

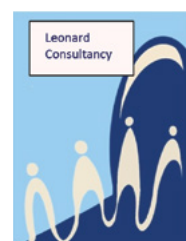


A Resource for Victims and Survivors

Exploring Intimacy After Abuse: A Resource for Survivors of Sexual Abuse



Marie Collins
Foundation



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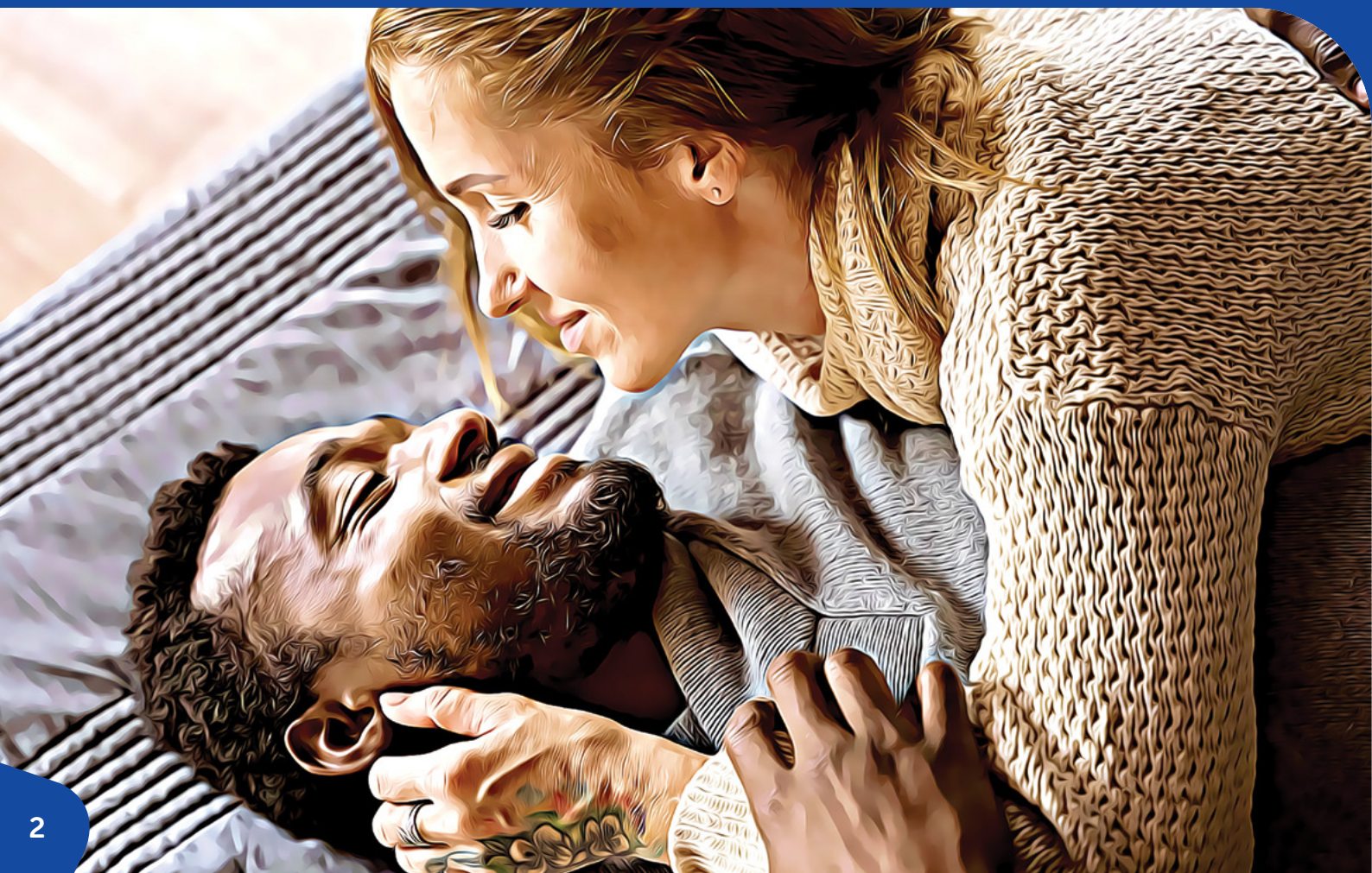
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Why you should read this resource

This resource has been created by the Marie Collins Foundation's Lived Experience Group (LEG) and Psychosexual Therapist Marcella Leonard.

