


## Teaching Relationships, Sexuality and Safe Practices For Abstract Learners

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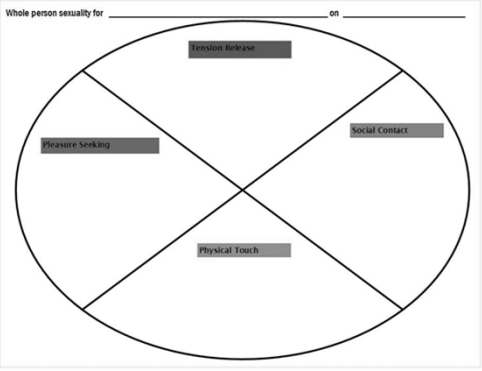
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## Intimate Relationship Meets Complex Needs

- ▶ Pleasure seeking
- ▶ Physical touch
- ▶ Tension release
- ▶ Social contact/caring relationship

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Whole person sexuality for \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_



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## Understanding Sexual Needs

- ▶ What is individual currently doing to meet following common needs?
  - ▶ Pleasure seeking
  - ▶ Tension release
  - ▶ Social contact/caring relationship
  - ▶ Physical touch/ comfort
  - ▶ Self-esteem
  - ▶ Social status

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## Understanding Sexual Needs

- ▶ Assess individual's understanding of sexual and social needs
- ▶ Make a list of his/her current and past sexual and social behaviors
- ▶ Identify options for meeting unmet needs

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## Physical Touch

- ▶ Some adults with ASD like to be touched, others do not
- ▶ Sustained touch: holding hands or brief: a hug
- ▶ Some want firm touch, others want soft
- ▶ Try “touch exploration” to find out what type of touch is pleasurable.

## Intimate Relationship Meets Complex Needs

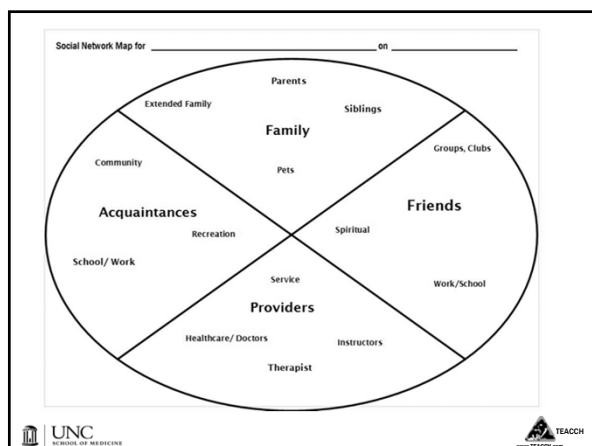
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## Intimate Relationship Meets Complex Needs

- ▶ Physical touch
- ▶ Pleasure seeking
- ▶ Tension release
- ▶ *Social contact/caring relationship*



## What's Missing?

- ▶ Identify need areas that are not being met in the individual's life.
- ▶ Help him/her prioritize the needs.



### What's most important?

- ▶ Begin with the most important need and identify ways of meeting the need
- ▶ Keep in mind the individual's
  - ▶ Preferences
  - ▶ Moral, religious, and social beliefs
  - ▶ Social judgment
  - ▶ Prerequisite skills
  - ▶ Current resources
  - ▶ Motivation

### Continually: Assess, Educate and Develop Options

- ▶ Individual sexual needs
- ▶ Individual social needs
- ▶ Individual tension release needs
- ▶ Sexual knowledge and understanding
- ▶ Social understanding and skills
- ▶ Tension reduction activities

### What to teach?

- ▶ Sexual Anatomy
- ▶ Reproductive health
- ▶ Sexual responses and partnered sex
- ▶ Stages of relationships and maintaining relationships
- ▶ Dating
- ▶ Contraception and sexually transmitted infections
- ▶ Sexual Diversity
- ▶ Illegal, Unsafe or dangerous behaviors



