

Talking About Sex ...

Talking about sex is never easy. Feeling embarrassed is natural. Remember, talking about your sexual relationship is one way of showing that you care – about yourself and your partner. Discussing your questions, doubts or fears together can help bring you closer.

Here are some ideas for helping you start that conversation ...

- **Pick a good time and place to talk.** It is probably better to talk when you're not feeling romantic or in the middle of sexual activity. However, be flexible and ready to talk whenever the time seems right – even if it isn't when you'd planned.
- **Think about what you want to say beforehand.** It's important to know what you want to say before you try to tell your partner about your feelings or concerns. Making a list can help you organize your thoughts so you can be clear with your partner. (If you and your partner have planned a time to talk, ask her or him to make a list in advance, as well.)
- **Let your partner know it's important.** Be sure that your partner understands that it means a lot to you to communicate your concerns and feelings to him or her. Explain that you're sharing these personal thoughts because you trust her/him.
- **Remember, starting to talk is the hardest part.** After that, the conversation should get easier. Your partner may be relieved you brought the situation up.
- **Be clear and direct.** Using "I" statements can help you get your point across. For example, "I need to talk with you about something that's important for both of us." OR "I feel kind of embarrassed, but I care too much about you not to talk about this." (Don't accuse or blame your partner. It's hard to talk when one person is upset.)
- **Be Patient. Listen well.** Give your partner the chance to explain his/her thoughts about the situation. Listen carefully and give your partner the time s/he needs to get out what s/he is trying to say. If you don't quite understand, ask a question to clarify. *It's important that you understand each other.*
- **Be open, honest and non-judgmental.** How you feel about sex is really personal to you, so you really are opening up when you talk about it. It's the same for your partner. Just as you expect him/her to respect what you have to say, it's important to be open to and respectful of what your partner tells you.
- **Your partner may need time to think about what you've said.** Be prepared to talk about the situation again.
- **Get help if you can't resolve the issue on your own.** Change is difficult. A counselor may be able to help you and your partner find the solution that you're not able to see on your own.