

**WEBINAR**

**Personal Responsibility Education  
Program**



# Teaching Students with I/DD About Sexuality and Healthy Relationships

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Elevatus**





# Teaching Students with I/DD About Sexuality and Healthy Relationships

**ELEVATUS TRAINING**  
LEADERS IN SEXUALITY AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY





# My Story

I worked for Planned Parenthood of Northern New England for 22 years.

2 years after I started, I acquired a disability from a Spinal Cord Injury and started using a wheelchair.

I noticed that I was treated differently because I used a wheelchair.

Developmental Disability Agencies and School Districts wanted help, so I provided training on how to address sexuality.

I developed a Sexuality Education Curriculum in 2006, updated in 2018.

# Learning Objectives

Explain the specific issues people with developmental disabilities face regarding sexuality, disability history, and culture.

Explore what topics need to be covered, effective skills and tools for teaching this population, and ways to adapt lessons to meet various learning needs.



# Agenda



Introduction

Messages People with Disabilities

Receive

What is the Same and What is Different?

Essential and Effective Skills and Tools  
for Teaching

Adapting Lessons

Working with parents

Wrap-Up



When you think about teaching youth with intellectual or development disabilities (I/DD) about sexuality and relationships:

What is one thing you are looking forward to?

What is one thing you are worried about?



# Messages Students With Developmental Disabilities:

What messages do  
YOUTH AND ADULTS  
with I/DD  
receive about sexuality?



# Messages About People With Developmental Disabilities

Are not sexual beings

Should not have sex

Can't have sex and don't want to have sex or be sexual

Are innocent and childlike and need protection from sexuality

Are not responsible

Can not solve problems

Are unable to make good decisions about sexuality

Would not make good parents so should not have children

Are different than their non-disabled siblings





# Messages and Disability Culture

Which negative messages do you think you may have believed at one point in your life, or maybe even still believe now, about people with disabilities and their sexuality?

# Messages and Disability Culture



An Interabled Love Story (Intimacy and Disability)

# Step 1: Self-Reflection



Do I have negative or positive values, attitudes, and beliefs regarding sexuality and disability?

Am I comfortable or uncomfortable with the people with disabilities? Why or why not?

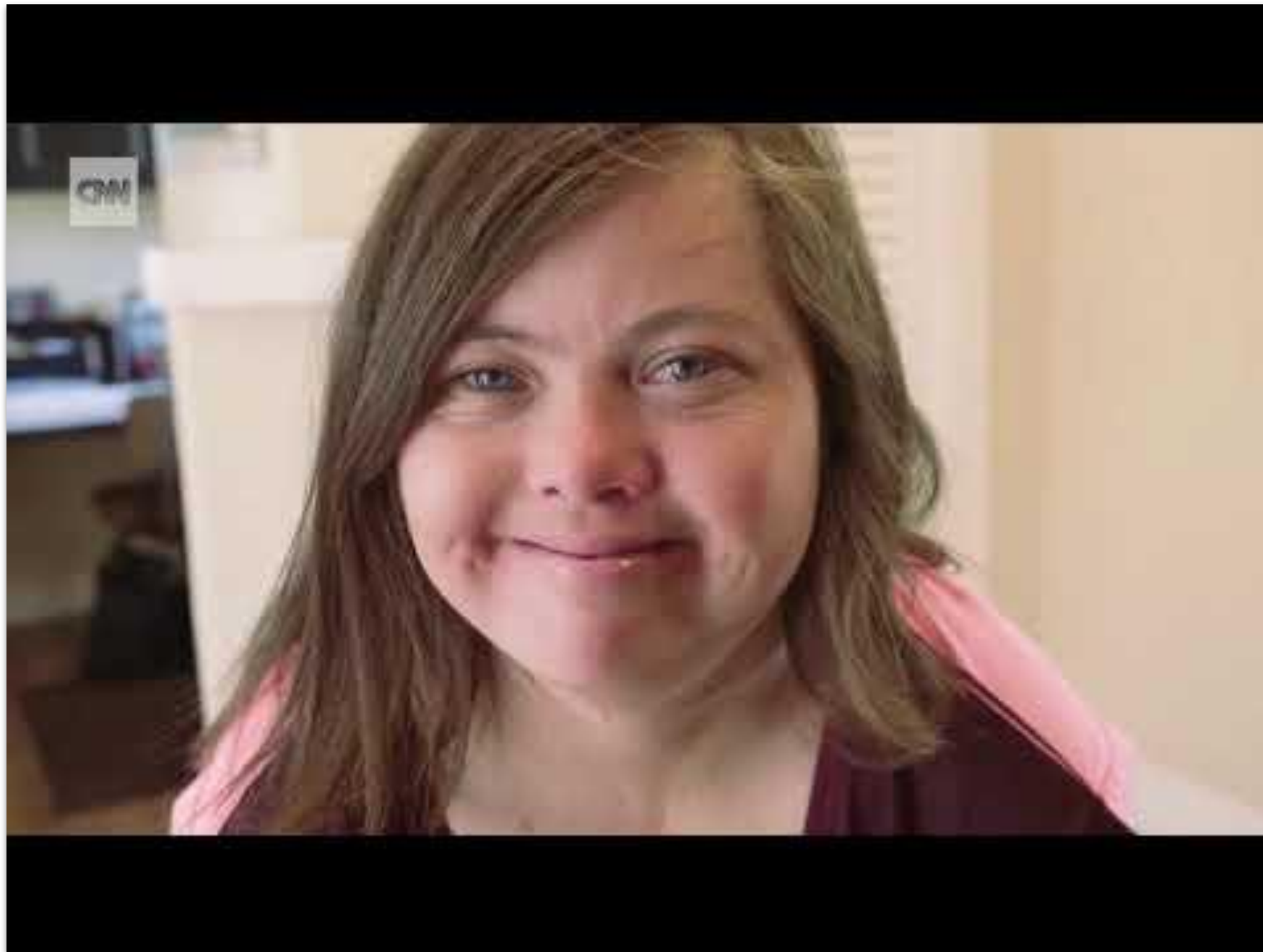
Am I nervous to do something wrong or see them as fragile?

