# Channel 4’s Virgin Island breaks new ground with frank intimacy coaching for virgins



The world of reality television has ventured into uncharted territory with Channel 4's provocative new series, *Virgin Island.* This six-part show centres around twelve individuals—all of whom are virgins—seeking to break free from the anxieties surrounding intimacy. Set against the sun-kissed backdrop of Croatia, participants are guided by a diverse ensemble of sex coaches, each bringing unique approaches to the complex terrain of human sexuality and emotional connection.

The contestants, ranging in age from 22 to 30, are paired with an eclectic mix of experts, including sexological bodyworkers and somatic artists. Among the most prominent figures is Dr Danielle Harel, a California-based sexologist with over two decades of experience in the field. Dr Harel co-founded the Somatica Institute and is well-versed in the psychological underpinnings of intimacy, having researched 'orgasmic birth'—the phenomenon of experiencing sexual arousal during childbirth. Her methodology emphasises tactile connection and emotional presence, aiming to dismantle the barriers many individuals face when engaging with others. "If you ask me what's better, to see so much violence on TV or sex, I'll choose sex any minute," she asserted, defending the show's frank exploration of intimacy.

Thomas Rocourt, a French somatic coach, also features prominently in the series, employing unconventional techniques such as 'play-fighting' and contact improvisation to help contestants navigate their feelings about intimacy. With a background in shamanism and movement practices, Thomas aims to foster a sense of joy and comfort in physical connection. During a session with contestant Emma, who had previously struggled with low self-esteem, he gently guided her through touch therapy to ease her anxieties. Such approaches reflect a growing trend in therapy, combining playful elements with serious emotional work to facilitate deeper connections.

Joining these seasoned experts is Aisha Paris Smith, a UK-based somatic sexologist known for her direct, hands-on approach. Aisha's work caters to individuals looking to overcome barriers to intimacy, including those stemming from trauma or societal pressure. Her sessions cover a range of topics, from masturbation techniques to elaborate sex toy tutorials, enabling participants to explore their desires in a safe environment. Aisha has expressed that the filming experience has been educational for both herself and the contestants, although she has had limited airtime thus far.

Joy Rigel, another member of the coaching team hailing from Philadelphia, brings over twenty-five years of experience to the show. She focuses on emotional intimacy and relationship coaching, utilising mindfulness and meditation techniques to guide participants. In a particularly revealing moment, she worked closely with Jason, a contestant who often deflected his discomfort with humour. Joy’s techniques helped him gradually acclimatise to physical connection, showcasing the emotional work that lies at the heart of the series.

The show’s premise comes at a notable time when the average age for losing virginity has steadily risen, attributed to factors like increased access to pornography and heightened body image issues. These anxieties resonate not only with the contestants but also with a broader audience, reflecting societal shifts regarding sexual intimacy. Passion Distribution has noted the show’s potential to spark conversations surrounding these topics, indicating a wider cultural lens through which viewers can examine their own relationships with intimacy.

Despite the bold nature of the programme, reactions to *Virgin Island* have been mixed. While some praise its candid approach to a typically taboo subject, others express concern that it commodifies intimacy for entertainment purposes. Nevertheless, the cast members themselves reveal a deeper need for the experience; many of them articulate feelings of isolation and shame related to their virginity. In a world where intimacy is often portrayed unrealistically, *Virgin Island* seeks to create a space where vulnerability can flourish.

Ultimately, *Virgin Island* stands as a controversial yet insightful exploration into human intimacy, tailored to meet the needs of a generation grappling with increasing emotional barriers. As the episodes unfold, viewers are encouraged to witness not merely the act of losing virginity, but the profound emotional journeys that accompany it.

