College of Sexual and Relationship Therapists

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Sensate Focus

Non-genital Sensate Focus

Ground Rules:

- For the weeks or months when non-genital sensate focus is being done there will be no sexual intercourse or touching of genital areas (breasts, nipples, penis, vagina, testicles or clitoris)
- Set times and dates aside where there can be private time to do the exercises, turn off the phone.
- Create a warm, comfortable environment for the exercises (e.g. following a bath, with candles and soft music). You might well find it useful to have some lotion or oil to massage each other with (e.g. Johnson's baby lotion or massage bars or lotions from Lush or the Body Shop).
- You can be naked or wear underwear or relaxed clothing if that feels more comfortable.
- The aim is for this to be a fun session and it is fine to vary it according to your own ideas. You may find a book or DVD about massage useful if you want to learn different techniques.
- Remember that the goal is enjoyment and pleasure, to enjoy the journey rather than focusing on any specific destination.

Instructions:

- Take it in turns to give and receive touching, focusing on learning to enjoy providing pleasure when you are giving as well as receiving touch. You might want to alternate on the same occasion, or to focus on one person in one session and the other person in the next session.
- When it is your turn to touch take plenty of time to explore the other person's body, avoiding sexual areas: stroke, tickle, gently touch and massage the other person's body all over. Experiment with different sensations. Focus on your own pleasure in experiencing the texture, form and temperature of the other person's body. Try to discover the degrees of pressure and types of touch that they find most pleasurable by encouraging feedback or by placing your hand under their hand so they can show you.
- On your first turn at touching, get the other person to lie on their front and massage their back, neck, arms, buttocks and legs, not neglecting the hands and feet.
- On your second turn, get the other person to lie on their back and massage their neck, chest, stomach, shoulders, arms and legs. You may also gently massage their scalp and face without lotion.
- When it is your turn to be touched make sure you let the other person know what you like and don't like. Sometimes a touch will be too light, gentle or ticklish, or too heavy or uncomfortable. You can say how you feel, make appreciative noises, or move the other person's hand to where you want to be touched.
- You might find it useful to talk about your experiences afterwards, e.g. 'I really liked it when you…'

Genital Sensate Focus

Ground Rules:

- Having spent some time on non-genital sensate focus you can bring in touching of the breast and genital areas. You might want to spend several sessions or weeks on each phase of this stage before moving on to the next.
- Continue to pay attention to the other parts of the body that you explored in the previous sessions as well as the new areas that you are incorporating.
- The main aim of these stages is to increase each person's pleasure and awareness of each other's responses to different types of stimulation. If one or both of you become aroused this is fine but it is not the aim of the exercise.
- Again it may be useful to use massage oils, bars or lotions. During genital stimulation it is often useful to use a water-based lubricant (remember that oil-based products should not be used near condoms), e.g. Liquid silk, Senselle and Maximus can be purchased from sex shops or online, or Durex lubricant can be purchased from high street pharmacies. Take care if you are using any oils, lotions or lubricants for the first time. It's a good idea to try them on a small area of your skin to test if you have any adverse reaction to the product before using it more liberally. This is particularly important around the genital areas where the skin can be more sensitive. If you do experience any adverse reaction, then discontinue use and try a different product.
- As before make sure you set around private time and create a warm, relaxed environment and feedback to the other person during and afterwards.
- Remember that the goal is enjoyment and pleasure, to enjoy the journey rather than focusing on any specific destination.

Instructions:

- Take it in turns to give and receive touching, focusing on learning to enjoy providing pleasure when you are giving as well as receiving touch. You might want to alternate on the same occasion, or to focus on one person in one session and the other person in the next session.
- Again encourage feedback from the other person and/or place your hand under theirs to discover what kind of touching they find pleasurable.
- You might want to incorporate a bit more of the body into each subsequent session, or to spend some time on each in every session. It is worth spending at least 5 minutes each way.
- First incorporate touching of breasts and nipples.
- Then incorporate touching of areas around the genitals, including the testicles for men. You could do this with one person lying on their back, or sitting up against a support. You might find it helps to sit with the person being touched' back against the other person's front, or that it is good to sit facing each other with the person being touched' legs around the other person's hips. Make sure you are both comfortable with your backs supported if necessary.
- Then incorporate touching the genitals themselves (the clitoris and entrance to the vagina on a woman, or the penis, shaft and glans on a man)
- After a while you may also want to incorporate oral as well as manual touching (kissing, licking and sucking) into both non-genital and genital touching. You may also want to experiment with vibrators of different shapes and sizes (e.g. back massagers available from pharmacies, specialised vibrators available from shops and online companies like Sh! and Ann Summers)
- When you have incorporated these stages for some time you can incorporate the 'teasing technique'. Manually stimulate the other person's genitals gently at first, then increase the speed of stimulation. You may well find it helpful to get them to show you how they like to be touched. Take a rest for a few

minutes and then begin again. If orgasm occurs at this, or later, stages that is fine, but not the aim of the process.

- Finally you may also want to incorporate some form of penetration, first with one person on top and then the other. Initially try this with little thrusting, just enjoying the sensation of containment. The person being penetrated should be in control of the depth of penetration and time spent on it. Later you can incorporate more thrusting, again with the person being penetrated in control. You might find some books of sexual positions useful at this point so you can find out which positions are most comfortable and pleasurable according to the part of the body being caressed.