Rape Trauma Syndrome Phases

**Acute Phase**
(May last for a few days to several weeks following a sexual assault. Survivors may exhibit controlled or expressed emotions.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Controlled</th>
<th>Expressed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Withdrawn</td>
<td>Crying/sobbing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numb</td>
<td>Shouting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distracted</td>
<td>Tenseness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disconnected from feelings</td>
<td>Restlessness</td>
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</tbody>
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**Outward Adjustment Phase**
(Initial shock wears off – can continue for months or years)

- Continuing anxiety
- Severe mood swings
- Sense of helplessness
- Fears/phobias
- Depression
- Rage
- Nightmares
- Insomnia
- Eating difficulties
- Denial
- Withdrawal
- Hypervigilance
- Sexual problems
- Difficulty concentrating
- Flashbacks
- Suicidal
- Self-mutilation
- Dissociation
- Drugs/alcohol abuse

**Resolution Phase**
(Wants to heal, seeks help or counseling, tells a support person)

- Confrontation (court, stop offender)
- Increased self-worth
- Gain control
- Education
- Support
- Counseling
- Group Therapy
- Learns to overcome stereotypes
- Learns to recognize triggers
- Release of shame and guilt
- Blames offender
- Learns to empower self
Self-Care and Coping

Self-care is about taking steps to feel healthy and comfortable. Whether it happened recently or years ago, self-care can help you cope with the short- and long-term effects of a trauma like sexual assault.

**Physical self-care**
After a trauma, it’s important to keep your body healthy and strong. You may be healing from injuries or feeling emotionally drained. Good physical health can support you through this time. Think about a time when you felt physically healthy, and consider asking yourself the following questions:

- How were you **sleeping**? Did you have a sleep ritual or nap pattern that made you feel more rested?
- What types of **food** were you eating? What meals made you feel healthy and strong?
- What types of **exercise** did you enjoy? Were there any particular activities that made you feel more energized?
- Did you perform certain **routines**? Were there activities you did to start the day off right or wind down at the end of the day?

**Emotional self-care**
Emotional self-care means different things to different people. The key to emotional self-care is being in tune with yourself. Think about a time when you felt balanced and grounded, and consider asking yourself the following questions:

- What **fun** or **leisure** activities did you enjoy? Were there events or outings that you looked forward to?
- Did you **write down your thoughts** in a journal or personal notebook?
- Were **meditation** or **relaxation** activities a part of your regular schedule?
- What **inspirational words** were you reading? Did you have a particular author or favorite website to go to for inspiration?
- **Who did you spend time with**? Was there someone, or a group of people, that you felt safe and supported around?
- **Where did you spend your time**? Was there a special place, maybe outdoors or at a friend’s house, where you felt comfortable and grounded?