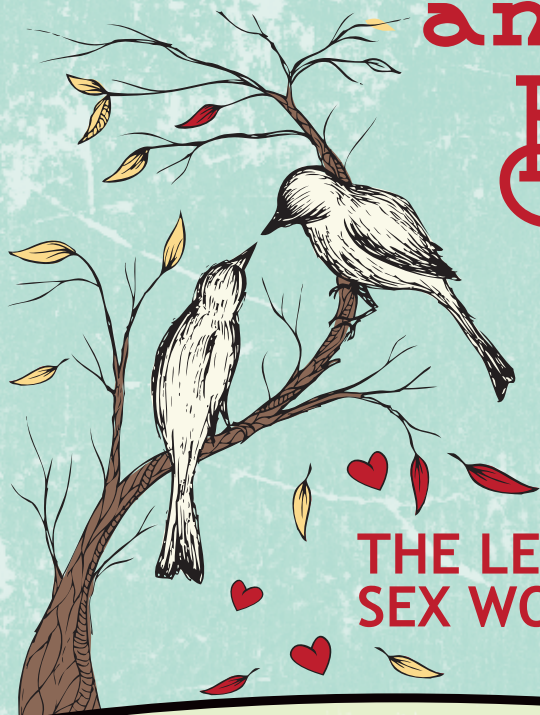


The Birds and the Birds



THE LESBIAN SEX WORKBOOK

Name:

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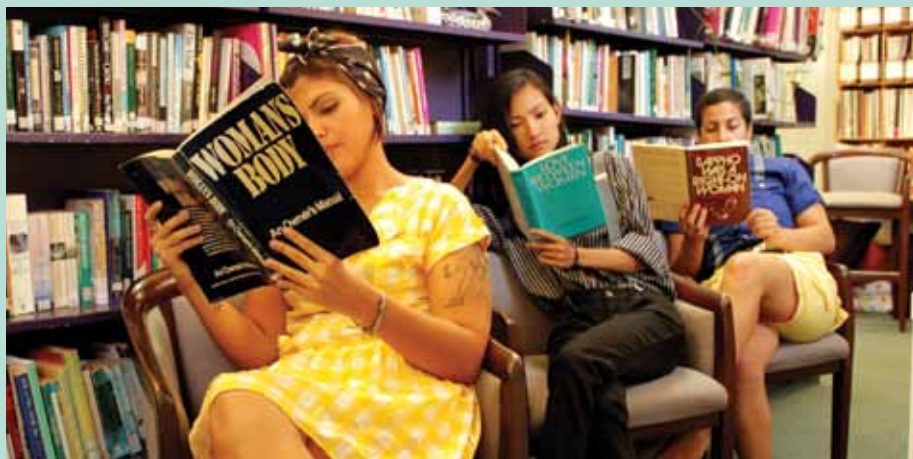


ACON acknowledges the traditional owners of the land we operate on across NSW and remind people that we are on Aboriginal land. ACON also acknowledges the Elders and in particular those reading this document.

Celebrating diversity

The young same-sex attracted women's community is extremely diverse across a whole range of factors. Cultural background, sexual identity, gender expression, religion, body size and shape, women with disability, race, gender identity, Aboriginality, sexual experience and socio-economic status - to name a few. We hope that this resource is relevant for and inclusive of all the women in our community. Further to that, we envisage and hope for a community where diversity is seen as a positive thing, and where we move beyond 'tolerance' to a celebration of this diversity.

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ABOUT THE LESBIAN SEX WORKBOOK

Welcome to “The Birds & the Birds: The Lesbian Sex Workbook” - the first booklet of its kind for young, same-sex attracted women. This workbook targets young women of all sexual identities who find other women attractive (e.g. lesbian, bisexual, straight, queer, no label, etc). It’s a response to the lack of coverage of lesbian sex in the majority of sex education and has been developed by, for and in consultation and collaboration with young same-sex attracted women.

The booklet contains important and helpful information about sex between women, and how to look after your sexual health and wellbeing as well as your partner/s. There is a list of services and links on page 37 where you can go to get more information on particular issues or services. There is also a glossary on page 42 that provides definitions of some of the terms used in the workbook, so if you see a term that you’re unsure about - check out the glossary.

This resource is in a workbook style, which means there are sections where you respond to questions. These questions don’t always have a ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ answer - sometimes they’re more about getting you to start thinking about particular issues.

If you’re worried about your safety or welfare if someone finds this booklet, it could be a good idea to write your answers to the exercises on a bit of paper and keep it in a different place to the workbook (particularly for the more personal questions like Exercise 1). Another option is to think about your answers to the questions but not actually fill them in. If you’re really worried, you can always get rid of the booklet after you’ve read it - give it to a friend or throw it away, that way there’s less chance of someone finding it. This booklet is also available online, so you can check it out without having to keep a physical copy: www.acon.org.au.

CONTENTS

What is Lesbian Sex?

pages 3 to 16

This section sheds some light on sexuality, community and what lesbian sex actually is. There's an in-depth exploration of the bonza things about sex, different sorts of relationships, how to 'keep the flame alive' and the lesbian web. There's also an exercise exploring what sex means to you, and what good sex means for you.

Making sure everyone still feels good the next morning

pages 17 to 24

This section is all about how to look after yourself and your sexual partner/s emotionally and mentally so that everyone has a hot-diggity damn good time. It contains some information on consent, communication, negotiation and how to make your (wet) dreams a reality. There's information on 'mixing pleasures' - by this we mean mixing alcohol or other drugs and sex. There's also an exercise to help you figure out what 'twists your knickers' (in the best possible way of course!).

Keeping yourself in top physical condition for sex

pages 25 to 36

This section is all about looking after yourself physically in terms of your sexual health and wellbeing - there's info on all the 'nitty gritty' about what can get in your knickers (i.e. STIs). There's also practical tips on how to look after yourself and your sexual partner/s so that everything can go off without a hitch. There's a number of exercises in this section, including a 'pop quiz' and 'name the sex toy'.

More information

pages 37 to 45

This final section includes a glossary with definitions for some of the terms used in this resource, a list of contacts and also the answers to Exercises 4 and 6.





WHAT IS LESBIAN SEX?



WHERE DOES MY SEXUALITY COME FROM?

Ahem, cough Well, when a woman and a woman really love each other, they lie very close together, and then they decide to call themselves lesbians...

Ok, so it's actually not always that simple. Our society usually views sexuality as gay or lesbian versus straight, sometimes with a mention of bisexuality. It's also often spoken about like it's really simple ('it's just about who you have sex with, right?').

