



# UN FIL TERED

Discussion Guide



## Introduction for Peer Educators

This guide is designed to help you facilitate supportive, informative group sessions about PrEP (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis) and sexual health using the Unfiltered campaign ([www.UnfilteredNY.org](http://www.UnfilteredNY.org)). Unfiltered is a docu-series funded by the New York State Department of Health spotlighting Black and Brown New Yorkers as they share honest, everyday experiences about sexual wellness and PrEP.

As a peer educator, your role is to create a safe space where participants feel comfortable asking questions, sharing experiences, and supporting one another. The Unfiltered videos provide powerful conversation starters featuring real stories from Black and Brown New Yorkers, making it easier to normalize these important discussions in your community.

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## Core Principles

**Create Safety:** Establish ground rules about confidentiality, respect, and non-judgment from the start.

**Center Lived Experience:** Your personal experience and that of group members is valuable knowledge. The Unfiltered influencers model this by sharing their own authentic stories.

**Provide Accurate Information:** Share facts about PrEP while acknowledging what you don't know.

**Encourage Agency:** Support people in making their own informed decisions about their sexual health.

**Address Stigma:** Name and challenge HIV stigma, shame, and discrimination when it arises. Unfiltered helps reduce stigma by normalizing conversations about PrEP in communities of color.

**Highlight Cultural Relevance:** Acknowledge that communities of color face disproportionate HIV impact and have historically been underrepresented in PrEP use.

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## About the Unfiltered Campaign

Unfiltered is a docu-series designed to raise awareness about PrEP for HIV prevention for Black and Brown New Yorkers. The campaign features eight influencers, artists, and advocates from across New York State sharing their personal stories:

- Yves Mathieu East - Artist and activist championing connection as self-care
- Jade Verette - Chef and podcast host platforming Black joy and encouraging partner communication
- Leo Herrera - Writer, artist, and activist challenging PrEP stigma while addressing cultural barriers
- Mila Jam - Pop artist and advocate encouraging community leadership for PrEP access
- Boy Radio - Musician, artist, and actor normalizing PrEP as routine physical wellness
- Sydnee Washington - Comedian emphasizing PrEP for Black cisgender women
- Gabriel Ocasio-Cortez - Community worker, accessibility activist, and artist advocating for better sexual health messaging for communities with special needs
- Raquel Willis - Author and activist dedicated to elevating the voices of Black transgender people and advancing gender justice
- All episodes and materials are available at [UnfilteredNY.org](https://UnfilteredNY.org)

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## Before the Session

### Preparation Checklist

- Review Unfiltered campaign videos at [UnfilteredNY.org](https://unfilteredny.org)
- Select 1-2 videos (less than 10 minutes each) to show during the session
- Download campaign graphics and social media toolkit from [UnfilteredNY.org/social-media-toolkit.html](https://unfilteredny.org/social-media-toolkit.html)
- Prepare handouts with local clinic information and hotlines
- Arrange seating in a circle for equal participation
- Have condoms, lube, and safer sex supplies available
- Print Unfiltered campaign posters (available at [UnfilteredNY.org/social-media-toolkit.html](https://unfilteredny.org/social-media-toolkit.html))

### Materials to Have on Hand

- PrEP information (from your organization and/or from [unfilteredny.org/faqs.html](https://unfilteredny.org/faqs.html))
- Unfiltered campaign materials (e.g., poster with QR code)
- Local clinic and pharmacy contact information
- Insurance and assistance program resources
- Questions for healthcare providers handout (located in Appendix 1)
- Paper and pens for activities
- Tissues (conversations can be emotional)
- Device to show Unfiltered videos

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## Session Structure (90 minutes)

### Opening (15 minutes)

#### Welcome and Introductions

- Introduce yourself and your role
- Have participants share names and pronouns (if comfortable)
- Use an icebreaker: “What brings you here today?” or “What does sexual wellness mean to you?”

