



# Boundaries Explored

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**Charting Your Consent Pathway:  
A Workbook**



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# INTRODUCTION

## What is consent?

Consent means that everyone knows everyone's intentions and everyone has been given the space to say "yes" or "no" freely. It means that everyone knows what they're agreeing to and that everyone feels comfortable enough to express when they do not want to do something anymore. With consent, we can make sure everyone is having a good time!

## What is sex?

In life, you can consent to lots of different things, but in this workbook we're talking specifically about sex and consent. Sex can look like different things to different people, here is a list of a few activities we would consider to fall under the category of "sex". Feel free to circle which ones you are most interested in. You can do this activity alone or with your partner(s)!

- Using hands or fingers on a vulva
- Using hands or fingers in a vagina
- Using hands on a penis
- Using fingers in a rectum
- Penetrating a vagina (ie. inserting a penis, strap on or other)
- Penetrating a butt (ie. inserting a penis, strap on or other)
- Using mouth and/or tongue on vulva
- Using mouth and/or tongue on butt
- Using mouth and/or tongue on penis
- Masturbating with a partner
- Using sex toys on, in or with a partner

**Missing some examples? Write some of your own below!**



# ESSENTIALS FOR BUILDING A CONSENSUAL RELATIONSHIP

Knowing what kind of sexual activities you're interested in can be a really helpful first step in building a sexual relationship rooted in consent and pleasure. Keep in mind that sexual desire (ie. what kinds of sexual activities you're into, how often you're interested in sex, etc) can change throughout a lifetime or even throughout a day! Allow yourself the space to explore your desires and change your interests when you feel like it. Here are some other things that we would consider essential in building a consensual sexual relationship:

1. Feeling like you can say what you need or want
2. Accepting when people say no
3. Giving important information so that another person(s) knows exactly what will happen
4. Agreeing on what terms mean before using them (ie. "to hook up", "to fool around" etc)
5. Knowing that other people deserve to feel safe
6. Knowing that rejection does not make you undesirable
7. Finding ways to deal with rejection that are outside of the relationship(s) to the person(s) who rejected you
8. Knowing that your partners' needs are as important as yours
9. Knowing that conversations around consent can bring forward safety, fun, and connection in our relationships!

**What do you need for a relationship to be consensual? Write some thoughts below!**

## At the end of this workbook, we hope that you:

Learn more about your needs and feel confident talking about what you need during sexual encounters with partners.

Feel better connected to yourself and your partner(s).

Learn a few tips on how to have conversations about consent, safer sex and your desires with others.

## Reminders to yourself:

Pace yourself during your journey through this workbook and be as honest as you can - nothing is shameful about exploring your wants and needs.

Offer yourself some grace and kindness, these conversations are not always easy to have. Talking about consent can be fun and empowering, but it can also feel overwhelming.

If it's helpful, try going through the workbook with another person or as a group and see what conversations come from it!



# BRINGING UP CONSENT WITH PARTNER(S)

Once you've thought about what your own desires are and what your partners' desires might be, bringing up consent with partners is a necessary next step. Together, you can both explore and discover what feels good for you during sex. This can look like exploring different sexual activities (either alone or together), gathering information about what might interest ourselves or other people, and having discussions with your partner(s) in order to set clear expectations.

**To start, take some time to reflect on the questions below. These questions can help anchor the following section in your own desires and wants, while also allowing you to reflect on what your potential partner(s) might also desire and want.**

## Write all of these down

Imagine a future sexual experience...

**What do you wish your partners would ask you before, during or after sex?**

**What words or questions could make you feel a little more comfortable?**

**What might you ask your partner(s) if you are not sure what they want to do?**

Talking about what sexual activities you or your partner(s) are interested in can feel daunting for some people. For some, it can be helpful to practice having these conversations before getting into a sexual encounter!

**Below we have a few suggestions on some ways to talk about consent and wants before or during sex. We encourage you to go through the list (either alone or with partner(s)) and highlight which phrases you like the best!**

**Highlight your favorite options from the list below!**

What do you like?  
 Where do you see this going?  
 What should I look out for if you start to get uncomfortable?  
 How are you feeling?  
 What would you like me to do?  
 Are you into this?  
 How far do you want to go?

**Some responses might include:**

I like that!  
 I'm not really interested in that.  
 I need a break.  
 Keep going.  
 Yes, that sounds fun.  
 I'm not really feeling it today.  
 Not today, but maybe another time?

