



## A Brief Conversation

**When you only have a few minutes with someone, you can still make a difference.**

Suggested language:

**Many people who come to us for help have had difficult experiences in their lives. Many of them have suffered physical and/or sexual abuse. I don't know if this may be part of your life experience, but I do want you to know that we can help. We've learned that these painful experiences are often at the core or center of many of the things people struggle with—including substance use and mental health problems. If this is true for you, please let us be of help.**

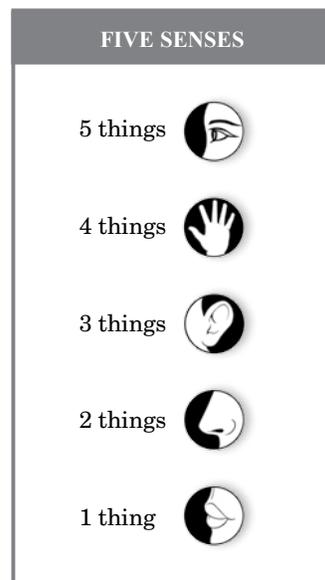
**We've also learned that people can be uncomfortable or anxious when in a new place or when asking for help. Here are two exercises that many people find comforting or self-soothing.**

**Would it be okay if I showed you how to use these (or if I demonstrated these)?**

### FIVE SENSES

1. Please close your eyes or lower your eyelids. We can do this together, if you like.
2. Relax for a few moments. Take a few deep breaths and exhale slowly.
3. Open your eyes when you are ready.
4. Silently, identify five things you can see around you.
5. Now identify four things you can feel or touch.
6. Identify three things you can hear.
7. Identify two things you can smell.
8. Finally, identify what you can taste right now.

**I also have a card for you to take with you to remind you of this activity.**



From *Healing Trauma: Strategies for Abused Women* by Stephanie Covington  
(Center City, MN: Hazelden, 2011; rev. 2016 as *Healing Trauma: A Brief Intervention for Women*).

## BREATHING AND EXHALING EXERCISE

Shall we stand up and try this?

1. Place your feet a little distance apart so you feel stable. Take a few deep breaths.
2. Relax your shoulders and drop your hands to your sides. Let your arms and hands just dangle, relaxed.
3. Take in a deep breath through your nose and blow it out through your mouth like a big gust of wind.
4. Now inhale again and let the air out by blowing it out through your mouth. (Smell the roses; then blow out the candle.)
5. Remember to relax your shoulders and arms.
6. Let's do the inhaling and exhaling three more times. (Smell the roses; then blow out the candle.)

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FIVE SENSES		FIVE SENSES		FIVE SENSES	
5 things		5 things		5 things	
4 things		4 things		4 things	
3 things		3 things		3 things	
2 things		2 things		2 things	
1 thing		1 thing		1 thing	
<i>Healing Trauma</i> Stephanie S. Covington, PhD		<i>Healing Trauma</i> Stephanie S. Covington, PhD		<i>Healing Trauma</i> Stephanie S. Covington, PhD	
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