



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Health**
Public and Aboriginal Health Division

Relationships, sex & other stuff

A few things teenagers will need to know
about relationships, sex and other stuff!



CHILDREN CROSSING

Why do I need this book?

When you're a teenager, you have more freedom than when you were a kid. You are on the road to becoming an adult. The adults around you are beginning to trust you to look after yourself and to make your own way. More and more, you will make decisions for yourself about the things that are important to you.

With this freedom comes new kinds of responsibility. What happens to your body and how you look after it are only part of the ride. You will encounter many different situations and new ideas: there are new kinds of relationships, love and sex. And how to keep feeling good about yourself, and how to get on with people.

In this booklet, we've put together a heap of information so that you can read up on the important stuff. Remember too that there are adults in your life you can trust, like your parents, teachers and the school nurse, who'll be willing to listen and help you along the way.

A list of services that can help is at the end of this booklet.

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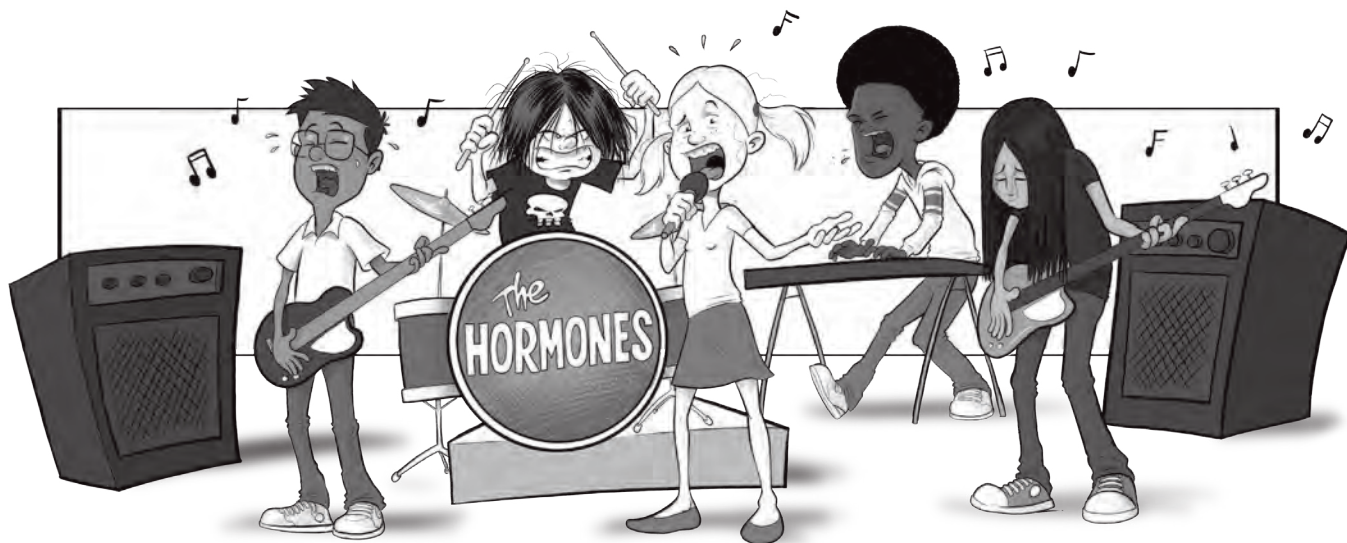
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RELATIONSHIPS

From the moment you are born, you have different kinds of relationships and connections with those around you: parents, siblings, friends, aunts, uncles, grandparents, teachers and role models to name a few.

These relationships may involve dependence, responsibility, equality, respect, or a combination of any of these.

From each of these relationships and from what you see and experience in the world around you, you will learn:

- How people behave towards each other
- How people behave towards you
- How people expect you to behave.

This booklet mainly focuses on romantic and sexual relationships.

Friendships

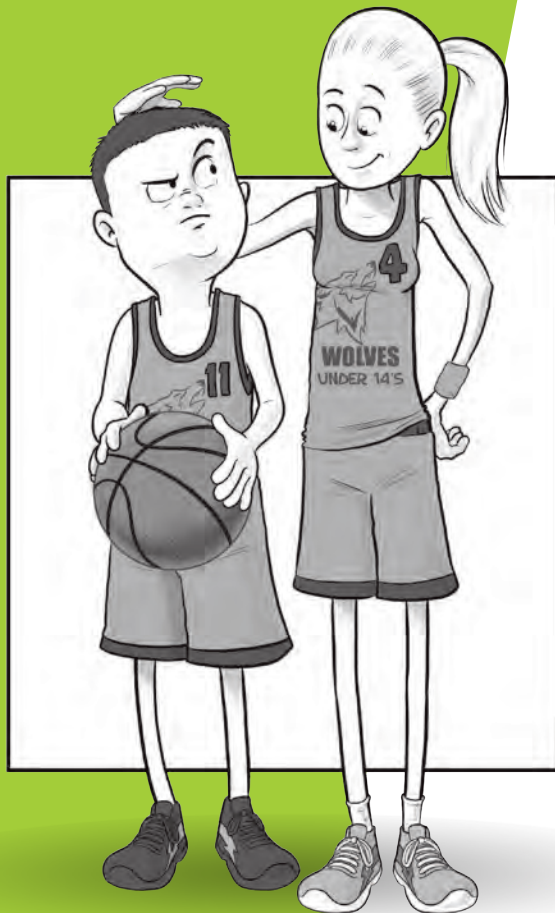
During puberty, you experience lots of changes. Some of these are physical, and some are emotional. Everyone travels at a different rate along the road to adulthood. Between the ages of 12 and 14, girls are often taller than boys, and their bodies may be developing into the women they are to become. By contrast, boys, who will go on to become well-proportioned, deep-voiced, muscular adults, may still be short and skinny!

