

HARNESS PROJECT

Facilitator's Guide

Fearless, Aware, and
Protected Curriculum



Stay Informed. Stay Protected. Stay Fearless.



HARNES

FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

Leading Transformative Sexual Health Education

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The HARNESS Project

Welcome, Facilitator!

Thank you for choosing to facilitate Fearless, Aware, and Protected. This guide will equip you with everything you need to lead transformative sexual health education rooted in empowerment, not fear. Your role is to create a brave space where participants feel safe to learn, question, and grow.

Your Role & Mindset

As a facilitator, you are not a lecturer—you are a guide, a listener, and a holder of space. Your job is to empower participants to make their own informed decisions, not to tell them what to do.

Core Facilitator Principles

Empathy and Non-Judgment: Approach all topics with sensitivity and an open mind. Recognize that participants come from diverse backgrounds and experiences.

Empowerment: Your goal is to empower participants to make their own informed decisions, not to dictate behavior.

Confidentiality: Establish clear ground rules about confidentiality to foster trust and open sharing.

Active Listening: Pay close attention to participants' questions and concerns. Validate their experiences and feelings.

Cultural Humility: Be aware of your own biases and be open to learning from participants' diverse perspectives.

Sex-Positivity: Sexual health is about freedom and pleasure, not shame or fear. Model this attitude.

Creating a Brave Space

Establish ground rules at the beginning of every session:

Confidentiality: "What's said here, stays here; what's learned here, leaves here."

Respect: Honor all experiences, identities, and opinions. No judgment.

"I" Statements: Speak from personal experience, not generalizations.

Right to Pass: Anyone can decline to answer or participate in an activity.

Embrace Discomfort: Growth happens at the edge of our comfort zones. It's okay to feel uncomfortable; it's not okay to be disrespectful.

Ask Questions: There are no stupid questions. Curiosity is encouraged.

Language Matters: Use inclusive, non-stigmatizing language. Correct yourself if you slip.

Facilitation Best Practices

Before the Workshop

Read the entire ebook "Fearless, Aware, and Protected" by Christopher Zacharie

Review all lesson plans in the Master Curriculum document

Practice condom, dental dam, and glove demonstrations on models until you're confident

Gather all materials (see checklists in workshop documents)

Arrange seating in a circle or U-shape to promote visibility and connection

Test any AV equipment (projector, speakers) if using presentation slides

Prepare flip charts with prompts written in advance

Photocopy all handouts (1 per participant + extras)

Check in with yourself: Are you comfortable with the content? What are your own biases or discomforts?

During the Workshop

Start on time and honor breaks. Participants need mental rest.

Read the room: Adjust pacing based on energy levels and engagement.

Use open-ended questions to spark discussion: "What comes up for you?" "How does this land?"

Validate all contributions: "Thank you for sharing that." "That's a great question."

Redirect off-topic discussions gently: "That's important. Let's put a pin in it and come back after this section."

Normalize laughter and awkwardness—sexual health can be both serious and playful.

Monitor for anyone who seems triggered or distressed. Check in during breaks.

Keep time ruthlessly. Use a timer if needed.

Model vulnerability: Share appropriate personal insights when relevant ("I used to think...").

Close each section with a clear takeaway or action item.

Handling Difficult Moments

Disrespectful comments or jokes: Address immediately but kindly: "I appreciate your participation, but that comment doesn't align with our ground rule of respect. Let's refocus."

Participants sharing trauma: Thank them for trusting the group. Acknowledge their courage. Redirect to resources: "I'm glad you felt safe sharing. There are counselors and hotlines that can provide more support." Follow up privately during a break.

Misinformation or myths: Gently correct with evidence: "That's a common belief, but the science actually shows..." Avoid shaming the participant.

Silence or low engagement: Use smaller group discussions or pair shares to lower the barrier to participation. Reassure: "It's okay if this feels new or uncomfortable."

Someone dominates the conversation: Redirect kindly: "Thank you for that. Let's hear from someone we haven't heard from yet."

Module-Specific Facilitation Tips

MODULE 1: Mindset of Protection

This module sets the tone for everything. Emphasize that safer sex = freedom, not restriction. The "Two Words" icebreaker is powerful—acknowledge all responses, including fear-based ones, then pivot to the empowerment frame. During communication practice, normalize awkwardness and celebrate brave attempts. Remind participants: practice makes confidence.

