

# THINGS YOU DIDN'T LEARN IN

# SEX ED

Booklet for Teens

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★ SPECIAL THANKS TO:

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# INTRODUCTION

Did you leave your sex ed class with more questions than you had before? Did you feel that the topics covered were unhelpful and did not apply to your life? Do you want to learn about more than just pregnancy and STIs?

This booklet will hopefully answer those questions or point you towards the answers that you need. The author of this booklet has taken information from published research studies on what adults felt was lacking from their sex ed experiences and has combined it into a short and easy booklet for teens. The information within this booklet is a mixture between research findings and my own informed opinions based on scholarly literature I've read.

This booklet is LGBTQ+ inclusive and tries to reflect that in the topics included and the language used. While not everyone will have experiences with every type of sex or all of the material included in this booklet, you will probably interact with people different from you sometime in your life. Knowing some of the ins and outs of different people, the relationships they seek, and the experiences they have will help you connect with them on a deeper level.

Relationships with others is the name of the game within this booklet. Your relationship with yourself, people your age, and the adults in your life can all be affected by the information provided within these pages.

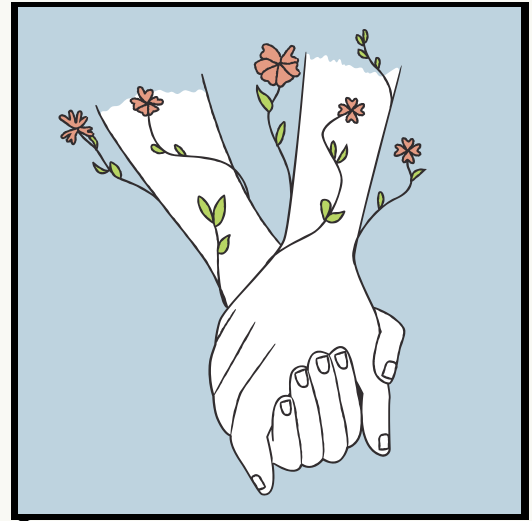
Throughout the booklet you will find activities that you can try out with a trusted adult in your life. We hope that these activities break the ice on asking questions regarding sex ed topics, but also give you a chance to explore topics you might not have heard about before.

We have also created a partner booklet to this one for guardians of teens. This could be your parents, grandparents, foster parents, or any other adults in your life that you trust and want help from. Encourage them to look through that booklet while you look through this one and compare what you find. Having a trusted adult to talk to and ask open questions can make a world of difference in understanding your body, your thoughts, and your experiences as you mature into a young adult.

*Relationships with others is  
the name of the game in  
this booklet*



# Ideal Partner Activity



Hi!

Draw or write about your ideal romantic partner.

Identify the five most important physical, personality, and psychological characteristics of your ideal person.

With a trusted adult, discuss your chosen characteristics and why they are important to you.

Hey!

Hello!

Answer additional questions such as:

- Is this person based off of someone (fictional or real)?
- Are the traits you described traits that you would like for someone to look for in you? Particularly the personality and psychological traits.
- Do you think it is possible to find someone that fulfills these traits? Why or why not?
- How did this activity make you feel? Why?

# GETTING TO KNOW YOURSELF!

## WHO ARE YOU?

---

Adolescence is a time where people explore who they are. You will likely try on new things and have new experiences during this time. You might change your interests or discover new talents; you might also find out who you want to be and what kind of people you want to be around.

Adolescence – a time period between childhood and young adulthood that usually starts with puberty [1]

This is a time to explore!

It is also a time to understand who you are based on how you interact with the world. All of the different characteristics of you make you a unique person, but also help you connect to other people.

Your race, culture, gender expression, sexual orientation, religion, nationality, etc. all combine to create you – this is often called *intersectionality* [2]. You are the sum of all of your parts. Who you are makes you see the world differently than some people, but you might also find people who are similar to you in many ways.

We encourage you to think about the different parts of you that are important to you. If you were to describe yourself to a friend online that cannot see a picture of you, what would you say? Would you describe yourself as tall? Smart? Curvy? Happy? Latino? Buddhist?

Each of these descriptions play a part in how you see the world and how the world might interact back with you.



## RELATING TO OTHERS

Now that you have thought about who you are, it is important to learn about people who are different from you as well.

Research has shown that by learning about others we not only understand them better, but we feel more compassionate towards their struggles and experiences [3]. Compassion is important in breaking down social barriers that keep us from understanding and working with one another.

In your life, you will likely meet people with different bodies, with different gender expressions, or with different sexualities than you. You might become friends with some of those people or might go on to be romantically or sexually involved with them. Wouldn't you like to know more about those people so that you can be the best friend, ally, partner, etc. you can be?

## SHARED MEDIA ACTIVITY

See the end of the booklet for directions on how to do this activity. Some options to choose from are:

### Books:

- On the Subject of Unmentionable Things by Julia Walton
- The Black Flamingo by Dean Atta
- Perfectly Imperfect: Compassionate Strategies to Cultivate a Positive Body Image by Amy Harman

### Movies/TV Shows:

- Turning Red – Movie
- Sex(Ed): The Movie – Documentary

## ITS NOT TMI!

As you've grown up, you've probably found there are certain things that are "just not talked about." Maybe this is the discussion of sex in general; maybe it's the hush-hush nature of pulling a pad or tampon out of your bag before sneaking to the bathroom in class. If you've ever wanted to talk about something with a friend but found yourself saying "I hope this isn't too much information, but..." – I want to tell you that it's not too much information!

Talking about things like periods, sex, STIs, and relationships with your friends, siblings, parents, or trusted guardians is so important! Not only will talking about these things remove the stigma around them, but you will only benefit from knowing how other people deal with the same experiences you are having. Try to build a relationship with at least one person that you feel you can speak to openly about the things that are on your mind.

