

Start Your Own Sex Squad

An Artist How-To Manual



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Welcome

We're glad you're joining us!

Welcome to the exciting and empowering world of sexual health arts-activism – activism! We, the members of the UCLA Sex Squad, are so excited you want to form your own group, make your own art, and co-educate youth with your creations.

You are joining a movement. A movement of laughter, fun, and urgent art-making to change the way our communities think and talk about sexual health. A movement that is growing every day in the midst of a stigmatized world. We challenge judgment and fear in the hopes that we stimulate dialogue around sexual health subjects. Currently, there are Sex Squads, or Sex-Ed Squads at UCLA, Duke University, North Carolina Central University, and multiple high schools in Los Angeles; hopefully, the next Sex Squad is at your school. Thank you for journeying with us in using art to make the world a safer and sexier place!

What you have before you is a manual that tells you everything you need to know in order to create your own Sex Squad, build your own shows, and perform in your community. It tells you how we run our group at UCLA, why we do it that way, and offers ideas for how you can develop your own unique collective.

This manual provides you with an overview, set of principles, description of the process, logistics, warm-ups, exercises, advice from previous Sex Squads, and examples of show structures. With that being said, feel free to make this your own. This manual is not meant to discourage you from adding your own flavor. It is simply an introduction to our process and all that we have learned through it so that you too can learn from our experience and take what you will.

Get ready for a beautiful experience!

What's a Sex Squad?

Who we are, what we do, why we do it, and why you need to join us!

A Sex Squad (or Sex-Ed Squad) is a group of students who use humor, theater, and storytelling to open up urgent conversations on taboo topics surrounding sex. We aim to creatively and inclusively shift the stigmatized culture around sexual health that exists in our world today.

The first version of the Sex Squad formed in 2009 when South African arts-activist (artist) Pieter-Dirk Uys brought his bold idea of using humor to fight HIV into a two-week workshop with students at UCLA. The students formed a group called the AIDS Performance Team, and were so inspired by Uys that they continued working on the material after he left, even taking it on tour to Los Angeles high schools.

The following year they kept building. They realized that, in order to have a comprehensive discussion about HIV, they needed to tackle a whole range of issues that affects sexual health: sexism, homophobia, access to care, protection, getting tested, and more. They decided to widen their scope, to address the whole of human sexual health, and the UCLA Sex Squad was born.

Every year at UCLA, a new group of students forms a Sex Squad. As a group, they choose the most significant topics on which to focus their art-making. The Squad spends the fall creating engaging and interactive skits, poems, songs, dances, and any form of performative art you can imagine! Once the show is created, they load up the bus with props and take it on tour to LAUSD (Los Angeles Unified School District) schools as a part of a multiple component program called *AMP!* put on by the UCLA Art & Global Health Center in collaboration with LAUSD.

Our Principles

How we do what we do: Fundamental ethics we embody as we operate on a daily basis

We operate on certain principles. Our collective action is guided by these values emphasizing the transformative power of art, humor, openness, collaboration, and inclusivity. Accordingly, we invite you all to channel your inner activist to embody these principles, as well as add your own, to make the world a safer and sexier place.

- We believe in a sex-positive, non-judgmental approach, giving students the information and tools to make their own choices about their sexual health.
- We believe in abstinence as AN option, but not the ONLY option.
- We promote healthy, direct communication, especially with sexual partners.
- We define consent as a verbal, enthusiastic affirmation before any sexual activity.
- We believe in inclusivity, and pushing back against heteronormative and patriarchal approaches that affect the LGBTQ+ and female-identified communities, as well as other marginalized populations.
- We believe in the unique power of the arts, humor, and fun to communicate information in an engaging way and open a dialogue about topics that are considered to be taboo or scary, and because of this, we believe the arts are a particularly effective medium to talk about sexual health and HIV.
- We believe in the power of narrative and personal story, and that by exposing ourselves and sharing intimate stories, Squad members create a rare safe space where others feel encouraged to open up about their own urgent issues.
- We embody a philosophy of collaboration over individual genius, channeling the power of the collective. We view human beings as innately artistic and aim in our creative process to express rather than impress.
- We thrive artistically and communally on authentic relationships amongst our members, and we do not avoid tackling the messy, complicated topics together.

- We believe in the power of interactive inclusion of students, seeking to actively engage them physically and vocally rather than treating them as a passive audience.
- We believe there is NO SUCH THING as an inappropriate question, and we value the knowledge gained from learning into our own discomfort.
- We choose to acknowledge moments when we do not know the answer to a question. When we do not have the tools to adequately support students, we respect the roles of other social and health advocates.
- We strive for a reciprocal relationship with the communities we work with, seeking to learn as much as we impart in order to form stronger bonds of solidarity.
- We straddle the line between pushing conventional boundaries and respecting school standards.
- We understand that tackling oppression is a continuous process, and we value the progress we can make one conversation at a time.

Getting Started

A pre-Sex (Ed) Squad list of basic necessities:

- **Students:** At the heart of the Squad: the students create the group, the performance, and are the ones taking action!
- **Supervisor/Facilitator/Adult Ally/Joker:** To lead the group in workshops, performances, and guide the group through any permission, production, and logistical questions.
 - **Joker:** the facilitator of the workshop (in this manual Joker and facilitator are used interchangeably). The Joker is unbiased and leads the discussions through questioning rather than stating.
 - **Adult Ally:** this can be the adult sponsor (staff person, teacher, etc.) The adult ally can act as a Joker, as well, if needed.
- **Sexual Health Training** It is crucial for every member to have a solid base of accurate, up-to-date, and non-biased sexual health knowledge in order to share and co-educate sexual health information. If a school health teacher cannot give this training we suggest partnering with a local clinic.
- **Meeting Space:** A place that has enough space to move around during theater games and exercises.
- **Time for meetings/workshops:** A consistent time that will allow you to build the community in the Squad, and grow your creative pieces. We suggest two to four hours a week. This can be a lunch time meeting and one to two after-school meetings.
- **Props/Costumes:** This includes everything from prop condoms to the wackiest things hiding in your closet. Have members of the group bring in costumes/props that they would feel okay donating to the group.
- **Supplies:** Markers, poster boards, paper, and flip charts for note taking that everyone can see. Speakers that can play music loud enough to fill the space are also useful.
- **Food:** Having snacks and water nearby keeps energy and morale up, and can also be good for convincing people to come by. "There will be free food" is a proven community-organizing tool.

Yearly Process

A sample schedule showing the breakdown of a year's worth of work.

June to September

1. Get school support
2. Assemble the Squad
3. Find a meeting time and space
4. Hold a visioning meeting
5. Decide on a group structure
6. Draft an annual timeline
7. Design a logo
8. Hold sexual health trainings
9. Group talent sharing

October to December

10. Decide on performance topics
11. Get costumes/props/supplies
12. Weekend Intensive
13. Plan group activities
14. Workshopping
15. Scene selections
16. Connect with local schools
17. Get feedback/approval
18. Perform on World AIDS Day

January to March

19. Coordinate performances
20. Go on tour with performance

April to June

21. Further develop performance work
22. Write letters to next year's group
23. Sex Squad graduation
24. Improve the process for next year

June to September

Use summer to get everything in order for the school year

1. Get School Support

University Students: Getting support from your university can be extremely helpful. At UCLA, the Squad has been a course on the books, giving students credit for learning about sexual health, creating the show, and ultimately touring the work. Try to find a department at your school that would pair nicely with the ideals of the Sex (Ed) Squad, and find a professor or advisor that is willing to help make Sex (Ed) Squad into a university course. Pairing your Sex (Ed) Squad with a non-profit organization can help you organize and/or fund your group.

High School Students: In a high school setting, the first step is to find a certified school faculty member that will be able to sponsor and supervise your new student club. That supervisor will need to be present for your meetings, rehearsals and performances. Make sure your faculty supervisor is someone you are comfortable with and shares your interest in creating a safe space for open dialogue.

Permission Slips: Depending on your school, you may need varying types of permission in order to create work based on the topic of sexual health. The advisor should research who they need to speak with in order to receive consent to start a Sex (Ed) Squad. You may need to speak to the school district and principal. As far as the students who are involved in the group, the students may need signed permission from a parent or guardian to participate in the club. Students who are attending the show may also need a signed permission slip as well depending on district/school rules.

2. Assemble the Squad

Create a flyer/application to advertise the Squad and get people to apply. The application gives people an opportunity to introduce themselves and their reasons for wanting to get involved.

Read applications and choose your Squad members. Try to choose a group of students who can speak to a lot of stories and audience members. In general we want to bring in students that demonstrate a strong desire to be involved and present a perspective that is often silenced or not heard from. We aim to have between 10-18 members in the Squad.

3. Find a Meeting Time and Space

The more time you put into your Sex (Ed) Squad the more valuable it will be for both the students involved and the show that is produced. We recommend weekly meetings in which the group goes over logistics and rehearsal schedules

For high school clubs: this could be during multiple lunchtimes. With remaining time, choose from the warm-ups and exercises in order to begin exploring ideas. After-school rehearsals will also be necessary to create and prepare for shows, and should be scheduled based on everyone's availability. We recommend at least one and a half hours of workshop time a week. Your group will need a place to meet for lunchtime meetings, possibly in a classroom of an adult ally and then another space for workshops, retreats and presenting work. That said, if your room options are limited, work with what you have!

For university students: If you are creating a Sex (Ed) Squad course, you can use your course time to create material, hold trainings, and rehearse for your show. Some outside of class time may be necessary to fine-tune your show. If you are creating a club at your university, finding a studio or theater space on campus to hold your meetings in will be extremely helpful in your rehearsal process.

4. Hold a Visioning Meeting

Hold a first meeting to have everyone meet each other and begin to build the Squad, set group agreements, envision what you want the group to be, and set goals for the year. Begin with icebreakers and warm-ups to open up creativity and start having fun right away.

5. Decide on a Group Structure

At the university level, there is the director (course instructor), a producer (university/non-profit staff who schedules and coordinates the program), and the cast (made up of students in the class).

At the high school level, there is the faculty supervisor, and, for some groups, there is a student director (who helps lead the creative process) and a student treasurer (who handles any money raised by the groups).

What kind of structure makes sense for your Squad? If at all possible, decide as a group.

6. Draft an Annual Timeline

You will need to make your own timeline that works specifically with your school's quarter/semester and your goals for the year. Select timeframes and decide where you would like to be within the process (creating, finalizing pieces, learning lines, full dress rehearsal, etc.) by those specific dates. Remember to include the date of the retreat (this should be outside of normal school time) in your yearly calendar. We recommend having the retreat at school (potentially on a weekend). Keep in mind dates that you would like to have performances on, such as: World AIDS Day (December 1) and Valentine's Day (February 14).

7. Design a Logo

Every Sex (Ed) Squad has its own unique logo, but they all put the Sex (Ed) Squad's boldness and sense of humor on display. A good first project with your group could be to have a contest to design your Squad's new logo.

8. Hold Sexual Health Trainings

Trainings give foundational information and understanding for the art-making to come. Hold ongoing trainings throughout the year as needed by your group.

9. Group Talent Sharing

Open a space for everyone to share the talents they want to bring to the show.

October to December

Get your group creating a full performance during the fall.

10. Decide on Performance Topics

Decide as a group what kinds of urgent topics will be covered in your performances.

11. Get Costumes / Props / Supplies

For costumes and props, members can bring in their own pieces, borrow from one another, and possibly even borrow items from the drama/dance department. Any other pieces that are needed can be bought. Try to think about economical options such as thrift shops, or even asking for donations. Start to create a costume box, so future Sex (Ed) Squad members can use the supplies you have gathered.

Every Sex (Ed) Squad will need condoms for props, so try to buy these in bulk (Remember that any condom that has been used as a prop should not be used for its primary purpose; your prop condoms will be inadequate protection due to storage, constant heat or pressure, stepping on them, etc.).

12. Weekend Intensive

Find a weekend for a one to two FULL day retreat to explore sexual health topics, create material, and bond as a group. A retreat is a great way to get a lot of material created in a short amount of time. With the group all together in one place for a one to two day period, you can make a whole show with urgency and intensity.

13. Plan Group Activities

Get started with performances at local events like AIDS Walk.

14. Workshopping the Work

Continue to create pieces and develop old ones, always processing and dialoguing as a group throughout.

15. Scene Selections

As a group, select scenes for your show(s).

16. Connect with Local Schools

Contact your local school district and get your show approved within the guidelines for health classes.

17. Get Feedback / Approval

Perform for feedback/approval to perform within schools.

18. Perform on World AIDS Day

World AIDS Day, December 1, is the perfect opportunity for some kind of art action. At UCLA, we use this as a debut moment for the rough draft of our performance before we go on tour.

January to March

Finalize plans for your tour and enjoy the ride.

19. Coordinate Performance Tour

Schedule shows in schools and put them on a group calendar so that the Squad knows when they are. Coordinate rides to and from the shows. Vans and carpools have worked for other Sex (Ed) Squads in the past. If you are performing at your own school, book your performance space with your school administrators and advertise on your campus to get as many students in the audience as possible.

20. Go on Tour with Performances

You decide how many shows you want to do. Remember that the more shows you do, the more knowledge you spread! Just remember to constantly check-in with the group about the workload and encourage all to practice self-care throughout touring season.

April to June

Reflect on your group's experience and decide how to move forward.

21. Further Develop Performance Work

Continue performing and/or create video material as other squads have done in the past.

If creating video work, pick pre-created scenes from live shows to shoot. Script and storyboard each scene so that you know exactly how you will film it before your shoot day. Assign roles on the set (i.e. cameraperson, actors, directors, etc.). Rehearse the scenes, and shoot! After shooting and editing, hold a screening for your inner circle to get feedback on the scenes and then incorporate their suggestions. Post videos online and share them with the world.

22. Write Letters to Next Year's Group

Words of advice and encouragement to new members are always much appreciated as the group evolves from year to year.

23. Sex Squad Graduation

Celebrate the year's achievements with your group as well as their invited close friends and family. Wish graduating seniors well as they transition to the next chapter of their lives. Use the event as an opportunity to get next year's returning and incoming members pumped for another year of arts-activism!

24. Improve the Process for Next Year

Incorporate feedback gathered from the previous year as you plan for the next. Analyze what worked well and what needs improving.

Lesson Plans

A collection of one to two hour sessions to get your group started.

Every group is different. Some important things to consider are the size and needs of your team and how much time you have to meet, rehearse, and perform. To illustrate how a Sex Squad might start out, we've included the following suggested lesson plans that can be adapted to your specific needs and continually developed over time.

- Week 0: Info Session (60 minutes)
- Week 1: Jump In and Get to Know Your Squad! (90 minutes)
- Week 2: Sexual Health 101 (130 minutes)
- Week 3: Let's Make Some Art! (80 minutes)
- Week 4: Positively Speaking (visit with an HIV-positive speaker) (100 minutes)
- Week 5: Let's Make Some Art! (100 minutes)
- Week 6: Gender 101 (85 minutes)
- Week 7: Let's Make Some Art and Rehearse (120 minutes)
- Week 8: "Stumble-Through" Performance (120 minutes)
- Week 9: Revise and Run-Through (90 minutes)
- Week 10: Perform and Reflect (120 minutes)
- Week 11: Celebration (Suggested)

Week 0: Info Session

Estimated time required: ~60 minutes

1. Intro and Name Rhythm Game (5 minutes)
2. Warm-Up Game: Pass The Clap (10 minutes)
3. Yell the most uncomfortable word you've heard about sex (1 minute)
4. Watch videos (10 minutes)
5. Discussion about Sex (Ed) Squad (10 minutes)
6. Sexophonic Choir (15 minutes)
7. Check-out: Fluid Cheer (5 minutes)

1. Intro and Name Rhythm Game (5 minutes)

Introduction: Welcome everyone to the space, thank them for coming, and give a few words about what this space is. Here's an example:

“Welcome to Sex (Ed) Squad! Thank you all for coming. The Sex (Ed) Squad is a participatory arts-based approach to talking about sexual health. With that, let's begin in good Sex (Ed) Squad fashion by having some fun and introducing ourselves...”

Name Rhythm Game: Begin by setting the rhythm. Take your index and middle fingers of your right hand, with the rest in a fist, and do a double tap on the palm of your left hand. Then in that same beat, tap your chest, then your left palm, then your chest, and so on. Once the group has developed a rhythm, begin by stating your name in sync with the rhythm. Then, choose someone to begin with and have them say their name next in sync to the rhythm and so on until everyone in the space has said their name (including facilitators, adult allies, etc.).

2. Warm-Up Game: Pass The Clap (10 minutes)

Warm-Up Games: Suggested pre-workshop warm-up activities/fun energizers to get the group moving and ready to create. The idea behind warm-ups is to break away from the automatic nature of the body and mind, focus the group's energy, and to incite spontaneity and freedom of expression. In addition, warm-ups promote the concept of a safe space, in which a group may play and work comfortably together while openly sharing their feelings.

We suggest playing more than one warm-up game for this session. For more warm-up games, please see WARM-UPS.

Pass The Clap: Get the group in circle and have everyone face towards the center. The person beginning the game will face the person right of them and clap. That person must clap at the same time as they do and then turn to the next person to their right and clap in unison with them. Encourage eye-contact as an important facilitator in clapping at the same time with your partner. This continues until the clap gets back to the person who began the game. Once the group has the hang of it, add a challenge. The group can now change directions of the clap by clapping with the same person twice in a row instead of turning to the next person in line, thereby reversing the clap. See how long the group can keep passing the clap before a mistake is made! This warm-up requires a lot of group awareness in order to keep passing the clap. By getting everyone to be on edge and aware of when they need to clap and what direction the clap is going, they are being pushed to keep their energy and focus up. You want this energy and focus to translate when you are onstage and performing! This exercise is great before a show or as a regular warm-up. A focused group is one that picks up the slack and stays on point despite distractions. How many claps can your group pass at once?

3. Yell the most uncomfortable word you've heard about sex (1 minute)

Prompt: Think of three words that relate to sexual health that make you uncomfortable.

Examples: Vagina, Anal Mucus, Condoms, Lube, Penetration, etc.

Pick one of the three words you thought of. On the count of 3, have everyone in the space yell out their word. Have one or two people talk about how that felt and possibly why they felt that word was uncomfortable.

4. Watch videos (10 minutes)

Watch "Introducing the UCLA Sex Squad" at <http://artglobalhealth.org/bssb1/>

Watch "Introducing the San Fernando High School Sex Squad" at <http://artglobalhealth.org/bssb14/>

5. Discussion about Sex (Ed) Squad (10 minutes)

Prompt: What did you see? Who knows what Sex (Ed) Squad is? What do we think it is? Has anyone ever seen the Sex Squad perform before?

Give a clear definition of what Sex (Ed) Squad is in case it does not come up in the discussion questions, such as:

"Sex (Ed) Squad is a group of people who come together to create skits, scenes, poetry, songs, etc. about sexual health. The group's aim is to begin conversations about sexual health that otherwise may seem too taboo to talk about."

6. Sexophonic Choir (15 minutes)

Divide the group into six smaller groups. Assign each group one of the six fluids that can transmit HIV when no barrier method is present: blood, vaginal fluid, semen, breast milk, anal mucus, and pre-cum. Each group will come up with a creative way to say/sing the fluid, using both their voices and their bodies. Think really big and theatrical, and make sure participants fully use their bodies and voices. Once everyone has created their fluid song, have each group share their songs with the other groups. Tell everyone you are a conductor and they are all members of a "Sexophonic Choir" (a rip on a Saxophone Choir). As you point to each fluid, the members will yell/sing/perform it (loudly) as a group. This will start off slowly and continue to get faster and faster and increasingly chaotic. The faster the conductor points the more outrageous everyone's movements and yelling should be until the conductor signals to stop.