### Values

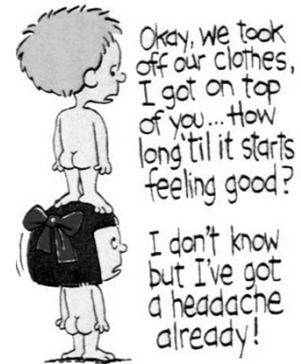
Prior to talking with your son or daughter, you as parents need to have a discussion and be in agreement as to the family values and ethics that are important to you. (Clinicians should clarify client and family's values)

- ▶ Family values - It is important for you to explain your family values, morals, and beliefs in a concrete manner.
- ▶ Societal values - May not be in agreement with Family values
- ▶ Religious values
- ▶ Individual perspective

### Sexual Skills Training

- ▶ How to teach?
  - ▶ Use concrete, explicit language
  - ▶ Break down topics into manageable chunks of information

Literal Understanding Of Sex



## Having "The talk"

- ▶ This will not be a one time conversation, so stress where and when you will be available to talk.
- ▶ Some Topics:
  - ▶ masturbation,
  - ▶ physical intimacy and sexual intercourse,
  - ▶ homosexuality,
  - ▶ birth control, contraception,
  - ▶ conception, pregnancy, abortion, child birth,
  - ▶ sexually transmitted diseases and how to prevent them,
  - ▶ dangerous harmful sexual behavior,
  - ▶ illegal sexual behavior.

## What do I say?



- ▶ First educate yourself
- ▶ Start by asking what your son or daughter already knows. Try not to be shocked!
- ▶ Reassurance and encouragement may be needed for them to trust they can share.
- ▶ Correct any misinformation gently
- ▶ Explain that their peers are all learning about this topic too and may not have the correct information, but that you will be honest with them.

## A "privacy" notebook may be helpful.

- ▶ Privacy Notebook Rules
  - ▶ All communication is to be written
  - ▶ Any question can be asked, no topic is off limits. You may be surprised by the questions that are asked.
  - ▶ Try to answer all questions honestly, if you do not know the answer, then say so. If you can provide a resource to find the information, you can provide that.
  - ▶ Once your response is written, place book on bed of asker.
  - ▶ If you would like to discuss what was asked, you must ask in writing and respect the answer. Asking questions should not feel intimidating.
- ▶ What is written in the book is **private** and not to be shared or talked about unless both people agree.

## Talking about sexual subjects

- ▶ Try to learn the "lingo" for teens and sex, sexual acts, body parts, and masturbation and then educate your child ahead of time what the different sayings mean.
  - ▶ Unfortunately the sayings and terms can get our kids in trouble. "Can I see your kitty?" can cause a slap in the face or a suspension.
  - ▶ Older sibs, cousins, or neighbors may be able to help you become familiar with terms.

## Slang Terms

- ▶ **Masturbation:** Wanking, Jacking off, Pulling the hood, Tickling the bean, Choke the chicken
- ▶ **Kissing:** Make out, Snog, Play tonsil hockey, Exchange spit, Peck
- ▶ **Oral Male Sex:** Blow job, Suck off, Chrome his dome, Get head
- ▶ **Oral Female Sex:** Dine at the Y, Eat fur pie, Muff dive, Munch carpet
- ▶ **Intercourse:** Bang, Do the nasty, The horizontal bop, Beat the cheeks, Bump the fuzzies, Do, Boink

- ▶ **Orgasm/Ejaculate:** Blast, The big O, Blow his load, Shoot his wad, Cum
- ▶ **Genital Touching:** Hand job, Finger bang, Fisting, Fingering
- ▶ **Genitalia:** Pink taco, bat cave, roast beef, ninja foot, lunch meat, muffin, anaconda, tube steak, pink tractor beam

From C. Davies & M.A. Dubie, *Intimate Relationships and Sexual Health*

Online Slang Dictionary ([www.onlineslangdictionary.com](http://www.onlineslangdictionary.com))  
Sex Lexis ([www.sex-lexis.com](http://www.sex-lexis.com))

## Challenges to Sexual Education

- ▶ Difference between teaching about sexuality and sensuality versus procreation and where babies come from
- ▶ Understanding of others' feelings and needs
- ▶ Recognizing and expressing own feelings and needs
- ▶ Internet challenges

## Internet Challenges

- ▶ Ease of access!! Need I say more?!!
- ▶ No filter of information, all information treated equally- correct and incorrect. Gives misperceptions about sex and what is "normal"
- ▶ Dating and social networking
- ▶ Pornography websites
- ▶ Lack of guidance and education

## IT IS ESSENTIAL TO TEACH ABOUT SEXUAL FEELINGS

## Physical intimacy

Physical intimacy describes any activity that includes the intentional stimulus of the body for the purpose of generating pleasure of either or both participants.

