

Innovations at the Intersection: Supporting Survivors of Sexual Assault with a Survivor Support Packet

Created by: Mass Rights for Change

July 20, 2021



Mass Rights for Change: A Collaboration

Created through a grant from the Office on Violence Against Women, Disability Grant Program

We came together to better serve and support survivors of sexual violence who have intellectual and/or developmental disabilities



Mass



Rights



for Change

END ABUSE
of **PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**
The movement starts here

We Always Start Here



Nothing About Us Without Us

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Why Does This Matter?

- Rates of sexual abuse, assault, and rape are higher among individuals with disabilities
- As compared with people who have other kinds of disabilities, people with I/DD are more likely to be sexually abused or assaulted
- Survivors with I/DD experience the same trauma responses as the broader population, but with additional challenges and barriers

Trauma Informed & Survivor Centered

- **Trauma Informed:** Understand how trauma impacts Survivors
- **Survivor Centered:**
 - Survivors know themselves best
 - Empowerment: Survivors have strengths and resources
 - Choice: Options not advice
- **Social Service; Social Justice**
 - Free supportive services, resources
 - Everyone deserves equal social rights and opportunities
- **Staff = Community Health Workers:**
 - Not therapists

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without us*



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What is in the Packet?

What is in This Packet?

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- ✓ Where to get more help:
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- ✓ Tips for supporting survivors42



Self-Care Tools

Self-Care Tools

✓ **When I am stressed videos:**

➤ **[John Mullaly's Yoga and Breathing Video](#)**

(<https://youtu.be/E056qvneDr4>)

➤ **[Brian Kelly Using Music to Help](#)**

(https://youtu.be/WTcR_r0biXE)

➤ **[Pauline Bosma and Her Pet Bunny](#)**

(<https://youtu.be/4q0AF-SXmrY>)

➤ **[Listen to a Relaxation Exercise](#)**

(https://drive.google.com/file/d/1qUYeeldsJ2xjVPK_W93Ww-SsXRUQfHxg/view?usp=sharing)

➤ **[Relaxation Exercise with Subtitles](#)**

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y1t4XUQ7-cc&feature=youtu.be>)

- ✓ **Take Time for Yourself.....32**
- ✓ **Coming Back to Center Exercise.....33**
- ✓ **Relaxation Exercise34**
- ✓ **Relaxation Exercise – Short37**
- ✓ **Putting Hard Stuff Away Exercise.....39**
- ✓ **Tips for Survivors42**





How My Pet Helps Me Cope

An interview with Pauline

Bosma



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The Trust Card



TRUST CARD

Name of Person You Trust

Phone #: _____



Who can stand by you when you are getting help?

A Script for Help

What to say when you call the VRLC:

You can read from this when you call. Fill in the blank space or check the box you want to use.

Hi, my name is _____
Your name

I live in _____
Name of your Town

I was sexually assaulted.

My phone number is _____

It is best to: Call me Text me BOTH call and text

A safe and okay time to call or text me is _____

I need help with:

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> My Housing (where I live) | <input type="checkbox"/> My Safety (I <u>don't</u> feel safe) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Immigration | <input type="checkbox"/> Something else _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> My School | <input type="checkbox"/> I'm not sure/ I don't know |
| <input type="checkbox"/> My Privacy | |

It is okay if you do not know what you need help with!

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The Script Continued...

Fill in below ONLY if you have something happening in court soon. Please also leave this information in your message

I have to go to court soon.

The date of my court hearing is _____.
Date

It will be at _____ court.
Name of court

If you want to, please tell us if you have a disability.

Let us know if there are any accommodations or help you need, for us to best support you.

Supports

- Why include Supports?



- They help make services accessible:

- Calling



- Transportation



- Scheduling



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Supports (Continued)

- Support Staff deserve support too.
- Family can be Supports as well.
- Helping them understand big picture so they don't accidentally harm during healing process.
- Holding feelings of the survivor.
- Vicarious trauma.
- Self- care.



Some of the Options in the Survivor Support Packet

- ✓ **Take Time for Yourself.....32**
- ✓ **Coming Back to Center Exercise.....33**
- ✓ **Relaxation Exercise34**
- ✓ **Relaxation Exercise – Short37**
- ✓ **Putting Hard Stuff Away Exercise.....39**
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Take Time for Yourself

Get Moving



Play a Game



Do A Project



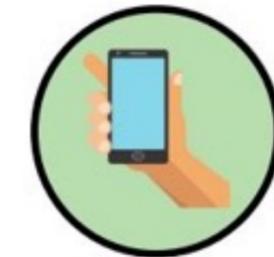
Journal Your Feelings



Listen to Music



Reach Out to Someone You Trust



T a k e a D e e p B r e a t h

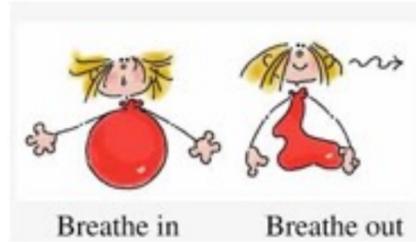
Thank you to the Sexual Assault Response Unit (SARU) for letting us use some of their images and words they collected for their self-care sheets

An Example of Written Exercises

Relaxation Exercise: The Short Version

Find a quiet and private space to do this exercise.

Focus on a spot on the floor in front of you about 6 feet away from your toes. Stare at that spot and breathe out all the air in your lungs, and then breathe in, a full good breath. Keep doing this until you are focusing on that spot and breathing normally.



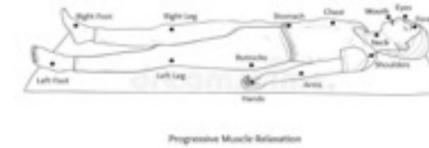
Now as you pay attention to different areas of your body, breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth, in nice, even, slow, breaths. Keep breathing this way through the whole exercise.