**Establish Ground Rules Together**

- What's shared here stays here (confidentiality)
- Respect different experiences and perspectives
- No judgment—everyone's journey is their own
- One person speaks at a time
- It's okay to pass or just listen
- Respect people's pronouns and identities

**Introduce Unfiltered Campaign (2-3 minutes)**

- Briefly explain that Unfiltered is a campaign supported by the New York State Department of Health featuring real Black and Brown New Yorkers sharing their stories about PrEP and sexual health
- Mention that today's session will include watching an Unfiltered video to start our conversation
- Let participants know they can find more stories at [UnfilteredNY.org](https://unfilteredny.org)

**Video Viewing and Discussion (30 minutes)**

**Show Unfiltered Video (10 minutes or less)** Choose one episode that resonates with your group's demographics or interests. Each influencer brings a unique perspective.

**Facilitated Discussion (20 minutes) Use these prompts after viewing:**

- What stood out to you in this story?
- What did you relate to?
- What surprised you?
- What questions does this raise for you?
- How does this person's experience connect to your own life or community?

**Main Content (25 minutes)****PrEP Basics Discussion (Weave in key Unfiltered campaign messages):**

- PrEP is 99% effective at preventing HIV through sexual transmission when taken as prescribed.
- There is a greater unmet need for PrEP in communities of color—Black and Brown communities face disproportionate HIV impact but have historically been underrepresented in PrEP use, especially Black and Latina women.
- PrEP is for all people who are sexually active, regardless of gender identity, sexual orientation, relationship status, or age.
- Taking PrEP doesn't define someone's identity or mean they're being promiscuous.



- Taking PrEP doesn't mean someone is having sex with people who have HIV.
- Anyone can get HIV, regardless of who they have sex with or how they have sex.
- There are different types of PrEP (daily pill, injectable, on-demand) so users can choose what fits their lifestyle.

### Interactive Elements (Choose 1-2)

**Small Group Discussions:** Break into pairs or small groups to discuss what they learned from the Unfiltered video and how it changed their perspective on PrEP.

**Myth-Busting Activity:** Write common myths about PrEP on cards (drawing from campaign talking points), have the group identify and correct them together.

**Role-Play Exercise:** Practice asking a doctor about PrEP using the healthcare provider questions handout (Appendix 1), or practice discussing PrEP with a partner.

**Website Exploration:** If participants have phones, have them visit [UnfilteredNY.org](https://UnfilteredNY.org) together and explore other influencer stories that resonate with them.

### Addressing Common Concerns (10 minutes)

Guide discussion around topics that frequently arise, connecting back to Unfiltered stories when relevant:

- Cost and insurance coverage (Raquel Willis addresses affordable access)
- Accessing PrEP without judgment (Most of the influencers speak to this including Yves Mathieu East. Leo Herrera also discusses the history of PrEP and judgment around PrEP, especially during its early days)
- Discussing PrEP with partners (Jade Verette and Sydnee Washington both emphasize communication)
- Remembering to take daily medication (Boy Radio discusses routine wellness)
- PrEP and the transgender community (Mila Jam and Raquel Willis both speak to this)
- Stigma from healthcare providers or community (Leo Herrera discusses cultural barriers and Mila Jam discusses having found a healthcare provider where she feels seen and comfortable)
- Accessibility for people with disabilities (Gabriel Ocasio-Cortez highlights this need)
- PrEP availability for women and women taking control of their sexual health (Jade Verette and Sydnee Washington both discuss this)

### Resources and Next Steps (10 minutes)

- Direct participants to [UnfilteredNY.org](https://UnfilteredNY.org) for more stories and resources
- Share local clinic information
- Discuss patient assistance programs
- Provide hotline numbers for questions

- Explain how to make an appointment
- Distribute take-home materials including Unfiltered campaign materials
- Encourage participants to follow campaign influencers and use #UnfilteredNY when sharing their own stories

### Closing (10 minutes)

- Invite final questions or reflections
  - Reminder about confidentiality
  - Appreciation for participation
  - Share how they can stay connected to the campaign (social media, website)
  - Information about next session (if recurring)
  - Brief closing exercise: "One thing you're taking away today is..."
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## Facilitation Tips

**If Someone Dominates the Conversation:** Gently redirect. "Thanks for sharing. Let's hear from someone we haven't heard from yet."

**If Someone Shares Misinformation:** Correct gently with facts, using campaign messaging. "I've heard that too, but current research shows PrEP is 99% effective at preventing HIV through sexual transmission and is for anyone who is sexually active, not just specific communities."