- ▶ Holding Hands, Hugging, Kissing (closed or open mouth)
- ▶ Touching parts of another's body (fondling or massage)
- ▶ Mutual Masturbation
- ▶ Oral or Anal sex
- ▶ Sexual Intercourse

Taken from E. Ramey & J. Ramey: Autistics' Guide to Dating pp.82-83

## ESSENTIAL TO TEACH ABOUT CONSENSUAL RELATIONSHIPS

## Essential to teach about consensual relationships

- ▶ We discuss the many ways for our individuals with ASD to say no and decline unwanted behaviors, but we must also teach them to understand and how to respond when others are saying "No"
- ▶ Teach to ask permission and accept the answer



## Saying "No"

- ▶ "I'm incredibly flattered, but no, thank you."
- ▶ "No, but thank you for asking"
- ▶ "No"
- ▶ Use the NICE strategy
  - ▶ Say No
  - ▶ Use I statement, "I do not want to have sex"
  - ▶ Change the topic
  - ▶ Have an Exit plan

## Consent

- ▶ Before any physical intimacy both people must give consent either verbally (by saying yes) or nonverbally (by initiating the intimate activity)
- ▶ Always get consent, don't assume even if you have been intimate before
- ▶ Either person has the right to say "No" at anytime. There is no point that is too far or too late to say "No"
- ▶ If you do not get consent, No intimate activity should take place. If you continue then it is a sexual assault.

## Accepting No

### Ann Says No

Bill wants Ann to be his girlfriend.  
Bill asks Ann to sit with him at lunch. Ann says yes. Soon Bill and Ann sit together every day at lunch. Bill knows it is OK to ask Ann to be his girlfriend.  
Bill asks Ann to be his girlfriend. Ann says no. Bill knows Ann just wants to be friends. Bill can sit with Ann at lunch.  
Bill cannot ask Ann for a date or hold hands or kiss her.  
Bill cannot say Ann is his girlfriend.  
Bill knows they are just friends. That is OK.

## Issues in Sexual Relationships

("Asperger's In Love" , 2003 Maxine Alston)

- ▶ AS men have difficulty initiating sex with partner
- ▶ AS men have trouble reading non-verbal cues
- ▶ Difficulties reading non-verbal cues also makes AS teens vulnerable to mis-reading cues when dating

## Issues in Sexual Relationships

- ▶ Uncomfortable with certain aspects of sex -e.g. kissing, hugging, touching, oral sex
  - ▶ Touch (skin, hair, pubic hair, secretions)
  - ▶ Smells (body odors, perfumes)
  - ▶ Taste (body fluids, sexual lubricants)
- ▶ Emotional Control
- ▶ Unusual Interests

## Resolving Issues in Sexual Relationships

- ▶ Relationship needs to be based on what works for couple - may be atypical
- ▶ Direct communication about what each person wants and does not want
- ▶ Clear rules for what to say and do in dating situations



## ESSENTIAL TO TEACH ABOUT EMOTIONAL INTIMACY

“Why do I need to buy flowers when I just want to have sex?”

