

Seven Ways of Dealing with Sexual Feelings

1. **Denial:** refusal to admit that certain facts or actions exist; often a rejection of obvious evidence. This denial often occurs in interpersonal and social situations.
2. **Repression:** an intrapsychic process, an unconscious coping mechanism. Repression entails not being conscious of one's experiences of sexual feelings and not being consciously aware of being unaware.
3. **Sexual acting out:** engaging in genital behavior with others or with oneself that includes oral, vaginal, and anal intercourse, foreplay, and masturbation.
4. **Expression:** to make known or communicate one's experience of sexual feelings. Expression includes 'self -talk, "journaling, and talking to another appropriate person, for example, a friend, confidant, or spiritual director.
5. **Suppression:** a conscious coping mechanism that entails the awareness and acceptance of sexual feelings and choosing not to promote them or act on them.
6. **Sublimation:** the process of awareness and acceptance of sexual feelings and channeling the sexual energy to activity judged to be "higher" culturally, socially, physically, aesthetically, or spiritually.
7. **Respectful integration:** a direct way of integrating sexual feelings and spirituality to foster religious growth. In respectful integration a person looks in love at sexual feelings as an opportunity to see the whole person (oneself and others).