

THE TRANS SAFETY GUIDE



















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Contact

Transwave Jamaica Kingston 6, Jamaica +876-669-4671 hello@transwaveja.org @transwaveja

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Glossary of Terms

Gender non-conforming defines people who have a gender expression that does not conform to traditional gender norms.

HIV: Human immunodeficiency virus is a virus that attacks the body's immune system.

LGBTQIA: An acronym used to signify Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, and Asexual people collectively.**Non-binary:** describes someone whose gender identity isn't exclusively woman or man.

PrEP: Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis can reduce your chance of getting HIV from sex or injection drug use.

Transgender: This describes a person whose gender identity is different from the one they were assigned at birth. Their gender identity often contrasts gender they are assigned in relation to their sex.

1. Transmasculine: This umbrella generally describes people who were assigned female at birth (AFAB) but identify on the masculine end of the gender spectrum. Transmasculine people do not necessarily identify as men but instead, their dress, behaviour, mannerisms etc are more masculine. Some transmasculine people still present feminine aspects of themselves. **2. Transfeminine:** This umbrella generally describes people who were assigned male at birth (AMAB) but identify on the feminine end of the gender spectrum. Transfeminine people do not necessarily identify as women but instead, their dress, behaviour, mannerisms etc are more feminine. Some feminine people still present masculine aspects of themselves.

3. Transition: This describes a set of steps taken by transgender people, to affirm their gender. This could include changing their name, dress, pronouns, beginning hormone therapy and getting gender-affirming surgery. The process of transitioning looks different for all trans people and does not have to include all the common actions in order to be valid.

STI: Sexually transmitted infections are conditions are spread mainly by unprotected sexual contact

Acknowledgement

We must begin by thanking our beautiful community. Your bravery and willingness to unite to improve our collective experiences has inspired this guide. We are truly a group of diverse, intellectual, and creative people who yearn for safety and community. You have made this work possible.

This project would not be possible without the contributions of the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives (CFLI).

We also extend gratitude to all the contributors to this guide: Khalil Gordon (karate instructor), Sheré Samuels (staff), Chaday Emmanuel (staff), Lamar Grant (staff) and Sudean Peters (staff). To Khalil, thank you for being an ally and tailoring your tips to the needs of the community. To the staff, thank you for recognizing the need for this work and giving it your all.

Thank you, Renae Green, Executive Director of TransWave, for your guidance on this project. Most importantly, thank you to all the readers of this guide.

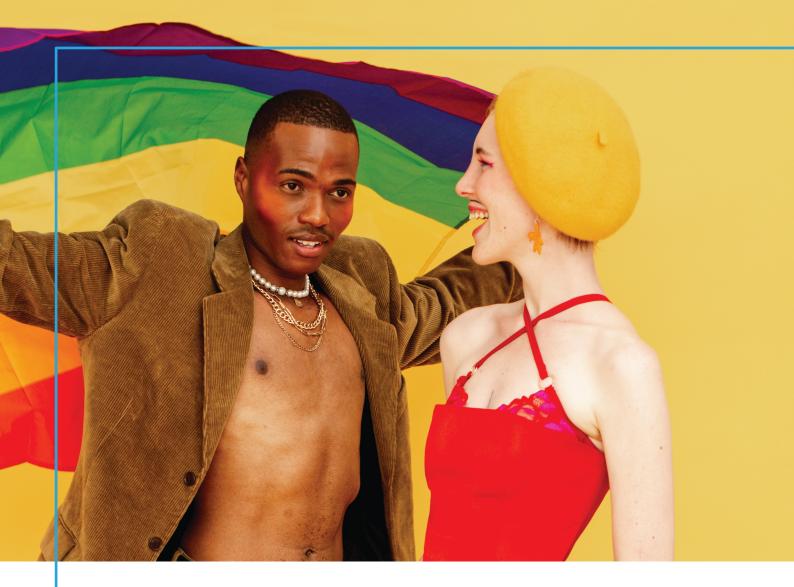


What is the Trans Safety Guide:

The Trans Safety Guide is a comprehensive and holistic document aimed to provide the transgender, gender non-conforming and non-binary community with options and pathways to safely navigate recreational spaces, dating and healthcare. The prevalence of homophobia and transphobia in Jamaica has caused safety to be a pervasive issue in the trans community. Coupled with that, high risk sexual behaviours have surged the incidence of HIV-contraction within our communities. These issues have made the creation of this guide paramount to TransWave Jamaica- we want to protect YOU.

