

Knowing Yourself Leads to Healthier Sex

Your **sexuality** is how you show yourself to others. It is your thoughts and your feelings about relationships.

You need to figure out what you want before you can choose a partner.

Ask Yourself:

- How do I feel about myself?
- How do I show myself sexually?
- What feelings do I show to others?

Your **gender** (female or male) and your **sexual orientation** (are you attracted to men or women?) combine to form your **sexual identity**.

Ask Yourself:

- What have I learned about being a woman?
- Who am I attracted to? And why?
- What do I like about myself?

Trusting your answers to these questions will help you trust your partner!

Many people find that sex without trust is not as good. You probably don't trust someone you don't know well. How can you enjoy sex with a stranger?

Take Your Relationship to a Deeper Level

Being close to your partner means sharing your thoughts and feelings with him or her. This closeness gives you the trust you need to enjoy sex.

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Your Health Is Important

Take care of your health. Do it for yourself and for your family.

For more information about your sexuality and relationships call the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the U.S. at:
(212) 819-9770

Or visit their Web site at:
www.siecus.org

Sex & Sexuality

how to have a healthy relationship





Seven Steps to Healthier Sex

1. Talk to your partner. Get to know your differences so you're not afraid or embarrassed.
2. Talk about birth control and sexually transmitted infections.
3. Plan a time where you won't feel rushed or interrupted.
4. Light touching, dancing, or massage will make you feel comfortable with your partner's body.
5. Trust your partner to do what you like.
6. Bring pleasure to your whole body.
7. Make sex enjoyable, not work.



Sexually Transmitted Infections Are a Real Danger

Millions of people get sexually transmitted infections (STIs) every year. STIs can lead to serious health problems, like infertility or even death.

Many people show no outward signs of infection. It is up to you to protect yourself.



Only a medical test can tell you if you are healthy. Ask your healthcare provider about STI tests.

Talk to your partner about infection. Ask if he or she has been tested recently.

Wear a condom during vaginal, oral, or anal intercourse. This will help prevent STIs. But condoms are not 100 percent sure to stop infection.

Sex without a condom is only safe when you and your uninfected partner only have sex with each other. But remember that you need to use some type of birth control if you want to avoid pregnancy. You should both get tested for STIs before making this choice.

Seven Ways to Stay Happy With Your Partner

Stress, depression, health problems, or using drugs and alcohol can all make you lose interest in being close to your partner.

Communication means more than just words. Your body and your actions can tell your partner a lot about what you are feeling.

Here are some ideas that can help you feel close to your partner again:

1. Talk openly about your feelings with your partner. Saying "I feel...", "I think...", or "I want..." are positive ways to begin talking about your feelings.
2. Listen when your partner is talking. Say things like "yes," or "go on" to show you are paying attention.
3. Write down your feelings. Ask your partner to do the same. Exchange the notes.
4. Smile at your partner. Be aware of your facial expressions and what they say about your mood.
5. Holding hands, a hug, or a kiss can build comfort and trust.
6. Giving your partner flowers, cards, or small gifts shows you are thinking about them.
7. Take your partner out somewhere you don't normally go.

Being good to your partner is the best way to be good to yourself!

