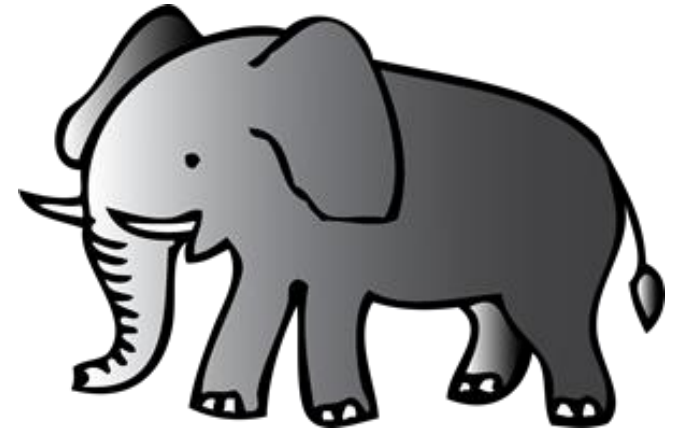


The Importance of talking about sex

The elephant in the room

Theresa Fears, MSW

Breanna Neely, BSW





Why talk
about
sexuality?



To prepare people
with the
knowledge, skills
and values to make
responsible
choices about their
social and sexual
relationships.



To prevent abuse.



What Parents and Providers Tell Us



If I don't talk about sex – they won't think about sex



I'll wait till they ask



If we talk about sex, they'll become sexually active



I'm going to say too much, and confuse them



People with
Disabilities
are seen as...

Sexually
Innocent

Perpetual
child

Incapable of
understanding

Asexual
(no desire)

