

Sexual Ability: Dis/Ability Aware Sex Education

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Intro

- Who am I?
- Modeling Access
 - Can everyone who can hear, hear me?
 - Can everyone who can see, see me?
 - Does anyone need any additional accommodations?

Thanks to Bethany Stevens for her help and amazing work in the CripSex Field

Guidelines

- Why are we here?
- Questions: Welcome and Encouraged
- Open and Honest Communication
- R-E-S-P-E-C-T and Confidentiality
- No Experts!
- Move Forward, Move Back
- Self Care; breaks, bathroom, etc

Disability in America

- 54.1 Million people in the US identify as PWD
 - That's 18-20%
- Wheelie = small representation of PWD
 - Only about 1% of Americans use a wheelchair
- Disability has many definitions; personal, medical, governmental
 - Important to accept self-identified disabilities
- Disability intersects all other identities; race, age, orientation, gender, class, etc.
- Disabilities can happen from birth to death and anywhere in-between; short and long term



Defining Disability

- What IS disability?
- What types of disabilities have you encountered in your work?
- What issues of accessibility have you run into in your sex education experience?
- What questions do you have surrounding disability and sexuality?

Medical Model of Disability



- *Push to “fix” or “cure” people with disabilities (sometimes non-consensually)
- *Youth with disabilities (of all types) are often segregated for education
- *There is more to quality of life than medical intervention



OPPR

SSION

Ableism



- Power structure around disability is ABLEISM
- Similar to other systems of oppression; racism, sexism, ageism, classism, sizeism, etc
- Creates able bodies as norm; devalues disability
 - Views disability as a problem vs an identity
- Medical pros, teachers, gov'n't employees, etc don't know how to interact with PWD
 - Work on cultural competency for accessibility, inclusive language, etc.
 - Work on physical and monetary access to culturally competent sex education

Accessibility in Sex

- Where is sex ed offered?
 - Physically accessible?
 - ASL option?
 - Visual images/handouts?
- Who is invited/welcome?
 - Youth w/ disabilities are frequently left out of sex ed
 - Youth w/ developmental disabilities often have their sexual development/education/needs ignored
 - Make sure advertising/recruitment for events includes info about accessibility



Ableism: Inaccessible Healthcare



- Many OB-GYN offices and rooms are not accessible for all folks
- Trainings around safer sex do not always include how to talk about disabilities as part of pre-sex discussions
- Some case managers and/or advocates for young PWD are unsure where to go for appropriate sex education

Ableism: Denial of Rights

- Many youth with developmental or cognitive disabilities are treated as asexual or hypersexual
 - Do not have access to info, birth control, contraception
 - PWD go through sexual interests and explorations just like everyone else in their teens and young adulthood
- PWD are disproportionately sexually abused by caregivers and family members
 - Many do not know who to talk to, how to get help, and how to report the abuse
- Some medical professionals refuse to talk about sex(uality) with PWD
 - Important to provide accessible information and resources for youth with disabilities

Ableism: Sexual Stereotypes

- Normative standards of beauty
 - Able bodied, white, slim, rich
- PWD seen as asexual or hypersexual
 - Partners of PWD seen as perverts or martyrs
- Assumptions that PWD don't have sex, have bad sex, unable to parent
- Concerns of youth toward finding sexual partners, LTRs, ability to become parent, etc



Cripsex

“Draws attention to the political aspects of the sexual [pleasure and oppression] of disabled people. The rationale of the word ‘cripsex’ draws on the political nature of the word ‘crip’ (the shortened and reclaimed form of the derogatory term ‘cripple’) which signifies a sense of pride in disability by those who utilize it.” – Bethany Stevens

Note: “Crip” is an insider word within the PWD community. Please be careful w/ your usage.

Cripsex Positivity

- Work to recognize and undo ableism in YOUR work
 - Your organization, your trainings, etc
- Call out others on their ableism
- Create inclusivity for all diversity
- Engage in cultural competency that challenges systems of power



Discussion

Smaller Groups



- What steps are you already taking to insure an inclusive and accessible sex ed environment?
- How can you add inclusivity and accessibility to your practice/organization/school?
- In what ways can you better reach out to/include the people with disabilities community?
- What community resources can you use/share?

Questions?



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