In many cases, these discussions can also increase your safety [3]! Describing a situation that made you uncomfortable to another person may help you see why it made you so uncomfortable. Or maybe they can tell you about a similar situation they experienced and how they dealt with it.

## HOT POTATO ACTIVITY

With a guardian or trusted adult, play a game of Hot Potato. To play, ask each other questions related to the topics of this booklet or other questions you might have about sexuality, gender, and growing up in general. You can pass an object back and forth to show whose turn it is or do the entire activity by just talking.

It may help to have the object be something interactive like a squeeze ball or fidget toy so that you have something to focus on. It might be awkward at first, but that's okay! You can acknowledge that it's awkward and laugh about it together. Just keep trying to talk openly and you will eventually move past the awkward stage.

To get you started, consider the following questions you can ask your guardian or trusted adult:

- What did you not know about sex before you had it?
- When did you figure out your sexual orientation? Did you ever experiment or explore other sexualities?
- How did you know you were ready to have sex? (Could mention specific kinds of sex such as oral, penetration, etc.)
- Do you have any tips for setting boundaries with future partners?

# SEXUALITIES

There are many different sexualities available to describe the way people are attracted to one another. Some people experiment with different sexualities before deciding on which one describes them best. Some people change their minds or experience new things that redefine their sexualities. All of these experiences are not only normal but should be celebrated.

Ultimately, your sexuality is a way for you to identify who you are and who you might like to interact with romantically or sexually. It doesn't have to stay the same and you shouldn't be afraid to change it. You also don't owe that information to anyone else, but more on that later.

Below are some general definitions of the most common sexualities. There are many more options available, and some people disagree on the exact definitions of even those provided below. My hope is to provide you with a starting point in understanding your feelings about other people and yourself but please continue to explore as needed!

**Straight/Heterosexual** - usually people who like people of the opposite sex (example: men like women and women like men)

**Gay Men/Lesbians** - this usually refers to men or women who only like the same gender as themselves (example: men who like men and women who like women)

Gay can also be used as a catch-all term for anyone that is not straight. Other catch-all terms can be queer, homosexual, questioning, LGBTQ+, etc

**Bisexual** - usually describes people who like both genders or all genders ; this can enforce the gender binary (talked about in the gender section) if you believe that "bi" refers to only two genders (men and women)

**Pansexual** - alternatively, some people use this term to describe themselves as a person that likes all people regardless of gender ; some find that this is more inclusive of people that do not identify as men or women

**Asexual** - while there are many different sexualities that fall within asexuality, this term generally refers to people with varying levels of disinterest in sexual activity ; this is not to say that asexual people do not have sex with others, but that they may experience a level of disinterest when compared to other people

**Aromantic** - similar to asexual people, aromantic people may have varying levels of disinterest in romantic love or interactions with other people ; they may or may not have sex with other people

# Inviting In

You may have heard of the concept of “coming out” before. This usually means that a person who is not heterosexual is expected to tell other people what they have decided their gender and sexuality is. This practice can be empowering for some people but can be traumatizing for others. There is also an unfairness to assuming that everyone you meet is straight unless they tell you otherwise.

Because of this, there is a developing movement within the LGBTQ+ community to change this verbiage from “coming out” to “inviting in” [4]. While the process may stay the same, some believe that “inviting in” has a more positive connotation. By inviting other people to learn more about you and your life, you are providing them with the gift of knowing who you are! All of us have the opportunity to share ourselves with those around us, but it is up to you how and when you do that.

Q: What if I want to come out, but I don't feel safe or am scared of getting kicked out of my house?

A: Your safety and security come first. If you are not in a position where you can come out to the adults in your life, then do not feel pressured to do so. If you need help or have been recently unhomed because of your sexuality, there are resources available to help you.

Visit- <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/get-help/> or <https://www.1800runaway.org/>

You do not owe it to anyone to share your sexuality with them.

## SHARED MEDIA ACTIVITY

See the end of the booklet for directions on how to do this activity.

Some options to choose from are:

### Books:

- *Ace: What Asexuality Reveals About Desire, Society, and the Meaning of Sex* by Angela Chen
- *Am I Blue? Coming Out from the Silence* by Marion Dane Bauer
- *Ask a Queer Chick: A Guide to Sex, Love, and Life for Girls Who Dig Girls* by Lindsay King-Miller

### Movies/TV Shows:

- *Heartstopper* –TV series
- *Love, Simon* – Movie
- *One Day at a Time* –TV series
- *Young Royals* – TV series
- *All in My Family* – Documentary
- *How to Make a Rainbow* – Documentary





# GENDER

Gender as a concept has been separated from biological sex.

Biological sex has been defined as the biological sex (of male, female, or intersex) that a person is determined to be by doctors at birth [5].

People that are intersex have both male and female biological traits, including hormones and/or anatomy.

There are some situations where surgeries to change the anatomy of intersex babies are performed; there are other situations where it is not clear that a person is intersex until puberty [5].

For more information about intersexed people, visit:

<https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/gender-identity/sex-gender-identity/whats-intersex>

“Gender is between your ears and not between your legs”  
– Chaz Bono

Gender is instead the way a person fits into the norms of a society [5]. Many people refer to this as a social construct, meaning that society determines which characteristics, activities, interests, etc. are associated with each gender. This isn't a negative perception, but many people see themselves as living outside of these descriptions.

Have you heard the term “tom boy” before? What does this term bring to mind? Typically, people picture a girl that has more “boyish” interests, looks, friends, etc. While this does not mean that a girl labeled as a tomboy would prefer to go by another gender, it shows how often people act outside of what is considered “normal” for their gender.