What kind of experience do I have working with this population?

Since there is a higher rate of abuse, have I addressed my own trauma history?



# Messages and Disability Culture



CNN | Couple with Down Syndrome | Love is Love

# Question



What do I need to know about disability  
culture and people with I/DD?





The disability and self-advocacy movements give positive messages and impact.



# “Nothing About Us Without Us”

Empowers self-advocates

Is person-centered

Encourages supportive decision-making

Provides the dignity of risk

Believes sexuality and relationships are human rights

Believes everyone deserves sexuality education



# Individuals with I/DD

Owning their bodies

Controlling their lives

Making their own decisions

Being proud of who they are

Having dignity of risk

Forming positive healthy relationships

Decreasing abuse

Strong sexual self advocates



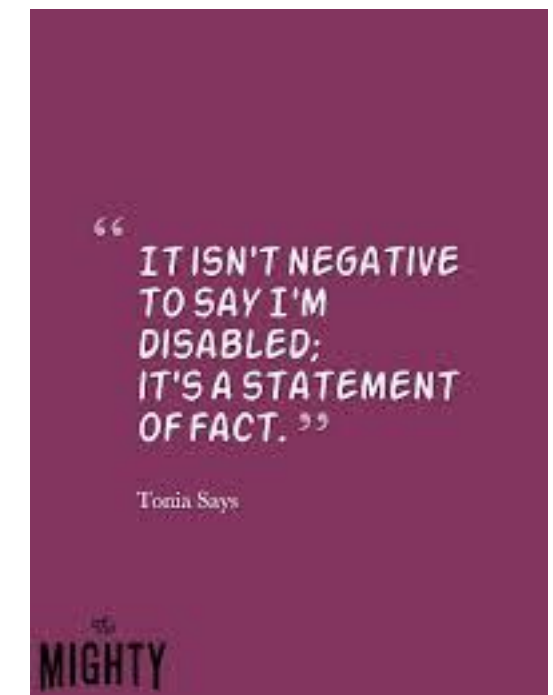
# Language and Disability

Person-First v. Identity-First Language

~~Higher Functioning v. Lower functioning~~

~~“Differently abled”~~

#saytheword





# Myths and Stereotypes



National Council on Independent Living | Sex Ed Series by and for people with I/DD

# Small Group Discussion



Regarding sexual development, what is the *same* for a person with a developmental disability versus someone without a disability?

Regarding sexual development, what is *different* for a person with a developmental disability versus someone without a disability?

