

# SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS

— SELF GUIDE —





# **SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS**

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The Initiative for Equal Rights (TIERS)  
Contact: [info@theinitiativeforequalrights.org](mailto:info@theinitiativeforequalrights.org)  
Website: [www.theinitiativeforequalrights.org](http://www.theinitiativeforequalrights.org)

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## Acronyms

SRHR- Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

VAPP Act - Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act

STI- Sexually Transmitted Infections



# Introduction

Hello, my name is **Ayo (He/him)**, and I will be your companion through this toolkit. Together, we'll learn about important parts of our lives, such as **fundamental human rights, understanding our identities, the legal landscape, and pleasure and safety.**

Whether you're seeking to enhance your understanding or navigate critical issues, this guide offers invaluable insights and support every step of the way. Together, we'll learn about important parts of our lives, such as fundamental human rights, understanding our identities, the legal landscape, and pleasure and safety.

Are you ready to begin this journey of self-discovery and advocacy? Together, we will go through topics such as human rights, identity, law, pleasure, and safety, creating a community that values and defends the rights of everyone. Welcome to the toolkit - let's start learning.





# Understanding Your Fundamental Human Rights

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# Understanding Your Fundamental Human Rights 1.1

Do you know you've got some amazing human rights, regardless of your identity? Let's dive into these essential rights together!

The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, as amended, guarantees and protects the fundamental rights of all persons in the country, regardless of their tribe, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, gender identity, etc. These rights can be found in Chapter Four of the Constitution; they are;

Rights to life (section 33)

Right to dignity of human persons (section 34)

Right to personal liberty (section 35)

Right to fair hearing (section 36)

Right to private and family life (section 37)

Right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion (section 38)

Right to freedom of expression and the press (section 39)

Right to peaceful assembly and association (section 40)

Right to freedom of movement (section 41)

Right to freedom from discrimination (section 42)

Right to acquire and own immovable property (section 43)

Right against compulsory acquisition of property (section 44)

## Understanding Your Fundamental Human Rights 1.2

How are these rights mine?

These rights are yours simply because you are human.

So I have right to privacy, but my neighbour keeps spying through my window whenever I have visitors, hoping to catch us doing something.

James, what happened is a violation of your rights, and there are avenues to address this. Your constitutional rights provide protection, allowing you to report your neighbor to the police. Consulting with a legal professional can help you understand your rights and explore options such as pursuing legal action.

Additionally, reaching out to human rights organizations like The Initiative for Equal Rights (TIERs) at 08146337128 can offer valuable support and guidance in navigating through this situation.

The constitution is not the only law that protects your rights in Nigeria, there is also the Violence Against Persons Prohibitions Act, 2015

The VAPP Act 2015 provides protection against the following offences, and remedies to Victims

## Sexual Violence

- Rape
- Incest

## Physical Violence

- Female circumcision or genital mutilation.
- Spousal battery, Depriving a person of his/her liberty.
- Attack with harmful substance.
- Administering a substance with intent.
- Forceful ejection from home.
- Inflicting physical injury

## Emotional Violence

- Abandonment of spouse, children and other dependants without sustenance

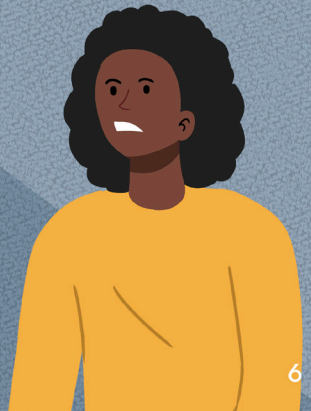
## Psychological Violence

- Forced isolation or separation from family and friends.
- Stalking.
- Emotional, verbal, and psychological abuse.
- Intimidation.
- Coercion.
- Offensive conduct.
- Indecent exposure.
- Wilfully making false statements
- Harmful widowhood practices.
- Wilfully placing a person in fear of physical injury.
- Harmful traditional practices

What's the matter, Nneka?

I shared my **nudes** with bukola and she said she showed someone she trusts and now it's on **twitter**!!

Ha! That is a violation of your human rights o!

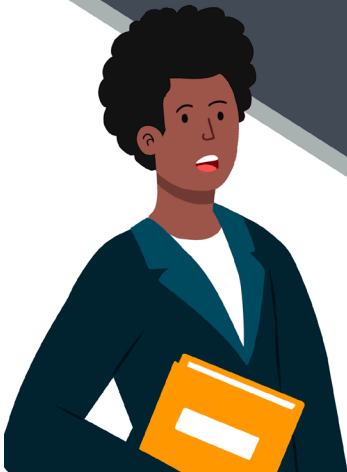


## Understanding Your Fundamental Human Rights 1.3

Do you know your online engagement are also protected? The 2015 Cyber Crime Prohibition Act covers you.

