Relationship and Sexuality Training

Arc of Massachusetts Transition Conference
October 3, 2015
Nicole Murphy LCSW and Paula Thompson LICSW
Nicole Murphy and Paula Thompson

- Group Facilitation
- Making the gray areas of life more concrete
- Education background and clinical background
- Years of Research
Goals for today

- Gain knowledge and strategies to assist in having discussions about relationships and sexuality issues with your child, family member or student.

- Leave with a list of resources and activities
What comes to mind when you think about sexuality and people with a developmental disabilities?

Have you tried having conversations with your family member about this topic?

Does anyone want to share their experience with having this discussion?

Questions you have for today and topics you hope we address?
Importance of Discussions

- Sex Education Vs. Sexuality Discussions
- Statistics regarding abuse
- There is a need for accurate information
Sexuality

- It is age appropriate for adults
- Making Decisions
Where to Start the Discussion

- Same age for all people
- Privacy
- Advocacy
Strategies to utilize during your discussions

- Identify a place to get clear and consistent information
- Opportunities to practice skills
- Continuous conversations
Sexuality and Relationship Topics

- Relationships
- Identification and expression of feelings
- Enhancing self-esteem and social skills
- Personal boundaries and body rights
- Body parts and changes
- Sexual development and education
- Touching appropriate/inappropriate
- Personal safety skills around relationships
Personal Boundaries and Body Rights

- How to say “No”
- Knowing your rights
Public and Private

- Location Identification
- Proper Language
Relationships

- Kinds of relationships
  - Personal
  - Professional
- What is the difference between friendship and dating?
- Options
Identification and Expression of Feelings

- Intimacy
- How feelings translate into actions
Enhancing Self-Esteem and Social Skills

- Peer Pressure
- Qualities of a Friend
  - Red Flags and Green Flags
- Confidence Building
Touching Appropriate/Inappropriate

- Discussing types of touch
- Masturbation
- Permission
Personal Safety Skills

- The role of emotions on making decisions around sex.
- What happens when drugs and alcohol are involved?
Safe Sex Discussion

- Forms of protection
- Sexually Transmitted Diseases
Decision Making Steps
1. List choices
2. Think about what could happen (good things, bad things)
3. Think about feelings, your own and other people’s if someone else is involved
4. Think about what your beliefs and your family beliefs

(Directly from Family Life and Sexual Health Curriculum, Kings County, Washington)
Benefits of having conversations with your family member

- Tools to make decision
- Accurate Information
- Reduce risk of Abuse
- Provide a safe place to ask questions
Asperger’s Syndrome and Sexuality by Isabelle Henault
This book provides helpful background information with helpful checklists and handouts.

Sexuality by Karen Melberg Schwier and Dave Hingsburger
This is book gives a great overview, with examples and suggestions. It is an easy read, for families and professionals alike.

Socialization and Sexuality - A Comprehensive Training Guide by Winifred Kempton
A good guide for long term staff training. This guide includes interactive tools and surveys.

Teaching Children with Downs Syndrome about Their Bodies, Boundaries and Sexuality by Terri Couwenhoven
Helpful visuals and step by step directions on how to teach the skills necessary for sexuality discussions.

The Coping Skills Workbook by Lisa Schab
Worksheets based on problem solving through a variety of scenarios. Some themes include dealing with your feelings, adjusting your attitude, asking for help, planning ahead and taking care of yourself.

American Girl Books
A smart girl’s guide to sticky situations
A smart girls’s guide to friendship troubles
The Care and Keeping of You - The Body Book for Girls
These books have great factual information. The language is in a concrete format that is helpful in navigating some of the gray areas of life.
Curriculums and other Resources

- Family Life and Sexual Health Curriculum by King County Public Health, Washington
  http://www.kingcounty.gov/healthservices/health/personal/famplan/educators/FLASH.aspx
  *Special Education section and appendices with comprehensive downloadable free lesson plans*

- Healthy Relationship Bingo and Stress Bingo By Enasco.com
  *These are classic bingo games with that address the topics above. They are a favorite of our participants.*

- Sexuality Education for children and adolescents with developmental disabilities, Sexuality across the Lifespan
  By the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council Inc.
  *This has some helpful visuals, it is a comprehensive curriculum.*
Questions???

Nicole Murphy 781-587-2318  nmurphy@theemarc.org

Paula Thompson 781-587-2316  pthompson@theemarc.org