7. Check-out: Fluid Cheer (5 minutes)

Before everyone leaves, have everyone gather together in a huddle and put one of their hands in the center. Have someone shout out one of the fluids that can transmit HIV with no barrier methods present. Once one fluid is chosen, count to 3 and everyone should scream the fluid as loud as possible, while all throwing their hands up in the air, together. This is a good way to close up the workshop for the day, emphasize the bond and community built in the space, as well as help the group remember the fluids. If students cannot choose one fluid, allow each student to choose their own fluid and all yell them out together on the count of 3.

Week 1: Jump In and Get to Know Your Squad!

Estimated time required: ~90 minutes

1. Check-in (5 minutes)
2. Warm-Up Game (10 minutes)
 - Secret Handshake OR
 - Name and Gesture Game OR
 - People, Cabana, Storm!
3. Intro to Image Theater (15 minutes)
4. Sex Squad Principles (25 minutes)
5. "I am" Poems (10 minutes)
6. Urgent Topics List (15 minutes)
7. Check-out: Homework and Fluid Cheer (5 minutes)

1. Check-in (5 minutes)

Have everyone sit in a circle. Ask the group to honestly “check-in” about how they are doing that day/week. Have one person self-select to go first: have them say their name, Gender Pronoun(s), and a word or sentence for how they are feeling. That person chooses the direction to go around the circle to share check-ins. When the group is first coming together, check-ins can be as long as they need to be. When you are in the middle of a creative process, it may help to limit the group to one-sentence or even one-word check-ins. For groups struggling to get into their bodies, you can even have them do a ‘one image check-in’ where they use their body to make an image of how they are feeling.

- Gender Pronoun(s): This is what pronoun a person identifies as (ex. John’s GP is he/him/his, so when speaking about John others can say, “John is very nice and he is very dedicated to his work”). There is a wide range of GP’s and everyone has the right to self-identify their own GP. It is important to allow students to voice their GP’s because there may be students who are gender non-conforming, transgender, or still figuring it out and this is a great space to allow them to be themselves openly. Other examples are: she/her/hers, they/them/theirs, etc.
- A common term for pronouns is Preferred Gender Pronoun(s); however, we feel this term does not validate the identities of gender-queer and trans individuals, whose identities are not a preference. That is why we only call them “Gender Pronoun(s).”

2. Warm-Up Game (10 minutes)

Suggested pre-workshop warm-up activities/fun energizers to get the group moving and ready to create. For this week, we suggest playing at least two of these suggestions:

- **Secret Handshake:** This activity has three to four rounds. Have everyone walk around the space, filling in any empty space that they see with their bodies as they move. Play with the levels of their pace, change it up starting from a 5 and moving up (10 being the fastest) and down (0 being the slowest). After a few changes in pace, have each person find a partner for the first round. In this first round, have the partner pairs create a silly handshake with each other. Give them a minute then have them separate from their partner and walk around the room again. When they see their partner, have them do their handshake with them. Repeat for a second round, except tell them to find a new partner and have them create a silly face and sound with this new partner. Then have them walk around the space and do their sound and face with their partner when they pass by each other. You can have a possible third round with a different greeting (ex. strike a silly pose). After all the rounds have gone, have them walk the space again and do their “secret handshakes” with each person they created a greeting with. The room will be filled with silly handshakes, greetings, and sounds.
- **Name and Gesture Game:** Have someone volunteer to go first. This person will say their name and do a gesture (ex. Daniel might do a thumbs up on “Dan-” and a shimmy on “-niel”). Everyone repeats that person’s name and gesture. Then the next person goes, until it makes a full circle back to the first person. Everyone should choose a gesture that is unique to them and that feels good. There is no right or wrong answer.
- **People, Cabana, Storm!:** Get people in groups of three. Two people from each group will stand facing each other touching hands over their heads (like doing a double high five). These two people are the “cabana.” The third person will squat under the “cabana.” Throughout the game, this person will be referred to as “people.” Explain that there will be three different things you can call out: people, cabana, or storm. When you call out people, all of the people have to move from under the cabana they were in and find a different cabana to squat under, but the

cabanas stay where they are. When you call out cabana, the people stay where they are and the cabanas have to come apart and find a new partner, creating a new cabana over a different “people.” When storm is called out, everyone comes apart: people can become cabanas and cabanas can become people, creating new groups of three. The person calling out “people, cabana, or storm” tries to jump into one of the new trios, and the person left out becomes the next caller. If the trios are getting very close together, encourage each group to find a new spot in the room so that there is more space to cover to jump into a new group.

For more warm-up games, see WARM-UPS for reference.

3. Intro to Image Theater (15 minutes)

The group stands in a circle facing out. The facilitator says a word or a theme and counts down from 3-1 at which time the participants turn and face into the circle presenting a frozen image of what that word means to them. The group then discusses what they see, objectively (physically) and then subjectively (thinking about emotions and potential narratives). The facilitator can play different rounds with different words and then ask members of the group to suggest relevant words to turn into images. Suggested words could be “sex-ed, pride, strong, vulnerable, condom.” After hearing these responses to different words, you could then continue the conversation by asking, “If these were images of something other than x, what else could they be images of?” In the discussion that follows the exercise, key ideas to explore are:

1. How/what images communicate differently than words (i.e. no language barriers).
2. How different/similar people’s images of the same word can be
3. How a variety of things/ideas can be seen at the same time within one image.

Image Theater introduces the experience of using our bodies to tell stories with images, and to explore the multiple ideas/truths that can exist within a single image. The knowledge and surprises that can come from making and dialoguing about images can unlock exciting creative avenues for the group. Make sure to allow enough space for dialogue and processing following the mini-performances.

4. *Sex Squad Principles (25 minutes)*

Go through the list of Sex Squad principles as a group but instead of using words to describe the principles, have each student pick one principle to embody through a micro-performance (see WARM-UPS: PERFORMANCE-ENHANCING GAMES). Have a discussion about the student's choices and body language for their images. Why did they choose that image? Pick a couple students to talk about their image.

- Micro-performance: For this purpose, a micro-performance is when a person chooses an image or action to perform for a specific prompt, and when the facilitator prompts the group, everyone either does their image simultaneously or one by one each student performs their action in the center.

5. *"I am" Poems (10 minutes)*

Write the following prompts on a large post-it note or a dry erase board, and ask everyone to write a poem by filling in the blanks. This is an individual activity, meaning everyone does their own "I am" Poem.

I am ____.
My name is ____.
My name is not ____.
You would never guess that I ____.
Where I'm from sex is ____.
Where I'm from people say ____ about sex.
Bodies that look like mine are ____.
I think ____ is sexy.
____ breaks my heart.
My revolution is ____.

Have everyone read back their responses and then have everyone collaborate to curate a poem that pulls from everyone's responses and mixes them all together. This creates a group poem that can be used in the show.

6. Urgent Topics List (15 minutes)

Together as a group, brainstorm the most urgent topics in sexual health that you would like to create material about. Have one to two people write everyone's answers on a flip chart posted on the wall so that everyone can see what has been included so far. This simple activity is a great early step in the process to lay a foundation for the creative work to come, setting a collective intention and focus where the group gets to decide what it wants to talk about. Having two people scribe rather than one helps to keep the flow of the brainstorm at a good rate. The brainstorm is never done, but instead the list should be ongoing, with group members having a chance to return to the list to add/edit what is there.

7. Check-out: Homework and Fluid Cheer (5 minutes)

Sometimes homework is assigned because some work cannot be done in the space, either because of lack of time or it has to be done outside of the space.

Homework for this week: Interview a teacher, health practitioner, health class student, parent about sexual health education and what topics they think are urgent and why.

For Fluid Cheer, see Week 0 for reference.

Week 2: Sexual Health 101

Estimated time required: ~130 minutes

1. Check-in (5 minutes)
2. Warm-Up Game: Zip, Zap, Zop (10 minutes)
3. Share interview findings and make new list of Urgent Topics (15 minutes)
4. Sexophonic Choir (6 fluids) (15 minutes)
5. Sexual Health 101 (60 minutes)
6. Sexual Health Rewrites (20 minutes)
7. Check-out: Homework and Fluid Cheer (5 minutes)

1. Check-in (5 minutes)

See Week 1 for reference.

2. Warm-Up Game: Zip, Zap, Zop (10 minutes)

Everyone stands in a circle. You have everyone repeat “zip, zap, zop” three to four times, always together. Tell everyone in the group that you have a bolt of energy in your hands. To start, you send the bolt out of your hands with a strong forward motion straight at someone else in the circle (using your hands, body, and voice) and saying “zip” at the same time. You must make eye contact with the receiver when you pass the bolt of energy to them. They receive the bolt and immediately pass it to someone else in the circle, saying “zap” as they do so. When that person receives the “zap” and bolt of energy, they will pass it to a new person, saying “zop” and making eye contact as they pass the bolt of energy around the circle. The game repeats and continues “zip, zap, zop” with the bolt of energy passed around the circle at random.

You must have eye contact with the person you pass the bolt to. Stay focused. There should be no pauses and the goal is to keep the bolt of energy going. Encourage participants to stay focused and to keep going even if they mess up or forget the words. To make the game more complicated, have everyone walk to a new spot in the room, and play zip, zap zop with everyone scattered. To make the game more complicated still, play the game as everyone is continuously walking around the space.

When a “mistake” is made, encourage everyone to celebrate the very human mistake, and then start again. This is a great game to quickly get group concentration. It allows for group rhythm to develop and really forces group mind. In the game, participants need to stay aware of where the bolt is and be ready to immediately pass it on if it is passed on to them. The game may take a few rounds to establish a good rhythm, but once it is established, it builds the group energy.

For more warm-up games, see WARM-UPS.

3. Share interview findings and make new list of Urgent Topics (15 minutes)

Have everyone pull out the notes they have from the interviews they conducted. Have a poster and markers to write with and ask the students to start talking about their findings. You will create a new Urgent Topics List using the findings and as each student shares, write down one word to a small phrase encompassing what they found. Once everyone has shared, compare this Urgent Topics list with the one they had already created. Take note of the similarities and the differences. You may use these lists for reference when creating your show.

4. Sexophonic Choir (6 fluids) (15 minutes)

If you have not done Sexophonic Choir before, see Week 0 for reference.

If you have already done Sexophonic Choir, have students break up into the fluids they were already assigned. Give them one minute to rehearse and really embody their fluid and movement. When everyone is ready, have everyone get into position. The conductor may then begin the choir, encouraging the fluids to get as loud and as big as they can with their fluid and movement. After a few rounds, give everyone a round of applause and thank them for participating.

After the choir, pose this question to the group: Why do you think we do that? What's the purpose of this activity? Close this conversation by reiterating the way in which Sexophonic Choir allows people to remember the fluids because it is silly and repetitive, therefore easy to remember. One final question to pose is: "What about these fluids? Why are we singing these specific fluids?" (They transmit HIV/STD's with no barrier method present, etc.). This is a great transition into the training session.

5. Sexual Health 101 (60 minutes)

The UCLA Sex Squad works with the LAUSD HIV/AIDS Prevention Unit, as well as Planned Parenthood, to provide us with a presentation on medically accurate information.

For your Squad, you may invite someone from local clinics or wellness centers if the adult ally is not a certified health teacher/instructor. It is important that this training be a comprehensive sexual health training that encompasses HIV/STI's, contraceptive methods, and testing.

6. Sexual Health Rewrites (20 minutes)

Break the members into four groups. Have each group choose a song(s) that is popular. It is helpful to start with songs that are popular today, but popular songs from any time period work. The group will now rewrite the lyrics to the song using their Urgent Topics List (See Week 1 for reference), as well as the training they just did, for reference. They will write for about ten minutes, and then have five minutes to rehearse. Each group will share their songs with each other. The songs do not have to be complete; they can focus on a couple verses and the chorus. However, the more they write the better.

7. Check-out: Homework and Fluid Cheer (5 minutes)

Homework for this week: Watch the following *Bringing Safe Sexy Back* and *Come As You Are* videos.

- *Bringing Safe Sexy Back* video: "The Condom Steps"
<http://artglobalhealth.org/portfolio/bssb2/>
- *Come As You Are* video: "The New Dating Game"
<http://artglobalhealth.org/portfolio/caya-2/>

For Fluid Cheer, see Week 0 for reference.

Week 3: Let's Make Some Art!

Estimated time required: ~80 minutes

1. Check-in (5 minutes)
2. Warm-Up Game: This Is Not A... (10 minutes)
3. Revisit Urgent Topics (5 minutes)
4. Story Modes (10 minutes)
5. Work on Story Modes (30 minutes)
6. Perform Story Modes (10 minutes)
7. Closing Game: Zip, Zap, Zop (5 minutes)
8. Check-out: Homework and Fluid Cheer (5 minutes)

1. Check-in (5 minutes)

See Week 1 for reference. For this week, instead of saying one word, challenge the group to do a pose/frozen image for how they are feeling.

2. Warm-Up Game: This Is Not A... (10 minutes)

Place a small, everyday item, such as a water bottle, in the center of a group circle. Ask the group what the object is, and when they answer correctly, tell them that for the remainder of the exercise the item can be anything other than what it actually is. When they have an idea for what else it could be (such as a telephone, or a football) each individual member silently enters the circle and interacts with the object as though it were the object they imagine. The group tries to guess what the imagined object is. Once the group guesses correctly, it is someone else's turn to go. We do this improvisational warm-up to open up our imaginations, and allow us to see objects (and our relationships to them) differently. It also opens space to practice creating small physical performances in front of each other. People may need reminders that they have to perform without making any noise. If people seem nervous, encourage them to try to have as little time with an empty stage as possible.

For more warm-up games, see WARM-UPS.

3. Revisit Urgent Topics (5 minutes)

Pull out Urgent Topics list and have folks choose which urgent topic speaks the most to them that they would like to create art about.

4. Story Modes (10 minutes)

Have everyone select a topic from the brainstormed list of urgent topics and come up with three pitches for a short performance piece that utilizes one of the storytelling modes offered on the list.

Examples: news report, dispatch, tweet, Facebook update, recipe, list, observation from a non-human object, rant, knock-knock joke, retelling of a dream, shopping list, sales pitch, letter of recommendation, advice column, debate, telegram, protest chant, blessing, emergency system warning, underwater storytelling, from the voice of a 100 year old, from the voice of a 4 year old, nature channel narration, sports broadcaster, report from the space station, observations of a condom inside a wrapper, "Deep Thoughts" by Jack Handy, interview, war room dialogue, gossip blog, statement from someone on a strike, text message exchange, inner monologue, from the voice of the superego, mandate from an authority, expert witness account, cross-examination, radio play, phone sex, "Real World" confession, letter to your younger self, best man/maid of honor wedding speech, baby naming ceremony, inspirational sports coach speech, from the pages of a history book, acceptance speech, etc.

Each person pitches their three ideas and the larger group offers feedback and ways that their ideas could grow. People who had similar ideas or ideas that could work well together then join to create a group.

Introduce the 'Kitchen' and have every group write their ideas down. The 'Kitchen' is a list used to document all the art making that is created. It is constantly updated every workshop and is there for reference. Each item added is an "ingredient" that is added to the kitchen in order to pull from later in order to cook up a powerful and inspiring show!

5. Work on Story Modes (30 minutes)

Give the groups 30 minutes to work on their pieces and encourage them to be on their feet and rehearsing their scene by the last 15 minutes of working on the scenes.

6. *Perform Story Modes (10 minutes)*

Create an order for which group goes first and so on. Have each group present their scene to the rest of the Squad. At the end, allow for a quick discussion: “What did you see? What did you like? What did you appreciate?” Thank everyone for their work and for sharing it with the space.

7. *Closing Game: Zip, Zap, Zop (5 minutes)*

See Week 2 for reference.

8. *Check-out: Homework and Fluid Cheer (5 minutes)*

Homework for this week: Watch *Bringing Safe Sexy Back* and *Come As You Are* videos.

Bringing Safe Sexy Back video:

3. “The Most Protected Man in the World”
<http://artglobalhealth.org/portfolio/bssb3/>
OR
4. “Sex Squad Street”
<http://artglobalhealth.org/portfolio/bssb9/>

Come As You Are video:

9. “Consent Fairy”
<http://artglobalhealth.org/portfolio/caya-9/>

For Fluid Cheer, see Week 0 for reference.

Week 4: Positively Speaking (visit with an HIV-positive speaker)

Estimated time required: ~100 minutes

1. Check-in (5 minutes)
2. Warm-Up Game: Change The Action (10 minutes)
3. Funnel Poems (10 minutes)
4. Share Funnel Poems (5 minutes)
5. Story Sharing by Speaker (20 minutes)
6. Q&A with Speaker (10 minutes)
7. Art Making Activity: Group Image Theater (30 minutes)
8. Response and Feedback from Speaker (5 minutes)
9. Check-out: Homework and Fluid Cheer (5 minutes)

1. Check-in (5 minutes)

See Week 1 for reference.

2. Warm-Up Game: Change The Action (10 minutes)

Beginning in a circle, the leading student/facilitator will do an action (ex. claps hands) while everyone else is still. Then, a new leader will call change and begin to do another action (ex. stomp feet). The rest of the students will then begin to copy the previous action of the first leader (clap their hands). Each time someone calls change, the rest of the students will do the previous action. The game isn't over until everyone has gone and can go on for multiple rounds.

For more warm-up games, see WARM-UPS.

3. Funnel Poems (10 minutes)

Writing Prompt: Who does the world think you are? Who are you, actually?

Have the Squad, including the speaker if they have already arrived, create a poem following the prompt above. Allow them to do this for four minutes. Then, instruct everyone to cut down their poem to half of what they originally wrote. Give them two minutes to do so. Next, instruct everyone to cut their poem in half again. Give them another two minutes. Finally, instruct everyone to choose five words that stand out to them or that they think are the most important in their piece. Give them another two minutes to circle those words.

4. Share Funnel Poems (5 minutes)

Have everyone share their funnel poems (either the full version, the half-versions, the five words, or all versions!) in order or in popcorn style.

5. Story Sharing by Speaker (20 minutes)

We work with Positively Speaking, an organization within the LAUSD HIV/AIDS Prevention Unit, to book HIV positive, trained speakers to visit the UCLA Sex Squad and share their stories.

For booking and more information about Positively Speaking, visit:

http://www.aidspreventionlausd.net/positively_speaking.html

6. Q&A with Speaker (10 minutes)

Allow students to ask questions to the speaker. Encourage students to take notes during this conversation. They may wish to use these notes when creating pieces.

7. Art Making Activity: Group Image Theater (30 minutes)

Get the group into a standing circle facing towards the center. Split the Squad into two equal halves—Group A and Group B. Have Group A work on one side of the space and have Group B work on the other side of the space. Have each group create a scene about HIV/AIDS based on what they just learned. To help the process, prompt a couple questions: What did you think you knew about HIV? What did you learn today? What is the purpose/significance of this scene?

8. Response and Feedback from Speaker (5 minutes)

Allow the speaker to respond and give feedback. Encourage everyone to take notes as well.

9. Check-out: Homework and Fluid Cheer (5 minutes)

Homework: Watch *Bringing Safe Sexy Back* and *Come As You Are* videos.

Bringing Safe Sexy Back video:

13. "Pruebas De Amor"

<http://artglobalhealth.org/portfolio/bssb13/>

Come As You Are videos:

11. "Not Everybody's Afraid"

<http://artglobalhealth.org/portfolio/caya-11/>

12. "Visiting the Clinic"

<http://artglobalhealth.org/portfolio/caya-12/>

For Fluid Cheer, see Week 0 for reference.

Week 5: Let's Make Some Art!

