



10 TIPS FOR INCLUDING PLEASURE IN YOUR WORK

Are you thinking of including pleasure in your work?

We know that including pleasure can improve sexual and reproductive health.
But, you might be asking yourself-how do I integrate pleasure into my work?

How can I also become a 'pleasure implementer'?

Read on to find out what other sexual and reproductive health
and rights (SRHR) organisations said helped
them to include pleasure.

You can read about the evidence for pleasure and
further resources at the end of this document.

the
pleasure
project.



AMPLIFYCHANGE

1

BEFORE YOU BEGIN: ASSUMING AND HONORING

2

Keep an open mind about how closed or open people, groups and communities may be to pleasure and let this be reflected in your approach.

Some groups are often viewed as out of reach for a pleasure approach. Assumptions are that talking about pleasure would be uncomfortable or even impossible for these groups! Pleasure implementers told us that not making assumptions can allow for individuals and groups to decide their own response to a pleasure approach.

A massive lesson learned was to not have preconceived notions about the communities' openness to talking about pleasure.

Encadrement des Femmes Indigènes et des Ménages vulnérables, DRC

Honour pleasure approach work that is already being done. It may not be named or recognised as pleasure approach work.

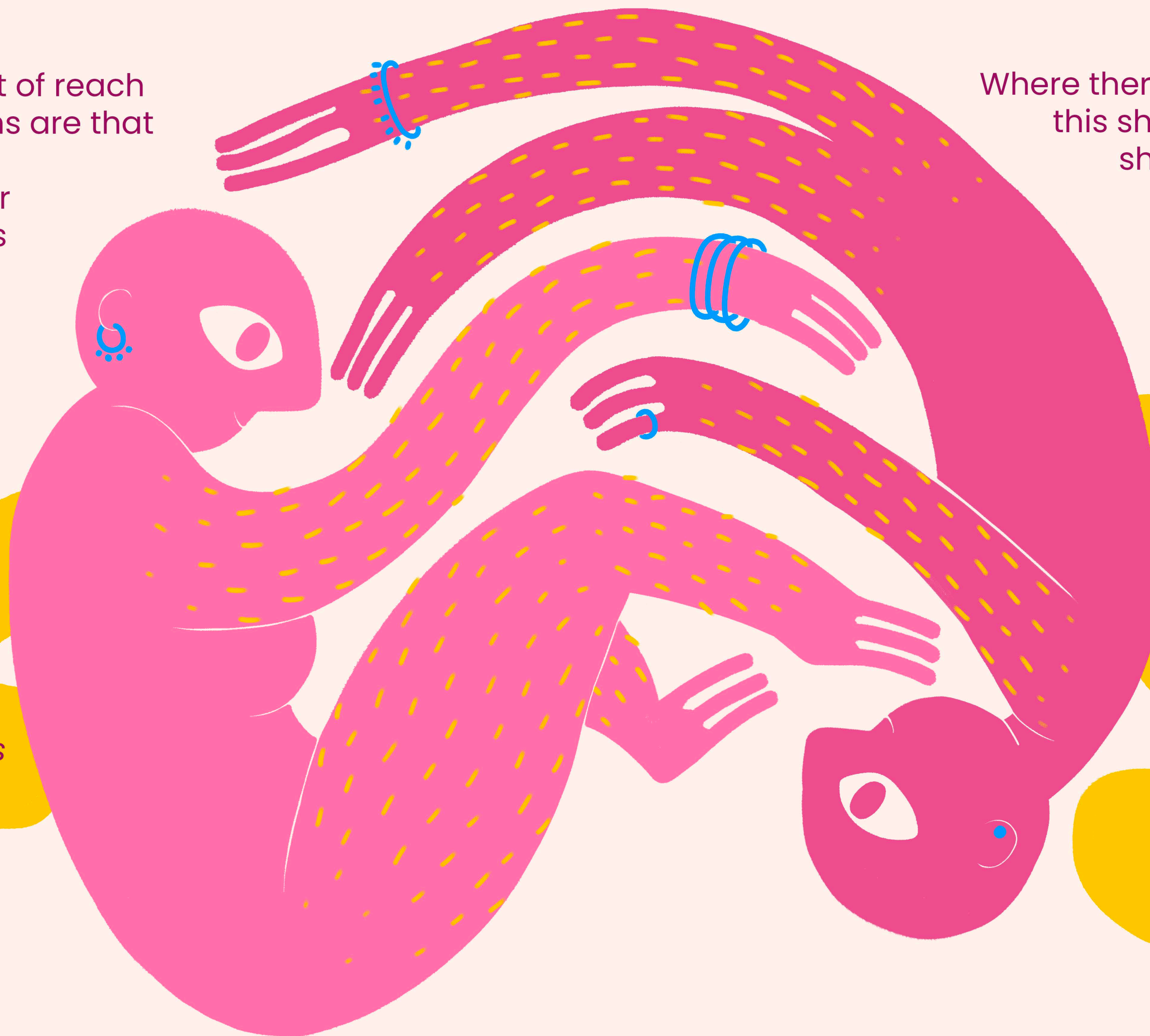
Where there is already pleasure work happening, this should be acknowledged. Implementers should consider using this as a valuable way of talking about pleasure in this setting.

