

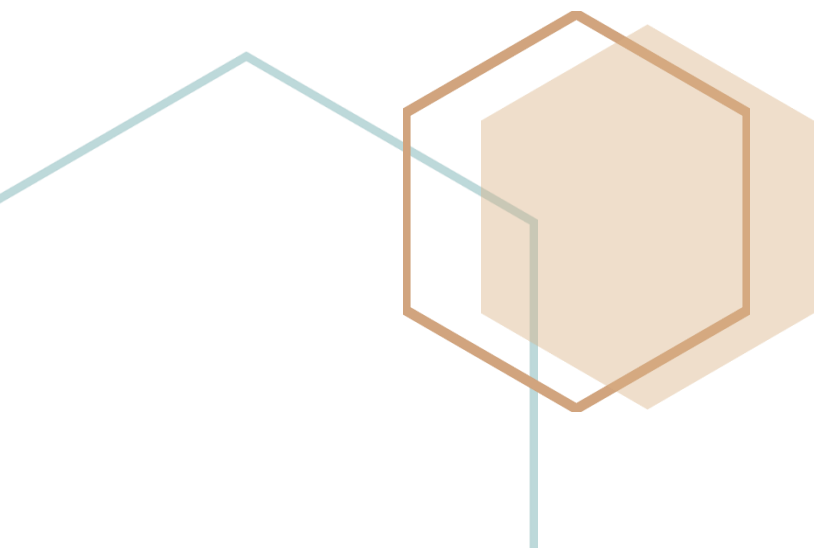


Am I Ready?



Questions Journal

Deciding to have sex for the first time is an important choice. After all, sexual experiences are deeply personal and private. Here are some helpful questions to ask yourself if you're thinking about having sex for the first time. They are just for you to think about – you don't have to share your answers with anyone to “prove” that you're ready.





Am I Ready?

Questions Journal

Family and Cultural Values

Family and cultural values are often very strongly held beliefs. If your values are different from your family's, that might lead to conflict. You might feel comfortable talking with one family member about whether to have sex, but not another. What you choose to share with your family is personal – it depends on your individual relationship with your family members.

1. What values about sex are important to my family?

2. On which values do I agree or disagree with them?

3. Would I feel comfortable telling my family about my decision?

Remember...

You are the only person who can decide whether you are ready to have sex. You should engage willingly, never through pressure or force. The truth is that even if you prepare as much as possible for your first time, your expectations about sex – good and bad – may not be met. You are in control of your decision to have sex or not.

Note: Understanding issues related to sexual health is critical for your long-term health. You can learn more about pregnancy, STIs, and safer sex in the [Am I Ready](#) section of OAR's [Sex Ed. For Self-Advocates](#).



4. Are there any family, religious, or cultural beliefs I would be violating if I chose to have sex?

5. Am I prepared to deal with how my family and friends may react, whether positively or negatively?

Personal and Emotional Risks

There are a variety of risks associated with have sex. Understanding those risks and how you will handle them is crucial to deciding whether you are ready to have sex for the first time.

Questions About Me

1. Is it important to me to be in a committed relationship, in love, and/or married to the other person before having sex for the first time?

2. Would I be compromising or changing any of my core beliefs by having sex? If so, how would I feel about it?



3. Do I have a way to reflect on and deal with any emotions I might experience after having sex, such as talking with a friend or writing in a journal?

Questions About My Relationship

1. Am I comfortable with where we are in the relationship?

2. How would having sex change our relationship or expectations in the future?

3. Have my partner and I discussed our expectations, hesitations, and what sexual activities we feel comfortable doing?

4. Do I feel my partner and I can communicate our needs and desires to each other, and respect each other's choices?



Communication

1. During sex, would I be prepared to communicate with my partner if I start to feel confused, upset, happy, or surprised about anything?

- a. If I am nonverbal, low-verbal, or might have trouble talking if overwhelmed, have I planned for other ways to communicate these things?

2. If anything unpleasant happens while we are having sex, will I know what to do?

3. Do my partner and I **both** want to have sex, without coercion, force, or pressure?



Physical

1. Would I have a safe and private place to engage in sexual activity, such as my bedroom?

2. Have I discussed any sensory sensitivities I might have with my partner (such as not liking to be touched in a certain place or way), and are we prepared to address them if new ones arise?

Health

1. Do I know what sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) are, what the symptoms are, and how they can be contracted?

2. Do my partner and I agree on how we can best engage in safe, protected sex (condoms, dental dams, birth control, etc.)?



Pregnancy

1. What are my values on how to handle unplanned pregnancy?

2. Do I have a plan if I or my partner becomes pregnant? Which option is best for us based on our values and the resources available to us?
