

Podcast #3: Sensate Focus

Before you begin:

Prepare your environment for a relaxing experience using whatever “props” are most helpful for you: candles, warm bath, and soft music, quiet. Be sure you will be left undisturbed for the duration of the exercise. The goal of this exercise is to clarify what is physically pleasurable for each person, to reduce anxiety and de-emphasize performance.

Step One:

Plan to spend approximately 40 minutes for this exercise. For the first 20 minutes, one partner touches and caresses the other partner’s naked body: spend ten minutes on the front and ten minutes on the back. Breasts and genitals are “off-limits”.

Step Two:

Duplicate the exercise in step one, with the addition of breasts and genitals. The focus of the exercise should be on the sensation of the touch, not on sexual pleasure. If sexual arousal occurs, slow down or take a short break, then return to the exercise. No intercourse.

Step Three:

Again, duplicate steps one and two but in step three the exercise involves mutual touching, resulting in intercourse if desired. The focus should be relaxation and physical enjoyment rather than orgasm.

Step Four:

Share your reactions and responses to this exercise with your partner.

Sensate focus exercises are often used as an adjunct to couples sex therapy. If unresolved anxiety is aroused as a result of this exercise, you can find a qualified sex therapist in your area by contacting: AAMFT (American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy), AASECT (American Association of Sexuality Educators, Counselors and Therapists) or The Brief Therapy Institute of Denver sex therapists: www.btid.com Tracy Todd, Ph.D. or Marne Wine, M.A., LPC