

Can an App Close the Pleasure Gap?: Changes in Gendered Patterns of Sexual Pleasure,  
Closeness, and Emotional Labor After a Digital Intervention

Nicholas Velotta

A thesis  
submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

Master of Sociology

University of Washington

2025

Committee:

Pepper J. Schwartz

Sarah Quinn

Program Authorized to Offer Degree:

Sociology

©Copyright 2025

Nicholas Velotta

University of Washington

**Abstract**

Can an App Close the Pleasure Gap?: Changes in Gendered Patterns of Sexual Pleasure, Closeness, and Emotional Labor After a Digital Intervention

Nicholas Velotta

Chair of Supervisory Committee:

Pepper J. Schwartz

Department of Sociology

Persistent gender disparities in sexual satisfaction and orgasm frequency remain a hallmark of inequality in heterosexual relationships, rooted less in biology than in entrenched cultural scripts and inequitable distributions of emotional and sexual labor. This study examines whether a digitally guided intimacy intervention can begin to recalibrate these patterns. The first “scene” of a mobile intimacy app (Arya) was evaluated using a mixed-methods, pre–post design with 180 participants in relationships. Quantitative measures captured changes in sexual satisfaction, relational closeness, and outlook; qualitative open-ended responses were thematically coded with attention to constructs from Self-Expansion Theory, Social Learning Theory, and feminist scholarship on emotional labor. Findings indicate that women experienced larger gains in sexual satisfaction than men, narrowing the “pleasure gap” modestly. Increases in satisfaction were often—but not universally—paired with greater closeness, particularly among couples who began with lower baseline intimacy. Many women described relief from the cognitive burden of planning intimacy, suggesting that digital guidance might redistribute relational labor. While exploratory and not generalizable, these results highlight the potential for technology-based interventions to disrupt entrenched sexual scripts and promote more equitable intimacy at scale.

# Can an App Close the Pleasure Gap?: Changes in Gendered Patterns of Sexual Pleasure, Closeness, and Emotional Labor After a Digital Intervention

## Abstract

Persistent gender disparities in sexual satisfaction and orgasm frequency remain a hallmark of inequality in heterosexual relationships, rooted less in biology than in entrenched cultural scripts and inequitable distributions of emotional and sexual labor. This study examines whether a digitally guided intimacy intervention can begin to recalibrate these patterns. The first “scene” of a mobile intimacy app (Arya) was evaluated using a mixed-methods, pre–post design with 180 participants in relationships. Quantitative measures captured changes in sexual satisfaction, relational closeness, and outlook; qualitative open-ended responses were thematically coded with attention to constructs from Self-Expansion Theory, Social Learning Theory, and feminist scholarship on emotional labor. Findings indicate that women experienced larger gains in sexual satisfaction than men, narrowing the “pleasure gap” modestly. Increases in satisfaction were often—but not universally—paired with greater closeness, particularly among couples who began with lower baseline intimacy. Many women described relief from the cognitive burden of planning intimacy, suggesting that digital guidance might redistribute relational labor. While exploratory and not generalizable, these results highlight the potential for technology-based interventions to disrupt entrenched sexual scripts and promote more equitable intimacy at scale.

## Introduction

In modern heterosexual relationships, sexual satisfaction remains a persistent form of gender inequality. Despite decades of empirical research and feminist theorizing, women consistently report lower frequencies of orgasm, reduced sexual satisfaction, and diminished relational fulfillment compared to their male partners in heterosexual contexts. These disparities are not adequately explained by anatomical or biological differences; rather, they reflect deeply embedded sociocultural hierarchies that manifest through inequalities in emotional labor, communication norms, and sexual scripts that are culturally maintained and relationally enacted (Anderson 2023; Duncombe and Marsden 1995; Hochschild 1983). These inequalities are enacted not only in the daily work of emotional maintenance but also in the unbalanced distribution of interpretive and sexual labor—the unseen cognitive and affective tasks that sustain intimacy.

In recent years, digital technologies have sought to mediate and actively intervene on the intimate lives of their users. Mobile health platforms, dating apps, sexual wellness apps, and algorithmically guided practices increasingly shape how users initiate, negotiate, and evaluate sexual encounters. Yet the gendered implications of these interventions remain undertheorized, particularly when it comes to their impacts on couples. Because persistent disparities in sexual satisfaction and orgasm frequency reflect entrenched cultural scripts, they raise the question of whether such gaps are amenable to change through structured, technology-based scaffolding. Exploring this question is crucial: if digital tools can meaningfully redistribute the work of

initiating intimacy or foreground women's pleasure, they may represent a promising pathway for altering inequities that have long resisted other forms of intervention.

To investigate this possibility, this study evaluated a digital intimacy program that provides couples with a structured "scene" designed to spark erotic novelty, foster communication, and balance the cognitive and emotional labor of planning. With a mixed-methods approach, this study integrates quantitative pre-post survey data with thematic coding of open-ended responses, allowing examination of both measurable shifts and participants' own accounts of how those shifts occurred. While the sample is not nationally representative it offers an exploratory vantage point on how couples engaged with a digital and real-world structured program for intimate and sexual wellness. Quantitative measures captured changes in sexual satisfaction and closeness, while qualitative narratives illuminated the meanings couples attached to those changes—especially around novelty, relational equity, and emotional labor. Coding combined deductive attention to constructs from Self-Expansion Theory, Social Learning Theory, and emotional labor with inductive openness to emergent themes. This dual approach provides insight not only into whether couples experienced change, but also into how guided digital interventions can challenge or reinforce the gendered scripts that sustain disparities in sexual pleasure and satisfaction.

## The Orgasm Gap

Perhaps the most empirically salient manifestation of these imbalances is the so-called "orgasm gap," a persistent disparity wherein heterosexual women report significantly fewer orgasms than men during partnered sexual encounters (Gesselman, 2024; Mahar et al., 2020). Large-scale studies consistently show that heterosexual women experience orgasms at far lower rates than heterosexual men. For example, Wade et al. (2005) found that only 39% of women, compared with 91% of men, usually or always experienced an orgasm during partnered sex, while Frederick and colleagues (2018) reported that 65% of women compared with 95% of men reached orgasm during sexual intimacy. And this gendered gap in pleasure is not unique to the United States; studies find that the orgasm gap appears across different cultures and has proven difficult to change over time as well as age (Döring and Mohseni, 2022; Gesselman, 2024).

Additional analyses demonstrate that lesbian women and gay men report higher orgasm frequencies (about 86 % and 89 %, respectively) than heterosexual women (Frederick, 2018), illustrating that the orgasm gap varies across relationship contexts. These statistics indicate a persistent gap of roughly 30 percentage points and suggest that social and relational factors, rather than innate physiology alone, underlie the disparity.

Prevailing sexual scripts—structured around male initiation and climax—normalize a view of intimacy that sidelines female pleasure. Mahar et. al. (2020) among other thought leaders and sexologists (Jackson, 1984; McPhillips, et al., 2001; Mintz, 2017; Sanchez et. al, 2012; Wiederman, 2005) contend that the privileging of penile-vaginal intercourse structurally excludes female pleasure. So while sex is often depicted as spontaneous, linear (i.e., arousal leads to orgasm), and male-driven, core aspects of female pleasure and orgasm, such as relational trust and the prioritization of clitoral stimulation (McElroy and Perry, 2024), get sidelined. One large-scale survey underscores this misalignment: over 1,400 women were surveyed about vaginal intercourse with and without concurrent clitoral stimulation, participants reported reaching orgasm approximately 51–60% of the time during intercourse that included additional clitoral stimulation ("assisted" intercourse) but only 21–30% of the time during strictly

vaginal intercourse without any extra clitoral stimulation. In the same study, the proportion of women who said they never orgasm during intercourse dropped from 37% during unassisted intercourse to 14% during assisted intercourse (Shirazi et al., 2018). These findings highlight how clitoral stimulation dramatically increases orgasm frequency and reveal the limitations of sexual scripts that center penile–vaginal penetration while minimizing or ignoring clitoral stimulation. Furthermore, they illustrate that cultural templates not only dictate the expected sequence of sexual acts, but they uphold a relational hierarchy wherein male climax is often synonymous with the “successful” completion of sex.

## Gender Differences in Sexual Initiation and Communication

Beyond orgasm frequency, gendered sexual scripts shape who initiates sex and how intimacy is communicated. Sociologists have long noted that women are socialized to manage the emotional tenor of relationships and to prioritize their partners’ pleasure. Qualitative evidence illustrates this burden: nearly all participants in a study of women’s emotion work in their sexual relationships described engaging in four types of “sexual emotion work” — faking orgasms to bolster a partner’s ego, tolerating pain or discomfort to avoid disrupting the encounter, defining their own satisfaction by their partner’s pleasure, and reframing unsatisfying sex as acceptable because it pleased a male partner (Fahs and Swank 2016). Women explicitly linked these behaviors to broader gender norms, emphasising that they felt responsible for maintaining their partner’s enjoyment and managing any awkwardness or insecurity—even at the expense of their own comfort or pleasure.

Communication patterns further exacerbate these burdens. Anderson (2023) conceptualises “hermeneutic labor” as the work of articulating one’s own feelings, interpreting a partner’s feelings, and devising solutions to relational problems. She argues that this labor disproportionately falls on women in heterosexual relationships, who are expected to be “relationship-maintenance experts,” while men often withdraw from emotional conversations and lack skills for interpreting feelings. This demand–withdraw pattern means women are frequently left to do the cognitive and emotional work of planning when and how to bring up sex, anticipating their partner’s reactions, and smoothing over any discomfort.

