

# WARNING

The presentation you are about to see is for adult audiences only. It contains references to alternative sexual activities that some people may find disturbing.

If open discussion of sexual activity is offensive to you, you may want to consider attending a different presentation.

Or perhaps a different conference altogether.

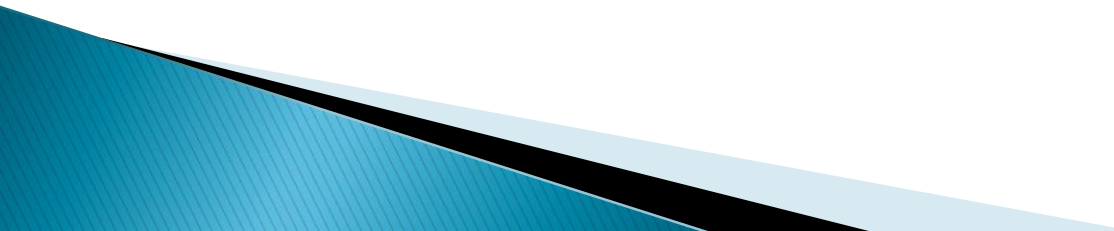


# Communicating About Alternative Relationship Styles

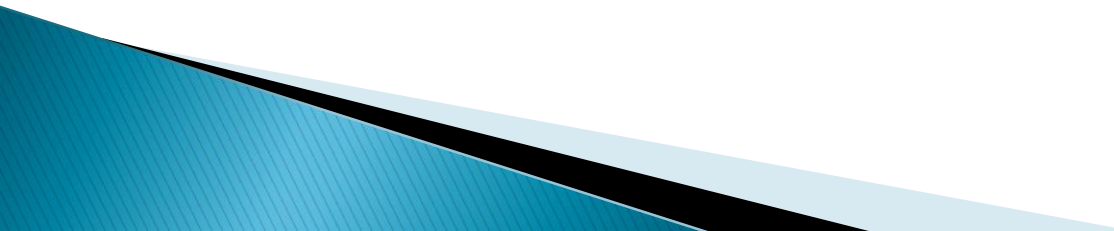
Non-monogamy, polyamory and kink

Bernie Roehl

# About Me

- ▶ I'm polyamorous and kinky! 😊
  - ▶ Very open about my sexuality (presentations, articles, interviews, etc)
  - ▶ Began exploring alternative sexual practices when I was 17 years old
  - ▶ Since 1993 I've been organizing the local kinky community
  - ▶ I'm involved with two wonderful, amazing women
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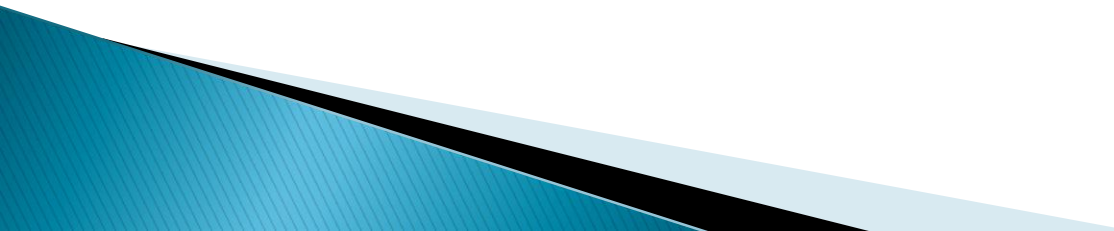
# Notes

- ▶ This entire presentation will be available online
  - ▶ No need to take notes (except on ideas that arise from questions)
  - ▶ Nothing here is gender-specific, so swap pronouns as needed
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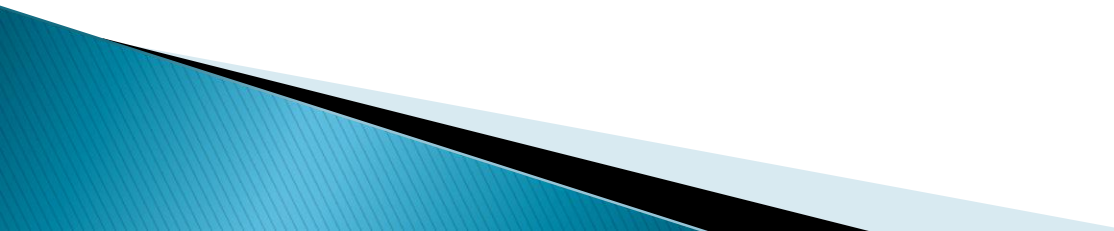
# Ask Questions!

- ▶ Ask questions at any point during the presentation
  - If there's something you're not clear on, other people are probably confused too
  - You won't throw me off-track 😊
- ▶ General questions can be saved for the end
- ▶ If you're shy, speak to me after the talk
- ▶ If you're *really* shy, contact me by email

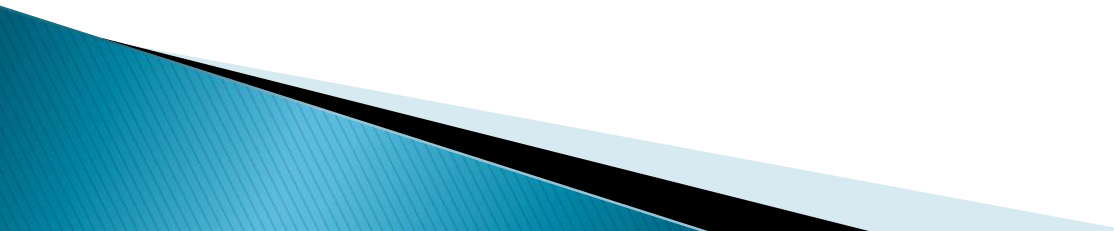
# Goals of this Presentation

- ▶ Provide background information about polyamorous relationships and BDSM
  - ▶ Explain some of the terminology used
  - ▶ Identify problems and challenges faced by people who are kinky and/or polyamorous
  - ▶ Offer guidelines to help people communicate more effectively with each other about kink and poly
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# Outline

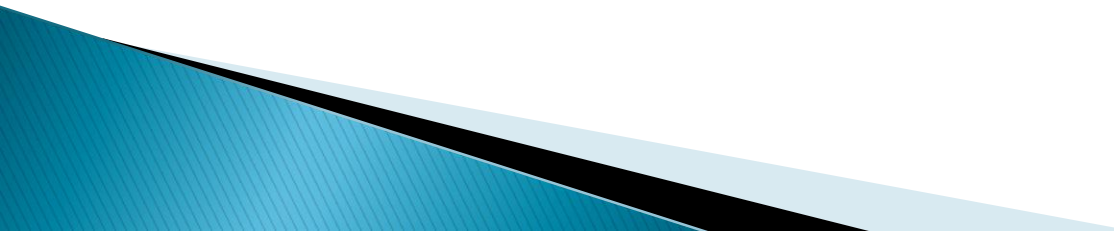
- ▶ Part 1 – Non-monogamous relationships
    - Terminology
    - Key concepts
    - Challenges faced by people in non-monogamous relationships
  - ▶ Part 2 – BDSM
    - Terminology
    - Difficulties in communication about BDSM
    - Ways of introducing BDSM into a relationship
  - ▶ Open discussion about the issues raised
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# Part 1 – Non-Monogamous Relationships

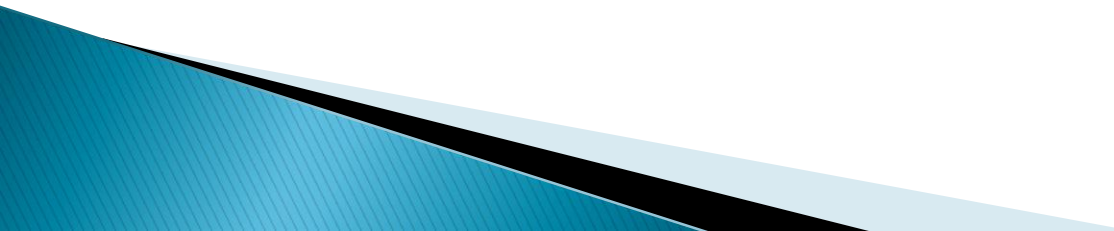
- ▶ “Non-monogamous” is a general term for any relationship style that does not involve sexual or emotional exclusivity
  - ▶ Many types of non-monogamy, including:
    - Polyamory
    - Open relationships
    - “Swinging”
    - “Relationship Anarchy”
    - ... etc ...
  - ▶ Our focus will be on polyamory
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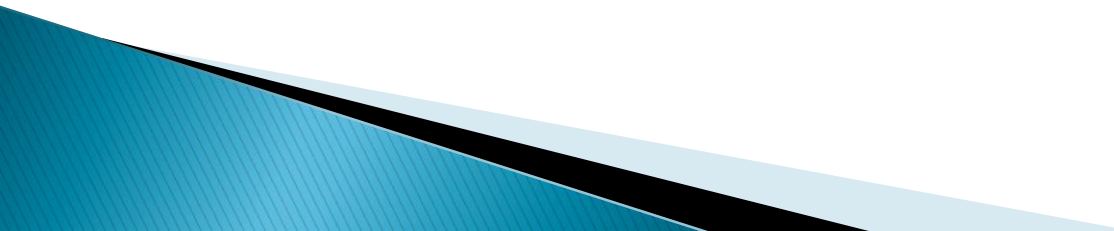
# Polyamory

