

# MINDS & HEARTS

A Specialist Clinic for Asperger's Syndrome and Autism Spectrum Disorders



## Asperger Syndrome and Intimacy

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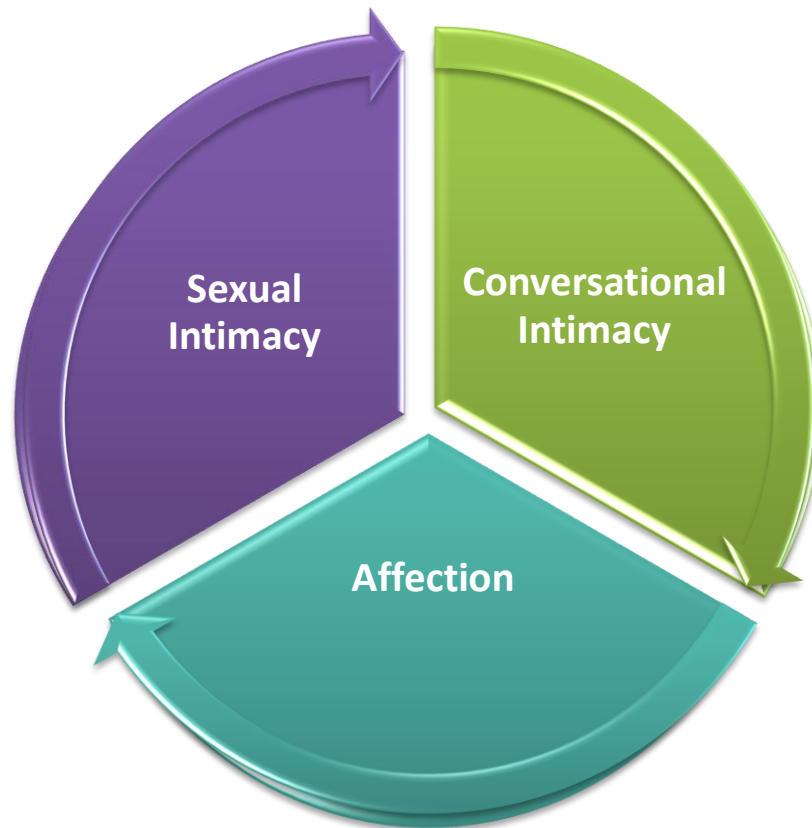


