

# Kindling Our Curiosity

*A Trans Sexual Health Zine*



**Volume 1**  
What is Sexual Health?

**Trans Care BC**  
Provincial Health Services Authority

Trans Care BC operates on the unceded lands of many Indigenous peoples. This zine was created on the unceded lands of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations, and we recognize their stewardship of this land for generations. We recognize and celebrate the contributions of Two-Spirit, Indigiqueer and trans Indigenous people within these communities, whose voices and experiences enrich our understandings of sexuality, gender and community care.

This zine was written and created by staff and contractors for Trans Care BC in 2024. Many subject matter experts contributed to the vision and content, and we are grateful for their trust, vulnerability and contributions to this work.

Themes and framing imagery in this zine were inspired by resources created by the Native Youth Sexual Health Network and the game *Let the Fire Soothe* by Lyra Vega. Information and ideas were influenced by the book *Trans Sex* by Lucie Fielding, as well as the zines of Mira Bellwether, specifically *FTW: A Zine About the Sex Lives of Trans Women*, and the contributors to *Learning Good Consent*.



## Content note

While this zine celebrates trans sexuality, it also discusses topics that may bring up complicated feelings, like body parts, and acknowledges the potential for difficult experiences that can lead to trauma. Some content may prompt unexpected emotions. We encourage you to prioritize self-care while reading.

*Financial contribution:*

# *This is not a safer sex guide.*

## **What we won't be doing:**

- Telling you what sex acts are “risky” and “safe”
- Describing how STIs are passed or when and how to get tested
- Discussing birth control and pregnancy

## **What we will be doing:**

- Asking questions, like:
  - What does sexual health mean for you?
  - What experiences do you want to have?
  - What feelings do you want to experience?
  - How do you want to keep yourself safe?
- Providing resources that may help you with the above

As trans, Two-Spirit, and non-binary people, it can be difficult to access any health care—let alone sexual health care. Decisions about sexual health may seem like a balancing act between safety and pleasure. We want to encourage you to prioritize both.

This zine discusses nuances of our sexual health and validates the difficult, exciting, and complex experiences trans, Two-Spirit and non-binary people have exploring our sexualities.

## *How to use this zine*

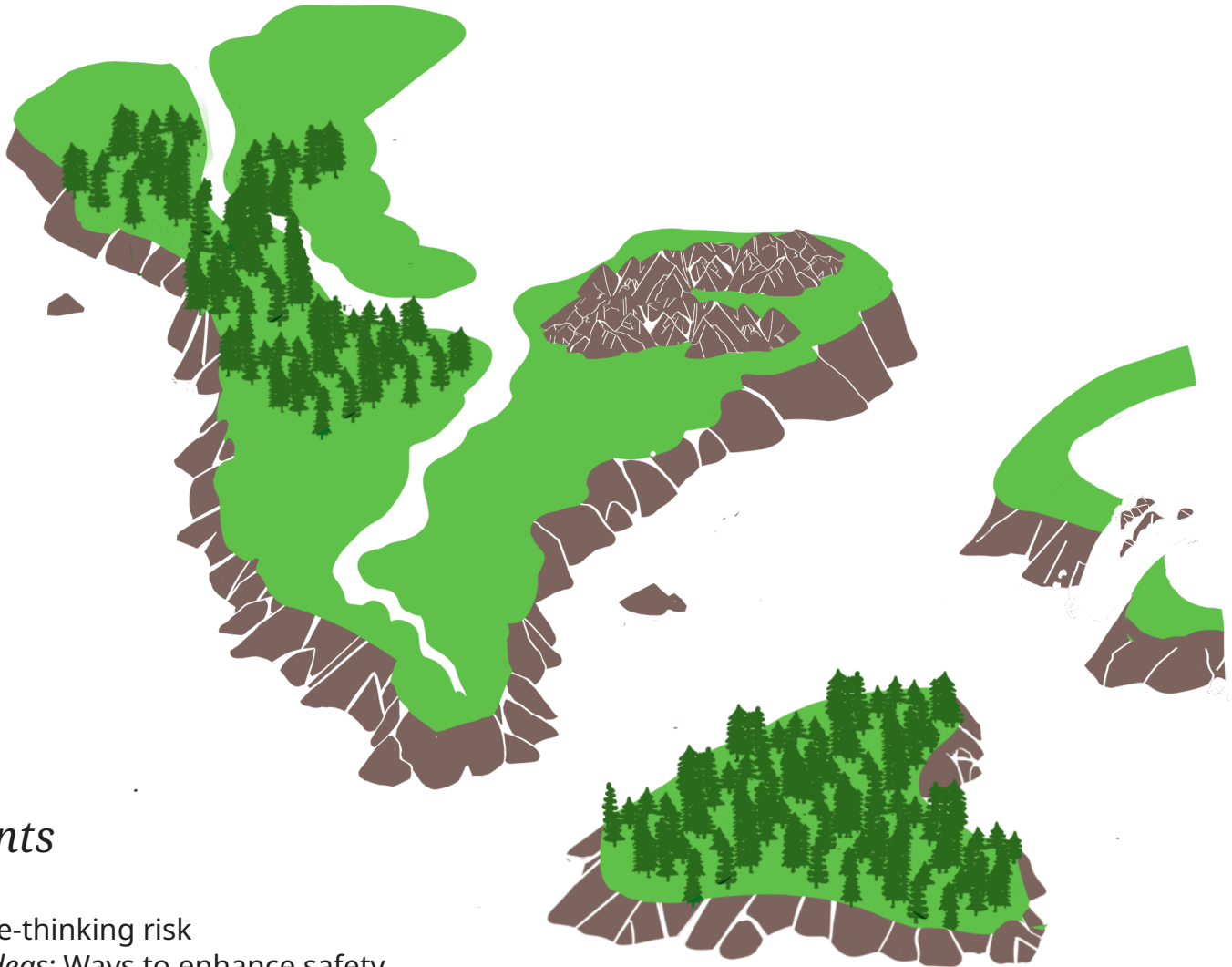
- Print it, download it, screenshot sections of it
- Scribble on it, highlight it, make notes on it
- Cross out language or sections that don't feel relevant or useful
- Fill out activities on these pages, in a journal, or in a notes app
- Flip through it and take away one useful piece of information

