

**How to Talk About Sex & Sexuality
- For Parents -**

Presented By: Shanya Luther, M.Div
Among Friends, LLC

1

Contact Information




Shanya Luther
shanya@among-friends.org
503-332-8783

To find out more about what we're doing,
ask to be added to our contact list!

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2

Training PRE-Test and Introductions



- Training Pre-Test

Shanya Luther, M.Div
Social-sexual ecologist and
Professional trainer and consultant;
Owner and Director of Among Friends, LLC



Over 15 years of experience writing, speaking, and
presenting about relationships, sexuality, and gender

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3

Ask For Our Full Training Menu

Examples of other topics we train on:

- Sexual Violence and Trauma Informed Care
- Consent I & II
- Person-Centered Sexual Supports
- Mapping Healthy Relationships
- Supporting Sexual and Gender Minorities
- Adolescence vs. Puberty
- Proactive Social-Sexual Supports
- Becoming An Askable Ally

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In addition to trainings...

- Consultation with Vocational Rehabilitation and Behavior Professionals – different options
- An assessment tool for whether someone has the ability to consent
- A protocol for masturbation and related issues

Projects we're working on...

- A sexuality certification program with OHSU/UCEDD and OTAC
- A new computer app for dating and relationship skills
- An assessment tool for the nature of sexual behaviors

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The Goal of Social-Sexual Supports

To help keep behaviors...
SAFE, HEALTHY, LEGAL, and APPROPRIATE

- ~ Supporting the whole person
- ~ Encouraging a full human experience
- ~ Improving quality of life

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The Goals for This Training

- Understanding why talking about sex and sexuality is so important
- Defining Sex & Sexuality
- Building skills for opening a dialogue about sex and sexuality as a parent
- Learn strategies for talking about sex & sexuality (such as: approaching the topic in a non-controlling manner, how to ask open-ended questions, etc.)

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Why Do Families Need to Talk About Sex/Sexuality?

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Sexual Supports – One Person’s Story

Neil, 22 yrs -25 yrs

- Stalking Behaviors
- Masturbation Concerns
- Porn at Work
- Bar & Lap Incident
- Stranger Overnight
- Strip Clubs

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9

Why Is It Critical To Talk About ‘Sex’?

2015 Oregon Healthy Teens (OHT) survey reports that SWD are:

- more likely to experience **abuse, bullying, and sexually risky behaviors**
- more than twice as likely to report **sexual assault and coercion** — including **forced sex** and being **pressured into unwanted sexual activity**
- twice as likely to report **physical and sexual abuse by an adult**
- more likely to be **sexually active**, to report **younger age at first sexual intercourse**, and to have **more sex partners**; but **less likely to use condoms**
- at **higher risk for pregnancy and contracting STDs** because of being more sexually active, having multiple partners, and less likely to use condoms

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Why Is It Critical To Talk About ‘Sex’?

Findings from the 2012 Survey on Abuse of People with Disabilities
(Source: <http://disability-abuse.com>)

- 70% reported being victims of abuse
- More than 90% of victims experienced abuse on multiple occasions
- Verbal-Emotional 87.2%; Physical 50.6%; Sexual 41.6%; Neglect 37.3% ; Financial 31.5%
- 62.7% did not report the abuse to the authorities; and when reported, 52.9% of the time nothing happened to the perpetrator

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11

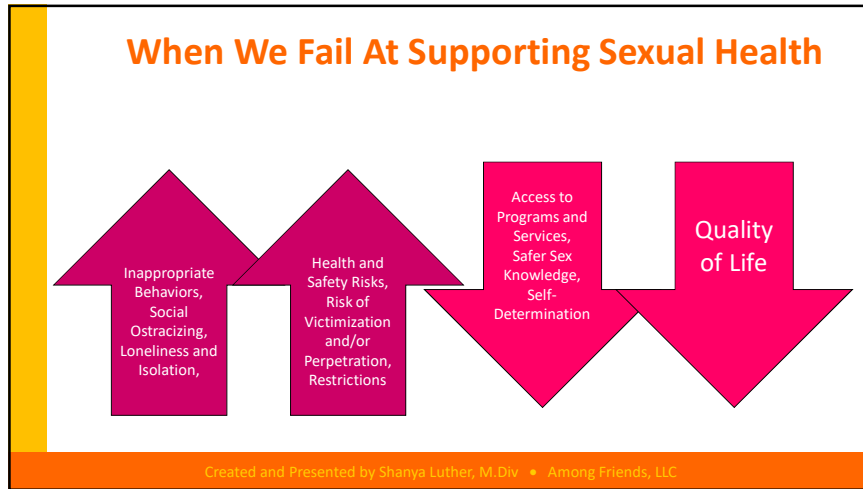
Why Is It Critical To Talk About ‘Sex’?