While this guide provides tips about protecting yourself, always check with your doctors and other medical professionals about the methods that are right for your health.





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I don't know what I am if I'm not a woman.

- MARSHA P. JOHNSON



SAFE SPACES





WHAT ARE SAFE SPACES?

According to Oxford Languages, Safe Spaces are places or an environment in which a person or category of people can feel confident that they will not be exposed to discrimination, criticism, harassment, or any other emotional or physical harm.

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If I wait for someone else to validate my existence, it will mean that I'm shortchanging myself. -Zanele Muholi, artist (non-binary)



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WHAT ARE SAFE WORKSPACES?

A top-level definition of a Safe workspace would be one that provides equal access and opportunities regardless of variables such as age, gender Identity, race, physical ability and mental health and Sexual Orientation.

Contributors to an inclusive workspace:

- Inclusive Workplace Polices
- Discrimination free Environment
- Fostering Gratitude practices
- Fostering a Comfortable Environment
- Safety

WHAT IS A SOCIAL SAFE SPACE?

In its simplest of form, safe social space are those spaces persons can socialize without feeling discriminated against on any grounds.

Things to look out for in safe spaces:

- Location

- Trust

- Policies

- Diverse and inclusive staff

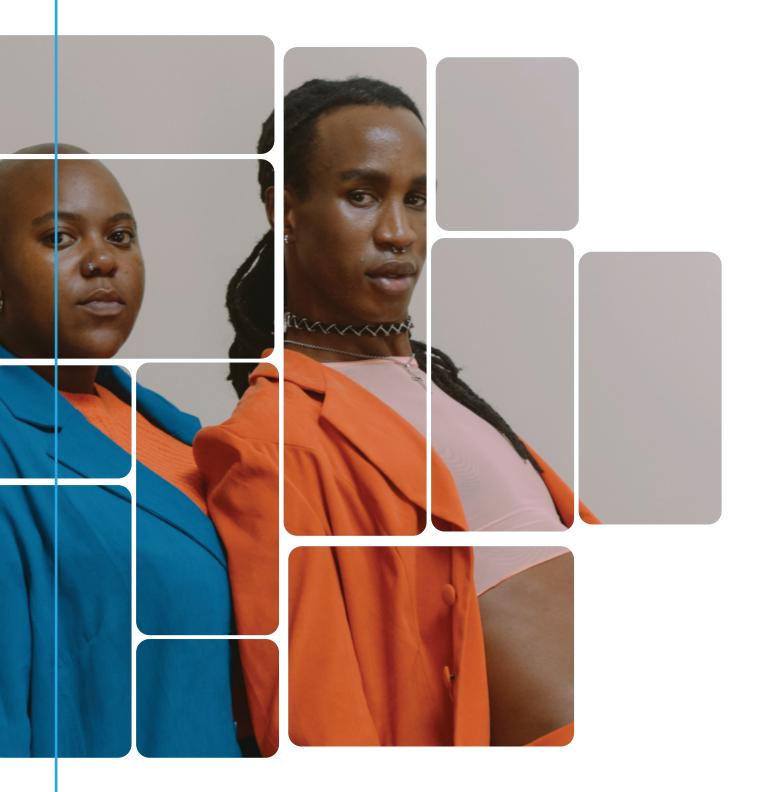
- Hospitality

- Safety measures (security guards, security cameras etc.)





DATING



ONLINE DATING:

The LGBTIQ+ community is vibrant, strong, creative, and resilient—in large part because it has had to be. Across the globe, LGBTIQ+ people continue to experience discrimination, inequality, violence and abuse because of their sexual orientation and gender identity. In the face of these threats and challenges, our ever-resourceful queer community has turned to internet and more specifically, social networks—for safer communication, networking, and mobilizing. With users worldwide, online dating has become a vital part of the community and has flourished as a unique place for queer people to connect. But while online dating is intended as a safe space, it is features also have the potential to put users at risk.



