

Quickies

3RD EDITION

THE HANDBOOK OF BRIEF SEX THERAPY

EDITED BY
Shelley Green and Douglas Flemons

FOREWORD BY MICHAEL F. HOYT



Reviewed by Kevin Jeffrey Goldwater

Despite the obvious benefits the world of psychotherapy has brought into both individual and communal lives, many cultures still consider therapy taboo. The action of attending therapy is misunderstood and often maligned: going to a shrink is for the crazies, seeking out professional help signifies inability for self-sufficiency, deviating from a biopsychosocial norm from translates as if you are broken. Surpassing the taboo of therapy itself is that of sexuality. Sexuality alone is a taboo subject—the exploration of one’s sexuality, the preferences and expression of such are hushed, driven into the darkness by a societal dictum that preaches uniformity and singular experience. Discussing one’s sexuality in terms of therapy and biopsychosocial healing can be difficult under the effect of the taboo nature. It is precisely this attitude—the one of taboo avoidance—that Shelley Green and Douglas Flemons -combat with a smile in their edited anthology entitled, *Quickies: The Handbook of Brief Sex Therapy*.

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Therapists can and do feel uncomfortable and unqualified to handle sexual discussions with their clients. They often refer clients to a 'sex' therapist or a like-focused clinician to have these sorts of conversations. Green and Flemons, however, suggest that therapists encourage active discussions (maintained with professionalism and a clinical lens) about sexuality; it is, after all, part of the patient's development and understanding of their relationships. *Quickies* reflects just that attitude—encouraging open and integrated discussion throughout the entries.

Although potentially considered a taboo topic, this anthology attempts to abolish the apathy and discomfort associated with discussing sexuality in the clinical setting. The twenty contributors offer clear, concise, and intriguing entries regarding the most under-discussed and ever pressing issues in sexual theory, such as non-monogamous relationships and sexual lives of cultural minorities.

Content and Coverage

Quickies is in its third edition. The growth it has shown in the revisions team-up perfectly with the immense drive for social change, i.e. the #metoo movement, indigenous resurgence movements, education reform and such that are being elevated to a new level by increased social activism and through social media.

The book comprises five sections with each covering a different theme. Accompanied with case examples and research, these sections are relatively dense, but the writing styles of the contributors combat this by creating a tone that is easily digestible and interesting to follow. While paired with research and case examples, each author weaves themselves into the narrative in a discussion like manner. The fourth chapter "Come Again? From Possibility Therapy to Sex Therapy" for example begins with the author commenting after a pun, "As a brief therapist, I consider myself an expert on helping people make changes, but I don't consider myself one when it comes to the choices they make or the preferences they hold. Clients are the experts on their lives" (99). This reflection not only provides a conversation between reader and author, but allows the reader to approach these

contributions from an active reckoning stance.

Green and Flemons begin by explaining their foundational ideals of brief sex therapy and discuss how their "Models of Brief Sex Therapy" is based on relationships. Four guiding types of relationships reflected in this initial entry are traced throughout the anthology: Between the Therapist and Client; Between Partners; Between Clients and Desire; and Between Clients and the Problem.

Content also covered includes Beyond Monogamy, Cultural/Sexual Minorities, and Sexual Violence. Beyond Monogamy discusses the reaches of monogamy in today's world. The author explores the wounds left by affairs, then continues to discuss the increasing trend of consensual non-monogamy and ends on one of the newest explorations of sexuality, the role of the internet in sexual dynamics.

Cultural/Sexual Minorities, discusses same sex couples, transgender identifying individuals (the first mention of such since past editions), and approaching brief sex therapy with multicultural and third world individuals. While together in the same section of the book, each subject is given more than adequate attention. These under-discussed social groups are not only described well and discussed in an open manner, they are done so in a way that respects, acknowledges, and sometimes combats the experiences of minority individuals.

The same can be said about the following section, Sexual Violence. The stories shared in this section are done so with the care needed for such a discussion, allowing emotional respect while maintaining academic professionalism.

Quickies' updates have also allowed the authors to supplement their discussions with modern evidence. In discussing transgender individuals within, contributors reference the current recent and unending debate regarding gendered bathroom rights. In discussing sexual violence, our attention is brought to the recent Stanford rape trial (*Los Angeles Times*, People v. Brock Turner, 2016). Both examples highlight not only the relevancy of these issues today, but how prevalent these issues are in our everyday life.

Quickies concludes by returning to theory, with further explications of theory and more intensive exploration of the building blocks of brief sex therapy, complete with a case study on a severely depressed gay man. Despite this ending note, *Quickies* communicates, explains, and shares hot button topics of human sexuality in ways that are entertaining, educating and meaningful throughout the book. While intended for academics, the nature of *Quickies* allows anyone to be able to pick up the book and learn not only about the methods and ways of brief sex therapy, but of various cultural taboos in a normalized fashion that they may not otherwise explore. *Quickie's* has quickly (no pun intended) become one of my favorites, and I have no doubt it has earned its place on the shelf of the psychological zeitgeist.



Photo by Rick Gomez

Douglas Flemons is professor of family therapy, clinical professor of family medicine and co-director of the Office of Suicide and Violence Prevention at Nova Southeastern University. A co-director of Context Consultants, Flemons is also an AAMFT Clinical Fellow and Approved Supervisor. Flemons resides in Florida.



Photo by Rick Gomez

Shelley Green is professor of family therapy at Nova Southeastern University and a Clinical Fellow with the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy. As co-director of Context Consultants, Green specializes in working with couples with issues of sexuality and intimacy. A licensed marriage and family therapist, Green resides in Florida.

Kevin Jeffrey Goldwater studies applied psychology with a minor in music and social & cultural analysis at New York University. He is set to graduate in May of 2019. Born in Chicago, Kevin has done immersive research on psychoanalytic theory and the role of gender in today's media. Most recently, Kevin has been working in cultural psychology, focusing on the impact of colonialism on indigenous and minority patients. In addition to working for *Somatic Psychotherapy Today*, he writes reviews for the *International Psychotherapy Journal*.

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