

## 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.)

#### Controlled

Withdrawn

Numb

Distracted

Disconnected from feelings

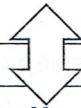
#### Expressed

Crying/sobbing

Shouting

Tenseness

Restlessness



### 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

\* Support \* Counseling \* Group Therapy \* Learns to overcome

stereotypes \* Learns to recognize triggers \* Release of shame and guilt

Blames offender \* Learns to empower self

Education

## 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?

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A MISSION**

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