

Sexual Pain from Trauma

A lot can come up for survivors/victims after their assault(s). The way we feel (emotionally) and our thought process may have changed, the way we feel things (physically); desires and needs may change as well.

The pain that you may be feeling is not just in your head and you are not complaining. YOU are advocating for yourself and taking care of your body.

There are a lot of reasons why a survivor/victim may not want to partake in sexual acts following trauma. But, the only thing that matters is they have stated and/or shared a NO.

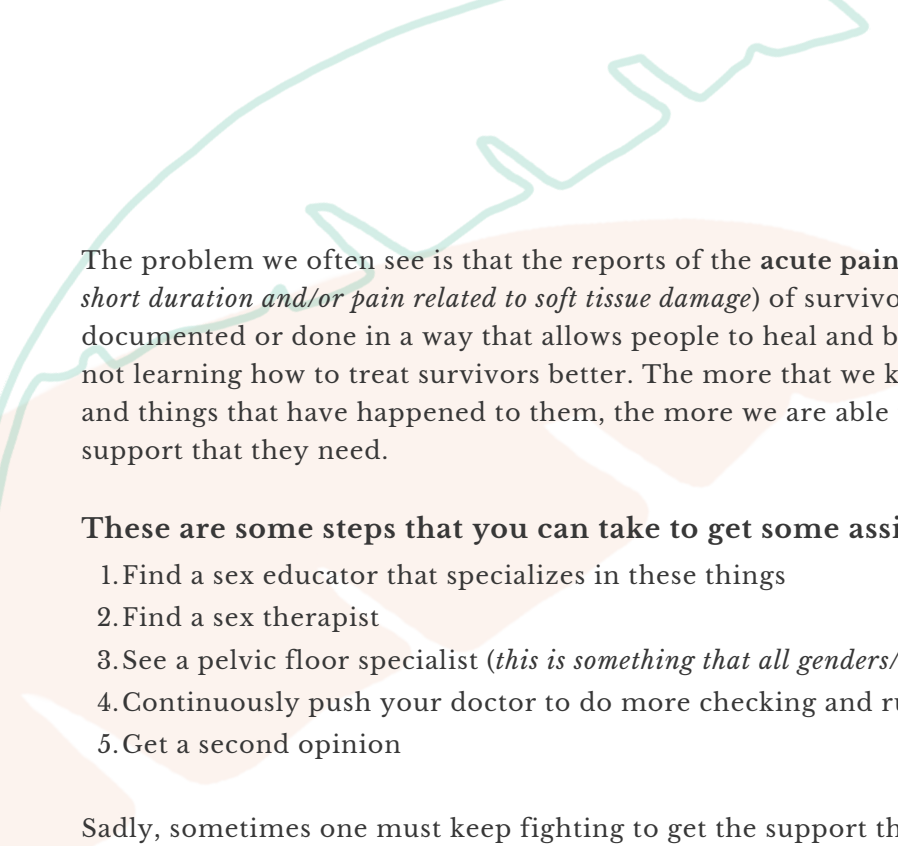
Things a survivor/victim may feel or do:

- Avoiding sex or feeling a lack of physical desire even when you'd like to
- Feeling out of control of your sexuality, which may include doing sexual things you don't feel good about
- Feeling distant or alienated during sex
- Feeling uncomfortable, fearful, angry or disgusted by touch
- Experiencing physical/genital pain related to psychological distress
- Being triggered or experiencing flashbacks in response to particular kinds of touch, words, or scenarios

These can all be addressed in different ways. Something that we do not talk about enough is the pain that may come after trauma; not just the emotional pain but also the physical, body pains that may arise. One may have experienced an aggressive assault that may have caused physical harm like tearing, bruising and or swelling. Trauma can also lead to other illnesses and other pains within the body. There may be scar tissue that may be impeding and affecting the way that someone is able to receive pleasure and even the way you may receive penetration. **Hyperalgesia**, which is an increased sensitivity to pain and extreme response to pain, may show up post assault.

All bodies are different and can be going through different types of pain. Remember sexual assault can happen to anybody. It doesn't look just one way and there is no particular time frame and no way to anticipate it. Thinking that way is doing a disservice to survivors/victims.





The problem we often see is that the reports of the **acute pain** (*pain that lasts for a short duration and/or pain related to soft tissue damage*) of survivors are not fully documented or done in a way that allows people to heal and because of that we are not learning how to treat survivors better. The more that we know about our bodies and things that have happened to them, the more we are able to actually get them the support that they need.

These are some steps that you can take to get some assistance:

1. Find a sex educator that specializes in these things
2. Find a sex therapist
3. See a pelvic floor specialist (*this is something that all genders/identities can utilize*)
4. Continuously push your doctor to do more checking and run more tests
5. Get a second opinion

Sadly, sometimes one must keep fighting to get the support that they need, especially if they are a **marginalized** (*a person or individual treated as insignificant and/or pushed to the side*) individual, you can be overlooked in the medical system and you have to fight JUST THAT MUCH HARDER to get the care and respect that you are owed. But, remember you are OWED that care and respect, no matter who you are and no matter what you've gone through.

Some places to check out for more support:

[RAINN](#)

[UptoDate](#)

[Victims of Crime](#)

[Victim Connect](#)

[NSVRC](#)

Books Recommendations:

Molecules of Emotions by Candace Pert

Acupressure for Emotional Healing by Michael Reed Gauch & Beth Ann Henning

Thank you

