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The Role of Orgasmic Meditation in Human Flourishing

"It appears that Orgasmic Meditation (OM) optimizes our own biology, our own nervous system, to disable the sense of wounding, the neurotic storytelling, the operatic internal arias around our personal tragedies. By combining sexual arousal with a mindful turn toward what we have been trying to keep locked up, we release the body's energy that fuels the great states of joy and well-being that are the birthright of being human."

–NICOLE DAEDONE, FOUNDER OF ORGASMIC MEDITATION

OM Benefits

- Deepens joy and intimacy by fusing meditative attention to sexual arousal
- Addresses emotional numbness, a major symptom of trauma
- Dissolves feelings of isolation, disconnection, loneliness
- PTSD symptoms fell 56%, with 83% of participants reporting they would continue the practice
- Intense positive feeling reported independent of physical arousal

For more than a century, science and medicine have wrestled with addressing profound areas of psychological wounding—trauma, depression, emotional numbing, addiction, and anxiety among them—that are obstacles to wellness. Pharmaceuticals and a top-down therapeutic approach of adjusting the mind have been the main methods for mitigating the intensity of the feeling of woundedness. In the case of trauma in particular, the focus has been on dodging triggers in order to avoid flooding the system with negative emotions and states of mind.

A newer line of research runs the other way. Instead of asking how to avoid what harms, it asks what actively produces flourishing — months or years of meditation on altruism and compassion (Stanford, Emory), or of cultivating a more spiritually integrated way of living (Harvard, University of Pennsylvania).

Social psychologist Amy Cuddy, then at Harvard Business School, popularized a way to understand the bottom-up approach, one in which a

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Conventional approaches to healing start with the mind



New approaches activate flourishing at the level of the body

shift in the body induces changes in the mind.

The best-known version of that idea is the power pose (Carney, Cuddy & Yap, 2010), which reported that expansive postures changed hormones and risk-taking. Those specific findings did not replicate, and the study's first author later withdrew them. What has survived is narrower: across 128 studies, people holding open postures report feeling somewhat more confident than people who slump, with no measurable effect on physiology (Körner et al., 2022).

This is the beginning of a revolution, that the body—without the aid of external substances—can change the mind. Even more robust approaches are emerging that are revolutionizing the way we understand how to get to not just base-level psychological health but to peak states of human flourishing. We now know that this can happen through a combination of sexual arousal and meditative concentration, delivered through the methodology of clitoral stroking in Orgasmic Meditation (OM).

OM is a structured attention-training practice conducted between two people who are following a predefined set of detailed instructions. The practice involves one person gently stroking the clitoris of the other person for 15 minutes while both place their attention on the point of contact and notice what they feel.

Nicole Daedone initiated the research into OM. She felt sure, from decades of practicing Orgasmic Meditation, that science would confirm the extraordinary benefits she had personally observed. She and a group of colleagues set out to gather the proof.

Researchers such as neuroscientist Andrew Newberg, of the Marcus Institute of Integrative Health, and others, have observed intriguing brain changes in both stroker and strokee that occur in just minutes instead of years of practice. These connectivity changes show some similarities to those observed in meditation-based practices, including concentrative and loving-kindness meditation (Newberg et al., 2021).

Early studies of OM have been conducted in healthy practitioners and have measured changes in brain connectivity, reported emotion, and interpersonal closeness. These are

observational studies rather than clinical trials.

Each participant's rated intensity of the experience correlated with connectivity changes in several of their own brain structures.



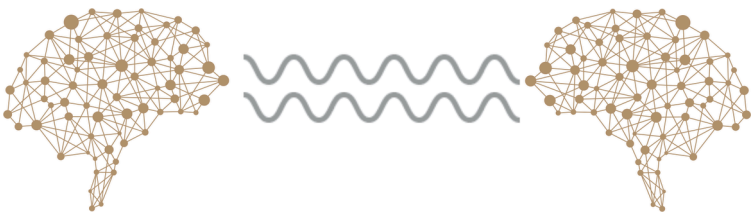
The effectiveness of OM comes from turning the strongest force in a human body—sexual arousal—mindfully toward our biggest wounds.

