

Introduction to Sensate Focus

A mindful touching experience

Sensate comes from the Latin word *sensatus*, “gifted with sense or perception.” Sensate involves your five senses. In Sensate Focus, touch is the primary sense you are using. The aim of the experience is *not arousal*. **The aim is to encourage each spouse to surrender their expectations and judgements around mutual touching.**

The focus is solely on the sensation of touch (not arousal), specifically temperature, texture, and pressure. Sensate Focus was developed by Dr. William H. Masters and Virginia E. Johnson in the 1960’s as a 5-step process that can take as much time as a betrayed wife needs to complete.

Because the focus is intentionally drawn away from arousal, it is an effective way to nurture improved relational intimacy and communication around sexual experience. It shifts the focus of each person away from goal-oriented sexual patterns that may not serve the couple well. While engaging in Sensate Focus, the couple can relax and be mindful of the touching experience without the weight of what “should” happen.

The resources I am providing are not specific to a marriage impacted by sexual betrayal. However, the Sensate Focus method peels away “performance” and reminds our body, soul, spirit, and mind that sexual experience is about connection first! This aligns with the biblical principle for why sexual intimacy exists – for deep knowing and emotionally intimate connection (Genesis 2:4). Although this method was developed by secular scientists, it helps marriages in recovery learn healthy, godly sexuality.

Receiving touch during Sensate Focus has an unexpected benefit. For many couples in recovery, they did not experience loving touch as children. Sensate Focus is a way to “re-parent” yourself by receiving nurturing touch without expectation of anything else.

Instructional Sheet from Cornell University -

<https://health.cornell.edu/sites/health/files/pdf-library/sensate-focus.pdf>

<https://www.smsna.org/patients/did-you-know/what-is-sensate-focus-and-how-does-it-work>

Sensate Focus expert, and very tasteful presentation, Dr. Linda Weiner -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SpqwyXDSsvk>



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