



Sexual Pleasure in Times of COVID-19

World Sexual Health Day · September 4th, 2020

Share-Net Netherlands celebrates World Sexual Health Day!

Introduction

Within this overview you can find more information about the following:

- WAS Conversation on September 4th: Sexual pleasure in times of COVID-19
- A podcast with Doortje Braeken: The role of sex in time of high anxiety and despair
- The Dutch national action plan for sexual health
- The new SRHR youth ambassador in the Netherlands
- Training, assessment and pedagogical tools by GAB, the Pleasure Project and SEX-ED+
- Announcement of the forthcoming SNNL sexual pleasure checklist
- Pleasure-positive SRHR programming: The Love Matters network
- Recommendations for further reading

Since 2010, the World Association for Sexual Health (WAS) invites many audiences to celebrate World Sexual Health and Share-Net Netherlands joins this initiative to promote sexual health, well-being and rights for all.

We must remember that sexual health is defined by the WHO as a state of physical, mental and social well-being in relation to sexuality. It requires a positive and respectful approach to sexuality and sexual relationships, as well as the possibility of having pleasurable and safe sexual experiences, free of coercion, discrimination and violence.

SEXUAL PLEASURE IN TIMES OF COVID-19

The theme of this year's Sexual Health Day is "Sexual Pleasure in Times of COVID-19" combining the [Declaration of Sexual Pleasure](#) of the 24th WAS Congress in Mexico City in 2019 and the current Pandemic.

On September 4th, the third session of the [World Association for Sexual Health's](#) Conversations will take place focusing on Advancing Sexual Health and Sexual Rights for ALL, this time in collaboration with [Sexual and Reproductive Health Matters](#) and [The Pleasure Project](#).

Six prominent activists and experts in the field of Sexual Health, Sexual Rights and the importance of Pleasure will discuss how we have been able to reach this point and what we need to do in the future.

To join the meeting starting at 15.00 CEST, you can still register [here](#).



Some months back, Share-Net member Doortje Braeken spoke about the meaning and role of sex in the time of high anxiety and despair. In this podcast by Dr. Sara Nasserzadeh, Doortje Braeken shares from her experience of 3 decades as a leader in the field of sexual health and well-being by sharing lessons learned from community education (such as in the times of the HIV outburst).

Doortje invites you to continue our journey post #Metoo movement, to liberate consensual sex versus putting it in the 'box of shame' and labeling it as taboo. She offers the idea that kindness can serve as a lens through which bestows healing in people when they connect intimately with one another. And she encourages us to be more compassionate towards ourselves and others, around our need for being sexual during this time; as having sexual connection is a primal need and a form of coping for many.



You can (re)listen to this podcast episode [here](#).

SEXUAL HEALTH IN THE NETHERLANDS

The National Action Plan on STIs, HIV and Sexual Health presents an integral approach for the five years 2017-2022 that is centred around a positive approach to sexuality.

A principle of sexual health is that the inhabitants of the Netherlands should be properly informed and able to make sensible choices in the matter. As well as good preventive measures, they must have easily accessible and affordable care in the event of problems. Good information and comprehensive sexuality education are important for the prevention of STD, HIV, unwanted pregnancy and sexual violence. Efficient cooperation between the most important partners is necessary to achieve this. The National Action Plan defines the concrete objectives and actions for a healthy sexual life. You can read the full national plan in Dutch and an English summary [here](#).

The new Youth Ambassador for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights for 2020-2021 has been announced!

[CHOICE for Youth and Sexuality](#), in partnership with the [Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#), recently announced the appointment of the new Youth Ambassador for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, 2020-2021, Lisa de Pagter! [Here](#) you can watch a video to learn more about her vision and exciting plans for the upcoming year! Don't forget to follow her on Instagram and Facebook [@youthambassadorsrhr](#) and Twitter [@YouthAmbSRHR](#).

“IN MY ROLE I WILL BE REPRESENTING YOUNG PEOPLE’S VOICES IN THE POLICIES THAT WE MAKE AT THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS. MAKING SURE THAT THEY ARE HEARD, AND THAT THE LIVED REALITIES OF YOUNG PEOPLE ALL OVER THE WORLD ARE REFLECTED IN THE POLICIES THAT WE MAKE AT THE MINISTRY.”