DATING APPS



Grindr



Tinder



TIPS

Do not post pictures with identifiable features: If you live in a place where having your identity shown on a dating app puts you at risk, there are many ways to use the app without putting yourself in danger. Do not show your face or any other identifiable feature, including tattoos, furniture, home decoration, or surrounding scenery

Clear metadata when you take a photo. Cameras automatically add metadata when you take a photo. This hidden info can include location, date, time, and location of the photo. Even if a photo does not GUIDE show your face or any other details that could expose your identity, a photo's metadata can still be used to learn a great deal of information about you. There are many apps that remove this data for you before sharing photos with strangers.

If you are chatting with someone and would like to send a picture, consider blurring certain identifiable features to mask who you are. It can still be a nice and fun way to share pictures with people, without fully showing yourself. Remember, blurring does not always work because some software can reverse the blur feature. Try using a picture that represents you in a different way such as one related to your hobbies or personality.

When talking to people you do not know well, it is better to cover the camera on your smartphone, laptop, or tablet. For Android users you can do it digitally with the Camera Blocker app. Meet in a safe location. Sharing your home address can be risky. Make sure you feel comfortable with someone prior to meeting. If you are ready to meet someone, try meeting at a place known to be friendly to LGBTQ+ people if there is one in your area. If you want to continue chatting outside of Grindr, consider using secure messaging apps that use end-to-end encryption. A few of these include Wire, Signal, Jitsi, and Appear. Please note on Wire you do not need to register with your phone number, you can simply register with an email address if you want to. In Signal, you can set a time for the messages to be deleted. After a specified period, your conversation will automatically disappear.

Do not use your personal information on your dating app profile. Do not specify your name, address, phone number, or any other info that could help identify you in your profile. Displaying your personal info on dating apps increases the risk of someone identifying your social media profiles.

Do not Connect Your Social Media Accounts: Some apps allow or require you to login with another social media account. Connecting between different social media and communication tools can give someone ways of finding info about you. If that is the case, consider the following steps: Use a different name on dating apps than with other social media apps. Provide a different phone number and email address than you usually use. Do not connect or sign in through social media, if possible. If required, have a separate social media account just for logging in to social networking apps. Do not provide a phone number unless necessary.

Avoid Browsing Online via Wi-Fi Hotspot: Wi-Fi hotspots in public places such as airports, coffee shops, libraries, and hotels are convenient, but too often are not secure. If there is no alternative option to using these insecure networks, and if there are no legal implications to do so, we recommend that you always use a virtual private network (VPN) on your phone.

DATING IN REAL LIFE:

When dating in person, our vulnerabilities as trans people increase. There are several factors to consider ensuring your utmost safety when meeting someone in person.

Here are some tips to consider.

Make sure your phone is fully charged. Bring a charging battery with you on long dates. Give your date location to a friend or family member. Update them on your movements.

Never leave your drinks unattended. If you walk away from a drink, do not drink it.

Always trust your instinct if you feel uncomfortable.

When choosing a date location choose somewhere that is well populated. Choose a place that is as safe as possible (security, secured property etc) you are familiar and comfortable with.

If you want to keep your home address private, meet your date at the location instead of having them pick you up. Ensure that a friend or family member has your date's name and contact details.

Give your friend or family member regular updates on your whereabouts and safety. You can also ask your friend to call you an hour into the date to check in.

Share pictures of your date with your friends and family.

SEXUAL HEALTH



SEXUAL HEALTH

Sexual health is a vital part of your holistic wellness. When dating and engaging in sexual relationships, there are numerous factors to consider so you keep yourself and your partners safe from STIs. Here are some ways to protect yourself sexually.

