

EXPLORING

SEX



FOR TEENS

In this pamphlet we'll answer some of the most commonly answered questions about exploring sex as a teenager (or any age!).

AM I TOO YOUNG TO BE HAVING SEX?

To answer that question, first we need to talk about what it means to have sex. While we often talk about sex as being penetration with a penis in a vagina, it's much much more than that. Sex and sexual exploration can involve lots of different things for different people including masturbation, mutual masturbation, giving or receiving oral sex, sex using your fingers and hands, as well as vaginal and anal penetration.

There isn't age limit for sexual exploration! Many babies touch their genitals while in the womb, and it is normal for some children to begin masturbating as toddlers. Sensuality and pleasure are normal parts of life for many people. There is also not an age when should be, or have to be sexually active. Many adults that are very knowledgeable about the risks and benefits involved in sexual activity choose not to be sexually active, and this is okay. You may also be sexually active at some points in your life, and not in others, sexuality is a fluid and changing thing.

Sometimes it is helpful to speak to an adult that you trust if you have questions about sexuality, but not all adults will be supportive of your choices. Please don't feel discouraged! Having sexual feelings is normal at any age, and it's important that we understand that everyone experiences sexual feelings differently.

The most important thing is to say "no" if you are not interested in having sex with someone else, and to never pressure someone else to have sex if they are unsure, or not interested. Keep in mind that sex without consent is rape, and rape is never the victim's fault. You should also make sure that you understand the risks associated with sex, and take precautions to reduce your risks.

There are many bad resources available for teens wanting to learn about sex, so it's important to seek out trusted resources. You can find some good websites and resources at your local sexual health centre, and online at www.sexualhealthlunenburg.com (sexual education resources should not make

IS EVERYONE ELSE HAVING SEX?

Maybe, or maybe not, but other people's decisions don't have to affect you! Feeling ready to have sex happens at different times for different people. There is also not always adequate sexual education in school or in homes, so many young people who are having sex might feel pressured to do so, or might not be having very good sex. Educating yourself is a fantastic way to learn about reducing risks when you are sexually active, and is also a great way to learn how to have sex that is fun and feels good!

HOW DO I KNOW WHEN I AM READY?

This is a really important question for you to consider. There are a few things that can indicate whether you are ready to engage in sexual activity with a partner and yourself.

Firstly,

- Have you considered the risks involved, like potential STI's and pregnancy?
- Have you considered how you would manage these risks and how you would deal with an STI or an unplanned pregnancy?
- Are you capable of talking to your partner about sex?
- Are you capable of talking to your partner about risks?
- Do you trust and feel safe with your partner?
- Are you comfortable talking to your partner about what kind of sex you like and dislike?

Has your potential sexual partner considered these questions? Communication is an essential part of sexual relationships, and can make sex a fun and rewarding experience!

HOW DO I TALK TO MY PARENTS?

Not everyone feels safe or comfortable talking to their parents about things like their sexuality. That's normal, and okay. There are other resources to help answer your questions and possibly other adults that you trust. If you are interested in talking to your parents about your sexuality, they can be a great source of support for you. Keep in mind that it is often an awkward conversation for everyone at first, but with time and patience your parents may be a valuable source of information and support.

WHERE CAN I GET NON-JUDGEMENTAL INFORMATION AND SUPPORT?

It's a great idea to contact your local Sexual Health Centre in your area; they can provide you with resources, condoms, lube, pregnancy tests, and more. Additionally, you might want to speak to your guidance counsellor at school, another teacher, or your family doctor. Sometimes these people can make you feel safe, and sometimes they don't, it is up to you to decide if you think they would be supportive and helpful to talk to. Check out our website for links to other great resources.

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