A person’s capacity/competency to consent is based on, in part, the ability to:

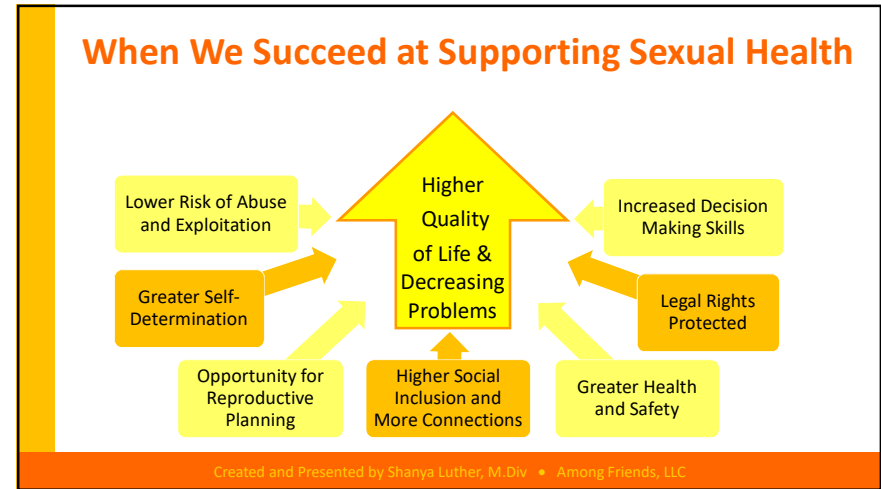
- Identify Body Parts and Functions
- Discuss intercourse and it’s possible outcomes
- Demonstrate and understanding of birth control
- Clearly communicate what one likes and dislikes
- Clearly communicate “no” or that something is undesired

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12



13



14

If We Don't Talk About It...

How would someone (for example):

- Learn about healthy relationships?
- Understand sexual functions?
- Know what their boundaries are?
- Figure out how to communicate about sexual issues?
- Understand gender?
- Learn about safer sex practices?
- Know their STI status?

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15

Sexual Supports – One Person's Story

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16

Defining Sex & Sexuality

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17

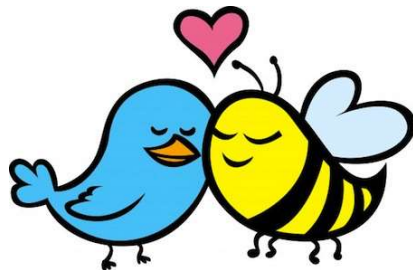
When You Hear The Word Sex...

- Are you having sex with them?
- Your parents want you to wait to have sex.
- Are you ready to have sex?
- We caught them having sex.
- Do we know if they were having sex?

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What is Sex?!?



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Are These Sex???

- Having Sexual Fantasies
- Viewing Sexual Images
- Sexting
- Masturbation
- Skinny Dipping
- Touching Bare Chest/Breasts
- Touching Someone's Genitals
- Taking Birth Control
- Putting on a Condom
- Showering Nude Together
- Hand to Genital Stimulation
- Mouth to Genital Stimulation

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6 Core Components of Sexuality



- Psychological/Emotional
- Sociological and Educational
- Physical and Physiological
- Interpersonal
- Sexual Health and Healthcare
- Dangers and Criminalization

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Sexuality and Relationships Can't Be Ignored

Sexuality is so much more than 'sex' and is a birth-to-death experience.

Sexuality and relationships are essential to a person's understanding of themselves, their perception of their quality of life, and their overall health and well-being.

Helping professionals, family members and guardians need to understand the importance of proactively addressing sexuality and relationships in just about every aspect of supporting someone.

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22

How to Start The Conversation

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23

LET'S
TALK
ABOUT
SEX

SEX ED:
1. Do not have sex
2. See number 1
3. See number 2
4. See number 3

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24



Check Yourself First

- Evaluate the Sexual Messages You Received
- Understand and Clarify Your Sexual Values
- Heal Your Own Sexual / Relational Wounds
- Recognize That Other People in Your Child's Life Have Differing Sexual Values, Choices, and Ideas
- Check Your Facts (do not perpetuate myths!)
- Remember That Information About Sexuality and Relationships is Always Evolving



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“We don't need to deal with sexuality...”


