

Guidance for Participants

This document is also available in the form of a 7 minute video which can be found here:

https://prezi.com/v/op_rlpmmwq1/

The purpose of this is to help you get ready for your conversation so you have an idea of what you'll talk about and know each other's boundaries so you can all enjoy the experience. It's essential that you do talk this through with whoever you're participating with before you progress. You'll be asked to confirm you've done this at the start of the recording. **Please note, that if you haven't had the pre-conversation then the full conversation and recording will not be able to go ahead and you'll be asked to reschedule the recording for another time when you have been able to discuss the things mentioned below and agree your boundaries.**

You should also read and/or watch the participant information sheet. You have to have read or watched this and that to participate.

You might find it helpful to write down some of the things you discuss and agree. There's a document for that here on the website if you want to use it.

Who are you participating with and why?

Talk with the person or people you're doing this with. I've already mentioned how important it is that you have trust and respect for one another but it's good to make sure you're on the same page about getting involved in this project and what it means to you.

Most likely the best person or people to do this with would be those you are currently sexually involved with. You could participate with a former partner/s, but this needs extra consideration. How you feel about an ex can be complicated and its possible a past partner might not be wanting to do this for all the right reasons. Because of this, participating with a past partner could mean you end up having a conversation that might make you upset or uncomfortable. Past partners are still welcome to participate in the project it's just something you need to give your full consideration.

Consider your boundaries and your triggers

This is really important! My absolute priority as a researcher is your wellbeing. This means doing everything I can to make sure that this process isn't upsetting or uncomfortable for you. So, to start with you need to figure out if there are things that might upset you or make you uncomfortable so you can figure out whether these are things that you want to avoid or talk around in your conversation.

There might be specific experiences or events you prefer not to talk about because it's upsetting or it might just be that there are aspects of your sex life you feel are too personal to share for a research project –(although you should be reassured that there is absolutely no judgement from the researcher's perspective and all you share will be completely anonymised).

Agree what it is not ok to talk about

Hopefully, when you've thought all that through everyone involved will have been able to identify anything it's not OK for them to bring up in the conversation. It's essential that you all/both know exactly what's out of bounds for this chat and respect that.

Maybe nothing is out of bounds or off limits and that's fine too!

Agree what it'll be OK to talk about

So now you know what, if anything, you agree to avoid, you can think about what you would like to chat about. It's fine for the conversation to flow naturally and be quite spontaneous but you might also prefer to plan it a bit. There's a document called 'What Should We Talk About?' which I'll send to you to help you along with this.

This might also be a good time to just check with your co-participants what it is OK to bring up. It could be that they're open to talking about something unexpected.

Agree what you'll do if one of you is feeling uncomfortable or have changed your mind about things during the course of the conversation

So you've prepped and agreed what it is OK to talk about and not ok to talk about but sometimes conversations affect you in ways you didn't expect or take a turn you weren't expecting. Just in case this happens and one of you is feeling uncomfortable you need to agree what you'll do.

Like agreeing it's ok for someone to say 'can we change the subject' or 'lets move on' or even a random safe word which lets them know you're not enjoying this topic and you'd like to talk about something else. If someone you're participating with does that, it's really important that you respect it.

This goes for ending the conversation too. If someone says they've had enough or they want to stop you need to agree to that without asking questions.

If you want to stop your reasons might be complicated, you might not completely know yourself exactly why it's making you uncomfortable and that is fine.

Have backup questions

So usually things just flow when we are talking especially with people we are intimate with but the bright lights of the laptop screen and that good old record symbol might throw you off a bit. Just in case this happens it would be good to have some questions or prompts prepared.

Think about timing and location that will give you privacy

When you're ready, I'll ask you to work out a time to set up your conversation online. It'll be a Microsoft Teams meeting and I (Holly Barnes-Bennetts) will be there at the start to introduce myself and set up the recording. After that I'll go and leave Teams recording your chat.

First of all, you'll need to think about whether you'll be in a room together on one device, on separate devices or even in separate locations. Any of these is fine but of course do make sure you are being covid safe and following any social distancing guidelines in place for your area at the time.

It's also important that you are in a space (or spaces) which is/are quiet and private so you can't be overheard or disturbed. It's important for the ethics of my research that you aren't in a position where your privacy or confidentiality could be compromised so I'll check this with you at the start of the recording.

I hope this helps you to feel ready for your consent conversation but if it isn't just remember that you can email me h.barnesbennetts@worc.ac.uk with any questions or post your questions anonymously in the comments section on the website (link)