

Sexual and Reproductive Justice Video

Discussion Guide



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Introduction

The Sexual and Reproductive Justice Community Engagement Group (CEG) is a group of community leaders, activists and nonprofit organizations that work with the New York City Health Department to promote sexual and reproductive justice (SRJ) in New York City (NYC). The CEG plans events where all New Yorkers can safely express their sexuality and gender identity with dignity. The group also offers knowledge and resources for leading healthy and fulfilling lives.

The CEG co-created the "Sexual and Reproductive Justice" video, released in November 2016. The three-minute video gives an overview of SRJ and features stories from community members.

Follow the tips in this guide for hosting a screening in community or informal settings, such as house parties, during wellness visits and in classrooms. The guide was informed by community gatherings and created by the Health Department's SRJ CEG. The guide includes questions and activities to foster discussion about SRJ, as well as age-appropriate lesson plans for classrooms.

Different types of facilitators can use this discussion guide. Parents and community members can speak to youth and elders about SRJ elements that impact them directly. Educators in other learning spaces, can also use this information to support their lesson plans about health, safety and history.

The video covers
the stories of several
people living in the
five boroughs of NYC.
Please note that the
video discusses sexual
assault, medical abuse,
medical neglect,
pregnancy, birth,
abortion, silencing
and healing.

Visit nyc.gov/health and search SRJ to find the video and more SRJ resources. Please check if your screening space blocks video access.

Special thanks to Bianca I.

Laureano, MA, CSE, who wrote this guide in collaboration with the SRJ

Community Engagement Group.

Prepare for Your Screening

Consider the following points in this section as you plan your SRJ video screening and discussion. Check to make sure your screening space allows video access.

What is SRJ?

SRJ exists when everyone has the power and resources to make healthy decisions about their bodies, sexuality and reproduction.* SRJ means that every person has the human right to:

- Choose to have or not have children
- Choose the conditions under which to give birth or create a family
- Care for their children with the necessary social support in a safe and healthy environment
- Control their own body and self-expression, free from any form of sexual or reproductive oppression.



Farah Diaz-Tello

Media Literacy

The Media Literacy Project, a group that trained people on how to become critical media consumers, defined media literacy as an audience's ability to understand the complex messages received from television, radio, internet, newspapers, ads, music and other forms of media. Media literacy helps us understand how media messages shape our culture and society, which in turn helps shape how we think and talk about social and reproductive justice.

^{*} The New York City Health Department draws their definition of SRJ from the seminal reproductive justice theory, strategy and practice as created in 1994 by African American women who were looking for a way to articulate the needs of communities of color that face multiple forms of sexual and reproductive oppression. For more information, please visit sistersong.net.

Before Your Screening

Screenings should be 1.5 to two hours. Activities and preparation may vary depending on your location and number of participants. Consider the following as you plan your screening:

- Watch the complete video before your event. Make sure you understand what the video is about. This will help you if your audience has questions or does not remember specific details.
- Review the complete discussion guide, including the resources at the end. Review this discussion guide to know what topics you want to cover and what activities you want to prepare for your audience. Choosing the activity at this stage will give you time to gather the suggested materials and know the suggested timeframe for each activity section.

Find a screening space.

Ask yourself these questions when choosing a screening space:

- What is the location's capacity, that is, how many people can it hold?
- What kind of audio-visual tools and technology does it have? To show the video you will need a projector, screen or smart board, speakers, computer or tablet, and internet access.
- What needs does your audience have? Will they understand English? Will they read English or Spanish subtitles?
- If there are child care needs, will child care be provided during the screening?
- Is the location convenient to public transportation? Is it easy to find?
- Can you meet accessibility needs? Are you willing to find another location with a ramp, elevator and accessible bathroom stalls? Remind location staff that, per New York State law, people can use the restroom that best fits their gender identity. Be sure to consider these needs, since they are directly in line with SRJ.
- Prepare for varying reactions. The video discusses SRJ in several ways. Note that not all viewers will interpret the information in the same way. Embrace different reactions and questions during the discussion. Sometimes the questions are more important than the answers, so it is OK not to have all the answers.
- **Identify the questions that you want to explore with your group.** You might not use all of the suggestions in this guide but they may help start the conversation.