It is written with survivors, for survivors. It is not a "how-to" guide about sexual practices. Instead, it is a collection of reflections, questions, and strategies that survivors have found helpful in either experiencing or rediscovering intimacy after sexual abuse.

Experiencing intimacy is complex for any person and can be even more complicated and sometimes feel overwhelming after having experienced sexual abuse. Many survivors told us they wanted a resource which was real, honest, and practical. This resource brings together professional knowledge with lived experience, so you don't feel alone in working through these challenges.



How to use this resource

Go at your own pace

You don't need to read everything at once. Each section stands alone, so you can dip in and out depending on what feels helpful.

Take what works, leave what doesn't

Not everything here will apply to everyone. That's okay. The important thing is that you feel free to choose what fits for you.

Share

You can use this resource to start a conversation with a support person or with your intimate partner, if that feels right for you.



A note on language

You'll see us use both "victim" and "survivor." Different people identify differently, and we respect that choice.

A note on privacy

Please use this resource in a way that feels safe for you. That might mean reading on your phone, using a private browsing session or VPN, or saving certain sections to come back to later.



Healing Isn't Linear

Recovery after abuse is rarely a straight line. Survivors often talk about periods of progress, followed by setbacks that can feel like starting over. Triggers may appear without warning, even after years of feeling more stable. This can cause frustration, guilt, or fear that healing is impossible, but ups and downs are a normal part of the process.

Intimacy in particular can bring these shifts to the surface. Some survivors describe enjoying safe sexual contact, only to later feel overwhelmed by flashbacks. Others notice they can manage intimacy with casual partners but feel panic with someone they love. None of these patterns mean you are broken or failing, they show how complex trauma recovery can be.

Marcella's guidance

A journey of peaks and valleys

Resolution and recovery from abuse involves being able to recognise and predict the emotional, behavioural, physical and sexual triggers but these can also emerge without prediction. So, when you feel you are on a peak, a trigger without any warning can bring you down to the valley again, that is normal. The peaks and valleys of your journey to healing take energy so take support on the journey.

Healing isn't about reaching a fixed destination. It is about building tools and self-awareness so that when challenges resurface, you feel more able to cope. Survivors told us that being reminded of this – that recovery doesn't follow a straight path – helped them feel less ashamed when difficult feelings returned.

Some people find it helpful to keep a journal of triggers and what helps on harder days. Others create rituals of self-care after intimacy, such as taking a bath, listening to calming music, or making space to rest. What matters is knowing that setbacks are part of the journey, not a sign of failure.

You can get flashbacks literally in the middle of stuff as well because that's happened a lot. And yeah it's sometimes quite hard to manage if you're in the moment and then suddenly a flashback appears.

I think a lot of time I was in the frame of mind where I thought I was supposed to get over things a lot quicker. I thought I had to be healing at the same rate as some other people that I met that went through something similar to me and that felt isolating.

Things that can help

- Remind yourself that progress includes ups and downs, and healing isn't a race or a straight line.
- Notice patterns – sometimes identifying triggers or contexts makes them easier to manage.
- Build self-soothing practices you can turn to after intimacy like grounding, writing, or gentle movement. Share with your partner what they can do to make you feel safe after intimacy.
- When a setback happens, try to reframe it as information, not failure: "What does this tell me about what I need?"
- Share honestly with trusted people (friends, partners, support workers) so you don't carry the weight alone.
- Setting yourself intimacy goals which are right for you and not what you think others want from you.
- Remember that every survivor's path is unique. Needing more time or going back over old ground does not undo the progress you've made.



Sexuality & Identity After Abuse

Many survivors describe feeling uncertain about their sexuality or identity after abuse. Some worry that their abuse has “made” them attracted to or avoidant of certain genders. Others notice their preferences shift over time, moving between periods of high sexual drive and times of little or no interest in sex. This can feel unsettling, leaving survivors questioning what is “normal” and whether something is wrong with them.

It is common to feel this way after abuse. The very process of how sexual abuse happened can blur the lines between sex, attraction, identity, consent, and leave lasting shame. Often survivors link the shame they feel to having experienced arousal during the abuse. Arousal during abuse is the body’s reflex response to touch, it does not mean you enjoyed the abuse nor that you consented to it. It does not define your identity or attraction. Sexual orientation and preferences can shift and change throughout anyone’s life, survivors are no exception.

