



EMPOWERED

IMPROVING LGBTQ+ MENTAL HEALTH

Important Sexual Health Concerns in a Changing World

In preparation for Sexual Health Awareness month in September, we're talking about tips to make relationships and hookups safer in the context of COVID-19. In what many people are calling a "post COVID" world, it is hard to know the best way to keep yourself safe, especially with the frequency of new variants. **NYC Health** recommends that when first meeting up with a person, discuss your vaccination status. If you and your partner are fully vaccinated, you're at lower risk of getting COVID-19 or spreading it to other people. People who are fully vaccinated (at least two weeks have passed since they got a single-dose vaccine or the second dose of a two-dose vaccine) can more safely go on dates, make out, and have sex. It is also important to recognize that everyone has different levels of comfort around meeting in-person, even when fully vaccinated. Discussing upfront whether folks would prefer to meet somewhere outside or with masks is one way to respect that.

Communicate with partners if you have been exposed to COVID so that they can get tested. One way you or your partners can still have a date night when an exposure may have happened is going on a virtual date. Virtual dates can be streaming the same Netflix movie, cooking meals virtually together or just

talking on the phone. At this point, there are many **recommendations** for online date options.

Another recent concern in Colorado is monkeypox, a virus that is spread through close contact with someone who has it. The type of monkeypox currently spreading in the U.S. is very rarely fatal, and symptoms include flu-like symptoms, fever, and a rash or skin bumps. Monkeypox can also resemble syphilis, herpes, or even acne. The current

public health recommendation for who should get vaccinated includes gay, bisexual, or other men who have sex with men aged 18 years or older. **The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) website** has information on where you can get tested, as well as where you can get vaccinated.

As with many subjects related to sexual health, communication is key when considering things like COVID-19 or monkeypox when dating or hooking up. Know your boundaries, and respect the boundaries of others. By communicating, you can further protect yourself and others in your community.

For more tips on improving your sexual health and wellbeing, the National Coalition for Sexual Health has a variety of practical tools and materials.



STAFF HIGHLIGHT

Meg Shamblen (they/them) is a program coordinator with Envision:You focused on the LGBTQ+ Behavioral Health Provider Training Program. Meg is passionate about social advocacy, youth empowerment, and trauma-informed care addressing mental health concerns utilizing art, animals, and inclusive movement. Through their work, Meg hopes to make these forms of healing accessible to historically marginalized communities.



Meg received a bachelor's of science degree in Visual Communications from Ohio University in 2015 and a master's degree in Social Work with a certificate in Human-Animal Environment Interactions from the University of Denver in 2022. Since moving to Denver, Meg has worked as a social emotional learning counselor with Denver Kids, completed research on LGBTQ+ affirming urban housing options under Denver Councilwoman Robin Kniech, and served as the healthequity and training intern for One Colorado. Outside of work, Meg enjoys rock climbing, biking to the local farmer's market, dancing on roller skates, and hammock reading with their dog Ivy.

5 HEALTHY TIPS

...on how to date with shifting COVID expectations:

- 1 Consider your boundaries** ahead of time and be upfront about intentions.
- 2 Ask about other people's COVID boundaries** - don't assume that everyone is vaccinated or that they aren't immuno-compromised.
- 3 Virtual dates can still be a thing!** Try a virtual date before meeting for the first time, or meet somewhere outside.
- 4 Find ways to talk about your values.** A lot has happened during the pandemic, talk about what's important to you and your partner.
- 5 Be curious about your date.** Ask them questions that allow you to dig deeper.

[LEARN MORE](#)

FRESH PRESS

Every year, Community Marketing and Insights, an LGBTQ-owned company, conducts the largest survey of LGBTQ community members about their consumer habits and issues such as workplace support and friendly living environments. According to the 2021 16th Annual LGBTQ Community Survey, 76% of LGBTQ respondents think more positively about companies that sponsor LGBTQ community organizations and events. However, only

53% of people surveyed agreed that corporations' presence at Pride events was positive for the community. The lowest percentage of people who viewed corporate presence at Pride as positive came from young adults, with only 27% of 18 to 34 year-olds agreeing. This view is split drastically between generations of LGBTQ people, with 74% of people over 55 agreeing that corporate presence at Pride events was positive for the community.

[LEARN MORE](#)

COMMUNITY PARTNER

We are proud to highlight one of our 2022 Summit Peak Sponsors, Chase Huddleston | Coldwell Banker International Realty. With over 10 years of experience in real estate, Chase has a proven track record for making the home buying and selling experience seamless for his clients. Chase



CHASE HUDDLESTON



has received numerous honors for excellence in his field, most notably the Coldwell Banker International President's Circle, which is reserved for the top 8% of agents globally. Thank you Chase and Coldwell Banker for helping make the work we do possible.

[LEARN MORE](#)