

The background of the entire page is a close-up photograph of two hands clasped together. The hands are positioned diagonally, with one hand on top of the other. The lighting is dramatic, with a strong red light from the right and a blue light from the left, creating a gradient across the skin. The fingers are interlaced, and the texture of the skin is visible.

TOOLKIT

# how to become a sexual pleasure champion and trainer

a few helpful steps

the  
pleasure  
project.

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# how to become a sexual pleasure champion and trainer

a few helpful steps

This book is produced by The Pleasure  
Project/Taking Action  
for Sexual Health [Registered UK]  
[www.thepleasureproject.org](http://www.thepleasureproject.org)

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**the  
pleasure  
project.**



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Our objective is to get sex educators hooked on talking ‘dirty’ and to embrace desire, joy, happiness and pleasure when it comes to sex education...

Image by Dainis Graveris on Unsplash

## foreplay

It's so great to meet you pleasure enthusiast, we have been expecting you! We want you to become pleasure proficient and so we have designed our Training Toolkit, a practical guide to show how facilitators can best address pleasure in discussions and conversations on sexual health to enable good safer sex.

After witnessing and experiencing the systematic erasure of pleasure in international development and public health, a silencing that disproportionately affects minoritized identities, and makes our sexual health interventions less effective, we welcome you to take a positive, liberating and sexy approach to good safer sex by using some of the tools we gathered here over our 20 years of experience as pleasure activists and trainers.

With this Toolkit, we invite you to co-create a world where more people live happier, more satisfying, and flourishing lives—challenging the shame and judgment we face around pleasure and sexuality. Let's create a Pleasure Land where we can use [The Pleasure Principles](#) to guide us to enable more good safer sex in the world.

The way we talk or do not talk about pleasure and sex matters, who gets to talk about it matters, and it matters who gets left behind. Breaking the pleasure stigma and silence requires the voices of many, so we draw from our own experiences of pleasure as well as from the joys and turn-ons of joining a collective movement that is radically pro-pleasure in its myriad forms. We are excited to welcome you into our community of pleasure practise.

We hope this Toolkit helps you open your aspirations for your own pleasure and joy, and then walk alongside others to see what can be universally available to us in all our pleasures.

We would love to hear what you think and how you use it to increase the amount of pleasure in the world.

A special thank you to Doortje Braeken for her invaluable contribution and expertise in updating the Toolkit and to the Pleasure Fellows for reviewing it and sharing with us their experiences.





**Are you a content creator,  
blogger or vlogger?**

**Are you an educator,  
health provider, counsellor  
or facilitator?**

**Are you working in a sex  
shop or selling/providing  
contraceptives and want to  
discuss sexual pleasure?**

Whatever you do or whatever your profession or passion is, you may want to start a conversation or discuss sexual pleasure with your audience and clients in a meaningful way. You do not have to be a sex expert, sexually experienced, or a sexologist to discuss sexual pleasure.

**Anyone can do it; in this document, we want  
to show you how.**

## welcoming you to pleasure

Content creators, influencers, educators, counsellors, facilitators, contraceptive providers, and brand managers among others may want to discuss sexual pleasure face-to-face and online with their clients and audience. They have told us that they want to have access to practical resources to help them develop the correct information, text, language and images for their work. This is why we have created and collected resources that are meant to inspire and help you to have a pleasure-focus in your work.

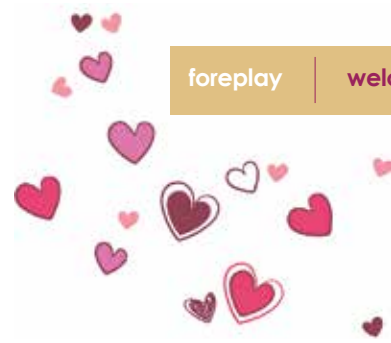
The Pleasure Project has been working since 2004 to make sexual pleasure a crucial part of people's sexual health and lives on the global agenda. We have developed a wide range of education, research and advocacy materials to support our work. This toolkit builds on our experience of using previous training guide and running many workshops, discussions and events that highlight the importance of pleasure.

This document aims to be a kind of one-stop-shop, a practical document for professionals that brings the Pleasure Principles and The Pleasure Project's existing training manual together. It shows

**“The Pleasure Project has been working to make sexual pleasure a crucial part of people's sexual health and lives...”**

how facilitators can best address pleasure in discussions and conversations on sexual health. This document presents various ways sexual health can be discussed and reflected from a pleasure perspective in training, education, workshops, information giving, blogs, vlogs, podcasts, etc. Even in more day to day and informal conversations with clients.

We created it to inspire and support you to use accurate and positive information and words. It is a collection of exercises and comments which looks at inclusive, diverse, realistic, and evidence-based ways to make the topic of sexual pleasure easier for you.



## who are we?

# the pleasure project.

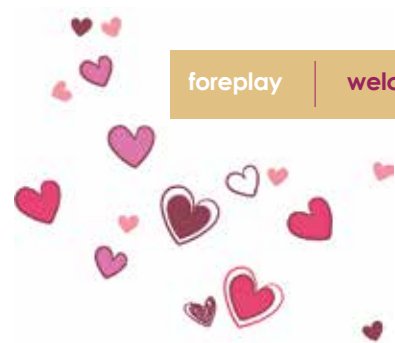
In 2019, we worked with the **World Association of Sexual Health (WAS)** to publish the world's first **Declaration on Sexual Pleasure** highlighting the importance of sexual pleasure for well-being, flourishing and health. In 2021, The Pleasure Project won the WAS award for innovative sexuality education for our pleasure-based work. In 2022, we published a **systematic review** with the World Health Organisation (WHO) that showed that pleasure inclusive sexual health improves sexual and reproductive health outcomes.

The **Pleasure Project** is the global thought leader on pleasure-based sexual health. We have been leading the effort to put *sexy into safer sex* since 2004. We build bridges between the public health world and the pleasure and sex industry and help develop the evidence base for a sex-positive and pleasure-based approach to sexual health and rights.

We promote sexual health and agency through an emphasis on 'good sex' by focusing on the pursuit of pleasure as one of the primary reasons people have sex. Secondly, we work to expand the evidence base on what works in acknowledging diverse desires and means of satisfaction.







Pleasure based approach is “one that celebrates sex, sexuality and the joy and wellbeing that can be derived from these, and creates a vision of good sex built on sexual rights. It focuses on sensory, mental, physical and sensual pleasure to enable individuals to understand, consent to, and control their bodies and multi-faceted desires. Well-being, safety, pleasure, desire and joy are the objectives of a programme with a pleasure-based approach.

This approach measures empowerment, agency and self-efficacy by whether or not an individual has been enabled to know what they want, and can ask for it, and request this of others, in relation to their sexuality, desires and pleasure.”

(The Pleasure Project first defined pleasure based sexual health [here](#), in 2019. Medicus Mundi Schweiz Bulletin #151)

## what we are talking about

### What is sexual pleasure?

It seems an easy question, but the answer is more complex than we think. Several organizations through the years have recognized the importance of pleasure approaches in sexual health, we have learnt from them and acknowledge their great contribution. The narrative and the content of this document are centred in the definition of pleasure based sexual health we published in 2009.

In this document, we will unpack this definition and aim to show how you can use the definition in your work.



## who this document is for

We hope that this document will inspire and motivate you to become a sexual pleasure champion in any context, regardless of who and where you are and what you do.

This document is for everyone who is interested and wants to become a champion for promoting sexual pleasure and sexual well-being. You can be working as a professional in sexual health or someone who wants to explore and expand your knowledge about sex and sexuality.

**Everyone can be a champion. You can promote sexual pleasure at work in discussions with your partner, family, or friends. You can introduce the topic online as a digital content creator; you can discuss it at your work, during formal and informal debates or workshops and training.**

We hope that this document will inspire and motivate you to become a sexual pleasure champion in any context, regardless of who and where you are and what you do.

Image by Gabrielle Dickson on Unsplash

## how to use this document

This document has two parts

### a. Introducing the sexual Pleasure Principles:

This part presents The Pleasure Principles. The Pleasure Project developed the Pleasure Principles in 2022 to act as a guide and inspiration to support people and organisations to embark on the journey towards a sex-positive, pleasure-based approach to sexual health. ~~[See Part 1 of this document].~~ It also gives you talking points and suggestions on starting a conversation, introducing the Principles, and answering difficult questions.

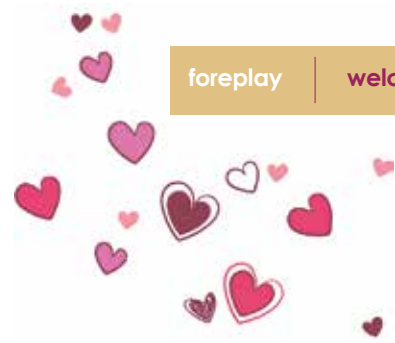
### b. Training manual on pleasure-based sexual health:

This manual is an updated version of the existing trainers' toolkit titled Secrets of Mixing Pleasure and Prevention. It gives you access to training exercises and talking points, which you can use to discuss and include sexual pleasure

in your work, educational/ informational sessions, training or workshops. The manual inspires and helps you support learners or participants to explore sexual pleasure from a human rights perspective, including individual and societal contexts for that. It sees pleasure not just as a physical experience but as emotional and mental wellbeing, safety and joy.

Both parts are conceptualised to support our work to influence a pleasure-based and a sex-positive approach to sexual health and to support people who work on sexual health to get more comfortable in pleasure. We have included some suggestions on how to connect the two parts of this document so that you can pick from a range of exercises and advise and choose what is most relevant for your work. It may help you glance through the whole document first to see what is most useful for you and your work.





## be prepared for pleasure

When you are going to use and introduce the content of this document, here is some advice to prepare yourself:

### Be honest and accurate

By focusing on the realities of sexuality, sex and sexual activity/ orientation as part of people's lives, you can counteract stigma and misinformation. Non-biased and accurate language and illustrations can help to enhance people's understanding of sexual health and happiness.

### Be objective and open-minded

Believe that individuals have the right to make decisions about their sexuality for consensual sexual relations. Also, as professionals, like everyone else, you have personal values, beliefs, and experiences. It is essential to present a range of sexual experiences and reflect on the diversity of how people enjoy sex.

### Focus on the individual

It is essential to focus on your audience's (mental) health and rights in all messaging.

The right to decide how to enjoy their sexuality should always rest with the person you are working with, because they are best placed to understand their circumstances and the results of their actions. This includes including the importance to ask and give consent for any sexual activity, and to never be forced to a sexual act by anyone, e.g. someone with more power or older.

### Recognise diversity

No two people feel or think the same about sexual pleasure; sexual pleasure occurs in a wide variety of ways in our minds and bodies. The way we experience sexual pleasure can depend on socio-economic and cultural settings, different experiences and values. It is important to present a range of experiences and to reflect the diversity of people who want to enjoy their sexuality.

### Use positive and respectful language and images

It is easy to unintentionally stigmatise sex and sexual pleasure through inaccurate and negative language and poorly chosen images. We will include more detailed guidance on appropriate language and images you can use on page xx.

Critically engage with dominant social and cultural norms about sexuality and support the audience to be critical of these norms.

### Find a balance between seriousness and humour

Sex and sexuality and sexual pleasure are not just serious concepts; using humour and a lighter touch can help get the conversations going. However, be careful that the jokes or language are not offensive or discriminating.

### Involve the intended audience

Make sure you are responsive to the audience's needs and characteristics. For example, consider the intended audience's literacy and comprehension levels, values, beliefs and identities, along with the emotions that the topic may evoke in them.

### Be sex critical

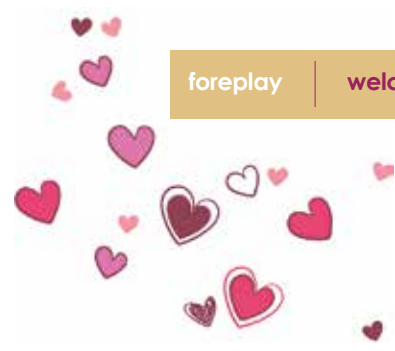
Critically engage with dominant social and cultural norms about sexuality and support the audience

to be critical of these norms. Being critical doesn't mean you have to disagree with dominant social norms about sex and sexuality in your community but instead, constructively analyse whose norms are predominant and who they impact on.

During discussions with clients and colleagues about their attitudes and assumptions, try to understand their opinions, ask questions, and show alternatives. For example, the notions that condoms make sex feel worse, that women don't enjoy sex, that all relationships are heterosexual or that 'sex' always means penetrative vaginal/penis sex.

### Always provide references and resources

As well as giving references for factual information, all communications materials provided through the training should enable audiences to obtain further information about what you have discussed.



# some tips on being a sexual pleasure champion...

Reflect on your values and experiences. What are the dominant attitudes or 'rules' in the communities you live and work in about sexuality, sex, condoms, pornography, sexual pleasure, female sexuality or same-sex relationships?

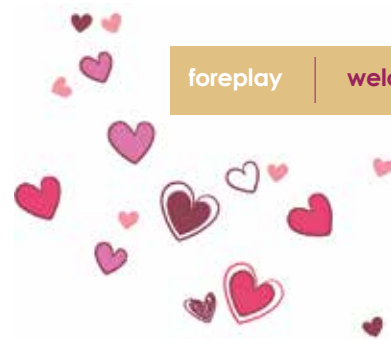
**Be aware of your feelings, attitudes and norms regarding sex, sexuality, sexual relationships and sexual pleasure.**  
You may not always be conscious of your ideas, prejudices and norms. So, before starting, always explore your feelings, attitudes and norms or discuss them with a colleague or friend. Reflect on your values and experiences. What are the dominant attitudes or 'rules' in the communities you live and work in about sexuality, sex, condoms, pornography, sexual pleasure, female sexuality or same-sex relationships? Who decides on the rules? What happens to those who don't stick to the rules? What are the possibilities for living by different kinds of rules? Be clear to your audience about what is a fact and your value-idea about the topic you discuss.

**Adopt an attitude that promotes sexuality as an enhancing part of life that should bring happiness, energy, well-being, fulfillment and celebration.**  
You can support your audience to achieve ideal experiences rather than solely working to prevent



Image by Shingi Rice on Unsplash





Empower people, especially those who have been structurally excluded (young people, disabled people, women, LGBTQIA+ etc.), to exercise their sexual and reproductive rights and respect the rights of others.

negative experiences. At the same time, acknowledge and tackle the various risks associated with sexuality without reinforcing fear, shame or taboo of sexuality.

**Be prepared and put in some groundwork and understand sexuality, the meaning of sexual desire, and the context and meaning of sex and sexuality in different countries/cultures/ groups.**

You cannot run before you take some baby steps, and you need to be brave to be very critical of your work. Try to avoid falling into the pitfall of becoming normative and

prescriptive without understanding the reality of people's lives. Sex can be messy, it is sometimes difficult and painful, and it can be fantastic. As a professional worker, you need to introduce sexual pleasure well and listen to your audience: the real experts.

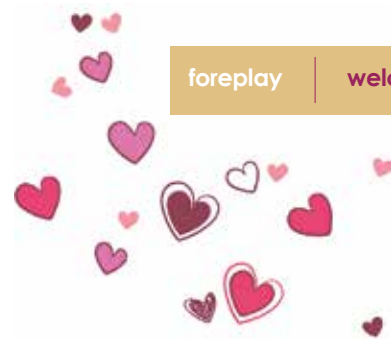
**Explore how your work influences your own sexual life.**

Sometimes people may think that, because you can talk about sexual pleasure, you are an expert, a fantastic lover, or an 'easy' catch. Talking about sexual pleasure does not mean you need to be a great lover or an expert; or one of the happy few who always have the most amazing orgasms; it is alright to have your hang-ups and challenges when it comes to sex and sexual relationships.

**Try to decrease discrimination and (self) stigmatisation.**

Try to decrease discrimination and (self) stigmatisation by empowering people, especially those who have been structurally excluded (young people, disabled people, women, LGBTQIA+ etc.), to exercise their sexual and reproductive rights and respect the rights of others.





## contextualisation

One of the main characteristics of impactful work around sex and pleasure is to be evidence-based. We know pleasure inclusive sexual health improves safer sex and sexual health, and we should all be enthusiastic to advance evidence-based practices. The Pleasure Project on its website (<https://thepleasureproject.org>) offers access to resources and best practise to show the range of experiences on pleasure based sexual health and an overview of **organizations and individuals** who are already promoting pleasure and sexy safe sex in the public health world. Besides robust evidence and science you also need to bear in mind the cultural and religious norms in the countries and communities. To make your training/conversations contextually relevant you need to collect information to make the content relevant and understand how we can connect your community's values and social norms and the realities of people's sexuality, sexual wellbeing, and pleasure.

A culturally sensitive approach respects the cultural characteristics of sexuality and offers evidence-based information while promoting critical thinking, human rights and empowerment for self-determination. Even if you have certain beliefs, you still need to explain sexuality as neutral,

**Introducing sexuality and sexual pleasure can be a tricky conversation. There can be people in the discussions or training who have opposite ideas and values about sex and sexuality...**

respectful, complete, professional, and academic. Be always very clear about what is a fact and a value or belief. Introducing sexuality and sexual pleasure can be a tricky conversation. There can be people in the discussions or training who have opposite ideas and values about sex and sexuality, e.g., multiple partners, sex before marriage, etc. Negative expressions about sex and sexual pleasure can be based on religious or cultural values and norms. Try to treat both positive and negative expressions equally. Keep in mind that there is a wide diversity of sexual practices - some of which change across time and contexts - which are influenced by many factors like, for instance, technology. To start a conversation, it's crucial to keep an open mind and contextualise them in a sexual rights framework. Reflecting on the diversity of sexual practices in their own context is always a good start.

## communicating with passion

We hope that by becoming a champion, you will be passionate about sharing your ideas about the importance of sexual pleasure. Getting your message across, either in debates or training, can be difficult, especially when you encounter people who are not convinced or have strong normative and restrictive ideas about sex and sexual pleasure.

When you want to get your message across, you have to know when to be aggressive, subtle, or persuasive - when to shout and whisper.

Before embarking on communication for change, you must feel confident about talking about sex and sexual pleasure. People who may not appreciate all the nuances, evidence and need for pleasure, may challenge us on these issues, so being prepared is the key to success!

### Some practical tips:

Begin from a place of curiosity and respect, and stop worrying about being liked.

- Focus on what you're hearing, not what you're saying.
- Be direct.
- Start with an example from work, in which everyone can identify themselves.



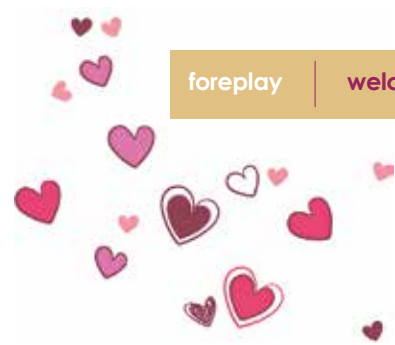
**Try the following. It is a kind of metaphor for approaches to communication.**

Work with a partner; your partner should form a clenched fist. You need to try to open the clenched fist. You will immediately try to force open the fist most of the time! But there are easier ways!

For example, your partner can hold out their hand to shake hands with you and, often, your fist will open automatically; or give them a gift which they have to receive with an open hand.

- Look at the issue from their perspective.
- Focus on the issue not the position.
- Ask positive questions like 'What if?'; 'What was your best experience?'; 'What did you learn?'
- Make it practical.
- If things aren't going to plan, take a break.
- Agree to disagree.





## getting ready for debates and discussions

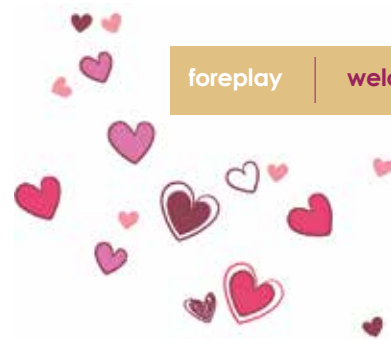
Each society interprets sexuality and sexual activity in different ways. Norms dictate what is considered acceptable behaviour; what is considered normal or acceptable in terms of sexual behaviour and values of the particular society.

In formal and informal conversations and workshops, sexuality and sexual pleasure can be very inspiring and have the potential to open up new discussions and insights. It is good to have dialogues and discussions even when the topics maybe uncomfortable or contentious. It is ok to disagree; you can always agree to disagree.

However, sometimes there may be an unwillingness and inability to discuss sex and sexuality. Communities/societies/groups develop rules, values, and beliefs about sexuality which ultimately become standard rules that control sexual relationships and are taught from an early age. This can also result in sexual attitudes, practices, and norms among individuals and groups which promote sex-positive behaviour.

However, it can also put the lives of young people at risk of poor sexual experiences. Each society interprets sexuality and sexual activity in different ways. Norms dictate what is considered acceptable behaviour; what is considered normal or acceptable in terms of sexual behaviour and values of the particular society. Some cultures and religions emphasise control over one's sex drive and sexual desire or dictate the times or conditions in which sexuality can be expressed. Whether or not sex before marriage, birth control, masturbation or abortion is deemed acceptable is often a matter of a cultural or religious belief.





Also, media perpetuates several stereotypes around sexual relationships and the sexual roles of men and women, many of which have been shown to have problematic effects on people's real sex lives.

**Here is some advice:**

- Not everyone may want to engage in the discussion; do not force people.
- Identify the arguments and activities of those in opposition.
- Prepare counterarguments that are accurate, honest and provide a clear vision of what you are aiming to achieve (refrain from using jargon - keep it simple!), and include reference to shared values.

Assess the risks; your actions should not cause harm to yourself or others. Some possible risks may include:

- ♦ Social stigma or discipline, at home, school, or in the community (e.g. being called a slut etc.);
- ♦ Hostility, bullying or even physical harm by someone opposed to your actions.

We believe it is important to hold onto the values about sexuality and sexual pleasure as described in The Pleasure Principles.

This document includes a range of topics and suggestions that will detail the opportunities and barriers in promoting a dialogue on pleasure based sexual health.

We believe it is important to hold onto the values about sexuality and sexual pleasure as described in The Pleasure Principles. At the same time, we realise that this may pose challenges in some cultures and for some religious groups. It is only through dialogues that we can address these complex issues. Be respectful of existing norms but define a minimum of what you would consider a practical introduction of sexual pleasure/ wellbeing. As a champion, finding common ground between restrictive cultural values and sex-positive values of dignity and equality, it is vital to show respect and compassion.





## part 1: introducing the pleasure principles

The two sections of this document

We advise you to read The Pleasure Principles before starting a training or a workshop. They give you an overview of the meaning we give to sexual pleasure, including individual and societal factors and emotional, legal and socio-cultural aspects.

Both parts of the document can be used separately. However, we have attempted to link them to make this resource comprehensive. The exercises in the toolkit have been linked to relevant Pleasure Principles, and The Pleasure Principles have been linked to exercises that can help introducing them.



# The Pleasure Principles

## Pleasure-based Sexual Health

These Pleasure Principles are designed to act as a guide and inspiration to support people and organisations to embark on the journey towards a sex-positive, pleasure based approach to sexual health. The Pleasure Principles aim to help inspire and guide you as a pleasure activist, propagandist or practitioner.

### LOVE YOURSELF

To build a pleasure-inclusive world, love yourself. Show kindness to yourself and others. Collaborate with and promote other pleasure champions.



### EMBRACE LEARNING

There is a growing body of evidence about the impact of pleasure positive approaches on sexual health. Use this knowledge to spread sex positivity.



### TALK SEXY

Pleasure-positive messaging communicate positively & effectively. Adopt evidence-based pleasure-inclusive language and imagery across your media and mediums.



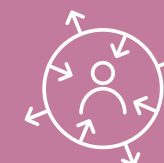
### BE FLEXIBLE

Be adaptive in your approach to each unique context and culture. Recognise that pleasure-based sexual health is possible for all.



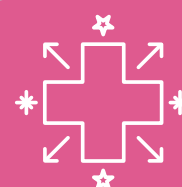
### THINK UNIVERSAL

Everyone has the ability to experience pleasure. Recognise individual differences and identities, and ensure everyone is included in pleasure-based sexual health.



### RIGHTS FIRST

Sexual rights and human rights are core to a person's sexuality. These are the building blocks of pleasure-based sexual health.



### BE POSITIVE

Core to all the Pleasure Principles is being sex-positive. Remember, when you feel safe and are safe, sex can be very good for you.





## the pleasure principles

We believe that the pleasure movement inspires the more organisations and individuals, the better we can seize the moment and put the principles into practice.

The Pleasure Project developed The Pleasure Principles to act as a guide and inspiration to support people and organisations embarking on the journey towards a sex-positive, pleasure-based approach to sexual health. The Pleasure Principles aim to help inspire and guide you as an activist, propagandist or practitioner or anyone who wants to support the cause of sexual wellbeing and sexual pleasure as a crucial part of our lives. This initiative intends to encourage you, whether you are working in the online or offline world of education on sexual health and safer sex, to become a sexual pleasure champion.

We believe that the pleasure movement inspires the more organisations and individuals, the better we can seize the moment and put the principles into practice. In short, we understand the importance of integrating sexual pleasure in our work, and this document shows how to do it well and consistently. You can access the full resource at <https://thepleasureproject.org/the-pleasure-principles/>





# how to use this document

This document summarises The Pleasure Principles and advises how and where you can use The Pleasure Principles in practice.

This document summarises *The Pleasure Principles* and advises how and where you can use The Pleasure Principles in practice. It also gives suggestions and prompts on introducing and discussing them

We advise you to read the original, more extended explanation of the principles before you introduce The Pleasure Principles in your work.

- **Be Positive**
- **Rights First**
- **Think Universal**
- **Be Flexible**
- **Talk Sexy**
- **Embrace Learning**
- **Love yourself**

You can choose which Pleasure Principle you need, but it is good to become familiar with all of them because they are interdependent. In particular *#Think Universal* and *#BeFlexible* are best to be introduced together and *#BePositive* is the overall foundation.

Through dialogue, we can begin to address and introduce The Pleasure Principles. Finding common ground in values of dignity, equality, respect, and compassion is vital.

## General tips for introducing The Pleasure Principles

Sexuality and sexual pleasure can bring joy and satisfaction to people's lives. However, they can be controversial and uncomfortable topics for professionals. An unwillingness and inability to discuss sex and sexuality may, for example, limit knowledge of the full range of options that are known to be successful for safer sex and sexual wellbeing, including masturbation, outercourse and sex talk, oral and anal sex or condom use.

It is important to strengthen values about sexuality and sexual wellbeing from a sexual rights perspective while at the same time realising that this may pose challenges in some cultures. Through dialogue, we can begin to address and introduce The Pleasure Principles. Finding common ground in values of dignity, equality, respect, and compassion is vital.

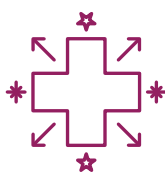
## BE POSITIVE

Core to all The Pleasure Principles is being sex-positive. Remember, when you feel safe and are safe, sex can be very good for you.

This principle is at the core of what we want to change - in our work and ourselves - to move from a negative, risk-based approach to a positive one.

