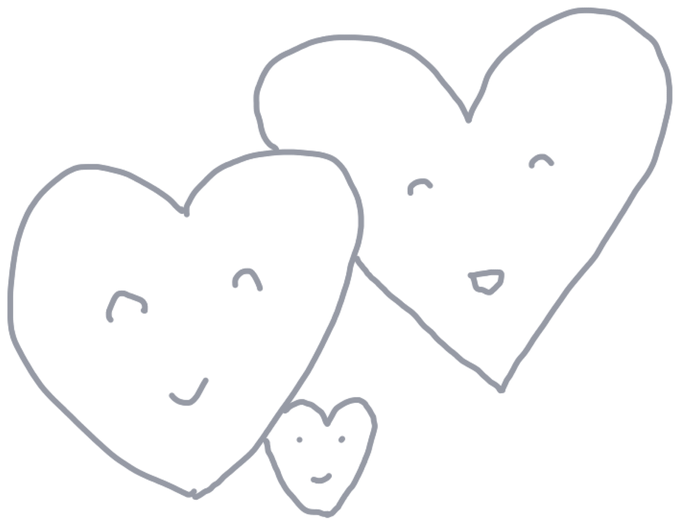

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Printed in-house

Gasp!

A guide to your body, your mind, and being alive.

Planned Parenthood Generation Action @ Penn State University

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We've got lots to cover.

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A Manifesto, for a Moment

Dear Reader,

The idea for *Gasp!* came from a conversation I had with someone who reached out to me on Twitter, asking me advice because he was going to have sex for the first time that weekend and was nervous. He knew I worked for Planned Parenthood, so he thought I could help. I did the best I could, but I realized in that moment there aren't that many resources for young people, especially young queer people, to talk about sex, sexuality, and relationships.

Later, I discovered that there was no mandatory sex education in Pennsylvania public schools. The rate of condom usage among teens has plummeted, and in my conversations with students I have found that most young folks don't know a whole lot about their bodies.

This zine is intended to help give comprehensive basic information about every aspect of sexuality we could think of, from healthy relationships to internal condoms, to the basics of various sexual positions. I hope you find it useful, and that it helps you begin to think about sex, sexuality, and your body in new and exciting ways.

Love,
Christine O'Donovan-Zavada, Lachlan Campbell, and team

Your Sexual Bill of Rights

The right to make your own decisions about being sexual (or not) regardless of your partner's wishes.

The right to make your own decisions about birth control and protection from sexually transmitted infections (STIs) regardless of your partner's wishes; the right to make free and responsible reproductive choices.

The right to ask a partner if they have been examined for STIs.

The right to tell anyone that you are not comfortable being hugged or kissed in certain ways.

The right to tell a partner what you would like sexually or not sexually—to tell a partner that you would like to be hugged, cuddled, or touched without sex.

The right to sexual autonomy, sexual integrity, and safety of your sexual body.

The right to masturbate.

The right to sexual privacy, sexual equity, and sexual pleasure.

The right to emotional sexual expression.

The right to comprehensive sexual education.

The right to sexual information based upon scientific inquiry.

The right to sexual health care.

Consent: More Than Just "Yes" or "No"

Think back for a moment at when you were young, maybe in elementary school. What happened if someone tickled you when you didn't want them to? Or hugged you? Or otherwise touched you in a way you didn't want? Oftentimes, no one takes it seriously. We learn from a young age, especially people raised as girls, that we should take violations of our boundaries with a smile and a laugh.

A great disservice has been done to people during their sex education, distilling the idea of consent down to the act of saying yes to sex. Consent is more complicated than that—we all know this from our experiences, beyond just sex, but in life generally. We have all had boundaries violated by people we trust, and people we don't know. That idea of boundaries is fundamental to consent.

When it comes explicitly to sex, there are a million and one reasons why someone might verbally say yes when they don't want to. Power dynamics, intoxication, social pressure, and emotional manipulation can all lead to someone saying yes when they don't want to. The emotional fallout for the victim remains the same as if they said no and it was ignored.

Consent is...

F **Freely given.** It's not okay to pressure, trick, or threaten someone into saying yes. And you can't give consent if you're drunk, high, or passed out.

R **Reversible.** It's okay to say yes and then change your mind—at any time! Even if you've done it before, and even if you're both naked in bed.

I **Informed.** You can only consent to something if you have all the facts. For example, if someone says they'll use a condom and then they don't, there isn't full consent.

E **Enthusiastic.** When it comes to sex, you should do stuff you WANT to do, not things people expect you to do. If someone doesn't seem enthusiastic (happy, excited, or energized), stop and check in.

yasss

S **Specific.** Saying yes to one thing (like going to the bedroom to make out) doesn't mean you're saying yes to other things (like having sex).

Flickin' Your Bean

The FUNdamentals

That's right, baby, we're talkin' about masturbation! Knowing your body, what you like, what you don't like, and how to get off is a pretty important part of your sexual life (if you choose to have one). How is your partner gonna get you off if you don't know how to get yourself off? Here are some foundational things to know about taking yourself to orgasm town.

Feeling good. It's about more than knowing about your anatomy (though please look at the diagram of a vulva and all its parts and glory). It's also about your mental state: stress and anxiety can kill your mood. Finding a time a place where you feel comfortable is critical to twirling your pearl.

Exploring what turns you on. Looking at porn, reading erotica, or just using your imagination are all great ways to figure out what you're into. However, porn and erotica do not reflect the reality of sex—they are fantasy. People with vulvas: you are not expected or supposed to enjoy someone jackhammering your vagina for a half hour.

Exploring your body. Not everyone comes the same way. Some people only need penetration, some people need penetration and clitoral stimulation, some people only need clitoral stimulation. Time also varies—for some it is a 3 minute job, for others it can take much longer.

Tips & Tricks

The most important thing to remember is that everyone's body is different, and different things work for different people. There is no normal masturbation, but here are some fun tricks.

Lube: not just for butts! Sometimes your body doesn't make enough natural lubricant. Lube is a great way to get it going.

Get cozy. Warm up your vulva by cupping it in your hand. Use your whole hand to massage your outer lips.

Be gentle. Try tracing lines with your fingers on your labia majora, your upper thighs, your mons pubis. Think of it like tickling—you want those nice little shivers.

Be slow. Take your time. This is all about you. Teasing yourself slowly can help heighten your sensitivity, making your body crave orgasm even more.

Penetration. If you enjoy penetration, go for it! Inserting a finger or two into your vagina and making the "come hither" motion. It's not about recreating a penis—it's about touching all the parts of you that want to be touched, so experiment!

Toys. Some people can't orgasm without them! It is perfectly normal to not find your rhythm with just your hands—try a vibrator if it's not working out for you. You can often get bullet vibrators at your local pharmacy.

Signs of Unhealthy Relationships

You don't have to have a reason to break up with someone. The only thing that matters is that you don't want to be in a relationship with them. However, there are specific signs of unhealthy behaviors in a partner that can be of particular concern. Many of these behaviors can be present in all kinds of relationships, not just romantic ones. You may also recognize behaviors here that you exhibit. If that's the case—that's ok! Recognizing it now and working to correct it is all you can do.

