

Taking Back Control After Sexual Harassment

Irrespective of gender, age, income level, or circumstance, every person that has been traumatized by sexual harassment bears the burden of managing a complex range of reactions. Through professional therapy and self-help, victims of sexual harassment can learn coping skills that defuse the destructive power of what happened and place blame back where it belongs, with the perpetrator. This worksheet is designed to help you feel that you are back in control of your life.

Sexual Harassment Is Not Your Fault

Sexual harassment is by nature very demeaning, leaving the victims feeling isolated, helpless, and no longer in control of their careers or personal lives. These feelings are often compounded when victims are told that they were at fault, or in some way share the blame for what happened. One way the perpetrator of sexual harassment wields power is through relying on the victim feeling too embarrassed about what happened to come forward.

The first step to regaining some sense of control is to acknowledge how destructive your negative thoughts can be to your mental and physical health, and find ways to manage them.

It will be helpful to remember:

- What happened was not your fault.
- Feelings of anger, betrayal, and violation are normal and to be expected.
- You *can* regain control over the situation.

There are a variety of things that psychotherapists recommend to help you deal with feelings of anxiety and depression after you have been sexually harassed. Check the ones that you are most likely to do in the list below, and add other “wellness practices” that you have done in the past.

- Keep a journal.
- Exercise at least three times a week.
- Meditate and/or practice yoga.
- Make sure you get good nutrition and enough sleep.
- Avoid using alcohol, drugs, or other habits to mask your feelings.
- Talk to friends.
- Spend time in nature.
- Other things you can do: _____

Important: If you feel that you are having severe signs of anxiety and depression, seek help from a mental health professional right away. If you feel that you are in danger or you are in significant distress call 911. If you are in a crisis, call a hotline right away. Here is a list of important hotlines: <https://www.betterhelp.com/gethelpnow/>.

Now use the chart below to help you think about the things you can do when you feel out of control. After you have tried different wellness activities, rate them according to how helpful they are in taking back your sense of control, with 1 = Not very helpful and 5 = Very helpful.

Put a checkmark next to any negative thoughts and feelings that you have experienced, and write down different ways you can achieve control over them.

✓	When I feel...	I can...	How Help Was This?
	Panicked / Anxious		
	Fearful		
	Distrust of others		
	Ashamed / Guilty		
	Angry		
	Depressed		
	Helpless / powerless		
	Isolated / lonely		