
SECTION 4
EDUCATION
RESOURCES

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INTRODUCTION

WHAT YOU WILL FIND IN THIS GUIDE?

Disability service agencies and rape crisis centers can help prevent sexual violence against women with disabilities. They can also respond effectively to women who experience sexual violence. Achieving these goals requires collaborative efforts to educate women with disabilities about healthy sexuality, sexual rights and sexual violence, and safety planning.

This guide will help disability service agencies and rape crisis centers:

- **Be aware of basic information about women with disabilities and healthy sexuality.**
- **Understand the sexual rights of women with disabilities.**
- **Prepare and deliver education sessions to women with disabilities regarding sexual violence, healthy relationships, healthy sexuality and sexual violence risk reduction.**

This guide is organized into four sections.

1. Overview – Women with Disabilities and Sexuality
2. Education Sessions
3. Education Session Handouts
4. Education Resources

TERMINOLOGY

(See Tool #1 for more definitions and terms)

Victim/Survivor – The terms victim and survivor are often used interchangeably, though individuals who are sexually victimized may prefer one term over another. Both terms will be used throughout this Toolkit. When working with a victim/survivor, ask her which term she prefers and use that term.

WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES – This Toolkit focuses exclusively on women with disabilities, as this was the purpose and restriction of the funding. However, most of the material can be generalized to improve services to males and youth with disabilities who experience sexual violence.

SHE – This Toolkit focuses on women, the most common victims of rape. The sexual assault victim is referred to as “she” throughout this Toolkit. However, men can also be victims of sexual violence. The reactions, feelings and needs of sexual assault victims, whether male or female, are very similar. This information in this Toolkit is equally relevant and helpful to male sexual assault victims and their friends and family.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE – The term sexual violence is used throughout this Toolkit to refer to any act (verbal and/or physical) that is non-consensual and is sexual in nature. The term “sexual violence” includes sexual harassment, exposure, voyeurism, sexual abuse, sexual assault and other forms of sexual exploitation. Sexual violence may be perpetrated by a family member, partner, acquaintance, caregiver or stranger.

OVERVIEW:

WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE

INTRODUCTION

Women with disabilities experience sexual violence at a disproportionate rate. They are also less likely than other women to identify abuse and seek services from rape crisis centers and others. One of the factors that contributes to the increased risk faced by women with disabilities is the lack of information and education they receive on issues related to healthy relationships, sexuality, sexual violence prevention and body safety.

Risk reduction is a key tenet of sexual violence prevention education. Though stopping the behavior of perpetrators is the only sure way to prevent sexual violence, women can take steps to reduce their risk of sexual violence. However, it is critical to remember, and to tell all women, that sexual violence is not their fault. No matter what they did or did not do, the behavior of forcing sexual contact is always the fault of the perpetrator, not the victim. Keeping that fundamental principle at the forefront, we can provide education about relationships and sexuality geared toward reducing the risk of sexual violence. Women with disabilities need this education as much as all other women and girls.

PRESENTING THE SESSIONS

With a modest amount of planning and preparation, you can provide valuable education for women with disabilities. This type of education, long denied or overlooked, is central to reducing the risk of sexual violence and empowering women with disabilities to report sexual violence when it occurs.

As you review these materials, consider opportunities that you have, or could create, to provide education to women with disabilities, individually or in a group setting. Think about the topic area(s) you will choose as your focus and the activity(ies) that fit into the time frame you have.

The education sessions in this Guide are best used in totality and in the sequence they are listed in the modules. However, we understand time constraints might not make it possible to present each session. You can adapt the presentations to reduce the time commitment.

Each session description includes information about preparation, instructions, usage, objectives, materials and estimated time. Most of the sessions take 30 minutes or less to complete. Some sessions include options for varying the length of the session.

Handouts associated with the education sessions follow the Lessons in Section 3 of this module. We created one “Universal Handout” entitled Sexual Violence and You. This handout should be given to every woman with a disability who participates in any education session. If you have time, review this handout briefly before adjourning the session. Encourage the women to discuss the handout with their significant others, family members, caregivers, staff and others they trust.

WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES AND SEXUALITY

Human sexuality is as unique as each human being and develops in relation to many individual, physical, cultural and social factors. All people have sexual feelings and experience sexual changes across their life span. For many people, coming to fully appreciate their sexuality can be quite a journey. For women with disabilities, the journey can be treacherous.

Women with disabilities have often been deprived of information about relationships and human sexuality. Further, they have frequently been denied the right to sexual expression and/or privacy to engage in sexual behavior alone or with a partner. Finally, few women with disabilities receive information about sexual abuse, sexual assault and other forms of sexual violence. This lack of information and experience increases the risk that women with disabilities will experience sexual violence.

As advocates and providers of services and support, perhaps our greatest responsibility is to listen to the words of women with disabilities whose lives are affected by our responses. When Illinois Imagines asked women with disabilities what they want everyone to know about them and their sexuality, they indicated the following:

- I am a human being, just like everyone else;
- I am a sexual being, just like everyone else;
- I am not a child; I am an adult;
- My sexuality is a human right, not a legal one; and
- I have the right to information, community participation, private sexual expression, boundaries in personal care and relationships and a full life.

Women with disabilities need education about sexuality and sexual violence in order to reduce their risk of being victimized. To achieve this, workers in disability services agencies and rape crisis centers can:

- Provide facts;
- Create a safe place for expression;
- Accept each woman with a disability as a human being with rights and possibilities;
- Empower each woman with a disability to make choices and use her voice on her own behalf; and
- Support each woman with a disability in recognizing and totally embracing herself as capable, strong, sexual, and beautiful.

WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES AND SEXUAL RIGHTS

All women with disabilities have the same rights to sexual expression and safety as all other women in society. These rights include, but are not limited to:

1. The right to explore, identify, define and express their sexuality and sexual orientation without judgment or discrimination.
2. The right to receive education and information about sex, safe and healthy sexual relationships, and reproductive health.
3. The right to make decisions about their sexuality and sexual relationships, including who they choose to relate to sexually and how they choose to relate sexually to that person.
4. The right to privacy and dignity related to dating and sexual intimacy.
5. The right to receive education and information about sexual violence, including harassment, abuse and assault.
6. The right to safety and freedom from sexual harassment, abuse, assault and other forms of sexual violence.
7. The right to receive supportive, trauma-focused, victim-centered response in the case of sexual harassment, abuse, assault or other forms of sexual

violence.

SEXUALITY EDUCATION AS RISK REDUCTION

The belief that people with disabilities are not or should not be sexual leads to a denial of appropriate education. Special education students are often denied sex education and even violence education classes. Similarly, women with disabilities are often denied exposure to social experiences that could provide opportunities for learning and experimenting with relationships and sexuality. Some women with disabilities have not even had preventive gynecological exams because of assumptions made by family members and medical professionals. When education and experience are denied, women with disabilities lack the tools to understand their sexuality and are not empowered to respond to sexual violence.

The women who are most at risk for sexual violence may have little framework for understanding or communicating about any experience of sexual violence. It is important to understand this history of oppression, segregation and denial of basic rights when providing a compassionate, proactive, victim-centered response to women with disabilities who experience sexual violence.

Despite the traditional reluctance on the part of parents, caregivers, and institutional staff to discuss sex with women with disabilities, there are many benefits to providing sexuality education for women with disabilities including:

- Healthier choices
- Increased social skills
- Improved assertiveness
- Greater independence
- Increased ability to take responsibility for sexual behavior
- More appropriate expressions of sexuality
- Less chance of risk-taking behaviors
- Reduced risk of sexual abuse, sexually transmitted infections and unintended pregnancy
- Increased communication by women with disabilities about sexuality, including interests, desires, concerns, fears and experiences of sexual violence
- Increased safety

Women with disabilities need complete and accurate information, education and support. Ideally, education regarding sexuality, relationships and risk reduction should include information about:

- Self-esteem
- Public and private places and behaviors
- Different types of relationships
- Personal safety and protective behaviors
- Right to refuse sexual contact
- Coping with relationship difficulties or rejection
- Appropriate and inappropriate expressions of sexuality
- Sexually transmitted infections (STIs), safer sex, contraception
- Consent
- Saying no and resistance/assertive responses to unwanted sexual attention
- Sexual coercion and violence
- Reporting incidents of sexual violence

PREPARING TO TEACH ABOUT SEXUALITY AND RISK REDUCTION

You may need to examine your own comfort level with this material. You need to make sure that you are comfortable using language related to sexuality and body parts (both correct language and slang terms). You also need to make sure that you know and understand the information. You don't need to be embarrassed or ashamed if you are not clear or are unsure if your information is accurate or complete.

Most of us are not accustomed to speaking openly about body parts, sexual acts, sexual violence and other aspects of a risk reduction program. But take the time and opportunity to educate yourself. It is also helpful to discuss the material with someone else or practice doing the activities prior to using them. You can also ask someone else to assist in facilitating the information and session.

Many women with disabilities may never have had an opportunity to talk openly about these topics. Therefore, it is critical to create a safe, private, comfortable environment for education sessions.

ESSENTIAL FOR EVERY EDUCATION SESSION

1. Privacy – Privacy is critical. Make sure that you hold these discussions in a location where privacy is ensured. It is best to avoid areas of traffic flow or intrusions. A space behind closed doors is preferred. Inform others that a private meeting is being held and there are to be no interruptions if possible.

2. Confidentiality – Confidentiality is also paramount. Women with disabilities need to know that anything that they share in the group will not be shared or discussed elsewhere. State the rule clearly (“We don’t repeat what other people say outside of this room.”) at the beginning of each discussion. Ask group members to affirm this agreement.

3. Ground Rules – Start every session by setting ground rules, like “Don’t interrupt” and “Listen to the person talking.” It can be helpful to have the ground rules on a poster in the room as a reminder. Remind the group often that we want to make this a safe place for people to ask questions, share stories and discuss any issues they may have.

4. Disclosures – Prepare for the possibility that this material may be difficult and emotional for some individuals. Prepare yourself for the possibility of a disclosure of sexual harm, and anticipate your response when this occurs. If you are a required reporter, disclose this to the audience. Discuss your required reporting obligations and the impact that will have on a disclosure. It may be helpful to have another support person, such as a rape crisis center prevention educator available if someone needs individual attention and support. It is also beneficial to have a rape crisis center prevention educator involved in the education program, as they are not required reporters.

TEACHING TIPS

1. **Background** – Ask women in your education program if they have received any sex education before. They may have little or no knowledge about sexual issues, and what they know may have come from misinformed peers. You need to know this to tailor your sessions to the audience.
2. **Repeat** – Repeat the same concept from a few different angles to maximize the potential for understanding. Each lesson should begin with a review of any previous lesson(s).
3. **Examples** – Provide concrete examples. Some women with cognitive disabilities may not easily comprehend abstract concepts (e.g., pregnancy results in having a baby nine months later). Examples need to be concrete, in the present and as tangible as possible. Using pictures and videos is helpful.
4. **Pacing** – Pace the education program. Go slowly and don't overload the women with information. Schedule enough time to process the information, answer questions and have discussions. You can also leave a few days between lessons so that the women have time to think about the information.
5. **Participation** – In teaching women with disabilities, it is important to provide lots of opportunities for them to make choices and to help facilitate portions of the class. For example, ask for volunteers to write on the flip chart or to read scenarios. They may have limited choice and power in their lives, and these sessions are a perfect setting to empower them to use their talents.
6. **Context** – Remember that context is everything. Consider how the information you are providing fits into the lives of group members. Discuss social situations as examples.

KEY MESSAGES

SEXUALITY

Appreciate that all women are sexual, and they **may express their sexuality** in various ways. Talking about sex does not encourage them to try it. Rather, education can make women more comfortable and informed on the subject.

RISK

Recognize that women with disabilities are at a **greater risk for sexual violence**, because they often have to depend on others and have been conditioned to place total trust in others.

