



# When pain or a changing body gets in the way of intimacy

I'm Joseph Maron, MS, LPC, a sex therapist seeing Pennsylvania adults by telehealth. While you continue the rehab and pain care, I work alongside you on the worry, avoidance, and relationship changes.

Consider a referral when your patient...

## Mentions that pain has changed their sex life.

Sexual difficulties often go along with pain and low mood.

## Worries sex will cause a flare or an injury.

Beliefs that sex will make things worse can quietly limit desire.

## Has stopped sex or touch since an injury or diagnosis.

Illness can change intimacy, roles, and communication.

## Describes guilt, role strain, or distance with a partner.

Partners often struggle to talk about sexual needs and limits.

## Is adapting sex to a disability, MS, or spinal cord injury.

Adults with MS or spinal cord injury say they want sexual health support that fits how their body works now.

## Is recovering from cancer treatment or major surgery.

After breast cancer, psychological care improved sexual function.

## COMMON REASONS TO REFER

Sexual concerns with chronic pain

Changes after injury, surgery, or illness

Adapting to disability or mobility change

MS, spinal cord injury, and other neurologic conditions

Fear of pain or a flare during sex

Fatigue and low desire

Body image after physical change

Communication and role changes

## Tandem care, not a hand-off

### STAYS WITH YOU

Pain and function care · Exercise and mobility · Safe-movement guidance

### I WORK ON

Fears about sex and pain · Rebuilding touch · Widening what sex includes · Body image

**Shared:** with your patient's permission, I coordinate with you so both plans support each other.

**WHY IT FITS** In a review of chronic musculoskeletal pain, sexual difficulties were consistent and tracked pain and distress.<sup>1</sup> After breast cancer, psychological interventions improved sexual function.<sup>2</sup> Psychological treatments, including CBT and mindfulness-based approaches, improve sexual function and sexual distress compared with no treatment in controlled trials.<sup>3</sup> No trial has tested sex therapy in chronic pain; MS and spinal cord injury evidence is early.

## TO REFER · JOE MARON THERAPY

**Your patient requests a free 15-minute consult at [JosephMaronLPC.com](https://www.JosephMaronLPC.com)**

Or call **215-804-9315**. Want to talk a referral through first? Call me at the same number.

**Telehealth only · Adults in Pennsylvania · Private pay**, superbills provided

**Tell your patient:** sex therapy is talk therapy. No touch, no exam.

Doctoral student in human sexuality, Widener University · Certificate in Affirmative Therapy for Transgender Communities · ADHD-CCSP · LGBTQ+ affirming

1 Katz et al., *Pain Med* 2021. 2 Xu et al., *J Clin Nurs* 2023. 3 Frühauf et al., *Arch Sex Behav* 2013; Liu et al., *J Sex Med* 2026.



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