Sexually
dangerous

Danger to
others

Sexually
indiscriminate

Oversexed

Path to Abuse

False Beliefs
And Fears

Lack of
Education

Uneducated
and
Unprepared

Abuse

The Prison of Protection

Protect from
Relationships

Protect from
Sexual Information

Vulnerable

Protect from
Decision-Making

Person

Protect from
Society

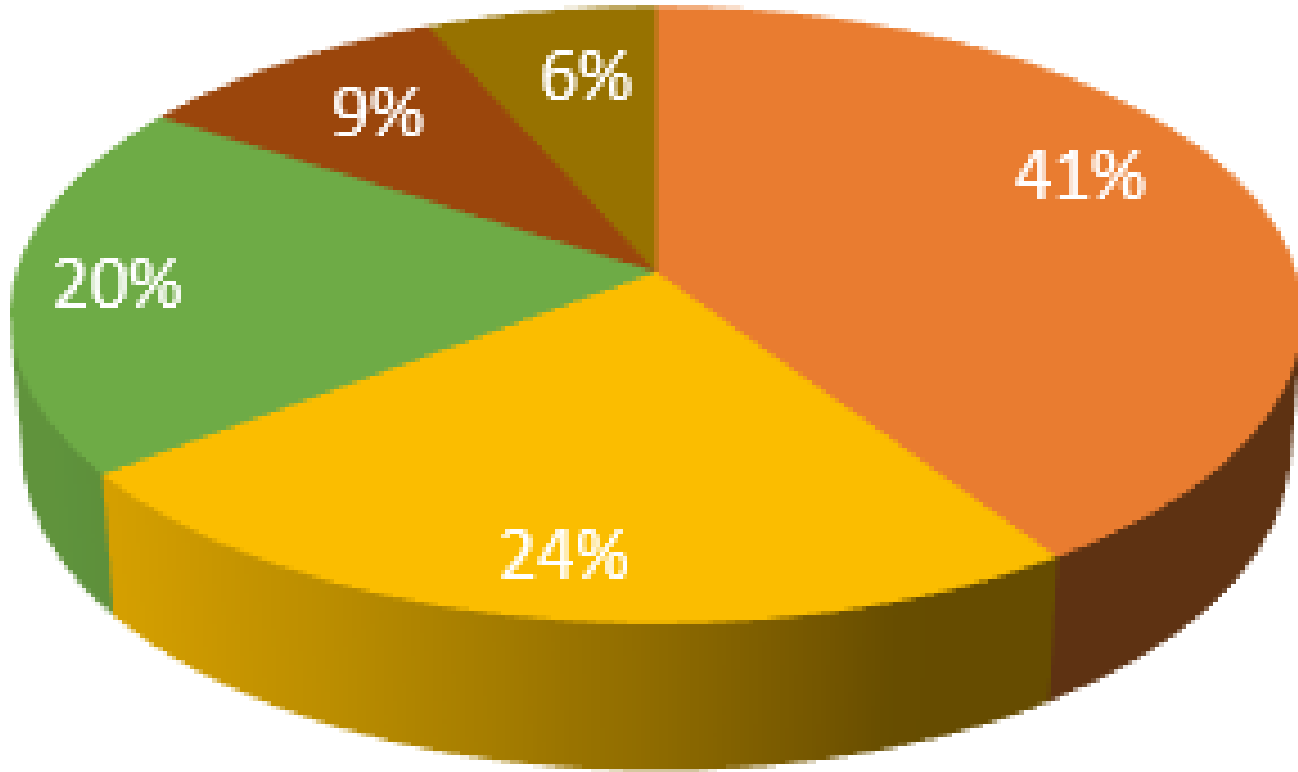


Abuse Rates



More than 90 percent of people with developmental disabilities will experience sexual abuse at some point in their lives.

(Valenti-Hein & Schwartz, 1995)