With gender being seen by some people as only men and women, those that feel like they fall between or outside of this gender binary (binary meaning two options) might call themselves nonbinary. Nonbinary can refer to people that are fluid, meaning that that might feel more masculine or feminine depending on the situation, relationship they are in, or other factors. It can also mean that a person does not feel defined by either male or female terms [6].

Gender identity is the way a person would describe the way they feel in terms of gender (female, male, nonbinary, both, etc.) [5]. Like with sexualities, some people experiment with different gender identities before deciding on which one describes them best. Some people change their minds or experience new things that redefine their gender identities.



Cisgender – people that feel their gender is the same as the sex they were assigned at birth ; this term can be applied to the gendered terms to describe people (examples include: ciswoman or cisman) ; when people say woman or man, it is often assumed to be cisgendered

Transgender – people that feel their gender is different from the sex they were assigned at birth ; when applied to gendered terms, can be said as transwoman or transman ; some people feel that nonbinary falls under the transgender umbrella



Some people that are transgendered feel *gender dysphoria* regarding their bodies. Some may feel that they need to transition their bodies physically to look like their desired gender. For instance, people that were assigned the sex of male at birth (sometimes referred to as AMAB) might go through procedures like hormone replacement, bottom surgery (or vaginal construction surgery), and other feministic surgeries to appear more in line with their female gender. For more information about the details of gender affirmation treatments such as these, visit:

<https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/treatments/21526-gender-affirmation-confirmation-or-sex-reassignment-surgery>

There are more options available, and people may identify differently based on their own experiences. For more information, you can visit:

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/adult-health/in-depth/transgender-facts/art-20266812>

Another layer of this topic is the idea of gender expression. This is the way that we all dress, act, and speak to express the gender we identify with [6].

Gender expression does not have to be static; it can change day by day or year by year.

Some people dress to match their gender identity; some people do not. For those who wish to experiment with certain dressing options such as chest binding and tucking, please review information on how to do so safely:

<https://www.pointofpride.org/blog/binding-101-tips-to-bind-your-chest-safely> <https://www.pointofpride.org/tucking>

Gender dysphoria – feeling of discomfort or distress when a person’s gender identity doesn’t match their body and/or the sex they were assigned at birth [5].



# PROUNOUNS

A golden rule for using pronouns is: When in doubt, ask. If you can't ask, default to they/them pronouns unless otherwise corrected.

Pronouns are the way we refer to people within conversation or writing when we don't want to use their names. In that last sentence alone, I used two different pronouns.

Pronouns can include she/her/hers, he/him/his, they/them/theirs, combinations such as they/his or her/his, as well as a number of other options. What is important is to use the pronouns that the other person prefers.

We all have pronouns that we prefer people to use for us. It can be very helpful to share your pronouns with the people you meet, even if you feel it is unnecessary. Not only does this communicate which pronouns you would like people to use when referring to you, but it allows them to share their pronouns with you.

SHE/HER

HE/HIM

SHE/HER

HE/HIM

THEY/THEM

It is okay to enforce boundaries and explain your pronouns to other people. If a person uses an incorrect pronoun when referring to you or someone else you know the pronouns of, simply state what the correct pronouns are. This does not have to be argumentative or distracting; it can be as simple as, "Oh actually, I prefer they/them pronouns."

If you make a mistake when referring to another person by their pronouns, this can also be simple and easy to correct. Simply restart your sentence and say the correct pronoun or correct it in a follow up sentence. Excessive apologizing is not helpful to you or the other person as it only brings more attention to something that should be moved on from quickly.

You might feel that you want to try out new pronouns to see how they make you feel about your gender identity. This can be both exciting and scary, but there is no shame in trying something out and changing your mind. Confide in a trustworthy friend or person in your life that you would like to try out a certain pronoun. Make it clear in what contexts you would like to try out the pronoun and if you want others to know or not. And don't be afraid to change your mind!

SHE/HER

HE/HIM

HE/They

# SHARED MEDIA ACTIVITY

SEE THE END OF THE BOOKLET FOR DIRECTIONS ON HOW TO DO THIS ACTIVITY. SOME OPTIONS TO CHOOSE FROM ARE:

## Gender and Pronouns

### Books:

- Being Jazz by Jazz Jennings
- Birthday by Meredith Russo
- Just Ash by Sol Santana
- Middlesex by Jeffrey Eugenides

### Movies/TV Shows:

- Steven Universe – TV show
- Disclosure – Documentary
- Game Face – Documentary

## Discrimination

### Books:

- Stonewall: Breaking Out in the Fight for Gay Rights by Ann Bausum
- Not So Pure and Simple by Lamar Giles
- The Grace Year by Kim Liggett

### Movies/TV Shows:

- A Secret Love – Netflix documentary
- Reversing Roe – Netflix documentary



# DISCRIMINATION

With many identities being explored in the United States, discrimination has become a hot button topic that has likely affected the life of someone you know. People who identify as transgendered or gay are often the victims of physical violence but are also discriminated against through laws that take away their basic human rights. But they are not the only ones.

People who have unintended pregnancies are kept from healthcare that could be lifesaving or at least life preserving in many states. There is even criticism for men who act too femininely (or too masculinely) or women who want to be in charge of their own bodies when it comes to health care.

The point is: discrimination affects us all. While you may not identify with the LGBTQ+ community or are not at risk of having an unintended pregnancy, there is something about you that others might use against you for their own social or political gain.

While this sounds depressing, it just means that we should all take an active interest in one another and the experiences we are all having. Next up is more information about specific forms of discrimination and places where you can find more information about them.

Basic civil rights have been kept from gay people for decades. Even those laws that have been passed to assure their rights are being attacked at high levels of the government every day.

Did you know that homosexuality used to be a diagnosable mental illness? This was the case until 1973, but even since then, it was a mental illness to be distressed by being homosexual. This stayed within the main diagnostic manual for psychologists until 2013 [7]!