# Same

Assigned gender

Gender roles reinforced

Biological changes

Need same information based on biological age

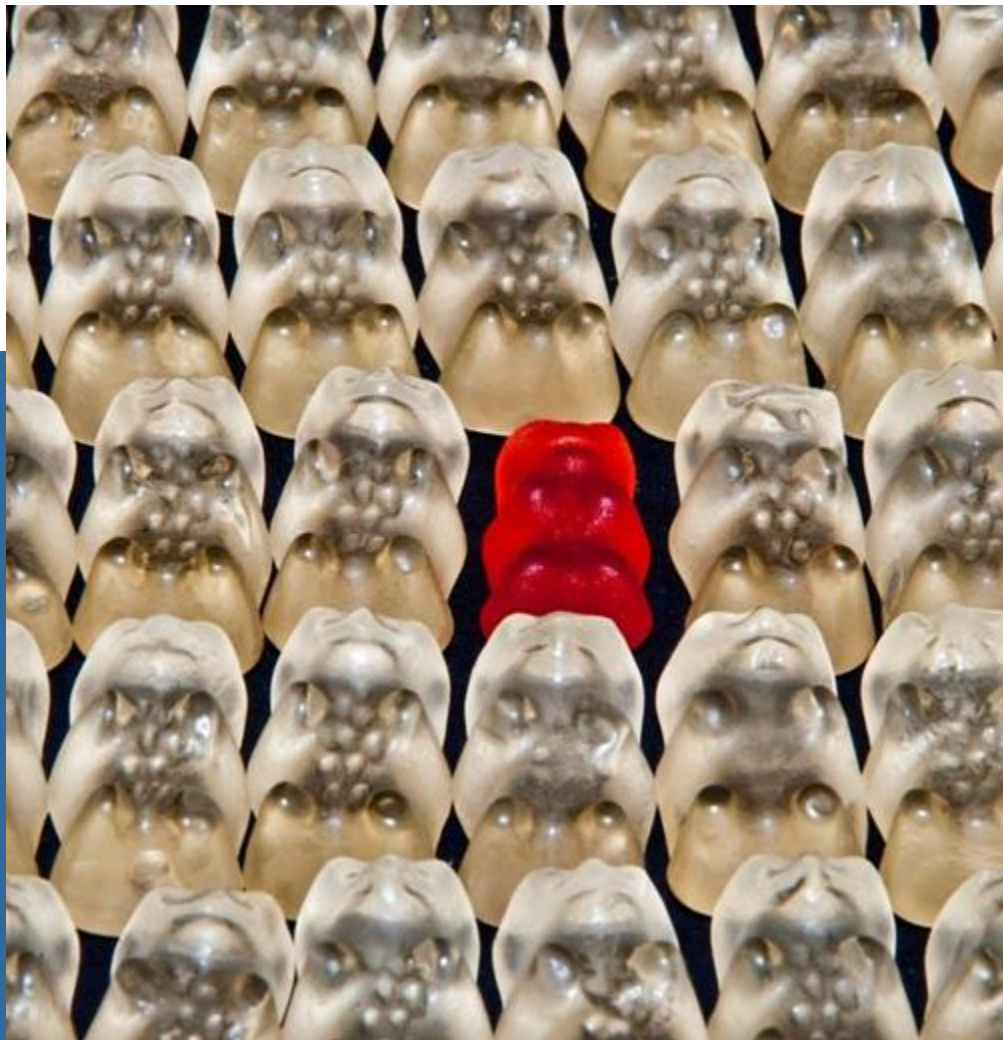
Have sexual feelings and needs

Have dreams, relationship, babies, like anyone else might





# Different



Lack basic sexuality information and skills  
(asexual, oversexed, taken out)

Considered children: behaviors are accepted  
or forgiven, protected (hugging, act your age)

Nature of disability: Don't pick up on the  
social cues, need additional topics, trouble  
identifying emotions

Lack friendships, social opportunities, miss  
informal learning, lonely

Many parents let go of dreams for child related  
to sexuality or think of them as not sexual,  
worry about higher rate of abuse

How you teach topics is different

May have a wide range of abilities and limitations

Often lack privacy to explore their sexuality

# Video: Just the Two of Us



Just The Two Of Us | CoorDown | World Down Syndrome Day 2022

# Step 2: What Are the Needs of My Students?



What sexuality education have they received?



Non-speaking



Non-reading



Need movement



Physical disability



Deaf



Sensory Issues



Need more time to process



Need additional topics





# Step 3: Class Techniques

Slow down, silence is okay.

Be **concrete**, use plain language.

Take breaks, use short chunks of content, **avoid ambiguity**.

**Use group agreements** to create healthy boundaries in class.

**Recognize that students are taught to say yes.** Rather than "does that make sense" say, "Can you repeat what we just talked about?"

Be prepared for **disclosure** ("not your fault") and provide trauma-informed sexuality education.



# Step 3: Class Techniques (cont.)

**Variety of disabilities:** Provide adaptations, communication supports, interpreters, technology, role play, and hands-on visuals.

Assume **competence**.

Teach **non-compliance skills**, saying no and yes.

Use Scarborough **Method**.

Give messages from the **self-advocacy and other disability movements**.

Use disability **language**.

Give positive messages about sexuality, **not just abuse prevention**.

Treat people with I/DD **just like anyone else**.

**May have a wide range of abilities and limitations.**





# Techniques/Tools

Concrete

Scarborough Method

Group Agreements

# Concrete

Concrete v. abstract.

