Disclaimer

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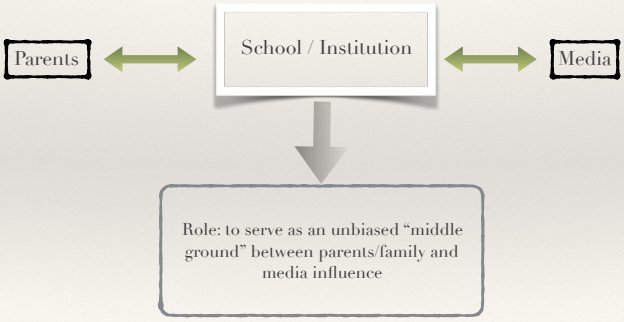
Sex education (in general) has serious issues!



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Individuals with disabilities face additional barriers

- Inadequate training for educators
- Parents even more afraid to talk about sex
- Unique learning profiles for every individual
- Others assume level of interest in sex correlated with intensity of a disability

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These barriers face possible consequences

- Lack of independent skills development
- Increased anxiety and confusion during puberty
- Vulnerability in social and sexual situations that can lead to being sexually violated
- Lack of confidence and self esteem

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STATE POLICIES ON SEX EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS

12/21/2016

All states are somehow involved in sex education for public schoolchildren. As of March 1, 2016:

- 24 states and the District of Columbia require public schools teach sex education (21 of which mandate sex education *and* HIV education).
- 33 states and the District of Columbia require students receive instruction about HIV/AIDS.
- 20 states require that if provided, sex and/or HIV education must be medically, factually or technically accurate. State definitions of "medically accurate" vary, from requiring that the department of health review curriculum for accuracy, to mandating that curriculum be based on information from "published authorities upon which medical professionals

TABLE OF CONTENTS

2016 Sex Education Legislation

State Laws on Medical Accuracy in Sex Education

Additional Resources

CONTACT

Health Program

Source: National Conference of State Legislators

Our rights to access sex education…

(Applying to all public school students in the US)

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"All students, regardless of physical or intellectual ability, deserve the opportunity to achieve personal health and wellness, including sexual health."

–National Sexuality Education Standards (2012), pg. 9

… *including* students with disabilities.

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Increasing interest in disability & sexuality

- Books & Articles
- Research & Studies
- Films (Documentaries and Fictional)
- Websites and Blog Posts

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1. PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE

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Professional input is valuable.

Individual input is also valuable.

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Balance is Key

Professional (structure) + Individual (methodology)

Awesome Duo!

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2. PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE

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Self advocate contributions can be found in…

- Disability & Sexuality blogs / websites
- ASD & Sexuality blogs / websites
- Posts & Articles on ASD & Sexuality

(Please refer to "Works Cited" document for more info)

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Every individual has different views and different experiences, and different strategies in managing sexuality. This is why it is crucial to have a "chorus" of personal perspectives.

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Real Life Examples

(Please refer to "Works Cited" document for more info)

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How do we include our voices in building the sex education curriculum?

Here are a few ideas…

- Self Advocate Panels
- Webinars
- Books, Guides & Collaborative Essays
- Self Advocate / Professional Co-presentations

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The more diverse representation of self advocates, the higher quality of sex education we will be able to provide to learners with developmental disabilities.

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3. Inclusion

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3A: Inclusion of learners who are not sexually active or not interested in sex

Questions to consider…

- If you're not interested in sex, why learn about sex?

- If others assume you will never achieve or pursue sex, then why learn about sex?

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Because sexuality education is not just about sex. It's also about…

- Body awareness
- Validating Identity
- Self Determination
- Self advocacy
- Safety & protection
- Building confidence
- Social(sexual) awareness
- Family planning
- Gaining knowledge
- Making informed choices

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3B: Inclusion of learners who use non-traditional communication methods

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How do we communicate?

- Spoken
- Written / Typed
- Technology devices
- PECs
- Sign language
- Behavior
- All or some of the above

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AAC (Augmentative and Alternative Communication)

- **Unaided** [Examples: Voice; nodding and shaking one's head; facial expression; pointing or looking at desired objects; gestures; sign languages.]
- **Aided** [Examples: Communication displays (comprised of written words, letters or phrases, pictures or symbols); devices which speak or print out messages; call bells etc.]