**If Someone Gets Emotional:** Validate their feelings. "That sounds really difficult. Would you like to take a moment?" The Unfiltered videos can bring up personal experiences.

**If You Don't Know an Answer:** Be honest. "That's a great question. I don't know, but let me find out and follow up. In the meantime, you can explore more at UnfilteredNY.org."

**If Conflict Arises:** Return to ground rules. "Let's remember we're here to support each other and respect different perspectives, just like the Unfiltered influencers model for us."

**If Silence Occurs:** Don't rush to fill it. Give people time to think. You can reference something from the video: "Going back to what [influencer name] said about..."

**If Technical Issues Occur:** Have a backup plan. You can facilitate discussion using campaign graphics and talking points if video won't play.

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## Discussion Prompts

Use the open-ended questions below to generate conversation, drawing from Unfiltered themes. Note: These are meant to be a few examples and not all need to be addressed or discussed.

- What have you heard about PrEP before today? How does what you learned from Unfiltered compare?
  - The influencers in Unfiltered come from different backgrounds and experiences. Whose story resonated with you most and why?
  - What concerns do you have about starting PrEP?
  - How do you think PrEP could change your life or relationships?
  - What barriers might prevent you from accessing PrEP in your community?
  - [Influencer name] talked about [specific topic]. What did you think about their perspective?
  - How comfortable do you feel talking about sexual health in your community? What would make these conversations easier?
  - What support would help you stay on PrEP if you decided to start?
  - How might you talk to friends, family, or partners about PrEP?
  - What role can we play in reducing stigma around PrEP in communities of color?
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## Handling Sensitive Topics

**HIV Status Disclosure:** Never pressure anyone to disclose. Create space where people can share if they choose, just as the Unfiltered influencers share their stories authentically.

**Sexual Practices:** Use inclusive, non-judgmental language. Avoid assumptions about gender, sexuality, or behavior. Remember the campaign message: PrEP is for all people who are sexually active.

**Substance Use:** Acknowledge the connection between substance use and sexual health without judgment. Yves Mathieu East shares his story of sobriety alongside sexual liberation.

**Trauma:** Be prepared that discussions about sexual health may bring up past experiences. Have crisis resources available.

**Religion and Culture:** Respect diverse backgrounds while providing accurate health information. Leo Herrera addresses cultural barriers in communities of color.

**Disability and Accessibility:** Gabriel Ocasio-Cortez highlights the need for better sexual health messaging for communities with special needs. Ensure your physical space and materials are accessible.



**Race and Representation:** Center the voices and experiences of Black and Brown participants. The campaign was created specifically to address the disproportionate impact of HIV on communities of color.

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## Key Campaign Messages to Emphasize

Use these talking points throughout your facilitation:

1. **There is a greater unmet need for PrEP for HIV prevention in communities of color.** While PrEP is 99% effective at preventing HIV through sexual transmission, Black and Brown communities—especially Black and Latina women—have historically been underrepresented in PrEP use.
  2. **People of color normalizing conversations about PrEP reduces stigma.** That's why Unfiltered features real Black and Brown New Yorkers sharing their stories.
  3. **PrEP is for all people who are sexually active,** regardless of gender identity, sexual orientation, age, or relationship status. Taking PrEP doesn't define your identity.
  4. **Taking PrEP doesn't mean you're promiscuous or having sex with people who have HIV.** It means you're being proactive about your sexual health.
  5. **Anyone can get HIV,** regardless of who they have sex with or how they have sex. PrEP is an effective way to lower your risk.
  6. **There are different types of PrEP** that give users the power to choose what best fits their lifestyle.
  7. **You deserve respectful, stigma-free healthcare.** If you face barriers, there are programs and advocates who can help.
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## Ways to Integrate Unfiltered Beyond the Session

### Amplify Online

- Share Unfiltered videos, graphics, and reels on your organization's social media
- Use the official hashtag #UnfilteredNY to increase visibility
- Tag influencers and encourage participants to follow them
- Include campaign information in newsletters or on your website

### Create Physical Presence

- Display an Unfiltered poster in your space (download at [UnfilteredNY.org/social-media-toolkit.html](https://unfilteredny.org/social-media-toolkit.html))
- Loop videos in waiting rooms, lobbies, or common areas
- Include campaign materials in safer sex kits
- Add QR codes linking to [UnfilteredNY.org](https://unfilteredny.org) on printed materials

