Sexuality Topics and Intervention Strategies: Taking care of personal needs for individuals who are visually impaired

Webinar • Perkins School for the Blind

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CHARGE Syndrome Researcher Consultant
Outline

- Importance of prevention and education
- Consideration of short- and long-term goals
- Identifying body parts and gender
- Identifying boundaries
- Hygiene and Personal Care
- Menstruation
- Masturbation
- Sex Education
- Odds and Ends
Who is Here?
Where do we begin? And WHY?

“Not teaching a child about sexuality and how to express natural urges in a safe and appropriate manner denies a big part of what is essentially human.” (Moss & Blaha, 2001).

Embarrassing moment or teaching moment

- Children who are Blind, VI, DB, and those who present with DD do NOT learn incidentally about sexuality issues.
Importance?

- Research has long shown a need for better education
- Missed opportunities for models/concepts
- Multiple studies indicate that children who are Deaf know less about sexuality issues than hearing peers (Getch et al., 2011)
- 2.2 times higher for sexual abuse
- Often repeated and will go unreported (Stinson, Christian, & Dotson, 2002)

References: National Center for Abuse and Neglect
Sexual Abuse Research

Males
- About 13.9% vs. 3.7% reported lifetime sexual violence
- 32% victims of sexual assault

Females
- 26.6% vs. 12.4% experienced lifetime sexual violence
- Abuse estimated to range from 33% to 83%
- 83% victims of sexual assault (less than half seek treatment or legal support)

Goals

- Begin teaching EARLY!
- 6 month
- 1 year
- 5 year

- Is the location (environment) appropriate?
Individualized Plan

- Identify needs
- Incorporate the family/educational team
- Determine goals and priorities for the individuals and the family
- Identify necessary materials and technology
Naming Body Parts
Body Parts

- Use daily teaching when appropriate
- Begin Early
- Be Specific

**Recommendations:**
- Games: “Is it a boy or a girl?”
- Books, magazine clippings
Body

- Visual Aids to practice
- Many need to use models of body parts
Establishing Personal boundaries
Personal Boundaries

- Establish a pattern of behavior.
  - More difficult to change highly established behaviors
  - Identify examples of safe and not safe hands

- Model Modesty
  - REQUIRE modesty from teachers, physicians, etc.
  - Opportunities for practice
  - Teach for the environment
Establishing Boundaries

- State specific people who can see the child without clothing

- Who can assist with baths?

- Examples of private and not-private

- Prep for physical examinations

- Livingwellwithautism.com
Safe Hands

- Use a consistent vocabulary.
- Forewarn your educators.
- Perseverative touch; redirect when able and address behavior.
Hugging Social Story

Photo: livingwellwithautism.com
Kissing Social Story
Personal Boundaries

- How do introduce yourself to others
- Name
- Place out hand
  - “Count down” handshake
Hygiene and Personal Care
Hygiene and Personal Care

“A critical component of social and sexual maturity is attaining independence in basic self-care tasks.” -AAP

- Intervention Options: direct instruction, formalized cues, and reinforcement system

- Clothing: Acceptable to peers and socially appropriate?

- Add to your child’s yearly goals at school
Showering/Bathing

- Assistance - Did you ask for permission?
- Use of soap
- Forgotten parts
  - Neck
  - Back
  - Feet
- Caring for other medical necessities
- Timers
Hygiene Interventions

“First Impressions”
- Male and Female Versions
- Hygiene
  - Importance
  - Shower, Shampoo, Soap
  - “5-minute shower”
- Toilet Hygiene
- Self-exams (testicular and breast)
- Social Stories; Laminated Task Lists

http://www.stanfield.com/products/social-life-skills/first-impressions/
MENSTRUATION
Menstruation

- Sanitary Pad Compliance
  - Practice, Practice, Practice!
  - Visual scripts (placement and changing)
  - Reinforcement
    - Hygiene
- Choices
  - Sanitary pad type
- Add to IEP
Menstruation

- Change sanitary pad during each toileting trip
- Prepping for School
- Medications
- Keep record of periods

- Teaching Tool: “Janet got her period.”