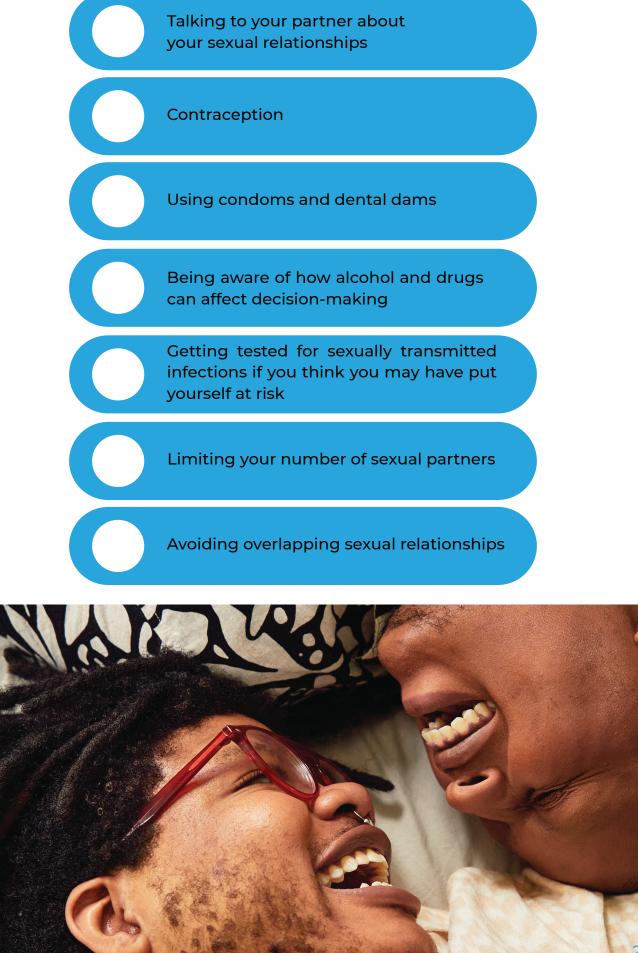
OVERVIEW

According to the World Health organization (WHO) (2002), sexual health is defined as "a state of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being related to sexuality." Contrary to popular belief, sexual health does not focus merely on the absence of disease, dysfunction, or infirmity, it also looks at the positive and respectful approach to sexuality and sexual relationships, as well as the possibility of having pleasurable and safe sexual experiences, free of coercion, discrimination, and violence.

WHAT IS SAFER SEX?

Safer sex is about taking steps to protect yourself and your partners from sexually transmitted infections.

How to protect your sexual health, if you choose to be sexually active, there are ways you can help protect your sexual health. Key ways include:



Gender-affirming hormones are not birth control. Genderaffirming hormone treatment (GAHT) can reduce your period or how much sperm your body makes. But it is still possible to get pregnant even if you are on hormones.

> Gender-affirming hormones do not reduce your risk of getting STD. Different infections spread differently, like through skin-to-skin contact or through body fluids.

> > Barrier methods for birth control and safer sex like external condoms, dental dams, and internal condoms — are good tools for trans and nonbinary people.

Tips on Safer Sex as a trans or nonbinary person

Trans, nonbinary, and intersex people have developed barrier methods especially for their bodies. For example, a con-dam is a barrier made from a latex or nitrile glove that has been cut to function as a dental dam with a small external condom attached. Con-dams can help prevent STDs during oral sex for someone who has a vulva and smaller erect anatomy that would not fit in a standard external condom.

Lube can help reduce your risk of getting an STD. It does this by reducing friction, which can cause tears where STDs can get into your body. Lube is especially important for some kinds of penetrative sex when a person's body part cannot lubricate itself. People who have a vulva and had a vaginoplasty or have been taking testosterone commonly have little or no lubrication in their vagina or front hole.

Gender-affirming surgeries can reduce the possibility of pregnancy, depending on the surgery. For example, a hysterectomy, vaginectomy, or orchiectomy would prevent pregnancy permanently.

TRANS FEMININE TIPS

Condoms and dams:

Whether you have had bottom surgery or not, the best way to protect yourself and your partner against STIs is to use a condom. Use a new condom with each partner and never use the same one for anal and vaginal sex.

Human Papilloma Virus (HPV)

Many people with a vagina/front hole are at risk of HPV and may benefit from the HPV vaccine. People with a cervix, who are within cervical screening guidelines, should be supported to access recommended Cervical Screening Tests (CST), while considering that many trans people with a cervix find the cervical screening process uncomfortable or painful.

They come in a variety of sizes and materials (including latex-allergy free). If you are having sex for more than half an hour, it is a good idea to change the condom to prevent it breaking.

External condoms go over a penis or sex toy.



When using lube, use only waterbased or silicon-based lubes with condoms and not oil-based lubes or lotions, which weaken latex. Avoid silicone-based lubricant with silicone dildos and sex toys as it can degrade the surface.

