

4-11-2015

Sexual Interdependence Theory (SIT)/Sexual Progression Approach (SPA)

Rodger K. Bufford

George Fox University, rbufford@georgefox.edu

Albert Pace

George Fox University, bpac@georgefox.edu

Brett Copeland

Allenmore Psychological Associates

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/gscp_fac



Part of the [Christianity Commons](#), and the [Clinical Psychology Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Bufford, Rodger K.; Pace, Albert; and Copeland, Brett, "Sexual Interdependence Theory (SIT)/Sexual Progression Approach (SPA)" (2015). *Faculty Publications - Grad School of Clinical Psychology*. Paper 92.

http://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/gscp_fac/92

This Conference Proceeding is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School of Clinical Psychology at Digital Commons @ George Fox University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Faculty Publications - Grad School of Clinical Psychology by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ George Fox University. For more information, please contact arolfe@georgefox.edu.

SIT/SPA CAPS 2015

Albert Pace & Rodger Bufford
Graduate School of Clinical Psychology at
George Fox University
and
Brett Copeland
Allenmore Psychological Associates

SIT/SPA CAPS 2015

Overview

- I. Sexual Interdependence Theory (SIT)
- II. Sexual Progression Approach (SPA)
- III. SIT/SPA and Christian Perspectives
- IV. Conclusions

SIT/SPA CAPS 2015

Sexual Independence Theory

Importance of theory

- ❖ Theory provides a road map that can shape research and guide treatment.
- ❖ Psychosexual development and sexual function, dysfunction and disorder have received limited theoretical attention

SIT/SPA CAPS 2015

Sexual Independence Theory

Sexual Interdependence Theory (SIT) is based on the principle that psychosexual development is an integral part of human development

Each developmental phase and process involves elements of normal psychosexual development

SIT/SPA CAPS 2015

Sexual Independence Theory

Sexual Progression Approach (SPA) is based on three principles

- ❖ Best treatment identifies the developmental stage of the patient/client
- ❖ Treatment targets the stage-appropriate developmental tasks
- ❖ Interventions are suited to developmental level and related goals