Putting you on a pedestal. This is often represented positively in media as the "manic pixie dream girl" trope. When someone idolizes you, and is constantly telling you things like "you're unlike anyone else I've ever met", even if it isn't in a sexual context, this is a form of objectification.

Monitoring. If your partner is constantly asking where you are, who you are with, and gets angry if you don't tell them in explicit detail what you have been up to, these are signs of unhealthy controlling behavior. If your partner constantly crosses boundaries, that is unsafe behavior in and of itself.

Isolation. If your partner finds excuses to keep you from your friends and family, makes you feel guilty for spending time without them, and is excessively critical of your friends, that is an enormous red flag. They are trying to eliminate your external sources of support.

Controlling behavior. If your partner makes unsolicited negative comments on your appearance, tells you ways you should or shouldn't dress or to cut your hair, they do not respect your bodily autonomy.

Diving in too quickly. If you start dating someone and it becomes very intense very quickly, with high expectations of commitment established too close to the beginning your relationship, than it's based on codependency, not love.

Permission. Being considerate and asking your partner about decisions you are making about yourself can be a healthy part of a relationship. However, if it feels like you have to ask permission for things, like hair cuts, work decisions, or social events, for fear of emotional or physical consequences from your partner, that is unsafe behavior.

Unhealthy Relationships, Continued

"**Rescue me.**" This is a behavior that can work both ways. If you are in a relationship because it feels like either you or them could not survive outside of that relationship, that is codependency. You both should have sources of support outside the relationship. You need to understand that you cannot save anyone. People have to exist independently and have sources of support outside of their partner, and if your partner threatens self harm or other self destructive behaviors if you don't do what they want, that is emotional abuse.

Hot/cold. If your partner has constant mood swings. And expects you to deal with them randomly exploding or giving you the silent treatment, that is enormous burden on you that you do not have to deal with. Being kind when someone is having a rough time is different than patterns of making you deal with their problems.

Violence. If anyone, ever, for any reason, threatens or commits violence against you, even indirectly—punching the wall next to your head, breaking your things, etc, leave as quickly and safely as you can.

END OF STORY

I Had an Abortion.

You may have noticed that people have a lot to say about abortion. That it's immoral, that's it's normal, that it's okay but only under certain circumstances, etc. I had an abortion, and my main experience of it was that it was inconvenient. Living in State College, I had to drive to Maryland to avoid the 2-day waiting period required in Pennsylvania. My insurance didn't cover most of it, so I had to find money from friends and family to help pay for it. It was, above all else, a hassle.

The representation of abortion in pop culture for the most part is that pregnant people have them when the pregnancy is as the result of some sort of trauma or terrible accident. For me, the condom broke, and my birth control apparently didn't do its job. When I told my partner, he was incredibly kind. He, my friends, and my coworkers all went out of their way to support me so that it was as simple as possible, though it did still make me miss two days of work.

A lot of people have very dramatic abortion stories, but this is mine. The condom broke, my birth control failed, and I got pregnant—it happens, and it happens more often than you'd think.

—*Anonymous*

Safe Words

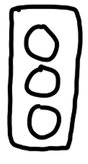
Not Just for BDSM

Safe words are most often associated with BDSM, when they are a matter of physical and emotional safety for the submissive partner. However, they are useful in ALL types of sexual and non sexual situations!

What should my safe word be? In popular media, safe words are often silly things like “rutabaga”. While you can employ this method, a more fun and more nuanced version is “red, yellow, green.” Just like a stop light, red means absolutely stop, yellow means slow down or that you are unsure, and green means go! It’s much easier to remember in a sexual situation than a random word.

Non verbal safe words. If you are doing something, like oral sex or being gagged, you need to establish something nonverbal to communicate needing to stop or slow down. Tapping your partner's thigh is a simple and easy one to use.

Non-sexual situations. Sometimes establishing a safe word or a “reset” word can be useful with a partner when you just need a break. In an argument, in social situations, whatever - having something you can say that means “I need to take a walk/calm down/breathe” can be a lifesaver.



In both sexual and nonsexual interactions, positive, healthy communication is an absolute necessity for many reasons.

First, you and your partner should communicate your boundaries. Setting clear, serious boundaries for things you don’t want or don’t enjoy is an important part of great sex.

Second, you know what is great? Helping your partner get you off. Don’t be afraid to tell your partner exactly what you like and don’t like. If you need clitoral stimulation, penetration, whatever, tell them! They’re not mind readers. Similarly, ask your partner what things they’re into. Establishing open communication about likes and dislikes, turn ons and turn offs, is the one thing that universally will make your sex better.

Third, in relationships in general, communication is better than silence every time. This applies equally to friendships and romantic relationships—talk about it! Ensure that your partner is happy and feels safe by checking in and level setting every once in a while.

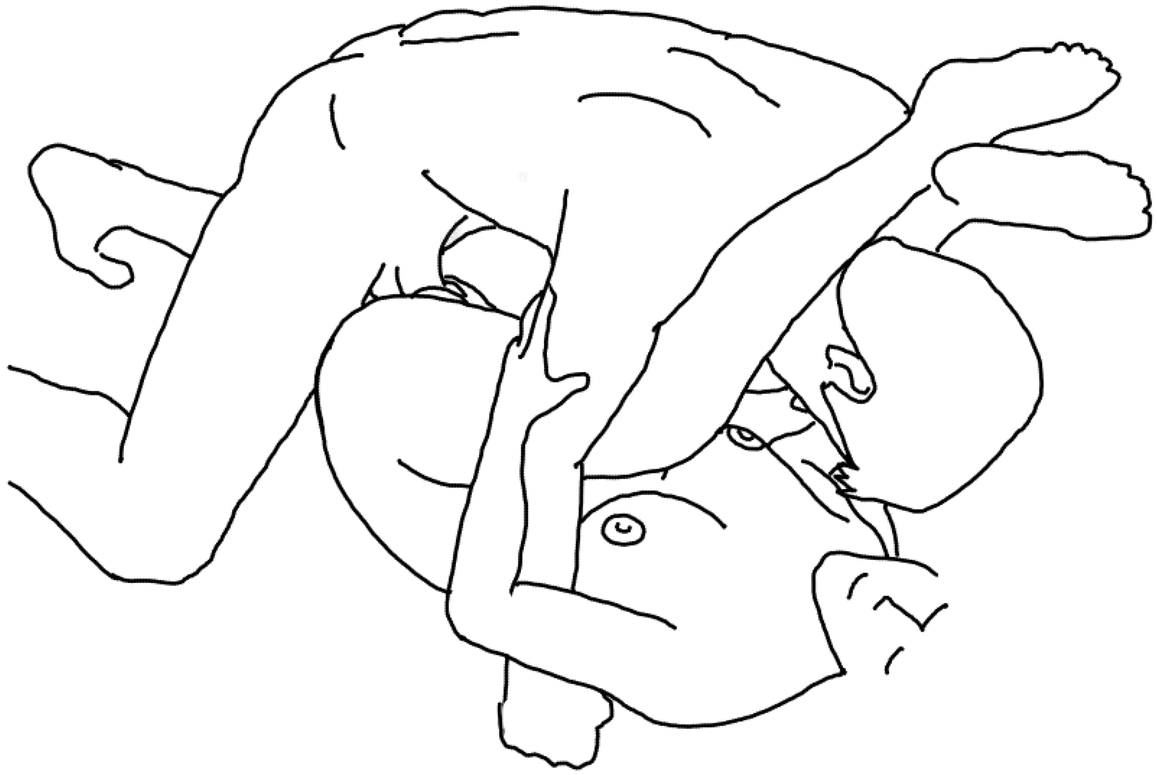
Penetration

You hear a lot about sexual positions, but the reality is there's a few main ones most people use. The colloquial terms for these are missionary, rider (aka "cowgirl"), and doggy style. Most other positions are simply variations on these three. These are also not limited to penis in vagina sex! They can be great for people with whatever genitalia who enjoy penetrative sex.

