

maine family planning

WE CAN DO IT!

20th Annual
Comprehensive Sexuality Education Conference



APRIL 7TH 2026 | GREEN LADLE, LEWISTON

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WELCOME TO MAINE'S 20TH ANNUAL COMPREHENSIVE SEXUALITY EDUCATION CONFERENCE!

What began as an effort to provide sexuality education updates to school nurses and health teachers has grown into an eagerly anticipated annual event by middle and high school teachers, school nurses, school counselors, and other youth-serving professionals.

Every year we are excited to come together to share new and innovative programming, develop skills and knowledge, and provide resources related to positive sexuality. There is a certain magic that happens when we realize that we are a community. Our work thrives when we unite with others and share our ideas, questions, and strengths.

This year our theme is *We Can Do It!* In the face of challenges, both timeless and current, sex educators exemplify the spirit of *We Can Do It!* Sex educators are a creative and innovative bunch. From distilling content to teach in a limited time frame, to teaching students with diverse values and lived experiences, creativity and flexibility is the name of the game. This year's conference will highlight creativity and innovation in the presence of restrictions and challenges. From unique parent programs to new media literacy activities, participants will walk away with resources and ideas to bring to their community. We look forward to learning with you!

Today we also joyfully honor Maine individuals and organizations with the following Excellence in Sexual Health Education Awards:

- Margaret Hoyt, *Rising Star*
- Miranda Wakefield, *Significant Contribution*
- Karissa Walter, *Community Star*
- Prevention. Action. Change., *Community Pillar*

We look forward to celebrating and learning with you all!

With gratitude,

Lynette, Maddy, Brie, Lynne, Anna and Victor, Maine Family Planning

Conference Planning Team:

- Naomi Montag, *Maine CDC*
- Jennifer McCann, *LCSW/Sexuality Educator*
- Lisa Råvar, *Maine Coalition Against Sexual Assault*
- Susan Berry, *Maine Department of Education*
- Karin Heim and Zach Caron, *OUT Maine*
- Aspen Ruhlin, *Mabel Wadsworth Center*
- Olivia Friday Loneman, *Planned Parenthood of Northern New England*
- Chelsea Paradis, *New Beginnings*
- Alli Williamson, *Next Step*

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CONFERENCE SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

MORNING

8:00-8:30	Registration
8:30-8:45	Welcome!
8:45-9:45	Keynote: <i>Navigating the New Digital Landscape: AI, Media, and Teen Sexual Development</i>
9:45-10:00	Break
10:00-11:15	Morning Workshops: <i>Supporting LGBTQ+ Youth in Practice</i> (Breakout Room) <i>AI, Media & Healthy Relationships: Tools for Educators</i> (Main Room)
11:15-11:45	Energizer Activities & Networking
11:45-12:15	Lunch
12:15-12:30	Awards Presentation
12:30-12:45	Exhibit Tables and Networking



CONFERENCE SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

AFTERNOON

12:45-1:45	Keynote: <i>Ignite Speaker Series</i>
1:45-2:00	Break
2:00-3:15	Afternoon Workshops: <i>Showing up Authentically: Channeling Your Strengths to Be Askable</i> (Breakout Room) <i>Sexual Health Education for Learners of All Abilities</i> (Main Room)
3:15-3:30	Conference Closing and Door Prizes



MORNING

8:00-8:30 | REGISTRATION

ACCESSIBILITY INFORMATION:



- Visit Victor at the registration desk in the back of the main room if you have questions or need assistance during the conference.
- Pumping/chest feeding Room is available by request.
- Both bathrooms will be designated as all gender restrooms.
- ASL interpreters are available on request.
- Please have your name badge visible throughout the day.

8:45 - 9:45 | KEYNOTE

Navigating the New Digital Landscape: AI, Media, and Teen Sexual Development

Dr. Supreet Mann – Common Sense Media



This session will provide an overview of current data and trends in how tweens and teens engage with media, followed by insights from emerging research on AI companions and their potential impact on adolescent relationships and intimacy. It will also explore findings on teen pornography use and preview upcoming research on AI-generated pornography, including patterns of consumption, risks, and youth perspectives. The session will conclude with practical takeaways and ready-to-use conversation starters to support educators in engaging young people in thoughtful, informed discussions.

