

Reducing Abuse and Exploitation in the IDD Population:

An Overview of the Friends and Relationships Class

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Socialization and Sexuality Education (SSE)

SSE services is a proactive, lifelong learning program

Outcomes

- 1) increase social networks with healthy, meaningful relationships; and
- 2) SSE services is a proactive, lifelong learning program

New Mexico Health Care Authority
Developmental Disabilities Service Standards
14.9 Socialization and Sexuality Education (SSE)
Original Issue: Nov 1, 20 21, Reissue Effective date July 1, 20 24

History of Socialization and Sexuality Classes (SSE)

- ❑ Jill Ryan, PhD and Mark Gordon, Spec Ed Teacher-Founders
- ❑ In the late 90s they taught sexual education at Santa Fe Community College to HS students

- ❑ Formally came out of the Jackson Class Lawsuit-2004
 - MDT effort came up with core factors that needed to be taught
 - Sexuality was one of 17 areas of the lawsuit
 - Under sexuality, 3 main groups: victims of SA, offender prevention and sexual knowledge
 - Preliminary Risk Screening program created to address offenders/risky sexual behaviors
 - FRC addressed all three groups

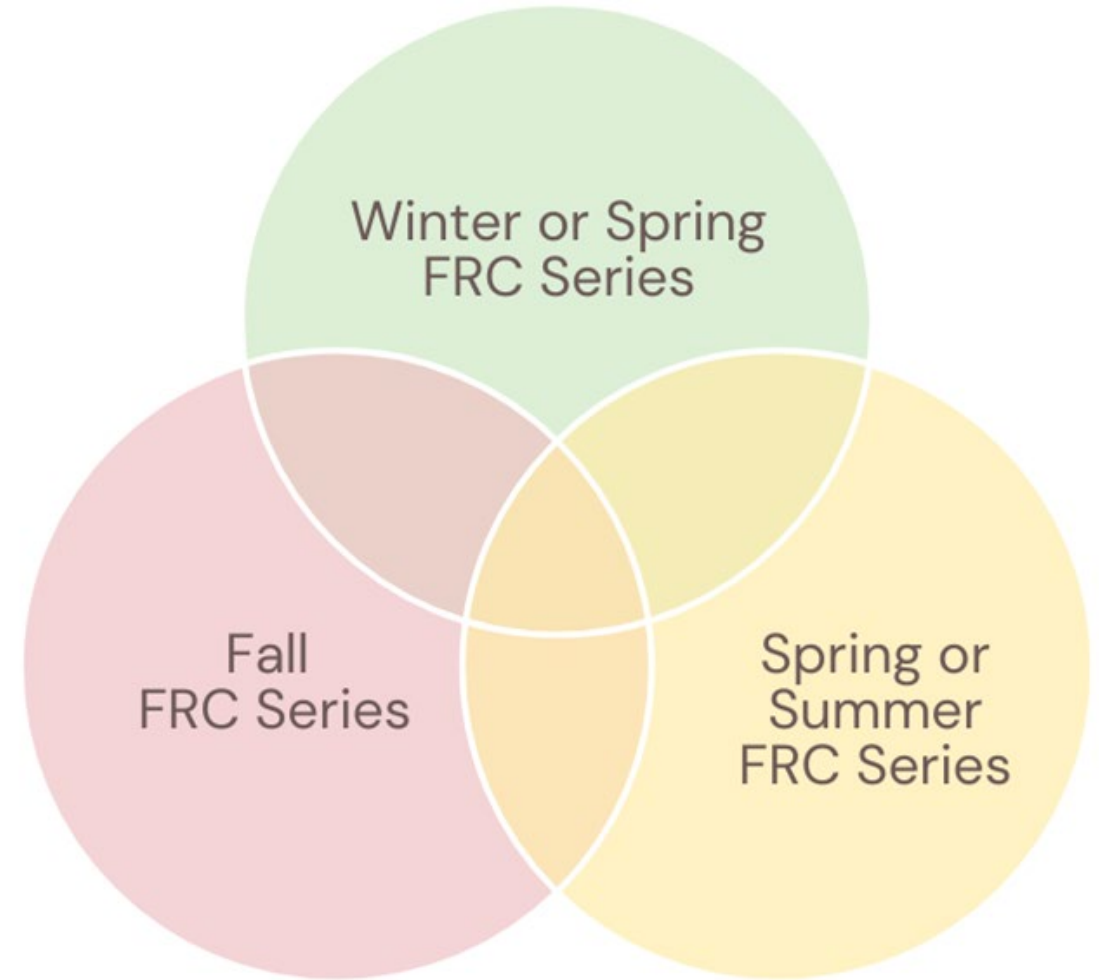
- ❑ Staff were afraid to support clients with sexual issues and often needed the same training. This became the reason to include a support person- BSC, DSP, family or natural support
- ❑ The importance of students (with exceptions) having a support person with them in class