Estimated time required: ~100 minutes

1. Check-in (5 minutes)
2. Warm-Up Game: Gibberish (10 minutes)
3. Story Modes Round 2 (25 minutes)
4. Perform Story Modes (15 minutes)
5. Art Making and Sharing (30 minutes)
6. Revise Existing Scenes (20 minutes)
7. Check-out: Homework and Fluid Cheer (5 minutes)

1. Check-in (5 minutes)

See Week 1 for reference.

2. Warm-Up Game: Gibberish (10 minutes)

Start by standing in a circle, facing each other. Let one person self-elect to start the game by saying a word they have just made up in their head. The person to their right would then do the same, offering both a definition for the previous word and creating a new word themselves. Go around the circle until each new word has been offered and defined. In reflection, have the group describe the experience.

For more warm-up games, see WARM-UPS.

3. Story Modes Round 2 (25 minutes)

For Story Modes, see Week 3 for reference.

With this round of Story Modes, it may be helpful to assign groups specific modes and topics. It may be topics that haven't been covered or unused ideas from the Kitchen, and/or from the Urgent Topics List.

4. Perform Story Modes (15 minutes)

Have everyone share the pieces they worked on.

5. Art Making and Sharing (30 minutes)

Have everyone get a pen and a piece of paper. Give a writing prompt and ask everyone to write a poem in response, keeping their pens moving for five to ten minutes (the prompt can be about anything sexual health related that is of urgent interest to the group. An example is, "what is your sexual health manifesto?"). Then have the group do a "gallery walk," going around the room and reading everyone's writing. Ask everyone to pick one piece that resonates with them (they can't choose their own poem but each person must have one). Pass out visual art materials and give the group 10 minutes to make drawings/paintings/collages inspired by the poems that they chose. Have everyone do a gallery walk again, and give space for some discussion about what everyone sees, and what the creative experience was like. Then have the group split into small sub-groups of three to four people and have them choose one poem/picture pairing. Give them 10 minutes to create short performance pieces that incorporate lines from their selected poem and images from the drawing. Have the groups perform their new pieces, and open space to process the experience.

6. *Revise Existing Scenes (20 minutes)*

Go over the Kitchen and pick a few scenes that need to be worked on. Break up into groups given by the scenes that are picked and work on those scenes.

7. *Check-out: Homework and Fluid Cheer (5 minutes)*

Homework for this week: Watch *Bringing Safe Sexy Back* and *Come As You Are* videos.

Bringing Safe Sexy Back video:

8. "The Right Moment"

<http://artglobalhealth.org/portfolio/bssb8/>

Come As You Are videos:

1. "Before Sex"

<http://artglobalhealth.org/portfolio/caya-1/>

2. "Bop It"

<http://artglobalhealth.org/portfolio/caya-3/>

For Fluid Cheer, see Week 0 for reference.

Week 6: Gender 101

Estimated time required: ~85 minutes

1. Check-in (5 minutes)
2. Warm-Up Game: Pass/Change the Energy Ball (10 minutes)
3. Gender ABC's Race 2 (10 minutes)
4. Gender 101 (30 minutes)
5. Writing Prompt Exercise (20 minutes)
6. Check-out: Homework and Fluid Cheer (5 minutes)

1. Check-in (5 minutes)

See Week 1 for reference.

2. Warm-Up Game: Pass / Change the Energy Ball (10 minutes)

Get the group into a circle and have everyone facing towards the center. Make as if you are holding a large ball in your hands and improvise playing with it, juggling it, etc. As you play with it, explain that your "ball" is made of energy and that you can do anything you want with it. Tell the group that the "ball" will be passed around the circle and that when a person receives the ball they must do something with it that no one in the group has done yet. Everyone must go at least once. We suggest doing a few different rounds.

For more warm-up games, see WARM-UPS.

3. Gender ABC's Race 2 (10 minutes)

Create two separate lists on a giant Post-It paper or on the board. Title one list "Masculinity" and the other "Femininity," then write the alphabet going down in order all the way to Z on each list. Have students form two even groups. Assign each group to a Post-It note, and have them get in a line in front of their assigned list. They will have three minutes to fill each letter with a word that is related to their list, either to "Masculinity" or "Femininity." The first person in the line will go first, adding a word that starts with A and then moving to the end of the line. Then the next person will go and add a word for the letter B and then go to the end of the line. This will continue until all the letters are filled out. If one person cannot think of a word, they can either pass, and give their marker to the next person, or they can ask their group for help. The race does not start until the joker says "go." The first group to finish wins; however, the other group will still get the opportunity to finish. Congratulate both groups for participating. Have each group read aloud their list. Allow the students to have a discussion based on this activity, by prompting: "Did you have any reactions to this activity? What did you notice? What are similarities and differences between the lists? Other comments?"

4. Gender 101 (30 minutes)

Distribute Gender Unicorn worksheets. You can find these if you Google "Gender Unicorn. As a collective, review the sheet.

Based on what you saw on the Gender Unicorn Sheet, create a list with three columns. On the first column write Sex, the second write Gender, and in the third write Sexuality. Fill out each column with words that are similar or that are examples of the word in that column based on what you have learned from that Gender Unicorn.

5. Writing Prompt Exercise (20 minutes)

Have everyone pull out a piece of paper and a pencil or pen. Have them do a free-write with the following prompts:

When was the first time you were gendered?

When was the first time your assigned gender role limited or didn't allow you to be your full true self?

What messages did you receive as a result of your assumed gender? Why? And what was the impact of those messages?

6. Check-out: Homework and Fluid Cheer (5 minutes)

Homework for this week: Watch *Bringing Safe Sexy Back* and *Come As You Are* videos.

Bringing Safe Sexy Back videos:

4. "My Protest"

<http://artglobalhealth.org/portfolio/bssb4/>

5. "The Double Standard"

<http://artglobalhealth.org/portfolio/bssb10/>

6. "Questioning"

<http://artglobalhealth.org/portfolio/bssb12/>

Come As You Are videos:

4. "Capoeira"

<http://artglobalhealth.org/portfolio/caya-4/>

5. "Champagne Problems" <http://artglobalhealth.org/portfolio/caya-5/>

For Fluid Cheer, see Week 0 for reference.

Week 7: Let's Make Some Art and Rehearse

Estimated time required: ~120 minutes

1. Check-in (5 minutes)
2. Warm-Up Games (10 minutes)
3. Perform Thumbprint pieces (20 minutes)
4. Edit and Rehearse Existing Pieces (60 minutes)
5. Perform work (20 minutes)
6. Check-out: Homework and Fluid Cheer (5 minutes)

1. Check-in (5 minutes)

See Week 1 for reference.

2. Warm-Up Games (10 minutes)

Suggestion: This Is Not A... See Week 3 for reference

For more warm-up games, see WARM-UPS.

3. Perform Thumbprint pieces (20 minutes)

Have each student perform, one-by-one, what they created the week before for homework. After each student performs, ask the rest of the Squad to give affirmations or ask any questions they may have.

4. Edit and Rehearse Existing Pieces (60 minutes)

Now that you have done a Comprehensive Sexual Health and Gender 101 Training, use what you have learned and see if it can be implemented into your already existing pieces.

5. Perform work (20 minutes)

Have the students perform for each other what they just worked on.

6. Check-out: Homework and Fluid Cheer (5 minutes)

Homework for this week: Continue rehearsing as needed for next week's "stumble-through" performance.

The "stumble-through" performance is when the Squad performs the pieces they have been working on sequentially to make an entire show. The students perform every piece from the beginning to end, one after another, no matter how uncomfortable it may feel.

For Fluid Cheer, see Week 0 for reference.

Week 8: "Stumble-Through" Performance

Estimated time required: ~120 minutes

1. Check-in (5 minutes)
2. Warm-Up Games (10 minutes)
3. "Stumble-through" performance for LAUSD HIV/AIDS Prevention Unit and/or important stakeholders (60 minutes)
4. Get feedback (30 minutes)
5. Check-out: Homework and Fluid Cheer (5 minutes)

1. Check-in (5 minutes)

See Week 1 for reference.

2. Warm-Up Games (10 minutes)

Suggestion 1: Shake down (2 minutes) In a circle, have everyone spread out to have enough room to move around without bumping into each other. The shake down will commence with the prompter starting the countdown from 8 all the way down to 1. While counting down, everyone will shake out their right arm. Once done counting down, they will change to their left arm and count down while shaking it out. Then they will move to their right leg and repeat, then to their left leg and repeat, and finally shake out their whole body. They will begin the shake down once again, this time starting from 6. Once shaken out all the body parts, they will start again but starting the countdown at 4, then repeat and start at 2, and one last time starting with 1. By the last shake down, it should be very quick and the energy should be much more present.

Suggestion 2: So Get This (5-10 minutes) Each student is asked to take a minute or two to remember how they were introduced to the Sex (Ed) Squad. This could be through a flyer, a friend, a teacher, etc. They must choose a way in which they will tell their story (ie. first person, third person, using someone or something else to represent them, etc.). They must begin their story with "So Get This." As a collective, the group can choose one word which everyone MUST include in their story. This word can be ridiculous to force the storytellers to get creative when sharing their story. This activity is over when everyone has shared. Stories should be kept short and simple but still follow guidelines.

For more warm-up games, see WARM-UPS.

3. “Stumble-through” performance for LAUSD HIV/AIDS Prevention Unit and/or important stakeholders (60 minutes)

The “stumble-through” performance is when the Squad performs the pieces they have been working on sequentially to make an entire show. The students perform every piece from the beginning to end, one after another, no matter how uncomfortable it may feel. This show is also called a “vetting performance.” Because we work with topics that are socially sensitive, there are state mandated guidelines about best practices on how to approach them. Our partners from the LAUSD HIV/AIDS Prevention Unit will be in the Sex Squad space today to watch the show and make sure these guidelines are being followed. Your school could have special provisions, so check with your school’s administration if you have questions about this.

4. Get feedback (30 minutes)

The folks from LAUSD will sit down with you and the Squad after the performance and give supportive notes about what needs to be changed in the show to keep with LAUSD guidelines. Reassure the Squad that receiving these notes are completely normal and that even the UCLA Sex Squad goes through this process and receives these notes every year.

5. Check-out: Homework and Fluid Cheer (5 minutes)

Homework for this week: Reflect on the group's successfully completed "stumble-through" performance and subsequent feedback in preparation for refining individual pieces next week.

For Fluid Cheer, see Week 0 for reference.

Week 9: Revise and Run-Through

Estimated time required: ~90 minutes

1. Check-in (5 minutes)
2. Warm-Up Games (10 minutes)
3. Notes from stumble-through (10 minutes)
4. Re-work notes (15 minutes)
5. Run-through performance of show (50 minutes)
6. Check-out: Homework and Fluid Cheer (5 minutes)

1. Check-in (5 minutes)

See Week 1 for reference.

2. Warm-Up Games (10 minutes)

Suggestion: The Human Knot Students will form a circle and stretch their arms forward. Have everyone step forward until everyone in the circle is touching shoulders. Each person reaches across the circle and holds the hand of someone opposite them, holding a different person's hand in each of their own. The goal is to undo the knot as a group, creating one of the four possible solutions; one big circle, two intertwining circles, a figure eight, or a circle within a circle. Make sure to tell the group to unravel the knot slowly and kindly to make sure no one gets hurt in the process. Once the group undoes the first knot, you can make it harder by taking away the group's ability to speak. Another possibility will be to make one or two people in the knot close their eyes.

For more warm-up games, see WARM-UPS.

3. Notes from stumble-through (10 minutes)

This workshop day is for the Squad to refine the individual pieces and practice performing the show. This is an opportunity to give feedback and stage direction to the students about things that could be changed or improved upon in their performance of the show, such as the way lines are delivered, stage positioning, body movement within a scene, or streamlining transitions between scenes, etc. It is also important to give positive reinforcement and reflect back to the students the things they did that worked well, so they feel encouraged to continue working to improve.

4. Re-work notes (15 minutes)

Break the students up into scene groups and have the Squad rehearse the pieces that are the most rough around the edges first, so that they can improve where it is most needed. Groups should work on the notes and direction you and/or stakeholders gave them in order to prepare for the run-through performance they will be doing shortly.

5. Run-through performance of show (50 minutes)

When we say “run-through,” we mean running through the show with all the edits and changes. A show order should have been established during the “stumble-through,” however if you do not have one, create one, and then run-through your show for rehearsal! You may need multiple rehearsals to incorporate feedback and prepare for your performance.

Have the students start the show from the beginning and act out each scene, with transitions, through to the end, giving stage direction and help with lines along the way.

6. Check-out: Homework and Fluid Cheer (5 minutes)

Homework for this week: Give the students some additional stage directions and other notes to think about and work on for the following week. Students should now memorize finalized lines.

For Fluid Cheer, see Week 0 for reference.

Week 10: Perform and Reflect

Estimated time required: ~120 minutes

1. Check-in (5 minutes)
2. Warm-Up Games (10 minutes)
3. Performance (50 minutes)
4. Debrief: How did that feel? (15 minutes)
5. Culminating Exercise (20 minutes)
6. Final check-out: Fluid Cheer (5 minutes)

1. Check-in (5 minutes)

See Week 1 for reference.

2. Warm-Up Games (10 minutes)

For more warm-up games, see WARM-UPS.

3. Performance (50 minutes)

Students perform the show from beginning to end, ideally in front of a live audience of their peers and/or others who would benefit.

4. Debrief: How did that feel? (15 minutes)

Gather the Squad in a seated circle and encourage students to talk about their favorite parts of performing as well as what was most challenging.

5. Culminating Exercise (20 minutes)

Secret Admirer: Ask the students to sit in a circle with their backs facing inward and their eyes closed. Choose three people at random to come inside the circle, and begin explaining that these three people will be lightly touching the shoulder of their peers, one at a time, in accordance to prompts that you are about to give. Tell the three students to touch the shoulder of someone(s) who: they appreciate, they are inspired by, they think are super creative, they think are resilient, they think are intelligent, they think are hilarious, whose style they think is awesome, etc. Then ask the three students to rejoin the circle and choose three new students to do the same with new prompts. Do this until every student has had an opportunity to be one of the three students in the middle of the circle. Feel free to make up your own prompts!

OR

Appreciation Circle: Have everyone sit in a circle and ask each person to appreciate one thing that they saw someone else in the group do. We do this after a performance or a workshop in order to process the experience, encourage group consciousness, and foster a supportive environment. Have one member of the group self-select to go first, and then pick the direction around the circle.

6. Final check-out: Fluid Cheer (5 minutes)

For Fluid Cheer, see Week 0 for reference.

Week 11: Celebration (Suggested)

This is a tradition that the UCLA Sex Squad does at the end of every quarter to celebrate the work that has been made and the space that has been established. This is a suggested week but is not necessary. You can choose to celebrate your own way, as this is YOUR Sex (Ed) Squad.

- Bring food, drinks, treats, goodies, etc.
- Eat, play some music, play games, etc.
- Celebrate the end of the semester and the work that has been created!

Warm-Ups

Suggested pre-workshop warm-up activities/fun energizers to get the group moving and ready to create

The idea behind warm-ups is to break away from the automatic nature of the body and mind, and to incite spontaneity and freedom of expression. In addition, warm-ups promote the concept of a safe space, in which a group may play and work comfortably together while openly sharing their feelings. Warm-ups also act to increase the amount of focused energy in the safe space.

Warm-ups are only one part in the creation of the safe space. It is important for all members of the group to discuss guidelines for behavior and other aspects they wish their safe space to embody.

The ideal physical space in which to engage in these warm-ups is an open area, such as an empty classroom or studio, in which the group can feel free to strive for the goals of the warm-ups without feeling cramped.

Getting To Know You

Name Rhythm Game (5 minutes)

Begin by setting the rhythm. Take your index and middle fingers of your right hand, with the rest in a fist, and do a double tap on the palm of your left hand. Then in that same beat, tap your chest, then your left palm, then your chest, and so on. Once the group has developed a rhythm, begin by stating your name in sync with the rhythm. Then, choose someone to begin with and have them say their name next in sync to the rhythm and so on until everyone in the space has said their name (including facilitators, adult allies, etc.).

Name and Gesture Game (5 minutes)

Have someone volunteer to go first. This person will say their name and do a gesture (ex. Daniel might do a thumbs up on “Dan-” and a shimmy on “-niel”). Everyone repeats that person’s name and gesture. Then the next person goes, until it makes a full circle back to the first person. Everyone should choose a gesture that is unique to them and that feels good. There is no right or wrong answer.

So Get This (5-10 minutes)

Each student is asked to take a minute or two to remember how they were introduced to the Sex (Ed) Squad. This could be through a flyer, a friend, a teacher, etc. They must choose a way in which they will tell their story (ie. first person, third person, using someone or something else to represent them, etc.). They must begin their story with "So Get This." As a collective, the group can choose one word which everyone MUST include in their story. This word can be ridiculous to force the storytellers to get creative when sharing their story. This activity is over when everyone has shared. Stories should be kept short and simple but still follow guidelines.

Human Beat Box (5 minutes)

The group stands in a circle and everyone closes their eyes. One person will start making a repeating sound with their mouth. Then another person in the group will add their own individual repeating sound into the beat of the first sound. This continues until all members of the group are making a collective of repeating sounds that together form a "human beat box." Once everyone is participating, the leader instructs the group to slowly raise the volume, and then slowly decrease it until it eventually fades out. We use this warm-up starting at the very beginning of the year, and then return to it often. This warm-up opens space for group members to practice using their voice (metaphorically and physically) in the group and is a space for people to jump out of their shells and be silly alongside each other. The warm-up also fosters group focus and encourages members to really listen to each other. In addition, the beatbox created is fresh and different each time, and shows the Sex Squad members what collaborative improvisation can lead to. Emphasize that the repeating sound should be made with your mouth, to get members using their voices, and should not be a word.

Master, Master, Who am I? (5-10 minutes)

One student (volunteer or chosen) will be blindfolded. Another student from the group (chosen or volunteered) without letting the blindfolded person know who it is, will ask the blindfolded person, "Master, Master, who am I?" in an unrecognizable voice. The person who is blindfolded must guess who this person is. If they guess incorrectly, they may try again with a different person. If they guess correctly, the person who asked gets a turn to be blindfolded and guess the person.

Refrigerator Poetry (5-10 minutes)

On individual sheets of cardstock, write words that have to do with sexual health as well as pronouns, conjunctions, definite articles, punctuation marks including, but definitely not limited to: the, so, yes, consent, sexy, condoms, squad, protest, semen, blood, vaginal fluid, pre-cum, breast milk, vagina, penis, etc.

When you have all your words written on separate pieces of paper, put some tape on the back of them and stick them up on the workshop wall. Invite the group to rearrange the pieces of paper on the wall into found poems.

This is a fun game to have set up as people enter the workshop space. Whenever there is a break in the activities invite people to construct a new poem and engage with the vocabulary. You can do this activity whenever you have a workshop in a space with walls.

Notes/Questions: If you have already done the Sex Squad Thesaurus exercise add those words to the mix!

BANG! Game (10 minutes)

This game is a great "Getting to Know You" game as well as a "Focus" game.

Get the group into a circle and have everyone face towards the center. Explain that everyone in the circle is in a shootout and that if your name is called you must duck. The people in the circle on either side of the person whose name is called must try and be the first to shoot the other by pointing a finger and yelling, "BANG!" If the person in the middle doesn't duck fast enough they are out. If one of the people on either side doesn't yell BANG! before the other, they are out. If the people on either side both point and shout simultaneously then no one is out and play continues. The person who is out calls out the next person's name. The game goes on until there are two people left standing. This is a great game for getting to know everyone's name as you must know those who are close to you in order to make sure that you will not get shot. Play this game whenever you want to throw in a fun warm-up or at the beginning of your process when everyone is still learning each other's names. Play this game at a fast pace to make it harder!

