

Relationships & Sexuality

Education - *Supporting people with Down syndrome towards safe, healthy and happy adulthood*

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Myth Busting

- People with intellectual disability are asexual and/or childlike
- People with intellectual disability are overly sexual and/or can't control themselves
- Our behaviours are influenced by our attitudes and beliefs
- When we view people with intellectual disability as 'other' we deny:
 - Information about their rights and responsibilities
 - Information about their body
 - Language to ask questions or report abuse

Sex Ed vs Relationships Training

- Lots of emotion tied to the sex part of sex education
- Reality is:
 - Only about 10% is facts
 - The other 90% is social behaviour – how we express ourselves and our sexuality
- Shift from ‘How can I stop sexuality from developing?’ to ‘How can I help them to express sexuality in a way that is consistent with their ability and within the standards of the community in which we live?’

The Risk if We Don't

“We discovered that each of them, every one, had been on a sex education curriculum designed by the media.

They learned about relationships from soap operas.

They learned about body image from commercials.

They learned that a woman's no did not mean 'no' - it meant try harder.

They learned that gentle men were losers and callous men were sexy.

They learned that force wasn't force it was passion.

They learned that it took seconds to fall in love.

They learned that love was expressed only, and best, by sex.”

- Dave Hingsburger

Self-care

grooming, toileting, dressing,
hygiene, menstrual management

Anatomy and Physiology

body part names and functions,
sexual anatomy, public vs private

What Should We Teach?

Empowerment

self-determination, choice,
personal power

Relationships and Social Skills

Types of relationships and
behavior rules, affection,
friendships, 'how to'

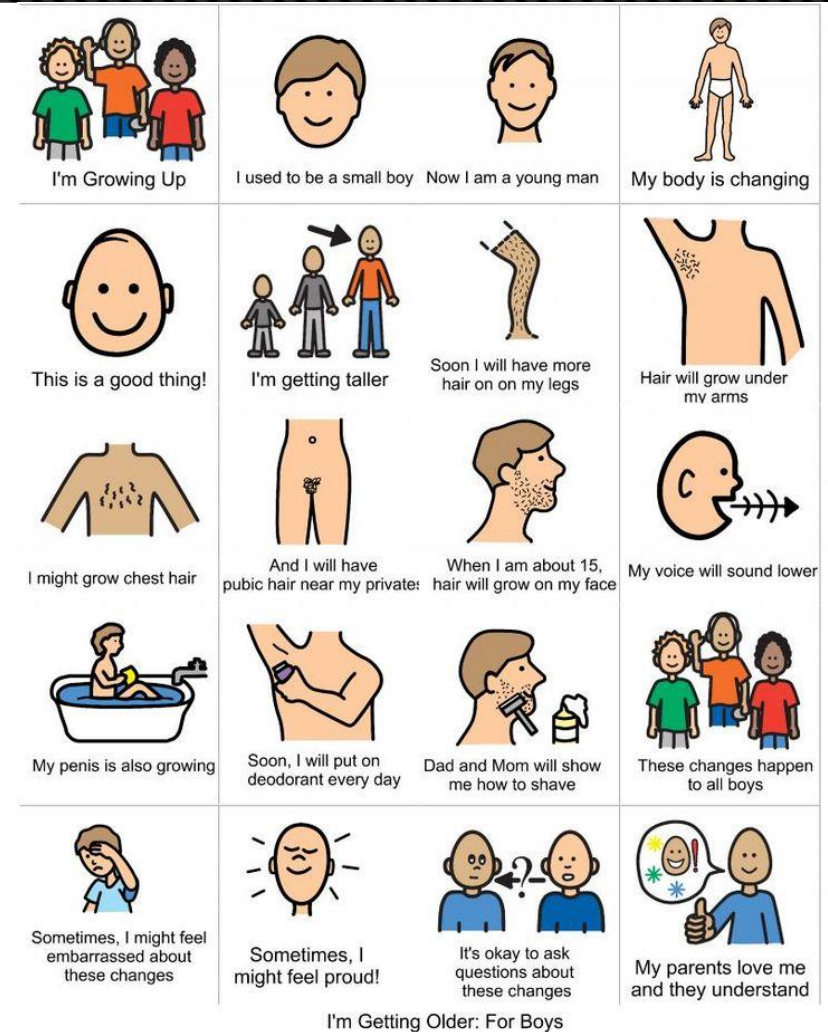
Self Care

- Hygiene
- Scheduling
- Products
- Social implications
- Menstrual management



Anatomy and Physiology

- Label body parts with correct names
- Consistently use correct names
- Use photos to sequence change from baby to adult
- Cut out/draw swimmers to teach concept of 'private parts'



Empowerment

- Provide (and respect) choice frequently
- Teach decision making rather than compliance
- Teach and practise how to say no
- Self-esteem activities
 - 5 things
 - Certificate of pride

Relationships and Social Skills

- Consider the impact of communication skills
 - AAC options to include social communication not just wants and needs
- Friend vs Acquaintance
- Friend – like each other, enjoy spending time together, do fun things together
- Acquaintance – you don't know them well OR with you to do a job (doctor, therapist, coach, teacher)
- Except for family, everyone is an acquaintance first. Friendship takes time.

Relationships and Social Skills

- What does a good friendship look like?
 - Both people want to be friends
 - Choices are shared (not one person in charge)
 - Treat each other with respect
 - Feel happy and safe
 - Nice to each other
 - Listen to each other
- ‘Friend wanted’ activity
- ‘What makes a good friend’ poster

Relationships and Social Skills

- Romantic relationships
 - Boyfriend, girlfriend, husband or wife.
 - Go on dates together
 - Do not go out with other people
 - Committed to each other
 - Learn a LOT about each other
 - Might hold hands or kiss
 - Might have sex
- Romantic relationships start as friendships
- Romantic relationships are not with people who are with us to do a job or are from the same family

Relationships and Social Skills

- Friendship to relationship ladder
- Romantic relationship poster
- How to ask someone on a date
- Boundaries – different types of touch with different types of relationships
- Make a poster – draw or cut out pictures of people
- Model appropriate touch
- Only use physical contact appropriate for same-age peers

Teaching Strategies

- Modelling
- Sequencing
- Social stories
- Pictures and story boards
- Videos and photos
- Drama and role play
- Discuss case studies/real life scenarios
- Storytelling, songs etc.
- Puppets and dolls – anatomically correct
- Art activities

THANK YOU!



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