

# Finnish sexual culture





## TO THE READER

This guide is especially for you, young immigrant. In this guide we will tell you some important things about the Finnish sexual culture and about the sexual health services that you can use. In addition, we will tell you something about the different laws related to sexuality.

This guide was made in co-operation with the Mauste project whose aim is to promote sexual health and safety skills among immigrants. The guide was made as a part of a Bachelor's thesis in JAMK University of Applied Sciences. The authors are Riikka Niilola, Heidi Pöysä and Suvi Suojala.

Enjoy your reading!

Sincerely,

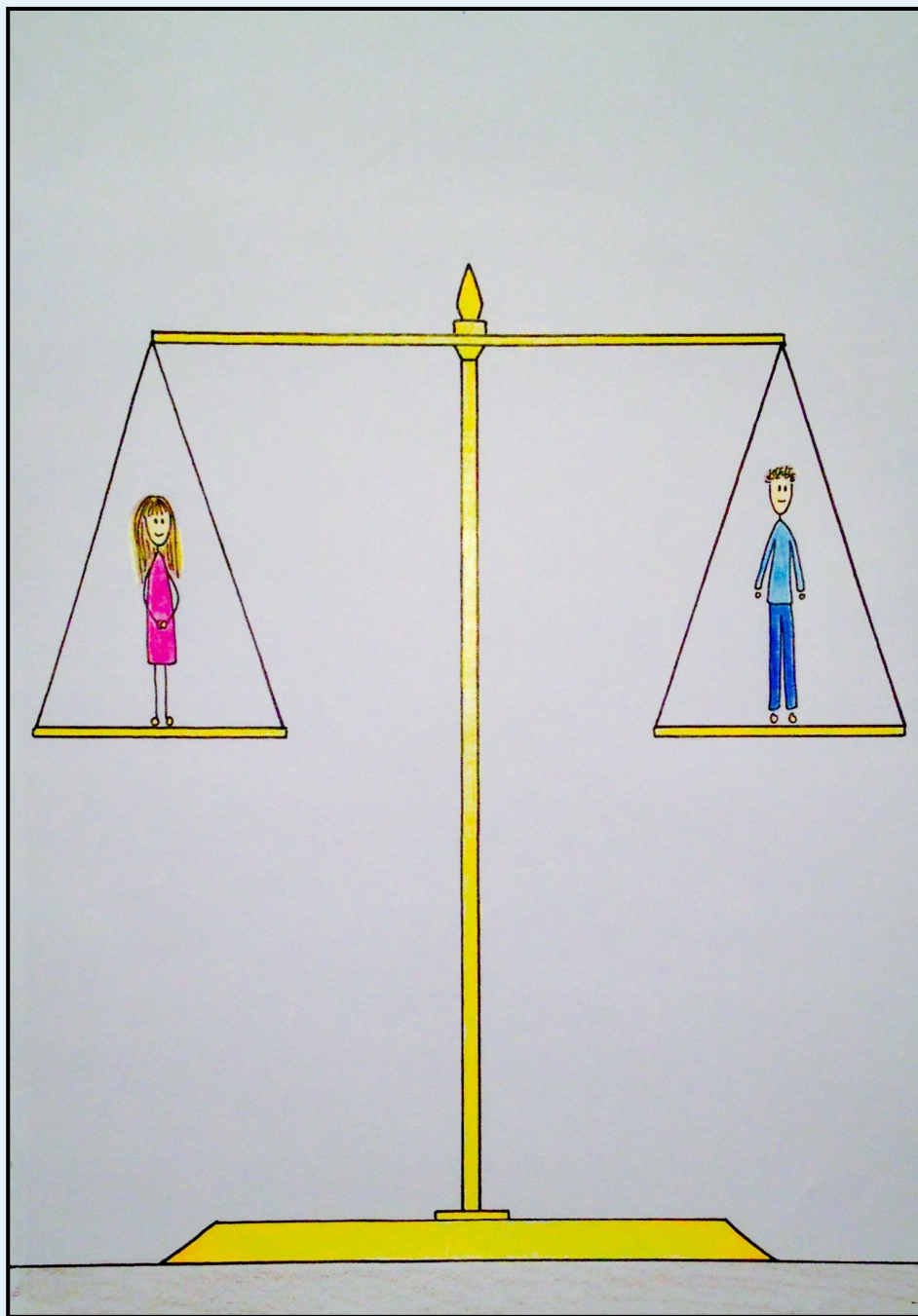
Heidi, Riikka and Suvi

Pictures ©Suvi Suojala



# CONTENTS

Equality .....	5-6
Sexual rights .....	7
Rights for youth .....	8
Self-determination .....	9-10
Relationship.....	11-12
Marital status.....	13-14
Sexual orientation.....	15-16
About legislation.....	17-18
Sex.....	19-20
Birth control methods.....	21-23
Abortion .....	24
Sexual health services .....	25-26
Respect your culture .....	27-28
In Finland .....	29
Read more .....	30



# EQUALITY

All people are equal in Finland regardless of their age, sex or background.

In Finland equality is regulated by the Equality Act.

Women and men are in the same position in Finland.

An equal marital law is in preparation, and it will give same-sex couples the right to marry.

