



Language around sex

In order to have good, honest conversations about sex, young adults should know the type of language that is appropriate to use, particularly how to avoid using out-dated, potentially sexist terms.

In groups, discuss which terms below could be seen as offensive or out-dated, and say why.

Term:	Could this term be seen as offensive?	Explain your answer:
“Lose your virginity”		
“Popped her cherry”		
“Shag”		
“Walk of shame”		
“Slut”		
“She’s really tight / loose”		
“She’s so frigid”		



Answers up for discussion:

“Lose your virginity” – this is a common phrase used when talking about having sex for the first time. It isn’t offensive, but the idea that an individual ‘loses’ something when they have sex for the first time is an out-dated mindset that we need to move on from. Individuals having sex for the first time should not ‘lose’ anything. It should be consensual and enjoyable for both individuals.

“Popped her cherry” – this phrase often refers to ‘taking a girl’s virginity’ or when a girl’s hymen has been broken during her first sexual encounter. This can be seen as a derogatory term and is factually inaccurate as a girl’s hymen is usually broken before she has penetrative sex for the first time. Any bleeding during sex is usually a result of tearing in the vaginal wall. The idea that something is ‘taken’ from a girl when she has had sex for the first time is also derogatory and an offensive, out-dated term that should be avoided. More information on this is available on the Gen Fem website.

“Shag” – a common way to describe having sex. It may not be offensive, but the term can be seen as crude or inappropriate.

“Walk of shame” – people should avoid using this out-dated term. It is only really used to describe a woman walking back from a one-night stand. Very rarely is it used after a man has had a one-night stand. It implies that there is something wrong with having sex with someone for one night.

“Slut” – this is often used as an insult or nasty term to describe a woman who has a lot of sex. It is a modern saying and implies that it is wrong for a woman to be having a lot of sex. The equivalent for a man is a ‘player’ which is seen as a compliment.

“She’s really tight / loose” – this is a way of describing a female’s vagina and it is often seen as a bad thing if a woman’s vagina is ‘loose’. Students should be made aware that every vagina is different and guys should know it is not their place to discuss the size of a woman’s vagina nor is it a representation of her sexual activity.

“She’s so frigid” – this term is used to demean a woman if she does not want to engage in sexual activity. There is no term like this for a man. It also puts pressure on women to say yes to things when they may not want to. Males should be taught to respect a female and her choices.