Missionary. The receiving partner is lying on their back with their legs spread, and most often their knees/thighs are pressed back towards their chest (this is known as the "Viennese oyster," depicted to the right), or spread away from the body (known as the "butterfly" position).

A fun variation on this is having the receiving partner hook their legs around the penetrating partner's shoulders; this allows for deeper penetration, and access to the clitoris if they have one.

Having a pillow or other prop placed under the receiving partner's hips can help things fit together better, and making a "C" shape with their body with pillows under their hips and head can help with finding their prostate (if they have one).



Penetration, Continued

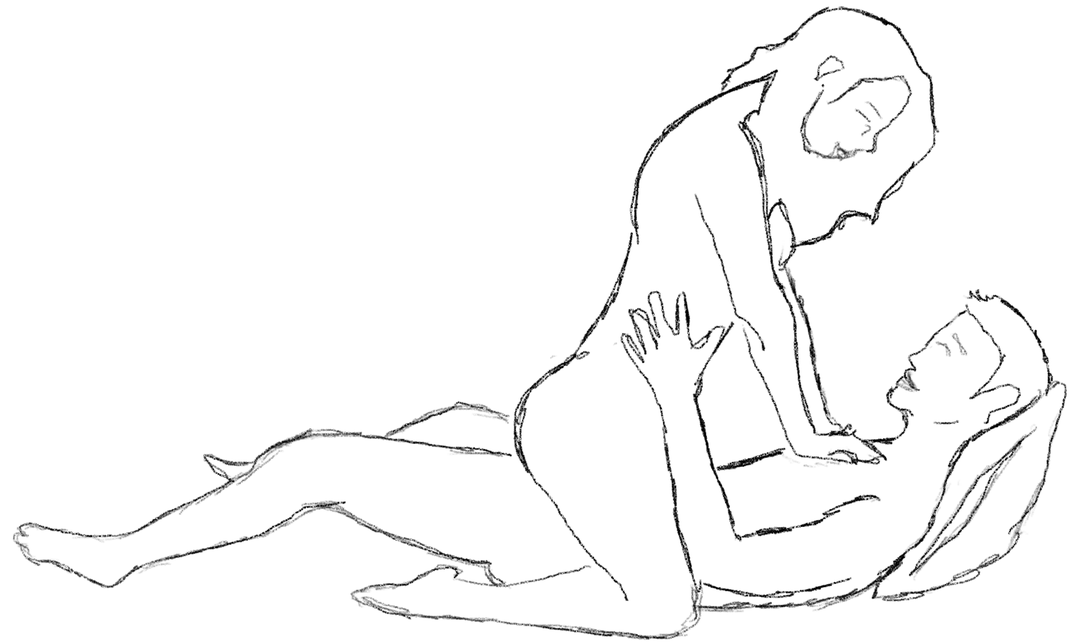
Rider. Sometimes referred to as “cowgirl”, this is when the penetrating partner is lying on their back, and the receiving partner straddles the penis (or strap on!).

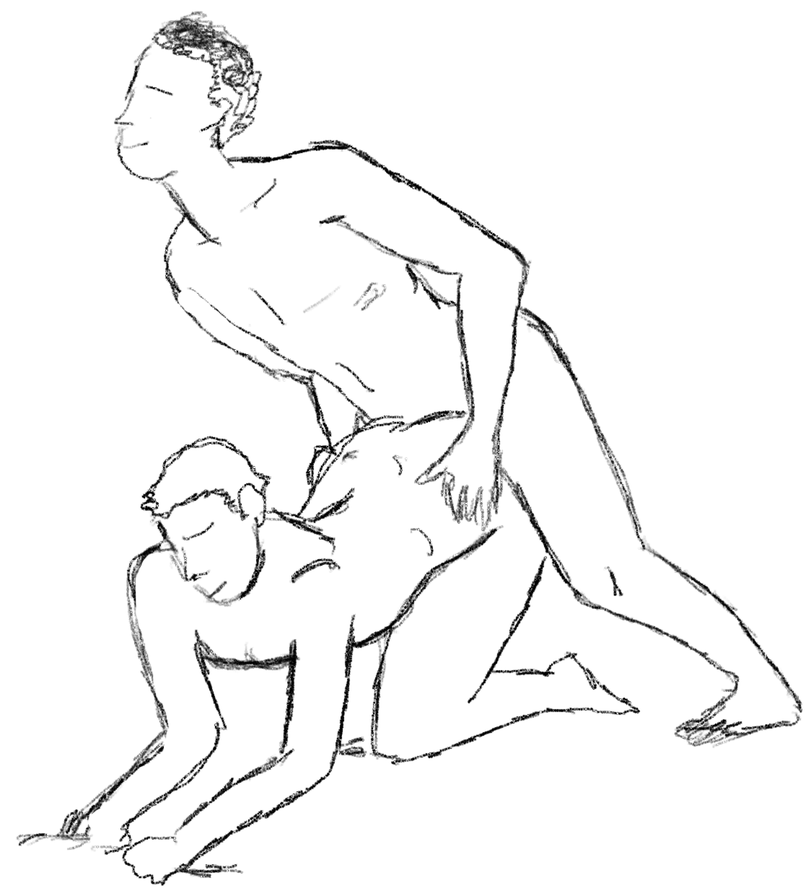
This can provide deep penetration, as well as access to the clitoris if the receiving partner has one. Riding also allows the receiving partner to control the pace and rhythm, which missionary limits.

Riding is also great for trying out different rhythms and angles for the receiving partner. Swiveling their hips, trying more than just “up down up down,” can open up a whole new realm of pleasure.

Doggy style. The receiving partner is on their hands and knees or otherwise bent over, legs spread, and the penetrating partner is standing or kneeling behind them, entering their anus or vagina from behind.

