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From wounds to wellness – Del Mar therapist pens book on healing sexuality beyond addiction and trauma

A book launch and signing will be held Oct. 7 at Camino Books in Del Mar

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FROM WOUNDS TO WELLNESS

Del Mar therapist pens book on healing sexuality beyond addiction, trauma

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By Catharine L. Kaufman

Stephanie S. Covington, PhD, LCSW, a Del Mar resident with a PhD in psychology and a master's degree in clinical social work, has embraced numerous and diverse fields of interest and areas of focus, and amassed a vast body of research and publishing credits, along with over three decades in private practice primarily for the pure fulfillment of healing the wounded.

She recently closed her 30-year private practice in La Jolla, where she specialized in addiction and trauma, and opened The Covington Training Institute in Del Mar. This dual core focus has enabled her to cast a wide net well beyond her private practice, such as, consulting with the venerable Betty Ford clinic in Rancho Mirage, Calif., where Covington helped redesign women's treatment services; training other professionals in the field; keynote speaking events at various venues both domestically and globally; and develop programs within the criminal justice system to help the population of female prisoners incarcerated in California and across the lands support each other and survive by moving out of their vicious cycles of addiction and trauma.

This pair of toxic ingredients is again tackled head on in Covington's latest book, *Awaken Your Sexuality: A Guide to Connection and Intimacy after Addiction and Trauma* (Hazelden Publishing, 2025), which she has co-written with Vanessa Carlisle, PhD, an author, coach, and educator in the fields of gender, sexuality, and trauma, holding a PhD in creative writing, and

master of fine arts. There's more.

"Vanessa brings a non-binary, younger, and more contemporary perspective to the book," says Covington. Bob Dylan keenly observed that, "the times, they are a-changin'." While addiction three decades ago was pigeonholed as a dependency on a substance, primarily alcohol and drugs, ("everybody must get stoned"), "today's view of addiction is more sophisticated," with a slew of menu offerings that can include everything from shopping and exercising to gaming and relationships.

"We've expanded our understanding of compulsive behaviors, and how these things can impact people's lives in a negative way, including their sexual intimacy," explains Covington. As for trauma, which comes from the ancient Greek root meaning "wound," the word refers to more than just physical injuries. "Trauma happens in many different ways, and it can impact people's thinking, their feelings, and their behaviors. People are entitled to experience pleasure and joy in their lives regardless of their traumas and addictions. That's what healing is all about."

As an added boon, New York Times bestselling author Elizabeth Gilbert, (*Eat, Pray, Love*, and the newly released *All the Way to the River*), who identifies as a love and sex addict, and tragically lost her partner as a result of addiction, has written the foreword to the book: "A treasured resource. Nobody is judged in these pages; everyone is welcomed, and everyone is understood." That includes straight, queer, trans, cis, gender expansive, or questioning readers looking for solace and solutions.

According to Covington, the book is written for "a dual audience," for both women searching for sexual joy and connections, and for professional people who want to expand their resources when exploring this delicate topic with their patients. *Awaken Your Sexuality*... is a treasure trove in its field providing "practical exercises to process sexual history and heal from past wounds, ways to explore and embrace pleasure without judgment, and a support for one's unique journey to healthier intimate relationships, along with real-life stories of sexual recovery."

A companion workbook is also available, filled with pertinent exercises women can work on themselves or with a women's group, developing a support system around these issues.

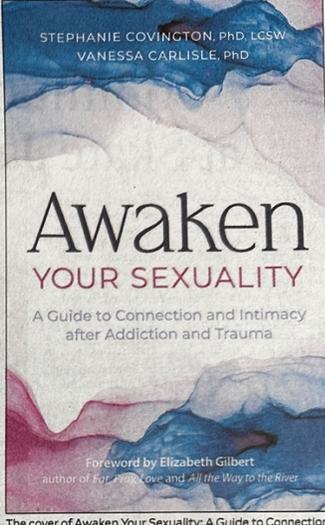
Doling out one last tidbit of advice, "to make changes in our lives, first we need to acknowledge we have an issue or a problem, then we can find a solution," says Covington. "It is important to know that you are not alone, and help is available. We heal from addiction and trauma through connection, not in isolation."

Covington and Carlisle will hold a book launch and signing for *Awaken Your Sexuality: A Guide to Connection and Intimacy after Addiction and Trauma* on Tuesday, Oct. 7, at 6 p.m. at Camino Books, 1555 Camino Del Mar, Suite 114, Del Mar. (This free event will be held upstairs at the Pacifica Breeze Cafe Deck.) For more information on the event call Camino Books at (858) 925-7078 or visit <https://caminobooks.com/event/2025-10-07/stephanie-covington-vanessa-carlisle-awaken>

For additional information about the book and other book signing events visit www.stephaniecovington.com and www.hazelden.org.



Authors Vanessa Carlisle, PhD, and Stephanie S. Covington, PhD, LCSW. JT MACMILLAN



The cover of *Awaken Your Sexuality: A Guide to Connection and Intimacy after Addiction and Trauma*. COURTESY OF STEPHANIE S. COVINGTON

Authors Vanessa Carlisle, PhD, and Stephanie S. Covington, PhD, LCSW (JT MacMillan)

By [Catharine Kaufman](#)

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