Current Stats

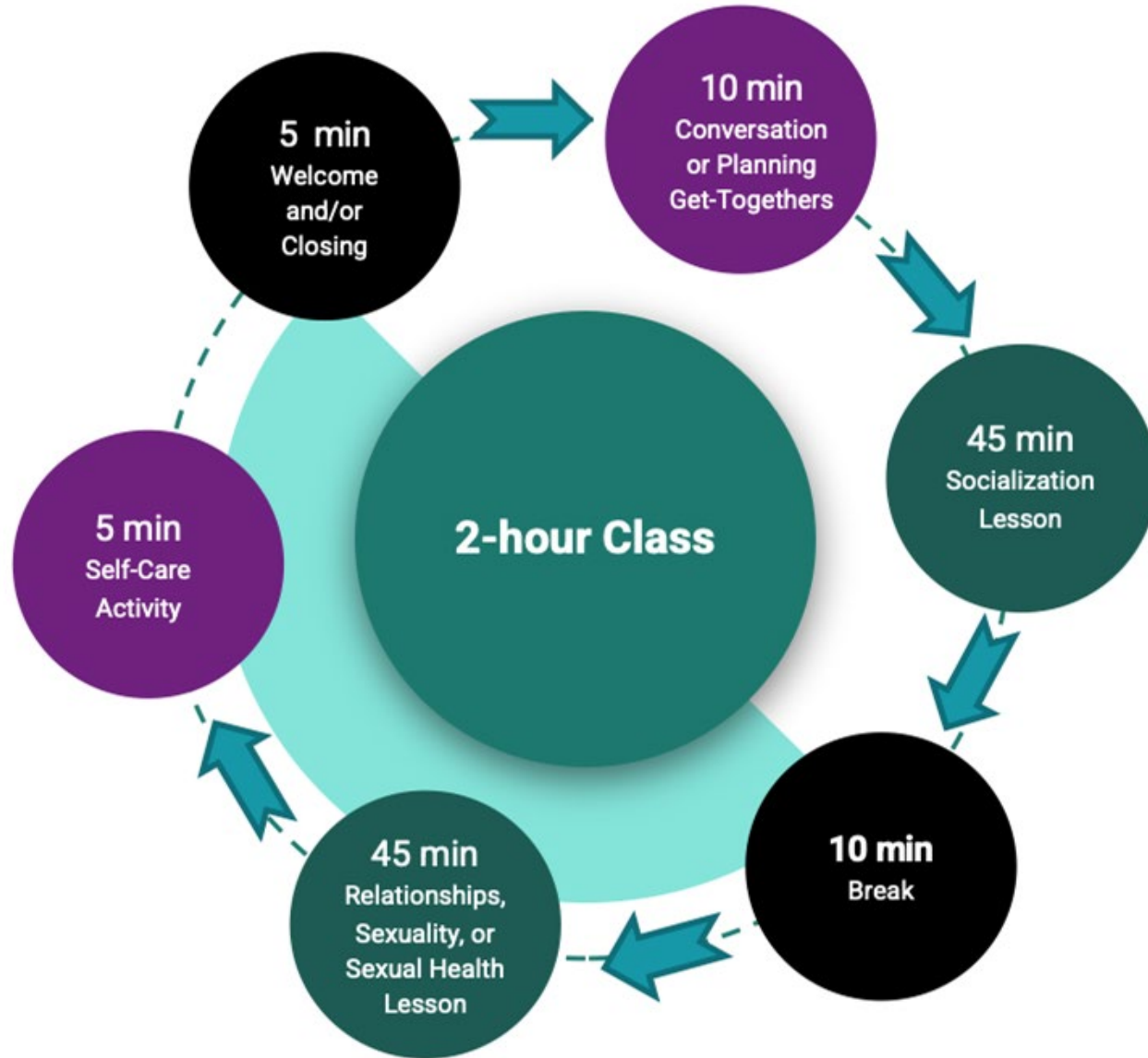
- Thea Kavanaugh was hired in 2021 as the statewide coordinator
- Fiscal year 2025 served 186 students or 3.9% of the 4,000 DDW participants
- 13 Certified teachers around the state
- Students have presented at employment conferences, UNM Imagine Conference- autism conference, regional BSC, parent information sessions. UNM Continuum of Care, The Arc of NM annual advocacy conference.
- Will be at information tables and participate at the full day teacher training.
- Summer virtual class with teens: 2 parent meetings and 2 weeks of 1.5 sessions per day