No
Teach the right to say no. Women with disabilities have been conditioned to be overly compliant with the wishes of others. They are accustomed to taking direction from others and obeying others. They need to know it is okay to say no if they are uncomfortable, nervous or scared.

PRIVACY
Acknowledge that women with disabilities may have **few opportunities for sexual expression** due to a lack of privacy. Explore ways that they can request and access private space for sexual expression, alone or with a partner.

DIVERSITY
Recognize that women with disabilities represent the **same diversity of sexual identity and orientation** as the general population. In education sessions, acknowledge that some women with disabilities may choose female dating partners or have questions about sexual orientation and identity they would like to explore.

THE NEXT STEP
Think about how you can collaborate to plan and conduct these education sessions. Disability service agencies and rape crisis centers working together will present the most effective, comprehensive education program to inform and empower women with disabilities. Talk with colleagues in your agency and partner agencies in the community to plan a coherent, comprehensive education program for women with disabilities.

EDUCATION SESSIONS

This Guide describes education sessions that disability service providers and rape crisis center workers can use to teach women with disabilities about sexuality and sexual violence risk reduction. For background information and additional educational materials, see the Resources Section in this module.

LESSONS

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP

| | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------|------------|
| ○ What are Relationships? | 30 minutes | Page 16-19 |
| ○ Thumbs Up/Thumbs Down | 30 minutes | Page 20-21 |
| ○ Who Would You Date? | 15 minutes | Page 22 |
| ○ Dating Relationships | 45 minutes | Page 23-25 |
| ○ Starting a New Dating Relationship | 30 minutes | Page 26-29 |

HEALTHY SEXUALITY

| | | |
|----------------------------------|------------|------------|
| ○ Knowing our Bodies | 30 minutes | Page 32-33 |
| ○ Public and Private Behavior | 20 minutes | Page 34 |
| ○ Sexuality: Feeling and Actions | 20 minutes | Page 35 |
| ○ Consent: The Yes/No Exercise | 20 minutes | Page 36 |

SEXUAL VIOLENCE RISK REDUCTION

| | | |
|----------------------------|------------|------------|
| ○ Our Rights, Right Now | 30 minutes | Page 40-41 |
| ○ What is Sexual Violence? | 30 minutes | Page 42-44 |
| ○ Boundaries | 30 minutes | Page 45-46 |
| ○ Consent | 30 minutes | Page 47-49 |
| ○ Red Light/Green Light | 30 minutes | Page 50-51 |

SAFETY AND SUPPORT: HOW TO GET HELP

| | | |
|----------------------------|------------|------------|
| ○ Ways to Reduce Risk | 15 minutes | Page 54-55 |
| ○ Safe People, Safe Places | 30 minutes | Page 56-57 |
| ○ Design a Support Person | 30 minutes | Page 58-59 |
| ○ Safety Planning | 20 minutes | Page 60-61 |
| ○ Empowerment Graffiti | 30 minutes | Page 62 |

Handouts

| | |
|---|-----------|
| ○ Relationship Rights | #1 |
| ○ Green Flags | #2 |
| ○ Red Flags | #3 |
| ○ Relationship Quiz | #4 |
| ○ Three Safety Rules | #5 |
| ○ 5 Tips to Reduce Risk of Sexual Abuse | #6 |
| ○ Design a Support Person | #7 |
| ○ Sexual Violence and You | Universal |

EDUCATION SESSIONS: HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

The following education sessions provide a foundation to help women with disabilities identify characteristics of healthy relationships. The sessions address the basic elements of relationships. It is important to provide this baseline information, because often women with disabilities have not been educated about the qualities of healthy and unhealthy relationships. The sessions help reinforce the concept that everyone is entitled to safety in their relationships with others.

LESSON 1: WHAT ARE RELATIONSHIPS?

