



# Creating Programs for Sociosexual Development in Adolescents

CHERI

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# Overview

- Issues in sociosexual development – looking ‘under the problem’ for the solution.
- Small group programs – in particular Henault (2006).
- Teacher training – Riverina Project (2008)
- Resources
- Questions

# Acknowledgement

Isabelle Henault, Ph.D., Sexologist & Psychologist, presented a workshop in May 2005 in Sydney and published *Asperger's Syndrome & Sexuality from Adolescence through Adulthood* in 2006 (Jessica Kingsley Pubs).

This presentation describes how I have used and adapted her work.

## For Example ....

- Socio-sexuality workshops (10 sessions each) with adolescents (x2) & adults (x1) with ASD. Partnership with Aspect.
- Adapting workshops for people with cerebral palsy. Partnership with Spastic Centre of NSW.
- Teacher training project with Riverina DET
- Consultations with individual students at request of school/parent
- Private practice 1:1 counselling with individuals & couples with ASD

# Sexuality & Social development

- Sexuality is a **normal part of development & life**
- Sexuality is **complex** – body, moods, thoughts, interests, relationships, social expectations, cultural rules i.e. **more than a set of behaviours**



# Profile of Asperger's/High Level Autism & how affects SSD

- Social skills: free of social rules
- Communication abilities: understanding & expressing both in verbal & non-verbal modes. Non-verbal 'blind/ blurry'
- Theory of Mind: different ways of thinking
- Emotions: detecting, reading, expressing
- Sensory issues: over & under sensitivity

# Parent & carer fears related to sexuality

- Not being able to give a clear answer to a question
- STI's/STDs & AIDS
- Unwanted pregnancy
- Unions, couples & marriage
- Sexual exploitation – victim/perpetrator
- Judgement of others
- Knowledge will lead to higher level of sexual interest

# Issues of development

- Sexual behaviours: self stimulation, exploring sexuality
- Frustrations & inappropriate behaviours
- Gender identity & role definition: 'My way' – inflexibility, conflict, confusion.
- Social imitation: context, consent

# Issues of development

- Expression of emotions: tends to be all or nothing. “I hate her.” “They’ve gotta be killed!” “I love him”
- Sexual drive, desire, curiosity.
- Interpersonal relationships: empathy, intimacy, confusion, anxiety, betrayal

# Case Discussions

- C  
13 yr old boy. High level ASD. All boys school.
- L  
15 yr old girl. Aspergers. Mixed gender school
- B  
18 yr old young man. Aspergers & LD. Left school

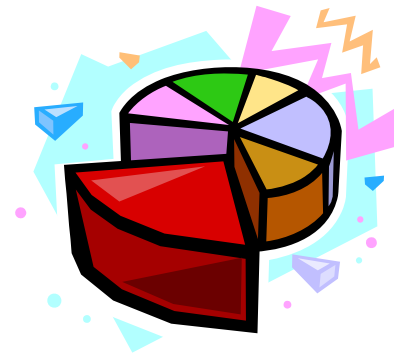
# Factors influencing healthy social & sexual development

- Information from
  - Basic knowledge
  - Experiences
  - Social support
- Limitations of the environment
  - Gender segregation
  - Social network
  - Rules
  - Sex education

# Factors influencing healthy social & sexual development

- Medication
  - Secondary effects
  - Synergic effect
  - Infections
  - Monitored
- Rights & attitudes
  - Permissive attitude or protective attitude? – both are extremes

Aim for  
an Informative Approach.





# Personal hygiene

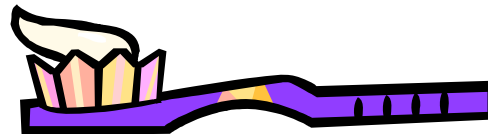


See 'Checklist for daily hygiene routine.'  
(Henault, 2006)

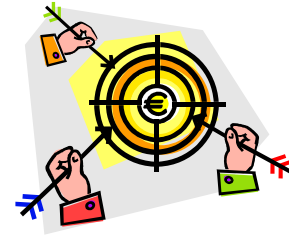
"If you want to have friends you have to smell good."

"You may be smart, witty etc BUT people will not want to be your friend if you smell."

"I'm going to be the person to tell you – you wont have people wanting to be with you if you smell."



# Goals of Sex Education



- Better knowledge
- Make informed & responsible sexual decisions
- Decode situations in interpersonal & intimate relationships
- Improve social & sexual skills: learn adaptive and positive behaviours to realise their potential for interpersonal relationships & sexual expression

# Goals of Sex Education

- Decrease problem behaviours
- Increase self esteem through understanding & accepting physical/emotional changes & feeling positive about their body
- Encourage independence (choices, decisions, judgement) & understand clear behavioural boundaries
- Maximise social integration

# Ethics

**Under 18 yrs old** – tell parents what you are doing:

“I’m going to talk about healthy sexuality”

“Is it OK if I share some information about healthy sexuality?”

