

# SEXUAL DISGUST:

Therapeutic interventions for disgust based sexual avoidance and the impact on arousal, pleasure and sexual health.



**Lisa Torney**

National Chairperson  
Society of Australian  
Sexologists

# disgust

noun

/dɪs'gʌst/

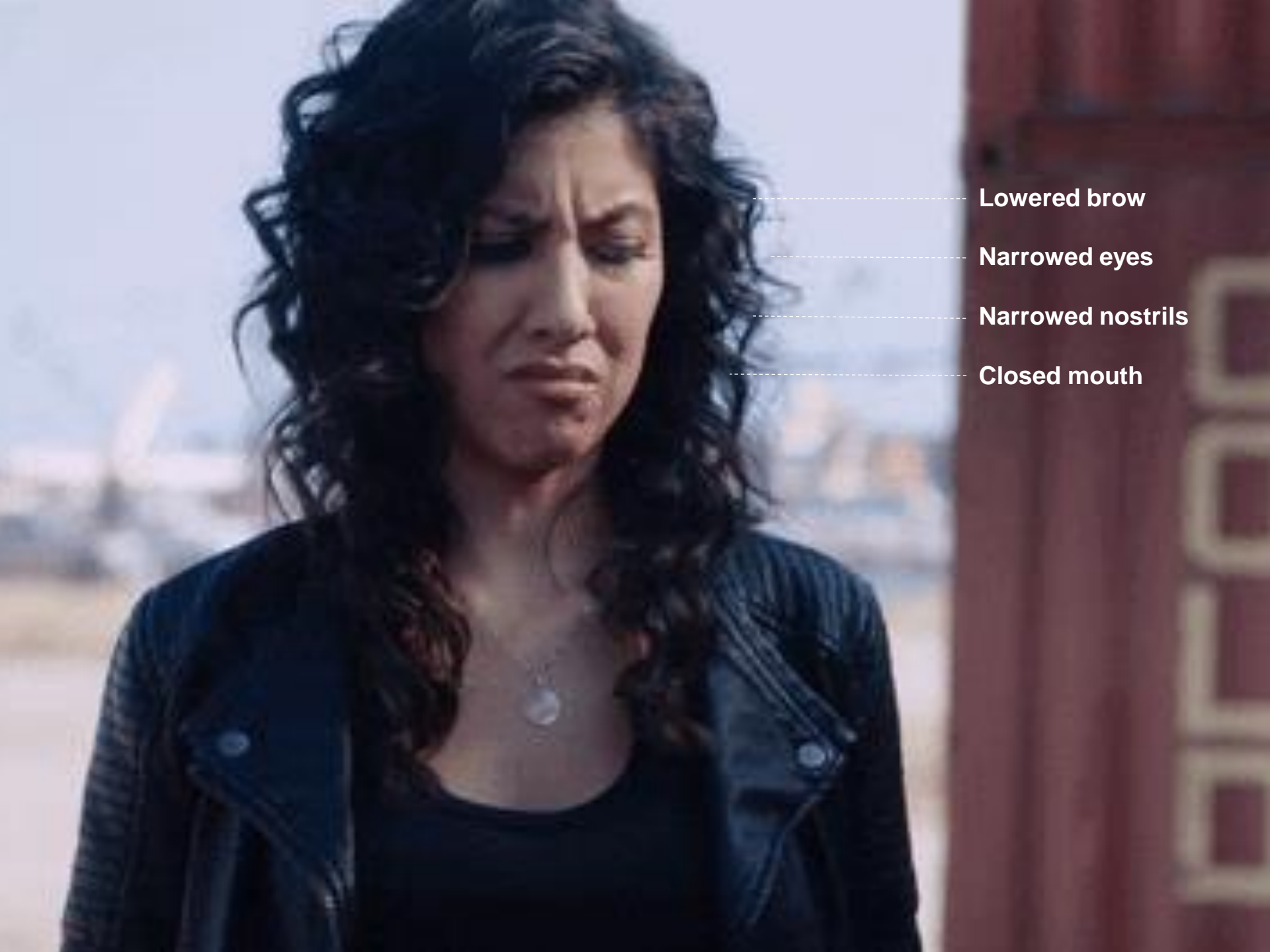
1. a feeling of revulsion or strong disapproval aroused by something unpleasant or offensive

*Origin*

Late 16th century from early modern French desgoust or Italian disgusto, from Latin dis- (expressing reversal) + gustus 'taste'.