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9:45 - 11:00 | WORKSHOPS



Supporting LGBTQ+ Youth in Practice

Karin Heim, LCPC (she/her) & Charlie Gluck (she/her), *OUT Maine*

Participants will enhance skills for supporting LGBTQ+ youth in their settings through small group discussion based on real-world scenarios. Connect with other trusted adults to develop practical solutions, learn about barriers & intersecting identities that can negatively youth today, and how to identify protective factors to ensure that LGBTQ+ youth in Maine become happy, healthy LGBTQ+ adults! This workshop will empower adults to develop and utilize practical skills and strategies for supporting LGBTQ+ youth in their community, no matter where they live or work!



AI, Media & Healthy Relationships: Tools for Educators

Dr. Supreet Mann, Director of Research, *Common Sense Media*

This session dives into how AI companions are influencing students' romantic, sexual, and emotional relationships and what that means for health educators. Drawing on research on AI Companions and online health seeking behaviors, the bulk of this session is a structured workshop where educators use real data to work through classroom scenarios and develop strategies they can use right away.

11:15 - 11:45 | ENERGIZER ACTIVITIES

11:45 - 12:15 | LUNCH

12:15 - 12:30 | AWARDS PRESENTATION

12:30 - 12:45 | EXHIBIT TABLES & NETWORKING

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AFTERNOON

12:45 - 1:45 | KEYNOTE

Keynote: Ignite Speaker Series



This session will be an energizing series of short presentations from educators who will share innovative approaches, tips and strategies for delivering sex education in today's world. Participants will explore common challenges in sexual health education and identify practical, effective solutions to address them. They will also discover innovative teaching strategies and methodologies that enhance student engagement and learning. Additionally, attendees will have opportunities to connect with and learn from colleagues across the state, sharing ideas, experiences, and best practices.

2:00 - 3:15 | WORKSHOPS



Sexual Health Education for Learners of All Abilities

Kate Turpen (they/them) & Avery Olmstead, MLIS (he/him), Disability Rights Maine
People with intellectual disabilities are SEVEN TIMES more likely to experience sexual assault than those without disabilities. We also know that people with disabilities are social beings and have the potential to want to have intimate relationships and friendships in their lives. However, there remains a gap in comprehensive, quality sex education for youth with disabilities. Moving past *why* it's important to include learners of all abilities and into *how*, this session seeks to highlight inclusive instruction methods that anyone can implement. You will hear from trainers who are currently applying this content to classrooms in Southern Maine. You will leave this presentation with tips, tools, and resources to use with the people in your life - students, family, friends or others that you support.



Showing up Authentically: Channeling Your Strengths to Be Askable

Karissa Walter (she/her) Sexual Assault Services of Midcoast Maine and Christie Basson (she/her), Sexual Assault Response Services of Southern Maine
This workshop will expand on the Vermont Network's Askable Adult framework to help youth-serving adults and caregivers explore the inherent strengths and strategies that help them relate to and support youth. An askable adult is someone approachable and easy for youth to open up to – however, how we connect with others and create that safe space is uniquely ours. This workshop will focus on helping participants channel the tools and resources at their disposal to create authentic relationships with not only the youth they serve but also with the greater community, including parents, partners, and stakeholders. Learn more about identifying your own affinities, filling the gaps around shortcomings, and applying your skills in an actionable way to create collaborative and supportive spaces for your community.

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3:15-3:30 | CLOSING AND DOOR PRIZES

Join us as we raffle off some fabulous door prizes! You will want to stick around to see if you are one of the lucky winners. *Must be present to win!*

Visit the registration table for instructions on how to enter the raffle.

Special Thank You to our Ignite Session speakers!