In actual fact, there can be as many types of different labels for sexuality as there are days in the year (to take a random number). There are also lots of different things that make up a person's sexual identity - it's not just the gender of the people we have sex with. A person's sexuality can include or be influenced by lots of different things, such as...

... their behaviour: who they have sexual contact with (keeping in mind that sex means different things to different people)

... their attraction: who gets their knickers in a knot (in the best possible way)



... their sexual identity: the label they choose to describe their sexuality both publicly and privately (remembering that these labels may differ at times, for example if someone isn't 'out' about their sexuality)

... their gender: a person's conception of their gender (as male, female, trans, something in between or something different altogether) can influence the label they use to describe their sexuality. For more information on gender, or the terms used to describe it - please see the "Links/ Services" section (page 37) and the glossary (page 42).

The thing about the different parts of your sexuality is that they don't all have to match up, and they don't always stay the same - a person might identify as straight, but be attracted to both guys and girls, and mostly have sex with guys. A person might be attracted to girls for some parts of their life and guys for another part of their life.

Gay, bi, and straight are all labels we as a society use to describe this complex thing called sexuality, and many people may be attracted to the same sex, but don't see themselves as gay or bisexual. Similarly, some women may identify as lesbian but sometimes sleep with guys.

People can sometimes be confused when they think that the label someone uses doesn't seem to match their behaviour or their attraction. The really important thing to remember is to respect the label/s that people choose to describe their sexual identity. After all, many different things influence your sexual identity, and everyone is the one & only expert on their own sexuality - because they're the only people that experience every aspect of it.



LESBIAN SEX: A DEFINITION?

Lesbian sex is rarely talked about in school sex education. It's not something that we often see represented in popular culture (e.g. movies, TV shows). And we might not feel comfortable talking about it with our friends...

So what *is* lesbian sex anyway?

Firstly, it's important to point out that you don't have to identify as a lesbian to have lesbian sex. When we use the phrase 'lesbian sex' in this booklet, we actually mean sex between two (or three or four, or more!) women. These women may not identify themselves as lesbian - they could identify as bisexual, queer, heterosexual, not sure, straight - or any of the other multiple ways you can describe your sexual identity. For more information on what makes up your sexual identity, check out the "Where does my sexuality come from?" section on page 4.

Also, there's a huge range of different practices that lesbian sex can include - and this booklet actually isn't about providing you with a definition of what lesbian sex is. What's important is that you think about what sex means to *you*. We've included an exercise to start you on this process on page 11 check it out.

It's also important to recognise that sex can mean very different things to different people. We want to celebrate the diverse range of sexual practices that same-sex attracted women can engage in. So we've included a poster called the "A to Z of Lesbian Sex" that lists a whole bunch of practices or aspects of sex between women. Keep in mind that this poster is by no means an exhaustive list of possible sexual practices - the only limit is your imagination...





LESSON I: SEX IS FUN!

It's really important that we recognise that lesbian sex is a rollicking good time, as long as it is consensual. When we talk about consent, we mean that all parties taking part have freely agreed to what's going on (for more information on consent, see "The C Word(s)" section on page 18).

When it's done well, lesbian sex can be hot, wet, raunchy, erotic, tingly, juicy and so on (and on and on and on!). Recognising (and celebrating) the fact that consensual sex can be a whole shedload of fun, is called 'sex-positivity'. But what does sex-positivity mean? Well it's really just a fancy-pants way of saying that consensual sex is a hot-diggity damn good time. It's about talking openly & honestly about the good things about sex (like pleasure, or coming, or going up the wazoo). Sex positivity also recognises that it's not appropriate to judge other people's consensual choices about how to have sex, who to have sex with, and how they define their sexual identity.

So how do you live your life in a sex-positive way? Being sex-positive doesn't mean that you should be open to all types of sex, with anyone, at any time and in any place. It's about reflecting on your own sexual practices and your boundaries (yes, it's okay to have boundaries). You should think about what you like and what you don't like, what you'd like to try, and what you definitely don't wanna do. It's about being non-judgemental about other people's consensual sexual practices. It's about talking openly and honestly about sex and sexual health (when appropriate of course!). It's about looking after yourself and your partner/s, so that if you do choose to have sex, everyone has a tip-top experience.

EXERCISE I: SEXY SENTENCE COMPLETION



This exercise is to help you to start thinking about what sex means to you, and how you look after yourself and your partner/s if you choose to have sex. You may not have had sex yet, and that's okay - but you're still likely to have ideas about what sex is or what makes good sex, and this exercise will help you think about these issues. You might find that your answers to these questions change over time, or even in different situations - this is totally okay and to be expected. Complete the sentences provided with words, pictures or whatever you like...

To me, lesbian sex involves...

I know I've had sex when...

For me, good sex involves...

If I choose to have sex, I look after myself by...

If I choose to have sex, I look after my partner/s by...



BUT WHERE WILL I FIT IN?

If you have people around you to love and support you and celebrate who you are, you can be a happy, healthy same-sex attracted woman in any community, anywhere. However, a lot of the time gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and queer (GLBTQ) people like to hang out together, because we may share common experiences or values and might want to be around people we can relate to. Another reason for this is that sometimes same-sex attracted people don't get the support and acceptance they need from their families and the rest of society, and so often we have banded together to look after each other and fill in those gaps.

This results in something you might hear referred to as the gay community, the GLBT community, the queer community, or "the scene." When people use these terms, they are often talking about a whole lot of interconnected friendship groups, organisations, events, venues, services, publications, online communities, religious groups and sporting teams that operate for GLBT people. No two people will have exactly the same understanding of what "the gay community" really is. The thing to remember is that if you're looking for a place to belong and be accepted as a same-sex attracted young woman, there's bound to be a group or activity within the community that matches your personality and interests. The ACON Young Women's Project is a great place to start, and there's also a list of other services and groups on page 37.



ONE NIGHT STANDS OR 'THE ONE'?

(AKA One month stands or 'The many'?)

So when you *do* find someone that gets your knickers in a twist, what are you gonna do with them?

Sometimes there's an expectation that if you get along well with someone, and want to spend time with them (including sexy time), then this means you should commit to a long term, monogamous relationship. In reality, there's all sorts of different relationships we can have with our sexual partners: one night stands, casual lovers, fucking friends, primary partners, life partners (and so on and so forth). And while there are many couples that maintain happy and healthy monogamous relationships for many years, there are also couples (or trios or four-os or more-os) that negotiate happy and healthy 'open' relationships.

