



SUPPORTING SEXUALITY &
INTIMACY

ELEVATUS TRAINING

LEADERS IN SEXUALITY AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY



Nonotuck
Resource Associates Inc.

Why Do People We Support Need and Want To Learn About Sexuality

Handout 1: Self-Advocates Say



Self advocates say....

- ▶ "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!"
- ▶ "So that people know their rights!"
- ▶ "So we can be sexual self advocates, not just self advocates!"

Sexual Self Advocacy



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

[Handout 2: Sexual Self-Advocacy, what is it?](#)

Overview

- ▶ Gain knowledge about sexuality and specific issues for people we support
- ▶ Explore our own values and attitudes regarding sexuality and people we support
- ▶ Explore ways to communicate one-on-one about sexuality with people we support and their families/loved ones



I Got This

RESPECT

Is respectful of all people no matter what their skin color is, how much money they have, what religion they believe, who they are sexual with, their age, and what kind of disability they have.

ATTITUDES

Believes that everyone is a sexual being, deserves to get information about sexuality, and that it is okay to talk about this topic and ask questions.

VALUES

Understands that people have different values and beliefs and respects those differences.

SKILLS

Is able to communicate with others in a warm and kind way and knows how to help people feel comfortable talking about sexuality.

Is non-judgmental and open when talking about this topic.

Uses teachable moments and other tools to be a more effective communicator.

INFORMATION

Knows lots of information about sexuality and relationships and knows where to get information if he or she doesn't have the answers.



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What is Sexuality?

- ▶ Sexuality means more than intercourse or sex.
- ▶ It's about intimacy, connection, and belonging.
- ▶ It's about relationships. Both friendships and sexual.
- ▶ It's about how we feel about being the gender we are and our sexual orientation.
- ▶ 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.

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Trauma-Informed Care



What is Trauma?

According to SAMHSA, individual trauma results from an:

- ★ **Event**, series of events, or set of circumstances that is
- ★ **Experienced** by an individual as physically &/or emotionally harmful or threatening & that has lasting adverse
- ★ **Effects** of the individual's functioning &/or physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being



A Trauma-Informed Approach Incorporates:

- ♦ **Realizing** the prevalence of trauma
- ♦ **Recognizing** how it affects all individuals involved with the program, organization or system, including its own workforce
- ♦ **Resisting** re-traumatization
- ♦ **Responding** by putting this knowledge into practice

Core Principles of a Trauma-Informed System of Care:

- ♦ **Safety** - ensuring physical and emotional safety
- ♦ **Trustworthiness** - maintaining appropriate boundaries and making tasks clear
- ♦ **Choice** - prioritizing (staff) consumer choice and control (people want choices and options; for people who have had control taken away, having small choices makes a big difference)
- ♦ **Collaboration** - maximizing collaboration
- ♦ **Empowerment** - prioritizing (staff) consumer empowerment and skill-building

Messages



- ▶ Let's think about some of the messages you received about sexuality growing up?
 - What ones were positive, what ones were negative?
 - How does this impact your ability to talk with others about sexuality?
 - What messages do people with I/DD get?
 - How are they similar or different to messages you got?

[HANDOUT 4: Messages](#)

Messages People We Support May Have Received:

- ▶ 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 non-disabled siblings

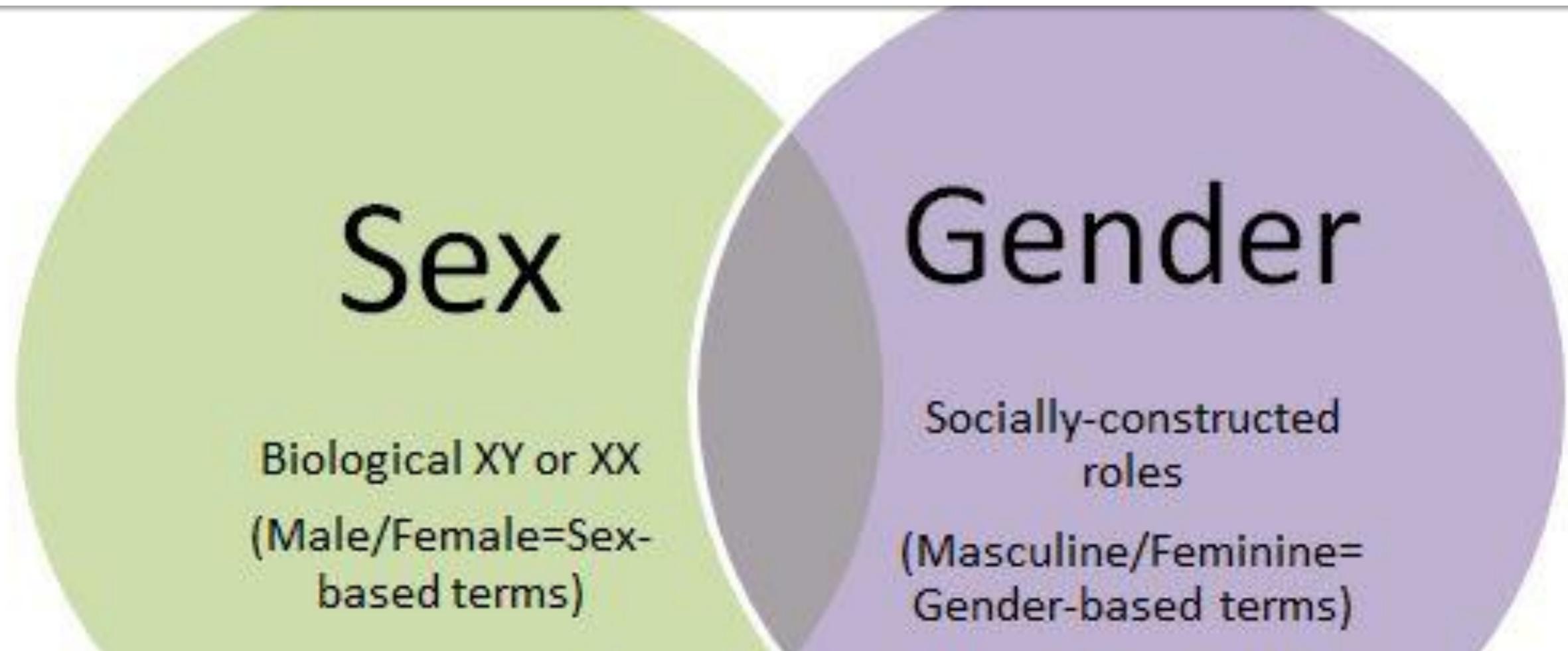


Creating Positive Messages

In the chat, write in positive messages about sexuality that you think people you support should receive about sexuality.



Difference Between Sex And Gender



Sex = biological status as male or female. It includes physical attributes such as sex chromosomes, gonads, sex hormones, internal reproductive organs, external genitalia. These are the same across cultures

Gender = how we act, interact and feel about themselves and their sex. Varies across cultures.



What Is Transgender?

It is an umbrella term used to describe people whose **gender identity** and **gender expression** differs from that which is usually associated with their birth sex or assigned sex.