In this process, the well-being of sexuality unleashes neurobiological and neurochemical changes that provide one of the strongest possible foundations for healing.

Psychology, according to Freud, was meant to replace misery with ordinary unhappiness. Antidepressants and other psychopharmaceuticals deliver tolerance of difficult states by muting their intensity. If you are suffering from anxiety, depression, or a traumatic wound to the nervous system, then attempting to experience the benefits of meditation can, in some cases, deepen psychological distress. OM has the potential to leapfrog modes of psychological healing to deliver practitioners to the threshold of truly transformative states.

Newberg tells us that the practice of OM rewires the brain in ways that can be associated with positive states of flourishing. “We are getting the first hints of how all of this happens,” he says.

Brain changes during OM are correlated between pairs



Source: (Newberg et al., F1000Research, 2022 — not yet peer reviewed.)

[1] Andrew Newberg is the director of research at the Marcus Institute of Integrative Health and a physician at Jefferson University Hospital in Philadelphia. Board certified in both internal medicine and nuclear medicine, Andrew studies neurotheology, the relationship between brain function and various mental states—particularly with respect to religious and spiritual experiences.

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"This is a ground-breaking study of a very unique practice. This study also suggests the possibility of an important link between sexuality and spirituality. It should be no surprise that there is such a relationship since both sexual and spiritual experiences can be referred to as 'ecstatic,' and spiritual traditions have long struggled with the potential problems and benefits of the sexual human being." (Newberg, quoted in Thomas Jefferson University news release, 2021)

Future Research: Neurohormones & OM

Oxytocin
"Bonding"



Dopamine
"Reward"

Serotonin
"Well-being"

"OM science shows that the practice of Orgasmic Meditation entrains the brain to the positive, to the good. By laying down new habits, new neurocircuitry, OM helps us build the emotional resilience to face and work with our darkest, most difficult psychological material. It trains us simultaneously to peak states of consciousness and human connection."

–NICOLE DAEDONE, FOUNDER OF ORGASMIC MEDITATION

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The Benefits of Orgasmic Meditation (OM)

There is growing evidence that Orgasmic Meditation has profound broader health benefits. These include increased resilience, trauma reduction, feelings of connectedness, and overall improved emotional health.

The findings listed below reflect a summary of the published research on the practice of OM, including both peer-reviewed papers and studies posted but not yet peer reviewed. These studies were conducted at Thomas Jefferson University, the University of Pittsburgh, Children's Hospital Los Angeles, and Liberos, a biotechnology company.

Research described in this document was funded in whole or in part by the Institute of OM Foundation.

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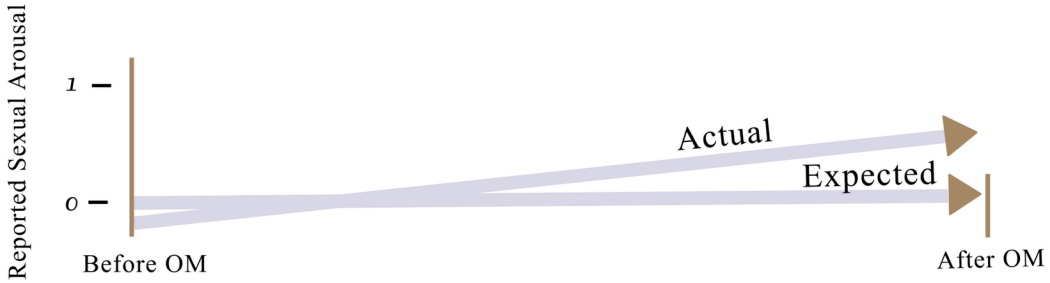
1. Sexual arousal and histories of childhood adversity



(Prause, Cohen & Siegle, 2021)

A study published in October 2021 by researchers at the University of Pittsburgh, Children's Hospital Los Angeles, and Liberos found that practitioners reporting more adverse childhood events, including sexual trauma, reported higher sexual arousal after an OM session than those reporting less childhood adversity (Prause, Cohen & Siegle, 2021). This is a comparison between groups at a single point in time.