I often thought my abuse couldn’t have been that bad, because during certain periods of my life, I had no qualms about taking dangerous risks with strangers. I sold my soul for sexual pleasure, thinking it was love.

Things that can help

- Give yourself permission not to label your sexuality if that feels safer. Labels are optional, not compulsory.
- Remember that shifts in attraction or sexual interest are common, with or without an abuse history.
- Separate arousal from choice — bodily reactions in abusive situations never mean you consented.
- If you want to explore your sexuality, take small, safe steps: read, reflect, connect with affirming communities.
- If you want to explore your sexuality, for yourself, but not with or for another person, that is a valid and respected choice.
- Hold onto this truth: whatever feels right for you now is valid.

Marcella's guidance

A journey of discovery

Sexuality in how it is emotionally, physically and behaviourally expressed, is individual to each person. Everyone goes through periods of questioning, exploration, discovery and eventual resolution in their own journey of what sexuality means for them. Sexual abuse will have affected that journey, so give yourself permission to take the longer road / divert if you need to / stop for a while / take a different path on the journey – it is your journey to take.



Body Image & Self-Connection

Many survivors describe struggling with how they see and feel about their bodies. For some, the body feels unsafe or alien. Others feel shame when they look in the mirror, when they touch themselves or when a partner touches them, or even when they think about being visible to others. Scars or marks gained during the abuse or from self-injury can cause embarrassment and concerns over how partners will view these. Abuse does affect how survivors experience their bodies, leaving behind feelings of disgust, dirtiness, or lack of ownership. This is normal and your relationship with yourself and your body can change and fluctuate throughout your life.

Reconnecting with your body can take time. It may involve very small steps, such as choosing clothing that feels comfortable, noticing your breath, or looking at yourself in the mirror for a moment. There is no single “right” way to rebuild body confidence or connection. For some, intimacy with themselves comes first; for others, it develops in the context of safe and supportive relationships.

I was groomed and I was very well aware that what he found attractive about me was the fact that I was young and a child. And so as you become an adult, you're like, oh, I'm not, am I not attractive anymore? Am I like gross?

I've got scars on me from my abuser, and whenever my partner would look at them, I would feel a sense of shame for them. You're reminded of it 24/7 because it is there for the rest of your life.



Marcella's guidance

A journey of self-love

Most people have worries about their body image, disliking your body because of what was done to it, will distort your perception of what it looks like, feels like and also how others, especially intimate partners, will see it. You may have spent years building a distorted image of your body so it will take time to change your perception, so give yourself time, it takes practice.

Some survivors find comfort in grounding practices – gently touching their arm or hand, wrapping themselves in a blanket, or listening to music. These small acts can be reminders that they are in charge of their body in the present moment. Others use protective barriers, such as thin gloves during self-touch, which can help create a sense of safety and distance while still beginning to reconnect.

Rebuilding body connection is not about forcing yourself to love every part of your body. It is about reclaiming choice: deciding what feels safe, what feels comfortable, and how you want to engage with yourself.

Things that can help

- Begin with small, non-sexual acts of care – moisturising your hands, stretching, or choosing clothes that make you feel comfortable.
- Use grounding techniques (breathing, sensory focus, music) to remind yourself you are in the present.
- If mirrors are difficult, focus on one feature you feel neutral or positive about, rather than your whole reflection, or if there is one part of your body you dislike, look at your body as a whole. Try not to judge your body, just look at it, try to accept it and repeat this every day.
- Try creative approaches such as drawing an outline of your body, writing affirmations, or decorating a mirror with words that remind you of your worth.
- If self-touch feels frightening, experiment with safe barriers (like gloves, blankets, or placing your hand on an object) to build familiarity.
- Remind yourself that your body belongs to you. It is not defined by what was done to you.
- Make your personal hygiene routine safe, if taking a bath feels too much exposure of your body but it is something you want to enjoy, take small steps and move on to the next step when you are ready:
 - Sit on the side of the bath, clothes on the top half of your body and let your feet and legs feel the water
 - Sit in the bath, wear a vest top so your lower half is feeling the water
 - Sit in the bath, as previous step, when you are ready, remove the top and breathe
 - Repeat until you feel able to lie back and relax
- Plenty of suds, aromatherapy oils / candles help too!
- Using thin gloves, wash mitts, soap bars to have a barrier from skin touching skin during personal hygiene routine and gradually removing the barrier as each area of the body feels safer to touch
- Asking, allowing and accepting your intimate partner giving you compliments on how you are dressed and your body



Partner Communication & Relationships

Talking about intimacy with a partner can feel daunting. Survivors often worry about being believed, about hurting or disappointing their partner, or about being seen as “too much” to handle. Others have experienced partners who became frustrated or withdrawn when intimacy was difficult.