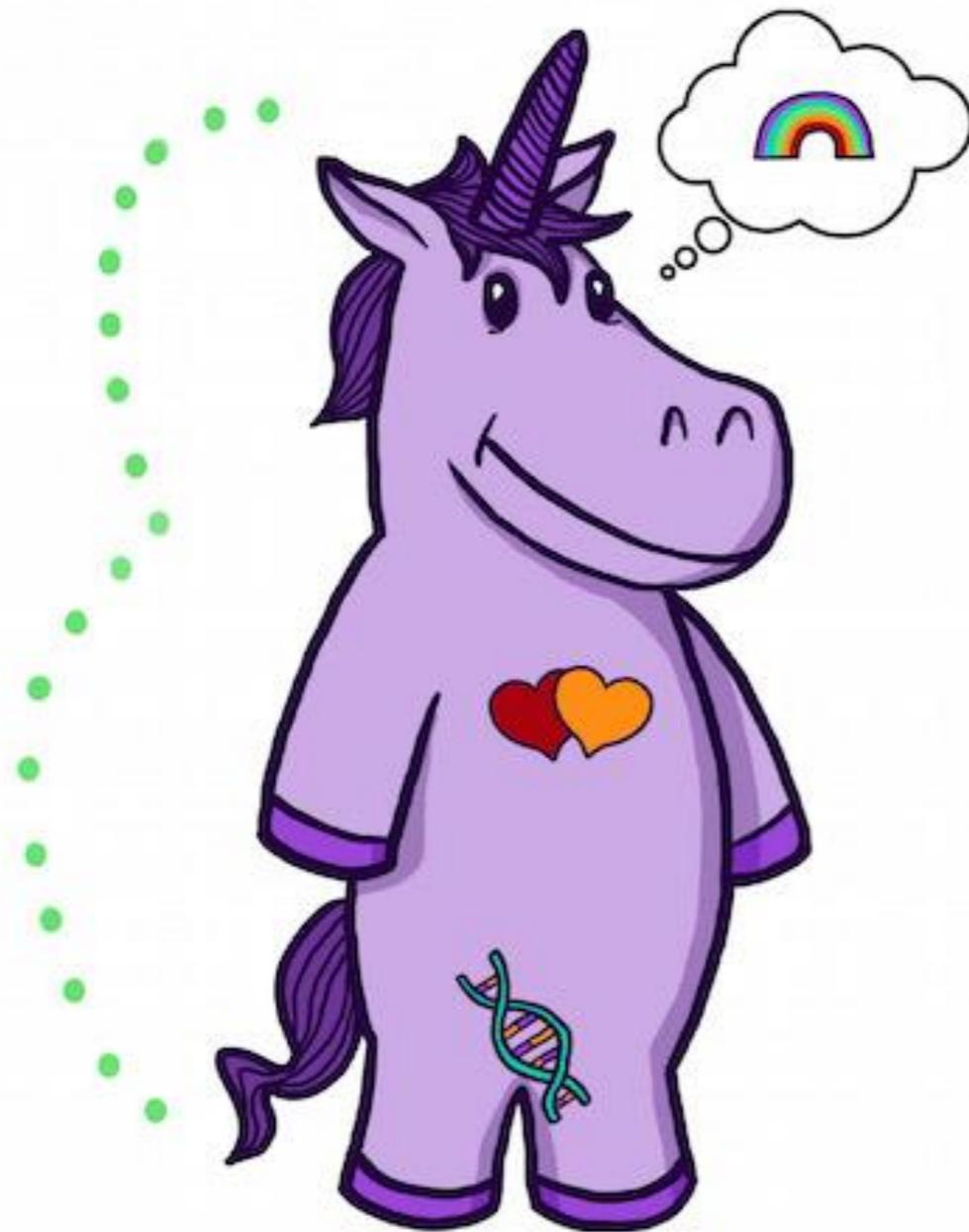
Expression And Identity

Gender expression = how we express our gender, clothing, haircut, voice or body characteristics

Gender identity = the person's sense of self as male or female, an innate sense, deeply psychological identification as male or female which may or may not match their biological sex

The Gender Unicorn

Graphic by:
TSER
Trans Student Educational Resources



Gender Identity

-  Female/Woman/Girl
-  Male/Man/Boy
-  Other Gender(s)

Gender Expression/Presentation

-  Feminine
-  Masculine
-  Other

Sex Assigned at Birth

-  Female
-  Male
-  Other/Intersex

Sexually Attracted To

-  Women
-  Men
-  Other Gender(s)

Romantically/Emotionally Attracted To

-  Women
-  Men
-  Other Gender(s)

To learn more go to:
www.transstudent.org/gender

Design by Landyn Pan

Difference Between Gender Identity And Sexual Orientation



Sexual orientation is who the person is erotically, romantically, and affectionately attracted to, male female or either

