



Innovative and Culturally Sensitive  
Educational Package for Migrants'  
Sexual Health Education

# ICEX e-Handbook



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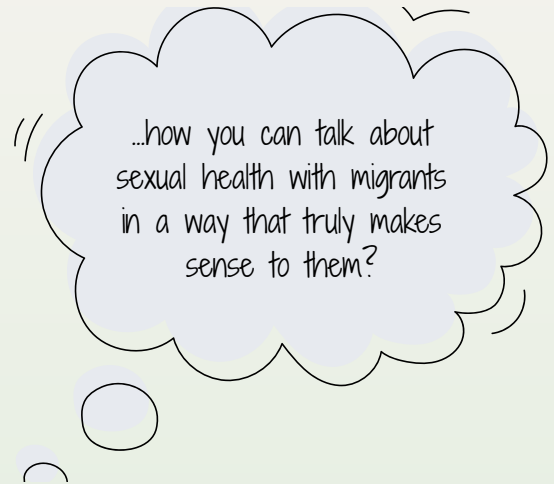
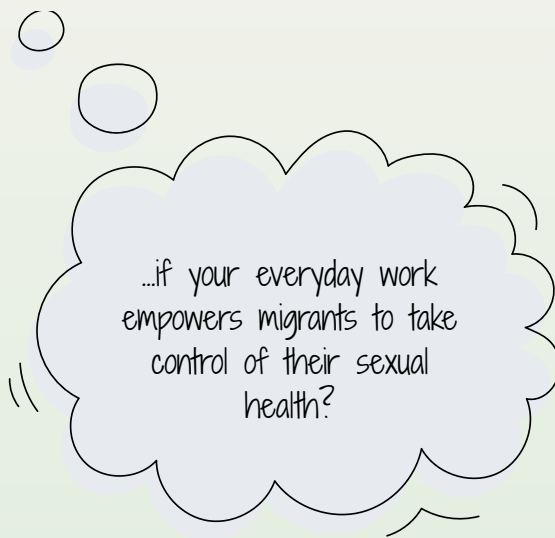
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# As a professional working with migrants, have you ever wondered...



*Go through the ICEX e-Handbook to find the answers!*

# The ICEX project Idea: Innovative and culturally sensitive sexual health education

Migrants often face a range of sexual health problems due to changed life circumstances or past events, which can have serious consequences for their mental and physical health.

Providing accurate and comprehensive sexual health education tailored to the needs of migrants is essential for public health. This education needs to be delivered in a safe environment, considering cultural and linguistic aspects, and should include information on body awareness, reproductive health, sexual rights, and access to sexual health services.

The ICEX project (Innovative and Culturally Sensitive Educational Package for Migrants' Sexual Health Education) aimed to enhance the sexual health knowledge of adult migrants and the professionals who worked with them. By developing innovative and culturally sensitive educational material, the project sought to address gaps in information and skills, aiming to improve sexual health among migrants. Coordinated by Turku University of Applied Sciences (Turku UAS), the project involved several partners: Linnasmäki College in Finland, University of West Attica (UNIWA) and Education and Innovation Hub (KMOP) in Greece, Escola Superior de Enfermagem de Lisboa (ESEL) and Family Planning Association (APF) in Portugal, and the Estonian Refugee Council (ERC).

The ICEX project produced three key outcomes: the ICEX Framework, the ICEX Educational Package, and the e-Handbook for professionals working with migrants and other interested people. Funded by the Erasmus+ Cooperation Partnerships programme, the ICEX project was set to run from November 1, 2022, to October 31, 2025.

The materials are aimed primarily to adult migrants, providing them with the relevant information to enhance their sexual health knowledge and skills. In addition, the package supports professionals by providing them with the best available sexual health knowledge and pedagogical practices of sexual health education to effectively educate and counsel migrants. Overall, the ICEX Educational package aims to promote better sexual health and well-being among migrants, thereby fostering a healthier and more informed community.

# ICEX e-Handbook



This e-Handbook was created with you in mind – professionals working with migrants. It is designed to support and empower your work in promoting sexual health education that is inclusive, culturally sensitive, and respectful of migrants' lived experiences. Inside, you will find practical guidance, tools and theoretical insights tailored to the unique needs of adult migrants. It is best to use this e-Handbook alongside the **ICEX Educational Package**.

The ICEX e-Handbook is an evidence-based, online guide with two parts: the first part being the background that introduces sexual health and sexual health education and the second being the comprehensive manual for using the ICEX Educational Package. It integrates innovative pedagogical methods and interactive resources to help you approach sensitive topics with clarity, confidence, and care.

Developed through a collaboration among ICEX project partners, the ICEX e-Handbook embodies a shared commitment to advancing inclusive and impactful sexual health education across diverse cultural settings.

The ICEX e-Handbook is freely available online in English and all partner-country languages (Finnish, Greek, Portuguese, and Estonian), ensuring that professionals and organisations across borders can benefit from its content and apply it in their own settings.

We invite you to explore, adapt, and apply it in your work and, most importantly, to use it as a tool for impact.

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# 1. Sexual Health and Sexual Health Education

Sexual health and sexual health education are essential to ensuring well-being, promoting informed choices about sexuality, and preventing illnesses as well as sexual and gender-based violence. Concerning the migrant population, it also supports integration, reduces vulnerability to exploitation, and upholds human rights.

## 1.1 Key concepts

Concepts and meanings are important. In practice, it is important that migrants and professionals share the same understanding of each concept. If any uncertainty arises, it should be clarified to ensure that both migrants and professionals are truly referring to the same thing. The key concepts used in this manual are presented below in alphabetical order.

**Gender** refers to the roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes socially constructed and considered appropriate for women and men (WHO, 2022; Council of Europe, 2011).

**Gender identity** is how a person experiences their gender and gender expression. This may or may not correspond with the sex assigned at birth. There are many different gender identities, reflecting the diversity of human experience. A **cisgender** person's gender identity matches the sex they were assigned at birth. In contrast, a **transgender** person's gender identity does not align with the sex they were assigned at birth. **Intersex** individuals are born with physical sex characteristics that do not fit typical definitions of male or female. Some people identify as **non-binary** or **genderless**, meaning they do not see themselves strictly as male or female. For others, defining their gender is not important, or they may choose not to define it at all (WHO, 2016 ).

**Sex** is a biological category based on anatomy and physiology and related to the genetic component. Sex is normally assigned at birth as female or male and sometimes intersex (Nash, 2023).