What's important is that you think about what sort of relationship is best for you - are you a monogamite or an ethical slut? A polyamorist or a polyfidelity enthusiast? Something different altogether? Your needs can also change depending on the person you're entering a relationship with - you might want some relationships to be monogamous, and others to be open to fucking, or dating other people.



It's also possible that your partner/s may want very different things from a relationship - this is why it's important to communicate about your wants and needs. Even if your needs are different to your partner/s, you may be able to negotiate a situation where you can both feel comfortable with the structure of your relationship. For more information on communication and negotiation, see "The C Word(s)" section on page 18.

Most relationships are based on love and trust, however some are based on manipulation and abuse. It's important to recognise that same-sex domestic violence does happen in our community. For more information and support with any of these issues, contact the ACON Anti Violence Project or go to the 'Another Closet' website (see the "Links/Services" section on page 37).



LESBIAN BED DEATH:

Keeping the flame alive

You may have heard the dreaded term 'lesbian bed death' before - and if not, you're pretty lucky. This term refers to the possibility of sex ceasing to exist, or be desired, between long term partners (be they monogamous or 'open'). Often 'lesbian bed death' is spoken about like it's a given, like it happens in all relationships (as long as they're between two women - we don't hear about 'gay bed death' that often!). In actual fact, many women can have long term relationships that are hot and heavy long into their twilight years.



However, it's pretty common for *all* relationships to go through periods of excess and 'drought' in terms of the amount of sexual activity. If you do find yourself in a situation where you think you might be experiencing the dreaded 'bed death' - how do you reignite the flame? Of course, the ways to address this can vary between relationships. But here are just a few ideas...

- Communicate with your partner/s - maybe they've noticed this happening, maybe they're worried too, maybe you can talk about what's worrying you and work it out together.
- Try new things - in long term relationships sex may go a bit stale cos you're doing the same things over and over. Now could be the right time to talk to your partner about that fantasy you've always wanted to try, or to dream a new fantasy up! (If you need some help, there's lots of books available, not to mention the "A to Z of Lesbian Sex Poster" included in this resource)
- Make an effort to turn yourself and your partner on - what works can vary from person to person, and could include things like candles and rose petals, pizza and porn or latex and whips.
- Just about all of us will experience some sort of difficulty with sex at some point in our lives - some examples would be difficulties with being fucked or problems with lubrication. If you or your partner/s are experiencing issues like these, the good news is that most sexual difficulties can be helped. A great place to start is with a good lesbian-friendly doctor or counsellor, for a referral contact ACON or ALMA (see page 37).



THE LESBIAN WEB:

Because six degrees of separation is only for straight people

As same-sex attracted young women, something that we often laugh about (and complain about) is that it feels like every woman we meet seems to know all of our friends already, and that we can't seem to have sex with anyone without finding out that she's dated our ex-girlfriend, or had a fling with our flatmate, or at least built a Mardi Gras float with our best friend's girlfriend's sister. This phenomenon is sometimes known as "The Web" or even the "Lesbian Web of Death," and it's enough to drive anyone bananas.

Of course we're exaggerating, but the reality is that the lesbian community can sometimes be a pretty small, tight-knit space. It's pretty likely that the people you have friendships or relationships with will know each other, and that these relationships will often overlap in a variety of different ways. This can be awesome, and make you feel that you belong to something special, where everyone takes care of each other. It can also be really difficult, like when it feels like everyone knows your business, or like you can't go to a party without running into that girl who broke your heart.



If the kind of interconnectedness we're talking about seems familiar to you, either now or in the future, the best advice we can give you is to be realistic about it. Recognise that 'The Web' is part of your life and your community, and that there are some things we can all do to make this a positive, rather than a negative thing. This includes being aware of the impact of our behaviour on the people around us, thinking before we gossip about our friends, exes or partner/s, and looking after our own and our partner/s sexual and emotional health. A lot of the time what we do affects a bunch of different people, and if we're aware of that we can try to avoid negatively impacting ourselves and each other.





MAKING SURE EVERYONE STILL FEELS
GOOD THE NEXT MORNING

MAKING SURE
EVERYONE STILL
FEELS GOOD THE
NEXT MORNING



THE C WORD(S)

So you've found the girl of your wet dreams, and you've spoken about how you want to get sexy together - which is going to add up to mind-blowing, gasket-popping sex... Right? Hmm, well possibly not. As we've mentioned already (a few times) - sex can mean very different things to different people. And there's every possibility that the deeds you're dreaming about aren't featured at all in your lady's fantasies. She might be thinking about something completely unlike what you have in mind. For example, some women need love and romance to get wet, while others might be more into an anonymous fuck in a nightclub bathroom.

Communication

So how to work this puzzle out? Answer: The big C word - communication. How else are you going to 'tell' your sexual partners what you want, and find out what they're after? Communication doesn't have to be verbal, in fact - research shows that the majority of communication that occurs between young people when they're 'dancing the horizontal jive' is non-verbal. This can include subtle cues like body positioning, facial expression, or handing her a sex toy with a cheeky wink (okay, so maybe that example isn't so subtle).

If you can master the art of communication, you radically increase your chances of getting your every wa(n)king fantasy and desire fulfilled. After all, if your partner/s don't know what you want - how are they going to give it to you? Likewise, how are they going to know what feels good for you unless you 'tell' them (e.g. by moaning, quivering etc)?



Another important thing to think about is what you *don't* want to do. As we've mentioned already, everybody has some boundaries around sexual practice, and there's likely to be some things that you just have no interest in doing. These boundaries might change over time, and that's okay - but it's still a good idea to have some notion of where you're at right now. Having an awareness of your boundaries makes it easier to communicate them to your partner/s if, perchance, you find yourselves in a sticky situation on a later date.

Of course, you also have to be prepared for your partner/s being uninterested in some activities that you may be hot for (and vice versa, your partner/s may want to try something that conflicts with your boundaries). This situation will require some good communication and negotiation. If you do this with respect for your partner/s, you should be able to find a happy medium where everyone has a chance to 'go off like a frog in a sock' (in the sack).

Consent

The other big 'C word' is consent. It's a big deal, and something that we don't talk about enough. Of course there's the legal age of consent to consider. In New South Wales, the legal of consent (i.e. the age at which you are considered able

to consent to sex) is 16 years old. If you have sex before this age or have sex with someone under this age, it's considered non-consensual and is illegal.

But what about other types of consent?

Well, when consent *is* talked about in our society, it seems pretty simple, the old "Yes means Yes, No means No". Easy, right? But how often do you actually verbally say "Yes" to someone before you have sex? And how often do you make sure that your partner says "Yes" before you have sex? Chances are this doesn't happen every time. So how do you make sure that you're really ok about everything you've been doing? And how do you make sure that your partner is?