- Set goals for your screening. Be clear on what you want to accomplish with your screening. Here are sample screening goals:
 - Help high-school-aged youth understand and relate to SRJ.
 - Provide parents with ways to discuss SRJ with their children.
 - Teach community members about SRJ and help them share what they learned with their peers.
- Set ground rules for your group. Prepare discussion ground rules and request ground rules from participants to hear what they think is important in this space and for this discussion. Here are suggestions for ground rules:
 - Only one person can speak at a time; one "mic."
 - Vocal participants should let others speak, while those less vocal should try contributing more. Step up, step back.
 - Use "I" statements when sharing personal experiences rather than speaking for others. Then provide the example.
 - Be present.
 - Take a break when you need it.
 - Don't assume consent. Don't assume that a fellow participant wants to have a continued conversation about what they brought up. Participants shouldn't share anyone's personal accounts or statements without consent.

• Prepare statements in advance to help the conversation flow. This is especially helpful if you have participants who speak more than others. The scenarios and suggested responses below can help you move the conversation forward and keep participants focused.

SCENARIO	SUGGESTED RESPONSE
A few people are taking over the conversation and the rest of the group is quiet.	Let's hear from some new voices.
One person continues to overshare, speak over others or not allow others to speak up.	I'm going to pause you there because there are some great points I'd like for us to explore.
	Or
	Let's remember our ground rules of being mindful of our participation or "one mic," meaning one person speaks at a time. I'm going to ask those of you speaking now to allow others to participate.
Participants share personal information about trauma or assault.	Thank you for sharing your experience. Sometimes it is helpful to process traumatic experiences to understand sexual and reproductive justice. My training is not in counseling or therapy but I do have resources for those who need them. Please see me after our time today.
There is silence in the room and people are not responding or are unable to answer some questions.	We do a lot of hard work quietly. It is OK to think about this for a few minutes and be quiet together. Let's think about [insert topic] for two minutes and come back as a larger group to discuss.
	Or
	Let's do this work a bit more quietly. I will read a question out loud. Please think about what comes to mind first and write it down. Do the same with the next few questions and then we will come back as a larger group (or in pairs or small groups).

The video presents the following SRJ values:

- All people have access to information and resources to make decisions about their bodies, sexuality and reproduction.
- Every person has the human right to decide on contraception, and make decisions about childbirth, parenting and their body.
- Working toward SRJ will reduce inequities in our city.

These values will help participants better understand sexual and reproductive justice and the body. You can discuss the values in a large or small group, or in pairs. If your group has more than eight people, consider small groups to encourage more in-depth discussion.

Conversations on Sexual and Reproductive Values

The following list includes ideas that can help your group discuss the sexual and reproductive values introduced in the video:

- Read each value aloud and ask participants what they understand about it. What are some areas that they may not connect with as easily as others? This may be a good opportunity to allow participants to discuss without facilitation. Keep track of time on this activity because people enjoy talking and may need you to keep them on task.
- Discuss safety, community and freedom. What do these terms mean to participants? How can we connect freedom to safety and community? How do participants define freedom for themselves? How do participants imagine freedom as it relates to the body and SRJ?
- Post each value on a large sheet of paper and invite participants to add specific examples under each focus area. For example, for "Every person should have the human right to decide on contraception," ask participants to list contraceptives. This may include what was mentioned in the video (condoms) or abstinence, celibacy and masturbation.
- Add more layers to the conversation. Use an intersectional framework, or an approach that considers other overlapping identities. For example, what does "every person should have the human right to make decisions about their body" mean for babies and children? How do people with disabilities, who may rely on others, find support in SRJ? Do people living with HIV feel forced to take medicine, or could they do what they choose with their bodies? See page 14 for more guidance on using an intersectional framework.

Conversations on Specific SRJ Topics

The following list covers ideas that can help your group discuss specific topics related to the SRJ experiences shared in the video:

- Sexual violence. In the video, Michelle talked about being sexually assaulted and her belief that if she had been exposed to SRJ earlier in her life, she would have learned to value herself. What do you think she means by this?
- Representation. To the people in the video, seeing themselves reflected in media and literature is an important part of SRJ. Ericka shares how important it would have been for her to see two Black women in love. What does it mean that there were no people who looked like her in media and literature? Why is representation so important? How are Ericka's and Alison's experiences similar?



