



You Are Not Alone

Support & healing for survivors of sexual abuse



Surviving sexual abuse can change how you see yourself, other people, and the world around you. What happened was not your fault — and the ways you have coped since then, even the ones that feel confusing, are valid survival responses. At Shanti Psychotherapy, we specialize in trauma-informed, culturally responsive care for survivors, and we are honoured to walk alongside you as you reclaim your sense of safety and self.

— YOUR BODY'S RESPONSES MAKE SENSE

Trauma responses aren't a character flaw — they're your nervous system's way of trying to keep you safe. Here's what each one can look like, and a small way to work with it in the moment.

Fight

Your body gets ready to stand its ground — flooding you with anger, the urge to argue, or snapping at people you love, especially when something touches on what happened. Like a grizzly bear rising up to defend itself, fight is your nervous system trying to protect you.

Try this: Name the anger out loud ("I notice I'm angry right now"), then let the energy move through your body — a brisk walk, shaking out your hands, or pressing your palms firmly together.

Flight

You feel the pull to physically leave, stay constantly busy, or throw yourself into distraction the moment something starts to feel unsafe — like a rabbit darting away at the first sign of danger. Humour, overworking, and avoidance can all be forms of flight.

Try this: Before acting on the urge to leave or distract, plant your feet on the floor and take three slow breaths. Give yourself permission to pause before deciding what to do next.

Freeze

Overwhelm can make you go still, numb, or "check out" of your body and surroundings — much like a fawn that drops motionless to stay safe from a predator. Some people also notice their breathing slow down without meaning it to.

Try this: Gently orient back to the room — name 5 things you can see, then notice one physical sensation, like your feet on the floor, to help your body register that you are safe now.

Fawn

People-pleasing, over-apologizing, and staying loyal to people who haven't been safe are ways of keeping the peace — much like a dog whose safety depends on staying loving and loyal to the people around it.

Try this: Before automatically saying yes, pause and ask yourself, "What do I actually want here?" Practicing this question, even silently, is a small act of reclaiming your voice.

"There is not anything wrong with you — let's shift the perspective to what happened to you." Awareness of these patterns is the first step toward responding mindfully, rather than reacting.

— Karina Karys, MSW, RSW



Karina Karys

MSW, RSW · EMDR & Trauma Therapist

With 9 years of experience, Karina specializes in supporting survivors of gender-based violence, intimate partner violence, human trafficking, and adverse childhood experiences. She offers a compassionate, collaborative space where your lived experience is honoured — in English or Polish.

"I'd be honoured to walk with you through this process."

[Read Karina's full bio →](#)

Our clinicians use EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing) and trauma-informed approaches to help your nervous system process what happened and release memories that feel "stuck." EMDR is recognized by the World Health Organization and NICE as an effective, evidence-based treatment for trauma, PTSD, and complex/developmental trauma.

- Extensive experience with survivors of sexual abuse, gender-based & intimate partner violence, and human trafficking
- Culturally attuned care for BIPOC and 2SLGBTQIA+ communities
- EMDR, Narrative Therapy, trauma-informed CBT & DBT, and mindfulness
- Virtual & in-person sessions across our Toronto-area locations

Learn more about our [EMDR Therapy](#), [Trauma, Abuse & Attachment Wounds](#), and [Culturally Attuned Mental Health Therapy](#) services.

Karina is one of several clinicians at Shanti Psychotherapy who practice EMDR and trauma therapy for survivors of sexual trauma. [Meet our full team →](#)

Sexual abuse can leave invisible injuries to the mind, brain, and nervous system. Just as physical injuries deserve medical care, emotional injuries deserve compassionate, evidence-based mental health treatment. Healing is possible with support.

You don't have to sort this out alone.

Book a free 20-minute consultation at shantipsychotherapy.janeapp.com, or reach our intake team at intake.shantipsychotherapy@gmail.com

Our team offers care in English, Urdu, Polish, Cantonese, Punjabi, Hindi, Turkish, Farsi, Gujarati, Tamil, and Mandarin — so you can be supported in the language you feel most comfortable in. [See our team's languages →](#)

— FREE, CONFIDENTIAL SUPPORT LINES ACROSS CANADA

Assaulted Women's Helpline

24/7, all genders welcome, 200+ languages

1-866-863-0511

Support Service for Male Survivors

24/7, for men & boys

1-866-887-0015

Kids Help Phone

24/7, ages 5–29, call or text CONNECT to 686868

1-800-668-6868

Canadian Human Trafficking Hotline

24/7, national, multilingual

1-833-900-1010

Talk4Healing

24/7, for Indigenous women, 14 languages

1-855-554-4325

Hope for Wellness Help Line

24/7, for First Nations, Inuit & Métis

1-855-242-3310

If you are in immediate danger, please call 911 or go to your nearest emergency room.