## Social Relationships

## Social Issues

- ▶ Want social relationships outside the family
- ▶ Want variety and depth in relationship
- ▶ Interested in dating as a way of achieving sexual intimacy or adult status

## Social Issues

- ▶ Trouble distinguishing between levels of intimacy (stranger vs. acquaintance vs. friend vs. date)
- ▶ Trouble taking another person's perspective
- ▶ Does not know the prerequisite steps to an intimate relationship
- ▶ Difficulty being around people/physical closeness

## Other issues that interfere with intimate relationship

- ▶ Communication difficulties
  - ▶ Difficulty with non-verbal communication
  - ▶ Problems understanding emotions of others
  - ▶ As a result don't always remember conversations about emotions
  - ▶ And can't predict emotional reactions of others

## Increase Social Opportunities

- ▶ Clubs or Interests Groups
- ▶ Social Groups
- ▶ Structured Activities with Peers
- ▶ Advocate/Volunteer



## GOAL

- ▶ Provide training on the different types of relationships and levels of intimacy and the prerequisite skills and behaviors necessary to achieve these relationships

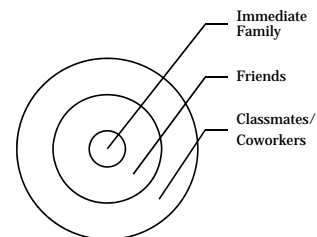
## Strategies for Teaching Social Skills

- ▶ Define Social Skills or Relationships in concrete terms

## Defining Relationships

- ▶ What is a friend?
- ▶ Who do you ask on dates?
  - ▶ What do you need to know before you ask someone out?
- ▶ What is a Boyfriend or Girlfriend?
- ▶ What does it mean to be married?
- ▶ What is a Stranger?

Provide training on the different types of relationships & levels of intimacy and prerequisite skills/behaviors necessary to achieve these relationships.



## Prerequisites to dating (By Newport and Newport, 2002)

- ▶ Good personal hygiene
- ▶ Finding a variety of activities that you enjoy and would do by yourself
- ▶ Practice the "date"
- ▶ Learning not to talk about your special interests all the time
- ▶ Practice asking someone (don't ask more than 3 times)

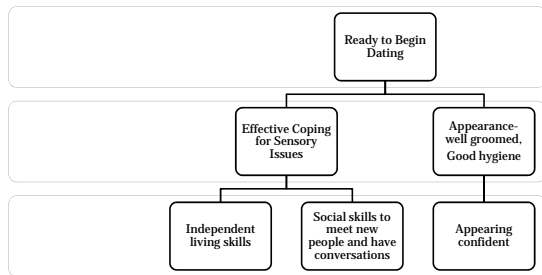
## What is Daily Hygiene?

- ▶ Brush teeth at least twice daily
- ▶ Shower or bathe with soap and water, washing your entire body with a wash cloth, bath sponge or scrubby. Wash, condition and style your hair.
- ▶ Afterward, moisturize your skin with lotion or cream to prevent flakiness and dryness.
- ▶ Use deodorant.
- ▶ Wash hands and nails before each meal, after using the bathroom, after coughing or sneezing, or after touching pets.
- ▶ Make sure finger nails and toe nails are clean and trimmed.





## Preparing to Date



## Safe Places to meet for First Date

- ▶ Public Restaurant
- ▶ Coffee Shop
- ▶ Park during daylight hours
- ▶ Church social
- ▶ Social club
- ▶ Friends or relatives home
- ▶ Club or hobby group

## First Date Rules

- ▶ Meet in a busy public place
- ▶ Tell someone when and where you are going
- ▶ Pay your own way
- ▶ Drive separately and leave separately
- ▶ Make an "escape" plan

## Internet dating

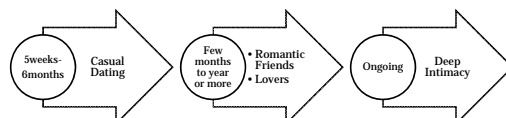
- ▶ Find out about person before agreeing or suggesting to meet
  - ▶ Name, age
  - ▶ Where live, what they do
  - ▶ Interests
  - ▶ Whether or not the person is married or currently in a relationship
- ▶ Meet in the day time in a public place
- ▶ Tell someone where you are going/ or take some one with you
- ▶ Do not get into the other person's car

## Additional Dating Safety Tips

- ▶ Give only your first name
- ▶ Give an email (maybe set up a separate "dating" email)
- ▶ Only give your phone number if you want calls or texts
- ▶ DO NOT GIVE YOU ADDRESS!!

## How Long does it take?!

There is no specific timeline, but a general guide is:  
Stranger to "Getting Acquainted" could last a few weeks.