Michelle Hope

► Health inequities. These are unfair, unjust and avoidable differences in health outcomes. Health Commissioner Dr. Mary T. Bassett shares that Black women in NYC are 12 times more likely to die from pregnancy-related causes than White women. Why does this happen? How does Farah's experience relate to why this may happen? How might care for White women be different? Why? How do you think an SRJ framework can help end this inequity?



Travis-Michael Altamar

- who needed trans-friendly services. What does this mean? How do his needs connect to SRJ? Why is it important to have doctors who understand your needs? What can happen if you have doctors who don't understand or respect your body? How could you use your body for activism and advocacy?
- Freedom. Travis-Michael says, "A parent has the right for their child to grow up happy, healthy and affirmed." What images did you see in the video as he spoke? How do these experiences of being happy, healthy and affirmed fit into SRJ?

Conversations on Experiencing and Coping With Pain and Silencing

The following list covers ideas that can help your group discuss dealing with the pain that comes from a negative sexual or reproductive experience:

- How do you understand oppression? What stories align with that understanding in the video? What do certain types of power over others (e.g., homophobia, misogyny, racism, ableism) look like in our communities?
- The video begins with the experience of Farah and how she learned about SRJ through her birth experience. Farah says, "Decisions were made without my input." What do you think that means? When doctors make decisions without speaking to their patients, what message does this send? How does power become a part of this interaction? Who had the power in Farah's story?
- Describe a time when decisions were made for you without your input. What happened? How did that experience make you feel? What did you learn about power, control and self-determination (or the act or power of making your own choices)?
- Sexual assault is deeply rooted in power, control and taking someone's selfdetermination away from them. Michelle was sexually assaulted and says that she spoke to friends and counselors. How do you bring up tough conversations with your friends?
- Healing from trauma is vital to survival, but asking for help can be a challenge for many. What are some reasons we, like Michelle, delay seeking support? How is that connected to SRJ? How would you find a therapist you trust and want to work with?
- In the video, Dr. Bassett shares that there is a "history of women being coerced into contraceptive choices that were not ones that they either understood or chose." What do you think this means? What are the images you see when she is speaking? What is sterilization? What are other examples of coercion?
- Leeann says nobody gets to make a decision about her body – not an entity, clinic, boyfriend or parent. Why is it important for Leeann to make this list? Who else would you say may not make decisions about your body? How is Leeann's statement relevant to Michelle's experience? Why is body autonomy (the right to choose for yourself) important?



Farah Diaz-Tello

What and Who Is Missing?

The last question in this guided discussion, "What is missing from this message?" allows people who do not see themselves represented in the video to discuss their own experiences related to SRJ.

Invite participants to answer, "What is missing?" You may do this as a large group or break out into smaller groups and have them create a cluster of ideas to share with the larger group. If you do this, take note of any similarities or repeated points mentioned. Write a list of each experience, identity and topic. Examples may include youth, people living with HIV, people who are undocumented, people with disabilities, people who experience housing instability or homelessness, people who identify as intersex, sex workers and elderly people. Keep this conversation to five to 10 minutes.

This may be a good time to redefine intersectionality. For support in introducing and explaining an intersectional approach, see the lesson plan on page 14. The questions below may help guide this conversation:

- What does healing look like? How might it look within an SRJ framework and context? Whose healing is prioritized?
- In the video, Barbara says that to heal, we need to hear from everyone. What does she mean by this and why is this important? How is silence not useful in the healing process?
- What do we lose when we don't focus on the people in our communities facing the most significant health, social and economic challenges?
- What types of power are at work when we forget the needs of others?
- What kind of world would you like to live in? What are the features of a world and community you are invested in maintaining?



