Beliefs regarding intimacy, commitment, vulnerability, and control may be explored. Individual coping statements are generated to overcome anxiety, aversion, or avoidance responses that occur in reaction to sexual situations.

**Communication Training:** The individual or couple will learn how to express their thoughts, feelings, desires, and frustrations to their partner in a honest, non-threatening manner.

**Sensate Focus:** A graded series of sexual tasks may be suggested as "homework" beginning with massage and gradually progressing to gentle and exploratory genital stimulation. These exercises are designed to remove performance anxiety and discover new sensual experiences. Sexual arousal is not the objective. These tasks are aimed to change sexual behavior and teach effective sexual technique.

## FREE PHONE CONSULTATION

Dr. Christine Ziegler, Director of the HVCCT, is happy to discuss your specific concerns and explain how Cognitive Therapy may benefit you. Please call (845) 353-3399 x 12 to learn more about our services or to schedule an initial appointment with one of our therapists.