

# LOVE, SEX RELATIONSHIPS



EMOTIONS

DESIRE

IDENTITY

FAMILY

CULTURE

I first had sex when I was 21...

...15...

...18...

...35!

I want to wait until I'm married.

I like to touch myself...

... to walk around naked...

... to dance...

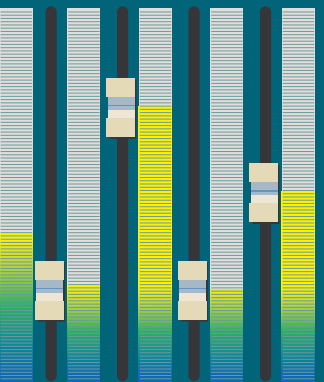
... to dress up as a girl.

I like sexy texts.

I don't fancy anyone.

Your **sexuality** is part of your personality. It's how you feel about yourself as a sexual being and how others see you.

Your emotions, feelings, behaviour, sexual orientation and culture all help to define your sexuality.



Like your body and your brain, your sexuality develops throughout your life.

It may take time to find out who you are and what you want, but that's all part of the process. **Take your time.** There's no rush.



I came out in my 50s.

I think I might be a lesbian.

Boys... girls... I can't make up my mind.

I'd rather stay home and watch TV.

I don't know what I like.

I don't want to know about this.

...being stroked.

...having my neck kissed...

...being cuddled...

... my best friend...

I love... my teacher...

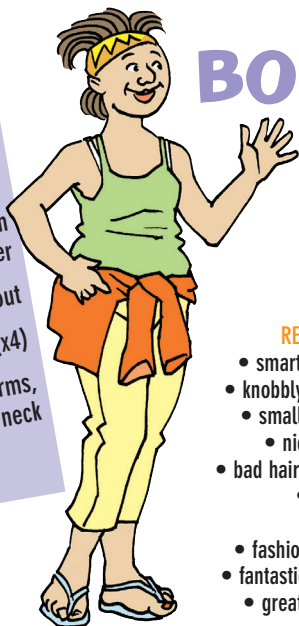
**The sad truth about why you'll never look like the idealised celebrities of your dreams is that they barely exist in the first place.**

### SOCIAL MEDIA STAR

- Three hours of hair and make-up in order to look fresh and natural
- Legs digitally elongated
- Five hours per day with personal trainer
- Cellulite airbrushed out
- Boob job (x4)
- Liposuction of arms, ankles and neck



### BODY



#### REAL YOU

- smart, funny
- knobbly knees
- small boobs
  - nice bum
- bad hair month
  - spots
  - farts
- fashion error
- fantastic smile
- great kisser

**The GREAT NEWS for you, me, and pretty much everyone else on earth, is that we're all looking for different things in a friend and in a partner. So why not seek out people who love you for what you are?**

### EATING DISORDERS

Eating disorders are serious illnesses where people's feelings about food become mixed up with how they feel about themselves. There's no single cause of an eating disorder, but they can be treated. It's important to get treatment and support as soon as possible. Talk to your doctor or a group that can help.

**“The degree of thinness exhibited by models chosen to promote products is both unachievable and biologically inappropriate”  
British Medical Association report**



Take away the photo-manipulation, the retouching, the stylist, and the make-up, and what you're left with is just another (ordinary) pretty face.

# IMAGE

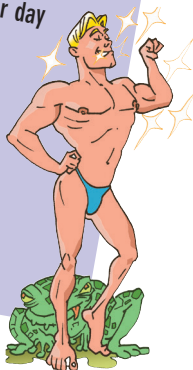
## REAL YOU

- shortest in class
- lovely eyes
- sticky-out ears
- hates sport
- great dress sense
- nice to old ladies
- always ready to help a friend



## MOVIE STUD

- Back, crack and sack wax (forget what it costs, it hurts like \*@£?&\*\*!!)
- Spots airbrushed out
- Five hours per day with personal trainer
- Calf implants
- Abdominal 'etching' (fake sixpack)
- Hair implants



At the end of the day, if you're going to enjoy spending time together then you need to be able to relax with each other and enjoy each other's company. It can take a while to find your 'soul-mates', but don't despair, it's not a race.

