

## Homework: Building Intimacy

There are two parts to this homework assignment, but this week, both will be done together. The idea behind these exercises is to allow you to become more comfortable talking about your sexual relationship, as well as to improve your sexual enjoyment. However, it is important that while you are focusing on the first exercise, you refrain from sexual intercourse.

1. During this week of treatment, I would like you to schedule 3 times during the week when you can have an uninterrupted hour of time (example: after your child is in bed). Lock your bedroom door and insure you will have no interruptions (turn off phones, etc.). Mutually agree on who will be the receiver first and who will receive second. The goal of this exercise is for the receiver to be fully present and for the giver to learn about the receiver's body, likes, and dislikes.



This week will be the same as the previous week, although this time breasts and genitals are included. The giver's job is to caress the selected area with an eye toward experimentation. Explore all areas of the body, using different strokes and pressures. This part can use objects (flowers, feathers, cloth, ice, etc) or lotion. Do what you would like to do, whatever you are curious about; this is your chance to experiment with different types of touch. Do not base your touching on what you think your partner likes, but what interests you.

The receiver's job is to remain interested and focused on the sensations. If other thoughts come into your mind, gently push them back out. Remain intent on the sensations, lying back with your eyes closed. Focus on the pleasure of receiving. During this time, periodically tell your spouse if something feels particularly good to you. If something is uncomfortable, gently tell them that you are uncomfortable, and they will change their approach.

This exercise includes the following step: at some point during the body caress you take your partner on a "genital tour" showing your partner in detail where all the different parts of your genitals are (especially the parts that feel the best for you). The genital tour should be done one of the three times that you are doing sensate focus this week—preferably the first time. Then, during the partner's turn, your partner takes you on a tour of his or her genitals and tells you where all the parts are and which areas feel best. This "show and tell" exercise is designed so that you can teach each other in detail where the best areas to stimulate are. Your partner can only know as much about your body as you take the time and effort to tell him – so be a good teacher! This part should last 20-30 minutes, then switch roles.

At the end of this time, each partner should spend 5-10 minutes talking to your partner about what the experience was like for you (how it felt to give and receive, sensations or thoughts you experienced, etc.). Ensure that you mention particular experiences you enjoyed. Talk together about the thoughts that you have about it, and feelings that were aroused during the exercise. As your partner talks, listen to them carefully.

2. This week, your other assignment is to increase another type of intimacy. Sensate focus will focus on sexual intimacy. Your focus should be on another type: spiritual, emotional, etc. Arrange for a time this week when you will spend time on an activity that you feel will improve your intimacy together. Do something that you don't normally do or something that you have never done before. Make sure you agree on a time and place, and you should **enthusiastically** agree to the activity.