## Concepts:

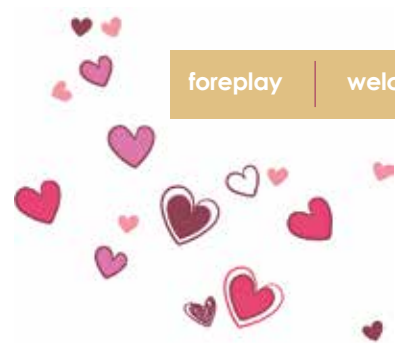
**Sex-positive approach:** this approach strives to achieve ideal experiences rather than solely working to prevent negative experiences or outcomes. At the same time, sex-positive approaches acknowledge and tackle the various concerns and risks associated with sexuality without reinforcing fear, shame or taboo of sexuality and gender inequality.



**BE POSITIVE**  
Core to all the Pleasure Principles is being sex-positive. Remember, when you feel safe and are safe, sex can be very good for you.



Concepts



A **sex-positive worker** promotes a constructive view on sex, sexuality and sexual health and how these enhance people's lives. This helps flip the sex-negative narrative in programmes, services, policies and activities to a positive one.

#### How it would work in practice:

A sex-positive approach is a holistic approach. You can use it in all forms of information, education and services, online and face to face, that deal with sexual health, sex and sexuality:

- Aim to improve the quality of (sexual) relationships and promote empowerment and consensual, pleasurable sexual interactions. At the same time, you focus on societal changes by tackling societal barriers, including gender inequity.
- Show and encourage solidarity with groups that have less or no sexual rights.
- Affirm social values that promote sexual wellbeing and sexual pleasure: freedom of sexual expression, sexual consent, bodily autonomy, integrity, and privacy.
- Avoid being sexist, biased and vague in your language and use of illustrations/photos (See The Pleasure Principle [#TalkSexy](#)).
- Understand that many different factors can have a negative-positive impact on a sexual relationship; ranging from physical and emotional issues to past sexual experiences and communication problems.
- Always ask permission to talk about sex and respect your audience.

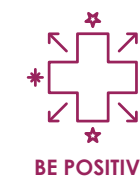
#### Prompts and suggestions to introduce this Pleasure Principle:

- ♦ Ensure that you create a safe environment and choose a good moment to discuss sex and pleasure.
- ♦ With colleagues, you can use the exercise from the manual ([link](#)) to introduce the concept of a sex-positive approach.



We need to feel safe when it comes to sex and our sexuality. We want to get access to services related to sex and sexual health; we want the right information. We want to be able to express ourselves, regardless of our identity, gender, orientation or sexual preferences.

- ♦ Share research on how sexual well-being has a positive impact on general wellbeing and health (see The Pleasure Principle [#EmbraceLearning](#)).
- ♦ Explain that a sex-positive approach is "an attitude that celebrates sexuality as a part of life that can enhance happiness, bringing energy and celebration".
- ♦ Taking it further: ask about ideal experiences and desire, and increase confidence to have consensual and pleasurable sex, including masturbation.
- ♦ Practise ways to introduce enjoyable sexual relationships as a topic in your work.
- ♦ Together, look at opportunities in your work/programme to discuss sex and sexuality positively, understanding consensual sex, sexual pleasure, and safe sexual life.







## RIGHTS FIRST

**Sexual rights and human rights are core to a person's sexuality. These are the building blocks of pleasure-based sexual health.**



### RIGHTS FIRST

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These are the building blocks of pleasure-based sexual health.

We need to feel safe when it comes to sex and our sexuality. We want to get access to services related to sex and sexual health; we want the right information. We want to be able to express ourselves, regardless of our identity, gender, orientation or sexual preferences.

To enjoy our sexuality with all these characteristics, we need our human rights to be fulfilled. Pleasure based sexual health/sexual rights are directly linked with human rights.

#### Concepts:

**Human rights:** "Human rights are rights inherent to all human beings, regardless of race, sex, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion or any other status." (United Nations).

**Sexual rights:** The fulfilment of sexual health is tied to how human rights are respected, protected and fulfilled. Sexual rights embrace certain human rights



Concepts

**The human rights approach** focuses on those who are most marginalized, excluded or discriminated against. This often requires an analysis of gender norms, different forms of discrimination and power imbalances to ensure that interventions reach the most marginalized segments of the population. Programmes identify the realization of human rights as ultimate goals of development.

#### How it would work in practice

In sexual health programmes, you work towards:

- Advocating for human and sexual rights for everyone, regardless of socioeconomic background, (dis)ability, sexual identity etc. This also includes people who are working in the sex industry.
- Promoting sexual rights is not just to protect people from harm, discrimination and unequal treatment: it is about promoting sexual fulfilment, the right to express yourself sexually, alone or with others.

Every human has the capacity to experience sexual pleasure if they wish. A pleasure-inclusive world supports people in safely having and expressing sexual pleasure while recognizing that sexual pleasure is different for everyone.

- Increasing access, availability, and affordability to sex-positive health services and education for all.
- Addressing issues including the age of consent, access to comprehensive sexuality education, sexual consent, and right to sexual identity, including transgender.
- Including sexual rights in the policies and the capacity building and content of your programmes.
- Prioritising work for vulnerable and excluded people to violence, including LGBTQIA+, people with disabilities, very poor girls/women and those in conflict-affected areas.

#### Prompts and suggestions to introduce this Pleasure Principle:

- ♦ Start with sharing your understanding that fundamental rights- to autonomy, freedom, non-discrimination, equality, equal treatment under the law, right to privacy and safety, as well as the bodily integrity of the person-are essential to enjoy sexuality.
- ♦ Sometimes after the introduction it is better to address primary concerns on issues such as violence, abuse, and freedom of expression. This is so they are better understood. Make sure your colleagues, peers and clients are clear that you believe in pleasure-based sexual health.
- ♦ Ask questions to stimulate reflection and spark discussions on how sexual pleasure and wellbeing can be (more) integrated into SRHR programmes. For example: 'how do we ensure that our clients/learners know they can choose how they want to enjoy their sexuality.'

**THINK UNIVERSAL**

**Everyone can experience pleasure. Recognise individual differences and identities and ensure everyone is included in pleasure-based sexual health.**

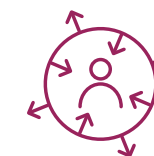
Every human has the capacity to experience sexual pleasure if they wish. A pleasure-inclusive world supports people in safely having and expressing sexual pleasure while recognizing that sexual pleasure is different for everyone. Social norms often prevent us from wanting to be perceived as different, leaving us feeling that our behaviours are deviant and bad. The good news is that it is possible to create a secure space to support people to determine what they want and have the confidence to say yes to sex and say no to what they don't want.

**Concepts:**

**Dominant Norms** dictate what is considered acceptable behaviour, what is considered acceptable in terms of sexual behaviour, and the society's value. For example, in many societies it is acceptable for men to be sexually active before marriage, while it is not acceptable for women.

**How it would work in practice**

- Although we are all different and have different needs and wants, we are also the same in striving toward happiness and sexual wellbeing; this should be the priority in your work. You need to avoid a traditional stereotyping and discriminating approach in your work on how to pursue sexual happiness.
- We cannot live without norms and values; they are crucial to giving guidance to societies. You need to do some critical reflections on whose values determine how we address sexuality, sexual health and wellbeing in your work.
- For some people, questioning prevalent norms and expressing their needs is more difficult than others; think of young women, LGBTQIA+, people with disabilities etc. To support them, you need knowledge and their input to adapt your work to their needs and wants and help to overcome the extra barriers they face to enjoy their sexuality and sexual health.
- Remember that sexual pleasure is a possibility for all, but not necessarily wanted by all. Some people prefer non-sexual relationships or no relationships, or non-monogamous relationships. These are all valid sexual expressions.

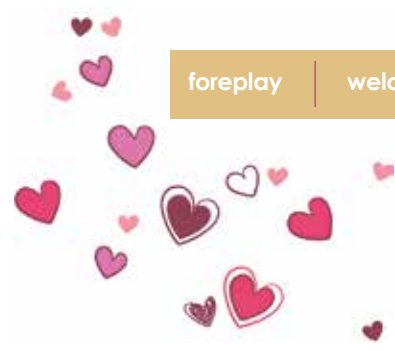
**THINK UNIVERSAL**

**Everyone has the ability to experience pleasure.**

Recognise individual differences and identities, and ensure everyone is included in pleasure-based sexual health.

**Concepts**

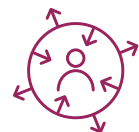




**Contextualisation means that your work is sensitive to existing norms and values in the society/community you work in.**

**Prompts and suggestions to introduce this Pleasure Principle:**

- ♦ Good and enjoyable sex does not fall from the sky; you need to learn and experience it and be able to discuss it. As a professional, you need to give the information and the confidence to your clients, learners or audience to understand and embrace sexual pleasure.
- ♦ You can start to discuss what makes your colleagues, clients, and learners make it easy or difficult to talk about sex and sexuality.
- ♦ What may also help the discussion is to ask people what the dominant social norms say about sensitive issues, including homosexuality, age of consent, access to contraception, sex outside marriage, or having multiple partners. Ask them what the difference between the social norms and the reality is. How can they help build a bridge between the norms and the realities of people's lives? Ask your clients and colleagues about their attitudes and assumptions. For example, the notions that condoms make sex feel worse, that women don't enjoy sex, that all relationships are heterosexual or that 'sex' always means penetrative sex. Then together reflect on how such notions are assumptions.



THINK UNIVERSAL







## BE FLEXIBLE

**Be adaptive in your approach to each unique context and culture. Recognise that pleasure-based sexual health is possible for all.**



### BE FLEXIBLE

**Be adaptive in your approach to each unique context and culture.**

Recognise that pleasure-based sexual health is possible for all.



Concepts

We are all shaped by the social and cultural environment. We are influenced and driven by our norms and socialisation and values regarding sex, sexual health and sexual pleasure. Sometimes it is difficult to grasp that people have different views and beliefs than our own. Even when we seem to be free and open, we still might expect sex to be experienced in a certain way; for sex, for example: heterosexual, penetrative sex. But, as professionals, we need to be able to welcome and address the needs and wants of all people.

### Concepts:

**Contextualisation** means that your work is sensitive to existing norms and values in the society/community you work in. It is an approach that respects the cultural characteristics of sexuality, but still is based on evidence-based information.

### How it would work in practice

- We need to realise what and who can play a role in how people want to experience sex and sexual pleasure.

We need to understand cultural factors (see The Pleasure Principle [#ThinkUniversal](#)) and the individual motivations of our clients/ audience (like earlier experiences, socialisation, etc.)

- When we want to contextualise our work (for example, international guidelines/protocols), we need to be aware that we are working with individuals, with human beings with their own needs and wants.
- Social media perpetuates several stereotypes around sexual relationships and the sexual roles of individuals, many of which have been shown to have problematic effects on people's real sex lives. Most importantly, it means that in your work, everyone should have the possibility to express and enjoy their sexuality.

- Contextualisation does not mean adapting to the dominant norms; it is about understanding the perspective of the client/audience and their environment. There is also a limit to contextualisation; it should never violate human rights, respect and dignity.

### Prompts and suggestions to introduce this Pleasure Principle:

- ♦ You can start a conversation with questions such as 'What makes a sexual experience pleasurable? Why is it that something that feels sexually pleasurable for one person or in one situation might not feel exciting or may even be unpleasant for another person or in another situation.'
- ♦ You can explore different motivators for people to have sex.
- ♦ To make educational materials and international guidelines culturally sensitive and relevant, agree on what is acceptable or not.
- ♦ You can also discuss stereotypes and how to address them. For example:
  - ❖ What if a male client tells you that when a woman kisses him and agrees to come back to his place, he can have sex with her/ What do you think when your female client tells you she wants to have sex with a different man at the same time? Get a present or some money for having sex?
  - ❖ You can ask what you feel when you hear this, what you think, and what you do/say?
- ♦ You can discuss how to address these kinds of stereotypes with individuals. And also how to challenge them on a societal level in education or advocacy.



Image by Womanizer Toys on Unsplash

## TALK SEXY

**Pleasure-positive messaging communicates positively and effectively. Adopt evidence-based pleasure-inclusive language and imagery across your media and mediums.**

Communication, verbal and non-verbal, is crucial when we want to introduce and give information about discussing sexual wellbeing and pleasure. (Un -) intentionally people use words and use images that can provide a negative and sexist view of sex and sexual pleasure.

**Concepts:**  
**Unbiased language and images** in sexual health are the use of words, concepts and images that are clear, accurate, based on facts and do not give an opinion about sexual behaviour.

**Pleasure inclusive language and images** show and explain how sexual acts can be emotionally and physically satisfying and can enhance happiness and wellbeing.

### How it would work in practice:

- Ask yourself:
  - ♦ Do the content and the images of bodies and sexual activities I use in my work give realistic and credible representations.
  - ♦ Have I done enough research about sexuality and sexual pleasure? Have I consulted or involved my audience before developing the content?
- Be clear, honest and accurate:
  - ♦ Focus on the realities of sexuality, sex and sexual a part of people's lives and counteract stigma and misinformation.
  - ♦ Avoid stigmatising language and images: It is easy to unintentionally stigmatise sex and sexual pleasure through inaccurate, biased and negative language (e.g. using the term promiscuity instead of having multiple partners and poorly chosen images. (e.g. oversexualised images of women).



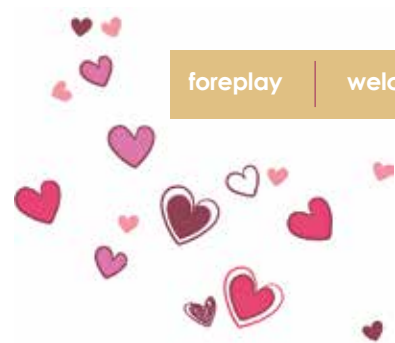
### TALK SEXY

**Pleasure-positive messaging communicates positively & effectively.**  
Adopt evidence-based pleasure-inclusive language and imagery across your media and mediums.



Concepts





...loving and showing kindness to others is recognising the lived experiences of your sexual partners and supporting them to also overcome shame and get the pleasure they want. Healthy sexual development is not the same for everyone.

- ♦ Listen to what your clients/audience tell you about their experiences without immediately giving your opinion or judgement
- ♦ When you use images, it is essential that people feel that their bodies and sexualities are reflected in the images shown. Images are powerful. Look (together) at images and check whether they pay attention to diversity in bodies, identities and life circumstances.



TALK SEXY

#### Prompts and suggestions to introduce this Pleasure Principle:

- ♦ Practise feeling comfortable discussing sex, sexuality, safer sex, and sexual pleasure. Feeling comfortable discussing these issues enables you to deliver the most appropriate services and information to everyone.
- ♦ When talking about sex and sexual pleasure, try to find a balance between seriousness and humour. Using humour can help get the conversations going. However, be careful that the jokes or language are not offensive or discriminating.
- ♦ Don't let cultural norms determine all your conversations or stop you from telling the facts about pleasure and sex. It might not be considered appropriate to discuss sex and sexual pleasure in your context. However, you can find ways to model conversations in a way that people feel safe and accepted. Agree with your audience about what words to use.
- ♦ Look at your communication and language about sex and sexuality and what it can convey. Try to use more positive language. Help find alternatives for words such as promiscuity (sexual activity with multiple partners), indulging in sex (enjoying sex), losing virginity (gaining a new sexual experience) etc.

- ♦ When you want to talk about safer sex in a consultation, you can ask: "What were your most pleasurable safe sexual experience and why?" rather than "Why did you have unsafe sex?"
- ♦ Use simple messages. Dr Milton Diamond, a sexologist from Hawaii, offers these rules of thumb on sex, from casual to long-lasting and everything in between:

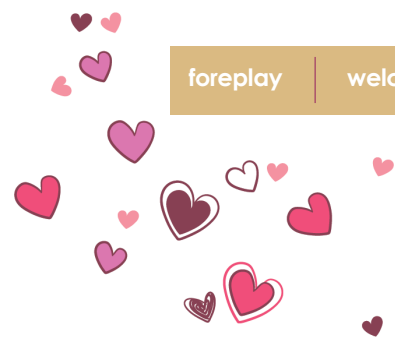
- ❖ Be kind to each other. Treat the other person as a person and not only as a body.
- ❖ Give your partner pleasure and accept that the other person gives you pleasure.
- ❖ Do not assume it is "Yes" but always ask first and accept always when it is "No".
- ❖ Tell the other person what you like and don't like.
- ❖ Try to find a balance between lust, humour, seriousness and sensuality.

(Source: Lecture by Milton Diamond, undated)



TALK SEXY





## EMBRACE LEARNING

**There is a growing body of evidence about the impact of pleasure positive approaches on sexual health. Use this knowledge to spread sex positivity.**



### EMBRACE LEARNING

**There is a growing body of evidence about the impact of pleasure positive approaches on sexual health. Use this knowledge to spread sex positivity.**



### Concepts

Introducing and starting conversations on sexual pleasure should be based on evidence and an in-depth analysis of the communities you work in. This principle promotes continuous learning about the elements and impact of sexual pleasure in our daily life and our work as professionals.

#### Concepts:

**Research on sexual pleasure and wellbeing:** There is an increase in research that shows the beneficial link between sexual well-being/pleasure and general well-being and health (Zaneva M, Philpott A, Singh A, Larsson G, Gonsalves L (2022) *What is the added value of incorporating pleasure in sexual health interventions? A systematic review and meta analysis*; and International Journal of Sexual Health Special Issue: Advancing Sexual Pleasure.

**Monitoring and evaluation of sexual wellbeing and pleasure:** to be able to evaluate positive outcomes regarding sexual wellbeing, the monitoring and evaluation of programmes should move away from narrow public health indicators and outcomes and consider emotional and mental health aspects.

#### How it would work in practice:

- Review how existing research around sexuality and sexual health and sexual wellbeing can change the narrative on sexual health from prevention/risks to a positive approach to sexuality and sexual health. (*PLOS ONE systematic review and meta analysis*).
- Collaborate with researchers and evaluators about how best to put existing research into practice.
- Share the results of evidence of the impact of sexual pleasure with the broader public in talks, conversations, blogs, articles, lectures etc.





- Collect gaps and missing knowledge topics and information on sexual pleasure during the life cycle and in different contexts; advocate for new research that shows the impact of sexual pleasure on our mental, emotional and physical health.
- Assess, review and evaluate new and existing programmes and how they have integrated sexual wellbeing into their policies, programmes and activities.
- Work with journalists and advocates to support them in sharing the results of research with the broader public.

#### Prompts and suggestions to introduce this Pleasure Principle:

Before introducing this principle, some questions you should ask yourself:

- ❖ Do you have enough knowledge of existing research, or do you know where to find it?
- ❖ Have you considered the challenges of implementing research/ feedback effectively and consistently?
- ♦ Try to explain using simple terms the results of research presenting evidence on the positive impact of pleasure based sexual health and discuss how the results can be integrated into your work.
- ♦ Ask questions such as “How can we use the research data to promote sexual pleasure in our online and offline work?”.
- ♦ Formulate arguments to explain that research shows that sexual pleasure is not a luxury but important for our general wellbeing.



### LOVE YOURSELF

**To build a pleasure-inclusive world, love yourself. Show kindness to yourself and others. Collaborate with and promote other pleasure champions.**

This principle emphasises the importance of feelings of self-worth, self-esteem/acceptance, and understanding your preferences, needs, wants, and expectations of your sexuality and sexual relationships. Without loving yourself, it is difficult to have fulfilling sexual relationships.

Secondly, loving and showing kindness to others is recognising the lived experiences of your sexual partners and supporting them to also overcome shame and get the pleasure they want. Healthy sexual development is not the same for everyone.

You need to be open and have empathy for the needs and wants of your partner, clients and colleagues.

#### Concepts:

Kindness and sex: This means that you know what you want in sex relationships and your sexuality and that you find out what you and the other person want; that you know to give and take; you ask for a yes to sexual acts and accept a no. Yes, it can always become a no, and no cannot become a yes. To find out more about consent, please see the [Wheel of Consent](#).

This Pleasure Principle also recognises that the journey to becoming a pleasure champion can be fun, fulfilling and enriching to your life and can help you connect you to other champions.

#### How it would look in practice:

- Advocate for the principle of kindness, self-compassion and caring for the other in information and education and counselling on safer sex.
- Explain that loving yourself and the other is finding a balance: you can push your partner away if you put your desire first. If you put away your desire and push your own need into the background, you signal that your need does not matter that much. Before you know it, you are only pleasuring, and you no longer pay attention to your own needs; you may not even know what your own needs are.



### LOVE YOURSELF

**To build a pleasure-inclusive world, love yourself. Show kindness to yourself and others. Collaborate with and promote other pleasure champions.**



#### Concepts



- Include messaging on sexuality as a source of pleasure and wellbeing for everyone and highlight the importance of loving yourself for achieving ideal sexual experiences.
- Promoting sexual pleasure for yourself and your partner(s) is a key ingredient to practise safer sex and use protection.
- Explain that sex is one of the many ways to love yourself and others; be kind to yourself and others. It helps when everyone feels safe. Being altruistic helps. However, clarify that you do not need to feel responsible for the pleasure of the other
- Collaborate don't compete, there is a long journey to pleasure based sexual health and we need to promote other pleasure champions and build a stronger network to fight stigma.

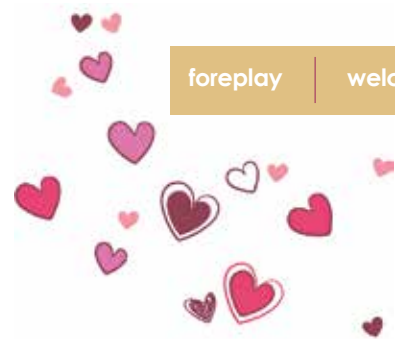
**Prompts and suggestions to introduce this Pleasure Principle:**

- ♦ Explain the importance of sexual pleasure for personal well-being and physical and mental health can be a good way to start a conversation.
- ♦ Explain that to have sexual pleasurable relationships or to enjoy sexuality, you need to have knowledge and confidence and feelings of self-efficacy and self-worth.
- ♦ Explore how you can communicate your needs and wants with your partner(s), but at the same time be able to listen and understand the feelings and needs /wants of your partner(s).
- ♦ Emphasise that you should not blame the other and yourself if things don't always go the way you imagined or hoped (this is, of course, not the case when there is violence)
- ♦ You can explore your client's experiences and feelings about sexual pleasure in different ways.

For example, you can use [The Pleasure Meter](#) of GAB; or you can consult The New Sexual Satisfaction Scale and its short form at [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/283971021\\_The\\_New\\_Sexual\\_Satisfaction\\_Scale\\_and\\_its\\_short\\_form](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/283971021_The_New_Sexual_Satisfaction_Scale_and_its_short_form)







## part 2: presenting the toolkit

This toolkit introduces, discusses, trains, and educates on issues around sexuality, sex, and sexual pleasure. You can use the manual for many different purposes.

### WHAT THIS TOOLKIT IS NOT

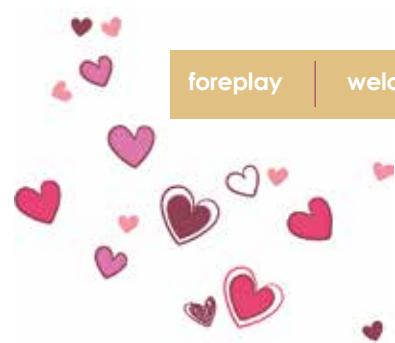
The document does not include comprehensive guidance on developing and delivering training sessions or workshops, giving education or counselling, or creating a blog, a vlog, or a podcast. It helps to start a conversation on different aspects of sexual pleasure and makes the topics easier to address during a training/workshop.

It gives ideas and inspiration to use a positive narrative about sex, sexuality and sexual pleasure in your online and offline work. You can find some general advice for preparing and conducting a workshop in the annexe.

This toolkit introduces, discusses, trains, and educates on issues around sexuality, sex, and sexual pleasure. You can use the manual for many different purposes. You can be a peer educator, a teacher and advocate, or anyone who wants to promote sexual pleasure and endorse the ideas of [The Pleasure Project](#).

We recommend using this document once you have already run some training or worked on sexual and reproductive health. If this would be the first time you facilitate such a conversation, you might want to have a co-trainer who has prior experience. In addition, it would be a good idea to work with a multi-disciplinary group of representing a range of age, sexual identities and expressions if possible. This will enrich the training and provide a good example of co-training.

The toolkit's content can be used for one session up to a 3-4 day training. Whatever suits you best. While you might need the manual to schedule a brief session, you might find it helpful to read the whole document to familiarise yourself / refresh your comfort with pleasure based sexual health. As mentioned earlier, we have provided linkages between the exercises in this part of the manual and The Pleasure Principles to help you connect the two. Once again, we recommend for you to read The Pleasure Principles in their entirety on our website before engaging in trainings on pleasure based sexual health.



Our methodology reflects our core values: working from a rights-based perspective and promoting participation and inclusion.

Adopting a rights-based approach you start from the idea that everyone is equal and has the right to information and support regarding sex and sexual pleasure.

#### What you can expect from this toolkit

To be able to share and increase understanding of sexuality and sexual pleasure and be sex-positive in your life and work as a trainer/facilitator.

To learn practical exercises and approaches to include sexual pleasure and sexual confidence in your work as a trainer or facilitator.

To guide a sex-positive approach in training and workshops by using interactive sessions on sexual pleasure.

#### Methodology

Our methodology reflects our core values: working from a rights-based perspective and promoting participation and inclusion. Adopting a rights-based approach you start from the idea that everyone is equal and has the right to information and support regarding sex and sexual pleasure. It is also about respecting everyone's right to express their sexuality. This is reflected in the exercises/modules. They have less focus on telling people 'how it ought to be' but rather they start from the participants' own experiences and evolve from there.

#### How we arranged the Toolkit

The manual has five modules. Each of them includes several exercises.

The modules are:

- a. **Setting the mood** - Creating a happy work environment
- b. **What do you know?** Unpacking sexuality, sex and sexual pleasure
- c. **Let's get it on!** Normalising communication about sexual pleasure
- d. **Context is sexy** - Society and culture and sexual pleasure
- e. **Aftercare** - Next steps to pleasure in your life and work

In 'Tips and Tricks', you can find extra information on preparing, delivering and evaluating the training workshop sessions, and we share two sample training agendas. You will also find references to literature, training manuals, online videos, etc.

#### How to use the modules

You can use the modules and exercises in any order or way you see fit. You can pick and choose the most useful and relevant ones for your audience. You can use most exercises with any group of participants. You may have to adapt them to the needs and wants of your participants. However, some exercises are especially for professionals and managers of sexual health organizations, schools etc. e.g. contextualizing your work on sexual pleasure and programming.

We advise you to use some of the exercises in Module (a) 'Setting the mood' to help people feel more comfortable and safe discussing sexual pleasure. The exercises are not meant to be prescriptive; they are intended to be an inspiration. You decide how to use them.

Depending on the expertise and knowledge of your participants, you can choose which exercises are most relevant for your training and workshop. We advise you to spend time to introduce sex and sexuality (e.g. exercise 2 in Module b) 'What do you know?' for those who have never worked in the area sexuality or sexual and reproductive health. However, it is helpful for both 'newcomers' and more experienced participants professionals,



Respect differences and try to find common ground; all cultural and religious norms want people to be healthy and honest. Ensure that you make it clear to the participants, right from the start, what the rights-based, sex-positive values are of the Pleasure Project workshop or training.

to discuss personal values and norms (e.g. exercise 6 in Module b) 'What do you know?'. Some exercises are specifically intended to be used for programmers and implementers (e.g. exercise 7 in Module d) 'Context is sexy' & exercises 3, 4 in Module e) 'Aftercare'.

You can find an example of a two-day workshop, examples for evaluation and references, and relevant resources in 'Tips and Tricks'.