Traditionally there are some resources and some practices that already exist at the local context addressing this [pleasure] approach....

So for example, in some of the villages there are people talking about sexual pleasure.

There are positive role models around the villages, even where sex is a taboo topic

Encadrement des Femmes Indigènes et des Ménages vulnérables, DRC



SEXY TALK: LANGUAGE AND VOICE

1

Where use of local languages sounds offensive or sex-negative when talking about pleasure, use a mix of languages or comfortable slang words as alternatives.

Some pleasure implementers chose to use a mix of Swahili and English to get around this challenge. Others appropriated internet slang and verbalised emojis to refer to genitals; for example, using the Swahili word for peach to refer to vulvas and vaginas. Be creative as you know your audience best!

Sometimes using local languages to talk about pleasure can sound offensive or like slang

Young and Alive, Tanzania

2

If jumping straight into pleasure is uncomfortable, introduce pleasure slowly into a conversation through discussion topics that feel safe.

Using topics that feel safe to introduce thinking around respecting and understanding other people's sensations, experiences and desires can allow a pleasure approach to be introduced slowly and comfortably.

We first start talking to them about respectful maternity care, where the woman must be respected while giving birth. It's the same thing that needs to be respected before conceiving, that's where we introduce the theme

Groupe de Volontaires pour la Promotion de la Maternité sans Risques, DRC

3

Address resistance to introducing pleasure by amplifying young people's voices.

Sometimes people claim that a pleasure approach encourages young people to have sex. This can be responded to by young people speaking out about wanting to learn how to negotiate safer and pleasurable sexual experiences.

Young people themselves were like responding saying, you know, it's not promoting immorality, but actually promoting what we want to discuss

Haguruka, Rwanda

PLEASURE PEOPLE: FACILITATORS AND TRAINING

1

Invest time training those who will facilitate the pleasure approach (youth educators, teachers), as for many this is a new topic and skill.

Talking about pleasure can be new and scary, even for facilitators. New facilitators of a pleasure approach will need training, time and support to become comfortable talking about pleasure, knowing their boundaries and sharing with others.

Please see our **resource section** for The Pleasure Projects' training resources.

The first advice to other organisations wanting to work on pleasure-based and sex-positive SRHR is to first build the capacity of their staff on pleasure-based and sex-positive SRHR

Women's Health and Equal Rights Association Rwanda (WHERAR), Rwanda

2

Provide your facilitators with ongoing support because learning to speak about pleasure is an ongoing process.

Learning to be comfortable and confident talking about pleasure is a continuous journey. New ways of appreciating pleasure may reveal themselves at different times. Facilitators need ongoing support to reinforce their pleasure journey.

There has been ongoing monitoring where the youth external facilitators have been supported in how to talk about sex and pleasure, for example, sharing thoughts with peers

Sesotho Media and Development, Lesotho

3

Find people that have the capacity to communicate positively and non-judgmentally about pleasure and sex.