- ▶ Literally, having more than one love
  - ▶ Emphasis is on emotional connection with multiple partners, rather than purely sexual encounters
  - ▶ Has always existed, but is now more openly discussed and acknowledged in Western society than previously
  - ▶ “Poly” relationships can be healthy and happy, or not – just like monogamous relationships
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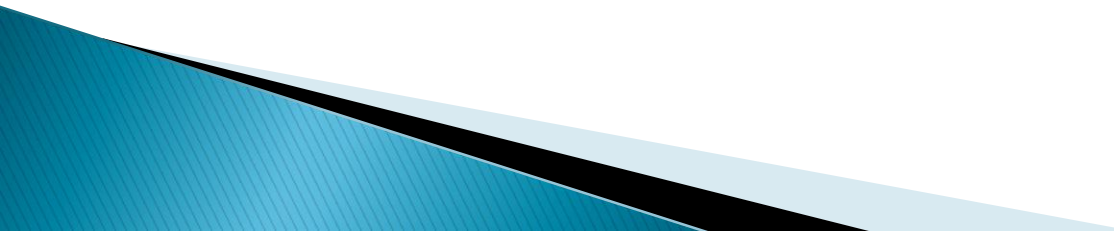
# Basic Terminology

- ▶ “Primary” – the main focus of someone’s emotional energy
  - ▶ “Secondary” – an additional focus
  - ▶ “Tertiary”, etc
  - ▶ Note: not all poly relationships use the “primary/secondary” model
  - ▶ “Paramour” – the non–primary partner (also called an “OSO” – Other Significant Other)
  - ▶ Metamour – the partner of one’s partner
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# More Terminology

- ▶ Diad – any two–person relationship
  - ▶ Triad (and quad) – three (or four) people who are all emotionally and sexually interconnected
  - ▶ V – a relationship consisting of one person (the “hinge”) with two partners (the arms of the “V”)
  - ▶ Can also have N, W, etc, though these are less common
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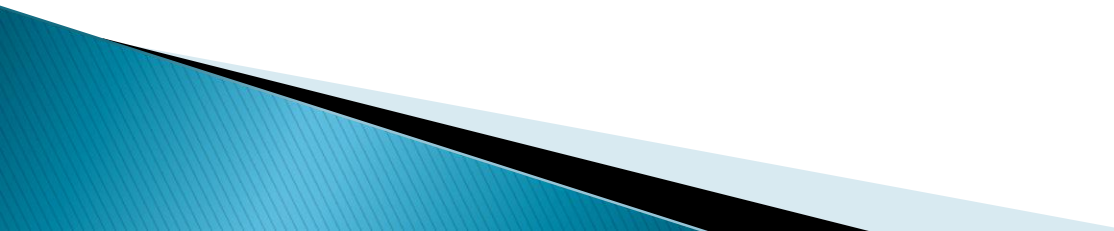
# More Terminology

- ▶ Poly “families” (in some cases called “group marriages” or “intentional families”)
  - ▶ Poly fidelity (“poly fi”, or “poly exclusivity”) – a group consisting of multiple interconnected partners forming a closed set
  - ▶ Intimate networks – larger, less structured groups with varying degrees of emotional and physical intimacy
  - ▶ Note: sexual and emotional connections are not necessarily the same
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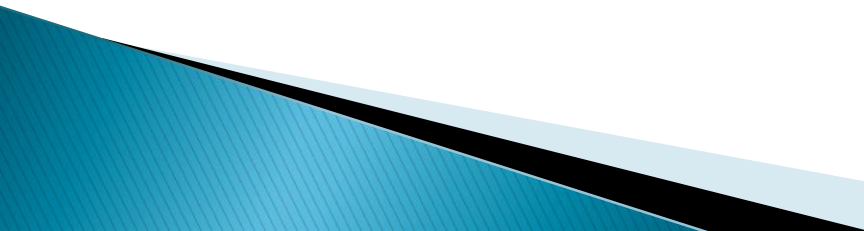
# Advanced Terminology

- ▶ Compersion – the opposite of jealousy, a feeling of happiness at knowing your partner is having positive experiences with other people (in the UK, called “frubble”)
  - ▶ NRE – New Relationship Energy
  - ▶ Limerance – similar to NRE, but more of a “crush”
  - ▶ Polysaturated – not being able to take on any more partners
  - ▶ Polywog – child in a poly household
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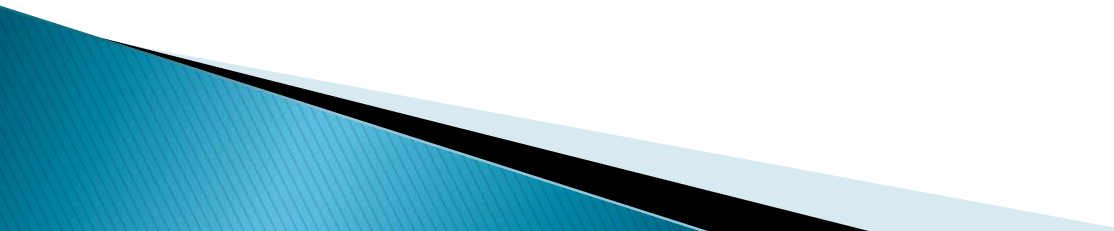
# A Small Digression – Are Animals Monogamous?

- ▶ Vast majority of all animal species (~95%) are non-monogamous
  - ▶ Many that were initially believed to be monogamous are actually not, e.g. swans
  - ▶ Even “lovebirds” (dunnocks) cheat!
  - ▶ Some of our closest primate relatives (e.g. bonobos) are clearly and enthusiastically non-monogamous
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# Are Humans “Naturally” Monogamous?

- ▶ Of 1270 human societies catalogued in Murdoch's Ethnographics Atlas, 85% indicate some form of multi-spouse relationships
  - ▶ Even in cultures where monogamy is the social norm, there are high rates of infidelity which indicate human beings are not, by nature, monogamous
  - ▶ Existence of laws and traditions enforcing monogamy also suggests that it is not necessarily “natural” for everyone
  - ▶ (cf. “Sex at Dawn” by Christopher Ryan)
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# Everyone Has Lots of Partners

- ▶ Some people do marry their high school sweethearts and spend the rest of their lives together – but not many!
  - ▶ People routinely engage in “serial monogamy” (“exchanging one partner for another in hopes of a better outcome”)
  - ▶ Serial monogamy requires that you end one relationship before starting another
  - ▶ Creates an “opportunity cost” of staying in a relationship (a cost avoided through non-monogamy)
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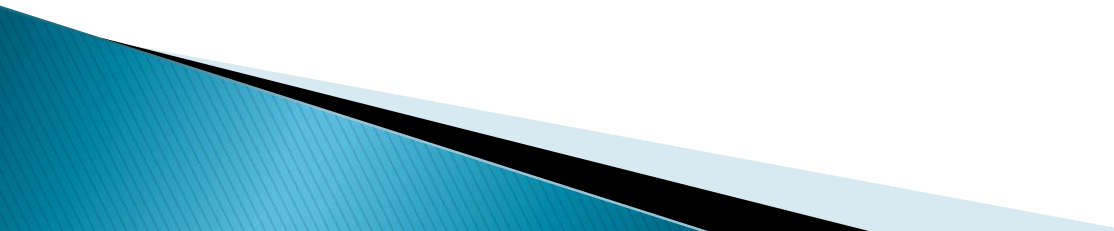


# Key Differences Between Infidelity and Non-Monogamy

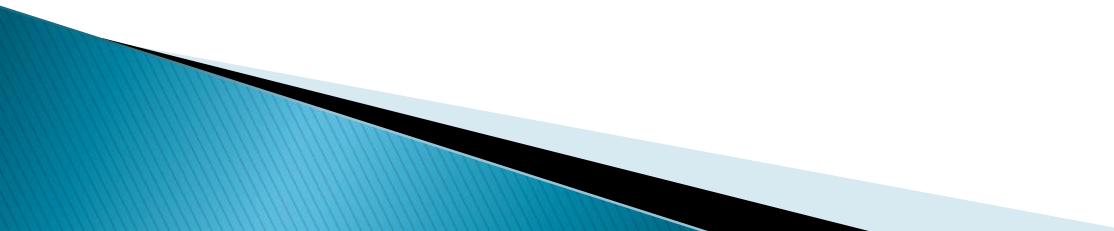
## ▶ Infidelity

- very destructive to a relationship
- based on lies and deceit
- undermines trust and mutual respect
- can lead to feelings of guilt and regret

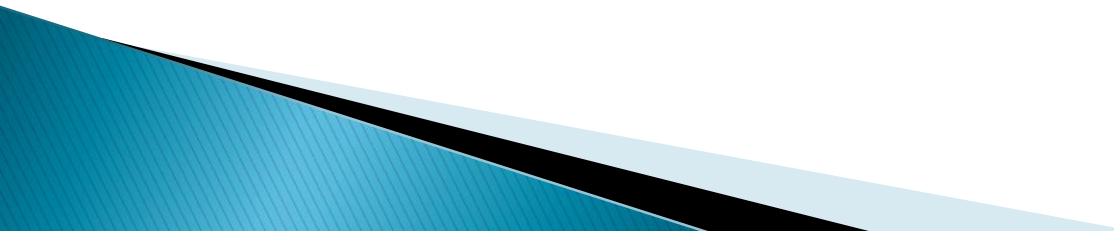
## ▶ Responsible Non-Monogamy

- based on trust and mutual respect
  - no need to lie or be deceitful about relationships
  - “a straightforward acceptance and celebration of human nature”
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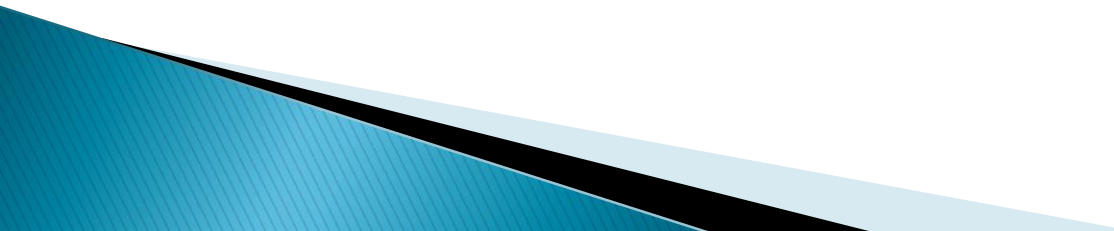
# What Research Says About Poly People