There are some prompts and activities included.  
They are optional. Pick and choose what you want to do.

# 1

# What is Sexual Health?

We each define good sexual health, risk & safety differently.  
There is no “one size fits all” way to approach these topics.



## *Contents*

- Re-thinking risk
- *Ideas:* Ways to enhance safety
- *Activity:* What keeps you warm?
- Finding safety in boundedness
- Decolonizing sexual health

# *Re-thinking risk*

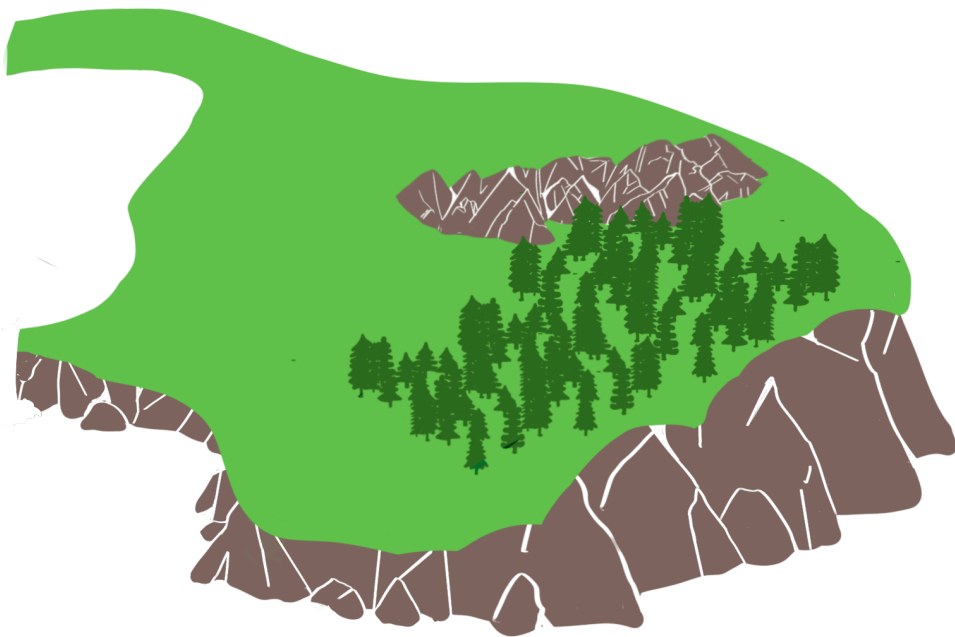
Discussions of sexual health & safety often focus on risks, such as risks of infection, interpersonal dangers, or pregnancy. When safety and sex is only discussed in this way, it can seem like the safest bet is just to not to date, or not have sex at all.