Abuse can affect how survivors approach relationships in many different ways. Some find closeness overwhelming and prefer casual connections where less is expected. Others long for committed, loving partnerships but feel guilt when trauma responses get in the way of sexual intimacy. There is no single right way to relate, but open communication can make space for understanding and safety.

Partners often need reassurance that intimacy challenges are not about rejection or lack of love. Survivors may need reassurance that setting boundaries will not cause abandonment or anger. These conversations are never easy, but they can become easier with practice and clear language.

Some survivors prefer to talk outside of intimate moments, perhaps on a walk or at a calm time together, so that discussions don't feel like pressure. Others use written notes, metaphors, or even traffic light systems (green = okay, amber = pause, red = stop) to signal comfort levels during intimacy. What matters is that the survivor feels able to set boundaries without fear, and the partner understands that intimacy is about mutual care, not obligation.

It can be difficult if your partner/s are being scared to approach you and come anywhere near you for fear of triggering you. So intimacy isn't ever initiated by them.

I've had conversations with previous partners starting with me saying, "I'm not comfortable with this because of this." And then it sort of spurs into a "Well, what do you want to try?" or "What can we try together?" And it turned into a much safer exploratory space with that partner.

Marcella's guidance

A journey of sharing

Communicating our most innermost thoughts and feelings can feel scary as you anticipate the response from the other person but it is also feels anxious for the other person that they respond the 'right' way to you. So, sharing needs to be at a time when you both have space to listen, to respond, starting with small thoughts and building to the more sensitive topics. Feeling safe to share takes time and so does developing the skill of active listening – so practice makes communicating easier.

Things that can help

- Chatting during intimacy helps to keep a connection with your partner, it does not have to be in depth, just reaffirming statements of what you are enjoying from the touch and asking your partner what they are enjoying. This sets the ground for talking about more in depth conversations outside the intimacy time.
- Choose the right time and space. Calm, neutral spaces make it easier to speak and be heard.
- Use clear but gentle language like "Sometimes my trauma gets in the way of sex, but it isn't about you."
- Offer your partner resources (like this one) so they can learn without you carrying all the explaining.
- Agree on a simple signal system (like "pause" or "stop") to use during intimacy if you feel triggered.
- Remind both yourself and your partner that intimacy includes many forms of connection – talking, cuddling, laughing, being present – not just sex.
- Reassure each other that survivors are not rejecting partners, and partners are not responsible for "fixing" survivors.



Managing Triggers & Grounding Techniques

Triggers during intimacy can happen suddenly and feel overwhelming. Survivors describe panic, dissociation, or flashbacks when certain touches, words, or situations remind them of the abuse. These reactions are the body's way of trying to protect itself. They are not a choice, and they are not your fault.

Feeling triggered does not mean you are failing at intimacy. It shows how powerfully the body remembers trauma. Survivors have found that having strategies ready can help them stay present or gently bring themselves back if they disconnect. Grounding techniques are not about "getting it right," but about finding small ways to remind yourself you are safe now.



The minute I might experience pleasure, I automatically feel that I should be harmed, or that I deserved to be harmed even further in that moment. And yeah, that hasn't left. That's still there.

Some survivors use sensory grounding, which is focusing on something you can see, hear, touch, smell or taste. Others use agreed “pause” signals with partners to create a sense of safety. For some, practical adjustments like leaving a light on, choosing positions where they feel more in control, or having blankets available make a difference.

Grounding is deeply individual. What works one day may not work the next, and what helps one survivor may not suit another. The important thing is having a few tools you can turn to, and reminding yourself that needing them does not mean you are weak.

Marcella's guidance

A journey of senses

Triggers are how your senses remind you of what happened to your body, they are to be understood and managed. Each sense has a role in how it holds the memory of the abuse, so take time to get to know each one and how to either retrain the memory or learn how to manage the impact of it safely.