You may want to invite or get support from an expert in sexology; e.g. for the quiz exercise or the exercise on sexual violence in Module b) 'What do you know?'.

Before running the exercises, please read the Pleasure Principle connected to it. We advise you to familiarise yourself with all The Pleasure Principles. You can provide the Pleasure Principles wave as a handout during or at the end of a session/exercise.

Try to get as much information as possible on research and data on sexuality and sexual health in your country/context. This will help you in the discussions. You can also give the relevant handout before the session, allowing participants to prepare.

Evaluation and follow-up: it is always good to know whether your work as a facilitator was appreciated and whether the content of your training or workshop was relevant. You can always learn and improve. In 'Tips and Tricks' we included some examples of daily and final evaluations.

#### Tips for working with heterogeneous or diverse groups

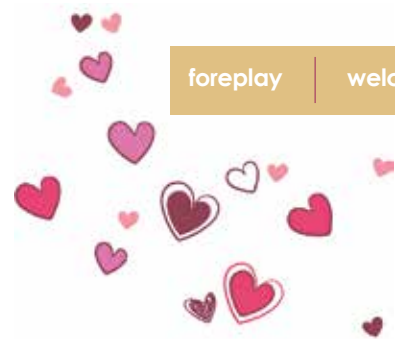
Sometimes you can have a very diverse group in your workshop or training. There can be a variety in age, background and experience and expertise. You need to make sure that none of your participants feels ignored.



**Some tips**

- Make it clear to the participants that everyone is equal, everyone can contribute, everyone's experience is equal, there are no stupid questions. Knowledge and experience with sex, sexuality, and sexuality are just as diverse as the participants.
- Ensure that from the start, everyone is treating each other with respect. This should also be part of the ground rules or agreements of working together at the start of the workshop/training.
- When you have participants of different cultural/religious backgrounds, ensure that the discussions do not evolve into discussions about which religious or cultural norms are better. Respect differences and try to find common ground; all cultural and religious norms want people to be healthy and honest. Ensure that you make it clear to the participants, right from the start, what the rights-based, sex-positive values are of the Pleasure Project workshop or training. For more information on how to have a discussion on sex and sexuality in religious settings, take a look at the [Voices of Hope](#); a guide to inspire discussion on faith, religion and sexuality of young people.
- It is essential to keep in mind that the explanations about sex, sexuality and sexual pleasure are not always simple. Religion in one country and culture might be interpreted differently in another place. Often, we talk about culture and religion as if they are the same thing. Still, tradition often rules (you can use the exercises on society and sexual pleasure in Module c) 'Let's get it on!' to explore this further with participants).
- Give examples from different settings. This way, participants from diverse backgrounds or age groups feel included. You can also ask participants to present their case studies or examples from their own experiences or reference framework.
- You can introduce and discuss the content from different angles. You can also invite a guest speaker or expert (e.g., on sexual abuse), the knowledge quiz on sex and sexual pleasure), or let students speak from their experience or perspective.
- Provide sufficient variety in teaching methods: you can create variety by asking questions, creating interaction, providing room for discussion, giving lectures etc. You can list articles for supplementary reading for those who want/need to learn more.





### Online training and workshops

This manual, like the previous edition, is written with the hope of face-to-face workshops and training on sexual pleasure. However, the last few years have seen us transition more and more to online workshop and training sessions - and so we have made some suggestions.

The advantage of online training is that it gives you more freedom in choosing time and place and organize training when budgets are limited. It also allows you to reach many more participants and provide the possibility for those who cannot travel. You can use your workshop/training sessions repeatedly when you record them. What we do not like much of online training is that you cannot ensure everyone is involved and feel comfortable to ask questions and contribute.

You can adapt most of the exercises of this manual to an online version, depending on the technology you can use. You can make the sessions interactive, make participants work in groups. We are making some suggestions here and in each exercise of tools and platforms you could use - please do get back to us with what has worked best for you.

#### Some tips for online training:

- You need to be very clear about the structure and framework of your sessions and keep clear time frames.
- Keep the plenary sessions short and clear.
- Have regular breaks, screen time is tiring both for the mind and the eyes.
- If you are using break out rooms, make sure you and your co-facilitators circulate across the groups to extend support where required.
- You need much more variety in methods than in face-to-face training to keep the attention and the concentration of your participants.
- Do not offer too much content in one session and work with subgroups as much as possible.

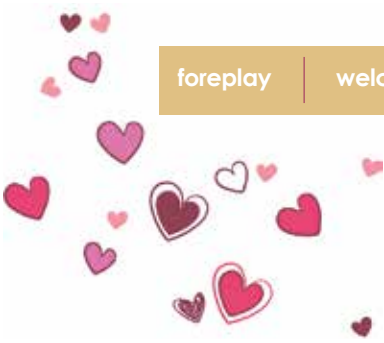
### Here are some tools you might want to use (this is just an indicative list):

- ♦ **Online meeting platforms:** (to connect with people): Zoom, Googlemeet, Microsoft Teams etc.
- ♦ **Free online learning management system solutions (to design your training):** Moodle, Facebook classroom, Google classroom, Edmodo, Sakai etc.
- ♦ **Co-creation tools (like flipcharts):** online whiteboards, breakout rooms, chatbox; Miro Boards; Mural; Mentimeter; Slido etc. Please note that for wordclouds you will have to set up a specific code for each submission ahead of time.
- ♦ **Messaging platform (to keep in touch):** WhatsApp messaging, WhatsApp voice messages, Local messaging apps etc.
- ♦ **Training evaluation (Anonymous):** Survey Monkey, Slido, etc.

Just like in a physical setting, when conducting a training online it is useful to ensure you set rules of engagement and request for respect and confidentiality. You might want to paste a message like this one, on top of the chatbox and read it out to the participants:

*"We aim for this training to be a safe and respectful space. We would like for all participants to be able to engage in free and open discussion with respect and humility. Please note that any disruptive or antagonistic behaviour will not be tolerated and will result in removal from the session".*

If you wish to record a session or take pictures, please ensure to seek consent from the participants.



Recommended selected resources to read/view/listen before using this toolkit:

Written documents:

1. Singh, A., Philpott, A. (2009), *Pleasure as a measure of agency and empowerment*, Medicus Mundi
2. *The Pleasure Principles*
3. Arushi Singh, Rosalijn Both & Anne Philpott (2020): *'I tell them that sex is sweet at the right time'* - A qualitative review of 'pleasure gaps and opportunities' in sexuality education programmes in Ghana and Kenya, Global Public Health
4. *World Association for Sexual Health, Declaration on Sexual Pleasure*
5. Ford, J., Corona, E., Cruz, M., Fortenberry, J. D., Kismodi, E., Philpott, A., Rubio-Aurioles, E. & Coleman E. (2022): *The World Association for Sexual Health's Declaration on Sexual Pleasure: A Technical Guide*, International Journal of Sexual Health
6. *The Pleasure Project (2022), Pleasure Matters: systematic review synopsis*
7. The Pleasure Project (2010), *Everything you wanted to know about pleasurable safer sex but were afraid to ask: Twenty questions on sex, pleasure and health*

Podcasts:

1. Sexual Reproductive Health Matters Podcast, *Shining a Light on pleasure as a core element of SRHR*
2. Ana P Santos, *Middle Me*

Videos:

1. <https://amaze.org/>

You can find plenty more fun and interesting resources at the end of this document.

Keys to audience

Without wanting to be prescriptive we have assigned symbols to the exercise/module that show the potential audience:



For Everyone



For Professionals  
experienced in SRHR



For Beginners





# setting the mood

## creating a happy work environment

If you meet the participants for the first time or the training is only about sexual pleasure, you may need to do some groundwork. In this module you will find exercises you can use to start your training and develop and nurture a happy, safe working environment. It will allow the participants to introduce themselves and share their expectations and ideas on how they want to work together.

### 1. What We Want to Know About Each Other

**Synopsis:**  
This exercise helps participants to get to know each other and establish a democratic environment in the training space. This is done by asking participants what they would like to learn about each other and then getting them to answer those questions they feel most comfortable with.

- Steps:**
- Invite participants to brainstorm a list of essential things they would like to know about each other.
  - As they do so, write these down.
  - Depending on the size of the group, the next part of the exercise can be done either in plenary or in small groups. If you are online, you can use breakout rooms.
  - Invite participants to introduce themselves, covering those topics from the list with which they feel comfortable.
  - This exercise, particularly when conducted in small groups, can help develop the sense of intimacy a group will need to explore sensitive issues.



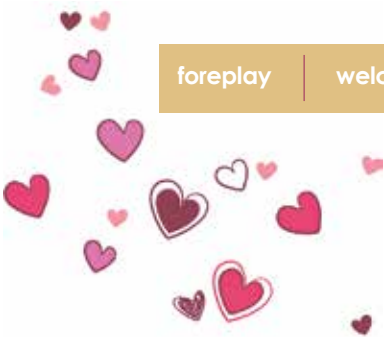
For Everyone

**1. What We Want to Know About Each Other**

**Objective:** To facilitate introductions

**Approximate Time:** 30 Minutes

**Suggested Materials/ Online Tools:** Flipcharts, Marker Pens or Whiteboard, messaging, chatbox, voice messages



What We Want to Know About Each Other

Notes/Tips for the Facilitator:

In the beginning, if participants don't respond, you may have to provide a couple of examples of questions like, 'Where have you travelled from for this workshop?' or 'If you had a superpower, what would it be?', 'What is your favourite tune?' etc.

Try and avoid too personal questions at this point like 'What is your sexual identity?' Try to have a list of between five and ten questions for people to pick and choose from.

2. Expectations and Agenda-Setting

**Objective:** To clarify participants' expectations from the training

**Approximate Time:** 20/30 Minutes

**Suggested Materials/ Online Tools:** Flipchart, Pens, Tape, shared board, breakout rooms, wordcloud

2. Expectations and Agenda-Setting

Synopsis:

This exercise helps participants and facilitators be on the same page about the workshop's purpose and what participants can hope to gain. It also helps to ensure that participants know exactly what they can or cannot learn at this forum.

Steps:

- Write each objective of the workshop at the top of a large piece of paper: For example: *Explore key elements of sexuality; Explore some of our feelings, values and attitudes; Practice communication skills.*
- Divide participants into smaller groups. Online you can have breakout rooms.
- Give one sheet/one objective to each group and ask them to discuss it for ten minutes, which will help each person in the group clarify the most important things they wish to learn from this training.
- When they have done this, these can be written on the sheet.
- Stick the sheets on the wall/place them on the floor/project them so everyone can see them.
- It is important that you are clear with participants if there are any items on the sheets that you feel unable to address.

- Explain the basic values of your workshop or training. They should be in line with the values and principles of the Pleasure Project. (Rights-based, sex-positive, evidence-based and gender transformative).

Expectations and Agenda-Setting

Notes/Tips for the Facilitator:

Ask participants why they have chosen their expectations for themselves or their work.

This exercise could also throw up new areas for exploration, requests for training that the course currently does not address. Keep track of these and send a recommendation to The Pleasure Project!

3. Talking about Fears and Joys

Synopsis:

It is important to acknowledge that participants may have fears and anxieties about discussing sexual matters. This activity provides an opportunity to articulate these in a non-threatening way and for facilitators to provide reassurance. It will also help to discuss what participants are looking forward to and what they think they might enjoy during the training.

Steps:

- Invite each participant to take two pieces of paper and a pen and to complete (in silence) the following sentences.

The thing that scares me the most about talking about sex and pleasure here is:

.....

.....

The thing that I will enjoy talking about sex and sexual pleasure here is:

.....

.....

For online training you can prepare these in advance on an interactive polling/question platform.

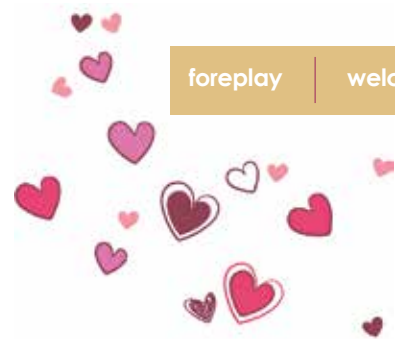
3. Talking About Fears and Joys

**Objective:** To acknowledge participants' concerns and joys about discussing sex and pleasure.

**Approximate Time:** 30 Minutes

**Suggested Materials/ Online Tools:** Papers & Pens, wordcloud, shared board, anonymous typing in chatbox





- When everyone has done this, gather all the pieces of paper and redistribute them among participants ensuring that no one has their paper.
- Invite each participant, in turn, to read out what is written on the piece of paper they are holding. Ask them to do this slowly so that you can note down the key points which emerge. For online trainings you can use a whiteboard to take notes or simply project the word clouds generated by the polling platform.
- When this is completed, talk through the concerns offering reassurance as appropriate. Also, look at the positive feelings of anticipation.
- Some concerns participants can share can be about confidentiality or feeling forced/ashamed to discuss specific issues about sex. Maybe some people feel that they do have not enough knowledge or can find the words to discuss sensitive matters. Be clear that no one should feel forced to say anything they do not want to share.
- Explain that the group will decide on ground rules or operating agreements that will help people feel safe enough to participate to the degree they feel able. Confidentiality and respect for each other's opinions are often important agreements.

#### 4. Your Imprint

**Objective:** To give participants the possibility to share their expertise and contribution.

**Approximate Time:**  
15/20 Minutes

**Suggested Materials/  
Online Tools:**  
A4 paper and a coloured pen for each participant, tape, photos, mural

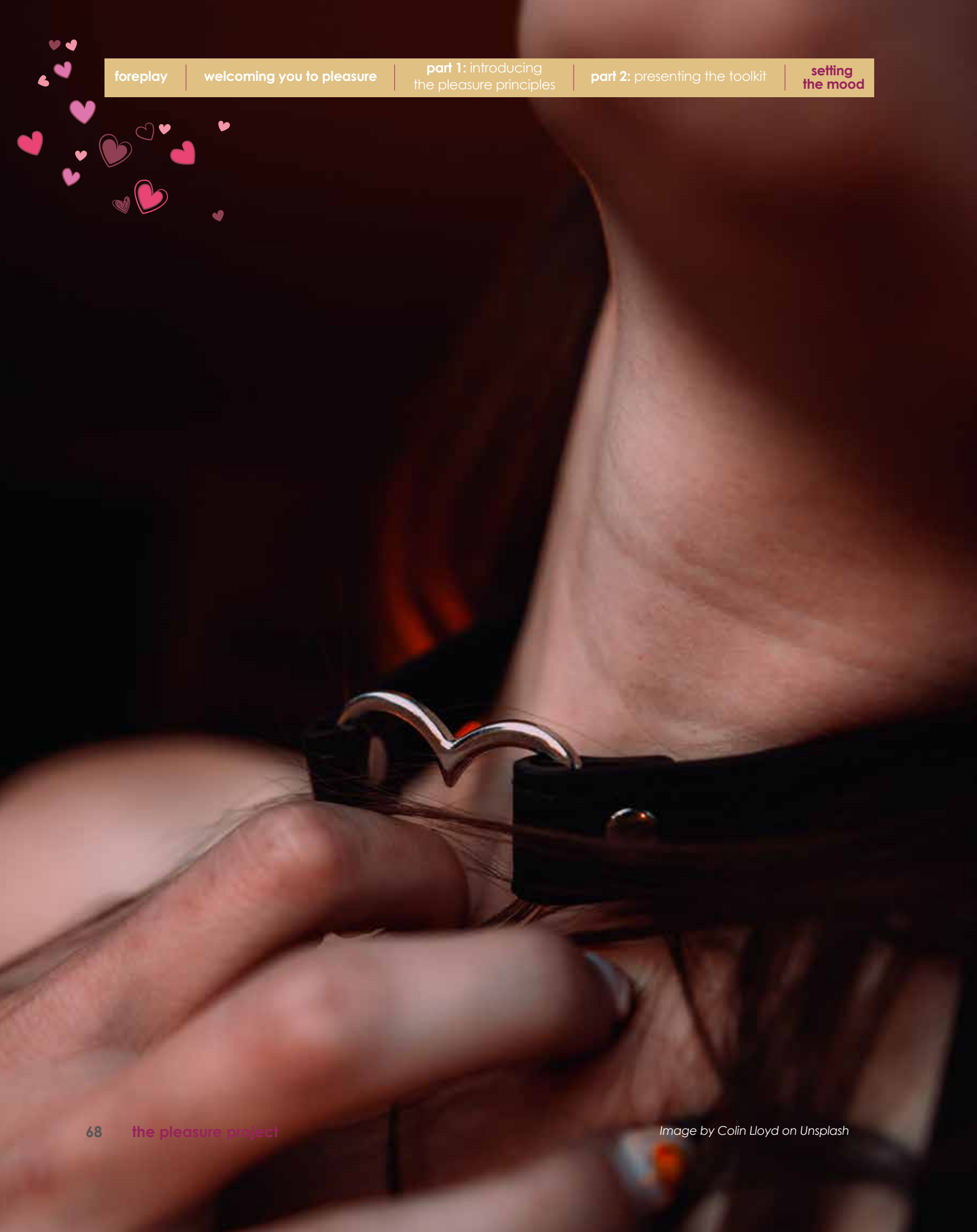
#### 4. Your Imprint

##### Synopsis:

This exercise allows participants to share their personal experiences and expertise that could be helpful for the workshop/training.

##### Steps:

- Invite all the participants to take their shoes off, step with their left foot on the paper, and draw an outline around it (do it yourself with the participants and give them time to do it). If they do not want to take off their shoes, they can keep their shoes on. If using their foot is not culturally appropriate, ask participants to use their hand. For online training you can ask them to do it at home and email it to you. You can then create a collage and share with the full group later.
- Invite participants to write their names on the top of the paper.



- Invite them to write in the footprint/hand in a few words what they can bring to the workshop and the individual contribution they can give in the sessions. For example, someone who is good at talking about certain cultural practices; can help make participants feel comfortable by doing warm-ups between sessions.
- Invite participants to tape their footprints/handprints on the wall and provide a short explanation.
- During the training/workshop, refer to and 'use' the expertise written in the footprint/hands.

## 5. Working together

### Synopsis:

This exercise is meant to establish an open, non-judgemental and safe working environment amongst the participants. The operating agreement arrived at through this exercise will enhance ownership over the workshop and personal learning among the participants.

### Steps:

- Explain to the participants that if the group is to work and learn together constructively, it will be essential to have ground rules or working agreements, which are a kind of contract between all the group members. These should cover issues such as confidentiality, listening to each other, allowing everyone to participate, etc.
- Divide the participants into smaller groups of fours or fives and ask each small group to discuss and write down three agreements they will propose to the rest of the group. Ask them to consider specifically what will be needed for people to feel able to talk in this setting about sex and pleasure (e.g., assumptions about people and disclosure).
- When the small groups have completed this task, re-assemble in plenary, and ask the groups to tell the others their agreements and see if they approve.
- All agreements should be written on a sheet of paper stuck on the wall and left there to remind participants throughout the course/keep posting in the chatbox.

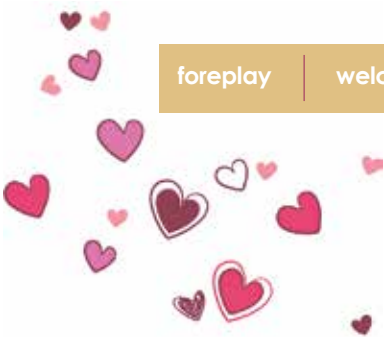
### 5. Working Together

**Objective:** To establish a set of working agreements that will facilitate participation.

**Approximate Time:**  
30 Minutes

**Suggested Materials/  
Online Tools:**  
Flipchart Pens, shared board, breakout rooms





Working together

Notes/Tips for the Facilitator:

Discuss with participants how it felt to participate in that activity. Did they learn something new?

When you think that an agreement is missing (e.g., not feeling forced to say things), you can introduce and discuss it.

Some agreements may need more explanation. For example, confidentiality is on the list. You may need to explore together what is exactly meant by it. For example, do you mean confidentiality of the group or the individual participant?

6. Fruit Salad

**Objective:** Energiser to increase comfort with self-disclosure

**Approximate Time:**  
15 Minutes

**Suggested Materials/ Online Tools:**  
A chair or a place to sit for each participant, raise hand/use of emoji on the profile photo

6. Fruit salad

Synopsis:

This exercise can be used at different points in the training to energise participants and encourage self-disclosure in a non-threatening manner. Self-disclosure in sex and pleasure enables participants to bust some myths and assumptions about people they think they know. It is also a good technique to help participants realise that they are perhaps not alone in being or doing a particular thing.

Steps:

- Explain to the participants that this exercise is both an “energiser” and a way of making some steps towards self-disclosure.
- Emphasise that participants should only make disclosures that they feel comfortable about.
- Invite everyone to stand up and arrange their chairs in a circle in the centre of the training space. Remove one chair from the circle so that there is one chair less than the total number of participants. Invite a volunteer to stand in the middle of the circle to start the exercise. Alternatively, the facilitator could start the exercise.
- Whoever is in the middle of the circle must make a statement true for them and likely true for others in the group.

- They should begin: “All those who..... change chairs” and all those for whom this statement is true change chairs immediately and as quickly as possible.
- The person left in the middle calls out the next statement.
- The first handful of statements should be non-sexual to get participants moving and comfortable: for instance, they can relate to appearance “All those with brown eyes”, or “All those who are over 20 years old”.
- When the atmosphere is more relaxed, encourage participants to make statements relating more explicitly to sexuality, e.g. “All those who like to talk about sex” or “All those who can explain how to have sexual pleasure.”
- Processing - ask participants:  
How did you feel when the exercise began?  
What do you think about the disclosures you and others made?  
How did you feel when the exercise ended?  
What do you think the exercise did for the group?  
What have you learned from this exercise for your work?

Fruit Salad

Notes/Tips for the Facilitator:

You can use this exercise at any time during the training. It could be an exercise that you keep coming back to throughout the training with more and more explicit disclosures, some of which could be points of discussion (in a generalised manner, ensuring that particulars are not discussed) in plenary.

Be sensitive to any personal or intimate disclosures that could generate other participants' shock or judgment. Set the example by being supportive and non-judgemental. Allow people to step out/switch off their cameras if they feel uncomfortable.



# what do you know?

## unpacking sexuality, sex and sexual pleasure

This module will help participants better understand the meaning of sex, sexuality and sexual pleasure. They will be able to explore their personal values and how their experiences influence their thinking and conversations about sexual pleasure. It will also enhance their knowledge and explore their gender and safer-sex and sexual pleasure ideas.

### 1. Let's get started...with a warm-up exercise

**Synopsis:**  
This exercise will help the participants warm up to discussing sex and sexuality.

- Steps:**
- Divide participants into pairs
  - Ask them to discuss in pairs the first time someone said something positive to them about sexuality; when by whom, and what?
  - Let some people share in plenary and discuss together as a group

**Let's get started...with a warm-up exercise**  
**Notes/Tips for the Facilitator:**  
Ask people whether the sexuality education they received from school, home, friends etc., ever explained how to have sexual pleasure; if not, why not; if it happened, what were they told?  
  
Discuss what makes it difficult or easy to explain sexual pleasure; different for men/women, gender and sexual identities etc?

**1. Let's Get Started... with a warm-up exercise**  
  
**Time:** 10-15 Minutes  
  
**Suggested Materials/ Online Tools:**  
Chairs or spaces to sit in pairs, breakout rooms

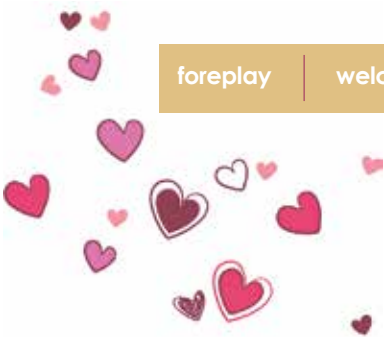


For Everyone



For Beginners





## 2. Defining Sexual Pleasure

Pleasure Principle: [#RightsFirst](#); [#ThinkUniversal](#)

### Synopsis:

This exercise helps participants to understand the definition of pleasure based sexual health and its components.

### Steps:

- Before discussing sexual pleasure, explore the difference between sex and sexuality with participants. Explain that people often confuse sex and sexuality. Sexuality is more than sex. Sex is about behaviour and acts (alone or together) that may lead to orgasm. Sexuality encompasses much more; it is about identity, relationships, sexual behaviour, culture, norms and values (see the *'Tips and Tricks'* section for definition).
- It is also helpful to share 'official definitions of sexual health and sexual rights before exploring the definition of pleasure based sexual health (see the *'Tips and Tricks'* section).
- Ask everyone to write down what sexual pleasure means for them personally (in reality or fantasy) on a piece of paper (no name on the paper!).
- Ask them to crumple it into a ball and throw it around the room, like a snowball fight. In the end, everyone opens one of the balls and reads out what is on the paper.
- Remind participants that this is a safe and non-judgmental space, so reactions should be respectful.
  - ♦ Categorise the different responses on a flipchart (optional) and discuss them.
  - ♦ Show the definition of **Pleasure Based Sexual Health** by The Pleasure Project and the definition of **Sexual Pleasure of WAS/GAB** (see the *'Tips and Tricks'* section) and explain that the definition is based on existing definitions of sexual health and sexuality and human rights declarations.
  - ♦ Explain how the definition links the physical and emotional aspects of sexual pleasure with sexuality, sexual health and human rights.

### 2. Defining Sexual Pleasure

**Approximate Time:**  
45 Minutes

**Suggested Materials/ Online Tools:**  
Small pieces of paper, pens, anonymous typing in the chatbox or wordcloud submission

**Handouts:**  
The Pleasure Project's definition of pleasure based sexual health; WAS/GAB definition of sexual pleasure; Pleasure Principles: [#RightsFirst](#) & [#ThinkUniversal](#)

Sexuality contributes to the physical, emotional, relational, and cultural aspects of sexual pleasure. The sexual health aspects of the pleasure definition include safer sex and the prevention of unwanted consequences of sexual pleasure. Finally, human and sexual rights are crucial to enjoying sex. They include, among others, the rights to autonomy, freedom of expression, the right to be free from violence and the right to have information and health care. These are crucial to enjoying sexual pleasure. So sexuality, sexual health and sexual rights are all equally important for sexual pleasure.

- The exercise Human Rights and Sexual Pleasure (Module b) 'What do you know?' exercise 7) can be used if you need to provide more clarity.

- **Questions/points for discussion:**

What makes a sexual experience pleasurable?

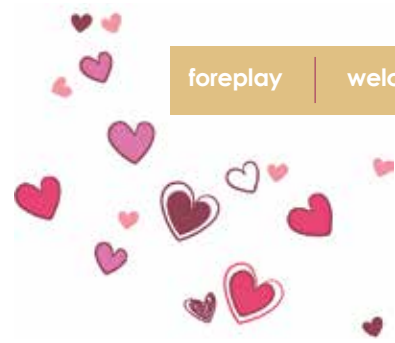
Is sexual pleasure a right or a luxury?

Something that feels sexually pleasurable in one situation may feel un-stimulating or even unpleasant in another situation. How might you explain this?

In the context of sexual rights, how is sexual pleasure linked to consent and power?

Why is sexual pleasure important for your health and wellbeing?

- Finally, you can introduce The Pleasure Principles [#RightsFirst](#) & [#ThinkUniversal](#) and give the definitions handouts.



**Defining Sexual Pleasure**

**Notes/Tips for the Facilitator:**

It may not be easy for all participants to use the words sexual pleasure.