- Karyn Bussell (Skowhegan Area Middle School)
- Dave Munson (Appleton Village School)
- Kristen Allen (Mountain Valley High School)
- Jo Duke & Erin Varney (Camden Hills Regional High School)
- Meghan Lynch (King Middle School)

**We would love your feedback!
Tell us your thoughts on 2026 CSEC:**



**Need CEU credits or contact hours? Contact Lynette Johnson:
ljohnson@mainefamilyplanning.org**



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PRESENTER BIOS

Dr. Supreet Mann (she/her), Common Sense Media
Workshop Presenter, "Navigating the New Digital Landscape: AI, Media, and Teen Sexual Development"

Dr. Supreet Mann is the Director of Research at Common Sense Media. She holds a PhD in Communication and an MS in Child Development from UC Davis. Her research focuses on the impact of social influences and media on children's social and emotional development, including prosocial behavior, risk-taking, and learning. Dr. Mann has published extensively on youth mental health, media use, and new technology. She has presented at national and international conferences and has been published in several academic journals, including the *Journal of Children and Media* and the *Journal of Child and Family Studies*. Her work has also been featured in prominent media outlets such as NPR, *The Washington Post*, and the Today show.

Karin Heim, LCPC (she/her), OUT Maine
Workshop Presenter, "Supporting LGBTQ+ Youth in Practice"

Karin Heim, LCPC (she/her) has lived and worked in Maine since 2015, and has spent her career serving youth, adults, and families throughout the state in a variety of settings, including home and community-based services, outpatient healthcare, special education, mobile crisis services, and substance use outreach. She currently works as the Mental Health Coordinator for OUT Maine, where she strives to support queer youth to find safety, connection, and belonging as their most authentic and healthy selves.

Charlie Gluck (she/her), OUT Maine
Workshop Presenter, "Supporting LGBTQ+ Youth in Practice"

Charlie started volunteering with OUT Maine in 2022 to support programs like Rainbow Ball Weekend and witnessed the positive and empowering impact of the youth programs and community support systems that OUT Maine's team of staff and volunteers had created. She knew she had to stay involved and now has the opportunity as Youth Engagement Coordinator to apply her extensive experience working with children, teens, families, and community partners in public libraries and schools to further OUT Maine's mission.



PRESENTER BIOS

Kate Turpen (they/them), Disability Rights Maine

Workshop Presenter, "Sexual Health Education for Learners of All Abilities"

Kate has been advancing youth self-advocacy with students who have disabilities since 2022. The same group of students has historically been left out of sexual health education for decades. For the past 2 years, Kate has been adapting a variety of curriculum to suit complex and varied needs inside special education classrooms - leading to their receiving Maine Family Planning's Community Star award in 2025.

Avery Olmstead (he/him), MLIS, Disability Rights Maine

Workshop Presenter, "Sexual Health Education for Learners of All Abilities"

Avery Olmstead holds a MLIS in Library Information Sciences and is a trained peer educator for sexual health topics. He believes strongly in equitable access of information and meaningful inclusion of people with disabilities. Avery has presented at the 2025 Comprehensive Sexuality Education Conference and MAHPERD Conference to share his lived experience and push for more sex educators to include learners of all abilities!

Karissa Walter, (she/her, they/them), Sexual Assault Services of Midcoast Maine

Workshop Presenter, "Channeling Your Strengths to Be Askable"

Karissa Walter is an advocate and educator at Sexual Assault Services of Midcoast Maine and is passionate about all things prevention-based. She has over ten years of experience working with youth and families, and has made it her lifelong commitment to build protective factors in the communities she serves.

Christie Basson, (she/her), Sexual Assault Response Services of Southern Maine

Workshop Presenter, "Channeling Your Strengths to Be Askable"

Christie Basson is an advocate and sexual violence preventionist at Sexual Assault Services of Southern Maine. She has a background in global health, demography, and sexual reproductive health and has been working in Maine for two years. She has experience collaborating with underserved populations across the state, and most recently in developing and delivering sexual violence prevention programming across Cumberland and York counties. She works closely with community members and partners to make the environments they live and work in safer for all.

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EXHIBITORS

MABEL WADSWORTH CENTER
MAINE FAMILY PLANNING
OUT MAINE
PPNNE
MCEDV
MECASA
NEW BEGINNINGS
MAINE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
MAINE CDC STD PROGRAM

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