A meta-analysis of forty-eight studies on couples’ sexual communication further highlights the importance of equalizing communication labor. Sexual communication is positively associated with sexual desire, arousal, lubrication, orgasm, erectile function, less pain, and overall sexual function (Mallory, Stanton, and Handy 2019). Effect sizes for sexual desire and orgasm were higher for women than for men, and studies involving married couples showed the strongest associations. These results suggest that when couples talk openly about sex—disclosing desires, boundaries, and preferences—women’s sexual function improves markedly.

Cultural narratives also reinforce the misalignment of sexual scripts with women’s bodies. In a mixed-methods study of heterosexual Canadians, participants routinely portrayed women’s orgasms as “work” and men’s orgasms as “natural,” reflecting essentialist gender beliefs and a narrow definition of sex (Andrejek, Fetner, and Heath 2022). Such narratives are used to justify sexual behaviours that prioritize men’s pleasure and render women’s pleasure optional.

Taken together, these studies reveal that gendered differences in sexual initiation and communication are not simply matters of individual preference. They reflect structural inequalities that require women to perform disproportionate emotional and interpretive labour. Interventions must therefore go beyond encouraging women to “speak up”; they should create

contexts in which both partners are incentivized to initiate, plan, and communicate about sex, and where women's pleasure is recognized as integral to intimacy.

## Cumulative Sexual Experiences and Gendered Patterns of Desire

Sexual agency and relational motivation are not static traits but dynamic constructs shaped by a cumulative history of interactions. Within long-term partnerships, repeated sexual encounters create feedback loops that condition how couples experience desire, satisfaction, and intimacy. For example, perceiving a partner as responsive across repeated interactions reliably predicts greater sexual desire and higher relational satisfaction, effects that are especially pronounced for women (Birnbaum et al. 2016). Similarly, pursuing sex with approach-oriented goals—such as to enhance intimacy or pleasure—buffers against declines in desire and predicts higher satisfaction over time, whereas avoidance-motivated sex is linked to poorer outcomes (Impett et al. 2008). Beyond single encounters, longitudinal and daily-diary research shows that within-person increases in sexual satisfaction forecast subsequent increases in both partners' relationship satisfaction and sexual frequency (Park et al. 2023). Taken together, these findings highlight that sexual satisfaction is less a one-time outcome than an evolving process structured by the accumulation of experiences, making it essential to consider how repeated encounters set enduring expectations for intimacy and pleasure.

This cumulative pattern aligns closely with Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory (SLT), which emphasizes that behavior is learned through repeated interaction, observation, and reinforcement. In sexual relationships, this suggests that couples who regularly engage in safe, mutually pleasurable erotic practices are more likely to sustain fulfilling intimacy over time. Conversely, when desire is met with ambivalence, neglect, or anxiety, patterns of avoidance or compliance may become entrenched. Similarly, the Self-Expansion Model (SET) theorizes that individuals seek out close relationships as opportunities for growth, novelty, and identity enhancement (Aron & Aron, 1996; Aron et al, 1998; Aron et al., 2001). Experiences that are novel (Aron et al. 2003), and in this case novel *erotic* experiences that are jointly navigated, and emotionally grounded may offer couples a unique vehicle for mutual expansion. In this way, desire is not simply a precondition for sex but an outcome of how relational experiences are structured, remembered, and iterated. This application of Aron and Aron's work finds a compelling contemporary corollary in Esther Perel's landmark book *Mating in Captivity* (2006), which argues that sustained erotic vitality within committed relationships hinges not on stability alone, but on the preservation of curiosity, risk, and structured novelty. Emily Nagoski's (2015) popular work builds on physician Rosemary Basson's non-linear model of women's sexual arousal, introducing the concept of responsive desire, which follows rather than precedes arousal and underscores the importance of context, safety, and planned erotic encounters.

Taken together, these frameworks underscore how planned interventions may foster sexual exploration and reconfigure relational patterns constrained by cultural scripts or negative experiences. Despite growing theoretical support for such interventions, controlled outcome research remains scarce, echoing calls from prior reviews for more rigorous studies assessing therapeutic outcomes in sexual and relational health.

One notable example of early-stage intervention research is the EIS Model (Empathy, Intimacy, and Sexual Satisfaction), developed and piloted by Konzen et al. (2018), which employed a structured therapeutic framework across multiple sessions to help couples improve relational and sexual functioning. In their pilot study of 22 heterosexual married couples, participants showed significant improvements in verbal sexual communication, emotional closeness, and

sexual satisfaction, particularly through the practice of empathy-and-intimacy-based exercises. This demonstrates the capacity of repeated, novel practices to shift entrenched sexual behaviors and increase mutual fulfillment, thus embodying core tenets of both Bandura's Social Learning Theory and Aron & Aron's Self-Expansion Model. However, the reach of these structured interventions remains limited, both in scale and accessibility—a shortfall that signals the need for more broadly applicable and scalable models. As such, emerging digital platforms now offer a compelling avenue for translating these psychologically and sociologically grounded frameworks into real-world, relational tools. As digital technologies increasingly permeate domains of relational and sexual wellness, they present a novel opportunity to operationalize these theoretical principles at scale.

## Digital Technologies as Relational and Sexual Interventions

Recent years have seen a proliferation of mobile apps and digital platforms designed to support women's sexual health, emotional intimacy, and relational growth. Apps such as *Flow* and *Clue* have made significant strides in empowering women (and their partners) with data about their reproductive health. While platforms like *Bumble* have redefined how women initiate romantic and sexual interactions. These developments reflect a broader cultural shift toward valuing female agency and autonomy in sexual relationships.

More recently, wellness platforms have begun offering guided experiences intended to restructure sexual communication and expand intimacy through curated erotic content. These platforms aim to remove some of the logistical, emotional, and cognitive burdens that have historically fallen more heavily on women. In doing so, they not only support individual exploration but also promote mutual growth and pleasure in relational contexts. Yet, despite their growing relevance, these platforms remain under-examined in academic literature. Their wide accessibility and increasing uptake make them promising candidates for empirical investigation—particularly as they offer scalable, low-barrier tools to address the entrenched gendered dynamics of sexual satisfaction and intimacy.

## Present Study: Evaluating Arya's Scene-Based Sexual Wellness Intervention

The current study examines the effectiveness of a novel digital intervention offered through Arya, a couples wellness app that delivers 3-week guided erotic experiences referred to as "scenes." These experiences are designed to provide couples with immersive, curated content structured around specific forms of sexual play, such as sensory play, wax play, and bondage. Each scene unfolds in chapters across three weeks, incorporating multimedia content (videos, articles, quizzes), AI-enhanced messaging support, and prompts for in-app partner sharing to facilitate communication and anticipation.

Couples also receive a package of physical items aligned with their scene, accompanied by a detailed guide to help them prepare for a final structured night of play. Scene assignment is informed by an onboarding survey that assesses individual preferences, relationship needs, and turn-ons. This design seeks to scaffold intimacy through repeated exposure to shared erotic content, consistent communication opportunities, and context-specific guidance—mirroring key principles from Social Learning Theory, the Self-Expansion Model, and responsive desire frameworks.

This study evaluates whether such a scene-based intervention can meaningfully impact relationship closeness and sexual satisfaction. Primary analyses explore potential gender-based differences in outcomes, while secondary analyses investigate whether scene type affects results and which mechanisms—such as communication, novelty, or reduced emotional labor—are most associated with positive experiences. In doing so, the study addresses a key gap in the literature: the lack of empirical evaluation of broadly accessible interventions designed to support female pleasure and promote equity in partnered intimacy.

**Hypothesis 1:** Female users will show greater relative gains in sexual satisfaction than male users, suggesting a potential narrowing of the “pleasure gap” through structured interventions.

**Hypothesis 2:** Gains in sexual satisfaction will often—but not universally—be accompanied by gains in emotional closeness, such that participants perceive novel exploration together as enhancing both satisfaction and closeness (consistent with the self-expansion model).

**Hypothesis 3:** Self-expansive motivations (e.g., curiosity, exploration) will be associated with better outcomes than relationship-mending motivations (e.g., addressing monotony or disconnection).

**Hypothesis 4:** Couples who report the exploration as interrupting or shifting their usual sexual routines will be more likely to view the app as a positive intervention worth integrating into future encounters (in line with Social Learning Theory).

**Hypothesis 5:** Female users will be more likely than male users to describe aspects of the experience in terms of emotional labor, mental load, or planning, with those who frame the intervention as a relief from such burdens experiencing greater benefit.

## Methods

### Product and Platform Overview

Arya is a subscription-based couples wellness app that offers guided erotic experiences—called “scenes”—delivered through digital content, physical intimacy kits, and an AI-driven messaging concierge. Each scene unfolds over multiple weeks and is designed to help couples explore new forms of intimacy through curated themes such as bondage, sensory play, or communication-driven eroticism. A typical member pays a weighted average price of \$35.37 per month for an Arya membership; with monthly memberships costing \$39.95 (54% of active members), 3-month memberships costing \$114.95 (4% of active members), 6-month memberships costing \$189.95 (36% of active members), and a \$349.95 annual membership (3% of active members) available at the time of sign-up. (Note: these percentages do not add up to 100% because approximately 3% of Arya’s active members are in some other type of plan such as a trial plan or discontinued plan type.) All plans include personalized scene assignment, access to multimedia content, in-app partner communication tools, and a mailed box of products selected to complement each scene. At the time of data collection, Arya supported over 20,000 monthly active users.