Section 24 (1) Any person who knowingly or intentionally sends a message or other matter by means of computer systems or network that (a) is grossly offensive, pornographic or of an indecent, obscene or menacing character or causes any such message or matter to be so sent; or

(b) he knows to be false, for the purpose of causing annoyance, inconvenience danger, obstruction, insult, injury, criminal intimidation, enmity, hatred, ill will or needless anxiety to another or causes such a message to be sent: commits an offence under this Act and shall be liable on conviction to a fine of not more than N7,000,000.00 or imprisonment for a term of not more than 3 years or to both such fine and imprisonment.



# Our Identities

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# Our Identities 2.1

Hi, it's Ayo again.

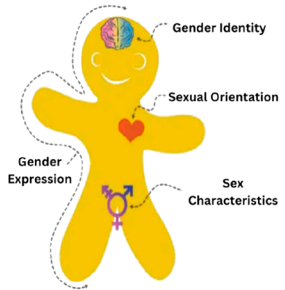
When we talk about sexuality or sexual orientation, our thoughts often focus on LGBTQI+ individuals. Although these conversations frequently involve us, here's the gist: it isn't just about us. We all have sexual orientations, sex, gender identities, and expressions.

Now, let me introduce you to a vibrant acronym that wraps all of this up into a neat package: SOGIESC! It's a fantastic blend that celebrates the diversity of how we all navigate this colorful spectrum of life.

So, buckle up for a cheerful exploration of SOGIESC – because everyone's story is worth celebrating!

Sex - Gender and Sexuality :

SO	Sexual Orientation	
GIE	Gender Identity	Gender Expression
SC	Sexual Characteristics	





# Our Identities 2.2

## SOGIESC Explained



### Sexual Orientation

Sexual orientation is a persistent pattern of romantic or sexual attraction (or a combination of both) to persons of the opposite sex or gender, the same sex or gender, or to multiple sexes or multiple genders. Sexual orientation is fluid; we all experience it differently. Some people may experience new attractions over time or a decline, and some may not experience new attractions.

**Heterosexual:** attraction to individuals of the opposite sex and gender.

**Homosexual:** attraction to individuals of the same sex or gender.

**Bisexual:** primarily used to describe attraction to men and women or male and female.

**Pansexual:** attraction to individuals regardless of their gender, gender identity, or sex.

**Asexual:** limited or absence of sexual attraction to others.

**Queer:** An umbrella term for people who are not heterosexual.



### Gender Identity

Gender identity refers to a person's personal concept of self as man, woman, non-binary, gender non-conforming, or any other gender term.

**Gender norms** refer to what is socially accepted as masculine or feminine and may differ from society to society. Some norms include a man earning more than a woman and women as child-bearers and primary caregivers. Therefore, gender norms cast individuals who do not adhere to expectations as 'different' or 'abnormal'. Gender norms may also privilege men over women in certain arenas, such as business, politics, and religion. People are more than their genders and shouldn't be viewed only through a gendered lens.

**Gender pronouns** are terms people would like to be identified as. There are binary gender pronouns like he/him, she/her. There are non-binary pronouns like they/them. Languages are ever evolving, as they do, so do people's preferred gender pronouns.



### Gender Expression

Gender expression is how a person publicly expresses or presents their gender. This can include behavior and outward appearances such as dress, hair, make-up, body language, and voice. Gender expression is described as feminine, masculine or androgynous

Gender expression is fluid. A person who expresses themselves in a masculine way today may express themselves in a feminine way the next day.



**Sex characteristics** refer to the chromosomal, gonads, and anatomical features of a person, which include primary characteristics such as reproductive organs and genitalia and/or in chromosomal structures and hormones; and secondary characteristics such as muscle mass, hair distribution, breasts, and/or structure.

## Our Identities 2.3

It is crucial to emphasize that being attracted to the same sex or identifying with diverse gender expressions is entirely normal and should be accepted without judgment. Society's understanding of sexual orientation and gender identity has evolved over time, leading to the declassification of homosexuality as a mental disorder in the DSM-5, a significant milestone reflecting a more inclusive and empathetic approach to human diversity.

It is essential to recognize that embracing LGBTQI+ identities is not a Western import, as historical evidence reveals the existence of diverse sexual and gender identities in various cultures, including Africa. Contrary to misconceptions, pre-colonial Africa had rich traditions that acknowledged and even celebrated different expressions of gender and sexual orientation. It is crucial to dispel the myth that LGBTQI+ identities are incompatible with African culture and to promote a more accurate understanding that these identities have deep roots in the continent's history and traditions.

