

What help is there?

Talking through your experiences may provide a release for feelings held within. Counselling offers an accepting, non-judgemental and supportive environment in which these feelings can be explored safely.

At the beginning of counselling flashbacks may increase in frequency and intensity as vivid memories are brought to the forefront. However counselling can often help to take away the power and intensity of flashbacks by helping you to explore and cope with your feelings.



To make a referral, or for advice and information,
you can visit us online, email, or call on

0330 363 0063

www.rapecentre.org.uk
support@rapecentre.org.uk

 @RapeSupport

 @RapeSupport

 @rasasc_cm

Complaints:

If you are unhappy with any part of the service, please try to address this with the worker first. If this is not possible, you can speak to the Therapy Services Director or write to us at RASASC, P.O Box 35, Warrington, WA1 1DW.

 BACP Accredited Service



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Flashbacks

A strong memory of a past event that comes suddenly into a person's mind.

rasasc



**Rape and
Sexual Abuse
Support Centre**

for adults, children and young people
in Cheshire and Merseyside

What are flashbacks?

Flashback is the term used to describe a flash of memory where an individual re-experiences a trauma from the past.

Flashbacks are often a visual experience and can be accompanied by intense emotions, physical sensations, sensory memories of what you heard or felt at the time of the trauma, or a combination of any of these.

It is important to remember that these are normal experiences for those who have been sexually abused or raped.

Why do they happen?

Flashbacks can be triggered by many things such as:

- Seeing someone who looks like the abuser
- Sexual situations
- The tone of someone's voice
- Smells
- Hearing certain sounds or words
- Touching certain things e.g. fabrics
- Beginning counselling

These triggers can be something completely unrelated to the abuse itself.



Flashbacks are completely normal responses.

What can I do?

When a flashback occurs grounding exercises can help to bring you back into reality. It may be useful to speak to yourself out loud, confirming who and where you are in the here and now. Become aware of your feet upon the ground and of what is going on around you. Tell yourself that you are having a flashback and that this is normal for people who were traumatised as children or adults.

Reassure yourself that this is part of the healing process. Breathe slowly and deeply, feel that your body is supporting you.

Flashbacks are emotionally and physically draining, it is important to look after yourself. Take some time out to relax. Maybe have a warm bath, a hot drink or listen to music.

Take care of yourself and remember – you are not alone and we are here to support you!