### Participants and Recruitment

Participants were eligible if they had completed exactly one scene between June 27 and July 24, 2025 and had not yet begun a second. Eligible users were invited via email to complete an

optional follow-up survey assessing their experience. To incentivize participation, respondents were entered into a lottery to win one of ten \$100 VISA gift cards. The total sample size of this analysis includes 180 respondents.

## Arya's General Member Population

While Arya's broader user base is diverse, it is not nationally representative (see Table 1 for a comparison of Arya's member population and the current sample). Members are disproportionately concentrated in large, urbanized states, with the highest representation in Texas (9.3%), California (6.6%), and Florida (6.5%), followed by Ohio, North Carolina, Washington, and New York. The majority of users reside in urban ZIP codes (84%), with a smaller, but not insignificant, share in suburban (9%) and rural (7%) regions. This geographic distribution suggests Arya's strongest uptake occurs in politically and culturally heterogeneous metropolitan zones across the South, West Coast, and East Coast, where openness to wellness-oriented and digitally mediated intimacy interventions may be more common.

The average age range of Arya members falls between 30–39 years old (median age of 37 years old), with approximately 75% identifying as women, 13% as men, and 12% identifying as queer, non-binary, or transgender. This overrepresentation of women reflects observed patterns in sign-up behavior: in most cases, it is women who initiate the use of Arya, consistent with broader research on women's role in emotional and relational maintenance. Based on preferred content pairings (i.e., members select whether they prefer female-male content, female-female content, or male-male content), approximately 89% of members are inferred to be in different-sex pairings, while 11% represent same-sex pairings. Relationship duration is also varied: 14% have been together less than a year, 28% for 1–5 years, 24% for 6–10 years, 27% for 11–20 years, and 7% for more than 21 years.

## Sample Characteristics

Similarly the current study's analytic sample is not nationally representative. The age ranges of the analytic sample falls into these groups: <30 (27.7%), 30–39 (34.0%), 40–49 (23.9%), 50–59 (10.6%), and 60+ (3.7%). In terms of gender identity, 62.8% identified as women and 37.2% as men. Relationship durations of the sample tended to be shorter than the general Arya member population; 11.7% of participants were together for less than a 1 year, 42.6% for 1–5 years, 23.9% for 6–10 years, 16.0% for 11–20 years, and 5.9% for over 20 years. Only 5 respondents (2.7%) were in same-sex relationships, while 183 (97.3%) were in different-sex relationships (a notable difference in this sample compared to the general Arya member population). Compared to the broader base, our respondents skew higher in sexual satisfaction upon registering for the app: 63.9% report high satisfaction (4–5 out of 5) vs. 46.0% in the general user pool. The sample's median Inclusion of Other in Self (IOS) score of 5 matches Arya's general member population, though fewer respondents report very low levels of closeness than in Arya's general member population (see the Measurements Section below for discussion on IOS). Eight participants were retroactively removed from the sample due to a mistake in recruitment whereby they reviewed variations of scenes that were outside of the current study's scope.

By comparing the sample respondents to the broader Arya member base, we see that the follow-up survey captured a slightly more satisfied and moderately close subset of members—likely those motivated to report positive experiences. This sample is also comprised of more different-sex couples than the general Arya member base. Recognizing these skews helps contextualize all subsequent analyses (changes in satisfaction, intimacy, and thematic coding) within a somewhat more engaged segment of Arya's community.

## Design and Procedure

This study employed a pre-post intervention design to evaluate how a single scene-based experience impacted sexual satisfaction, relational closeness, and overall outlook on one's sex life. Upon joining Arya, members completed a baseline assessment that included demographics, play style preferences, and measures of relational closeness and sexual satisfaction. After completing a scene, eligible participants were emailed an optional follow-up survey to assess changes in pre- versus post-scene responses.

## Intervention Content

Three scene types were included in the present study. They are listed below along with the percent of study participants assigned to each scene compared to the percent of all Arya members that received that scene as their first experience in the same time window that data collection took place.

1. *Bound (16.5% of sample; 23.43% of Arya active users)*: An introductory bondage experience using leather wrist cuffs, sensory fingertip covers, and bondage tape. The scene guides couples in exploring control and submission in a consent-focused, sensual format.
2. *Heat (45.2% of sample; 35.33% of Arya active users)*: A beginner-level wax play scene incorporating a massage oil candle, a low-temperature wax-dripping candle, and a glass pleasure wand, which can be heated or cooled for sensory or penetrative play.
3. *Sense (38.3% of sample; 21.52% of Arya active users)*: A sensory exploration scene that includes a Wartenberg Pinwheel, a wearable vibrating device for finger stimulation, and a satin blindfold. The scene emphasizes nonverbal communication and sensation-based mapping of pleasure.

Each scene unfolded over a multi-week arc, integrating video explainers, articles, quizzes, and partner reflection prompts. All scenes also included a kit of physical items delivered by mail, and access to a personalized AI concierge designed to provide guidance, suggestions, and emotional attunement throughout the process.

## Measurements

The study employed a mix of pre-post scale measurements and open ended follow-up questions. See the Appendix for the complete questionnaire. (See Table 1.a for comparison of baseline measurement comparison between sample and Arya's general member population.)

### Pre-Post Scene Measurements

- **Sexual satisfaction:** Sexual satisfaction was assessed at time of registering (providing a baseline sexual satisfaction) as well as after completion of the first scene. Participants rated their overall level of sexual satisfaction on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = "Very dissatisfied" to 5 = "Very satisfied").
- **Relationship closeness:** Relational closeness was measured using the Inclusion of Other in the Self (IOS) scale (Aron et al. 1991) both at time of registration (providing a baseline closeness) as well as after completion of the first scene. The IOS is a single-item, pictorial measure that presents respondents with seven pairs of increasingly overlapping circles, one labeled "Self" and the other "Other." Participants select the pair

that best represents their perceived closeness with their partner. The IOS is grounded in Self-Expansion Theory, which posits that close relationships involve incorporating aspects of the partner into the self, leading to a blurring of boundaries in terms of resources, characteristics, and identities (Aron et al. 1991). Higher overlap reflects greater perceived inclusion of the partner into the self, which in turn is theorized to facilitate self-expansion. The IOS has been widely validated as a parsimonious yet robust indicator of relationship closeness.

- **Outlook on sex life:** Participants' sexual outlook was assessed with a single self-report item: "*How are you feeling about your sex life after completing the first scene?*" Responses were given the options "I feel better about our sex life," "I feel worse about our sex life," "I feel neither better nor worse about our sex life." This measure was designed to capture short-term shifts in global evaluations of sexual wellbeing following the scene.
- **Motivation for joining:** At the time of signing up for Arya, participants selected their primary motivation for joining from a set of categorical options (e.g., "Let's have more fun," "Feel closer," "Going bolder," "It's complicated"). This variable was used to contextualize couples' goals entering the app and to examine whether different motivations were associated with distinct patterns of experience or outcomes.
- **Scene type:** Automatically logged as Sense, Heat, Bound (see descriptions of each scene in Intervention Content above)

## Open-ended Items

These items were designed to give participants a chance to reflect on their experiences leading up to, during, and following their first scene. In total there were four open-ended items covering general sentiments about the scene, discussion of their sexual and emotional connection, as well as how participant's engagement (or lack thereof) with the various features of the app impacted their experiences.

Open-ended responses were analyzed using thematic coding procedures in Atlas.ti. The analytic process followed a combination of deductive and inductive strategies. First, a preliminary codebook was developed based on the study's core constructs (e.g., sexual pleasure, emotional closeness, novelty, relationship inequities, etc.). Then, responses were coded line-by-line to identify both anticipated and emergent themes. Codes were iteratively refined through constant comparison until stable categories were established. Themes were subsequently grouped into higher-order constructs aligned with the study's theoretical frameworks (Self-Expansion Theory, Social Learning Theory, and gendered labor perspectives). This approach allowed the analysis to capture not only the prevalence of core concepts but also the nuanced ways participants described their experiences.

## Results

### Pre–Post Changes by Baseline Satisfaction and Closeness

Overall, participants showed measurable improvements from before to after the first scene. To contextualize these changes, individuals were stratified by their baseline sexual satisfaction and relationship closeness levels. Table 2 shows the distribution of the sample across baseline groups for each outcome. At sign-up, 16.1% of respondents fell in the *low* satisfaction category (very dissatisfied/dissatisfied), 28.3% had *moderate* satisfaction, and 55.6% reported *high* satisfaction. For relational closeness (Inclusion of Other in Self scale), 27.2% of participants

were initially in the *low closeness* group, 33.3% had *moderate* closeness, and 39.4% felt *high* closeness with their partner at baseline.

Table 2: Baseline distribution of participants by sexual satisfaction level and relationship closeness (IOS) level

Group	Sexual satisfaction count	Sexual satisfaction %	Closeness count	Closeness %
Low	29	16.1 %	49	27.2 %
Moderate	51	28.3 %	60	33.3 %
High	100	55.6 %	71	39.4 %

Changes from pre- to post-scene were strongly associated with where participants started out. Table 3 presents the average change scores and improvement rates for each baseline group. Couples who began with low sexual satisfaction showed the largest gains: their mean increase was about +1.0 on the 5-point satisfaction scale (with a median change of +1), and roughly 48% of low-satisfaction individuals improved by at least one point. Those in the moderate satisfaction group also saw substantial benefits with a mean change of around +0.8 (median +1), and ~76% of this group reported higher satisfaction after the scene. By contrast, participants who were already highly satisfied at baseline had relatively little room to improve: their average change was only about +0.17 (median 0), with ~26% reporting an increase. These patterns suggest that the structured, novel scene experience yielded the most tangible gains for those who were initially neutral or dissatisfied, whereas those who were very satisfied to begin with tended to remain at similar levels. This might reflect a *ceiling effect*, meaning participants who already reported very high satisfaction had little room for measurable improvement, even if they still experienced positive outcomes.