*synonyms*

repugnance, abhorrence, repulsion, loathing, hatred



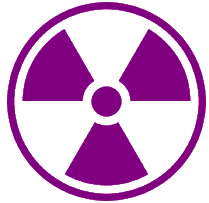
**Lowered brow**

**Narrowed eyes**

**Narrowed nostrils**

**Closed mouth**

## Role of disgust over time



defending the  
body against  
toxins



defend against  
disease

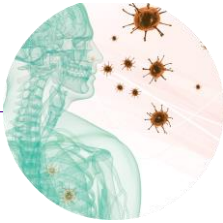


threats to  
biological fitness



social and moral  
involvement

## Types of disgust



### **Pathogen**

A "behavioural immune system" evolving from the desire to survive and the fear of death. A line of defence to protect from contamination from dead bodies, spoiled foods, bodily products including blood, vomit, faeces



### **Moral**

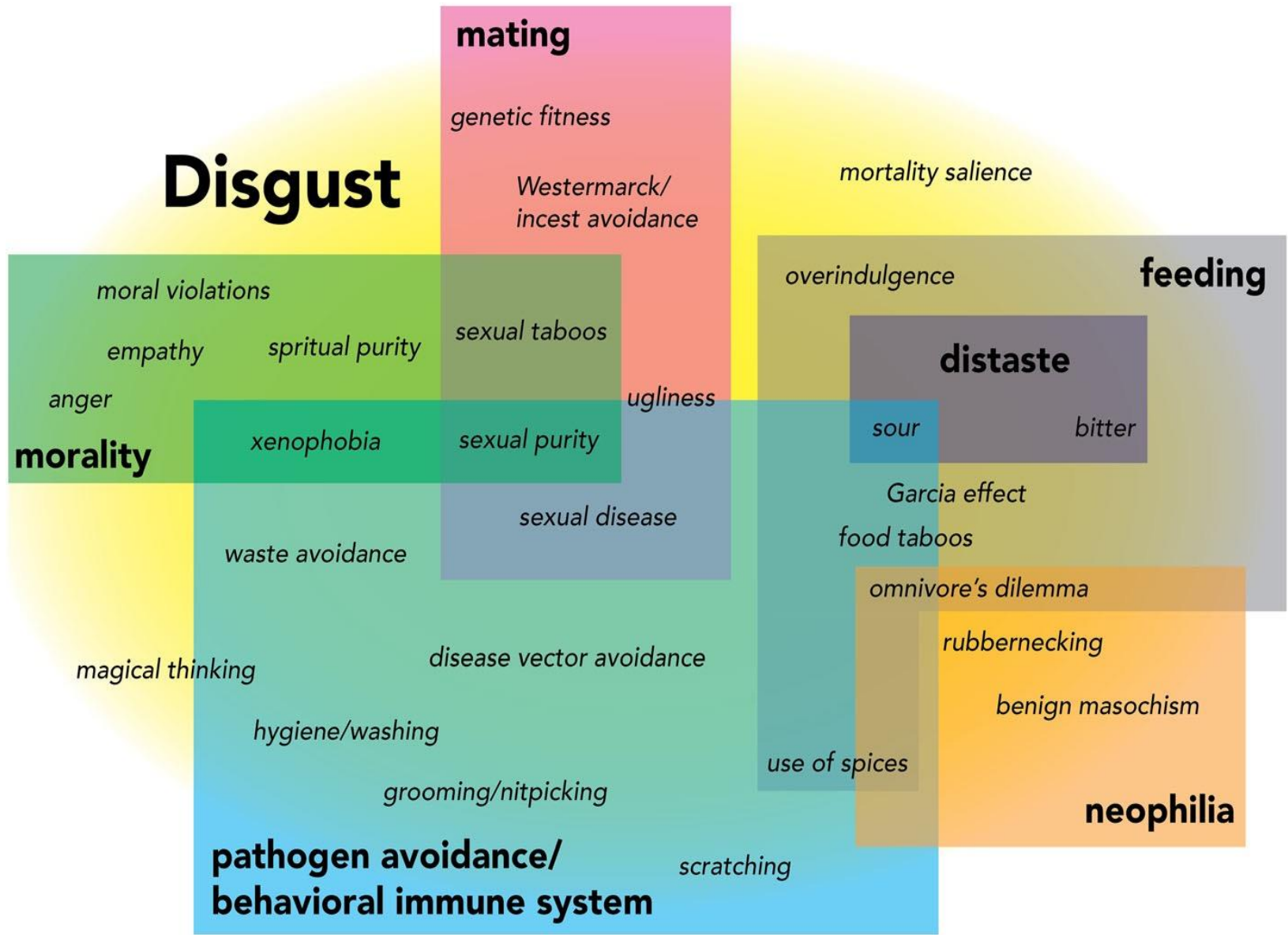
Repulsion for behaviour that violates social norms, confronts our sense of morality, can be subjective and differ across individuals and culture



### **Sexual**

Evolving from the avoidance of sexual contact with undesirable partners from an evolutionary perspective. e.g., relatives