- ▶ People in open relationships are statistically not that different from those in monogamous relationships
  - ▶ People in open relationships have all the same problems that people in monogamous relationships do
  - ▶ People in open relationships tend to score higher on individuality, creativity and non-conformity
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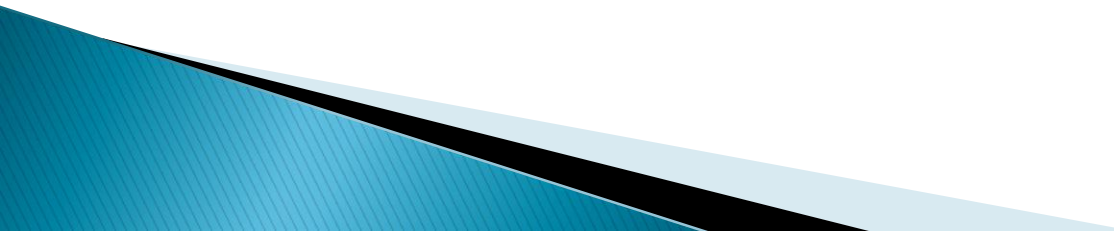
# Key Concepts of Non-Monogamy

- ▶ Love should be abundant, not a resource to be hoarded
  - ▶ Loving one person should not be conditional on not loving anyone else
  - ▶ Poly people point out that we love both our parents, we love all our children, so why is romantic love constrained to just one person?
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# Understanding Why People Choose to be Poly

- ▶ Multiple relationships means more love, more emotional support and nurturing
  - ▶ Broader range of emotional and social needs can be met
  - ▶ Provides feelings of validation (being desired by people other than one's primary partner gives an objective indication of desirability and increased feelings of self-worth)
  - ▶ Less pressure to be the sole provider of a partner's needs
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# Other Reasons to be Poly

- ▶ Sexual variety
  - ▶ Option to explore other forms of sexuality (BDSM, bisexuality, etc)
  - ▶ Within the BDSM arena, option to explore broader range of activities
  - ▶ New partners and the corresponding NRE
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# Still More Reasons to be Poly

- ▶ Areas of specialization – one partner may like theatre, the other may prefer going to movies
- ▶ If one partner is busy (work, family obligations, etc) one can schedule time with other partner
- ▶ If co-habiting, can share:
  - chores
  - child care
  - expenses
  - etc
- ▶ Improves communication skills 😊

# Challenges Faced by Poly People

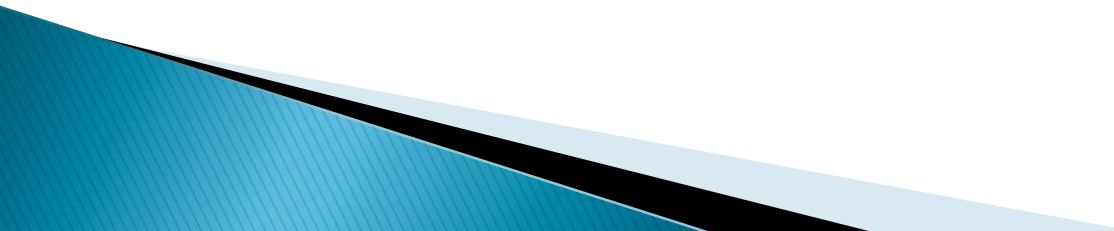
- ▶ There are no scripts, and few role models
  - ▶ Dealing with potential conflict between partners
  - ▶ Dealing with disapproval of family or friends
  - ▶ Possible need to hide relationships from family, friends and work
  - ▶ Stress from time commitments
  - ▶ Lack of “alone time”
  - ▶ Stress from dealing with emotional needs of multiple partners
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# More Challenges

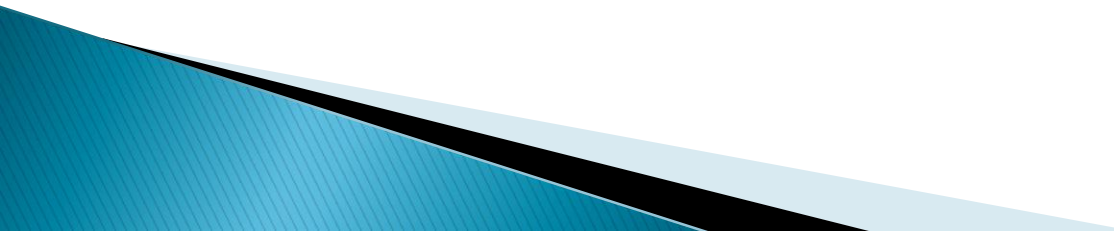
- ▶ Time management (love is infinite, time isn't)
  - ▶ Expectation management
  - ▶ Jealousy (much more on that later)
  - ▶ Establishing rules and boundaries (ditto)
  - ▶ Lack of external support group, leading to feelings of isolation, alienation, and self-doubt
  - ▶ Internal conflicts (e.g. resolving desires with religious beliefs – gay and bisexual clients face many of the same issues)
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# When (and Whether) to Introduce Poly into a Relationship

- ▶ Poly is not for everyone!
  - ▶ Poly is not a panacea
  - ▶ Poly will not solve relationship problems
  - ▶ If a relationship is in trouble, poly can make it worse – much worse!
  - ▶ The time to introduce poly is when things are going well, not when they're going badly
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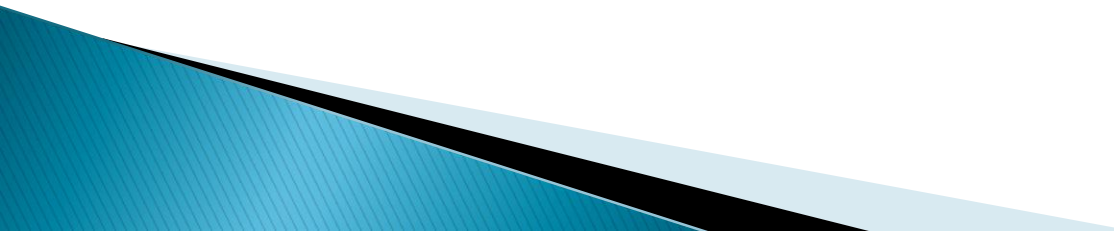
# What Poly People Need to Know

- ▶ Accept that you will make mistakes, especially in the beginning
  - ▶ It takes time to build trust, and to realize that your partner won't leave you for someone else
  - ▶ Be comfortable being alone, and don't look for relationships to make you happy
  - ▶ “Poly people get jealous, can be insecure, can do dumb things and occasionally mess up relationships in a truly spectacular way. We do non-monogamy *despite* all this, not because we're immune to it.”
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# Dealing with Jealousy

- ▶ Jealousy is not the problem, it's a symptom
  - ▶ “Normal” jealousy is something you can live with
  - ▶ “Irrational” jealousy is harder to work around
  - ▶ Best way to handle your own jealousy is to ride it out
  - ▶ Take ownership of your jealousy
  - ▶ Figure out what triggers your jealousy
  - ▶ Talk about your feelings honestly and immediately even if they don't seem rational
- 

# More on Handling Jealousy

- ▶ Don't compare yourself to your partner's partners
  - ▶ Don't compare your partners to each other
  - ▶ Have a “reassurance script” for each of your partners that addresses their insecurities and recognizes their strengths and individuality
  - ▶ For some people, jealousy never goes away – it's a chronic, but treatable, condition
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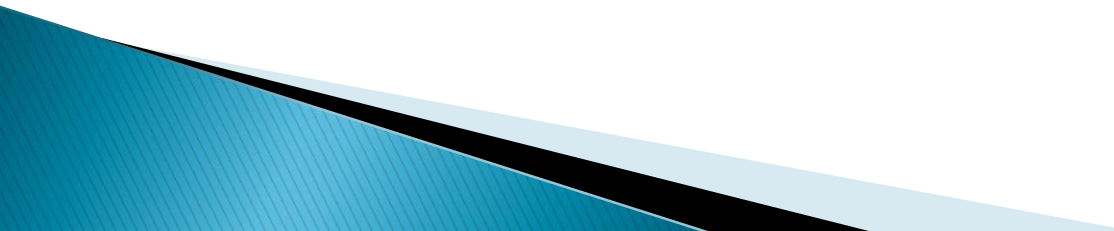
# Boundaries

- ▶ Good fences make for good neighbours
  - ▶ You can (and probably should) have different boundaries for different partners
  - ▶ Boundaries should be realistic, and as specific as necessary (“no sex” is ambiguous; even “no oral sex” is ambiguous)
  - ▶ People may not know they need a boundary until they encounter a particular situation
  - ▶ You sometimes discover the boundaries as you go. Sort of like a minefield. 😊
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# Boundaries (continued)