On a different front, gayness has been discriminated against through something called heteronormativity [8]. This means that everyone is assumed to be straight unless they decide otherwise. But even more than that, there are many social norms that assume everyone is straight, like the wedding industry that focuses on brides and grooms rather than brides and brides or grooms and grooms.

For more information about homophobia, and the activists working to reduce this form of discrimination, visit: [https://lgbpsychology.org/html/prej\\_defn.html](https://lgbpsychology.org/html/prej_defn.html)

Homophobia





“A better world for trans people is a better world for all of us.”

-Annalise Singh, Ph.D.

Associate Provost for Faculty Development and Diversity, Tulane University



### Transphobia

Like gay people, transgendered people have faced legal barriers and transgenderism has been classified as a mental illness in the past. More recently, conversations regarding where transgendered people can go to the bathroom or which sports they can play have plagued the media. In a way, the more visibility transgendered people experience, the more criticism of their everyday actions is thrown their way.

But this does not mean that their visibility should go away! Instead, as Dr. Annalise Singh states, we all “transgress gender” every day in the ways that we act outside of the traditional gender stereotypes that are expected of us. Protecting and uplifting transgendered people allows for more understanding of us all and the ways that we interact with the world and our gender.

You have maybe heard of “gender affirming healthcare” in the media. This refers to any care that helps a person experience life as their identified gender [5]. This doesn’t just mean gender affirming surgeries and hormone replacement, but therapy and other social or psychological methods of supporting a person’s gender journey.

For more information on identifying transphobia and what to do next, visit: <https://www.healthline.com/health/transphobia#examples>

### Toxic Masculinity

The idea of toxic masculinity has been thrown around in online spaces, but what does it really mean? It typically refers to the idea that boys and men are expected to act a certain way due to their gender [9]. Sound familiar? Once again, we are all subjected to societies expectations of how we are supposed to act.

However, in the case of toxic masculinity, the expectations are for men to be aggressive, to never acknowledge their feelings or weaknesses, and often to look down on women and other men who do not conform to intense masculinity [9]. By not respecting other people (especially women) and by turning to aggression in times of stress, men are more likely to assault and harm others when they have been exposed to these ideas of toxic masculinity.

Toxic masculinity hurts the man just as much as other people. In some ways it has actually been linked to health problems and early death because men are discouraged from seeking help from others [10].

### Teen Pregnancy

There is a reason why the states that teach abstinence only sex education have the highest rates of teen pregnancy [5]. It has been scientifically supported that trying to convince teens to not have sex, while providing no information on how to have sex safely, leads to more pregnancies and STIs. Information about what is usually referred to as contraception (condoms, birth control options, etc.) that is made readily available to teens reduces teen pregnancy significantly [5].

Some teens will choose to abstain from sex, which is completely fine too! Although some may see this as a conservative choice, teens should feel comfortable with the choice of abstinence as well.

However, there is no denying that some teenagers are going to become pregnant. So the next logical step is to support their journeys through pregnancy and teen parenting. Yet this is not widely available within the United States.

# BOUNDARIES AND RELATIONSHIPS

## Healthy and Respectful Relationships

There are many types of relationships available to have. A few are:

- Platonic friendships – where you are friends without romantic or sexual interactions
- Monogamous relationships – where you date or are partnered with one person at a time
- Polyamorous relationships – where you date or partner with more than one person at a time
- Open relationships – also known as consensual non-monogamy, where you and your partner agree to pursue other romantic or sexual relationships while still maintaining your relationship with one another

As your relationship progresses towards sex, which includes kissing all the way to penetration, it is important to talk about your perspectives on sex. What are you willing to try? How often do you feel you want to do sexual things with your partner, and do they feel the same?

It is important to keep in mind that people have different ideas of how often they want to have sex. This is often referred to as libido and can be very different depending on the person. There is no evidence that this is different for each gender, despite what you may have heard about men wanting sex more often than women [5].

Another difference in people's libido is reactive versus spontaneous sexual desire. [11] People with reactive sexual desire may not feel interested in sex until they are engaging in some sort of sexual behavior (even kissing can cause a person to react and determine that they would like to have sex). Those that are spontaneous might feel interested in sex more randomly without having to engage in anything sexual first. Both of these perspectives are valid, healthy, and normal. As always, the key is to communicate how you feel to your partner and be open to their feelings as well.

It may seem cliché, but the key to having a healthy and respectful relationship really is communication. Part of that communication for sexual and romantic relationships is talking about “what is cheating” within your relationship.

As we enter relationships with other people, our expectations for a relationship might not line up with what they expect out of a relationship. Some questions you can ask to begin communicating these expectations are:

- How would you define this relationship? Are we dating, hooking up, friends, etc.?
- What is cheating to you? Would talking to other people in a sexual way be cheating? Is watching pornography cheating?
- How often do you want to be in touch with one another and how? Should we text all the time? Do you like phone calls or video chats on the weekend?



# Consent



Another piece of advice I would like to give you is to feel comfortable setting boundaries about all things in a relationship. This doesn't just mean sex or physical touch, but also boundaries around your time, interests, friends, and family. Part of a healthy relationship is to have other people in your life as well. No one person can be everything you need. A larger support system is healthy and necessary. As we will talk about with consent, these boundaries should be set early on in a relationship, but they can always be changed as you want them to.

You may have heard of consent before, but essentially it just means the permission you give another person to touch or interact with you. In all your relationships, romantic or friendly, an open discussion of what you both are comfortable with should be held early and often. While it may be awkward at first, talking openly with your friends and partners about consent will get easier as you do it!