### Reference Map

* Paragraph 1: [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/relationships/article-14714839/Virgin-Islands-middle-aged-sex-therapists-giving-intimate-massages-touch-therapy-20-contestants-include-French-therapist-drag-clown-alter-ego.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[3]](https://www.mediamole.co.uk/entertainment/tv/news/channel-4-gives-go-ahead-to-reality-show-virgin-island_558397.html), [[4]](https://www.tvzoneuk.com/post/virginisland-c4realityseries-ann5)
* Paragraph 2: [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/relationships/article-14714839/Virgin-Islands-middle-aged-sex-therapists-giving-intimate-massages-touch-therapy-20-contestants-include-French-therapist-drag-clown-alter-ego.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]](https://www.mediamole.co.uk/entertainment/tv/news/channel-4-gives-go-ahead-to-reality-show-virgin-island_558397.html)
* Paragraph 3: [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/relationships/article-14714839/Virgin-Islands-middle-aged-sex-therapists-giving-intimate-massages-touch-therapy-20-contestants-include-French-therapist-drag-clown-alter-ego.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[4]](https://www.tvzoneuk.com/post/virginisland-c4realityseries-ann5)
* Paragraph 4: [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/relationships/article-14714839/Virgin-Islands-middle-aged-sex-therapists-giving-intimate-massages-touch-therapy-20-contestants-include-French-therapist-drag-clown-alter-ego.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[3]](https://www.mediamole.co.uk/entertainment/tv/news/channel-4-gives-go-ahead-to-reality-show-virgin-island_558397.html)
* Paragraph 5: [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/relationships/article-14714839/Virgin-Islands-middle-aged-sex-therapists-giving-intimate-massages-touch-therapy-20-contestants-include-French-therapist-drag-clown-alter-ego.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/)
* Paragraph 6: [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/relationships/article-14714839/Virgin-Islands-middle-aged-sex-therapists-giving-intimate-massages-touch-therapy-20-contestants-include-French-therapist-drag-clown-alter-ego.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[6]](https://www.messengernewspapers.co.uk/news/24056930.channel-4-casting-virgins-feature-intimacy-retreat/)
* Paragraph 7: [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/relationships/article-14714839/Virgin-Islands-middle-aged-sex-therapists-giving-intimate-massages-touch-therapy-20-contestants-include-French-therapist-drag-clown-alter-ego.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/), [[5]](https://www.tvzoneuk.com/post/theintimacyretreat-c4repann1)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/relationships/article-14714839/Virgin-Islands-middle-aged-sex-therapists-giving-intimate-massages-touch-therapy-20-contestants-include-French-therapist-drag-clown-alter-ego.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.passiondistribution.com/news/news/passion-distribution-and-double-act-partner-up-on-virgin-island/> - Passion Distribution has acquired worldwide rights to 'Virgin Island,' a six-part reality series commissioned by Channel 4. The show features 12 virgins undergoing a bespoke program of treatments designed by leading sexologists on a luxury island retreat. Aimed at addressing intimacy anxieties, the series explores issues like the rise in age for losing virginity, influenced by factors such as easy access to pornography and body image concerns. The program is set to be launched at MIPCOM later this month.
3. <https://www.mediamole.co.uk/entertainment/tv/news/channel-4-gives-go-ahead-to-reality-show-virgin-island_558397.html> - Channel 4 has approved a new reality show titled 'Virgin Island,' which will follow 12 virgins experiencing intimacy anxiety as they participate in sex coaching from experts Celeste Hirschman and Danielle Harel. The series aims to help participants overcome their fears and insecurities related to intimacy and sex. The show is set to be filmed over five weeks on a luxury island location, featuring various therapies to assist the participants.
4. <https://www.tvzoneuk.com/post/virginisland-c4realityseries-ann5> - Channel 4 has commissioned a six-part dating series called 'Virgin Island,' a social experiment exploring sexual attraction. The twist is that all contestants identify as virgins and have never had sex before. Throughout the series, viewers will follow the twelve contestants as they take tentative steps towards losing their virginity and delve into the science behind sexual attraction. The contestants will be coached by experts including Celeste Hirschman, Danielle Harel, Aisha, Thomas, Joy, Kat, and Andre.
5. <https://www.tvzoneuk.com/post/theintimacyretreat-c4repann1> - Channel 4 has commissioned a new six-part dating series titled 'The Intimacy Retreat' (formerly 'Virgin Island'). The series will bring together a group of virgins who've never had sex before to explore sexual attraction as they learn the skills in the art of intimacy. Viewers will follow the contestants as they take tentative steps towards losing their virginity and delve into the science behind attraction. The Intimacy Retreat is due to air on Channel 4 in 2025.
6. <https://www.messengernewspapers.co.uk/news/24056930.channel-4-casting-virgins-feature-intimacy-retreat/> - Channel 4 is casting adult virgins to feature in a new six-part documentary series titled 'The Intimacy Retreat.' The series will follow the journey of a group of adult virgins as they learn skills to help them with intimacy. Sexologists will run a Mediterranean island retreat to help people overcome their fears and insecurities when it comes to intimacy and sex. The program aims to address issues such as the rise in age for losing virginity and intimacy anxieties.
7. <https://www.standard.co.uk/showbiz/channel-4-sparks-outrage-with-show-about-school-that-teaches-virgins-how-to-have-sex-6583076.html> - Channel 4 sparked outrage after it screened a new show titled 'The Virgin School,' which featured a male virgin being taught how to have sex. The program followed James, a 26-year-old virgin from Kent, who visited a sex school in Amsterdam to learn 'the art of intimacy.' Viewers were subjected to the uncomfortable sight of James losing his virginity to a sex therapist. The show aimed to address issues related to intimacy and sexual experience.