# MINDS & HEARTS

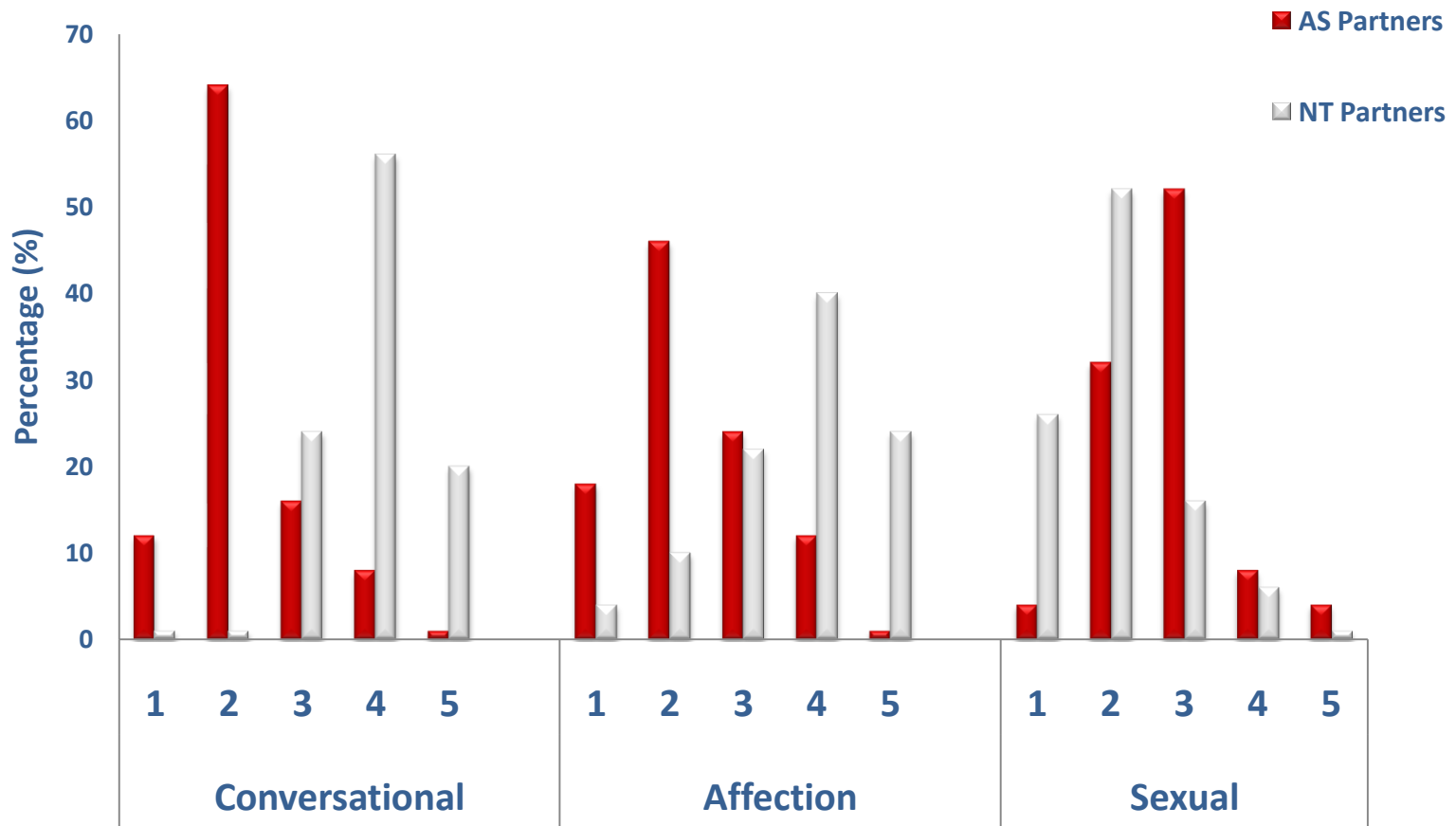


## Experience of Intimacy In AS-NT Romantic Love Relationships: An Online Survey

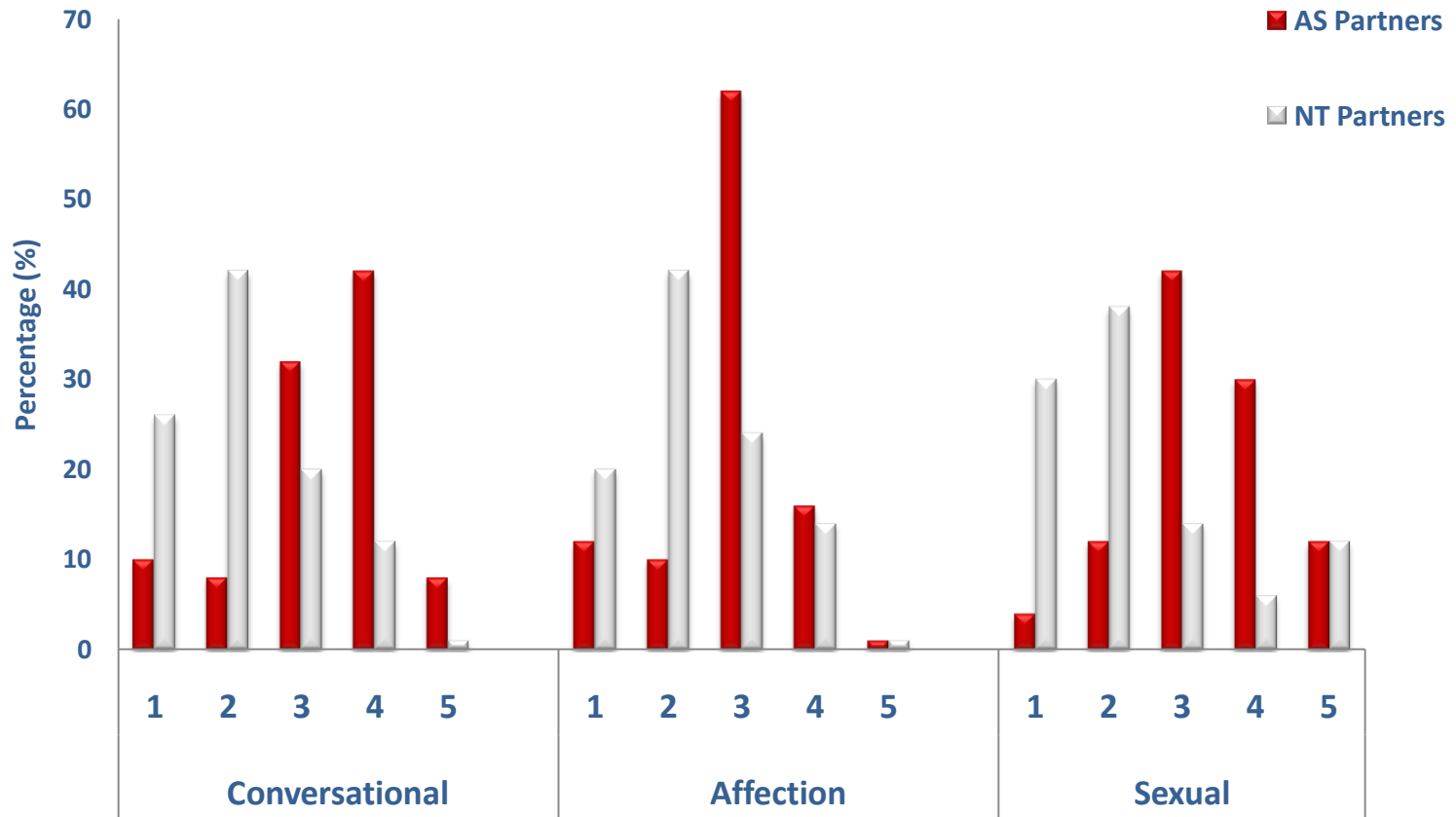
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## Sense of Competency



## Sense of Satisfaction



## Conversational Intimacy: Qualitative Data

### AS Partners

*“I have trouble putting my thoughts into words. I transpose words, repeat myself, and really have to think it through. I'm much better at putting how I feel into writing. We talk a lot through email.”*

### NT Partners

*“I didn't get a response, or the response would be very self-involved by my husband, so over time, I stopped conversational intimacy. After I learned about AS, I told him exactly what I needed and told him to fake it. That was helpful. i.e. look at me in the eyes etc.”*



## Affection: Qualitative Data

### AS Partners

*“Practical displays of affection I am fine with, I find it extremely difficult to express love in other ways and being hugged tends to freak me out unless I prepare myself for it.”*

*“I don’t do this.”*

### NT Partners

*“I stopped trying to get and give physical affection after years of being rejected and his not understanding. When he does try to touch me it is mostly annoying touch.”*



## Sexual Intimacy: Qualitative Data

### AS Partners

*“I have no interest and find the whole prospect of sexual intimacy with my partner boring and unfulfilling and unexciting.”*

*“So many things, such as eating, talking and seeing beautiful things, are so strong experiences to me that it is almost like having sex all the time.”*

### NT Partners

*“Yes, it is working, as long as we do it every Fri night at 10pm...”*

*“Sometimes I feel that he needs some time alone after a night we've spent together. I think having sexual intimacy with me is not that easy on him as it appears. After all, he is faced with the NT world, and this can't be easy on him.”*