- ▶ Figure out what to do when a boundary is crossed
  - Inadvertently (“oops – landmine!”)
  - Unthinkingly (poor judgement – it happens)
  - Deliberately (very rare)
- ▶ Rules and boundaries are no substitute for genuine good will, compassion and understanding

# Some Example Boundaries

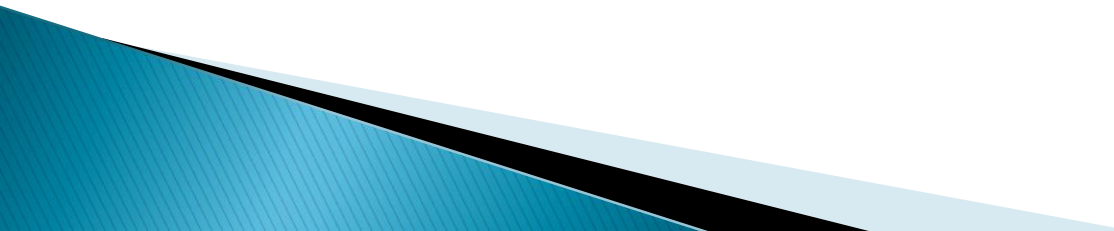
- ▶ “No overnight stays”
  - ▶ “No kissing”
  - ▶ Veto power over specific partners
  - ▶ Sexual restrictions
  - ▶ Safer–sex practices
  - ▶ Frequency and duration of visits
  - ▶ Special occasions (holidays, etc)
  - ▶ Personal belongings and space
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# Communication


- ▶ ... is hard!
- ▶ Talking about poly (especially for the first time) may raise issues:
  - Unaddressed problems in current relationship
  - Feelings of jealousy, inadequacy
  - Fear of loss
- ▶ The first “poly conversation” is seen as pivotal, but is really only the start of the process
- ▶ Talk about what each of you wants
- ▶ Imagine what a happy poly relationship would look like (but don’t idealize it – book vs movie)



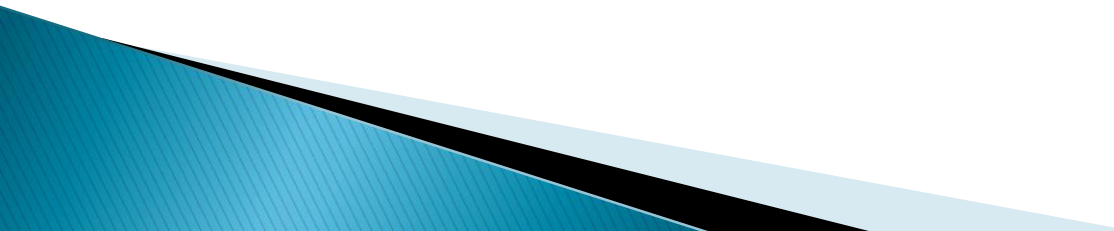
# Communication

- ▶ Be prepared for lots (and lots!) of talking
  - ▶ Don't fall into the trap of talking about your relationship instead of actually having one
  - ▶ There will be advances and retreats – embrace both
  - ▶ Do not negotiate while upset or freaked out
  - ▶ Do not “chase” your partners if they aren't ready to talk, but don't put off conversations indefinitely
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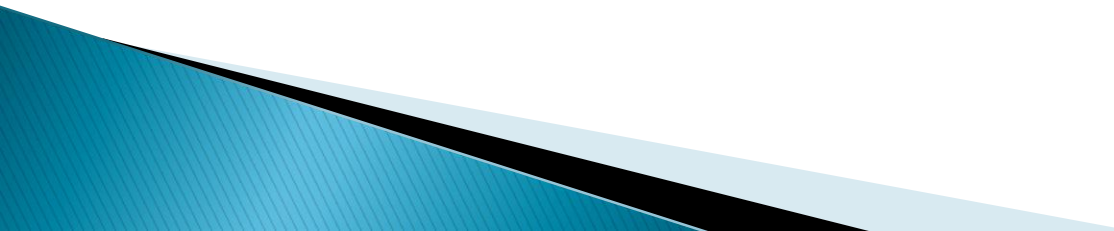
# Communication

- ▶ Take a positive approach (“yes, and”)
  - ▶ Don’t expect everyone to be rational all the time
  - ▶ Accept that some emotions are illogical and irrational
  - ▶ Don’t try to address everything all at once
  - ▶ Don’t rely on buzzwords – they mean subtly different things to each person
  - ▶ Paraphrase a lot to clarify things – people always hear things a little differently
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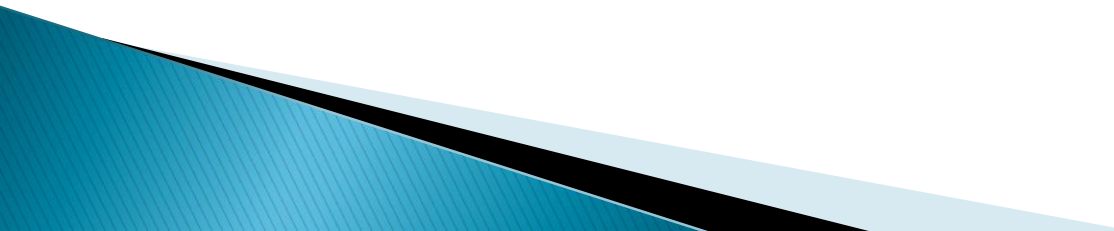
# Communication

- ▶ Communicate honestly – don't worry about being “good poly people”
  - ▶ It's okay to feel jealous and possessive, and to express those feelings
  - ▶ Don't feel guilty over asking for boundaries
  - ▶ Never use ultimatums
  - ▶ Stay flexible, don't be afraid of change
  - ▶ Don't be a martyr – your happiness is as important as your partner's or their partner's
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# Relating to Metamours

- ▶ It *will* be awkward at first
  - ▶ Do not mistake awkwardness for jealousy
  - ▶ Relax, be natural, don't force things
  - ▶ It's okay to dislike your metamour
  - ▶ It's not okay to be rude to them
  - ▶ Don't demonize them, or idealize them
  - ▶ If they're jealous of you, don't take it personally
  - ▶ Do not act possessive in front of your metamour, especially in public
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# Relating to Metamours

- ▶ Establish how much detail should be shared about encounters
  - ▶ Balance transparency with respect for everyone's privacy
  - ▶ Don't get involved in your metamour's problems, or take sides in disputes between your partner and your metamour
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# General Advice

- ▶ Take responsibility for your actions
  - ▶ Poly is easier for people with good self-esteem
  - ▶ A “no surprises” policy is usually a good idea
  - ▶ Don’t spend time with one partner just to avoid difficulties with another partner
  - ▶ Don’t “keep score”
  - ▶ Think “What do I need”, not “am I getting the same thing the other partner is getting”
  - ▶ Ask for what you need
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# General Advice

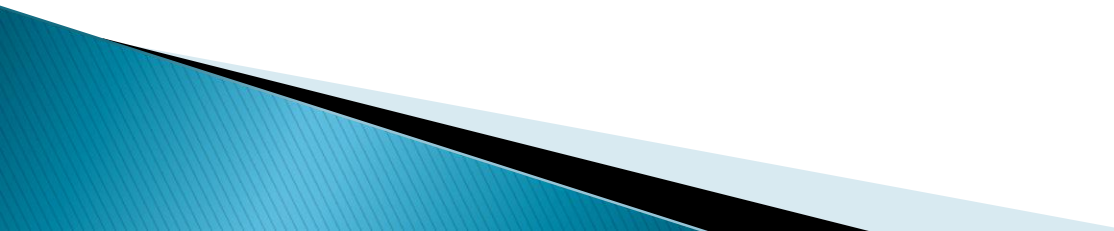
- ▶ Talk sooner rather than later – problems are not like wine
  - ▶ Recognize and accept your own hypocrisy
  - ▶ Do not use safer-sex boundaries as a stand-in for emotional boundaries
  - ▶ Just because you feel bad, doesn't mean someone else did something wrong
  - ▶ If you have an issue with one partner, and then have the exact same issue with another partner – maybe it's you!
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# Part 2 – Kink and BDSM

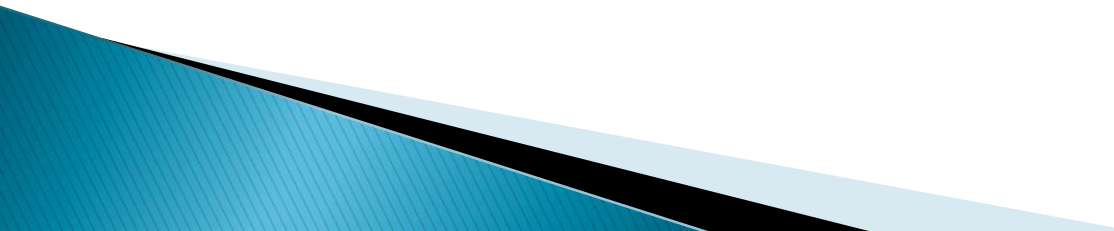




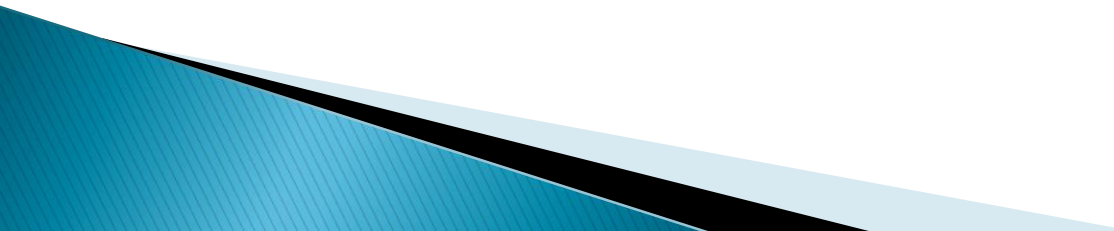
# What do we Mean by “Kink”

- ▶ Kink refers to a wide, wide range of “non-traditional” sexual practices
  - ▶ “Kink” is to “Sadomasochism” what “Gay” is to “Homosexual” – a friendlier, less clinical, less stigmatizing term
  - ▶ Kink is anything that’s outside of the very limited range of activities that most people consider “sex”
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# Are Poly People Also Kinky?

