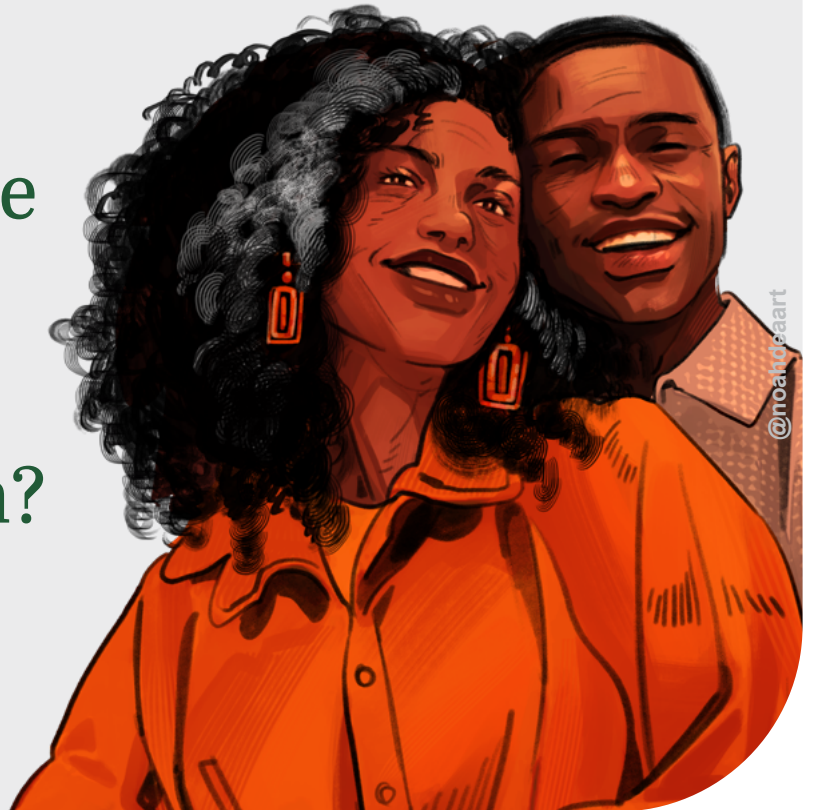


## How do I have respectful sex with trans women?



*This tip sheet is for men who date or hook up with trans women or trans feminine people\*.*

*It provides practical information on how to enjoy better, more respectful sex with trans women.*

### Summary

- Open communication makes sex more fun and more comfortable for everyone.
- Trans women sometimes feel pushed by men into sexual situations, because they are worried what will happen if they say no.
- Consent means understanding what the person is interested in doing sexually, and what they are not interested in doing.
- Trans women always deserve to be treated with respect. When it comes to sex, find out what trans women find disrespectful – and change your behaviour if you need to.

\* "Men" in this resource refers to cisgender men. "Trans women" refers to trans women, trans feminine people, women who have a trans and gender diverse history or experience, but do not identify as transgender - and other trans feminine culturally-specific identities such as Sistergirls, Fa'afafine and Kinner.

*Sex can be a great way to have fun or express affection. The more you understand and respect each other, the more fun sex will be for you both. For example, communicating your desires to each other will help you better understand what turns each other on. Sharing your limits can help remove confusion or anxiety and help you more confidently enjoy mutual pleasure.*

*Failing to seek proper consent can lead to you hurting or harming the person you are having sex with, even if you didn't mean to. Trans women sometimes feel pressured by men into having unwanted sex, or that they must agree to have sex in certain ways, in order to stay in, or access romantic or sexual relationships. These experiences can damage your relationship and cause harm to you or the other person's wellbeing and mental health.*

## Consent and pleasure

*“For me, dating trans women is the same as any relationship with any person, it should be built around active consent. I've found that asking if there is anything I can do to make them feel more comfortable, or if there is anything that needs to be addressed in our personal interactions so I can be more respectful– that is really helpful.” Michael*

Consent means taking steps to understand what the person is interested in doing sexually, and what they are not interested in doing. Consent can change at any time, and cannot be given by individuals who are underage, intoxicated or incapacitated by drugs or alcohol, or asleep or unconscious. If someone agrees to an activity under pressure of intimidation or threat, that isn't considered consent, because it was not given freely. In some places, such as Victoria, it is now unlawful to have sex or sexual contact with someone without first gaining their explicit consent, rather than waiting for them to say no.