But, for many of us—denying ourselves the pleasure, the release, the intimacy of sex? That's a risk in itself!

When we choose not to pursue sexual activities and experiences we're interested in, we may risk loneliness, a lack of connection, validation, and miss opportunities to feel affirmed in our gender. We may risk not getting to live as our authentic selves.

So, let's think about:

- What we want to make space for & go after
- How to do that in ways that we feel supported and safe



# *Ideas: Ways to enhance safety*

## **Question and resist**

- Work through shame and judgment from society, peers, family, and even our own minds regarding our desires and the kinds of sex we crave
- Challenge colonial ideas about gender and sexuality
- Question the view that heterosexual, monogamous, or binary approaches to sexuality, relationships, and gender are the most valid or only ones
- Recognize and celebrate the importance of pleasure
- Assert our autonomy & recognize its value
  - We all have the right to make informed decisions, which includes:
    - Having access to detailed information about potential outcomes of our actions (aka “risks”)
    - Knowing and exploring our options for what to do if something unsafe or unexpected occurs

## **Care for our bodies**

- Take proactive measures. These might include:
  - Getting vaccinated for:
    - [HPV \(human papillomavirus\)](#)
    - [Mpox](#)
    - [Hepatitis A](#) and [Hepatitis B](#)
    - [Covid-19](#)
    - For more information on these vaccines, visit [immunizebc.ca/vaccines-by-disease](https://immunizebc.ca/vaccines-by-disease)
  - Accessing prophylactic medications:
    - [HIV PrEP & PEP](#)
    - [Doxy PrEP & PEP](#)
  - Using contraception:
    - Hormonal & non-hormonal options
    - Barriers (external & internal condoms)
- Bring preferred safer sex supplies (condoms, oral dams, gloves, lubricant, etc)
- Consider using [drug checking kits](#), [point-of-care HIV tests](#), [Covid-19 tests](#), [masks](#), air filters and/or good ventilation, protective nasal sprays and CPC mouthwashes
- Get routine STI screening
- Ask partners about their STI screening & safer sex practices
- Access affirming support and resources, including clinical care (doctors, nurses) and peer support

## **Build community**

- Seek out and nurture friendships with people who have similar sexual and romantic orientations and relationship styles
  - e.g., Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bi/pan, ace, queer, non-monogamous, kinky
- Explore and join groups based on shared interests and values
  - e.g., Trans, 2SLGBTQ+, queer, non-monogamous, kink, racial justice groups
- Learn about ways these communities strive to create safety

## Plan ahead

- Know where to turn for help if we find ourselves in dangerous or harmful situations
- Have safety plans in place for dates or hookups. For example:
  - Letting a friend know where we'll be and having them check in
  - Using technology, like GPS tracking apps, to share location with a trusted contact
- Get routine STI screening
- Bring our own preferred safer sex supplies
- Establish and maintain our boundaries. For example,
  - Practice saying no when something doesn't sit right with you
  - Practice shifting the conversation to something you're excited about
  - Take a moment to review your options for leaving

## Questions to consider

- What does good sexual health look like for me?
- What helps me feel connected to my body?
- What helps me feel connected to my gender?
- What do I need to be sexually happy?
- What contributes to happiness in my relationships?
- What do I need to feel safe?
- What other factors influence my sense of safety?
- Who can I trust to share details with about upcoming dates?
- Who do I feel comfortable to share with about my dates and sexual experiences?
- Are there any new sexual health strategies I would like to take or learn more about?



## Further reading

- [Tips for Safer Online Dating and Dating App Use](#), RAINN
  - General safety tips for online dating, aimed at all audiences
- [Safe Dating Tips \(PDF\)](#), FORGE
  - General safety tips for online dating, aimed at trans, gender non-conforming and gender non-binary people
- [Trans Safe Dating Tips \(PDF\)](#), Center on Halsted
  - Advice on disclosure







# *What keeps you warm?*

## *Dreams*

### **Reflect on a fantasy or desire you hold.**

Focus on the feelings or emotions that your fantasy brings up. Try to observe them non-judgmentally. Don't worry about whether the fantasy is physically possible.

What is exciting about your fantasy?

What are some of the feelings you associate with it?

## *Pleasure*

### **Reflect on an experience of pleasure.**

Pleasure can help us connect to various parts of ourselves, including our body, our gender, and our spirit.