SEXUAL INTERDEPENDENCE THEORY

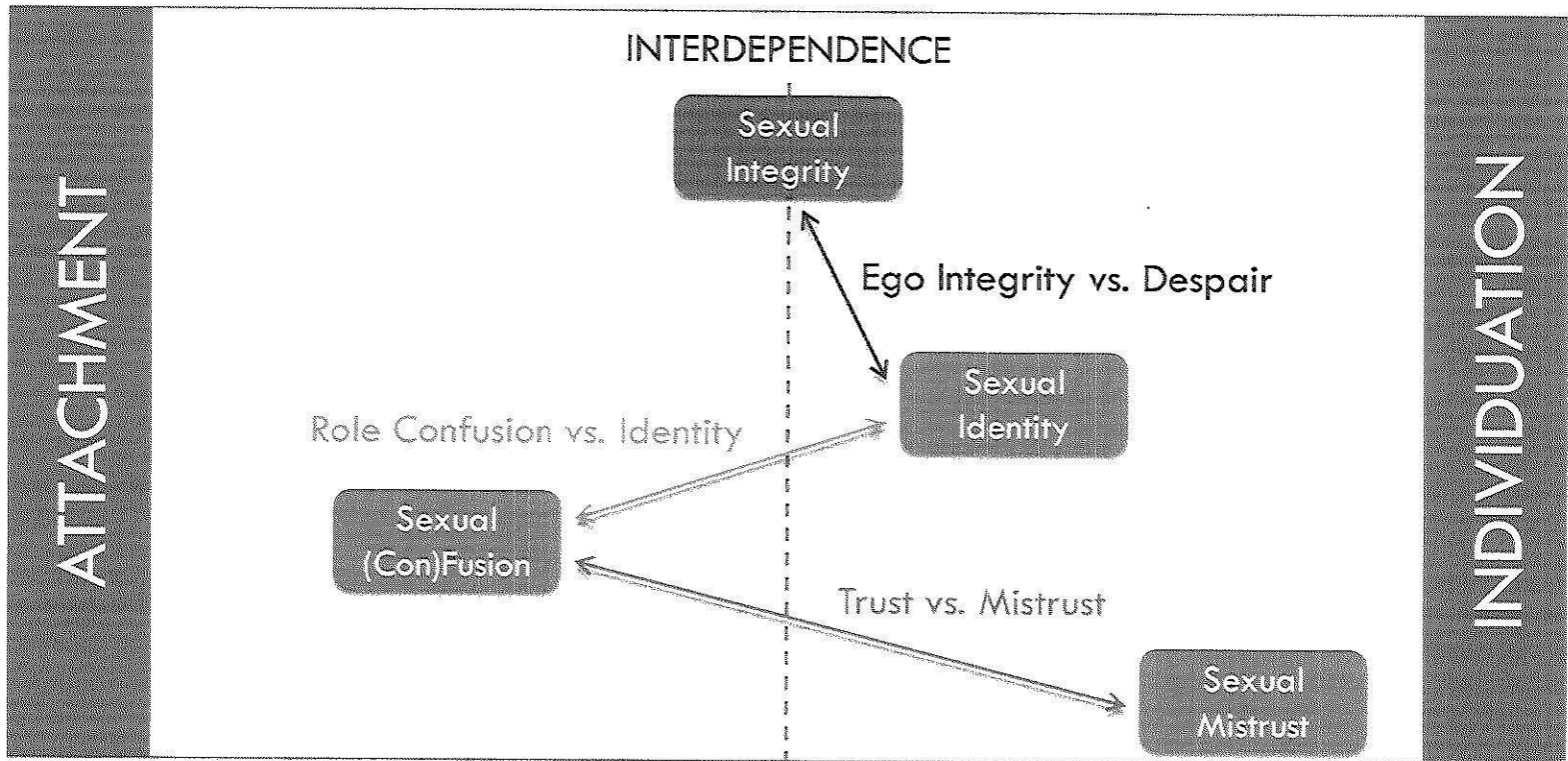


Figure 1

Sexual Progression Model

SIT/SPA CAPS 2015

Sexual Independence Theory

Sexual Interdependence Theory proposes four stages:

- A. Sexual Mistrust
- B. Sexual (Con)fusion
- C. Sexual Identity
- D. Sexual Integrity

Table 1

SIT Compared to other Developmental Theories

SIT	Erikson	Kohlberg	Maslow	Piaget
Sexual Mistrust	Mistrust	Preconventional	Physiological & Safety	Sensorimotor & Preoperational
Sexual (Con)Fusion	Trust with Role (Con)Fusion	Conventional	Love/Belonging	Concrete Operational
Sexual Identity	Identity	Early Postconventional	Early Esteem	Formal Operations
Sexual Integrity	Ego Integrity	Postconventional	Esteem & Self- Actualization	Formal Operations

SIT/SPA CAPS 2015

Sexual Integration Theory

SIT

- Sexual Mistrust
- Sexual (Con)Fusion
- Sexual Identity
- Sexual Integrity

Erickson

- Mistrust
- Trust with Role (Con)fusion
- Identity
- Ego Integrity

SIT/SPA CAPS 2015

Sexual Interdependence Theory

For SIT, each stage has:

- A. Characteristic features
- B. Specific limitations on sexual satisfaction

SPA proposes specific treatments
related to these

- C. Primary intervention objectives
- D. Various intervention approaches

Here we will discuss SIT and SPA together

SIT/SPA CAPS 2015

SIT/SPA

A. Sexual Trust/Mistrust: characteristic features

- ❖ Interpersonal and sexual trust pave the way for the next stage
- ❖ Distrust of sexual partners results in
 - Sexual avoidance
 - Objectification
 - Assumed malice in sexual partners
 - Sexual domination

Table 1**Overview of SIT/SPA Model**

Stage	Characteristic Features	Limitations	Primary Objective	Interventions
Sexual Mistrust	Interpersonal distrust leads to objectification and/or sexual avoidance	Distrust of sexual partners; assumed malice in sexual partners; sexual anorexia or sexual domination	Initiate therapeutic alliance sufficient for modeling effective relationships and reprocessing trauma	EMDR, exposure with response prevention, CBT/CR and Schema Therapy
Sexual (Con)Fusion	<i>Fusion</i> : Identity is defined by rigid adherence to familial or cultural standards <i>Confusion</i> : Sexual uncertainty often brought on by tension between values and experiences	Rigid sexual enactments or abstinence; discrepant beliefs and experiences; sexual anorexia	Address ineffectiveness of sexual rigidity and loss of opportunities rooted in emotional and behavioral avoidance while formulating internalized, workable sexual values	Foster development of internalized values; ACT
Sexual Identity	Established sexual values/beliefs that are both internalized and workable	Tension between values and behavior/relationships; “wimpy” masturbation where will-power collapses	Apply “radical acceptance” of sexual urges while incorporating values-based living	Developing distress tolerance and resistance to temptation via ACT, EMDR, and mindfulness. Practice comprehensive alignment of behavior with values
Sexual Integrity	Seeking partner in context of mutual respect, nurture, mutual feedback and change; cultivates lasting attachment	(Rare)	Maintain coherence of behaviors and values while modifying values to fit new circumstances. Retaining posture of complete acceptance of sexual urges	None proposed outside of maintaining existing coping strategies