## Getting Married

1. Some people get married when they are all grown up.
2. When people get married, they move away from home. They don't live with their mothers or brothers anymore. They move to a new place with their wives.
3. Before people get married, they have to know how to take care of themselves.
4. They have to know how to cook lots of meals.
5. They have to know how to do their laundry.
6. They have to know how to clean their apartment or house.
7. There are lots of things they have to know how to do.

## Getting Married (continued)

8. Also before people get married, they have to have money. They need money to pay for the wedding. They need money to pay their rent and other bills. They need money to buy food and clothes and medicine.
9. Some people do not get married.
10. They are called bachelors (some people say single). Bachelors (single people) can still have girlfriends/boyfriends. Bachelors (single people) can still have fun. Bachelors (single people) can be happy.
11. I can be happy even if I don't get married.

## Intimate Relationships

Many Neuro Typical relationships develop with the goal of marriage. Does the goal of intimate relationships have to be for marriage or commitment?

What does marriage mean for the person with ASD?

People with ASD:

- may not want to share their living space
- may prefer to be alone
- may not have the advanced social skills required

## Sexual Diversity

- ▶ Homosexuality
- ▶ Bisexuality
- ▶ Transgender

Websites: <http://www.glaad.org/reference/transgender>

<http://lgbtqia.ucdavis.edu/lgbt-education/lgbtqia-glossary>

Common question from parents "Is this real or just an autism special interest?"

## Homosexuality

- ▶ Appears to be equally prevalent in people with ASD
- ▶ Parents question whether individual truly understands and whether gender preference is affected by social problems of autism
- ▶ Face same difficulty as individuals without ASD in finding a relationship

## Safety Issues

- ▶ Contraception
- ▶ Sexuality transmitted infections
- ▶ Illegal behavior



## Contraception

- ▶ What kind
- ▶ Where do I get it
- ▶ How do I use it
  
- ▶ Planned Parenthood website has examples in concrete language and provides video clips
- ▶ Sexuality and U ([www.sexualityandu.ca](http://www.sexualityandu.ca))
- ▶ Stay Teen ([www.stayteen.org](http://www.stayteen.org)) “get informed” then “contraception”

## Sexually Transmitted diseases

- ▶ How to educate
- ▶ Recognition
- ▶ Prevention
- ▶ Treatment
  - ▶ Davies and Dubie
  - ▶ [www.plannedparenthood.org](http://www.plannedparenthood.org)
  - ▶ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([www.cdc.gov/std](http://www.cdc.gov/std))

## Illegal and Unsafe behavior

- ▶ Age of consent
- ▶ Stalking digital or in person
- ▶ Intimidation
- ▶ Rape
- ▶ Sexting
- ▶ Child Pornography
  - ▶ Autism is not a defense

## Illegal Behavior

- ▶ NCGS § 14-202.2. Indecent liberties between children.
- ▶ (a) A person who is under the age of 16 years is guilty of taking indecent liberties with children if the person either:
  - ▶ (1) Willfully takes or attempts to take any immoral, improper, or indecent liberties with any child of either sex who is at least three years younger than the defendant for the purpose of arousing or gratifying sexual desire; or
  - ▶ (2) Willfully commits or attempts to commit any lewd or lascivious act upon or with the body or any part or member of the body of any child of either sex who is at least three years younger than the defendant for the purpose of arousing or gratifying sexual desire.
- ▶ (b) A violation of this section is punishable as a Class 1 misdemeanor. (1995, c. 494, s. 1; 1995(Reg. Sess., 1996), c. 742, s. 12.)

## Illegal behavior

- ▶ NCGS § 14-202.1. Taking indecent liberties with children.
- ▶ (a) A person is guilty of taking indecent liberties with children if, being 16 years of age or more and at least five years older than the child in question, he either:
  - ▶ (1) Willfully takes or attempts to take any immoral, improper, or indecent liberties with any child of either sex under the age of 16 years for the purpose of arousing or gratifying sexual desire; or
  - ▶ (2) Willfully commits or attempts to commit any lewd or lascivious act upon or with the body or any part or member of the body of any child of either sex under the age of 16 years.
- ▶ (b) Taking indecent liberties with children is punishable as a Class F felony. (1955, c. 764; 1975, c. 779; 1979, c. 760, s. 5; 1979, 2nd Sess., c. 1316, s. 47; 1981, c. 63, s. 1, c. 179, s. 14; 1993, c. 539, s. 1201; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c).)