*“Before we had sex for the first time he asked me so much about my life and what I liked sexually, he made me feel so comfortable and safe. He's always respectful in terms of consent, checking in to ensure I'm also enjoying myself.” Aurora*

**Tips:** Here are some ways you can show your respect for trans women during sex:

- Ask what language she uses to describe her body parts.
- Ask how she likes to have sex and what gives her pleasure. You can use questions like:
  - What do you want to do?
  - What gets you off? What makes you feel good?
  - What can I do to make you feel more comfortable?
- Explore what she doesn't want to do as well. You can use questions like:
  - Is there anything I should avoid doing or suggesting?
  - Is there anything that makes you feel uncomfortable or unsafe?
  - Are there any parts of your body that you don't like to use or only use in certain ways?
  - Is there anywhere that you don't want to be touched?
  - Do you have a safe word or action to indicate to stop?
- Share what you enjoy or would like to try, and see what she thinks. If she seems nervous or unsure, say it's ok to say no.
- If she says no, thank her and ask what else she might enjoy.
- Make sure that your partner feels comfortable to stop any behaviour that begins to feel uncomfortable.
- Notice if your partner seems zoned out. Stop what you're doing and take a break. Ask how she is feeling and if she needs anything. Don't start having sex again until she says she wants to and is comfortable.
- Communicate your own boundaries. This may include parts of your body that you don't want to be touched.
- Check-in after sex to make sure she enjoyed herself.
- Don't take a 'no' to sex personally or get angry if sex is paused or ended sooner than you would like. Everyone is entitled to change their minds and there may be lots of reasons why a person doesn't want to have sex, (e.g. timing, environment, personal feeling, physical discomfort). Listen and respect a 'no' or 'not right now'.



**Tips:** Trans women deserve to always be treated with respect. When engaging in sex with trans women, here are some behaviours you should avoid:

- Pressuring, threatening or forcing your partner to have sex when she doesn't want to
- Not listening or respecting when she has said no, or that she is not comfortable with the sex you are having
- Not using condoms or other protection when you have agreed that you will, or taking them off during sex
- Not noticing if she is uncomfortable, nervous, distressed or in pain
- Pressuring trans women to dress in particular clothing that fits your fantasies
- Degrading or humiliating your partner without enthusiastic consent
- Treating her as a sex object or focusing on only one part of her body without enthusiastic consent
- Acting out sexually violent fantasies (for example choking – this is very dangerous and may lead to death)
- Demanding sexual acts or only re-enacting scenes from porn
- Demanding or expecting your partner to behave a certain way because of stereotypes or fantasies based on her race or culture
- Leaving suddenly after sex.

## If you're looking for support in Australia:

### **Qlife**

National anonymous and confidential LGBTIQ+ peer support service (including partners)

Website: [qlife.org.au](http://qlife.org.au)

Phone: 1800 184 527

Opening hours: 3PM to midnight, every day

Telephone and web chat support service

### **Say It Out Loud**

ACON's sexual, domestic and family violence website *Say It Out Loud* provides information and guidance relating to sexual, family and intimate partner violence in the Australian LGBTIQ+ community.

Website: [sayitoutloud.org.au](http://sayitoutloud.org.au)

### **Men's Referral Service**

A free, confidential telephone service for men

Phone: 1300 766 491

Open any time.

**For men outside Australia looking for counselling support, try searching online for "trans friendly counselling in my local area".**