During Your Screening and Discussion

- ▶ **Prepare your audience.** Introduce the video and explain what you want them to look out for, including images, names and stories. You may also want to warn them that there will be discussions of sexual assault, medical abuse, medical neglect, pregnancy, birth, abortion, silencing and healing. These discussions may trigger emotions that lead to re-traumatization, so remind your audience that their participation in this screening is voluntary.
- Be comfortable with silence. The video topics may be new for some participants. They may need to think about the stories before they feel comfortable enough to discuss with the larger group. Try pairing participants together to discuss their thoughts and then share with the group, or try writing activities. Remember, you are not expected to provide therapeutic services beyond your knowledge, skills or comfort level.
- Consider how your audience can share what they learned. Before you end your screening, ask participants how they plan to share this information with others in their communities. Think of an action-oriented plan that individuals or groups could carry out. Refer to the **Resources** section on page 23 for guidance. Here are some action steps they could take:
 - Share information with family members, especially elders and youth.
 - Partner with young parents who are advocating for their rights as parents.
 - Create a gender and sexuality alliance at school.
 - Plan another community screening for a specific group.
 - Invite religious leaders to host a screening and discussion.
 - Learn more about SRJ through reading groups and oral histories.
 - Advocate for SRJ with community and political leaders, and policymakers.

After Your Screening Event

- You did it! Congratulations on starting this conversation in your community.
 Remember to take care of yourself and whatever needs you have after the screening.
- Think about your next steps. What actions did the group decide they want to do and how can you support them?
- Consider ways to stay in contact with each other.



Evaluation

We would like to know how you use these tools to prepare and implement your screenings and discussions about SRJ. Please email us at SRJ@health.nyc.gov to share your experience with us! Please try to answer as many of the following questions:

- What were the demographics of your group screening?
- How many people attended your screening?
- What activities did you choose to do with your group?
 - Activity 1: Justice at the Intersections
 - Activity 2: Media Justice Meets Sexual and Reproductive Justice
 - A: What Is Media Literacy?
 - B: Core Questions of Media Literacy
- What discussion question sections did you use?
 - SRJ as a Framework
 - Expressions of Oppression
 - Beyond the Body
 - What and Who Is Missing? How to Fill in the Gaps?
- How would you describe the participants' engagement with the video and questions?
- What action steps did participants decide to implement?
- Please share any other comments you have about the video and discussion guide.

LESSON PLAN:

Sexual And Reproductive Justice

Timeframe: 35 to 45 minutes

Goal: To introduce SRJ as a framework and discuss how it applies personally or professionally

Objective: By the end of this activity, participants will be able to:

Define SRJ

Explain the basic rights that we all have

Internet access to show the "Sexual and Reproductive Justice" video

TV or speakers (if using a laptop or PC)

Markers

 Large poster board paper, blackboard, computer or projector to record participants' responses

Watch the "Sexual and Reproductive Justice" video in full.

 Familiarize yourself with the people in the video and their stories.

Review the entire lesson plan and glossary.

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Materials:

Preparation:

Additional Activities

Activity 1: Justice at the Intersections

Timeframe: 50 minutes to two hours, as needed

Goal: To learn about and discuss intersectionality as it relates to SRJ

Objective: By the end of this activity, participants will be able to:

Explain intersectionality

Discuss why intersectionality matters

List ways that intersectionality connects with SRJ

Materials:

Internet access to show the

"Sexual and Reproductive Justice" video

TV or speakers (if using a laptop or PC)

Markers

 Large poster board paper, blackboard, computer or projector to record participants' responses

Watch the "Sexual and Reproductive Justice" video in full.

Review the core points of SRJ.

 Review the glossary and definitions to support participants who need help understanding the content.

Instructions: Define intersectionality.

Write the word "intersectionality" on the poster board paper or flipchart. Invite participants to find words they already know in the term. Prepare for responses, such as "inter," "section," "intersection" or "-ality (like person-ality)." Ask participants to think about what happens at a street intersection. Explain this for participants who do not know what intersection means. Some of the responses may be, "wait for the light to change," "all cars and people follow traffic signs" or "streets meet." You can draw a simple intersection with two lines, as shown at right.

Sexual and Reproductive Justice

Preparation:

Define "intersection" and explain that the lines that meet at the center, where we are, represent our many identities. Ask participants to share four different identities and write one in on each line. Some examples of identities are gender, ethnicity, race, class and spiritual belief. When all four lines are labeled, begin to add more lines for more identities, like ability, sexual orientation, body size, national origin or citizenship, age, geographic location and education level. Your image might look like the one shown at right.



Explain that we each have many different identities that make up who we are and how we move in the world. Our identities may be different or similar. Remind participants that we take all of our identities everywhere we go. We do not wake up one day and say we want to only bring our gender with us, because we are more than our gender and our other identities help us understand our gender.

