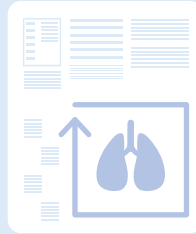


Feeling overwhelmed?

Try a grounding exercise.

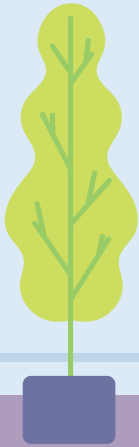
Box Breathing

Breathe in and count 1, 2, 3, 4.
Pause and count 1, 2, 3, 4.
Breathe out and count 1, 2, 3, 4.
Repeat until you feel grounded.



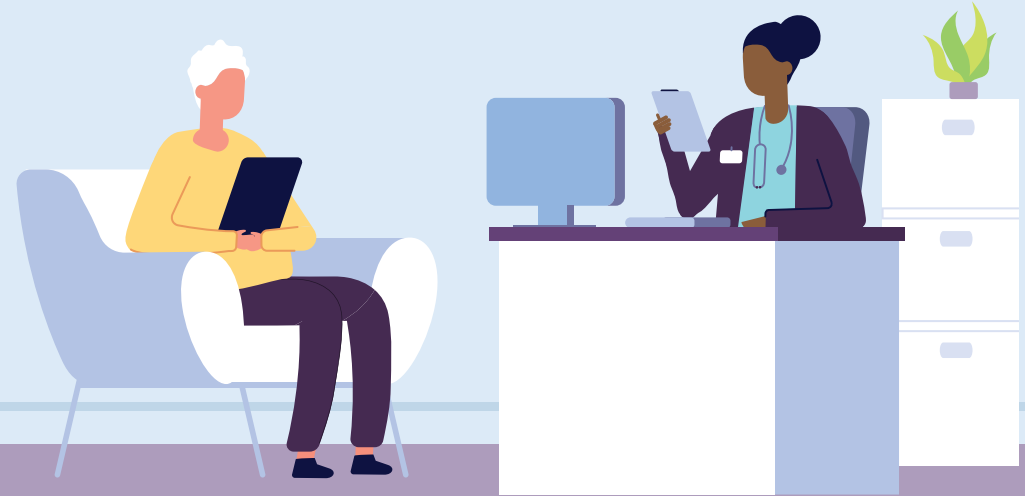
Five Senses

Notice 5 things you can see. Notice 4 things you can touch. Notice 3 things you can hear. Notice 2 things you can smell. Notice 1 thing you can taste. It may help to say each of the things out loud as you notice them.



We believe you and we care.

*Talk to your healthcare provider about
unwanted sexual experiences.*



If you have had an unwanted sexual experience, you are not alone. Unfortunately, these experiences are all too common. 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 13 boys experience some form of sexual violence as kids.¹ In the United States, approximately 44% of females, 25% of males, and 47% of transgender individuals report sexual violence involving physical contact in their lifetime.^{2,3}

What do unwanted sexual experiences have to do with your health?

Unwanted sexual experiences, as with all traumatic events, can lead to both short-term and long-term health effects, including but not limited to:

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Difficulty sleeping and nightmares
- Persistent fatigue
- Increased use of alcohol and drugs
- Nausea, gastro-intestinal distress, changes to appetite or digestion
- Chronic heart, lung, liver, and autoimmune issues⁴

Why talk about these experiences with your healthcare provider?

Having a discussion with your healthcare provider about any unwanted sexual experience—even if it happened a long time ago—can help you better work together to address your current health concerns effectively and holistically. Your provider may also be able to refer you to additional resources for support.



1. Pereda N, Guilera G, Fornis M, Gómez-Benito J. The prevalence of child sexual abuse in community and student samples: A meta-analysis. *Clinical Psychology Review*. 2009;29:328–338. doi:10.1016/j.cpr.2009.02.007

2. Smith SG, Zhang X, Basile KC, Merrick MT, Wang J, Kresnow M, Chen J. *The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS): 2015 Data Brief – Updated Release*. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; 2018.

3. James SE, Herman JL, Rankin S, Keisling M, Mottet L, Anafi M. *The Report of the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey*. Washington, DC: National Center for Transgender Equality; 2016.

4. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. "Understanding the Impact of Trauma." *Trauma-Informed Care in Behavioral Health Services*, Treatment Improvement Protocol (TIP) Series, No. 57. Center for Substance Abuse Treatment, Rockville, MD, 2014.

When and how can you talk to your healthcare provider about unwanted sexual experiences?

The short answer is: whenever and however you feel comfortable. There is no right or wrong time or way to share any part of your history with your healthcare providers. This includes providers you've had a long relationship with, and providers who are brand new to you. If you're not sure how to get the conversation started, try phrases like:

"I'd like to tell you about something that happened to me, because it's important to my health."

"I know that past traumatic experiences can affect someone's health for a long time. Can I share something with you so we can work together better?"