“You need to masturbate in private. Private is when no one is around.” No one is around at McDonald’s at 3 pm.

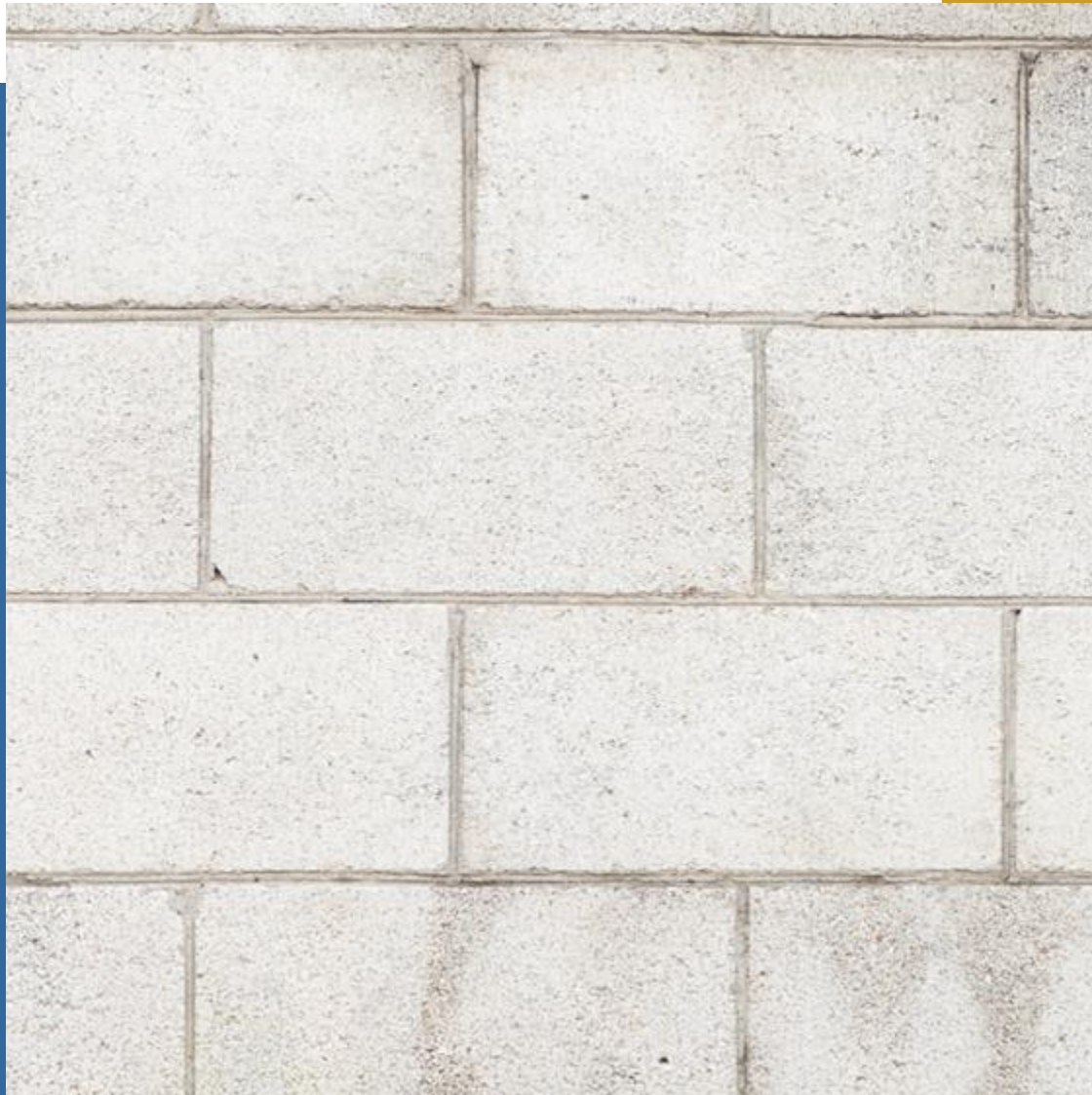
Detailed but simple.

How do you do make something concrete?

Think about making a peanut butter and jelly sandwich: describe the steps.

Is there any way this could be misunderstood?

Is this statement always true? Grey areas







# Public and Private

**Public** is when other people are there or might be there. It's a place where people can go in and out. Certain ways of speaking and touch are okay to do in public spaces, but not all. Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat are all public.

**Private** is where you are alone, and no one can come in and out. Certain ways of speaking and touch are okay to do in private but not public.

