SEXUAL COMMUNICATION

Communication is an important aspect of sexual health and pleasure. An open, honest dialogue with a sexual partner supports gratifying and safe sexual experiences. It may seem challenging or awkward at first, but the more you practice, the easier and more comfortable it will be.

Talking with your partner
The goal is to create and foster an environment where you and your partner can talk freely about sex. In this environment, someone can say “no” without judgment, fear, or pressure to change their mind, and someone can say “yes” with the understanding that “yes” now does not mean “yes” every time.

If you want to have an honest and open dialogue with your partner(s), try:
- asking about preferences
  - What are you into? What turns you off?
- sharing favorite and least favorite words for body parts and sexual acts
- sharing what you think is silly and what you think is sexy
- using phrases such as
  - I prefer when you..., I love when you..., or I want you to ... instead of: I hate when you..., or I don’t like when you...

Checking in
People have different desires, limits, and curiosities that can change over time. Whether you have just met your partner or you know each other well, it is important to check in and talk with one another. Talk before sex in order to avoid “trial and error” situations, talk during sex to provide guidance and receive feedback, and talk after sex to reinforce what worked for each partner.

Try these pro tips for communication:
- confirm consent via verbal affirmation
- listen just as much as you are asking and telling
- respond accordingly and with respect
- make specific requests
- speak up if you are unsure or change your mind
- continue to check in with your partner

Like sex itself, sexual communication gets better, and sexier, with practice. Start with what is most comfortable for you. Have fun!