It all sorts itself out in the end, but in the beginning, there could be a mismatch of size and proportion among your friends that may contribute to worries about fitting in.

In adolescence, you will find that the interests of your friends start to vary too. Someone you have known for all your primary school life may suddenly become a stranger to you, and things that never used to matter suddenly do. Everyone around you may start to have strong opinions about clothes, music, hobbies, who they like, what they're good at, what is cool and what's not. These opinions may not always match your own – and that is fine.

All these strong-minded, opinionated people are moving in different ways on the road to adulthood. Each of you will get there in your own way. In the end, the friends you stay close to will probably be those with whom you share the same values, interests and concerns, and the same ways of enjoying your time.

“Someone you have known for all your primary school life may suddenly become a stranger to you.”



Communication

Being a teenager isn't necessarily hard. For most, there are wonderful freedoms associated with not yet having to take on the responsibilities of adulthood and there are many amazing things to discover and learn.

But with all the changes taking place in your life, you are bound to experience the full spectrum of moods: from confidence and exuberance, to loneliness and despair. This is a totally normal part of being a teenager.

As well as your friendships, you may find your relationships with different family members are changing too. People who you once got along with may no longer seem as close or as easy to be with as they once did.

The best way to sort out these feelings is through communication. Having a conversation is one way of sorting out the good, the bad and the confusing. Without talk, there can be no resolution.

Sometimes it can help to say things out loud to yourself, too, in private, to see how something sounds.

You may not find it easy to talk about how things are. But different people will be able to help you with different things. Try talking to someone who cares about you and who can support you to help you become the person you want to be. This might be a trusted and respected adult or friend, or your doctor, or a school counsellor. You can always call the Kids Helpline on **1800 55 1800**, especially if you are having problems talking to your family.

Romantic relationships



Like? Like a lot? Love!

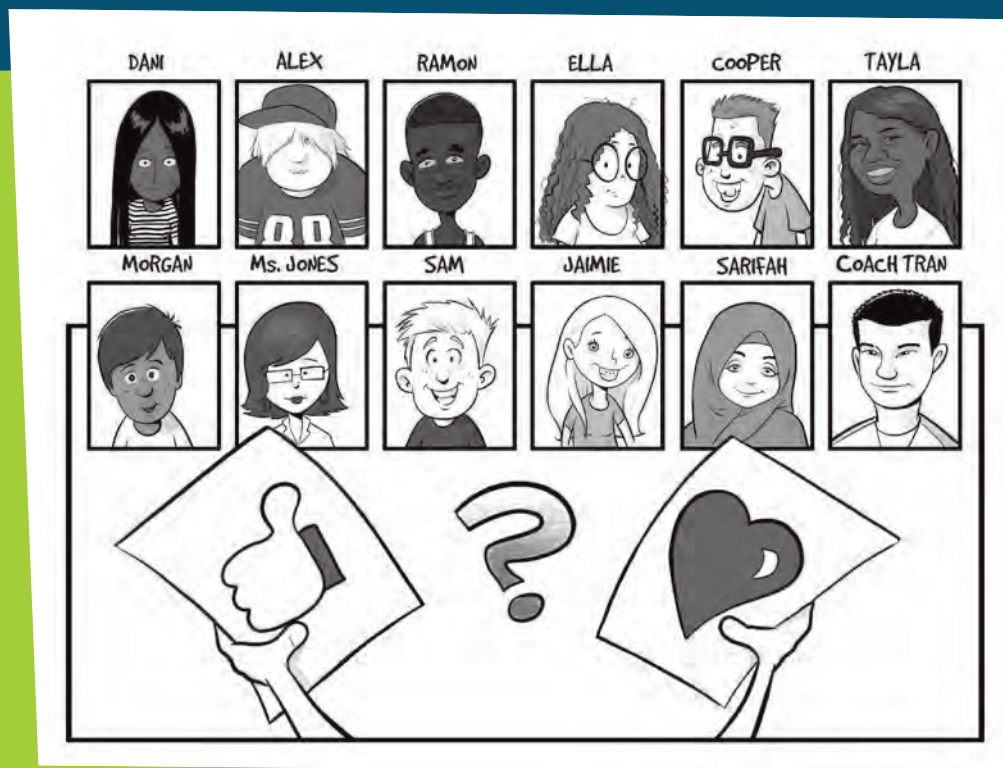
As you become older, you may find that the way you feel about people becomes more complex too.