Pleasure itself can be defined in different ways. Explain that in the exercise, we explore the concept of sexual pleasure. It can include a feeling/emotion, an act, a situation, a person etc.

Emphasizing knowing your body or using sex toys to know your body is a good way of understanding what can give you pleasure and what doesn't, and it's an easier way to create boundaries and become more empowered in sex.

Good sex matters. It is communication without words. It is the glue in your relationship; your hormones during sex can make a more profound connection with your partner(s) than you can get in other ways.

Enjoyable sex is part of your well-being and that your well-being is of great importance to your overall health. Research also indicates other benefits: if a woman knows what she wants and doesn't want during sex and can also make that clear to her partner(s), that will positively affect her contraceptive choices.

Sexual pleasure remains one of the greatest taboos in society, and it is rarely included in sex education programs for young people. Professionals may have different ideas about what sexual pleasure is. If they talk about it, it focuses mainly on the physical part. But there is more to sexual pleasure. Orgasms are important for both men and women, but it is also about feeling happy. Sexual pleasure is related to the right to freedom of sexual expression.

Opening up a discussion on pleasure is not just the addition of facts about the body's pleasure zones and sexual acts that can unleash pleasurable sensations and orgasms. These are important, but sexual pleasure also includes emotional and mental well-being.

Having pleasure in a relationship is not always possible because of other things or tensions in the relationship, or personal issues and circumstances.

Sexual pleasure is also often linked with what is good or bad sex: this isn't always helpful because this is very much linked with values, norms, culture, and religion.

You can refer to research that links sexual pleasure with health and well-being (see resources in the '*Tips and Tricks*' section).

You experience pleasure according to what you have heard about it and according to the individual situation within which you seek or achieve it. Enjoying a sexual relationship doesn't fall from the sky. It is something you need to learn by doing.

**There are some tips to enjoy sexual relationships:**

Treat your partner as a human being, not as a body or object.

Find the right balance between play, seriousness, sensuality and intimacy.

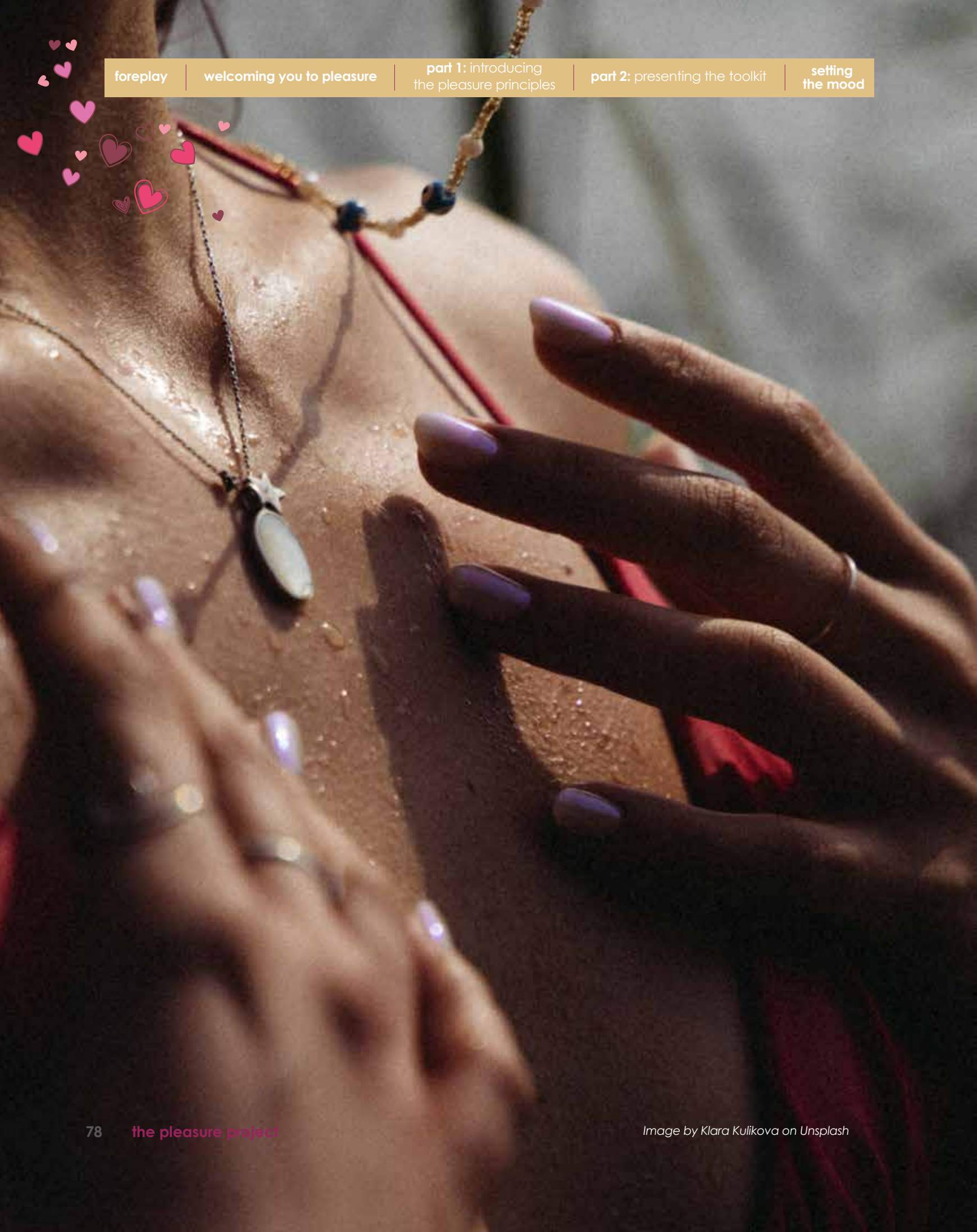
Try to give pleasure to your partner(s) and accept being pleased.

Find a balance between what you want and what your partner(s) wants.

Communicate what you want and don't want to happen and listen to what the other wants.

Be safe.





### 3. Why People Have Sex

Pleasure Principle: #BeFlexible, #LoveYourself

#### Synopsis:

This exercise helps participants critically analyse the reasons and motivations to have sex. It also helps highlight the gender differences in the reasons for having sex, depending on the context of this exercise.

#### Steps:

- Divide participants into three groups, giving each group marker pens and paper.
- Ask them to brainstorm all the reasons they can think of in answer to the question posed to their group:
  - ❖ Group 1: *Why do men have sex? Does age matter?*
  - ❖ Group 2: *Why do women have sex? Does age matter?*
  - ❖ Group 3: *Why do LGBTQIA+s have sex? Does age matter?*
- Allow 15 - 20 minutes for this.
- Stick all the sheets on the wall and get participants to walk around and look at the lists.
- Add blank sheets and ask participants to write any reasons that appear in two or more of the other lists.
- Processing - ask participants:
  - ❖ What are the similarities and differences between the four lists?
  - ❖ Which heading has the most items under it?
  - ❖ Was it easier to think of negative or positive things?
  - ❖ How could we build up the positives?

### 3. Why People Have Sex

**Objective:** To explore the variety of wants/needs and motivations for people to have sex and understand there is no right or wrong way.

**Approximate Time:**  
60 Minutes

**Suggested Materials/  
Online Tools:**  
Flipchart Marker pens,  
breakout rooms,  
shared whiteboard

**Handouts:** Pleasure  
Principles #BeFlexible  
and #LoveYourself

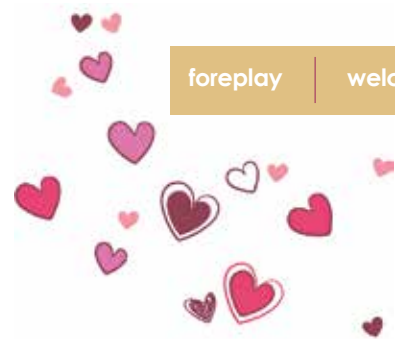


For Everyone



For Beginners





- ❖ Which items appear in more than one list?
- ❖ What does this tell us about sexual pleasure?

Explain and give handout of The Pleasure Principle [#BeFlexible](#)

#### Why People Have Sex

##### Notes/Tips for the Facilitator:

It is important to explain that motivation is one of the key drivers of having sex.

The motivation to have sex or not depends on a variety of reasons, including:

Values and moralities

Economic factors

Socialisation

Gender roles

Myths on sex and sexual pleasure

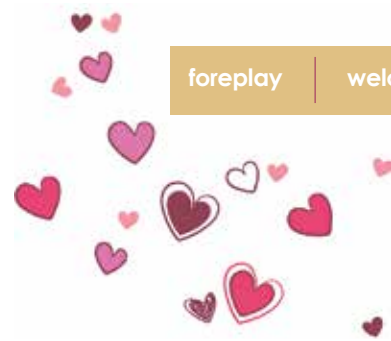
Personal sexual history

Sex is often linked with love or stable relationships. However, you can enjoy sex without love and love without sex. These can also be questions you can discuss with the participants: do you need to love someone to have sexual pleasure? Is sex and marriage different for people of different identity? What is the meaning of sex for different sexual identities, are they the same or different?

It is important to note that everyone can enjoy sex in any different ways, if they wish to. Everyone has a 'sexual self'. This is the meaning that you give to sex. You can be very open and curious and want to explore new things; or you can be more romantic and make a strong connection between love and sex. It helps to be aware of the meaning you give to sex. How much is that influenced by others/How much can you be yourself?







## 4. Things That Give Me Pleasure

Pleasure Principle: #LoveYourself

### Synopsis:

This is an exercise that can be repeated each day as the training progresses while encouraging participants to become more and more open about sexual pleasure. It is an anonymous and non-threatening way to enable participants to unpack the concept of pleasure and what it means to different people.

### Steps:

- Invite participants to think about the question “*I get pleasure from.....*”
- Ask participants what they want to share with the others.
- Give each participant a slip of paper and ask them to focus now on sexual pleasure. (They should keep it anonymous).
- The slips should be placed in the box, shuffled, redistributed, and participants read them out in turn.

#### 4. Things That Give Me Pleasure

**Objective:** To practice talking about pleasure.

**Approximate Time:** 20 Minutes

**Suggested Materials / Online Tools:** Pieces of paper, Box/ anonymous typing in chatbox, wordcloud

**Handout:** The Pleasure Principle #LoveYourself



For Beginners

#### Things That Give Me Pleasure

##### Notes/Tips for the Facilitator:

Explain to participants that pleasure is derived from many different things in life. The meaning of pleasure is as diverse as there are people in the world: this is for items in general and sexuality.

If necessary, you can discuss sexual pleasure and dispel any disgust or surprise arising from sexual acts or practices.

## 5. Pleasure Lifeline

Pleasure Principle: #LoveYourself

### Synopsis:

This is a self-reflection exercise, allowing participants to look back into their lives and examine when they became conscious of pleasure in general and sexual pleasure.

### Steps:

- Ask participants to think about their favourite meal. They don't have to tell anyone about it, but rather just enjoy its memory. What about a favourite sound? Smell? Who cooked it for them? Where did they eat it?
- Explain to the participants that if we can talk successfully about sexual pleasure, it can be helpful to explore our experiences of pleasure overall when we feel shy to discuss those pleasures.
- Ask participants to choose their partner for this exercise now so that when the time comes, they can go into pairs with minimum disruption to other participants. The person they choose should be someone they feel comfortable sharing some confidential material with.
- Ask participants to find a place in the room where they feel comfortable and can focus on the exercise without distraction. If the space allows for it, they may want to lie down on the floor. They should relax and listen to your voice. Allow a few minutes for this.
- Say the following:  
*“Imagine yourself in a place where you feel completely relaxed and safe. There is a photograph album of your life. Inside the album, there is a different picture of you on each page to varying stages of your life.*

*The first page is a photo of you as a baby. On the next, you as a toddler, then as you turn the pages, you start primary school, secondary school, beginning puberty, becoming a young adult, and finally as you are now. Look at these photos and think about yourself at each of these ages. Think about different senses - taste - touch - hearing - smell - looking and how these give you Pleasure: as a baby, as an infant, as an older child, at puberty, as a young adult, as you are now?*

*Now, think about sex...when did you first become aware of yourself as a sexual person? When did you first feel sexual pleasure? What did it feel like? And now, how does it feel to be a sexual person? What makes you feel sexy? What makes you feel good about yourself as a sexual person?”*

#### 5. Pleasure Lifeline

**Objective:** To increase sensitivity and understanding of how participants' experiences of pleasure and sex can affect their attitudes, values, and responses to others.

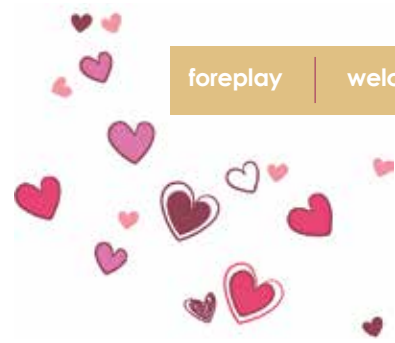
**Approximate Time:** 75 Minutes

**Suggested Materials/ Online Tools:** Paper and pens for each participant, breakout rooms after (participants will not be able to choose on their own the partner online)

**Handout:** Pleasure Principle #LoveYourself



For Everyone



- When you have finished, participants should take time to draw or write on their paper whatever has come into their mind. This may be in words, pictures or diagrams. Allow 15-20 minutes for this. They should then get together with their partner, and they should divide the next 30 minutes equally between them. One of them will be talking, and the other will be listening. They will then change roles.
- Processing: It may be most appropriate to process the exercise in support pairs or groups, paying attention to the experience of the exercise and the learning from it.
- It may be helpful for the facilitator to begin the process by drawing attention to the fact that change is possible. And to ask participants to consider the messages they would like to give to their clients or those over whom they have influence, e.g., their children.
- Ask participants: What did you learn about yourself from that exercise?

Give the handout [#LoveYourself](#) for further reading.

#### Pleasure Lifeline

##### Notes/Tips for the Facilitator:

Such an exercise could lead to bad memories surfacing as well. Before going into the workshop, try and arrange contact with a support group or counsellor to help people who may have experienced sexual or other violence/trauma.

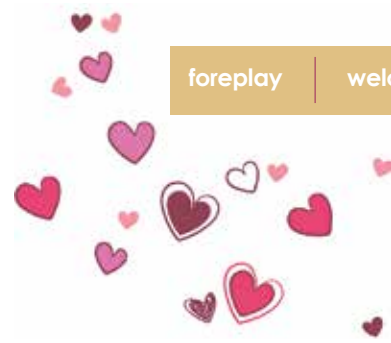
Before launching into the exercise, clarify that while you may not be trained to help participants deal with negative emotions, you can point them to somebody who they can talk to.

Explain that everyone has their own narrative regarding sex and sexual pleasure. These stories begin in early childhood and can influence our sexuality later. Sometimes these stories can generate feelings of shame or guilt and can influence the way we can enjoy sex and sexual relationships.

You can always form a new narrative, by challenging your ideas and beliefs about sexuality. Becoming aware of what has influenced your sexual life and your sexual narrative can give you the power to develop new stories about your sexuality.







## 6. Facts, Values and Myths on Sexual Pleasure

**Objective:** To get a better understanding of the difference between facts and values regarding sex and sexual pleasure

**Approximate time:** 45 Minutes

**Suggested Materials/ Online Tools:** Enough room, hand out the Principle Love yourself, assign emoji for each option and participants to put them on the screen

**Definitions:**  
**Fact:** Something that is known to have happened or to exist, especially something for which proof exists, or about which there is information.

**Value:** The beliefs people have, especially about what is right and wrong and what is most important in life, that control their behaviour.

**Myth:** A commonly believed but false idea.



For Everyone

## 6. Facts, Values and Myths on Sexual Pleasure

Pleasure Principle: [#EmbraceLearning](#)

### Synopsis:

This exercise helps participants explore and reflect critically on their personal values and discuss them with each other.

### Steps:

- Make an imaginary line in the room. On one side is 'Agree', and on the other side is 'Disagree' with 'Do Not Know' in the middle.
- Ask participants to position themselves on the line after each statement. Discuss why people positioned themselves there; is it a fact or their value?
- Examples of statements you can use:
  - ♦ Sex is better when you love your partner.
  - ♦ Men want sex more than women.
  - ♦ Women get most pleasure from penetration.
  - ♦ Good sex should always end in an orgasm.
  - ♦ For sex, you need an erection.
  - ♦ Sex is better when it is spontaneous.
  - ♦ Gay couples have better sex than heterosexual couples.

Try to unpack why these statements are often defined as fact and what are the values behind them.

Give the handout of The Pleasure Principle [#EmbraceLearning](#) for participants who would like to know more about the issue.

### Facts, Values and Myths on Sexual Pleasure

#### Notes/Tips for the Facilitator:

All the statements are subjective values but are often presented as facts. It is important to distinguish between what is an evidence-based fact and what is a value.

There are no universal norms and values. Sexuality is not thought of in the same way across space and time; different cultures and historical moments think of sexuality differently.

## 7. Human Rights and Sexual Pleasure

Pleasure Principle: [#RightsFirst](#)

### Synopsis:

This exercise explains the link between rights and sexual pleasure.

### Steps:

1. Divide the participants into two groups. Write the following statement on a flip chart: *"Everyone has the right to sexual pleasure."*
2. Tell one group that they favour this statement, and they must come up with all the reasons that support it. They should also think of the implications of this statement for programmes and policies
3. Tell the other group they are against this statement, and they must come up with all the reasons that negate it. They should also think of the implications of going against this statement for programmes and policies
4. Ask two people from each group to hold a debate. The side in favour presents their arguments first and those against respond. This is repeated.
5. Hold a final discussion. You may want to consider the following questions:
  - ❖ What are the limits of the right to sexual pleasure?
  - ❖ How are sexual rights and responsibility linked?
  - ❖ Should governments promote sexual pleasure in schools etc.?
  - ❖ What do you think about children and young people and sexual pleasure?
  - ❖ What do you think could help promote the right to sexual pleasure (e.g. consent) about the need for parental consent for services?
6. Give the hand-out of [#RightsFirst](#) and go through it with the participants.

## 7. Human Rights and Sexual Pleasure

**Objective:** To get a better understanding of the link between rights and sexual pleasure

**Approximate Time:** 40 minutes

**Suggested Materials/ Online Tools:** Flipchart, markers, break out rooms & for final debate spotlight people for the debate.

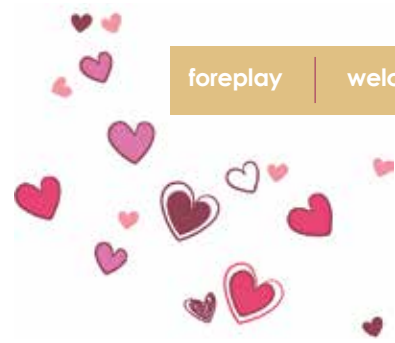
**Handout:** Pleasure Principle [#RightsFirst](#)



For Everyone



For Professionals experienced in SRHR



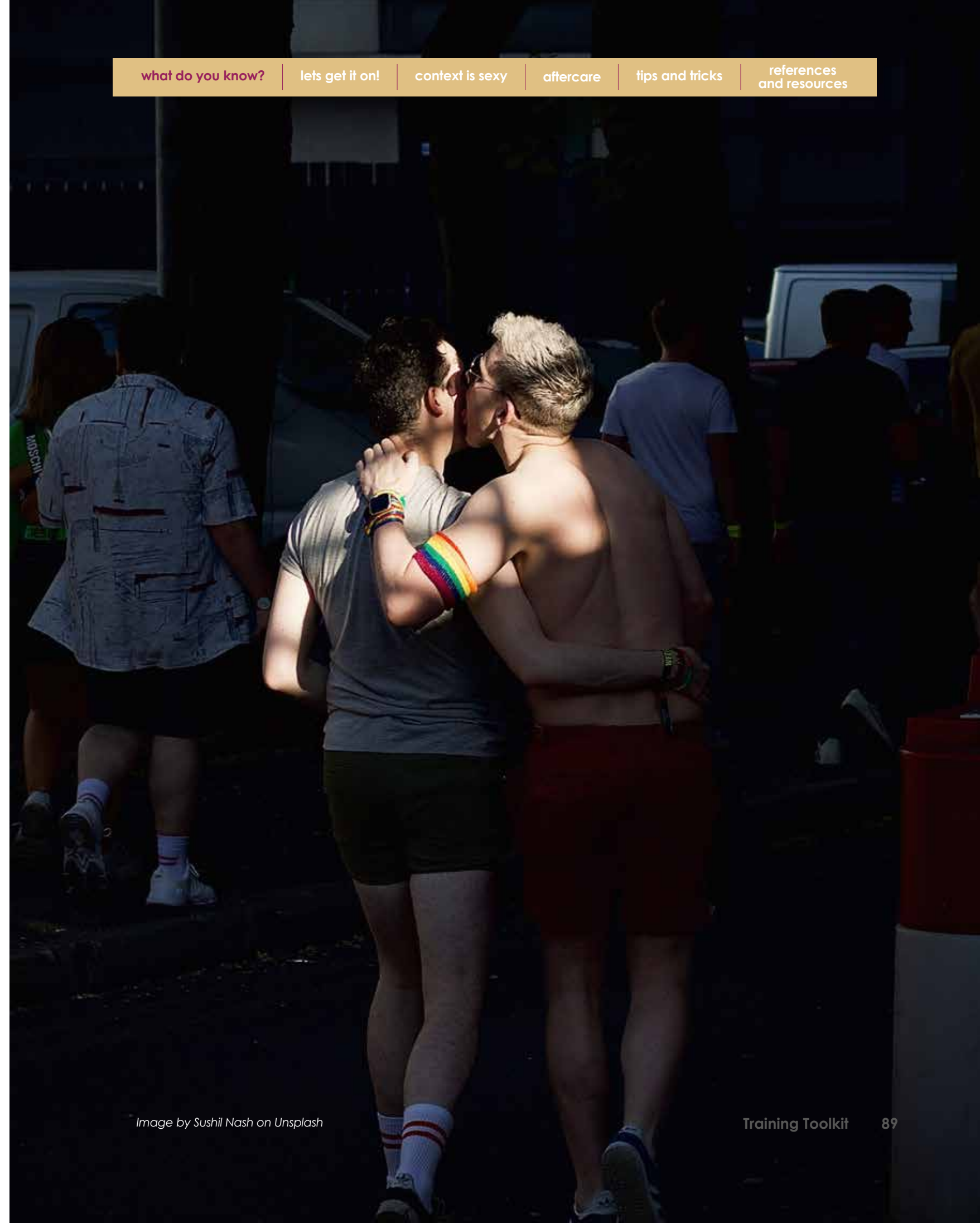
**Human Rights and Sexual Pleasure**

**Notes/Tips for the Facilitator:**

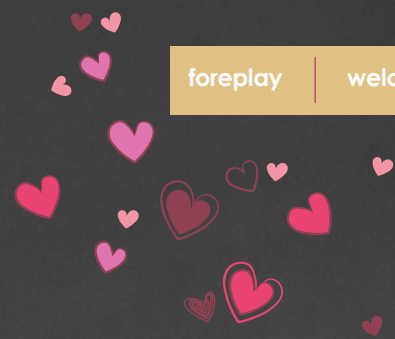
Everyone has the right to enjoy sexuality. However, one person's right or wants are not more important than the other. Preferences to have sexual pleasure should never violate the right of the other.

Some people may ask, "What about people's responsibilities?" The idea behind this is that rights are in some way conditional. However, rights are never conditional, nor they can be given or taken away. Every person has rights, and whether they are met or not is what matters. If, for example, a young person is not thought to be acting responsibly, this does not have any bearing on their rights.

Another angle on the link between sexual rights and responsibility is that it is hard to act responsibly when your rights are not met. Acting responsibly implies that you have the liberty to choose among different options and to make a responsible decision. In fact, denying people their rights make it harder to make responsible choices. The responsibility that everyone has is to respect each other's rights.







## 8. Quiz

### Quiz

#### Notes/Tips for the Facilitator:

Arousal looks different for different people and context is extremely important to consider. Take a look at the principles be flexible and think universal to gain some more perspective into the following exercise.

### Question 1:

**Is it important to be able to recognize the first signs of physiological arousal? In what circumstances?**

A foundational research on physiological stages of arousal is by William Masters e Virginia Johnson, widely recognized for their contributions to sexual, psychological, and psychiatric research, particularly for their theory of a four-stage model of sexual response, reported in the findings of their research that vaginal lubrication was the first physiological sign of sexual arousal in women, and erection of the penis the first sign in men. They stated that in both men and women, the first physiological signs of arousal are caused by the reflex vasodilatation of the genital blood vessels. The male erection is caused by the engorgement of the penis with blood. For the female, the engorgement of the walls of the vagina and surrounding tissues causes a clear fluid to seep through the vaginal wall. For both men and women, arousal can be caused by smells, sounds, touch, taste, images or thoughts. As conceptualized by Masters and Johnson, these physiological responses follow a consistent pattern irrespective of sexual orientation.

Ask participants:

- What do you notice of the language that is used by Masters and Johnson?
- Do Masters' and Johnson's findings match people's own experience of their sexual response?
- Do you see experiences of trans folks who are undergoing hormone therapy reflected in these findings?
- Do you see experiences of menopausal people reflected in these findings?
- Do you see experiences of non-binary individuals reflected in these findings?
- Are you familiar with the concept of arousal non concordance? Why and how would it be relevant to reflect on it in this circumstance?
- Does it matter if we are like/unlike other people in our sexual lives?

Take a look at the Pleasure Principle **#BeFlexible** and think about how that might inform your answer.

## 8. Quiz

**Objective:** To increase understanding of sexual functioning and the physiological basis of Sexual Pleasure.

**Approximate Time:**  
60-90 Minutes

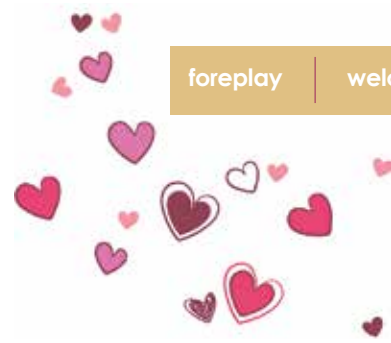
### Suggested Materials/ Online Tools:

Copies of the quiz for each participant, Pens, Flipchart, survey monkey for the quiz, breakout rooms.



For Beginners



**Question 2:****Which type of stimulation might result in orgasm?**

## Guidance:

Some people prefer one kind of stimulation while others prefer different combinations. This can also vary from occasion to occasion at various stages of one's life. Orgasm can be triggered by tactile or psychic stimulation or a combination of the two. The brain plays an important role in enhancing sexual pleasure (e.g. through sexual fantasy or feeling safe). This also explains why some people, including people with disability, can experience pleasure even with no genital sensation, in ways that are a testament to how narrow our normative views of orgasms and sexual pleasure are.

## Ask participants:

- Can you GIVE anyone else an orgasm?
- What might be the role of touch in orgasm?
- What might the role of sexual fantasy be in sexual excitement?
- What role might sexual aids, e.g. vibrators and pornography, have on sexual arousal? How do you feel about these?
- How do we learn the best way to stimulate ourselves sexually?
- "Foreplay" - does it exist? If so, what is it? Why is it talked about?
- Safer sex - is it sexy or not? How could we make it sexier?

