

# SEXUALITY FOR ALL ABILITIES: TEACHING AND DISCUSSING SEXUAL HEALTH IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

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[sexualityforallabilities.com](http://sexualityforallabilities.com)



# THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

- Humans are sexual beings.
- Sex education can bring up a range of emotions.
- Sex education is a lifelong process.
- None of us are perfect.

## OUR HOPE FOR THIS WORKSHOP

- You will leave this workshop feeling a little more comfortable talking about this topic.
- You will leave with 1-2 tools or strategies to use with yourself, your children, or the people in your life.

# WHY ARE STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES MORE VULNERABLE TO ASSAULT?

1. Attitudes and beliefs in our society
2. Aspects of the disability
3. Lack of sexual education
4. Dependency and learned compliance
5. Isolation

# HOW HAS SEXUAL EDUCATION FAILED PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES?

- Lack of education
- Stranger Danger principle
- Sex ed as abuse prevention
- Reactive education (after something happened)
- Hidden curriculum (what we are just “supposed” to know)
- Informal curriculum (what we learn from friends)

# HELPFUL STRATEGIES FOR EQUITY – SEXUAL HEALTH & STUDENTS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

- Teach accurate terms for private body parts
- Talk about body rights – “my body belongs to me”
- Use teachable moments
- Encourage assertiveness and appropriate noncompliance
- Repetition (pre-teach, re-teach, review)
- Teach the rules
- Role-play
- Use routines (same lesson format)

# SELF-ADVOCACY & SELF-DETERMINATION

- Self-advocacy is the extent to which a person has the ability to speak up for one's self.
- Self-determination requires an individual to make decisions about their own life. This includes skills such as: choice-making, decision-making, problem solving, goal setting, self-monitoring, leadership, resiliency and so much more.

# STRATEGIES FOR SEXUAL HEALTH CONVERSATIONS





# BEST PRACTICES, STRATEGIES, TIPS, REMINDERS

- Reminder: ALL students can learn
- Learning rate and ability level may vary
- Teach, re-teach, pre-teach
- Same topics every year K-12 (sex education is a lifelong process)
- Speak less, wait more, use visuals

# ANSWERING DIFFICULT QUESTIONS STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

- Follow same protocol that you typically use
- Remember that most of the “shock value” questions may not actually be “shock value” questions
- Question box can be helpful for some classrooms
- Many students will ask questions when the question comes to them
- Not uncommon for students to bring up personal stories of assault or abuse in the middle of class

# I BELIEVE YOU. I SEE YOU.

Often times when people with developmental disabilities report incidences of assault, they are not believed. Why not?

- Societal attitudes and beliefs
- Those connected express powerful denial and disbelief
- Concerns regarding separating real life events from TV events or made-up stories
- Trouble believing the person as credible

# IMMEDIATE RESPONSE

1. Remain calm.
2. Move to a quieter place to talk (near others who have been made aware of the situation).
3. Do not attempt to handle things on your own.
4. Let them know you believe them.
5. Reassure them that it's not their fault and that telling was the right thing to do.
6. Contact the authorities or your supervisor.






# COMMON CONCERNS WHEN WORKING WITH STUDENTS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

- Confusion with private/public behaviors
- Trouble discerning facts vs. myths
- Can be easily pressured by peers
- Can get in trouble for behaviors they don't know are inappropriate for school or the workplace
- Confusion about caregiver relationships
- Lack support in developing autonomy and independence
- Nonconsensual hugging/touching
- Misreading social cues

