

HOW I WANT IT:

SEXUAL SAFETY PLANNING FOR SURVIVORS AND THEIR PARTNERS



Talking about sex with your partner(s) can be hard, especially after you've experienced sexual violence.

You might notice that we put an (S) after the word partner in this toolkit. We believe that people can have as many sexual or romantic partners they want—as long as everyone's consenting!



This guide is to help advocates, survivors, and the survivors' sexual partners discuss sex in an open, honest way and leaves plenty of room for choices.

A couple of things to note:

- Sex and sexual attraction are natural and healthy.
- **NOT** experiencing sexual attraction is also okay and normal

Someone who doesn't experience sexual attraction may refer to themselves as asexual. They also may not feel romantic attraction to anyone either. Asexuality exists on a spectrum, and if you want more information about it, check out [The Asexuality Visibility and Education Network](#) or [The Trevor Project](#).



- Everyone who can consent deserves to have safe and pleasurable sex.
- Everyone should be able to have sex how, when, and with whom they want (as long as everyone is consenting!)

- Consent needs to be given with each new action and given again each time you have sex
- It's okay to **stop** giving consent at any point, even if you have given it before
- Everyone should feel safe before, during, and after the sexual activity has taken place



There is no right or wrong way to re-engage with sex after sexual violence. Each person is different and will have a different healing journey.

- If you want to have sex again after you've experienced sexual violence, great! Hopefully, this toolkit can help guide you through that experience.
- If you **don't** want to have sex again after you've experienced sexual violence, that's great too! There are still many ways to have a life full of love, connection, intimacy, and meaning without sex. Your choice is real and valid.



Intimacy could look like writing a letter to a friend, cooking some yummy enchiladas by yourself, spending quality time on a walk with family, or even watching a movie with you pets. It doesn't have to be sexual!



Let's get started! Think about these questions on your own, and then discuss them with your partners!

- **What is sex? What does it look like to you?**

There's also ways to explore your sexuality on your own! Maybe you can try:

- Masturbation (yes, this is normal too!)
- Sex toys
- Watching healthy pornography
- Reading and listening to erotica, podcasts, or romance novels
- Sensual massages



- **How do you know you want to engage in sex?**

- How do you feel, physically and emotionally, when you want to engage in sex?
- How do you communicate that you want or don't want to have sex with your partners?

What are your sexual boundaries? What sexual activity...

- Do you like? What feels good, pleasurable, and enjoyable?
- Do you not like? What feels unsafe, harmful, or unenjoyable? What doesn't feel good? This could also be any activity you may be triggered by.
- Are you interested in trying or learning more about?
 - Do you want to explore this by yourself or with others?
 - Do you want more information before making a decision?
 - If you're not ready to make a choice right now, when would you like to revisit the conversation?



[Sex Turned Up, ACESDV..](#)

- How do you communicate your sexual boundaries to your partner?
- What are your partners' sexual boundaries?
 - How do they communicate them with you?

Everyone has boundaries and everyone should have their boundaries respected. Make sure you talk about those boundaries with your partners before engaging in sex!

- How do you and your partners "check-in" during the sexual activity?
 - Is it through words, body language, or both?

Checking-in means pausing whatever's going on. It's just to make sure everyone is still enjoying, understands, and is cool with what's going on. Some ways to check-in might be:

- "Do you like this?"
- "What do you want me to do next?"
- "How would like it if I did..."
- "Are you okay? Everything good?"
- "Do you wanna take a break?"



How do you and your partners talk about your sexual health?

- How often do you get tested for STIs? When was the last time you and your partners got tested?
- How do you feel about contraceptives and birth control?
 - What types or methods will be used?
- Are you having sex with other people?
- Are there other health concerns you and your partners should be aware of?

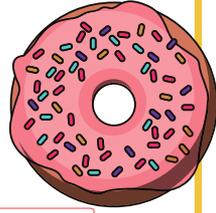


This can be anything from latex allergies, mobility needs, places not to touch, or anything else that you want your partner to know!

Fynan, 2021.

How do you and your partners check-in after sex?

- What are some things you need immediately after sex?



Make a list!

After I'm done with sex, I really need_____

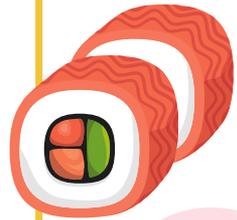
I like_____

I want my partners to_____

You can also have your partners do this too!



- What do you need to feel centered, grounded, or comforted?
- How can they help you feel cared for or recuperate after physical activity (food, water, rest)?



- How do you give your partners an after-action report?
 - How do you discuss what felt good, what didn't feel good, and what you'd like to change for the next time?
 - Is there something you'd like to try next time?
- What are you comfortable being shared with others after sex?

This could include details about sex, pictures or videos, or anything else that you may want to keep between you and your partners.

Remember it's okay if you want to keep your sex and romantic life private, or if you'd like to share it with others. **EVERYONE** deserves to be able to share what they want about themselves.



When boundaries are crossed...

- How do you want to process when boundaries are crossed? This may be alone, with a friend, or with your partners.
- How do you communicate when you're feeling unsafe and feeling uncomfortable?
 - What do you want your partners to do if you're feeling triggered?
- How do you communicate when boundaries are crossed with your partners?
 - What do you want your partners to do ...
 - In the moment?
 - In the immediate aftermath?
 - After some time has passed?



Vartuli & Elizabeth, 2021.

Use these pages to write down
some notes!

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**We hope this guide helps you
make choices that are safe,
pleasurable, and make you feel
cared for.**

Want to talk to someone? Don't know
where to start? Call our helpline!

**Arizona Coalition to End Sexual and Domestic
Violence**

(602) 279-2900

**Monday-Friday 8 a.m.-5 p.m.
call, text, and chat!**