Just as important as discussing consent is revoking consent. This can happen at any time. You may have said that you were okay with certain kinds of touch, but then became uncomfortable quickly after. It is completely within your control to tell another person you have changed your mind. But you should also look out for body language from another person that tells you that they are uncomfortable. No means no, whether it is said aloud or not.

In certain states, consent needs to be explicitly stated. For instance, Oklahoma defines consent as "affirmative, unambiguous and voluntary agreement" [19]. Keep in mind that certain laws may require you to have explicitly said "no" in order to press charges.



Consent can become a little more complicated when drugs or alcohol are involved. One of the important parts of consent is being able to understand what you are consenting to. When someone is drunk or high, they may say they want to have sex or participate in other activities, but without full awareness they may regret what they say later.

If a person seems to not be fully aware of their surroundings, and especially if they are fully unconscious, you should not interact sexually with them. If possible, help them get to a safe place where they can rest. There will always be a chance to hang out with them again.

Sometimes people in established relationships feel that they have what is called "passive consent." This means that touching or other physical actions are assumed to be okay unless the other person says no. An example might be that you have a best friend that is always okay with being hugged, so you don't have to ask before you hug them. Passive consent can be a tricky situation to navigate and should be seriously talked about within your relationships.

For a video on consent being as simple as tea:

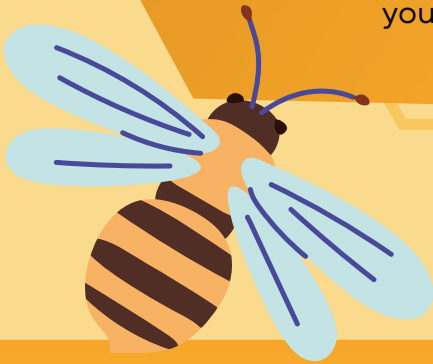
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oQbei5JGiT8&ab_channel=BlueSeatStudios)

[v=oQbei5JGiT8&ab\\_channel=BlueSeatStudios](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oQbei5JGiT8&ab_channel=BlueSeatStudios)

# HAVING SEX

There is a common misconception that “real sex” is a penis entering a vagina. There are several problems with this idea..

- It leaves out the people who are having sex without a penis and/or a vagina.
- It puts pressure on people to reach an ultimate end goal of penetration. What if you don't want to have penetrative sex? You don't have to!
- Sex is anything that you want it to be that connects you to your partner or is sexually pleasing to you.



## SEX IS NOT JUST PENETRATION!!

Another common misconception is that every teenager is having sex. For those that are, great! As long as safety, health, and consent are at the forefront of your mind, sex can be a meaningful way to connect to another person. But if you aren't having sex yet, that's great too! It's not a race and you should not feel pressured. There are more people your age who don't want to have sex than you think. And remember, you can choose which level of sexual activity you want to perform; it's all up to you.

Before we talk about the types of sex that people have, let's first talk about the things that can be helpful when having sex.

- Lube can be used by everyone! The last thing you want during sex is uncomfortable friction and lube is just the thing to help with that. Even people with vaginas, which do produce their own wetness, can benefit from the use of lube when the natural lubrication is not enough. There are many types of lube available, from flavored to sensation providing. Be sure to use body safe (and vagina safe, when needed) lube. For suggestions about specific brands, visit: <https://www.healthline.com/health/healthy-sex/lube-shopping-guide-types>
- While there should be no shame associated with orgasming quickly, especially when first experimenting with sex, those who would like to last longer have options available. These include desensitizing wipes for all genitals, medication, and creams. As always, make sure that these items are safe for the genitals they are being used on through the box directions or online information.



# Types of Sex

## Masturbation

You have likely heard of masturbation before. You may have received direct or indirect messages about whether masturbation is bad from your family, friends, religious organization, school, etc. There is often a lot of guilt surrounding masturbation, but health organizations like Planned Parenthood, have found that masturbation has many health benefits like releasing endorphins that reduce stress, improving self-esteem and body image, and relieving menstrual cramps and muscle tension. [5]

While you may think this is something that you do alone, masturbating with another person can be a way to experiment with sex with or without physical contact. Some people prefer to touch themselves during sex because they know what they like better than the other person does.

No matter what kinds of sex you are having, sex can and should be pleasurable. If you experience pain or discomfort, tell your partner. There is no shame in asking for something different and communication during sex is just as important as communication before sex.

## Manual sex

Manual sex includes anything that is mainly focused on touching, like hand jobs and fingering. In the past, people also referred to this as “heavy petting” or other slang terms. The important thing to keep in mind with manual sex is to have clean hands before and after and use lubrication as needed!

## Oral sex

Oral sex is anything that has to do with mouths touching genitals. People call this blow jobs when done to a penis, eating out when done to a vagina, or rimming when done to an anus.

An important thing to keep in mind about oral sex is that STIs can be transmitted through oral sex quite easily [5]. Condoms and dental dams should be used to prevent the spread of STIs through oral sex just as much as they should be used for penetrative sex.



## Penetration

Penetration can be done to a vagina or an anus with a penis or sex toy, like a dildo or vibrator. The important thing to keep in mind with penetration is that stretching and preparation is incredibly helpful in reducing pain. Stretching can be done with fingers or sex toys to help relax the area being penetrated and to increase pleasure.

Similarly, foreplay (such as kissing and other forms of sex) can be used to help a vagina increase its natural lubrication. In many cases, lube can and should be used to reduce friction and increase slip.

Ultimately, penetration should not be painful. If you find that it is painful, even with additional lubrication, ample preparation, and your desire to have penetrative sex, talk to a doctor or trusted adult. There are many physical and mental health reasons behind why this kind of sex can be painful.



# Body Hygiene

Showering is one of the many ways we keep ourselves clean on a daily or semi-regular basis. While some people are taught how to shower by their parents or other family members, some people never receive instructions on how to care for themselves. Important areas to clean that you may not think of are behind your ears, inside of your bellybutton, and your back. If in doubt, there are many TikToks and YouTube videos giving advice on how to properly shower.