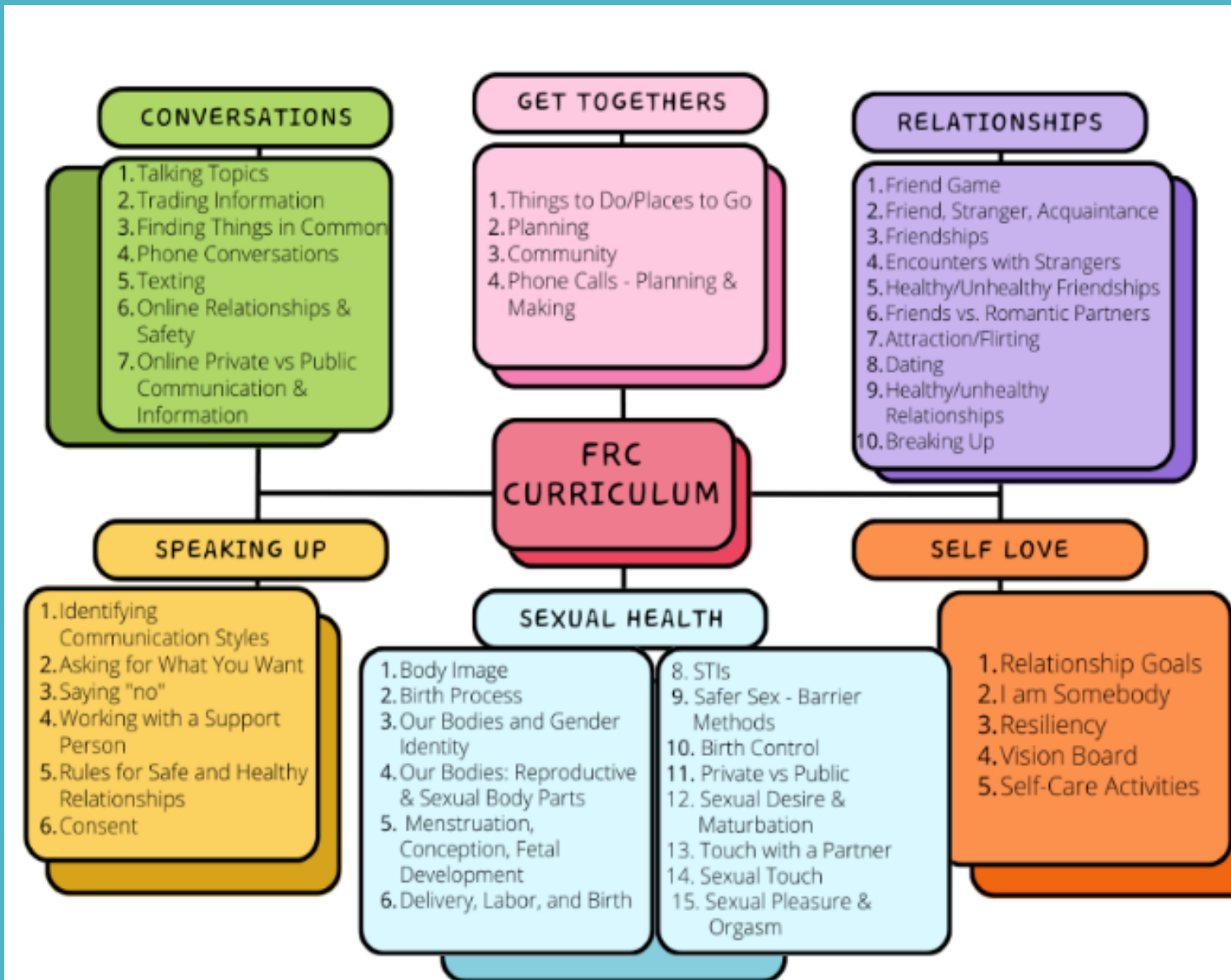
FRC Series =

16 hours of instruction
(8 weeks for 2-hr)



Typical Class Format





DDSD: Socialization and Sexuality Education (DD Waiver Service) Friends and Relationships Course

How to Have a Conversation by Finding Things in Common

- Starting and Maintaining a Conversation
- Trade information by taking turns: asking and answering questions.
- Stay on topic
- Find common interests
- Participate in active listening to show interest: nod, smile, eye contact, say things like: “umm”, “oh”, “that’s interesting” “ah, ha”
- Keep conversation going by making comments and asking follow-up questions.
- Don’t get too personal at first.

Teaching Conversations

CONVERSATIONS

1. Talking Topics
2. Trading Information
3. Finding Things in Common
4. Phone Conversations
5. Texting
6. Online Relationships & Safety
7. Online Private vs Public Communication & Information

Talking Topics

Write as much as you can in each box. The more details the better.

Interests and Hobbies	Favorite Foods and Drink
I like to read books I like to sing I like going places I like to watch I like to cook I like shopping	I like Chinese food My favorite drink is coke I like Chinese food there is Rice I like Pizza
Jobs I have had	Family, pets, Growing Up
Tresco I wash Pet an Pans	I have a dog I have two bothers
Current Events	Places where I go or places where I want to go.
Special Olympics Dancing Movies	I like going to the Movies with my Friends an looking around at the mall