## Common Challenges

### AS Partners

**Alexithymia**  
**Missing Subtle Cues**  
**Rigidity in Thinking**  
**Sensory Sensitivities**

### NT Partners

**Affection Deprivation**  
**Anxiety**  
**Self-Esteem**  
**Depression**

# Management Strategies



## Key Ingredients

**Obtaining and Acceptance of the diagnosis**

**Motivation of both partners to change and learn**

**Relationship information and counseling**



## Knowledge and Attitude

### Perception of The Relationship

#### Stages of Acceptance

### Recognition of the Differences

#### The Unique Profile of an AS-NT Relationship



# Conversational Intimacy





**TIME**  
**LOGICAL**  
**PREDICTABLE**



## Emotion Understanding

### Reading Cues

Perception vs Expression

Explicit Feedback

### Physiological Reactivity

Switch vs Dimmer

Emotion ToolBox

### Clear Rules

The 5 Point Scale



# Affection



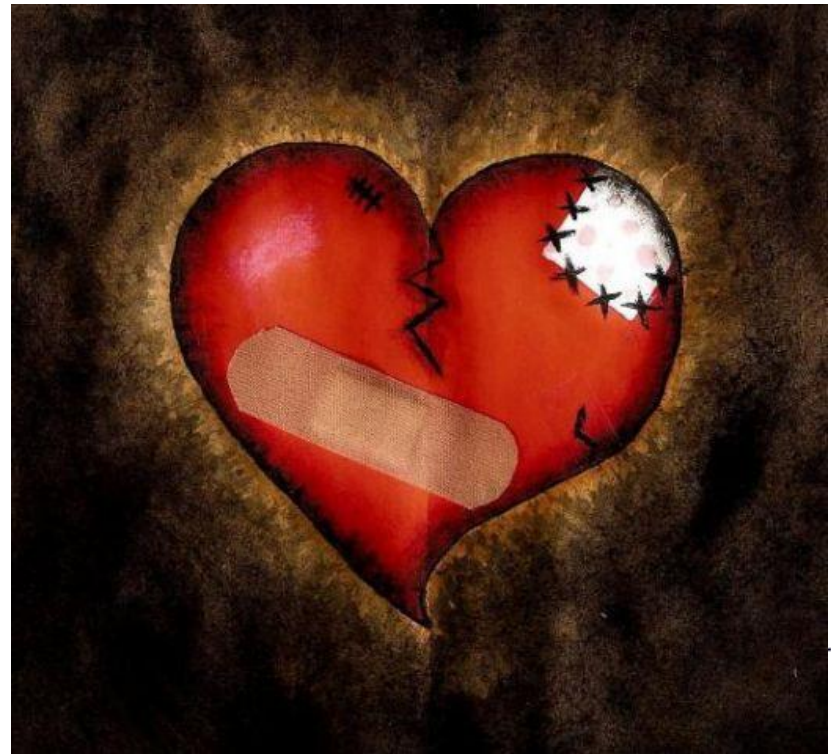
## Affection as a Tool

**Specify the Unmet Needs**

**Differences in Emotional Repair Mechanisms**

**Compliments**

**Breaking It Down**

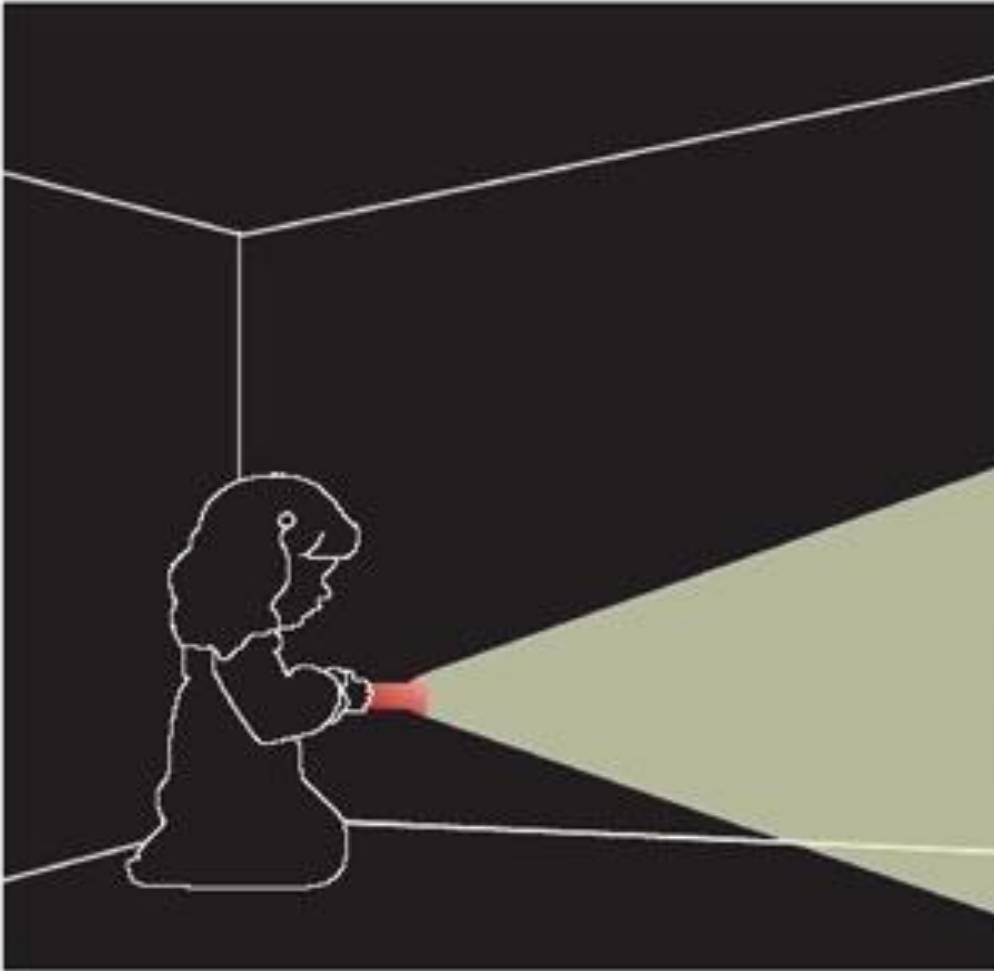