**Want a creative challenge to explore consent language more? Use the word bank below (or use your own words!) to fill in the blanks for the statements below.**

Can you \_\_\_\_\_ my \_\_\_\_\_?  
 Can I \_\_\_\_\_ your \_\_\_\_\_?  
 Did you like it when I \_\_\_\_\_ your \_\_\_\_\_?  
 I liked it when you \_\_\_\_\_ my \_\_\_\_\_.  
 Would you want me to try \_\_\_\_\_ next time, if there is a next time?  
 How would it be for you if \_\_\_\_\_?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Touch</li> <li>• Lick</li> <li>• Rub</li> <li>• Suck</li> <li>• Kiss</li> <li>• Taste</li> <li>• Bite</li> <li>• Add your own word(s) _____</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cock</li> <li>• Dick</li> <li>• Pussy</li> <li>• Coochie</li> <li>• Strapless</li> <li>• Girl-dick</li> <li>• Fronthole</li> <li>• Add your own word(s) _____</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• T-dick</li> <li>• Ass</li> <li>• Bootyhole</li> <li>• Tit(s)</li> <li>• Nipple</li> <li>• Neck</li> <li>• Ear</li> <li>• Add your own word(s) _____</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> </ul>
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# CONVERSATIONS SURROUNDING SEX AND STI'S

## What are STI's?

Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) are illnesses that are passed from one person to another predominantly through sexual activity. The sexual activities that pass STIs include: Oral sex (mouth to genitals), or anytime genitals touch (for example penis in vagina sex, penis in butt sex, etc.)

Everyone has different feelings about STIs. It's not uncommon to be taught to be scared of getting an STI, or people who have STIs. To put STI transmission into a different perspective, read some of the below statements and indicate whether or not you agree or disagree with each statement. There is no right or wrong answer to this activity. The goal here is to reflect on your feelings about STIs.

Question	Circle one!
People with the flu shouldn't have contact with others.	Agree / Disagree
People who have the flu were probably irresponsible and could have easily prevented getting the flu.	Agree / Disagree
If someone is cautious they won't get the flu.	Agree / Disagree
If someone gave me the flu they probably knew they had the flu and should have prevented me from getting it.	Agree / Disagree

Now replace the words "the flu" with any STI (like chlamydia, HPV, herpes, syphilis or HIV.) Would you answer the same way? Or differently?

**STI's are no different than other illnesses someone might have, and just like other illnesses there are ways we can all take care of each other, and reduce our risk of getting sick.**

### **What do STI's have to do with consent?**

Knowing what kind of STI risk you're agreeing to with potential partners is an important piece of informed consent. Informed consent means that you have all the information in order to make a decision that best aligns with your values & risk tolerance.

### **So, how do you talk about sex and STIs?**

Here are some questions to get you thinking about why you want to have this conversation. Reflecting on these will also help you ground your conversations about STIs.

**Why would it be important for me to bring this up?**

**What value can I get from this conversation?**

**What benefits will this add to my relationship?**



## Here are some of our tips for talking about STIs!

**Choose a comfortable location** to have the conversation, somewhere that feels safe for everyone involved.

**There isn't necessarily a 'right' or 'wrong' way to talk about STIs** – but here are a few suggestions of phrases that might help inspire you:

- “Wait... when was the last time you got tested?”
- “Heyyyyy! We should get tested together before we have sex! What do you think?”
- “I've been taking PrEP for x months – how about you?”
- “Let's get tested together so we are both safer.”
- “The last time I got tested was x date and the results came back negative. What about you?”
- “I don't always use dental dams, but I have one if we need it. Should I use a dental dam?”
- “You're really cute. I wanna hook up with you. What's your STI status?”
- “I have a few condoms if you'd like to use them, but I am also okay not using them if you have recently been tested. What's your STI status?”

**Do you have any ways that you like to bring up STIs? Write them here!**



## Reducing STI risk is a shared responsibility!

Having sex that is mindful of STIs, consent and pleasure is not one person's single responsibility. Everyone involved in a sexual relationship or encounter has a responsibility to take care of one another. For most people, that includes having a conversation (or multiple conversations!) about safer sex and what that might mean to you and your partners. Safer sex doesn't mean that there is a specific type of magical sex that is completely safe from things like STIs and an unplanned pregnancy. However, with some knowledge we can make sex much safer from STIs and unplanned pregnancies.

## What does safer sex mean to you?

We encourage you to go through these questions and write down your answers. You can do this alone or with someone else!

When I think about "safer sex", I want \_\_\_\_\_

Safer sex is important to me because \_\_\_\_\_

Talking about STIs with partners is important to me because \_\_\_\_\_

When I think about having a conversation about safer sex, I feel \_\_\_\_\_ because

\_\_\_\_\_

Come back to these 4 things as often as you need to.

## Want to learn more about STI's?

Some people might want a little bit more information on how STIs are passed and some of the ways that someone can reduce their risk of STI transmission. We don't go into detail on that in this booklet, so if you're looking for that information we recommend checking these resources out:

[Smart Sex Resource - Know Your Chances](#)

[CATIE - Oral Sex](#)

[Planned Parenthood Ottawa - STIs Webpage](#)

If you still are unsure about your STI risk and want someone to talk about it with, don't hesitate to reach out to us! **You can call us at 613-226-3234 ext:101 or email us at [ppottawa@ppottawa.ca](mailto:ppottawa@ppottawa.ca) and we would be happy to walk you through it.**

# TALKING ABOUT PLEASURE

**Let's talk about pleasure!**

Pleasure is a feeling that is good, enjoyable, and satisfying. While some people have sex to make a baby, or to show affection, finding pleasure in a sexual relationship is also important to many people!

