

# Red Light/Green Light

<b>Objective:</b>	Participants will identify sexual activities that can transmit HIV/STIs. Participants will identify ways to decrease the chance of becoming infected with HIV/STIs.
<b>Structure:</b>	Large group.
<b>Time:</b>	20-30 minutes.
<b>Materials:</b>	Construction paper to make a red, a green, and a yellow circle (about 8'' in diameter), large index cards, markers, tape. Facilitators can also make a large "traffic light" from construction paper, containing a red, a green, and a yellow light.

## Procedure

1. **Brainstorm** with the large group, asking them for ways that people can demonstrate love and sexual feeling. With a marker, have a volunteer record the responses on cards.

For example:

kissing	holding hands	writing letters
massaging	cuddling	doing things together
having unprotected vaginal intercourse	sending e-mails or letters	using latex condoms for vaginal or anal intercourse
talking	performing oral sex	being naked together
doing mutual masturbation	petting	showering together
having unprotected anal intercourse	buying gifts	having dinner

2. Stick the coloured circles up on the board, about 45cm (18") apart. Explain the meaning of each of the colours as follows:

**Red** represents activities that are high risk for transmitting HIV/STIs.

**Yellow** is for activities that pose some risk for the transmission of HIV/STIs.

**Green** indicates activities that do not present any risk for the transmission of HIV/STIs.

3. **Distribute** the cards, listing the various ways to show love and sexual feeling, to participants. Ask them to come up to the board (perhaps two at a time) to tape their card under the appropriate risk category. Some participants may feel very uncomfortable having to categorize certain sexual activities. Be sensitive to the needs of individual participants by giving “less threatening” cards to those who may find aspects of this activity embarrassing.
4. **Involve** the group in the process, asking for feedback as the cards are placed, e.g. “Would you consider oral sex a no risk activity?” Correct any misconceptions that participants may have (see “Facilitator’s Discussion Guide”; fact sheets provided in the “Resources” section may also be helpful).

**Sample:** Categorizing the activities from group brainstorming:

**Red: High Risk for HIV/STI transmission**  
 unprotected vaginal intercourse  
 unprotected anal intercourse

**Yellow: Some Risk for HIV/STI transmission**  
 oral sex  
 using latex condoms for vaginal and anal sex

**Green: No Risk for HIV/STI transmission**

kissing	having dinner	writing letters
massage	cuddling	doing things together
talking	petting	mutual masturbation
buying gifts	sending emails	
holding hands	showering together	

**Note that there are many more activities in the “No Risk” category!**

6. Once all cards have been placed, ask the group to brainstorm ways to make some activities safer. Ask them to think about the reasons people may not always practice safer sex, and to come up with ideas for ways to overcome these obstacles to safer sex (see facilitator’s discussion guide).

# Red Light/Green Light Facilitator's Guide

This guide will provide the facilitator with some basic information about the principles of transmission of HIV and STIs. For more detailed information, please refer to HIV and STI fact sheets located in the "Resources" section of this Sourcebook.

## HIV

Two conditions are needed for the transmission of HIV:

1. A body fluid with sufficient numbers of virus particles
2. A way for the virus to get from an infected person into the bloodstream of another person.

Some conditions may also make it easier for HIV transmission to occur, such as the inflammation and irritation caused by STIs. Irritation caused by the use of spermicides may also increase the risk of HIV infection.

Body fluids that contain enough virus particles to cause an infection in another person include blood, semen, pre-semen, vaginal secretions, and breast milk. HIV in these fluids could enter the bloodstream of another person through sex (anal, oral, and vaginal), sharing needles or other injecting equipment, or from a mother to her baby (before or during birth, or during breastfeeding).

### Activities considered "High Risk" for passing on HIV:

- anal or vaginal intercourse without a condom
- sharing needles for injection (or sharing other injecting equipment)

### Activities posing "Some risk" for HIV transmission:

- performing oral sex on a partner
- anal or vaginal sex with a condom

### Activities with "No Risk" for HIV transmission:

- kissing, massage, touching partner's genitals (as long as there are no cuts, etc. on the hands)
- using new, sterile needles for injection (no sharing of other injecting equipment)
- performing oral sex with a latex barrier

**Other Sexually Transmitted Infections:** (chlamydia, gonorrhea, herpes, human papilloma virus, syphilis, hepatitis B and C)

These organisms do not necessarily have to enter the bloodstream to cause infection (although Hepatitis B and C do). For most, contact between the mucous membranes of two people is all that is required. Mucous membranes describe the moist, delicate tissue that lines body openings like the eye, mouth, nose, vagina, penis, and anus. This tissue is very thin and has less protection from pathogens than does skin on other parts of the body. Intimate contact is required to transmit STIs (anal, oral, or vaginal sex), and penetration is not always necessary to pass on an STI.