



## TRANSFORMING SEXUAL HEALTH EDUCATION

THE HARNESS PROJECT LLC | [www.theharnessproject.org](http://www.theharnessproject.org)



# Participant Workbook

Welcome. This workbook is yours — a private, personal space to reflect, explore, and build the SaFER Sex plan that fits your actual life. There are no right or wrong answers here. Your choices are valid. Your plan belongs to you.

Work through it at your own pace during and after the workshop. Write honestly. Skip anything that doesn't apply. Come back to it as your circumstances and knowledge evolve.

Your Name (optional)	Workshop Date	Facilitator / Location
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### Key Terms to Know

These terms appear throughout the workshop and the ebook. Having a shared vocabulary helps us talk about sexual health clearly and without stigma.

**SafER Sex:** An approach to sexual health that acknowledges risk exists on a spectrum. Rather than demanding abstinence or perfection, it uses layered, realistic strategies to reduce risk — while preserving pleasure and autonomy.

**Combination prevention:** Using multiple overlapping strategies simultaneously — physical barriers, biomedical tools, regular testing, open communication, and personal habits — to achieve stronger overall protection.

**PrEP:** Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis. Medication taken before potential HIV exposure to prevent infection. Available as a daily pill or a bi-monthly injection.

**PEP:** Post-Exposure Prophylaxis. A 28-day course of emergency antiretroviral medication taken within 72 hours of a potential HIV exposure.

**Doxy-PEP:** Doxycycline Post-Exposure Prophylaxis. An antibiotic taken within 72 hours of potential exposure to bacterial STIs (chlamydia, gonorrhea, syphilis). Requires a prescription.

**ART:** Antiretroviral Therapy. Daily medication that suppresses HIV to undetectable levels in people living with HIV — dramatically improving health outcomes and eliminating sexual transmission risk.

**U=U:** Undetectable = Untransmittable. A scientifically proven principle: people living with HIV who maintain an undetectable viral load through ART cannot sexually transmit HIV to their partners.

**Dental dam:** A thin latex or polyurethane sheet used as a barrier during oral-vaginal or oral-anal sexual contact. Can also be made DIY from a non-lubricated condom.

**Fluid bonding:** A conscious, negotiated decision between partners to stop using barriers with each other — typically made after both partners have been tested and have discussed their risk levels openly.

**Harm reduction:** A philosophy and set of practical strategies that meet people where they are, reducing negative consequences of behavior without requiring that people stop the behavior entirely.

**MATCH:** A personal SafER Sex planning framework: Medications, Awareness, Tools, Communication, Habits.

**Status-neutral:** An approach to sexual health that does not assume, require disclosure of, or center HIV or STI status — treating all participants with equal dignity and care.

**Consent:** Active, ongoing, enthusiastic, informed, and freely revocable agreement to any sexual activity. Consent is not a one-time checkbox — it is a continuous conversation.



## MODULE 1: MINDSET OF PROTECTION

Module 1 focuses on the most foundational layer of Safer Sex: your relationship with yourself. Before any tool or partner, it begins with how you see and value your own health.

### Lesson 1 — Own Your Health

What does Safer Sex mean to me personally? How would I define it in my own words?

How do I currently feel about my sexual health? (Confident? Anxious? Somewhere in between?) Be honest.

What is one thing I want to change or improve about how I care for my sexual health?

Finish this sentence: 'I deserve sexual health care that...'

### Lesson 2 — The Erotic Art of Communication

What makes talking about protection or sexual health difficult for me? What gets in the way?

**Write a conversation starter I could realistically use with a new or current partner:**

**What would I want a partner to say to me about their sexual health? (Write it here — this is often what you should be saying to them.)**

**One conversation I commit to having before my next sexual encounter:**

## MODULE 2: SEXUAL BARRIERS — TOOLS FOR FREEDOM

Module 2 is about the physical tools at your disposal — condoms, oral barriers, lube, and toys. The goal is not just to know they exist, but to use them confidently and creatively.

### Lesson 3 — Condoms: The Frontline

Which type of condom (external or internal) do I most commonly use — or would I want to try?

What is one thing I learned about condom use today that surprised me or changed how I think about it?

What has made consistent condom use difficult for me in the past? How could I address that?