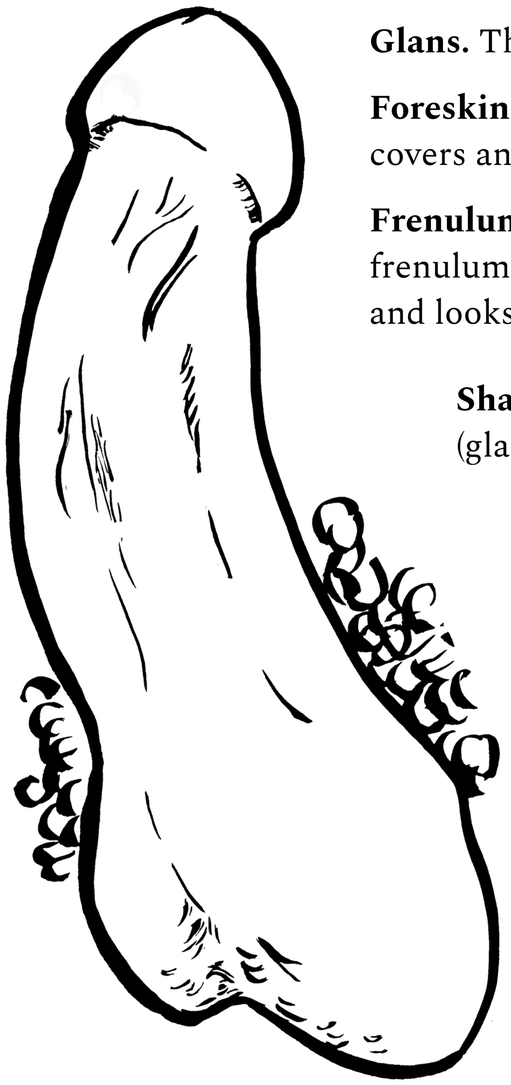
Doggy style can be great for deeper penetration, as well as giving both partners some element of control and freedom of movement.





Illustrations by
@redrawnoxen

Oral Sex on Penises



Glans. The tip of the penis.

Foreskin. The foreskin is a patch of skin that covers and protects the head (glans).

Frenulum. For uncircumcised penises, the frenulum is the only piece of the foreskin left, and looks like a small "v" below the head.

Shaft. The shaft extends from the tip (glans) to where it meets the lower belly.

Scrotum (balls). These hang under the penis, and are very sensitive!

Don't neglect the balls. Cut or uncut, the balls are a wonderful source of pleasure. Rolling them in your hand, massaging them with your tongue—explore!

Keep it wet. Use lube and saliva to keep everything slick and lubricated.

Keep it tight. Circumcised penises are less sensitive, so try to keep your lips wrapped around your teeth so you're squeezing the head (lightly) as you take it into your mouth.

Find the frenulum. The underside of the head of the penis, where the glans meets the shaft, is the most sensitive part of a circumcised penis.

Focus on the tip. The foreskin is your friend! Uncut penises have millions of nerve endings in the tip, the head of an uncut penis is basically a clitoris.

Get handsy. Use your hand to work the shaft while you focus your mouth on the tip.

Be gentle. Think of it more like a massage than a blowjob. Swirling your tongue or thumb around the tip and massaging the shaft is going to feel much better for your partner than just jerking it around.

Don't go too deep. Because of how sensitive the tip is, "deep throating" won't be as much fun for your partner as you might think.

Watch the suction. Focus more on licking, stroking, and massaging.

Listen. The best sex tip of all time is to communicate with your partner because everything is different. Listening to what your partner likes and reading their cues is the only way to have truly great sex.

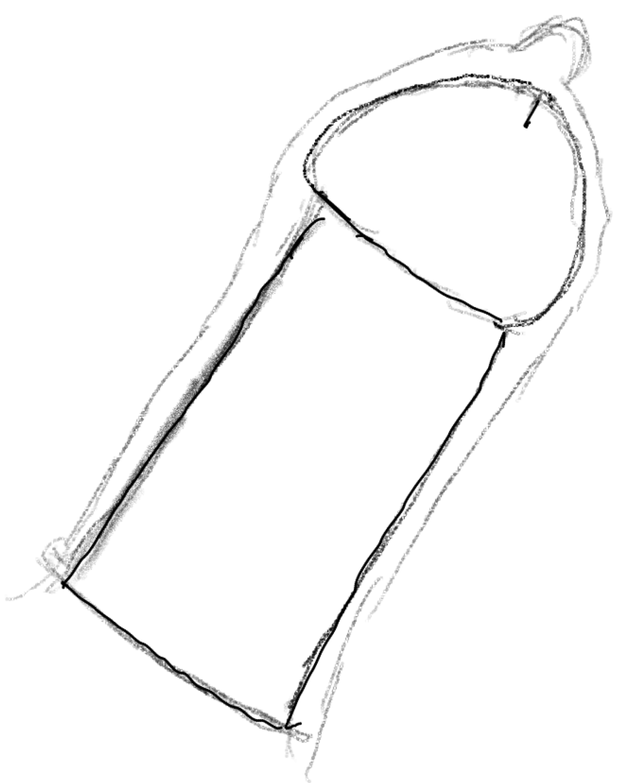
Stay in control. If you don't want to choke on it, you don't have to. Porn teaches us that blowjobs are just letting your partner ram the back of your throat, which is great if that's what you're into, but NOT necessary for an amazing blowjob. You can use your tongue and lips to create that sensation, while working the shaft with your hand.

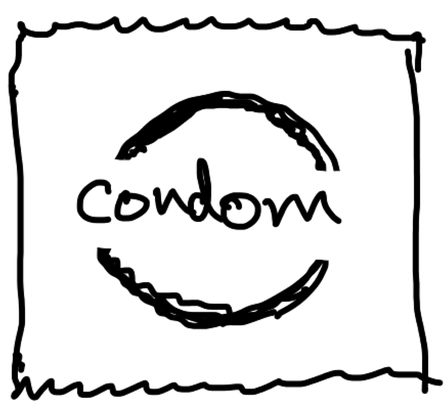
Have fun! That's what sex is for.

Yassss, Let's Go!

Tip: Use Lube.

- Use it even if you don't think it's necessary.
- It adds extra pleasure.
- Using lube doesn't mean there is anything wrong or abnormal.
- Start with a few drops and add more if ya need it!
- Dry condoms are more likely to break (uh-oh).
- Use water-based lube. Oil-based products ruin silicone toys and condoms.
- Try different brands—super worth it!





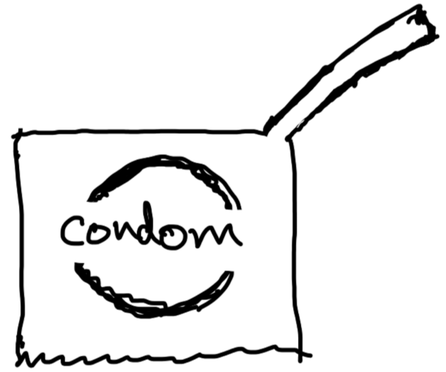
BREAKING NEWS—
CONDOMS ARE YOUR FRIEND!