A similar trend emerged for relationship closeness. Participants who started out feeling less connected to their partner (*low IOS*) experienced the most significant improvements: on average their IOS score increased by about +0.88 (median +1), and ~61% of low-closeness individuals reported a higher closeness rating after the scene. Those with moderate baseline closeness showed little net change on average (mean  $\Delta \approx -0.35$ , median 0), with about 28% improving. Meanwhile, couples who already felt very close (*high IOS*) sometimes saw slight declines in their closeness score (mean  $\Delta \approx -0.9$ , median -1), and only ~3% of that group improved (most likely reflecting a ceiling/regression-to-mean effect). Notably, a one-point drop at the upper end (e.g. from 7 to 6 on the IOS scale) still indicates a very high level of perceived closeness and may represent a minor recalibration rather than a meaningful deterioration in the relationship.

Table 3: Pre- to post-scene changes in sexual satisfaction and closeness by baseline group, with mean change, median change, and % improved

Outcome	Baseline group	n	Mean change	Median change	Improved %
Sexual satisfaction	Low	29	1.00	1.0	48.3 %
	Moderate	51	0.82	1.0	76.5 %
	High	100	0.17	0.0	26.0 %
Closeness (IOS)	Low	49	0.88	1.0	61.2 %
	Moderate	60	-0.35	0.0	28.3 %
	High	71	-0.89	-1.0	2.8 %

Participants' subjective evaluations of the experience aligned with these quantitative improvements. When asked *"How do you feel about your sex life after the scene?"* a clear majority (106 out of 180) selected *"I feel better about our sex life."* Another 75 participants said they felt *"neither better nor worse,"* and only 7 individuals ( $\approx 3.7\%$ ) reported *"I feel worse."* Interestingly, this self-assessed boost in outlook occurred even for some who had little or no measured change: many participants with no change in their satisfaction score still *felt* better about their sex life, and even a few whose satisfaction score dropped reported feeling better overall. This indicates that the single numeric satisfaction rating may not fully capture participants' subjective sense of progress. In other words, some couples felt the experience improved their relationship or outlook despite what the raw score alone suggested.

I also examined whether the duration of one's relationship might influence the degree of improvement. Couples in mid-length relationships benefited the most. Participants who had been together 6–10 years or 11–20 years showed the largest average increases in satisfaction (approximately +0.55) with about half of them improving. Couples together for 1–5 years improved somewhat less (around +0.20 on average, with  $\sim 33\%$  improving), and those either in very new relationships (<1 year together) or very long relationships (>21 years) tended to have only modest gains. It appears that pairs in a "middle" stage of their relationship were especially responsive to the intervention, perhaps because they have some established patterns that can be improved upon, yet are not as set in their ways as long-term couples nor as consistently in a honeymoon phase as brand-new couples.

### Gender Differences in Sexual and Relational Outcomes

One of the most noteworthy findings was that women showed disproportionately greater improvements in sexual satisfaction compared to men (seen in Table 3). Across the entire sample, women's sexual satisfaction increased by  $\Delta +0.51$  on average (median +1.0), with 28.9% reporting higher satisfaction after the scene. By contrast, men's mean change was  $\Delta +0.35$  (median 0.0), with 23.3% reporting improved satisfaction. The one non-binary participant reported no change in satisfaction, while the one transgender participant experienced a one-point decrease. This gendered pattern held true across different motivation groups as well –

in every category of initial goal, a greater proportion of women than men experienced an increase in satisfaction. For instance, among those who joined “to feel closer,” about 65% of women vs. 44% of men improved, and in the “have more fun” group 48% of women vs. 28% of men did so. Thus, while both genders benefitted overall, women were more likely to register significant gains from the guided scene.

Qualitative responses underscore these differences in how women and men experienced the intervention. Women’s open-ended comments often emphasized newfound hope, emotional connection, and personal growth. For example, one 29-year-old woman (11–20 years together) shared that the scene “gave us confidence to try new things, [and] helped us slow down and take the time to be intimate.” Another woman in her forties wrote that exploring a new scene made them “grow closer” as a couple and that it was “a wonderful experience.” In contrast, men’s comments tended to focus on the novelty of the experience and occasionally revealed differences in reciprocal desire. A man in his mid-fifties (more than 21 years together) enjoyed setting up the scene for his wife and noted she “seemed to enjoy it very much.” However, he lamented that there was “no reciprocal desire for her to perform a scene on me.” Another man in his early fifties simply described the encounter as “exciting and fulfilling,” without elaborating on emotional effects. Overall, women were more likely to mention improvements in communication and closeness alongside the physical aspect, whereas men were more likely to mention the activity itself and, in a few cases, to hint at asymmetries in enthusiasm or initiative between partners. These perspectives suggest that the structured intervention may have especially helped women in areas of intimacy and communication, while men enjoyed the new experience but sometimes did not perceive as much relational change.

Turning to relationship closeness (IOS outcomes), the gender differences were less pronounced than for sexual satisfaction, but still observable. Among women in the study ( $n = 135$ ), the mean change in IOS was  $-0.21$  (median 0.0), with 28.9% reporting an increase in closeness. Among men ( $n = 43$ ), the mean change was  $-0.26$  (median 0.0), with 23.3% reporting improved closeness. The non-binary participant and the transgender participant both reported a one-point decline in IOS and no improvement in closeness. In other words, men were somewhat more likely than women to experience a drop in perceived emotional closeness following the scene. It’s worth noting that the median change for both genders was zero – indicating no change for the typical participant – and that the declines were usually small (often just a 1-point dip). Still, the fact that a larger fraction of men felt less close afterward (despite generally enjoying the scene) may reflect that for some male participants the intervention did not significantly enhance emotional intimacy or that they potentially became more aware of pre-existing emotional gaps. By contrast, a greater share of women felt closer to their partners, aligning with the qualitative reports of increased communication and connection.

## Links Between Sexual Satisfaction and Emotional Closeness

Although sexual satisfaction improved more frequently than relationship closeness in the sample, many participants experienced *simultaneous* positive changes in both domains. In fact, gains in sexual pleasure often coincided with gains in emotional intimacy, consistent with a self-expansion dynamic where novel shared activities strengthen the bond on multiple levels. Notably, those who began the program feeling the least connected to their partner (low baseline closeness) not only saw the biggest improvements in closeness, as discussed, but often also reported increased sexual satisfaction; in other words, the couples starting at a disadvantage made significant strides on both fronts. On the other end, some highly satisfied couples who didn’t see much change in closeness also tended not to gain in satisfaction – suggesting a ceiling effect wherein both aspects were already near personal highs.

Participants' comments frequently tied physical and emotional improvements together. Two participants who showed parallel increases in satisfaction *and* closeness explained how the scene affected them. One 34-year-old woman (6–10 years together) wrote that the first scene “*made opening up to my partner about my likes (and dislikes) easier,*” indicating that the guided exercise not only heightened her sexual enjoyment but also improved communication with her partner. Another woman, age 30 with young children (6–10 years together), shared that “*we’re in a phase of really young kids, so sometimes I feel more distant. This helped us move from feeling stuck in the bedroom to something I can discuss nearly any time.*” Trying something new clearly increased both their physical pleasure and their sense of emotional closeness. In sum, when the intervention “succeeded,” couples often perceived both greater enjoyment in their sex life and a stronger connection with each other. This overlap between sexual and relational outcomes underscores the potential of shared novel experiences to simultaneously enhance intimacy on multiple dimensions.

## Motivations for Joining

The primary motivations for joining the program were similar for women and men. Approximately one-third of women and men selected “feel closer to my partner,” around 40% chose “let’s have more fun,” and roughly one-quarter opted for “going bolder.” Only four participants (all women) chose the “it’s complicated” category. Table 4 summarizes the distribution of these motivations by gender and the proportion within each group who reported improvements in sexual satisfaction and relational closeness after the first scene. Across all motivation categories, women more often reported positive outcomes than men.

For example, among those wanting to feel closer, 62.2% of women versus 50.0% of men reported higher sexual satisfaction, and 37.8% of women versus 25.0% of men reported greater closeness. In the “let’s have more fun” group, 47.3% of women improved their satisfaction compared to 27.8% of men, with closeness improvements of 27.3% for women and 27.8% for men. In the “going bolder” group, 38.7% of women and 33.3% of men increased their satisfaction, while closeness gains were observed for 22.6% of women versus 11.1% of men. Finally, in the small “it’s complicated” subgroup (n = 4 women), 50.0% reported improved satisfaction but none reported increased closeness.