It is quite normal to suddenly experience strong feelings, or crushes, for a range of people, including those that are older than you. These feelings may remain private and unexpressed. Or you may choose to confide in a friend, or express your feelings to the person directly. All these different feelings are completely normal.

Bear in mind that sharing your feelings can put you in a vulnerable space. If your feelings are not reciprocated, you may feel exposed and rejected. Or, if they are, you may find yourself in an exciting new friendship or relationship.

What if someone gets a crush on me?

You may find that someone feels strongly about you but that you don't return these feelings. Try to treat this person with dignity and respect, and don't share their feelings for you with anyone else. Be honest and clear about your own feelings.



Will someone ever love me?

You may feel as if everyone around you is falling in love, or finding someone, except for you. It can be hard to be patient and wait your turn, even when, in all probability, you can be sure your turn will come. There are many years ahead for these things to happen, even though you may want them to happen now. In the meantime, try to focus on the things that make you happy. Enjoy your own company. A happy, together person is the kind of person someone else will be attracted to.

Is it love?

Sometimes you may feel as if you like someone a lot. The feeling can be intense – more than the feeling of having a crush. The feeling of falling in love can be overwhelming. It can affect your sleep, your appetite, your desire to do, or not do, different things. It can take over your whole world.

How do you know if it is really love?
You can ask yourself:

- Do you both care about each other to the same degree?
- Do you have things in common, and enjoy similar activities or interests?
- Do you share similar perspectives and general values (about family, morals, beliefs, etc.)?
- Do you encourage each other to pursue your own interests?
- Can you talk to each other about important things?
- Do you understand and listen to one another?

What if my heart gets broken?

Just as you can fall in love, you or the other person can also fall out of love. Most people fall in love more than once before they find the kind of partner who is ready to fully share the emotional journey of loving and to make a commitment for the longer term.

If you are emotionally hurt, it is important to be kind to yourself, and to do things that make you feel good. Spend time with and talk to the people around you who care about you. You may find perspective, comfort and useful advice from hearing the heartbreak experiences of others.

TECHNOLOGY AND RELATIONSHIPS

Cyberbullying

Most people use technology and social media to communicate with each other in a positive way. Unfortunately, there are some people who use websites, text messages and social media to embarrass, intimidate or harass other people.

This is cyberbullying: bullying that is done through the use of technology. For example, using the internet, a mobile phone or a camera to hurt or embarrass someone is considered cyberbullying. If you experience cyberbullying or know someone else who is, it is important to tell a trusted adult. It can help to make copies of the messages to show them. Bullies can be blocked from sending messages. Victims of cyberbullying need to remember that they are not at fault, and no one deserves to be bullied, online or anywhere else.



Sexting

What is sexting?

Sexting is when someone uses the internet or a mobile phone to create, share, send or post sexual photos, messages or videos. Sexting may also be referred to as 'nudes' or 'selfies', so a sext might consist of a photo or video of someone who is nude, semi-nude, or in a sexual pose. People within a trusting relationship sometimes send sexts as an expression of their feelings and desires but there are still associated risks.

Sexting and the law

In Western Australia it is against the law to take, send, receive or store a sexual picture of a person who is under the age of 18, even if it was taken with the other person's consent. There can be serious consequences for a person if they break this law as these images are considered to be child pornography.

Problems and risks with sexting

As well as the legal implications, the risk of sexting is that the photos or videos may not stay private. They can be sent on or uploaded to the internet. The photo or video may become permanently accessible to others and create future problems for a young person; for instance, when applying for a job. It could cause embarrassment, problems between friends, get someone into trouble at school and injure a person's reputation.

When it comes to sexting, it's best to think before sending. And, if you receive a sexy picture from someone, delete it and do not forward it to anyone else.



What to do if?

If you are worried because you have already sent a picture on, don't panic. Just delete the picture from your devices and ask the person you sent it to to do the same and not forward it to anyone else. If you are still worried, you should speak to a trusted adult or report it to the service that it was posted on.

Alternatively, if you have received a sexual image from someone, it's best to make sure it is deleted and tell the person to stop sending them. If you are uncomfortable about any of these issues, speak to a trusted adult or call the Kids Helpline for a free and confidential chat on **1800 55 1800**.

For more information on sexting and how to report it go to: www.esafety.gov.au/esafety-information/esafety-issues/sexting

“A photo or video may become permanently accessible to others and create future problems for a young person.”

Pornography

Becoming older brings increased awareness of sexuality and being interested in knowing what sex actually looks like.