Both men and women may have a job and work.

Both women and men can own property.

Everyone has the right to their own opinions and will.

Women are allowed to walk alone.



# SEXUAL RIGHTS

Sexual rights are human rights related to sexuality.

Sexual rights are regulated by laws and regulations.

Our sexual rights are based on equality, freedom and dignity.

Everyone has a duty to protect others from sexual-related harm.

You are not allowed to discriminate anyone.

Everyone has the right to their freedom and it should not be limited.



# RIGHTS FOR YOUTH

Right to gain knowledge about sexuality.

Right to protect themselves and be protected by others.

Right to be yourself.

Right to live without sexual harassment.

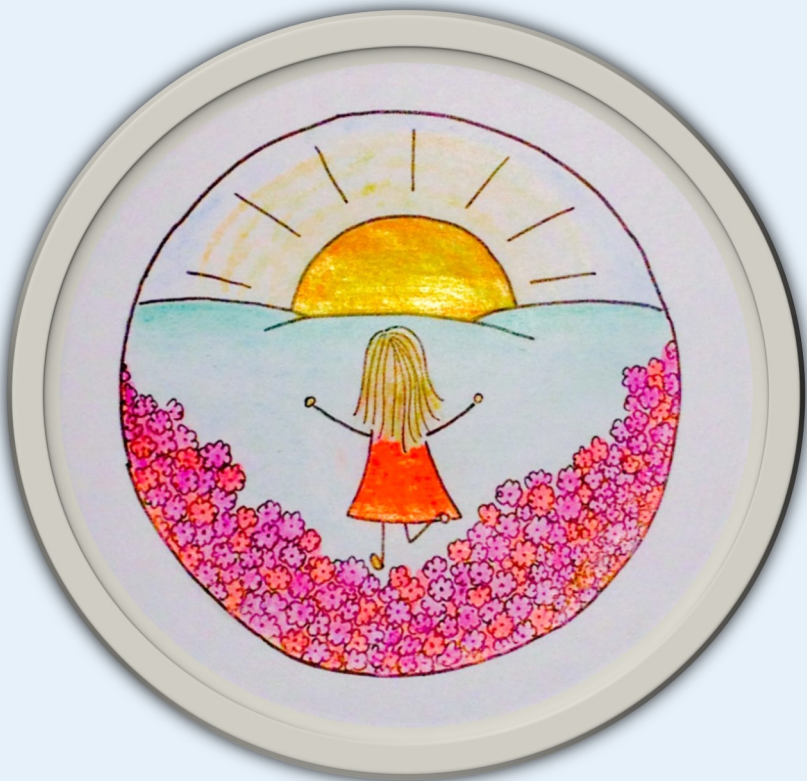
For example...

... Being protected from pregnancy or sexually transmitted diseases.

... Living without sexually insulting comments and harassment.

# SELF-DETERMINATION

Self-determination means our personal freedom and integrity. Self-determination protects both physical freedom and free will.



# ACTS WHICH VIOLATE SELF-DETERMINATION

Rape

Pimping

Defamation

Sexual abuse

Distribution of revealing pictures

Buying sexual services from under-aged individuals

Holding, distributing or watching child porn.

These acts may happen face-to-face, through your phone or on the Internet.