# Public or Private?





# Public or Private?





# Public or Private?



# Public or Private?





# Public or Private?







# CONSENT

Freely Given

Reversible

Informed

Enthusiastic

Specific



# How Can You Make This Concrete?

**F**reely Given *or* Chosen.

**R**eversible *to* Change your mind and stop any time during the sexual act.

**I**nformed *to* Honest, no lies.

**E**nthusiastic *to* Yippee, feel happy about the choice.

**S**pecific *to* sexual acts. Which ones?

# What is Consent?

Consent is a freely chosen yes.

Freely chosen means getting a “yes” without any of the coercive examples we just discussed. The person can say yes or no, and their decision will be accepted and respected.

Two questions have to be asked to decide if it is true consent:

1. Did the person say “yes?”
2. Was it freely chosen?



If the answer to BOTH questions is “YES,” that is consent.



# Examples of Coercion (Opposite of Consent)

These are some examples of what is **not** OK to say or do to get someone to do something or to have sex with you:

Lies	Saying “I love you” when you don’t really mean it.
Threats	Saying “if you don’t have sex with me, I’ll find someone who will.”
Constant Pressure	Saying “come on, please, just this time; it’ll be OK.”
Blackmail	Saying “if you don’t have sex with me, I will tell everyone you are a real jerk.”
Intimidation	Saying “you’re such a baby, when are you going to grow up?”
Bribes	Saying “I lent you \$10, so now you owe me. You have to kiss me for 10 minutes.”
Force	Forcing the person to have sex. Physical force to have sex is called rape and is illegal.

# Consent Story #1

You are going out for pizza with a friend.

When it comes time to order you ask your friend, “Do you want pepperoni on our pizza?”

Your friend says, “Yes, sounds good. I love pepperoni.”

Group Discussion Question:

Is this consent?

Why or why not?

**Two Questions to**

**Ask About Consent:**

1. Did the person say “yes”?
2. Was it freely chosen?

**Freely chosen means**

**not based on:**

Lies

Threats

Pressure

Blackmail

Intimidation

Bribes

Force

# Consent Story #2

Your friend asks you if they can borrow \$50. You say, “No, sorry, I don’t have the money to lend it to you.” Your friend says, “Come on, I lend you money sometimes. If you don’t, I won’t ever lend you money again.”

Group Discussion Question:

Is this consent?

Why or why not?

**Two Questions to**

**Ask About Consent:**

1. Did the person say “yes”?
2. Was it freely chosen?

**Freely chosen means**

**not based on:**

Lies

Threats

Pressure

Blackmail

Intimidation

Bribes

Force



# Consent Story #3

One person asks the other if they want to have sexual intercourse.

The other person says “yes.”

They have sex and enjoy it.

Group Discussion Question:

Is this consent?

Why or why not?

**Two Questions to**

**Ask About Consent:**

1. Did the person say “yes”?
2. Was it freely chosen?

**Freely chosen means**

**not based on:**

Lies

Threats

Pressure

Blackmail

Intimidation

Bribes

Force

# Consent Story #4

One partner says, “Let’s have sex?”

The other says, “No, I want to talk first.”

The first partner says, “If you don’t, I’ll tell everyone you did anyway.”

The other partner agrees but feels kind of yucky about it.

Group Discussion Question:

Is this consent?

Why or why not?

**Two Questions to**

**Ask About Consent:**

1. Did the person say “yes”?
2. Was it freely chosen?

**Freely chosen means**

**not based on:**

Lies

Threats

Pressure

Blackmail

Intimidation





Bribes

Force

# Gender Identities

Gender identities are words people use to describe the gender they feel they are. There are many gender identities.

Here are a few examples of people sharing their gender identities.





<b>Cisgender Woman</b>		Amanda is a woman. She was born female. She is a cisgender woman.
<b>Transgender Woman</b>		Adriana is a woman. She was born male. She is a transgender woman.
<b>Non-Binary</b>		Jacob is not a man or a woman. They identify as non-binary.
<b>Two-Spirit</b>		Raven is Native and identifies as a Two-Spirit person because they don't feel they are only male or only female.



# Sexual Identities

Sexual identities are words people use to describe who they feel romantic or sexual feelings for. There are many sexual identities.

Here are a few examples of people sharing their sexual identities.

<b>Gay</b>		John is a man and has sexual feelings for men. John identifies as gay. He is dating Raul.
<b>Straight / Heterosexual</b>		Jenn is a woman and has sexual feelings for men. Jenn identifies as straight. Jenn also identifies as heterosexual. She is with her boyfriend, Lee. .
<b>Pansexual</b>		Pablo has sexual feelings for all different types of people. They identify as pansexual.
<b>Two-Spirit</b>		Raven is Native and identifies as Two-Spirit because they are attracted to different people with different gender identities.

