



Minnesota EFT Couples Therapist Addresses Sexual Trauma on Brave Love Great Sex Podcast

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Plymouth-based Emotionally Focused Therapy supervisor joins Dr. Laurie Watson to examine how partners can support survivors of sexual assault

Renee Segal, owner and clinical director of Evolve Therapy, a couples therapy practice in Plymouth, Minnesota, serving the Minneapolis-St. Paul area, appeared as a guest on the Brave Love Great Sex ? Couples Therapy Podcast in an episode examining how sexual trauma affects romantic relationships and how partners can support survivors. The 39-minute episode, "Healing Sexual Trauma with Couples," was released Oct. 16 and is available on Apple Podcasts and other major listening platforms.

The episode, the 566th in the series, is hosted by Dr. Laurie Watson, an AASECT-certified sex therapist, certified Emotionally Focused Therapist and co-author of the book "Brave Love, Great Sex." Segal is a licensed marriage and family therapist and a certified Emotionally Focused Therapy (EFT) therapist and supervisor whose clinical work has included supporting survivors of sexual abuse and sexual assault.

Watson and Segal framed the conversation as a response to recent national coverage of how Cornell

University has handled sexual assault allegations on its campus, a story that prompted student protests and a faculty debate over the administration's response in October. The episode carries a content warning and directs listeners to the RAINN National Sexual Assault Hotline for support.

The discussion opens with a statistic cited by the hosts: roughly 1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men are survivors of sexual assault. Segal and Watson describe trauma responses that can surface years after an assault, including dissociation, avoidance of sex, hypersexual behavior and hypervigilance, and note that these effects often go unspoken between partners even in otherwise stable relationships.

"Many survivors carry the effects of an assault into their relationships without ever naming it, and their partners are left trying to make sense of distance or reactions they don't understand," said Segal. "When a couple can talk about the trauma with safety and patience, the relationship can become a place where the survivor feels protected rather than pressured."

The episode focuses on practical guidance for both survivors and their partners. Segal and Watson identify safety, gentleness and compassion as the foundation for supporting a survivor, and discuss how partners can respond to trauma symptoms without taking them personally or pushing for physical intimacy before the survivor is ready. The conversation draws on Emotionally Focused Therapy, an attachment-based model that helps couples identify the emotions and needs behind recurring patterns of conflict or withdrawal. According to Evolve Therapy, EFT is typically a short-term approach lasting eight to 20 sessions.

Evolve Therapy uses EFT as the core method across its couples counseling, relationship counseling and individual counseling services. The practice's listed specialties include trauma, affair recovery, out-of-control sexual behavior, premarital counseling and tele-therapy. Its team of more than a dozen clinicians sees clients in person at its office at 9800 Shelard Parkway in Plymouth and online throughout Minnesota, including Minneapolis, St. Paul, Wayzata, Minnetonka, Edina and Maple Grove. The practice also offers EFT supervision and training for therapists, a practicum placement site for graduate students and a low-cost therapy option.

Segal holds a bachelor's degree in accounting from the University of Minnesota Carlson School of Management and worked as an accountant and securities broker before earning a master's degree in clinical counseling in marriage and family therapy from the Adler Graduate School. Her clinical interests include attachment science, the mind-body connection and the developmental aspects of trauma.

"Conversations like the one happening around Cornell right now remind people how common sexual assault is, and that can stir up old pain for survivors and their partners," Segal said. "Couples therapy can give both people a structured, supported way to face that pain together instead of alone."

The full episode is available on Apple Podcasts at <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/healing-sexual-trauma-with-couples/id1083324677?i=1000796580753>

Survivors seeking immediate support can contact the RAINN National Sexual Assault Hotline at 800-656-4673 or visit rainn.org.

For couples counseling support reach out to Evolve Therapy or call 763-200-8900

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Evolve Therapy

Evolve Therapy is a couples counseling practice in Plymouth, MN, serving the Twin Cities in person and online. Specializing in Emotionally Focused Therapy, Evolve offers couples counseling, affair recovery, premarital counseling and individual therapy.

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