Table 4: Distribution of participant motivations by gender, and percent reporting improvement in sexual satisfaction and closeness within each category

Motivation (general)	Women (n)	Men (n)	Women: satisfaction improved %	Men: satisfaction improved %	Women: closeness improved %	Men: closeness improved %
Feel closer to my partner	45	16	62.2 %	50.0 %	37.8 %	25.0 %
Let’s have more fun	55	18	47.3 %	27.8 %	27.3 %	27.8 %
Going bolder	31	9	38.7 %	33.3 %	22.6 %	11.1 %

It's complicated	4	0	50.0 %	—	0.0 %	—
------------------	---	---	--------	---	-------	---

Participants' narrative responses further illuminate what these motivations meant in practice:

#### “Feel closer to my partner”

Qualitative narratives from participants illustrate how these motivations played out in practice. Those who sought to “*feel closer to my partner*” often used the scene as an opportunity to reconnect after periods of stress or distance. For example, a 35-year-old woman (11–20 years together) admitted she was nervous at first, but once they started using the provided toys, “everything else flowed nicely” and the props “*led to exploration and intimacy building.*” Another participant, a non-binary individual in their late 20s (1–5 years together), described the experience as “so exhilarating,” saying that introducing a body-safe candle and a glass toy was just what they needed after being “*in a rut*” due to work and school obligations. Not every closeness-seeking couple had a purely positive experience, however; one woman in her mid-30s (6–10 years together) had mixed feelings, noting that her husband was reluctant to continue these kinds of “intimacy building” activities.

#### “Let’s have more fun”

Participants motivated by “*let’s have more fun*” largely emphasized excitement and playfulness. A 37-year-old woman (more than 21 years together) said the scene felt “like nothing I had ever tried before,” noting that it “*woke up our senses*” and was “*so exciting.*” Similarly, a 47-year-old woman (6–10 years together) described both partners being eager to unbox the scene’s items; although her partner was “a little unsure” at first, she hoped he would gain confidence with practice as they experimented. Some fun-focused couples highlighted specific novel elements they enjoyed – for instance, one mid-30s woman loved the massage candle and found the heat candle “interesting,” calling the overall experience “*great.*” However, not all couples in this category had an entirely fun experience: a 41-year-old man (6–10 years together) reported that while the scene was “good” for him, it ended up stressful for his partner because they “*weren’t prepared for how messy it would be,*” which made it distracting and less enjoyable. Others echoed that certain novel aspects felt “clunky” or disrupted the natural flow of intimacy, underscoring that the pursuit of excitement sometimes came with a learning curve.

#### “Going bolder”

Those in the “*going bolder*” category – who selected the edgier, more adventurous scene – tended to report either significant growth or some disappointment, often depending on their prior experience levels. On one hand, a 50-year-old woman (6–10 years together) said their bondage scene (with cuffs, tape, and sensory props) was “*the perfect time to try all the things*”; she noted that because they’d used similar items before, they’d now “grown” and had “*lots of communication, so much enjoyment and closeness*” during the scene. Similarly, a 46-year-old woman (11–20 years together) called the experience “*very sensual*” and said it “*opened new doors for us as a couple to explore.*” On the other hand, some participants in this group felt let down, especially those who were already fairly experienced. These individuals sometimes wished for “more innovative pieces” and felt the scene lacked true novelty. As one person put it, the scene was a bit of a letdown because it offered nothing substantially new to them.

## “It’s complicated”

Finally, the few participants in the “*it’s complicated*” group (all women) often expressed ambivalence or disappointment. One 42-year-old woman (11–20 years together) confided that the scene “*brings on panic*,” though she was trying to make it work. Another participant (49, 11–20 years) called the experience “*a pretty big miss*,” explaining that they weren’t prepared for how “*gross*” the dried wax would feel and that the residue “*left a tacky film*.” A third woman (55, over 21 years together) said her husband didn’t want to use the props at all, noting that he preferred fantasy play and that bondage “*was not for him*.” These comments, while varied, illustrate that when underlying issues or mismatches in interest existed, a single guided scene could fall short of expectations.

## Emotional Labor

The intervention was also examined through the lens of emotional labor – the often-unseen effort involved in initiating intimacy, planning romantic or sexual activities, and managing a couple’s emotional connection. Out of 180 participants, 43 provided open-ended comments that were coded for themes of emotional labor. Their reactions were mixed: 14 users described the experience in *wholly positive terms* (emphasizing relief from planning, feeling supported, and reduced stress), 12 saw it as *an additional chore or burden*, and 16 had *ambivalent feelings* with both positive and negative elements (the rest did not mention emotional aspects). This split reveals that while many found the app alleviated emotional work, others felt it added to their workload. Importantly, those who did experience a positive shift in emotional labor often credited the app’s features with lightening their mental load.

## Feature-Facilitated Relief from “Mental Load”

The digital intervention provided a suite of features (nine of which were examined in this study). For example, a “*concierge*” that participants could text for clarification (handled by an AI chatbot) or nuanced relationship advice (provided by an in-house expert). They also had in-app messaging, step-by-step text guidance, video demonstrations, erotic content, conversation prompts, playlists, and a collection of physical items sent to them. Most participants tried out multiple features (commonly 1–4 different features, with some using as many as 6–8). Engaging with a *greater number of features* was relatively common and linked to better outcomes: those who used four or more features had higher rates of improvement in both satisfaction and closeness compared to those who only used one feature (Table 5). For instance, among participants who utilized at least four different features, 53% reported higher sexual satisfaction and 37% reported greater closeness afterwards, whereas those who stuck to a single feature saw lower improvement rates. This trend suggests that fully engaging with the array of tools and outsourcing more of the brainstorming, planning, and creative effort to the app might have been cumulatively beneficial for members in this sample. (See Table 6 for a distribution of which features were most popular amongst participants and their associated improvements in sexual satisfaction and closeness.)

Table 5: Number of features perceived as important to member’s experience

Number of features selected	Participants (n)	Improved satisfaction (n, %)	Improved closeness (n, %)
0	1	1 (100 %)	0 (0 %)

1	51	20 (39.2 %)	11 (21.6 %)
2	30	16 (53.3 %)	10 (33.3 %)
3	39	16 (41.0 %)	6 (15.4 %)
4+	59	31 (52.5 %)	22 (37.3 %)

Participants' comments reinforce the idea that these features helped reduce the emotional and cognitive burden of orchestrating a satisfying sexual experience. Many who spoke positively about emotional labor noted that having a "ready-made plan" or being "guided" by the app took pressure off of them to initiate or organize intimacy. The app essentially performed some of the *mental labor* that one or both partners typically shouldered. As one 29-year-old woman (together with her partner for 11–20 years) explained, being "*gifted what to do*" by the program meant she could "*just connect and be [present] for the night,*" without worrying about what to plan – this "*took the stress and hurt feelings out of the equation.*" In other words, the structured scenarios and prompts relieved her of having to think of everything, allowing her to enjoy intimacy without the usual planning anxiety. This sentiment – that the tool offloaded the work of initiation – was common among those who felt relief from emotional labor. Participants described feeling "*guided and supported*" by the app's suggestions and materials, which made the experience less mentally taxing and more enjoyable.

Crucially, by reducing the need for one partner to always be the initiator or planner, the tool addressed a key aspect of emotional labor in relationships. Themes of outsourcing things like remembering to plan date nights, think of new things to try, or initiate tough conversations were common in the sample. In this way, using multiple features (like reading erotic stories together, following conversation prompts, or letting a pre-set playlist set the mood) allowed participants to enjoy the moment without overthinking. The positive responses indicate that for many, the intervention "*made it easier to connect*" by streamlining the work that typically goes into maintaining an exciting and intimate sex life.

It is worth noting, however, that not everyone experienced a reduction in effort. A minority of users felt that the app introduced new kinds of work (e.g. learning to use the platform, gathering materials, like a candle for a wax-play scene, or scheduling time for the scene) framing it as "*another chore*". For instance, some found certain scenes "messy" or preparation-intensive, which momentarily *increased* stress instead of relieving it. These critiques illustrate that new tools or interventions can create friction, especially if the added structure feels cumbersome or if expectations aren't met (a few participants were frustrated when a scenario wasn't a good fit for them, calling it awkward or not aligning with their needs).

On the other hand, some women experienced the app as essentially "*another chore*" they had to fit into their schedule, or felt let down that their partner still wouldn't "*take the reins*" in initiating intimacy. As a 41-year-old woman (11–20 years together) admitted, she has "no drive so it's hard to start anything" and wished her partner would step up more. Another busy mother of three in her late thirties (>21 years together) found it challenging to schedule the activities, though she acknowledged that when they could make time, the scene helped them focus on each other. Despite such reservations, it is noteworthy that even among participants who viewed the intervention negatively in terms of effort, 40–43% still improved their sexual satisfaction scores afterward. Women's responses show the complex relationship between perceived effort and outcomes: relieving women's mental load often coincided with smoother,

more satisfying sexual experiences (and modest gains in closeness), but even when the program felt burdensome it could still yield benefits. Their critiques illustrate that new tools or interventions can create friction, especially if the added structure feels cumbersome or if expectations aren't met (a few participants were frustrated when a scenario wasn't a good fit for them, calling it awkward or not aligning with their needs).

## Negative Experiences and Unmet Expectations

A subset of participants reported difficulties or disappointments with their first scene. Thirty individuals (16.7%) mentioned discomfort, awkwardness, panic, messiness or other negative feelings in their open-ended responses. These responses were then grouped into three broad themes—"technical issues," "relationship turbulence," and "not a good fit"—based on the focus of their comments. The categories are not mutually exclusive: some participants' remarks reflected more than one theme.

### Technical Issues

The technical issues theme encompassed practical problems such as messy wax, uncomfortable sensations, lack of clear instructions or difficulty navigating the platform. One 41-year-old man (6–10 years together) described how the candle scene "was a bit stressful" for his partner because the wax was "very messy" and they "weren't prepared for how messy it'd be," which made the experience distracting and less enjoyable. A 49-year-old woman (11–20 years together) similarly noted that wax play was "messy but fun," concluding that it would be "an every once in awhile thing." Another respondent didn't know how to access the digital features and tried to complete the scene without any guidance.