**LGBTQIA+** (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning, Intersex, Asexual or Agender). This acronym seeks to encompass sexual and gender diversity, including people whose identity is based on their sexual orientation and gender identity (Human Rights Campaign, 2023).

**Sexual health** includes a positive and respectful approach to sexuality and sexual relationships, free from discrimination and violence, and the ability to have safe, enjoyable experiences and make informed choices. Access to sexual health care and education and protection from gender-based violence is a fundamental part of comprehensive sexual health, global health, and well-being, impacting not only individual health but also couple and family relationships, as well as the social and economic development of communities (WHO, 2015).

**Sexual health education** provides individuals with the information and skills they need to make the best decisions for themselves about sexuality and relationships. Sexual health education is a lifelong process of learning about identity, relationships, and intimacy. All people have the right to comprehensive sexual health education that addresses the socio-cultural, biological, psychological, and spiritual dimensions of sexuality by providing information, exploring feelings, values, and attitudes, as well as developing communication, decision-making, and critical-thinking skills. Sexual health education may take place in schools, at home, in community settings, or online (UNESCO, 2018). Although various terms exist in the literature, the most current and widely accepted is 'sexuality education', as adopted by the World Health Organization (WHO, 2010; WHO, 2023).

**Sexual orientation** refers to an individual's emotional, romantic, and/or sexual attraction to others—or lack thereof—including who they may or may not feel sexual desire for. It is a fundamental part of a person's identity and differs from gender identity. Sexual orientation consists of three components: sexual attraction, sexual behaviour, and sexual identity. Sexual orientation is diverse and can be experienced in many different ways. A *heterosexual* person is emotionally and/or sexually attracted to people of a different gender. In contrast, a *homosexual* person is attracted to those of the same gender. A *bisexual* person experiences attraction to both the same and different genders. Some individuals identify as *queer*, meaning they do not wish to label their sexual orientation within traditional categories. Meanwhile, an *asexual* person experiences little or no sexual attraction toward others (WHO, 2016).

**Sexuality** is a fundamental and complex aspect of human identity, encompassing emotions, behaviours, and orientations. It involves how individuals experience and express themselves as sexual beings, including physical attraction, emotional connections, and intimate relationships. Sexuality is shaped by biological, psychological, social, and cultural factors. Recognising and respecting the diversity of sexual orientations and identities is essential to fostering inclusive and supportive communities (World Health Organisation [WHO], 2015). Barriers such as stigma, discrimination, and lack of education can negatively impact sexual health, preventing individuals from expressing their sexuality safely and comfortably (Bohren, 2022).

**Sexual rights** are part of human rights. They encompass the right of all individuals to access sexual and reproductive health services, seek information, express their sexuality, and live without discrimination, coercion, or violence. Rooted in fundamental human rights principles, they include the rights to privacy, bodily autonomy, equality, and informed decision-making in matters of sexual and reproductive health.



These rights are essential for dignity, well-being, and full participation in society, and they must be respected, protected, and fulfilled for everyone, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, or cultural background (World Association for Sexual Health, 2014).

**A sexual relationship** is an intimate bond between two or more people that involves sexual intimacy and may include physical or emotional closeness. These connections can take many forms, ranging from casual interactions to long-term, committed partnerships and everything in between (Ventriglio, 2019). Sexual relations can be represented through affection and pleasure, contributing to the strengthening of emotional bonds (Vieira, 2016) or existing in the absence of romantic feelings. Sexual behaviour is an important way for partners to communicate and interact in a huge variety of ways (Zhang, 2022). Sexual relationships can vary based on the gender identities or expressions of those involved (Kennis et al. 2023).



## 1.2 Sexual health and sexual health education for migrants

“Migrant” is an umbrella term, not defined under international law, reflecting the common lay understanding of a person who moves away from his or her place of usual residence, whether within a country or across an international border, temporarily or permanently, and for a variety of reasons (Sironi, 2019).

Individuals on the move can face significant challenges in accessing sexual health information and services, which affects their well-being and ability to exercise their sexual rights. Barriers such as stigma, discrimination, and lack of education can negatively impact sexual health, preventing individuals from expressing their sexuality safely and comfortably. Migrants often face barriers to sexual health literacy, including language obstacles, cultural stigma, lack of education, legal restrictions, and economic disadvantages (Mandroiu, 2024; WHO, 2020; Gaspar et al., 2020; Keygnaert et al., 2014; Rechel et al., 2013).

Furthermore, changing circumstances or past experiences can also create sexual health challenges for migrants with potentially severe consequences for their mental and physical health. These challenges expose people to increased risks and vulnerability and limit access to essential health services, increasing risks of unplanned pregnancies, Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), gender-based violence, and poor maternal health outcomes, for example (Keygnaert et al., 2014).

Promoting sexual health and rights contributes directly to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including good health and well-being (SDG 3), gender equality (SDG 5), and reduced inequalities (SDG 10). The ICEX project helps build healthier, more inclusive communities by improving access to information and services—especially for vulnerable groups like migrants, who often face legal and social barriers. Integrating sexual health into sustainable development efforts is key to creating a fairer, more equitable world. (United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2025).

Diversity sensitivity is essential to recognising and understanding various forms of cultural diversity, including gender, ethnicity, age, socioeconomic status, religion, sexual orientation, and other social markers. These differences should be integrated into the creation of effective and equitable systems and services. Regardless of its source, diversity itself can be a positive contribution to society (WHO, 2020). From this perspective, culture can be a way of life and not just linked to social, religious, and ethnic issues or geographical boundaries (UNESCO, 2018).

In addition, a holistic focus on well-being is central - integrating physical, emotional, and mental health to address the diverse needs of individuals. The approach promotes gender equality and diversity, fostering an inclusive environment where everyone is respected and empowered to exercise self-determination. Finally, all information provided is grounded in scientific accuracy, ensuring that it is evidence-based, unbiased, and reliable (WHO, 2010). This comprehensive sexual health education guide ensures that migrants receive the knowledge and support necessary to navigate their lives with confidence and dignity (Konstantinou et al., 2025).

## 1.3 Principles for migrants' sexual health education

Since everyone has the right to sexual health education (WHO, 2010), migrants' sexual health education is guided by key principles that ensure its relevance and effectiveness. The approach is culturally sensitive and age-appropriate, providing information and support tailored to the developmental stages and diverse cultural backgrounds of migrants. It is firmly rooted in a human rights-based framework that upholds sexual and reproductive rights, recognising these as essential to individual dignity, autonomy, and well-being (Keygnaert et al., 2014).