# The Scarborough Method – Winifred Kempton



Physical –

What it is, physical aspects

Social –

Private, responsibility, laws

Emotional –

Feelings connected to it



# What Is A Condom?



**Physical:** A rubber sock that covers a penis

**Social:** Using a condom is private; it protects you and your partner

**Emotional:** Many people feel good when they use them because they are being responsible and protecting self and partner



# Scarborough Method

What does having your period mean?

Physical –  
What it is,  
physical aspects

Social –  
Privacy,  
responsibility, laws

Emotional –  
Feelings connected  
to it



# Practice Scarborough

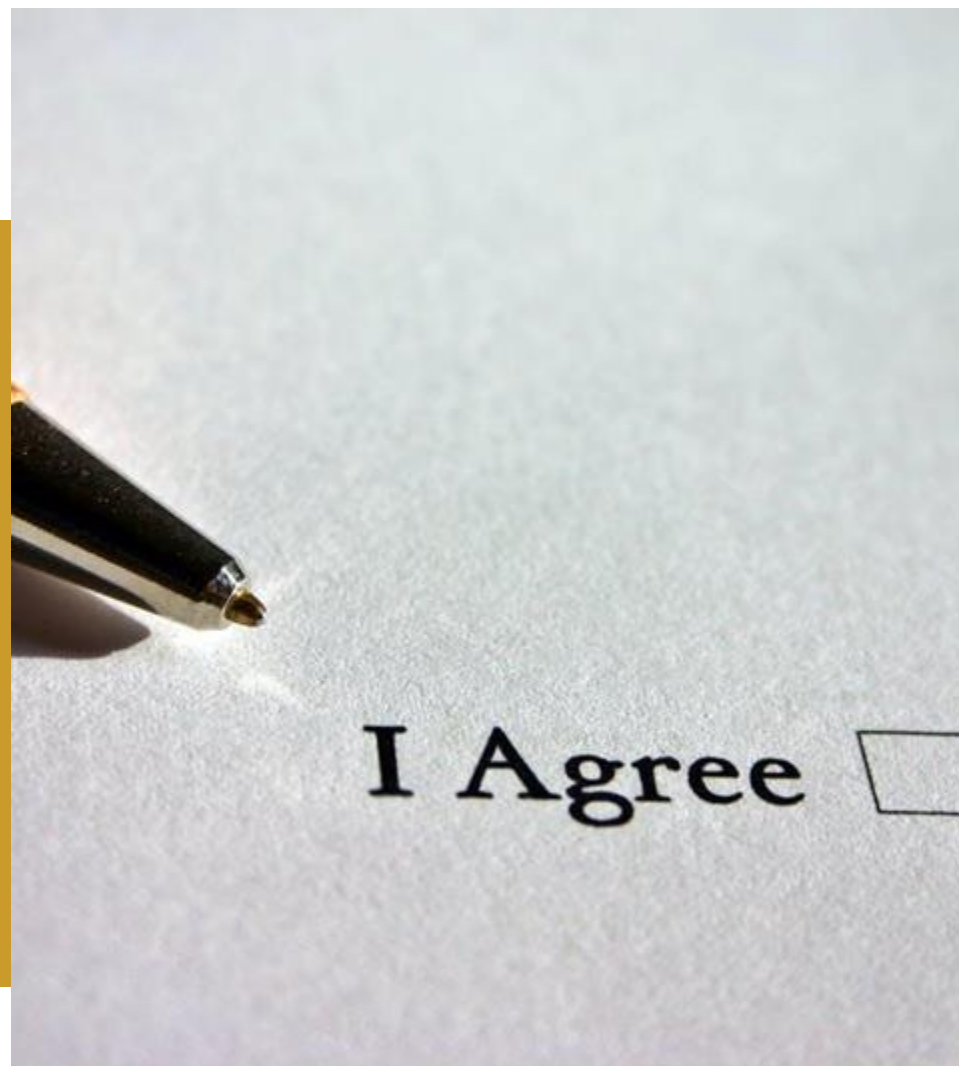
**What does “having your period” mean?**

Physical: It is a nickname for menstruation, which is when blood slowly drips from the vagina.

Social: It is normal for this to happen, usually once a month. It is a private topic.

Emotional: A person can feel grumpy, crampy, or tired during menstruation.

