# Virgin Island redefines intimacy with therapeutic journey for young adults



In a world increasingly shaped by unrealistic portrayals of intimacy, Channel 4's innovative new series, "Virgin Island," presents a refreshingly candid exploration of sexual awakening. Taped on a serene Mediterranean island, this six-part programme invites twelve young adults, all aged between 22 and 30, on a transformative journey to lose their virginity while receiving guidance from seasoned sexologists, Dr. Danielle Harel and Celeste Hirschman. This series aims to dismantle the stigma surrounding virginity and sexual exploration, particularly against the backdrop of societal pressures and media portrayals that often distort the nuances of intimacy.

The show employs an array of therapeutic approaches, including group sessions and surrogate partner therapy, intended to provide a safe space for participants to explore intimacy. Dr. Harel and Ms. Hirschman, both co-founders of the Somatica Institute, have been vocal about the necessity of such an environment, arguing that conventional media often propagates harmful stereotypes regarding sexual encounters. They assert that traditional depictions of sex on television, characterised by quick and scripted encounters, contribute to unrealistic expectations, thereby exacerbating intimacy issues. Celeste Hirschman articulated this concern, stating that much of what is portrayed is “abysmal,” suggesting that it fosters false beliefs about what sexual experiences should entail.

Integral to the series are trained surrogate partners, who help participants navigate their emotional hurdles. These surrogates foster meaningful connections, offering support in a controlled, therapeutic setting. By maintaining a triadic relationship that includes a therapist, the show creates a layered dynamic that addresses potential emotional complexities, such as attachment or performance anxieties, in real-time. This model ensures that all parties engage in open communication and emotional honesty, cultivating skills that are essential for sustaining intimacy beyond the confines of the show.

Interestingly, the backdrop of societal expectations plays a pivotal role in shaping the participants' experiences. Research from University College London suggests that one in eight 26-year-olds remains a virgin, a stark increase from previous generations, indicating a shift in sexual norms. Dr. Harel suggests this is largely due to daunting societal pressures that come from multiple fronts—including digital portrayals of relationships, the rapid-fire nature of dating apps that can often leave individuals feeling overwhelmed and unprepared for genuine connection.

Moreover, the show's structure counters the often superficial lessons gleaned from mainstream media, where influences from pornography and romantic comedies frequently skew perspectives on sexual intimacy. Dr. Harel emphasises the disparity between these portrayals and the authenticity required for genuine sexual experiences, explaining that many young people feel they must "figure it all out" before attempting to engage intimately, perpetuating a cycle of unnecessary anxiety.

The series not only aims to challenge these misconceptions but also serves as a platform for personal growth, allowing participants to explore their sexuality and develop essential relational skills in a supportive atmosphere. Ultimately, "Virgin Island" aspires to redefine the discourse surrounding virginity, intimacy, and personal discovery, by presenting a narrative that values authenticity and emotional connection over sensationalism.

As it rolls out to audiences, the hope remains that "Virgin Island" will usher in a new age of responsible and realistic portrayals of intimacy on screen, offering viewers not only entertainment but valuable insights into the complexities of human relationships.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraph 1: [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/tv/article-14694809/Virgin-Island-surrogate-lose-virginity-sex-TV-harmful.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.passiondistribution.com/news/news/passion-distribution-and-double-act-partner-up-on-virgin-island/)
2. Paragraph 2: [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/tv/article-14694809/Virgin-Island-surrogate-lose-virginity-sex-TV-harmful.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.passiondistribution.com/news/news/passion-distribution-and-double-act-partner-up-on-virgin-island/)
3. Paragraph 3: [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/tv/article-14694809/Virgin-Island-surrogate-lose-virginity-sex-TV-harmful.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.passiondistribution.com/news/news/passion-distribution-and-double-act-partner-up-on-virgin-island/)
4. Paragraph 4: [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/tv/article-14694809/Virgin-Island-surrogate-lose-virginity-sex-TV-harmful.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.passiondistribution.com/news/news/passion-distribution-and-double-act-partner-up-on-virgin-island/), [[7]](https://www.newsminimalist.com/articles/channel-4s-virgin-island-dating-show-to-feature-celebrity-sexperts-and-12-newcomers-4d7675ac)
5. Paragraph 5: [[3]](https://www.somaticainstitute.com/how-we-got-here/), [[4]](https://www.somaticainstitute.com/faculty/danielle-harel/), [[7]](https://www.newsminimalist.com/articles/channel-4s-virgin-island-dating-show-to-feature-celebrity-sexperts-and-12-newcomers-4d7675ac)
6. Paragraph 6: [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/tv/article-14694809/Virgin-Island-surrogate-lose-virginity-sex-TV-harmful.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.passiondistribution.com/news/news/passion-distribution-and-double-act-partner-up-on-virgin-island/), [[4]](https://www.somaticainstitute.com/faculty/danielle-harel/)
7. Paragraph 7: [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/tv/article-14694809/Virgin-Island-surrogate-lose-virginity-sex-TV-harmful.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[4]](https://www.somaticainstitute.com/faculty/danielle-harel/), [[6]](https://www.somaticainstitute.com/about-us/)