Ongoing research also underscores the importance of a rights-based and culturally sensitive approach to sexual health education. Moreover, the literature (Kwok & Kwok, 2023; Morin & Marwah, 2024; European Parliament, Michielsen, & Ivanova, 2022) suggests the following key principles to guide the development of sexual health education programs for migrant populations:

**Human rights-based:** Sexual health education upholds sexual and reproductive rights as fundamental human rights. Individuals, regardless of background, should have access to comprehensive sexual health education that respects their dignity and autonomy. Migrants should be informed of their rights to health care and consent, regardless of their legal status.

**Holistic well-being:** Integrates physical, emotional, and mental aspects of sexual health. Sexual health education should recognize the interconnectedness of body, mind, and emotions in overall well-being.

**Culturally & age-appropriate:** Tailored to different cultural backgrounds and life stages to ensure relevance. Sexual health discussions may vary between generations, ensuring topics are appropriate to the age and understanding of each group. Sexual health education should consider cultural values, beliefs, and practices. Respectful language should be used.

**Lifelong learning:** Adapts to changing needs, from childhood to adulthood. Sexual health education should evolve with the learner, addressing age-appropriate needs across the lifespan.

**Scientific accuracy:** Provides fact-based, unbiased, and up-to-date information. All sexual health education should be grounded in scientifically accurate and unbiased data to ensure learners receive the most reliable information.

**Empowerment & inclusion:** Encourages decision-making, autonomy, and social fairness. It is essential to promote self-determination and informed decision-making in sexual health matters. Providing migrants with the knowledge of safe sexual practices and legal protections empowers them to make informed choices in their relationships. Interactive and participatory methods can be used to address diverse backgrounds and needs. In addition, they should guide individuals in critical media analysis, especially in addressing misinformation and building the skills to recognize reliable sources and avoid misinformation.

**Gender equality & diversity:** Promotes equity, inclusivity, and self-determination for all. Sexual health education should actively combat stereotypes and promote respect for all genders and sexual orientations. Providing information on gender identity and non-binary experiences ensures inclusivity for all learners, regardless of their identity.

## 1.4 Ethical considerations for sexual health education among migrants

These ethical considerations are intended to guide professionals working with migrants by promoting respect for human rights and the application of cultural competence. They are also broadly applicable to the implementation of sexual health education. By applying these considerations, professionals can ensure that their work is both effective and fair, leading to improved sexual health outcomes for migrant communities (WHO, 2017; WHO, 2021).



### Cultural sensitivity and respect for diversity

Professionals should understand and respect the fact that migrants come from diverse cultural backgrounds with varying attitudes towards sexuality, gender roles, and sexual health. At the same time, they should understand and respect these differences while ensuring that sexual health education is relevant and sensitive to the cultural context of the community.



### Confidentiality and privacy

Professionals should prioritize protecting personal information. They should ensure that privacy is respected, and sensitive health information is kept confidential.

Building trust is crucial when working with migrant populations. Ensuring confidentiality can help alleviate concerns about exposing personal information. Thereby strengthening the relationship and promoting more effective sexual health education.



### Rights and empowerment

Sexual health education programs should be designed in a way that does not discriminate based on immigration status, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, or any other factor. This inclusive approach is essential to promoting equal access and safeguarding the dignity and rights of all learners.

Equally important is the principle of informed consent. Migrants should be given the opportunity to provide informed consent before receiving sexual health education or participating in any related services. This is crucial for maintaining ethical standards and protecting their autonomy.



### Access and barriers to sexual health services

Migrants often face various barriers to accessing sexual health services, including language difficulties, lack of knowledge about available services, fear of deportation, and cultural stigma. It is crucial for professionals to identify and work to remove these barriers.

In this context, professionals should actively advocate for policy changes that affect migrants' sexual health and sexual rights and enhance access to sexual health services and sexual health education for all migrants, including un-documented individuals.

### **Training and interdisciplinarity**

Professionals who work with migrants and implement sexual health education should receive regular training on the latest sexual health information, cultural competence, legal rights of migrants, and ethical practice.

Moreover, a holistic approach to migrants' sexual health education and an interdisciplinary collaboration is often required among sectors such as healthcare, social work, legal advocacy, and community-based organizations.

### **Ethical decision-making**

Professionals should ensure that their interventions are in the best interest of migrant individuals and communities, aiming to do good (beneficence) and avoid harm (non-maleficence). This includes promoting well-being, preventing disease, and avoiding actions that could further marginalize or harm migrant populations. Equally important is respect for the autonomy of migrants. This means giving them the freedom to make informed decisions regarding their sexual health without coercion or under pressure.

### **Legal considerations**

Professionals working in sexual health education should be aware of both local and international legal frameworks governing sexual health education and migrant rights. For instance, human rights conventions (such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights) emphasize the rights of migrants to access health services.

In addition, professionals need to know the immigration laws and health access. While many countries may restrict access to certain health services for undocumented migrants, ethical practice involves advocating for universal access to sexual health education, regardless of immigration status.

Moreover, legal requirements may differ by country in terms of reporting certain issues (e.g., child abuse or trafficking). Professionals should be aware of the specific laws in their jurisdiction and navigate these complexities while maintaining ethical practices.

## 1.5. Sexual rights

Sexual rights are an essential part of human rights. Understanding sexual rights helps professionals support dignity, freedom, and equality for all. Promoting sexual rights means creating safer, more respectful environments. Whether you work with migrants or vulnerable communities, these rights matter. The infographic below outlines the core principles of sexual rights.



## 2. How to use the ICEX Educational Package

The content of the ICEX Educational Package has been developed based on a needs assessment of migrant populations. It provides information on sexual health for both migrants and the professionals who work with them, and it is intended to be applicable across diverse groups, allowing the professionals to adapt and integrate it into their health education initiatives according to their target population's needs. The material is available free of charge in digital format and available in six languages: English, Finnish, Greek, Portuguese, Estonian, and Russian.

This package consists of innovative and culturally sensitive tools addressing a broad range of topics, organised into three main sections: "Anatomy and physiology of sexual function," "Reproductive health and safe sex," and "Ethics and legality." The three main sections are divided into subsections and some even into further subsections. The sections include sexual health educational material with interactive elements, including visual aids, self-assessment tools (i.e., quizzes), and multimedia content such as videos.