MODULE 2: Sexual Barriers

Hands-on practice is key. Don't rush the condom demonstrations—allow time for everyone to practice on models. Keep the energy playful but educational. When teaching dental dams and gloves, normalize oral and manual sex as valid sexual activities. The DIY dental dam activity is empowering—celebrate participants' resourcefulness. During the lube station, keep it appropriate (hands only!) but informative.

MODULE 3: Medical Shields

This module is science-heavy. Break down medical terminology (PrEP, PEP, Doxy-PEP, ART) into plain language. Use the ebook's accessible definitions. Emphasize that U=U (Undetectable = Untransmittable) is a FACT, not theory—this reduces stigma. Case studies help participants see themselves in the scenarios. Provide clear access info: where to get PrEP, how to get PEP in an emergency, which vaccines to prioritize. Combat the myth that PrEP is only for certain groups—anyone at risk can use it.

MODULE 4: Real Talk - Gray Areas

This module addresses kinks, fetishes, and harm reduction—topics often left out of traditional sex ed. Normalize diverse sexual practices while centering consent, communication, and boundaries. When discussing harm reduction, emphasize compassion over perfection: "Good enough is better than perfect." Scenario discussions help participants apply principles to messy, real-world situations. Remind them: mistakes happen. What matters is the next step.

MODULE 5: Your Perfect MATCH

This is the culmination. Give participants quiet, reflective time to create their personalized plans. The MATCH framework (Medications, Awareness, Tools, Communication, Habits) organizes their thinking. Pair sharing builds accountability and peer support. End with commitments: What's ONE action you'll take this week? Celebrate their growth and remind them: "Your plan is living—adapt without perfectionism."

Assessment & Evaluation

Assess participant learning through:

Observation: Are participants practicing skills correctly? Engaging in discussions?

Check-ins: Quick pulse checks during the workshop ("Thumbs up if you're following along")

Reflection shares: Participants share one thing they learned or one question they still have

MATCH plan completion: Review plans to ensure participants understand how to layer protection

Post-workshop survey: Gather feedback on what was most helpful, what needs improvement

Sample Post-Workshop Survey Questions

On a scale of 1-5, how confident do you feel having safer sex conversations? (Before workshop / After workshop)

What was the most valuable thing you learned today?

What topic would you like more time on?

Do you feel empowered to create your own safer sex plan? (Yes/No/Somewhat)

Will you access any of the resources provided? If so, which ones?

What would make this workshop even better?

Resources for Facilitators

Required Reading

- "Fearless, Aware, and Protected" ebook by Christopher Zacharie (complete read)
- CDC HIV Prevention Guidelines: [cdc.gov/hiv](https://www.cdc.gov/hiv)
- U=U Resources: [preventionaccess.org](https://www.preventionaccess.org)

Where to Get Materials

- Anatomical models: Health education suppliers (Nasco, Health Edco)
- Free condoms: Local health departments, Planned Parenthood, LGBTQ+ centers
- Dental dams: Order from sexual health retailers (Lovehoney, Good Vibrations)
- Lube samples: Many brands offer sample packs for educators

Additional Training

- Harm Reduction Coalition: [harmreduction.org](https://www.harmreduction.org) (online courses)
- LGBTQ+ Cultural Competency Training: [fenwayfocus.org](https://www.fenwayfocus.org)
- Trauma-Informed Facilitation: [samhsa.gov](https://www.samhsa.gov)

Facilitator Self-Care

Facilitating sexual health education can be emotionally taxing, especially when participants share trauma or difficult experiences. Take care of yourself:

Debrief with a trusted colleague or supervisor after workshops

Set boundaries: You are not a therapist. Refer participants to professional support when needed.

Take breaks during long workshops to recharge

Process your own emotions and reactions—journaling can help

Celebrate your impact: You are empowering people to take control of their health!

Final Message to Facilitators

You are doing critical, life-saving work. By facilitating Fearless, Aware, and Protected, you are helping people reclaim their sexual health from fear and stigma. You are building a world where pleasure and protection go hand in hand. Thank you for being part of this movement.

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