# Disgust







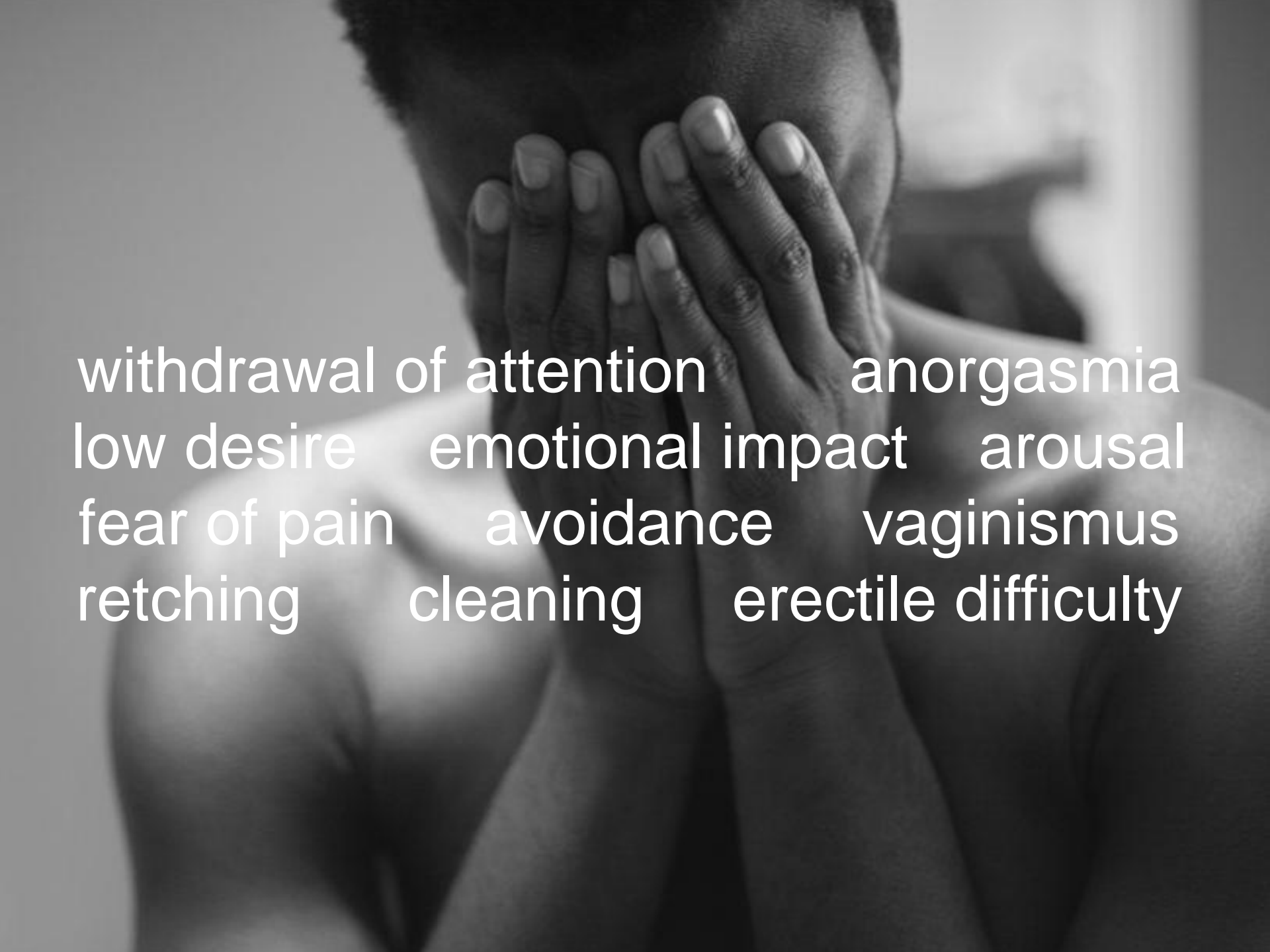
VS



**MOIST**

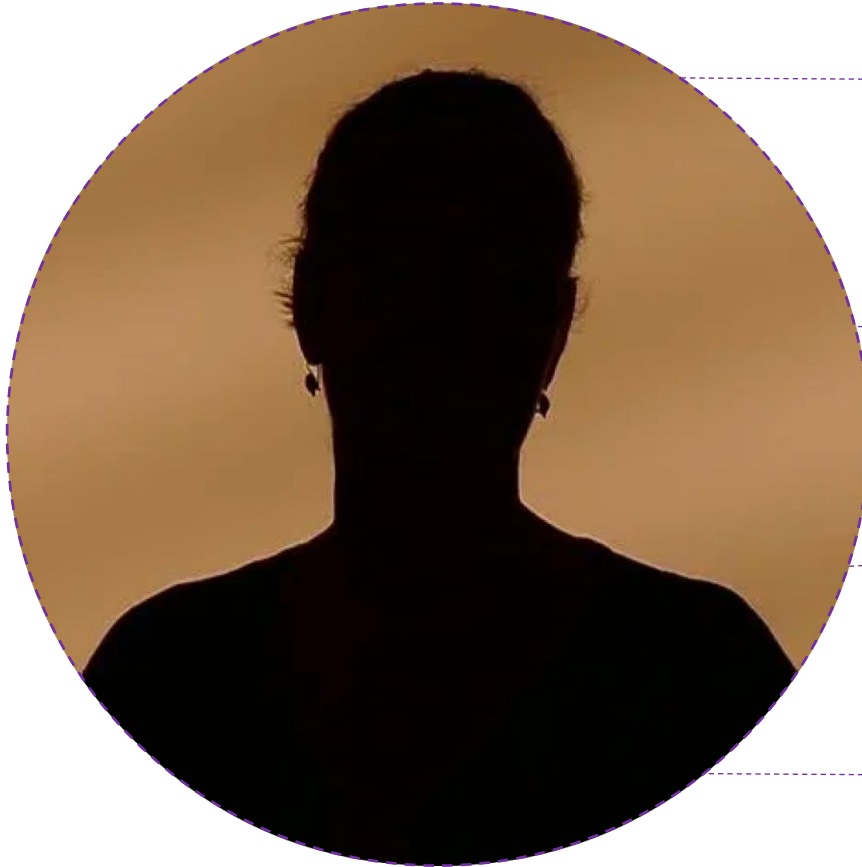






withdrawal of attention      anorgasmia  
low desire      emotional impact      arousal  
fear of pain      avoidance      vaginismus  
retching      cleaning      erectile difficulty

## Case study



- Cisgender woman, heterosexual
- Early 40's
- Married 10 years
- Child under 5
- Primary wage earner

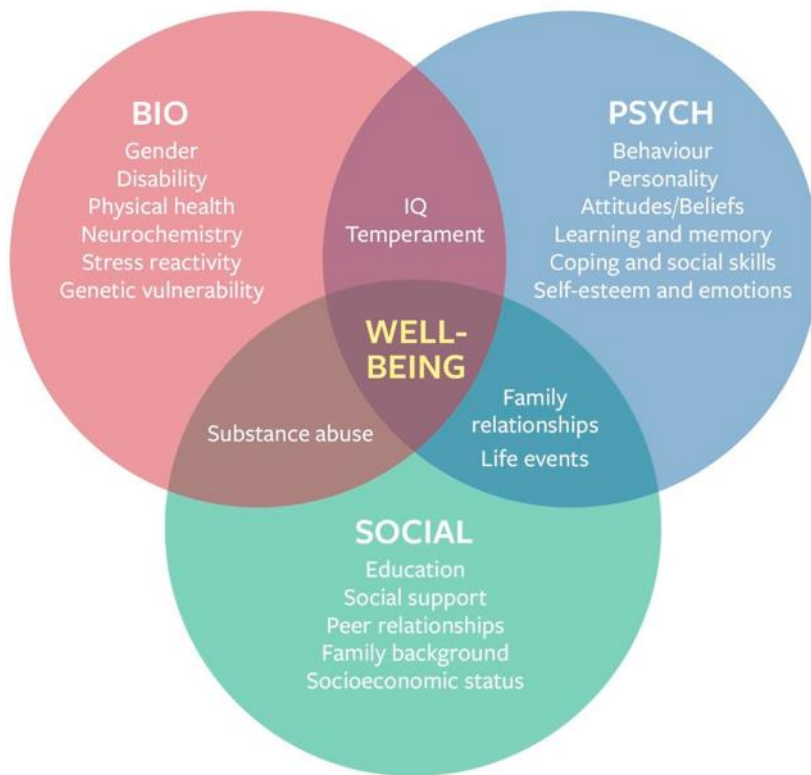
- No trauma history
- Mother with cleanliness OCD
- Roles rigid thinking
- Sexual messages from mother

- Desire decreased after marriage
- Dislikes kissing, touch penis, giving oral
- Eye contact or too much touching
- Limited contact with ejaculate

- Shameful noises of sex
- Attractive beautiful people have clean sex
- Genitals darker colour = unclean

# Therapeutic interventions

## Biopsychosocial assessment



## Interventions

- Psychosexual history
- Exposure to “disgusting” stimuli
- Tasks at home - gradual from mildly to highly disgusting
- Mindfulness based therapy
- Cognitive behavioural therapy – reframing negative beliefs
- Relationship therapy



- less anxious
- initiating sex differently
- less critical of husband
- more comfortable with touch
- enjoyable and fun

# THANK YOU



**Lisa Torney**

National Chairperson  
Society of Australian Sexologists

E: [info@lisatorney.com.au](mailto:info@lisatorney.com.au)

W: [lisatorney.com.au](http://lisatorney.com.au)