

Psychoanalysts need a better understanding of human sexuality to help their patients

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"Psychoanalysts were once thought to be experts on sexual issues, but that is less true today. The rift between psychoanalysis and scientific sexology that occurred in the mid-20th century may be partly responsible," states Mark J. Blechner, PhD, author of "Psychoanalysis and Sexual Issues," a new article available from Contemporary Psychoanalysis, the official publication of the William Alanson White Institute and the William Alanson White Psychoanalytic Society.

The article describes the conflict between [psychoanalysis](#) and sexology and shows how it may be partly responsible for current psychoanalysts' lack of knowledge surrounding [sexual issues](#). Blechner suggests ways in which this situation could potentially be remedied.

According to Blechner, psychoanalysts are best able to become more literate about variant forms of sexuality by reading first-person accounts and by garnering information from empirical research and Internet sites for specific forms of sexuality. Psychoanalysts additionally need to examine their attitudes to different forms of sexuality, be aware of the patient's own goals in treatment, remain honest and open about whether the analyst can help achieve those goals, and pay attention to the important difference between psychopathology and societal pathology. Blechner presents a case example to illustrate these principles.

Blechner concludes: "Ultimately, we all want to help our patients . . . Sexuality is a core part of human experience, and sexual difficulties can be a large part of the issues for which people seek psychotherapy. In

order to help patients, the analyst must learn the facts of human [sexuality](#) , a huge area of knowledge that needs constant refresher courses . . . Our aim is to support our patients in finding sexual satisfaction and loving intimacy in the best way possible for them."

More information: Mark J. Blechner. Psychoanalysis and Sexual Issues, *Contemporary Psychoanalysis* (2016). [DOI: 10.1080/00107530.2016.1225190](#)

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