## Why pleasure?

Pleasure can help us:

feel desired, comfortable, or good in our bodies;

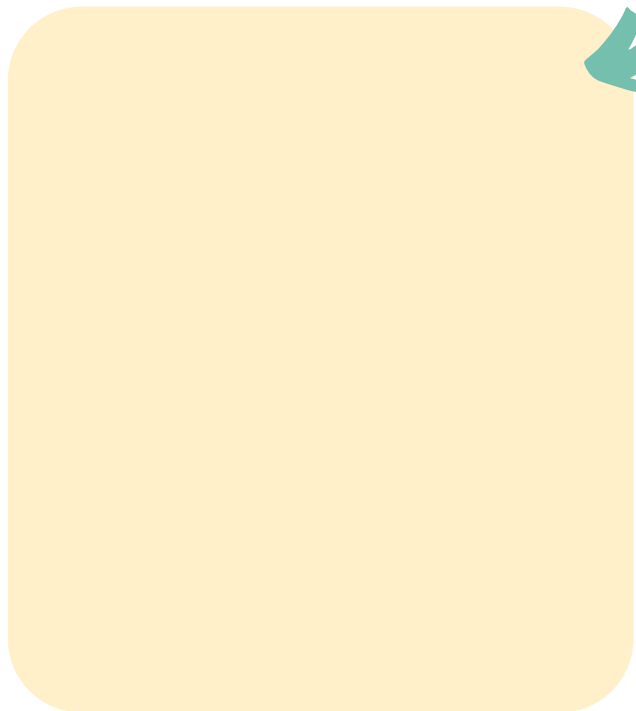
feel desired, comfortable, make others feel desired, comfortable, or good in their bodies;

feel connected to what our bodies like, want, and need.

**Before getting into talking about pleasure with others, let's name our feelings. Think about the answers to the following questions:**

**What are some of your fears when talking about what makes you feel good?**

**What are some of the benefits for both you and your partner(s) if you discuss what makes you feel good?**



## Boundaries and pleasure

Desires are like your preferences for flavours or aromas- they are personal and not the same for everyone. Boundaries are more firm limits for what we will accept or what we're willing to engage in.

### Examples of boundaries:

**Physical boundaries** - not wanting your partner(s) to touch a certain body part during a sexual encounter (or in general)

**Verbal boundaries** - not wanting your partner(s) to use certain words when talking about your body or specific body parts.

### How to talk about your sexual preferences and desires!

**Reflect on what your preferences or desires actually are. What do you want to explore with your partner(s)? What do you want to explore with yourself? Is there anything you've been wanting to try but are nervous about?**



**Think about what your boundaries are. What are some things that are off limits to you? Think about the words, actions, sensations or settings that you are not wanting to engage with. What might you be not really interested in but okay with exploring?**



## Tips for talking about boundaries!

**Collaborate!** Make this experience for you and your partner(s) as collaborative as possible. This conversation isn't about one person or the other but it's about you and your partner(s) wants and needs.

**Acknowledge!** Our preferences and desires (and even boundaries at times) can change throughout a day, a week - a lifetime! So, it's important to also find ways to talk about those changes.

**Make a plan!** Plan to actually have the conversation, where all people involved feel ready to have this discussion.

It could sound like: "Hey, I really want to find some time to talk about our sexual relationship. I want to learn about what makes you feel good and I want to share with you what makes me feel good. Do you have a time that works for you to have this conversation?"

**You can write some notes here based on the suggestions above!**



## Exploring your desires!

Below is an example list of sexual activities that some people might be curious about and find pleasure in. Using the templates below, you can reflect on your desires and boundaries in a sexual encounter (ie. What makes you feel good? What might you be open to?), and make a list of actions you might want to do within a sexual encounter.

Then you can have a partner use one of the other templates to make their own list. Once you both have some ideas, you can compare your lists and see where you overlap. Feel free to cut out the various lists for you and your partner(s) to work on together.

If you're able to or want to, you can set the mood (in whatever way makes everyone involved feel sexy),and maybe even try a few things off each other's list. Pleasure is about connecting with your body, having fun, and feeling liberated!



Example:

- I want you to refer to my genitals as a cock.
- I want you to kiss my thighs.
- I want to peg you.
- I want to watch you touch yourself.
- I want you to spit in my mouth.
- I want you to spank my ass.

Now try yours!

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Now try yours!

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Now try yours!

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## LET'S WRAP IT UP!

Feeling confident in talking about your needs or desires during sexual encounters and/or having conversations about “safe sex” can take time (and practice!) to achieve. Sex, pleasure and consent can all be challenging to navigate for lots of different people for lots of different reasons. Wherever you are on your journey, we hope that this workbook gives you some starting points!

If you're looking for more resources on consent, safer sex and pleasure - take a look at our list below.

A Worksheet To Help You  
Talk To Partners About  
Sex by Autostraddle



“Learning Good  
Consent: On Healthy  
Relationships and  
Survivor Support” edited  
by Cindy Crabb.

Driver's Ed for the Sexual  
Superhighway: Navigating  
Consent



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