### **Anatomy and physiology of sexual function**

- Anatomy and physiology
- Sexual function
- Intimate hygiene
- Body awareness & self-skills

### **Reproductive health and safe sex**

- Family planning
- Intimate relationship
- Safe sex and prevention

### **Ethics and legality**

- Ethical and critical thinking
- Sexual health laws and services in the ICEX partner countries
- Sexual rights



## 2.1 Facilitating inclusive and respectful sexual health education

To effectively implement sexual health education that is both inclusive and respectful, it is essential to consider the following key considerations:

### Show up with empathy and use active listening skills

- Be present and aim to create a calm and welcoming atmosphere.
- Encourage discussion and ask open-ended questions.
- Reflect and ensure that every migrant has been heard.
- Be conscious of your body language. When shared language is limited, the importance of open and friendly body language becomes even more pronounced.

### Offer multiple ways to participate

- Give migrants plenty of time to get to know the material.
- Let migrants decide how and how much they want to participate.
- Remember that language can be a barrier to participation, but silence is not an indication of not participating.

### Be open and curious about different belief systems and cultures

- Acknowledge your prejudices and work on them beforehand.
- Approach new situations with an open mind and allow yourself to be surprised.
- Create an atmosphere of respect.
- Be patient. Addressing topics related to sexuality and sexual health can be difficult depending on factors like cultural taboos or a lack of vocabulary.

### Take into consideration gender diversity and create safe spaces by using inclusive language

- Remember that outer appearance is not a reliable indication of someone's gender identity. Ask for their name/how they would like to be addressed.
- Use gender neutral and inclusive terms like partner and spouse instead of wife/husband when referring to significant others.

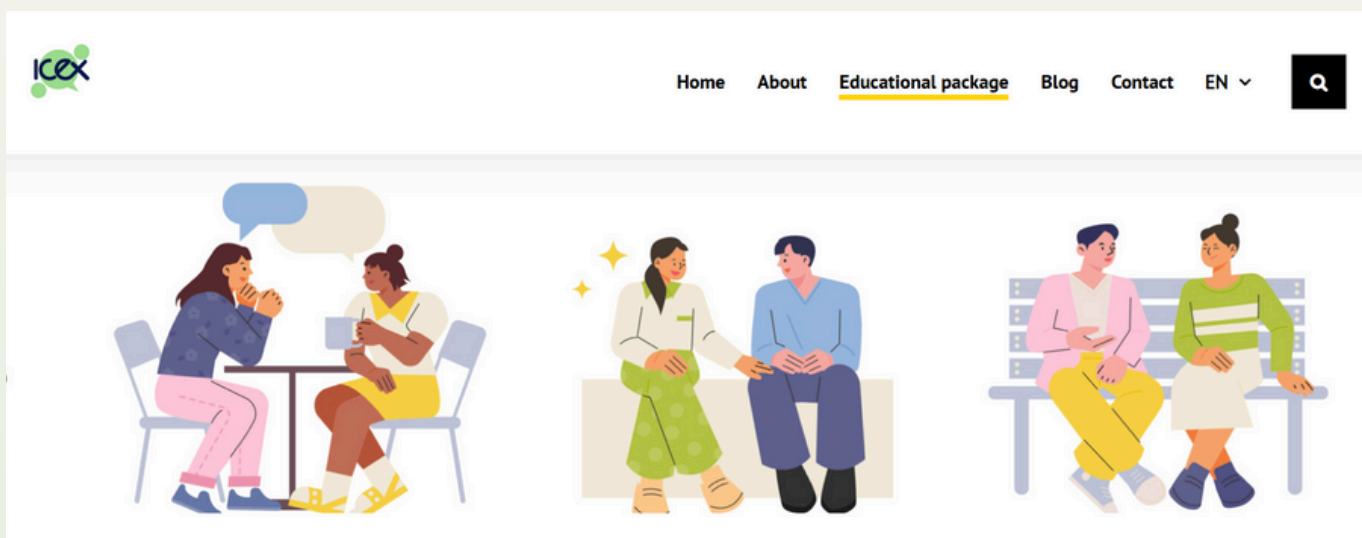
### Remember the importance of language awareness

- Use simplified language and terms that are easy to understand.
- Explain new words, terms, and concepts, and avoid abstract vocabulary whenever possible.
- Check that the previous content has been understood before moving on to the next subject.
- Remember that you rarely explain too much!





## 2.2 How to navigate through the ICEX Educational Package

It is possible to start from any of the main sections and go through the whole content, or go straight to one of the subsections that is of interest. To return to the previous section or slide, click the “Back” box situated at the bottom of the page.



There are two ways to navigate the material on the website. Some sections are organised into slides, and some are navigated by scrolling down the page:

- The **slide presentations** are navigated by clicking the right arrow to go to the next slide and by clicking the arrow on the left to return to the previous slide.
- **Picture cards** have information on both sides. Clicking “Turn” on the card will provide more information.
- Some slides and pictures have **hotspots** with icons  or  that can be clicked to receive more information.
- Some tasks are done by **dragging the right word** to the correct picture or to the right place in the text.
- In **quizzes**, users choose the right answer to the question. Clicking “Check” will reveal the right answer and will sometimes also give feedback or provide more information.
- In **true or false quizzes**, users choose if the statement is true or false in their opinion. Clicking “Check” will reveal the right answer and sometimes will also give feedback or provide more information.

## 2.3 Using the ICEX Educational Package in different settings

This educational package can be accessed independently online, allowing migrant users to engage with the content without the supervision of a professional. The educational package can also be used by professionals working with migrants, whether in one-on-one sessions or group settings.

When using this material in a facilitated group setting, the following steps can help ensure a safe, inclusive, and effective learning experience:

### COURSE OF ACTION

#### 1. Prepare to use the ICEX educational package.

*It's important to approach the topic of sexual health with both self-awareness and sensitivity towards cultural diversity and gender inclusivity. Using correct terms is vital to quality sexual health education, but it is also vital to be prepared to provide the same information and explanations using simple and accessible language.*

*The key to the preparation relies on first becoming comfortable with the topic itself and then learning how to talk about sexuality and sexual health. It is also important to recognise personal limitations and boundaries when addressing the topic of sexual health. Below are some reflection questions to strengthen the preparation:*

- How do I relate to the topic of sexuality and sexual health?
- How comfortable am I discussing topics regarding sexuality and sexual health?
- What are my own beliefs, values, and possible taboos regarding sexuality and sexual health?
- Have I ever made assumptions about migrants' beliefs or experiences?
- Have I asked for feedback on how I facilitate sensitive topics?