All these acts are punishable.



# RELATIONSHIP

The feeling of mutual love is the foundation of relationships in Finland.

Starting a relationship is always a personal choice.

In Finnish relationships both partners are equal.

In Finland you choose to be single for your whole life if you want to.

You can register your relationship or get married to only one person at a time.

In Finland you may end your relationship or get a divorce. After that you may begin a new relationship and you can even get married again.

# MARITAL STATUS

## Single

A person who is not in a relationship.

## Cohabitation

Cohabitation means that a couple lives together without being married or without being in a registered relationship.

## Marriage

Adults of the opposite sex can get married if they so choose. Minors (people under 18) need a special permission from the Ministry of Justice.

## A registered relationship

People of the same-sex can not yet get married in Finland.

Adults (people over 18) can choose to register their relationship which gives them many of the same rights as marriage does.

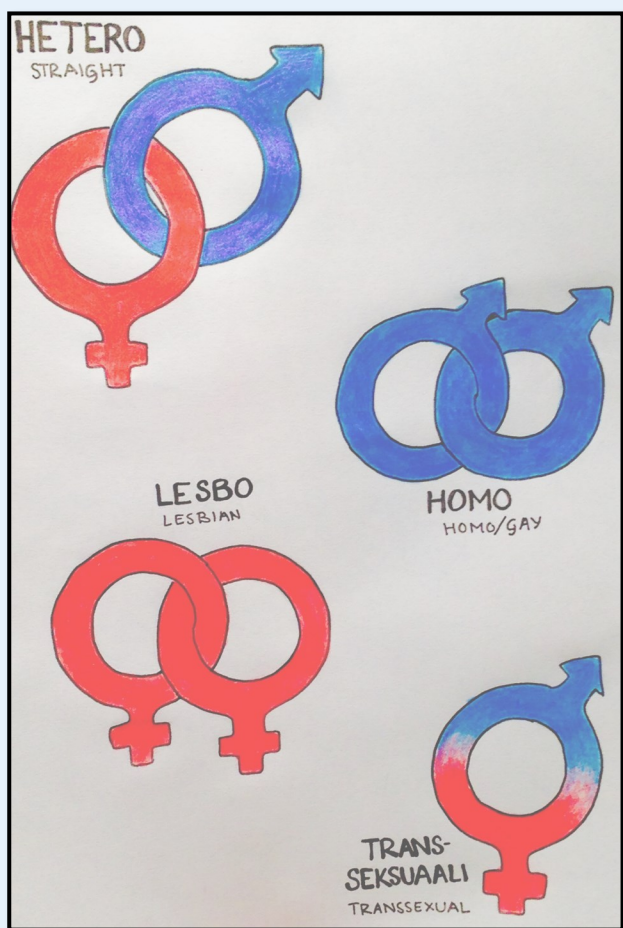
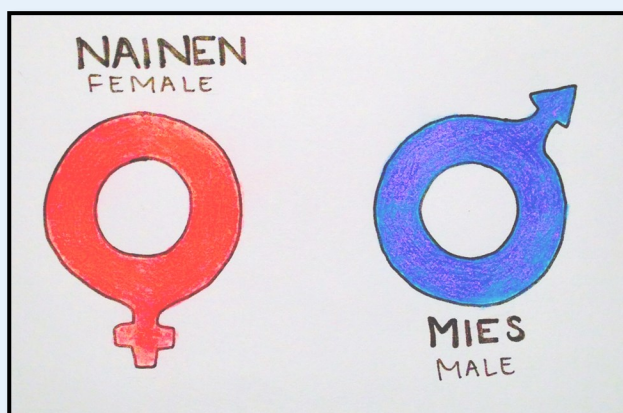
## Relationship

Dating does not necessarily end in cohabitation or marriage. Person can have several relationships during his/hers life.

## Sexual relationship

A sexual relationship is a relationship with a sexual contact. It is also possible to base it only on sex.





# SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Sexual orientation describes which genders someone is sexually and/or romantically attracted to.

Sexual orientation is not a choice and it can not be voluntarily changed.

Heterosexuality, homosexuality and bisexuality are sexual orientations. A bisexual feels attraction to both sex.