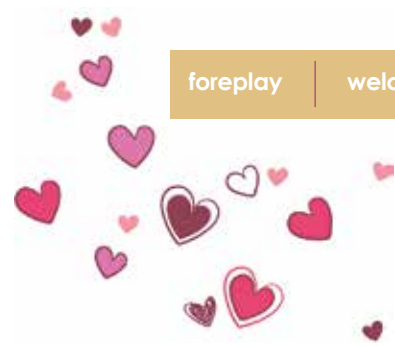
**Question 3:****What characterizes an orgasm?**

## Guidance:

Orgasm is notoriously hard to describe. Masters and Johnson's laboratory research on human sexual response in the late '50s led them to conclude that only one kind of female orgasm is centred around the clitoris and is characterised by involuntary rhythmic contractions of the outer third of the vagina (the so-called 'orgasmic platform'). For men - their framework was binary, and their language use reflects it - an orgasm is characterized by ejaculation. According to Masters and Johnson, ejaculation occurs in two stages: the first consisting of the pooling of seminal fluid inside the body; the second of its rapid expulsion caused by rhythmic muscular contractions. It is usually this "pumping" experience which is associated with orgasm.

Ejaculation and orgasm are not necessarily synonymous. For example, some men who have had prostatectomies (i.e. partial or complete removal of the prostate gland) may be left unable to ejaculate or ejaculate in a retrograde fashion (into the bladder). However, their ability to experience orgasm remains intact. There is a lack of research on how people with penises generally can experience orgasm independently of ejaculation (and even erection). What is more certain is that after orgasm, most men





enter a “refractory” period (during which they are unresponsive to further stimulation). The duration of this period is different within and between individuals, but as men get older, this period tends to lengthen. Whether or not men have the potential to be “multiply orgasmic”, i.e. to experience two or more consecutive orgasms without a refractory period, is yet unclear.

But this necessarily only addresses the physiological element of orgasm. At a physiological level, orgasm is the reflex response once a threshold level of sexual stimulation is reached. Orgasm can be inhibited by insufficient or ineffective stimulation or difficulties in “letting go” emotionally. Women who have not been able to experience an orgasm can learn to do so. Similarly, male partners can learn more about female sexual arousal and orgasm.

What is certain is that the hallmark of orgasm is a physical and emotional sensation in nature and unique to each of us. Descriptions of orgasms can be very diverse, and the nature and intensity of orgasms depend on a complex range of social, psychological and physical factors. Because people with vulvas, unlike people with penises, do not experience a refractory period (during which they are unresponsive to further sexual stimulation), continued stimulation may lead to multiple orgasms.

Ask participants:

- Can we ever adequately define an orgasm?
- What would be your definition of an orgasm?
- How would you describe an orgasm to someone who hasn't had one?
- Does having an orgasm matter?
- What is the difference between sexuality and sensuality?
- Do you know more about the so called male or female orgasm? Why?

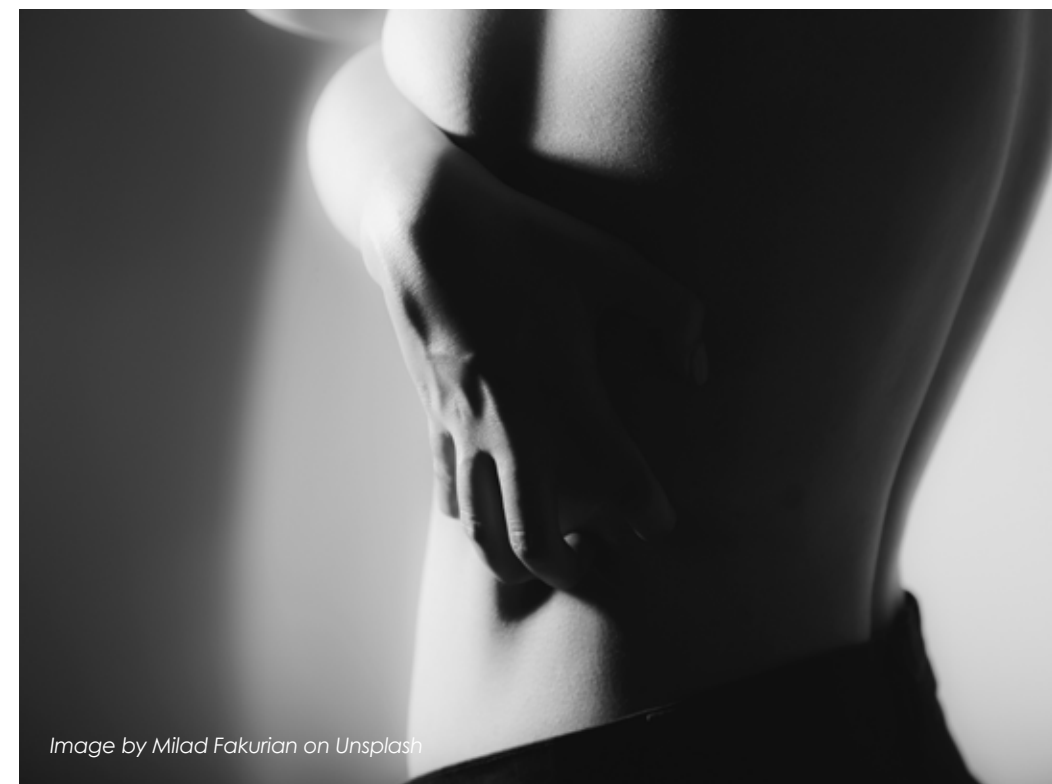


Image by Milad Fakurian on Unsplash

#### Question 4:

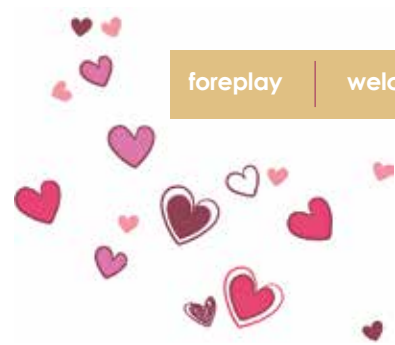
**Can sexual pleasure not be dependent on genital stimulation?**

Guidance:

Sexual pleasure depends on various behaviours, moods, environments, attitudes, expectations, and social conditioning. It is essential to distinguish between what we identify as sexually pleasurable and the “objective” criteria of physiological stimulation and response described above.

Ask participants:

- What is sexuality?
- Is sexuality different from sensuality?
- What about people with different degrees of physical disability (permanent or temporary) - how might this affect their experience of their sexuality?
- Do people who are socialized as men and women view sexuality and sensuality differently? If so, why?



### Question 5: Why do people masturbate?

#### Guidance:

In some cultures, masturbation is considered an important source of pleasure, whether done alone or shared with a partner. In contrast, it remains unacceptable to others and, when practised, may lead to considerable feelings of guilt. Potentially positive aspects of masturbation are that it is safe sex, and it can play an important role in learning about ourselves as sexual beings.

#### Ask participants:

- How do you feel about masturbation?
- What were you told about masturbation?
- What do you think about partners in a relationship masturbating separately?
- Who is ultimately responsible for our sexual pleasure?
- How should adults respond to children who masturbate?

For questions and reflections on children and masturbation we invite a positive conversation on the importance of not shaming children but rather open conversations on the need for it to be appropriate/private. You can find useful resources on the [www.amaze.org](http://www.amaze.org) website which might help you in navigating this conversations.



Image by Sinitta Leunen on Unsplash



Image by Nancy Nguyen on Unsplash

### Question 6: Why are people heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, asexual etc.?

#### Guidance:

Sexual orientation refers to who people are attracted to or want to have relationships with.

While this question asks about heterosexuality, homosexuality and bisexuality, most research has concentrated on looking at the “causes” of homosexuality, thereby defining it as a “problem” rather than viewing any apparently exclusive sexual identity as equally in need (or not) of explanation. Heterosexuality is seen as “given” and “natural” and therefore does not need a reason.

#### Ask participants:

- Are behavior and identity always consistent?
- Why do people not want to identify themselves as male or female?
- Does it matter what sexual orientation we have? Why?
- What is homophobia?
- How might it manifest itself?
- How do you feel about people whose sexual orientation differs from yours?





## 9. Gender and Sexual Pleasure

**Objective:** To explore the gender dimensions of talking about sex and pleasure.

**Approximate Time:** 45-60 Minutes

**Suggested Materials/ Online Tools:** None



For Everyone



For Beginners

## 9. Gender and Sexual Pleasure

*“Wanting sex and expressing sexuality outside the teaching of heteronormativity are about a chaos of liberation that deeply threatens patriarchy”*  
Mona Eltahawy

### Synopsis:

This exercise allows participants to explore ideas of sex and pleasure as held by different gender identities. They are asked to come up with three questions they would like to ask others around sex and pleasure.

### Steps:

- Before you start: It is most likely to be successful when there are participants from different gender identities. Some participants may not want to identify themselves. It will be important to remind participants of their ground rules before beginning the activity: treating each other with respect and listening without judging.
- Remember to tell the group this exercise is about surfacing issues that might be in people's minds but unsaid and could be uncomfortable – and that it is not the responsibility of others to educate you about their sexual preferences. For example lesbians don't need to explain what sex between two people with vulvas is like.
- Divide the group into three , depending on how masculine, feminine or neither you feel at this moment. Do support the group that might be smallest.
- Explain that they will have an opportunity to ask the other group three questions about sex and pleasure.
- You will need to assist both groups in negotiating the kind of questions which should and should not be asked before they go off (preferably to separate rooms) to draw up their lists.
- You can help and provide suggestions or topics for each group to develop the questions, for example:
  - ♦ What makes sex pleasurable for a man /woman/trans/gay/lesbian
  - ♦ Do gay/lesbian people have better sex than straight people?”

- ♦ Is sexual pleasure more important for men than for women, or are men more sexually driven than women.
- ♦ In plenary, the groups ask the questions to the other group. First, each group can deliberate on the answers to the questions of the other in private, electing spokespersons to give feedback on their responses to the other group.
- ♦ The groups take it, in turn, to observe (in silence) each other's discussions.
- ♦ Ask the participants:
  - ❖ How did the groups approach this exercise?
  - ❖ What did it feel like to do it?
  - ❖ Did anything surprise you?
  - ❖ What have you learned about yourself/others?

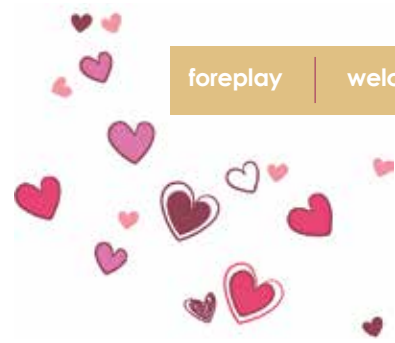
### Gender and Sexual Pleasure

#### Notes/Tips for the Facilitator:

Be aware that gender is not binary. Explain the difference between gender, sex, sexual preference and identity. Gender and sexuality are closely interwoven. Gender is not a binary category relating to men and women only. Gender is something we live, perform and construct. Our society constructs gender; it intersects with inequality and power differences. It matters whether and how you live your life as a woman, a man, or another gender identity in most communities. This can highly influence how to enjoy relationships.

Do be aware of a pressure on participants who hold more marginalised identities or who are in smaller numbers in the group to be the educator for their identity, or that they are being asked personal or inappropriate questions they dont want. Support them as the faciliator and take a role in explaining yourself or offer other resources to explain queer, non-binary or LGBTQIA+ experiences

We tend to believe that there is a difference in sexual perception between men and women and between heterosexuals and gays. Although there are physiological differences in sexual arousal, there are striking similarities in the emotional aspects of sex. People have less sex drive when they are criticised, regardless of their and their partner's gender. And vice versa: if you feel appreciated by the other person, it helps to let yourself go and enjoy sex more.

**Gender and Sexual Pleasure contd.****Notes/Tips for the Facilitator:**

Diversity is an essential part of our lives, for example, in culture, gender, education, faith, HIV status, age and sexual orientation. People are different, which is a positive thing most of the time. We can learn from and support each other because we are diverse. We have many different relationships: we have friends, family, and sexual and romantic relationships. All these relationships have different emotions, levels of intimacy (emotional and physical), rights and responsibilities and power dynamics. Some are healthy, and others are unhealthy or coercive.

LGBTQIA+s (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Asexual) can experience negative sexual experiences as they are aggravated by self-stigma caused by ostracization and racism at home, in school, in church, and community in society at large.

Violence and gender-based, homo-and trans-phobic bullying occurs worldwide. Violence often happens because of actual or perceived sexual orientation and the gender identity of peers. People who are perceived not to conform to prevailing sexual and gender norms, including those who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and asexual (LGBTIA+), are more vulnerable including within their sexual relationships and encounters. Sex education and norms tend to focus on the more negative experiences of these communities and people, and there is less celebration of love, joy and fulfilment. See Pleasure Principle [#ThinkUniversal](#) and the Pleasure Hierarchies that exist.







### 10. Safer Sex and Sexual Pleasure Option a

**Objective:** To explore possibilities for promoting male and female condoms to enhance sexual pleasure.

**Approximate Time:**  
60 Minutes

**Suggested Materials/  
Online Tools:**  
Flipchart Marker pens,  
breakout rooms,  
shared board



For Everyone

## 10. Safer Sex and Sexual Pleasure

### Option a

#### Synopsis:

This exercise helps participants critically analyse what safer sex means and the reasons behind the usage or non-usage of condoms, what it has to do with pleasure and how it ties into people's reasons for having sex. It also helps highlight other forms of safer sex and the gender differences in the reasons for having sex, depending on the context of this exercise.

#### Steps:

- Discuss with participants what they mean by safer sex. This includes more than using condoms; it is also about non-penetrative sexual activities.
- Divide participants into three groups. Allow 15-20 minutes for this.
- Invite them to brainstorm and make two lists of all the reasons they can think of in answer to the question posed to their group:
  - ♦ Group 1: Why don't people with penises use condoms?
  - ♦ Group 2: Why don't people with vulva's use condoms?
  - ♦ Group 3: What are pleasurable ways to have non-penetrative sex?
- Stick all the sheets on the wall and get participants to walk around and look at the lists.
- Add blank sheets and ask participants to write any reasons that appear in two or more of the other lists.
- Discuss with participants:
  - ♦ What does this tell us about sexual pleasure?
  - ♦ How does sexual pleasure help to promote or reduce the use of condoms?

- Ask participants to think of ways how to make the use of condoms more pleasurable before and during the use of condoms.
- Discuss other ways of promoting the practice of safer sex and how you could encourage this; why is non-penetrative sex not seen as 'real' sex.

### Safer Sex and Sexual Pleasure

#### Option a

#### Notes/Tips for the Facilitator:

Be aware and informed about the types of condoms available in your context. Also, try to find out who and how many people are using condoms (if these data are available).

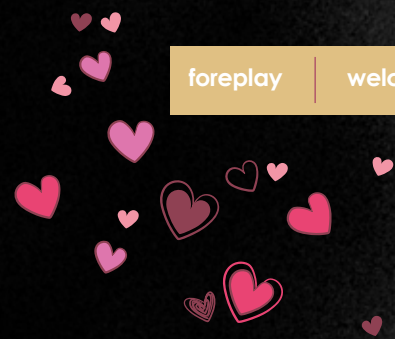
Some participants may argue that condom use reduces their sensation. You can discuss that you still can have other skin to skin contact; discuss the different ways in which sex can be intimate and involve skin-to-skin contact. Think about finger-to-genital and mouth-to-genital sex and how people can touch kiss, stroke, and hug different body parts.

Another argument could be that condom use prevents spontaneity, discuss how to use this 'planning in advance' as an opportunity to talk to their partner about sex and get each other 'in the mood'. Or how feeling safe can increase arousal. They could talk about whether they might have sex later and what kind of sex they might enjoy having.

It is important to take seriously everyone's concerns about how the use of condoms affects their desire/self-esteem rather than focusing purely on how effective each method is at reducing pregnancy risk.

Discussing non-penetrative sex can be very sensitive. It includes using your hands, mouth, feet, etc. Many people still do not see this as 'real sex' that is often defined in heteronormative and patriarchal contexts as a penis in a vagina. However, many people can find it more pleasurable and intimate than intercourse. For non-penetrative pleasurable sex, you need to understand how your body works and what kind of touches you like or dislike.

*Note: You can link this exercise with the exercise Positive Marketing: Module c), 'Let's get it on!' Exercise 6.*



**Safer Sex and Sexual Pleasure**  
**Option b**

**Synopsis:**  
By exaggerated statements, participants explore their personal feelings and challenges about condom use and sexual pleasure. They can share their ideas by refuting or slimming down the content of the statements.

- Steps:**
- Prepare participants by telling them this exercise is very personal, and confidentiality is very important.
  - Read out the following statements and ask participants to write down how they would react when someone tells them:
    - ♦ I can never reach an orgasm when I use a condom.
    - ♦ My partner will get angry when I suggest using a condom.
    - ♦ When someone sees I have a condom in my bag/pocket, they will call me a slut/a player.
  - Ask participants to sit in pairs - we often saw same gender identity pairs work better for this exercise.
  - Ask them to discuss how they feel about the statement for themselves and how they would react if someone else told them this.
  - Discuss in plenary how it felt to do this exercise. Do not ask for the answers.
  - Discuss participants' barriers to condoms.

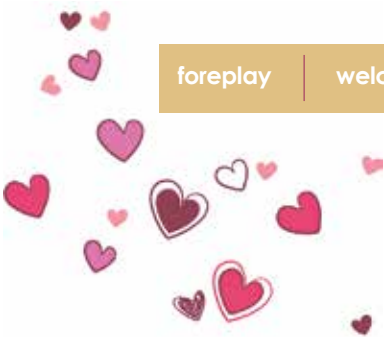
**Safer Sex and Sexual Pleasure**  
**Option b**  
**Notes/Tips for the Facilitator:**  
This exercise can only occur when there is enough trust in the group; it may work better in same-identity groups. You can tailor the statements to the age/experience of the participants.  
  
You can use stronger statements which are more exaggerated and challenging, so you get more responses and reasons for refutations.

**10. Safer Sex and Sexual Pleasure**  
**Option b**  
**Objective:** To explore challenges using condom use and sexual pleasure  
**Approximate Time:** 30 minutes  
**Suggested Materials/ Online Tools:** Paper, breakout rooms



For Everyone





## 11. Consent and Sexual Pleasure

Pleasure Principle: #LoveYourself

### Synopsis:

This exercise is to explain the importance of sexual consent to enjoy sex.

*Note: this exercise touches on sensitive and personal issues. We advise you to warn participants. They should not feel forced to participate. Prepare yourself by studying what the laws are in your country/country where the training is taking place in on consent and sexual abuse.*

### Steps:

- Brainstorm with participants what sexual consent is.
- If possible, you can show the video *Love in the Garden of Consent*
- Explain that to enjoy sex with a partner, consent of both is crucial. Without mutual agreement there can be no sexual enjoyment for both partners. But that discussing, detailing and giving consent can be deeply sexy. See Facilitator's notes.
- Divide participant in groups of 3-4 and ask them to discuss the following situations:
  - Two men meet. They have oral sex. One of the two asks if he can have anal sex. The other does not feel ready. He says.....
  - A young woman wants to try a fantasy they have of dressing up - how can she suggest this in a sexy way to her partner?
  - A boy and girl age 16 years old have been together for several months. They have been talking about having sex. One day the girl asks the boy if they can go further and shows him a condom. The boy does not want to have intercourse, but keep the relationship. She says...
  - A man and a woman start having sex. At a certain moment the woman wants to stop. The man gets angry and says that once you start you should go all the way. The woman says.....

### 11. Consent and Sexual Pleasure

**Objective:** To get a better understanding of what consent means and how it can be linked with sexual pleasure.

**Time:**  
45 minutes

**Suggested Materials/ Online Tools:** Video, sheet with case studies

**Hand out:**  
#LoveYourself



For Everyone



For Beginners

- Two women know each other for a longer time. They have been intimate. One evening one of them show a sex toy and says she want to experiment. The other is not sure. She says.....
- Discuss the answers in the plenary session. If your participants feel comfortable they can also show it in a role play.
- Discuss what participants have learned from this exercise.
- Discuss how consent can be very sexy because it's about expressing what you want, and therefore don't want. It can be a type of arousal.

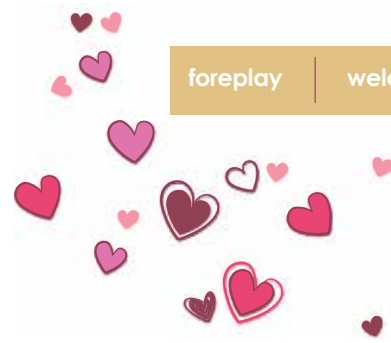
### Consent and Sexual Pleasure Notes/Tips for the Facilitator:

Consent is a positive, voluntary, active and conscious agreement to engage in sexual activity. When someone is consenting, they agree and are confident in their decision to consent. Body language and verbal language should both give the same positive message. Consent can be expressed with or without words. The way in which people give consent differs. But if someone does not say "No" it does not automatically mean "Yes". There are situations of "Maybe" which is a way to explore what you and others want. Consent needs to be situated within respect, desire and dignity and it cannot be one size fits all and has to speak to people's entitlement and power in that context. If you are in doubt whether anyone likes a sexual act, just ask. And make that asking pleasurable - "Would you like me to do more of that, you seemed turned on?" "What do you most want to do?", "I love doing this to you, can we carry on?"

There are some universal values of consent - such as adults consenting, and young people not being able to - that laws might not account for. A reference to context and legality is important outside personal consent too especially when looking at age. It might be useful to refer to other contexts [wanting to go to a movie with a friend who is reluctant] to explain how consent is a process, not always binary.

Sometimes what we want is not fully known to us in advance. The details of desire and satisfaction are often discovered, and produced, in the sexual moment. Rather than a question of what an individual wants, consent is agreed upon by both partners, and with a clear understanding of what they're agreeing to.





Consent and Sexual Pleasure contd.  
Notes/Tips for the Facilitator:

The person who initiates the sexual contact or who wants to move to the next level of intimacy is responsible for asking for - and clearly receiving - consent before continuing with the sexual contact. The person receiving the next level of intimacy is responsible for expressing their needs or concerns clearly. See the [Wheel of Consent](#) for an explanation of the giving and receiving needed in active consent. It distinguishes between the 'doing' aspect of an interaction: who is doing? - and the 'gift' aspect: who is it for?

Asking for consent should not be seen as an obstacle. It would be so much better if we said *"So we both consented, now what? I want to know what feels good for you and share what feels good to me."* Consent can also be given non verbally or through sound if partners know each other well.

A consent conversation includes asking, answering and negotiating. A consent conversation can be deeply sexy.

When there is consent, both people feel safe and comfortable. Safety and comfort (with themselves, their body, their partner and the situation) create an environment where both people can freely take part in all aspects of the consent conversation. And feel aroused and safe. Sexual Rights and consent are a critical aspect of pleasure based sexual health.

Paid sex might indeed be conducive to transactional, negotiated terms in which the parties, there bargain and consent to specific acts for a set price.

For consent to happen, a person needs to be given the chance to say 'No'.

Actually, two things are important when you have sex with a partner:

1. Know what you want and don't want.
2. Taking into account the other person and understanding what the other person wants

Saying no to one activity does not mean you can explore together what you want to do instead to enjoy sex together



Image by Kev Kombs on Unsplash





### Consent and Sexual Pleasure contd.

#### Notes/Tips for the Facilitator:

However you should never do what the other person's wants if you do not want it

Consent is not moment bound: if someone says "Yes" today, this does not automatically apply for what happens next week. And someone may like something at first but don't want to continue a few minutes later. You always have to listen.

Consent needs to be given face to face and online.

Do not give in to sign apps or documents that record which sexual acts you consent to. They do the opposite of what consent means: you can't go back.

## 12. Sexual Abuse and Sexual Pleasure

Pleasure Principle: [#LoveYourself](#)

### Synopsis:

Explain to participants that sexual abuse is a sensitive matter. When participants feel uncomfortable about the topic, they do not need to participate actively. Ensure you know where to send a participant for further support if required. Find out what the laws are about sexual abuse in the specific contexts of your training.

*Important note: If you do not feel comfortable facilitating this exercise, invite an expert on sexual abuse to support you or co-facilitate the session with you. When you want to work with an expert from outside, ensure this person comes prepared. Give them insights on the group and explain what issues you have already discussed, without breaking confidentiality. Try to find an expert that has knowledge and experience in giving training/holding interactive sessions.*

### Steps

- If possible refer to the exercise Consent and Sexual Pleasure, Module b) 'What do you know?', Exercise 11.
- Introduce different forms of sexual abuse; mental, physical, emotional etc.
- Divide participants into groups and ask them to think about:
  - ♦ How sexual abuse / trauma can influence sexual pleasure.
  - ♦ How they can support a client/friend to enjoy sex after trauma and find ways to enjoy sex and intimacy again.
- Discuss in plenary
- You can direct the participants to this article: N. Fava & J. D. Fortenberry (2021), [Trauma-informed Sex-Positive Approaches to Sexual Pleasure, International Journal of Sexual Health, 2021](#)
- Give handout of The Pleasure Principle [#LoveYourself](#) for further reading.

### 12. Sexual Abuse and Sexual Pleasure

**Objective:** To explore the consequences of sexual abuse to be able to enjoy sex.

**Time:** 60 Minutes

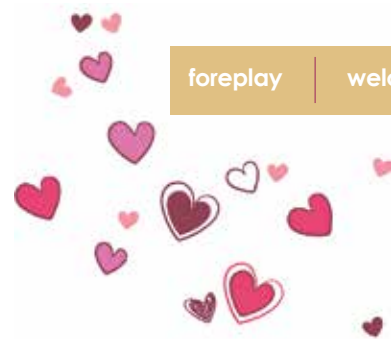
**Handout:**  
[#LoveYourself](#)



For Everyone



For Beginners

**Sexual Abuse and Sexual Pleasure****Notes/Tips for the Facilitator:**

Sexuality is not always pleasurable, and it can be a source of pain and trauma. It can happen because you don't know enough about your desires or the ones of your partner; because you don't talk about it with each other. Having sex with each other is about asking for consent and communicating what you want/don't want.

Un-pleasurable sex is also the outcome of abusive or exploitative relationships. Many people, especially women, are coerced or forced into sex, often by older people or people who hold power on them. Young women are more often victims of sexual violence. Coerced sex is also more likely than consensual sex to result in unwanted pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections and HIV. It can also lead to lifelong emotional and social problems.

Negative experiences of sexuality also result from particular sexual practices, such as young women being expected to have a dry vagina during sex or having undergone genital mutilation/cutting, which can make sex painful.

These are very sensitive issues, and many people, including providers, may feel confused and uncomfortable about how to address the negative aspects of sex.

Programmes that adhere primarily to gender and (the prevention of) gender-based violence need to understand better and resolve questions about how to enjoy sex and fears, doubts, contradictions, and misconceptions after sexual violence.

We know the trauma of sexual violence cause anguish and other emotional negative feelings which hamper the ability to enjoy sex without fear.

As programmers, educators or providers, we need to be aware that non-consensual and sexual coercion is always a violation of human rights and never justified by where, when, and how it happens. Understanding sexual coercion requires understanding sexual consent.

There are many different forms of sexual abuse; physical, emotional and verbal abuse; it can vary from unwanted touch or verbal attacks to incest and rape.

