



Sexual anxiety: Hobart therapists' advice on how to overcome bedroom stress

936 ABC Hobart

By [Carol Raabus](#)

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[PHOTO: Getting over the stigma around sex and anxiety can be hard for many couples.](#) (Getty Images)

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Everyone gets nervous about sex at some stage, but when the jitters take over and morph into anxiety it can really kill off any bedroom action.

Hobart counsellors Darren Radley and Jeanette Radley work with couples having relationship issues and said anxiety around sex was a common problem.

"Some will come in for specific problems, but often it's a general feeling of trouble with the relationship," Ms Radley told Marcus Taylor on [936 ABC Hobart](#).

She said many couples found it difficult to talk to each other about sex and it could take many sessions with a counsellor until they felt comfortable speaking about it.

Let's talk about sex

Mr Radley said sex and mental illness were often still treated as taboo topics in society.

"Given all the negative images and negative impact of sex in the media, compounded by the negative stigmatisation of mental illness, it has a double whammy where sexual anxiety is even harder to talk about and difficult to address," he said.

Anxiety around sex can take many forms and can be triggered by all manner of things.

It can manifest in problems such as premature ejaculation, erectile dysfunction or just loss of arousal altogether.

"It's that paralysis by analysis," Ms Radley said.

"You just keep going over it and putting too much pressure on yourself."

Both counsellors said the best way to start overcoming problems in the bedroom was to be open and honest with your partner.

"It's important to be very sensitive around that," Ms Radley said.

"I think it's important not to have the conversation in the middle of some sexual encounter that's gone wrong where maybe people are feeling upset, stress or embarrassed."

If talking about sex was something you struggled with, Mr Radley said writing to your partner might work.

Just breathe

The Radleys advocate for using mindfulness techniques during sex to help overcome anxiety as well.

"Really being in that moment and what you're feeling," Mr Radley said.

"If you feel yourself having thoughts and anxiety come into your mind, it's really important to breathe through that.

"Breathe and relax and let those thoughts pass ... relax back into the sensations.



PHOTO: Using mindfulness to stay in the moment during sex can help overcome anxiety problems. (891 ABC Adelaide: Brett Williamson)

"Get your mind back and focus on the experience you're having with your partner."

Practicing mindfulness techniques in your day-to-day life by focusing on the activity you are doing rather than letting your thoughts wander can make it easier to focus when it comes to sex as well.

Mr Radley said it was also important not to place too much significance on a bad night in the sack.

"Some of the research I've read suggests sex only makes up 10 per cent of a healthy relationship," he said.

"There's a whole other 90 per cent that must work."

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