Puberty vs. Adolescence

- Puberty (physical and physiological) – generally between 10-18 years old
- Adolescence (psychological and emotional) – variety of ages and over time
- Puberty is when the body starts potentially developing sexual drive, whether or not someone is interested in developing relationships




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26



Address Your Fears As a Parent

1. Share your values and preferences but remember your child should, and will, differentiate from you
2. Express your fears and put reasonable safety measures into place while acknowledging your child has a right to explore and express their sexuality (which involves some risk!)
3. Remember that when your child turns 18 they will have the legal right to do anything you or I can do – so prepare them to make safer choices in advance before they are legal liable
4. Focus on healthy parenting behaviors!
5. Don't forget to ask yourself what your hopes and dreams are for your child's sexuality and relationships




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27

When Talking With Your Child With I/DD

- Ideally, start as young as possible
- Make it an on-going dialogue (repetition!)
- Ask “are any of your friends talking about...?”, or “have you ever heard about...?”, or “what do you think about...?”, or “what do you know about...?”
- Introduce a topic indirectly if necessary
- Create a peer group to talk about topics of interest
- Use characters and scenarios in popular media
- Invite questions!!!



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Get Support!

Sexuality is a part of almost every area of life:

- IEP's = consent, puberty, health, sexuality education, safer sex practices, pregnancy and STI prevention
- ISP's = dating, relationships, family planning, housing, seeking work, safety, trauma recovery, transition years
- ADL's = finances, hygiene, grocery shopping, socialization
- Employment = healthy boundaries, appropriate behaviors
- Skills Training = building and sustaining relationships, communication, compromise, awareness of feelings and needs, conflict management

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Useful Strategies When Talking About Sex/Sexuality

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Strategies - 1

- Be respectful – support your child's dignity
- Do not introduce / increase shame
- Look beyond the obvious; don't assume
- Seek to understand (be a curious investigator, not a judgmental authority)
- Look for safe, healthy alternatives to unsafe, unhealthy behaviors
- Value your child's right to sexual expression
- Model healthy consent
- **HAVE A SENSE OF HUMOR AND COMPASSION!!!**

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31

Strategies - 2

- Approach the topic in a non-controlling manner (partnership)
- Learn how to share your values without expecting your child will have an exact replica of your values (you and your parents don't!)
- Don't have "the talk" and expect that its enough
- Be proactive - don't wait until something is happening in their life to teach about it
- Find teachable moments (or create them!)
- Make a topic a research project, game, video, or other type of activity

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Strategies - 3



- Ask open-ended questions
- Use examples from popular media – songs, movies, tv, youtube
- Find or create case studies and ask for help “solving a problem”
- Fill out a “yes, no, maybe” list; Utilize questionnaires
- Find great children’s books on bodies, gender, and sexuality
- Teach about healthy relationships and boundaries
- Don’t use euphemisms! Use PICTURES AND MODELS!!!
- Get some families together and find someone in to facilitate discussions about these topics

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Don’t Leave Out the ‘Good’ Stuff

Don’t just talk about “problem behaviors”, or the ‘bad’ stuff; be sure you cover the natural, healthy, and joyful parts of sexuality.

FOR EXAMPLE:

- Masturbation
- Dating / Romantic Relationships
- Sexual Activity
- Family Values
- Gender Identity
- Sexual Orientation

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34

Get Proactive AND Encouraging



- Understand your child’s rights and need to take risks
- Understand Supported Decision Making as a framework for sexuality and relationships (Say YES!)
- Expect your child to have a full range of relationship, romantic and/or sexual expressions
- Bring up sexuality and relationships in as many contexts as possible
- Remind your child’s support team that proactive strategies are better than reactive responses
- Promote healthy touch

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35

More Examples of Why This Is So Critical



- Derek, 23 – max train
- Cindy, 31 – behind the dumpster
- Jesse, 29 – diapers
- Lee, 58 – at the bus stop
- Tina, 22 – baby
- Paul, 36 – internet character porn
- Billy, 16 – mom
- Bob, 28 – children

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36



37

Training Post-Test & Evaluations

Please complete a post-test and an evaluation to help us continue to improve our trainings.

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38

Call To Action

Please take this information and do something with it!

- Discuss it with your customers, families, co-workers
- Advocate for individuals' needs around sexuality and relationships
- Familiarize yourself with issues related to trauma and sexuality in your field
- Ask for more training for your organization, or become certified in social-sexual supports
- Start a dialogue about how to change policies and procedures at your organization to better address sexuality and trauma

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39

Q&A

Thank you for making healthy sexuality a priority!

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40