## HELP! My girlfriend/boyfriend tells me I'm too fat!

If they're putting you down and making you feel bad, it's not a healthy relationship. Tell them how you feel. And if they don't stop, tell them where to go.

## BORING BUT TRUE

The easiest way to stay fit and healthy is to increase the amount of physical exercise you do (play a sport, walk to school or college, dance), and keep fizzy drinks, sugar and junk food to a minimum.

## OK, NO LABELS. BUT WHAT IS...?

**ace** a word for people whose identity fits within the **asexual spectrum** (identities related to asexuality). Ace people may describe themselves using terms such as **asexual**, **aromantic**, **demis** and **grey-As**.

**aromantic** a person who doesn't feel romantic attraction to others.

**asexual** a person who feels little or no sexual attraction to others.

**bi** a person sexually or romantically attracted to more than one gender. Bi people may describe themselves using terms such as **bisexual**, **pan** or **queer**.

**cisgender** a person whose gender identity is the same as the sex they were assigned when born.

**Demi** or **demisexual** a person who only experiences sexual attraction after developing a strong emotional bond with someone.

**gay** a man sexually and/or romantically attracted to men. May also be used to describe anyone attracted to the same gender. Some non-binary

people identify as gay.

**gender** being male, female or non-binary.

A person's sex is assigned based on biological characteristics, whereas gender is influenced by a range of things including culture and society.

**gender identity** a person's sense of their own gender, which may or may not be the same as the sex they were assigned at birth.

**grey-a** a person who may experience sexual attraction very rarely or only in specific circumstances.

**heterosexual (straight)** a woman sexually and/or romantically attracted to men, or a man sexually and/or romantically attracted to women.

**kink** a sexual preference that could include a particular thought, activity or object, such as the feel or smell of leather.

**lesbian** a woman sexually and/or romantically attracted to women. Some women prefer the term 'gay'. Some non-binary people identify as lesbian.



# Sexuality



## SEXUAL ORIENTATION

can take many forms including straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual and ace. Even then, everyone's different. A lot of people are unsure what their sexual orientation is.

### non-binary

a term for people whose gender identity isn't male or female. They may identify as both, neither or with some aspects of being male or female.

### trans or transgender

an inclusive term for people whose gender identity is different from the gender they were assigned when they were born. They might decide to confirm their gender through medical treatment or surgery and also change it legally, but this is a personal decision.

**transsexual** a word used in the past for people whose gender identity is different from the gender they were assigned when they were born. Many people find the word outdated and prefer 'trans' or 'transgender'.

**transvestite** a word used in the past to describe a person who **cross-dresses** in the style of a different gender.

MALE

STRAIGHT

SEXUAL

FEMININE

# is a mix...



**What mix are you?** A 'girly girl' who loves dressing in pink? A 'man's man' who loves lifting heavy weights? **Most people are somewhere between these two extremes.** Stereotypes – where people are expected to conform to certain behaviours – bring everyone down. **Accept the person and treat everyone with respect.**

You don't choose your sexual orientation – to be straight or gay, lesbian, bisexual or ace – any more than you choose to be tall or small, black or white. It's just the way you are.

Many parents and friends will support you, whatever your sexual orientation. If yours aren't supportive, there are plenty of people you can turn to who are (see p16).

**Your sexuality may change throughout your life. Confusion and uncertainty may be difficult, but at least you can be certain you're not alone. Give yourself time.**

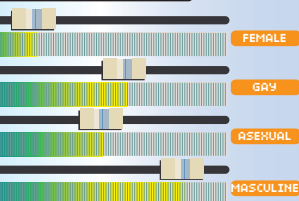
**HOMOPHOBIA** Hating, abusing or bullying people because they're gay, lesbian, bi or trans, or using 'gay' as an insult to mean 'stupid' or 'crap', is stupid and crap. So don't do it.