- ▶ Broadly speaking, there are people who follow social expectations and those who choose to go their own way
  - ▶ Once you go your own way, you soon encounter others who have done the same
  - ▶ Once you step out of the “social traditions box”, a whole world opens up – including people who are poly, kinky, bisexual, etc
  - ▶ Be prepared that your clients may be more than one of the above
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# Alternative Sexual Practices

- ▶ Most people think they know what “sex” is
  - ▶ Most people have a very narrow definition
  - ▶ Not everyone has the *same* narrow definition
  - ▶ There are many, many activities that produce sexual arousal and may lead to orgasm
  - ▶ There’s no reason to limit yourself to a particular set of activities when other options are available
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# The Crayon Analogy

When you were a kid, you started out with a small box of eight crayons:

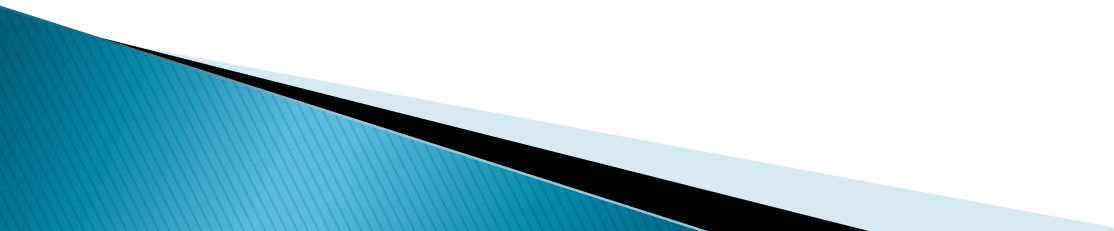


# The Crayon Analogy

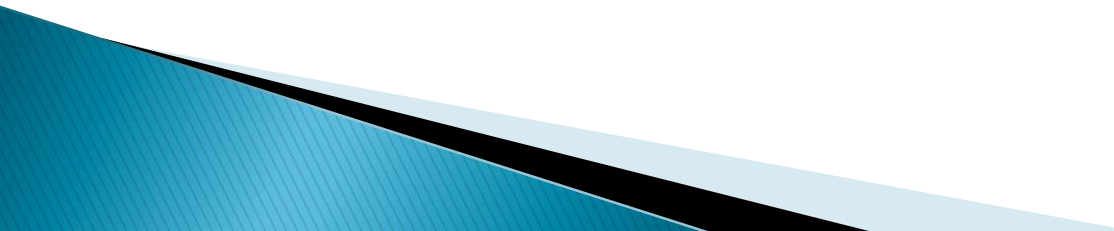
... and then one day you discovered there was also a big box of 64 crayons!



# The Crayon Analogy

- ▶ Why limit yourself to 8 crayons when you could be using 64?
  - ▶ You can be a lot more creative and expressive if you have a more diverse palette
  - ▶ No one says you have to use all 64, but having lots of choices is always a good thing
- 

# The Need for Communication

- ▶ Most people engage in the same basic set of sexual activities – intercourse, oral sex, and possibly anal sex, along with some foreplay
  - ▶ Because we all share those basic activities, there isn't much to talk about or negotiate
  - ▶ When your sexual palette is much broader, communication becomes much more important
  - ▶ The goal is to find areas where your desires intersect with those of your partner
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# A Brief Diversion: Jargon

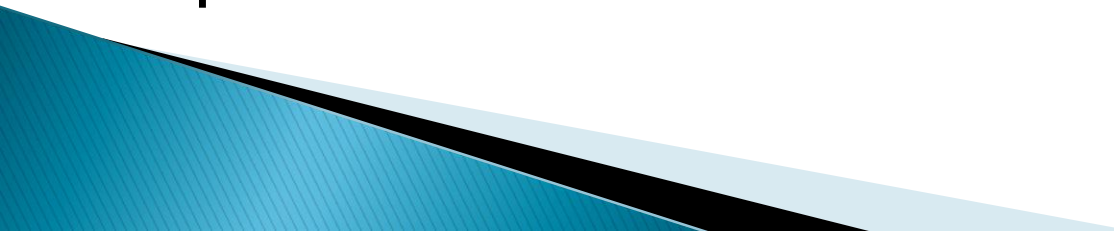
- ▶ “BDSM” is a three-way acronym
  - B and D stand for Bondage and Discipline
  - S and M stand for Sadism and Masochism
  - D and S stand for Domination and Submission
- ▶ The “Top” is the giver of a sensation
- ▶ The “Bottom” is the receiver of that sensation
- ▶ A “Switch” is someone who can give or receive
- ▶ “Top”, “Bottom” and “Switch” refer to physical activities, while “Dominant” and “Submissive” usually refer to relationship dynamics and power exchange



# More Jargon

- ▶ **SSC – Safe, Sane and Consensual**
  - **Safe** not only in the sense of safer sex, but also physical and emotional safety of both partners
  - **Sane** in the sense that all participants are able to make good decisions (this generally includes not being under the influence of drugs or alcohol)
  - **Consensual** in the sense that all participants give free and willing consent to all activities
- ▶ **RACK – Risk Aware Consensual Kink**
  - Similar to SSC, but implicitly acknowledges the risk inherent in certain activities

# The Value of Communication

- ▶ Communicating about expanding your sexual repertoire creates closeness, connection and intimacy
  - ▶ Increases trust between partners
  - ▶ Opens the door to communication about other aspects of your relationship
  - ▶ Leads to better and more varied sexual interaction
  - ▶ Keeps sex satisfying and fresh for both partners
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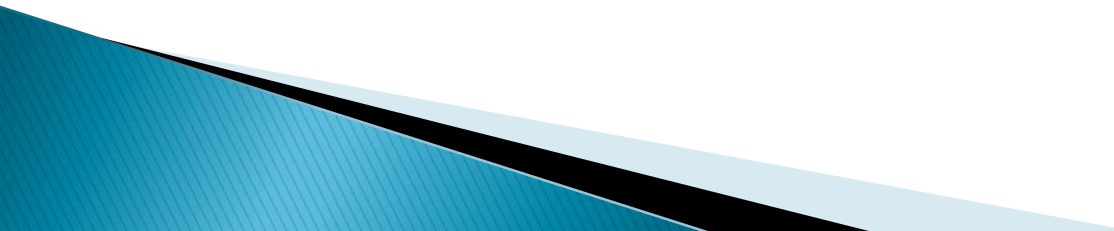
# Why is it Difficult?

- ▶ If communication is so important, why is it so hard to do?
  - Stigma
    - Society treats many of these activities as strange, bizarre and unacceptable
    - Some people may even consider these desires to be a sign of mental illness
  - Guilt, embarrassment and shame
    - From parents, schools, religious institutions
    - From within (we realize we're different, and "different" is "not okay")

# Why is it Difficult?

- Fear of being judged by one's partner
  - Wanting to maintain their respect
  - Not wanting them to change their image of you
  - Worried it will create stress in the relationship
- Difficulty in verbalizing specific desires
  - Finding the right words
  - Saying them out loud (possibly for the first time ever)
- Reluctance to “rock the boat”
  - Disrupting established sexual routines
  - Doing nothing always *seems* easier in the short term

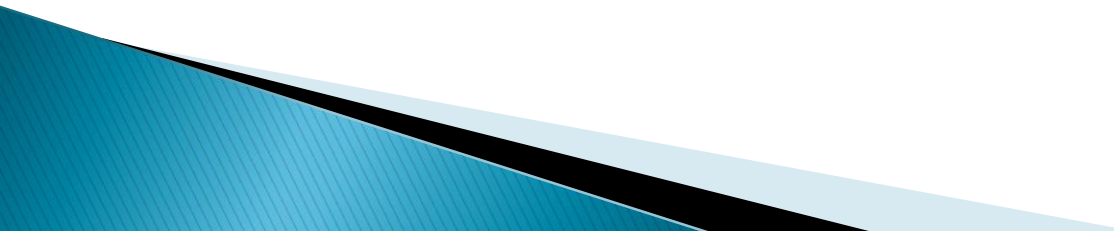
# Why is it Difficult?