SIT/SPA CAPS 2015

SIT/SPA

A. Sexual Mistrust: Characteristic features

- ❖ Interpersonal distrust

- ❖ Pathologies

 - ❖ Sexual avoidance

 - ❖ Sexual objectification

SIT/SPA CAPS 2015

SIT/SPA

A. Sexual Mistrust: Limitations

- ❖ Distrust of sexual partner
- ❖ Assumed malice in sexual partner
- ❖ Sexual anorexia
- ❖ Sexual domination

SIT/SPA CAPS 2015

SIT/SPA

A. Sexual Mistrust: primary treatment objectives

- ❖ Build trust:
 - ❖ Initiate therapeutic alliance
 - ❖ Model effective relationships
- ❖ Reprocessing trauma

SIT/SPA CAPS 2015

SIT/SPA

A. Sexual Mistrust: Interventions

- ❖ Relationship building
- ❖ Schema Therapy
- ❖ EMDR
- ❖ Exposure with response prevention
- ❖ Trauma-focused CBT/CR

SIT/SPA CAPS 2015

Sexual Interdependence Theory

B. Sexual (Con)fusion: Characteristic Features

- *Fusion*: Identity is defined by rigid adherence to familial or cultural standards
- *Confusion*: Sexual uncertainty
 - Often brought on by tension between values and experiences
 - May involve rejection of familial or cultural standards

SIT/SPA CAPS 2015

Sexual Interdependence Theory

B. Sexual (Con)fusion:

Healthy development

- ❖ Progress toward maturity
- ❖ Gradual emergence of own beliefs/values

Limitations

- ❖ Discrepant beliefs and experiences
- ❖ Rigid sexual enactments
- ❖ Abstinence
- ❖ Sexual anorexia

SIT/SPA CAPS 2015

Sexual Interdependence Theory

B. Sexual (Con)fusion: Primary Therapy Objective

- ❖ Address ineffectiveness of sexual rigidity
- ❖ Address loss of opportunities rooted in emotional and behavioral avoidance
- ❖ **Formulate internalized, workable sexual beliefs/values**
- ❖ **Foster behavioral patterns consistent with beliefs/values**

SIT/SPA CAPS 2015

Sexual Interdependence Theory

B. Sexual (Con)fusion: Interventions

- ❖ Induce “Creative Hopelessness”
- ❖ Foster development of internalized values
- ❖ ACT
- ❖ EMDR
- ❖ Behavioral activation

SIT/SPA CAPS 2015

Sexual Interdependence Theory

C. Sexual Identity: Characteristic Features

- ❖ Established sexual values/beliefs that are both
 - ❖ Internalized
 - ❖ Workable—reality-based

SIT/SPA CAPS 2015

Sexual Interdependence Theory

C. Sexual Identity:

Benefits

- ❖ Growing sense of sexual beliefs/values
- ❖ Exploration of sexual behaviors consistent with beliefs/values

Limitations

- ❖ Tension between values and behavior/relationships;
- ❖ “Wimpy” masturbation where will-power collapses
- ❖ Other sexual behaviors inconsistent with beliefs/values

SIT/SPA CAPS 2015

Sexual Interdependence Theory

C. Sexual Identity: Primary treatment Objectives

- ❖ Foster “radical acceptance of sexual urges
- ❖ Developing distress tolerance
- ❖ Developing resistance to temptation
- ❖ Promote values-based sexual living

SIT/SPA CAPS 2015

Sexual Interdependence Theory

C. Sexual Identity: Interventions

- ❖ Practice comprehensive alignment of behavior and values
- ❖ ACT
- ❖ EMDR
- ❖ Mindfulness

SIT/SPA CAPS 2015

Sexual Interdependence Theory

D. Sexual Integrity: Characteristic Features

- ❖ Seeking partner in context of
 - ❖ Mutual respect
 - ❖ Nurture
 - ❖ Mutual feedback and change
 - ❖ Cultivating lasting attachment