Go for a walk



**Would
you
Rather?**

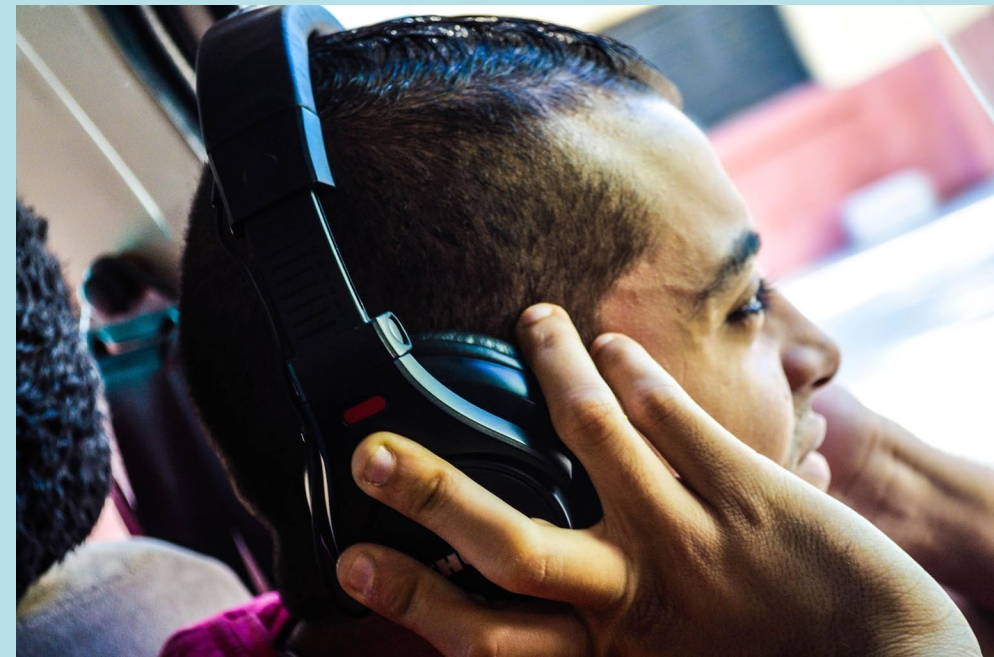
Go for a bike ride



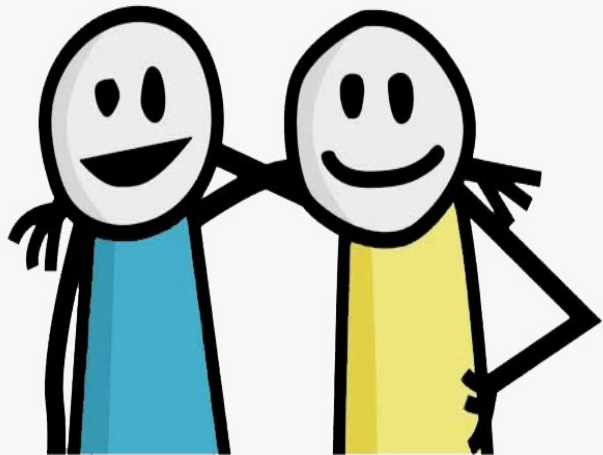
Watch movies

**Would
you
Rather?**

Listen to Music



**Make a new
friend**



**Would
you
Rather?**



**Be in a
romantic
relationship**

How to End a Conversation

Ending a Conversation

Wait for a pause

Offer a handshake or just say: “It was great talking with you” or “I have a few more things to do but I enjoyed our conversation. See you later.”

Smile and say “goodbye”

If you found something in common, you might say, “hope to talk to you again about ____.”

If you didn’t share your name at the beginning of the conversation, you may say, “It was nice talking with you. By the way, my name is ____.”

Rules of Friendship

Talk to each other about their interests Listen and understand how each other feels

Do things with each other

Have fun talking and hanging out together

Have things in common

Care about each other and what happens to each other

Feel safe and calm around each other

Stick up for each other and help each other when needed

Share and know personal information about one another

Respect boundaries: Understand and respect each other's personal boundaries.

Celebrate successes and important events/holidays together

Are equals: Freely chosen relationship

What is a friend?

Someone who...



The Friend Game:



Unhealthy Friendship

Mean
Saying mean things

drugs, drinking
hitting each other
Not following rules

lies Calls you names

Don't Care Cheats on you
Doesn't check on you Taking advantage

RELATIONSHIPS

1. Friend Game
2. Friend, Stranger, Acquaintance
3. Friendships
4. Encounters with Strangers
5. Healthy/Unhealthy Friendships
6. Friends vs. Romantic Partners
7. Attraction/Flirting
8. Dating
9. Healthy/unhealthy Relationships
10. Breaking Up

Healthy Safe Friendships

Kind
Smart
Supportive

Honest
friendly

Some things

Nice to you

Talking to you
visiting with friends

Respect each other
visiting each other
invites you out
encouraging other

Speaking Up

Asking for What You Want



When
You...