You might have felt it in the sensations tingling through your skin, the images dancing in your mind, the sounds echoing in your ears, the thoughts racing through your head, the emotions flooding your heart, the experience of different mental states, or the fantasies playing out in your imagination.

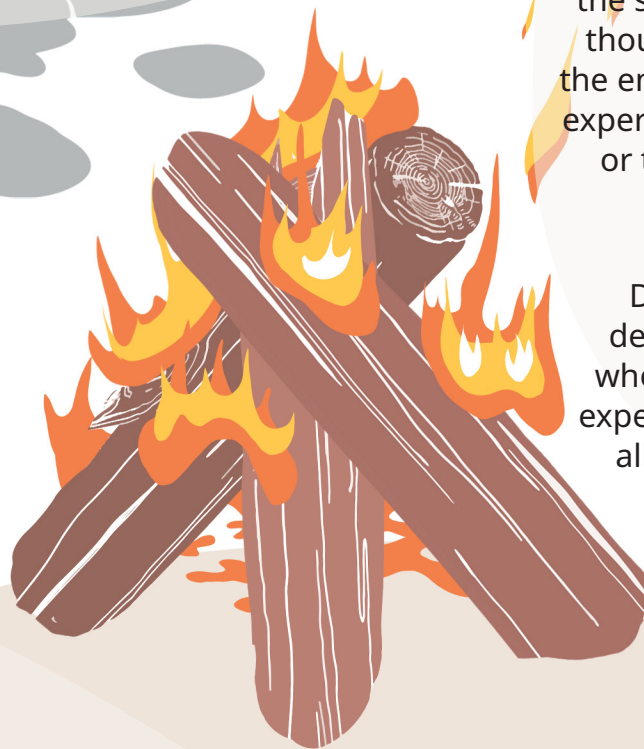
Describe the memory in as much detail as you can: where you were, who you were with, your emotional experience, physical sensations, and all the vivid details that made that experience unforgettable.

## *Community*

Reflect on an experience where you felt a sense of community.

Community is varied and can be found in many places. You might have found it in close friends, larger groups, your family, online spaces, or even within yourself.

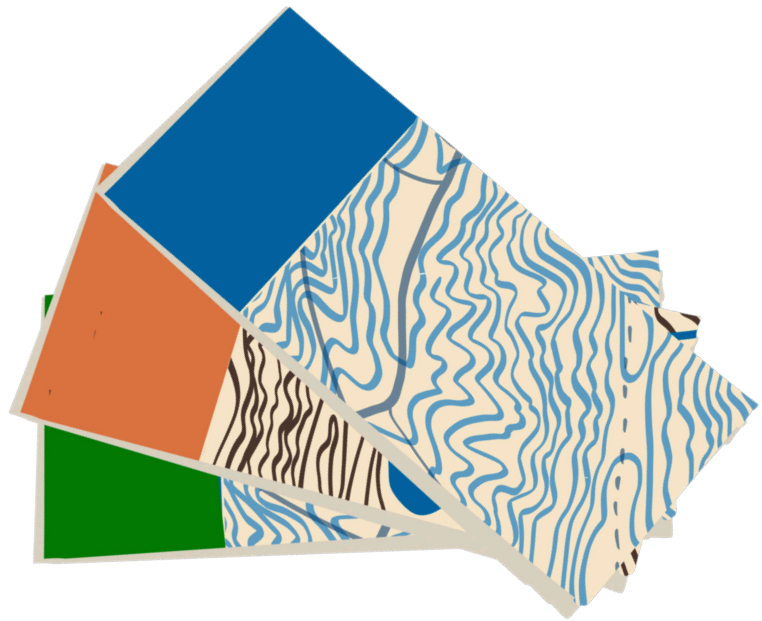
Describe the memory in as much detail as you can: where you were, who you were with, your emotional experience, physical sensations, and all the details that helped you feel part of a community.



# *Finding safety in boundedness*

Have you heard of the idea of [boundedness](#)? Lucie Fielding, a sex therapist and educator, introduced this concept to illustrate how we can establish a safer space for ourselves in specific moments. It's like drawing a protective bubble around us during interactions where we can feel secure, free, and at ease.

Boundedness offers an alternative to conventional ideas of safety, which can be difficult to attain in a world affected by discrimination and oppression. Instead, it strives to cultivate trust and relaxation in specific moments, even amid challenging circumstances.