### Relationship Turbulence

Comments grouped under relationship turbulence focused on relational hurdles rather than the mechanics of the scene. A 45-year-old man (6–10 years together) admitted that they "haven't even tried it yet because we're too awkward and disconnected," while a 35-year-old man (11–20 years together) said he had "trouble initiating it and getting [my] partner to embrace the ideas." One woman (42 years old, 11–20 years together) described her experience succinctly: "It was awkward. I'm awkward. It brings on panic. I'm trying." Another woman (29 years old, 6–10 years together) recounted that they "didn't really know what to do," and that her partner "was unable to get it up because he felt pressured." These responses highlight how existing relational dynamics—such as discomfort with initiating sex, anxiety, or partner reluctance—can diminish the benefits of a guided scene, regardless of its content.

### Gendered Patterns of Negative Experiences

Across themes, women were more likely than men to report negative experiences, reflecting their larger representation in the sample. In the technical issues category, women often emphasized messiness, discomfort or inadequate guidance, whereas men's comments sometimes balanced complaints with positive remarks (e.g., finding the drip candle messy but still "exciting to try something new"). In the relationship turbulence category, both women and men highlighted anxiety and difficulty initiating, although two of the four comments in this theme were from men. The not a good fit comments came predominantly from women; these often expressed outright dislike for the scene's materials or frustration with unmet expectations. Although the numbers are small, these patterns suggest that negative experiences with Arya's scenes manifested differently by gender and by theme: women more frequently voiced dissatisfaction with the product itself, while men more often mentioned relational obstacles or balanced critiques with positive elements.

## Discussion

This study's findings underscore both the potential promise and the complexity of digitally supporting intimacy to address entrenched gender disparities in heterosexual relationships. In line with our theoretical framework, the results generally support key tenets of Social Learning Theory (SLT) and the Self-Expansion Model (SET). Couples who engaged with the scene-based intervention often learned new intimate behaviors (as SLT would predict) and experienced broadened emotional and sexual connection (as SET suggests), but these benefits were not uniform. Below, is a review of the study's five hypotheses (H1–H5) in light of the findings, connecting them to broader sociocultural dynamics such as gendered labor, sexual scripts, and relational equity. Throughout, we emphasize the exploratory nature of the study and avoid generalizing beyond our sample.

**H1 (Gendered “Pleasure Gap” Narrowing):** *Female users will show greater relative gains in sexual satisfaction than male users. Supported.*

Women in the sample reported disproportionately larger improvements in sexual satisfaction compared to men. On average, female participants' satisfaction increased almost twice as much as males', a pattern suggesting a modest narrowing of the persistent “pleasure gap” in heterosexual intimacy. This gender-differentiated boost aligns with prior research showing that conventional sexual scripts – often centered on male initiation and climax – tend to sideline women's pleasure. By contrast, this intervention explicitly foregrounded female pleasure and balanced the initiation of erotic activities between partners. The result was that many women in the sample experienced gains in enjoyment that begin to offset this inequity. Notably, female participants frequently mentioned improvements in communication and emotional closeness alongside physical gratification, whereas men more often focused on the novel activities themselves. This suggests that the structured intervention may have especially helped women engage more fully on both emotional and physical levels, while men “enjoyed the new experience but sometimes did not perceive as much relational change”. In other words, women derived multifaceted benefits (physical and emotional) from the scene that men, on average, did not report to the same extent, a finding consistent with evidence that enhancing sexual communication and novelty tends to especially improve women's sexual outcomes. This is an encouraging indication that a digital intimacy tool can chip away at gendered pleasure disparities, though we caution that the gap was by no means closed. Men in the study generally started with higher baseline satisfaction, leaving less room for improvement, and some even reported slight declines in perceived closeness (discussed under H2). These nuances reflect the complexity of changing deeply embedded hierarchies in intimacy. Still, the greater gains for women highlight the potential of interventions that deliberately prioritize women's pleasure to promote more relational equity in heterosexual couples.

**H2 (Sexual Satisfaction and Emotional Closeness):** *Gains in sexual satisfaction will often – but not universally – be accompanied by gains in emotional closeness, consistent with the self-expansion model. Supported.*

We found a clear positive coupling between improvements in sexual pleasure and in relational closeness for many participants. When the intervention “succeeded,” couples frequently experienced parallel boosts: a more satisfying sex life went hand-in-hand with feeling emotionally closer as partners. This pattern is precisely what SET would predict – novel shared activities can simultaneously strengthen multiple dimensions of a relationship by broadening each partner's sense of self to include the other. In this case, couples engaged together in new,

self-broadening erotic experiences which enhanced both excitement and emotional bonding for many in the analytic sample.

At the same time, as hypothesized, this coupling was not universal. A subset of couples saw increases in sexual satisfaction without a corresponding jump in closeness, or vice versa. These exceptions tended to occur in predictable contexts. For instance, those who were already extremely close as partners had little room to report further closeness and indeed showed minimal change on that front (a likely ceiling effect), even if their enjoyment of the new sexual activities grew. Conversely, a few participants (notably some men) actually reported feeling slightly *less* close after the scene despite enjoying it. Rather than contradicting the self-expansion principle, this outcome may indicate that for those individuals the intervention illuminated pre-existing emotional gaps or unmet expectations. In general, however, the overall trend – especially among couples who began the program with relatively lower intimacy – was that sexual and emotional gains went hand in hand, reinforcing the idea that shared novel experiences can expand both erotic satisfaction and emotional connection simultaneously. This finding is theoretically interesting: it offers personal narratives that illustrate long-standing arguments that a couple's sex life cannot be separated from their emotional life. Consistent with responsive desire frameworks (Basson 2002), an improvement in one domain can catalyze positive feedback loops in the other. Thus, these results extend prior literature by illustrating how an intervention grounded in mutual exploration might leverage those feedback loops. As partners explore and grow together, they often become both happier and closer; a dual payoff that speaks to the heart of the self-expansion process.

**H3 (Role of Motivations – Self-Expansion vs. Repair):** *Self-expansive motivations (e.g. curiosity, adventure) will be associated with better outcomes than relationship-mending motivations (e.g. addressing monotony or conflict). Partially supported.*

In general, participants who approached the intervention with positive, exploratory goals tended to report the most robust benefits, whereas those joining out of relationship strain or ambivalence saw more mixed results. This pattern parallels prior findings on sexual goal pursuit: approach-oriented motivations (seeking fun, closeness, or personal growth) have been shown to buffer against declines in desire and predict higher satisfaction, whereas avoidance-oriented motives (trying to fix a problem or appease a partner) are linked to poorer outcomes (Impett et al. 2008). The sample's data reflected this distinction. For example, among those who enrolled primarily to "have more fun" or "go bolder" in their sex life, a substantial proportion realized improvements in sexual satisfaction and some also in emotional closeness. These self-expanding motivations may have come with an open mindset that helped couples fully engage with the new experiences.

In contrast, participants motivated by a desire to repair or address issues in their relationship had more variable outcomes. Those who simply wanted to "feel closer" to their partner often did benefit; individuals used the scene to reconnect after periods of stress, and a majority reported heightened satisfaction and intimacy afterward (indeed, this group showed some of the highest rates of improvement). This suggests that when *mild* disconnection was the issue, a structured novel encounter could spark renewed closeness. However, the few participants in the "it's complicated" category (those hinting at deeper relationship troubles or uncertainties) illustrated the limits of a one-off intervention. Not a single person in this subgroup reported any increase in emotional closeness, and qualitative comments from these individuals often conveyed ambivalence or disappointment. Such outcomes imply that when underlying conflicts or mismatches in desire exist, a novel kit of activities is not a panacea.

Additionally, even within ostensibly self-expansive groups, prior experience level mattered. A few adventurous participants who were already sexually experienced felt *let down* that the scene did not offer anything truly new, revealing that what counts as “expansion” is relative to each couple’s baseline. In sum, H3 is only partly borne out: expansive motives and a spirit of curiosity did correspond with broadly better outcomes (supporting SET’s emphasis on novelty and growth), whereas joining under duress tended to yield weaker or inconsistent benefits. Yet, a desire for closeness—which straddles the line between growth and repair—also proved effective for many. This nuance suggests that couples in this sample need not be perfectly problem-free to have gained from Arya’s intervention, but they (more often than not) needed a baseline of openness and mutual willingness. When those conditions are present, the app can act as a catalyst for self-expansion; when they are absent the same activities might fall flat. This reinforces the importance of tailoring interventions (and expectations) to a couple’s starting point.

**H4 (Breaking Routine and Future Integration):** *Couples who report that the scene interrupted or shifted their usual sexual routines will be more likely to view the app as a positive intervention worth integrating into future encounters (in line with SLT). Partially supported.*

These findings indicate that disrupting habitual scripts with a fresh, guided experience was indeed associated with positive evaluations and intentions to continue. A clear majority of participants said they felt *better* about their sex life after completing the first scene, and only a tiny minority felt worse. This generally enthusiastic post-scene outlook suggests that most couples viewed the intervention as a valuable, enriching experience. Many explicitly noted that it helped them break out of a rut or “unstuck” their routine. Such responses imply that couples were not only pleased with the single experience but also inspired to integrate elements of it into their future sexual repertoire. This interpretation is bolstered by the survey’s quantitative results. Couples in the mid-length stage of their relationships (roughly 6–20 years together) showed the greatest gains in satisfaction; about double the improvement of both newer couples and very long-term couples. The especially strong positive response among the mid-term group aligns with the idea that interrupting an existing script at the right time can reinvigorate a relationship. It is precisely in these established-but-evolving relationships that a structured novel intervention can hit a “sweet spot.” From the perspective of SLT, this makes sense: these couples experienced a powerful positive reinforcement for deviating from their usual script, which may encourage them to keep experimenting and learning new behaviors together. Indeed, SLT would predict that if partners find a new practice rewarding (e.g. a guided date that leads to greater pleasure and closeness), they are likely to repeat it and incorporate it into their ongoing repertoire. This data cannot directly confirm long-term behavior change (the scope of this project did not track couples beyond their initial post-scene survey), but the combination of subjective enthusiasm and measurable improvement is a strong indicator that many couples intended to continue using the app or at least to apply its lessons going forward.

