

## **The Core Stuff - Key messages for secondary and college age young people about sex**

### **In Your Own Time**

- Wait until the time is right for you. Most under 16s in Brighton & Hove haven't had sex so don't feel you're the only one if you haven't
- There is no pressure to rush to have sex, not everyone is doing it all the time - even if they say they are!

### **Get consent**

- If someone can't / won't consent to sex, don't have sex with them
- Sex needs to be consensual and even though it can be a good/pleasurable experience that does not mean that everybody wants / needs to have it. It is also important to be able to talk openly about it with your partner so that you can set up boundaries that you both feel comfortable and happy with

### **Be Yourself**

- Sex is whatever you want it to be. It doesn't have to be penetrative
- How you feel about yourself sexually, your sexual thoughts, desires and sexual health are all important parts of being you – it's ok to explore these as long as it doesn't harm yourself or others
- Your gender identity and the gender(s) you find attractive may change over time
- Some people are not interested in sex at certain stages in their life and/or are never interested in sex

### **Enjoy it**

- Friendships and relationships should be fun, equal, respectful and healthy
- Sex should be enjoyable, should feel good, and have the potential for pleasure (and orgasm).
- Know your body and explore it, don't expect your partner to know how to pleasure you if you don't know yourself

### **Trust your instincts**

- You should always feel safe when having sex, trust your instincts if you feel unsafe or that you are not ready
- Remember it's your body.

### **Stay Protected, get tested**

- Using condoms, dental dams and other contraceptives keep you protected from STIs and mean that you can choose if and when you want to have children
- Getting regularly tested for STIs is what all sexually active people should do.

### **Show your Feelings**

- Think about the many different ways you can show someone you care for them. There are other ways than penetrative sex (intercourse) – some are sexual (e.g. kissing, cuddling, touching/playing with each other, massage etc).

### **Stay In Control**

- If your partner has been drinking / taking drugs you should rethink if now is a good time to have sex. It is illegal to have sex with someone who is too drunk or high to give their consent.
- Having sex when you are drunk can also make sex less good and can make you feel sick

### **Keep talking**

- Talk to the person you're thinking of having sex with (or are already having sex with) about what you want out of the relationship and find out what they want out of the relationship too.

### **Stay Connected**

- Remember there are people around you (parents, carers, youth workers and other support workers) you can get help and advice from if you're faced with tricky decisions or situations

### **It's Your Right**

- All young people, have a right to top quality, professional information, advice and guidance about sex and relationships in a way that suits you.