*Source: Speak Up Project: http://www.accpc.ca/Speak_Up/vocabulary-intro.htm#2

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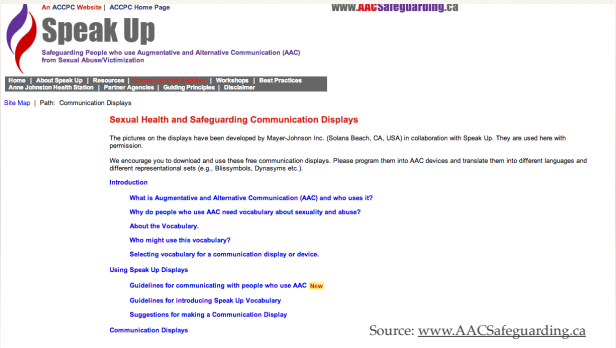
Speak Up Project Website:


An ACCPC Website | ACCPC Home Page

www.AACSafeguarding.ca

Speak Up

Safeguarding People who use Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) from Sexual Abuse/Victimization

Home | About Speak Up | Resources | Sexual Health Displays | Workshops | Best Practices
Anne Johnston Health Station | Partner Agencies | Guiding Principles | Disclaimer

Site Map | Path: Communication Displays

Sexual Health and Safeguarding Communication Displays

The pictures on the displays have been developed by Mayer-Johnson Inc. (Solana Beach, CA, USA) in collaboration with Speak Up. They are used here with permission.

We encourage you to download and use these free communication displays. Please program them into AAC devices and translate them into different languages and different representational sets (e.g., Blissymbols, Dynasyms etc.).

Introduction

What is Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) and who uses it?

Why do people who use AAC need vocabulary about sexuality and abuse?

About the Vocabulary.

Who might use this vocabulary?

Selecting vocabulary for a communication display or device.

Using Speak Up Displays

Guidelines for communicating with people who use AAC New

Guidelines for introducing Speak Up Vocabulary

Suggestions for making a Communication Display

Communication Displays

Source: www.AACSafeguarding.ca

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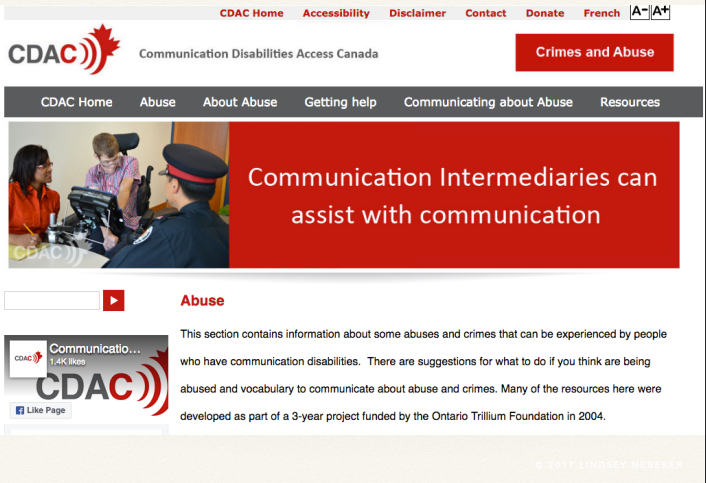

Communicating About Abuse - Picture Displays | CDAC

http://www.cdacanada.com/crimes/communicating-about-abuse/picture-displays/

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3C: Inclusion of learners who do not fit the heteronormative assumption

Image Credit: Dejan Josifov

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Sex Ed typically focuses on:

(Cisgender female) (Cisgender male)

Image Sources: Tammy Sue and Karen Arnold

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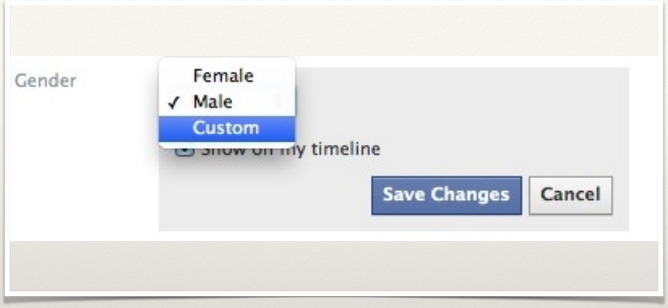

Autism & Gender Identity: Double Standard?