TRAINING, ASSESSMENT AND PEDAGOGICAL TOOLS

[The Pleasure Project](#) is an international education and advocacy organization working to eroticize safer sex. They build bridges between the public health world and the pleasure and sex industry, and help to develop the evidence base for a sex-positive and pleasure-based approach to sexual health and rights.

We recommend having a look at the Pleasure Project's [Trainer's Guide: Secrets of mixing Pleasure and Prevention](#). This resource offers 16 exercises, each of them being shortly explained and elaborated further along objective, time, materials needed, steps to take and tips for the trainer.



The [Global Advisory Board for Sexual Health and Wellbeing \(GAB\)](#) is an independent group that has come together in recognition of the lack of equal attention to sexual health, sexual rights and sexual pleasure in research, education, training, policies and programmes regarding sexuality.

GAB recognizes that talking about sex and sexuality can be difficult for both sexual and reproductive health (SRH) service providers and their clients. Establishing sexual pleasure as a starting point can provide a broader and positive focus on sexuality and sexual health, helping people to make informed decisions about sexual relationships and avoid risks. In this toolkit called “Sexual Pleasure - The forgotten link in sexual and reproductive health and rights”, GAB provides specific guidance on how SRH providers can put a sex-positive approach into practice in order to explore issues related to sexual health and sexual rights with their clients (regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity). It elaborates how to proactively incorporate information about sexual pleasure when communicating with clients; how as a provider to feel confident in answering questions; and supporting clients with autonomous decision-making regarding their sexual relationships and sexuality in general. The toolkit contains ten training modules. An innovative approach to sexual history taking is introduced using the *Pleasuremeter*.



Download the full GAB sexual pleasure toolkit [here](#).

Furthermore, GAB has launched another innovative, practical tool aimed at supporting sexual and reproductive health (SRH) programme designers and managers to incorporate sexual health, sexual rights and sexual pleasure as an integrated approach. The tool can be used to improve SRH service delivery, sexuality education and sexual health programmes by adequately address sexual pleasure and the links with sexual health and sexual rights.

Have a look at the GAB sexual pleasure assessment tool [here](#).

In case you are interested in pedagogical tools for comprehensive sexuality education that present the diversity of genital anatomies, [SEX-ED+](#) contributes to anatomical knowledge by documenting genitalia through a human molding process.

The project’s goal is to create the first online 3D database representing the diversity of the genital spectrum. [SEX-ED+](#) also creates pedagogical material to answer the needs of sexuality education and sexual health professionals. This project aims to promote sex-positivity and a culture of consent.

Find out more about [SEX-ED+](#) and their tools for comprehensive sexuality education [here](#) and have a look at their [web shop](#).

At Share-Net Netherlands, we are happy to announce that inspired by GAB’s assessment tool, our [Sexual Pleasure CoP](#) is currently finalising a new Sexual Pleasure checklist tool.

The purpose of the checklist tool is to apply the issue of sexual well-being and sexual pleasure to policies, programmes and activities in SRH and the other CoPs of Share-Net. It aims to raise awareness and to start conversations on the topic of sexual pleasure and serves to improve the quality of SRH programmes and activities.



PLEASURE-POSITIVE SRHR PROGRAMMING

The Love Matters Global Network currently consists of seven members; Love Matters is implemented by Share-Net member [RNW Media](#) in Egypt, Kenya, Nigeria, DRC and China and in India and Mexico through a social franchise model. The network members all implement the unique Love Matters model to support safe, healthy, pleasurable sex, love and relationships for young people.

What sets [Love Matters](#) apart is that it talks about pleasure, rather than sticking to the conventional focus on dysfunction and avoiding disease. With this pleasure-positive approach and non-judgemental discussions on mobile-friendly, localised digital platforms, Love Matters delivers accessible evidence- and right-based information and advice to young people to help them make informed decisions.

This research provides [empirical evidence](#) from Love Matters and furthers the efforts to adopt a pleasure-positive approach to both online and offline sex education interventions.