It's important to think about how you know when your partner/s have consented to something, and how you communicate that you consent to a particular activity. To get you started on this process, we've included some exercises on communication, negotiation and consent on page 21.

Consent is actually a very big issue that is often a bit confusing for people, and unfortunately we can't explore the full complexity of consent in this resource. If you would like more information on consent, please see the "Links/Services" section (page 37) and glossary (page 42).

Another helpful tip is to think about an action plan to help you get out of situations that are not right for you. An action plan can be based on cues that help you define when a sexual situation is outside of your comfort zone. Cues can be put into three categories: thoughts, feelings and actions. Examples can be thinking that a sexual situation is beginning to seem unsafe or not right, feeling pressured or intimidated in a sexual situation, and finally if the other person or people involved are behaving in a way that you don't like, such as too forcefully or by doing things that you have asked them not to. If any of these cues happen in a situation, the action plan you've thought through before hand can help you get out quickly and safely. Things that might be helpful in an action plan include, telling your friends where you're going, having sex somewhere you feel safe, being prepared to exit quickly, and calling out for help.

It's important to recognise that unfortunately, sexual assault does happen - both in the wider community and in the GLBTQ community. If you think that you (or someone you know) has experienced sexual assault, there are many services that can offer you support. The NSW Rape Crisis centre runs a 24 hour counselling service where you can talk to a trained professional: Phone 1800 424 017 anytime day or night. There are also more services listed on the "Links/Services" section on page 37.

EXERCISE 2: BECOME A CUNNING LINGUIST

These are some questions to get you thinking about communication in sexual situations. The first couple are sentence completion exercises, and the others ask you to list responses. None of these have right or wrong answers - it's about getting you to think about how you communicate with your partner/s. If you need some inspiration on different sexual practices - check out "The A to Z of Lesbian Sex" poster.

I know my partner has consented to a sexual activity when...

I communicate my consent to a sexual activity by...

Some things I know I definitely don't want to try are:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Some things I'd definitely like to try are:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Some things I'm curious about, and I might want to try at some point are:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Some ways to communicate what I don't want, verbally are:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.



Some ways to communicate what I don't want, non-verbally (without talking) are:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Some ways to communicate what I want, verbally are:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Some ways I can communicate what I want, non-verbally (without talking) are:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

MIXING PLEASURES: ALCOHOL, OTHER DRUGS AND SEX

Research tells us that as a group, young same-sex attracted women tend to use alcohol and other drugs at higher rates than heterosexual young women. The reasons for this are unclear, although it could have something to do with the effects of living in a homophobic society and experiencing discrimination. It could also have something to do with the 'normalising' of the use of alcohol and other drugs on 'the scene'. Given these higher rates of use within the community, it's not surprising that some young same-sex attracted women enjoy 'mixing pleasures' (for example alcohol or drugs with sex). Reasons for doing this might be to help increase confidence to pick up, to loosen inhibitions, or simply because being intoxicated makes sex more fun or pleasurable for some people.

However, sometimes mixing alcohol or other drugs with sex can result in negative experiences. For example, you may find that you didn't stick to your boundaries when intoxicated, and may wake up the next morning feeling uncomfortable with some of the things you did. You may have hooked up with someone that you really didn't want to (for example an ex, or a friend's partner). If someone was particularly intoxicated, they may wake up in bed with someone with absolutely no memory of what happened. All of these experiences, and others like them, can leave people regretting their behaviour 'the morning after'.

Not to mention that alcohol and other drug use have real implications for consent - if anyone is heavily intoxicated, they may not be able to provide what we call 'informed consent'. This is not only a question of ethics, but is also set out in laws regarding sexual assault.

So what can you do to look after yourself and your partner/s? Like with sexual practices, it's important that you're aware of your boundaries around alcohol and other drug use. Are there certain substances that tend to make you lose control? How much is too much (for you)? How do you look after your own (and your friends') safety? We've included some basic tips on looking after yourself and your friends when using alcohol and other drugs to get you started. If you'd like more information on any of these issues, check out the "Links/Services" section on page 37.

EXERCISE 3: PARTY ON CHECKLIST

- ☐ Be aware of safer sex practices and be prepared - carry whatever you need (e.g. gloves, dams) with you (see "Lesson 2" for more info).
- ☐ Be aware of drink spiking - always watch the bartender mix your drink and never leave your drink unattended.
- ☐ Make a plan for the night and tell your friend/s about it - do you hope to fuck someone tonight, or is it what you definitely *don't* want to do?
- ☐ Tell your friends where you're going and who you're going with. Get them to call you later to check that you're okay.
- ☐ Make a plan with your friends to look after each other - if your friend is so wasted they can't walk, then they probably shouldn't be going off with someone. Call them a cab or take them home - they'll probably thank you in the morning.
- ☐ Have a plan about how to get home. Save enough money for a cab or public transport. Walking the streets at night can be dangerous, so try to avoid it or get a friend (or friends) to come with you.
- ☐ If you see something that looks 'suss', then do something about it. You don't have to be personally involved (and you shouldn't be if it compromises your safety) - tell the bartender or bouncer, or call the police.
- ☐ If you see someone who is ill from alcohol or other drugs, get them some help. Tell venue staff or call an ambulance - they're trained to help in these situations, not dob.
- ☐ If you're drinking alcohol, it's a good idea to space your drinks with non-alcoholic drinks (like water). This prevents you getting too drunk too quickly, and can really reduce hangovers the morning after.
- ☐ If you're an injecting drug user, remember to use a clean fit for every hit - and never share other equipment like swabs as these present a risk for Hepatitis C infection. Also remember to dispose of your equipment safely - in a needle and syringe disposal unit.
- ☐ Know your limits around alcohol and other drug use and plan your night out so that you have the best time possible.



KEEPING YOURSELF
IN TOP PHYSICAL
CONDITION FOR SEX

KEEPING YOURSELF IN TOP
PHYSICAL CONDITION FOR SEX



Well, like most physically exerting activities - sex can be a whole lot better if you're fit and healthy. This isn't about your body size or shape, but is all about eating a healthy balanced diet and partaking in regular physical exercise. It could be a good idea to try to go for regular walks, ride to work or join a sporting team (check out page 38). You could also make sex part of your regular exercise plan - it can be great exercise and after all, practice does make perfect.

Sexual Health and Wellbeing

There's a common misconception among our community (and in wider society) that lesbians and same-sex attracted women are not at risk of contracting sexually transmissible infections (STIs). In fact, the most recent available research suggests that young same-sex attracted women have a higher risk of contracting an STI than heterosexual young women.

