Sexuality Education for People with Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities

“We take the position that by developing positive attitudes in staff, parents, and people with disabilities regarding both sexuality and disability, a new era of acceptance and healthy sexual development can begin.”

**Myth:** Sexuality education is not important for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD).

**Fact:** Comprehensive, life-long and individualized sexuality education is important for all people to develop healthy self-esteem and relationships. If people with I/DD choose to be sexual, sexuality education can offer some protection from sexual violence and abuse, unplanned pregnancy, and sexually transmitted diseases.\(^2\)\(^3\)

**Myth:** Providing sexuality education will encourage people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to have sex.

**Fact:** People have sex with or without sexuality education. Having sexuality education can actually lead to making better decisions about when to have sex or not.\(^4\)

**Myth:** People with intellectual and developmental disabilities do not understand sexuality.

**Fact:** Most people are sexual beings, and many people with intellectual and developmental disabilities have communicated that they want to express their sexualities.\(^5\) If sexuality education begins early and is life long, people with and without disabilities will be able to learn about sexuality at their own pace.

**Myth:** There are no sexuality education curricula for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

**Fact:** There are quite a few sexuality education curricula for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.\(^6\) However, most of these curricula have not been evaluated enough to be called “evidence-based”.\(^7\)

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