Thinking outside the gender and sexual expression binary

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STUDY: "Gender Identity Issues More Likely Among Children with Autism or ADHD"

Author: Springer; Published March 12, 2014

- *(Participants were children between 6 and 18 years old)*
- "Gender variance was found to be 7.59 times more common in participants with ASD" (Springer, 2014)
- "Participants who wished to be another gender had elevated rates of anxiety and depression symptoms. However, these were lower among participants with autism spectrum disorders. This is possibly due to their impaired social reasoning which makes them unaware of the societal pressures against gender nonconformity." (Springer, 2014)

Source: http://www.disabled-world.com/disability/sexuality/identity.php

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In order to shift out of the heteronormative assumption, we need to be able to identify and learn the social norms (the "unwritten rules" of social behavior) which hinder us.

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Social Norms may include things like:

- Traditional gender roles
- 'Straight' privileges
- Heterosexual relationships & marriages
- Male = masculine
  Female = feminine
- Cisgender privileges
- Able-bodiedness
- Society's definition of beauty
- Non-disabled status privileges

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"Inclusion is not a place. Inclusion is a philosophy."

–Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence: 'Least Restrictive Environment' Video

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4. Teaching Materials for Non-Traditional Learners

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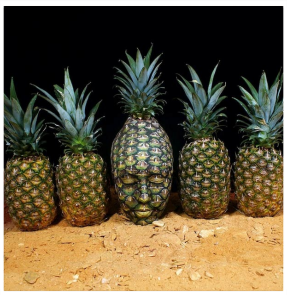

Photos / Paintings © Johannes Stötter

Wake up… it's time to get creative!

Taking an interactive approach to learning beyond textbooks

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Building a Learning Materials "Toolkit"

- Illustration cards & vocabulary sets
- Sign language
- Photos & videos
- Puppets
- Stick figures & models

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Building a Learning Materials "Toolkit", cont.

- Role-playing
- Self defense techniques
- Interactive demonstrations
- Interactive sex education themed websites
- Sensory integration

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5. Sociosexual Awareness

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Definition of

Sociosexual:

"Of or pertaining to sexual behavior as it relates to society."

(Source: Wikipedia)

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"There is a surprisingly large number of rules to learn when it comes to sexuality—many of which are unwritten and rely on social understanding and nuances. For individuals with ASDs, social deficits contribute greatly to difficulties with sociosexual concepts."

*(Nichols, S. & Blakeley-Smith, A., 2009, p.86)**

**Nichols, S. & Blakeley-Smith, A. (2009): "I'm Not Sure We're Ready for This …": Working With Families Toward Facilitating Healthy Sexuality for Individuals With Autism Spectrum Disorders, Social Work in Mental Health, 8, 72-91*

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Lack of sociosexual awareness can lead to…

- Social naivety
- Low self esteem
- Being taken advantage of
- Sexual assault & abuse
- Lack of personal empowerment

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Exploring the Hidden Curriculum

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What do we need to learn?

- Hidden intentions and hidden agendas
- Social boundaries
- "Scripts" (responding to verbal and nonverbal queues)
- Sexual slangs & lingo
- Spotting "red flags"
- Informed consent

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The goal of sociosexual awareness is not to force ourselves into conforming to the social norm, but to gain a better understanding of the "hidden agendas" (hidden sexual intentions) so that we can better protect the vulnerabilities we may have.

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6. Sex Positivity

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What does it mean to be

Sex Positive?

Sex positivity is a social and philosophical movement which advocates "an attitude towards human sexuality that regards all consensual sexual activities as fundamentally healthy and pleasurable, and encourages sexual pleasure and experimentation." *(Gabosch, Allena (2008-02-26). "A Sex Positive Renaissance")*

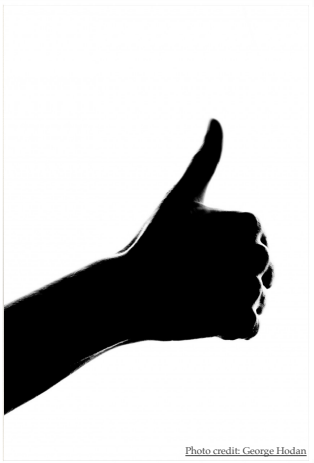

Photo credit: George Hodan

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Sex positivity encourages…

Sex positivity *does not* encourage…

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Lorem Ipsum Dolor

Don't want to get involved in sex?

