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Now that your partner knows you have herpes... ^[1]

Dear Alice,

I recently told my girlfriend I have herpes. Since that night I can feel her moving emotionally away from me. What can I tell her to comfort her and continue moving forward in our relationship?

Answer

Dear Reader,

To get a better sense of how your girlfriend might be feeling, it could be helpful to think back to the day that you learned you had herpes and try to recall the following: What were your reactions? How long did it take for you to accept and feel comfortable with the news? Just as it may have been difficult for you at first, your girlfriend may be having a difficult time with the news. Try to remember what helped you understand herpes and accept living with herpes. Did you read a particularly informative book? Join a support group? Talk to someone at a herpes or sexually transmitted infection (STI) hotline? Some of the same things that helped you work through your initial feelings might also help your girlfriend.

A lack of knowledge and understanding of a condition can contribute to a fear of it and a desire for distance from it. You might want to ask her what questions she has. Explaining some of what you've learned about how the virus is transmitted and how it affects the body might make her more comfortable dealing with the news about your infection. Risk of infection is likely one of your girlfriend's chief concerns. It would be a good idea to discuss how you can work together to keep her risk of contracting herpes low. For information and ideas, check out the [American Sexual Health Association's \(ASHA\) Herpes Resource Center](#) ^[2].

You and your partner can speak privately and confidentially with a health care provider. In addition, you may want to consider talking to a trusted therapist. Finally, don't forget to search [Go Ask Alice! Sexual & Reproductive Health](#) ^[3] archives for more questions and answers on herpes. There are some great tips for communication about this and other difficult subject matters in [Relationships](#) ^[4] archives. While you may not be in the exact same situation as some of the askers, you'll still get some great tips on how to communicate better in your relationship!

Best of luck to you!

Alice!

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