

# Sexual problems may be affected by evidence-based psychotherapy for PTSD

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Regions of the brain associated with stress and posttraumatic stress disorder.  
Credit: National Institutes of Health

The National Center for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) has published the research findings of a University of Kentucky researcher in its latest issue of the Clinician's Trauma Update. Assistant Professor of Psychology Christal Badour's research investigates associations

among symptoms of PTSD, depression and problems with sexual arousal and desire, particularly in male veterans who served in Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

In an article titled "Sexual Problems Predict PTSD and Depression Symptom Change Among Male OEF/OIF Veterans Completing Exposure Therapy," Badour and her co-authors take a close look at how the presence of [sexual problems](#) may be affected by evidence-based psychotherapy for PTSD, as well as how these problems impact the effectiveness of treatment.

Badour's research involved the participation of 45 OEF/OIF (Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom) veterans receiving behavioral activation and therapeutic exposure (BA-TE), an evidence-based behavior therapy targeting co-occurring symptoms of PTSD and depression. Participants completed clinical interviews and questionnaires measuring [sexual arousal](#), sexual desire, PTSD symptoms and depression symptoms at baseline, and after eight sessions of BA-TE treatment.

At the conclusion of her research, Badour found that not only did participants' sexual problems not improve, they also showed less improvement in symptoms of PTSD and depression across treatment when compared to veterans without sexual dysfunction issues. These findings suggest that veterans with co-occurring symptoms of PTSD and sexual dysfunction may require additional assessment and treatment considerations in order to improve treatment outcomes for both primary psychiatric symptoms and sexual problems.

**More information:** Christal L. Badour et al. Sexual Problems Predict PTSD and Depression Symptom Change Among Male OEF/OIF Veterans Completing Exposure Therapy, *Psychiatry* (2016). [DOI: 10.1080/00332747.2016.1142774](https://doi.org/10.1080/00332747.2016.1142774)

Provided by University of Kentucky

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