Sexual abuse can have a significant influence on sexual enjoyment - this can include:

- Increased confusion during sexual and emotional intimacy.
- Discomfort with touch in certain areas of the body.
- Limiting the type of sexual activity considered okay or enjoyable.
- Requires certain circumstances to be in place. For example, lights are on or off when sex occurs.
- Experiencing difficulties in achieving sexual arousal or ejaculation.
- Feeling distressed, shame or guilt about sexual response, interest or fantasy.
- Difficulty trusting sexual partners.
- Experiencing panic attacks, disassociation or flashbacks during sexual activity.
- Difficulties in sexual relationships, confusing sex with love, caregiving, abuse, pain, and being powerless or powerful.

How to support someone who is abused to enjoy sex and sexual intimacy again?

Listen and do not ask for details of the abuse.  
Help to self-forgive what happened: sexual forgiveness is defined as a process that interrupts patterns of self-blame, self-stigmatisation, shame, avoidance, aggression, and revenge.

Find organisations/persons you can refer to.

This article will help you and the participants to get more information on sexual pleasure after the trauma of sexual abuse:

N. Fava & J. D. Fortenberry (2021), [Trauma-informed Sex-Positive Approaches to Sexual Pleasure](#), *International Journal of Sexual Health*, 2021





## let's get it on!

### normalising communication about sexual pleasure

#### 1. Language and Messages

Pleasure Principle: #TalkSexy

##### Synopsis:

Exploring what words to use with a different audience

##### Steps:

- Explain to the participants that we will be reflecting on how to develop a language that feels comfortable for them.
- Ask the participants to brainstorm the following on large sheets of paper. This works best by distributing other participants in pairs or in small groups. You can also propose to do it as a self-reflection and development exercise. Each group or individual works on a piece of paper/sheet:
  - ♦ All the words you can think of for sex.
  - ♦ All the words you can think of to describe good sex.
  - ♦ All the words you can think of to describe bad sex.
- Once you have completed this activity, ask the participants to look at the content on each sheet and circle in different colours all the words that they would feel comfortable using with A) friends, B) colleagues C) clients. Reflect on the differences and difficulties you may have in using some of these words.

What is it about them that is difficult/ awkward/offensive?

- ♦ List all the different sexual activities, behaviours, and expressions you can think of. Which of these activities and behaviours would you feel comfortable talking about in a counselling session?
- ♦ What words would you use to describe these activities when talking to your audience clients?
- ♦ Would you use different words depending on the client's age, gender, sexuality, or social background?
- ♦ How do the words you use impact the message you want to give on sexual pleasure?

#### 1. Language and Messages

**Objective:** To help participants reflect on the importance of correct messaging

##### Suggested Materials/ Online Tools:

Paper, pens, handout circulated over email/message / chatbox, breakout rooms, wordcloud or whiteboard

##### Handout:

Pleasure Principle  
#TalkSexy

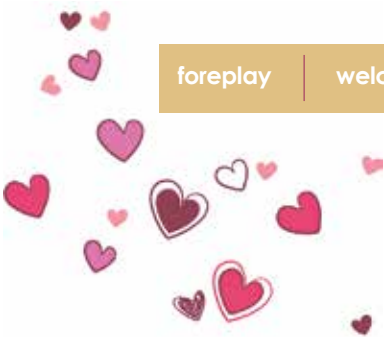


For Everyone



For Beginners





Language and Messages

Notes/Tips for the Facilitator:

- These are some other questions you can ask to facilitate the conversation:
  - ❖ Would you feel confident describing the pleasures and risks of each of these sexual activities to your audience/learner/client if you were asked?
  - ❖ Where might this kind of knowledge be helpful for you to use in your work sessions? Think about when it might be helpful to encourage your audiences to experiment with new ways of having sex or expressing intimacy, love or desire.
  - ❖ Where is your comfort level whilst doing this activity on a scale of 1 - 10? What can you do to feel more comfortable discussing complex issues for yourself?
- Working through these questions and discussing them with colleagues will help you feel more comfortable using sexual language and sexual expressions.
- There are also some do and don'ts:
  - ♦ Try not to assume to understand what people mean by 'sex' or that people know what you mean by 'sex' - there are many ways people can have sex with each other and on their own. Encourage and facilitate open conversation.
  - ♦ It may be helpful to keep the following general tips in mind when you talk with people about sexuality:
    - ❖ Use neutral language, and be careful not to use words like normal or abnormal, natural or unnatural, sinful or dirty.
    - ❖ Use positive, inclusive, and respectful language and give people the message that we all have the right to enjoy sex independently and with a partner without the risk of harm.
    - ❖ Be clear in the words you use, don't use vague descriptions.
    - ❖ Remember that we can convey judgment in language, words, facial expressions, and tone of voice.
    - ❖ Give examples of do's and don'ts

Instead of these words	You might want to use
Promiscuity	Having more partners
Losing virginity	Gaining a new sexual experience or sexual debut
Sex = penis in vagina/anus	Celebrate all kinds of sexual activities. These include - but are not limited to - oral sex, penetrative vaginal sex, penetrative anal sex, using a sex toy, masturbation, kissing and sexual contact (touching intimate areas)
Foreplay	Foreplay suggests that intercourse is the 'real thing'. Use non-penetrative sex or get each other excited.
Risky behaviour and critical language	Discuss risks in a friendly way Be clear about non-consensual sex
Describe some sexual acts as weird	Embrace an open, accepting view of people's different identities and preferences
Sexual orientation is about sex	Make a distinction between attraction and having sex.
Pleasure and orgasm are the same.	There are many ways to experience pleasure without having an orgasm, and there is some evidence of an 'orgasm gap' between women and men, and lesbian women and heterosexual women. And so some people need to know how to reach orgasm.
Everyone wants sex	Some people are asexual. And sexual desire is different for everyone
Everyone can have the same kind of sexual experiences or bodily functions	Everyone can experience pleasure and sex in different way. Be inclusive and respectful.





## 2. Finding the Right Words

Pleasure Principle: #TalkSexy

### Synopsis:

This exercise helps participants articulate colloquial words related to specific sexual acts and makes them think about whether they know the language used by various possible clients they could have. It helps highlight the lack of information programme planners and implementers often have regarding sexual acts and language.

### Steps:

- Divide the participants into groups of five or six participants. In our experience, dividing the group into same identity groups worked well. However we would leave it to the facilitator to decide.
- Give each group a copy of the worksheet and ask them to complete it, filling in the words they think the different people would really use.
- After you hand out the worksheet, ask the participants:
  - ♦ How did it feel about participating in that activity?
  - ♦ Did your feelings change as the activity was going on? If so, in what ways?
  - ♦ How do you feel now?
  - ♦ What were the main differences between the vocabularies used by the different people?
  - ♦ Was there a gender difference among the different characters? If so, how would you describe this?
  - ♦ Were any of the vocabularies more or less acceptable to you personally?

How would this affect you if you were to have a conversation about sexual matters with one of these people? Which vocabulary, if any, would you wish to use?

### Finding the Right Words

#### Notes/Tips for the Facilitator:

Be sensitive to any reluctance about this activity. Emphasise its purpose and relevance to the work of participants.

Encourage everyone to try the activity, but allow those who feel uncomfortable to opt-out.

### 2. Finding the Right Words

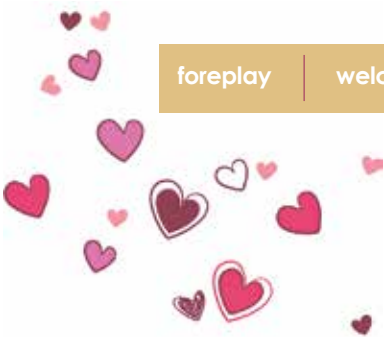
**Objective:** To practice talking explicitly about sex.

**Approximate Time:**  
45-60 Minutes

**Suggested Materials/  
Online Tools:**  
Copies of the  
worksheet, email/  
message worksheet



For Professionals  
experienced in  
SRHR



Finding the Right Words contd.  
Notes/Tips for the Facilitator:

Depending on the context you are conducting this training, you might like to have separate groups of married/unmarried females and males or age-based divisions. This ensures that younger or unmarried women and men can contribute freely to the discussion in highly hierarchical or hetero-normative contexts.

In our experience, participants have found this exercise highly enlightening as they have realised they do not possess the vocabulary to discuss sex, sexual acts, and pleasure with their clients/in their work.

Emphasise the importance of learning this vocabulary and being aware of the exact meaning of different words to ensure that messages do not get diluted or misunderstood.

Note any difference in the number of words the male group can fill in versus the number of words the female group knows for example. Highlight any apparent gender differences, i.e. it is okay for men to use these terms but not for women. Therefore, they never learn about them. You could discuss the effect this has on women's knowledge of their anatomy and, therefore, their (lack of) 'access' to sexual pleasure.

*Note: when you conduct this exercise and learn new expressions from different contexts, please do send them to The Pleasure Project for us to build a universal pleasure vocabulary.*

WORKSHEET

Fill in the appropriate term in the blank space:

1. An illiterate 20-year-old man from a rural area, talking privately with his friends, would call his genitals his.....and his wife's genitals.....  
He would describe sexual intercourse as....., masturbation as.....,  
oral sex as ..... and anal sex as.....  
He would describe orgasm as.....
2. An illiterate 20-year-old woman from a rural area, talking privately with her friends, would describe her genitals as her.....and her husband's as his.....  
She would describe sexual intercourse as....., masturbation as.....,  
oral sex as..... and anal sex as.....  
She would describe orgasm as.....
3. A 22-year-old educated urban man, talking privately with his friends, would describe his genitals as .....and a woman's as her.....  
He would describe sexual intercourse as....., masturbation as .....  
oral sex as..... and anal sex as.....  
He would describe orgasm as.....
4. A 22-year-old educated urban woman, talking privately with her friends, would describe her genitals as her.....and a man's as his.....  
She would describe sexual intercourse as....., masturbation as .....  
oral sex as.....and anal sex as.....  
She would describe orgasm as.....
5. A 13-year-old boy, talking privately with his friends, would describe his genitals as .....and a girl's as his.....  
He would describe sexual intercourse as.....  
and masturbation as .....
6. A 13-year-old girl, talking privately with her friends, would describe her genitals as .....and a boy's as his.....  
She would describe sexual intercourse as.....  
and masturbation as.....





### 3. Talking about Sex and Pleasure: How to start a conversation

Pleasure Principle: #BeFlexible

#### Synopsis:

This exercise helps participants start a conversation about sexual pleasure, and it is not an exercise in the ins and outs of counselling or sexuality education.

#### Steps:

- Explain that this exercise is about practising talking about sexual pleasure in a professional setting. It is not about counselling for sexual problems or sexuality education.
- Ask participants to sit in groups of three.
- The exercise is in 3 stages; each of the three participants in the subgroup will take the role of client, professional (themselves) and observer.
- At the start of each role-play, the participant who plays the professional sets the scene and explains the situation.
- After five minutes, the role play stops; first, the professional and client give feedback on how they felt about the process and content of the role play. After that, the observer provides their impressions.
- Explain that everyone should be positive in giving feedback; advise about language, non-verbal communication and content.
- Discuss in plenary what everyone has learned from the exercise.
- Give handout of The Pleasure Principle [#Be Flexible](#)

#### 3. Talking about Sex and Pleasure; How to start a conversation

**Objective:** To make talking about sex and sexual pleasure easier

**Approximate Time:**  
60 minutes

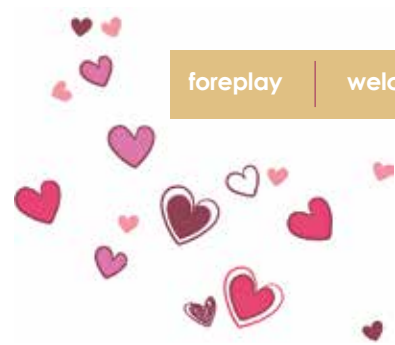
**Suggested Materials/  
Online Tools:**  
Chairs, breakout  
rooms



For Everyone



For Beginners

**Talking about Sex and Pleasure: How to start a conversation****Notes/Tips for the Facilitator:**

It is normal to feel awkward or embarrassed when talking about sexuality. You can help by acknowledging your embarrassment and letting your audience/client know that it's okay to feel awkward.

Find the time when everyone is relaxed to plan this exercise

Keep it simple and talk about one topic at a time.

Know the facts!

Only start talking /introducing/discussing sex and sexual pleasure when it is appropriate, and you have a good reason for it

Talking about sexuality is not just talking about the behaviour itself but what it means to the person(s) involved

Consider the social context in which sexual behaviour takes place

Be flexible

Explain that in the conversations, the following issues can be discussed:

Sexual pleasure/wellbeing means many different things for different people; however, there are some general ideas to consider when you include sexuality in your counselling:

Understanding that sex should be enjoyable and not forced.

Accepting personal sexual orientation as a human right.

Everyone has the right to experience pleasure.

Sexuality and pleasure should be a part of everyone's life.

In a sexual relationship, sexual pleasure is about finding a balance between your own needs and wants and listening to and being open to the needs and wants of your partner.



Pleasure is not limited to sexual intercourse.

Safe sex can be pleasurable sex.

Masturbation as a safe and enjoyable practice for everyone and as a personal choice.

Communication between partners can enhance pleasure and the quality of your sexual interactions. Sexual pleasure/wellbeing includes behaviours that feel good and create intimacy rather than actions that necessarily result in orgasm, and this can be penetrative and non -penetrative sex.

Consider the positive aspects of sexuality that may have nothing to do with orgasms, such as feelings of attraction, love, confidence, and self-worth. Discuss pleasure boundaries. While it can be exciting to explore new positions and activities, no one should feel coerced at any time.





## 4. Introduction to a Sex-positive Approach

### Synopsis:

This exercise helps participants explore what a sex-positive approach is.

### Steps:

1. Define with participants what a sex-positive approach means to them in one word. Write them on a flipchart.
2. Ask: Why do you think a sex-positive approach is important?
3. Have an open discussion with the group about their ideas on the importance of a sex-positive approach in their life.
4. Present some main reasons to the group afterwards (see talking points) and see if they are similar to the ideas that they came up with.

### 4. Introduction to a Sex-positive Approach

**Objective:** To understand better being sex-positive and what this means for you.

**Approximate Time:** 30 minutes

**Suggested Materials/ Online Tools:** Flipchart; paper, pens, wordcloud



For Everyone



For Professionals  
experienced in  
SRHR

### Introduction to a Sex-positive Approach

#### Notes/Tips for the Facilitator:

#### Why is it essential to adopt a sex-positive approach?

Sexuality is a fundamental aspect of human life that refers to gender roles and identities, sexual orientation, intimacy and pleasure. It is experienced and expressed through thoughts, desires, emotions, beliefs, values, behaviours, roles and relationships. Being able to express sexuality freely and openly is central to being human and important to every individual's wellbeing, happiness and health.

Positive outcomes: research shows that sexual well-being contributes significantly to the quality of life for many people. With all of these often negative and conflicting messages about sexuality, it's no wonder that young people, especially girls, often grow up feeling confused, ashamed of their bodies, insecure about their sexuality and disempowered to exercise their sexual and reproductive rights.

Several studies have argued that denying the possibility of pleasure in sexual activity, particularly for women and girls, has a negative impact on their active negotiation of safer sex.

To normalise pleasure as a right for not only male bodies but for all bodies is a crucial starting point for developing sexual competence. The ability to negotiate around pleasure and exercise regarding involvement in relationships and sexual practices depends on whether they will yield a positive experience for all partners involved.

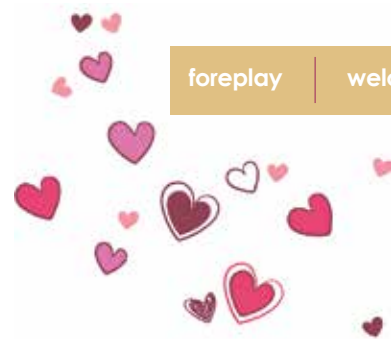
#### How does a sex-positive approach work?

It means that you need to be able to identify what is seen as 'normal' and 'abnormal', 'good' and 'bad' within your community and think about whose interests these categories serve. Who has the power to define what is 'normal' and 'good'?

In practice: Being positive about sex and our bodies can be challenging in social and cultural contexts where there are many negative and contradictory messages about sex, gender, sexuality and the body. Your audience may need space to talk about these conflicting messages and how they feel about them to help them make choices and decisions about their lives.



Image by Alexander Krivitskiy on Unsplash



### 5. How to be a Sex-positive Worker

**Objective:**

To understand better being sex-positive and what this means in your work.

**Approximate Time:**  
60 Minutes

**Suggested Materials/  
Online Tools:**

Flipcharts, pens,  
breakout rooms,  
whiteboard



For Professionals  
experienced in  
SRHR

## 5. How to be a Sex-positive Worker

**Synopsis:**

this exercise helps participants explore what makes a professional sex positive; how will that affect their work. This exercise is a follow to the former exercise.

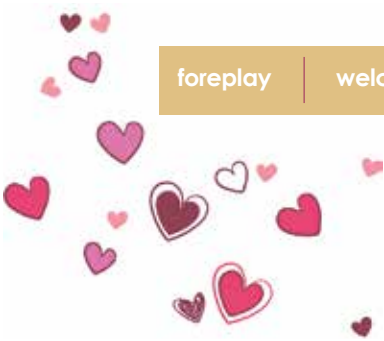
**Steps:**

- Divide the participants into four groups and ask each group to write down the characteristics of a sex-positive worker
  - ♦ in education;
  - ♦ in a medical profession, Nurse etc.
  - ♦ in social work;
  - ♦ in a drugstore selling condoms and sexual health products
- Ask them to list the knowledge, attitudes and skills this person needs. They can give positive examples they have seen.
- Discuss and compare in plenary.

**Talking points:**

- ❖ Being 'sex-positive in your work is about being able - but is not limited - to talk about sexual intercourse or other activities that we may define as 'sex' positively. It also involves you about sexual and gender expression, rights, relationships and families, physical and emotional pleasure and pain, and sexual values and attitudes.
- ❖ It means you can find a balance between explaining the pleasurable sides of having sex and protecting yourself against unwanted consequences.
- ❖ It is about being open to discussing problems regarding sex and having sexual pleasure while also understanding your limitations. Be honest about what you know or do not know and be able to refer to experts when needed.





**Additional discussion topic: A sex-positive approach to sexualisation and social media:**

Introducing a sex-positive approach may start a discussion about sexualisation and social media. It is good to address this, and these notes may help the discussion:

- ♦ Various parties have increasing concerns about the sexualisation of popular and consumer cultures and the increased availability of pornography through rapidly changing global media technologies. These concerns centre around the possible impact of media and pornography consumption on people's sexual understandings and practices. Any information on sex in the media may pressure people to conform to the sexual behaviours and values seen in sexualised and pornographic media content. Practitioners working with young people have noted how pornography can normalise ideas about bodies and sexual behaviour in young people.
- ♦ Discussing social media can also offer a forum to help understand and make sense of the images, practices, norms, and sexual scripts observed in social media, including pornography. It gives a possibility to learn about the aspects of sexuality often absent from pornography, such as emotional intimacy, negotiating consent, discussing contraception, etc.
- ♦ Supporting people to understand that they have choice, agency and autonomy in their sexual practices is an essential part of developing their capacity for negotiating safe, consensual and enjoyable sexual experiences.

**6. Carousel**

**Synopsis:**

This is a practice exercise that provides participants with the opportunity to apply some of their learning and receive constructive feedback on their reactions and advice to clients (Played by participants). It enables analysis of the end of how different situations can be handled and which would be the most effective.

**Steps:**

- Explain that this exercise aims to allow participants to practice talking about sex and sexual pleasure by exposing them to a range of different situations relevant to their work.
- They will have the opportunity to receive feedback from several different 'clients', and as 'clients', they get to experience different approaches to talking about these issues.
- Divide participants into two groups. Ask one group to sit in the inner circle, facing outwards. Ask the others to sit opposite them in the outer circle. Explain that those seated in the inner circle are the professionals and those in the outside circle are the clients. There will be an opportunity to change roles.
- Give each of the 'clients' a situation card to present to the professional and tell them to explain to the professional what role they play as is outlined on their card. E.g. they are playing a 15-year-old.
- Explain to the professionals that they will have three minutes to respond to each situation before calling time. There will then be two minutes for feedback from the 'client'. This feedback must be constructive: it should be focused upon how specifically what was done or said affected the 'client' and, if appropriate, what they could have done differently.
- After the feedback, call time and ask the 'clients' to move one seat clockwise while the professionals stay where they are and repeat the Activity.
- Do this as many times as feels necessary or until participants get tired.

**6. Carousel**

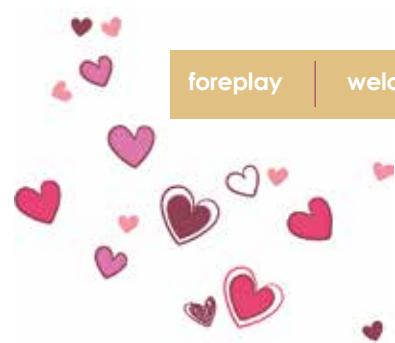
**Objective:**  
To practice talking about sex and sexual pleasure.

**Approximate Time:**  
45 - 60 Minutes

**Suggested Materials/ Online Tools:**  
Situations, Chairs are arranged in two concentric circles with an equal number of chairs in each circle, breakout rooms, spotlight



For Professionals experienced in SRHR



- When it is time to change roles, ask participants to change chairs and the service users to move one seat clockwise before beginning in their different roles.

Processing - ask participants:

As a client, what did you find most useful in what was said to you?

- ♦ What was least helpful?
- ♦ What were the most important similarities among the responses?
- ♦ What were the most important differences?
- ♦ What did you find most enjoyable about this activity?
- ♦ What did you find most difficult?
- ♦ What did you learn about yourself from the activity?
- ♦ What did you learn concerning the work you do?

#### Carousel

##### Notes/Tips for the Facilitator:

Ensure that participants understand what 'giving feedback' means. They must not be judgmental or provide value-laden feedback. Instead, their role is to state facts and explain how these affect the 'client'.

You could try a variation on this exercise with a short plenary discussion after each round of conversations. This can result in subsequent client simulations being better based on the feedback discussed together.

If you have fewer participants, you could try the fishbowl method instead of the carousel, where two participants volunteer to be the client and the professional. They are placed face-to-face in the circle's centre, with all other participants being the (silent) observers. After each interaction, there can be a plenary discussion on the observations and feedback, followed by a new pair coming into the fishbowl to simulate interaction.

Depending on the client group your participants deal with, you can adjust the ages given in the situation cards.



Image by Bruno Aguirre on Unsplash





## WORKSHEET

### SITUATIONS FOR CAROUSEL

*(Cut out each situation and hand it out separately to the participants)*

You have heard your friends talk about this thing called a climax. You laugh and joke with them but are too shy to say that you don't think you have ever experienced this with your husband.  
(25-year-old woman)

You have realised that you are gay. You feel okay about this, and all you need to know is how you can make sure that the sex you have is enjoyable and safe.  
(18-year-old man)

You have a very happy relationship, but one thing bothers you. Your partner loves having sex, but you could never understand all the fuss.  
(Young married man)

You are having sex with your boyfriend. Do you think it would be fun to introduce female condoms? You are not sure how these work or how he will react.  
(20-year-old woman)

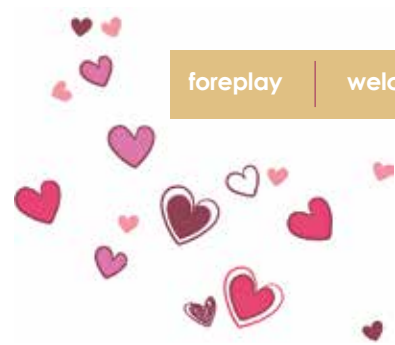
You enjoy sex with your partner, but he penetrates very quickly, and it hurts you because you are still dry.  
(19-year-old woman)

You are very nervous about having sex because you climax very quickly. Someone told you that condoms might help - how?  
(24-year-old man)

Your partner touches your breasts very quickly before penetrating. You would prefer to have non-penetrative sex but don't know how to ask  
(26-year-old woman)

You have always had great sexual fantasies but now that you are in a relationship, you feel guilty because you are not always thinking about your partner when you have sex.  
(24-year-old person)

You and your partner are HIV positive. Sex is a very important part of your relationship – any suggestions as to how you can make your sex safer as well as exciting?



## 7. Positive Marketing

### Objective:

To identify and promote pleasure-focused advantages of male and female condoms and lubricants.

**Approximate Time:**  
45 Minutes

### Suggested Materials/ Online Tools:

Male and female condoms, lubricants, breakout rooms



For Everyone



For Beginners

## 7. Positive Marketing

### Synopsis:

The exercise compels participants to project condoms and lubricants as pleasure enhancing products. This helps them understand the possibilities in messaging around condoms (both female and male), apart from fear and disease.

*Note: It is important that you know the sorts and brands of male and female condoms and lubricants available in the community/country. Also, try to find data about the usage of condoms.*

### Steps:

- Divide participants into six groups. Two groups will work on male condoms, two on female condoms and two on lubricant.
- Explain that they have 20 minutes to identify ways of convincing the others of the advantages of their product, focusing on sexual pleasure.
  - ♦ Each group presents to the others. Processing - ask participants:
    - ♦ How easy or difficult was that activity?
    - ♦ Which points were most/least convincing?
    - ♦ What can we learn from the activity?

### Positive Marketing

#### Notes/Tips for the Facilitator:

You can pitch this activity as one where the groups have to make an advertisement / TV commercial.

The exercise can be more exciting and creative by telling participants that they cannot use words like fear, danger, infection, contraception, etc., in their pitch.

It can also be a competition between the groups with the most convincing advertisement winning a small prize - keep some candies or other easy to obtain and inexpensive items handy to give out to the winning group members. Participants become enthusiastic about the competition scenario and can be creative.



Image by Matteo Vistocco on Unsplash





## context is sexy

### society and culture and sexual pleasure

The exercises in this module help participants look at the wider context of sexual pleasure. How far can they discuss sexual pleasure in their community, workplace etc.? The first two exercises are linked to each other. Participants may have rich and long discussions, which will exceed the given time-limits

#### 1. Society and Sexual Pleasure

**Pleasure Principle:** #ThinkUniversal, #BeFlexible

##### Synopsis:

This exercise will help participants explore and discuss sexual pleasure in a broader context; to better understand how communities influence thinking and behaviour about sex and sexual pleasure.

##### Steps:

Explain:

- Sexuality has a different meaning in different contexts and societies. There is often one group in a society who decides what should/should not happen in the bedroom.
- Open/closed. Some societies are more closed with rules and regulations that dictate how people should behave sexually (e.g. religious societies) and societies where the sexual rules are more left to the individual choice.
- Individual versus community: there are societies where the community is more important than the individual and those where the individual is more important than the community.