That's okay, too!

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It is important for individuals to know that…

- Sex is healthy, so long as it is practiced safely and with consent between all parties.
- Not having an interest in sex is perfectly okay.
- We have the right to refuse any sexual activity we do not want to participate in.
- We have the right to communicate and be educated about sex in a safe social environment.
- Expressions of sexuality is not forbidden and evil, but a natural part of the human experience.

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7. Concrete Instruction Style

Photo credit: Philip Anderson

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Avoiding Euphemisms

Mixture of one-on-one and peer group instruction

Explicit & scientific terminology
(and understanding the complexity of sexual terminology)

Access to educational resources which contain bullet points, lists, visuals, etc.

Candid, clear-cut communication between the Instructor and the Learner

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8. Safe and Effective Learning Environment

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Consider accessibility & space.

What factors of accessibility and space help us learn most effectively?

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LED Lighting Saves Money, Creates Better Learning Environment for Students with Autism

The new lights at Cherokee Elementary School do not flicker when fully dimmed, creating less of a distraction in special needs classrooms.

January 26, 2014

How beneficial is LED lighting? At Cherokee Elementary School in Scottsdale, Ariz., new LED lighting fixtures not only save energy, they also prevent students with autism from being bothered by fluorescent lighting. Researchers maintain that individuals with autism are more vulnerable to the sub-visible flicker of direct fluorescent lighting, which can cause headaches, eyestrain and increased repetitive behavior.

LED lighting makes all the difference in classrooms at the Cherokee Creek Elementary School.

Tags: School Safety · Autism · Features · Light Emitting Diodes LED · Special Needs

In a pilot project, Scottsdale Unified School District replaced 69 2x4-foot fluorescent lighting troffers in four special education classrooms with 60 2x2-foot flat-panel LED fixtures from lighting manufacturer MaxLite. The install has the added benefit of energy savings. According to Charlie Bowers, Arizona Business development manger for installer Centennial Contractors, the school saw energy savings of about 60% in areas with the new LED fixtures. Most importantly, these fixtures do not flicker when fully dimmed, a quality that is important in a special needs classroom.

MaxLite rep Adam Robbins from lighting supplier Perseid LED specified the MLFP22D4535 2x2 Direct Lit Flat Panels. These panels each emit 3,850 lumens of brightness while using just 45 watts. The lumen power is far less than the 8,000 lumens the school's previous fluorescent troffers offered, but those classrooms had been overly lit.

"When a lighting layout was done, nine fixtures were determined to be unnecessary to adequately light the areas," says David Delgado, MaxLite lighting applications engineer.

In a single room with 22 fixtures, the new products reduced the lumen output by 121,000 lumens for substantial energy savings. The room initially had a light intensity of 65 foot-candles. After the install, the room was down to 42 foot-candles at the desktops, meeting Arizona state standards.

Designed for drop-in ceilings, the LED flat panels were offered in the correlated color temperature (CCT) of 3500K, which emits a "soft white" light. The lights have a CRI (Color Rendering Index), a measurement of color accuracy, of >80, which is considered by lighting experts to be good, with 90 to 100 considered excellent. An IR remote allows teachers to adjust the lighting levels to meet the changing needs of the classroom or to alter

Link to Article: http://www.campussafetymagazine.com/article/led-lighting-saves-money-and-creates-better-learning-environment-for-autist/Features

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Possible ideas to implement…

- Lighting alternatives or fluorescent light diffusers
- Floor lamps
- Home furnishings
- Thermostat settings
- Sensory activities / Items & objects for sensory input
- Organized and clutter-free space
- Unscented supplies (markers, notebooks, etc)
- Adaptive layout of room
- Removal of distractions

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Consider safety.

What factors of safety help us learn most effectively?

