

YEAH BUT...

I FEEL SO AWKWARD TALKING ABOUT THIS STUFF.

You're not alone. Practicing the conversation with someone beforehand can help. Taking breaks when anyone needs to can help. You can find more tips on having these conversations at real-talk.org/videos. We also train staff to become better sexual health supports. Contact us to book a free session for your organization.

WHAT IF I GIVE WRONG INFORMATION?

It's great that you want to provide accurate information. The best part is, you don't have to be an expert. There are lots of resources where you can find free, up-to-date, reliable sexual health information. Just call or email these resources in advance to get the info you need. Or - even better - show the person you support how to call or email them. You can find a list of great, reliable resources for all different learning styles at real-talk.org/resources

WHAT IF PEOPLE THINK I'M TALKING ABOUT THIS STUFF FOR THE WRONG REASONS?

Telling another family member or staff member beforehand about your intent to have a sexual health conversation is a great way to make sure everyone knows why it's happening. They may even have ideas on how to get the information across better.

You can find more tips on having these conversations safely at real-talk.org/videos, or email us at hello@real-talk.org for more tips and a free 15 minute consultation.

Get a printable PDF of this pamphlet at:
<https://www.real-talk.org/resources/talking-to-people-with-learning-disabilities-about-sex>



Real Talk is a sexual health education initiative aimed at people with learning disabilities, and their families, friends, and support staff. Real Talk is funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada, and operated by Burnaby Association for Community Inclusion, Kinsight, and posAbilities.

Real Talk makes educational videos and offers free sexual health workshops for people with learning disabilities, and free staff training for community living organizations.

Check out real-talk.org for more information, or email us at hello@real-talk.org if you want to get in touch.



Burnaby Association
for Community Inclusion



Kinsight



Public Health
Agency of Canada

www.real-talk.org
www.gobaci.com
www.posabilities.ca
www.kinsight.org

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health>



TALKING TO PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES ABOUT SEX

real-talk.org



TALKING ABOUT SEX CAN BE AWKWARD.

Even so, we believe that it's a good idea to talk to people with learning disabilities about sexual health. Here's why...

TALKING ABOUT SEX MAKES PEOPLE SAFER.

People with learning disabilities are at greater risk of experiencing sexual abuse. People who commit sexual abuse target individuals who don't have anyone in their life who they can talk openly with about sex, and who exhibit shame and ignorance around sexuality.

In contrast, they avoid targeting individuals who have someone in their life who they can talk to openly about sex, and who exhibit comfort and knowledge around sexuality. Individuals like this are risky to target, because they are less likely to feel ashamed of what happened, and are more likely to tell someone.

As well, people with learning disabilities sometimes run into legal and social problems because they don't have information about social norms, personal space, sexual consent, or why they may be feeling certain ways. Talking to them about sexuality makes them safer by giving them the information they need to avoid these pitfalls.

SEXUALITY HAPPENS WHETHER WE TALK ABOUT IT OR NOT.

Adults with learning disabilities learn in a variety of different ways, and at a variety of different paces. But they do have adult bodies, adult hormones, and adult urges. As such, they are experiencing sexuality - sexual feelings, sexual ideas, sexual desires, maybe sexual trauma. That's not in question. The only question is whether we are going to give them information and support around this stuff, or whether we're going to stay silent on the topic and make them figure it out for themselves. Individuals who have someone providing them with non-judgmental support as they work through all of these things tend to have better mental and emotional health.

SEX EDUCATION HAPPENS WHETHER WE PARTICIPATE OR NOT.

Anyone who sees a beer commercial, or a sitcom, or a music video, or an underwear ad on a billboard is getting messages

about sexuality, relationships, and gender roles. These messages may not be helpful - especially if people find it hard to understand comedy or fantasy. Porn is easy to find, and it provides a whole other set of messages. This 'education' happens to people all the time. The question, is - do we add our own ideas and values to the mix or do we leave it all to pop culture & porn?

TALKING ABOUT SEX HELPS PEOPLE MAKE BETTER DECISIONS.

We may wonder whether talking with someone about sex will make them want to go out and do it. Statistics show the opposite. People in BC who receive comprehensive sexual health education in secondary school are more likely to start having sex at an older age, and are more likely to take precautions about contraception and STI prevention. Overall, they are more likely to have sex when it makes sense for them and in ways that are safe for them - rather than succumbing to peer pressure.