#### 2. Prepare the interaction

- Learn about your participants (if possible):
  - Age, gender, country of origin, language proficiency, and digital literacy
- Establish clear objectives for sexual health education
- Select a suitable location:
  - Ensure privacy, minimal noise, and enough space for the group
- Plan the duration:
  - Consider the group's availability and stick to the agreed-upon timeframe
- Ensure access to technology if needed:
  - Inform migrants if smartphones, tablets, or computers will be needed or provide the necessary devices

#### 3. Create a safe and respectful environment

*Creating a safe space is essential for open, respectful discussion about sexuality and sexual health. You can support this by:*

- Introducing migrants to each other
  - You can use icebreakers at the beginning of the session to create a more comfortable environment for all.
- Clearly stating the goals, duration, and confidentiality expectations
- Ensuring linguistic understanding (offer interpretation or simplified language if needed)
- Establishing group agreements to promote respect and safety:
  - Confidentiality and mutual respect are essential
- Personal boundaries:
  - Avoid discussing personal sexual experiences (migrants and facilitators)
  - Refrain from showing or taking personal photos during sessions
  - Always obtain verbal consent before discussing sensitive topics

#### 4. Ending the session

- Make sure all migrants' questions are addressed
- Arrange follow-up meetings if appropriate
- Provide resources for further support, such as contact details for healthcare professionals

#### 5. Practice self-reflection after each session

- Ask for peer or migrant feedback
- Read literature
- Attend workshops
- Record and review your facilitation sessions

## 2.4 How to act when difficult situations arise in a group setting

Challenging situations can sometimes arise, which can be difficult to manage. For instance, one of the participants could share something very personal or ask you for a personal opinion. When you are presented with a difficult situation, here are some suggestions for you:

- Identify that the situation is difficult
- Remind migrants about the agreed-upon safe space rules
- Check in with migrants after the end of the session

Below are some practical examples of challenging situations you may face while implementing sexual health education and suggestions on how to manage them:

- *What if you don't know the answer?*

It is OK to admit that you do not know the answer. You can either come back with an answer later or refer the person to another relevant professional or other relevant resources.

- *What if someone asks your opinion on what is right or wrong, or asks for advice on what they should do?*

For many questions, there are no right or wrong answers, as the most suitable option will depend on the individual variables. Differences in values and customs of the host country and countries of origin can be explored through discussion. As a professional, however, it is essential to provide information about sexual rights and laws, and to reference them when justifying your responses.

- *What if a migrant says something inappropriate or confrontational?*

It is good to remember that people come from different kinds of backgrounds, so do not take it personally. Stick to the facts and de-escalate. You can always end the session if you no longer feel safe.

- *What if someone starts to describe their traumatic experience or overshare?*

Acknowledge their experience and validate it, but explain that this would be better explored in a specialised supportive environment. Then guide them to other services.

- *What if someone says they don't like the material?*

As a professional, you do not have to defend the material. If appropriate, ask why and take it as feedback.

## 2.5 ICEX Educational Package implementation guide

This section includes ideas and instructions on how the activities in each subsection can be used in a teaching setting for different target groups in face-to-face situations. You can adapt the instructions to suit different topics. Ensure safe and confidential interaction.

### Anatomy and physiology of sexual function

This section contains the different topics below:

#### Anatomy and physiology

This subsection introduces the anatomy and physiology of male and female reproductive system, the menstrual cycle and how to get pregnant. There is also information about circumcision and female genital mutilation.

#### Sexual function

In this subsection, you will find information about sexual function, the body's response to sexual stimuli, factors that may affect sexual response, and the main problems or dysfunctions.

#### Intimate hygiene

This subsection introduces the basics of intimate hygiene and the prevention of sexually transmitted infections.

#### Body awareness & self-skill

This subsection highlights body awareness and self-skills related to communication in intimate relationships.

### Anatomy and physiology

#### 1. Ways to start the session and introduce the topic

Explore through discussion:

- Begin with an introduction: We're going to have an open and judgment-free conversation about anatomy and the reproductive system and its function.
- Make sure that the migrants understand the topic that is being discussed.
- Use questions: Do you want to talk about this topic? Can you think of some parts of the reproductive system? Do you know where they are in the body?
- Identify if migrants have questions about sexual function.

## 2. Go through the material:

The Anatomy and Physiology section begins with the interactive story of an immigrant couple who have some questions about the anatomy of the male and female reproductive systems and how these systems work.

- Ask the question: What do you want to learn about reproduction?
- Learn some information and study the pictures.
- Click on green boxes to learn more about each topic.
- Ask questions: Do you know the male and female anatomy? Do you know how this system works? What do you know about fertility? How does it work? What do you know about the menstrual cycle? What is menstruation? Do you know how to have a child? And how does the woman get pregnant? Do you know what female genital mutilation is? Do you know what circumcision is?

## 3. Ways to end/conclude the session:

End with a reflection question:

- Was it interesting to you to explore this subject?
- Do you have other questions related to this topic?
- Do you want to add something to this topic?

## Sexual function

### 1. Ways to start the session and introduce the topic:

Explore through discussion:

- Begin with an introduction: We are going to have an open and judgment-free conversation about sexual function.
- Make sure that the migrant understands the topic that is being discussed.
- Use questions: Do you want to know how the body responds to sexual stimuli? Is it the same for men and women? Does the body always respond in the same way throughout life? What factors can affect sexual response? What kind of sexual problems do you know about?
- Identify if migrants have questions about sexual function.

### 2. Go through the material:

On this topic, you can get information by following the arrows or playing a game to test your knowledge about sexual function and what can affect it. Learn some information and study the pictures.

### 3. Ways to end/conclude the session:

Wrap-up with key points:

- Sexual function can affect and be affected by communication, trust, and mutual satisfaction.
- It's normal for men and women to feel stimulated in different ways, and this triggers pleasure and an individualised human sexual response.
- Several factors can affect your sexual function and might also cause sexual problems throughout your life.
- It can be a problem when the situation(s) cause suffering, or if they occur always or very often.

## Intimate hygiene

### 1. Ways to start the session and introduce the topic:

Explore through discussion:

- Begin with an introduction: We are going to have an open and judgment-free conversation about intimate hygiene – taking care of our private areas. It is a natural and important part of health.
- Make sure that migrants understand the topic that is being discussed.
- Use questions: What is in our daily routine that we cannot omit? Why do you think hygiene is important for overall health? Can you think of some parts of the body that need extra care and attention? Why might it be important to talk about intimate hygiene instead of keeping it a 'taboo' topic?
- Identify if migrants have questions about intimate hygiene.

