

Sexual Communication Mediates the Association Between Emotion Dysregulation and Daily Sexual Satisfaction

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Emotion regulation is positively associated with constructive communication (e.g., Richards et al., 2003), and constructive sexual communication is associated with sexual satisfaction (e.g., MacNeil & Byers, 2009). Moreover, difficulties regulating emotions is negatively associated with sexual satisfaction (e.g., Pepping et al., 2018). Thus, we predicted that poor sexual communication would mediate the association between emotion dysregulation and spouses and daily sexual satisfaction.

Mediation hypotheses were tested in 125 mixed-sex married couples ($M_{age} = 30.58$, $SD = 4.98$) who completed a 21-day daily diary study. Couples completed the Difficulties with Emotion Regulation Scale – Short Form (Kaufman et al., 2016), the Dyadic Sexual Communication Scale (Catania, 1986), and a 3-item measure of daily sexual satisfaction adapted from Shaw and Rogge (2016).

Multi-level modelling indicated that there was a significant indirect effect of emotion dysregulation on daily sexual satisfaction through poor sexual communication for men ($B = -.04$, 95% CI [-.05, -.03]), but not for women ($B = -.02$, 95% CI [-.06, .02]). Cross-partner analyses revealed a significant indirect effect of husband s emotion dysregulation on daily sexual satisfaction through husband s poor sexual communication ($B = -.02$, 95% CI [-.02, -.01]) and a satisfaction $B = -.02$, 95% CI [-.02, -.01]). Therefore, emotion regulation has implications for their own and their partner s sexual satisfaction through the sexual communication.

Poor emotion regulation impedes couples from constructive communication during discussions of sexual issues, and in turn spouses and their partners are less sexually satisfied. Thus, teaching couples emotion regulation skills may improve sexual communication and thereby contribute to sexual satisfaction.