- **They can be fun and not suck!** They prevent STI transmission and pregnancy, they're easy to use, they're way cheaper than a kid or a chronic STI, and they're for everyone.
- **Practice.** Are you going to have sex in the dark? Are you going to put it on someone else? etc. Do it on your own to get comfy.
- **Internal condoms.** The lesser known rubber for penetration—tougher to find and more expensive, but can be inserted hours beforehand (goes inside vagina or anus). They can be a little tricky at first, YouTube can help.
- **External condoms.** Well known, widely available, cheap (goes on the penis or sex toy). Every condom you can find is going to be nearly the same; the gimmicks don't matter, regular size fits virtually everyone, and they'll work fine if stored correctly.
- **Dental dams.** For oral sex on the vulva/clit or anus; they can prevent orally-transmitted STIs

Where to Find Condoms @ PSU

- HealthWorks—free! Basement of IM + tables in the HUB
- your friends at Planned Parenthood Generation Action and Triota—free @ condom handouts + tables around campus
- McClanahan's, Target, CVS, gas stations, Sheetz, everywhere!
- myonecondoms.com
- goPuff
- Amazon

A Guide for Using External Condoms

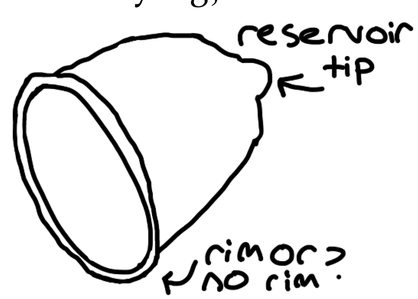


Store correctly. Ensure sure they're stored safely in a cool, dry place.

Open the condom using the easy-tear edges. Be careful not to rip the condom when opening the package!

Put on the condom before there is any contact between the penis and any fluid-producing orifice.

Check to see which way it's rolled. You want it to unroll easily down the shaft. The easiest way to check is that if there is a rim at the base, it's right side out. If there isn't a rim, it's inside out. Don't check this by putting it on and trying, because pre-cum can transmit STIs!



Make sure the reservoir tip is pointed the right way.

You can lube the inside too!

Pinch the reservoir tip with your fingers, place the condom over the head of the penis, and roll it down.

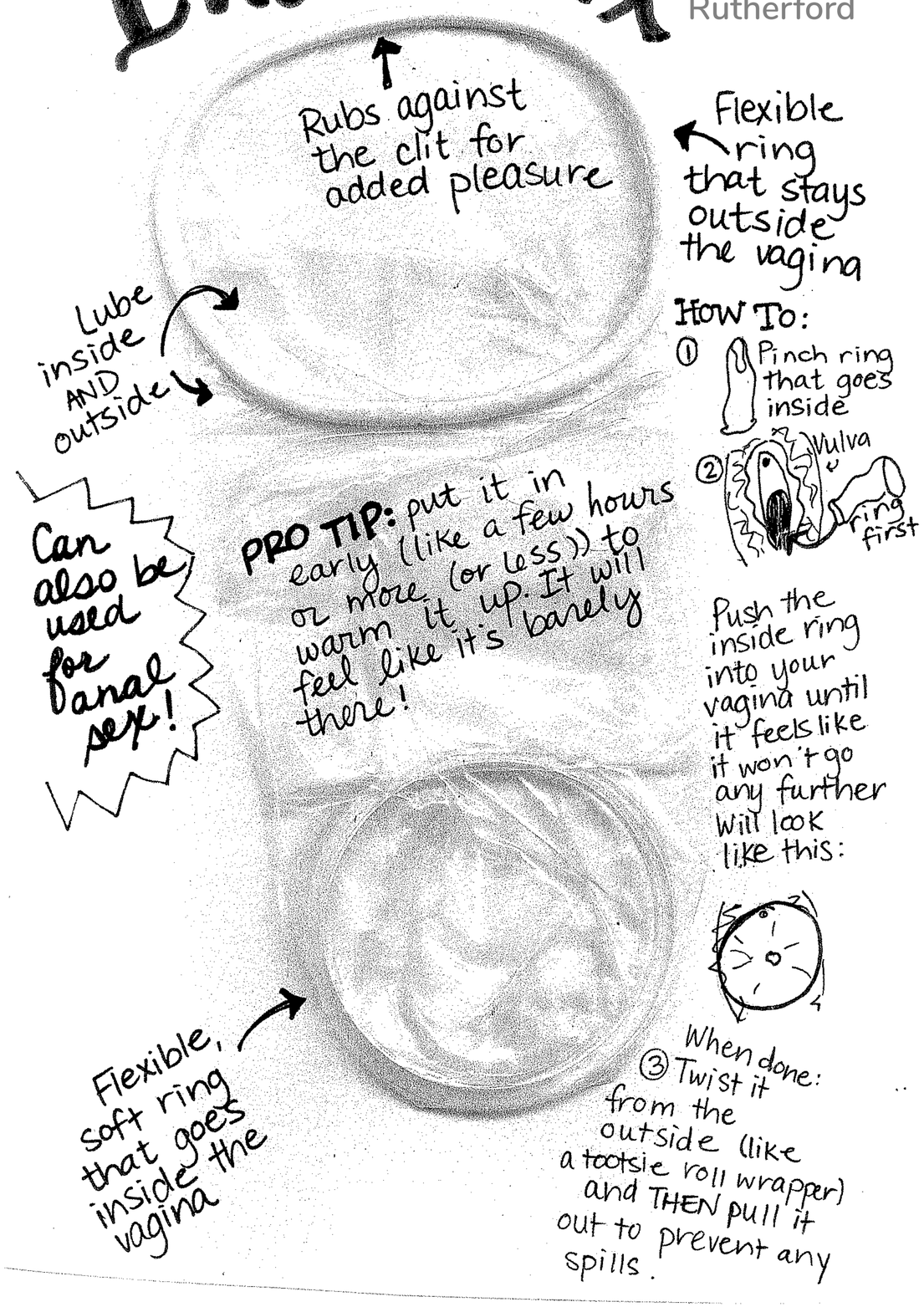
Replace the condom if you're switching between different types of sex (vaginal to anal, oral to anal, oral to vaginal, etc).

Take it off quickly after sex to prevent seepage (and when the penis softens it can be easier for it to fall off.

Tie off the end and throw it away!

Internal

By Pam Rutherford



Oral Sex on Vulvas

Start gentle. Increase pressure and speed slowly, but start gently to establish a baseline.

Take your time. This is not a 2 min job, nor should it be. Rushing it will kill the mood—it's not a race.

Explore. Use your hands to caress their thighs, kiss all around the vulva and the mons pubis, and explore their many erogenous zones!

Switch it up. Whatever you're doing, make sure to vary speed, pressure, and motion. This will help you find what works best for them.

Enthusiasm. The most important part of great oral sex is enthusiasm. Don't make them ask, it's not a chore! Doing it with gusto will turn them on more, and make everything better.

Come hither. Once you have a finger or two in, making the "come hither" motion with your fingers to rub their vaginal wall, which is basically the inner part of the clitoris. This is the fabled "g spot".