### Lesson 4 — Beyond the Condom: Safer Sex Oral Pleasure

Have I ever used a dental dam, glove, or barrier for oral or digital sex? If not, what has held me back?

One new barrier approach I'm genuinely willing to try:

How would I bring up using an oral barrier with a partner? Write the words you'd actually use:

## **Lesson 5 — Lube & Toys**

**What lube do I currently use? Is it compatible with the barriers and toys I use?**

**What is my current toy-cleaning routine? What, if anything, do I want to change?**

**One thing I want to stock or change about my barrier and lube supply:**

## MODULE 3: MEDICAL SHIELDS

Module 3 covers the biomedical tools that science has given us: PrEP, PEP, Doxy-PEP, ART, vaccines, and regular testing. These are powerful layers — and they work best when combined with others.

### Lessons 6–10 — Biomedical Prevention

Am I currently using any biomedical prevention tools (PrEP, ART, vaccines)? List them:

What tool from Module 3 do I want to learn more about or talk to a healthcare provider about?

When was my last HIV test? My last full STI panel (gonorrhea, chlamydia, syphilis)?

Am I currently on a regular testing schedule? If not, what frequency would work for my life?

Which vaccines am I up to date on: HPV  Hepatitis A  Hepatitis B  Mpox  Other:

One biomedical tool or test I want to discuss with a provider in the next 30 days:



## MODULE 4: REAL TALK — NAVIGATING GRAY AREAS

Module 4 is where Safer Sex meets real life — messy, complicated, nuanced real life. There are no perfect answers here, only layers and strategies.

### Lessons 11-12 — Gray Areas & Harm Reduction

What are the sexual activities I engage in most often? Where would I honestly place them on a risk continuum?

What is one harm reduction strategy I could add to my current practice — right now, this week

I ever had a situation where a planned prevention strategy didn't work? How did I handle it? What would I do differently now?

Who is one person in my life I can talk to honestly about my sexual health? (Or: who do I wish I had?)

If a condom broke tonight, I would: (Be specific — name resources, steps, timeline)



## MODULE 5: YOUR PERFECT MATCH PLAN

### The MATCH Framework

MATCH stands for Medications, Awareness, Tools, Communication, and Habits. It is your personal Safer Sex planning framework — a structure that helps you build a plan that is realistic, flexible, and entirely your own.

There is no 'right' MATCH plan. A plan that works for you — that fits your actual life, relationships, and risk level — is infinitely better than a perfect plan you'll never follow. Fill this in honestly. Revisit it often. Let it grow with you.

#### M

#### MEDICATIONS

Which biomedical prevention tools are you currently using or want to explore?

Currently using (PrEP, ART, Doxy-PEP, other):

Vaccines I'm up to date on:

Vaccines I still need to get (HPV, Hep A, Hep B, Mpox):

Questions I want to ask a healthcare provider:

Next provider appointment or telehealth check-in:

# A

## AWARENESS

What do you know about your own status, and how do you stay informed?

**My last HIV test date:**

**My last full STI panel (gonorrhea, chlamydia, syphilis, herpes) date:**

**My planned next test date:**

**How I learn about partner status (what I ask, how I bring it up):**

**What I would do if my status or a partner's status changed:**

# T

## TOOLS

Which physical barriers and tools do you use — and how will you keep them accessible?

**Barriers I currently use (condoms, dental dams, gloves):**

**Barriers I want to start using more consistently:**

**Lube I use — and its compatibility with my barriers:**

**Toy materials and my cleaning routine:**

**My restock plan (where I buy them, how often):**



## COMMUNICATION

How do you talk about sex and sexual health — before, during, and after?

**My go-to conversation starter about protection:**

**How I usually bring up testing with partners:**

**One thing I want to say to a current or future partner:**

**How I handle it when a partner resists barriers or conversations:**

**What ongoing consent looks and sounds like for me:**

# H

## HABITS

What routines keep your Safer Sex plan active, sustainable, and evolving?

My current testing frequency and my goal frequency:

How I remember medications, appointments, and refills:

How I keep barriers and lube in stock:

How I check in with partners about comfort, health, and needs:

How I will revisit and update this plan:

## COMMITMENT TO ACTION

### Your Next Steps

"Fearless belongs to you — and it starts with one step."