So what should we do about this? Does it mean we should never have sex again? Definitely not! But we should all be taking steps to look after our own, and our partner/s sexual health and wellbeing. The following section will provide an introduction to this process...

EXERCISE 4: STI POP QUIZ

Before you read about the nitty gritty on STIs, take a moment to fill out this quiz. Respond to each statement with 'True' or 'False' to get an idea of where your knowledge is at (answers on page 37).

1. Genital warts are not contagious. ☐
2. A regular health check - up will show all STIs. ☐
3. If you ignore an STI, usually it will go away by itself. ☐
4. In some cases, if you pass an STI on to someone else, it means you don't have it anymore. ☐
5. There is no cure for genital herpes. ☐
6. You can get genital herpes from a cold sore. ☐
7. Treatment for crabs can be purchased at a chemist. ☐
8. It's possible to have syphilis and have no symptoms. ☐
9. If you have been treated for gonorrhoea you can't catch it again. ☐
10. Lesbians don't need to have pap smears. ☐
11. Chlamydia can be caused by stress or alcohol. ☐
12. Untreated chlamydia can cause infertility in both men and women. ☐



THE NITTY GRITTY ON WHAT CAN GET IN YOUR KNICKERS

In this resource, when we talk about STIs we're not including HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) in that list. This is because many sexual practices between women carry a low risk of HIV transmission. And even though with some practices there's *theoretically* a possibility of transmission, in actual fact there has never been a documented case of transmission of HIV between two women in NSW. If you're into blood sports or play piercing then it's a whole different kettle of fish, check out ACON's "Spank Electric" resource for more info on this.

As we mentioned earlier, evidence suggests that young same-sex attracted women have higher rates of STIs than heterosexual young women. The good news is that most STIs are easily cured with medication, and for those that can't be cured (e.g. Herpes) you can receive treatment to reduce the frequency and severity of the symptoms. For more information on STIs and the modes of transmission in lesbian sex, a really good website to check out is girl2girl.info (see page 37).

A really important thing that every lusty lesbian (and salacious same-sex attracted woman) should know is that many STIs often have no symptoms at all. Which means that you can have an STI (& be passing it on to other

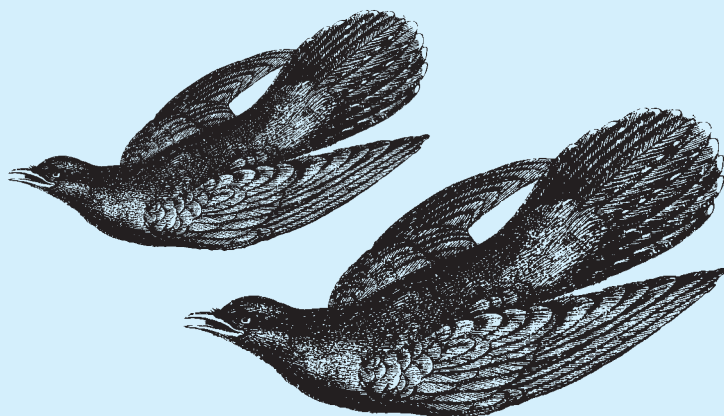


people) without even knowing it. This isn't meant to scare you out of having sex, but instead to show you how important it is to regularly get a sexual health check up.

Sexual health check ups (or STI tests) are an important part of taking care of your own, and your partner/s sexual wellbeing. They're pretty easy, they don't take very long and they usually involve a mouth swab, a vaginal swab or urine sample, and a blood test. You can get tested at any GP, sexual health centre, women's health centre, or youth health centre. How often you get tested is really up to you, and depends on how many sexual partners you have, but a good ballpark figure is about once every 6 to 12 months. It could be a good idea to include sexual health testing as part of your regular pap smear - which all women (regardless of sexuality) should be getting at least every two years.

The important thing is that you find a medical practitioner that you're comfortable with, so that you can ask them everything you ever wanted to know about STIs and testing, sexual health, sexual practices, and whether heaps of fisting will affect the elasticity of your vagina (for example).

If you'd like some help finding a GLBT-friendly doctor, the Australian Lesbian Medical Association (ALMA) runs a referral service, and women's or youth health centres are often quite good (see the "Links/Services" section on page 37).



LESSON 2: WHAT YOU CAN DO...

Okay, so that's a bit of information about STIs and the importance of regular testing, but there's also a number of things you can do to reduce the risk of STI transmission when you're having a bonza bonk with a bonny lass (or lasses) in the boudoir.

Doms, Dams and other latex aids...

If you'd like to be well-protected against STIs, it's a good idea to invest in some gloves, dental dams and condoms (to start you off, we've included one of each in the back of this resource). All of these barriers should be used with generous lashings of lube - this not only makes the sex more slippery, slidey and fun, but also reduces the possibility of tears in the vagina or arse. ACON provides safe sex packs that include these barriers and lube - you can pick these up from ACON (or order over the website) or from GLBTQ events.

Gloves can be used as a protective barrier when using your hand to 'manually' stimulate someone's arse or vagina. The important thing is to make sure that you change the glove between partners, or if you're going to be touching yourself. If you're in a group sex situation, it could be a good idea to wear two or more gloves so you simply have to remove gloves between partners (rather than putting on a new one each time).

Condoms - yes these aren't only for dicks! Condoms can be used on your fingers when you're down for some 'manual' stimulation (in place of a glove). Using condoms on sex toys (e.g. dildos, vibrators, strap ons) can greatly reduce the risk of STI transmission. It's best to use (& change) condoms when sharing sex toys with partners, or swapping toys between your arse and your vagina.



Dams (AKA Dental Dams) can be used as a protective barrier when licking (or going down on) someone's vagina or arse. Instructions for the use of dams are usually on the packets they come in - generally you put the dam over the area to be licked and 'go to town' (so to speak).

Lube glorious lube! As we've already mentioned, all of these barriers should be used with water-based lubricant - which you can pick up in ACON's safe sex packs, or from an adult store, chemist, grocery store or convenience store (& many other places). It's important that you use water-based lube when using sex-toys &/or barriers, as oil-based lube can degrade barriers, and silicon-based lube can degrade your silicon sex toys. Lube is fun and useful in many sexual practices (even if you're not using barriers) to both enhance pleasure, and reduce the possibility of hurting your partner via friction or skin tears. Adult stores often carry many different sorts of lube, and it's easy to find one to suit your tastes - these days you can get flavoured lube, vegan lube, natural & organic lube, jelly-like lube, 'I can't believe it's not the real thing' lube, and the list goes on!