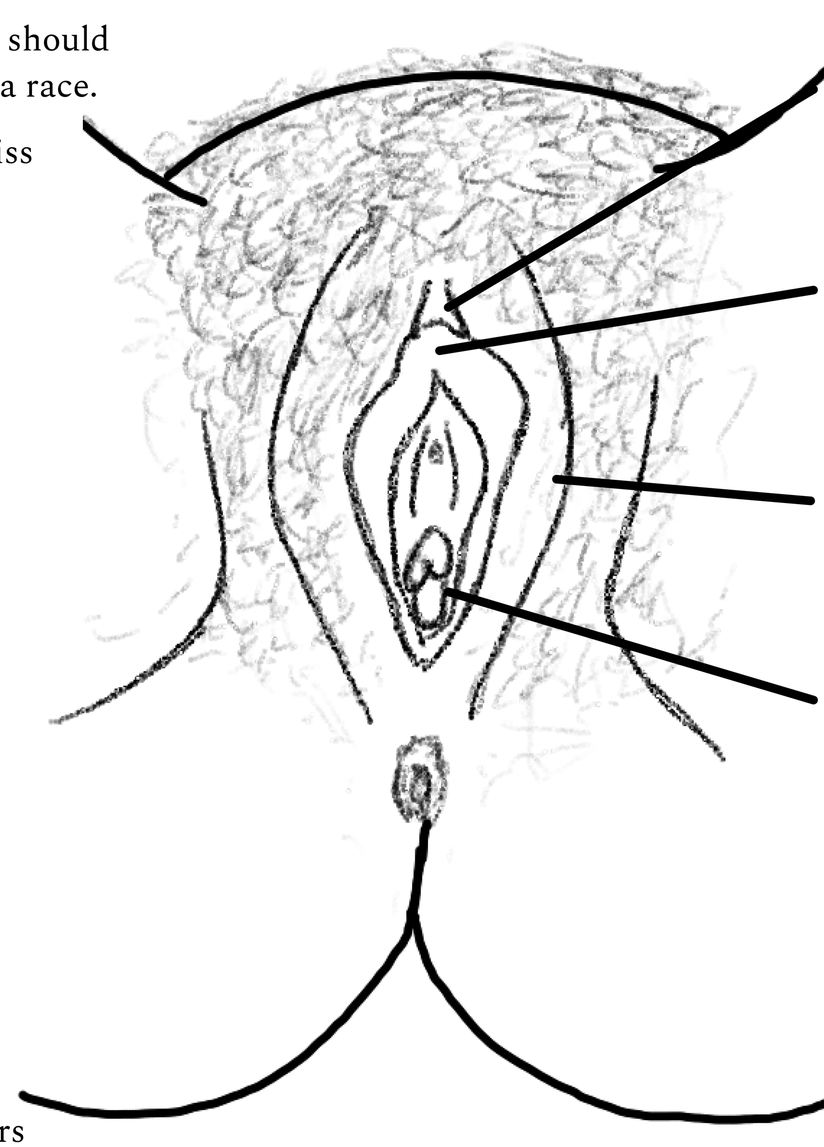
Ask before penetrating. Make sure your partner is ready for your finger(s). Don't just shove them in, slide them in gently and listen to their response. Use lube.

Learn your ABCs. Trace the alphabet with your tongue until you find the letter or pattern of letters that does it for them, and repeat that cycle.

Cut your nails. Just do it. Please.

Listen. Listen to your partner and respond to their verbal and nonverbal cues. If they say "keep going," that means keep doing what you're doing, not to speed up or go harder.

ANAT-OH-MY



Clitoral hood. This little guy covers the incredibly sensitive clitoris. It should be gently pushes back to expose the clit, but be careful! Don't pull it back the whole way.

Clitoris. This is it, baby. The clitoris has the most nerve endings per square centimeter in the body, and is proof the god wants people with vulvas to get their pussies ate.

Labia. Also called "lips", these look different for everyone! There are no "normal" labia. What is virtually universal is that they are sensitive! Lick, kiss, and stroke them to warm your partner up.

Vaginal opening. This is the actual vagina, and it is a beautiful thing. Using penetration, in combination with clitoral stimulation, is often the one-two punch you need.

"I press my lips really softly around the clit with two fingers in, curled up, and pressing sporadically. I use just enough pressure to create a tiny bit of suction and alternate pressing with fingers and sucking ever so slightly. When that reaches a plateau I start to hum a little. Repeat, then I do the same thing while touching the tip of my tongue to the clit." —*anonymous*

"Do that." —*anonymous's partner*

STI Testing

You should get an STI test after EVERY partner, regardless of if you used condoms or not. Human error means that condoms aren't always 100% effective for preventing STIs. If you are having regular sex with multiple partners, make sure everyone is on the same page when it comes to their STI status.

Here are the common STIs and their testing methods.

Chlamydia and Gonorrhea are tested either through a urine test or a swab of the cervix or inside the penis. They are easily treatable with a round of antibiotics.

HIV, Syphillis, and Hepatitis are tested most often with a blood test. These are much more serious diseases, but can be controlled and managed. It is vitally important that these are caught as soon as possible.

Herpes is the most common STI on the planet. About 85% of living humans have some form of it, either simplex A or simplex B (oral or genital). The most common expression of herpes is cold sores on the lips or mouth; this is oral herpes, or herpes simplex A. If you have ever gotten a cold sore, you should use protection when performing oral sex on a partner as you can transmit the infection even when you aren't showing symptoms.

There are a few places in State College where you can get STI testing. The AIDS Resource Center at 129 S Fraser Street in downtown State College can provide testing for HIV and some STIs for free or low cost. More info at aidsresource.com

You can also purchase full range STI tests from CVS or order them online, though the cost may be prohibitive.

There is always the option of getting tested at your general practitioner's office, if you are comfortable with that!

Porn

Most of the internet is porn. Video, pictures, erotic stories, all sorts of things you can watch or read that have different depictions of sexuality.

Most of it is fake. Not just in terms of the story, but in terms of how pleasurable any of it is. “Jackhammering” isn’t really fun for the receiving partner, and the positions are generally uncomfortable to account for the necessary camera angles.

The actors themselves aren’t bad, there is no shame in sex work. But the people who profit off of their work often pressure them into doing things they don’t want to do, and those actors often don’t see the lion’s share of the profit for their work.

Watching porn also isn’t inherently bad. Masturbation is normal, and using porn or other erotica to explore your sexuality and interests is perfectly ok. Just be aware of what you are consuming—and remember that actual sex bears little to no resemblance to what you’ll see online.

The Brain is the Most Powerful Sex Organ

Mental health and desire are closely tied! So it’s important to check in with yourself about how you’re feeling in AND out of the bedroom.

Some mental health struggles and some medications can decrease your desire to have sex. If you’re in this position and YOU want to be having more sex/desire, it’s a good idea to talk to a medical professional you trust.

Experiencing trauma or sexual violence, whether you’re aware of it or not, can affect whether or not your brain and body can experience sexual desire. It won’t be like this forever, there’s nothing wrong with you, and it’s not your fault. See the last page of the zine for resources available to you when you’re ready to talk.

It’s okay to not feel okay. It’s not unusual to experience mental health struggles. You are not alone.