Next, introduce that term intersectionality was coined by a Black woman, professor and civil rights activist named Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw in the 1980s. Professor Crenshaw created this theory and framework to discuss our identities and how we experience challenges, discrimination and oppression as individuals and communities. She focused on the experiences of Black women in the United States, and today intersectionality is a theory that deeply connects to making the world a more just place. Ask the following questions to see if participants understand intersectionality:

- How is intersectionality an important approach when discussing SRJ?
- What challenges may some people face when incorporating an intersectional approach?
- How do different types of power connect to intersectionality?

Activity 2: Media Justice Meets Sexual and Reproductive Justice

Timeframe: 50 m

50 minutes to two hours, as needed

Goal:

To learn about and discuss media literacy

Objective:

By the end of this activity, participants will be able to:

- Discuss the five questions of media literacy
- Explain what is missing and what messages are promoted in the "Sexual and Reproductive Justice" video
- Explain how others may understand the video differently

Materials:

- Internet access to show the "Sexual and Reproductive Justice" video
- TV or speakers (if using a laptop or PC)
- Large poster board paper, blackboard, computer or projector to record participants' responses

Preparation:

- Watch the "Sexual and Reproductive Justice" video in full.
- Review the core points of SRJ.
- Write the words "media literacy" and each of the five media literacy questions on individual poster board paper for a total of six pieces of paper.

Activity 2A Instructions: What Is Media Literacy?

Write the words "media literacy" on a piece of poster board paper for the group to see. Ask participants what they think the words "media" and "literacy" mean when put together. It may help to break down each term individually first and then put them together. Media literacy is the skill and ability to access, understand, analyze, evaluate and create media in different forms.

Explain that the Center for Media Literacy, an organization that promotes and supports education on media literacy, identified five core questions that help viewers analyze the media they consume. Write these questions on a piece of poster board and invite participants to read each question aloud.

- Who created the message and what are the goals of the message?
- What techniques does this media use to attract my attention?
- What values and points of view are represented in the message?
- How could different people understand the message differently than me?
- What is missing from the message?

Activity 2B Instructions: Core Questions of Media Literacy

Who created the message and what are the goals of the message? Explain that creators include directors, writers, cast, crew and production. Using the SRJ video as an example, ask participants to think about who created this video. The New York City Health Department created this video with funding and support from state and local communities, including the SRJ Community Engagement Group. What does it mean for a video to be created by a government organization that is invested in the health and care of the community? What should an audience think about when watching this video, knowing that the Health Department created it?

What techniques are used to attract my attention? Address the reasons you remained interested in the video. How did the video hold your attention? Was it the multiple voices, music, graphic elements, closed captions, running length of time or something else?

What values and points of view are represented in the video? NYC embraces and prioritizes SRJ. What does it mean that a City agency has a new value that is rooted in justice? What does it mean to value sexual and reproductive health, rights and justice?

How could others with a different point of view understand this media differently than me? Although we may watch the same video, we interpret the ideas and messages differently. This question expands our focus area, which is important for justice and centering a community that might be different than our own. This is a good time to incorporate some of the discussion questions presented in the Prepare for Your Screening section (see page 2).

What or who is missing from this media? When we notice who and what is missing in the media, we can consider how we would include their voices in media we consume. Have a deeper conversation about why it is important to include missing voices and how we could do that on a regular and daily basis. How does including missing voices speak directly to SRJ goals?



Ableism

A set of practices and beliefs that assign less worth to people who have developmental, emotional, physical or psychiatric disabilities.

Consent

Direct words, behaviors or actions that show voluntary agreement to engage with others. Someone who consents is aware of their surroundings, potential impact or outcomes of their decision, and options. They are not coerced, manipulated or changed by drugs or alcohol.

Equality

When everyone receives the same treatment. Assumes everyone begins from the same place, which is incorrect.

Equity

When the same outcomes occur for everyone. Equity gives people what they need (specific to what each individual lacks) to enjoy full, healthy lives — whereas equality gives everyone the same things (regardless of what they need or lack) to enjoy full, healthy lives. Although equality may also aim to promote fairness and justice, it can only work if everyone starts from the same place and needs the same things (Source: SGBA e-Learning Resource: Rising to the Challenge).