# Group Agreements

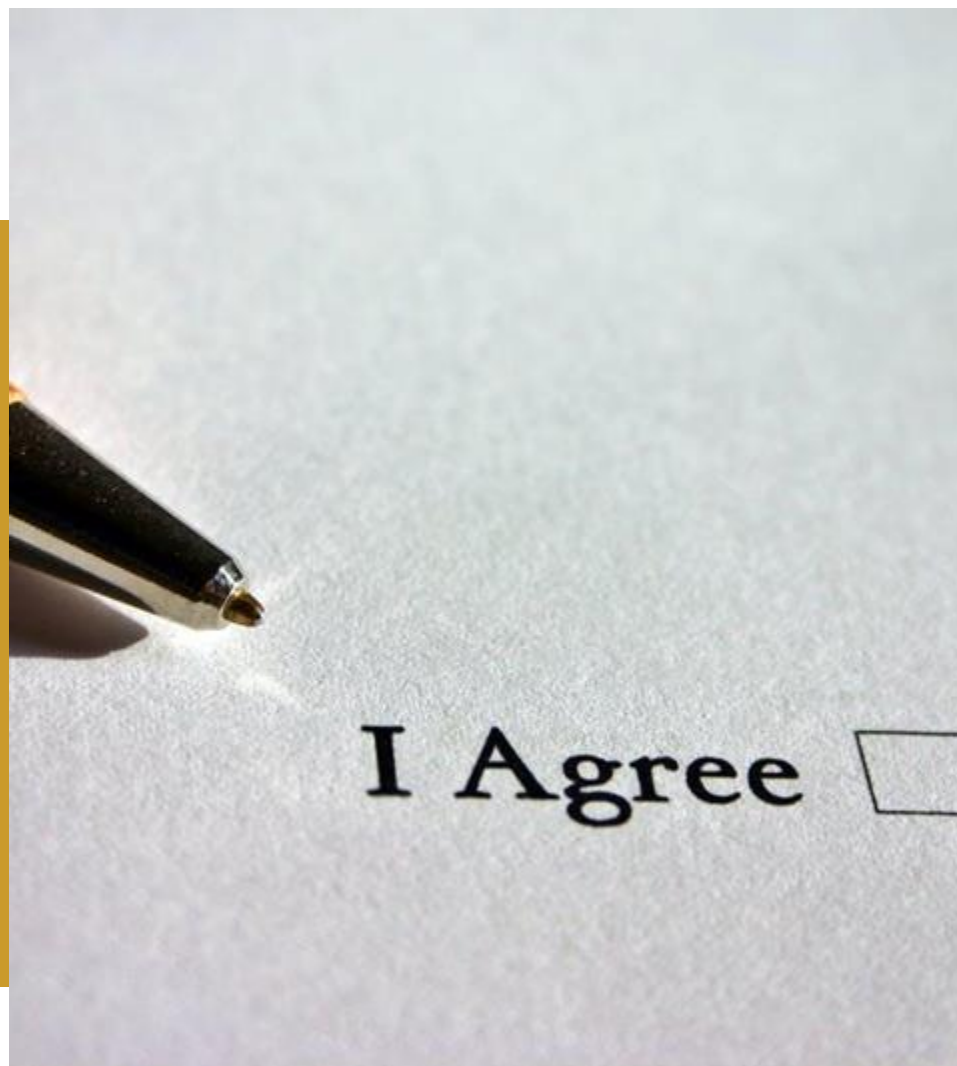


What will make this group safe for you and fair for you?

1. Keep it confidential – what is said in the room stays in the room, unless someone is being hurt or hurting someone else.
2. Show respect for everyone's opinion. We don't all have to agree with each other – but we do need to respect each other.
3. Express your feelings in a kind way.  
For example: Do not say...“That's gross!” Instead say... “I don't like that.”



# Group Agreements



4. It is okay and important to ask questions, just not personal and private questions. For example, you can say, “How do I ask someone out on a date.” But it is **not** okay to ask someone if they had sex last night. That is private.
5. It is okay to share stories but not personal sexual stories. Again, that is private.
6. Even though we are talking about a private topic in a public space, it is okay because we are learning. We will shut the door to make our class private.

# Practice Adapting Lessons

In Breakout Rooms

1–15 Activity A

16–30 Activity B

31+ Activity C

In small groups, discuss 3 ways that you would adapt the lesson.

You will need a spokesperson to tell us what you came up with when you return.



# Working With Parents

Ask what their fears are. “What worries you about that?”

Build trust. It takes time.

Parents as peer educators

Online course for parents.

Sexual abuse approach

Individuals as self advocate

GULP Newsletter



# Working with Parents

Myth: You should focus on the cognitive age of the child.

Myth: If we talk about it, they will do it.

Myth: Sexuality education is teaching them to have sex.

Myth: Sexuality education teaches someone else's values.



# People with Disabilities as Sexuality Educators: Michigan Project

## Since the 2018 Team Training:

31 individuals with I/DD were trained as sexuality educators

70 professionals and parents were trained as sexuality educators

## Since the 2018 Summit:

240 family members

139 transition staff

502 other agencies

638 individuals with I/DD





# Sexual and Relationship Rights

“I have the right to say what happens to and with my body.”