Once, I was a baby.

Then, I was a little girl.

Now, I'm a big girl.

Soon, I will be a woman.

Big girls and women have a period that comes once each month.

When I have my period, I will see blood on my underwear.

I will need to wear a sanitary pad inside my underwear so that blood does not get on my clothing.

When I have my period, the blood flow will last about 5 - 7 days.
I will need to change my pad several times during the day.

I will go to the bathroom, wrap the dirty pad in toilet paper, and put it in the trash.

If I start my period at home, I can tell Mom or Dad.

They will go to the bathroom with me.

At home, my Mom and Dad will help me.

I will put a new, clean pad on my underwear.
If I start my period at school, I will quietly tell Ms. Clinton or Ms. Randall.

I will talk quietly because this is a private matter. Friends and other teachers do not need to know.

I will have pads in a bag in my backpack. I will get my bag from my backpack.

We will quietly walk to the nurse's suite. I can use the nurse's bathroom when I have my period.

When I have my period, it will be very important to wash between my legs every day to stay clean.

When I have my period, I might feel a light pain in my tummy. If I do, I will tell my Mom or Dad.

That light pain in my tummy is called cramps. My Mom or Dad can give me some medicine if I need it.
- Boardmaker Achieve
- Post in bathroom
- Visual may need to remain in carrying bag
Examinations

- The American Academy of Pediatrics supports having a trusted caregiver present for examinations if the individual provides consent to do so (Murphy & Ellis, 2006)
Birth Control

- Discuss questions and concerns with your child’s physician
- Caution: antiepileptic medications decrease the effectiveness of oral and implanted contraceptives (Murphy & Elis, 2006).
- Injectable contraceptive can effectively minimize or eliminate menstrual flow
  - Prolonged use linked to bone density loss in healthy adolescent females, which may not reverse completely after discontinuation of the medication (Murphy & Elis, 2006)
MASTURBATION
Masturbation

- Prerequisite Skill #1:
  - Does your child understand the concept of “wait”?
    - “Later when we get home”

- Prerequisite Skill #2:
  - Teach public versus private
Masturbation

- LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION
  - Redirects; Use of a timer
  - Social Story; Visual Script
  - Reinforcement Systems!
  - Be cautious of items used for humping
  - Gentle touch

- Video Modeling:

(Diverse City Press: Diverse-city.com)
Masturbation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Private Time</th>
<th>Go to Bedroom</th>
<th>Ask siblings to leave</th>
<th>Close the door</th>
<th>Close the curtain</th>
<th>Touch gently</th>
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Timers

VisTimer; $1.99 App Store

LTD; Amazon.com

Harriscomm.com; Quake and Wake Alarm
Sex Education?
Sex Education

- Education and intervention for sexuality allows the individual to knowledgeable to make informed decisions to promote sexual identity and sexual safety (Getch et al, 2001)

- Consult with your IEP team early
Final Notes

- Begin education early
- Physicians and educators must know that sexuality education is a primary part of your child’s goals
- Instructional strategies may require the use of concrete materials and tactual exploration
Additional Resources

- Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired, Judith Davies

- Sexuality and Developmental Disability:
  - A Guide for Parents, from the Alberta, Canada web initiative teachingsexualhealth.ca, which was developed by educators and health professionals. The website offers up-to-date, evidence-based information and strategies for teachers and educators in four main areas: How To Teach, Lesson Plans, Teacher's Lounge and Resources.

- Introduction to Sexuality Education for Individuals Who Are Deaf-Blind and Significantly Developmentally Delayed—from the National Consortium on Deaf-Blindness.
  - [www.nationaldb.org](http://www.nationaldb.org)
References

- Livingwellwithautism.com—excellent social stories
- National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities (Sexuality Education for Children and youth with Disabilities): http://nichcy.org/pubs/newsdig/nd17txt.htm
- Sexuality Education for Youth with Disability or Chronic Illness A Resource List: http://www.med.umich.edu/yourchild/topics/disabsex.htm
Contact Information

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