Human Knots (5-10 minutes)

This game is a great "Getting to Know You" game as well as a "Focus" game.

Students will form a circle and stretch their arms forward. Have everyone step forward until everyone in the circle is touching shoulders. Each person reaches across the circle and holds the hand of someone opposite them, holding a different person's hand in each of their own. The goal is to undo the knot as a group, creating one of the four possible solutions; one big circle, two intertwining circles, a figure eight, or a circle within a circle. Make sure to tell the group to unravel the knot slowly and kindly to make sure no one gets hurt in the process. Once the group undoes the first knot, you can make it harder by taking away the group's ability to speak. Another possibility will be to make one or two people in the knot close their eyes.

Four Corners (5 minutes)

This game is three to four rounds. First round: everyone gathers in the center of the room, and the joker will come up with a category (ex. movies). The joker will come up with four subcategories of that category and assign each one to a corner of the room (ex. movies: horror, action, comedy, romance). Then everyone in the center of the room will move to the corner they resonate with or fit better with. Once everyone is in a corner, the joker can prompt the groups to have every person in the group explain why they chose this subcategory. After all groups have finished sharing, the joker will move the group into the next round, repeating the same steps, but with a new category and subcategories.

Other examples: Siblings: oldest child, middle child, youngest child, single child.
Music Genres: rock, pop, rap, classical. Art form: music, writing, painting, dancing

Secret Handshake (7 minutes)

This activity has three to four rounds. Have everyone walk around the space, filling in any empty space that they see with their bodies as they move. Play with the levels of their pace, change it up starting from a 5 and moving up (10 being the fastest) and down (0 being the slowest). After a few changes in pace, have each person find a partner for the first round. In this first round, have the partner pairs create a silly handshake with each other. Give them a minute then have them separate from their partner and walk around the room again. When they see their partner, have them do their handshake with them. Repeat for a second round, except tell them to find a new partner and have them create a silly face and sound with this new partner. Then have them walk around the space and do their sound and face with their partner when they pass by each other. You can have a possible third round with a different greeting (ex. strike a silly pose). After all the rounds have gone, have them walk the space again and do their "secret handshakes" with each person they created a greeting with. The room will be filled with silly handshakes, greetings, and sounds.

People to People (3-5 minutes)

Have everyone find a partner. One caller shouts a body part and the partners touch that body part (ex. shoulder to shoulder) to each other. The caller shouts out another body part and the pairs have to touch that new body part, while still keeping the first body parts touching (ex. their right knees now touch with their left shoulders still touching). The caller continues until he/she doesn't think the group can do another body part. The caller then yells "people to people" and everyone breaks from their partner and finds a new partner, with the caller jumping in as well. The person remaining at the end of the scramble without a partner is the new caller. We do this warm-up at the beginning of workshops, starting pretty early on in the year. The close physical contact required in the game helps to get people comfortable working/playing together. The boundary of touch is crossed in a collective and silly way, hopefully expanding everyone's comfort level in the group. People's personal boundaries do need to be honored, and a facilitator may want to make a point that the caller should not choose private bodies parts that group members would feel uncomfortable with.

Dance Pyramid (5-10 minutes)

Organize the group into a pyramid with one person at the front, two people behind that person, three people behind that pair, and so on. Explain that everyone gets time to dance for four beats and that when the person up front is dancing the rest of the pyramid should copy their movements to the best of their abilities. After four beats the next person in the pyramid moves up to the top and the person who just danced goes to the back. Put on some jams and dance away! Dancing is fun! Also if you can dance in front of your classmates then who else can you dance in front of? The possibilities are endless! This warm up is best used when the group is getting to know one another to break the ice and get some of the less performance-oriented people in the group comfortable. To be honest, there is never a bad time to break this sucker out. Past Sex Squads have pyramid'ed on stage during a performance so the sky's the limit. As awesome as your music taste might be, there is always room for someone else's playlist. Ask the group to send you their favorite track for letting loose and make it into a group playlist!

Parisian Shake (5-10 minutes)

Split the Squad into groups of three. Have them line up in single file in their groups of three. The second and third person in each line will put their hands on the shoulders of the person in front of them and the first and last person in each line will close their eyes. Instruct the middle person to guide his or her triad around the space being careful to not collide with any other groups. Cycle who is in the middle and who has their eyes closed until everyone has had a chance to steer a group. This warm up requires your group to trust each other and builds the idea that trust is an essential part of performing alongside other people. By leading and being guided your Squad will begin to have a feel for that trust. Use this warm-up at your retreat as a supplement or lead-in to the creative process. How big of a group can be lead by one or two people with their eyes open? Toggle with the group sizes and see what happens!

Columbian Hypnosis (10-15 minutes)

Each person grabs a partner and they choose who will be A and who will be B. The partners then face each other. In the first round, A holds his/her hand out six inches away from B's face. A will move his/her hand around, while B follows, always keeping their face six inches away from A's hand. Keep these going for several minutes and then have them return to the starting position. Next have them switch with B now holding a hand in front of A's face and A following. Allow B to lead A for a few minutes. After B has led for a little bit, have them come back to starting position once again. Finally, give space for the group to process what the experience was like. We do this warm-up to both get physically warm and to experience moving our bodies in ways that we don't normally move. In moving differently there is space opened up to think and create differently. The exercise also is an interesting way for a group to begin to talk about power and power imbalances, important ideas in thinking about sexual health. This exercise can be expanded into a "tree" with one person at the center. That person puts up both hands and has a person follow each hand. Then those followers each put up their hands and have people follow their hands. This can expand out to include as many people as are present in the workshop. There are also an infinite number of ways to reinvent and re-imagine the structure of the warm-up to explore different things.

Potential questions at the end of the exercise: What was your experience like doing this? Did you prefer the role of A or B better? Why? What were some of the challenges of each? What situations does this exercise make you think of? Why?

Energizer Games

People, Cabana, Storm! (10 minutes)

Get people in groups of three. Two people from each group will stand facing each other touching hands over their heads (like doing a double high five!). These two people are the “cabana.” The third person will squat under the “cabana.” Throughout the game, this person will be referred to as “people.” Explain that there will be three different things you can call out: people, cabana, or storm. When you call out people, all of the people have to move from under the cabana they were in and find a completely new cabana to squat under, but the cabanas stay where they are. When you call out cabana, the people stay where they are and the cabanas have to come apart and find a new partner, creating a new cabana over a different “people.” When storm is called out, everyone comes apart: people can become cabanas and cabanas can become people, creating new groups of three. The person calling out “people, cabana, or storm” tries to jump into one of the new trios, and the person left out becomes the next caller. If the trios are getting very close together, encourage each group to find a new spot in the room so that there is more space to cover to jump into a new group. We play this warm-up at the beginning of workshops throughout the year because it offers a chance to be physically active and work quickly in collaboration. It also builds energy and unity.

Shake down (2 minutes)

In a circle, have everyone spread out to have enough room to move around without bumping into each other. The shake down will commence with the prompter starting the countdown from 8 all the way down to 1. While counting down, everyone will shake out their right arm. Once done counting down, they will change to their left arm and count down while shaking it out. Then they will move to their right leg and repeat, then to their left leg and repeat, and finally shake out their whole body. They will begin the shake down once again, this time starting from 6. Once shaken out all the body parts, they will start again but starting the countdown at 4, then repeat and start at 2, and one last time starting with 1. By the last shake down, it should be very quick and the energy should be much more present.

Change the Action (5-10 minutes)

This game is a great "Energizer" game as well as a "Focus" game. Beginning in a circle, the leading student/ facilitator will do an action, (ex. claps hands) while everyone else is still. Then, a new leader will call change and begin to do another action (ex. stomp feet). The rest of the students will then begin to copy the previous action of the first leader (clap their hands). Each time someone calls change, the rest of the students will do the previous action. The game isn't over until everyone has gone and can go on for multiple rounds.

Cross the Circle (5-10 minutes)

Students will form a circle with chairs. Leave enough room between each chair and in the center of the circle to walk, with one less chair than the number of people in the group. Each student will be numbered off (ex. 1, 2, 3) until everyone has their own number. Have everyone sit in a chair, with one student left standing in the center of the circle. This person will then call out a random number, and whoever has that number will pick a role in which to cross the circle with (ex. a ballerina, a panther, a moonwalker, someone who just sprained their ankle, a tightrope walker, etc.). Everyone will cross the circle acting out the role and find a new seat. The person left without a seat will choose the next number and so on. A number can be called out multiple times and the game can continue until everyone has gone once.

Shazam! (5-10 minutes)

Students will divide into two even groups (if there is an odd number of participants, facilitator(s) may step in or out to complete equal groups). The facilitator will name off one group as the A's and the other group as the B's and each group will pick a place in the room for which to meet. When they meet they will decide whether their group will be Knights, Wizards, or Giants. They will then reconnect with the opposing group and face off. Someone will count off to three and the groups will simultaneously reveal what they chose. Each option will have an action (ex. the Wizards will wave an imaginary wand and shout Shazam!, the Giants will stomp their feet and say fee, fi, foe, fum, and the Knights will draw their swords and shout "en garde"). Points will be awarded to the winning side; Knights beat Wizards, Giants beat Knights, and Wizards beat Giants. If both groups choose the same role, neither side wins. The count can be kept on the board or a piece of paper. First group to reach a preset number of wins (ex. 5 or 10) wins the game.

Ninja (5 minutes)

Have students get in a circle. The goal of the game is to kill all other players and prevent yourself from being killed. You are allowed only one move for your turn and can only kill someone with your hand, no other body part. You have killed someone if you have cut off all their limbs (arms and legs). All other body parts are safe. Have one student start and choose a direction, then go around the circle. The game is over when there is only one participant left.

Move Your Booty (5 minutes)

While you have the group in a circle, ask everyone to remove one of their shoes and set it out in front of them. Choose someone to enter the middle of the circle and remove his or her shoe from the outer ring of the circle. The person in the middle will say something true about themselves, for example: "I am wearing a hat," and if there are any people in the circle who are wearing hats they have to leave their shoe and find another in the circle. The catch is that the person in the middle will try to steal a place in the circle as well and whoever is left without a shoe to stand next to must head into the circle and say something true about themselves. This warm-up is for fun, plain and simple. Who doesn't like playing a camp game? Plus you get to admire everyone's socks. Play this game in the beginning of your creative process to get everyone comfortable with each other. The reason that this game is more for fun than anything else is because it doesn't really have a performative aspect. How might you add performance into this exercise?

“Put The Old Man In His Place!” (5-10 minutes)

This game is a great "Energizer" game as well as a "Focus" game.

Everyone sits in an open circle of chairs, one less chair than the number of people, with one person in the center. The person in the center has to move around the circle and point to someone and say one of two things: "PUT!" or "Put The Old Man In His Place!" In order to stay out of the center the people in the chairs must respond a certain way. If the center person just says, "PUT!" the person in the chair being pointed at should say nothing. If they say anything they trade places with the person in the center. If the person in the center says "Put The Old Man In His Place!" then the person being pointed at must say the word "PUT!" before the center person finishes their sentence. If they do it in time they are safe. If they are slow and the center person says the whole sentence before they say, "PUT!" then they lose their seat. This game can keep going until the laughing dies down a little. During the game, almost anything goes, someone can say: "PUT!", "PUT!", "PUT!", "PUT!", "PUT!", "PUT!", "PUT!", "PUT!", "Put The Old Man In His Place!", "PUT!". This game helps to get energy flowing and to build focus strategies.

Scream (3 minutes)

Have everyone get in a circle and look down at their feet. The facilitator will count down from three to one. When the facilitator reaches one, everyone will look up and try to make eye-contact with someone else in the circle. If two people do make eye-contact with each other, they then scream together and fall to the floor. They are then out of the circle and the rest of the members keep playing. This game ends when there are only two people left.

Focus Games

Zip, Zap, Zop (5-10 minutes)

Everyone stands in a circle. You have everyone repeat “zip, zap, zop” three to four times, always together. Tell everyone in the group that you have a bolt of energy in your hands. To start, you send the bolt out of your hands with a strong forward motion straight at someone else in the circle (using your hands, body, and voice) and saying “zip” at the same time. You must make eye contact with the receiver when you pass the bolt of energy to them. They receive the bolt and immediately pass it to someone else in the circle, saying “zap” as they do so. When that person receives the “zap” and bolt of energy, they will pass it to a new person, saying “zop” and making eye contact as they pass the bolt of energy around the circle. The game repeats and continues “zip, zap, zop” with the bolt of energy passed around the circle at random.

You must have eye contact with the person you pass the bolt to. Stay focused. There should be no pauses and the goal is to keep the bolt of energy going. Encourage participants to stay focused and to keep going even if they mess up or forget the words. Celebrate mistakes as they are a part of life and we learn from them. To make the game more complicated, have everyone walk to a new spot in the room, and play zip, zap zop with everyone scattered. To make the game more complicated still, play the game as everyone is continuously walking around the space.

When a “mistake” is made, encourage everyone to celebrate the very human mistake, and then start again. This is a great game to quickly get group concentration. It allows for group rhythm to develop and really forces group mind. In the game, participants need to stay aware of where the bolt is and be ready to immediately pass it on if it is passed on to them. The game may take a few rounds to establish a good rhythm, but once it is established, it builds the group energy.

Quick Change Artist (5-10 minutes)

Students will form a circle. Within the circle, students decide who the first Quick Change Artist to go will be. Once decided, the first person will leave the room or go somewhere where the rest of the group can't see them. This person will change something small about themselves (ex. put shorts on backwards, change hair, tie/untie shoes, take off/put on jewelry, etc.). Then, this person will return to the circle, say their name, and allow everyone the chance to see what has changed. One person will begin by guessing what has changed and one-by-one everyone will take a turn. The first person to guess correctly what has changed will become the next Quick Change Artist.

Cover the Space / Body Part + Emotion Walk (5-10 minutes)

Designate an area in the room that will be the space to move about and have everyone start moving in the space. The rules are no talking, no contact, and to keep moving. After a little while, you will tell everyone to become aware of their body, everyone around them, and the space on the floor. Then you will tell them that they need to make sure that, as they continue to move, all corners, sidelines, and any empty space is covered. To essentially "cover the space." When "Freeze!" is shouted out, the goal is to have everyone equally distributed throughout the space. After shouting out "Freeze!" and checking the group's positions, have them go right back into moving and covering the space.

Counting Off (5-10 minutes)

The group sits in a circle and everyone closes their eyes. The goal is for the group to count off to the highest number possible, with only one member of the group saying each number at a time. If two or more people say the next sequential number at the same time, the group must begin again, counting off from number one. Many attempts can be made, with an approximate warm-up time of five minutes. This game is a great way to aspire for group focus and a unified mindset. It also underscores the idea of “step up, step back,” in that it helps group members figure out when to “step up” by saying a number and when to “step back” by remaining silent. This group dynamic of changing leaders and followers translates to all parts of the Sex (Ed) Squad. You can lead this game from the outside, but may also participate while leading. Do not disparage if the group does not reach a high number, and emphasize that it takes time to work up to a high number as a group. This game should only include calling out numbers, with no talking involved.

Pass the Clap (5 minutes)

Get the group in circle and have everyone face towards the center. The person beginning the game will face the person right of them and clap. That person must clap at the same time as they do and then turn to the next person to their right and clap in unison with them. Encourage eye-contact as an important facilitator in clapping at the same time with your partner. This continues until the clap gets back to the person who began the game. Once the group has the hang of it, add a challenge. The group can now change directions of the clap by clapping with the same person twice in a row instead of turning to the next person in line, thereby reversing the clap. See how long the group can keep passing the clap before a mistake is made! This warm up requires a lot of group awareness in order to keep passing the clap. By getting everyone to be on edge and aware of when they need to clap and what direction the clap is going, they are being pushed to keep their energy and focus up. You want this energy and focus to translate when you are onstage and performing! This exercise is great before a show or as a regular warm up. A focused group is one that picks up the slack and stays on point despite distractions. How many claps can your group pass at once?

Keep the Ball Up (5-10 minutes)

Have the group stand in a circle. Have everyone stand shoulder to shoulder and hold their hands out with their palms facing up towards the center. One person will have a small ball made out of duct tape and will start off by slapping the ball up into the air and passing it to someone else, saying "one." The group continues to hit the ball up in the air, passing it around from person to person, and counting out loud every time the ball is hit. The goal is to get to count as high as possible without letting the ball hit the floor. If the ball hits the floor, then the group starts all over and begins counting from one. This warm-up is a good way to develop the focus of the group at any point in the year, as well as encourage teamwork between the members of the group. It will also encourage awareness between members, as they will have to constantly be aware of where the ball is and where it is going. A person can hit the ball more than once at a time to prevent the ball from falling to the ground but it will only count once when numbering up until a new person is able to hit the ball. Remember that the group should count together.

Egg, Egg, Sperm (10-15 minutes)

Get the group sitting down in a circle facing towards the center. Stand up and explain that you are the egg and that you are going to walk around the circle and tap people. Continue explaining that as you tap people you will either be saying “egg” or “sperm.” If you designate someone as an “egg” they are to remain seated. The second you designate a person as a “sperm” that person must leap up from the circle and chase you as you run around the circle in an attempt to beat them back to their seat (like “Duck, duck, goose!” but with sexual health terms!).

Round 1: Unprotected Sex. Ask someone to volunteer to be the egg. Have that volunteer go around the circle, choose a sperm, and then be chased back to a seat.

Round 2: One Layer of Contraception. Designate a new egg. This time, before the egg goes around and chooses a sperm, ask the group to name a form of contraception. Assign one person to be the chosen kind of contraception. Explain that the contraception’s job will be to rise at the time that the sperm is chosen, trap the sperm, and prevent it from getting to the egg. Have the egg walk around the circle, pick a sperm, and chase!

Round 3: Three Layers of Contraception. Assign a new person to be the egg and one new person to be the first layer of contraception. Invite the group to name two more kinds of contraception to be used in tandem with the first kind of contraception. Disallow forms of contraception that would hinder the first kind named. For example, if your Round 2 contraception was a male condom, a female condom or another male condom would not be an acceptable answer for Round 3. Instruct these two new contraceptives to act in the same way as the first contraception did. Have the egg walk around the circle, pick a new sperm, and have the chase occur.

Round 4: Three Layers of Contraception and Influences

Assign a new person to be the egg and three new people to be the 3 layers of contraception. Invite the group to name 3 different influences that might keep a person from using contraception. Assign group members to be those 3 influences and instruct them to try and stop the 3 layers of contraception from protecting the egg from the sperm as soon as the sperm is chosen. Have the egg walk around the circle, choose the sperm, and have the chase occur.

This warm up is a great, light-hearted way to introduce the logic of using contraception, understanding its benefits, and the reasons why people may not always elect to use protection. Use it as an ice-breaker or a warm up at the beginning of any workshop. When you are doing this activity for the first time it could be a good idea to have a discussion afterwards deconstructing the exercise. Talk about what forms of contraception and influences got left out. Talk about how you might involve STDs/STIs into the game.

Big Booty (10-15 minutes)

Get the group into a circle with everyone facing the center. Ask everyone to number off in order around the circle until everyone has a number. Explain that whatever number you have is your number for this round of Big Booty. Start a rhythm clap on your thighs on a one-three beat (ONE two THREE four). The game begins when everyone is keeping a drum rhythm on their thighs and with clapping. One person calls out, "Big booty big booty big booty! Big booty big booty big booty!" After chanting, the person who is number one will call out their number ("Number 1!") and then someone else's number ("Number 5!") (together it would be, "Number 1, Number 5!"). The second person called (in this case, "Number 5") then reiterates their number and calls out someone else's number in the previously mentioned format. When someone fails to say their own number, or stops clapping, or says someone else's number incorrectly they are out and everyone must either add or subtract one to their number depending on who got out and what number they were in the line. The game is over when there are two people left standing. This game is a lot of fun and a great warm-up if the group seems stressed or not really focused in the space. Sex (Ed) Squad is about fun too! If knocking people out of the circle seems too harsh you can always opt for a version that adds people who mess up to the end of the circle instead.