**BULLYING** Pushing, hitting, name-calling, persistent teasing, tormenting someone or deliberately making someone feel stupid – online or in person – can make people feel scared and powerless. But you can do something about it. If you see it, report it. If you're being bullied, tell

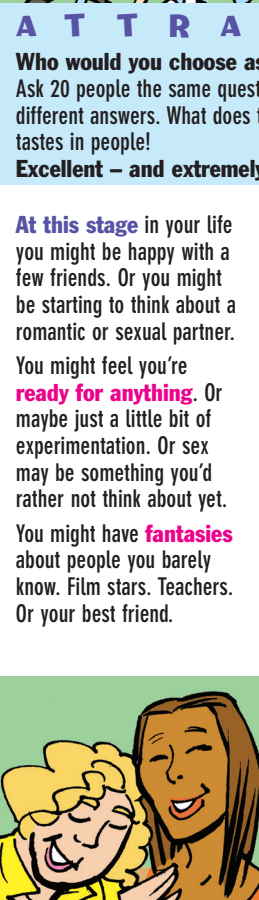
someone – a parent or carer, teacher, your doctor or the police. Call a helpline (see p16). Write a note if you can't talk about it. But don't suffer in silence.

**THE LAW**  
Bullying involving violence, assault, theft, hate crime, or harassment, abuse or intimidation over a period of time should be reported to the police.

## GENDER BLENDER



**BULLIES** If you've ever bullied someone, think about why. Some people bully because they're upset, angry or afraid. So talk to someone about what's bothering you – bullying won't help. **No one deserves to be bullied. Help people out and stick up for one another. You'll sleep better at night knowing you've contributed to someone else's happiness.**



## A T T R A C T I O N

**Who would you choose as a best friend/partner?**

Ask 20 people the same question and they'll all give you different answers. What does this say? We all have different tastes in people!

**Excellent – and extremely reassuring.**

**At this stage** in your life you might be happy with a few friends. Or you might be starting to think about a romantic or sexual partner.

You might feel you're **ready for anything**. Or maybe just a little bit of experimentation. Or sex may be something you'd rather not think about yet.

You might have **fantasies** about people you barely know. Film stars. Teachers. Or your best friend.

Your **hormones** may be telling you to *go go go* one minute, *cry cry cry* the next, and run away and hide after that.

There's no ideal progression through sexuality and relationships, any more than there's an ideal partner or body shape.

Relationships take time to explore, and mistakes are part of the journey.



## QUIZ: Are You Compatible?

1. Does your friend/partner look at you like you're weird when you pour out your most intimate feelings?  
Yes ☐ No ☐
2. Do they shower you with support when you're feeling insecure or unsure of yourself?  
Yes ☐ No ☐
3. Do they make loud and unpleasant comments about you around other people?  
Yes ☐ No ☐
4. Can you really relax and have a laugh together?  
Yes ☐ No ☐
5. Do they pressure you for sex you don't want or things you don't want to do?  
Yes ☐ No ☐
6. Are you worried that they might someday discover the hideous truth about what you're really like and then slag you off all over town?  
Yes ☐ No ☐



**SCORE** Do you really need us to score this quiz for you?

The whole point of relationships is to choose someone who genuinely likes and respects you for what you are. It's easy to get so twisted up trying to please other people that you forget what makes you you (plus, it doesn't usually work).





# RELATIONSHIPS

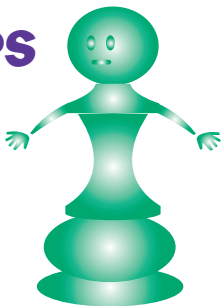
## How to tell the difference between love and a crush

A crush can be emotionally all-encompassing, exhausting and often totally unrealistic. The object of your passion may not know you exist or how you feel.