Internal condoms (formerly known as Femidoms) go inside the vagina or anus (remove the top ring for anal sex). Not all trans women/AMAB nonbinary people who have had lower surgery can use internal condoms – it will depend upon the depth of your vagina. Dental dams consist of a sheet of latex used as a barrier in oral-vaginal sex and rimming which can prevent the transmission of STIs.



HIV testing and treatment

If you are having sex, it is a good idea to test for HIV at least once a year, or more often if you change partners or have casual or new partners or have been diagnosed with an STI. It is easier to acquire or pass on HIV if you have another STI.

HIV treatment is highly effective and means you can have a long, healthy life. Most HIV medication is safe to take with hormone therapy. However, your doctor can help you choose the treatment that is best for you. It is better to know your status and start treatment early to prevent serious illness.





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I've never been interested in being invisible and erased. — Laverne Cox

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TYPES OF SAFER SEX

Anal and vaginal/ frontal sex

Use an internal or external condom.

Use water-based or silicone-based lube.

Infections such as herpes, genital warts and syphilis can be transmitted through regular skin-to-skin contact. A barrier such as a condom, dental dam or latex glove reduces risk but only protects the covered area.

Use a different condom with each partner, and when a penis/sex toy is moved between vagina/front hole and anus.

Has a minimal risk but it is still possible to get or pass on STIs such as herpes, syphilis, or gonorrhoea.

Has an extremely minimal risk of HIV transmission.

Avoid if you have bleeding gums, ulcers, a sore throat or had recent dental work.

Avoid receiving oral sex until you are fully healed from genital surgery as there is a risk of infection.

Avoid letting a partner ejaculate in your mouth-you can also use flavoured condoms or dental dams.

Frottage

Frottage involves rubbing genitals together without any penetrative sex.

Minimal risk but a chance of transferring skin-contact bacteria or viruses (such as herpes, syphilis, or genital warts).

Parasites (such as scabies or crabs) can be passed via skin contact.

Fingering

Make sure you do not have any cuts on your hands or fingers. Keep your nails short and use plenty of lube.

Clean your hands thoroughly using warm soapy water before fingering a different partner as fluids can transfer on the surface of fingers.

Use a latex glove to cover the finger or avoid fingering more than one person.

Rimming is licking someone's anus.

This had an extremely minimal risk for HIV, but it is possible to pick up hepatitis A or bacterial infections such as shigella or gonorrhoea.

Good personal hygiene can reduce risks slightly.

Use a barrier like a dental dam to cover the anus.

Rougher sex

Use a different condom with each partner, and when a penis/sex toy is moved between vagina/front hole and anus.

Bondage, fisting or S&M can result in bleeding or tearing of the anus, vagina/front hole, or mouth, providing a route for STIs, HIV and hepatitis.

Use latex gloves when fisting and do not share a pot of lube as minute traces of blood can be transferred onto your hands, making it easy to pass on hepatitis C.

PREP

PrEP (pre-exposure-prophylaxis) is a pill that protects you from HIV. It is taken by HIV- negative people before and after sex. Taking PrEP before and after sex means there is enough drug inside you to block HIV if it gets into your body – before it has the chance to take hold. It is highly effective at stopping HIV from being transmitted when taken correctly. PrEP offers protection during vaginal/frontal and anal sex. It is safe to use for trans women and trans feminine people and is effective regardless of any genderaffirming surgeries that you have had, including vaginoplasty.

PrEP and hormone treatment:

PrEP does not affect or interact with your hormone treatment. The British HIV Association guidelines note that there are no known interactions between PrEP and gender-affirming hormones. PrEP will not stop any hormones you are taking from working. Additionally, PrEP does not cause fat redistribution in the body or face.

Is PrEP right for you?

PrEP might be right for you if you are HIV negative and have sex in a variety of situations where condoms are not easily or always used. It gives you empowerment, particularly if you are a receptive partner, or bottom, by taking control over protecting yourself from HIV transmission.

TRANS MASCULINE TIPS

Taking testosterone/T:

Testosterone (or T) can change vagina/front hole lubrication, so you might find you do not produce enough. It may be because the natural acidity in the lubrication has changed, making you more vulnerable to infections like cystitis. This is more of an issue during the first few years on testosterone. Make sure you always have enough lube.

Reduced levels of oestrogen affect the thickness of the walls of the front hole, which may result in tiny unnoticed tears happening more easily if you are having frontal sex. The walls of the rectum can be affected in the same way. Making it even more important to use condoms and lube.