41% Service Providers

24% Family

20% Friends, Neighbors & Acquaintances

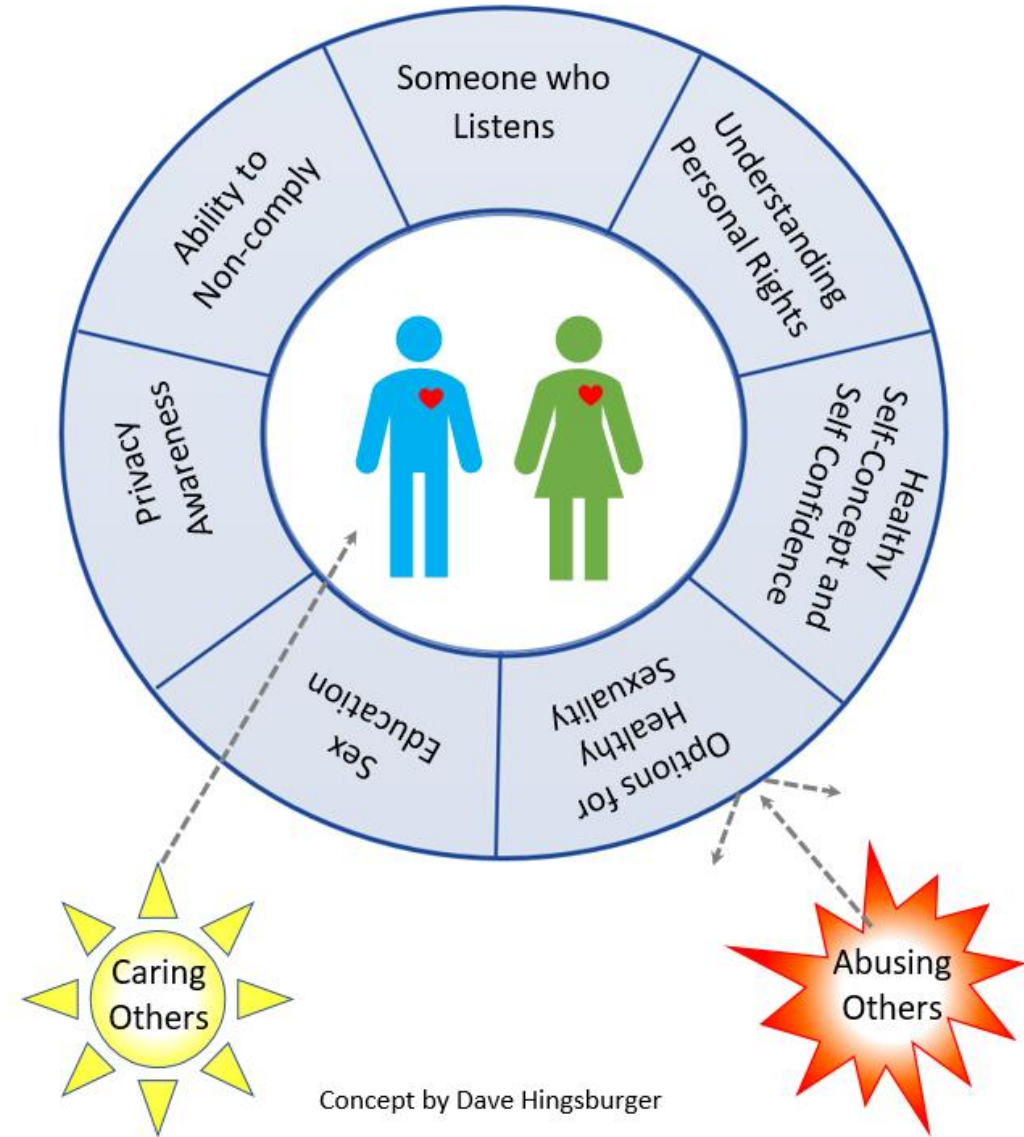
9% Peers

6% Strangers

94% are people the victim already knows

Perpetrators

The Ring of Safety



Healthy Relationships

Are relationships with

- Respect and equality
- Freedom of choice
- Honesty

Need to know

- Boundaries in the *different* types of relationships
- Identifying abusive behaviors