### 2. Go through the material:

Follow the slideshow presentation concerning the topics:

- What is intimate hygiene? What are the intimate parts of the body? What are some reactions in the intimate parts of the body?
- Female intimate hygiene care and male intimate hygiene care.

### 3. Ways to end/conclude the session:

Wrap-up with key points:

- The body cleans itself in many ways naturally.
- Gentle care is better (no harsh soaps, perfumes, or douching).
- It is normal for bodies to have a natural scent.
- Wearing breathable fabrics (like cotton underwear) can help.
- If something feels wrong (itching, smell, irritation), it is okay to seek medical help.

## Body awareness & self-skills

### 1. Ways to start the session and introduce the topic:

Explore through discussion:

- Begin with an introduction: We are going to talk about how to know our own bodies. We will learn skills to take good care of ourselves. Understanding our bodies helps us stay healthy, confident, and strong.
- Make sure that migrants understand the topic that is being discussed.
- Use questions: What does 'body awareness' mean to you? What are some basic self-care skills everyone should learn?
- Identify if migrants have questions about body awareness & self-skills.

### 2. Go through the material:

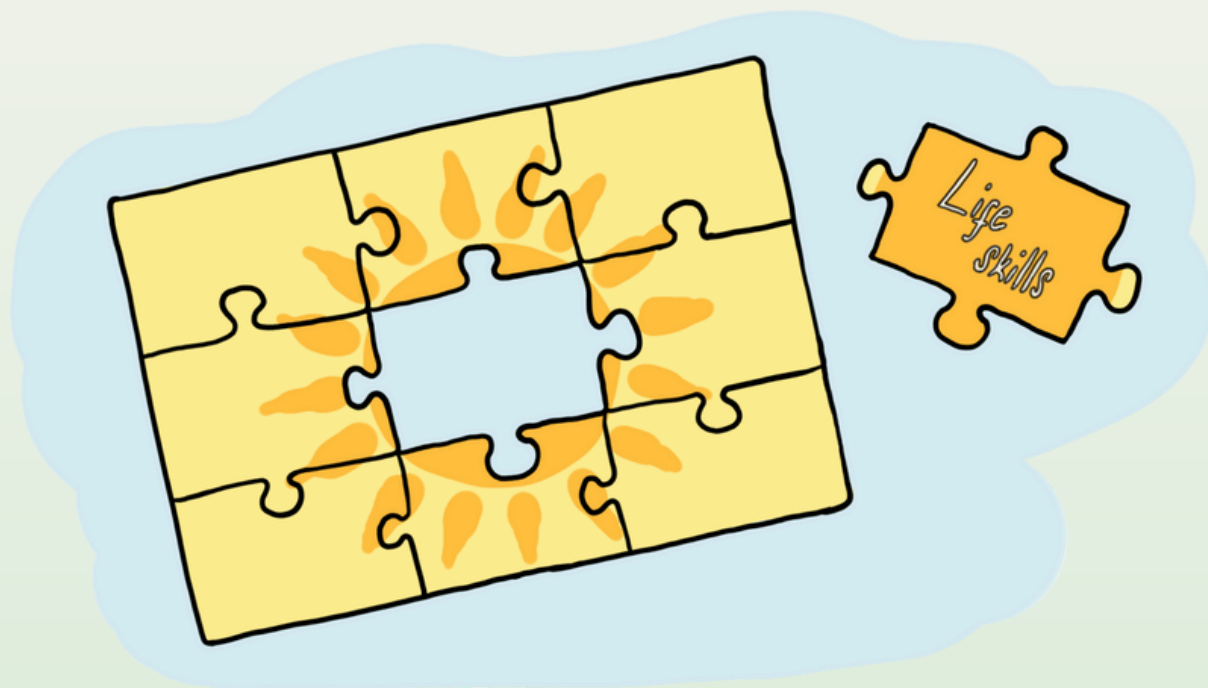
- Explore the importance of body language through the quiz.

Explore what self-skills are and their meaning through the interactive diagram.

### 3. Ways to end/conclude the session:

Wrap-up with key points:

- Self-skills are important to helping you live a happy and successful life. They help you solve problems and make good choices.
- Communication through body language often indicates desires, consent, and pleasure. Non-verbal communication gives information about what feels good and what does not, facilitating a more enjoyable and satisfying experience for both partners.
- Learning self-skills helps us feel more capable and confident.



## Reproductive health and safe sex

This section contains the different topics below:

### Family planning

This subsection introduces different contraception methods and explains how each contraceptive method works. There is also information related to fertility and becoming a family.

### Intimate relationship

This subsection highlights the importance of knowing how to read your partner's nonverbal communication and body signs. Information on the importance of verbal communication and how to ask for the partner's consent is also provided.

### Safe sex and prevention

This subsection provides information about safe sex practices.

## Family planning

### Contraception

#### 1. Ways to start the session and introduce the topic:

Explore through discussion:

- Begin with an introduction: We are going to have an open and judgment-free conversation about contraception.
- Make sure that migrants understand the topic that is being discussed.

#### 2. Go through the material:

- Start with the main concept:  
Use questions: How do migrants understand the word "contraception" – what does it mean? If the word is not familiar, explain it with common words and pictures from the ICEX Educational Package. Why and when is contraception needed? What contraceptive methods are the migrants already familiar with? Do they know how they work?
- Start with the story of Leyla and Ali:  
Ask about Leyla and Ali: Who are they? How old are they? What does their life look like? Where do they work? Why might they not want children right now? What options do Leyla and Ali have for contraception? Ask the migrants what contraceptive methods they already know.



- Start from a societal perspective:  
Link contraception to historical and social changes: Discuss what the typical family size and number of children were 25 years ago (in the user country) and what it is now. What has changed in society? Have opinions about contraceptive methods changed? Is contraception encouraged or discouraged? Have contraceptive methods changed? What options can the migrants name? What advantages and disadvantages do these methods have?

### 3. Ways to end/conclude the session:

Wrap-up with key points:

- There are many different options for contraception, and the best method for each individual and couple is different. If you are considering starting or changing your contraceptive method, consult a sexual health professional to find the best option for you. Do remember that condoms are the only method that is effective for preventing STIs.
- End with a closing round: ask, for example, what felt important, what was new or surprising information, and if there is anything they are still wondering about.