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2. A large reduction in PTSD symptoms in the first clinical trial

In a phase 1 trial published in Contemporary Clinical Trials Communications (Kriegman et al., 2025), 23 participants who screened positive for PTSD practiced OM with a partner over four weeks, following the protocol at home using an app.

Average scores on the PCL-5 fell from 60.9 to 26.7 — a 56 percent reduction. Every participant who began the study completed it, and none withdrew for safety reasons or worsening symptoms. Afterward, participants rated the practice 4.9 out of 5 for safety; 96 percent strongly agreed it was safe, 91 percent said it improved their quality of life, and 83 percent intended to keep practicing.

Retention is worth noting on its own. Dropout is a persistent problem in PTSD treatment — roughly 16 percent in psychological therapies and 30 percent in SSRI trials. Here it was none.

This was a single-arm study with no control group. The authors are explicit that the improvement "may have been due to the placebo effect, which cannot be ruled out," and describe the work as preliminary and exploratory. A controlled trial is the necessary next step.

WHAT THE PHASE 1 TRIAL PRODUCED

56%	4.9	96%	91%	83%
DROP IN PTSD SCORES (60.9 TO 26.7)	SAFETY RATING OUT OF 5	STRONGLY AGREED IT WAS SAFE	SAID IT IMPROVED QUALITY OF LIFE	INTEND TO KEEP PRACTICING

No participant withdrew for safety or worsening symptoms — in a treatment class where dropout typically runs between 16 and 30 percent.

A practice many would assume unsafe, and that the medical model often treats as contraindicated after sexual trauma, was rated safe by 96 percent of the people who tried it.

Kriegman et al., 2025. Single-arm trial, 23 participants analysed, four weeks of practice. No control group; figures are not placebo-subtracted.

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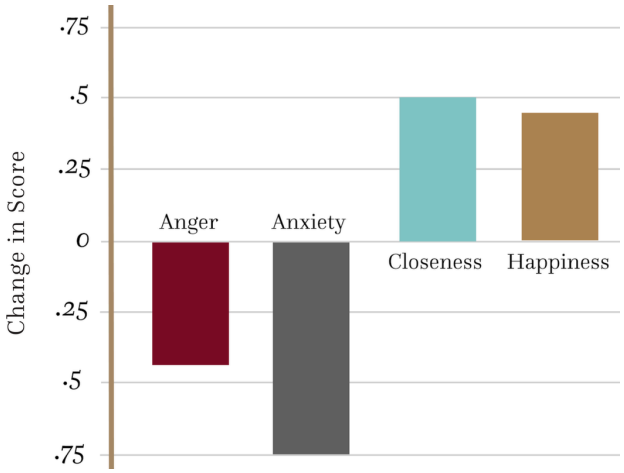
3. Positive experience without physiological arousal

In a 2022 study published in the International Journal of Psychophysiology, researchers measured skin conductance — a direct index of sympathetic arousal — while practitioners completed a single 15-minute OM.

Nearly all participants reported sustained intense positive affect. Their physiology, however, did not agree with itself: roughly half showed sustained increases in arousal and half showed sustained decreases. Participants described the same practice as exciting, as relaxing "like a massage," and as clarifying "like meditation."

The finding is that positive affect and physiological arousal are dissociable — an intense positive state does not require a high-arousal body to produce it (Siegle & Prause, 2022).