If they're a celebrity, that's the way it's likely to stay, and that may suit you just fine. If it's your sister's best friend, however, you may have a chance of it becoming real.

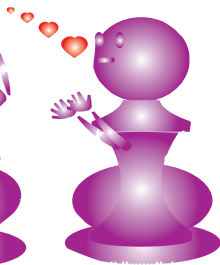
You need to talk, find out if you have things in common and get to know each other better.

A crush may become a relationship and love when it becomes real – when you tell the other person how you feel and find out that they feel the same.



## How to get a relationship

If you're looking for love and can't find it, work on developing other relationships. People who make and maintain close friendships learn valuable skills for future friendships and romantic relationships.



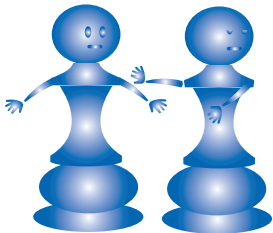
## Everyone talks about 'raging hormones', but you may find the science reassuring.

Extreme feelings of creativity, love, rage, and despair are typical of the teenage years because your body is producing high levels of the natural chemicals responsible for these feelings. Some people barely notice the ups and downs; others may swing between exhilaration and despair.

By your 20s, many of these swings will settle down and you're likely to feel more in control. If you're worried about how you feel, talk to someone who can help (see p16).

## Don't forget your friends

Sexual attraction may lead to love – or disappointment. So treat your friends well. Real friends will stick around long after you and your current object of passion have moved on.



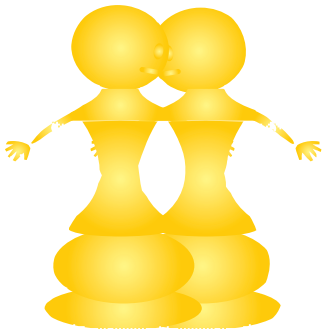
## How to tell someone you're not interested

Try to be kind and put yourself in the other person's shoes. "I just don't think we're right for each other," or "I'm sorry I don't feel the same way," is generally a better response than "You must be joking."

## How to tell someone you fancy them

"I worship and adore you!" can be off-putting. It's generally better to build up to it slowly.

Try talking about something shared – food, a film, a game, a favourite band. Eat lunch together. Message each other a few times. Get to know one another. If the object of your passion won't lend you a pencil, they're probably not interested in having a relationship either.



## Is it possible to survive rejection?

It is, but nobody will say it's easy. In case of rejection, fall back on the people who really do love you – your family, your friends, your cat, your dog. Rejection is part of life and, if you learn from it, can help your next relationship to be smarter and stronger.



## How to tell if someone really likes you

Do they talk to you, ask your opinion, listen to your answers, want to spend time with you and treat you nicely?

R-E-S-P-E-C-T is always a good start. No good relationship works without it. Anyone who can't remember your name and/or avoids you like the plague is probably not attracted to you.



# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## How can I tell if I'm ready for sex?

Ask yourself these questions:

- Do you want to have sex (for you, not for someone else)?
- Do you like, trust and respect your partner?
- Are you prepared to take responsibility for having safer sex?
- Are you prepared for the possible emotional rollercoaster of rejection or break-up?

Don't be pressured into sex, and don't put your future at risk by having unsafe sex.

## What's masturbation?

Most people masturbate (touch, stroke and rub their genitals in a way that feels pleasurable). It's a good way to get to know your own body and your own sexual responses. Once you know what turns you on, you can let a partner know too.

## What is 'having sex'?

Having sex, or making love, includes any activity that sexually arouses you and a partner. It's not just about penetration. It might include talking and flirting, kissing, looking, touching, stroking each other, kissing using tongues (french kissing), removing clothes, touching each other's genitals, putting on a condom. Whatever your sexual orientation, you can have sex in all sorts of ways – there's no magic formula.

## How do I say what I want?

Saying yes to what you want is just as important as saying no to what you don't want.