Things that can help

- Create a grounding toolkit of objects, scents, or textures that help you feel safe (e.g. stones, blankets, scented oils).
- Try the 5–4–3–2–1 technique: name 5 things you can see, 4 you can touch, 3 you can hear, 2 you can smell, 1 you can taste.
- Use music, lighting, or weighted blankets to make the environment feel safer.
- Agree clear signals with your partner (like squeezing a hand, saying “pause”) so you can stop without needing long explanations.
- Give yourself permission to step back completely if grounding doesn't work. Protecting yourself is always okay.
- After a trigger, take time for self-care. This could be going for a walk, taking a bath, journaling, or resting. Processing is as important as managing the moment.





Shame, Guilt & Intrusive Thoughts

Shame is one of the most common legacies of abuse. Survivors often describe feeling disgusted with themselves for what happened, for how their body responded, or for what they feel and think now. Some carry guilt about enjoying sex or masturbation, while others are haunted by intrusive thoughts or memories during intimacy.

These experiences can feel isolating, but survivors told us they are very common. Abuse often leaves people believing they are “bad,” “dirty,” or somehow responsible. Bodily arousal during abuse, or experiencing pleasure now, does not mean you wanted the abuse or that you are doing something wrong. Shame belongs to the abuser, not to you.

Intrusive thoughts and feelings of shame can be deeply distressing, but they do not mean you are “going backwards.” They are part of the way trauma lingers in the body and mind. Survivors in the LEG described how important it was to hear that they were not alone in these experiences, and that pleasure, desire, and intimacy are not things to feel guilty about.

Recently someone in my family said to me: ‘You’re really lucky that your partner accepts you for what happened because people in our culture would never accept you or would never marry you if they found out what happened to you.’

I had a normal sex life until my court case against the man who abused me. But after that, thoughts of the sexual abuse I had been subjected to gate-crashed my mind every time I had sex.

Some survivors find it helps to separate past and present with grounding techniques, focusing on a phrase such as “I am safe now” or “This is my choice.” Others reframe masturbation or sex as acts of self-care, pleasure, or connection rather than shame. Therapy, peer support, or creative outlets can also provide safe spaces to process intrusive thoughts without judgment.

Marcella's guidance

A journey of knowledge

Shame is often associated with feeling betrayed by your body's response to the abuse. Understanding your body responding to touch is normal so take time to educate yourself, read about body sensations, giving and receiving of touch, and share this with your partner, if that feels safe for you.

Things that can help

- Remind yourself that arousal is a body reflex, not consent nor enjoyment. What happened was not your fault.
- When intrusive memories surface, try naming the present – "This is 2025, I am here, I am safe." And try to think what triggered which sense to bring the memory back.
- Chatting during intimacy
- If you feel guilt after pleasure, reframe intimacy as your choice and your right, not something stolen from you. Talk with your partner, if that feels safe to do so.
- Speak about shame in safe spaces, hearing others echo similar feelings can reduce isolation.
- Journalling or creative expression (art, poetry, music) can help release shame without needing to explain in detail.
- Practice self-compassion. Talk to yourself as you would to a close friend who was hurting.





Choice & Diversity in Intimacy

Not all survivors want sex, and that's okay. For some, intimacy might mean holding hands, cuddling, or spending quiet time together. Others may prefer solo pleasure or feel more comfortable with relationships that don't include sexual contact. Survivors tell us how important it is to hear that choosing not to have sex, or choosing alternative forms of intimacy, is just as valid as seeking sexual relationships. Being sensual with someone can be as emotionally fulfilling as 'having sex' so it is about finding what feels good/pleasurable for you and your partner, if appropriate, and enjoying those experiences.

Abuse can leave people feeling that their choices are limited, or that they must live up to certain

expectations about sex, gender or relationships. Survivors in the LEG emphasised that reclaiming intimacy also means reclaiming freedom to choose, whether that means being celibate, exploring same-sex attraction, enjoying solo intimacy, or embracing long-term partnerships. Every pathway is valid.

It is important to remember that sex doesn't have to mean penetration.

Things that can help

- Give yourself permission to define intimacy however you want, it doesn't have to include 'having sex'.
- Recognise that choices may change over time, and that's okay. What feels right today may not be the same tomorrow.
- Explore what intimacy means for you – connection, touch, laughter, companionship, pleasure, or quiet presence.
- Developing knowledge of what touches work for you, takes time and practice, so don't rush, let your skin adapt and feel.
- Many people, including those who have not experienced abuse, develop sexual functioning problems, so reach out to your GP for referral or directly contact a psychosexual therapist who can assist you on your intimacy journey.
- Remind yourself that solo intimacy (masturbation, self-touch) is not "less than" partnered intimacy.
- If you do want to have sex, seek partners who respect boundaries and value communication.
- Hold onto this truth: you don't need to prove anything through intimacy. Your choices are enough.