“This is the situation that we need to address and I would like to talk about healthy sexuality. I’ll be using ..” Show materials

# Philosophy of Henault Program

- Practical activities and explanations
- Positive attitude – healthy sexuality
- Open communication
- Group format
- Sexuality in its entirety – not just ‘the body bits’

# Henault Program (2006)

- 10 themes
- Any number of sessions - 10x 2hrs, 12x 1 ½hrs, 24 x 45 mins etc
- Small groups (4 -12)
- Adolescents & adults (divide by ages 16-20yrs, 20-30 yrs, 30-40yrs etc)
- Mixed gender
- Questionnaires, games, role-play, software, DVDs, discussions, social stories, group project

# Themes

- Introduction
  1. Love & friendship
  2. Physiological changes
  3. Sexual relationships
  4. Emotions
  5. Contraception & prevention of STI/STD and AIDS

# Themes

6. Sexual orientation
7. Alcohol, drugs and sexuality
8. Sexism & gender roles
9. Sexual abuse and problem behaviours
10. Theory of Mind, communication and intimacy

# How can I best help other teachers?



» Provide good information. In-service every year on ASD, handout on ASD

- Provide individual behaviour programs for in school developed with both teacher and student present
- Set up clear & immediate consequences for unacceptable behaviours
- Involve teacher with assisting in SSD group

# How can I best protect other students?

- Provide with good information about ASD – ‘Sixth Sense’ program
- Role play with peers how to set limits and redirect unwanted behaviour.
- Give permission to report unwanted behaviour to teacher/counsellor/parent
- Run SSD group for students with ASD



# Riverina Teacher Project 2008: developing SSD programs

Aimed at teachers & school counselors in High Schools who work with students with ASD.

Designed to assist teachers in constructively managing student sociosexual development

The program included

- information and resources for sociosexual teaching
- participants planning, implementing and evaluating their own program

# Riverina Teacher Project 2008: Format

- 2 day workshop to familiarise selves with information and resources for sociosexual teaching
- Planning, implementing and evaluating pilot programs with small groups of students
- Support by email and video-teleconferencing during this implementation phase
- One day follow up session.

# Riverina Teacher Project 2008: learning so far

- Work in teams or *at least* in twos for support, ideas, solutions.
- Try for ideal of a man & a woman teaching team
- Combine students from local schools to create a group if needs be
- Taking the ‘informative approach’ helps teachers to get comfortable with the material themselves – be aware that others who haven’t been on the 2-day course may find the material very discomfoting.
- Need support from your Head Office to promote importance of an SSD program to Principals

# Riverina Teacher Project 2008: learning so far

- Incorporate both social and sexual material in program – don't leave one or the other out.
- Gathering resources is time consuming but not hard to do – Family Planning Associations & Sex Shops good sources (can go to another community's sex shop if don't want to be seen!)
- Easy to adjust material to intellectual levels of students with a bit of thought & creativity.
- School counselor commented that was more confident in addressing and raising awareness of importance of healthy sexuality in his work.

# Resources

- Books



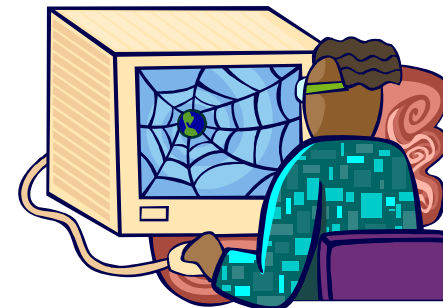
- CDs, DVDs & Movies



- Information pamphlets



- Websites



# Books

- Henault, I. (2006) **Aspergers Syndrome & Sexuality from Adolescence through Adulthood.** Jessica Kingsley Pubs
- Lawson, W. (2005) **Sex, Sexuality & the Autism Spectrum.** Jessica Kingsley Pubs
- Newport, J & M (2002) **Autism-Asperger's & Sexuality: Puberty & Beyond.** Future Horizons
- Angelo F, Pritchard H, Steward R (2003) **Secret Girl's Business**  
[www.secretgb@hotmail.com](mailto:www.secretgb@hotmail.com)
- Angelo F, Pritchard H, Steward R (2006) **Secret Boy's Business**  
[www.secretgb@hotmail.com](mailto:www.secretgb@hotmail.com)
- Kelly A, (2004) **Talkabout Relationships: Building Self-Esteem & Relationship Skills.** Speechmark Pubs

# CDs, DVDs & Movies

- . **‘Love & Kisses: relationships & sexuality featuring people with disabilities.’** (2007) Family Planning NSW.
- . **‘Sexuality Matters: sexuality, health & disability’.** (2006)  
Cerebral Palsy Association of WA
- . **‘Mind Reading: interactive guide to emotions’.** (2003)  
Jessica Kingsley Pubs
- . **‘Mozart & the Whale’** (2004) – love story between two people with Aspergers
- . **‘The Black Balloon’** (March 2008) – story of an adolescent with severe ASD from a sibling’s perspective - sexuality & romantic relationships included

# Information Leaflets

- ***Sexuality education & Asperger's Syndrome – information for parents & carers.***  
[www.fpq.com.au](http://www.fpq.com.au)
- *Taking Care of Me: about sexual assault.* Family Planning
- *Contraception: the basic facts.* Family Planning
- *Sexually Transmitted Diseases: Courting Disaster* (1995) by WR Spence M.D.

# Websites

- [www.fpnsw.org.au](http://www.fpnsw.org.au)  
Family Planning NSW – general resources
- [www.fpq.com.au](http://www.fpq.com.au)  
Family Planning Qld – factsheet ‘Sexuality Education & Aspergers Syndrome-information for parents & carers’
- [www.tccp.com.au](http://www.tccp.com.au)  
The Centre for Cerebral Palsy, WA – ‘Sexuality Matters’ CD-Rom
- [www.diverse-city.com](http://www.diverse-city.com)  
Hingsburger DVD resources on masturbation, condom use etc

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