Healthy Relationships:
Sex,
Sexuality
and
Relationships
Why I do this work?

• People are getting hurt (physically and emotionally)
• Efforts to protect people often increases vulnerability
• Individuals are often identified as offenders and victims, when they are just trying to figure it all out
• TRUST is a big problem
• *We* are all dragging around baggage from childhood and do we really want to pass it on?
• Sex is uncomfortable to talk about, but if we don’t, who will?
Messages

• What messages did you receive about sex when you were a child?

How did you actually learn ‘the truth’?
Messages continued

• Messages
  – Wait until marriage (Same sex)
  – Girls vs. Boys (double standard)
  – Pregnancy
  – Age (Pre and post ‘pill’)

• Learned
  – Partner
  – Books/TV/Movies
  – Friends
  – Abuse
How the people who have autism and/or ID learn or don’t learn about sex

• Victimization
  – As high as 90 % of people who have disabilities are sexually molested (Sobsey)

• Inadequate sex education

• Media

• Lack of socializing/ability to practice

• Overprotected

• Seen as children
A bit about Children

Sexual Developmental Stages

• Children from Birth to two years:
  – Explore body parts, including genitals
  – Experience genital pleasure
  – Boys have erections (in uterus)
  – Girls lubricate vaginally
Children – ages three to four

- Become aware and curious about gender and body differences
- Establish a firm belief that they are male or female
- Touch themselves and begin to masturbate
- Have a basic sexual orientation
Children ages five to eight years

• Mimic adult sexual behavior*

• Become modest and express a need for privacy

• Have sexual or romantic fantasies

*Can be a red flag for abuse
Children ages nine to twelve

- Have strong same gender friendships

- Begin to develop an attitude (either positive or negative) toward their bodies

- Masturbate to orgasm

- May initiate Sexual intercourse*  
  - Especially if there is a history of sexual abuse
Range of behaviors that are normal-ish

– Self-stimulation (masturbation)
– Attraction to others, including staff, teachers, friends and someone who is cute!
– Playing the part (doing what they have seen or heard--Media)
– Making ‘bad’ choices
  • stalking (attempt to connect)
  • impulsive verbalization (want to kiss me?)
  • inappropriate touching (Patting on the butt: Hi babe!”
Healthy Sexuality
Our Responsibilities

– Ask permission to touch people we support
– Knock before entering bedroom
– Encourage people to disagree or say ‘no’
– Be consistent - all staff need to follow the same boundary rules
– Model healthy sexual behavior
– Provide opportunities to practice
– Please don’t just say “inappropriate”
What to do? Teach and talk.

- **Sex is good** – normal & healthy
  - Sex can be with another person or alone
- **Proper names for body parts and functions**
  - Penis, testicles, anus, buttocks
    - Penis pees, ejaculates and can be part of sex
  - Breasts, vulva (vagina & urethra), anus. Buttocks
    - Women’s breasts can feed babies
    - Vagina is part of sex, menstruation, babies come out
- **Both have an anus and buttocks**
  - Anus and Buttocks
    - Anus poops and can be part of sex
    - Buttocks make it comfortable to sit on a hard chair.

Discuss LGBT (educate ourselves)
Teach and talk continued

• Safe Sex
  – Avoid pregnancy
  – Avoid STI’s

• LGBTQI
  – Sexual Orientation
  – Gender Identity
  – Transgender
  – Intersex
Consent

• VISCAT
  – Verbal Informed Sexual Consent Assessment Tool

• Results
  – 1. Complete understanding; can give consent
  – 2. Can give consent and would benefit from services below
  – 3. Cannot give consent. Requires services below
  – 4. Ability to provide information could not be determined

• Targeted need
  – Education
  – Counseling
  – Skills training
  – Program Planning
Healthy Relationships

• Hi and goodbye friend
• Casual friend
• Best friend
• Boy/girl friend
• Partner/lover/spouse
  – Identify who they are
    • Neighbor, coworker, friend, best friend, partner
  – What do you do with each of them?
    • Wave, fist bump, shake hands, hug, kiss, touch
Everyday Issues

• Sexual attraction to staff
  – Of course they will be attracted to you - there you are, being kind & pretty. Talk about it

• Internet/TV/Movies
  – It is complicated out there – try to explain how these are different from real life

• Reality or fantasy?
  – So is the murder on the news done with actors like the movie?

• Old records
  – If you find that a person you support offended someone 20 years ago, but there isn’t any evidence since then - don’t panic. How is he doing – now?
Exercises for Us

• Words on back – On a small ‘sticky’ write one word for a body part or a sexual activity. Put one on the back of each participant. Give the group 10 minutes to figure out what the word is – by asking only ‘yes’ or ‘no’ questions

• Boxes – Pick up three paper ‘cubes’ at a craft store. One cube represents a person, another an activity and the third, a place. Write one word on each of the six sides of each cube - then toss them like dice. A possible combination might be “The van driver (person) asked me to take off my shirt (action) in the park (place)” Now discuss all aspects of this scenario.

• On large paper, write every word you ever heard connected to “sexual act or body part”

• In your cultural/religious community how would you handle:
  • Same sex relationships
  • Unwed motherhood
  • Living together before marriage
Thank You

Be Kind:
Everyone is Fighting a Mighty Battle!