IF YOU SAID "YES" TO ALL OF THESE QUESTIONS, YOU'RE NOT ALONE! BUT ALSO, YOU ARE WORTH HAVING YOUR CONCERNS HEARD & NEEDS MET!

- Are you feeling awkward about talking to your partner about safer sex (i.e. using condoms)?
- Are you wondering how they'll react?
- Are you worried they'll judge you?
- Are you unsure how to start the conversation?

Check out these tips to get the conversation started!
Step 1

Decide what's right for **YOU** and your body! Establish what your safer sex limits/boundaries are, and what you like and don't like in advance so you're ready to share with your partner.
Know **WHY** it's important to you to have this conversation. Having a clear focus can help get past the initial awkwardness.
Consider role-playing the interaction with a friend or someone you trust. Practicing can help put you at ease when the time comes for the actual conversation.
STEP 4

Be HONEST about your needs regarding prevention of STIs (and pregnancy, if that applies to you), protective barriers you'd like to use (i.e. condoms, dental dams), & the type of sex that you are comfortable having.
Hear them out. They may need a chance to **PROCESS** the feelings brought up by the conversation you are having or by what you are asking of them.
IMPORTANT: Communication about safer sex, needs, desires, and sexual boundaries should be on-going, not a one-time conversation. BONUS: these convos can make your sex life more satisfying and interesting.
If they say...

"It's just oral sex; we don't need to use protection."

You can say...

"I thought that too, but then I looked into it and found that STIs can be passed through oral sex too! Especially STIs like herpes and genital warts. There are different flavors of dental dams and condoms we can use."
"Yes! But I care about your health and mine. I read many people can have STIs and not know it because they don't have symptoms. I'll feel more relaxed if we use one."

You can say...

"Don't you trust me?"

If they say...
If they say...

"It doesn't feel as good when we use a condom."

You can say...

"We could try different types of condoms, even pleasure enhancing ones. We can also use lube in the inside of the condom to increase sensation. We just have to experiment a little!"
If they say...
"There's no risk of pregnancy when we have sex. Why use a condom?"

You can say...
"Even though we can't become pregnant, it's still important to protect ourselves from STIs. We can experiment with different barriers to see what works best for us!"
If they say...

"We're just using our hands. There aren't any barriers for that!"

You can say...

"I thought so too! Then I read that using gloves can protect your hands. STIs can spread if we have little cuts on our hands or scratches on delicate genital skin."
"I'm on birth control. We don't need to use a condom!"

"Even though birth control helps prevent pregnancies, it doesn't prevent STIs. Plus, having extra protection is never a bad thing!"