- ▶ Not wanting to put pressure on your partner or make them feel inadequate
  - ▶ Uncertainty regarding your own ability to satisfy your partner's fantasies
  - ▶ Concern over introducing elements that might alter your ongoing relationship dynamics
  - ▶ Originally got together with your partner for many other reasons, so sexual horizon-expanding wasn't even an issue in the beginning
- 

# How to Communicate -- Giving

- ▶ A lot depends on your existing level of communication
  - If you're already comfortable talking about these things, it should be easy
  - If you *never* talk about these things, you need to start – and starting is the hardest part
- ▶ Be prepared for any reaction, positive or negative

# How to Communicate -- Giving

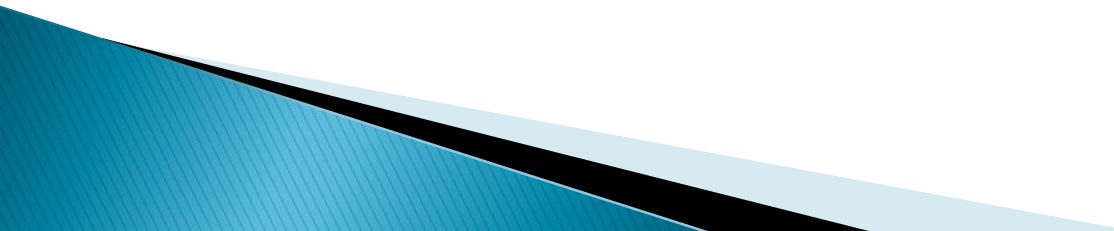
- ▶ Don't make your partner feel pressured to immediately do anything
  - ▶ You want them to simply hear and understand
  - ▶ Action can come later, if at all
  - ▶ Make sure they have an "out"
  - ▶ Make the discussion about you, not about them or about your relationship with them
- 

# Direct Approach

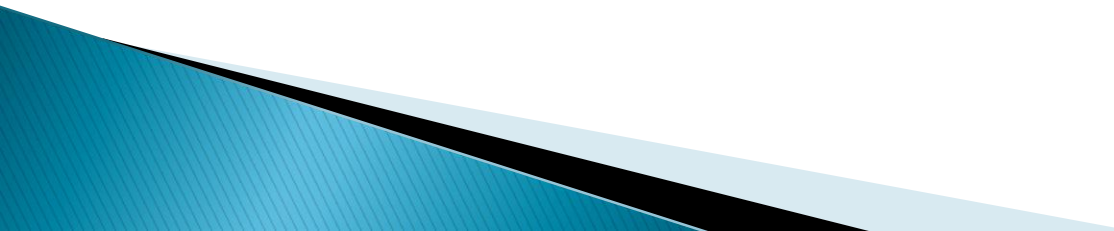
- ▶ Keep it light and pressure-free
- ▶ Choose a comfortable, relaxed setting
- ▶ Choose a time when sex is not imminent
  - No pressure on them to suddenly do something new
  - Lots of time for them to process on their own
- ▶ Don't make it seem like a "big deal" (even though it might be, for you)



# Direct Approach

- ▶ Rehearse what you want to say, but don't memorize a speech
  - ▶ Don't make them feel criticized, attacked or inadequate – again, it's about you not about them
  - ▶ Think of key phrases
    - “Lately I've been having some fantasies...”
    - “Can you keep a secret? I've always fantasized about...”
- 

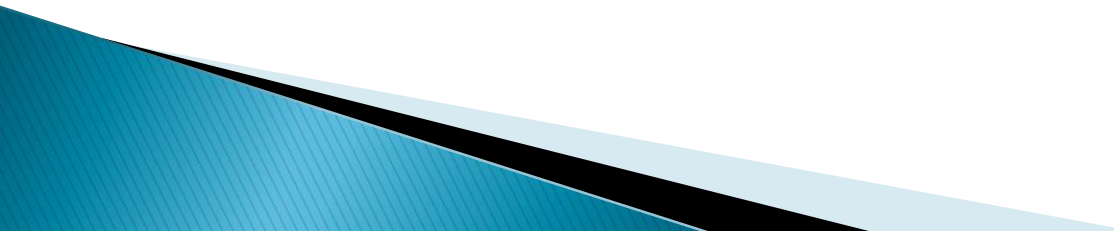
# Direct Approach

- ▶ Make them feel important, valued and trusted
    - “You’re the only one I can talk to about this sort of thing”
    - “Until I met you, I never felt safe telling anyone these things”
    - “I feel so good about what we have that I’m finally ready to share this with you”
- 

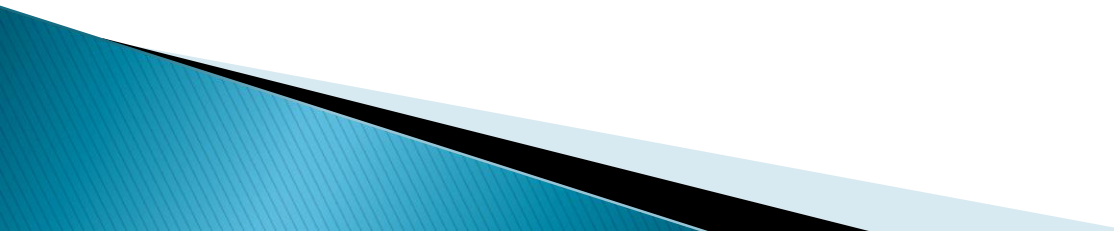
# Direct Approach

- ▶ For example:
  - Over breakfast, while getting ready for work...
  - “I had this really hot dream last night, and you were in it!”
  - If no response, repeat as needed (“I had that dream again! And it got me really horny...”)
  - If still no response, try a different approach (your partner may just be dense, especially if your partner is male)

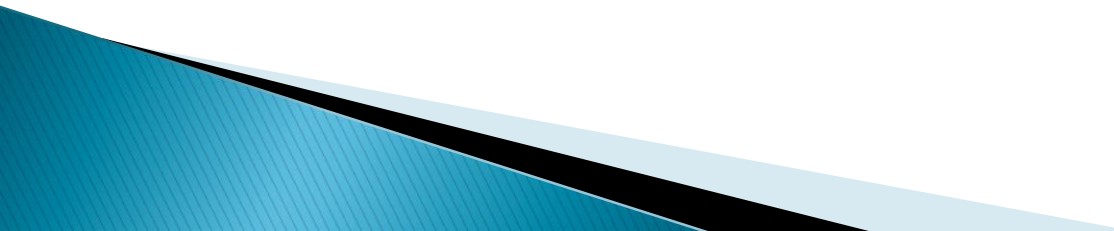
# Indirect Approaches

- ▶ Rent a movie that you know has scenes or themes that are related to your desires (e.g. “Secretary”)
  - ▶ Read a book that has suitable scenes, and show it to your partner (e.g. Anne Rice’s “Beauty” series, or “Fifty Shades of Grey”)
  - ▶ Consider highlighting certain paragraphs
  - ▶ Ask your partner to read it to you out loud and let yourself become aroused by it
- 

# Indirect Approaches

- ▶ Read a non-fiction book about your area of interest, and suggest your partner read it as well (again, use highlighter as appropriate)
  - ▶ Find articles in magazines or on websites, and show them to your partner
  - ▶ Go shopping together (“I’ve always wanted to go into one of those places, but I don’t want to go in alone... will you come with me?”)
- 


# Indirect Approaches

- ▶ Attend a seminar with your partner (like this one!)
  - ▶ Attend a seminar on your own (like this one!) and tell your partner what you learned about, and how some of it sounded interesting
  - ▶ Make friends with people or couples who are kinky, and are comfortable talking about it
  - ▶ Get friends to invite you to BDSM-themed social events
- 

# Indirect Approaches

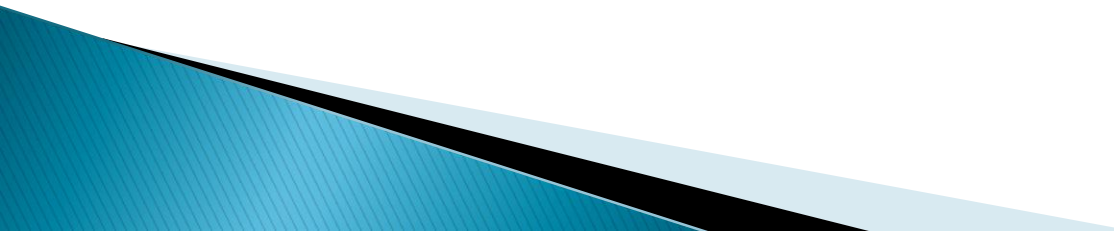
- ▶ Ask your partner about his or her fantasies, and find ways of connecting them to yours
  - You may be in for some surprises!
  - If your partner is reticent (“I don’t have any fantasies”) try a different approach
  - If they do share their fantasies, find ways of abstracting those fantasies to a high enough level that you can find some commonality with your own, then work forwards from there

# If they're willing to try...

- ▶ Be very, *very* supportive
  - ▶ Remember they're worried that they won't be able to fulfill your needs -- they need reassurance
  - ▶ Let them know how much pleasure they're giving you – your pleasure will heighten theirs
  - ▶ Express how happy you are that they're willing to try something new with you -- make them feel special
  - ▶ Make sure they know that it makes you feel closer to them, because you're sharing something new and intimate together
- 



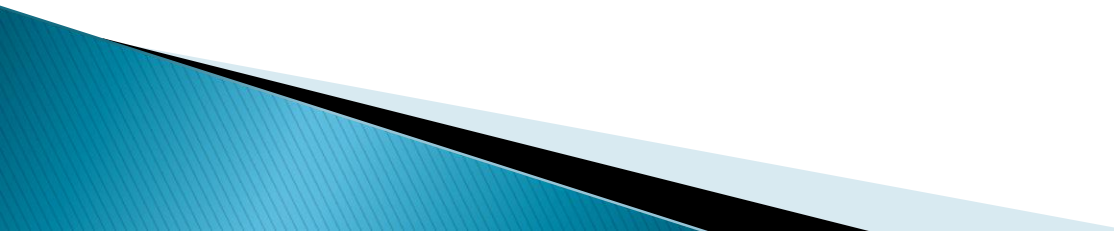
# How to Communicate -- Receiving

- ▶ If your partner raises a new idea, listen and respond to them
  - ▶ Remember that this may be something they've never told anyone else, ever
  - ▶ They're making a huge leap of faith, and taking a big chance just by telling you all this
  - ▶ It's a profound expression of trust – if you love them, don't let them down
- 