Gender Identity is your sense of self as male, female or transgender

Autism And Sexuality

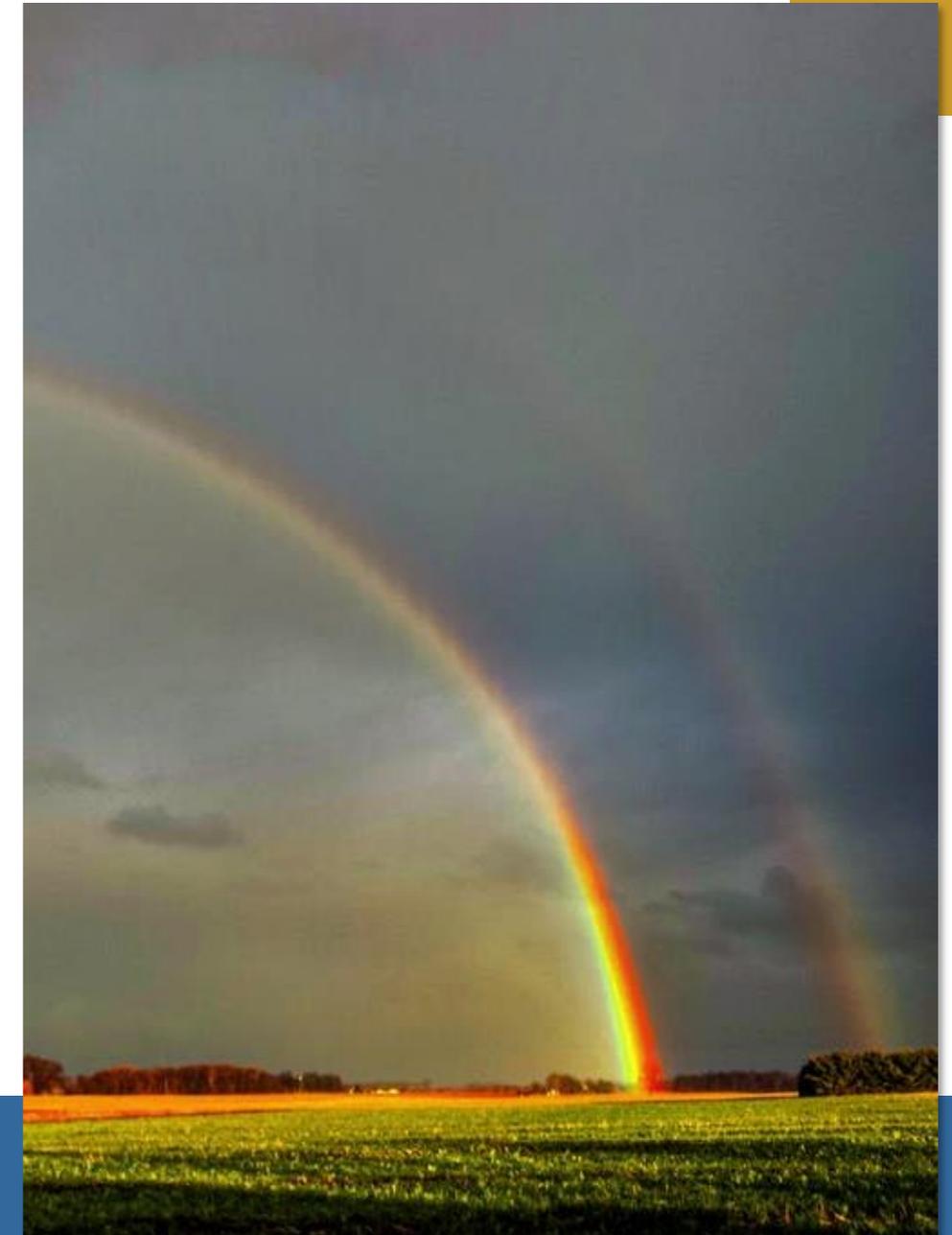
People with autism are seven times more likely to be gender non-conforming than the general population. Interviewed at gender clinics, 10 times more likely to have a diagnosis of autism than the general public.

The “double rainbow” of being both autistic and LGBTQIA+

Autism does not guarantee asexuality, nor are people with Autism’s identities always heterosexual and cisgender

Parallel to coming out and coming out as autistic

<https://www.twainbow.org/>



Gender Pronouns

Please note that these are not the only pronouns. There are an infinite number of pronouns as new ones emerge in our language. Always ask someone for their pronouns.

