

TALKING ABOUT SEXUALITY FOR SPECIAL NEEDS YOUTH POPULATIONS

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WHY DO PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES NEED AND WANT TO LEARN ABOUT SEXUALITY AND INTIMACY?

"So we can learn to have healthy relationships

"So we aren't lonely!"

"So we are able to make informed choices!"

"So we can pick the right person!"

"For help with the toughest part of the
relationship, making it last!"

"So we can be safe!"

"Because we all have desires/needs and that's
okay!"

REASONS, CONTINUED

- "To get correct information!"
- "To get resources and tools to make healthy sexual choices!"
- "So that people know their rights!"
- "So people with disabilities don't put themselves in bad situations!"
- "So we will know how to protect ourselves!"
- "So we can feel good about ourselves and our bodies!"
- "So we can be sexual self advocates, not just self advocates!"

SELF ADVOCATES SAY THAT SEXUAL SELF ADVOCACY MEANS

- ◉ "Speaking up for yourself, sexually
- ◉ "Getting information
- ◉ "Taking a stand
- ◉ "Saying to whomever - this is my choice
- ◉ "Stating your sexual limits with your partner, respecting others limits
- ◉ "Starting to do what you want with relationships

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

As a result of this session, participants will be able to:

- ◉ Explain what makes it difficult for parents to talk about sexuality with their children and discuss solutions to those barriers
- ◉ List topics and when to teach them
- ◉ Discuss ways to teach this topic to youth with developmental disabilities

AGENDA

- ◉ Messages we get and give
- ◉ Barriers to talking about the topic
- ◉ Human Sexual Development
- ◉ What to teach and when
- ◉ Tips for discussing
- ◉ Types of questions
- ◉ How to respond to values/opinion and personal questions
- ◉ Questions and Answers

WHAT IS SEXUALITY?

- ◉ Sexuality means more than intercourse or sex.
- ◉ It's about intimacy, connection, and belonging.
- ◉ It's about relationships. Friendships and sexual.
- ◉ It's about how we feel about being the gender we are.
- ◉ It's about how we feel about others and ourselves.
- ◉ It's about sexual expression and behavior.
- ◉ It's the total of who we are, what we believe, what we feel, and how we respond.

PAIR SHARE

- ◉ While you were growing up, What was the primary message you got from your parents about sexuality?
- ◉ These messages can be verbal and nonverbal.

MESSAGES MOST PEOPLE RECEIVED

- ◉ Don't do it until you are married
- ◉ Good girls don't
- ◉ Okay if you are male, but not female
- ◉ Don't get a girl pregnant or get pregnant
- ◉ You are on your own with this topic
- ◉ Here is a book and you can ask me questions
- ◉ Be safe
- ◉ It is not okay to talk about because..
 - Private
 - Shameful
 - Embarrassing

MESSAGES

- ◉ Most people didn't receive any positive messages about this topic.
- ◉ This is a healthy and normal part of life
- ◉ This topic can bring you lots of happiness and pleasure
- ◉ This topic is okay to talk about and have questions about

MESSAGES

- What messages do you think youth with developmental disabilities get?

MESSAGES YOUTH WITH SPECIAL NEEDS GET

- People with developmental disabilities:
 - Are not sexual beings
 - Should not have sex
 - Are innocent and childlike and need protection from sexuality
 - Are not responsible
 - Can not solve problems
 - Are unable to make good decisions about sexuality
 - Always make mistakes
 - Would not make good parents so should not have children
 - are different than their typical siblings

◉ GIVE POSITIVE MESSAGES

- ◉ This is a healthy and normal part of life
- ◉ This topic can bring you lots of happiness and pleasure
- ◉ This topic is okay to talk about and have questions about

BARRIERS

- ◉ Messages/Models we received
- ◉ Don't know what to cover and when or how much is too much
- ◉ Worried it gives permission
- ◉ No role models, what does it sound like?
- ◉ Awkward conversation

HUMAN SEXUAL DEVELOPMENT

- ◉ Development of Biological Sex
- ◉ Gender Assignment
- ◉ Development of Gender Identity & Societal Gender Role
- ◉ Development of Values and Attitudes About Sexuality
- ◉ Physical and Emotional Changes of Puberty

HUMAN SEXUAL DEVELOPMENT

- ◉ Development of Sexual Orientation
 - Affectional Attraction
 - Romantic Attraction
 - Erotic Attraction
- ◉ Development of Sexual Behavior
- ◉ Development of Sexual Identity