Comprehensive Sex Education

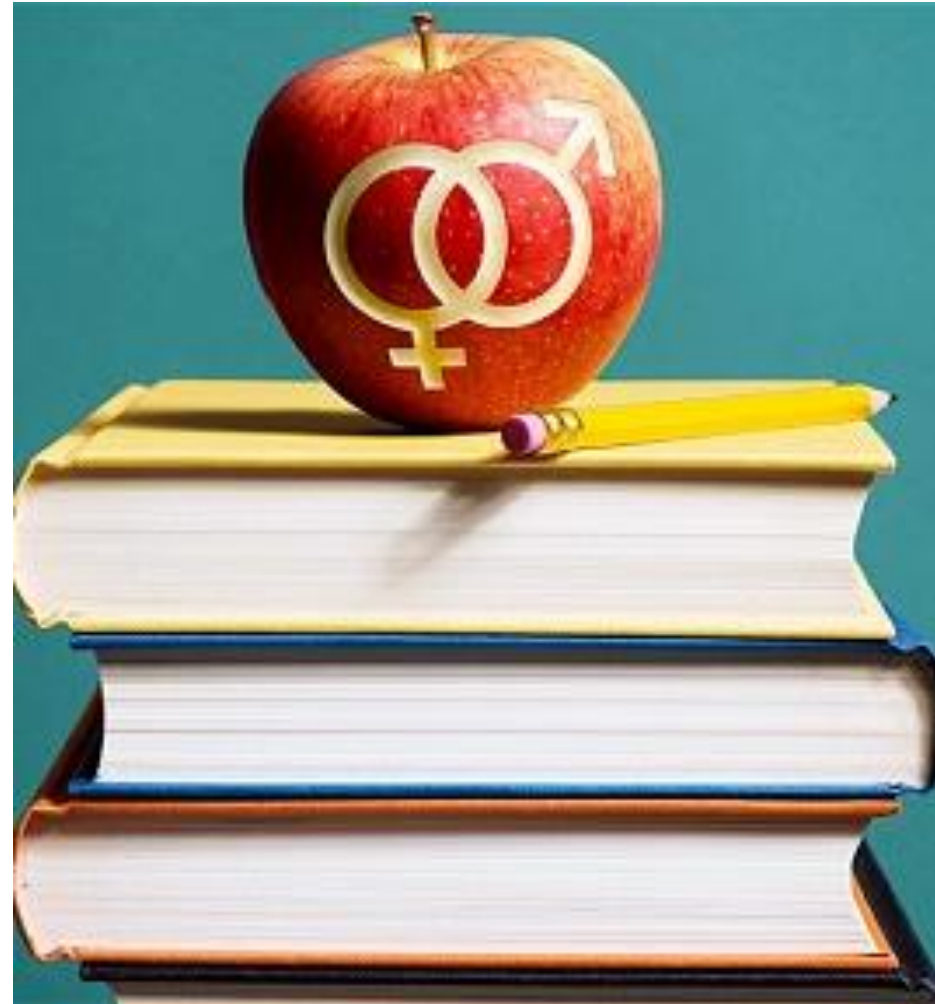
Sexual development

Naming body parts

Intimacy and CONSENT

Consequences and
Contraception

The meaning of sex



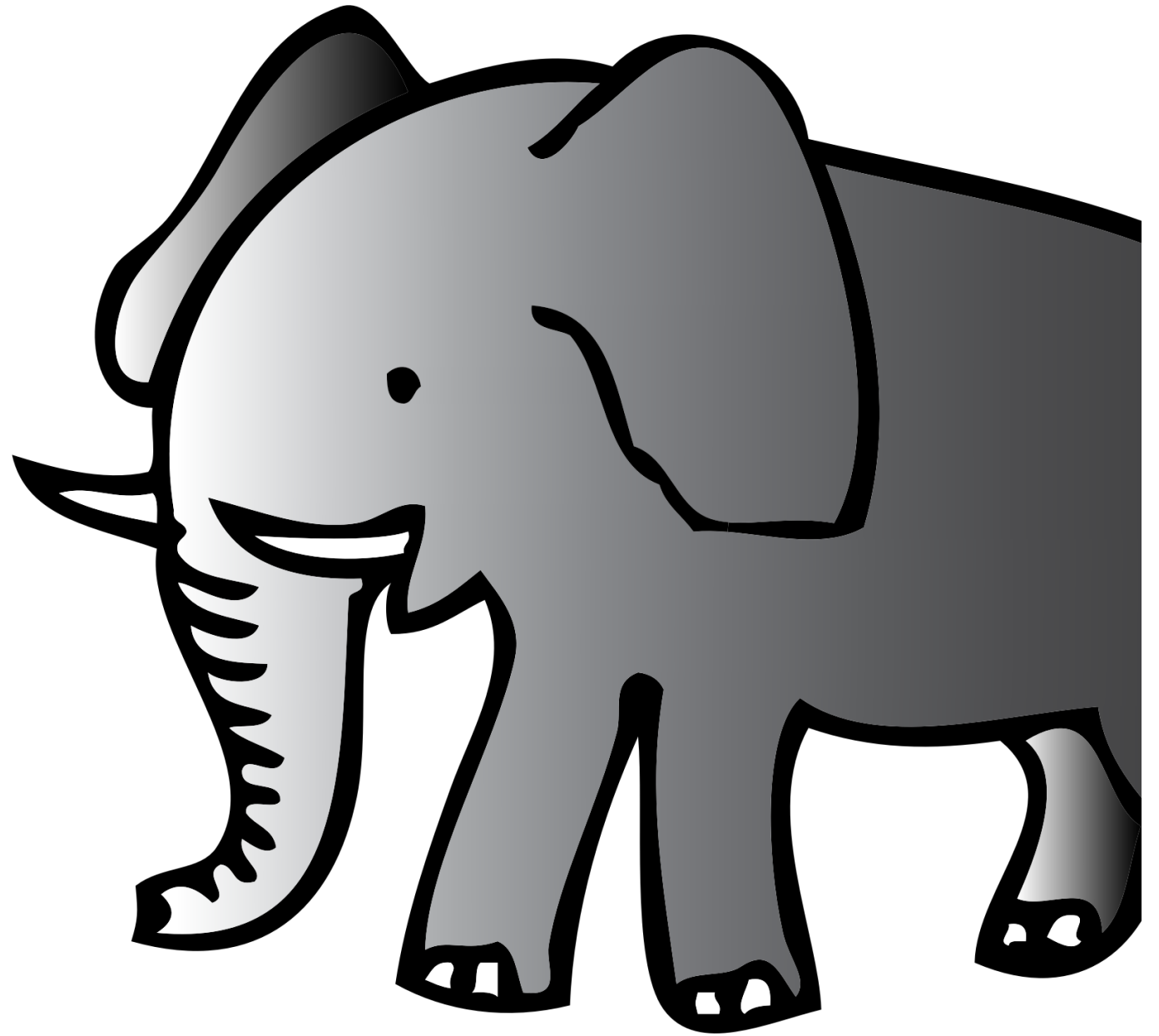


Abuse Recognition

- Being able to recognize abuse
- Naming the type of abuse
- Knowing who to ask for help
- Knowing how to report

The First step
is choosing to talk
about sex

The Second step is
learning how...



Understanding Ourselves

- o It's important to understand how YOU feel about sex, dating and relationships.
 - o How did you learn about sex growing up? Who told you about it?
 - o How did you feel when first learning about sex and relationships?
 - o How do you feel now? How has this changed over time?

Video

- YouTube: In Our Own Words: Why We Want Parents to Talk to us About Sex

Some Key Concepts

R-E-P-E-T-I-T-I-O-N!!!!



Hello

conversation examples

Use these straightforward, simple explanations to answer questions, begin conversations, and aid in understanding. Tailor them to fit your style and needs. Don't force a conversation if your child is uncomfortable, but DO look for opportunities to convey these important topics.