## Fertility

### 1. Ways to start the session and introduce the topic:

- Begin with an introduction: We are going to have an open and judgment-free conversation about fertility.
- Make sure that migrants understand the topic that is being discussed.

### 2. Go through the material:

- Start with vocabulary/concept:
  - What does fertility mean? If the word is not familiar, explain it using common words.
  - What factors do you know that affect fertility?
- Start with the story:
  - Discuss John and Sofia. Who are they? How old are they? What does their life look like? Where do they work? How are they feeling? What are they hoping for?
  - Explore together or let the migrants individually study the different aspects that affect fertility at their own pace (pictures 2 and 3). Be available for questions and individual guidance regarding the material.
  - Show the material and discuss together: what does the professional say in picture 2? What do you think about what the professional has shared?
  - Show the material and discuss together: what does the professional say in picture 3? Discuss the visit to the professional and the information they received about fertility.
- Start from a societal perspective:
  - Link fertility to historical and social changes: Discuss what the typical age of a first-time parent was 25 years ago (in the user country) and what it is now. What has changed in society?
  - Discuss what kind of support is available for people struggling with infertility. Is it different in their country of origin and country of residence?
- Ethical discussion: Why is it important to know that the reasons behind infertility are diverse? Is having children a measure of success in life? Why? Why not?

### 3. Ways to end/conclude the session:

Wrap-up with key points:

- Remember, the reasons behind infertility can be diverse and can be explored with the help of a sexual health professional. Infertility is a sensitive topic, and it is important to discuss/explore without blaming.
- The factors that affect fertility that you can influence with your choices are smoking, alcohol use, STIs, weight, and stress.
- It is also important to maintain a normal weight, avoid smoking and drinking alcohol, and use condoms to avoid having STIs.
- A factor you cannot influence is age.

## *Becoming a family*

### 1. Ways to start the session and introduce the topic:

- Begin with an introduction: "We're going to have an open and judgment-free conversation about becoming a family."
- Make sure that migrants understand the topic that is being discussed.

### 2. Go through the material and exercises:

- Start with the story of Remy and Zahra:
  - Start with the pictures and characters: Remy and Zahra. Who are they? How old are they? What does their life look like? Where do they work? How are they feeling? What are they hoping for? If the topic of same-sex couples in the story arises, emphasise that choosing your partner is a sexual right and is allowed in the (target) country, depending on the country's laws on artificial insemination.
  - Discuss feelings that couples and parents can go through when planning pregnancy, during pregnancy, and after birth (and beyond), e.g., worry, sadness, joy, anxiety, euphoria, depression.
  - Before moving on to the exercise, discuss the following definitions: miscarriage, bonding, hormones, same-sex couple, and breastfeeding.
  - Explore the exercise together or individually to receive more information about parenthood and breastfeeding.
- Start from a societal perspective:
  - Discuss diverse families and statistics: Are they different or similar to the country of origin? What thoughts come up?
  - Link the previous discussion to the story about Remy and Zahra, which explores one story about one family type and their experience and challenges with starting a family.
  - You can link this with the subsection "Sexual health laws and services in the ICEx" in the "Ethics and Legality" section.

### 3. Ways to end/conclude the session:

Wrap-up with key points:

- It is normal to have a wide range of emotions related to family planning and becoming a family – You can be happy one minute and sad the next. Most of the feelings are due to hormones.
- Seek help if difficult feelings last longer than a few days to two weeks.
- Remember to stress this: It is important to seek support, If you are experiencing infertility, you do not have to go through it alone!



## Intimate relationship

### Relationship skills

#### 1. Ways to start the session and introduce the topic:

- Begin with an introduction: We're going to have an open and judgment-free conversation about relationship skills.
- Make sure that migrants understand the topic that is being discussed.

#### 2. Start with the concept:

Discuss non-verbal communication:

- If you are interested in having a relationship with someone, how do you show it without words?
- Explore cultural differences in the group (e.g., about eye contact, touch, other non-verbal cues).
- Which signals do you consider to be signals of interest?

#### 3. Go through the material:

- Activity 1: Complete the task, and upon completion, have the migrants reflect: Are you of the same opinion with the "yes" and "no" signals? What other "yes" and "no" signals can you think of that indicate enthusiasm/reluctance? Emphasise that it is often difficult to trust only non-verbal communication, and it is important to also check verbally that the other person is willing to have closer contact with you.
- Activity 2: Explore Zara and Reza's story about verbal consent and go through the cards. Have the migrant think of possible answers before they flip each card. Then, compare their answers with the ones on the cards.
- Activity 3: Before the activity, discuss: What is a good partner like? What does she/he do or say, or what does she/he not do or say? You can make a list or mind map together with migrants. Discuss how a respectful partner behaves in intimate situations. Add these to the mind map/list. Explore and read about Leyla and Ali's thoughts. Ask the migrant: Do you agree with their thoughts? How do you show your partner trust, respect, and closeness?

#### **4. Ways to end/conclude the session:**

- Wrap-up with key points:
  - A good intimate relationship is based on trust, respect, and open communication.
  - Do not assume what your partner feels or thinks – discuss what is important to you in a relationship.
  - You can talk with a professional if unsure about your relationship.

### **Sex and intimacy**

#### **1. Ways to start the session and introduce the topic:**

- Begin with an introduction: We are going to have an open and judgment-free conversation about sex and intimacy.
- Make sure that migrants understand the topic being discussed.

#### **2. Start with the concept:**

- Reflect on and talk about the following questions: What do intimacy, touch and pleasure mean? What is the difference between touch and intimacy? How do you experience touch with different people and in different circumstances? What is neutral touch? Is there neutral touch in your opinion? How do you touch friends, family, or an intimate partner? What kind of touch is okay when playing sports, in discussion, or when helping someone? Is the appropriateness of touch different in your country of origin and country of residence?

