

Supporting Healthy Sexuality in People with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities

Presented by:

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and
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About the presenters



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Blue Tower Solutions, Inc.
Supporting Sustainable Change

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About Relationships and Sexuality:



In the words of a self-
advocate...



Why Talk About Sexuality?



How is sexuality defined?

How did you learn about sexuality?

Healthy Happy



Safe

Sexuality and Disability History and Background



Institutionalization – segregation by gender

Forced sterilization

Denial of access to sexuality education

Denial of opportunities for sexual expression



Myths & Facts

MYTH

FACT

**Your Attitude
just might be my
biggest barrier.**

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Role of Family/Siblings

Family plays a primary role

- **Family members** know how their loved one with a disability learns best
- **Family members** are consistent figures over the person with a disability's lifetime



Family plays a primary role

1. Communicates values.
2. Supports healthy relationships as an important and positive aspect of being human.
3. Shares information.

What do families want?



- Research shows that parents/family members want fulfilling relationships for their loved one.
- Many family members want to address the topic of healthy relationships, dating and sexuality with their loved one, but feel they lack the resources and support to learn how to talk about it.



What do self-advocates want?



- Access to information about sexuality
- Opportunities for choice
- Respect for their rights
- Safe people to talk to about sexuality





Talking about Healthy Sexuality

- Preparation
- Opportunities
- Education
- Practice

Preparation

- Know the basics
 - The term “Sexuality” encompasses a lot!
 - Physical and sexual development occur naturally as the person ages
 - Match content with preferred learning styles for better outcomes
- Gather resources
 - www.illinoisimagines.com

Preparation



Illinois Imagines Toolkit and Materials

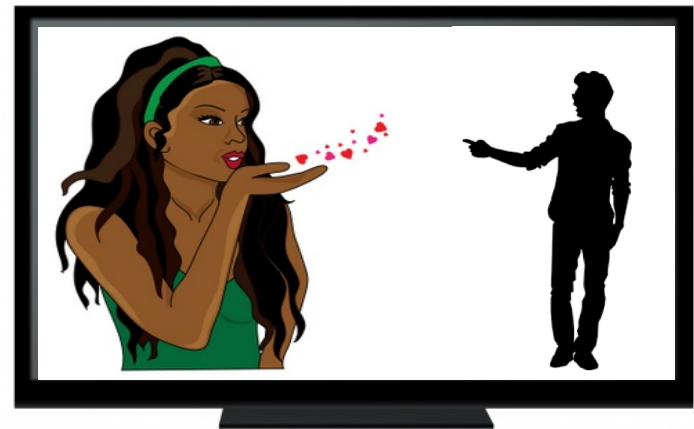


Opportunities



The Teachable Moment

- You can start a conversation naturally while you're watching television or people interacting, reading a book or listening to music together.



Opportunities



- Advocate for your loved one's Transition program or Agency to start Relationship groups and Empowerment groups



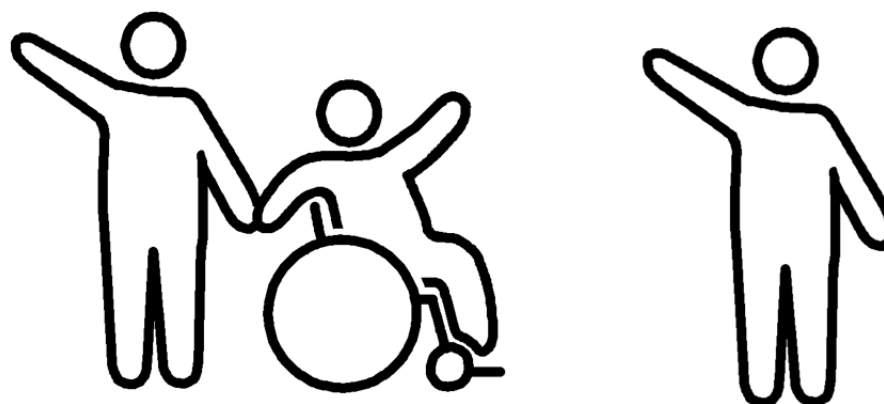
Education



- Access to Sexuality Education is often denied to people with disabilities
- When it is provided, it is often not accessible

What we believe

- Everyone can learn
- Everyone communicates
- People with disabilities can make good choices





Relationship Behaviors

Use this handout as a guide to remember what are healthy and unhealthy behaviors in relationships.

My boyfriend/girlfriend/husband/wife/partner ...	Healthy 	Unhealthy 
☐ won't let me talk to other people.		x
☐ doesn't want me to spend time with other people		x
☐ is okay if I say "no" to being touched, hugged or kissed	x	
☐ is happy for me to make my own decisions about my life	x	
☐ sometimes scares or hurts me		x
☐ tries to work out arguments by listening and speaking kindly	x	
☐ is happy for me to see my own friends if/when I want to	x	
☐ might try to hurt me or others if I wanted to break up		x
☐ makes me feel good about who I am	x	
☐ makes me feel bad about who I am		x
☐ Pressures me for kisses, hugs or sex		x

Illinois Imagines Education Guide

www.illinoisimagines.com

Practice



- What Self-Advocates want:
 - Access to information about sexuality
 - Opportunities for choice
 - Respect for their rights
 - Safe people to talk to about sexuality

Providing a safe space



- ✓ Tune in: this can mean listening more than talking
- ✓ Non-judgmental - There are no wrong questions
- ✓ Keep the dialogue open
- ✓ Be willing to go over concepts multiple times and in multiple formats

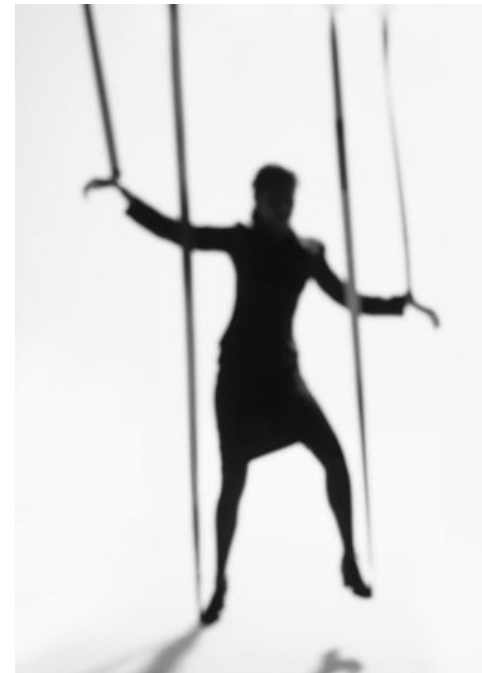


Responding to sexual violence

Sexual Violence



Sexual violence is about power and control, and people who have the least power are at greater risk to experience sexual violence.



Prevalence



People with disabilities experience sexual assault and other violent crimes at more than twice the rate of people without a disability. (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2015)

People with intellectual disabilities are sexually victimized more often than others who do not have a disability. (Furey, 1994)

Sexual Violence Response

Recognize the Indicators of Abuse

Listen with your



Listen with your



Listen with your



Responding to Disclosures

- I believe you.
- I'm sorry this happened to you.
- It was not your fault.
- How can I help you?



Sexuality Education ***IS*** Risk Reduction



- Be a **resource** to support sexuality education
- **Get educated** on how to talk about this subject
- **Join** together with other sibling leaders **to address** this topic and **develop** a plan.

Healthy Happy



Safe

Make the Jump





Thank You!

Contact Information

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