



*Five Steps in Reclaiming  
Agency in Sexuality for  
Survivors*

*Germaine B. Tizzano, CWC, Ph.D.*

*Email: [gbtizzano@icloud.com](mailto:gbtizzano@icloud.com)*

*[www.viewsfromatreehouse.com](http://www.viewsfromatreehouse.com)*

*I can't have sex!*

*No form of sex. Touch feels like pain. Pain feels*

*like hurt. Hurt feels...*

*Knives stabbing and penetrating me. I block. I*

*dissociate.*

*Focus. Feel. The spine ripples and terrors of dark,*

*tarry nights light up my brain.*

*Feel what? Mind grasps for pleasure. NO!*

*RAPE. Rape. Vomit.*

*Annihilation. I do not exist. I am a used object.*

*Please help...ME TO BE.*

*Anonymous Survivor*



Dissociation is a known process for dealing with **sexual trauma** for survivors of childhood sexual abuse. Known as a tool for survival during the violent act, re-enactment of this process occurs even under optimal healthy sexual encounters. **The terror, shame, self-hatred, and helplessness, an integral part of the survivor's active sexual experience, blocks pleasure and personal rights to sexual satisfaction.**



*STEPS FOR A SURVIVOR TO TAKE  
AGENCY OVER RIGHTS TO  
HEALTHY SEXUALITY AND  
PLEASURE*



Discover, explore, and learn about one's body and pleasures within one's comfort zones through the tool of mindfulness with curiosity, patience, and self-compassion.



**Take a bubble bath.**

**Caress one's body zones and discover areas of pleasure.**

**Feel one's body movement while dancing, yoga, and water playing.**

**Experience the sensual taste of ice cream, whipped cream in the coffee, or the scent of fresh lemon.**

**Watch a live comedy and discover laughter.**

**Walk in nature, and experience the sites, scents, and sounds.**

**Express self through art - play in the sand, manipulate clay, swirl fingerprint.**


**Using your non-dominant hand, express yourself through imagery.**



A close-up photograph of an artist's workspace. In the center, a silver metal tin holds a variety of paintbrushes with different bristles and handles. The background is a soft-focus view of a desk with a watercolor palette, scattered papers, and other art supplies. The overall lighting is bright and natural, creating a warm and creative atmosphere.

LEARN THE ART OF SAYING NO  
AND LEARN HOW TO  
COMMUNICATE YES!





Sexuality preferences are individual and expressed with variety in taste, flavor, and discovery. There is no right or wrong. What fits you, the person, is what is suitable for you, the person.

Allow oneself to share likes outside the confines of the moments of intimacy

Provide playful moments to discuss preferences over dinner or while walking. Do not wait till the heat of the moment to express what may be a challenging topic – personal sexual preferences.



Permit yourself to be sexual! Allow yourself to embrace the intimacy, pleasure, and love of being in love.

Place the monsters outside the bedroom. Lock them up. Ship them across the globe.

Your sexuality is your right, and your freedom is to enjoy and be fully in the moment.



Before, during, and after sexual encounters, practice being grounded with breathing techniques, self-affirmations, I am safe, deserving of love and pleasure, and crossing arms with a gentle tapping on shoulders.



Ask for support, understanding, patience, and reassurance from your partner. And provide your partner with resources to discuss triggers, withdrawal, and dissociation during sex. This will allow your partner not to personalize the sexual experience as rejection.



Provide ongoing acknowledgment of progress made, affirmations, and patience. Work with a counselor/therapist who understands trauma and sexuality and can guide you through reclaiming your sexuality as your own.





Information on Well-being and Life Coaching from Germayne,  
please feel free to email her at [gbtizzano@icloud.com](mailto:gbtizzano@icloud.com)

If you would like more information on Dr. Tizzano's trainings  
and consultations on childhood sexual trauma, intimate  
partner violence, trauma and substance use disorders,  
resiliency, and wellness, please feel free to reach out by  
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**To receive a complementary introductory Well-being and Life Coaching session with Germayne, please feel free to email her at**

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Germaine B. Tizzano, Ph.D.

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President and Founder

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