4. Increased positive emotions and decreased negative emotions



(Prause, Cohen & Siegle, 2021)

Practitioners reported higher positive emotion — happy, amused, sexually aroused — and lower negative emotion, including anxiety and anger, after an OM session than before (Prause, Cohen & Siegle, 2021). Researchers note it is rare for a modality to expand emotional range. Most current modalities that impact positive or negative affect are aimed at limiting the range. For example, anti-anxiety medications and antidepressants are designed to reduce the intensity of fear and sadness. At the same time, they also reduce the intensity of positive emotions like happiness and contentment. By liberating emotional range, OM allows the practitioner to access a wider range of positive emotions, with greater potential implications for addressing negative states associated with clinical disorders.

5. Potentially improves emotional regulation

A November 2021 study conducted with 40 advanced OM practitioners at Thomas Jefferson University using functional magnetic resonance imaging found the OM practice affects the brain's functional connectivity in ways similar to changes observed in long-term meditators who engage in practices designed to strengthen emotional regulation (Newberg et al., 2021). This means practitioners are likely to have greater self-control under positive or negative stress, and greater emotional resilience during difficult times. The changes in the brain were measured in OM practitioners in a resting state.

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6. Induces mystical, or heightened experiences of peak human flourishing, feelings of "oneness," or "flow"

In an online survey of 780 OM practitioners conducted in late 2017 and posted in 2021 — not yet peer reviewed — by Dr. Vivian Siegel, then Director of Science at the Institute of OM Foundation (Siegel & Emmert-Aronson, 2021), 62 percent met the questionnaire's threshold for a complete mystical experience when recalling a single powerful OM. The measure was the MEQ 30, a validated and quantitative measure of mystical experience (Barrett et al., 2015). Forbes reported the following in a 2021 article titled "How Science Is Making Sense Of The Mystical Experience In Psychedelic Medicine" (Ponieman, 2021):

> "Dr. Albert Garcia-Romeu, a Johns Hopkins assistant professor and member of the University's Center for Psychedelic and Consciousness Research, says that the mystical-type effects produced by psychedelics have been linked across the board to benefits in a number of different populations, including people with depression, cancer patients, and people with different types of substance use disorders like alcohol dependence and tobacco addiction."

In the second study reported in the same paper, 23 percent of participants attained a mystical experience in their most recent session, with a strong correlation between partners (Siegel & Emmert-Aronson, 2021). The authors compare the average score to a moderate dose of psilocybin (10 mg/70kg) given in an earlier controlled trial (Griffiths et al., 2011) — a randomized, placebo-controlled study, unlike this opt-in survey. Recent studies have shown psilocybin treatment produces large reductions in depression, addiction, and other mental health disorders over the long-term. Vivian Siegel concludes, "Given that OM apparently can trigger a mystical experience of similar power to psilocybin, and that psilocybin has shown promise in the treatment of mood and substance disorders, this study raises intriguing questions about whether OM might also be effective in the treatment of these disorders" (Siegel & Emmert-Aronson, 2021).

62%

met the threshold when recalling a single powerful OM

23%

met it when rating their most recent session

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7. Brain changes that can lead to strong emotional bonds

A November 2021 study conducted with 40 advanced OM practitioners at Thomas Jefferson University found through functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging (fMRI) data that the OM practice creates connections between two regions of the brain responsible for self-judgment and cognition (Newberg et al., 2021). Connections between these two particular regions, the insula and temporal lobe, have been shown to lead to strong emotional bonding with others, including higher levels of compassion.



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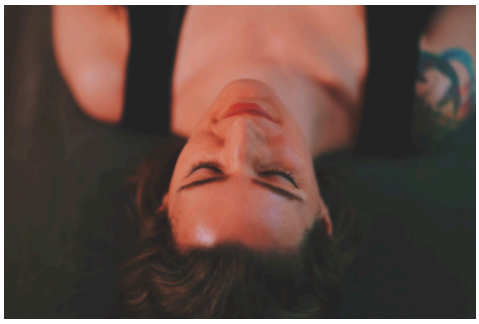

Questions?

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