Some people struggle with showering as a self-care task due to mental health and find it hard to motivate themselves to shower. You should not feel shame regarding these struggles, but reach out for help from those around you if you are struggling with this kind of hygiene motivation.

Other ways to keep yourself clean is to wear deodorant, change your clothes daily (especially your underwear), wear panty liners if needed, and wash your face at the beginning and end of each day.

When it comes to body hair, different people have different amounts, textures, and colors. Body hair is there to reduce friction and is completely natural. However, if you would like to remove body hair (including pubic hair found on the genitals), there are safe options available to do at home (such as shaving and Nair), but also professional services such as waxing and laser removal.



# H Y G I E N E

VAGINAS are self-cleaning. This means that they have a natural way of staying clean and a PH level that they must maintain to be healthy [12]. This doesn't mean that you don't have to clean them, but that you should never use scented soaps, douching, or other "vaginal cleanliness products." These are marketed as being vagina-safe but in reality can cause itchiness, discharge, or increase your risk for infections [12].

Speaking of discharge, this is a completely normal function of the vagina. Discharge can look different for different people and can be heavier during certain times of the month. If you are uncomfortable with the amount of discharge in your underwear, you can wear pantyliners or change your underwear more often. It is important to note that discharge also has the potential to bleach your underwear (remember that PH thing we were talking about?).

There are some infections more common for those with vaginas like UTIs and yeast infections. There are medications available for both of these infections at drugstores, but it is often most helpful to see a doctor if you are experiencing unusual itchiness, smells, or general discomfort.

Washing a penis can be slightly different depending on if you are circumcised or not. If you have foreskin, remember to move the foreskin back from the head of your penis when showering to fully clean it. Don't forget to clean your scrotum (or ball sack) as well!

After peeing, make sure to shake off any excess pee, or even better, dab with toilet paper to ensure you don't get pee on your underwear.

It is possible to get a UTI with a penis as well, so ensure that you are watching out for any discomfort when peeing. See a doctor if you feel that something may be off.

Use unscented soap in the shower to clean around and inside of the anus with either your hand or washcloth. Be sure not to use the same washcloth on other areas of the body after using it on your anus.

Wet wipes can be used for general cleaning, but they are not safe for vaginas and can cause irritation for some people with sensitive skin.

VAGINA

PENIS

ANUS



## Sex Hygiene

Try to shower before and after you have sex. At the very least, wash your hands, penis, and sex toys before using them on yourself or another person.

It is important to pee after you have sex to avoid yeast infections and urinary tract infections (UTIs) that can come from sex.

Penises that have not been circumcised are more at risk of trapping unwanted bacteria under the foreskin [5]. If you are uncircumcised, be sure to clean under the foreskin before and after sex.

Some people prefer douching and other forms of preparation for anal sex. While this is not required for pleasurable anal sex, determine what kinds of cleanliness are most comfortable for you and your partner.

## Cleaning Sex Toys

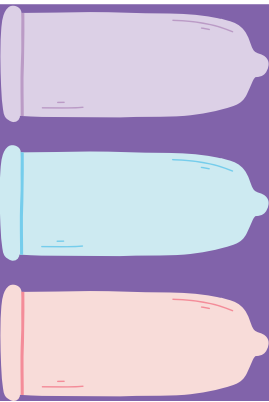
Sex toys should be cleaned before and after using them. It should be clear why you need to clean them afterwards but cleaning them before helps remove any dirt or bacterial that may be on them from sitting in a drawer or box.

You can buy sex toy specific soap, but any antibacterial, unscented hand soap will work too.

If using sex toys with multiple partners, clean between partners and/or use condoms, dental dams, or other protective layers on the sex toy itself.

Hygiene is Two Thirds of Health.  
-Lebanese Proverb

# PROTECTING YOURSELF AND OTHERS



The use of male condoms (for covering the penis) and female condoms (for covering the inside of the vagina) can be used to reduce the risk of pregnancy and STIs. They can be used by people of all sexual orientations and are typically the easiest to find form of contraception. Some important practices to increase the safety of condoms is to:

- immediately take off the condom and throw it away after ejaculation (for those with penises) or after concluding the sexual activity (for those without penises),
- to use water-based lubricants, and
- to use a new condom each time you have sex [5].

Other forms of birth control use hormones to reduce fertility and create changes within the vagina so that sperm is unlikely to cause pregnancy [5]. These include the pill, implants, hormonal shots, and intra-uterine devices (IUDs).

There are also after-the-fact options like PlanB that can be effective at preventing pregnancy after sex has taken place. However, keep in mind that these pills have weight limits as well as other limitations so talk to a doctor or trusted adult before relying upon this method of birth control.

Each of these methods have different success rates at preventing pregnancy, but they do not protect from STIs as they are not a physical barrier between you and another person. Talk to your doctor about which form of birth control might be right for your lifestyle, body, and life situation.

Birth control methods that rely on your behaviors include the pull-out option and ovulation tracking. Both methods are risky in their own way.

The pull-out method is when a penis is removed from the vagina before ejaculation so that semen doesn't get into the vagina. The issue with this is, there is plenty of sperm (the stuff that actually causes pregnancy) in the precum that leaks from the penis before ejaculation even takes place.

Ovulation tracking is also risky as it relies upon the person with the vagina to track their ovulation cycle with near-perfect accuracy. However, from either human error or "abnormal" ovulation cycles, people are still at risk of becoming unintentionally pregnant from this method.

Neither of these methods will protect you from STIs.

More permanent birth control options are available for both people with vaginas and penises.

Tubal ligation (aka getting your tubes tied) is a surgery where a doctor cuts and ties off the fallopian tubes that lead to the ovaries so that pregnancy cannot occur [5].

