

# Touch HighQ for Sex Therapists

## Nonsexual, consent-forward support for the embodied foundations of intimacy

Many sexual difficulties are not only about sex.

They are also about nervous system responses, boundaries, sensory preference, communication, self-trust, receiving, desire, and the ability to remain present in the body with another person.

Sex therapy can help clients understand these patterns and talk about them more clearly.

Touch HighQ offers a separate, structured space where some of the underlying capacities can be practiced through nonsexual, consent-forward touch.

## Why refer to Touch HighQ?

Sex therapists can help clients explore sexual patterns, relational dynamics, trauma, desire, communication, and identity. But they cannot usually provide embodied touch practice inside the therapeutic relationship.

Touch HighQ offers an ethical, non-clinical environment where clients or couples can explore:

- nonsexual touch as a foundation for connection
- bodily awareness in real time
- asking for what they want
- saying no, pausing, or adjusting
- receiving without performance
- comfort with closeness
- sensory preference and aversion
- staying connected to self while in contact with another person

For many clients, these are part of the groundwork beneath sexual honesty and intimacy.

## The triadic approach

I think of this work as a triadic model:

### **1. Sex therapist**

Holds the clinical relationship, therapeutic goals, sexual and relational processing, and case conceptualization.

### **2. Client or couple**

Brings their lived experience, concerns, desires, fears, patterns, and goals.

### **3. Touch HighQ**

Provides a structured, non-clinical, consent-forward environment for embodied practice around touch, comfort, agency, and relational presence.

This creates a clear division of labor.

The sex therapist helps clients understand and process what is happening.

Touch HighQ helps them practice some of the nonsexual foundations that often support sexual connection.

The client or couple returns to therapy with more language, more embodied awareness, and more usable experience.

## **Areas of support**

### **Nonsexual foundations of intimacy**

For clients or couples who need more access to:

- affection
- ease
- comfort
- attunement
- nonsexual closeness
- a wider touch vocabulary beyond sex or no sex

### **Desire, preference, and communication**

For clients who struggle to:

- identify what they want

- name what feels good
- communicate preference
- tolerate asking
- stay present while receiving
- understand what shuts them down

## **Consent and agency in real time**

For clients who need practice with:

- yes, no, maybe, and pause
- hesitation and override
- adjusting touch as they go
- noticing bracing, compliance, or disconnection
- remaining connected to self in relational contact

## **Sensory and nervous system awareness**

Especially relevant for clients who are:

- touch-sensitive
- shut down
- easily overwhelmed
- highly vigilant
- neurodivergent
- navigating intimacy with strong sensory preferences or aversions

## **Services**

### **Touch HighQ Labs**

Small-group experiences focused on nonsexual touch, consent, boundaries, and relational self-awareness.

Labs may include fully optional, low-stakes exercises such as:

- proximity and orientation
- shoulder-to-shoulder contact

- hand holding
- making requests
- declining or renegotiating touch
- noticing body cues
- helping one person become more comfortable through requested support

No one is ever required to touch anyone or be touched.  
Everything is invitational and choice-based.

## **Private Sessions**

One-on-one or paired sessions for clients who would benefit from a more tailored environment.

These sessions can support:

- nonsexual intimacy skills
- preference discovery
- receiving and adjusting
- boundary practice
- comfort with closeness
- sensory and touch awareness
- greater self-trust in the body

## **Collaboration with Sex Therapists**

I work with sex therapists who want a thoughtful referral partner for clients needing embodied, practical, nonsexual exploration outside the therapy room.

This may include:

- referrals for individuals
- referrals for couples
- customized groups for therapist communities or client groups
- collaborative conversations about fit and scope

## **Important boundaries**

Touch HighQ is not psychotherapy.

It is not sexual touch.

It is not sex work.

It is structured, nonsexual, embodied practice rooted in consent, choice, communication, and clear boundaries.

## **About Dr. Alissa Gardenhire**

I am a Harvard-trained qualitative researcher and embodied facilitator with more than 25 years of experience studying people's lives, systems, and behavior. Through Touch HighQ, I now bring that depth of inquiry into the body.

I create spaces where people can explore consent, connection, comfort, and self-possession through structured, nonsexual, consent-forward experiences.

## **Referral and collaboration**

Touch HighQ may be a fit for sex therapists seeking an ethical, specialized referral option for clients or couples who need embodied support alongside therapy.

**Dr. Alissa Gardenhire**

**Founder, Touch HighQ**

[www.touchhighq.com](http://www.touchhighq.com)

[hello@thisisdeeper.com](mailto:hello@thisisdeeper.com)

908.209.8923

Touch HighQ | Dr. Alissa Gardenhire | [touchhighq.com](http://touchhighq.com)

© 2026 ADG Group LLC. All rights reserved.