**How many first year engineering students does it take to change a light bulb?**

*None. That's a second year subject*



## Rigidity in Thinking



**Compromise**

**Letting Go**

**Perspective-Taking**



## Personal Well-Being

**Emotional Deprivation**

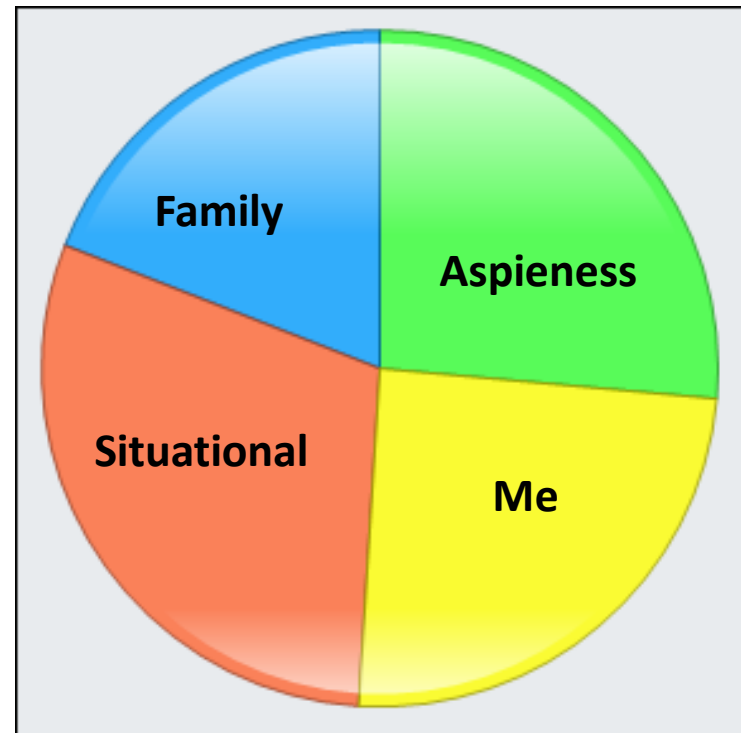
**Having an Independent Social Life**

**Guilt**

**Self-Esteem**

**Me-Not Me**

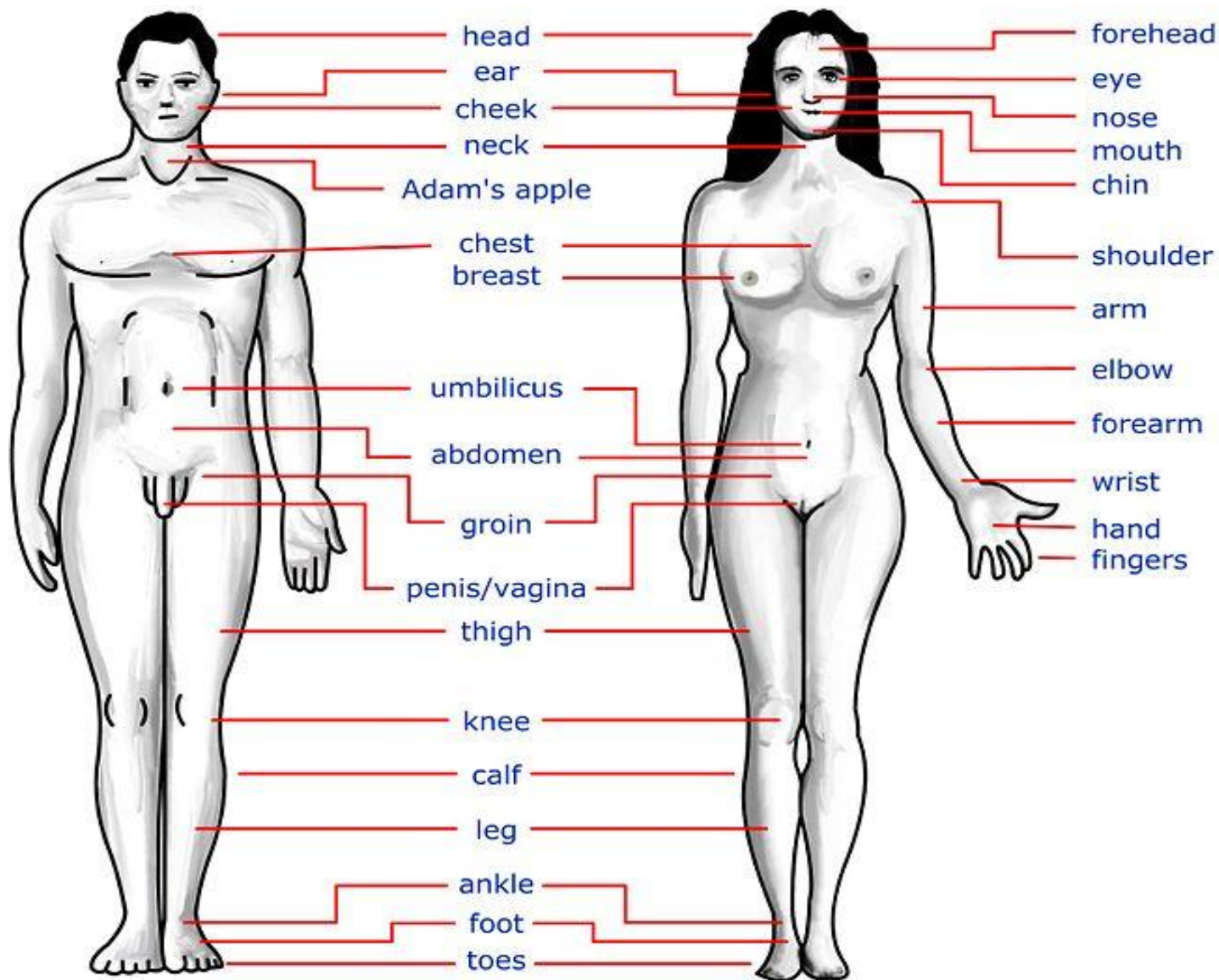
**Finding Me**



# Sexual Intimacy



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Questions?

