

## **Sex: Navigating our bodies - and minds**

**Sex is just one of the many things that can make a relationship complicated, but it doesn't have to be! Here are some tips for navigating sex and diverse bodies when getting to know someone.**

Sex is an essential part of life. It's also the single pleasure linked to biological function (okay, maybe eating ranks up there, too). For something so connected with our existence, we have a very strange relationship with it. We're fascinated by it, yet it's also taboo.

The basic motive for sex in humans is to reproduce and generate genetic variation, experience pleasure, or relieve sexual tension. During sex, oxytocin and endorphins, the feel-good hormones, are released, activating the pleasure centres in the brain. Your brain is turned *on*. You create intoxicating feelings of intimacy and desire, defying all logic and reason. You decide to move in together after two dates and regret it almost immediately.

The psychological reasons for having sex are as varied and complex as the number of individuals on the planet. The spectrum of how we experience sex is vast, from "meh" to "I saw God". Sex is a connection of one's body and mind with the body and mind of another, so we must understand the diverse possibilities of potential partners. While we may be inclined towards a certain gender (sexual orientation), there are so many ways for one's gender identity to be presented.

Once attraction and consent are established, how do we navigate this beautiful dilemma of diverse bodies and get to the good part?

Communication is key. Communication is very sexy, because it places emphasis on pleasuring each other and empowers the participants to make decisions that will benefit everyone involved. It's a form of intimacy. Clear communication builds trust, which is the foundation of a good sexual experience. You don't have to rattle off a checklist of questions before jumping into bed – this isn't an interrogation. Instead, you can subtly integrate your research into your whispered sweet nothings and flirtatious talk. Foreplay with substance.

Talk about boundaries. You, or your partner, may feel dysphoric about certain body parts. A trans man with a vagina might prefer another name for it, or may not want you to go there at all.

Trauma can also affect how we experience pleasure. It's important to establish what both of you are and aren't comfortable with showing and sharing. Lights on or off? That's actually a legitimate question.

The body is the outer shell, the interface that activates the pleasure centres. The layout is different for every person, but the function is the same, no matter what their genitals are. However, some parts of the interface are greyed out and not clickable, and that's to be respected.

The idea that sex is based solely on genital pleasure is severely limiting. It's never safe to assume things based on one's genitals. Just because they have a vagina doesn't automatically mean they like penetration. Similarly, if they have a penis, it doesn't mean that they would enjoy a blowjob. It is definitely very sexy to talk about where and how you would like to be touched, and you might even

learn something new! This also opens up the channel for communicating comfortably when something isn't working, or if either of you change your mind. Learning about each other's bodies and pleasure points is all part of the thrill and helps build intimacy.

Sex can happen any way you want it to. It doesn't have to follow the script of making out, feeling up, oral, then penetration. You can have all these things, a combination of a few parts, or something else altogether. How you feel varies from day to day and plays a part in how sex plays out. Check in with each other on how you feel, and what's on the menu.

Effective communication sets the foundation for trying new things, like role playing or BDSM. Again, establish what you and your partner want out of the new experience, and experiment with what works and what doesn't. If something seems fun at first but doesn't pan out, that's fine. There is no punishment for a failed sexual experience (unless you're into that sort of thing).

Below are some links to help you understand more about sex and diverse bodies. Explore, enjoy, learn, and grow. No matter how, where or when you have sex, listen to your body.

Resources:

[Transcending Anatomy #1: A Guide to Bodies and Sexuality for Partners of Trans People](#)

[What They Don't Tell You In Sex Ed! – A Resource For Transgender And Gender Diverse Communities On Sexual And Reproductive Health](#)

<https://www.tht.org.uk/hiv-and-sexual-health/sexual-health/trans-people/trans-masculine/navigating-sex>

<https://www.tht.org.uk/hiv-and-sexual-health/sexual-health/trans-people/trans-feminine/navigating-sex><https://ftm.aamft.org/lets-talk-about-trans-sex/>