It is essential to recognize that self-acceptance and celebration are empowering journeys. Embrace the uniqueness of your identity with pride, understanding that your authentic self is a beautiful contribution to the rich tapestry of human diversity.



# Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR)



## My Body My Right

Sexuality is a natural aspect of our existence. Various factors, including biology, society, culture, economics, environment, religion, and context, influence our expressions and experiences of sexuality. For instance, a lesbian woman in Nigeria, due to such legal restrictions as the Same-Sex Marriage Prohibition Act 2014, which criminalizes same-sex sexual intercourse, may be unable to express her natural and healthy sexual desires because of such a repressive law. Consequently, each person's sexuality is a distinctive blend of influences, resulting in a unique experience and expression.

### What is SRHR?

This is an umbrella term for a set of human rights that relate to sexuality and reproduction. These rights allow individuals to make informed and meaningful decisions about their sexual health and well-being, including their sexual orientation, relationships, sexual activity, family planning, and control over their own bodies. Knowing your rights is important to have good sexual and reproductive health.

There are 10 of these rights; they are

- The right to equality
- The right to participation
- The right to life and to be free from harm
- The right to privacy
- The right to personal autonomy and to be recognized as an individual before the law
- The right to think and express oneself freely
- The right to health
- The right to know and learn
- The right to choose whether or not to marry or have children
- The right to have your rights upheld

The above rights state that every individual is entitled to the realization of their sexuality and sexual pleasure and should be free from any form of coercion, discrimination, and violence. These rights apply to everyone, regardless of their age, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, marital status, HIV status, sexual orientation, or health status.

# Sexuality, Pleasure, and Sexual Orientation

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# Sexuality, Pleasure and Sexual Orientation 4.1

Sexuality is a more broader concept than sexual orientation. It encompasses a broad spectrum of aspects related to an individual's sexual desires, attractions, behaviors, and identities. It encompasses various dimensions, including but not limited to physical, emotional, and social aspects of human sexuality. Sexual orientation specifically refers to a person's enduring pattern of emotional, romantic, and/or sexual attractions to individuals

The experience of sexual pleasure encompasses more than just physical sensations. While it sometimes involves physical stimulation, it also sometimes involves finding happiness and connection in different ways, like feeling emotions, understanding your mind, and connecting with others socially. Some people find sexual pleasure in sharing intimate moments with a partner, while others feel affirmed in their sexual identity. Providing mutual pleasure or stimulation with a partner can also be enjoyable for some. Sexual pleasure can be personal or involve social aspects, depending on the individual.



## Self Guide

As time goes on, you might explore different avenues to find sexual satisfaction, yet you might also encounter a decrease in what brings you pleasure. For young LGBTQI+ individuals, embracing and accepting oneself often paves the way for a guilt-free and informed expression of their sexuality.

Many young LGBTQI+ individuals first encounter sexuality through pornography, but unfortunately, this medium often lacks comprehensive education and safety tips. As a result, they may not receive vital information on sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), including safe sex practices. It's essential that young LGBTQI+ persons have access to accurate and inclusive SRHR education to empower them to make informed decisions about their sexual health and well-being.









### Challenges to SRHR for Young LGBTQI+ Folks

- Legal barriers (SSMPA, status of illegality of abortion)
- Lack of comprehensive sexuality education
- Language barrier
- Largely economically disadvantaged
- Harmful Cultural norms and Religious Misconceptions
- Internalised homophobia
- Discriminatory behaviour of healthcare service providers
- Inadequate knowledge, facility, and skills to attend to LGBTQI+ specific cases