HUMAN SEXUAL DEVELOPMENT

- ◉ Development of Sexual Knowledge
- ◉ Development of Sexual Skills

INTERESTS, CONCERNS, AND BEHAVIORS

YOUNG CHILDREN

- Body parts and functions
- Genital touching
- Sex play
- Reproduction: "Where did I come from?"
- Roles as male/female
- Body image
- Need for privacy increases

INTERESTS, CONCERNS, AND BEHAVIORS

ADOLESCENTS

- Physical changes of puberty
- Hygiene: pimples and body odor
- Friendships
- Reproduction, Pregnancy, Birth, Pregnancy Options
- Sexual Expression
- Sexual feelings
- Masturbation
- Contraception and Sexually Transmitted Infections

ADOLESCENTS, CONTINUED

- Sexual Orientation
- Gender Identity
- Body Image
- Establishing and maintaining intimate relationships:
 - Ways of expressing affection
 - How to communicate with their partner
 - Deciding about having sex
 - Giving and receiving pleasure
- Breaking Up

INTERESTS, CONCERNS, AND BEHAVIORS

ADULTS

- Pregnancy, Birth
- Parenting
- Contraception, Sexually Transmitted Infections
- Masturbation
- Sexual Orientation

ADULTS, CONTINUED

- Establishing and maintaining intimate relationships
- Separation/Divorce
- Body Image
- Menopause
- Changes in sexual functioning

SAME

- ◉ Assigned gender
- ◉ Gender roles reinforced
- ◉ Biological changes
- ◉ Need same information, based on biological age
- ◉ Have sexual feelings and needs
- ◉ Have dreams like anyone else might, relationship, babies

DIFFERENT

- ◉ People don't discuss topic
- ◉ Think there are oversexed
- ◉ Higher rate of abuse
- ◉ Behaviors are accepted or forgiven
- ◉ Lack friendships, social opportunities
- ◉ Don't pick up on the social cues
- ◉ How you teach topics is different
- ◉ Often lack privacy to explore their sexuality
- ◉ Many parents let go of dreams for child related to sexuality or think of them as not sexual

LIST OF TOPICS

- ◉ You need to look at the biological age of the child, not the “cognitive age.”
- ◉ It isn't what topics are taught, it is how it is taught that is different.
- ◉ Research with both typical and special needs kids shows that talking about sexuality does not give permission and make people go out and have sex.
- ◉ When we don't teach about sexuality our culture will. Do you want the media teaching sexuality to our children?

QUESTIONS SO FAR.....

- ◉ Before we move into the tips and tools section of the session are there any questions about what was just covered?

TIPS

- ◉ Give Positive Messages
- ◉ Don't have to know all the answers
- ◉ OK to feel embarrassed
- ◉ OK to answer later
- ◉ Parents: okay and important to tell your values
- ◉ Staff: Give facts and a range of opinions, not your values
- ◉ Be concrete, graphic
- ◉ Use repetition
- ◉ Use the media, teachable moments

TYPES OF QUESTIONS ABOUT SEXUALITY

- ◉ Factual, how to
 - What is a boner?
 - How are babies made?
 - How do I meet people?
- ◉ Values, Opinions
 - Should I have sex?
 - What contraception should I use?
- ◉ Personal
 - When did you start having sex?
 - Did you have sex last night?

FACTUAL-TEACHABLE MOMENTS

- 1. Reassure the person that it is good to ask questions.
- 2. Find out what the person thinks/is really asking.
- 3. Decide what message you want to give.
- 4. Answer the question simply, using correct vocabulary.
- 5. Encourage the person to give feedback.

PRACTICE ANSWERING FACTUAL QUESTIONS

- What is a boner?

VALUES AND OPINION QUESTIONS

- Should I have sex with my boyfriend?

OUR VALUES

- Parents: this is your job to share your values. Our kids don't always adopt our values, but part of being someone's parent is sharing yours and explaining why you have those values.
- Staff: this is not your job. What is important for you to know what your values are so you can set them aside and let the person with a disability think about what their values are.

VALUES AND ATTITUDES

- ◉ Common values that we can all agree upon are OKAY.
 - It is important to respect others by treating them well and listening to them
 - It is important to get consent from a sweetheart for being sexual
 - Relationships should be equal and positive without violence or abuse
 - Sex should be safe and pleasurable for both

PERSONAL QUESTIONS

- Did you have sex last night?

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

- ◉ What questions do you have for me?

LET ME KNOW HOW I CAN HELP:

Many people who have learned how to address this sensitive topic

Many people say that once they start to address this topic, it gets easier and easier

Thanks for attending the session and have a great weekend!

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