Safe Sex Tip:

The Manicure

Betsy and Ingrid were having a bonza first date at the bowlo, until Betsy noticed the unsightly state of Ingrid's fingernails - she could have taken an eye out with those claws! Betsy got 'straight' (to work) with some clippers and a nail file. Once Ingrid's nails were nice and short, Betsy and Ingrid were able to fulfil their amorous intentions without a risk of internal injuries by fingernail.

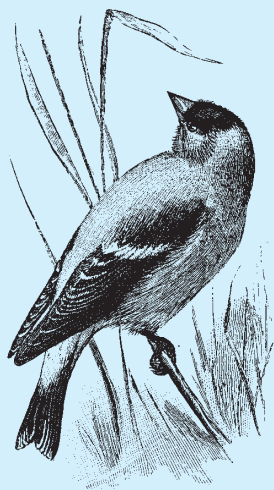
‘Risk Reduction Measures’ (or ‘things you’re probably already doing’...)

There are a number of other practices that many same-sex attracted women engage in that reduce the risk of STI transmission, although they may not identify them as such. For example, many women keep their fingernails quite short, in order to avoid hurting their partner’s ‘interior’ - this has the added benefit of reducing the likelihood of tearing the vagina or arse when finger-fucking (as tears on your hands, vagina or arse can increase the risk of STI transmission).

Another example is to avoid going down on your partner/s when they have their period. Some women may not engage in this because the idea ‘turns their stomach’. But this is also good practice in terms of STI prevention - as eating someone out while they’re bleeding increases the risk of transmission of blood-borne viruses.

A lesser known measure is to avoid brushing your teeth before you go down on your partner/s, as this can create small tears in your gums (which can provide an entry point to the bloodstream for STIs). If you’re worried about your breath, protect your partner/s from the odour by having a mint or chewing some gum instead.

Whatever measures you choose to take to protect your sexual health and wellbeing, it’s important that you plan how to negotiate these with your partner/s. Check out the short exercise on page 34, which will get you thinking about how to look after your sexual health.



EXERCISE 5: SAFE(R)-GUARDING YOUR KNICKERS (WITHOUT A CHASTITY BELT)

Fill in the gaps in the first three sentences to set out your sexual health testing plan, then answer the questions about safer sex practices. If you need more information to answer those questions, check out pages 28 to 33.

I plan to get a sexual health test every _____ months, which means my next one should happen in _____ (month) of _____ (year).

I should be getting a pap smear every ____ years, so my next one will be in _____ (month) of _____ (year).

I'll remind myself of these dates by:
(e.g. writing it in my diary, adding a reminder/alarm to my phone/computer)

The safer sex measures I plan to take to look after my sexual health are:

I will communicate these to my partner/s by:

EXERCISE 6: BRING IT ON HOME WITH A TOY (OR TWO)

Some same-sex attracted women use sex toys in their sexual practice and this exercise introduces you to some of the 'usual suspects'. Have a look at the pics provided, and try to link the toy with its name. You may already have some of those lying around the house. Answers on page 40.

Paddle



Blindfold



Feather



Candle



Rope



Handcuffs



Butt Plug



Dildo



Double ended Dildo



Vibrator



Strap on harness



Nipple clamps



Douche/Enema



Crop



LINKS/SERVICES

HELPFUL CONTACTS

ACON

ACON is Australia's largest community-based gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) health and HIV/AIDS organisation. ACON provides many services to our communities, such as counselling, community care and housing. There are also many projects providing services to specific communities such as The Aboriginal Project, The Positive Living Centre and the Sex Workers Outreach Project.

acon.org.au
9 Commonwealth Street
Surry Hills NSW 2010
PO Box 350
Darlinghurst NSW 1300
Tel: (02) 9206 2000
Fax: (02) 9206 2069
Freecall: 1800 063 060
Hearing Impaired:
(02) 9283 2088
Email: acon@acon.org.au

ACON Western Sydney
acon.org.au/communities/western-sydney
Tel: (02) 9206 2064

ACON also has five branches around NSW, call the Sydney office to find your nearest branch

HEALTH

Australian Lesbian Medical Association (ALMA)

ALMA offers support and mentoring for lesbian doctors, medical students and their partners.
almas.net.au

Girl 2 Girl

Girl 2 Girl provides safe sex information to lesbians, bisexual women and women who have sex with women
girl2girl.info

Women's Health NSW

Women's Health NSW provides non-government, community based, feminist services for women to determine their individual health needs.
whnsw.asn.au
Tel: (02) 9560 0866

Family Planning NSW

Reproductive & Sexual Health in NSW. Centres in Ashfield, Fairfield, Newcastle, Penrith and Dubbo.
www.fpnsw.org.au
Healthline: 1300 658 886
'Answers to tricky questions'

NSW Rape Crisis Centre

For those who have been the victim of sexual violence or know of someone who has.
nswrapeccrisis.com.au
Tel: 1800 424 017

ACON Anti-Violence Project

9 Commonwealth St
Surry Hills NSW 2010
acon.org.au/anti-violence
Tel (Report Line):
(02) 9206 2116
Tel (Enquiries):
(02) 9206 2000
Email: avp@acon.org.au

Another Closet

An online resource for people in same-sex relationships who are experiencing domestic violence. It also has information on supporting a friend or family member who is experiencing abuse.
ssdv.acon.org.au

COMMUNITY + SOCIAL GROUPS

ACON Young Women's Project

The YWP is run by & for young same-sex attracted women 26 years and under. Participating in our groups and events provides an opportunity to meet other young same-sex attracted women in a safe, fun and social environment.
acon.org.au/youth/young-women
Tel: (02) 9206 2029
Mobile: 0407 287 268
Email:
youngwomen@acon.org.au

SSAY Projects

There are a range of groups for young people under 25 in Western Sydney which meet every fortnight.
Contact: ACON Western Sydney
Tel: (02) 9206 2000
Email: aconwest@acon.org.au

Beit El Hob

Beit El Hob is a social, support and advocacy group for people living in Australia, who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, intersex and queer; and are identified ethnically or culturally with Arabic speaking communities.
Email:
beit_el_hob@hotmail.com

The Feminist Bookshop

Resource and information for young lesbians - books on all LGBTI and Queer issues, a wide selection of lesbian fiction and literary treats.
feministbookshop.com
Facebook: The Feminist Bookshop
Shop 9, Orange Grove Plaza,
Balmmain Road
Lilyfield NSW 2040
Tel: (02) 9810 2666

Dykes on Bikes

Go on monthly alcohol and drug free day rides led by our great Ride Leaders, who ensure we get to our destination safely & have a fun ride.

