Sexuality and Developmental Disabilities

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Why it is important…..

- They want and deserve it
- Messages people with disabilities receive
- Don’t get sex education, no informal learning
- Treated as children
- Nature of the disability
- Taught to be compliant
- Sexual abuse statistics
- Lack privacy, social opportunities
Self Advocates say……

“So we can learn to have healthy relationships”
“So we aren’t lonely!”
"So we are able to make informed choices!”
"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!”
Green Mountain Self Advocates say ....

- "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"
Messages People with Disabilities Receive…..

- You are not a sexual person and have no sexual feelings
- You are oversexed
- You are a child
- You need protection
- You can’t make good decisions
- You should have sex or have children
Why Important…continued

- They want and deserve it
- Messages people with disabilities receive
- Don’t get sex education, no informal learning
- Treated as children
- Nature of the disability
- Taught to be compliant
- Sexual abuse statistics, parents concerned
- Lack privacy, social opportunities
• What makes it difficult to reach this population with sexuality education?
Tips

- Biological age versus “cognitive age”
- Need additional topics - relationships, public/private
- Talking about a private topic in a public place
- Okay to ask questions, just not personal questions
- Repeat and reinforce
- Use models, visuals, TV, soap operas, Use activities, role plays
- Facts and a range of opinions
- Short repetitious sessions
- Concrete and specific v abstract
- Give a consistent message (parent and teachers)
Tools

- Types of questions, answering questions
- Scarborough method
- Responding to behaviors
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?
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 man’s 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
Practice Scarborough

- At your tables, pick one of these words and practice using the Scarborough method for this word.
  - How are babies made?
Practice Answering Factual Questions

- How are babies made?
Values/Opinions Questions

- Should I have sex with my boyfriend?
Personal Questions

- Did you have sex last night?
Responding to Behaviors

1. Decide first if it is better to ignore the situation. If ignoring the situation is inappropriate, then continue with the following steps...

2. Name the behavior/comment to the person(s) as you see or hear it; praise if appropriate.

3. Find out the meaning of the behavior/comment to the person(s).

4. Decide what "messages" you want to give.

5. Give the messages by responding simply.

6. Encourage the person(s) to give you feedback.

Public Masturbation

• At your tables, come up with a list of possible reasons this person is masturbating in public. Designate a spokesperson to report back.

• We will create a list as a large group
Hypothesis/Approach

- What are some possible meanings behind the behavior??
- What approach would you use to handle this behavior?
Dave Hingsburger

- Structural
- Modeling
- Partner Selection
- Inappropriate Courtships
- Sexual Knowledge
- Learning History
- Perpetual Arousal
- Medical
- Medications
- Moral Vacuum
Resources

- CURRICULUM, Sexuality Education for People with Developmental Disabilities
- On-line Virtual course, Developmental Disabilities and Sexuality 101
- Live Workshops
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