However, there is a major caveat found in this data: *perceiving* the routine as interrupted was key. Some couples, especially among the most sexually experienced, did not actually find the scene very novel (as noted above in H3) and thus may not have felt the same impetus to continue; their feedback was less enthusiastic. This suggests that for an intervention to be seen as worth integrating, it truly must offer a departure from business-as-usual for that particular couple.

**H5 (Gendered Emotional Labor and Mental Load):** *Female users will be more likely than male users to describe the experience in terms of emotional labor, mental load, or planning, with*

*those who frame the intervention as a relief from such burdens experiencing greater benefit.*  
**Supported.**

The qualitative data clearly show that issues of planning and emotional labor were salient, especially for women, and that the app often functioned as a tool for *redistributing* these burdens. Women in our study were indeed more prone to discuss who did the work of initiating and organizing the couple's intimacy. This finding is not surprising in light of extensive feminist scholarship documenting how women typically bear a disproportionate share of "interpretive" and emotional labor in heterosexual relationships. As Anderson (2023) argues, women are frequently expected to be the "*relationship-maintenance experts*," the ones who remember to plan date nights, initiate conversations about the relationship, and ensure sexual encounters are fulfilling for their partner, often at the expense of their own ease. Arya's intervention offered a partial antidote to this dynamic for some couples by essentially outsourcing some of the cognitive and organizational work to the app. A group of female participants experienced this as a *relief*. They described the scene's structured guidance as "a ready-made plan" that "*took the pressure off*" them to orchestrate or initiate sex. This sentiment was common among those who felt the greatest *benefit* from the intervention. These results align with the idea that relieving women's mental load often coincides with smoother, more satisfying sexual experiences.

At the same time, not everyone experienced the intervention as a relief. In line with H5's expectation, it was primarily women who voiced these more critical or ambivalent perspectives about labor. A minority of participants actually felt the app *introduced new kinds of work* or did not sufficiently shift burdens. Some found parts of the experience "messy" or time-consuming (e.g., setting up candles, learning to use the platform), framing it as "another chore" rather than a help. These critiques illustrate an important sociological point: technology alone cannot instantly overturn established gender norms and habits. Even a well-designed intervention will encounter friction if the couple's broader dynamic remains unchanged. For example, if a male partner is accustomed to a more passive role, a digital prompt may not suffice to make him an equal initiator overnight. Nonetheless, it is telling that even among participants who viewed the intervention negatively in terms of effort, 40–43% still improved their sexual satisfaction afterward. In other words, some couples reaped benefits *in spite of* perceiving added work, perhaps because the novelty and structure provided rewards that outweighed the inconveniences.

Truly achieving relational equity in emotional and sexual labor likely requires not just tools like Arya, but also ongoing negotiation and willingness from both partners to alter their usual script. These findings contribute to the literature on gendered labor by providing empirical evidence that *when* such labor is redistributed or supported by an external scaffold, women's pleasure and relational satisfaction can increase. At the same time, the persistence of some gendered frustrations in our sample serves as a reminder that interventions must continue to engage men and address deeper normative expectations (e.g., that women will do the emotional heavy-lifting) to sustain truly equitable change.

In conclusion, this discussion highlights how an exploratory digital intimacy intervention can both reflect and reshape sociocultural patterns in heterosexual couples' lives. The theoretical lenses of SLT and SET proved useful for interpreting our results: by learning new behaviors through repeated guided practice (SLT) and expanding the selves of both partners through novel shared experiences (SET), couples in our study often achieved concurrent gains in sexual and relational fulfillment. Importantly, these gains were most pronounced in areas historically marked by gender inequality – women's sexual satisfaction and the distribution of intimate labor – suggesting that technology-mediated interventions can be leveraged to promote greater equality

in couple dynamics. This exploratory study begins to fill a noted gap in the literature by empirically evaluating a scalable tool designed to support female pleasure and collaborative erotic exploration. The findings offer tentative optimism that such tools, by challenging prevailing sexual scripts and easing women's disproportionate burdens, could help narrow the pleasure gap and foster more equitable, satisfying partnerships.

That said, we must be careful not to overstate these conclusions. This was an exploratory pre-post study with self-selected participants, and its outcomes are not automatically generalizable beyond the study sample. The couples who chose to use Arya (and to respond to this survey) may differ in important ways from the general population (for example, they were open to trying a novel intimacy app, which suggests a degree of motivation and comfort with discussing sex that may not hold for all couples). We also lacked a control group, so we cannot definitively claim that the observed improvements were caused by the intervention itself. Natural fluctuations or a placebo effect (e.g. simply paying more attention to one's sex life) could have played a role. Moreover, the duration of the study was short: we measured outcomes only immediately after the first scene, so it remains unclear whether the improvements in satisfaction and closeness would persist, increase with additional scenes, or possibly taper off once the novelty wears off. Future research should therefore examine longer-term trajectories, perhaps by following couples through multiple scenes and a follow-up period, and ideally compare them to a control group engaging in an alternative activity. Additionally, while our qualitative data enriched our understanding of how and why the intervention worked (or didn't) for different people, those insights rely on self-report and may be subject to social desirability or recall biases.

Despite these limitations, this study provides valuable preliminary insights. It shows that a digital intervention can be more than just a one-time novelty – it can serve as a cultural probe into the state of modern intimacy, revealing both the potential for change and the resilience of existing norms. For practitioners and designers of similar interventions, our findings underscore the importance of addressing sociological factors (gender roles, emotional labor, normative scripts) in addition to providing engaging content. Couples benefited from features that guided both of them to communicate, introduced activities neither would have thought of alone, and by relieving the overburdened partner. These features should be further studied as potential focal points of new digital interventions seeking to enhance intimate partnerships.

Ultimately, this study invites cautious optimism: even if the path to truly egalitarian intimacy is an ongoing journey, structured digital interventions might provide a meaningful push in the right direction, helping couples expand their repertoire of love and labor together more fairly in the pursuit of mutual pleasure and connection.

## References

- Anderson, Elizabeth. 2023. "Hermeneutic Labor: The Gendered Burden of Interpretation in Intimate Relationships between Women and Men." *Hypatia* 38(1):177–197. doi:10.1017/hyp.2023.11.
- Andrejek, Nicole, Tina Fetner, and Melanie Heath. 2022. "Climax as Work: Heteronormativity, Gender Labor, and the Gender Gap in Orgasms." *Gender & Society* 36(2):189–213. doi:10.1177/08912432211073062.
- Aron, Arthur, Elaine N. Aron, and Maria Tudor, and Greg Nelson. 1991. "Close Relationships as Including Other in the Self." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 60:241–253.
- Aron, Arthur, Elaine N. Aron, and Danny Smollan. 1992. "Inclusion of Other in the Self Scale and the Structure of Interpersonal Closeness." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 63(4):596–612. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.63.4.596>.
- Aron, Arthur, Elaine N. Aron, and Cindy Norman. 2004. "Self-expansion Model of Motivation and Cognition in Close Relationships and Beyond." Pp. 99–123 in *Self and Social Identity*, edited by M. B. Brewer and M. Hewstone. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Aron, Arthur, and Elaine N. Aron. 1996. "Self and Self-expansion in Relationships." Pp. 325–344 in *Knowledge Structures in Close Relationships: Social Psychological Approach*, edited by G. J. O. Fletcher and J. Fitness. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Aron, Arthur, Cindy C. Norman, and Elaine N. Aron. 1998. "Self-expansion Model and Motivation." *Representative Research in Social Psychology* 22:1–13.
- Aron, Arthur, Cindy C. Norman, Elaine N. Aron, and Gary W. Lewandowski Jr. 2003. "Shared Participation in Self-expanding Activities: Positive Effects on Experienced Marital Quality." Pp. 177–196 in *Marital Interaction*, edited by P. Noller and J. Feeney. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Basson, Rosemary. 2002. "A Model of Women's Sexual Arousal." *Journal of Sex & Marital Therapy* 28(1):1–10. doi:10.1080/009262302317250963.
- Birnbaum, Gurit E., Moran Mizrahi, Efrat Kanat-Maymon, Omri Sass, and Harry T. Reis. 2016. "Loving and Being Loved: How Partner Responsiveness Moderates the Effects of Sexual Desire on Relationship Satisfaction." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 111(4):530–546. <https://doi.org/10.1037/pspi0000069>.
- Döring, Nicola, and M. Mohseni. 2022. "Der Gender Orgasm Gap. Ein Kritischer Forschungsüberblick zu Geschlechterdifferenzen in der Orgasmus-Häufigkeit beim Heterosex [The Gender Orgasm Gap: A Critical Research Review on Gender Differences in Orgasm Frequency during Heterosex]." *Zeitschrift für Sexualforschung* 35:73–87. doi:10.1055/a-1832-4771.
- Duncombe, Jean, and Dennis Marsden. 1995. "'Workaholics' and 'Whingeing Women': Theorising Intimacy and Emotion Work—The Last Frontier of Gender Inequality?" *The Sociological Review* 43(1):150–169. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-954X.1995.tb02482.x>.