Marcella's guidance

A journey of reclaiming rights

You have the right to experience sexuality in whatever form that feels right for you, not dictated by the needs of others nor what society / media decides what is 'normal'. Sensuality is the emotional connection with your body and with allowing your body to feel touch, safely, and pleurably.

Intimacy is not a one-size-fits-all experience. It can look different across cultures, ages, genders, and personal histories. What matters is that your choices are made freely, with your comfort at the centre. There is no timeline you need to meet, no standard you must live up to, and no expectation that survivors must want or achieve sexual intimacy in order to be "healed."



Myth-Busting & Reframing

Survivors often carry heavy myths and stereotypes about themselves. These can come from society, from professionals, or even from people close to them. Myths can fuel shame, silence, and fear of judgment. Challenging them is an important part of reclaiming intimacy and self-worth.

MYTH
"If you were abused, you'll go on to abuse others."

This is one of the most damaging misconceptions. Survivors in the LEG spoke strongly about how much this myth hurt them. Abuse does not "turn" someone into an abuser. People who cause harm make a choice to do so. Survivors, by contrast, are working to heal from trauma — which is the opposite of choosing to harm.

Abuse is never about consent. Bodily arousal is a natural reflex and does not mean agreement or desire. Many survivors spoke about the shame of experiencing arousal during abuse and the false belief that this meant they "wanted it." The truth is: arousal does not equal consent, and enjoyment of consensual intimacy now does not erase the harm of abuse then.

MYTH
"If you enjoyed it at the time, you must have wanted it."

MYTH
"Real intimacy means penetrative sex."

Intimacy is much broader than intercourse. Survivors described finding deep connection in cuddles, shared laughter, talking, or exploring non-traditional forms of touch. Reframing intimacy helps remove pressure and opens space for survivors to choose what feels right for them.

There is no timeline for recovery. Survivors may face triggers decades later. Healing is lifelong, and needing time or revisiting old struggles does not mean failure.

MYTH
"You should be over it by now."

Reframing the narrative

Sexuality is complex yet basic too, how your body reacted at the time of your abuse is individual to you and no one can dictate how your body should feel now. Who harmed you, how often they harmed, where they harmed you, your age and stage of development, the nature of the abuse and how you have been supported since are all individual aspects which will affect how you frame your abuse and recovery journey. So you own your experience of your own body and no one can dictate how it should feel or look. Give your body time to recover, let it then feel touch and then let it enjoy that touch.

Survivors are not broken, dirty, or destined to repeat harm. They are people who endured abuse and are navigating healing in their own ways. Reframing means:

- Shifting blame from survivor to perpetrator.
- Recognising that intimacy is whatever survivors decide it is.
- Valuing the strength it takes to seek connection after harm.
- Affirming that there is no single "right" way to heal.

Things that can help

- When you notice a myth creeping in, ask: Whose voice is this? Does it belong to me, or to society, the abuser, or stigma?
- Replace harmful thoughts with affirmations: "What happened was not my fault," "My body is mine," "I decide what intimacy means."
- Share myths and reframes with trusted people – hearing them challenged out loud can reduce their power.
- Keep survivor-written resources handy as reminders that you are not alone in these experiences.





Top Tips from Survivors and Practitioners

These ideas came up again and again during conversations with survivors and with Marcella. Not everything will work for everyone, but many people told us they found these small steps helpful.

Challenge	What might help
Feeling triggered during intimacy	Use grounding tools (5–4–3–2–1 senses, music, weighted blanket, lighting). Agree a “pause” or “stop” signal with your partner.
Shame about arousal or enjoyment	Remind yourself that arousal is a body reflex, not consent. Pleasure now is yours to choose and enjoy.
Struggling with body image	Start with small acts of self-connection such as moisturising, stretching, focusing on one feature you like, or using safe barriers like gloves.
Fear of disappointing a partner	Talk outside of intimate moments. Share that intimacy is broader than sex and direct them to survivor-created resources.
Worry about “not healing fast enough”	Reframe setbacks as part of the process. Healing isn’t linear, and taking your time is not failure.
Feeling pressured by myths	Challenge them – “That isn’t my truth.” Replace myths with affirmations of your choice, identity and worth.