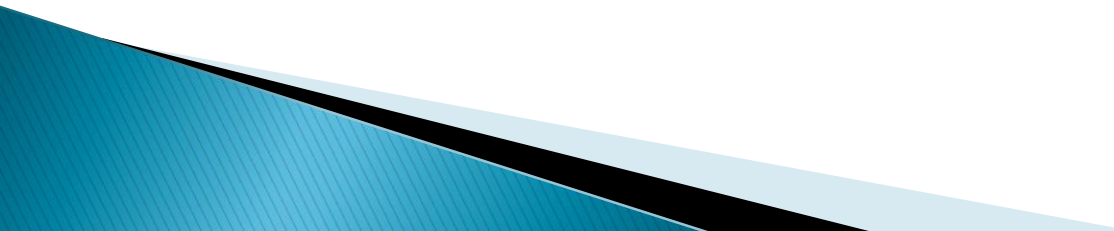
# Receiving Information

- ▶ It's a big deal, but you have to treat it like it's not
- ▶ Pivotal moment in your relationship
- ▶ How you react is very important
  - If you react well, it can bring you much closer and open up even better communication
  - If you react badly, it could drive you apart and make your partner feel that they have to hide a big part of who they are from you

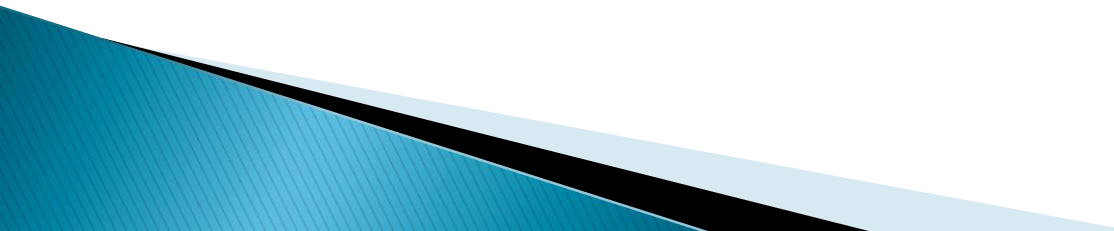
# Receiving Information

- ▶ Listen, and keep an open mind
  - ▶ Be supportive (look at them, smile, touch them)
  - ▶ Be accepting, with absolutely no judgment
  - ▶ Don't worry about being obligated to do things – just listen and accept
- 

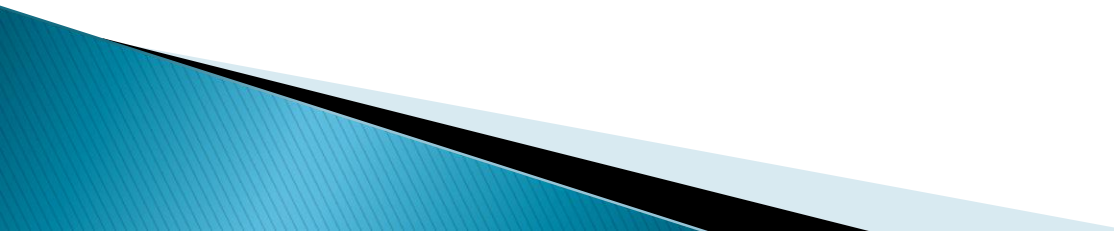
# Receiving Information

- ▶ Encourage them to tell you more (there's almost always going to be more – they've picked a starting point, but that's usually all it is)
  - ▶ Try to relate their fantasies to yours (not necessarily out loud to them, just list for possible points of connection)
  - ▶ Never ask them *why* they want what they want – they may not know, and it doesn't really matter (and they shouldn't feel the need to defend or justify their desires)
- 

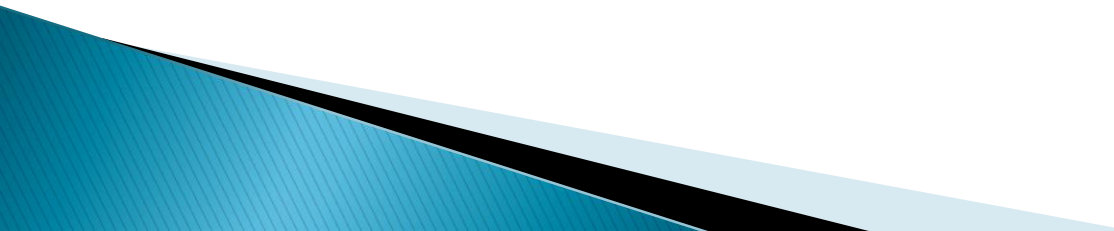
# Receiving Information

- ▶ When they're done
    - Hug them a lot to let them know everything is fine
    - Reassure them that nothing has changed as a result of what they've told you (and that they're still loved)
    - Thank them for being so open, for trusting you enough to share this
    - Let them know that you feel even closer to them now that they've shared this intimate part of themselves with you
- 

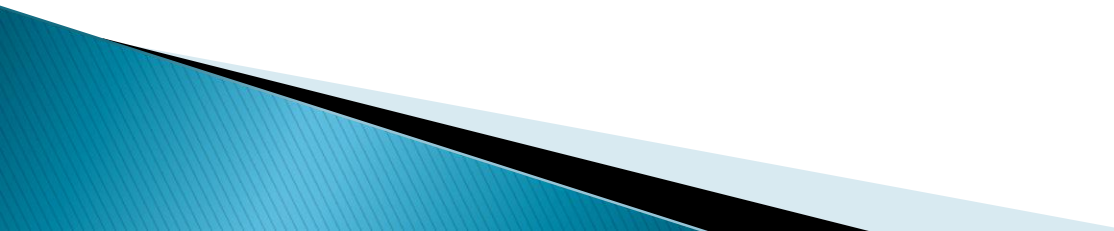
# What if I Don't Have a Clue?

- ▶ If they describe something that you've never even heard of, let them know that you need to know more in order to understand what they mean
  - ▶ It's okay to let them know you need some time to process, but that you love them and really want to know more
  - ▶ Google is your friend! After you talk, go look things up
- 

# Processing...

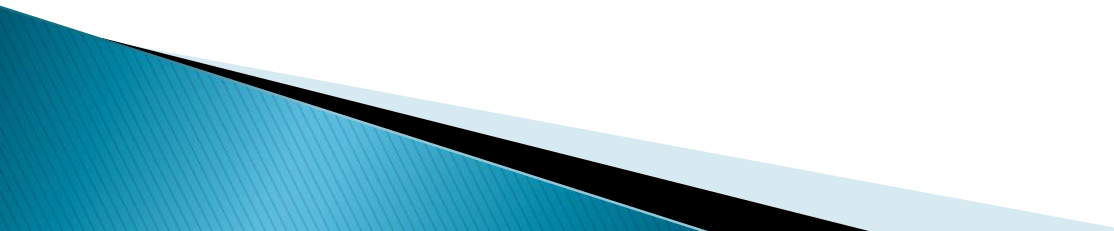
- ▶ Research whatever they told you, learn all you can, and try to find related ideas and activities
  - ▶ Don't wait for them to raise the topic again – they're probably waiting for you!
  - ▶ Be pro-active (“I’ve been thinking about what you told me, and I really want to know more”)
  - ▶ Show that you're interested
  - ▶ Work with your partner to develop scenarios
- 

# Keep an Open Mind

- ▶ You may find that you're just as kinky as they are! 😊
  - ▶ Remember that even if their fantasy is something that you yourself are not comfortable with, that doesn't mean it's intrinsically "wrong"
  - ▶ Whatever they want, they're definitely not the only ones who want it
- 



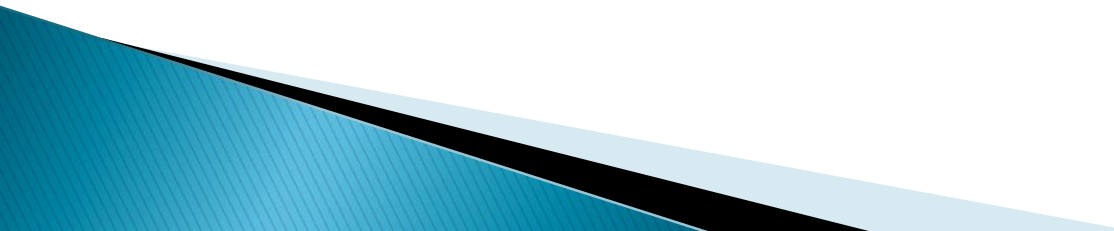
# Respect Your Own Limits

- ▶ Accepting your partner's kink does not mean you're required to embrace it yourself
  - ▶ Never do anything you genuinely don't want to do
    - They'll be able to tell
    - You'll eventually feel resentful about having to do it
  - ▶ Try to find ways to feel good about doing it, or find ways to address your partner's needs without crossing your own boundaries
- 