Memory Game (10-15 minutes)

Facilitator collects five items from each student (ex. pens, pencils, coin, rubber bands, small objects). Once all items are collected, the facilitator can go over all the items collected, hiding each item once it has been shown. Once the facilitator finishes showcasing all items, students will find a piece of paper and a pen and can write down as many items they can remember as possible. The person who remembered the most items correctly wins.

Performance Enhancing Games

Fortunately, Unfortunately (5-10 minutes)

Students will form a circle. The game will begin with the group deciding on a character, which could be anyone (ex: celebrities, Squad members, public figures). Have the group then decide on an activity that the character is doing. Next, a volunteer will begin by coming up with something unfortunate or fortunate that happens to the character. That person then decides which direction to go and the next person will describe another event that happens to the character, following the previous event. The circle can decide to have multiple rounds if there is enough time and everyone in the circle has already gone.

One Word, Many Meanings (10-15 minutes)

Get everyone in a circle and ask them, one by one, to step into the circle and say the word "Yes." The challenge is for each of them to say the same word, but to use their voice and bodies in such a way that they communicate something completely different from the people before them. After everyone in the group has had a chance or two, have them do the same exercise with the word "no." In the next round, use the words "thank you."

We do this warm-up in preparation for our tour in order to understand and explore all of the tools we can use to communicate other than words. To mix things up, ask the group to contribute 1-2 more words/phrases of their own for everyone to try. This exercise can also be used to rehearse specific scenes in two ways:

1. Do the exercise with words from the scene, or relevant to the topics explored.
2. Have the group members perform the scene in question from start to finish, but have them replace all of the dialogue with one word repeated, forcing them to explore different ways to communicate the nuances of the scene.

The Hitchhiker (5-10 minutes)

Students will place four chairs in the middle of the room, two in front and two in back resembling the seats in a car. Two students will fill the front two seats, one being the driver and the other being a passenger. Another student can be the hitchhiker who asks for a ride with a certain expression (ex. in pain, excited, nervous, gassy, shy, pressured, running late). Once allowed in the car, the driver asks the hitchhiker where he is taking him and why in a funny voice, accent, or manner. The hitchhiker must give a reason (ex. I need to go to the hospital, my wife is having a baby). As they explain their reason they must still be using their expression from before. Once the passenger and the driver hear the reason, they must copy the sentence and use the same expression as the hitchhiker. They will repeat this for 20 to 30 seconds. Then the people in the car change seats: the driver gets out of the car, the passenger becomes the new driver and the hitchhiker moves to the passenger seat next to the driver. A new student becomes the picked-up hitchhiker. They repeat with a new expression, destination, and a reason and so on. This game helps with developing improv skills.

Catch a Story (5-10 minutes)

Students form a circle. Using a beanbag or small ball, a volunteer will begin the game. The purpose is to create a story as a group. The beginner will say one to a few sentences. They will then carefully toss the beanbag to a next person who will add to the story with one or a few sentences. The game will continue until every member of the circle has gone at least once. It is possible to keep the game going after everyone has gone at least once.

Complete the Image (10-15 minutes)

Split the Squad into groups of three or more. Two people in each group will start by making a frozen image of two people shaking hands. The third person in the group observes and then taps one of the two people in the image out. The image that will be left is one person with their arm extended. The third person will then enter the image and try to change the image to reflect a different scenario than two people shaking hands. The person who was just tapped out then assesses the new image, taps one of the people in the image out, and gives her/his own response, again changing the image to create a different scenario. Continue in this fashion for a few rounds. Then ask the group to pause and reflect on how the image changed throughout the rounds. You will end up with very different images than the original image of two people holding hands. Give the group a chance to analyze these changes. This warm-up is a great way to emphasize the image as a communication tool, much like image theater or machine creation. By introducing these concepts in a warm-up you can then come back to them later when it comes time to actually get performance work done. This warm-up should be done at your retreat or whenever you are about to create scenes. This exercise can also work with the whole group considering each image.

Image Theater (Intro) (10 minutes)

The group stands in a circle facing out. The facilitator says a word or a theme and counts down from 3-1 at which time the participants turn and face into the circle presenting a frozen image of what that word means to them. The group then discusses what they see, objectively (physically) and then subjectively (thinking about emotions and potential narratives). The facilitator can play different rounds with different words and then ask members of the group to suggest relevant words to turn into images. Suggested words could be “sex-ed, pride, strong, vulnerable, condom.” After hearing these responses to different words, you could then continue the conversation by asking, “If these were images of something other than x, what else could they be images of?” In the discussion that follows the exercise, key ideas to explore are:

1. How/what images communicate differently than words (i.e. no language barriers).
2. How different/similar people’s images of the same word can be
3. How a variety of things/ideas can be seen at the same time within one image.

Image Theater introduces the experience of using our bodies to tell stories with images, and to explore the multiple ideas/truths that can exist within a single image. The knowledge and surprises that can come from making and dialoguing about images can unlock exciting creative avenues for the group. Make sure to allow enough space for dialogue and processing following the mini-performances.

This Is Not A... (10 minutes)

Place a small, everyday item, such as a water bottle, in the center of a group circle. Ask the group what the object is, and when they answer correctly, tell them that for the remainder of the exercise the item can be anything other than what it actually is. When they have an idea for what else it could be (such as a telephone, or a football) each individual member silently enters the circle and interacts with the object as though it were the object they imagine. The group tries to guess what the imagined object is. Once the group guesses correctly, it is someone else's turn to go. We do this improvisational warm-up to open up our imaginations, and allow us to see objects (and our relationships to them) differently. It also opens space to practice creating small physical performances in front of each other. People may need reminders that they have to perform without making any noise. If people seem nervous, encourage them to try to have as little time with an empty stage as possible.

Sexual Term Sing-Down (10 minutes)

Split the Squad into two even teams and give each team a large piece of paper and a pair of markers. Tell them that they are in a competition that will reward the team that can come up with the most synonyms for certain words. When each team is set up with two scribes and is ready tell them that the first word is 'Penis.' Give them five minutes to come up with as many words for penis as possible and then stop them. Give them a fresh sheet of paper and have them do the same with the word 'Vagina' for five minutes. When those five minutes are up take that paper as well and then give them a fresh sheet and five minutes to come up with every synonym they can think of for the word 'Sex.' These words can be both slang words and medical terminology. At the end have each group share the words they came up with, counting whether or not they say a word that the other group didn't have. This warm up gives the group a chance to talk about sex in a fun and engaging way. How often do we notice how vast the colloquial vocabulary is when it comes to sex and genitalia? By making it a competition you add an incentive to their brainstorm and in the end everyone gets to have fun learning new words. Do this warm up as early in your process as possible to foster a group bond and show that the Sex Squad is all about fun and innovative thinking. Some words that will come up are offensive and may bother some people in the group. Be sure to have a dialogue after the activity to highlight these words and talk about their significance. Why are some words used for sex so violent? How are these words used to put down certain kinds of people? Are there other words you could have brainstormed about?

Planting the Seed (5-10 minutes)

Divide your workshop space into an audience and a stage. Have group members congregate in the audience section. One member jumps into the space and forms a still image. Another person from the group then adds to this image with their own frozen image. The process continues until everyone is forming one group image. Then, one person breaks away from the image to form a new still image. The remaining group members break away from the original image and, one by one, add to the new still image in the same way as before. This can repeat multiple times before the facilitator calls for an end to the game. This game can be played throughout the creative process to encourage improvisation and spontaneity, and free up the body and mind to think in new ways. It also helps members learn to work with each other and use images to tell stories. In addition, the final group image is different every time and shows the group that beautiful and fresh art can be made quickly and in a unified way. This game should be played at a very fast pace, with little or no time to premeditate your still image. If needed, encourage that the still images can be physically large and crazy, not small and closed. Specific words or ideas can be used to prompt these images. Group members can also be asked to throw out their own ideas to inspire creativity.

Micro-Performances (5 minutes)

Gather the group on one side of the room facing towards the empty side to turn the space into an audience/theater dichotomy. Tell the group that there is a flower in the middle of the stage and that everyone will enter the stage, interact with the flower, and then exit the stage. Emphasize that each person should enter the stage with confidence and character, hold the space, and then exit with intent. Allow each person time and space to go onstage and develop their character. This warm-up is directly linked to the creation process and should be used at your retreat or before your scene-making process. Not only does it allow for some experience performing alone onstage, it also allows stage entrance and exit practice. The flower is one of many variations on how you can frame the scene for your group. You can ask them to interact with any object or even respond to a word, there really is no limit to the prompts you could give to set the scene.

The Expert (5 minutes)

Two students will be chosen to sit in two chairs in front of an audience. The audience will be the remaining people in the group. One of the two people in the chairs will be "The Host" and the other will be "The Expert." The Host will make up a name for their show and introduce an object and an action (Ex. The Host introduces: "Welcome to the _____ Show! Today we're here with Dan, who's an expert on teaching pigs how to do karate. Tell us more Dan!"). Then the Expert would have to go along with what the Host said and begin talking about the object and the action. The Expert is supposed to know everything about the object and the action, so anything they say is right, no matter how ridiculous. Once finished, the audience can choose to ask the Expert questions, or can opt for a new Host and/or Expert and begin again with a new show.

“Yes, No, Please, Banana” (10 minutes)

Break the group into two groups (facilitator may step in or out to complete even group). Each group will come up with a story that is one minute long. This story must include the four words “Yes”, “No”, “Please”, and “Banana”(possibly substitute with condom). The group must include one emotion in the story (acted out or mentioned) and can be as silly as possible or as believable as possible (or both). The groups can have five minutes to create the story and rehearse it before performing it.

Slow Motion Emotion (5 minutes)

Prepare small slips of paper with a different emotion written on each one and put them into a hat. The first student to perform will pick a slip of paper from the hat. The student will have five seconds to decide to how to act out the emotion. A facilitator will then count down slowly from 10 to 1. The student will try to act out their emotion as slowly as possible while the rest of the students have to guess the emotion. If no one guesses the emotion, the student will choose a new emotion and go again. If someone guesses correctly, they will replace the student on the stage and choose a new emotion to act out. This can go on for several rounds.

Pass / Change the Energy Ball (5 minutes)

Get the group into a circle and have everyone facing towards the center. Make as if you are holding a large ball in your hands and improvise playing with it, juggling it, etc. As you play with it, explain that your “ball” is made of energy and that you can do anything you want with it. Tell the group that the “ball” will be passed around the circle and that when a person receives the ball they must do something with it that no one in the group has done yet. Everyone must go at least once. We suggest doing a few different rounds.

This is a performance warm-up as it requires everyone to improvise his or her interaction with the “ball.” By saying yes to the improv the group gets to explore their performance capabilities with a controlled audience. Play this game at the beginning of your process when everyone is getting to know each other to ease some of the less experienced people in the group into the performance space. Not everyone that joins a Sex (Ed) Squad has had the experience of performing onstage. These warm ups help them find their identity onstage and are a very important step in the Sex (Ed) Squad process.

Gibberish (5-15 minutes)

Start by standing in a circle, facing each other. Let one person self-elect to start the game by saying a word they have just made up in their head. The person to their right would then do the same, offering both a definition for the previous word and creating a new word themselves. Go around the circle until each new word has been offered and defined. In reflection, have the group describe the experience.

Lines (5-10 minutes)

Have the group form two lines facing each other and form pairs with the person in front of them. One line will be assigned A and the other will be B. The prompter will give instructions of when to move. Partner A will be the first to move. During this, both partners should be keeping eye contact at all times. Prompter will instruct partner A to move towards partner B, slowly at first, then gradually pick up the pace until both partners are making physical contact, partner B is not allowed to move. After a few seconds, partners will stop and then go back to beginning place. Then partners will switch and B will approach A, A not able to move/react. In this round, repeat the same steps, this time allowing the stationary partner to determine how close the other partner gets by allowing them to say "stop" whenever they deem appropriate or they become uncomfortable. Then partners will switch. The game ends once both partners have done each step. Have a quick discussion about thoughts, feelings, and overall comments of the game.

Sirens, Mouth / Jaw Shakes, Diaphragm (Vocal Warm-Ups) (5-10 minutes)

How will anyone in the audience enjoy/take anything from your performance if they can't hear you? Vocal warm ups are EXTREMELY important because they prepare your voice for the kind of projection you need to do when you are acting, singing, and even speaking. Vocal warm ups should be done before every performance and we would even recommend that you fit them in during your regular meeting, especially before creating scenes. The diaphragm exercises are the most important as the diaphragm is what allows you to project your voice to the back of the audience. If a group member is having trouble using their diaphragm, spend extra time with them until they get it down.

- **SIRENS:** While you have the group in a circle have everyone make an "oooooo" sound that starts at the bottom or deepest part of their voice, climaxes at the most high-pitched sound they can make, and then comes back down to a low pitch again. Lead the group so that everyone is making their siren together.
- **MOUTH/JAW SHAKES:** Have everyone relax their jaw by massaging their own jaw muscles in a state of complete release. Ask the group to clench their hands together and then shake that joined fist back and forth vigorously while making a low "uhhh" noise. Lead so everyone makes the sound and shakes together. The point of this exercise is to release the jaw muscles.
- **DIAPHRAGM:** Ask the group to locate their feet. Guide them up their body, asking them to notice their legs, stomach, and abdomen until they reach the area right under the bottom of their ribcage. With their hands rested on that part of their body, instruct them in making a strong "HUH!" sound not unlike the stereotypical football "HUT!" Draw their attention to how the muscle contracting makes their hands bounce. That is their diaphragm. Lead them through the four sounds of the diaphragm in this order, "HUH," "HAH," "HEH," and "HEE." Each sound should be repeated around 12 times before moving up to the next octave of sound. Go from "HUH" to "HEE" and back once.

My Bunny (5-10 minutes)

Get the group into a circle facing towards the center. Tell them that they all have a bunny and ask them to, one by one in order, show and tell what they want to do to their bunny. When everyone has had their turn, inform the group that they will be repeating this but that instead of showing what they would do to an imaginary bunny they will be using the person on their right as their bunny. This is to say that if someone said, "This is my bunny and I want to nuzzle it," and then nuzzled their imaginary bunny, they now have to nuzzle the person next to them as if they were the bunny. Have everyone do this in the same order as they did the first time. This is another performative game that forces the group to run with the improvisation. By surprising the group with the second round of bunny-acting you also allow them to interact with each other on the fly, adding another layer of improv in how the "bunny" reacts to whatever a group member wants to do to it. Do this warm up in the middle of your process so group members have already had a chance to feel comfortable touching each other. Also do it for the laughs. This game is a ton of fun and really allows your group to explore their humorous side. How could you make scenes out of the bunny interactions? Play with what activity My Bunny can lead into.

Art & Theatre-Making Exercises

Suggested activities to create activist art for your show.

These exercises are supposed to be fun and creative! You don't have to follow our suggestions to a tee. People should be encouraged but not pressured to participate, or push people into participating. The participants do not need to know that these activities will lead to the creation of a performance.

Start of Process

These activities might work best for your group in the first couple weeks of meeting.

What Are the Urgent Topics? (30 minutes)

What To Do: Together as a group, brainstorm the most urgent topics in sexual health that you would like to create material about. Have one to two people write everyone's answers on a flip chart posted on the wall so that everyone can see what has been included so far.

Why/When: This simple activity is a great early step in the process to lay a foundation for the creative work to come, create and discuss a collective understanding of various sexual health issues, and focus on what the group wants to talk about.

Notes: Having two people scribe rather than one helps to keep the flow of the brainstorm moving. The brainstorm is never done, but instead the list should be a living document, with group members having a chance to return to the list to add/edit what is there.

Safe Space Creation (30-40 minutes)

What To Do: Distribute paper and art materials (pens, markers, glue, glitter, etc.) to the group and let them spread out. Ask the group the following questions:

What does your safe space look like?

What is in your safe space?

Who is allowed in your safe space?

What is allowed in your safe space?

What is not allowed in your safe space?

What kinds of questions can you ask in your safe space?

As you ask these questions instruct the group to respond to them by drawing, glueing, and making the space on their piece of paper. Give the group a good amount of time to answer each question on their page. When you have asked all the questions and provided time for the group to create their response in the form of a physical blueprint of their safe space, gather everyone's drawings. Dismiss the group for a short break and display their safe space drawings randomly on the floor or on a wall. When the group comes back from their break, have them look over everyone's drawings. After everyone has finished looking, gather in a circle and discuss what it was like to create a safe space and see everyone else's.

Why/When: Many people struggle with feeling safe to open up about their needs. By having the group visualize their own safe spaces, you are allowing them to physically create it and bring it into existence. By sharing their drawings, the group understands what is needed to manifest a safe space for everyone. Do this early on in the group's formation.

Notes: Give students the option to self-identify their safe space in the drawings. Not everyone might feel comfortable being so open with the group.

I Am Poem (10 minutes)

What To Do: Write the following prompt on a large post-it note or a dry erase board, and ask everyone to write a poem by filling in the blanks.

I am ____.
My name is ____.
My name is not ____.
You would never guess that I ____.
Where I'm from sex is ____.
Where I'm from people say ____ about sex.
Bodies that look like mine are ____.
I think ____ is sexy.
____ breaks my heart.
My revolution is ____.

Have everyone read back their responses and then have everyone collaborate to curate a poem that pulls from everyone's responses.

Why/When: We do this early on in the creative process as a means group introductions and to begin making art together immediately.

Notes: Please feel free to add to/change the prompts when you use it.

Sexophonic Choir (15 minutes)

What To Do: Divide the group into six smaller groups. Assign each group one of the six fluids that can transmit HIV when no barrier method is present: blood, vaginal fluid, semen, breast milk, anal mucus, and pre-cum. Each group will come up with a creative way to say/sing the fluid, using both their voices and their bodies. Think really big and theatrical, and make sure participants fully use their bodies and voices. Once everyone has created their fluid song, have each group share their songs with the other groups. Tell everyone you are a conductor and they are all members of a "Sexophonic Choir" (a rip on a Saxophone Choir). As you point to each fluid, the members will yell/sing/perform it (loudly) as a group. This will start off slowly and continue to get faster and faster and increasingly chaotic. The faster the conductor points the more outrageous everyone's movements and yelling should be until the conductor signals to stop.

Why/When: The Sexophonic Choir is a physically and vocally active exercise that teaches the fluids that transmit HIV in a funny and memorable way. The idea behind it is that when we're laughing and physically active, we're more engaged, and we take in more information. We use this exercise early in the creative process, in most of our shows, and also in all of our introductory workshops to not only share the information, but demonstrate our outrageous approach to sexual health education.

Notes: When performed, the piece can be interactive with the audience. See Entire Show for notes.

Sexual Health Remix (20-40 minutes)

What To Do: Split the Squad into groups of five by any method that you are comfortable with. Explain that each group has been invited to perform at the Sex Education Grammy Awards. Each of the five groups must take a song that they know and re-write the lyrics to that song so that they cover at least one of your urgent topics. The song should be in-between one to two minutes and everyone in the group has to perform at least one line of the song.