"Sometimes you will wake up in the morning and think you have wet the bed because all the sheets are wet and sticky. You haven't wet the bed--some semen has come out of your penis during the night. This is called a wet dream. Wipe the semen off with a tissue and wash yourself. Put your pajamas and sheets out to wash or air if they are messy."

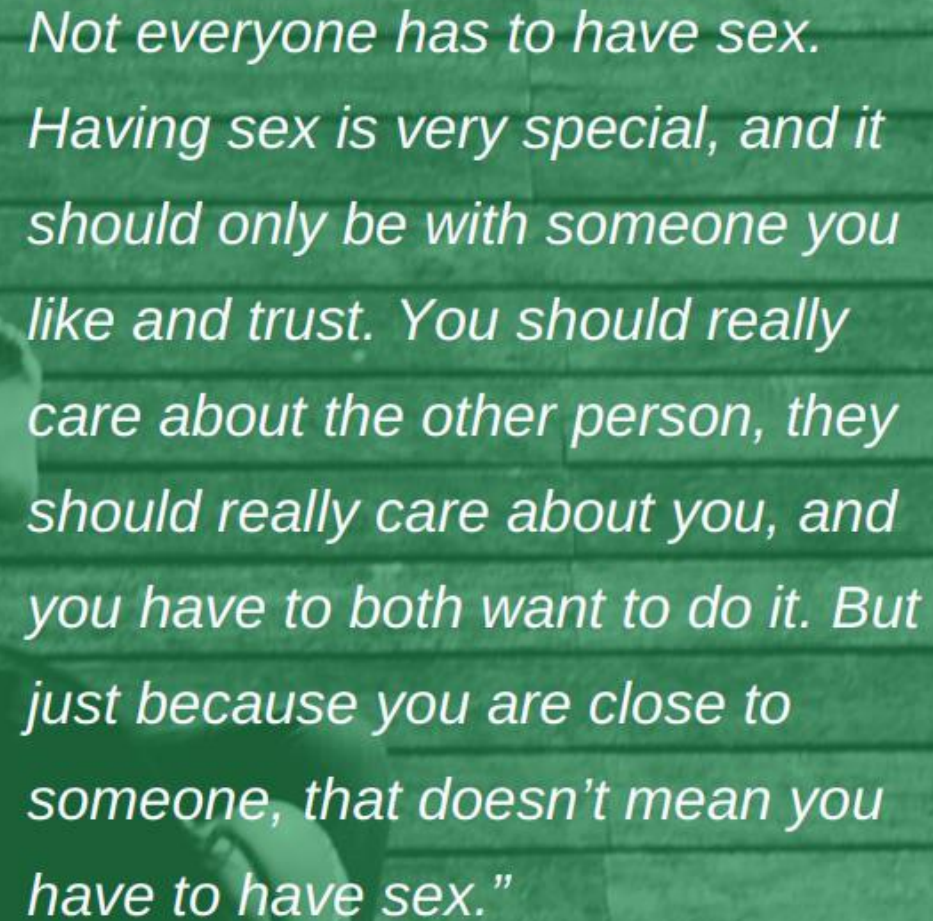
"Lots of boys feel the need to rub their penis when they get an erection. That's fine. Most men and boys feel like that. It is called masturbation and can only be done in private. You should not touch your penis in public. You should wait until you can go somewhere private."

Your penis will get hard and stick up. Sometimes this will seem to happen for no reason at all. Others times it will happen when you are thinking about sex or girls or when you read something in a magazine. It can be embarrassing but it happens to most men. It is called an erection. An erection is a private thing. Do not ask everyone to look at it. Eventually it will go away."

"Soon you will also see blood coming out of your vagina--that means you are growing up. Most grown-up women have that blood coming out of their vagina for a few days every month. It is called having a period. It means your body will make a baby when you are ready to start a family on your own."

"As soon as you see the blood coming out of your vagina, tell me or the teacher, so that we can take you to the bathroom and help you clean it up and put a pad on."

"Sometimes you will feel a sort of ticklish feeling around your vagina that will make you want to touch it and rub it. You should wait until you can go to your bedroom and do that, because it is a very special and private feeling. You should not touch yourself on the vagina in public. This is called masturbation and it can only be done in private."



*Not everyone has to have sex.
Having sex is very special, and it
should only be with someone you
like and trust. You should really
care about the other person, they
should really care about you, and
you have to both want to do it. But
just because you are close to
someone, that doesn't mean you
have to have sex."*

activities

Use these activities to encourage 2-way dialogue. They can be useful for children who do not communicate with words, or have limited verbal ability.

is it *OK?*

This game helps the child or young adult identify appropriate behavior and boundaries. For individuals who do not communicate verbally, use photos or drawings to help. Tailor the questions to fit your goals.