“I have the right to privacy in showing and sharing my sexuality.”

“I have the right to learn about sex, safe and healthy relationships, and reproductive health.”

“I have the right to get information and learn in a way that I can best understand through videos, large print, audio, pictures, and easy-to-understand language.”

“I have the right to learn how to keep myself safe.”

“I have the right to be safe and feel good when having sex or sexual activities.”

“I have the right to explore and to say if I am a man, woman, a combination, or neither.”

“I have the right to make my own choices about my sexuality.”

# Honored or Taken Away?





# Resources

## To read:

Organization for Autism Research, Sex Ed. Guide for Self-Advocates <https://researchautism.org/sex-ed-guide/> search, Sex Ed

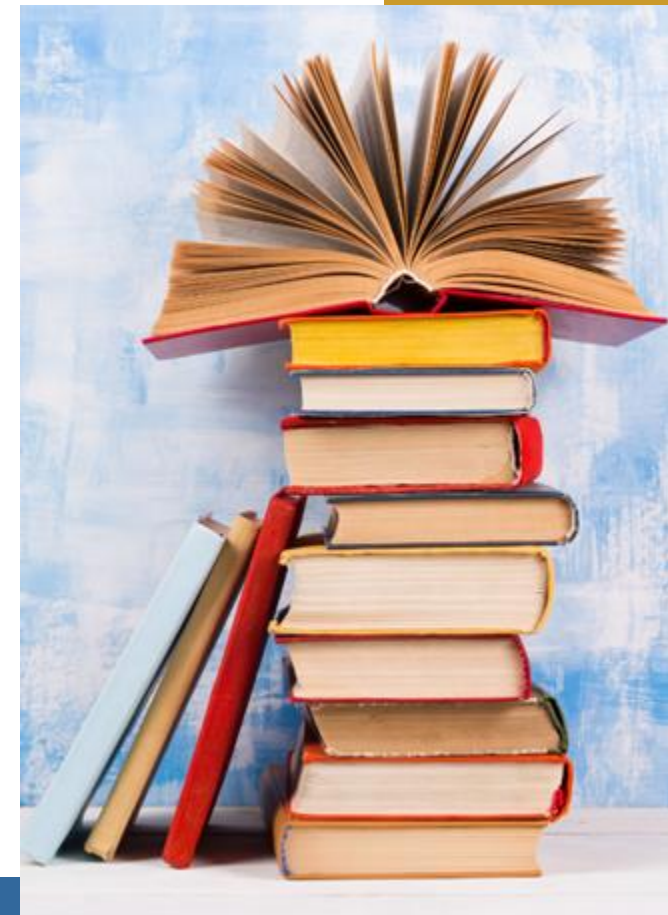
- Elevatus Training, E-newsletter, curriculum [www.elevatustraining.com](http://www.elevatustraining.com)

## To listen/watch:

Sex Talk for Self-Advocates Webinar Series

<https://www.elevatustraining.com/resources-2/sex-talk-for-self-advocates-series/>

- Organization for Autism Research, Sex Ed for Self-Advocates Podcast <https://researchautism.org/sex-ed-for-self-advocates-podcast/>
- Sex Ed for People with IDD: videos by NCIL and Rooted in Rights <https://ncil.org/sex-ed-for-individuals-with-i-dd/>
- *Crip Camp* on Netflix
- Resource list in handout folder
- SIECUS, A call to action



# Questions & Answers





Offering evidence and trauma informed curriculum, with on/offline training to help professionals, educators, self-advocates and parents skillfully and confidently navigate the topic of sexuality and healthy relationships.

## Curriculum & Related Products

### Sexuality Education for People with Developmental Disabilities



Related Products:  
Curriculum Slide Deck  
Communication Supports

### Building Healthy Relationships at Work



Related Products:  
Curriculum Slide Deck

## Live, Professional Developmental Trainings

### 3-Day Certificate Training: Becoming a Sexuality Educator and Trainer

CE Contact hrs available  
for Social Workers

### 90 Minute Workshop Series

Exploring a wide range of topics  
related to sexuality and I/DD

### In-service trainings

Can be customize for your  
agency or school

### 3-Year Statewide Training Project

For Teams of Self-Advocates and  
Professionals to Become  
Sexuality Educators and Lead  
Classes for People with I/DD

## Self-Study Online Courses

### Developmental Disabilities & Sexuality 101

For staff at your agency or school

### Talking with Your Kids: Developmental Disabilities and Sexuality.

To help parents bridge the gap

## For More Information:

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603-399-5777

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**ELEVATUS TRAINING**

LEADERS IN SEXUALITY AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY





# Wrap-Up

What is one thing you can do to reach students with I/DD with sexuality and healthy relationship education?