Out of curiosity some young people might go looking for sexual images or videos online, or they may happen across these by accident. Some types of sexual images and videos found online are extremely explicit and of a pornographic nature (or 'porn').

If you come across sexual images or videos that are surprising or shocking, you don't have to view them! Close the page, stop watching, tell an adult. Don't show others. Don't let what you see shape your choices and perceptions about sex. Make those decisions for yourself when you are ready and always be safe!

“It is important to know that pornography is not an accurate representation of what sex is really like.”

It is important to know that pornography is not an accurate representation of what sex is really like.

The reality is:

- Porn is a performance and the people are acting, often being paid to look like they are enjoying themselves
- Porn is an unreal representation of how people look. Artificial techniques are used to enhance the bodies of porn actors including makeup, lighting and sometimes even cosmetic surgery
- What is shown in porn is not usually safe sex and safety is vital.

Keep in mind that pornographic videos and images are mostly produced by an industry typically associated with the exploitation and manipulation of its performers. It's worth saying that most people in pornography are treated disrespectfully – sometimes abusively – but are portrayed as though they enjoy this treatment. In real life, people commonly do not enjoy being treated in this manner.

In real life, having sex with another person should be pleasurable and respectful for both people with an ease of communication about safe sex.

It is not unusual to be curious about porn and to watch it; however, it's not a reliable or trustworthy source of information on which to base views and choices about sex.

SEXUALITY

As you grow up you begin to make choices and decisions about how you want to behave in the relationships that are important to you. As you develop sexual feelings, you may also feel ready to express your affection and love through a sexual relationship.

Sexuality refers to the sexual feelings and attractions we have towards others and the way these are expressed. There are differences in sexualities, and these are normal and form part of the broad range of human relationships and experiences. A person's sexuality is a central part of who they are and a major influence on an individual's thoughts, feelings and actions. In some instances it can take a while for a young person to understand who they are and to work out their sexuality.

Different cultures view sexuality in different ways. Sexual practices and standards vary from country to country, religion to religion and culture to culture.

Sexual diversity

Sexuality is one of many things that makes us uniquely who we are. There is diversity in sexuality and for some it can take a while to understand their sexual identity.

Our sexual orientation indicates to whom we are sexually attracted. Sexual orientation can change over time for some. The diversity of sexual orientation is quite normal.

If you feel confused or worried about your sexuality or sexual orientation, it's important to speak about it with someone you trust. There are also agencies that can be contacted to talk things through.

For **i definitions** of heterosexuality, homosexuality and bisexuality, see page 14.



“Differences in sexualities are normal and form part of the broad range of human relationships and experiences.”



Definitions

Heterosexuality

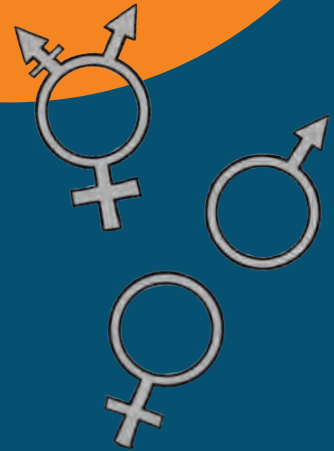
Heterosexuality is the sexual and romantic attraction to people of the opposite sex. Heterosexual men are attracted to women and heterosexual women are attracted to men. This is sometimes referred to as being 'straight'.

Homosexuality

Homosexuality is the sexual and romantic attraction to people of the same sex. This is the case when women are attracted to women, and men are attracted to men. People who feel this way often identify as being gay, or lesbian for same-sex attracted women.

Bisexuality

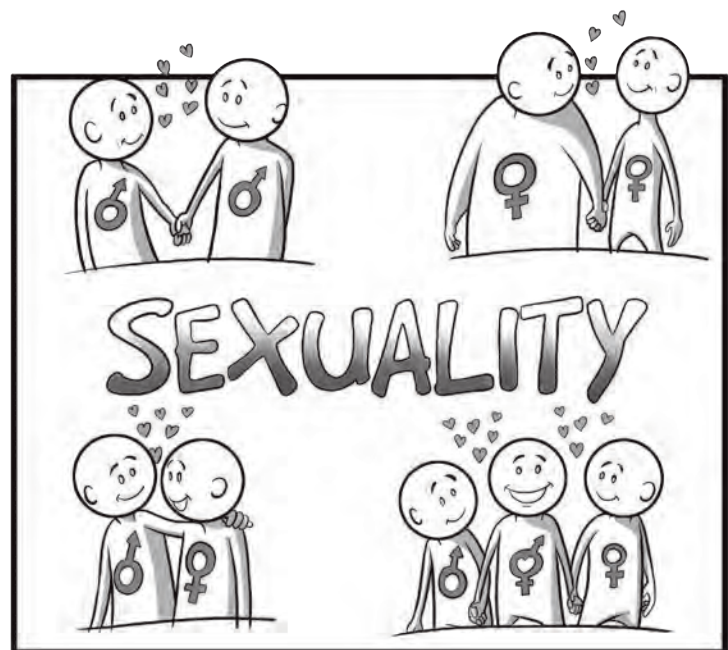
People who have sexual and romantic feelings for men and women may identify as being bisexual. Sometimes a person may engage in bisexual behaviours but doesn't identify as bisexual.