#### My commitment for this WEEK:

One specific, realistic action I will take in the next 7 days:

#### My commitment for this MONTH:

One larger step — a provider visit, a conversation, a test, a new tool to try:

#### One person I will share this with (optional):

Who in your life supports your health and could hold you accountable?

#### I feel more fearless because:

Complete this sentence. Say it out loud if you can.



## COMMUNICATION SCRIPT TEMPLATES

### Starting Points — Make Them Your Own

These scripts are starting points, not scripts to memorize. Read them, adapt them to your voice and relationships, and practice them in the mirror or with someone you trust. Communication about sexual health gets easier every time you do it.

#### Opening the Conversation Before Sex

"Before things go further, I want to talk about how we're going to take care of each other. What works for you?"

Tip: Adapt this for: new partners, casual encounters, people you've been with before but haven't discussed this with.

My version of this script:

#### Asking About Testing

"I get tested every [X] months — my last test was [DATE]. When was yours? It matters to me to check in about this with people I'm intimate with."

Tip: Saying your own testing frequency first reduces pressure and normalizes the question.

My version of this script:

#### Introducing PrEP

"I'm on PrEP, which means I'm protected against HIV. I'd still like us to use condoms too — both for other STIs and because I like having layers. Is that OK?"

Tip: This is honest, clear, and invites the partner into a collaborative conversation.

My version of this script:

## Bringing Up Barriers Mid-Moment

"Hold on — let me grab a condom. Give me just a second."

Tip: Said with confidence and without apology, this normalizes barrier use without making it a negotiation.

My version of this script:

## Responding When a Partner Resists

"My comfort with this requires a barrier. This is important to me and it's about caring for both of us. Can we work with that?"

Tip: This is a firm boundary stated with care. You do not need to justify it beyond this.

My version of this script:

## Fluid Bonding Conversation

"I've been thinking about whether we want to change how we use barriers together. I want to make sure we both feel good about it — can we talk about it openly and maybe both get tested first?"

Tip: Fluid bonding should always be a conscious, mutual, tested decision — never assumed.

My version of this script:

## After a Potential Exposure

"Something happened and I'm concerned. I need to figure out my next steps — PEP is available up to 72 hours. Can you help me think through this or go with me?"

Tip: Having this language ready before you need it dramatically reduces panic and improves decision-making speed.

My version of this script:



## COMMITMENT TRACKER

### Track Your Progress

Write your commitments here. Check them off. Update them as your plan evolves. Your Safer Sex plan is a living document — not a test you pass or fail.



## KEY RESOURCES

### National Resources

**HIV Testing Locator:** [gettested.cdc.gov](http://gettested.cdc.gov) | [hivtest.org](http://hivtest.org)

**PrEP Locator:** [preplocator.org](http://preplocator.org) | [getyourprep.com](http://getyourprep.com)

**PrEP/PEP Hotline (24/7):** 1-888-448-4911

**CDC STI Information:** [cdc.gov/std](http://cdc.gov/std)

**U=U Campaign:** [preventionaccess.org](http://preventionaccess.org)

**Planned Parenthood:** [plannedparenthood.org](http://plannedparenthood.org) | 1-800-230-PLAN

**HIV.gov:** [hiv.gov](http://hiv.gov)

**Home Testing:** [mylabbox.com](http://mylabbox.com) | [everlywell.com](http://everlywell.com)

**HPV / Mpox / Hep Vaccines:** [cdc.gov/vaccines](http://cdc.gov/vaccines)

### Houston Local Resources

**Legacy Community Health:** [legacycommunityhealth.org](http://legacycommunityhealth.org) | 713-830-3000

**Avenue 360 Health & Wellness:** [avenue360.org](http://avenue360.org) | 713-524-4567

**Montrose Center:** [montrosecenter.org](http://montrosecenter.org) | 713-529-0037

**Houston Health Dept — STD/HIV:** [houstontx.gov/health](http://houstontx.gov/health) | 713-794-9320

**UTHealth Houston HIV Clinic:** [uth.edu/hiv](http://uth.edu/hiv) | 713-500-6750

### All HARNESS Materials (Educators Hub):

[www.theharnessproject.org/educators-hub](http://www.theharnessproject.org/educators-hub)