As the groups create, go around to each group. Push them to keep moving and to not get stuck on one aspect of the performance. For example, if five minutes have passed and they still can't decide on a song, urge them to settle on something and remind them of the time restraints. At about the seven-minute mark, you want to encourage the groups to get on their feet and start practicing the song standing up. Keep time for the group. Let them know that it will be okay for them to read off of a paper and that they do not have to have their songs memorized.

Call the groups back to one side of the space and designate a performance area. Ask for a group to volunteer to go first and continue until all groups perform. If no group wants to volunteer, assign an order. Have each group come to the front of the classroom, state the name of their song, and then perform their song. Remind the Squad to be respectful of their group members onstage.

Why/When: This exercise can be used to create materials for your show. It is also a lot of fun!

Notes: Ask the group to share their favorite lyrics from the songs and why they picked them. Are these the messages that they hear in mainstream music? How can music fight or perpetuate structural barriers?

Dirty Haiku (10-20 minutes)

What To Do: Have the members of the Squad think about a moment in their lives when there was a structural barrier that made it difficult to advocate for their sexual health (ex. a parent gave a female-identified student a hard time when they tried to get condoms, because of sexist ideologies that only men should have and know how to use condoms). Ask them to write a quick haiku about this moment. If they cannot think of a moment, they can refer back to the Urgent Topics and Barriers list and choose a topic to write about from there. Share back the haikus.

(Optional) Group Haiku: After writing individual haikus, instruct the group to find a person who shares a similar structural barrier or story. If they cannot find a partner, they should join any pair. In pairs (or a group), have the partners come up with ways to connect the haikus. Alternatively, you could have group members work individually and find ways to expand their haikus. Share back at the end of this activity as well.

Why/When: This writing activity helps to get creative juices flowing. It also allows the Squad to connect the many ways in which sexual health impacts their everyday lives.

Notes: This is a perfect activity that begins with individual writing and leads to a group activity and/or scene.

Group Composition (25-40 minutes)

What To Do: Get the group to count off numbers 1-5 in order, to split into five smaller groups. Instruct the 1's to be a group, the 2's to be a group, and so on until the group is more or less evenly split and has a space to work in. Explain that each group is going to have a set amount of time to create a theatrical scene together. Produce a list of five or six elements that must be included in each individual scene. This list can include things like "a character that can only speak in song," "a very bad decision," "one random act of kindness," "a condom demonstration," etc. Give the groups time to write and practice their scenes before calling them back to perform. Designate a performance space and one-by-one have the groups go onstage and perform their scenes.

Why/When: Group compositions are a great way to get your members comfortable with creating and performing with each other. The guidance provided by the required elements allow for members to focus on a scenario rather than specific content. Who knows? Maybe a scene will be so compelling that you can make a full-blown piece out of it!

Notes: Remember to write down the good ideas that come out of the compositions! Keeping an active bank of all your characters/scenarios can make your show-assembling easier.

Poem, Picture, Scene Creation (30-45 minutes)

What To Do: Have everyone get a pen and a piece of paper. Give a writing prompt and ask everyone to write a poem in response, (the prompt can be about anything sexual health-related that is of urgent interest to the group. For example: “what is your sexual health manifesto?”). Then have the group do a “gallery walk,” where the group walks together around the room and reads everyone’s writing. Ask everyone to pick one piece that is not their own that resonates with them. Pass out visual art materials and give the group ten minutes to make drawings/paintings/collages inspired by the poems that they chose.

Have everyone do a gallery walk again, and give space for some discussion about what everyone sees, and what the creative experience was like. Then have the group split into small sub-groups of three to four people and have them choose one poem/picture pairing. Give them 10 minutes to create short performance pieces that incorporate lines from their selected poem and images from the drawing. Have the groups perform their new pieces, and open space to process the experience.

Why/When: This exercise is an opportunity for multi-media and cross-media creation: allowing, poetry, visual art, and performance to mix all together.

Notes: Depending on your budget, you may simply need to use pen and paper for the visual art component. The more supplies you have, however, the more dynamic and varied pieces the group can make.

Perception / Judgement Machines (20 minutes)

What To Do: Split your workshop space in half and designate one side as the audience and the other as the stage. Have the Squad sit facing the stage as if they were an audience. Demonstrate a performance machine by creating your own repeating image and sound and invite members of the group to create their own on the stage in tandem with you.

When the group understands the concept of a machine, split them into two halves: Group A and Group B. Have Group A work on one side of the space and have Group B work on the other. Instruct each group to create a group machine responding to these prompts:

Group A. What (insert group of people, e.g. "my parents") think (insert action here, e.g. "teenagers do on a Saturday night")

Group B. What (insert group of people, e.g. "I") actually (insert action here, e.g. "do on a Saturday night").

Allow the groups to work for ten minutes, pushing them to rehearse their machines when it gets closer to performance time.

When it comes time to share, have Group A share first and instruct Group B to sit facing the stage. When Group A has shared their combined piece ask them to freeze in their motions and individually have each person do their motion and sound. Lead a discussion with Group B about Group A's piece and whether or not they can relate to the images they see. Repeat this process with Group B's performance and lead the same discussion with Group A.

Why/When: Machines are a quick and effective way to get everyone's input on a subject. In ten minutes you can see every member of the group respond to a statement and also end up with a provocative piece to show onstage. A machine dialogue also allows the group to think through the relationships that are present in their own sexual health and how these relationships may be supportive or detrimental.

Notes: Change the prompts of this creative exercise depending on what urgent topic you want to respond to. If the machines are powerful enough workshop them to be bigger and tighter in blocking and then add them to your performance repertoire!

Clown College (30 minutes)

What To Do: Have the group bring in random objects and clothing to a session, but don't tell them why they are doing so. Assemble all the gathered props in a pile and then have the group stand in a circle facing towards the center. Explain that they will have one minute to grab a handful of props from the pile and put them on. Once everyone has donned their props, give each person a foam clown nose and instruct them to hold on to it for the meantime. Designate a stage space and have Squad members go on in groups of five or so. Have them face opposite the audience. Inform them that they are about to enter the stage in their clown character, and that when they do, they will not be able to talk or make noise. Have them put on the clown noses and instruct them to turn and face the audience, saying that when they have turned, they must enter as their clown character. Lead the clowns through a short narrative. Tell them that whenever you read a line from the narrative they must act it out in character. For example, if you were to say, "You see the love of your life tied on the tracks in front of a train and you begin to run to them," they must act as if they are running to them. Your narrative should take the clowns through emotional highs and lows and it will be the clowns' jobs to commit to acting these emotions out. Repeat this process until all members of the group have had a chance to show their clowns.

Why/When: This is a great character and improv exercise. By not using their voice, your Squad will have to practice acting with their bodies and being expressive. This encourages big movements onstage which will translate to a better physical awareness and emotion.

Notes: Construct the narrative beforehand or make it up in the moment. As long as you create a narrative that leads to emotional extremes, there is no bad story you could come up with.

Character Condom Demos (35 minutes)

What To Do: Get the group in a circle facing towards the center. Explain that each member of the group will have fifteen minutes to get into the group props pile, create a character, and then perform a condom demonstration as that character. Add that the character doesn't necessarily have to get the demonstration correct but that the character's knowledge should reflect their background. Give the group adequate time to create their characters and rehearse their routines. Call the group back to one side of the space, designate the stage, and then ask for volunteers to go onstage and perform their demonstrations. Have members volunteer to go until everyone has performed.

Why/When: By having your Squad create characters, you are allowing the individual members to explore other theatrical personas they could employ in your show. Many past Sex Squad members have taken their condom demo character and fleshed it out into a full-blown scene. This exercise also gets the group comfortable with using props to create characters that look like someone other than themselves. Gender barriers and sexual norms can be challenged in this exercise with some pretty amazing results.

Notes/Questions: Remember to document all the characters your group comes up with so that you can draw on them for later scenes!

Group Image Theater (30 minutes)

What To Do: Get the group into a standing circle facing towards the center. Split the Squad into two equal halves—Group A and Group B. Have Group A work on one side of the space and have Group B work on the other. Have each group create an image about one urgent topic that utilizes every member of the group. They should base the images on their sexual health trainings. To help the process, give them a prompt. For example: Create an image about HIV that shows a struggle people living with HIV have to deal with. Show protagonists, antagonists, bystanders, etc.

When both groups have finished creating their images, designate a stage area and have Group A perform. When they get into their image ask Group B to shout out what they see physically. Try to get them to evaluate what they see before they get into the narrative those visuals create in their minds. Let them go to narrative only after you have discussed the physicality of the scene. Once various narratives have been described, ask each member of Group B to make one change to a person in the scene, so that they are no longer a victim, or a bystander, etc. Once each person has changed one aspect about the scene in that manner discuss the changes and why they were made. Repeat the process with Group B's image and Group A's analysis and changes.

Why/When: This exercise is useful for creating visually striking tableaux that can be used as human set pieces behind spoken word performances or a series of still images that make a narrative. By allowing changes to be made in the images, your group will also get to think through possible solutions to the urgent topics you've brainstormed.

Notes: Image Theater is a technique in Theater of the Oppressed that helps people come up with possible solutions to structural barriers.

Print Condom Demo (25 minutes)

What To Do: Have the group look at an assortment of printed condom demonstrations, either in textbooks or on condom packages. Dialogue about what makes them effective/ineffective, entertaining and engaging, or not so much. Then ask the question, "What would an exciting and useful print condom demonstration look like?" Have everyone work individually, or split everyone into groups of three or four, and have them create the next generation of printed condom demos.

Why/When: The exercise is an opportunity to understand how the medium of print can be both useful or problematic in performances, art pieces, or instruction manuals.

Notes: Where could these demonstrations be used after they get made?

Through Positive Eyes Photo Response (40 minutes)

What To Do: Have everyone go online to <http://throughpositiveeyes.org> and watch one video created by HIV-positive photographers. Have them take a photo of their own inspired by the work of the photographer whose story they witnessed. Print out each of the Squad's images and tape them on a wall alongside one of their photographer's images. Then have everyone do a gallery walk (with music playing) to see the art that everyone created. Have everyone arrive at an image that is not their own (one person per image), and have everyone do a five-minute free write poem in response to the pair of images. A prompt could be to complete the following three lines: "I observe..." "I perceive..." "I wonder..." Then, have everyone pair off and share images/poems with each other, holding space afterward for a larger group processing of the experience.

Why/When: This creative exercise opens a space for the group to creatively respond to the stories of people around the world living with HIV, and to do so using writing and photography.

Notes: What if you were able to share what you create with the HIV-positive photographers from *Through Positive Eyes*? Who else might you want to share this work with?

What is Your Protest? (35 minutes)

What To Do: Have various art mediums and tools on hand (paper, writing materials, open space, a music player, musical instruments, etc.). Gather the group in a circle facing towards the center. Explain that, in this activity, each member of the group will individually create their own protest piece using whatever medium they wish. Whatever they create will protest against something they wish to see changed. Share the urgent topics as a jumping-off point. Allow twenty minutes to a half-hour for creation and then call the group back for sharing. Assign a stage space and have each member volunteer to perform one after the other until everyone has performed their protest piece.

Why/When: Many Sex Squad pieces have been born from this exercise. By creating an arts-based protest against something they are mad about, each performance piece becomes charged with passion and intent. These make for amazing show pieces! Have the group decide which pieces stand out the most and then incorporate them into the show.

Notes: If a person is struggling with their protest remind them that they can read a speech or a poem or a scene. This does not have to be a polished production!

Three-Image Improv Game (15 minutes)

What To Do: Have the group line up in two lines facing each other. The people facing each other become pairs. Give the group a topic based on your urgent topics list. For example: gender stereotypes, HIV, sexual protection, etc. One of the partners will create a frozen image (using their body). Then, their partner will react to that frozen image with another frozen image (using their body). Finally the person who started will end with one last frozen image (with their body). There are no words in this game, and no speaking is allowed, just the frozen images.

Why/When: We do this early on in the creative process to dive in and explore topics and issues that the group wants to talk about. Rather than talk about an issue, instead we create the issue and see the issue in front of us. The improvisational quality of the exercise keeps students from planning too much, but instead forces them to instantaneously respond, leading to potential surprises, revelations, and complex situations.

We do this later in the creative process to bring in a topic that we feel has been unintentionally left behind, or not sufficiently explored.

Notes: Challenge the group to make several things clear in their images: who the characters are, where the characters are, and what their relationship is.

Sexual Health Superhero (25 minutes)

What To Do: To create a sexual health superhero, have the Squad think of a moment when, in their lives, they needed and/or wanted an ally—perhaps of superhero strength—to swoop in and help them navigate a challenging moment, drop some knowledge, and/or stop oppression related to sexual health. You can use these questions to help guide the Squad in the creation of their superheroes:

1. What's your name?
2. What's your signature phrase?
3. Who are you?
4. What do you combat?
5. With what do you combat and how?
6. What kind of costume would your Sexual Health Superhero wear?

Why/When: These superhero characters can get Squad members to reflect on their own journey in sexual health and what led them to the Squad. They can also be great tools in unpacking oppression and finding ways for Squad members to advocate for themselves in their in real lives. You can do this exercise at the beginning of the rehearsal process or in preparation for advocacy projects. Sexual health superheroes have been a part of Sex Squad shows, AIDS Walks, and more!

Middle of Process

Group Scene Creation (40 minutes)

What To Do: Split the large group into smaller subgroups. Have each new group pick a topic from the urgent topics list and, in ten minutes, come up with three ideas for a performance piece about that topic (it can be dance, poetry, comedy, theater, improvisation, etc.). The groups then pitch their ideas to the other groups for feedback and creative dialogue, after which everyone has 20 minutes to pick which performance piece to make, create it, and rehearse it. The groups then perform their new pieces for each other, allowing time and space afterwards for dialogue and feedback.

Why/When: This structure is a central part of our collective creative process, and it is one that we repeat several times during our creative intensives. This process of creating under a time crunch encourages an urgency in both the process and the content, and also forces the group to really work as a team.

Notes/Questions: As facilitators, we often pick performers who have similar skill sets (i.e. dancers or musicians) and encourage (but not force them) to explore creating something which takes advantage of that. Throughout the creative process there are also often specific ideas that get prompted from other activities. This time/space can be used toward a slightly more focused group prompt that builds off a previously sparked idea.

Story Modes (50 minutes)

What To Do: Have everyone select a topic from the brainstormed list of urgent topics and come up with three pitches for a short performance piece that utilizes one of the storytelling modes offered on the list. Each group pitches their three ideas, and the larger group offers feedback and ways that they ideas could grow. Each group picks one of their ideas to get on its feet and performs it for the rest of the group for more feedback.

The Story Modes: *news report, dispatch, tweet, facebook update, recipe, list, observation from a non-human object, rant, knock- knock joke, retelling of a dream, shopping list, sales pitch, letter of recommendation, advice column, debate, telegram, protest chant, blessing, emergency system warning, underwater storytelling, from the voice of a 100 year old, from the voice of a 4 year old, nature channel narration, sports broadcaster, report from the space station, observations of a condom inside a wrapper, "Deep Thoughts" by Jack Handy, interview, war room dialogue, gossip blog , statement from someone on a strike, text message exchange, inner monologue, from the voice of the superego, mandate from an authority, expert witness account, cross-examination, radio play, phone sex, "Real World" confession, letter to your younger self, best man/maid of honor wedding speech, baby-naming ceremony, inspirational sports coach speech, from the pages of a history book, acceptance speech

Why/When: We do this exercise to create a wide variety of kinds of scenes in the show. Doing this exercise multiple times is also a good way to get people to work with different group members, and to explore different ways of telling stories.*

Notes: The story modes can and should be added to.

Continuum (30 minutes)

What To Do: Give each member of the group a pen and a piece of paper. Allow them to find their own space and get settled. Ask them to write a response to a series of statements that you will read (ex. "My partner's pleasure is more important to me than my own"). Their response can agree or disagree with the statement that you read. After you have read each statement and each member has formed their responses, have the group stand up with their writing. Explain that one side of the workshop space is the "agree completely" side and the opposite side is the "disagree completely" side. Explain that you will re-read the statements one by one. After you have read a statement, the group should organize themselves in a line that ranges from the "completely agree" side to the "disagree completely" side in order of how much they agree or disagree with the statement in their responses. After the group has organized itself in a line for the first question, have them read off their responses in order and edit the line as needed. Repeat the process for the remaining statements.

HIV/AIDS-Specific Variation: Ask them to write a response to a series of statements about HIV/AIDS and stigma (ex. "I am afraid of HIV/AIDS," or "I know what HIV/AIDS looks like"). A continuum specific to HIV/AIDS can make the subject relatable to an audience. We all have adverse reactions when it comes to a disease as complex as HIV/AIDS and to bring that conversation onto the stage is the first step towards facing the stigma against those who carry the virus. Do this exercise in your creative process.

Why/When: A continuum is a great way to create a performance piece that is engaging and honest. By organizing the group into a spectrum, the audience can see the wide range of views even a small group can hold. By having multiple topics, you allow the show to have multiple continuums and these can help break up the pace of the show. Do this activity during your creative workshop to make material for a performance.

Notes: How can you play with the blocking of the continuum? Try presenting the piece as something other than a straight line.

Remember to include humor. If no one says anything humorous, that is fine but don't squash a lively response. Laughter is the best weapon against fear.

Popcorn Poetry (15 minutes)

What To Do: Everyone in the group will get a piece of paper and a pen. Give everyone a topic or lead questions to write about and give them five minutes or a short time limit to write what they want to write in response to the lead questions and topics. Then have the participants pick one line of the story they feel is the most important, one line that really sends the message they were trying to deliver. Finally, after everyone has chosen his or her one sentence, go around in a circle and say it one after another.

Example prompts include, “What do you wish someone would have told you about sex at 13?” “If you could ask for consent/talk about condoms what else could you ask for?” “If you could ask your parents/trusted guardian one thing about sex, and they had to tell the truth, what would it be?”

Why/When: This poetry exercise is a chance for everyone to tell his or her own story while also hearing everyone else’s story. People not only get to speak their individual truth, but they get to witness the wide range of answers to the question posed. This can later be intentionally edited and arranged into a performance piece which shares with an audience how there is not one way to be, but instead many ways of being that can co-exist.

Notes: There are many different prompts that can jumpstart the exercise, the most interesting of which would likely come from members of the group. Encourage them to give their own prompts. Similarly, there are many different ways to perform this piece. Encourage the performers to play with staging, choreography, and pacing.

Victoria's Secret Consent Fashion Show (25 minutes)

Background: In 2012, a group of Baltimore feminists pranked Victoria's Secret by creating a fake website to promote the non-existent underwear line "Pink Loves Consent." The prank plays off of VS's "Pink" line, highlighting how Victoria's Secret's "Pink" line supports rape culture by putting phrases like "Sure Thing" on the front of women's underwear. People all over the internet thought it was real, and got so excited to see Victoria's Secret taking a stand with women. When VS found out about the prank, they responded with a cease and desist letter which only made the internet buzz all that much bigger.

What To Do: Have the group read and discuss [this article](#) on the prank: [Download PDF](#).

Then pass out blank underwear, ribbed tank tops, and blank t-shirts, along with markers, pens, glue and glitter. Give the group time to create their own line of sex-positive, consent-themed underwear, inspired by the work of the Baltimore feminists. End the exercise with everyone unveiling their creations and discussing the experience.

Why/When: This exercise is a fun and engaging way to use visual arts to create art that explores ideas of consent, gender, rape culture, and arts-activism.

Notes: In a college setting you can create a fashion show, where the underwear can be worn over clothes and "unveiled" on the catwalk/runway. In a high school setting, you will need to get creative about how to showcase the art in a way that doesn't get you in unnecessary hot water.