“Sexuality is one of many things that makes us uniquely who we are.”

Homophobia

The term homophobia describes those beliefs or behaviours that include fear of, or hostility towards, sexually diverse people. Homophobia is sometimes expressed through bullying or insulting people who appear to be different, whether or not they are gay, lesbian or bisexual. Any kind of bullying is completely unacceptable and a healthy sexuality includes tolerance and understanding of people who are different or who don't fit in to stereotypes. If you experience or witness homophobia, it's important to talk to a trusted adult about it. For more information on where to get help go to page 27.



Gender

The term gender describes a range of characteristics relating to being male and female, and is socially formed. Gender is also about how a person feels. Do they feel like a male or a female? Are they treated like a male or female by their family or community?

Biological sex – male, female & other

Understanding gender involves knowing that the term biological sex usually refers to the sex of a person and the biological and anatomical differences between males and females. A person's biological sex is typically defined and assigned at their birth based on the external appearance of their genitals.

Our biological sex incorporates the nature of our internal sex organs (reproductive system), external sex organs (genitals), genes (traits and characteristics inherited from our parents), and hormones.

Most people have a biological sex of either male or female, however, sometimes babies are born with sexual characteristics that are not clearly defined and not alike usual male or female profiles. Such babies are described as being 'intersex'.

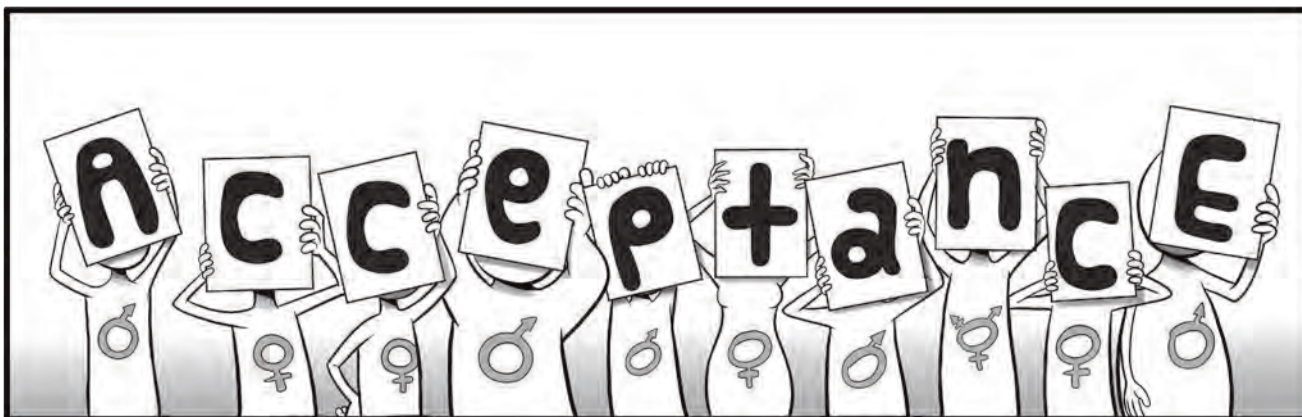
Gender diversity

One of the most wonderful things about humans is how different and diverse we are. There are people who have different coloured hair, speak different languages, come from different countries, wear different clothes and have different coloured skin. There are also differences in our gender. We are all unique.

A person's gender describes how they act, or are expected to act, as a male or a female. However, there are some people who may not think of themselves as entirely male or entirely female. These people are often called transgender or gender diverse. If a person is transgender it means that they feel as though their gender on the inside is different to how they appear. So a person may look like a boy, for example, but inside they feel like they should be a girl. It is important to understand that not everyone is the same and to recognise and accept other people's differences.

Gender stereotypes

Narrow, fixed expectations about being a male or being a female are called gender stereotypes. For example, there are stereotypes about males being 'tough' and females being 'gentle'. In fact, most people don't fit into gender stereotypes and there is enormous variation in gender roles. In adolescence, as people develop into mature males and females, girls and boys who don't fit the stereotype may be picked on or bullied. Such experiences are usually extremely hurtful. It's the differences between us that make human relationships so special and interesting.



Where there is confusion, help is available

For some young people it can be lonely and confusing getting to know their sexuality and gender identity, or to have sexual feelings which seem to differ from most around them. This confusion may be particularly hard to deal with while you're still working out who you are, and at a time when the opinions of others count for so much.

It's helpful to know that there are other people going through the same thing, but it's sometimes not shared or known about. Communication and talking things through is often the best way to help become the person you want to be.

Support and further information

- **Freedom Centre**
(08) 9228 0354
www.freedom.org.au
- **Kids Helpline**
1800 55 1800

“It's helpful to know that there are other people going through the same thing.”

SEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS

Sex

In relationships, sex means different things to different people. When most talk about 'having sex' they are usually referring to sexual intercourse (or penetrative sex).

As you become more sexually aware, it is natural that you will be curious about sex. You might learn about it by exploring your own body, then learn more within a relationship. As you experience and learn more, you will find what you are comfortable with, what you like, what feels right and, importantly, what feels safe.

Keep in mind that it's possible to be sexual without having intercourse. Things like kissing, touching, rubbing and stroking are all things that feel good too. Knowing about all of these options can help you make informed choices that are best for you. Delaying or postponing having sexual intercourse may indeed be a good choice for many reasons. Working out what your decision is prior to potentially intimate situations with a partner is a good start to healthy sexual development.

Masturbation

One way people express and explore sexual feelings is through masturbation. Some people don't masturbate at all, or not often; others more frequently.

Masturbation involves touching, stroking or rubbing one's own genitals. Sexual pleasure is different for everyone and so is masturbation.

When someone masturbates, they become sexually excited and usually reach a peak of sexual excitement called an orgasm, or 'coming'. At that moment, all the built-up tension and excitement is released. When a boy orgasms he ejaculates, then the penis gradually goes limp.

Masturbation may be someone's first sexual experience. It is a matter of personal choice and so long as no one is hurt and it is done in private, masturbation is a normal and healthy practice.

“Knowing about all of these options can help you make informed choices that are best for you.”

“Sex and love are not the same thing.”

Sexual feelings

When you are sexually attracted to someone and they are attracted to you, you may reach a point when you want to express this physically.

When you're with someone you like a lot, kissing is fun. You may wonder if you're going to know how to kiss, but usually people work it out together, and improve with practice.

You may also like holding hands and cuddling, feeling the closeness of each other's bodies, or touching each other's genitals. Physical attraction may lead to decisions about having sex (intercourse). The best sex usually takes place within a well-developed, trusting relationship when both people are sure and ready.

Keep the lines of communication open

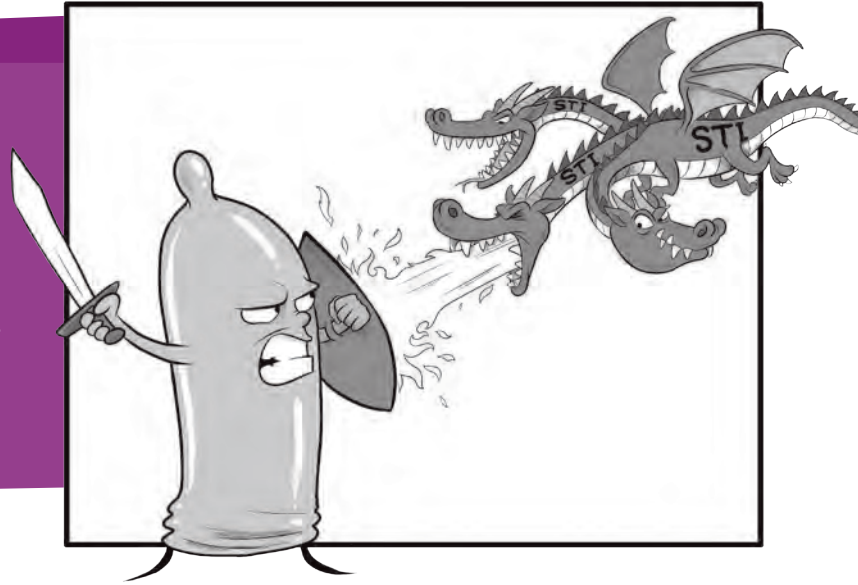
Sex and love are not the same thing. It's possible to have strong feelings of love and affection for someone and this not be at all sexual. The opposite is also true: it is possible to be physically involved with someone in a sexual way, without love being a part of it. People can be sexually involved out of curiosity, or because they think it will make them feel good, or they think it will bring them closer. It's a mistake to have sex with someone in the belief that it will make them love you, because it won't. Being or feeling pressured to have sex for that or any other reason is a recipe for disappointment and hurt.

Being sexually involved changes your feelings about your partner and yourself. It is important to talk about what you are doing together. Good communication means being able to share feelings about whether you are happy and comfortable with your physical involvement, or unhappy and uncomfortable. If you feel under any sort of pressure, it is important to be able to express this and to stop at any time.



Sexual intercourse

Sexual intercourse is the act of having penetrative sex and involves an erect penis entering a woman's vagina (in the case of male-to-female intercourse), or entering a man's anus (in the case of male-to-male intercourse). Such close and intimate physical contact is sometimes described as 'making love'.



Decisions about sex

Is sex right for you?

Sex is not right for you if you do it just because you think everyone around you is doing it, or because you think you 'should'. If you have sex because you are pressured, drunk, or curious, you will likely regret it later.