#### **3. Go through the material:**

- Watch the video and ask the migrants to pay attention to how intimacy, touch, and pleasure are shown in intimate relationships.
- After the video, discuss: What examples of touch, intimacy, and pleasure are shown? Caressing, eye contact, sleeping together, and cuddling. How do intimacy, touch, and pleasure relate to well-being? Intimacy, touch, and pleasure are not restricted to having sex; what other ways are there for caring about intimacy, touch, and pleasure in relationships? What is appropriate in intimate relationships differs from other relationships – certain kinds of touch and other behaviour can be very inappropriate or even illegal, if it is not consensual.
- Before the quiz, define and discuss consent. Discuss: What do you give your consent to? Can you imagine that someone does not give their consent to the same thing and can think very differently? How do you make sure you have consent? Is smiling the same as giving consent? Is eye contact a sign of consent? Do you need consent from your long-term partner? Is dressing a certain way a sign of consent for touch, sex, or sexual suggestions? Is not saying no a sign of consent? Remember, consent should always be given verbally—if it has not been clearly asked for and received, it is not there. Test their knowledge about consent with the quiz.

#### **4. Ways to end/conclude the session:**

Wrap-up with key points:

- Consent is required when you take pictures, touch someone, share information and pictures, and have sex.

- You do not need consent to use contraception or to ask a question. But remember, you are allowed not to answer. You can link this with the subsection “Sexual health laws and services in the ICEX” in the “Ethics and Legality” section.

## Safe sex and prevention

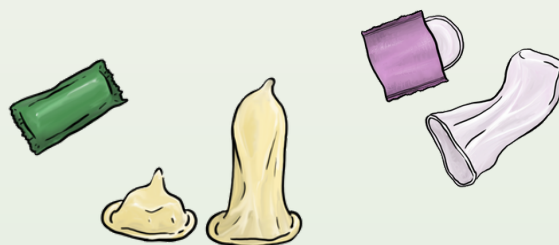
### Safe sex practices

#### 1. Ways to start the session and introduce the topic:

- Begin with an introduction: We are going to have an open and judgment-free conversation about safe sex practices.
- Make sure that migrants understand the topic that is being discussed.

#### 2. Start with questions:

- Have you heard about safe sex?
- What does it mean?
- What can make sex unsafe?
- How can you have safer sex?



#### 3. Go through the material:

- Read about sections “What is safe sex?” and “How to have safer sex?”
- After exploring these sections, reflect together: What was new or interesting? Is there something you want to ask? Is there something you are left wondering about?
- Define what hygiene means. How is hygiene related to disease prevention? Why is hygiene important? Good hygiene protects both you and those around you.
- Explore points for intimate hygiene: What good hygiene practices are the same for both common disease prevention and prevention of STIs? Define STIs + explore routes of transmission for STIs. Search together for information online about STIs. Combine this topic with learning about contraception.
- Explore picture cards to find out about the different types of sex. Often when we think about sex, we think about penetration (define!), but sex can take many different forms.

#### 4. Ways to end/conclude the session:

Wrap-up with key points:

- Only condoms protect against STIs!
- There are different types of sex.
- Good sexual hygiene is important.
- Safe sex requires open communication and good hygiene.

## Ethics and legality

This section contains the different topics below:

### Ethical and critical thinking

This section introduces principles for building strong multi-cultural relationships. There are three case studies that can be used to explore difficult situations related to sexual health and to integrate into living in a new country.

### Sexual health laws and services in the ICEX partner countries

This section presents the sexual health laws and sexual health services of the ICEX partner countries with references to further information and resources.

### Sexual rights

This section includes an infographic of sexual rights and human rights linked to sexuality.

## Ethical and critical thinking

### *Building strong multi-cultural relationships*

#### 1. Ways to start the session and introduce the topic:

- Begin with an introduction: We are going to have an open and judgment-free conversation about ethical and critical thinking.
- Make sure that migrants understand the topic that is being discussed.
- Ask migrants if they have interacted with people from different cultures and what their experiences have been like interacting with them.

#### 2. Go through the material:

- Ask the migrant to go through the different principles listed for building multicultural relationships.
- Ask if they noticed that these principles are different in the host country.
- Encourage them to share and discuss if and how they have applied these principles to their everyday interactions in a new country and why those principles are important.
- Also, ask them about any possible experiences in their own lives where those principles might not have been followed.
- Ask migrants to name one principle for building strong multicultural relationships that they think is most important.

### **3. Ways to end/conclude the session:**

Wrap-up with key points:

- Building strong and respectful relationships between people from different cultures is really important in diverse communities.
- Both the receiving host communities and migrant communities should uphold those principles.

## ***Migrants' challenging experiences in a new country***

### **1. Ways to start the session and introduce the topic:**

- Begin with an introduction: We are going to have an open and judgment-free conversation about migrants' challenging experiences in a new country.
- Make sure that migrants understand the topic that is being discussed
- Ask migrants to reflect on any challenging experiences that they may have had in their new country and how they were resolved. Also, how did they feel about the response they received from locals during these situations?

### **2. Go through the material:**

- Ask the migrant to read the cases and discuss the appropriate answers to the questions.
- Ask them to discuss why these are the most appropriate solutions and how they help to make life better for the people being spoken about.

### **3. Ways to end/conclude the session:**

Wrap up with key points:

- It is normal to encounter difficult situations in a foreign environment and country, as the cultural norms and expectations might be different from those experienced in the home country.

## ***Sexual health laws and services in the ICEX partner countries***

### **1. Ways to start the session and introduce the topic:**

- Begin with an introduction: We are going to have an open and judgment-free conversation about sexual health laws and services in the ICEX partner countries.
- Make sure that migrants understand the topic that is being discussed
- Start with questions: Is there anything that has made you look up any host country laws before? Are there any sexual health services that you have already used in the host country?

### **2. Go through the material**

- Ask migrants to go through the laws in the host country and to simultaneously think about the laws in their home countries: What laws are similar? What is different? What was the most surprising thing about the laws in the host country that the migrants were not aware of?
- Also, ask migrants to go through the available services in the host country: what did they know and not know about?

### **3. Ways to end/conclude the session:**

Wrap up with key points:

- Laws related to sexual health can vary greatly in different countries; it is always worth familiarising yourself with them.
- It is always worth it to seek further information or advice about laws and services in a host country from any available resources online or from a professional.

## **Sexual rights**

### **1. Ways to start the session and introduce the topic:**

- Begin with an introduction: We are going to have an open and judgment-free conversation about sexual rights.
- Make sure that migrants understand the topic that is being discussed.
- Start with questions: Is the topic familiar? What do migrants already know about human rights?

### **2. Go through the material**

- Read through the human rights related to sexuality.
- Ask migrants to discuss why they think human and sexual rights are important.

### **3. Ways to end/conclude the session:**

Wrap up with key points:

- Human rights are universal, and everybody's human rights should be respected.
- Human rights should be applied regardless of national laws and, ideally, should be applied everywhere.



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