# SRHR needs are different and unique to individuals.

Here are needs specific to different LGBTQI+ communities

 <p>Lesbians</p>	<p>Comprehensive Sexuality Education, contraceptive, STI screening (prevention, treatment and management), cervical and breast cancer screening, psychosocial support, abortion care, acceptance, recognition, affirming care, respect etc.</p>
 <p>Gays</p>	<p>Comprehensive Sexuality Education, contraceptives, STI screening (prevention, treatment and management), prostate and testicular cancer screening, psychosocial support, acceptance, recognition, affirming care, respect etc.</p>
 <p>Bisexuals</p>	<p>Comprehensive Sexuality Education, contraceptives, STI screening (prevention, treatment and management) prostate and testicular cancer screening, cervical and breast cancer screening, psychosocial support, abortion care, acceptance, recognition, affirming care, respect etc</p>
 <p>Trans-persons</p>	<p>Comprehensive Sexuality Education, hormonal therapy, contraceptives, STI screening (prevention, treatment and management) prostate and testicular cancer screening, cervical and breast cancer screening, psychosocial support, abortion care, acceptance, recognition, affirming care, respect etc.</p>
 <p>Intersex</p>	<p>Comprehensive Sexuality Education, hormonal therapy, contraceptives, STI screening (prevention, treatment and management) prostate and testicular cancer screening, cervical and breast cancer screening, psychosocial support, abortion care, acceptance, recognition, affirming care, respect etc.</p>
 <p>Gender non-conforming</p>	<p>Comprehensive Sexuality Education, hormonal therapy, contraceptives, STI screening (prevention, treatment and management) prostate and testicular cancer screening, cervical and breast cancer screening, psychosocial support, abortion care, acceptance, recognition, affirming care, respect etc.</p>



# Sexual Intercourse and Sexually Transmitted Infections

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## Sexually Transmitted Infections 5.1

Sexually transmitted infections (STIs), also known as sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), are infections that can be transmitted from one person to another through sexual activity. It's important to note that STIs can also spread through other means, not solely through sexual contact. Some STIs, such as HIV/AIDS and hepatitis B, can also be transmitted through blood-to-blood contact, sharing needles, or from mother to child during childbirth or breastfeeding. Additionally, certain STIs like herpes and HPV can spread through skin-to-skin contact, even without penetrative sex. STIs encompass a wide range of infections caused by bacteria, viruses, parasites, and fungi, and they can have serious health consequences if left untreated. It's crucial to practice safe sex, get regular testing, and seek medical attention if you suspect you may have an STI.



By understanding safer sex practices, such as condom use and regular testing, and seeking prompt medical attention if an STI is suspected, individuals can protect themselves and their partners effectively.



Warning!!!

Never self-medicate for sexually transmitted infections (STIs) or any other medical condition. Always seek professional care from qualified and affirming healthcare providers.





## 5.2 Some Types of STIs and Their Effects

**Gonorrhea** in male typically presents with painful urination and discharge from the penis, while in females, symptoms may include abnormal vaginal discharge and pain during urination. However, gonorrhea can also be asymptomatic in all sexes.

**Chlamydia** in males often manifests as pain or burning during urination and discharge from the penis, while in females, symptoms may include abnormal vaginal discharge and pain during intercourse. However, chlamydia can also be asymptomatic in all sexes.

**Syphilis** in males, syphilis can present with painless sores on the genitals, while in females, symptoms may include similar painless sores as well as rash, fever, and swollen lymph nodes. However, syphilis can also progress to more serious stages with severe health complications if left untreated in all sexes.

**Chancroid** (Genital Sore) This disease causes shallow, painful sores or ulcers around the genital area and inside the vagina of infected persons.

**Genital warts** usually appear as small, hard painless bumps in the vaginal area, around the penis or around the anus. If untreated, they may grow and develop into a fleshy cauliflower like appearance. A person who has genital warts should have a check up with a trained health professional every year.

**Candidiasis** This is an infection caused by a fungus. It is characterized by thick, whitish discharge resembling curdled milk. It is extremely itchy and may be associated with swelling of the labia in females. Males can be carriers without showing any symptoms. It is therefore important to treat both partners even though the male/female partner may have no symptoms. It might also be a result of other health issues, not only as an STI.



**HIV (human immunodeficiency virus).** HIV affects specific cells of the immune system (called CD4 cells). Over time, HIV can destroy so many of these cells that the body can't fight off infection anymore. There is currently no cure to HIV, but with proper medical care, the virus can be controlled. Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, or AIDS. AIDS is the late stage of HIV infection, when a person's immune system is severely damaged.





## 5.3 How to prevent contracting STIs



Avoid excessive use of alcohol and recreational drugs in unsafe environments



Use HIV Prep as directed by your physician (for HIV)



Speak openly with your partner



Treat existing STIs to reduce the chances of new infections



Clean/sterilize sex toys before and after use



Don't share sex toys



Abstinence



Don't share sharp objects



Treat and recover from sores and ulcers to reduce chances of infection



Use water-based lubricants



Use condoms



Use HIV PEP as directed by your physician (for HIV)

# Consent

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# Consent

As you demand that your **SRHR** be respected, you also need to respect those of others, and this brings us to consent. Consent is an agreement between participants to engage in sexual activities.

What does it look like?

Consent is requested: You need to ask your partner(s) before you commence any sexual act with them

Consent is an Enthusiastic Yes: Ensure that your partner is sure about their yes, and that they are excited about it.