## Assessing Level of Risk

- ▶ Is the individual engaging in unsafe behavior?
  - ▶ Degree of risk?
  - ▶ Risk to others? Self?
  - ▶ Duty to inform?
    - ▶ Parents
    - ▶ Responsible caregivers
    - ▶ Potential victims
    - ▶ Authorities



## Unsafe Behaviors

- ▶ Educate the individual regarding risks
- ▶ Identify need(s) the behavior meet(s)
- ▶ Develop new and safer strategies for meeting the same needs

Safe alternatives must be easy!

## Abstract learners

- ▶ Respect individual
- ▶ Literal interpretation
- ▶ Assess understanding of meaning
- ▶ Teach visually
- ▶ Develop guidelines and social rules
- ▶ Teach strategies for social judgment
- ▶ Teach self-awareness, self-regulation, self-advocacy
- ▶ Incorporate visual reminders
- ▶ Develop alternate strategies for getting needs met

## Problem-Solving Process REMEMBER THE AUTISM!

## Problem-Solving Process

- ▶ Define the concern/ stated goal
- ▶ Autism: communication, social interest, social skills, social cognition, flexibility, sensory differences, learning style
- ▶ Redefine short term goals that may be prerequisite skills and/or prioritize short term goals.

## Goal setting

- ▶ Assessment-
  - ▶ Clarify concerns
  - ▶ Assess how currently meeting needs
    - ▶ Social/ Caring relationships
    - ▶ Pleasure seeking
    - ▶ Tension release
  - ▶ Strengths and interests



## Assessment

- ▶ What does this goal mean to them?
- ▶ We define what we want based on our prior experiences - they may not have enough experience to know what they truly want.
- ▶ Sex and dating are abstract terms- and intercourse and going out to dinner with someone is a concrete term.
- ▶ Kissing- many definitions- open mouth, on the cheek, etc. Value laden taboo topic- keeps people from clarifying terms.

## Problem-Solving Process

- ▶ Intervention
  - ▶ What to teach?
  - ▶ How to structure/organize?
  - ▶ In the meantime, plan how to meet
    - ▶ Social
    - ▶ Physical pleasure seeking
    - ▶ Tension release needs
  - ▶ Re-assess targeted goals throughout the treatment

## Case #1

- ▶ 26 year old adult male works in a public library. He is frustrated and states he wants a girlfriend. However, most of his coworkers are high school girls.
- ▶ *"I see these girls laughing with boys and letting them touch their bottoms. They are nice to me so when can I touch their bottom?"*

## Adult male wants a physical relationship with a female

- ▶ Communication deficits
  - ▶ Inability to read body language
  - ▶ Concrete understanding of language
  - ▶ Inability to initiate and sustain a conversation
- ▶ Social deficits
  - ▶ Poor understanding of social rules and boundaries
  - ▶ Lack of insight and understanding of relationships stages
  - ▶ Does not understand relationship roles (no dating coworkers)
- ▶ Sensory Issues
- ▶ Restricted Interests/Rigidity
  - ▶ Special interests in politics, rules, and fairness
  - ▶ Rigid thinking that he should be able to touch girls bottoms
- ▶ Cognitive/Organizational Issues
  - ▶ Focus on details (coworkers allowing boys to touch them)
  - ▶ Inability to distinguish and understand age differences

1. Developed written rules for not touching or dating co-workers! To eliminate lack of judgement, the rule was "NEVER touch or date someone in High school-You will go to jail! All potential dates must be over 20."
2. Made a list of safe places to meet age appropriate females. College clubs, young adult group at church, special interests clubs in the community. (*social and pleasure*)
3. Created a visual timeline of possible relationship progression.
4. Set up monthly massages (*physical touch*)
5. Created an exercise plan (*tension release*)