# SAMPLE ACTIVITIES



# PEOPLE IN MY LIFE

My Family 
My Friends 
Romantic Partner 
Professional Relationships 
Public 

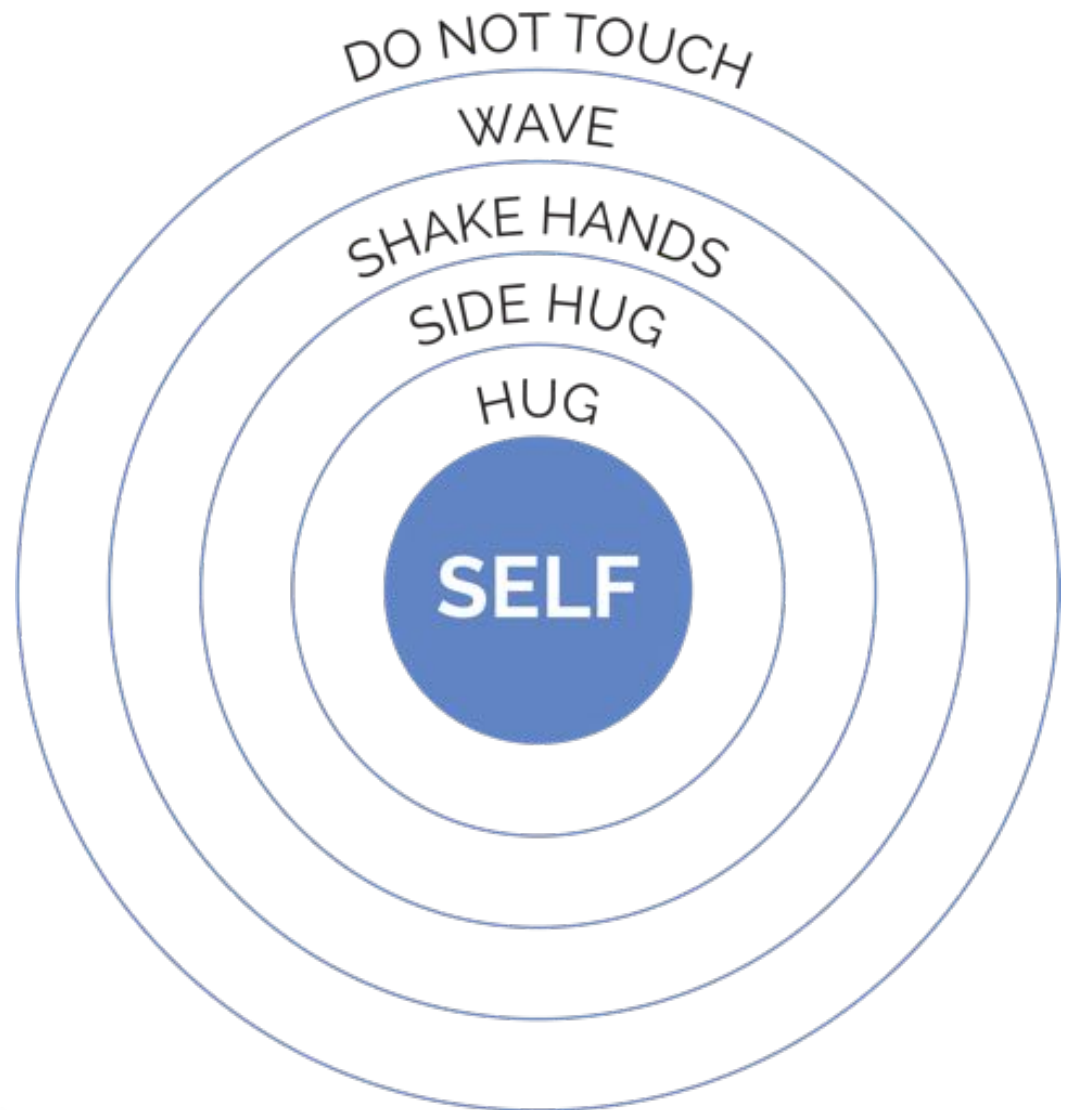
Write down the names of the different people in your life in all 5 categories.

Note: in the Romantic Partner category it is important that BOTH people have knowledge and want that relationship

# RELATIONSHIP CIRCLE

Write the names of the people in your life in the relationship circle.

