

30 What it means to be sexual and enjoying your body



If you are working through *The Warrior Within*, these two exercises and further useful information to help you in your recovery can be found on pages 118-120. These two exercises assume you have completed exercise sheet 1 **Starting an activity journal**.

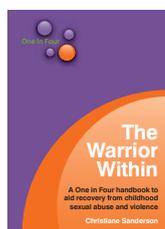
Discovering what being sexual means to you

To discover what being sexual means to you, you need to explore your feelings about your body, and identify what gives you pleasure.

Take some time to reflect on what being sexual means to you. What do you enjoy the most about being sexual? What do you like the least? What makes you feel comfortable or uncomfortable? What are your fears around sex and sexual relationships? What is the purpose of sex for you? Try to answer these, and any other questions you have, and list your responses in your journal. Reflect on these and record in your journal what you would like to change and what would help you to make those changes.

Exploring how to enjoy your body

To explore how to enjoy your body, think about what could give you pleasure. This can be through affection through being held, cuddled or stroked in a non-sexual way. Or it could be being wrapped in a warm, fluffy towel, splashing in water, feeling air on your skin or being naked without being sexualised. You could also find pleasure through running, swimming, dancing, skipping or any physical activity which allows you to feel in control of your body and develop bodily trust. Further sources of pleasure include dressing up, wearing soft, sensual clothing, taking pride in your appearance and receiving compliments without feeling shame or fear of sexual abuse.



The content of this exercise sheet is based on *The Warrior Within: A One in Four handbook to aid recovery from childhood sexual abuse and violence* by Christiane Sanderson

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