You can be a woman, a man, a transsexual or you can choose not to define yourself.

In Finland sexual orientation is not limited.



Girls' circumcisions (genital mutilation) are not allowed, and they are, in fact, seen as an unnecessary health risk and even abuse.

Boys' circumcisions are done in many cases only for medical reasons.

Sexual harassment, such as yelling profanities at people on the street, violates our basic human right to live peacefully and is considered defamation.

## ABOUT LEGISLATION

In Finland all over 15-year-old people can be charged and judged.

When the criminal is under 15 years of age, the need of child protection is determined by a child welfare inspector. Child welfare services secure a child's well-being.

In Finland we have different fines or prison terms as a penalty. All the penalties will be marked in the criminal register.

A woman and a man meet at a nightclub...

The man walks the woman home...



When they arrive the man says: "Can I come in? We could have sex". The woman replies: "Not this time"...

The man leaves and heads home, hoping to meet the woman again.

# SEX

Sex is supposed to give pleasure to you and your partner/partners.

Sex should happen only with mutual agreement. If your partner says no, you need to respect his/her decision.

You can have sex by yourself or with a partner(s).

In Finland you can not have sexual contact with a child who is under 16.

Sex is, for example:

Masturbation	Kissing
Fantasizing	Oral sex
Petting	Intercourse

# BIRTH CONTROL METHODS

## Condom

You can buy condoms from a grocery store, kiosks or pharmacies.

Condom is the only contraceptive which protects you from an STD (=sexually transmitted diseases).

If you think you might have an STD, you should immediately go to a health care center, school or student health care or University hospital (STD polyclinic) for examinations.



## Hormonal birth control

You can buy hormonal birth control from the pharmacy with a prescription written by your doctor. The school nurse, student health care, health care center or family planning clinic helps you to choose the birth control method that suits you.

## Emergency contraception

If your birth control fails during sex you can buy a morning-after pill from the pharmacy. The pill should not be taken later than 72 hours after sex. Emergency contraception is not recommended to be used continually.

This couple has decided to have sex...

They have both been responsible and brought condoms with them to use as protection...



After intercourse they realize that the condom broke...

Together they go to the pharmacy and buy a morning-after pill.

# ABORTION

If you are considering an abortion, you should go to a health care center (public or private) to discuss your options with a doctor or a nurse.

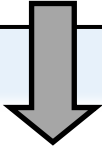
Pregnancy should be terminated as soon as possible.

If you decide to have an abortion, you can apply for the permission with your doctor.

Abortion should be done during the first 12 weeks of pregnancy. However, with a special permission an abortion can be done no later than pregnancy week 24.

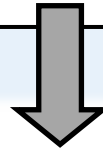
Examples of permits for abortion: if you are under 18 years old, if giving birth would cause remarkable stress because of the mother's or family's condition, if continuing the pregnancy threatens the mother's life or health or if the pregnancy is a result of a crime.

## HEALTH CARE CENTER



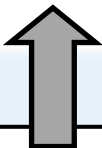
For example, if you believe you might have a sexually transmitted disease.

## FAMILY PLANNING CLINIC



For example, if you need birth control.

For example, if you are a student and you need guidance on sexual issues.



## SCHOOL AND STUDENT HEALTH CARE

For example, if you are working and you need guidance on sexual issues.