This guidance has been written by and in collaboration with a group of victims and survivors who would like to share a closing message with you.

For many of us, intimacy was taken or twisted by abuse, and for a long time it felt like it would always belong to the past. But healing has shown us that our bodies, our relationships, and our pleasure are still ours to claim. We are not defined by what was done to us, but by the choices we make now, the boundaries we set, and the compassion we show ourselves. No survivor should feel alone in navigating sex or intimacy after harm. Together, we are learning, unlearning, and rebuilding what closeness means, at our own pace and in our own way.



**A Closing Message from Psychosexual Therapist
Marcella Leonard.**

Intimacy is complex in what it means and how it is experienced. Intimacy after abuse is part of your recovery journey which involves giving yourself permission to reclaiming intimacy on your terms. This resource is to assist you on this journey of gaining confidence in understanding that 'Who you love, How you Love and What you love' is part of the recovery journey of moving from something being done to you to a place of experiencing intimacy with you. I hope this resource assists in giving yourself permission to reclaim pleasure in whatever manner feels right for you.




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**This guidance has been written by and in collaboration with
a group of victims and survivors**

They each would like to share a message with you:

For many years, I believed I was sexually dysfunctional. My body didn't respond the way I thought it was supposed to. Conversations with other survivors working on this resource gave me a better understanding that my mind and body were reacting to sexual abuse. It was never within my control. I was normal; my situation wasn't

Lived Experience Group Member

This resource makes me feel less isolated and that my feelings and reactions are normal. It is a relief to understand that I can avoid some sex acts and still have a fulfilling and loving sex life.

Nicole

The opportunity to take part in building this resource has taught me so much about my own experiences with intimacy post abuse. I still struggle with feelings of being a failure or a disappointment when it comes to sex and intimacy, in intimate situations I can often mentally check out or go back to negative memories. For a long time I assumed I was alone in these experiences. I thought I was abnormal and a hopeless case. Through the vulnerability and generosity of my fellow LEG members I can now see that I am not alone, my reactions to sex and intimacy are not a failing but rather symptoms of the grooming and abuse I experienced as a teenager. I still struggle with sex, and probably always will, however this resource has offered some hope and some companionship for my recovery journey. I hope if you are reading this resource and coming to terms with your own experiences of abuse and the challenges posed by intimacy that you also see that you aren't alone, or weird, or hopeless, or a failure. You are, in fact, in good company with friendly strangers cheering you on from afar.

Lived Experience Group Member

After my abuse, I felt that my body was an object to be used by men. I felt that only men's needs were important and that my role was to satisfy men, nothing else. This resource has helped me to realise that I have needs too and that they are equally as important as my partners and that I have a right to ensure that I can put boundaries in place, ask for what I need and enjoy intimate times with my partner without feeling like I am just an object here to satisfy him or that I am less than.

Samantha

Not everybody will experience the same difficulties. This doesn't mean you are any less impacted. For me, I didn't have noticeable severe flashbacks. This doesn't mean you don't have PTSD. It means that our minds and bodies are unique, so our paths are unique. Don't judge yourself, or be any less compassionate for being different if everything you read doesn't relate to you. Take what you want from it and leave what you don't.

Lucy

I would like readers to know there is no 'right' or 'wrong' way to survive child sexual abuse. The societal silence, made heavier with the taboo of speaking openly about intimacy and sex can make us feel like we are on our own with whatever struggles we have. You're not alone – and how you are feeling is valid. I used to believe I was 'damaged', or 'broken'. I wasn't." I was responding to the trauma of child sexual abuse.

Sophie



Support & Resources

If you would like more information or support, the following services may be helpful:



Marie Collins
Foundation

Marie Collins Foundation – support for victims and survivors of technology-assisted child sexual abuse:
mariecollinsfoundation.org.uk



NAPAC (National Association for People Abused in Childhood) – support line and resources:
napac.org.uk



SurvivorsUK – specialist support for male and non-binary survivors: survivorsuk.org



Rape Crisis England & Wales – helpline and local services:
rapecrisis.org.uk



Rape Crisis Northern Ireland- helpline and local services:
rapecrisisni.org.uk



Rape Crisis Scotland helpline and local services:
rapecrisisscotland.org.uk



COSRT- College of Sexual and Relationship Therapists:
cosrt.org.uk



For international readers: you can find global services through The Global Directory of Support Services (WeProtect Global Alliance): weprotect.org



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