



SUPPORTING
HEALING
EDUCATING

Helpful Tips for Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse (particularly in medical situations)

<i>A Therapeutic Community</i>	
Crisis support	Specialised support and therapy
Trauma work and pre-therapy	Evaluative Need Therapy
Skill workshops	Drop-in services
Creative therapy	Family therapy
Training and volunteering	Mutual support
Personal development & life skills courses	Time limited befriending and mentoring

For further information go to www.she-uk.org.uk or call us on 01636 611 107



<https://www.facebook.com/SHE.ORG.UK>



https://twitter.com/uk_she

Adult survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse:

- Do you avoid the dentist?
- Do you feel anxious before a doctor's appointment?
- Do you avoid, delay or cancel your yearly check-ups?
- Do these procedures trigger memories from your past?
- Do you or have you ever spaced out during medical examinations/procedures?

Childhood Sexual Abuse - talking about it

- Do you feel too unsafe to talk about it?
- Is it hard to trust?
- Do you fear what might happen if you tell someone?
- Do you think keeping a lid on past abuse feelings and experiences helps it go away?
- Do you experience flash backs, nightmares and/or panic attacks?

Do you find your abuse is triggered by all sorts of things:

- Giving birth
- A death
- Another traumatic or life changing situation 'in the here and now'
- Someone's words
- Certain actions
- Particular smells

Many survivors (male and female) find similarities and thus triggers between medical procedures in the here and now, and their past abuse:

- All physical examinations and procedure
- Dental procedures
- Breast examinations and procedures
- Pelvic examinations and procedures
- Rectal examinations and procedures
- Being in a horizontal position – often with someone standing over you
- Being touched
- Being looked at getting into or being in a state of undress
- Being in a room with someone you see as an authority figure
- Being examined by someone of the same gender as your perpetrator
- Having an object inserted into your body
- Being given or taking medication

These are normal reactions to very traumatic and abnormal events. With the right support and therapy, many survivors heal from their past traumas and change themselves and their life.

What Survivors can do to help themselves:

- Access a good support and therapy network
- Be kind to yourself
- Access crisis support
- Find a health care provider that you feel safe with and go back to them to allow a level of trust to build
- Try a different one if you do not feel safe/comfortable with them
- Make a first appointment to talk to your doctor about your worries and concerns and/or any practical or emotional difficulties – you do not need to tell them about your abuse to do this.
- Know your rights – you have the right to refuse or stop a procedure
- Ask them to tell you what they are doing and why, before, during and after
- Tell them what is helpful/unhelpful
- Keep your eyes open
- Be aware of yourself talk – tell yourself you are safe now

Some survivors will 'switch off' in order to cope with these procedures (triggers) while others will deliberately stay grounded 'here and now' as a way of coping with these traumas.

- Make an agreement before a procedure that if you feel unsafe or uncomfortable that the procedure will stop
- Some survivors find it helpful to take a support person with them
- Take a copy of the S.H.E. UK Guidelines for Sensitive Practice for your health care professional. You can find it in the professionals area on our website <http://she-uk.org.uk/professionals-area/>

Please be aware we are all individuals and what is helpful or unhelpful is different for everyone. We have shared from our experiences, but you know yourself best so it may be helpful to make your own list of helpful and unhelpful responses.