I feel...
because...



What I
want is...



A friend starts talking to you while you are watching TV and you don't want to miss what you are watching.



Your friend likes to joke around a lot but lately it seems like all his jokes are about making fun of others.



You have been taking out the garbage for months and you would like someone else to take a turn.



Your support person doesn't tell you before-hand about appointments that they make for you.



You call your friend two or three times a week but he or she doesn't call you or return your calls when you leave a message.



Other...

Speaking Up

SPEAKING UP

1. Identifying Communication Styles
2. Asking for What You Want
3. Saying "no"
4. Working with a Support Person
5. Rules for Safe and Healthy Relationships
6. Consent

What are some times where you have said "NO" or wanted to say "NO"?



Communication Styles

Passive

Aggressive

Assertive

Worksheet: Speaking Up

**Write your own situation from a life experience
when you needed to speak up**

I feel...

(Say how you feel)

Because...

(Explain why you feel the way you feel, explain how the person's actions affect you)

What I would like is...

(Decide what you want then ask for it)

SELF LOVE

1. Relationship Goals
2. I am Somebody
3. Resiliency
4. Vision Board
5. Self-Care Activities

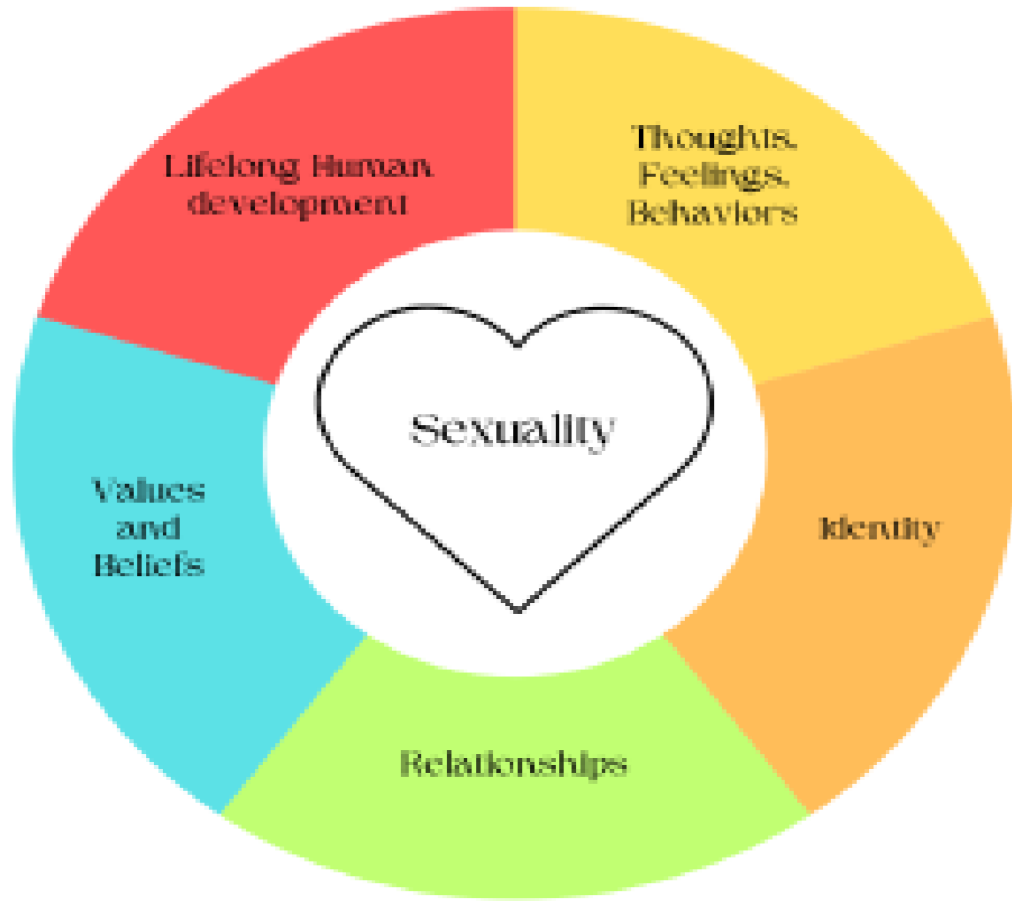
Confidence Drawing

Something I Love

Something I Love
About Myself

Something that
brings me joy

Something I am
Good at



Supporting Healthy Sexuality: The WHY?"

- Natural and healthy part of human development
- Continuous and a lifelong process - dynamic and changing
- Holistic - connected to one's cognitive, emotional, psychological, physical, and spiritual state of being
- Values, feelings, beliefs, attitudes
- Interaction with self - identity, expression, self-worth, acceptance
- Relatedness with others - intimacy, relationships, trust

Sexual Health

1. Understanding of the human body and reproduction
2. Experiencing sexual satisfaction (alone or with consenting others) while maintaining autonomy, minimizing exposure to disease, and preserving safety
3. Requires positive and respectful approach to sexuality and sexual relationships
4. Teaches about benefits, risks, and adverse consequences of sexual activity
5. Educates about the significance of self-care and self-exams and how to access healthcare and resources
6. Requires respecting, protecting, and fulfilling sexual rights for all.

Explaining Consent



REAL consent
=
EXCITED to say yes!

Addressing Guardian and Parent Concerns

What if this information makes them go out and have sex?

They're not ready, they're not interested