FURTHER READING

Sponsored by [The Case for Her](#), and in partnership with [Teen Vogue](#), this year, the [D&AD New Blood Awards 2020](#) decided to focus on sexual pleasure and invited brave young creatives to challenge the status quo and develop ways to normalize the conversation around female sexual pleasure.

The design brief, titled Mind the Pleasure Gap, asked for branded content that explored the female pleasure and sexual wellness space and sought to educate and challenge Teen Vogue's audience about the issues surrounding it. As Cristina Ljungberg, Co-founder of The Case for Her, told the Pleasure Project in a



recent [blog](#), Mind the Pleasure Gap was downloaded more than 19,500 times across 119 countries, and an incredible 225 entries were submitted. From these submissions, 13 [Pencils](#) were awarded, with two teams receiving the highest honor for their taboo-toppling concepts—a Yellow Pencil. Have a look at their website to find out more about these [standout projects](#).

In the UK, The Brook & Sh:24 Sexual Health Awards 2020 are still ongoing!

[Brook](#) and [SH:24](#)'s Sexual Health Awards celebrate ground-breaking work in destigmatising sexual health. Until September 9th voting is still open and you can learn more about the finalists [here](#).

Lastly, we want to leave you with some more practical sexual pleasure tips and tricks!

Apparently, Audrey Andrews, student blogger for [Lovehoney](#) knows how you can have 12 distinct types of orgasms. If you, too, are curious about this kind of 'Dirty Dozen', then keep reading this [blog](#) to find out what they are, and how you can have them. And Colleen de Bellefonds shared 16 interesting sex tricks on her blog on [Women's Health](#) Magazine. She strongly believes that if you don't expand your horizons as you develop into the sexual unicorn that you are, you're bound to miss out on at least a few orgasm-inducing tricks you might really like. You can find her elaborations [here](#).

Academic literature about sexual health

- Sexual health, sexual rights and sexual pleasure: meaningfully engaging the perfect triangle by Sofia Gruskin, Vithika Yadav, Antón Castellanos-Usigli, Gvantsa Khizanishvili & Eszter Kismödi
- Pleasure and Prevention: When Good Sex Is Safer Sex by Anne Philpott, Wendy Knerr & Vicky Boydell
- The Pleasurimeter: Exploring the links between sexual health, sexual rights and sexual pleasure in sexual history-taking, SRHR counselling and education by Antón Castellanos-Usigli & Doortje Braeken-van Schaik
- Why Pleasure Matters: Its Global Relevance for Sexual Health, Sexual Rights and Wellbeing by Jessie V. Ford, Esther Corona Vargas, Itor Finotelli Jr., J. Dennis Fortenberry, Eszter Kismödi, Anne Philpott, Eusebio Rubio-Aurioles & Eli Coleman
- The pleasure imperative? Reflecting on sexual pleasure's inclusion in sex education and sexual health by Rachel Wood, Julia Hirst, Liz Wilson & Georgina Burns-O'Connell
- Sexual rights as human rights: a guide to authoritative sources and principles for applying human rights to sexuality and sexual health. by Alice M. Miller, Eszter Kismödi, Jane Cottingham & Sofia Gruskin
- 'I tell them that sex is sweet at the right time' – A qualitative review of 'pleasure gaps and opportunities' in sexuality education programmes in Ghana and Kenya by Arushi Singh, Rosalijn Both & Anne Philpott

For more resources about SRHR-related topics have a look at our [Share-Net resource center](#).

Join Share-Net!

and become part of the knowledge platform on SRHR as either a member or a sponsor. When joining Share-Net, you will not only be contributing to our mission and vision, but you will also be able to enjoy specific member benefits:

- Have free access to all the meetings that we organise. (Non-members participate at cost-price)
- Participate in our working groups or CoPs, which is exclusive for members. These groups are crucial for agenda setting, organizing meetings and executing small research projects. For more information on the Share-Net Netherlands working groups and thematic groups please visit www.share-net.nl/working-groups.
- Be elected in one of our governing bodies, the Steering Committee of the Netherlands or the Board of Share-Net International. All members are invited to our annual business meeting.
- Be eligible for our yearly call for proposals for the Share-Net International Small Grants facility.

For more information about our work and how to get involved. Please contact our Share-Net Netherlands Coordinator, Meike Stieglis at info@share-net.nl