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Possible safety factors to implement…

- Transparency (windows, doorways, etc.) for easier transition
- Predictability
- Removal of physical hazards
- Small, minimal spaces for retreat

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Possible safety factors to implement…

- Instructor background: (experience working with ASD; professional credentials; criminal record)
- Instructor approach
- Other students in classroom
- Other faculty & staff

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Key Points to a Safe* & Effective Learning Environment:

- The Learner will always need some extent of control.
- The Instructor(s) need to be approachable, open-minded and receptive.
- The learning environment accommodates the Learner's sensory wiring.
- The learning environment is least restrictive.

**A safe learning environment is not to be confused with a sheltered learning environment.*

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9. Shift in Perception

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A shift in perception involves one simple thing:

deleting the Medical Model of Disability.

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Medical Model of Disability:

"The condition is the problem"

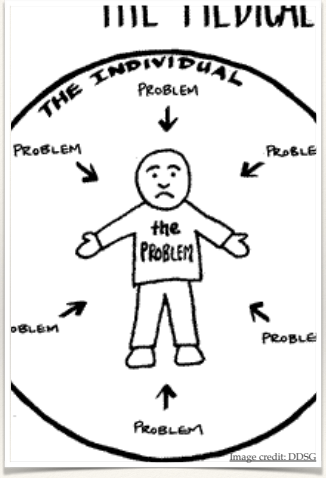

Image credit: DDSG

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What the Medical Model can imply:

- All individuals with disabilities have no interest in sex.
- All individuals do not have the capability to handle huge topics like sex.
- All individuals lack empathy.
- The assumed lack of empathy opens up the possibility that we are more likely to become predators or be extremely naive.*

*The four bullet points above are examples of false assumptions people can have on individuals with DD.

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Social Model of Disability

"Society structures are the problem"

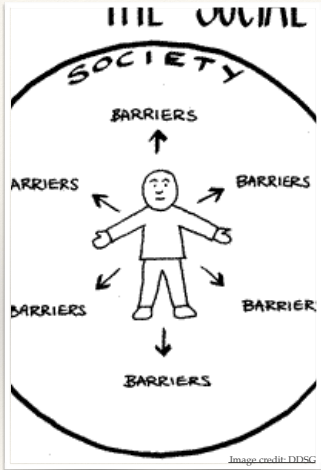

Image credit: DDSG

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ALWAYS presume competence.

We are often more capable than we realize -- regardless of our learning style, cognitive ability, characteristics and complexity of understanding.

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It is important for individuals to know that…

- We are not victims.
- Plenty of us do experience the same feelings of romance, sexual desires, developing relationships, and raising a family.
- All labels, classifications, and stereotypes, and conditions are merely labels created by a history of societal norms and were not created naturally.

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In Closing…

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The ideal sexuality education curriculum for individuals with disabilities has to be constructed as a

FRAMEWORK

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Framework Architects

- Self Advocates with Developmental Disabilities
- Professionals and Specialists
- Sexuality Educators

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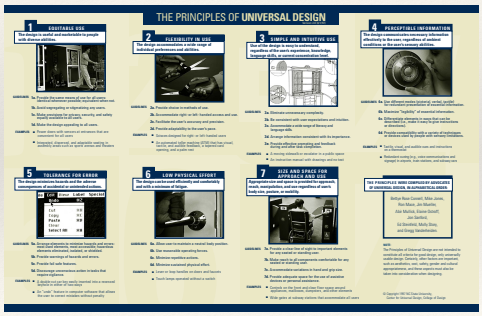
Framework Construction

Example: The Principles of Universal Design, Version 2.0. - North Carolina State University (poster):



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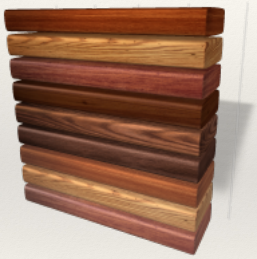
Framework Insulation



- Personal Perspective
- Personal Perpective
- Inclusion
- Teaching Materials for Non-traditional Learners
- Sociosexual Awareness
- Sex Positivity
- Concrete Instruction Style
- Safe & Effective Learning Environment
- Shift in Perception

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In acquiring a well-rounded inclusive sex education, in however way we learn it, we can become empowered.

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Additional Resources:

www.nakedbrainink.com/resources

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