For people with penises, a vasectomy can be performed in which the vas deferens (tubes within the penis) are cut to prevent sperm from being let out through ejaculation [5].

Both of these surgeries are quite effective at stopping pregnancy, but do not stop you from getting STIs.

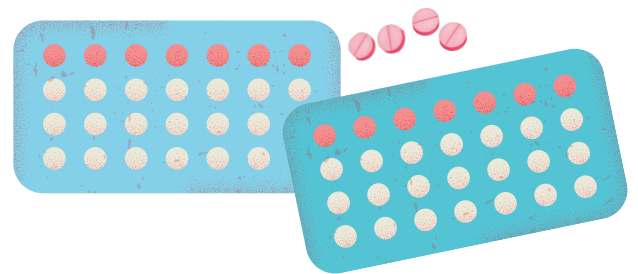
# Pregnancy

Pregnancy occurs when sperm reaches an egg during an ovulation period and gestates into a fetus [13]. For some, pregnancy is an exciting development that enriches their life; for others, especially when unintended, pregnancy can be a very scary prospect. For more information and resources about pregnancy in your state and community, visit: <https://www.plannedparenthood.org/health-center>

Abortion, the termination of a fetus, is a controversial topic, especially within the United States. Depending on the age you are and the state you are in, you might have more or less access to safe abortion options when you need them [14]. Remember that your choice to keep or abort a fetus does not make you a bad person. Every person must do what they think is right for their body and life situation.

Within the United States, you may come across fake clinics that do not intend to aid you in either abortion or prenatal care. To find out more information about abortion resources available within your state and community, visit:

<https://www.plannedparenthood.org/abortion-access>



## Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)

There are many types of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) that can be contracted through sexual activities (but also through blood transfusions, intravenous drug use, and other behaviors) [5]. Young people, especially those between the ages of 15 and 24, are the largest group to contract new STIs [5]. This means it is really important that young people, like you, learn how to have sex safely and get tested for STIs more often.

Some STIs are curable (such as chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis). Others are incurable, but manageable through medicine and other treatments. These include: HIV, HPV, hepatitis B, and herpes.

Getting tested for STIs protects not only you, but your current and future partners. There are clinics available that test for STIs within most communities. To find out where you can find STI testing and how often you should get tested, visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/std/prevention/screeningreccs.htm>

**Q:** How do I know if I should get tested for an STI?

**A:** If you have symptoms like bumps, sores, swelling, itching, abnormal discharge or bleeding, or painful urination or sex, visit a doctor for STI testing. However, some STIs do not have symptoms, so getting tested regularly is important [15].

There are various medicines and treatments available for many of the STIs listed above. Antibiotics are often prescribed by a doctor for bacterial infections like chlamydia and gonorrhea. Antiretrovirals help in the fight against HIV infections. Other forms of pre- and post-exposure medicines for HIV are now available as well. For more information on PEP and PREP, visit:

<https://www.cdc.gov/stophivtogether/library/topics/prevention/brochures/cdc-lsht-prevention-brochure-nows-the-time-patient.pdf>

# SEX PERFORMANCE

## Sending Nudes

We've talked about the sex activities that take place in person, but what about the sex that takes place online or over messaging? Sexting, especially the sending of nudes, is quite popular especially on apps like Snapchat and Instagram. However, it is important for you to know that people who are underage that send or receive nudes could be criminally charged with child pornography crimes. This age varies from state to state and country to country, but it is something to keep in mind before you send or receive nudes from a partner.

Another thing to keep in mind when taking and sending nude photos is that they do not always stay private. When sending a picture of yourself to someone else, there is always the risk that they will share that photo with other people. If a partner sends you their nudes, it is only between you and that partner. Sharing those nudes with others without your partner's knowledge and permission is a violation of consent and may be considered illegal in some cases. There is a phenomenon called revenge porn that has become a big problem on the internet in recent years. Essentially ex-partners or angry current partners have been known to post other people's nudes online without their consent. While this is illegal and the law is beginning to find beneficial ways of prosecuting these crimes, the person whose nudes have been shared may face embarrassment, harassment, and lifelong consequences that they did not ask for.

## Pornography and Sex Work

Porn is a very common thing for adolescents to watch, but there are some things to keep in mind. While the use of porn itself is not necessarily harmful [16], the expectations for sex that porn can give to some people can harm future relationships. People that watch porn can have unrealistic expectations of what people's bodies should and do look like and how to behave within sexual relationships.

There is also some concern about "addiction" to pornography. However, research has found that there is no basis for an actual addiction to porn; more that there can be intense distress caused by the use of pornography for those that feel guilty about watching it [17]. Those that do not feel such strong feelings of guilt, and therefore don't feel so awful for watching it, are more able to watch it in a "normal" way.

So is the answer to never watch porn? No, but be sure that you understand that porn is a fictional movie. The actors on the screen are doing things that your partners might not be comfortable with and they likely look different than the people you will have sex with in your life. Keeping in mind how porn is different from reality will reduce some of the negative outcomes of watching porn.

People who perform in porn (whether part of an official company or on online platforms like OnlyFans) and have sex with people for money are part of an industry called sex work. The moral arguments surrounding sex work are quite complicated and up for interpretation, but the important thing to keep in mind is that sex work is work. The people that engage in sex work are real people that deserve compassion and respect. If you decide to join the sex work industry as an adult, please just keep in mind your safety and the laws surrounding what you are doing and the state or country you are in.



# SEXUAL ASSUALT AND HARRASSMENT

While the major goal of this booklet has been to talk about the positive parts of sex and relationships, there are times where people get hurt sexually, physically, emotionally, and mentally by other people in their lives.