- **Is it okay to kiss the bus driver?**
- **Is it okay to hug a good friend?**
- **Is it okay to wave to the neighbor?**
- **Is it okay to hug a stranger?**
- **Is it okay to kiss your significant other?**
- **Is it okay to hug the store clerk?**
- **Is it okay to shake hands with someone you are being introduced to?**
- **Is it okay to hold a stranger's hand?**
- **Is it okay to hug your family members?**
- **Is it okay to hug someone you are being introduced to?**

consent

Consent is a vital concept that all children and young adults should grasp. Consent means that both **parties are of age, both people say yes to the activity, and no one said yes because they were forced to.** A person who does not use words to communicate can still consent.

It is **never** okay for sexual activity to occur between family members or children, even if everyone said yes.

In the eyes of the law, a person with an intellectual or developmental disability **may consent** to sexual activity. Do not assume it is automatically illegal.

You can instill the idea of consent by applying it in everyday situations: ask your child what outfit she'd like to wear. Ask if he prefers a pen or pencil. **Give your child choices** so that she knows she can say "yes" or no."

who would you...?

In this activity, the child must use her knowledge of appropriate behavior and boundaries to determine which behavior is appropriate for a certain relationship. Conduct the activity verbally, or try using photos of family members, friends, and strangers taken from magazines and ask the child to sort them into these categories.

kiss?



shake hands?



hug?



wave to?



practice

Practice making a list of trusted adults your child could come to with a disclosure of sexual abuse. Make sure your child understands that sexual abuse can happen to anyone. It is not his fault, and it is important he lets someone know.

Other Ways to Reinforce Concepts

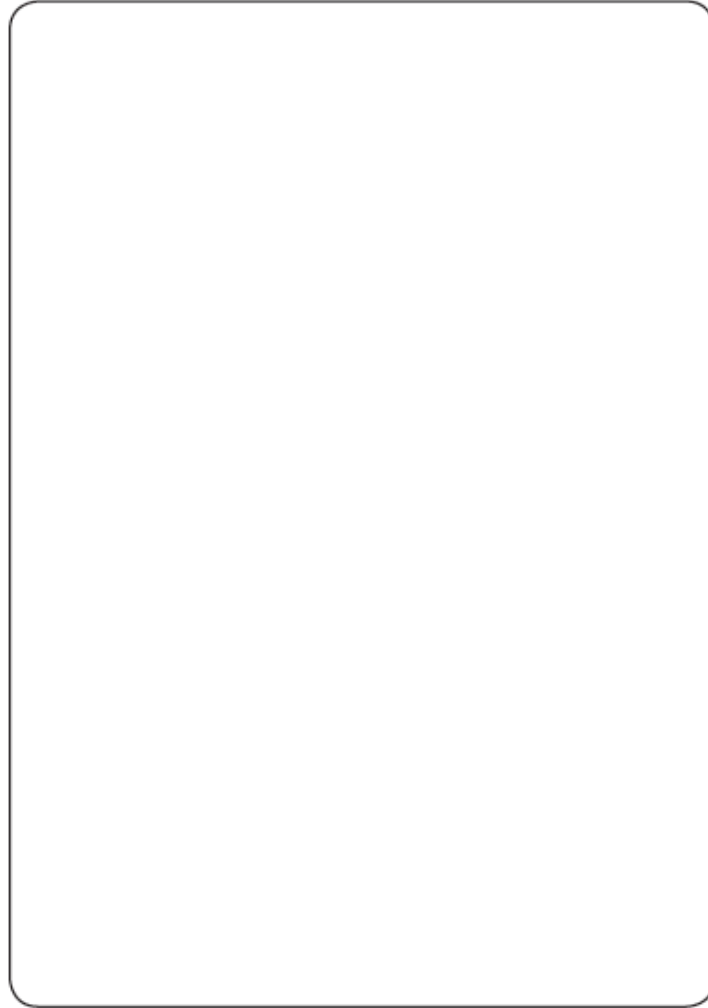
- o ALWAYS reinforce appropriate behavior!
- o Use teachable moments.
- o Practice consent in other contexts.



