

## Self-Sensate Focus Exercise

This handout offers you information on the self-sensate focus exercise. The self-sensate focus exercise allows you to:

- Explore your body with touch.
- Find what sensations (physical feelings) give you pleasure.

Over time you can experience less pleasurable sensations. This may occur:

- After a cancer experience
- As you age
- In a long-term relationship with a partner

### Steps for doing the self-sensate exercise

1. Close your eyes. Focus on your sense of touch.
2. Focus on the sensation(s) you have as you touch each body part listed below. Take a few minutes with each body part. If you have troubling thoughts, notice them and then focus again on your sensations. Don't be hard on yourself if you find this difficult.
  - Your feet on the floor. Wiggle your toes. Focus on what this feels like.
  - Your ankles and lower part of your legs.
  - Your knees and the top part of your legs (thighs).
  - Your vaginal area. This includes your labia and clitoris. Contract (tighten) your vaginal muscles. As you do so, remind yourself these are important body parts for sexual pleasure and activity.
  - Your hands and what you are touching. What temperature or texture are your fingers sensing? Describe these sensations to yourself.
  - Your shoulders, then your neck and head.
3. Focus on your breathing. Take a deep breath. Focus on what it feels like.

The sensations you have are real and they belong to you.

Talk to a cancer centre social worker if you have questions about the Self-Sensate Focus Exercise.

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