

Managing Orgasm Anxiety

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Understanding and Coping with Negative Feelings

Experiencing anxiety about orgasm can significantly affect your pleasure during sexual encounters. Here's what you need to know about orgasm anxiety and some strategies to help you cope.

Orgasm is often considered the pinnacle of a sexual experience, but it can be accompanied by negative emotions called orgasm anxiety.

Orgasm anxiety can be defined as:

The anxiety one feels about sexual performance, such as performance anxiety or the fear of not being able to orgasm during sex.

The anxiety one experiences leading up to the moment of orgasm, such as fear of losing control over their body or the intensity of the sensations.

Orgasm anxiety is a common and valid experience shared by many individuals and can impact a person's psychological well-being, potentially leading to other sexual disorders and dysfunctions.

Signs of orgasm anxiety may include:

- Tensing up of the body during sex.
- Having a wandering mind that detracts from the experience.
- Dreading the moments leading up to orgasm.
- Feeling overwhelmed with nervousness.
- Experiencing a disconnection between the mind and body.

The causes of orgasm anxiety can vary from person to person, as everyone's experience of pleasure is unique. However, it is essential to recognise that you are not alone in this, and identifying potential underlying causes can be helpful.

Reasons why you might experience orgasm anxiety:

- Feelings of fear, stress, or worry.
- Lack of comprehensive sex education that focuses on pleasure.
- History of sexual trauma.
- Sexual shame or guilt associated with pleasure.
- Self-judgment regarding sexual performance.
- Mental health conditions, such as generalised anxiety.
- Past negative sexual experiences.

- Body image concerns.
- Pressure from oneself or a partner to achieve orgasm.

Understanding that orgasm is a primal experience that requires surrendering control can be crucial. However, anxiety often stems from lacking control and the need for safety. Trusting the experience and allowing vulnerability and release can be challenging but necessary for the sensations to build up to orgasm.

Reflect on questions like:

- What does it mean to me if I can't orgasm with my partner?
- Am I afraid of appearing "out of control" when I orgasm?
- What significance do I attach to orgasm?
- Does, not having an orgasm, make me feel inadequate or lesser than me?

Consider trying the following strategies:

- Reflect on the underlying reasons: Take the time to explore the potential causes of your orgasm anxiety. By understanding why you feel this way, you can employ various methods to alleviate that anxiety.
- Communicate your feelings: If you experience orgasm anxiety during partnered sex, sharing your feelings with your partner can help them understand your experience and provide support. By voicing these concerns, you can unravel them from the grip of shame that often accompanies secrecy and silence.
- Explore your body and desires: Enhancing your body awareness and self-stimulation can be beneficial. Take the time to discover what pleases you, as this can lead to more fulfilling and potentially orgasmic sexual experiences. Engage in a solo-masturbation practice to become familiar with your body, needs, wants, and desires related to touch.
- Relaxation and presence: Mindfulness training can help alleviate anxiety, including sexual performance anxiety. By staying present and attuned to touch, you can escape the expectations and worries about what "should" happen. Create a sexual ambience by incorporating elements like candlelight, sensual music, soothing aromas, and paying attention to pressure, texture, and temperature. This practice requires vulnerability, curiosity, and the ability to appreciate sensual experiences.
- Prioritize pleasure: Remember that orgasm is not the sole indicator of pleasure during sex. Instead of fixating on reaching orgasm, focus on experiencing a general sense of pleasure. By de-emphasizing the pressure to achieve orgasm, you can alleviate fears and anxieties related to orgasm. Appreciate the sensual exchange rather than solely seeking the "perfect cherry on top."

- Seek professional help: Working with a sex educator or therapist can provide valuable guidance and support. They can help you understand the potential causes of orgasm anxiety and develop strategies to overcome it. Sex educators can reframe your perspective on pleasure and provide sex-positive education resources, while therapists can address both orgasm and general anxiety as part of a treatment protocol.

Remember, if you experience orgasm anxiety, your feelings are valid and shared by many. By addressing these concerns and implementing coping strategies, you can manage orgasm anxiety and enhance your ability to enjoy fulfilling and pleasurable sexual experiences in the future.

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