Public



Private

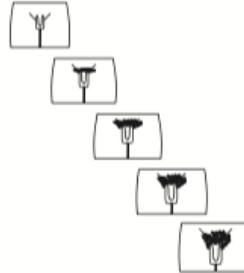


Growing up



I am growing up. My body is getting taller and bigger.

Tanner Stages of Life



My penis and testicles are growing and changing, too. I will grow hair under my arms and between my legs. This is normal.

Erection



Sometimes when I touch my penis, it will get harder and longer. This is called an erection.

Waiting



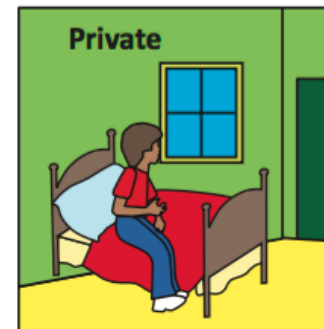
Sometimes erections happen when I don't want them to. I can sit quietly until it goes away or ask to go to the bathroom.

Adult men




















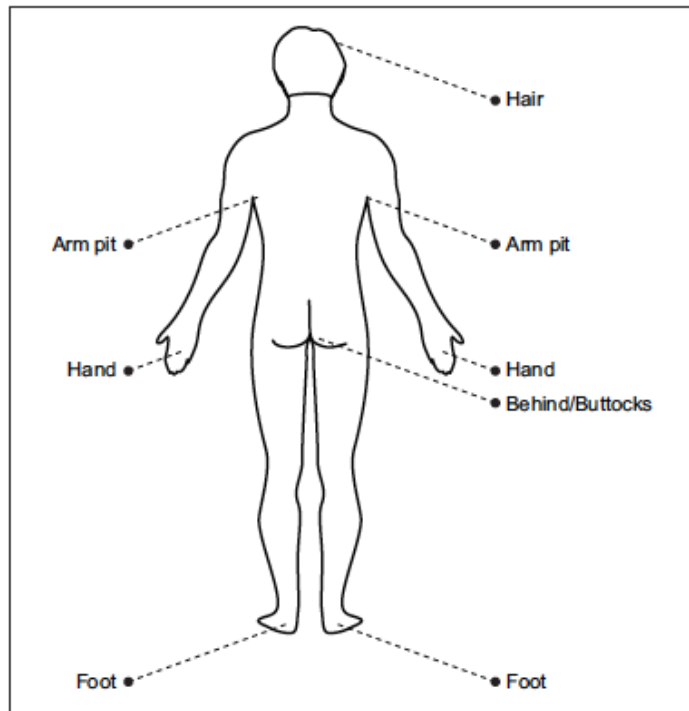
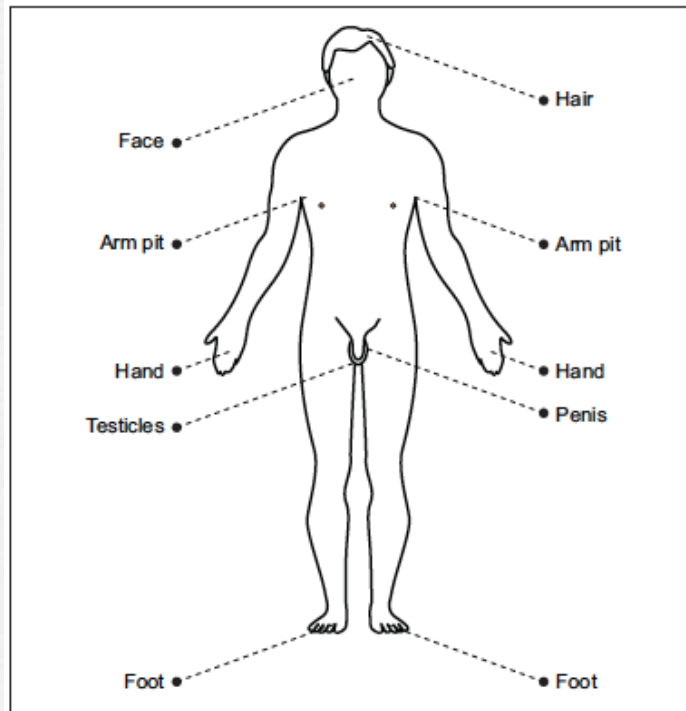
Erections are a normal part of growing up. They happen to all men, even my _____ (insert male figure in child's life).