Subjective	Objective	Possessive	Reflexive	Example
She	Her	Hers	Herself	She is speaking. I listened to her. The backpack is hers.
He	Him	His	Himself	He is speaking. I listened to him. The backpack is his.
They	Them	Theirs	Themselves	They are speaking. I listened to them. The backpack is theirs.
Ze	Hir/Zir	Hirs/Zirs	Hirself/ Zirself	Ze is speaking. I listened to hir. The backpack is zirs.

Let's Get Some Practice



- ▶ A girl begins to menstruate during puberty.
- ▶ A person with female sexual parts or a person with a vagina begins to menstruate during puberty.
- ▶ A woman usually stops ovulating when she's in her forties or fifties.
- ▶ Ovaries stop ovulating when the person is between forty or fifty.
- ▶ A boy begins to produce sperm during puberty.
- ▶ A person with male sexual parts or a person with a penis begins to produce sperm during puberty.
- ▶ A man can check his own testicles for lumps.
- ▶ A person with testicles will need to check them for lumps.



Barriers

When you think about talking about sexuality with people you support, what barriers do you face or what barriers might caregivers have?



Values And Attitudes



- ▶ Reference handout 7.
- ▶ Think about how you may answer each question.
- ▶ Your job is to get clearer about your values, not to change everyone else's.

[HANDOUT 7: Values and Attitudes](#)



Discussion

Which was were hardest for you and why?

If the person in the situation was someone you support, would you feel different? Same? Why?