Sex & Mental Health Check-In

There are a million great reasons to have sex!

- Emotional and physical connection.
- To pleasure someone.
- To receive pleasure.
- Because it's fun.
- Because it makes you feel good.

And some not-so-good reasons.

- Because it's the only way you feel better.
- Because you were feeling impulsive.
- You're feeling pressured to have sex.
- You want someone to like you.

Hey there.

Here's a simple check in you can do with yourself. Answer the following questions about yourself. This is only for you, and should serve as away to be self aware and mindful of where you're at. All answers are acceptable, as long as all partners are aware and consenting.

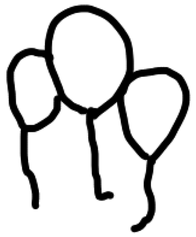
When you have sex, who is it for?

When you decide to have sex, what are you hoping for?

Are you having sexual desire and/or experiences more or less (or just right) than you want?

How do you feel about sex & your decisions after you've had it?

Body Image



Bodies are weird! They are also amazing. And sometimes they do things that we might not want—gain weight, grow hair, make weird smells. All of these things are totally okay, but it can be very difficult to figure out what you want in the context of what the world wants from you. Here are some things to consider when you're thinking about your body!

Your body works very hard, and even if it doesn't feel like it sometimes, it is doing it's best to protect you. For example, you sweat because your body is trying to cool you down from overheating. Think of an annoying thing your body does that's ultimately for your protection, and thank your body for it. ♡

Body hair can be a source of immense stress for a lot of people. Some people like waxing, some like shaving, some don't care and let it do what it wants! The important thing is to figure out what YOU want. Shaving can be time to focus on yourself, or it can be a hassle. Waxing can be a fun treat, or (meh.) it can be incredibly painful. What matters is how you feel about these things and absolutely no one else.

If you're not into shaving but want to keep things more groomed, getting a pair of clippers can help you keep things under control!

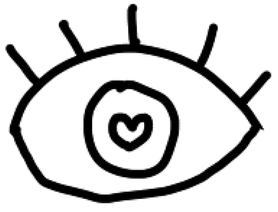
On Eating Disorders.

Bulimia and anorexia are incredibly common. They can stem from any number of things, including self hatred, body dysmorphia, lack of control in other things in life, or a desire for self-harm.

For me, I began starving myself in the months after I was raped by a friend of mine. I started hating the way my body looked, and without noticing it, slowly started eating less and less food, until I eventually stopped eating and was forced to leave school for a couple of months while I recovered. I never even considered it an eating disorder—I wasn't making myself vomit, and I wasn't obsessing over my food, so I never got help. I just didn't eat. It seemed like a very simple choice.

I was never taught to check in with myself about my body, to pay attention to what I ate or how it made me feel. The one thing I have struggled with more than anything as an adult is listening to my body about what it wants and needs.

—*Anonymous*



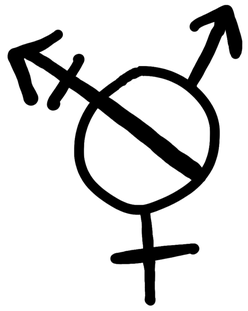
Gender

Our story with gender begins with the assignment of our sex at birth, but it doesn't end there. Gender is a complex social construction based on norms, natural biology, and cultural understanding.

Gender identity is how you personally identify your gender. That might be female, male, non-binary, agender, genderfluid, or whatever else. This may or may not correspond with your...

Biological sex is "what parts you have," and is written on your birth certificate.

Gender expression is how you choose to express your gender identity to the world. This includes clothes, makeup, speech, mannerisms, personality, and many other factors that are in no way dependent on your biological sex or even your gender identity. We are socialized to believe that certain expressions are coded as male or female, but the reality is your expression is whatever you choose it to be.



A critical understanding here is that all of these dimensions are entirely separate from one another. Being transgender means your gender identity and biological sex don't correspond, but your gender expression and pronouns you use can be whatever you want them to be. Knowing someone's biological sex, gender identity, pronouns, or being familiar with their gender expression doesn't mean you can automatically assume all the other dimensions.

Pronouns

When you meet new people, it's standard to ask for someone's name, but in order to make everyone feel safe and included, it's also polite to ask someone's pronouns. That way, everyone knows how to correctly refer to each other, and you can avoid awkward moments or hurtful misgendering.

SOME COMMON PRONOUNS

he/him she/her

they/them ...so many others

Sexuality is...

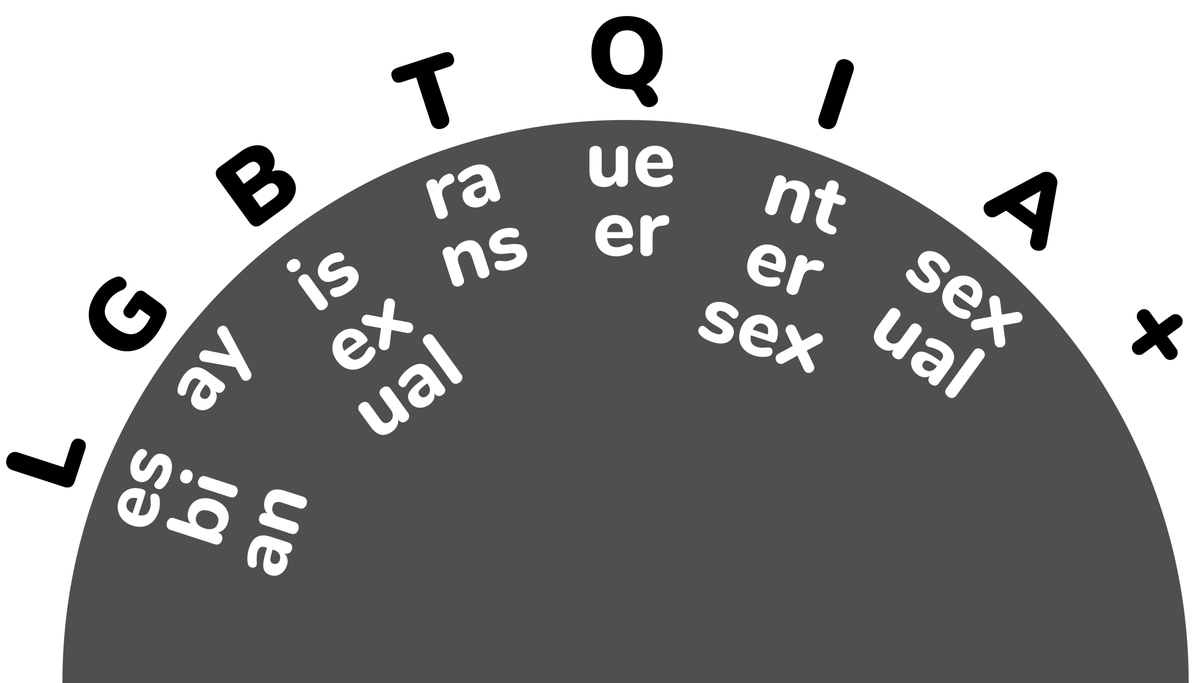
The way you experience and express yourself sexually.

