



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 the social worker or nurse practitioner from the WISH Clinic if you have questions about sensate focus exercises.

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Handout adapted with permission from the Southeast Regional Cancer Program