The Comic Strip (30-45 minutes)

What To Do: Have everyone get a pen and paper and write for five to ten minutes about a moment in their life when they were forced to reconsider what they thought about sex and/or sexuality. The group then forms pairs without showing their writing (or sharing any details) to their partner. Each pair makes two images—one for each moment that they wrote about. The only tools they have to make their images are themselves, and they have to make their images without talking at all. One person goes first, and either molds their partner into the right shape, or mirrors what they want their partner to do. They then jump into the image themselves, and then switch roles to create the second image. Each pair matches up with another pair, and they take turns showing each other the images that they made. Have the groups discuss what they see in the images (first objectively/physically, and then secondly in terms of emotions/narrative). Each pair picks one image created by the pair they are matched with to work more deeply with. They then come up with (at least) three potential sets of characters/relationships and situations for the image. Lastly, they come up with at least three potential two-line conversations with one character saying something and the other character responding. The whole group then comes back together and sees the chosen images, hears the potential dialogue, and as a collective, decides on situations/dialogues that make bold, humorous statements, subvert stereotypes, or ask important questions. Once the dialogue is chosen, the group writes the lines onto dialogue boxes. To perform each image, one pair steps into their image, the pair they were matched up with holds up the dialogue boxes that go with their scene. Hold space at the end to process the experiences.

Why/When: We do this exercise to create an image theater performance at AIDS Walk, and to explore a number of different sexual health topics through the use of images. There is also the potential for exciting revelation, by creating stories based on images whose literal story we don't know. For the people who know the stories behind the image, they can choose to share what the experience is like, and if there is any connection between the "aesthetic truth" that the group sees, and the "literal truth" of their story.

Notes: To perform at AIDS walk, where an audience walks past the images, we have two to four images being performed at a time, and then we cycle back and forth between the groups. It is important with this exercise, which brings up personal stories,

that their story is their story, but that the group is creating its own stories inspired by what is seen in their image. Individuals may need to be encouraged to let go of the preciousness of their own story in order to imagine with the group. With that in mind, encourage everyone to keep their story to themselves, at least the processing until the end of the exercise.

Newspaper Theater (25-35 minutes)

What To Do: Have groups of two to three find a newspaper article about something related to sexual health and use the article as the inspiration for a short performance piece. The performance can use or change the text from the article as needed, and can even be about the story that didn't get told, but should have.

Why/When: We use this creative exercise to tackle a number of different topics and push ourselves to be literate about the media we take in. We ask ourselves, what is the dominant narrative about sexual health in our society? Who does it marginalize and how? And how can we subvert it?

Notes: This is a more open ended prompt, but encourage the collective to hone in on a specific idea and run with it.

Consent Comic Strip (20 minutes)

What To Do: Ask the group to talk about what “consent” looks and sounds like. Then have them work individually, or split them into small groups to draw short comic strips that brings that consent to life. Allow time at the end to share back their comics with the group.

Why/When: This creative exercise is an opportunity to visualize consent, and also a chance for the more visual art focused members to have a chance to explore their medium.

Notes: What other topics could be explored with the comic book technique?

No Homo / Yes Homo (30 minutes)

What To Do: Give your group paper and writing materials. Assign them to find their own space in the workshop and respond to the prompt “The last time I saw homophobic behavior I...” When they are finished writing their responses get your group in a standing circle facing towards the center. Have the group count off into groups of three. When everyone has organized into those groups of three, tell each group to share their responses with one another. Tell them that they should listen to each response and then pick which of the three seems most urgent. When they have picked the most urgent of their group, ask the Squad to get on their feet and create an image of the story- response. This will be accomplished by having the person who wrote the response mold the other two group members into an image and then stepping into the image themselves. Now ask the groups to create the polar opposite of their image. If their image is one of success in being an ally, have them explore what it would have been like to not have stood up. If their image is one of failure to be an ally, ask them to explore what stepping up would have looked like in that situation. Have the whole group explore these changes. Now each group should have two frozen images. Ask the group to create a third image that will be the first scene in the story, explaining that the piece will be this first frozen image moving into the two alternate endings. From their first image, ask them to craft two ten second scenes that tie the first image to the two alternate endings. Recall the group and designate a stage area. Have each group volunteer to perform after one another until everyone has performed. Workshop each performance for a couple minutes after the group performs both scenes.

Why/When: This workshop and performance helps to show what action and inaction can look like when it comes to LGBTQ+ topics. Bullying and shaming of LGBTQ+ identifying people is common enough that having a piece like this in the show can do a lot for the audiences that receive your work. Do this exercise during your creative process.

Notes: What other topics might you do this exercise for?

Person Three-Line Improv (30 minutes)

What To Do: Have the group sit or stand in a circle. Pose a question which prompts people to respond with a moment from their own lives (ex. “What was a moment where you felt thwarted in advocating for your own sexual health by someone with more power than you?”). Ask them to tell the one to two minute version of the story. Then have two people jump into the middle of the circle and bring the moment to life with a “three line improv,” where one person says one line of dialogue, the other person responds, and the original person closes the scene with one last line. Go back and forth performing the three-line improv and dialoguing about the scene until it feels like the three lines are capturing its essence and bringing up the central question/ issue. Then move on to another story and do the process again.

Why/When: We do this exercise as a way to bring autobiographical stories to life as scenes, with the boldness of the performers’ openness encouraging audience to also be open. The stories that come up may also be about multiple topics (more than they may have even realized) allowing for revelation and learning through the art making process.

Notes: The prompting question can be entirely different from the one above, but should make sure to spark a personal story, rather than a theoretical answer.

These three-line improvs can be built into scenes which could then be further explored with rehearsal techniques and other exercises.

End of Process

Solo Piece Creation (40 minutes)

What To Do: Everyone will be given 30 minutes to write a poem, create a dance or performance or even just an oral narrative to tell a story about anything they have overcome or any of their learning experiences in regards to health education that they would like to share. This can be with family, school, friends, or strangers. This can be a dance, a skit, song, etc. Everyone comes back together and performs their new pieces for each other, allowing time and space afterwards for dialogue and (sensitively given) feedback.

Why/When: We only do this solo piece creation after there has been a lot of opportunity for group creative work. This exercise gives each participant an opportunity to process all of the ideas and techniques they have witnessed in the group setting, and respond in whatever creative medium he or she chooses.

Notes/Questions: Too early in the process, and this exercise can seem incredibly daunting. It is really crucial that the group has already set up a safe space, and that during the feedback session, it is more about expressing curiosities rather than critiquing technique. We have found this exercise to be a powerful space where participants have made themselves very vulnerable to each other, and also created work that builds on the ideas presented in a group setting.

The pieces shown as individual works in the workshop, can also be revised later, with the participant's permission, into a group performance piece.

Condom Negotiation, Scene, Forum (30-60 minutes)

What To Do: Give each member of the group a pen and a piece of paper. Allow them to find their own space and get settled. Ask them to write a response to the question “When was a time in which you couldn’t use contraception the way that you wanted to?” When everyone has finished writing call the group into a standing circle. Ask the group what it was like to write that scenario down. Ask for a volunteer to, with the help of the group, share their experience. The volunteer will choose however many members of the group they need to enact their story and then mold those members into a frozen image that depicts the climax of the story. The volunteer who is molding can only do so by enacting a position for the subject to mirror or by directly touch and molding the subject. When the scene is complete, ask the volunteer to tell the group the story leading up to the frozen image. Ask the people in the scene to act out the story and end in their frozen image. Do this for at least three volunteers’ stories.

Explain that Condom Negotiation is difficult and that one way to think these topics through is a theater technique called Forum Theater. Forum Theater is one part of movement called “Theater of the Oppressed,” which aims to use the theater space as a means of subverting social/political/ gender hierarchies. Explain that after they perform their scenes, audience members will be invited to replace the protagonist in their scenes to try out different ways of getting the condom negotiation to work. This will allow the students, or whomever you are performing for, to have some experience formulating arguments that they can use to get what they want in the “real world” outside of the performance.

IMPORTANT: If you are going to do this for a performance, you as a facilitator should be an experienced Joker, a term attributed to a person in Theater of the Oppressed that pushes the group to be critical throughout the Forum Theater process. Very problematic topics can arise in Forum Theater, and without an experienced Joker to lead the discussion, you risk leaving false and harmful information in the performance space.

Why/When: The Sex Squad has used Forum Theater in the past to do classroom condom negotiation workshops, and the students really get a kick out of participating and being critical of their classmates’ responses in scene. Do this exercise during your creative process.

Notes: Again, this is an advanced activity and MUST be lead by an experienced Joker.

Pilot / Co-Pilot Scene (25-35 minutes)

What To Do: Have two group members pair off, and tell a story to each other about a moment in their lives when they were at crossroads with their own sexual health. Ask the listeners to close their eyes while they are listening. After each person gets a chance to talk for three to four minutes, have them come back and share what it was like to share a story/hear a story from the other person. Ask if anyone feels comfortable sharing their story with the group. If someone does, then have them tell the one-minute version and then use other members of the group to create an image of that moment. Dialogue about what people see in the image, and then have all of the people in the image rewind back to a moment that feels like the start of the scene, and then improvise a scene that leads back to that moment.

Why/When: The exercise is an opportunity for people in the group to listen to each other without needing to “perform listening” and also to create scenes that come out of the group’s real life experiences.

Notes: This exercise should only be done once the group has developed a strong sense of trust, unity, and that the room is a safe space. Remember that, if people do not feel comfortable sharing their stories, then that needs to be respected.

Rewriting the Sexual Thesaurus (25 minutes)

What To Do: Put up a big sticky note or get access to a whiteboard. Write “Sex” at the top of the sheet or board. Ask the group to gather around the writing space. Ask them to list all the different words for the act of sex that they can come up with and write them down as they come up with the words. When the group is done listing, have everyone sit back and just look at the words for a minute. Ask the group if they see any trends and themes in the words on the note/board. When topics like misogyny and violence come up, lead a discussion on why that might be a theme to the vocabulary we use for sex. Ask the group about their ideal vocabulary for sexual intercourse. What would that language look like? What would be the requirements for those words?

Count the group off into triplets and give them a post-it sheet. Ask them to come up with as many new words for sexual intercourse as they possibly can in five minutes. The words should adhere to criteria that the group just created. After five minutes have each group present their new vocabulary to the Squad. Discuss the changes and how the new words compare to the old words.

Why/When: By changing the way the Squad talks about sex you change the way they approach the subject logically. How much more can you say with a show in which the actors/actresses are acting and speaking with intent? Keep a list of your words and pass them out in the program before a Sex Squad show to keep the audience in the know in case you want to throw some new vocabulary into the performance. Do this activity during or after your creative workshop.

Notes: We are about to start compiling a Sex Squad dictionary/ glossary/thesaurus. help us add to it by documenting your new words!

Perfect Pornos (25 minutes)

What To Do: Give each member of the group a pen and a piece of paper. Allow them to find their own space and get settled. Ask them to write a response to the question “If you could film your perfect porno what would it look like?” Give adequate time for each person to write down their responses and then ask everyone to get into a sitting circle facing towards the center. Indicate that everyone who feels comfortable sharing their writing should do so at this time. Have each willing person read their response the whole way through. Give time to appreciate each shared porno. Lead a discussion after everyone has shared that allows for reflection on the similarities and differences of everyone’s porno.

Why/When: Pornography and the erotic are sometimes seen as opposites because they contrast exploitation and empowerment respectively. This exercise allows for a creation that exists in the middle, a pornography made by the subject and that contains subjects. In this complicated space a creation that is both pornographic and erotic and possible! Obviously these will not be explicit pieces but it helps to think of your sexuality and pleasures as healthy. Do this creation exercise during your show-making process.

Notes: These can be turned into short theater pieces or maybe even online videos!

If Private Parts Could Talk (20 minutes)

What To Do: Split the group into five groups. Assign each group a “private part’s” point of view to write from (penis, vagina, anus, breasts, and intersex organs). Have each group write a manifesto or statement for a press conference from the point of view of the private part. Have each group read back their monologues, with time for feedback, dialogue, and processing.

If and when you decided to perform this piece, have one person offstage reading the monologue while another person stands onstage with a microphone (switched off) placed as though the private parts were speaking.

Why/When: This creative exercise (which we save until a safe space has been created) gives voice (literally) to private parts in order to humorously explore a wide variety of sexual health topics (especially gender), subvert stereotypes, and shoot down myths.

Notes: If a group is having trouble getting started, ask them to think about myths that they would want to respond to, what stereotypes they would want to show to be false, or what utopia might look like for the private part they are writing for. With this exercise, time and space to process is crucial.

Rehearsal Techniques (20 minutes)

What To Do: With a scene already on its feet, ask the actors to begin the scene as usual and then call out different ways for them to act which they have to instantly incorporate into their performance. These ways can include acting like they are in a Western, in a film noir movie, in a musical, underwater, in a very cold place, a very hot place, on a rocky boat in the middle of the ocean, or any number of other situations. Have the group process what the experience is like, and what if anything did they learn about the scene by performing it in different ways.

Why/When: We do this exercise when it feels like is more to learn about the scene, or something to get in touch with which is eluding the performers. There is a lot of potential learning to be done by taking on these techniques which can surprise the performers and make the scene new for them.

Notes: The challenge with this technique is to see which kinds of rehearsal techniques will be most useful and informative for the performers working on the scene.

(Inspired by) Cop in the Head (35 minutes)

What To Do: With a scene (based on reality) already on its feet, ask the person/group who wrote the scene what people/voices were not physically in the scene, but were present in their mind when writing the characters and scenarios. Have other group members come on stage and play those characters, commenting on what is happening in the scene. Pause the scene and give the person who brought the scene an opportunity to respond to the “cops in the head.”

Why/When: This technique (a bastardized version of a technique from Theatre of the Oppressed) is an opportunity to creatively explore all of the influences that affect (and oppress) people on an ongoing psychological basis. Understanding the idea of cops in the head can create a more nuanced, complex, and ultimately human performance piece.

Notes: This technique only makes sense if the scene being used is from a performer’s real life experiences.

Theater for the Deaf (20 minutes)

What To Do: Tell the actors to perform a particular scene from start to finish with absolutely no words or sound. Have the group watching (a group who preferably does not know the details of the scene) talk about what they saw, and what questions they have. Then give the actors a chance to perform again.

Why/When: This technique gives performers more training in using their physical tools to communicate story, relationship, and emotion. It can be used as part of the creative process to grow and learn about scene, work on performance, or it can even be used as a part of the final scene.

Notes: When thinking about using this technique in a show, it has the potential to echo feelings of being silenced, by actually being silent on stage.

Rituals

Suggested group rituals for various purposes.

To set the 'Sex (Ed) Squad space' apart from the rest of our day and get everybody on the same page, we open meetings and workshops with the same series of exercises. We have similar rituals to bring together new groups, prepare for performances, close workshops, and bring the year to a celebratory end.

Everyday

One Sentence (or One Word) Check-Ins

What To Do: Have everyone sit in a circle. Ask the group to honestly “check-in” about how they are doing that day/week. Encourage them to be truthful, and to go beyond the common “Good” response. Have one person self-select to go first, and that person chooses the direction to go around the circle.

Why/When: This is a great first activity to start a meeting or workshop. It gives everybody an opportunity to be heard in the space. The group can celebrate with someone if there is good news or be witnesses to each other if there is bad news to share. This “check-in” routine can build community and also keep people from taking things personally. If one person is having a rough day, and is offered the space to share that, the group can support them instead of wondering why that person is responding negatively.

Notes: When the group is first coming together, check-ins can be as long as they need to be. When you are in the middle of a creative process, it may help to limit the group to one-sentence or even one-word check-ins. For groups struggling to get into their bodies, you can even have them do a ‘one-image check-in’ where they use their body to make an image of how they are feeling.

Three Breaths

What To Do: Have everyone stand in a close-knit circle and look down or close their eyes. The facilitator offers three ideas/intentions and the group takes a collective deep breath after each one. It should be silent except for the breaths. These intentions can be whatever the group seems to need in that moment, in order to make the space creative and focused.

Example opening breaths might be:

1. Let's take one breath to let go of everything that happened this week coming into the workshop, and everything that will happen after, and be present here in the workshop.
2. Let's take another breath to celebrate the possibilities that laughter and curiosity can open up.
3. Let's take one last breath and come into the space, ready to play and make art together.

Example closing breaths might be:

1. Let's take one breath to thank everyone for their bold and creative contributions today.
2. Let's take another breath to appreciate how far we've come as a group in such small amount of time.
3. Let's take one last breath for all of us, appreciating each other for making this space what it is.

When/Why: We do this at the beginning and end of each group meeting to open and close the space. It is a great way to bring people into the present moment and create a group focus.

Closing All Activities

What To Do: When completing an activity (warm-up, game, art-making activity, training, etc.), allow students to have a quick moment to give feedback. Prompt them by saying, “To close up this activity, can we have a few people give a quick response to it? Any thoughts, reactions, feelings, comments, questions?”

Why/When: We encourage you to do this at least once every workshop, as it gives a chance for the students to feel heard, learn new perspectives from their fellow Sex (Ed) Squad members, and express any concerns they may have. It can also allow all the students to process what they just did and begin to see the importance in the activity and how they can apply it to their work.

Notes: This activity could take as little as 10 seconds to a few minutes. If the feedback leads to a long discussion, prompt the group to begin to close it and say the last words, and remind them they can always come back to the discussion later. Something to say to close it out could be: “We can keep talking about this for a long time, but for the sake of time, can we get one last comment so that we can then move on to our next activity. We can bring this discussion back at another time, if needed.”

Fluid Cheer

What To Do: Before everyone leaves, have everyone come together in a huddle with one hand in the center. Have someone shout out one of the fluids that can transmit HIV when no barrier method is present. One fluid is chosen, count to three and everyone should scream the fluid as loud as possible, while all throwing their hands up in the air, together.

Why/When: This is a good way to close up the workshop for the day and emphasizes the bond and community built in the space.

Notes: If students cannot choose one fluid, allow each student to choose their own fluid and all yell them out together on the count of three.

Beginning of Process

Group Agreements

What To Do: Create a flip-chart and ask one person to scribe for the group. Ask the group what kinds of agreements they need that will hold true for the year. For example: “be on time,” “respect other people’s viewpoints,” “encourage, but don’t push people out of their comfort zone.”

Why/When: We do this at the very beginning when a new Sex (Ed) Squad is formed. The group agreements are a crucial step in creating a safe space and a cohesive, supportive group.

Notes: The list of group agreements is a living document that can be changed, added to, or referred back to at any time during the year. It is a good idea to have this on the wall any time the group meets.

Why Are You Here?

What To Do: Have the group sit in a circle, facing towards the center. Explain that by joining the Sex (Ed) Squad the students have committed themselves to a cause that not many people would acknowledge openly. State that you are curious to know why each individual member is present and willing to give their time and energy to the space and to the group. Invite the group to share their reasons for joining and one by one, starting with a volunteer, go around the circle. When everyone has finished sharing, ask the group if they expected so much similarity or difference in each other's stories. Ask members to share how it felt to hear the responses.

Why/When: Sex is a difficult subject to discuss for a lot of people. Sometimes people feel alone in their questioning and that isolation leads them to be silent about their frustrations, worries, and fears. By joining Sex (Ed) Squad, they will be expected to work past the instinct telling them to be quiet. Sharing as a group allows the Squad to see that their struggles do not exist in isolation and that they are not alone in their questioning, confusion, or uncertainty. Do this exercise during the initial meetings of your Squad to get everyone on the same page and build trust in your creative space.

Notes: This conversation benefits from having the group agreements already figured out as respect and reserving judgement are significant elements of a sharing circle. Even if you have already hammered out the group agreements, reminding the group to revisit them before every sharing circle isn't a terrible idea.