dykesonbikessydney.org.au

Tel: 0418 272 936 (Annette)

or 0438 406 669 (Nic)

GLCS Women's Coming Out Group

This group is held fortnightly on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays of the month at 7pm.

glcsnsw.org.au

43 Bedford Street

Newtown NSW 2042

Tel: (02) 8594 9500

Email: tracey@glcsnsw.org.au

Lemons with a Twist

A monthly after work drinks function providing the opportunity to network and socialise on the 1st Friday of each month.

sglba.com.au

New Mardi Gras

Mardi Gras is three weeks packed full of culture, entertainment and social events - and of course the jewel in our crown - the Sydney Gay & Lesbian Mardi Gras Parade.

mardigras.org.au

Suite 6 / 94 Oxford Street

Darlinghurst NSW 2010

Tel: (02) 9383 0900

Queer Screen

Queer Screen is a not for profit arts organisation whose main aim is to celebrate and promote Australian and international queer screen culture in all its diversity and richness.

queerscreen.com.au

Tel: (02) 9332 4938

SPORTING GROUPS

Team Sydney

A great listing of LGBT sports organisations in Sydney and throughout NSW.

teamsydney.org.au

MEDIA + PUBLICATIONS

Cherrie Magazine

Sydney street press for "Not so straight girls."

cherrie.com.au

LOTL

Monthly magazine for lesbians.

lotl.com

Sydney Star Observer

Sydney gay and lesbian free weekly newspaper.

starobserver.com.au

Facebook: Sydney Star

Observer

Twitter: [sydstarobserver](https://twitter.com/sydstarobserver)

SX Magazine

Sydney gay and lesbian free weekly magazine

gaynewsnetwork.com.au

Samesame

Australia's #1 gay and lesbian lifestyle website

samesame.com.au

GLBT YOUTH WELFARE

Twenty10

Support services for young people, communities and families of diverse genders and sexualities.

twenty10.org.au

45 Bedford Street

Newtown NSW 2042

Tel: (02) 8594 9555

GLYSSN

GLBT youth service for the Sutherland shire and St George area.

glyssn.com

Tel: (02) 9570 6743

GENDER

The Gender Centre

Services for the Transgender and Gender questioning community

gendercentre.org.au

7 Bent Street

Petersham NSW 2049

Tel: (02) 9569 2366

MENTAL HEALTH

Gay and Lesbian Counselling Service

A community service providing free, anonymous and confidential telephone counselling and support groups for GLBT people and their friends.

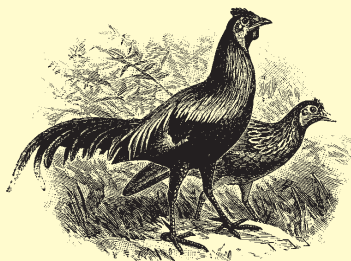
glcsnsw.org.au

Tel: (02) 8594 9500

Reach Out

General youth site providing information and support for young people.

reachout.com



STI POP QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Genital warts are not contagious.
FALSE - Genital warts are caused by the HPV or wart virus & are contagious.
2. A regular health check - up will show all STIs
FALSE - Unless you specifically request tests for all STIs you can't be guaranteed to receive the tests.
3. If you ignore an STI, usually it will go away by itself.
FALSE - STIs need to be treated. Left untreated, some can have very serious consequences.
4. In some cases, if you pass an STI on to someone else, it means you don't have it anymore.
FALSE - In all cases, you will still have the STI even if you pass it on to someone else.
5. There is no cure for genital herpes.
TRUE - Herpes can be managed with treatment but the virus can not be cleared from your body.
6. You can get genital herpes from a cold sore.
TRUE - Herpes simplex 1 and herpes simplex 2 can be transferred from the genital area to the mouth (cold sores) and from the mouth to the genital area.
7. Treatment for crabs can be purchased at a chemist.
TRUE - Treatment for crabs (pubic lice) can be purchased over the counter (without a prescription) at chemists and at supermarkets.
8. It's possible to have syphilis and have no symptoms.
TRUE - however, if you do get symptoms, the first one is a small, painless sore on the throat, arse or vagina which goes away within 3 weeks. This small sore is very easy to miss.
9. If you have been treated for gonorrhoea you can't catch it again.
FALSE - Gonorrhoea is caused by bacteria and can be contracted over and over again.
10. Lesbians do not need to have pap smears.
FALSE - Pap smears are recommended every two years for all women, regardless of sexuality and even when there are no symptoms.
11. Chlamydia can be caused by stress or alcohol.
FALSE - Chlamydia and all other STIs are only ever caused by sexual activity (hence the name sexually transmissible infections). Chlamydia is transmitted through sexual activities such as sharing sex toys with others, oral sex and arse play such as fingering and fisting.
12. Untreated chlamydia can cause infertility in both men and women.
TRUE - Both chlamydia and gonorrhoea can cause infertility.

ANSWERS TO EXERCISE 6: BRING IT ON HOME WITH A TOY (OR TWO)



Paddle: Used for light or heavier spanking, providing heavy, dull pain to a larger area (the size of the paddle).



Blindfolds are pretty self explanatory - put them over your partner's eyes to take away their sense of sight (which can mean that other senses, like touch, are heightened).



Feather: Use these to tickle or tease your partner for a different sort of sensation. Feathers could be used in tandem with blindfolding to intensify the experience.



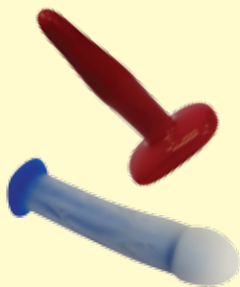
Candles: Yes you can use these to provide mood lighting. However, after burning for a while these candles hold a precious resource - wax. This can be dripped or dribbled onto your partner's skin for heat or pain. The closer you hold the candle to the skin, the more intense the heat (and thus, pain).



Rope: You probably have some lying around the house already, and this can be a cheap but effective way to tie your partner/s up. One thing to be aware of is that you don't want the rope to be either a) scratchy, as this will be uncomfortable against the skin, or b) too tight, as this can cut off blood flow, and also can be quite uncomfortable. If you want to expand your skills, there are many websites and books that give tips on rope tying in all sorts of simple and extravagant ways.



Handcuffs: These are used to restrain someone - all handcuffs (other than those used by the police or prison wardens) are legally required to have a safety release that can be operated by the person being cuffed.



Butt plugs: These can be used for anal penetration and are often slightly smaller for this purpose, although you can get butt plugs of all shapes and sizes.



