

# Taking a Sexual History

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# Let's Talk About Sex

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**"WHETHER YOU HAVE CHILDREN, TEACH CHILDREN, OR ARE AROUND CHILDREN AT ALL... THIS MOVIE IS A MUST SEE."**  
*-HUGH JACKMAN*

# Let's Talk About Sex

*a film by James Houston*

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# Sexuality in a Box

Male

Masculine

Female Partners



Female

Feminine

Male Partners



# The Many Dimensions of Sexuality

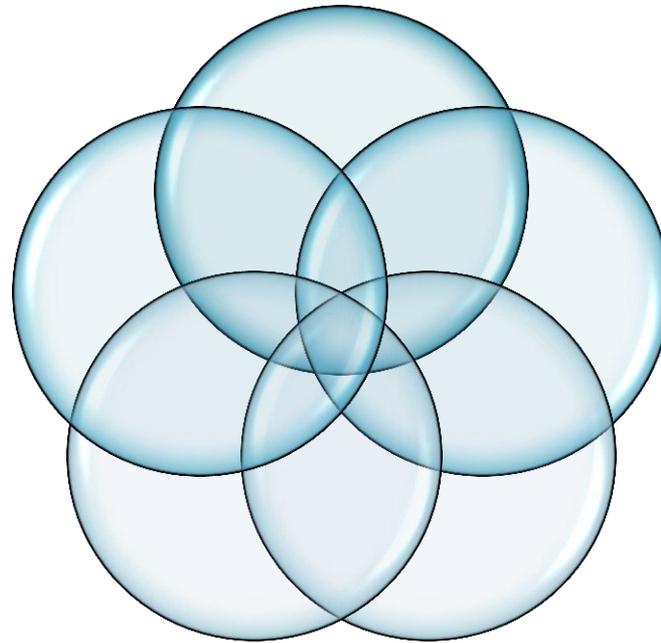
Sexual  
Orientation

Gender  
Expression

Attraction/  
Desire

Gender  
Identity

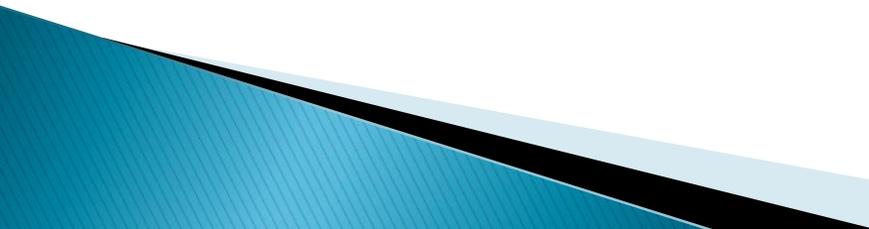
Partner  
Choices



# Sexuality as a Continuum



# Clinician Concerns and Sexual History

- ▶ Confidentiality
  - ▶ Getting accurate information
  - ▶ What to ask
  - ▶ How to ask
  - ▶ Accomplishing it quickly
  - ▶ Is it really so important?
- 

# Considerations before starting a Sexual History

- ▶ Be careful about making assumptions
  - *Avoid questions that assume heterosexuality*
  - *Use gender neutral language when referring to partners*
- ▶ Follow the patient's lead
  - *How do they describe themselves? their partner(s)?*
  - *If in doubt, ask what terms they prefer you to use*
- ▶ It's okay to ask
  - *Ask every patient about partners, practices, identity*
  - *If you don't understand a term a patient uses, ask them to clarify*
  - *If you get it wrong....it's okay, be sincere, apologize, ask what they prefer*
- ▶ Use open ended, non-judgmental questions

# Beginning the Sexual History

- ❑ Introduce yourself, confirm their name and what name they like to be called.
- ❑ If a patient has waited a long time – “I appreciate your waiting today. Now you have my undivided attention.”
- ❑ Why are you here today? (What brings you in?)
  - ❑ Get to their agenda first.
  - ❑ Listen!
- ❑ Introductory Statement

# Teri's Introductory Statement

“I'll be asking you some personal questions about your sexual health today. Everything we talk about is confidential and stays in this room. This is a safe place to talk about sex. The information you share with me will help me to take better care of you today and I ask these questions to all my patients.”