Testosterone and contraception:

Being on testosterone will decrease your fertility, and long-term use can lead to infertility. Within a few months of starting testosterone, periods usually stop. Over time the reproductive system will go through a process like menopause, which will thin the lining of the uterus and cause the ovaries to shrink.

However, testosterone is not an effective form of contraception and, if you do not want to get pregnant, you should use an effective form of contraception. Consistent condom use will prevent pregnancy but there are other things, such as the coil, implant, injection, or pill, which can be safely taken with testosterone and are more effective than condoms at preventing pregnancy.

TYPES OF SAFER SEX:

Using sex toys

Clean them thoroughly using warm soapy water before using them with different people to avoid sharing fluids.

Use a new condom for each new person or when moving from anus to front hole.

Sex toys can cause tiny unnoticed tears to the skin lining the front hole or the anus so use condoms and lube.

Frottage

Frottage involves rubbing genitals together without any penetrative sex.

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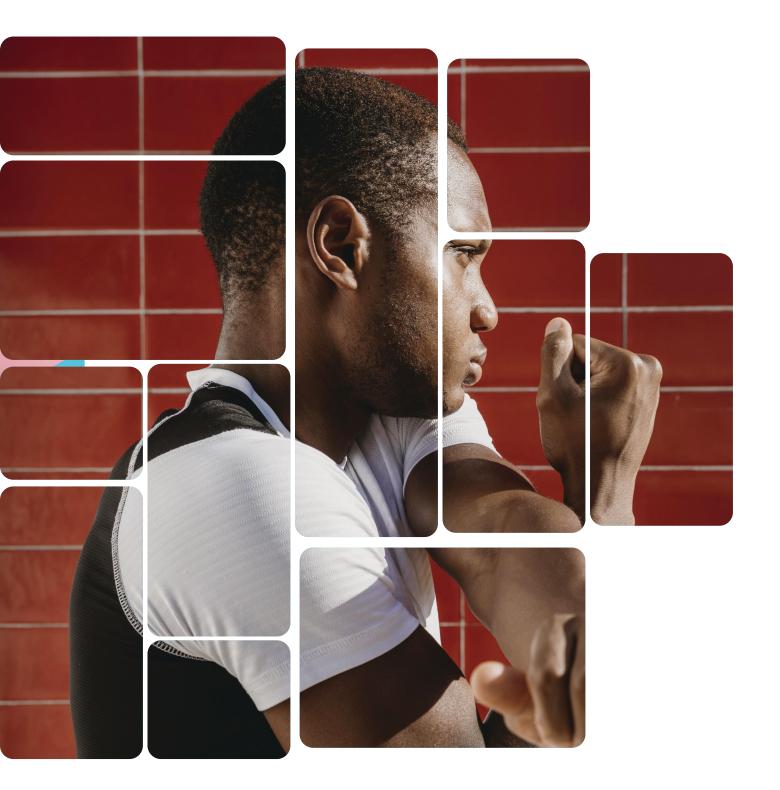
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Use latex gloves when fisting and do not share a pot of lube as minute traces of blood can be transferred onto your hands, making it easy to pass on hepatitis C.

SELF DEFENCE



Learning how to defend yourself against potential attackers will give you more confidence as you date online and in person. Unfortunately, trans people are disproportionately affected by violence in Jamaica. Consequently, it is important to equip yourself with the tools to defend yourself in the case of an attack.

Here are some self-defence tips:



1. Walk with PRIDE

Chin up, back straight, and walk with purpose. Looking meek and small may be great privately, but in public it makes you a target. Walking with your PRIDE makes you less appealing to target, that is a shield that will ward off many an aggressor.



2. Grabbed from Behind?

Let us say someone wraps their arm around your neck. Use both hands to grab their forearm and pull it away from your neck. Tuck your chin, twist your body away from their elbow and then push the arm up as you duck under it. Now give them a hard shove to gain distance.



3. Eyes on the Prize

Your eyes are your best tool to stay safe. As you are walking look ahead, behind and to either side of the street to check if anyone is too close or is following you from a distance.



4. Travel Safe and in Style

Nothing says stylish like sending a photo of your limo's license plate to your friends. Do not have a limo? Call a cab and be sure to sit behind the driver's seat. They will have a harder time reaching you when you are behind them if you are not in the mood to share fashion advice.