You may feel happier expressing your affection for someone just by kissing, cuddling and caressing. It is quite normal for couples to enjoy this kind of closeness and affection long before they are ready for intercourse.

It is good to have a strong, clear sense of what you want before you go beyond your comfort zone. When to have sex is one of the very important decisions in your life. Don't be in a hurry to make this decision. There is nothing wrong with taking your time and saying no to things that make you feel uncomfortable or unsure. You may find it helps to talk it over with a parent or other trusted adult.

Some things to think about if you are considering having sex:

- Am I doing this because it's what I want? If your partner is constantly pressuring you to have sex, you need to think about whether they really care for or are truly listening to you.
- The risk of an STI and unplanned pregnancy. Is sex going to be safe? Have you got condoms? Do you have other forms of contraception? (see Pregnancy on page 23).

Remember, life is long! The best sex will happen when both partners are equally ready.



What is safe sex?

Sex can be enjoyable and fulfilling, but does involve risks and consequences, particularly if it isn't safe sex.

Safe sex means having sexual contact in ways that reduce the chances of becoming pregnant or contracting a sexually transmitted infection (STI). For example, not having sexual intercourse and only kissing, cuddling, massaging and rubbing each other's bodies is completely safe.

Safer sex means protecting the health of both you and your partner by using a condom during intercourse. Using a condom during sex is called having 'protected sex'. A condom is a tube of very thin rubber that covers the penis and is effective if used correctly. They can break, so it's recommended to use a water-based lubricant to help ensure it stays intact during sex. Condoms and lubricant are readily available at supermarkets and chemists, and some sexual health clinics provide condoms for free.

The consequences of unsafe sex

1. A girl can become pregnant from having unprotected sex (sex without using contraception).
2. Both boys and girls can catch an STI if they have unsafe sex (sex without a condom) with a person who has an infection. Some sexually transmitted infections include:
 - chlamydia
 - gonorrhoea
 - herpes
 - HIV.

Simply asking someone if they are free from infection is not enough because a person carrying an infection cannot always tell they have one. If a person has had unprotected sex it's important they get checked for the presence of an STI by having an STI test. This is done by a doctor or at a sexual health clinic and generally involves providing a urine sample. Safer sex really starts right at the beginning – with talking to your partner and being sure that you both are ready and want to have sex.

Keeping safe

Everyone has a right to feel safe at all times; however, there may be times where we don't feel safe.

People of any age have a right to say 'no', especially if they are being asked to do something or go somewhere that makes them feel uncomfortable, unsafe or scared. If you are in this situation, listen to your instincts, act if you can, and talk about it with someone.

If you want to speak with someone privately you can call the Kids Helpline: **1800 55 1800**.

“It is good to have a strong, clear sense of what you want before you go beyond your comfort zone.”

Consent

Sex and the law

In Western Australia, it is against the law to have sex – either heterosexual or homosexual – if either partner is under 16 years of age. This is the case regardless of whether both give consent.

Consent

When a person is involved in any sexual activity, everyone needs to provide consent. Giving consent means that they are clearly and freely agreeing to the sexual activities that are happening or are likely to happen. Consent cannot be given if someone is drunk, under the influence of drugs or asleep.

It is unlawful to force anyone to have sex against their wishes. This includes any kind of sexual touching, or looking at sexual pictures.

It is unlawful to give people alcohol or drugs to get them drunk or drugged so they can be forced to have sex.

It is always okay to say **No** and to say **Stop!** People have the right to change their mind about sex even during the act and to choose not to continue even though they agreed at the start. Consent is paramount. Forcing someone to have sex or to do sexual things against their will is called sexual abuse or sexual assault. If this happens to anyone they need to tell a trusted adult.

The Sexual Assault Resource Centre can also be contacted on **(08) 9340 1828**.

“People have the right to change their mind about sex even during the act and to choose not to continue.”

Pregnancy

When a penis enters a vagina during sexual intercourse, it is possible for conception to occur, resulting in pregnancy.

This is the case even if:

- The girl has not had her first period (menstruation)
- The boy withdraws his penis from her vagina before ejaculating
- The girl is having her period
- It is the first time she has had sexual intercourse.

Missed periods

The first sign that a girl may be pregnant is when her period doesn't come when expected. If this occurs, it is vital to talk to a trusted adult and/or see a doctor as soon as possible.

Contraception (birth control)

Obviously the most effective means of preventing an unplanned pregnancy is to abstain from sexual intercourse. However, for those who choose otherwise the safest and surest way is to use contraception. Some forms of contraception such as condoms also protect against STIs. Planning to become sexually active is a major decision that should be discussed with parents or another trusted adult before having sex.

If two people decide to have sex, it is important for both partners to talk about contraception options and to consistently use contraception whenever having sex. The responsibility for contraception should be shared equally.

There are many different types of contraception and it can be confusing deciding which method is right. No contraceptive method can be 100% guaranteed so it is important to be informed about the range of contraception available and to weigh up the risks and benefits of each. School nurses and doctors can provide information about these issues and options.