# Introducing the Sexual History

Points to make with every patient

- ▶ It's personal
- ▶ It's confidential
- ▶ It's important
- ▶ It's my standard of care

# Sexual History – Content

- ▶ Chief complaint
- ▶ General health history
- ▶ Allergies
- ▶ Recent medication
- ▶ Past STDs
- ▶ Women: brief Gyn history
- ▶ HIV risk factors (IVDU, partner's status)
- ▶ HIV testing history
- ▶ Past and current sexual practices
  - Gender of partners
  - Number of partners
  - Most recent sexual exposure
- ▶ New sex partners
- ▶ Patterns of condom use
- ▶ Partner's condition
- ▶ Substance abuse
- ▶ Domestic violence issues

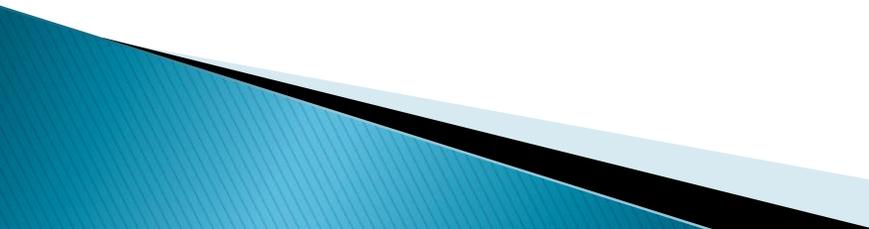
# CDC Recommendations Assessment: The 5 “P”s

- ❑ PARTNERS
- ❑ Sexual PRACTICES
- ❑ PAST history of STIs
- ❑ PREGNANCY
- ❑ PROTECTION from STI

# Or Even More Brief.....

- ▶ WHO – gender and number of partners
  - ▶ WHAT types of sex
  - ▶ HOW do you protect yourself?
- 

# Partners

- ❑ **Gender of partners**
    - ❑ **Are your partners male, female or transgendered?**
    - ❑ **How would you describe these partners - main or casual partners?**
  
  - ❑ **Number of partners in past month, 4 months and 1 year**
  
  - ❑ **Risk factors to also consider with patient/partner relationships, especially if multiple partners:**
    - ❑ Partners with symptoms
    - ❑ Partner has other partners?
- 

# Practices – Sex

## □ Types of Sex

- Vaginal
- Oral (give/receive, top/bottom/vers)
- Anal (give/receive, top/bottom/vers)

“There are different ways to have sex. Let’s talk about the kinds of sex you have so we know where to look for infections”

## □ Condom use with each type of sex

- What is your experience with condoms?
- How often do use a condom when you have vaginal sex, anal sex, oral sex?

# Practices - Drugs

- ❑ **What drugs have you used.....**
  - ❑ In the past
  - ❑ Currently
  - ❑ How do you use them? (oral, nasal, smoke, needles)
  - ❑ When you use do you share drugs or works with others?
  - ❑ How often do sex and drugs happen at the same time?

# Practices – Alcohol

- How many days a week do you drink alcohol?
  - On a typical day when you drink, how many drinks do you have?
  - What is the maximum number of drinks you've had on any given day this month?
  - How often do sex and drinking alcohol happen at the same time?
- 

# Past STDs (or STIs)

- ❑ **What STDs have you had in the past?**
    - ❑ When?
    - ❑ How were you treated?
    - ❑ How many times?
    - ❑ What about treatment for your partners?
  
  - ❑ **What STDs have your partners had in the past?**
  
  - ❑ **When was your last HIV test? Why were you tested? What were the results?**
- 

# Pregnancy

- ❑ **What are your current plans or desires regarding pregnancy?**
  - ❑ **Are you (or your partner) trying to get pregnant?**
  - ❑ **What do you and your partner do to prevent unplanned pregnancies? What's worked well? What hasn't worked well?**
- 

# Prevention (or Protection)

- ❑ **What do you do to protect yourself from STDs and HIV?**
    - ❑ What's worked well in the past? What hasn't?
    - ❑ Point out and commend patient for what they might be already doing to reduce risk
  
  - ❑ **What is one thing you can do to reduce your risk of getting an STD or HIV?**
- 

# Putting the 5 P's into Action



- ▶ Maria is a 20 y.o. female who says:
- ▶ “Well, I did something really dumb. I slept with my boyfriend’s best friend. Now it hurts down there.”