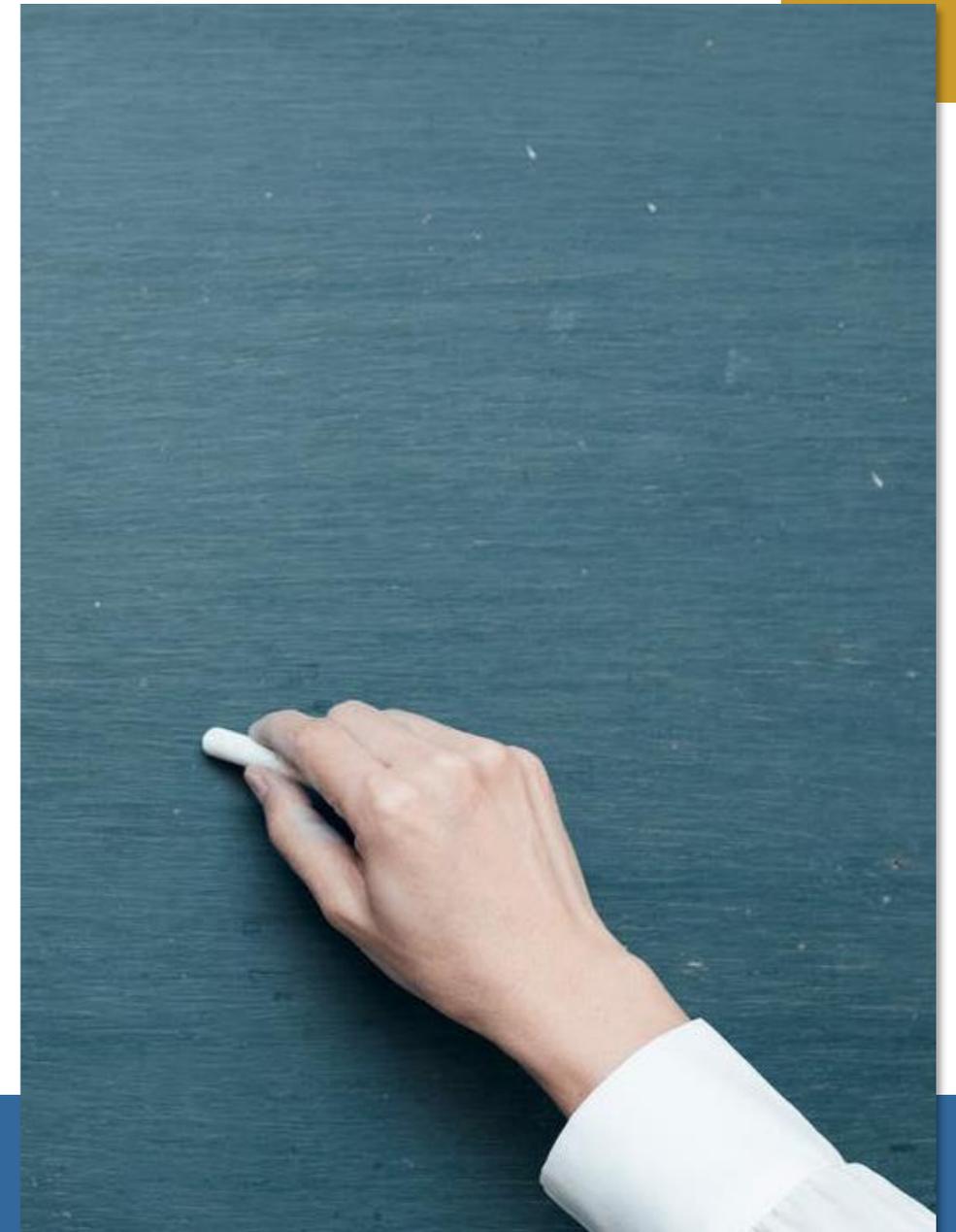
Discussion

What could happen if you told someone one of your values?

“You shouldn’t have sex until you are older.”

How can you manage your values, “hot buttons” so they don’t come out?

It is the parent’s role to teach values.



Common Values

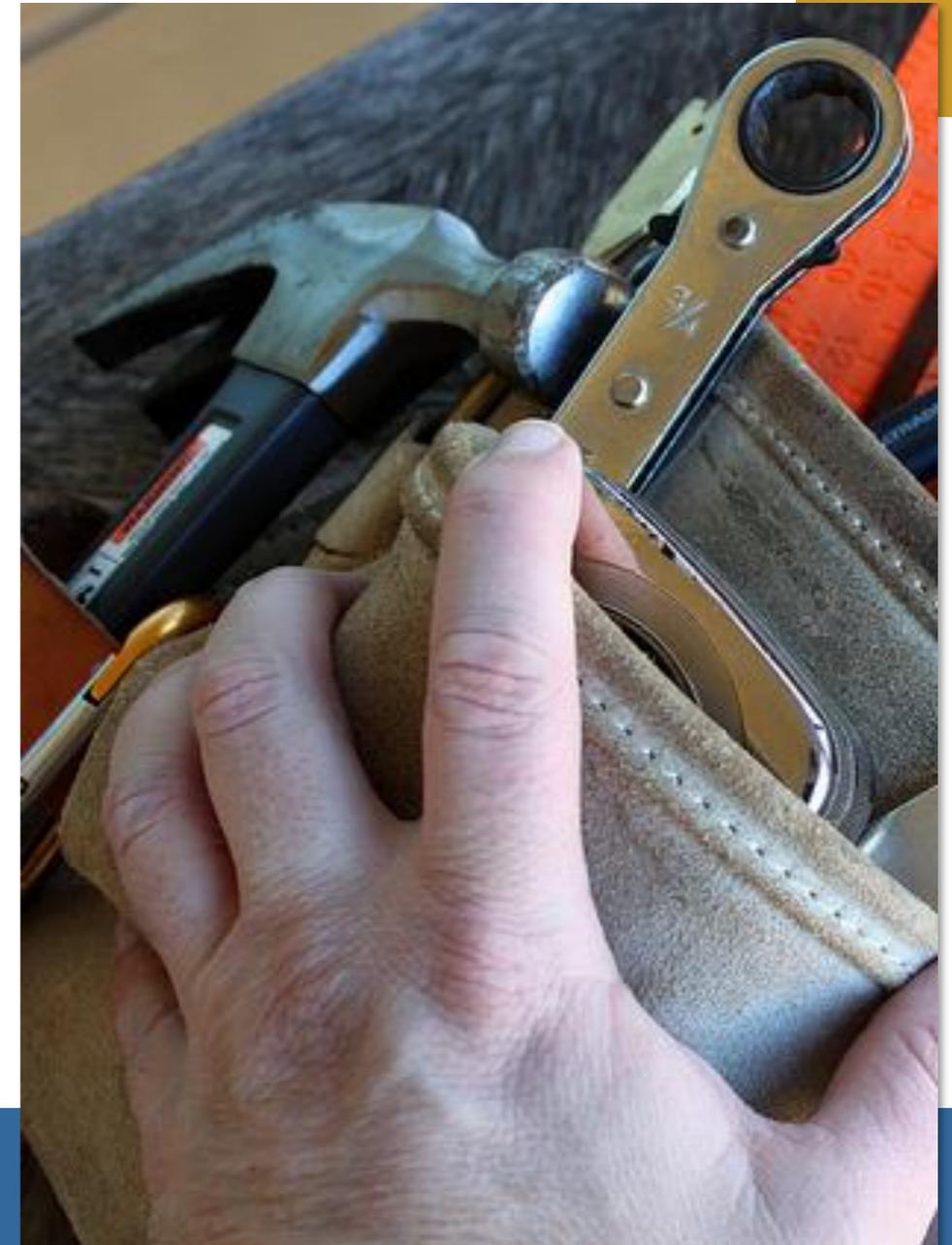
Common values that we can all agree upon are OK to express:

- ▶ 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.
- ▶ It is important to be responsible in a romantic relationship.
- ▶ Relationships should be equal and positive without violence or abuse.
- ▶ Sex should be safe and pleasurable for both.



Tips And Tools For Answering Questions

- ▶ Tips for discussing
- ▶ Types of questions
- ▶ Teachable Moments Format
- ▶ Scarborough Method
- ▶ How to respond to values/opinion and personal questions
- ▶ Practice



Tips

- ▶ Give positive messages, use inclusive language
- ▶ Don't have to know all the answers
- ▶ OK to feel embarrassed
- ▶ OK to answer later
- ▶ Give facts and a range of opinions
- ▶ Be concrete, graphic
- ▶ Use repetition
- ▶ Use the media, soap opera support group

The 4 Ps

The 4 Ps by Terri Cowenhoven

- ▶ Permission
- ▶ Privacy
- ▶ Pleasure
- ▶ Protection





Types Of Questions

Factual, How-to

- ▶ What is a condom?
- ▶ How are babies made?
- ▶ How do I meet people?

Values, Opinions

Personal



[HANDOUT 9: Types of Questions](#)

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

[HANDOUT 11: Scarborough Method](#)

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 don't have to worry.



Types Of Questions

Factual, How-to

Values, Opinions

- ▶ Should I have sex?
- ▶ What contraception should I use?

Personal

- ▶ When did you start having sex?
- ▶ Did you have sex last night?



Values/Opinions Questions

“Should I have sex with my boyfriend/girlfriend?”



Personal Questions

“Did you have sex last night?”





Responding To Sexual Behaviors

1. Find out the meaning of the behavior/comment to the person(s).
2. Decide what "messages" you want to give.
3. Give the messages by responding simply.
4. Encourage the person(s) to give you feedback.

The Center for Sex Education, www.SexEdCenter.org

What Is Your Hypothesis? Dave Hingsburger

1. Structural: Is it something in the structure?

2. Modeling: Is it being modeled by anyone?

3. Partner Selection: Is it because they have NO options for partners?

4. Inappropriate Courtships: Is it because have they not been taught how to “court” someone?

5. Sexual Knowledge: Is it because they lack education?

6. Learning History: Is it because of what they learned growing up?

7. Perpetual Arousal: Is it because they don't complete?

8. Medical: Is it because of a medical issue?

9. Medications: Is it because of a change in medications?

10. Moral Vacuum: Is it because no one has told them this isn't okay?

[HANDOUT 12: List of possible meanings](#)