#### 1. Society and Sexual Pleasure

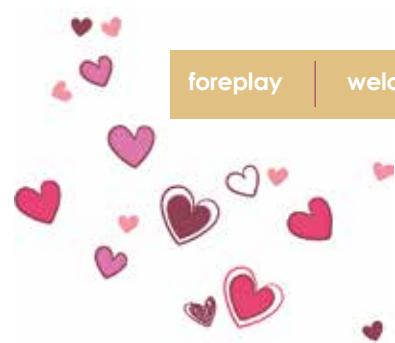
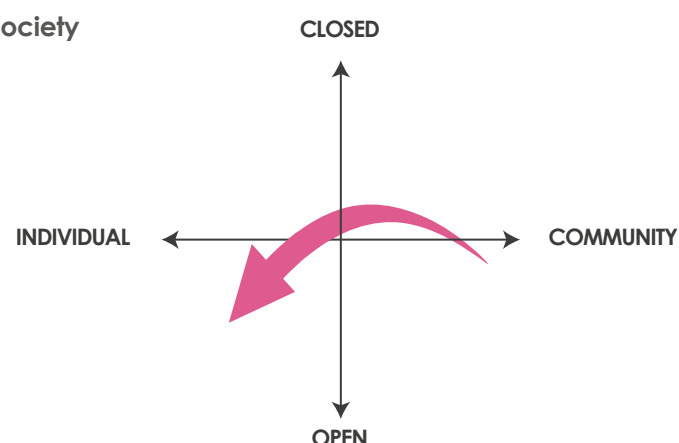
**Objective:**

**Approximate Time:**  
45 - 60 Minutes

**Suggested Materials/ Online Tools:**  
Flipchart marker,  
Handout: Pleasure Principles - Think Universal and Be Flexible, paper, breakout rooms



For Everyone

**Sexuality and Society**

Example: The topic of masturbation

- ♦ Closed communities where traditional and cultural leaders prescribe behavioural norms in the community: masturbation is seen as a sin for everyone.
- ♦ Closed and individual: a medical authority may state that masturbation is bad for your health.
- ♦ Open and individual: masturbation is seen as a personal choice.
- ♦ Open and community: a feminist political movement says that masturbation is the best way to enjoy your own body .
- Ask participants to draw the quadrant on a piece of paper.
- Ask them first individually and after discussing in groups to position their community in one of the four quadrants when it comes to how the following topics are positioned:
  - ❖ Masturbation
  - ❖ Same-sex practices
  - ❖ Sex for pleasure
- ♦ Discuss in plenary what their communities think about these topics and where they would put in one of the quadrants.

- ♦ Ask to explore and consider who are the main actors to decide the position in the quadrant.
- ♦ Discuss the difference between the position of the community and the real-life situation; are they very different?; How do people bridge the gap between the values in the community and their own lives?
- ❖ Can you find common ground between existing norms and sex rights and the values in the community? These could include dignity, equality, respect and compassion
- ❖ How can you create the right environment and bridge the gap between different ideas and values?

**Society and Sexual Pleasure****Notes/Tips for the Facilitator:**

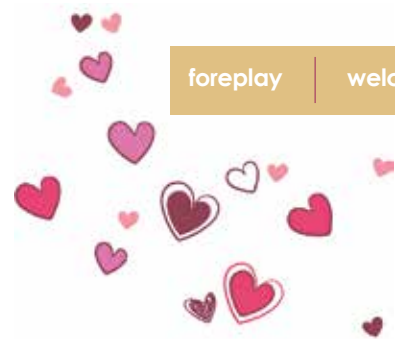
A closed culture around sexuality in many parts of the world also means it can be difficult for professionals and young people to talk about sexuality in professional contexts, including in education and services. It can often feel safer to stick to 'safe' topics such as contraception, pregnancy choices and treatment options or to ask about clients' experiences of poor health, pain or discomfort. Talking about sexual enjoyment and desire can sometimes feel too taboo.

In more open/individual-focused societies, individuals can make their own choices regarding sex and sexuality. However still, some stakeholders, like content creators/ social media influencers, medical professionals, psychologists and others, can 'dictate' what is acceptable or not acceptable.

However, societies and cultures are constantly changing. We often forget that there is not only culture or norms and value systems, and there can be differences between generations and between groups in the society. As a champion for sexual pleasure, you need to understand how different stakeholders (including social media) influence our thinking and behaviour.

Recognise that learners are individuals, not community representatives or ethnic groups.



**Society and Sexual Pleasure contd.****Notes/Tips for the Facilitator:**

Recognise the cultural roots of many sexual behaviours. Explore the opportunities and barriers to promoting dialogue on religion, culture and sexuality and the reality of young people's lives; what is the common ground between culture, religion and sexual rights, e.g. values of dignity, equality, respect, and compassion?

Acknowledge that cultural, religious and other beliefs may also influence you as a facilitator.

Some cultures discourage open communication about sexuality, making it difficult for young people to discuss it, especially in large groups.

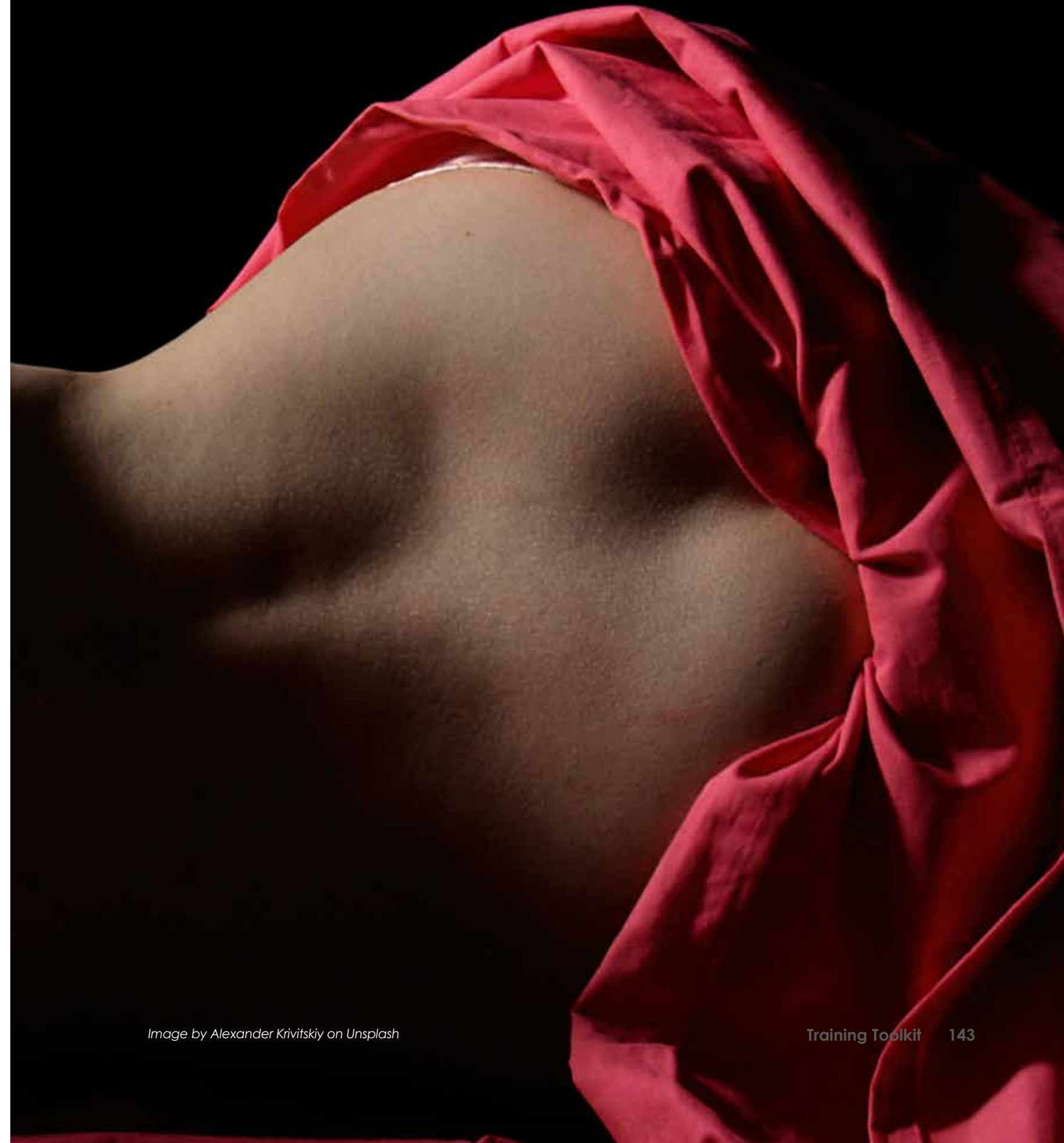
Recognise that participants may feel that their ideas may be different and sometimes conflict with the dominant culture and the messages they receive through social media.

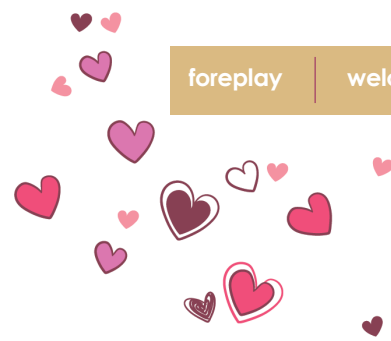
Support participants' pride in their ethnic identity.

Have zero tolerance for discriminatory words and behaviours based on cultural identity, including negative attitudes

Ensure critical thinking by discussing harmful/traditional practices, such as early and forced marriage.

Remember that all work on sex and sexual pleasure should be evidence-based information and interventions.





## 2. Sexual Pleasure in Your Context

**Objective:** To explore how societal and cultural values have an impact on your sexual pleasure

**Time:** 45 Minutes

**Suggested Materials/ Online Tools:** Flipchart paper, shared whiteboard



For Professionals  
experienced in  
SRHR

## 2. Sexual Pleasure in Your Context

### Synopsis:

This exercise is directly linked with the first exercise of this module. It digs a bit deeper into personal experiences of how society and culture influence sexual pleasure.

### Steps:

- Explain that when individuals are having sex, there are three elements you need to consider:
  - ♦ What is the person's capacity to have sex (physically)? This can be different for people with disabilities or with an illness like diabetes or heart problems
  - ♦ What does the person do? Even if a person can have sex all the time, it does not mean they will do it.
  - ♦ What happens is influenced by the values and norms of their society/ community. The values and limit or support their sexual pleasure.
- Ask participants to think for themselves about how society, culture or religion influence their sexual enjoyment.
- Ask for a few responses from the group and write them on a flipchart. People don't have to share their motivations if they don't want to; it can be any motivation they can think of.
- Discuss the influence of their community/their parents/peers on to enjoy sex.
- Being a parent/professional/friend now, what can they do differently to address societal/cultural inhibitions to have pleasurable sex?

### Sexual Pleasure in Your Context

#### Notes/Tips for the Facilitator:

There can be many different values in a society that can be clear and open for everyone or can be more hidden. They all can contribute to people's motivation to have or not have sex.

These morals can include:

Sexual relationships should be mainly there for reproduction

Sexual relationships should be controlled: e.g. young people shouldn't have sex before marriage

Sex is a voluntary action between adults

Children are not sexual etc.

First and earlier experiences with sex and sexuality may greatly influence whether people can enjoy sexuality and sexual interactions. When first sexual experiences are positive, and there are no feelings of shame etc., this can have a lasting positive effect on future relationships.

A lack of open and honest communication about sex and sexuality means it can be difficult for individuals and communities to get accurate information about sex, sexuality and the body. In particular, girls and young women are often told not to touch their genitalia or talk openly about sex for fear of being judged as sexually deviant or immoral<sup>1</sup>. Although many people have friends, confidants, and family members they can talk to and learn from, far too many people have inadequate preparation for their sexual lives and learn by myth, assumption and silence.

<sup>1</sup> Hussein ibid, and Aksakal, G.S. (2013). Sexual Pleasure as a Woman's Human Right: Experiences from a Human Rights Training Programme for Women in Turkey. In Women, Sexuality and the Political Power of Pleasure. Edited by Susie Jolly, Andrea Cornwall and Kate Hawkins.





### 3. Contextualising Sexual Pleasure in Your Work

**Objective:** To get a better understanding of how you can adapt your work on sexual pleasure to our context.

**Approximate Time:** 45 Minutes

**Suggested Materials/ Online Tools:** Paper pens, handout, be flexible, email/text handout, breakout rooms, shared board



For Professionals experienced in SRHR

### 3. Contextualising Sexual Pleasure in Your Work

Pleasure Principle: #BeFlexible

#### Synopsis:

This exercise helps participants explore and discuss ways how and how far work on sexual pleasure should be adapted to the prevalent norms and values in the society.

#### Steps:

- Ask participants to mention the three most important values in their culture. You might want to give prompts such as family, independence, romance, sexual openness. (In the discussion, you can refer to the exercise on sexual pleasure and society).
- Discuss how do these values influence their work on sex and sexual pleasure.
- Divide into groups; each group will work on how they can contextualise sexual pleasure in their work, what questions they need to ask, and who should be involved.
- Depending on your participants, they can work on sexuality education, counselling, social media and advocacy. How far can they go to include sexual pleasure?
- Discuss in plenary.
- Give Pleasure Principle #BeFlexible as handout for further reading.

#### Contextualising Sexual Pleasure in Your Work

##### Notes/Tips for the Facilitator:

Questions you ask to help the group work:

What are cultural beliefs about sexuality and sexual relationships during the life cycle for male/female/LGBTQIA+ individuals?

Are there specific practices: early marriage/FGM/circumcision/ criminalisation of sexual diversity?

Is sexuality seen as an integral part of overall health and wellbeing, or is it linked to a particular stage of life of the individual (puberty, marriage, etc.)?

What is it called? Are you considering how language and vocabulary in your programmes/work contribute to acceptance and success?

Is there a strong religious tradition within the community? If so, how does this impact daily life, gender relations, and inform values around sexuality?

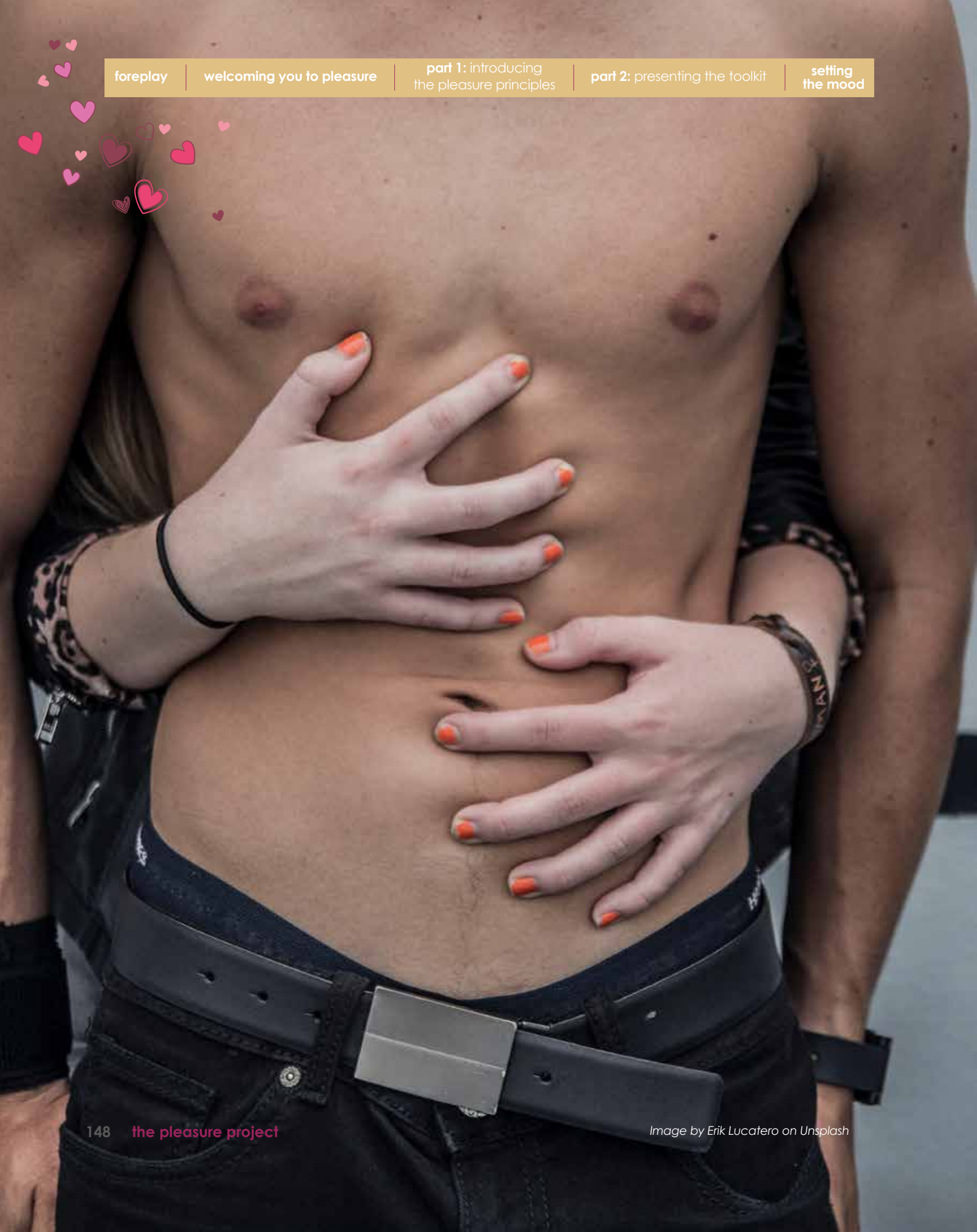
Timing of having sex: before marriage, outside marriage; monogamy versus polygamy; acceptable sex positions; alternative ways for sexual pleasure/ orgasm

What are male/female expectations of a sexual encounter?

Are the specific rituals around hygiene and sexual encounters?

What are the laws about the age of consent and same-sex relationships?

Give the handout of The Pleasure Principle #BeFlexible and ask participants to read and ask for clarifications if needed.



## aftercare

### next steps to pleasure in your life and work

This module helps participants explore how best to integrate the concept of sexual pleasure into their personal lives and their programming. Finally, they can make personal and professional plans for what they do with what they have learned during the session(s).

#### 1. How to Become a Sexual Pleasure Champion

##### Synopsis:

This exercise will help participants to explore how they can become a champion or a change maker to put sexual pleasure on the agenda.

##### Steps:

- Explain that everyone has a “vision”- an idea of how you want to promote sexual pleasure. This may be among family or friends, your local community, work, country, or worldwide. Your vision can be as local or global as you like. We’ve all got different visions relating to our experiences in life, and working it out will help guide you in whatever action you may take.
- It can be useful to ask participants to take a moment to reflect on what the training has done helped them to understand their personal beliefs and values about sex and sexuality. Did they change the meaning they give to sex and sexuality? What have they understood about their own sexual self? They do not need to share this with the group. Explain that what they have learned can help them to be a sexual pleasure champion
- Say: Here are four questions to help you identify your passions and interests. Jot down some points and put them in a safe place. A few people will ask you for your vision along the way, and by answering it well, they’ll take you seriously. If they believe in you, they’ll give you their support.

#### 1. How to Become a Sexual Pleasure Champion

**Objective:**  
To explore and discuss ways to become an advocate for sexual pleasure.

**Approximate Time:**  
30 - 40 Minutes

**Suggested Materials/ Online Tools:**  
Piece of paper, pens, wordcloud, breakout rooms

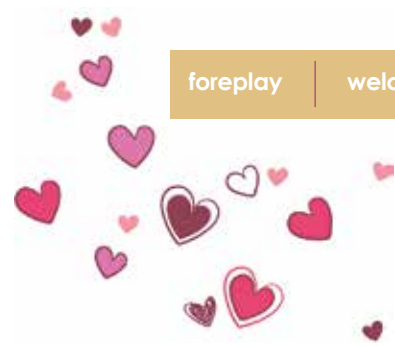


For Everyone



For Beginners





- ❖ what motivates you to act/promote sexual pleasure
  - ❖ what makes you angry or pisses you off when it comes to introducing sexual pleasure
  - ❖ what do you want to see more of?
  - ❖ what stops you from doing something about it
- Give participants 15 minutes to start answering the questions. Encourage them to write down whatever they think of. Explain that they don't have to commit to anything now and that they can think more about the questions at home. Let them sit in small groups, share their thoughts, and clarify that it's ok not to share anything if you don't want. Let the group's feedback be in the plenary.
  - Give positive feedback and encouragement to anyone who shares ideas. End the session by giving some examples of how anyone can contribute on a personal or professional level.



Image by AllGo on Unsplash

### How to Become a Sexual Pleasure Champion

#### Notes/Tips for the Facilitator:

Only if you have a real passion for something related to sexual wellbeing and pleasure you can be a champion.

There's no point in being angry but doing nothing about it. Turn your vision into action. Your action will be to do something.

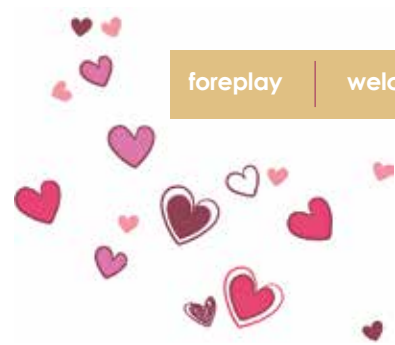
List examples of how you can be a champion for sexual pleasure:

Talk with your friends and parents about what you are passionate about  
Organize discussion and information evenings.

Write on Facebook; websites, or in newspapers/journals.

Participate in campaigns promoting sexual pleasure, e.g. in comprehensive sexuality education in schools.

- ❖ Perform theatre/drama presentations, followed by discussion.
- ❖ Attend awareness-raising activities, such as the World AIDS Day, Sexual Health Day.
- ❖ Participate in media & social media campaigns.
- ❖ Write letters or petitions to local politicians about sexual wellbeing and pleasure.



## 2. You Can Make a Difference

**Objective:**  
To get a better understanding of how you can promote the importance of sexual pleasure individually

**Approximate Time:**  
30 Minutes



For Everyone



For Beginners

## 2. You Can Make a Difference

### Synopsis:

This exercise helps participants discuss what they have learned about sexual pleasure with friends, families and in their community.

### Steps:

- Ask participants what the most important things they have learned about sexual pleasure during the workshop/training are.
- Discuss possibilities of how they can introduce /share their learning in an informal way with friends /family/community members.
- Ask them to practice in groups how to react in the following scenarios:
  - ✓ You are eating a family dinner. You tell them you followed this training/ workshop. One of your family members asks: “So you are a sex expert now; tell me all about sexual pleasure”.
  - ✓ You meet your best friend and tell them about the workshop/training. They ask you: “Why are you so interested in sexual pleasure; did you go to improve your own sex life?”
  - ✓ You and your colleagues or members of your community have a meeting. How could you get them interested in the topic of sexual pleasure?
- Discuss in plenary

### You Can Make a Difference

#### Notes/Tips for the Facilitator:

There is a time and place for discussing sensitive issues; you need to decide what is a good moment.

Try to remain kind and calm when people make hostile remarks. But remaining kind does not mean you should not be honest about what you think and feel. Keep it short and sweet.

When things go wrong, distance yourself for a moment and take a time out (for example, say you need the bathroom).

Sometimes humour may help to relieve the tension.

- Do not jeopardize your relationships/friendships; agree to disagree; do not make it into a competition or a fight.



Image by Dainis Graveris on Unsplash





### 3. Sexual Pleasure Championship in Programming

**Objective:**  
To get a better understanding of how sexual pleasure can be practically adapted in different work settings and programmes

**Approximate Time:**  
45 Minutes

**Material:** n/a



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### 3. Sexual Pleasure Championship in Programming

Pleasure Principle: #EmbraceLearning

#### Synopsis:

This exercise will help participants to explore how they can integrate sexual pleasure into their work.

#### Steps:

- Explain that new indicators are needed to develop and evaluate programmes focusing on sexual pleasure or integrating sexual pleasure.
- Brainstorm what competencies individuals need that can be measured to achieve sexual wellbeing, happiness and pleasure.
- Brainstorm what other changes in the organisation etc. need to happen to address sexual wellbeing .
- Ask participants to develop 5-10 indicators /questions for the development, assessment and evaluation of your programme that includes Sexual Pleasure; this includes assessing individual as well as broader programmatic indicators.
- Depending on the background of your participants, you can have a group on counselling in medical or social work or information/advocacy settings (on and offline). Encourage participants to think of indicators from a rights-based, health and mental health perspective.
- Share outcomes in plenary

#### Sexual Pleasure Championship in Programming

##### Notes/Tips for the Facilitator:

Currently, most indicators for sexuality in education and public are merely to showcase “hard” public health issues, including the prevention of unwanted pregnancy etc.

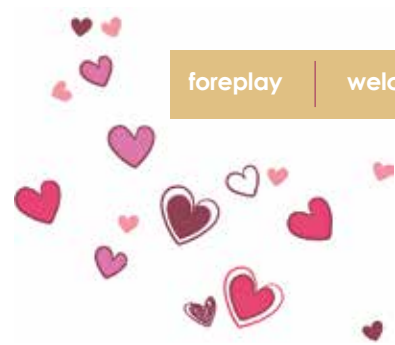
There is a necessity to include outcomes/indicators which contribute to the emotional and mental aspects of sexual wellbeing, including understanding sexual well-being and pleasure. Indicators such as confidence, self-esteem, empathy for others, understanding of consent, understanding (self-) forgiveness, and critical thinking are equally important to address sexual wellbeing and pleasure. It will be valuable to look at other competencies that empower young people to achieve sexual happiness and well-being concerning themselves and others.

Assessment tools by Share-Net and GAB can help you inspire your participants to think about how pleasure indicators in programmes can be developed.

<https://share-net.nl/sexual-pleasure-checklist/>

<https://www.gab-shw.org/our-work/sexual-pleasure-an-assessment-tool/>

It is important to note that critical thinking is not the same as having negative criticism of everybody or everything. Critical reflection means exploring existing norms and values and forming your judgements.



#### 4. Action Planning: Planting a Tree

**Objective:** To develop a plan of action to improve the integration of the concepts of/principles of sexual pleasure in their work

**Approximate Time:** 45 Minutes

**Material:** Sheets of paper; example of a drawing of a tree on a large sheet

#### 4. Action Planning: Planting a Tree

##### Synopsis:

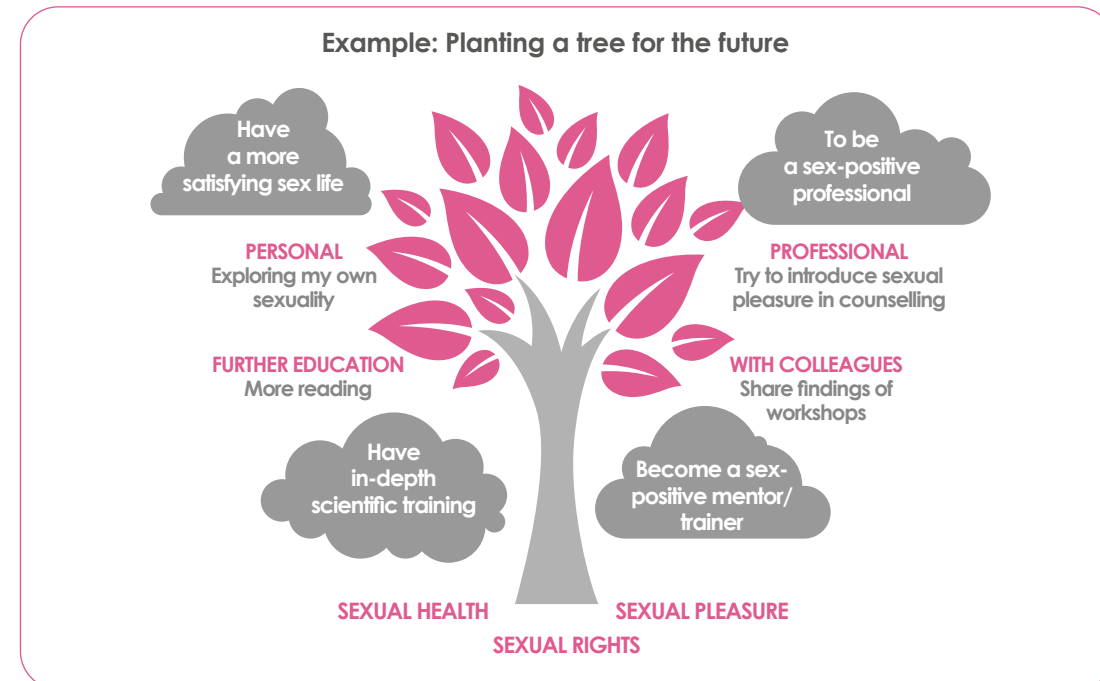
This exercise helps participant to reflect on the workshop and plan how they can put their learning into practice in their work.