As you breathe deeply and slowly, first pay attention to your head, and focus on your forehead. Notice any tension or stress in your muscles, and as you breath out, let go of any of the tension you have found in and around your head. Now focus on your eyes and then your mouth. As you breathe in through your nose let all that stress and tiredness go out through your mouth with your breath, letting it go. Keep breathing slowly and deeply all the way through.

Now focus on your neck and shoulders. As you breath, in and out, feel any pain or stress or tension in those areas and breath it out with your breath.

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Now move on to your chest. Feel any tension, tightness, stress and let it go as you keep breathing and let the tension go out with your breath.



Now focus on your arms and hands. Keep noticing any tension, strain, pain, and let it go as you keep breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth.

Now move to your stomach and notice any upset, any stress or tension and let it go out with your breath. As that feels better, move to your hips and back side. Let go of any stress or pain or tension in those areas as you again breath it out through your mouth.

Keep moving your attention down your body to your thighs, and then your calves, and then to your feet. Stop at each area and see if there is any tension or stress or pain that you want to breath out of your body. When you finish with your feet, do a scan of your whole body. See if there are areas that need more attention and if you find them, keep breathing in through your nose and then let go of the stress as you breathe out through your mouth.

This usually takes people about 3 minutes to go through their whole body. 3 minutes is worth the time to get rid of a ton of stuff you're carrying around in your muscles, it lightens the load!



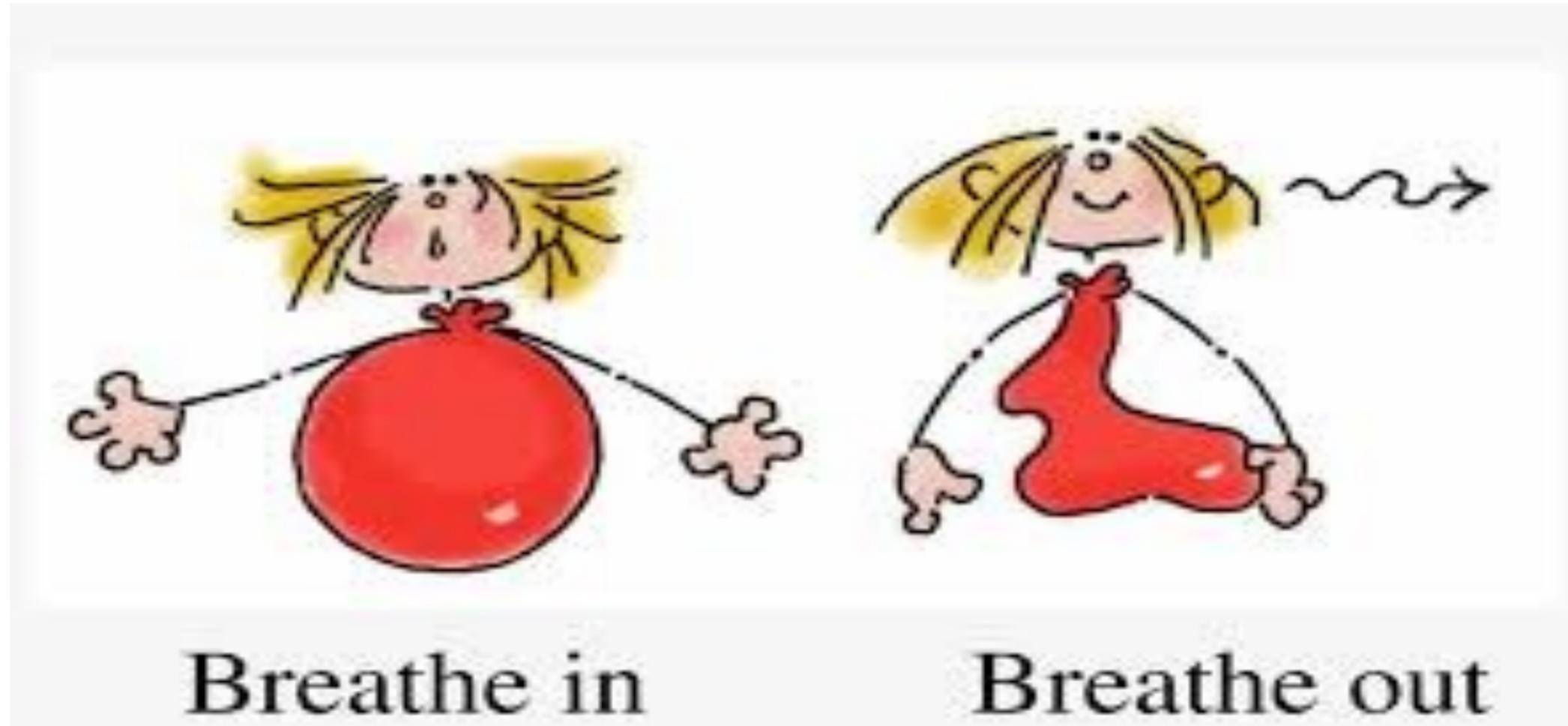
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Accessible Language and Use of Pictures

Evaluate website, brochures, releases:

- ✓ Use icons and pictures to communicate
- ✓ Short sentences
- ✓ Easy-to-read fonts
- ✓ Size 14+ font
- ✓ Contrasting colors
- ✓ Avoid italics, underlining, all caps
- ✓ Use headings
- ✓ Don't rely solely on color
- ✓ Use accessibility checker

Just Take A Breath!



Contact Us



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Massachusetts Advocates Standing Strong

www.WeAreMASS.org

info@wearemass.org



@VictimRightsLaw

www.victimrights.org



www.pathwaysforchange.help

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