



# Comparing Responses to Sexual Rejection and Sexual and Relationship Well-Being in Couples Coping with Sexual Interest/Arousal Disorder and Community Couples

**Sexual Interest/Arousal Disorder (SIAD)** is the absence or lack of sexual interest or arousal that persists for 6+ months and can lead to feelings of guilt, sadness, or frustration by both parties in a relationship.

**Sexual rejections** are instances when sexual advances are declined by a partner. It is the most commonly reported sexual problem by women and can be met with various types of responses, including:

## UNDERSTANDING

Accepting their rejection and letting them know you still love them and are attracted to them.

## RESENTFUL

Expressing anger, acting cold, ignoring, guiltting them.

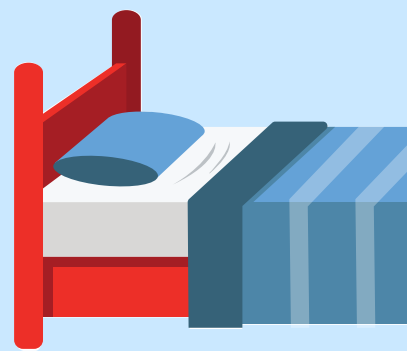
## INSECURE

Feeling hurt or upset, thinking their partner is not attracted to them.

## ENTICING

Attempting to re-initiate sex, change their mind, or get them in the mood.

We investigated whether couples with one partner who had SIAD and couples from a community sample who were not assessed for SIAD would respond differently to sexual rejection.



## Method

Data from two large North American studies were analyzed. The studies involved 241 couples coping with SIAD and 105 community couples, but all participants were asked:

- how often sexual rejection occurred in their relationship
- how they/their partner responded to sexual rejection
- about their own sexual satisfaction, desire, distress, and frequency, and relationship satisfaction



## Results

When declining sexual advances, individuals in the SIAD sample perceived and reported **more** resentful and insecure responses than those in the community sample.

For **both** the couples coping with SIAD and the community couples, **more** understanding and **less** resentful and insecure responses were associated with greater sexual and relationship well-being for **both** couple members.



## In short,

Although couples coping with SIAD indicated more resentful and insecure responses, they **still** appeared to be drawing on **adaptive** responses to rejection to the same extent as community couples.

The findings of this study highlight the potential for **interventions fostering more helpful (e.g., understanding) responses to sexual rejection** to improve sexual and relationship well-being for couples dealing with low sexual desire.