- Fahs, Breanne, and Eric Swank. 2016. "The Other Third Shift?: Women's Emotion Work in Their Sexual Relationships." *Feminist Formations* 28(3):46–69. doi:10.1353/ff.2016.0043.
- Frederick, David A., Harris K. S. John, Justin R. Garcia, and Elizabeth A. Lloyd. 2018. "Differences in Orgasm Frequency among Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Heterosexual Men and Women in a U.S. National Sample." *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 47(1):273–288. doi:10.1007/s10508-017-0939-z.
- Gesselman, Amanda N., Margaret Bennett-Brown, Simon Dubé, Ellen M. Kaufman, Jessica T. Campbell, and Justin R. Garcia. 2024. "The Lifelong Orgasm Gap: Exploring Age's Impact on Orgasm Rates." *Sexual Medicine* 12(3):qfae042. <https://doi.org/10.1093/sexmed/qfae042>.
- Hochschild, Arlie Russell. 1983. *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Impett, Emily A., Amy Muise, James K. Doyle, and James J. Collins. 2008. "Sexual Goals: Predicting Satisfaction and the Maintenance of Desire in Romantic Relationships." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 94(5):808–823. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.94.5.808>.
- Jackson, Margaret. 1984. "Sex Research and the Construction of Sexuality: A Tool of Male Supremacy?" *Women's Studies International Forum* 7(1):43–51. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0277-5395\(84\)90083-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/0277-5395(84)90083-9).
- Konzen, Joel, Jennifer Lambert, Monica Miller, and Solomon Negash. 2018. "The EIS Model: A Pilot Investigation of a Multidisciplinary Sex Therapy Treatment." *Journal of Sex & Marital Therapy* 44(6):552–565. doi:10.1080/0092623X.2018.1436626.
- McPhillips, Kathryn, Virginia Braun, and Nicola Gavey. 2001. "Defining (Hetero)sex: How Imperative Is the 'Coital Imperative'?" *Women's Studies International Forum* 24(2):229–240. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0277-5395\(01\)00160-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0277-5395(01)00160-1).
- Mahar, Elizabeth A., Laurie B. Mintz, and Brian M. Akers. 2020. "Orgasm Equality: Scientific Findings and Societal Implications." *Current Sexual Health Reports* 12:24–32. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11930-020-00237-9>.
- Mallory, Allen B., Amelia M. Stanton, and Ariel B. Handy. 2019. "Couples' Sexual Communication and Dimensions of Sexual Function: A Meta-analysis." *Journal of Sex Research* 56(7):882–898. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224499.2019.1568375>.
- Mintz, Laurie B. 2017. *Becoming Cliterate: Why Orgasm Equality Matters—and How to Get It*. New York: HarperOne.
- Oschatz, Tanja, Jennifer L. Piemonte, and Verena Klein. 2025. "The Intimate and Sexual Costs of Emotional Labor: The Development of the Women's Sexual Emotional Labor Assessment." *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 54:117–138. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-024-03061-7>.
- Park, Hyunji Grace, James K. McNulty, Andrea L. Meltzer, and Jeffrey A. Simpson. 2023. "Sexual Satisfaction Predicts Future Changes in Relationship Satisfaction and Sexual

Frequency: New Insights from Within-Person Associations over Time." *Personality Science* 4:e11869. <https://doi.org/10.5964/ps.11869>.

Sanchez, Diana T., Janell C. Fetterolf, and Laurie A. Rudman. 2012. "Eroticizing Inequality in the United States: The Consequences and Determinants of Traditional Gender Role Adherence in Intimate Relationships." *Journal of Sex Research* 49(2-3):168-183. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224499.2011.653699>.

Shirazi, Tina, Kristen J. Renfro, Elizabeth Lloyd, and Kim Wallen. 2018. "Women's Experience of Orgasm During Intercourse: Question Semantics Affect Women's Reports and Men's Estimates of Orgasm Occurrence." *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 47(3):605-613. doi:10.1007/s10508-017-1102-6.

Wade, Lisa D., Erica C. Kremer, and Jennifer Brown. 2005. "The Incidental Orgasm: The Presence of Clitoral Knowledge and the Absence of Orgasm for Women." *Women & Health* 42(1):117-138. [https://doi.org/10.1300/J013v42n01\\_07](https://doi.org/10.1300/J013v42n01_07).

Wiederman, Michael W. 2005. "The Gendered Nature of Sexual Scripts." *The Family Journal* 13(4):496-502. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1066480705278729>.

## Appendix

Table 1: Demographic Comparison of Sample to General Arya Member Population

Metric	Category	General %	Sample %
Gender	Women	75.0	62.8
Gender	Men	13.0	37.2
Gender	Other	12.0	0.0
Partner Pairing	Different-Sex	89.0	97.3
Partner Pairing	Same-Sex	11.0	2.7
Relationship Duration	<1yr	14.0	11.7
Relationship Duration	1-5yrs	28.0	42.6
Relationship Duration	6-10yrs	24.0	23.9
Relationship Duration	11-20yrs	27.0	16.0
Relationship Duration	21+yrs	7.0	5.9
Baseline Sexual Satisfaction	1	8.94	5.3
Baseline Sexual Satisfaction	2	12.76	10.6
Baseline Sexual Satisfaction	3	32.35	21.3
Baseline Sexual Satisfaction	4	30.06	42.6
Baseline Sexual Satisfaction	5	15.88	21.3
Baseline IOS	1	9.89	4.8
Baseline IOS	2	10.93	11.7
Baseline IOS	3	10.41	13.3
Baseline IOS	4	13.6	16.5
Baseline IOS	5	17.68	16.0
Baseline IOS	6	16.31	16.5
Baseline IOS	7	21.17	21.3

Table 1a: Sexual Satisfaction and IOS Comparison of Sample to General Arya Member Population

Construct	Group	Mean	Median	SD
Sexual Satisfaction	Sample	3.44	4	1.07
Sexual Satisfaction	General	3.32	3	1.15
IOS	Sample	4.62	5	1.84
IOS	General	4.52	5	1.97

Table 3: Change in Sexual Satisfaction and Closeness by Gender and Percent of Improvement

Gender	<i>n</i>	Mean $\Delta$ SAT	Median $\Delta$ SAT	Satisfaction improved %	Mean $\Delta$ IOS	Median $\Delta$ IOS	Closeness improved %
Women	135	0.51	1.0	28.9 %	-0.21	0.0	28.9 %
Men	43	0.35	0.0	23.3 %	-0.26	0.0	23.3 %
Queer or Non-binary	1	—	—	0.0 %	-1.0	-1.0	0.0 %
Transgender	1	-1.0	-1.0	0.0 %	-1.0	-1.0	0.0 %

Table 6: Feature selection and member's outcomes

Feature	Selected ( <i>n</i> )	Satisfaction improved %	Closeness improved %
Concierge	45	40.0 %	40.0 %
In-app messaging	17	35.3 %	23.5 %
Text guidance & articles	69	42.0 %	37.7 %
Video explainers	78	39.7 %	32.1 %
Customizable erotica	50	42.0 %	24.0 %
Physical items	153	44.4 %	27.5 %
Conversation prompts	58	53.5 %	27.6 %
Curated playlists	40	47.5 %	32.5 %
Other features	11	45.5 %	27.3 %

Post-Scene Questionnaire (Mobile View)

**Welcome!**  
This short questionnaire will focus on your experience with your first Arya scene.

Note: This is not a product review. We are participating in a targeted academic study on couples. All data will be **anonymized**. Please complete all items and express your honest opinions. Once submitted, you will be entered to win one of 10 \$100 VISA gift cards.

**Let's get started!**

Start screen



Which pair of circles best represents how close you feel to your partner?\*

you      your partner

1 ○ ○

2 ○ ○

3 ○ ○

4 ○ ○

5 ○ ○

6 ○ ○

7 ○ ○

1 2 3 4 5

6 7

**OK**

IOS



How satisfied are you with your sex life?  
\*

A Very satisfied

B Somewhat satisfied

C Neutral

D Somewhat dissatisfied

E Very dissatisfied

< OK

Sexual  
satisfaction



Take your time describing the  
experience of your first scene.\*  
Feel free to discuss your experience as well as  
your partner's experience.

Type your answer here...

< OK

Scene experience  
(open-ended)



How are you feeling about your sex life after completing the first scene?

A I feel better about our sex life.

B I feel worse about our sex life.

C I feel neither better nor worse about our sex life.

< OK

Outlook  
on sex life



**Follow-up:** Please discuss how you're feeling about your sex life in your own words.\*

Feel free to discuss your feelings as well as your partner's feelings after your first scene.

Type your answer here...

< OK

Discuss sex life  
(open-ended)



Describe how you're feeling about your **emotional connection to your partner** after completing the first scene.\*  
Feel free to discuss your feelings as well as your partner's feelings.

Type your answer here...



OK

Discuss emotional connection (open-ended)



Did any of the features or resources below have a particularly strong influence on your experience (for better or worse)?\*

Select any that apply:

Choose as many as you like

- A customizable erotica
- B access to your concierge
- C the items in your box
- D in-app messaging with your partner
- E conversation prompts
- F video explainers and guidance
- G curated playlists
- H text-based guidance and articles
- I Other

Select influential features



How did the features and/or resources  
you selected impact your experience?  
(Your selections are listed below for  
convenience.)

text-based guidance and articles

Type your answer here...

<

Submit

Discuss influential  
features  
(open-ended)

