



**Developmental  
Disabilities  
Planning Council**

*Easy Read Edition*

# **A Self-Advocate's Guide to Safer Sex**

## **Part 1: To Start**

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## What is this toolkit about?



This is a toolkit about having sex.

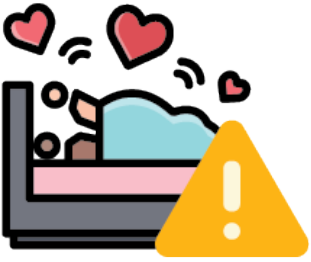
It talks about things like:



- What “having sex” means.



- Why people have sex.



- What some risks of having sex are.



- How to have safer sex.



- What pregnancy is.



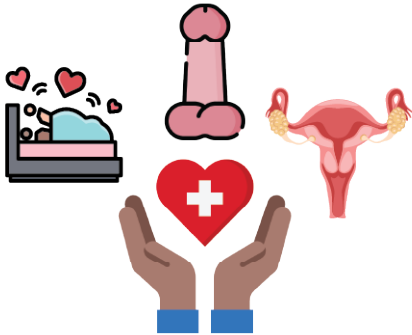
- What STIs (including HIV) are.



- How to prevent pregnancy.



- How to prevent STIs.



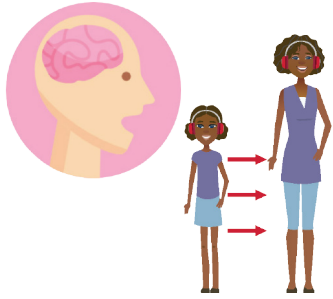
- What sexual and reproductive health care is, and how to get it.



- What consent is and why it is important.



- What sexual assault is.



These are really important topics for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) to know. Adults with IDD can be sexual beings, too.

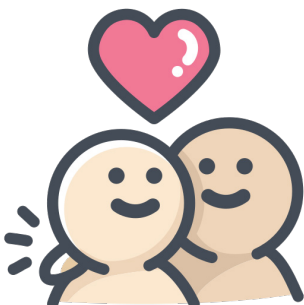
That means we can:



- Have sex.



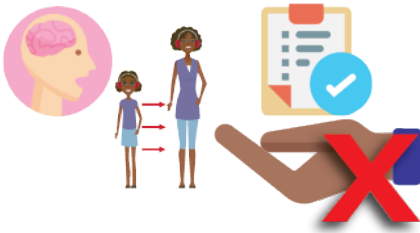
- Want to have sex with other people.



- Be in relationships where we have sex with other people.



- Love and care for the people we have sex with.



But a lot of the time, adults with IDD do not get information about sex.



We may be told that we should just never have sex.



We may be told that sex is a bad, dangerous thing.



We may be told that we are “not ready” for sex.



We may be told all of this even if we are adults who can say “yes” to having sex.



Note: Some adults with IDD are **asexual**.



Asexual people do not have sexual feelings towards anyone else.



It is okay to be asexual!

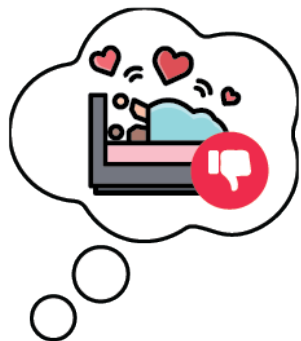


It is okay not to have sexual feelings towards anyone else.

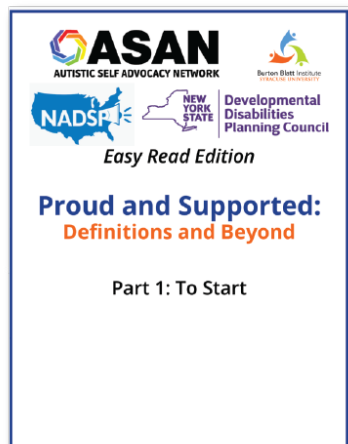


Some asexual adults like having sex.





Some asexual adults do not like having sex.



You can learn more about being asexual in [Definitions and Beyond](#).

# Why do people with IDD not get to learn about having sex?

Here are some reasons why adults with IDD do not get to learn about having sex, and how to have safer sex:

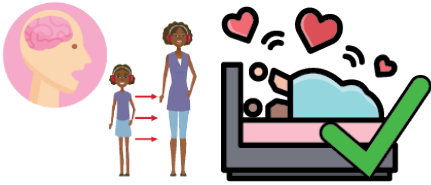
## People might think we are not able to have sex.



People may think we are not physically able to have sex.



Or, they may think we are not mentally able to say “yes” to having sex.



This is wrong! Adults with IDD can have sex.



We can say "yes" to having sex.

**People see us as permanent children.**



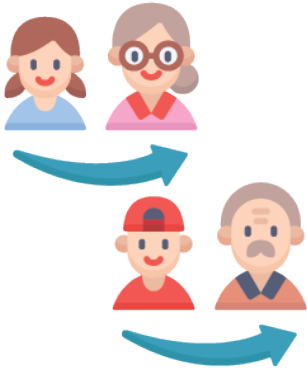
People might say we have the "mental age" of a child.