The most common contraceptive option for boys and men are condoms, which help prevent both unplanned pregnancy and STIs.

Common contraceptive options for girls and women also include condoms and:

- Contraceptive pill, which must be taken at the same time every day
- Implanon, a small plastic rod implanted under the skin of the arm that slowly releases hormones.

The human body is sophisticated, and geared towards reproduction, so contraception must be used as advised in order to be effective.



Conception (becoming pregnant)

Around 14 days before a girl's period is due, her ovaries release at least one egg. This stage of the menstrual cycle is called ovulation. Ovulation is the optimum time for a pregnancy to occur if a male and female have unprotected penis-to-vagina intercourse.

When a man ejaculates (comes, reaches climax, orgasms) inside a woman's vagina, about one teaspoon of semen – containing millions of sperm – is released into the vagina. The sperm swim into the uterus and fallopian tubes. If just one sperm implants itself into the released egg, fertilisation occurs. If the fertilised egg implants in the wall of the uterus, conception occurs and a new human life begins.

These are the ideal conditions for conception to occur, however, it is also possible to fall pregnant even if:

- Sex occurs at any other time in the menstrual cycle
- The male man does not ejaculate. Conception is still possible because sperm are also present in the clear fluid released from the penis prior to ejaculation (pre-cum)
- Any semen, including pre-cum, is deposited in or just outside the vagina
- The woman does not orgasm during intercourse.

“A missed period can be the first sign of pregnancy.”

Being pregnant

How would you know if you are pregnant?

An egg successfully fertilised by a sperm will remain in the lining of the uterus so that, rather than being shed, the lining stays intact to be able to nourish the egg. This means the girl will not get her usual period. A missed period can be the first sign of pregnancy. A pregnancy dates from the time of the last period, so a girl could be four, five, six or more weeks pregnant before realising it. In addition, the other physical symptoms of pregnancy (such as fatigue, nausea and breast tenderness) might not be experienced until later.

Decisions about pregnancy

Making the decision to get pregnant is massively important. An unplanned pregnancy places enormous pressure on all those involved. If someone discovers they are unexpectedly pregnant, it is critical to seek help as quickly as possible. They need to talk to people close to them and/or health professionals who can advise them of the full range of options, considerations and choices.



“A baby needs parents and carers who will love it and put its needs before their own.”

What happens during a pregnancy?

It takes 40 weeks (nine months) for a baby to be ready to leave its mother's womb (uterus). During this time it remains in the uterus, protected by a watery sac and nourished by the placenta. In the first eight weeks the baby is called an embryo and, after that, it is called a foetus.

The placenta is attached to the inner wall of the uterus and to the foetus by the umbilical cord. It develops and grows with the baby and provides total nourishment and all the oxygen the foetus needs through the cord. The umbilical cord also removes waste products from the foetus by returning them to the mother's circulatory system, and then out through her lungs and kidneys as part of her normal body functions.

During the pregnancy, everything the mother does has a direct impact on the wellbeing of the baby so it is important that the mother eats healthy food, and does not use alcohol or drugs.

Birth

A baby is born about 40 weeks after the mother's last period. The average newborn baby is about 45–50cm long and weighs between three and four kilograms.

When the baby is born, the doctor or midwife ties or clamps the umbilical cord, cutting it about 5cm from the baby's tummy. The short piece left attached to the baby dries up and usually drops off within a few days. The place where it was attached heals and becomes the navel (umbilicus, or bellybutton).

Parenthood

A newborn baby is utterly helpless and dependent on those responsible for it, all day, and every day. It needs parents and carers who will love it and put its needs before their own for the long term.

CONCLUSION

The teenage years and adolescence are a time of huge change. It can be fun, exciting, intense and wonderful. It can also be challenging. During this time, you will feel happiest and grow to your full potential if you remain true to yourself and your own personal values and beliefs, desires and goals.

Don't forget that there are people around who care for you and who will be willing to offer you advice or just be there to talk things over with. You'll make it through to adulthood one way or another, but you don't have to do the hard bits alone. There is always someone available to listen and help.



Further information and help

- **Get the Facts**
(WA Health youth website providing information on STIs, BBVs and relationships)
www.getthefacts.health.wa.gov.au
- **Freedom Centre**
(help with uncertainty about sexuality)
Ph: (08) 9228 0354
www.freedom.org.au
- **Headspace**
(help with mental health concerns)
www.headspace.org.au
- **Kids Helpline**
(online information, WebChat, email, and 24 hour telephone support for all concerns)
Ph: 1800 55 1800
www.kidshelpline.com.au
- **Sexual Assault Resource Centre**
(information and help in the case of sexual assault)
Ph: (08) 9340 1828
- **Youth Beyond Blue**
(mental health support and information)
www.youthbeyondblue.com

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one way or another, but you don't
have to do the hard bits alone.



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Department of **Health**
Public and Aboriginal Health Division

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