Transition to Adulthood

- SOCIAL SKILLS AND SEXUALITY EDUCATION FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

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THE FORGOTTEN CURRICULUM

“It is unrealistic of society to demand responsible behavior from people who have never been taught what constitutes responsibility and irresponsibility.”

(Johnson, 1973 in Gardner and Chpouras, 1998)
THE FORGOTTEN CURRICULUM

“Too often people with disabilities are sheltered from or do not have access to the small experiments and low risk mistakes through which people learn, and thus do not develop good judgment about sexuality.”

(Gardner, Chipouras, 1998)
WHY SOCIAL SKILLS AND SEXUALITY EDUCATION?

DEFINITION OF NEED
DEFINITION OF NEED

- The world is a social place and all that we do in society is affected by the social skills which we develop.
DEFINITION OF NEED

- Individuals without disabilities receive social and sexuality information through visual observations and interactions with others.
DEFINITION OF NEED

- They see what others are doing; they practice the skills; They test them out on others and refine them...

These children often pick-up a wealth of information incidentally, with little or no intervention from adults.
DEFINITION OF NEED

- Individuals with disabilities such as cognitive delays, autism and/or sensory impairments require structured training and need to be taught within the context of natural environments.
DEFINITION OF NEED

- Individuals with disabilities are at risk of developing deficits in social competencies.
- They are more likely to be unaware of the location of peers, the activities in which they are engaging, hence hampering the very possibility of interaction.
DEFINITION OF NEED

- Age appropriate awareness of social behavior and sexuality is an important area of understanding. Individuals must receive the necessary information to develop appropriate social and sexual concepts and behaviors.
DEFINITION OF NEED

- Individuals with disabilities require specific instruction that provides knowledge and skills.... sequentially and built logically on earlier learning.
DEFINITION OF NEED

- Research indicates that when individuals with disabilities are not given specific instruction in social skills they do not acquire the skills needed to function independently as adults.
WHAT ARE WE GOING TO TEACH?

- CURRICULUM CONTENT
Broad Definition of Sexuality

- Sexuality can be defined as the integration of physical, emotional, intellectual, and social aspects of an individual’s personality, which express maleness or femaleness. (Sex and Disability Project, 1979)
CONTENT
INFANCY TO ADULTHOOD

- Developmental Guides
- Understanding Oneself- Self Awareness (e.g. body language; feelings; self control; physical development; gender; etc.)

- Understanding Bodily Functions (e.g. toileting; grooming; hygiene; etc.)

- Understanding Individual Differences (e.g. uniqueness; puberty; body image; positive self concept; etc.)
CONTENT
INFANCY TO ADULTHOOD

- Understanding the Need to respect Self and Others (e.g. privacy; self-image; assertiveness; etc.)

- Understanding Relationships with Others (e.g. family; friends; strangers; decision making; avoiding abuse and exploitation; etc.)
CONTENT
INFANCY TO ADULTHOOD

- Understanding Medical and Health Aspects of Sexuality
- Understanding Sexuality Terms (e.g. correct terminology)
HOW DO WE TEACH SOCIAL SKILLS AND SEX EDUCATION?

- Continuum of instruction
- Curriculum/intervention planning sheet
- Curriculum adaptation- team approach
CONTINUUM OF INSTRUCTION

- Variations in approach are needed based upon the child/young adult’s sensory issues and level of adaptive, communication and cognitive skills
CONTINUUM OF INSTRUCTION

- Functioning level
  - Low
  - Mid
  - High

- Approach
  - Behavioral
  - In vivo
  - Classes

Worcester 2017
CONTINUUM OF INSTRUCTION

- All social/sexual behaviors can be defined by the following categories:
  - Appropriate vs. Inappropriate
  - Public vs. Private

(Edwards, 1979)
This approach offers:

- A common language for those involved in the learner’s education
- Concrete terms for student learning
- An emphasis on age appropriate behaviors
- An emphasis on decision making

(Edwards, 1979)
CURRICULUM/INTERVENTION PLANNING SHEET

- OFFERS

- An approach to either curriculum adaptation and/or behavioral intervention

- An opportunity for staff/families to problem solve and plan together
CURRICULUM/INTERVENTION PLANNING SHEET

- DEFINE THE BEHAVIOR OR ISSUE:

- IDENTIFY YOUR FEELINGS TOWARD THE BEHAVIOR OR ISSUE:
IN PLANNING YOUR APPROACH CONSIDER:

- **environmental factors** (living situation or where the behavior occurs)
- **adaptive factors** (people or social factors involved)
- **cognitive skills** (language level and/or general level of ability)

AND WHETHER THE BEHAVIOR CAN BE DEFINED AS:

- public-----private
- appropriate-----inappropriate
GOAL: WHAT IS THE NEW BEHAVIOR OR LEARNING NEEDED? (e.g. a more appropriate time and place for the behavior; a higher skill level; or level of information, etc.)

WHAT TECHNIQUE-STRATEGY-PLAN CAN BE USED TO ADDRESS THE ISSUE? (e.g. role playing; behavioral approach; formal class; tapes; reading; in vivo counseling; peer to peer support group, etc.)
BACK-UP PLAN: other creative alternatives or strategies for intervention
RESOURCES

RESOURCES

- **Curriculum for Developing an Awareness of Sexual Exploitation and Self-Protective Techniques**, Comprehensive Health Education Foundation, 20814 Pacific Highway So., Seattle, WA, 98188

- Edwards, J. and Wapnick, S., *Being Me* (1979) and *Feeling Free* (1982), Ednick Communications, Box 3612, Portland, OR, 97208

RESOURCES


- Miller, T. in McInnes, J., *Programming and Support for Individuals with Congenital and Early Adventitious Deafblindness*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, Canada, in 1999

RESOURCES