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## Bibliography

* <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/tv/article-14694809/Virgin-Island-surrogate-lose-virginity-sex-TV-harmful.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
* <https://www.passiondistribution.com/news/news/passion-distribution-and-double-act-partner-up-on-virgin-island/> - Passion Distribution has acquired worldwide rights to the new reality series 'Virgin Island,' commissioned by Channel 4. The six-part series features 12 virgins undergoing intimacy coaching on a luxury island retreat, addressing issues like intimacy anxiety and societal pressures. The program includes individual, group, and somatic therapies guided by sexologists Celeste Hirschman and Danielle Harel, along with surrogate partners Kat and Andre. The series aims to provide a realistic portrayal of intimacy and relationships, contrasting with the often unrealistic depictions in media. 'Virgin Island' is set to be launched at MIPCOM and is marketed for international distribution.
* <https://www.somaticainstitute.com/how-we-got-here/> - Dr. Danielle Harel and Celeste Hirschman co-founded the Somatica Institute over a decade ago, aiming to revolutionize sex and relationship coaching. They identified a gap in traditional therapies and developed the Somatica Method, an experiential approach to intimacy and relationships. Their combined expertise includes Dr. Harel's Ph.D. in Human Sexuality and Hirschman's Master's in Human Sexuality Studies. The institute trains the next generation of sex and relationship coaches, empowering individuals to achieve fulfilling relationships and personal growth.
* <https://www.somaticainstitute.com/faculty/danielle-harel/> - Dr. Danielle Harel is a co-creator of the Somatica® Method and co-founder of the Somatica Institute. With a Ph.D. in Human Sexuality, a graduate degree in Clinical Social Work, and a Bachelor's in Psychology and Educational Counseling, she has dedicated over 20 years to resolving clients' sexual challenges and training sex and relationship coaches. Dr. Harel integrates various modalities, including Hakomi, attachment theory, and neuro-patterning, to guide individuals toward their fullest potential. She has also co-authored books and is frequently quoted as an expert in publications.
* <https://www.celesteanddanielle.com/about-danielle/> - Dr. Danielle Harel, co-founder of the Somatica Institute, is a sexologist and entrepreneur with a passion for personal growth and intimacy. Holding a Ph.D. in Human Sexuality, a graduate degree in Clinical Social Work, and a Bachelor's in Psychology and Educational Counseling, she co-created the Somatica® Method. Dr. Harel has co-authored books like 'Making Love Real' and 'Cockfidence' and is frequently quoted as an expert in publications. She is also involved in television projects, including an upcoming docu-reality series on a major British TV channel.
* <https://www.somaticainstitute.com/about-us/> - The Somatica Institute is a global leader in sex and relationship coach training, dedicated to teaching and developing the next generation of successful coaches. Since its inception, the institute has empowered hundreds of aspiring sex coaches worldwide. Its mission includes training individuals in the Somatica Method, a holistic approach to intimacy and relationships. The institute offers various certifications and benefits, with faculty members who are experts in sex and relationship coaching, guiding students through dynamic training programs.
* <https://www.newsminimalist.com/articles/channel-4s-virgin-island-dating-show-to-feature-celebrity-sexperts-and-12-newcomers-4d7675ac> - Channel 4's new dating show, 'Virgin Island,' is set to launch with celebrity sexperts Celeste Hirschman and Danielle Harel. The show features 12 virgins participating in intimacy coaching at a luxury resort, addressing intimacy anxiety. Previously titled 'The Intimacy Retreat,' the show faced challenges in finding participants. It will be officially announced at the MIPCOM event in Cannes, France, later this week. The six-part series includes 'sexological bodyworkers' and 'surrogate partners' to guide the participants. The format is already being marketed for international distribution.