

# Lets talk about sex

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# Outcomes

Within today's work shop we hope to teach you-

- The disadvantages on Young People with Learning disabilities and/ or Autism when it comes to finding out about sex and relationships.
- Ways to communicate with Young People with Learning Disabilities and Autism when it comes to sex and relationships

- A learning disability is a reduced intellectual ability and difficulty with everyday activities – for example household tasks, socialising or managing money – which affects someone for their whole life.
- Valuing People/White Paper 2001
- People with a learning disability tend to take longer to learn and may need support to develop new skills, understand complex information and interact with other people.
- The level of support someone needs depends on individual factors, including the severity of their learning disability

Studies suggest that 39-68% of girls and 16-30 % of boys with intellectual or developmental disabilities will be sexually abused before their 18th birthday. Violence against children with a disability occurs at 1.7 times the rate of violence against non-disabled children (UN Violence Study 2006). Yet, the sexual health needs and rights of these populations continue to be largely neglected.

‘People with learning difficulties face some of the biggest restrictions in terms of availability of sex education. Whereas in other areas of life the trend is towards 'normalization', in other words, fitting people with learning difficulties into the roles and values of the rest of society (Wolfensburger, 1972), this does not seem to prevail in the area of sexuality.’  
Shakespeare et al., 1996,

# Professor Sheila Hollins' Three Secrets

**The three secrets that cannot be talked about are: disability, sexuality and mortality**

- The internalised sense of 'coming out of Mum all wrong'
- Sex is what created them in their 'wrongness' – it is not a creative act but a destructive one
- The ability to consider death is hard for us all, but so much harder for those whose ability to think about life is restricted

# The importance of SRE

Good sex and relationships education (SRE) plays an enormous part in underpinning young people's progress towards independence. It encourages and supports good social and sexual expression and a sense of self confidence.

Educating children and young people from a position of sexual positivity, non-bias and inclusivity means that they will have the same information as their peers in mainstream education and helps to undo some of the damage that misinformation can cause.

As Professionals in direct contact with Young People, it is part of our job to manage, create and be part of sometimes difficult conversations, so we also need to find ways and be prepared for facing these topics!



# Reminders-

- Talk slowly
- Use simple words and simple images
- Make sure you and the young people/person is in a safe space to talk – both emotionally and physically!
- Debrief with your peers!