5. Hands off the Merchandise

If someone handsy grabs your wrist, turn your arm over in small circle and pull your arm away to break their grip on you. Finish by pushing the person away with both hands and stepping back.



6. Wrong Type of Paparazzi

Phone in hand as you are walking? That will get you the wrong type of attention.

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7. Long nails? No problem

If a confrontation gets physical, here is how to win the fisticuffs. Most people start a fight with a right swing to the face. Bring your left fist to your shoulder then lift your left arm until your elbow is pointing forward (like running). Your arm is now protecting your temple and chin. Follow up by thrusting the heel of your right hand towards their face, breaking the nose.



8. Hands below the Neck!

Two hands on your neck and they never paid for dinner? Try this. Put your right arm over and then under their two forearms. Interlace your fingers and then twist, pushing up on your left side and twisting down with your right elbow. That should wrench their hands off and away from you. Follow up with an elbow to the face and then run \gtrsim



9. LGBT...K? Wait, that is a knife

Sometimes haters have sharp opinions. Say no to the hate by putting one hand on the other in an X and pushing your arms downwards to block. Aim for the forearm and push your butt back as you press the knife down and away from you. Do this block if they are aiming at your stomach and you should surprise them long enough to turn and run.

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10. Trigger Warning: S. Assault

Having someone on top of you that you do not want can be a scary situation. If their hand is on your body, use one hand to grab their hand and another to grab a thumb or finger and yank it back to break it. Bring your legs up to your chest and kick them away as they are distracted by the pain.



INTERACTION WITH THE POLICE

Knowing your rights is vital part of interacting safely with the police. As trans people, it is even more that we do so to protect ourselves from antitrans violence. Below, you will find information that guides you on the legality of your interactions with law enforcement.

Please note:

YOUR PERSON

A police officer can search you on a ship/boat or if you landed from a ship/boat, once he has good reason to do so

No general power to randomly search you

Without warrant, police must ask your permission to search you

Police ought not to search you forcibly/arbitrarily

Must be told why you are being searched

Women & girls must only be searched by a female officer. If none is available, a female member of the public may be asked to assist

YOUR PROPERTY

Police must have a warrant to search your house

They must tell you they have the warrant before they begin their search

You must be given a copy of the warrant

They must only conduct search in your presence and under your observation

Without a warrant they cannot search without your consent

Do not need a warrant if s/he believes stolen goods are kept there and/or if you were previously convicted of larceny/ receiving stolen goods

ARREST

Ordinarily a warrant is needed to effect an arrest however:

- A police officer can arrest you without a warrant if you are found committing an offence. Must be brought before a Justice to enquire into the circumstances of your arrest & either be committed, released, or granted bail.

- A police officer can arrest you once he has a warrant for your arrest, even if he does not have it on him at time of arrest. Warrant must be shown to you as soon as possible after your arrest. Warrant must be signed by JP.

- Police officer can arrest you without warrant if you are known or suspected to be in unlawful possession of dangerous and prohibited drugs, instrument for illegal lottery

- You must be informed of your rights and the reason for your arrest

- You must not be forced into a vehicle without an explanation of what is happening and where you are going

- If you are being charged, you must be informed of the charge and nature of the offence

- You have the right to refuse to answer questions

RESOURCES

Larry Chang Foundation

Cost: Free

Opening Hours: 24 hours Tel Numbers: 876-844-9366

Address: St. Ann

Services: Safehouse

Children First Agency

Cost: Free

Service: HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) and Syphilis test Opening hours: Available Monday-Friday between the hours of 9am-5pm

Address: 2 Moresham Avenue, Kingston 10

Jamaica AIDS Support for Life

Cost: Free

Service: HIV prevention and education Opening hours: Monday- Friday. 9 am- 4pm. Contact number: 876-925-0021

Address: 3 Hendon Drive, Kingston 20.

Legal Support through Jamaicans for Justice

Contact Numbers :

Office: +1(876) 615-5023/4 +1(876) 755-4524/5

WhatsApp: +1(876) 322-8205

E-mail:

General Inquiries: admin@jamaicansforjustice.org

Redress and Legal Services: complaints@jamaicansforjustice.org



Love, Action & Support





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