**Exploring Women’s Experiences of Healing from Sexual Trauma through Engagement in Body-Based Practices. A Systematic Review**

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**Background:** Research is increasingly recognising the profound effect that trauma has on the body (Van der Kolk, 2014). Therefore, exploring holistic treatments that incorporate a mind and body intervention appears essential for healing. This is the first systematic review exploring women’s experiences of recovery from sexual trauma through engagement in body-based practices.

**Aims:** To contribute to the understanding and development of holistic treatments that encompass a body element for women recovering from sexual trauma.

**Research Questions:**

What does the qualitative literature tell us about…

* **Women’s’ lived experiences of healing from sexual trauma through engagement in body-based practices?**
* **The healing processes of body-based practices for women recovering from sexual trauma?**

**Method:** A systematic review of the literature was conducted using four databases: PsycINFO, Medline, CINAHL Plus and Scopus. 2,392 records were generated from the searches. After screening 11 articles were considered eligible and were analysed using thematic synthesis.

**Themes:** Data synthesis led to the conceptualisation of 5 main themes and 3 subthemes.

* **Integrating Mind and Body** *(Reconnecting to the body & Processing emotions)*
* **Self-compassion**
* **Trauma-sensitive Approach**
* **Connection** *(Relationships Within the Group, Safety in relationships & Spiritual connection)*
* **Fun and Spontaneity**

**Discussion:** Findings suggest that the healing processes function as a powerful channel to release negative emotions, establish inner safety, gain a sense of empowerment, connect with others and nature and encourage self-acceptance.

**Conclusion:** This study provides evidence for the use of mind-body interventions with a focus on positive growth. Continued research is needed to help determine women’s readiness to engage and to understand how to support multifaceted needs.