

# ***Supporting the Whole Person: Sexuality and People with I/DD***

**CHEMRX**

**Residential Living Seminar**

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Living an ordinary life is a challenge but living an ordinary sexual life, in the sense of exercising rights over your own sexuality, is to live a life of defiance. As yet, it is a life which services have done little to support.

An Ordinary Sexual Life? A Review of the Normalization Principle as it Applies to the Sexual Options of People with Learning Disabilities

**Hillary Brown, *Disability and Society*, vol.9, 1994, p. 142**

# Sexuality

All human beings have a **need to care and be cared for**. Ongoing **communication** and **contact with others** is essential to our **physical and psychological health**. Our sexuality plays an important role in that communication process. Sexuality is the way we **define ourselves as men and as women**. The definition is an important part of our **self-esteem** and can influence our **interactions** with others. The quality of our interpersonal relationships is, to a large extent, determined by **how good we feel about ourselves** as people **worthy of receiving, and capable of giving, affection**. Sexual activity is our most **intimate** way of **expressing and receiving affection**.

*Choices: A Guide to Sex Counseling with Physically Disabled Adults by Neistadt and Freda, 1987*

# **SIECUS *Guidelines* for Comprehensive Sexuality Education**

These guidelines are based on specific values related to human sexuality and are consistent with values that reflect the beliefs of most communities in a pluralistic society. Each community will need to review these values to make certain the program is consistent with community norms and diversity. Some of the values inherent in the ***Guidelines*** include (partial listing):

- **Sexuality is a natural and healthy part of living.**
  - **All persons are sexual.**
- **Sexuality includes physical, ethical, social, spiritual, psychological, and emotional dimensions.**
  - **Every person has dignity and self-worth.**
- **Individuals express their sexuality in varied ways.**
- **Families share their values about sexuality with their children.**

- **In a pluralistic society, people should respect and accept the diversity of values and beliefs about sexuality that exist in a community.**
  - **All children should be loved and cared for.**
- **All sexual decisions have effects or consequences.**
- **All persons have the right and the obligation to make responsible sexual choices.**

- **Sexual relationships should never be coercive or exploitative.**
- **Abstaining from sexual intercourse is the most effective method of preventing pregnancy and STDs/HIV.**
- **Premature involvement in sexual behaviors poses risks.**



# **Yesterday's**

## **Questions, Concerns and Suggestions**

- **Are people with intellectual disabilities sexual? Are they even interested in sex or intimacy?**
- **The sexuality/sexual feelings/sexual activity of the individuals we support isn't really any of our concern, is it?**
- **Do provider agencies have a responsibility to provide education or counseling about sexuality? We have a lot of other (more important/pressing...) things to think about (OPWDD, The Justice Center, CQL, staffing shortages, finances, ever changing rules and regulations).**

- **Aren't parents the ultimate decision makers about their child's sexuality/sexual expression and relationships?**
- **Shouldn't we be protecting people from the possibility of bad/negative/hurtful things happening if they engage in sexual activity?**
- **Who am I to determine if a person can consent to sexual contact—no one assesses my ability to consent! It's a part of life and everyone else is doing it!**



## **Today's Focus**

- **Developing social and relationship skills**
- **Finding people to develop on-going, meaningful relationships with**
- **Consent in the era of CQL**
- **Continuing lack of accessible, appropriate sexuality education and counseling (childhood through adulthood)**
- **Gender and orientation**
- **Assessing, understanding and treating challenging sexual behaviors**

- **Developing and supporting opportunities for living together/marriage for those who desire**
- **The question of rights vs. responsibilities in the age of CQL and Personal Outcome Measures (POM)**
- **Social media, the Internet, iPods and cell phones**
- **Pornography (sometimes described as “sex ed”)**
- **Lack of productive discussion of sexuality and sexual rights in the self-advocacy movement**
- **The right to become a parent**
- **Creating a “sex positive” agency culture**
- **The changing influence of parents given CQL, POMs**



# How do we create a “sex positive” agency culture?

- Understand that sexual rights = human rights
- Leave no one out of the conversation: all people are sexual beings. Sexuality is expressed in many different ways.
- Develop ethical agency policies and procedures.
- Provide training to all staff, parents/guardians, boards
- Use positive, non-shaming language in writing, verbal interactions.
- Say the words! Don't speak in code.
- Commit to provide active treatment including counseling, education and behavior support as well as opportunities for social skills development

The people we support need and want **sexuality counseling**, they need and want **sexuality education**, they need and want therapeutic support related to **relationships**, they need and want **opportunities** to take safe, educated risks to meet their **goals** and to have any chance of making their *hopes and dreams* come true.

# Psychosexual Assessment and Treatment Model

**Clinical Issues/Service Continuum**  
**Progressive Specialization of Services**

Matich, Crocker and Boyle\*

\*with 2016 edits and additions by Pamela Boyle, MS



# PSYCHOEDUCATION

## Sexuality Education and Training

- Basic human awareness (myself and my world)
- Anatomy and physiology
- Self-identification (gender, attraction, orientation)
- Self-esteem, self-concept
- Abuse awareness and prevention
- STD awareness and prevention
- Understanding consent

## Strategies

- Assessment of knowledge, attitudes, values
- Socio-sexual history
- Individualized sex education
- Sex education groups
- Picture-based learning
- Life Horizon materials
- Abuse awareness and prevention group
- Consent education and assessment

# INTERPERSONAL

## Skills Training in Interpersonal Relationships

- Basic social and friendship skills
- Marriage and Committed Relationships
- Basic dating skills
- Understanding intimate relations
- Self-identification: gender, orientation, identity, attraction, expression
- Issue specific therapy including pregnancy and parenting issues

## Strategies

- Facilitated socialization groups
- Intimacy education
- Couple counseling
- LGBTQ support
- **Consent assessment**
- Men's support group
- Women's support group
- Parent support/training

# TRAUMA

## Trauma Therapy

- Acute victim issues
- Chronic trauma issues: PTSD
- Delayed trauma response issues

## Strategies

- Taking a sexual history
- Trauma assessment: Trauma Symptom Inventory, Post Traumatic Stress Inventory
- Trauma and I/DD Flow Chart
- Individual Therapy
- Project Pride group (abuse recovery)
- Collateral Therapy

# FORENSIC

## Sexual Aggression, Boundary Violation, Sexual Offender Behavior Assessment and Treatment

- Assessing risk for offending behaviors: “soft signs”
- First time offender assessments and treatment
- Repeated offense behavior assessment and treatment

## Strategies

- *Counterfeit Deviance* assessment
- Other offender assessments
- Sexual compulsivity assessment
- Boundary disorder assessment
- Individual treatment
- “Project RESPECT” group tx
- Collateral therapy
- Medication assessment
- Staff/family training, support





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