## Sexual Harrassment

The definition of sexual harassment is usually limited to sexual behaviors that make you uncomfortable at work or school [5], but I would like to expand that to any discomfort you experience because of sexual comments or behavior that you have not consented to, anywhere.

In a school or work setting, there are two types of harassment that have been defined. Quid-pro-quo harassment is anytime someone asks you for something sexual in exchange for a benefit (like a good grade or a promotion). Hostile environment harassment is just when the sexual harassment makes it hard to be comfortable in the setting anymore.

It may seem hard to know when something has become sexual harassment, but the bottom line is you should not be made to be uncomfortable by people around you. If you have asked a person to stop or leave you alone and they refuse (or even if you haven't said it out loud but have given nonverbal cues that you are uncomfortable) talk to someone in authority that you trust.

Many schools and workplaces have HR departments and Title IX offices for just this reason. You should feel safe from uncomfortable comments and actions. Do not feel bad for reaching out for help.

## Sexual Assault and Rape

Sexual assault is anytime a person is touched sexually or made to have some sort of sex that they have not consented to. It is a broader term that also includes rape, but the legal definition of rape is usually limited to forced or unwanted penetration [5].

Like with sexual harassment, sexual assault is never the fault of the victim. It doesn't matter what the situation was, who the assaulter was, or what the victim was doing or wearing. You should never be assaulted by people around you.

For people that have been sexually assaulted, it can be incredibly hard to tell other people, much less the police. While the police or medical professionals are the people that need to examine a victim of assault in order for the assaulter to be prosecuted, this can be a delicate situation. The methods of gathering evidence of a sexual assault can be invasive and feel like another violation. [18] If possible, talk to a trusted adult or doctor as soon as possible.

Dealing with the aftereffects of a sexual assault is traumatizing and difficult to navigate, but please remember that it is not your fault. If you ever need help, there are people available 24/7 to help you at the National Sexual Assault Hotline: 1-800-656-4673

## Relationship Violence

What I would like for you to keep in mind with relationship violence is that it can look different for everyone. This violence can be physical (such as slapping or shoving), verbal (such as cussing or screaming), or emotional (like manipulation or gaslighting). Using self-harm or suicide as a form of threatening another person is also a form of violence that should not be taken lightly. Anything damaging or harmful that a loved one does to hurt you can be a form of relationship violence.

Much of the information about this, especially domestic violence amongst partners, focuses on men as the abuser. While this is the case in many abusive relationships, please keep in mind that anyone can be an abuser. Even in relationships that don't have men, like lesbian couples, abuse can still happen and should be taken just as seriously. The people in your life, whether that is your parents, partner, friends, or teachers, should treat you with respect. It is never your fault when another person has been violent towards you.

If you are struggling with relationship violence in your life, call the National Domestic Violence Hotline and they can connect you with resources in your area. 1-800-799-SAFE

# Additional Resources

## Health Services

### **Local - Stillwater**

STD Testing Options:

<https://www.saferstdtesting.com/free-std-testing/stillwater-ok>

Wings of Hope Family Crisis Services:

<https://wingsofhopeok.com/>

OSU Sexual Health Research Lab: 405-744-3931

LGBTQ+ Affirming Therapist Nearby:

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/therapists/ok/stillwater?category=gay>

### **National - United States**

Diversity Family Health:

[www.diversityfamilyhealth.com](http://www.diversityfamilyhealth.com)

Planned Parenthood:

[www.plannedparenthood.org](http://www.plannedparenthood.org)

National Center for Transgender Equality:

<https://transequality.org/know-your-rights/health-care>

### **State-Wide - Oklahoma**

Healthy Teens Oklahoma:

[www.healthyteensok.org/](http://www.healthyteensok.org/)

parentPRO:

<https://oklahoma.gov/health/health-education/children---family-health/family-support-and-prevention-service/parentpro.html>

Diversity Chest Compression Binder Program:

<https://www.diversitycenterofoklahoma.org/chest-binder-program.html>

### **Booklet Feedback Survey**



# Hotlines

*Crisis Text Line: Text LGBTQ to 741-741*

*The Trevor Project: 1-866-488-7386*

*Trans Lifeline: 1-877-565-8860*

*LGBT National Hotline: 1-888-843-4564*

*National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 988*

*National Sexual Assault Hotline: Chat at [online.rainn.org](https://online.rainn.org) or call 800-656-4673*

*National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-7233 (SAFE) or chat online at [thehotline.org](https://thehotline.org)*

# Support Groups

Central Oklahoma Transgender Support Group:

[www.twofoldgroup.org](http://www.twofoldgroup.org)

Gay Lesbian Bi Youth Group: 918-587-1300

OKC Youth United: [www.okcyu.org](http://www.okcyu.org)

Openarms Youth Project: [www.openarmsproject.org](http://www.openarmsproject.org)

Youth Services of Tulsa - LGBTQ Support Group: [www.yst.org](http://www.yst.org)

Teen Parent Connection: <https://teenparentconnection.org/programs/group-services/>

## Shared Media Activity - Instructions

There are many opportunities in modern media to observe and talk about relationships, sexuality, gender, and other topics from this booklet. Choose one of the following or one of your choice that you can read/watch/interact with your guardian or trusted adult. Create a book club or watch party with your guardian or trusted adult and then discuss the media afterwards.

Some topics to discuss include:

- Did the piece of media seem realistic to you? What about it was unrealistic based on what you have learned through this booklet or observed in your daily life?
- Was there a part of the media that made you uncomfortable? Sit with that feeling and discuss what was uncomfortable. Did your guardian also find it uncomfortable? Why?
- Did you feel connected to a character or narrative within the piece of media? What made you feel connected to them? Was it only your identity similarities or more so the experiences they had?
- Make up your own discussion questions or look up questions specific to the media you consumed online.