Historical trauma

The combined emotional, psychological, physical, sexual and spiritual hurt over one's life and across generations. Examples of historical trauma include: genocide (including the Holocaust), violence against women and children, forced removal from home, involuntary sterilization, colonization and the Atlantic Slave Trade.

Human right

A right that belongs to every person, cannot be taken away, and is necessary to live a life with dignity and worth.

Intersectionality

A theory, framework, analysis and practice of understanding the many identities and social realities that impact individuals and groups and their interactions with social institutions and different forms of power.

Institutional power

How power is present in places and spaces. Black and Native people were not valued as human beings when the Unites States was created. Examples of institutions are your home, school, health centers and library.

Justice

Synonymous with equity and more than fairness. The systematic fair treatment of all people, which results in equitable opportunities and outcomes for all. Justice is the process to achieve racial equity.

Media literacy

The skill and ability to access, analyze, evaluate and create media in different forms.

Microagression

The subtle biased ways people stereotype others. These may include comments, looks or body language that are offensive, hurtful or negative. Sometimes microaggressions are not intentional and people may not realize that they are being biased. Typically, microaggressions target people from underresourced communities.

Oppression

Unjust control and treatment.

A system that maintains advantage and disadvantage based on social group memberships, and operates on individual, institutional and cultural levels.

- Individual: Attitudes and actions that reflect prejudice against a social group (unintentional and intentional).
- Institutional: Policies, laws, rules, norms and customs enacted by organizations and social institutions that disadvantage some social groups and advantage other social groups (intentional and unintentional).
- Societal/Cultural: Social norms, roles, rituals, language, music and art that reflect and reinforce the belief that one social group is superior to another (intentional and unintentional). (Source: Antoinette Myers & Yuka Ogino)

Power

The capacity or ability to direct or influence behaviors or events.

Power over

When a person or group interacting with another person or group exerts power over them. The power is not shared. Instead, the person with more power has different experiences that give them more control, and they make all of the decisions for the group and not with the group.

Power with

Capacity or ability to direct or influence the behavior of others or the course of events. When people share power to have similar outcomes and experiences, they share power with one another.

Racism

The system that allows one racial group, already in power, to keep power. "A system of power and oppression that structures opportunities and assigns value based on race and ethnicity, unfairly disadvantaging people of color, while unfairly advantaging White people. Racial prejudice + power = racism." (Source: C. Jones and People's Institute)

- Institutional racism occurs on the level of institutions. This is when policies, practices and systems within institutions create and sustain racialized outcomes. (Source: Race Forward)
- Internalized racism operates on a psychological level within individuals. These
 may be conscious or unconscious beliefs about ourselves and others based on race.
 (Source: Race Forward)
- Interpersonal racism occurs between people. Interpersonal racism exists when we bring our private beliefs and biases into our communications and interactions with others of a different race. (Source: Race Forward)
- Structural racism is racial bias across institutions and society. It is the system of structures, institutions and policies that work together to advantage White people and disadvantage people of color. It is the broadest manifestation of racism and encompasses multiple dimensions: (Source: Race Forward)
 - History
 - Culture
 - Interconnected policies and institutions
 - Racial ideology

Reproductive

The biological process where living things create new living things.

Sexual

Feelings and thoughts about gender, attraction, love and relationships that include intimacy, sensuality and sexual behavior.

Sexual assault

A form of violence. An act of power over another person without their consent to participate in or perform sexual acts.

Sexual and reproductive justice (SRJ)

SRJ means that every person has the human right to: choose to have or not have children; choose the conditions under which to give birth or create a family; care for their children with the necessary social support in a safe and healthy environment; control their own body and self-expression, free from any form of sexual or reproductive oppression.

Structural power

Structural power uses power to build or create something. For example, the United States of America and the United States Constitution were built on the ideas that Black and Native people were not human beings. That ideology led to the creation of institutions and systems that followed that idea and maintained the structure of inequity upon which this country was built.

Systemic power

Systemic power is how the institutions in our society, such as education and health care, control resources and limit opportunities. Individuals who use systemic power want to keep the inequitable structure of our country in place to gain more for themselves. Systemic power is sometimes used to ignore, hurt or oppress other people.

Trauma

To experience an event or condition where a person experiences a threat.

Resources

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Sexual and Reproductive Justice

When all people have the power and resources to make decisions about their bodies, sexuality and reproduction.

