

PLAY IT SAFE PART 1: INTIMACY AND HIV*

▶ ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

🕒 **Time:** 30 minutes

➔ **Objectives:** By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Discuss the differences between sexual intercourse (exchanging body fluids) and other ways to have sexual pleasure.
- Practice touching sex equipment in order to become familiar with how it may be used, how it can malfunction, and to describe the pleasure it can provide.
- Discuss sexually satisfying alternatives to sexual intercourse.
- Practice discussing sex and intimacy with others.
- Recognize that abstinence does not mean abstaining from sexual pleasure.

★ **Training Methods:** Small Group Activity and Discussion, Large Group Discussion

✓ **In This Activity You Will...**

- Explain the activity and break into groups (10 minutes).
- Facilitate group discussion during the activity (10 minutes).
- Facilitate discussion about the results of the activity (10 minutes).

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Instructions

1. This session will allow participants to discover how to use all of their senses to relate more intimately with themselves and others. Introduce the activity.
 - *We know that having sex is a part of life. It is healthy and needed. While we know having sex and being intimate are important, it is equally important to be as safe as possible.*
 - *Reducing risky sexual behaviors is an important step in protecting and being loyal to yourself and your partner. Just as important is the need for pleasure and sensuality. This exercise is designed to increase your awareness of satisfying and safer sexual activities.*
 - *We also need to be aware that sex and intimacy mean different things to people. We should not be judgmental about things we do not do or know about.*
 - *We also know that, for some people, abstinence--not having or refraining from penetrative sex--is their choice. But abstinence from sexual intercourse does not mean that you cannot be intimate or loving with a partner.*
2. Have participants form 4 separate groups by having them pick from presorted playing cards. Have them form 4 groups based on the suit of the card they draw (clubs, diamonds, spades and hearts). Make sure to have the same number of cards as participants and an equal number of each suit. Provide each group with a “sensuality sack” for each group to examine.
 - *We are going to discuss sexual pleasure, intimacy and safer sex. This would include ways to use our five senses. What are your five senses? (allow responses) The five senses are sight, smell, touch, sound, and taste.*
 - *Too often “safer sex” is only connected with giving up or interrupting sexual pleasure. For many, “safer sex” means sacrificing desire and romance.*

* This module comes from Duke University, Partners in Caring; Center for Creative Education, 2006.

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ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY (CONT.)

Materials:

- Flip chart with five senses
- Sensuality Sacks—contents may include:

Sight: candles, erotic videos, magazines, photos, posters, tattoos, fingernail/toe nail polishes, body paints, scarves, high heels, massage/sex books, note cards, paper, pictures, mirrors, sex toys, edible underwear, uniforms, and colored condoms.

Smell: candles, perfume, colognes, flowers, bath oil, incense, food, scented oils, work clothes.

Touch: velvet, silk and satin materials, feathers, massage oils, bubble baths, love lotions, dental dams, condoms, spray bottles, dildos, latex gloves, sponges, loofah, towels, hair brushes, hands, belts, straps, whips, ice, and hair (wigs).

Sound: music, love poems to be read, whispering, drums, breathing, moaning, fountain, relaxation tapes, and dirty talking.

Taste: chocolates, honey, whipped cream, sour candy, mints, flavored massage oil, flavored condoms, and candy.

- Playing cards to divide people into four groups

Preparation:

- Prepare flip chart
- Prepare Sensuality Sacks

3. Have participants pick a sack and look inside at the contents. Contents may be placed on the table so everyone in the group can view them. During this exercise, it is important to be aware of any negative feelings that may occur with using or seeing some of the items. Observe group interactions carefully. The teams should choose 2 of the items to explore and explain to the group.

- *Look at the items in your sack. These items may be used to enhance intimacy and sensuality with a partner. This is a fun exercise that will allow you to be creative.*
- *As a team, discuss how the items can be used to enhance sexual pleasure and intimacy. Be sure to think about safer sex. After your team discussion, each group will share 2 of the items and explain what and how we could use the 2 items in their sack. You will have 10 minutes in your team before we come back together as a large group.*

4. Move around the room and engage groups in discussion or listen to their discussion about the items.

- *Remember, while this discussion may be personally uncomfortable to you, as a peer educator you need to be prepared to hear about and be asked about many different kinds of intimacy and sex, and you need to work towards being non-judgmental and understanding.*
- *The items may be used in many ways to enhance sexual pleasure and intimacy. Be sure to be creative in your descriptions, and think of being safe as well. Remember that people have sex in different ways.*
- *There are women who have sex with men; men who have sex with men; women who have sex with women; you can masturbate; or you can masturbate with someone else. There are many ways to have sex and be intimate with someone else.*
- *Think about how someone can use these items safely. Think about the types of penetrative sex: oral, anal, and vaginal, as well as masturbation and other non-penetrative ways to give and receive sexual pleasure. How can these items be used in place of penetrative sex, to enhance intimacy and to be used safely?*

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- *You are going to have to be REALLY creative in your thinking, and think beyond what you like, and think of what other people may enjoy as well.*
5. Allow 10 minutes for the groups to examine and discuss the contents of the sensuality sacks. Then call them back together. Ask for one group to volunteer to be first.
 - *I need you to pick someone from your group who will tell us about the 2 items you chose. I will go first and describe the many uses of this candle for sexual pleasure and intimacy.*
 - *This candle can have many purposes in my mind. You can light it for romantic lighting. If it is scented, you can use it to enhance your sense of smell. You can also blow it out and allow the warm wax to be poured on your body or someone else's.*
 - *As far as safety, I would say not to pour extremely hot wax on your skin, because you do not want a severe burn. Other than that, a warm candle is a great item to enhance intimacy. The candle should not be used as a penetrating object (anal, vaginal). Now, we will need one team to go first in sharing what was in the "sack of sensuality". Who would like to go first?*
 6. Trainers should be sure to discuss safety with oils, condoms, and sharing of sex toys. Oils can damage and weaken the latex in condoms, diaphragms and dental dams. Condoms, if not used correctly, can break or tear. Sex toys, if shared, can also transmit other infections such as trichomonas. They should be washed with warm, soapy water.
 - *When using oils, condoms and sex toys, it is important to know that oils can damage and weaken the latex in condoms, diaphragms and dental dams; if you do not use condoms correctly they can break or tear, and you should never share sex toys without first cleaning them before and after each use because they can transmit other bacterial viruses such as trichomonas or hepatitis.*
 - *Thank you for sharing your creativity. Now we can discuss more issues about safer sex, pleasure and intimacy and how to use items that may prevent transmission of diseases.*

Activity adapted from T.H.E Course Tools for Health and Empowerment Curriculum by Glaxo Wellcome, 1997.

Summary

Wrap up with key points:

- People living with HIV/AIDS, like all people, want information and skills in talking with sex partners about intimacy and sex;
- There are many ways to have sex safely, and there are alternatives to having penetrative sexual intercourse that are both pleasurable and satisfying;
- Sex means different things to different people and everyone should respect the choices others make regarding sex/intimacy. Anal, vaginal and oral penetrative sex are ways in which HIV is transmitted;
- It is okay to talk about abstinence but be sure you understand what your peer really means by that. There are many ways to be intimate without penetration.
- Sex is a healthy part of life and abstinence is a valid choice and does not mean avoiding intimacy and sexual pleasure.

* This module is part of the online toolkit *Building Blocks to Peer Success*. For more information, visit http://www.hdwg.org/peer_center/training_toolkit. This module comes from Duke University, Partners in Caring; Center for Creative Education, 2006.