It might feel hard to say what you want, such as asking a partner to wear a condom or telling them what turns you on. You might not be sure what you want, or you might put a partner's needs first. Or you might fear being rejected, laughed at, hurt or ignored. But the more you don't say what you want, the easier it is to become resentful and the harder it is to talk.

Think about what you want and how to say it. Practise on your own. Pick your time. If someone doesn't respect your needs, they don't deserve your time and attention.

## Is it OK to say NO?

Yes. You don't have to do anything you don't want to. And even if you agreed to something at first, it's always OK to change your mind.

**And don't try and pressure someone else into doing something they don't want to. If you're not sure they consent, ask them.**

Having sex once doesn't mean you have to do it again. You might worry about upsetting a partner, but it's better than doing something you might regret.

## THE LAW

**In the UK, the legal age of consent to sex is 16.**

# ABOUT HAVING SEX



## What's safer sex?

Safer sex is taking steps to reduce the risk of pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Having safer sex (using condoms or dams) is the single most important step anyone can take to help prevent getting or passing on STIs.

## Am I the only one not having sex?

In the UK, the average age that people have sex for the first time is 16. Many wait until they're older.

## What's an orgasm?

Some experience orgasm (coming) as a feeling of muscular spasms or contractions that feel really good. Others feel tingling all over. Each orgasm feels different, but most people know when they've had one!

## How do I turn someone on?

If two people fancy each other, they're probably already turned on. A lot of being turned on happens in your head – flirting, eye-contact or a touch can cause you to feel faint with desire. Kissing, stroking, licking can all be turn-ons. The real secret is to be aware of what gives the other person pleasure.

## Can I be good at sex?

Nobody's born sexually experienced. Most of the fun is learning. Talk to your partner. Ask what they like. Be aware of their feelings as well as your own pleasure.

## Does sex hurt?

Some people experience pain, for example, when a penis first penetrates the vagina or anus. Take it slowly and sensitively: yet another reason to make sure you trust your partner.

## What's oral sex?

Licking, sucking and kissing someone's genitals. Often called a 'blow job' when done to someone with a penis, and 'going down' when done to someone with a vulva. Some people enjoy it; others aren't interested.

## What's anal sex?

Penetration of the anus by the penis. Some people think that only gay men have anal sex – but it's not true. Many gay men never have anal sex. You can be any sexual orientation. Some people enjoy it; others aren't interested. Some find it uncomfortable or painful.

You can get and pass on sexually transmitted infections through oral sex and anal sex as well as vaginal sex. Use a condom to cover the penis, or a dam (a latex or soft plastic square) to cover the vulva (external female genitals) or anus.

You have the right to...

- **CLEAR INFORMATION** about sex
- express and explore your sexuality
- **NOT BE JUDGED** because of your sexuality

- **SAY NO** to sex that you don't want
- **CHANGE YOUR MIND**
- have access to sexual health services
- confidentiality



# STAY SAFE...

**Certain behaviour is not OK – under any circumstances.**

- Telling lies or using anyone else to get what you want.
- Taking 'no' to mean 'yes'.
- Putting pressure on somebody to get what you want.
- Threatening behaviour of any kind.

Use common sense to figure out what's not OK. Does it make you (or someone else) feel bad or uncomfortable? Is it dangerous? Illegal? Or just plain stupid? Will it get you pregnant? Give you an infection? Are you scared if you don't, someone will laugh at you? Think you're not cool? Not love you?

**Believe in yourself.** If someone tries to make you feel bad about what you do/say/wear/like/are, tell them where to go.

## ALL OF THESE ARE AGAINST THE LAW

**GROOMING** – when an adult tries to gain the trust of a young person with the aim of using them for sex. This may be online, through social media, messaging, phone or meetings.

**INCEST** – sexual contact or intercourse between family members. Incest often involves abuse (for example, father with child).

**RAPE or SEXUAL ASSAULT** – doing something sexual to another person without their consent. It's still rape or assault even if the perpetrator and victim know each other.