Facilitators who are judgemental and share negative or stigmatising perspectives on sex or pleasure are not yet able to facilitate a pleasure approach.

We should not give judgemental messages like asking them why did the condom burst! What were you doing! We should handle them in a way that a person can open up... because the moment you start judging them, these clients will keep quiet

Transgender Equality Uganda, Uganda

PLEASURE PEOPLE: FACILITATORS AND TRAINING

4

Where facilitators can be vulnerable and offer up their own stories, joys, and struggles with pleasure, people are more likely to share their own experiences in a group setting.

Being vulnerable and open about pleasure is difficult. Facilitators can, if they feel able to, model the ability to be vulnerable by sharing their own experiences of pleasure.

Sex workers are expected to share their internal things, like personal things... So when we break the cover, when we open about our own sexual practices and preferences, they're happy to share about their preferences, their sexual pleasure.

South India AIDS Action Programme (SIAAP), India

It is important to note that being vulnerable about our experiences with pleasure does not have to be explicit or even sexual. Sharing experiences should be done in a way that feels comfortable for facilitators and honours their safety or privacy boundaries. Showing people how to share safely and comfortably is key to modelling vulnerability.

5

In some cases, facilitators that are the same age and/or gender as the group encourage more open discussion between those participating.

Pleasure implementers reported that women and girls can feel shy, intimidated and/or judged in mixed gender groups. Groups of only women and girls can allow them to speak more freely about their experiences with pleasure.

Similarly, young people can feel more comfortable in groups of similar ages. People with similar lived experiences or sexual and/or gender identities may feel more comfortable to have open conversations together.

If you put them all together [men and women] at the same time, it's difficult for them to come out with their thoughts.

Encadrement des Femmes Indigènes et des Ménages vulnérables, DRC

SPREAD THE WORD: DOCUMENT AND EVALUATE

Document and evaluate pleasure work where possible.

Documenting and evaluating pleasure work is essential to add to our understanding of how to best implement a pleasure approach in a variety of settings and the impact a pleasure approach has on wellbeing and SRHR. This information can be shared to inspire, encourage and help others who wish to apply a pleasure approach.

I think to see now how the grantees are kind of advocating and entering into different spaces with this really grounded knowledge of implementing pleasure based sexual health is just really exciting

The Pleasure Project, UK



HOW DID WE COME UP WITH THESE BEST PRACTICES?

The Pleasure Project, *AmplifyChange* and *The Case For Her* came together to fund and support civil society organisations doing pleasure based sexual health work around the globe. As part of a wider research project, we held focus groups with eight pleasure implementers to learn how they best applied a pleasure approach in their settings. These discussions culminated in 10 best practices to support others integrating pleasure into their work. A full report of the research project about implementation of pleasure will be published soon.

With thanks to *The Case for Her* for their support to the pleasure specific funding for this partnership. *You can read more about the partnership and the participating organisations here.*

WHO ARE WE?

AmplifyChange is a fund that supports grassroots and civil society organisations (CSOs) who advocate for improved sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) in their communities. The Pleasure Project is the world's leading organisation putting the sexy into safer sex since 2004. We build bridges between the public health world and the pleasure and sex industry and help to develop the evidence base for a sex-positive and pleasure-based approach to sexual health and rights.






PLEASURE RESOURCES

- ***The Pleasure Principles*** – a guide to inspire and support people and organisations embarking on the journey towards a sex-positive, pleasure-based approach to sexual health
- ***A pleasure-based approach*** – as defined by The Pleasure Project in 2019
- ***‘What is the added value of incorporating pleasure in sexual health interventions?’*** – a systematic review conducted by The Pleasure Project and the World Health Organization showing evidence that pleasure increases condom use and saves lives
- ***The Pleasure Project website*** – a portal to a huge range of practical resources on how to advocate for, train for and implement pleasure-based sexual health.
- More best practices to implement ***pleasure-inclusive CSE from The Pleasure Project***
- ***How to strengthen your team*** with pleasure-based approaches from SIAAP








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