##### Steps:

- Ask the participants to draw a tree.
- Write these words at the tree's roots: sexual health, rights, and sexual pleasure. These roots will nourish the tree.
- In the branches, write these words: personal life, professional life, advocating/promotion, working with colleagues etc.
- The tree's leaves represent the activities that can be carried out in the short term.
- The symbols show the vision: what you ideally want to achieve.



For Professionals  
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Ask participants to share their ideas for the future as a champion for sexual pleasure.

#### Alternative Action Planning

##### Synopsis:

This exercise is meant to facilitate participants to develop an action plan emerging from the course, which they can put in place to improve the effectiveness of their work and adopt a pleasure approach.

##### Steps:

- Divide participants into their work teams
- Ensure each group has at least one copy of their curriculum and at least one set of all the activities used in training.
- Explain that the purpose of the activities is for them to review their curricula, looking for opportunities in which they could include or adapt the activities to make their curricula more sex-positive and pleasure focused
- Allow 60 minutes for this and provide support and suggestions as necessary.
- Allow 15 minutes for each group to give feedback to the plenary on the outcomes of their discussions.

#### Alternative Action Planning

**Objective:** To facilitate the application of the training to participants' work.

**Approximate Time:** 90 - 120 minutes

**Suggested Materials/ Online Tools:** Copies of the relevant sections of the participants' curricula. Copies of all the activities used in the training A list on the wall of all the activities conducted so far. Breakout rooms



Image by Alexander Krivitskiy on Unsplash





## WORKSHEET

### PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL REFLECTION

1. What have been the most important things you have learned from this training?

- About yourself?
- About sex and pleasure?
- About your work?

2. In what ways will this training benefit you in your daily work?

3. Choose one area of your work and consider how you could make a change which would make you more able to be sex-positive with your clients?

4. What change are you going to make? Is this:

Specific

Measurable

Achievable

Realistic

Time-bound

5. Will you need permission or support from anyone in your workplace?  
(If so, state who, how and when you will obtain this)





## tips and tricks

### general tips, definitions and examples

#### I. Definitions

##### Pleasure Based Sexual Health

Pleasure based approach is “one that celebrates sex, sexuality and the joy and wellbeing that can be derived from these, and creates a vision of good sex built on sexual rights. It focuses on sensory, mental, physical and sensual pleasure to enable individuals to understand, consent to, and control their bodies and multi-faceted desires. Well-being, safety, pleasure, desire and joy are the objectives of a programme with a pleasure-based approach. This approach measures empowerment, agency, and self-efficacy by whether or not an individual has been enabled to know what they want, and can ask for it, and request this of others, in relation to their sexuality, desires and pleasure.” (The Pleasure Project, 2019 [Medicus Mundi](#))

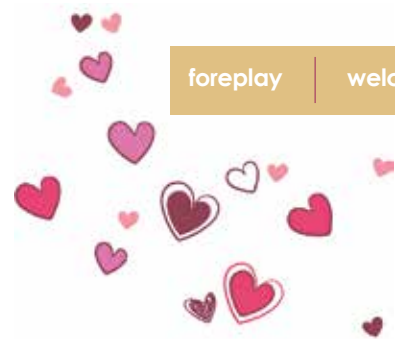
##### Sexual health

“Sexual health is a state of physical, emotional, mental and social wellbeing in relation to sexuality; it is not merely the absence of disease, dysfunction or infirmity. Sexual health requires a positive and respectful approach to sexuality and sexual relationships and the possibility of having pleasurable and safe sexual experiences free of coercion, discrimination, and violence. For sexual health to be attained and maintained, the sexual rights of all persons must be respected, protected and fulfilled.” (WHO working definition).

##### Sexuality

“Sexuality is a central aspect of being human throughout life and encompasses sex, gender identities and roles, sexual orientation, eroticism, pleasure, intimacy and reproductions. Sexuality is experienced in thoughts, fantasies, beliefs, attitudes, values, behaviours, practices and relationships. While sexuality can include all these dimensions, not all of them are always experienced and expressed. Sexuality is influenced by the interaction of biological, social-economic, political, cultural, legal, historical, religious and spiritual factors” (WHO, 2006).





**Sexual Pleasure**

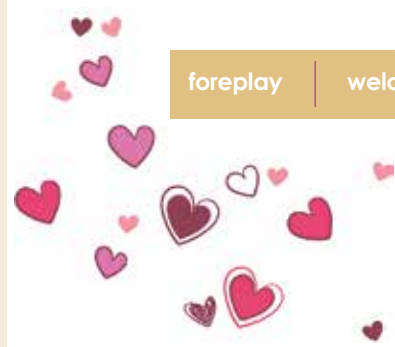
*"Sexual pleasure is the physical and/or psychological satisfaction and enjoyment derived from solitary or shared erotic experiences, including thoughts, dreams and autoeroticism. Self-determination, consent, safety, privacy, confidence and the ability to communicate and negotiate sexual relations are key enabling factors for pleasure to contribute to sexual health and wellbeing. Sexual pleasure should be exercised within the context of sexual rights, particularly the rights to equality and non-discrimination, autonomy and bodily integrity, and the right to the highest attainable standard of health and freedom of expression. The experiences of human sexual pleasure are diverse and sexual rights ensure that pleasure is a positive experience for all concerned and not obtained by violating other people's human rights and wellbeing."* (World Association for Sexual Health (WAS) Declaration of Sexual Pleasure).

**Sexual Rights**

*"The responsible exercise of human rights requires that all persons respect the rights of others. The application of existing human rights to sexuality and sexual health constitutes sexual rights. Sexual rights protect all people's rights to fulfil and express their sexuality and enjoy sexual health, with due regard for the rights of others and within a framework of protection against discrimination."* (WHO, 2006, updated 2010).



Image by Inge Poelman on Unsplash



## II. Tips for Facilitators

The facilitators of the training workshop are advised to:

### 1. Be well organized

- Read the training materials beforehand, so you know them well and are well prepared.
- Arrive early (either at the venue or at the online link) so you can set up and welcome trainees when they arrive.
- Set up chairs in a semi-circle, making sure that everyone can see each other and the flipchart.
- Set up the flipcharts and other aids you have planned for, so they are ready to use.
- Make sure all links to online polling websites are accessible.
- Prepare all the markers, cards, flipchart papers, masking tape, handouts and other materials necessary at the beginning of the day so that they are ready.
- Make the environment welcoming and comfortable.
- For online meetings you might want to play some music as the participants log in.

### 2. Get to know the participants and put them at ease

- Introduce yourself and talk to the participants in an open and friendly way.
- Find out more about them and their interests.
- What do they want to learn? What are their concerns about the workshop?
- Assure them that the workshop is not a 'formal' classroom and that they should feel free to contribute.

### 3. Use warm-up games and introductory activities

- Use warm-up games to break the ice and create a relaxed learning environment.
- Use name games to help trainees get to know each other.
- Use games and energizers at different points throughout the day to maintain energy levels.

### 4. Match objectives against expectations

- Ask participants what they hope to learn.
- Address as many of the participants' expectations as possible.
- Talk through the workshop schedule and how it relates to the objectives.
- If some expectations do not match with the objectives of the workshop, make sure you clarify this upfront.

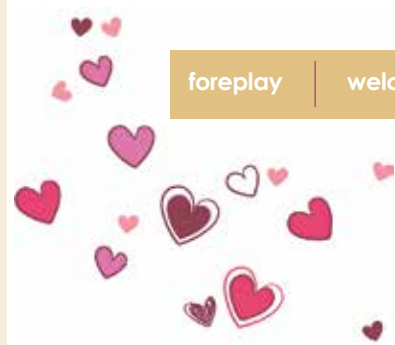
### 5. Follow the training guide and manage time effectively

- Go through the sessions in the guide in an orderly way.
- If questions come up which are off topic, you can either take note and address them later or deal with them immediately if they are brief.

### 6. Explain things clearly

- Speak slowly, clearly and loud enough for everyone to hear.
- Look at the participants as you speak and use your hands and body to emphasize points.
- Keep things short and straightforward. Use simple and familiar words.
- Don't talk too much. Remember, your task is to get the participants to contribute and reflect.
- Make sure the main points are also written in keywords on a flipchart.

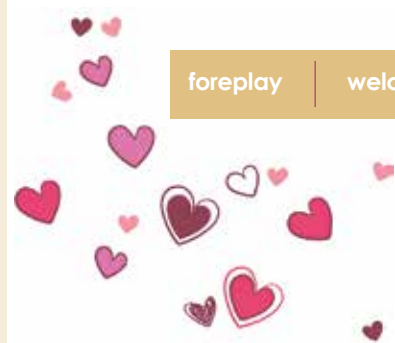




## 7. Ask questions and lead discussions

- Use questions - to get trainees talking, to make them think, to clarify what is being said, to test for agreement.
- Ask clear, simple, open questions that allow people to give their opinions.
- Fish for contributions - use your hands and body to encourage participants.
- Wait for responses. Give people time to think and come up with answers.
- Encourage everyone to talk - small 'buzz' groups help to get everyone talking.
- Keep asking - *"What else? Who would like to add to that?"*
- If there is no response, restate or rephrase the questions.
- Show that you are listening and are interested to hear more.
- Praise responses to encourage participation - *"Thanks!" "Good!"*
- Rephrase responses to check that you and the participants understand.
- Redirect the answers to the other trainees - *"They said.... What do others think?"*
- Summarize and check the agreement before moving to the next question/topic



**8. Organize group work**

- Use groups to get everyone involved and to allow more detailed discussions.
- Decide on the size of groups - pairs, 3s, 4s, 5s, 6-10.
- Fewer groups save reporting time, and small groups increase participation.
- Divide participants into groups using a group divider.
- Give a clear explanation of the group task, time and reporting method.
- Form new groups each time so that trainees get to work with different people.

**9. Record on flip chart**

- Write large and clear enough for people at the back of the room to see.
- Write keywords only and use participants' own words.
- Ask a co-facilitator to record so you can concentrate on the facilitation.
- Use the flipchart notes to stimulate further discussion and then summarize.

**10. Observe and test the climate**

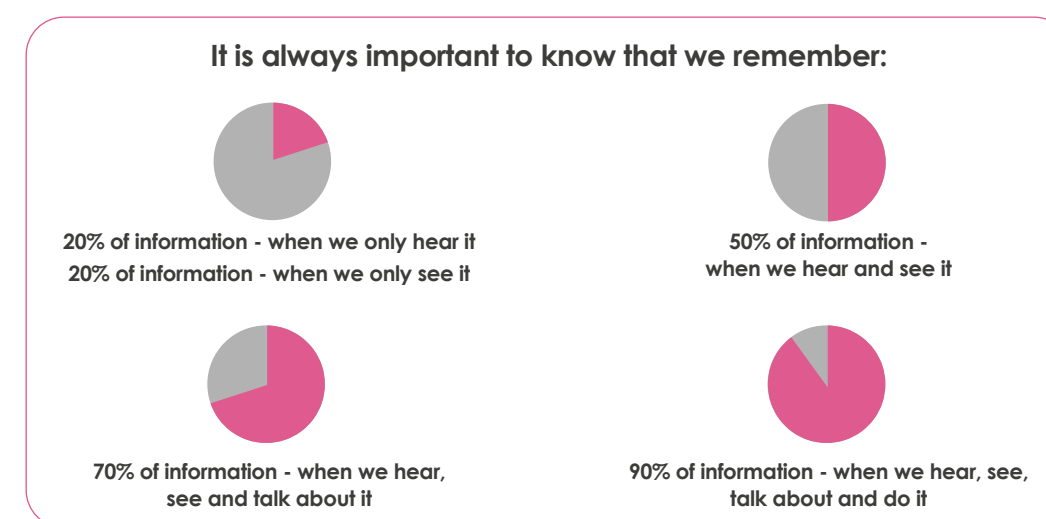
- Observe body language and ask people how they are feeling.
- Do they look interested, bored, and sleepy?
- Are they doing most of the talking, or are they bored listening to you?
- Do they need a break or a wake-up exercise?

**11. Select appropriate activities and use a variety**

- Select activities appropriate to the objectives.
- Don't use the same methods all the time. Keep things changing!
- Use different sizes and types of groups, change the meeting space (perhaps you could go outside), and take turns as trainers - so people don't get bored.

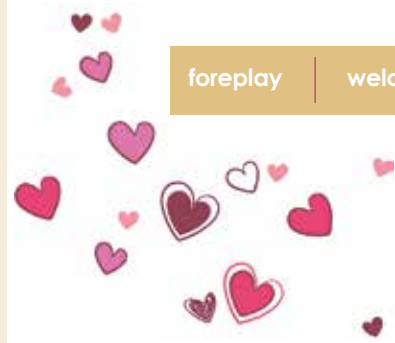
**12. Timing and pacing**

- Don't underestimate the time needed for participatory learning activities.
- Plan no more than 4 or 5 participatory sessions per day.
- Give groups enough time to do their work. Don't rush them.
- Go at a pace which is appropriate to the group.
- Do small group work in the afternoon when the energy level drops.
- Don't forget to take breaks to relax, get refreshments and talk informally.
- Don't go on for a long time at the end of the day. Cut it short!

**13. Facts to bear in mind:**

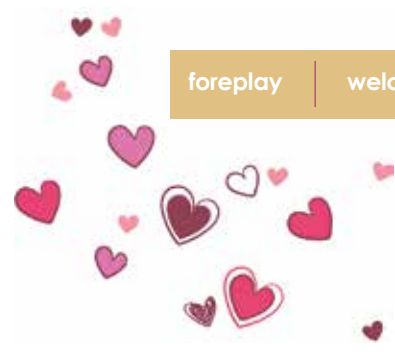
Therefore, try to use exercises that combine hearing, seeing, and talking about.



**14. Try to avoid:**

- Too much talking.
- Too much theory and too academic.
- Using the same methods for most sessions.
- Use of complicated language or jargon.
- Speaking too fast.
- Overloading participants with too much information.
- Too many monologues/lectures.
- Poor time management.
- Seeing yourself as the expert.
- Solving problems and making decisions for the participants.
- Imposing your ideas and solutions to the participants.
- Criticizing, condemning or making fun of people's ideas.
- Making people dependent on your advice





### III. Warm-up/energizers

Start with warm-up exercises to enhance learning and group development during the training. These types of activities support in:

- Relaxing the participants.
- Stimulating the flow of communication between strangers.
- Bringing private expectations and group reality closer.
- Encouraging everyone to participate and learn.
- Rounding off or introducing a session.
- Developing new skills.
- Exposing participants to new ways of judging their actions, particularly concerning the impact on group work.



Image by Monika Kozub on Unsplash

### IV. Some tips for online workshops/training

Many tips for face to face training and online training are similar. However you need to be aware of some additional elements.

- The attention span of participants of online training/workshops is shorter than in face-to-face situations; you may need to make more regular breaks.
- Depending on the size of the group and the technical possibilities, interaction and group work need a bit more preparation.
- You can and should plan for group work and participant-to-participants interaction through either break out rooms or virtual meetings outside of the main event for a set period of time.

While it may seem daunting, having group interactions for set periods of time prevents you from being the bottleneck for interaction. The benefits are that everyone in the group feel they are contributing.

- Ensure there is an online platform for participants to share ideas. It is important to have a dedicated link / platform that everyone can see where you are highlighting key questions or ideas to prompt participants to reflect. You can do this using something as simple as a Google document, and there are many more novel tools available for shared spaces as well.



## V. Example of a two-day workshop

### Agenda of 2-day training workshop:

#### Introduction to sexual pleasure

**Audience:** Peer educators (who already know each other)

#### Overall Objectives:

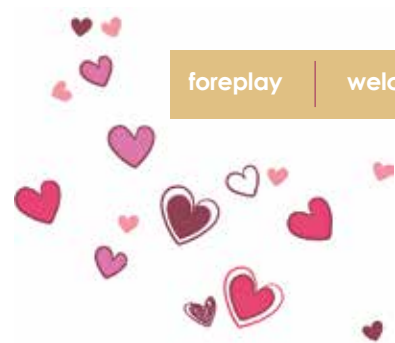
- To introduce and discuss the meaning of sex, sexuality and sexual pleasure.
- To increase knowledge about sex, sexuality and sexual pleasure.
- To explore personal feelings and values regarding sex, sexuality and sexual pleasure.
- To practice how to start a conversation about sexual pleasure during peer education.
- To discuss the next steps.

#### Overview of the two days

##### Day 1:

- ♦ Expectations; fears, and joys
- ♦ Personal footprint
- ♦ Defining sexual pleasure
- ♦ Why people have sex
- ♦ Things that give me pleasure
- ♦ Facts and values
- ♦ Quiz
- ♦ Safer sex and sexual pleasure



**Day 2 :**

- ♦ Language and sexual pleasure
- ♦ Starting a conversation about sexual pleasure
- ♦ How to become a sexual pleasure champion
- ♦ Action planning; planting a tree

**Agenda of a one day workshop**

**Audience:** Participants who are interested to know more about sexual pleasure and the Sexual Pleasure Principles

**Overall objectives:**

- To introduce and discuss the meaning of sex, sexuality and sexual pleasure.
- To increase knowledge about sex, sexuality and sexual pleasure.
- To explore personal feelings and values regarding sex, sexuality and sexual pleasure.
- To get an introduction into The Pleasure Principles.

**Overview:**

Participants need to have received The Pleasure Principles beforehand and asked to have read them.

**Morning session**

- ♦ Expectations; fears, and joys
- ♦ Personal footprint
- ♦ Defining sexual pleasure
- ♦ Why people have sex
- ♦ Things that give me pleasure
- ♦ Sexual life line

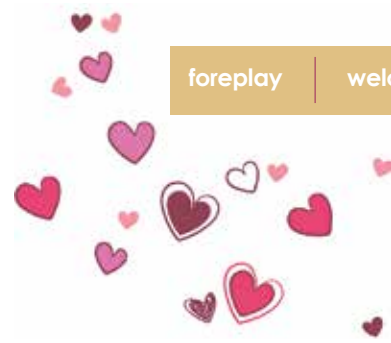


Image by Rafael Leao on Unsplash

**Afternoon session**

- ♦ Introduction into The Pleasure Principles (participants should have received the short version of the sexual beforehand); questions and answers. For each Pleasure Principle you can ask the participants what it means to them in their personal and professional life and how they can use it.
- ♦ How to become a sexual champion or how you can make a difference.





## VI. Examples of Evaluation

### Daily evaluations:

#### Time: 10 minutes

- Ask the participants to close their eyes and reflect on what they have learned and what was new.
- They can share if they want to.
- Answer any final questions or reflections from the group before closing the session. Thank all participants for their time and praise them again for coming to the session. Tell the group that they can come to you after the session if they want to discuss something.

### Light bulb moment

#### Time: 10 minutes

If you conduct a training for more than one day, you can start the new day by asking participants to think back on the day before and share their 'light bulb' moment. This means when did they hear something new /exciting/ relevant. It can also help you to answer questions or give clarifications.

### Thermometer

At the end of each day, put a sheet with a picture of a thermometer on the wall from cold to hot.

Ask participants before they leave the room to put a sticker on how they feel about the session of today hot= very good, excited, cold; not happy/bored etc.

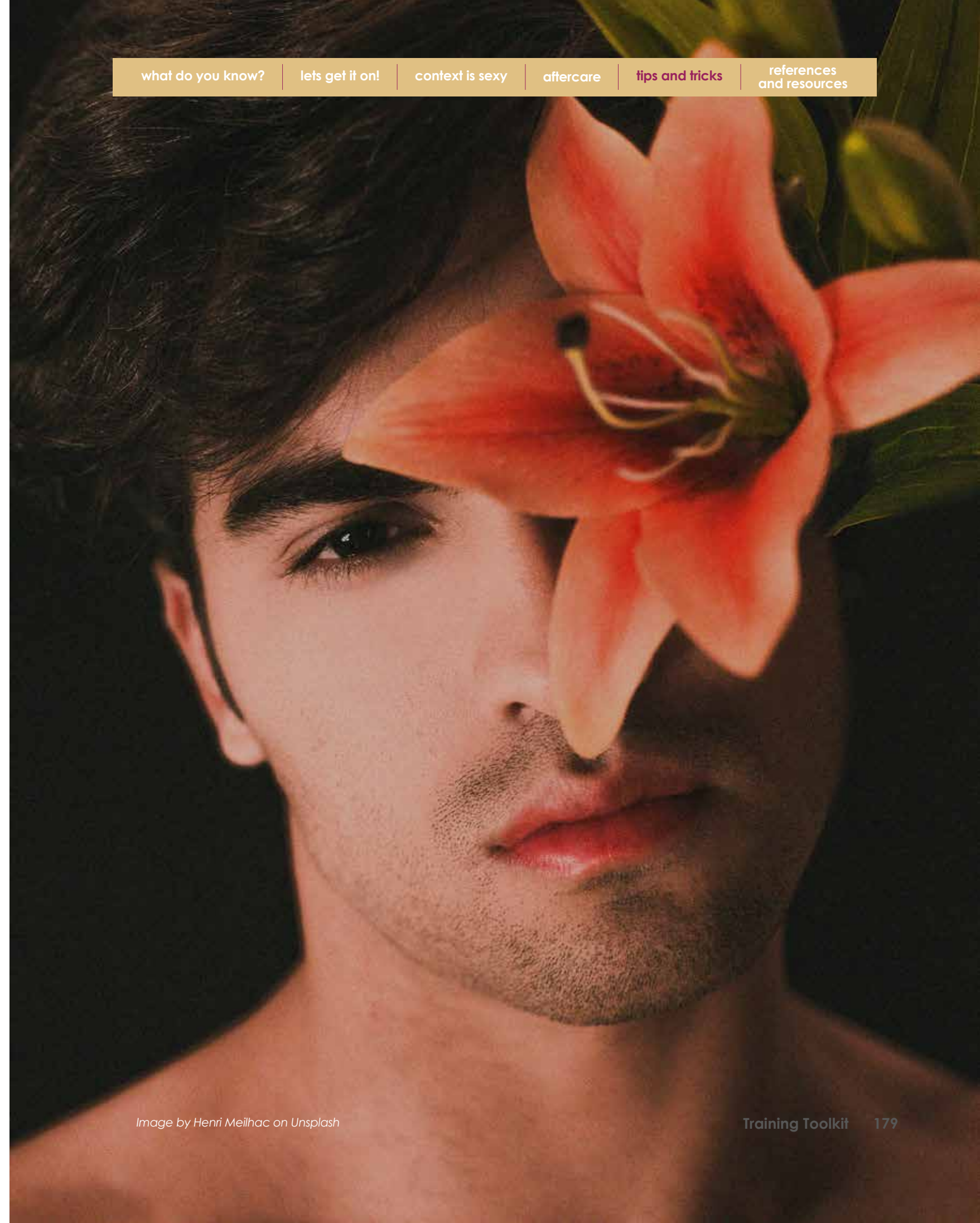
### Final evaluation

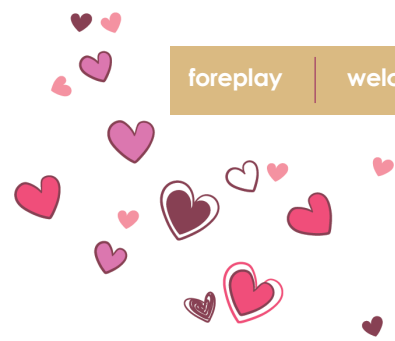
#### *What do I take home, and what do I leave behind?*

#### Time: 30 minutes

Hand out two pieces of paper. Ask participants to write on one piece of paper something they have learned and is valuable for them to take home. They can write something they do not like and want to leave behind on the other paper.

Go around with a waste bin and ask everyone to read both papers. They keep the one they want to take home and throw the one they want to leave behind in the bin.





## references and resources

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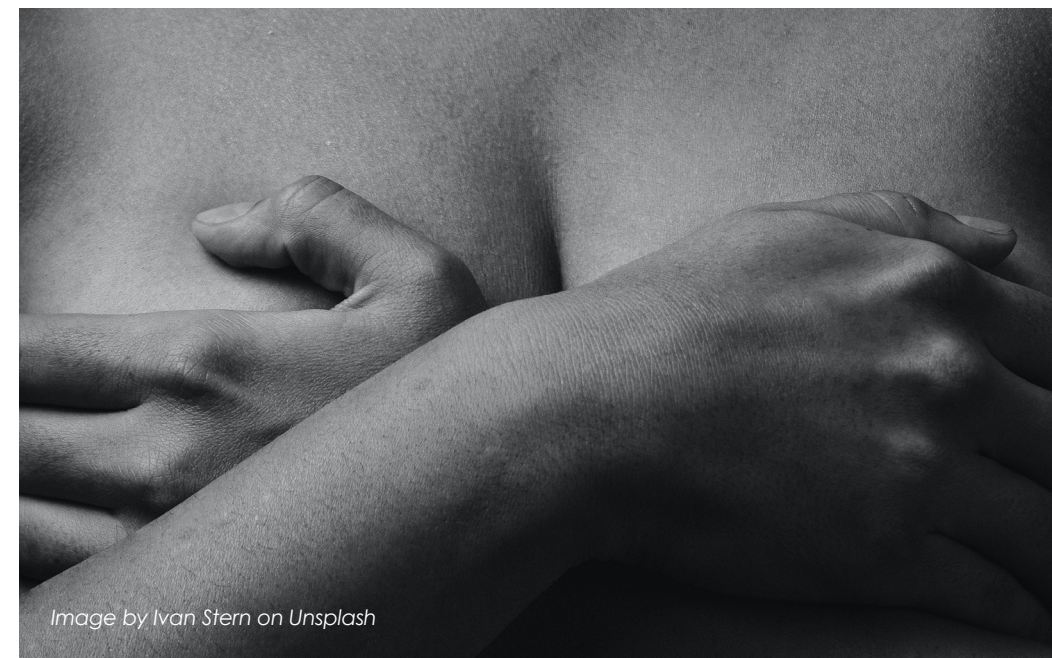


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### Videos

Sex Education - Netflix

Let's Talk About Sex & Disability  
<https://www.ippf.org/resource/watch-lets-talk-about-sex-disability>

Let's Talk About Sex and Pleasure  
<https://www.ippf.org/resource/watch-lets-talk-about-sex-pleasure>

Let's Talk About Sex and Consent  
<https://www.ippf.org/resource/watch-lets-talk-about-sex-consent>

### Training manuals

GAB (2020) Sexual Pleasure: The forgotten link in sexual and reproductive health and rights.

The porn conversation: Curriculum & Activity Guides are free and easily accessible theoretical and practical resources for educators seeking tools to lead an age-appropriate comprehensive sex education program for their students. <https://thepornconversation.org/educators>

International Planned Parenthood Federation [Putting sexuality back into Comprehensive Sexuality Education: making the case for a rights-based, sex-positive approach.](#)







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the  
pleasure  
project.



<https://thepleasureproject.org/>