People might say we "do not grow up."



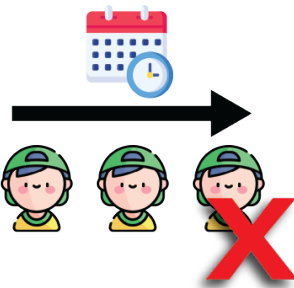
People then might say that we do not need information about sex because we're not really adults.



But everyone grows up!



Adults have the mental age of adults, no matter whether they have an IDD or not!

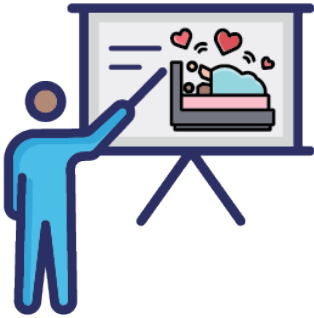


We are not permanent children.

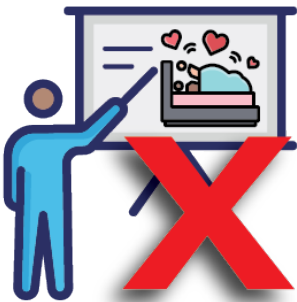


We can and do have sex.

## We may not have gotten sex education in school.



Sex education is classes that teach people about their bodies, sex, relationships, and dating.



A lot of the time, students with disabilities do not get sex education.

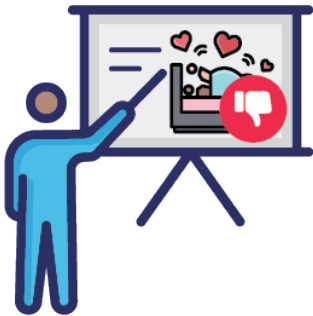


Sometimes this is because people believe students with disabilities should not get sex education.

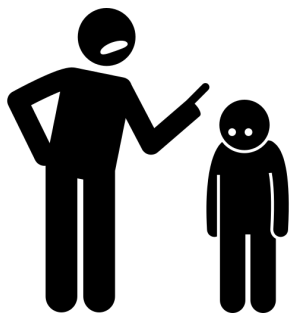


Sometimes this is because people believe that no students should get sex education.

**We may live in a place where people do not talk about sex openly or at all.**



Other people may have taught us that sex is “bad” or “dirty” and not something to talk about.



Other people may have punished us for asking questions about sex.

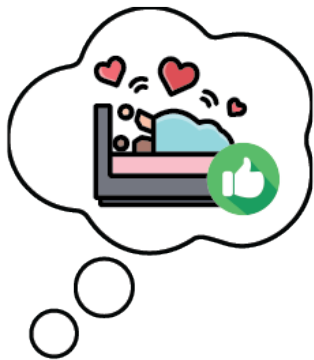


We may have learned that it is not safe to talk about or ask questions about sex.

# Why is it important for people with IDD to learn about sex?

It is still very important that people with IDD learn about sex and having safer sex. Here are a few reasons why it is so important:

## Adults with IDD can be sexual beings.



We may want to have sex!



We may already be having sex!



We need and deserve information about how to have safer sex.



Information about having safer sex is a human right.



Even if we are asexual or do not want to have sex, we still need information on having safer sex.



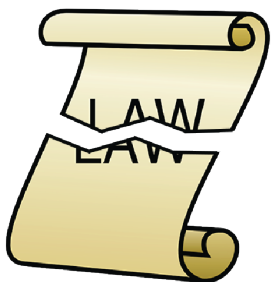
**If we do not learn about having sex and safer sex, we may have sex in ways that are dangerous.**



We may have sex in ways that put us at higher risk for catching diseases.



We may have sex in ways that hurt others or make other people uncomfortable.



We may have sex in ways that are against the law.

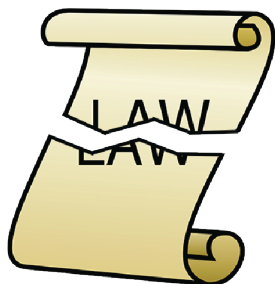
## People with IDD are more likely to be sexually assaulted.



Sexually assaulted means we are forced to have sex when we do not want to.



Sexual assault is wrong.



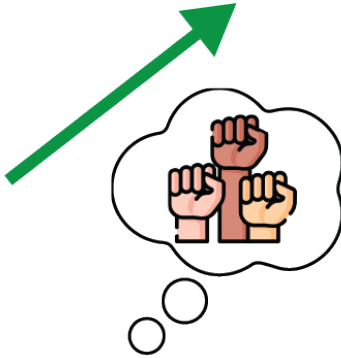
Sexual assault can be against the law.



Sexual assault goes against a person's rights.



Knowing what sex and safer sex are make us less likely to be sexually assaulted.



Knowing what sex and safer sex are means we are more likely to know our rights around sex.

## Content Note



This guide will talk about some things that can be upsetting.



It will talk about things like sexual assault, abuse, and violence against people with IDD.



We talk about abuse and violence in the sections “What is consent?” and “What is sexual assault?”



It is okay to take a break if you need to.



It is okay to skip these sections or not read this toolkit if you need to.