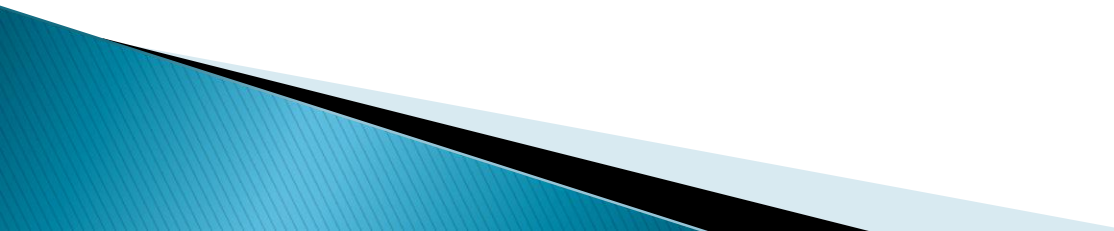
# Give and Take

- ▶ If it's something that you're okay with, but don't get any direct pleasure from yourself...
  - Remember that there's always give-and-take when it comes to sex (e.g. one of you is in the mood, and the other accommodates)
  - Realize that you now have an opportunity to explore your own fantasies too
  - Discover the pleasure that comes from giving pleasure, and find the emotional satisfaction in meeting your partner's needs

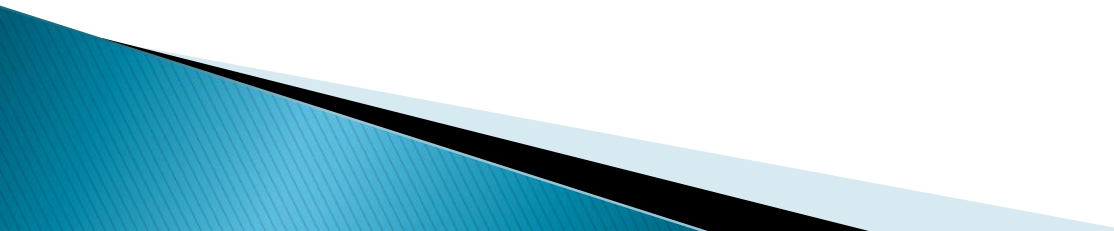
# How Deeply Into It Are They?

- ▶ At some point you need to determine if their kink is...
    - Something they want to try occasionally, for variety or as foreplay
    - An important element that's at the core of their sexuality
    - A fundamental part of their very identity
  - ▶ Decide for yourself how much of their kink you want to bring into your own life, and set clear boundaries with your partner
- 

# Fitting it All Together

- ▶ You've learned something about your partner that you didn't know before
  - ▶ You will have to do one of the following:
    1. Re-think what you thought you knew about them, or...
    2. Re-think what you thought you knew about the kink or fetish that they've told you about, or...
    3. Merge the two, and deepen your understanding of your partner, or...
    4. Compartmentalize
- 

# Compartmentalizing

- ▶ Not a bad thing, and sometimes the best solution
  - ▶ Recognize that each of you has many different facets already, and this is one more
  - ▶ “Keep it in the bedroom” (or the garage, or the dungeon...)
  - ▶ Use context
  - ▶ Use triggers for switching “compartments”
- 

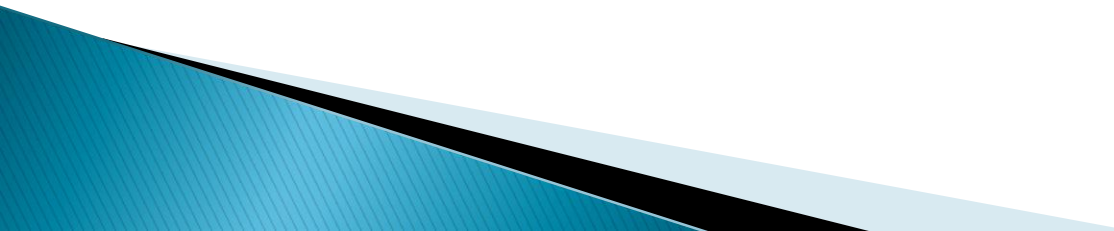
# Beyond the Bedroom

- ▶ Some desires extend beyond sex and may lead you to make changes in how your relationship works
  - Discuss the new dynamic you're working towards
  - Do your homework! (books, websites, friends...)
  - Seek guidance from others who have done something similar
  - Negotiate, and be sure to document what you agree on and what your expectations are
  - Subject for a whole other seminar! 😊

# You're Not Alone

- ▶ Consider connecting with your local BDSM community
  - Learn from the experiences of others
  - Get a sense of validation from being part of a community
  - Find inspiration for new activities
- ▶ Read, read, read

# The Intersection of Poly and Kink

- ▶ Kink and poly can intersect in several ways:
    - Vanilla primary partner, dominant or submissive paramour
    - Dominant with primary partner, submissive to paramour (or vice-versa)
    - Dominant partner chooses additional partners for their submissive
    - Dominant has more than one submissive
    - Submissive has more than one dominant (rare)
- 



# Intersection (continued)

- ▶ One person may enjoy certain activities with one partner, different activities with another:
  - Bondage with one partner, roleplaying with another
  - Abduction/rape fantasies with one partner, electrical play with another
  - ... etc ...
- ▶ No one is an expert at everything, so poly gives more opportunities for a range of experiences
- ▶ Kink and Poly – two great things that go great together! 😊

# Poly Resources

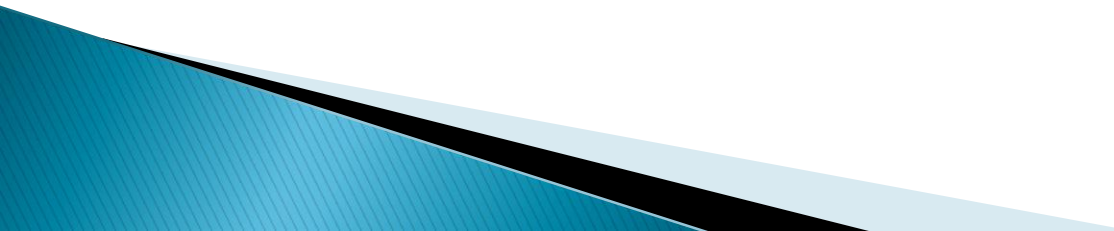
- ▶ What Psychology Professionals Should Know About Polyamory  
<https://ncsfreedom.org/images/stories/pdfs/KAP/2010>
- ▶ Practical non-monogamy tips:  
<http://freaksexual.wordpress.com/2008/03/22/practical-nonmonogamy-tips-ii/>
- ▶ More Than Two:  
<http://www.morethantwo.com/>
- ▶ Working with Polyamorous Clients in the Clinical Setting: <http://www.ejhs.org/volume5/polyoutline.html>
- ▶ Books: Ethical Slut, Opening Up, and others listed at <http://www.listal.com/list/polyamory-books>
- ▶ Poly Weekly podcast

# Kink Resources

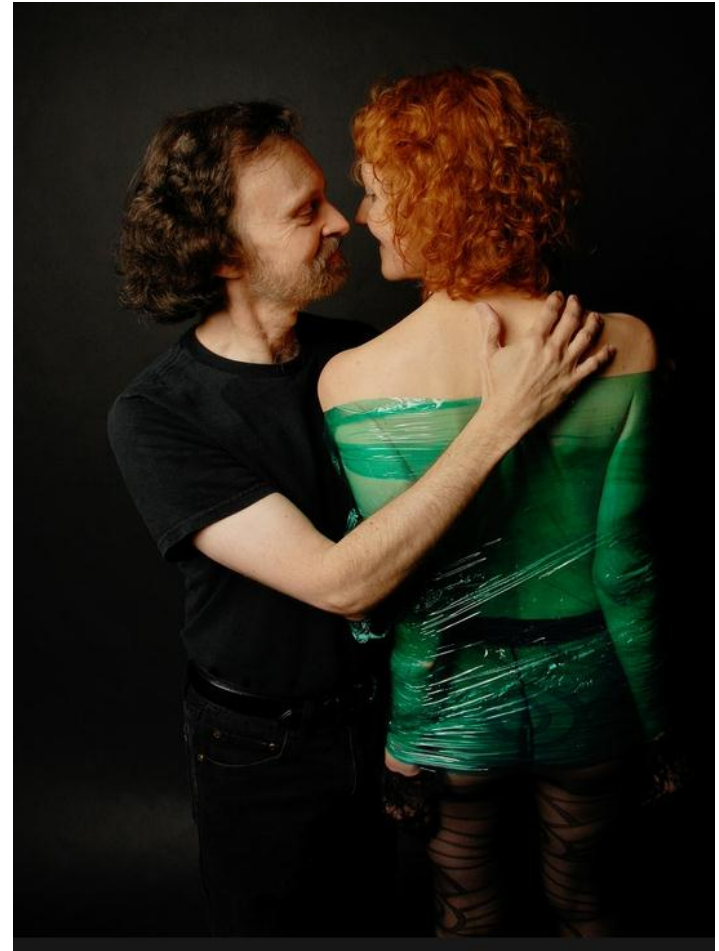
## ▶ Websites:

- Fetlife.com (like Facebook for kinky people)

## ▶ Books:

- The Topping Book
  - The Bottoming Book
  - When Someone You Love is Kinky
  - Different Loving
  - Screw the Roses, Send Me the Thorns
  - SM 101
- 

# My partners



# More Information

- ▶ Website of the group I'm involved with is [www.ehbc.ca](http://www.ehbc.ca)
  - ▶ This presentation is at [www.ehbc.ca/presentations](http://www.ehbc.ca/presentations)
  - ▶ My email address is [broehl@bernieroehl.com](mailto:broehl@bernieroehl.com)
  - ▶ Any questions?
- 