Dildos are sex toys that are typically used for penetration, and are often shaped like a penis. They can be used with a harness or without.



Double ended Dildos allow two women to be penetrated simultaneously with one dildo.



Vibrators are also used for penetration and can be used solo or with partner/s. Often vibrators can come with ‘bells and whistles’ like clit stimulators, moving pearls and lights, although no vibrator has been created with actual bells or whistles as yet (time to start inventing?).



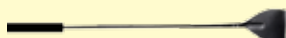
Strap on harnesses provide the ‘hands-free’ option for lesbian sex and involve wearing a harness with a dildo attached.



Nipple clamps can be used for nipple stimulation and can also have small electronic currents to add to the stimulation.

Douche/Enema: Sometimes also referred to as hygiene equipment. This is used to flush out or clean the ass or vagina, often before engaging in sexual activity. Some precautions:

- Only ever use water, don’t use soap or any other substance as this can cause problems.
- Use lukewarm water - hot water will burn, cold water can make the muscles seize up.
- If engaging in anal play afterwards, wait at least half an hour as douching removes the natural lubricant lining the anus - increasing the risk of tears (you should also use lube).



Crop: This looks like the whips jockeys use on horses. In sexual activity a crop can be used for light or heavier spanking, and provides concentrated, sharp pain to a small area.

GLOSSARY

SEXUALITY

Sexuality - is an umbrella term used to describe an individual's practices, motivations and feelings in relation to sex.

Sexual identity/identities - refers to the label or labels that you can use to describe your sexuality. A few examples are outlined below, but there are many more sexual identities than those listed. The important thing to remember is that these labels mean different things to different people, and for each term there isn't really a definition that will be accepted by everyone. This is because sexuality is a very complex and very personal thing, for more on this, see "Where does my sexuality come from?".

Lesbian - this term is generally used to describe the sexual and romantic desire that a woman has for other women.

Bisexual - this term is typically used to describe the sexual and romantic desire that an individual may have for people of both the same and a different sex.

Straight - this term is widely used to describe people who are attracted to members of a different sex.

Queer - is a term one might use to describe their sexuality without using the words "lesbian", "gay" or "bisexual". One might do this when they feel that these words are limiting in definition. Queer can also describe a political perspective, or membership of an alternative subculture based on sexuality.

No Label - someone might consider themselves to be "no label" when they wish not to be defined by the various terms used to describe sexual identity. This may be because they feel that sexuality is too complex to be defined by a single word or label.

Not sure - can be used by individuals to describe themselves when they are not comfortable with any of the labels available, and may be unsure about or questioning their sexuality.

GENDER

Gender - is the social construction of male and female, or an individual's perception of themselves as male, female, trans, or something else.

Transsexual people may feel that they were born into the wrong biological body in terms of gender. They may consider taking hormones or having surgery to re-assign their biological sex with their gender identity, but not all desire or are able to do so.

Transgender is an umbrella term used to describe people whose self-identification or expression challenges traditional notions of 'male' or 'female'. They may choose to live as male or female, or between, or as both genders, or they may prefer to live without a gender label at all.

Genderqueer - describes an individual who does not identify as either male or female, rather gender lines are blurred. Colloquially people might identify themselves as transboi, boydyke, third gendered, bi-gendered, multi gendered, andro, androgyne or gender bender.

RELATIONSHIPS

Monogamous - refers to two people who remain sexually exclusive with each other and have no outside sexual partners.

Asexual - broadly describes someone who lacks or does not experience sexual desire, interest or attraction towards other people. However, some people who consider themselves to be asexual still have sex.

Celibate is used to describe a person that chooses to abstain from all sexual activities. By definition, celibacy is a freely chosen state of practicing sexual abstinence.

Open relationships - this is a broad term used to describe any relationship that isn't monogamous, some examples of different types of open relationships are below.

Polyamorous - a person who practices polyamory or 'many loves'. This is when a person has more than one intimate relationship at one time and all the individuals involved have agreed to this arrangement. This could involve dating many people, or having multiple partnerships.

Polyfidelity - describes when three or more people are in an exclusive sexual arrangement, this operates much like monogamy but there are just more people involved.

Primary partners - a person may have more than one sexual or romantic partner at a time, but they may also have a particularly intimate relationship with one individual. This person would be considered their primary partner.

Intimate relationship - an intimate relationship may be either physical or emotional or both. Relationships as such provide a social network of people that builds strong emotional attachments needed to fulfill a person's needs of belongingness and the need to be cared for.

SEXUAL HEALTH

Sexual health and wellbeing - is used to describe an individual's physical and mental state in relation to sex and sexuality. This includes the obvious things like being free of sexually transmitted infections, but goes beyond that to encompass things like whether someone enjoys sex or whether they feel confident expressing what they desire.

Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are conditions that are transmitted through close body contact or the exchange of bodily fluids like vaginal fluids, semen, blood, mucus or saliva (i.e. through sexual practices - hence the name). An example of an STI is Chlamydia, which is a bacterial infection of the throat, arse or vagina.

OTHER

Out - is when a person is open about their sexual identity. This can include telling other people about your sexuality (e.g. your friends or your family). Being out is a relative term - you can be out to some people and not others (in fact, it'd be pretty hard to be out to everyone, unless you walked around all the time yelling out "I'm a lesbian!" or "I'm queer!"). It's important to note that a person shouldn't feel that they have to be out. In some circumstances, it may not be safe for a person to be out (e.g. to their family, or to their church), and thus they might wisely choose to keep their sexual identity to themselves.

Coming out - is the process by which a person chooses to disclose their sexual identity. Coming out can be considered as a single action, when one reveals to their family and friends that they are same-sex attracted, or may be a series of actions. For example, a person may come to the realization that they are same-sex attracted and thus have personally come out. This person may then choose to disclose this information to family or friends and this is also coming out. These two steps are part of the coming out process.

Consent - is much more than saying "yes" before sex. Between sexual partners the agreement (or consent) to sexual practices must be given freely and can be withdrawn at any point (and if consent is withdrawn, then the other person must stop).

GLBTQ - is a widely used and accepted acronym representing many different identities that make up the "gay community". It stands for "gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and queer".

Sexual practices - we use this term in this resource to refer to any of the activities involved in sexual contact. This can vary from person to person and include things like kissing, finger fucking or play piercing. For a list of some of the sexual practices that people may engage in, check out the "A to Z of Lesbian Sex" poster.



Check it out!

Inside this nifty little pouch is the “A to Z of Lesbian Sex” poster, as well as a sample safe-sex pack including a condom, a glove, a dam and some lube.



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RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

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