A no means no, don't try to convince, or guilttrip anyone after saying no.

Consent can be withdrawn: A person can withdraw their enthusiastic yes even after you have commenced the sexual activity. If they do, respect their choice.

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# Safety Tips

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### Safety Tips



#### When accosted by the police

- Do not attempt to physically resist arrest.
- Request to see the arrest warrant
- Demand to know the grounds for your arrest
- Ask for means of identification if whether they are in uniform or not
- Ask what station you are being taken to
- Contact your family, friends, and lawyer once you get to the station
- You have the right not to write a statement.
- You have the right to silence
- You may decide to give a statement
- If your statement is written by a police officer while you dictate, ensure you read it before signing

#### Staying Safe when meeting new people

- Only meet in public places
- Charge your phone
- Give their information to a trusted friend
- Turn on your phone location and share your live location
- Trust your instincts
- Take note of your environment
- Dress smartly

#### If you are attacked

- Make a scene
- Tell your story to bystanders, if you are being recorded, look into the camera
- Run to the nearest safe place (shops, office, etc.)
- Call for help
- Call the police, its safer to be with the police than with a mob

# Call to Action for SRHR Champions

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## Call to Action for SRHR Champions

Now that you know your rights, you are in a better position to demand that they be recognized, and protected. You are also in a better position to help others know about their rights; this is referred to as peer advocacy. So what is advocacy, and what is peer advocacy?

Advocacy involves doing things that support, recommend, or speak up for others. Peer advocacy is when people who share similar experiences team up. The peer advocate and peers they're helping might be similar in age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, and diagnosis, or have the same issues. Peer advocates use their own experiences to really get what others are going through and to support and connect with their communities.

### Strategies

#### Online platforms and social media:

Utilize social media platforms to disseminate information and create awareness. Young people are often active on social media, making it an effective tool for reaching a wide audience. Share informative content and success stories, and engage in conversations to address concerns and questions. Something beautiful about online advocacy is that you can access people beyond your geographical location, and you may choose to be anonymous.

#### Community Engagement Meeting with Peers:

Organize small community events to educate and empower your peers or individuals. These events can cover topics such as legal rights, health, and well-being.



### Informal conversations with others:

You may consider chatting with people outside your peer group, these may be your family members. Advocacy is all about spreading the word, and the more people know, the better chance we've got at making a real difference. Plus, you might not even know if there are LGBTQI+ people in their circle who could benefit from the information you share. Who knows, your chat might spark someone to be an ally down the line! It's like planting seeds of change in all your conversations. Remember to always prioritize yours and the safety of others when the opportunity to share comes up!

### Speak up against queerphobic statements and acts:

Speaking up against queerphobic statements and condemning acts of violence and abuse against LGBTQI+ people is crucial to fostering a more inclusive and supportive environment. However, it's important to approach these situations with care, considering the context and the safety of everyone involved. Before speaking up, assess the situation and consider the potential risks. If you believe it's safe to intervene, choose an appropriate moment to address the queerphobic statement or act.

### Artistic and Creative Expression:

Use art, music, and other forms of creative expression to convey messages and break down barriers. Creative projects can capture attention, evoke emotions, and serve as powerful tools for advocacy. You could consider creating a comic, tell stories, or starting podcasts that share positive messages.



## Where to get help

ORGANIZATIONS	HANDLES	HELPLINE	STATE
ISHRAI - Improved Sexual Health and Rights Advocacy Initiative	@ishrai_n (Instagram) @ishrainig (Twitter)	08156843504 08039663031	LAGOS
AHRDI - Access to Health & Rights Development Initiative	@ahrdinitiative (Instagram)	09074611520 08138520093 07033466851	LAGOS & BENIN
HAHAI - Hope Alive Initiative		08035970810 Bala Muhammed Executive Director	BAUCHI
ICARH - International Centre for Advocacy on the Rights to Health	@icarh_ng (Instagram & Twitter)	08008437279	ABUJA
THEDI - The Total Health Empowerment and Development Initiative	@thediNigeria (Instagram & Twitter)	09065509238 07065858417	BENUE
AGHI - Access Good Health Initiative	@aghinigeria (Instagram & Twitter)	09027770808 08065187179	ENUGU
WHER - Women's Health and Equal Rights Initiative	@wher_initiative (Instagram) @WHERinitiative (Twitter)	08186457675 07038322298	ABUJA
INCREASE	@increase_nig	08065488417	NIGER
TIERs - The Initiative for Equal Rights	@tiersnigeria (Instagram & Twitter)	0800CALLTIERS 0800225584377	LAGOS



# SEXUAL REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH RIGHTS

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