They can't understand and it will be confusing for them

Our family/religious beliefs don't support them having this information

Addressing Guardian and Parent Concerns

Duty of Care vs Dignity of Risk

Curiosity about sexuality and sexual health does not mean one is engaging in the behaviors or activities they are curious about.

Lack of curiosity about sexuality and sexual health does not mean one is not interested in sexuality, sexual behaviors or activities.

Paid providers, including guardians have a legal obligation to support an individual's goals and desires.

LET'S TALK: Relationships, Sex & Reality

A Virtual Lunch-Hour Chat for Everyone.



WE COVER IT ALL:



Healthy Boundaries
(at home, work, and beyond)



Dating, Sex & Sexuality



**Building Strong
Support Systems**



Navigating Friendships

WHEN & WHERE



**Every 2nd and 4th
Friday of the Month**



12:00 PM – 1:00 PM



WHO IS THIS FOR? Everyone is welcome!

- Individuals & Self-Advocates
- Parents & Guardians
- DSPs & Care Providers
-

“A safe, inclusive space to explore, understand, and connect.”



Feedback about FRC: Parents and Providers

“The Friends and Relationship class is a very important class that is very educational for those on the DD Waiver. The course benefits participants in understanding the intricacies of relationships. It’s a place to explore, learn, and socialize.” – Behavior Support Consultant

“I appreciate all you’ve done for my daughter, helping her to have discussions and interact with others.”

“My son’s social skills have improved. He’s around people more, has more friends and looks forward to coming to class. I even learned stuff about communication.” –Alicia, mom

“My son has blossomed, thank you for the wonderful class. He learned to be a listener and a gentleman, and he made several friends.” –Cynthia, mom

Feedback about FRC: Students

I liked the classes about texting, healthy relationships and approaching people-Stephen, student

I really love it because I met friends here and I get along. I want to come back. —Gina, student

I've learned about relationships and friendships. My favorite thing was getting to know people. I learned how to control my relationship. —Linda, student

I liked learning new stuff.—Student

I liked helping my peers by doing the activities and I made a new friend. I liked being able to show others that people with disabilities can have babies. —Kayleigh, student advocate

The teachers helped guide me with the book of information. My friends were also guiding me. I learned how to communicate better with my honey and make better decisions about who to care about. —Skye, student

Graduation Class