Note: If a person is in my hug circle, it does not mean I have to give them a hug every time I see them.





# HEALTHY AND UNHEALTHY BEHAVIORS IN A RELATIONSHIP

**Healthy Behaviors**

**Unhealthy Behaviors**



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# BEHAVIORS AT SCHOOL

## Healthy Behaviors

- High five
- Handshake
- Wave
- Hello
- Compliments

## Unhealthy Behaviors

- Hugs
- Touch private body parts
- Show private body parts
- Hitting, kicking, spitting, etc.
- Gossip

Example of how to talk about healthy behaviors at school, work or home.

# HEALTHY AND UNHEALTHY BOUNDARIES



# RED/GREEN CARDS

## GREEN CARD

- Healthy
- Okay
- Appropriate
- Safe
- Expected
- Comfortable
- Go

DO NOT USE: yes, good

## RED CARD

- Unhealthy
- Not okay
- Inappropriate
- Unsafe
- Unexpected
- Uncomfortable
- Stop

DO NOT USE: no, bad

# SEXUALITY FOR ALL ABILITIES PERSONAL SAFETY VIDEOS



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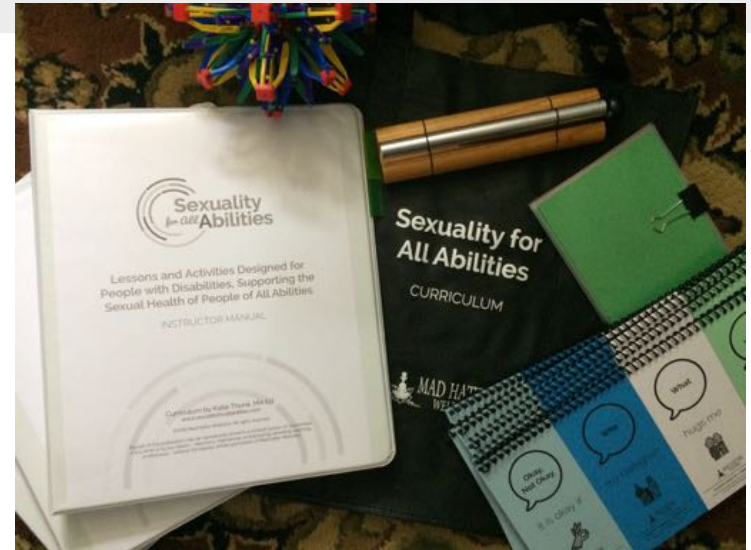
# EMPOWER ME CARD DECK



- Large Group
- Small Groups – Student Led
- 1:1 with Students
- Informal/less intimidating way to discuss difficult topics

# HOW WE CAN SUPPORT YOU!

- SFAA Curriculum/Training
- Safety Videos
- Boundary Flip Books
- Empower Me Card Deck
- Family Discussion Guide
- Videos on our YouTube page
- Coming in July 2020: Sexuality for All Abilities Book through Routledge Publishing
- Consulting



# RESOURCES

- [Sexualityforallabilities.com](http://Sexualityforallabilities.com)
- [Mad Hatter Wellness YouTube channel](#) - videos on sexual education
- [Taking Care of Myself 2: for Teenagers and Young Adults with ASD](#) by Mary Wrobel - Written for teenagers and young adults with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD).
- Sex Ed Curricula for Students with Disabilities:
  - Sexuality for All Abilities 😊
  - FLASH for Special Education
  - Teen Talk Adapted for All Abilities (Health Connected)
  - Teaching Sexual Health – Differing Abilities (Alberta Health Services)
  - Elevatus Training Curriculum – Sexuality Education for People with Developmental Disabilities
  - What else?



QUESTIONS????



Mad Hatter Wellness envisions a world that provides and promotes equitable health and wellness education for all people.



# CONTACT US! 😊

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