# Maria's 5 P's

## □ Partners

*"I've been with my boyfriend for about a year. Then last week I slept with John. We were at a party and I probably had a little too much to drink."*

## □ Practices

*Vaginal and oral sex with boyfriend, vaginal sex only with John. No drugs but likes to drink at the bars.*

## □ Past STDS

*"I was treated for a vaginal infection a few years ago but I don't think it was an STD. They just gave me some pills to take. I've never been tested for HIV or any STDs."*

## □ Prevention

*"I'm on the pill so I don't use condoms."*

## □ Pregnancy

*I've never been pregnant. I don't want kids yet but definitely someday."*

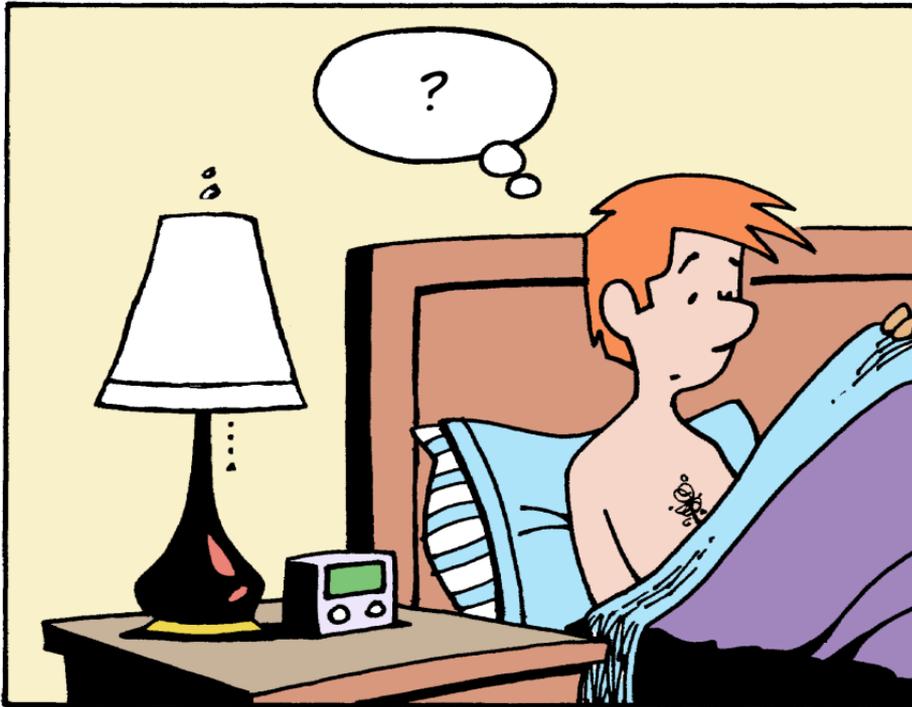
# Lessons Learned in 30 years

- ▶ **Keep it simple and be direct**
  - ▶ **Behavior change starts with me – I must be willing to learn new skills**
  - ▶ **Use open-ended questions whenever possible**
  - ▶ **Listen more, talk less**
  - ▶ **Keep my biases in check**
  - ▶ **Don't be afraid to ask your patient questions**
  - ▶ **There is always an “event” that brings someone to a clinic.**
- 

A person's hands are visible at the bottom, holding a white rectangular sign. The sign is centered in the frame against a blurred background of a crowd of people under a blue sky with light clouds. The text on the sign is written in a black, serif font and is arranged in five lines.

*Thank You For  
Talking Honestly  
About My Sexual Risks  
When Nobody Else  
Would*

ED STEIN



Any  
Questions?

# ED STEIN



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and the skills that support their successful  
implementation

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