Working With Families and Loved Ones

Pre-contemplation

Contemplation

Preparation

Action

Maintenance

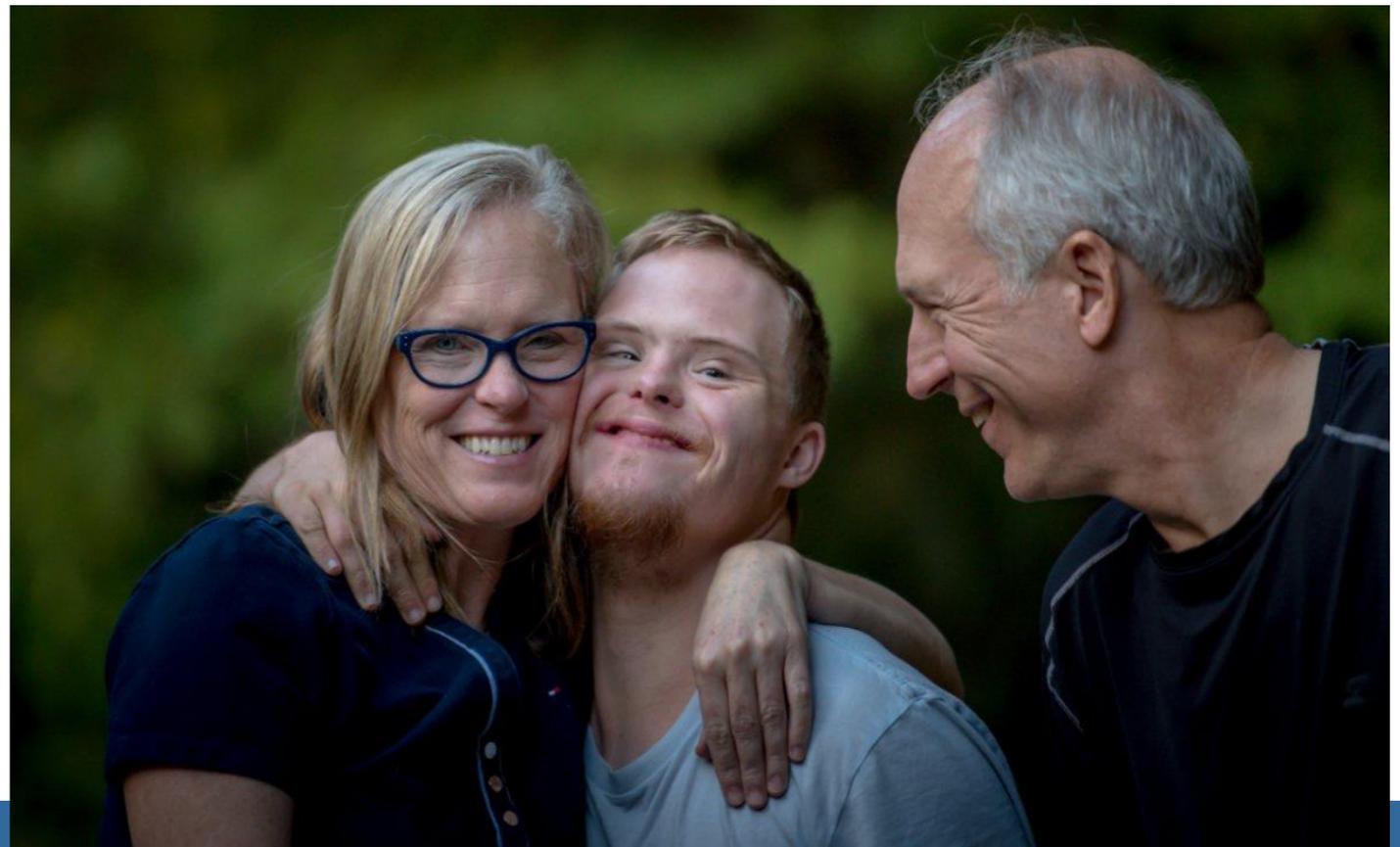
Working With Families and Loved Ones

- ▶ Behavior change theory
- ▶ Ask what their fears are. What worries you about that?
- ▶ Build trust
- ▶ It takes time
- ▶ Self advocacy-talk with the parent



Working with Families and Loved Ones

- 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.



How Would You Respond



As a large group, let's read the scenarios and decide what stage the parent is in for accepting their child as a sexual being.

Discuss how you could respond to the parent.

[HANDOUT 14: Parent Scenarios](#)

Evaluations



feedback

Please fill out and give your feedback on the workshop

[HANDOUT 15: Parent
Resource List](#)

[HANDOUT 16:
Evaluation](#)

Wrap-up

What is one hope you have for people with I/DD regarding their sexuality?