**Host Events**

- Screen multiple Unfiltered episodes for a longer viewing event
- Host Instagram or Facebook Live sessions discussing the campaign
- Organize panel discussions with local advocates inspired by the campaign
- Create themed events around specific influencer stories

**Engage Your Community**

- Ask participants to respond to campaign prompts on social media
- Invite them to share their own stories (with consent)
- Highlight local champions doing work similar to the Unfiltered influencers
- Connect people to the campaign between sessions

**Self-Care for Facilitators**

Facilitating these groups can be emotionally demanding:

- Debrief with a co-facilitator or supervisor after sessions
- Set boundaries about contact outside of group time
- Recognize you can't solve everyone's problems
- Connect with other peer educators for support
- Take breaks when you need them
- Watch the Unfiltered videos when you need inspiration—these stories remind us why this work matters

**Follow-Up and Continuity**

- Keep a resource list updated with current information
- Connect participants with clinical services as needed
- Share new Unfiltered episodes
- Consider creating a private online space for ongoing support (with consent)
- Gather anonymous feedback to improve future sessions
- Track which influencer stories resonate most with your group
- Stay connected to the campaign at [UnfilteredNY.org](https://UnfilteredNY.org)

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**Additional Resources****Unfiltered Campaign:**

- Website: [UnfilteredNY.org](https://UnfilteredNY.org)

- Social Media Toolkit: [UnfilteredNY.org/social-media-toolkit.html](https://unfilteredny.org/social-media-toolkit.html)
- Series Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QFuTOXMA6-E&t=4s>
- Official Hashtag: #UnfilteredNY
- Campaign Contact: [UnfilteredNY@impactmarketing.com](mailto:UnfilteredNY@impactmarketing.com)

**For Facilitators:**

- NYS PrEP Provider Directory - <https://providerdirectory.aidsinstituteny.org/>
- NYS DOH PrEP Assistance Program - <https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/aids/general/resources/adap/prep.htm>
- PrEP Payment Options - [https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/aids/general/prep/docs/prep\\_payment\\_options.pdf](https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/aids/general/prep/docs/prep_payment_options.pdf)
- Additional information on PrEP for women - <https://www.health.ny.gov/publications/9915.pdf>
- Local health department resources - [https://www.health.ny.gov/contact/contact\\_information/](https://www.health.ny.gov/contact/contact_information/)
- Regional LGBTQ+ health centers - <https://gaycenter.org/advocacy/lgbt-health-network/>
- HIV prevention organizations in your area - <https://providerdirectory.aidsinstituteny.org/>

**Crisis Resources to Have Available:**

- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 988
- LGBT National Hotline: 1-888-843-4564
- National Sexual Assault Hotline: 1-800-656-4673
- National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-SAFE (7233)
- Local crisis services and mental health resources

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**Remember**

Your role is to facilitate, not to have all the answers. The Unfiltered campaign gives you powerful tools—real stories from real people—to spark authentic conversations. Creating a space where people feel heard, respected, and empowered to make their own decisions is the most important thing you can do.

These stories matter. Your work matters. Thank you for being part of this movement to normalize PrEP and reduce stigma in communities of color.

**No scripts. Just truth. #UnfilteredNY**



### Appendix 1 – Handout: Questions to Ask Your Doctor About PrEP

1. I learned about PrEP for HIV prevention. Does your clinic prescribe PrEP?
2. Of the different PrEP options available (daily pill, injectable, on-demand), which would work best for me?
3. What are the potential side effects, and how common are they?
4. How often will I need to get tested for HIV and other STIs while on PrEP?
5. What other lab work or monitoring is required while taking PrEP?
6. How much will PrEP cost me, and what assistance programs are available to help cover the costs?
7. How can I protect myself against other STIs besides HIV?
8. What happens if I miss a dose? How important is consistency?
9. Can I take PrEP if I have other health conditions or take other medications?
10. How long does it take for PrEP to become effective after I start taking it?
11. If I want to stop taking PrEP in the future, what's the process for discontinuing it safely?

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## Appendix 1

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