**SENDING** sexual photos of someone who's under 18.

## HELP! I've met someone online and I think I'm in love!

It's fairly common to meet online, but if you're going to meet in person, it can also be dangerous. Always take a friend.

**Tell** a third person (preferably an adult) where you're meeting. Meet in a public place. Be suspicious of an older person who wants to be friends with a teenager.

Don't accept lifts in cars. Trust your instincts.

**If you feel funny about something, get away fast. Don't worry about looking foolish, it's better to be safe. Never send photos of yourself to someone you don't know and trust in real life.**



**If you've had sex without using contraception, or think your method might've failed, there are different types of emergency contraception you can use.**

- An **IUD** (intrauterine device) is the most effective option. It can be fitted into the uterus (womb) within 5 days of sex or the earliest time you could've ovulated (released an egg).




# LOOK AFTER YOURSELF



## HELP! My partner doesn't want to use a condom!

Condoms are the only form of contraception that help protect from pregnancy and most sexually transmitted infections (STIs) such as HIV and chlamydia.



It's not OK for anyone to push you into doing something risky.

- A pill with **ulipristal acetate** can be taken up to 5 days (120 hours) after sex.
- A pill with **levonorgestrel** can be taken up to 3 days (72 hours) after sex.

Try and get emergency contraception as soon as possible after unprotected sex.

Ask for an emergency appointment at your doctor's surgery, a contraception or sexual health clinic or a young people's service (see page 16).

## HELP! After a few drinks I can't say no!

Sex can seem like a great idea when you're drunk, stoned or high, but the risks you take when you're not in control can put you in danger.

If you, or a partner, are too drunk or high, you can't legally consent to sex.

## HELP! I'm only 15. Can I get contraception without anyone knowing?

You can get confidential free advice from a young people's service, contraception, sexual health or genitourinary medicine (GUM) clinics and your doctor or nurse (see p16). They have rules that they can only break your confidentiality if they think you or someone else is at risk of harm or of harming others. They'll always talk to you first before telling anyone else.

## CHECKLIST FOR A GOOD, SAFE NIGHT OUT

- Tell someone where you're going.
- Keep your **phone** charged up.
- Go home with a **friend**.
- Work out how to get home and keep aside enough **money**.
- Have the number for a **taxi** firm you know and trust.
- Agree a **signal** with friends in case of unwanted attention.
- Carry **condoms** if you think there's the slightest chance you might have sex. Make sure you know how to use them.

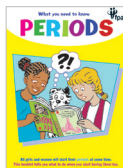


# WHERE TO GET MORE INFORMATION

For information on sexual health,  
sex and relationships visit

[www.sexwise.org.uk](http://www.sexwise.org.uk)

or check out these FPA booklets.



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These organisations can give  
you confidential information  
and advice.

## BROOK

[www.brook.org.uk](http://www.brook.org.uk)

Free and confidential sexual  
health services for people under  
25.

## CHILDLINE

0800 1111

[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

Confidential service for people  
under 19, where you can talk  
about anything.

## BEAT

[www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk](http://www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk)  
Support for anyone affected by  
eating disorders.

## FRANK

[www.talktofrank.com](http://www.talktofrank.com)

Honest information on drugs.

## RAPE CRISIS

[www.rapecrisis.org.uk](http://www.rapecrisis.org.uk)

For girls and women who've been  
raped or assaulted recently or in  
the past.

## SWITCHBOARD

– the LGBT+ helpline  
0300 330 0630

[www.switchboard.lgbt](http://www.switchboard.lgbt)

Support and information for gay  
men, lesbians, and bisexual and  
trans people.

## THE MIX

0808 808 4994

[www.themix.org.uk](http://www.themix.org.uk)

Free, confidential information and  
support for people under 25.

## YOUTH ACCESS

[www.youthaccess.org.uk](http://www.youthaccess.org.uk)

Find counselling, advice and  
information services near you.