

# sex talk.

answers to your questions about sex and relationships

## wildfact

Campus Health's Oasis Program offers a free support group for female-identified survivors of sexual assault. The group meets Fridays at 1pm in CAPS, Room C312. Call (520) 626-2051 for more information.

## Q Could a rape victim ever get over the past and try to have sex?

A. This is an important question! Rape is a traumatic event that impacts the survivor emotionally and physically. Difficulty with sexual intimacy (or in some cases, physical touch in general) is one common reaction to rape. For those who are having this issue or struggling with other symptoms in the aftermath, time alone does not heal. It may be important for you to talk to a therapist who has expertise in working with rape survivors. Trying to ignore what happened may make things feel even worse later on. Exploring the impact rape has had on your sense of self and relationship with others is important. Healing is definitely possible, and rape survivors can enjoy healthy sexual relationships in the future.

Sometimes, being able to tell your current sex partner a bit about your past trauma can help. That way you can explain if something is triggering for you, meaning that something in the present sexual

encounter is reminding you of the past and stirring up distressing thoughts, feelings, or images. If that occurs, the best thing you can do is stop the sexual activity until you feel calm and grounded back in the present moment. Communication about what is and is not working is an important part of sex; this is especially true for rape survivors. It helps your healing process if you don't try to push yourself to continue with sexual activities while feeling distressed or numb. Stopping when you need to, with a partner who supports that right, can be a very empowering experience!

Campus Health's Oasis Program is available to help with counseling, referrals, and resources. Visit our website at [www.oasis.arizona.edu](http://www.oasis.arizona.edu) or call us at (520) 626-2051.

*Guest columnist: Dr. Kathe Young,  
Oasis Program Psychologist and  
Coordinator of Clinical Services*



Have a question? Send it to [sextalk@email.arizona.edu](mailto:sextalk@email.arizona.edu)

SexTalk is written by Lee Ann Hamilton, M.A., CHES, David Salafsky, MPH, and Carrie Hardesty, BS, CHES, health educators at The UA Campus Health Service.