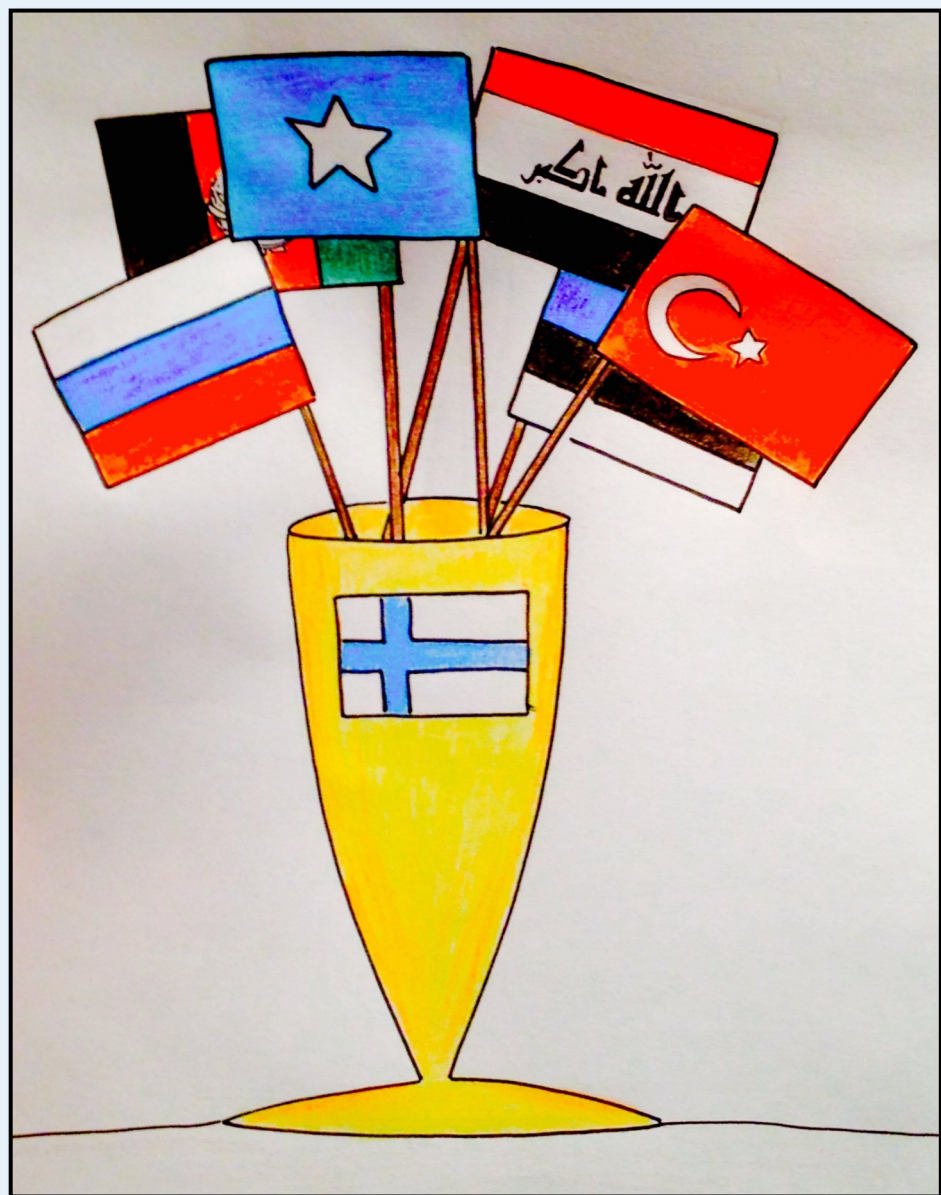
## OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH CARE

# SEXUAL HEALTH SERVICES

Everyone who lives permanently in Finland has the right to use our health care system.

Our primary health care system provides different services. These include, for example, our health care centers, school and student health care, child health and maternity clinics, the military health care and occupational health care.

In Finland your personal information is handled in a confidential way by the health care staff. That means that they are not allowed to share your information with outsiders or with people who do not take part in your care.



# RESPECT YOUR CULTURE

The meaning of the integration is not that you throw your own culture aside. The idea is to give you the understanding of how Finnish society works and what our laws and customs are like.

Hold on to your original culture's ways and customs which do not break the Finnish laws.



## IN FINLAND...

... it is normal to make eye contact without any sexual meaning.

... relationships are based on love.

... partners decide together if they want to have sex.

... you can say "no" and if someone says "no" you have to respect that.

... clothing does not send any sexual messages, a woman does not have to conceal herself.

## READ MORE

**Väestöliitto:**

[http://www.vaestoliitto.fi/in\\_english/multicultural\\_activities/](http://www.vaestoliitto.fi/in_english/multicultural_activities/)

[http://www.vaestoliitto.fi/in\\_english/sexual\\_health/](http://www.vaestoliitto.fi/in_english/sexual_health/)

**Save the children ry:**

<http://www.pelastakalapset.fi/en/>

**Mauste, sexual health promotion for immigrants:**

<http://blogit.jamk.fi/mauste/in-english/>

Thank you!

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