SIT/SPA CAPS 2015

Sexual Interdependence Theory

D. Sexual Integrity:

Benefits

- ❖ Enhanced relational richness
- ❖ Flexible engagement in sexual interactions consistent with beliefs/values

Limitations

- ❖ Psychosocial limitations are rare but occur
- ❖ **Physically-based complications also may occur**

SIT/SPA CAPS 2015

Sexual Interdependence Theory

D. Sexual Integrity: Primary Treatment Objective

- ❖ Maintain coherence of behaviors and values
- ❖ Retaining posture of complete acceptance of sexual urges
- ❖ Modifying behavior or values to fit new circumstances such as limitations or changes in physical capacity

SIT/SPA CAPS 2015

Sexual Interdependence Theory

D. Sexual Integrity: Interventions, though rare, may include

- ❖ ACT/acceptance of physical limitations and changes
- ❖ Maintain existing coping strategies
- ❖ Develop new coping and sexual strategies that fit changing personal and life circumstances

SIT/SPA CAPS 2015

Sexual Progression Approach

- A. What are Christian sexual values?
 - ◆ Factors that influence one's values.
- B. Internal & communal congruence as health.
 - ◆ Internal & communal congruence
- C. Subjective, communal, and common influences.

SIT/SPA CAPS 2015

Sexual Progression Approach

A. Christian sexual values.

- There is no one set of Christian values regarding “right” sexuality.
- This appears to exist on both an interdenominational and an intradenominational level.
- Individual values regarding “right” sexuality differ from their denomination.

SIT/SPA CAPS 2015

Sexual Progression Approach

A. Christian sexual values.

- Christian values, like many systems of individual belief are co-constructed.
 - Interaction of subjective and communal factors.
- Communally Embedded

SIT/SPA CAPS 2015

Sexual Progression Approach

Subjective Factors

- Personal Sexual Experience (PSE)
- Personal Sexual Behavior (PSB)
- Personal Sexual Values (PSV)
- Personal Religious Beliefs (PRB)
- Biological Factors (BIO)

SIT/SPA CAPS 2015

Sexual Progression Approach

- Subjective Factors
 - Unique Experiences (PSE, PSB, PSV)
 - Unique Biological Make-up/Experiences (BIO)
 - Unique tradition and theological perspective (PRB)

SIT/SPA CAPS 2015

Sexual Progression Approach

- Communal Factors
 - Sexual Proscriptions
 - Sexual Prescriptions
 - Spiritual Significance of Sex
- Diversity amongst Christians in these areas.

SIT/SPA CAPS 2015

Sexual Progression Approach

B. Internal & communal congruence as health.

- If no consensual values exist regarding “right” sexuality, what is considered spiritually healthy?
- Congruence?

SIT/SPA CAPS 2015

Sexual Progression Approach

- Congruence
 - Congruence exists on at least two levels:
 1. Internal Congruence
 - Subjective Sexuality
 2. Communal Congruence
 - Meeting of Subjective Sexuality and Communal Values.
 - Congruence ==> Sexual Functioning.