Some ways to establish boundedness in an interaction are to:

- Negotiate and set expectations: What will this encounter look like? When will it end? Who will be involved, and how?
- Understand the risks involved
- Consent to these risks in a freely given, reversible, informed, enthusiastic, and specific way (per Planned Parenthood's [FRIES model](#))
- Check-in: All parties check in with themselves and each other throughout to ensure everyone continues to consent to the activity
- Create plans for unexpected or difficult situations

For a great example of two people establishing boundedness, check out "[Sexual Negotiation featuring Midori](#)" on the YouTube channel [sexplanations](#).

# *Decolonizing sexual health*

Safety and health have been especially compromised for Indigenous people, particularly Two-Spirit, Indigiqueer, and trans Indigenous people. Colonialism has ongoing impacts on Indigenous people's traditional understandings and expressions of gender, sexuality, and pleasure.

There are many Indigenous-led initiatives striving to address and mitigate these harms, and to recognize sexuality as an integral aspect of health and well-being. Some examples include:

First Nations Health Authority's [Sexual Wellbeing Learning Model \(PDF\)](#).

- A framework that can be used to “build and strengthen conversations around traditional knowledge and ways of being in regards to healthy sexuality.”

Community-Based Research Centre's [Medicine Bundle](#)

- This bundle includes an HIV self-test kit, Indigenous medicines, sexual health supplies, and additional resources

[Native Youth Sexual Health Network](#)

- Projects & toolkits on topics related to reproductive health, rights and justice
- [Four Fire Model of harm reduction](#): framework that centers cultural safety, reclamation of cultural practices, self determination and sovereignty

BCCDC's [Chee Mamuk](#) program

- Innovative and culturally appropriate training, educational resources and wise practice models in STIs, hepatitis and HIV

Métis Nation of Ontario's [A place in the circle](#)

- Resource for helping understand and support Two-Spirit people.

Community-Based Research Centre's module: [Care in Action: HPV Awareness & Prevention](#)

- Learning module for service providers
- Offers information about HPV, guidance on vaccination & screening for HPV-related cancers

Trans Care BC's module: [Indigenous Gender Diversity: creating culturally relevant and gender-affirming services](#)

- Learning module for service providers to help increase awareness, knowledge & skills for improving access for gender diverse Indigenous people across BC

For more resources, see Trans Care BC's [web page on Information for Indigenous People](#).

# Resources & support

## Resources

- [SmartSex Resource](#)
  - Information on [STIs](#) and [STI fact sheets](#), a [clinic finder](#) and sexual health services
- [Options for Sexual Health](#)
  - Information on [STIs](#), [birth control](#), [abortion](#), and [HIV](#)
  - Ask any sex-related question using the [Sex Sense](#) resource
- [Health Initiative for Men](#)
  - Resources for gay, bisexual and queer men and [gender diverse people](#) on [sexual health](#) (HIV PrEP & PEP), [mental health](#) and [substance use](#)
- [YouthCo](#)
  - Youth-led organization with programs and resources on sexual health & harm reduction
- [Native Youth Sexual Health Network](#)
  - Organization by and for Indigenous youth focused on sexual & reproductive health, rights and justice
- [reproductiveaccess.org](#)
  - Downloadable PDFs on [abortion](#), [contraception](#), and [miscarriage](#)
- [Trans Care BC](#)
  - Health information, peer support resources & help navigating care
- [Trans Rights BC](#)
  - Human rights information

## Sexual health guides

- [Brazen 2.0: Trans Women's Safer Sex Guide](#), the 519
- [FTW: A Zine About the Sex Lives of Trans Women](#), Mira Bellwether
- [PRIM3D: A sexual health guide for queer trans men, transmasculine, and non-binary people](#), Gay Men's Sexual Health Alliance
- [PUMP: Sexual Pleasure & Health Resource Guide for Transmen who have Sex with Men](#), Callen-Lorde
- [TransLash Guide to Trans Sex: T4T and Trans-Cis](#), TransLash
- [Safer sex for trans bodies](#), Human Rights Campaign

## Support

- [Trans Lifeline](#)
  - Connects trans people to the support and resources we need to survive and thrive
  - Canada-wide toll-free line: 1-877-330-6366
- [Salal Sexual Violence Support Centre](#)
  - 24-Hour Crisis & Information Line:
    - Canada-wide toll-free line: 1-877-392-7583
    - Lower Mainland: 604-255-6344
- **Native Youth Sexual Health Network:** [Two-Spirit Mental Health Peer Support Manual](#)