Complicated. It's hard to condense sexuality into zine form, but know that however you feel is right.

Fluid. You don't need to be completely, 100% gay or straight or anything else. Most of us are a little in between labels, or a lot. You don't have to fit into a box or under a letter!

Ever-changing. Over time your feelings and preferences can change or evolve. Totally normal!

Up to you! How you define your sexuality is all yours to decide. The most important thing is to be honest with yourself. You don't owe anyone explanations that you don't want to give.



On Coming Out.

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Coming out is often characterized as a significant, and singular, event in a queer person's life. But it's not an event, it's a (lifelong) process. And for most queer people, it's just a start.

The important thing about coming out is that it should always be on your terms, and your terms only. You get to choose who to tell, and when, and how. "Being outed" is usually terrible, and sometimes traumatic or safety-threatening.

If you're finding yourself questioning your identity, my best advice is to give yourself time and space. You don't have to tell everyone in your life now, or next year. You don't owe it to anyone to tell them, in fact.

Every new person you meet, you choose how much you share about your identity. And coming out isn't always saying "I'm gay" or "I'm ace"—you might send subtle or strong hints through your clothes, behaviors, and/or gender expression. Some people want or need to keep their identity concealed, others want to be loud and proud. **Coming out is for you.**

I've done-the-come-out-thing twice, first as queer and then as non-binary. I was lucky enough to be supported when I told my family and friends. But make sure you'll be safe, and have the support you'll need. The first time is difficult for most people; for some, it takes decades. It'll get easier.

—Lachlan Campbell

On Asexuality.

I didn't even begin to suspect that I might be asexual until well into my first year of college. Asexuality is an identity defined by the absence of an experience—sexual attraction—and for someone like me who couldn't even imagine what that's like, it took years to realize I wasn't experiencing it. I imagine it's something like being colorblind; until you trade notes with people seeing the full spectrum, you have no way of fathoming what it is you're not seeing.

It also didn't help that there is very little media representation of aces and ace identities and a lot of misinformation from the resources that are available. "Aces can't have/enjoy sex," "Aces don't date or experience romantic attraction," and my personal least favorite: "Asexuality does not exist." Guess I'm a cryptid.

Throughout middle and high school, I tried dating and had some positive and negative experiences. I knew something was off but couldn't put my finger on what. I remember breaking up with my first boyfriend saying, "Sorry, I just don't think I feel that way about you. I don't feel that way about anyone." Until I was 18 I was still just waiting for something to click.

It's easy to feel broken or incomplete as someone who's ace. For me personally, it was a difficult thing to learn about myself and an identity I'm still reckoning with. *[continued on page 40]*

Rulebook for the Ethical Slut

If you aren't interested in monogamous relationships, here are the cardinal rules of sleeping around safely and ethically.

Be honest and upfront. Tell them. If you have a casual sexual relationship with someone, you should occasionally check in with each others feelings and emotional state to make sure everyone is still on the same page.

Get tested. Get tested after every new partner, even if you used a condom. Ask about your partner's STI status.

Always use protection. Always have condoms or dental dams on you. Do not compromise on this; the only time it's safe to have unprotected sex is if you know both you and your partner's STI status and, if you have a uterus, you are on birth control.

Establish ground rules. Are you public about it? How often are you seeing each other? Do you stay the night? Are you friends outside of sex? What do you want out of a casual sexual relationship?

Deal with feelings. If you have a long-term casual sexual relationship, one of you may develop romantic feelings. Talk about it, there is no reason to pine.

The only opinions that matter are yours and your partners'.

Dating App Etiquette

Be upfront about what you hope to get out of interactions. Just sex? Hook up buddy? Relationship? But also remember that these people are not a means to an end, don't just say "wanna fuck?" and leave it at that.

Realize that texting can create a false sense of intimacy. It can make you feel much closer to a person than you actually are, so try to meet up with people quickly, or don't text a lot before the date.

Don't just say "hey."

Don't be a dick. No one owes you their time.

Don't feel obligated to continue a relationship for any reason, if you decide you want out, that's the only reason you need.

Don't put your self-worth into these apps. Your desirability has nothing to do with matches or likes.

It's okay to say you just want to leave! If you don't feel comfortable with that, having an excuse ahead of time can make you feel better about peacing out early.

Good hygiene. Because…yeah.

Trust your gut

That feeling is almost always right. Your body knows better than you do, if someone makes you uncomfortable, you don't have to rationalize it away. You don't owe anyone your time.

If at any point you don't feel good about what's happening with the person you're interacting with, listen to your body.

If someone gives you a weird vibe, end it. It can mean you're in an unsafe situation, or at the very best, they're terrible in bed.

How a person acts in non-sexual situations can be a reflection of how they would be in bed. Are they rude to waiters? Are they selfish? Are they respectful? ***Do they listen?***

On Asexuality, Continued

For anyone who thinks they might be ace, there are great, inclusive communities online that can help you better figure out who you are and realize being ace is a lot more common than you've probably been led to believe. Aces can still date, get married, and even have sex; everyone's experience is different, the important thing is to learn what you're comfortable with and what would make you happiest.

—*Anonymous*

Sexiling: A Guide

Establish expectations beforehand with roommates.

Be respectful! This is a shared space.

DON'T HAVE SEX IN THE SAME ROOM AS SOMEONE WHO IS ASLEEP. It's gross. No.

Don't "shower" and take up all the hot water.

Having sex in a shared bathroom (like with stalls) violates the boundaries of anyone who may walk in randomly.

Don't wake up the whole hall. No one wants to hear that.

Lock your door.

(obv)

...there are other places to have sex that don't affect anyone else, so find them.

Don't be "that person" at a party.

Drink responsibly. It genuinely isn't cool to be the person vomiting in the bushes.

Don't touch people without their consent. That includes back-slapping, ass-grabbing, chest-bumping, just hugging, and whatever. Just ask. Drinking lowers your boundaries, but remember not everyone may be as drunk as you are.

Consent. If someone is too drunk to drive, they're too drunk to have sex. No ifs, ands, or buts.

Do NOT serve someone or encourage substance use with the aim of "loosening them up." That's coercion, don't do that.

Protect your friends. Don't go to parties by yourself if you don't know anyone! Make plans to check in with one another throughout the night.

One party foul is a mistake, many party fouls and you're an asshole. Don't break things, don't invade people's personal space.

Conclusion

The world at large is constantly sending you messages about how you should feel about your body, your sexuality, and your gender. The shame, dysphoria, or general confusion you might experience is totally normal—but it shouldn't be. Knowing about these things shouldn't be a privilege. This zine shouldn't be a secret.

We made this zine to combat all those forces that prevent us from knowing about our sexuality, or make us feel like we should be ashamed of any part of it. We want you to walk away knowing more about your body and yourself, and believe at a fundamental level that who you are is okay.

You are enough, your body is enough. You don't have to qualify or defend any part of yourself to anyone.

We hope this was helpful. Please share this zine with a friend.

XOXO,
Christine, Lachlan, and team