

# What Is Sexological Bodywork, The Touch Therapy From Gwyneth Paltrow's Netflix Show?

*We heard it on Sex, Love and Goop, and now we want to know more.*

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Michaela Boehm and Gwyneth Paltrow in Sex, Love & Goop.

Have you heard of sexological bodywork? You might have, if you've been watching Sex, Love, and Goop on Netflix, inspired by Gwyneth Paltrow's [infamous brand](#).

It is a method to help people have new experiences with their bodies, sensations and sexuality – and it can include a full body or genital massage, also known as a yoni massage.

Sometimes known as somatic sex education, advocates of sexological bodywork say it can help people understand their desires, while allowing them to heal from trauma, such as childbirth or assault.

As it's considered sex work in the US, the therapy is banned in 49 states. In the UK, it is practiced legally and is not considered sex work (just in case you were curious, sex work is legal in the UK but soliciting or working with more than one other sex worker is illegal).

According to Kian de la Cour, lead trainer at [UK Somatic Sex Education](#), practitioners may include genital touch within their scope of practice much as a pelvic floor specialist or midwife might. For some patients, it might not include any touching at all.

The therapy also takes serious training before practitioners can offer it.

A professional qualification is only gained after a period of training for seven months. The training amounts to more than 330 hours and includes in-depth anatomy, extensive hands-on and trauma-informed practice, plus 25 supervised sessions.

When all practical tests and assignments have been completed, the person is recognised as a Certified Sexological Bodyworker (CSB).

It is a growingly popular course too as one school, the [Sea School of Embodiment](#), has trained over 200 practitioners in the UK since 2014.



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Sexological bodywork was discussed on Netflix's Sex, Love and Goop

## So why would someone want to enlist their help?

There are several reasons one might go to a sexological bodyworker, says de la Cour.

The most common reasons are that they:

- Would like to rediscover their body, often after a change, such as childbirth
- Recognise they are stuck in a pattern that doesn't satisfy them anymore
- Struggle to ask for what they want, or even to know what they want in the realms of touch and intimacy
- Scars from gender reassignment surgery, or childbirth
- Concern about body image
- Don't know how to self-pleasure
- Didn't have sex education that was meaningful to them
- To have better sex
- More choice around orgasm, in other words, they could be unable to orgasm, they have an Early orgasm, or they have delayed orgasm
- Erection difficulties

- To rely less on porn
- Anxiety or trauma around intimacy
- Are bored / desire to practice something new
- Has been a change in their libido
- To experience more pleasure
- Feeling disconnected from their eroticism / genitals

De la Cour lists the benefits of going to a somatic sex educator: “In contrast to ‘fixing’ people, sexological bodyworkers coach, teach and support people to learn about their bodies. This approach, above all, empowers them to be healthy and happier with themselves.

“Practitioners offer a neutral space, free from expectations and performance, to practice and integrate new tools and techniques. Probably the most valuable aspect is being able to talk about what is being felt inside. Supporting people in exploring their sexuality, and working through sexual issues or concerns can be healing and cathartic.”

## So, why is it considered controversial?

It goes without saying that you should check the credentials of a therapist before even considering sexological bodywork and the concept of touch-based therapy will certainly not suit everyone.

“It is controversial because it works with and allows the client to experience arousal for the purposes of education and there are powerful cultural inhibitions against this,” de la Cour adds. “For most people, the only context they can imagine for genital touch is between romantic-sexual partners or in a clinical setting where arousal is effectively taboo. Many sessions do not include those aspects and may not included any touch at all.

“We would argue that it should be legal as it is an educational modality, which happens to have the scope of practice to include genital touch if and when appropriate, in a boundaried setting and within a clear code of ethics where erotic touch is one-way.”

**The School of Somatic Sexology**

