



**SExT: Sex Education by Theatre**, an award-winning peer education workshop and performance program, was founded by Dr. Shira Taylor as her doctoral thesis (University of Toronto) to put youth from a community where talking about sex is cultural taboo centre stage. SExT began its journey in Toronto's Thorncliffe/Flemingdon Park, designated "Neighborhood Improvement Areas" and the hub of highly publicized protests opposing comprehensive sex education. SExT takes into account the charged political climate surrounding sex education by using performance art to empower youth to reflect on, challenge, and communicate their realities in a way that celebrates diverse identities. Artists Elena Juatco (CTV's Jann) and Hamza Haq (CTV's Transplant) act as mentors and creative consultants. Since 2014, SExT has been performed 100+ times for 10,000+ youth. SExT was performed at the 2016 Toronto Fringe and SummerWorks to rave reviews (NNNN/Critic's Pick-NOW Magazine; Exceptional Ensemble-The Torontoist). Former Premier Kathleen Wynne attended a performance and pledged support for scaling up the approach, leading to a 2017 school tour. SExT was awarded the 2018 ArtBridges/ToileDesArts National Award for Remarkable Innovation in Community-Engaged Arts. Since 2018, SExT has toured nationally to Indigenous communities disproportionately affected by HIV/STIs in partnership with the Canadian Foundation for AIDS Research (CANFAR). In 2019, SExT responded to gonorrhea and syphilis outbreaks in the Northwest Territories in partnership with the Chief Public Health Officer. SExT has released music videos on consent ([Bodak Consent](#)), domestic violence ([Tunnel Vision](#)), and COVID-19 ([It Wasn't Me & Quarantine Dream](#)). SExT is the recipient of Ontario Arts Council, Toronto Arts Council, and ArtReach grants and has been featured in the media 40+ times, including on CBC, Breakfast Television, CTV, Global, and Sirius XM.

**Dr. Shira Taylor (Director & Co-Producer)** is a public health advocate and theatre artist who completed her PhD at the Dalla Lana School of Public Health. For her dissertation, she created the award-winning SExT: Sex Education by Theatre. Shira received the TD Michaëlle Jean Bursary for excellence in addressing issues of national concern through the arts for her work with SExT. She was one of 50 women featured in "Today's Wonder Women: Everyday Superheroes Who Are Changing the World." Shira and her puppet doppelganger Lucy performed at five Toronto Fringe Festivals with the award-winning theatre company, Shakey-Shake and Friends.

**Isfandiyar Virani (Co-Producer, Video Editor, & Designer)** is a Pakistani- Born, Qatar-raised resident of Toronto's Thorncliffe Park neighbourhood, a hot zone for COVID-19 cases. He was unfortunately infected with COVID-19 in December of 2020 and could not breathe normally or even do simple tasks for months. Even today, he is affected by some of the side effects. After being tired of this widespread disease, he decided to take this lockdown into his own hands and made a thrilling Fringe show that showcases the state of sexual health during the pandemic in a comedic way.

**Lauren Chang (Dramaturge & Cast)** is a second-generation Jamaican-Chinese recent anthropology graduate (University of Guelph) who joined SExT as a peer educator in 2016 when she was a Grade 11 student at Marc Garneau Collegiate Institute. Lauren loves meeting new people and interviewed Indigenous students across Northern Saskatchewan and the Northwest Territories about their sexual health realities during SExT's National Tours. Her special talents include yodelling and writing parodies of popular rap songs

**Thuriga Bala (Publicity & Cast)** is a Toronto-based film and theatre actor. Her parents are Sri Lankan, and she was raised in the multicultural Flemingdon Park neighbourhood. She graduated from Humber College with a Broadcasting Radio Diploma in 2018 with the goal of joining the entertainment industry and making change. In 2019, she signed with AMP Talent Inc. To Thuriga, SExT isn't just a bunch of youth teaching youth about sex ed, it's about creating a safe space where people can feel comfortable addressing topics that matter to them.