SIT/SPA CAPS 2015
Sexual Progression Approach

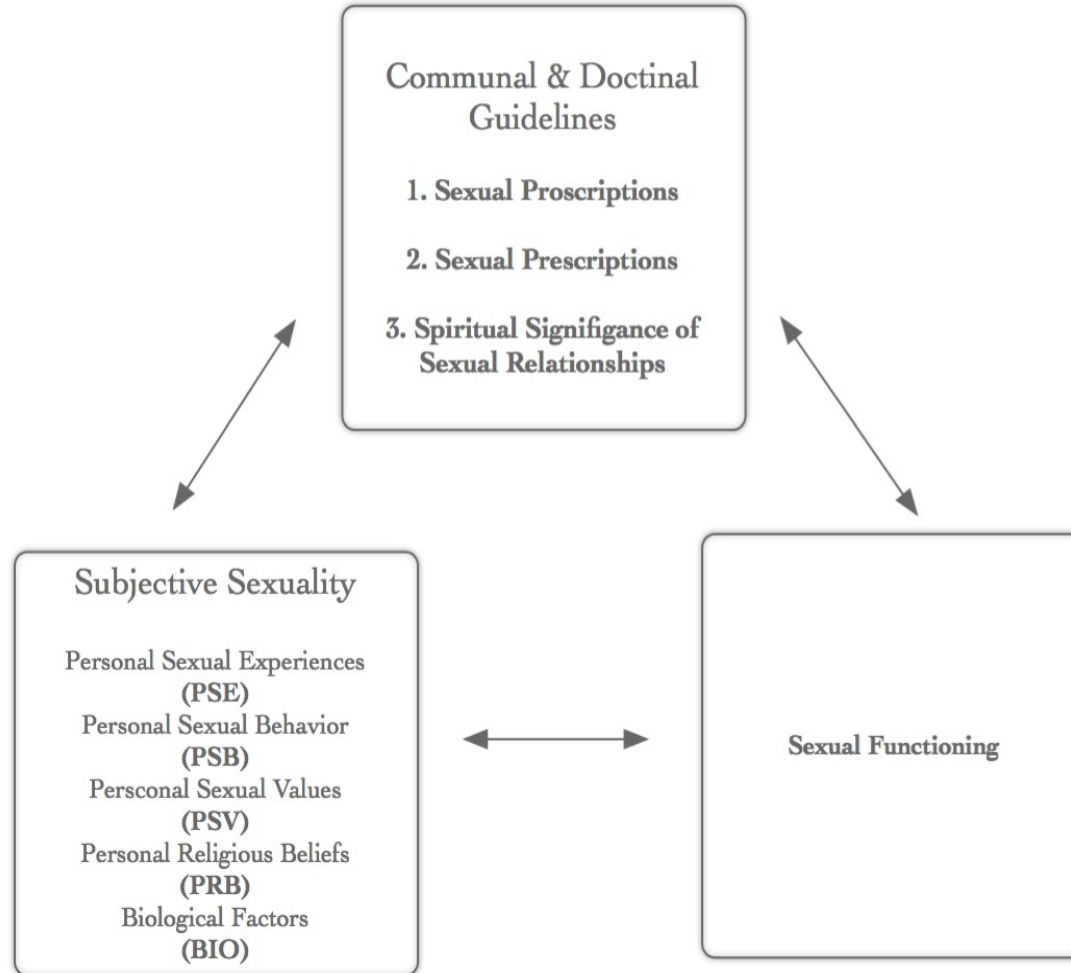


Figure 1: The figure depicted above displays the reciprocal relationship that exists between a person's subjective sexuality, the community (including but not limited to faith community) in which they, and their sexual functioning.

SIT/SPA CAPS 2015

Sexual Progression Approach

C. Subjective, communal, and common influences.

- Diversity and commonality.
 - Subjective Uniqueness
 - Uniquely Embedded in Community.
 - What ties us together as Christians?

SIT/SPA CAPS 2015

Sexual Progression Approach

- Commonalities
 - Sex is significant in the bible
 - Poetically (Song of Solomon)
 - Rhetorically (Corinthians)
 - Sex as a deep relational connection
 - Perhaps the most intimate way of expressing our fundamental relatedness.
 - People share a common identity as divine creations
 - Sex offers an avenue to embody a Christ-like love to another person.

SIT/SPA CAPS 2015

Sexual Progression Approach

Rom 2:1-3

Therapeutically, focus on the process

1. Meet the patient/client on her side of the bridge
2. Address pain
3. Confront hypocrisy with grace—foster integrity
4. Trust the process and trust God in the process

SIT/SPA CAPS 2015

SIT/SPA and Christian Perspectives

- I. Sexual Interdependence Theory
- II. Sexual Progression Approach
- III. SIT/SPA and Christian Perspectives
- IV. Conclusions

SIT/SPA CAPS 2015

SIT/SPA and Christian Perspectives

IV. Conclusions

A. SIT offers a developmental model

1. Integrates psychosexual development with other aspects of human development
2. Parallels mainstream developmental theory

SIT/SPA CAPS 2015

SIT/SPA and Christian Perspectives

IV. Conclusions

- B. SPA offers a nuanced model for treatment that takes into account the developmental stages of the patient/client and seeks to promote healthy development
 - 1. Using targeted interventions,
 - 2. We proposed mostly those from 3rd wave CBT
 - 3. Alternative interventions could be employed

SIT/SPA CAPS 2015

SIT/SPA and Christian Perspectives

IV. Conclusions

- C. A Christian perspective offers a model for values that can shape interventions while
 1. Respecting patient/client values
 2. Fostering exploration of their practical benefits and limitations.

bpace@georgefox.edu

rbufford@georgefox.edu