Performance Introduction

What To Do: Give everyone at least a day to prepare a short performance piece (no more than one to two minutes) to share with the group. Ask people to work in the medium that they might like to in the show (e.g. dance, song, poetry, etc.). Hold an open mic where each member introduces their creation(s) to the rest of the group.

Why/When: We do this at a point near the very beginning of the year as a great way for the group to get to know each other better, and also for each person to introduce themselves as an artist.

Notes: Every year students are nervous to perform in this setting and every year it ends up being an inspiring day when the students see how much they all bring to the table. It is a powerful moment to encourage, but not push, the group to get out of its comfort zone and share with each other.

Mid-Process

Sex Squad Retreat

What To Do: This retreat should be full of different activities with the purpose of creating scenes that will possibly be added to the show. This retreat should include an introduction of the space (check-in, warm-up), one to two trainings on sexual health (contraceptives and birth control; HIV and STD/I's; gender, sexuality, and sexual orientation; reproductive justice, etc.), sexual health rewrites, group scene building, storytelling activities, personal story writing, 30 second dance parties, sexual health superheros, Sexophonic Choir, and check-out with a fluid cheer.

Why/When: This retreat should be during a time when the Sex (Ed) Squad members can attend for a full day or for long periods of time, like a weekend. It should happen within the first weeks of the semester, because an ideal retreat will be full of art-making, group bonding and development, and inclusive, empowering activities designed to help establish your Squad.

Notes: A lot of art is created during this retreat that can later be referenced and developed. This retreat is very important for the development of the Squad. Another thing to include in the retreat is "The Kitchen," so that all the art-making that is created can be documented and used for reference later.

I Want to Create... / I Want to Let Go of...

What To Do: While seated in a circle, open space for the group to express and let go of feelings that are holding them back. Give lots of time and space for responses. Then ask what feelings the group would like to create for themselves moving forward.

Why/When: We typically do this right before a performance to process anything that is keeping the group from being present, and to actively imagine what they would like a performance or event to be, so that they can then make it happen. We also do this exercise any time it feels as though nervous energy is distracting the group from being fully invested in the space.

Notes: Being open and honest about what needs to be let go of is an opportunity to “lean into discomfort” and move through it. Encourage people to be truthful, and also offer that for complex and ongoing issues, the ‘letting go’ can be temporary. If time permits, have more discussion about these issues after a performance or workshop.

Rose / Bud / Thorn

What To Do: Have everyone sit or stand in a circle and ask each person to share a rose/bud/thorn. A rose is a favorite moment. A bud is a growing element that the student is looking forward to, or wants to see develop. Lastly, a thorn is a challenge experienced in the process.

Why/When: We do this in the middle of the year or after any milestone moment to process what has just happened, and look with intention towards what's coming next.

Notes: Each person can choose the order for their rose, bud, and thorn. Have one member of the group self-select to go first, and then pick the direction around the circle or go popcorn style until everyone has responded.

Non-Religious Community Altar

What To Do: Have everyone bring an object of importance from home that they would like to add to a community altar (making note that they will get to take it home afterwards). Ask each person to tell the story of why that object matters to them and place the object on the altar. Leave the objects on the altar until the end of the workshop, and then let people know they can take back their items.

Why/When: We often do this during the retreat as an opportunity to share personal stories and create a safer, more open workshop space.

Notes: Objects should be small enough that they can be easily transported and not incredibly fragile or valuable (monetarily).

Story Circle

What To Do: Ask the group a question that prompts them to tell a story from their own experiences. Put a talking stick in the center of the circle. Each person gets the opportunity to respond by taking the talking stick, talking for as much time as they need, and then putting the stick back in the center of the circle.

Why/When: We often do this during the retreat as an opportunity to share/witness very personal stories.

Notes: Questions might be “What was a moment in your own life, related to sexual health, where you were at a crossroads and did not know what to do?” or “What was a moment that caused you to rethink your understanding of sex and or sexuality?”

Late in Process

Appreciation / Prop Circle

What To Do: Have everyone sit in a circle and ask each person to appreciate one thing that they saw someone else in the group do.

Why/When: We do this after a performance or a workshop in order to process the experience, encourage group consciousness, and foster a supportive environment.

Notes: Have one member of the group self-select to go first, and then pick the direction to go around the circle.

Massage Train

What To Do: Have everyone stand in a circle and then turn to their left. Ask everyone to place their hands on the shoulders of the person in front of them and give them a massage. Everyone then turns around and gives their other neighbor a massage.

Why/When: We do this throughout the year when a moment of relaxation and connection is needed.

Notes: Encourage people to give direct and vocal feedback during the massage, and to give thanks afterwards. Remind people to respect personal boundaries and keep their touching safe, consensual, and appropriate.

Secret Admirer

What To Do: The group sits in a circle, facing outwards with their eyes closed. Music plays as the instructor selects three members of the group to stand up in the middle of the circle. The instructor reads statements such as: “Touch a person that you admire greatly,” “Touch someone who inspires you,” “Touch someone you would fart in front of,” etc. The three people in the middle go around and tap the shoulders of their seated peers as these prompts are given. After a few turns, select three different people to do the same with different statements.

Why/When: We do this at the end of a creative or performance cycle in order to appreciate everyone and help the group bond.

Notes: Feel free to come up with statements that feel relevant and powerful for your group.

Sex Squad Graduation

What To Do: Invite family and friends to a celebratory event to graduate the seniors who are leaving the group (and school at the end of the year). Every year the event looks different, but we have given diplomas, had speakers, held screenings of video work created by the group, given the mic to the graduating seniors to share a few words, and created condom flower pins for students to wear at their larger graduations.

Why/When: We hold graduation at the very end of the year to honor the work that all the students put in (especially the graduating seniors), open a space for their outside community to see what they’ve been a part of, and to mark the end of the year-long collective process.

Notes: Graduation looks different every year because the students are different every year. Include the students in the creating of the graduation plan so that they can take ownership of the event that marks the culmination of their year-long process.

Example Show Structures

Ways we've performed and how we've pulled it off.

Feel free to make Sex (Ed) Squad YOUR OWN. These examples of show structures from the 2013 UCLA Sex Squad tour are not meant to discourage you from adding your own flavor. They are simply a guide to show you the different acts that we have and how the show can be structured. Everything is open to change, so once again, make it YOUR Sex (Ed) Squad.

Sex Squad Tour

During each winter quarter at UCLA, the UCLA Sex Squad brings a full-length performance about sexual health to high schools in the Los Angeles Unified School District. The performance showcases original material, including songs, skits, dances, poetry, and visual art. Students get to see a variety of performances pieces inspired by the personal experiences of Sex Squad members and the interviews they conduct with youth, health practitioners, and others.

There were some key things we took into consideration while on tour. First, how many performers were available for any given performance? Second, how much time were we given to perform and lead a post-performance discussion or Q&A? If our performance cast was particularly small or we were allotted a limited amount of time, we had to shorten the length of our performance in order to fit the circumstances.

An Entire Show

Below we have included our complete list of performance pieces from the 2013 UCLA Sex Squad tour followed by a brief description of each piece.

Time: 1 hour for performance; 8-10 minutes for post- performance discussion or Q&A

Number of Cast Members: Entire UCLA Sex Squad

Show Order

1. **Introduction:** The opening act features the entire cast and explodes onto the stage with a live cover of Macklemore's "Thrift Shop," freestyle dancing, and condoms being tossed in the air.
2. **Perfect Pornos:** Cleverly crafted, a handful of performers recite monologues of their ideal pornographies, accompanied by appropriately suggestive acting and 70's-era disco music.
3. **The Masturbation Song:** This original song features the story of a couple who struggle to mutually stimulate each other and find fulfillment in self-pleasure.
4. **So We Talked About Sex:** Six performers share their challenging, humorous, and brave experiences talking with others about sex.
5. **Sexophonic Choir:** The only act involving audience participation, Sexophonic Choir demonstrates the five fluids* of HIV transmission through visual art, image theater, and dancing. In this piece, the Sex Squad members hold up five signs that read "blood," "vaginal fluid," "breast milk," "pre-cum," and "semen". In this piece, the conductor assigns sections of the audience to the fluid groups on stage and asks them to participate by screaming out the fluid with the Squad members on stage.
 - *Note: At the time of the UCLA Sex Squad's 2013 production, the CDC had not yet classified that anal mucus is a bodily fluid that can transmit HIV when no barrier method is present.
6. **Expectations:** Expectations is a moving spoken word duet that addresses the questions and concerns of two young women waiting to have sex.

7. **Popcorn Poem-Getting Tested:** Getting Tested highlights the experiences of several performers getting tested for STDs/STIs for the first time.
8. **Sweet like Summer:** A spoken word poem that captures the firsthand experience of a young woman about being in and healing from an abusive relationship.
9. **The Double Standard:** A spoken word poem about unfair sexual standards for women in the Latinx community and double standards in our patriarchal society.
10. **Time Travelers:** This humorous skit tells the story of an unconfident young man who receives a surprise visit from his girlfriend in the future and learns to believe in himself.
11. **Day in the Life:** Day in the Life takes the audience through the day of a “closeted” young man, who is the target of homophobic remarks, gender stereotypes, and miseducation.
12. **Popcorn Poem - Bullying:** Bullying highlights the experiences of several performers who have been targets of, witnessed, or helped reduce bullying.
13. **Most Interesting Man in the World:** Based off of a popular advertising campaign, this act cleverly subverts expectations about gender norms and male chauvinism.
14. **Questioning:** Accompanied by recorded text, this dance solo addresses the questions and concerns of a young man questioning his sexual orientation.
15. **The Condom Song:** This original song highlights the importance of using a condom and is accompanied by visual art and image theater.

Condensed Shows

The show order and structure may differ depending on a few factors. Things to consider are: size of your cast for any given performance, how much time do you have to perform and lead a post-performance discussion or Q&A, and technical needs of your performance space. To better illustrate how different a Sex Squad tour performance can look, we have included two examples below:

Example #1

Time: 20 minutes for performance; 5 minutes for Q&A

Number of Cast Members: 7

Show Order:

1. Introduction
2. The Masturbation Song
3. So We Talked About Sex
4. Sexophonic Choir
5. Time Travelers
6. Most Interesting Man in the World 7. The Condom Song

Example #2

Time: 30 minutes for performance; 10 minutes for Q&A

Number of Cast Members: 12

Show Order:

1. Introduction
2. Perfect Pornos
3. The Masturbation Song
4. So We Talked About Sex
5. Expectations

6. Sweet like Summer
7. Time Travelers
8. A Day In The Life
9. Popcorn - Bullying
10. Asking Questions
11. The Condom Song

Additional Performance Opportunities

48 Hours to Action

Over a period of just forty-eight hours, a Sex Squad develops an outline for a performance about sexual health (historically premiered on World AIDS Day, December 1st.) Aptly titled “48 Hours to Action,” the performance showcases a variety of skits, songs, and dances.

AIDS Walk

Performing at the AIDS Walk is a great way to gain performance experience in a non-traditional setting. Since the crowd is constantly moving forward, it requires you to present artwork that is transportable, quick, efficient, and doesn’t exhaust you. During our performances, we’ve presented image theater, short dance routines, and visual art.

Further Resources & Tips

Advice from past members, current educators, and helping-hands.

Post-Performance Discussion

Leading a post-performance discussion or Q&A is a great opportunity to engage the audience in an open dialogue about the show. Some questions you can begin with include: “What stood out to you during the performance? What sorts of problems do students face at your school? If you were to create your own Sex Squad show, what would you put in it?”

Technical Needs

While on tour, we often had to take care of our own technical needs. Typically, this would mean designating certain Sex Squad members to bring portable speakers or an amplifier, laptop, and microphone. We would also need to set up the equipment before the show and take it down afterwards. As you can imagine, this resulted in a pretty tired Sex Squad at the end of each performance!

Suggested Readings

- *Games for Actors and Non-Actors (2nd Edition)*
by Augusto Boal
- *Theatre of the Oppressed*
by Augusto Boal
- *Exercises for Rebel Artists: Radical Performance Pedagogy*
by Guillermo Gómez Peña
- *Theatre for Community Conflict and Dialogue: The Hope is Vital Training Manual*
by Michael Rohd

Member Q&A

What do you want future Sex (Ed) Squad members to know?

- "...Passion about what it is that we're doing, that's the only prerequisite talent you need."
- "You may experience a great shift in perspective as you begin to open up."
- "Do not hesitate to do any of the funny/weird/random/provocative things. Embrace it!"
- "It has allowed me to confront some of my most deepest fears, as well as step into the unknown."
- "When I joined Sex Squad, I had absolutely no idea how much I would learn about myself and grow."
- "Use this space as a conduit and channel all that energy and power into motivation to be here, give time, and be an active, critical participant of the process."

What was the most challenging part of the experience?

- "The most challenging aspect of the Sex Squad has been having radical openness when receiving feedback on my individual artwork or creative process. As someone who identifies my self worth with my artwork, it can sometimes be difficult to actively listen to someone's feedback, especially if they weren't directly involved in the making of the art."
- "The collaborative efforts were more challenging than most of the subject matter: you have this incredible group of brilliant, talented, passionate people all trying to work out our ideas. The great thing is, there was so much respect in the group that we generally could talk through disagreements about pieces, or activities, etc, and come to an understanding that made us all happy."
- "I had to feel uncomfy to feel comfy again."

What were some surprises?

- “Each person had a story that made the rest of us cry.”
- “We all realized we all had something to say. When I put myself out there and everyone was accepting was when we shared juicy and personal information and all became closer and more comfortable with each other.”
- “Opening up to the group was difficult, but once I realized they weren’t here to judge, it became a lot easier.”

Helpful Hints

A list of useful tips for a new Joker of a Sex Squad

- The job of a Joker/facilitator is to help shape different topics of art-making so they do not end up with similar pieces about similar topics. A good show consists of a good mix of monologues, group pieces, individual stories, humor, rawness, heavier, and lighter pieces. Each show will not have every single thing but that is okay. No show is 100% completely perfect, and that is okay.
- There will be moments of silence. That's okay. If the Joker or adult ally feels comfortable enough, they may be the first to share if no one else volunteers. However, do encourage others to start the conversation.
- We believe in self-selection: the act of determining for yourself what activities you will engage in, what dialogue you will take part in, and what roles you want to play in the Sex Squad space. Create an agreement with the group to self-select to avoid individuals being peer pressured into doing something they may not be comfortable with. When someone volunteers someone else, remind them of self-selection.
- Some students take longer than others to open up and participate in the space. That is part of the process. Allow those students to egress but send some positive encouragement their way as well (ex. "Thank you for voicing your comfortability and boundaries. That is very important. When you feel comfortable enough to join/participate please feel free to contribute.").
- When new students join the space, welcome them in. It's okay for new students to join the space at any time. Have a mini-discussion about what you have created so far, and fill them in on the principles and community norms already established. It's okay if you have to remind them of these norms as the year progresses. If a student doesn't join the Squad at the beginning of the year, they might need more reminders of how to engage with the other Squad members and the space you have co-created.
- When introducing the space to someone new, encourage the students to be the ones to explain and inform. Also, if possible, invite students who do not participate in discussion a lot to be the ones to explain.

- When possible, encourage students (other than the Joker/facilitator) to lead the space through an activity. For example, if the group wants to play a game they have played before, encourage a group member to remind everyone of the rules and/or facilitate the game. They may be shy or a bit nervous, so be encouraging and affirm their choice to step up as a leader. We highly recommend giving students the space to practice and embody leadership roles in the Squad. We believe that when students begin to see themselves as leaders in the space, they will begin to take more ownership of their experience in the Squad..
- When deciding what warm-ups/games to do, you can use the ones we have provided but you can also encourage students to introduce others they know that might not already be a part of our list.
- Every school is different. It is okay if one day you have to disregard the agenda and make a whole new one based on the needs of your Squad.
- Once you have “The Kitchen” list set, remember to update it and keep it around for every meeting to track progress and all the scenes you have created. This is really helpful when trying to create new scenes as a reference of what is already present and what is missing.
- Create partnerships. Especially on your campus, if possible.
- Encourage Leadership roles. This allows for a more even distribution of roles and responsibilities so it does not all lie on one person (ex. time-keeper, agenda creator, workshop manager, president, sergeant of arms, treasurer, script-manager, etc.).
- “Co-joker” system. With roles that require more responsibility and presence, establish a “co” system. This is important because if, for example, one president is not available for a meeting, the other can still be around to lead.
- With the “co” system, make sure that each co-president, or each “co” for each role, is kept up to date and prepared for the next meeting.
- The “co” system is also important for the adult ally in the space because if one adult ally is not present for one workshop, the other adult ally can still support. This is important for things like access to space for the workshops, supplies, and support of the Joker.

- Keep an eye on time. This is important because you do not want to take too long on one activity and run out of time. It's okay if this happens, but try to limit it as much as possible. Everyone's time should always be respected. We encourage setting up leadership roles that include a time-keeper to keep the workshops moving.
- Fundraise for things like t-shirts, props, and technical supplies. This can also be a way to advertise for your Squad.
- Recruit. Try to recruit throughout the process, but especially at the end of the year. If you have seniors, you ultimately want to find new students who can join next year to replace the missing spots, and maybe even create more spots in the group.
- Advertisement for the group. You should create an advertisement strategy that takes into consideration your school and your Squad. Examples of advertisements include flyers, announcements, posters, flash mobs, Snapchat page, Youtube videos, Bringing Safe Sexy Back and other Sex (Ed) Squad video screenings.
- Encourage students to be off-book as soon as possible but respect that your members may have different abilities in memorizing lines.
- Set "understudies" for when a student has to miss a performance. Or encourage the entire group to learn as much of the show as possible, so when someone is absent other Squad members can step into that person's roles.
- Some warm-ups take longer than others. Aim to introduce longer warm-ups in the first few weeks when there is more flexible time. you have a little more flexibility with your time.
- In moments when you cannot get everyone to focus, try to establish a group call-and-response to get everyone's attention. For example, calling, "And a hush fell over the crowd," to which they would all respond by saying "hush." Another example: calling, "If you can hear me, clap twice" and have them respond by clapping twice. You can do this a few times until you have everyone's attention. You can also create a cue that lets everyone know it's time to get back into the circle and pay attention (ex. chanting a certain song or phrase). An example of a chant can be "Sexy circle, a circle that's sexy," that can be chanted until everyone is in the circle and ready to focus.
- It is important that everyone is involved in the space. Students, allies, etc. This creates a positive environment and encourages more people to participate.

- Explain Gender Pronouns and why they are important. It is okay if you have to remind folks, as this may be a new concept for members of your group. Encourage someone other than the Joker to explain what a GP is when a new student joins the group.
- Before closing the space at the end of every workshop, make announcements regarding any “homework” there might be and encourage everyone to come prepared for the next workshop.
- Every Sex (Ed) Squad is different. This toolkit is designed to be a reference and is not universal. Some things may not apply to your Squad, and they can be disregarded or rearranged to fit your space as needed.
- Encourage the students to participate, to be honest and brave, and overall to have fun and make the space whatever they need/want it to be. We also encourage the adult ally to participate and contribute to the space as often as possible. All voices are important for this amazing work that you are creating and the more there are the better.

Acknowledgements

Because we can't do what we do alone.

We would like to thank all of the collaborators, activists, magic-makers, and visionaries who have made our work possible, and who believe in the dream of creating a safer and sexier world through radically hilarious and honest art-making.

Generous funding by:

The David and Linda Shaheen Foundation

The Elizabeth Taylor AIDS Foundation

The Ford Foundation

The Los Angeles Unified School District HIV/AIDS Prevention Unit

The University of California, Los Angeles Department of World Arts and Cultures/Dance

The University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill Department of Communications Studies

The Duke University Dance Program

The North Carolina Central University Project Safe Program

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