Private

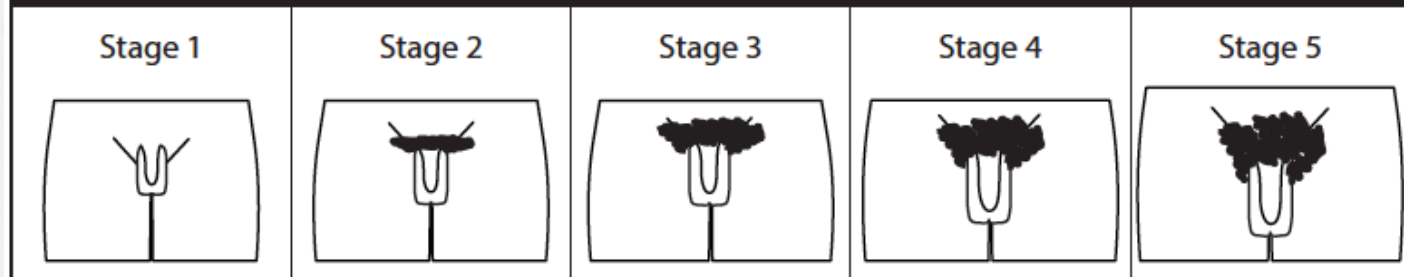


Erections are private. I should not talk about my penis or erections in public. If I have questions, I can ask _____ (insert name of trusted adult) when we are alone.

Sad 	Depressed 	Embarrassed 	Angry 	Shocked 
Disappointed 	Hurt 	Confused 	Frustrated 	Excited 
Happy 	Relaxed 	Curious 	Love 	Proud 
Lazy 	Ready to work 	Tired 	Grumpy 	



TANNER STAGES OF LIFE - MALE



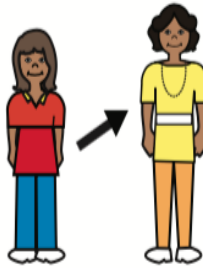
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Appendix Teaching About Periods – Story

My Period

Soon I will get a period like my _____ (e.g., aunt, mom, big sister). This means I am growing up. Other girls my age are starting their periods too. When I get a period, blood will come from my vagina. This is okay. I'm not hurt! My period may come every month. Periods are messy and can get on underwear and pants. I will use a pad in my underwear so the blood won't get on my pants. The pad may feel weird at first when I use it, but it will help keep my pants clean from the blood. I will keep my pad on. When the pad smells or becomes full of blood after ____ hours, I will change the pad in the bathroom. I will take off my dirty pad and wrap it in toilet paper. I will throw it away in the trash can. I will not flush it down the toilet. When I throw away my dirty pad I need to put on a new pad. Sometimes my stomach may hurt when I have my period. I will tell my mom or dad or the school nurse. My parents will be proud of me for taking care of my period and changing my pads.

Growing up



Clean panties



Maxi pad



Bathroom



Throw away



Talk to Doctor



Talk



Buy 1 box



How to Use My Pad



Open wrapper.



Take pad out of wrapper.



Open up panties.

Take off clothes



Put on gown



Lay on table



Put feet in stirrups



Dr checks your body



Stand up



Take off gown



Put on clothes



Reward



Where can I find this?

- o The Healthy Bodies Toolkit:
 - o <http://kc.vanderbilt.edu/HealthyBodies/>
 - o Manual and Appendix available
 - o Can print for free

Additional Resources

- Making Sense of Sex: A Forthright Guide to Puberty, Sex, and Relationships for People with Asperger's Syndrome. Sarah Attwood, 2008.
- Sexuality and People with Intellectual Disability. Lydia Fegan, Anne Rauch, and Wendy McCarthy, 1993.
- STARS: Skills Training for Assertiveness, Relationship-Building and Sexual Awareness. Susan Heighway, Susan Kidd Webster, and Marsha Shaw, 1988.
- Healthy Relationships and Safe Sex: Tips for Self-Advocates. Joe Meadours, 2006.
- Understanding & Expressing Sexuality: Responsible Choices for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities. Rosalyn Kramer Monat-Haller, 1992.
- South Carolina Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, teenpregnancysc.org
- Arcsc.org- The Elephant in the Room



Resources- Sexuality, Relationships and Prevention

- **Teaching Children with Down Syndrome about Their Bodies, Boundaries, and Sexuality**
<http://www.woodbinehouse.com/> and Amazon Books
- **Just Say Know** – Understanding and reducing the risk of sexual victimization of people with developmental disabilities
<https://diverse-city.com/> and Amazon Books
- **Healthy Relationships workbooks**
www.arc-spokane.org

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