USE: This is a beginning level session

TIME: 30 minutes

OBJECTIVES:

- To define relationships and identify relationships in participants' lives.
- To identify characteristics of healthy relationships

MATERIALS:

- Flip chart and markers
- Masking tape

PREPARATION:

- Before the session begins, use five pages of the flip chart to list each type of relationship on a different page: Strangers, Acquaintances, Friends, Family Members and Intimate Partners. Tape these five pages on the wall around the room.
- Review Lesson

THE LESSON:

Explain the following: **We all have different types of relationships in our lives: Strangers, Acquaintances, Friends, Family Members and Intimate Partners.** Start with Strangers, and ask the group to define Stranger. Write answers on that flip chart page. Move to each flip chart page and do the same. The responses should include the following key concepts; you may need to prompt the women with questions or suggestions.

1. Stranger

- someone you may have just met and know little or nothing about
- someone you have never met before (someone you pass on the street)

2. Acquaintance

- someone you know, but not well
- someone you do not spend personal time with
- someone you do not share personal feelings with
- someone you have not known for very long
- examples can include the checkout person at the grocery store, the van driver, etc.

3. Friend

- someone you like to spend time with
- someone you can share personal feelings with
- someone who likes to help you
- someone who likes you for who you are, not what you have
- someone you have known for a long time
- someone who cares about your preferences and doesn't try to talk you into something you don't want to do

Also, discuss in more detail the various names for friends and the differences between what these names mean. Examples include:

Best friend (or close friend): a person(s) with whom someone shares extremely strong interpersonal ties as a friend.

Acquaintance: a friend, but sharing of emotional ties isn't present. An example would be a coworker with whom you enjoy eating lunch, but would not look to for emotional support.

Soul mate: the name given to someone who is considered the ultimate, true, and eternal half of the other's soul, in which the two are now and forever meant to be together.

Internet friendship: a form of friendship or romance which takes place over the internet.

Casual Relationship or "friends with benefits": the sexual or near-sexual and

emotional relationship between two people who don't expect or demand to share a formal romantic relationship.

Cross-sex friendship: is one that is defined by a person having a friend of the opposite sex: a male who has a female friend, or a female who has a male friend.

Roommate: a person who shares a room or apartment (flat) with another person and does not share a familial or romantic relationship.

4. Family Members

- someone who is related to you
- someone who you grew up with
- someone you live with
- someone who helps look out for your needs

Family members include: mother, father, brother, sister, cousin, aunt, uncle, grandmother, grandfather, nephew, nieces, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, and other relatives.

5. Intimate Partners (Boyfriend/Girlfriend/Husband/Wife)

- someone who you are intimate with
- someone who you trust and who trusts you
- someone you are attracted to and is attracted to you
- someone you share personal feelings with
- someone who cares about your preferences and doesn't try to talk you into something you don't want to do

Now go around to each sheet on the wall and ask participants to identify each type of relationship in their lives by describing the relationship and sharing the person's name (if applicable). (For example, "James is my family because he married my mom." Or "Larry is my intimate partner because we kiss and talk about our feelings." Or "Mary is my friend because we watch movies together.")

Now ask the group what it means to have a healthy relationship with someone. Ask them to describe a healthy relationship. Write responses on another flip chart page. Answers may include:

- They respect you
- They love you
- They take care of you
- They protect you
- They spend time with you
- They listen to you

“One of the joys of reading is the ability to plug into the shared wisdom of mankind.”

Ishmael Reed

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- They care about you
- They are there for you when you need them

Note that their descriptions of a healthy relationship indicate that when you have a healthy relationship with someone, he/she does not hurt your body (rub hand along your arm as you say this) and he/she does not hurt your feelings or make you feel bad (rub your heart as you say this). When you are in a good relationship with someone they help you stay safe and stay away from any risk of harm. Stress this point by asking: “If you have a good relationship with someone, do they hurt your body? Do they hurt your feelings? Do they make you feel bad or good? Do they help keep you safe or put you at risk of harm? ”

Close by reminding the group members that we all have relationships, and we deserve respect from the people in relationships with us.

(Source: Adapted from PERSONAL SPACE: A Violence Prevention Program for Women developed by The Arc of Maryland, in partnership with The Arc of Southern Maryland and The Arc of the United States)

LESSON 2: THUMBS UP/THUMBS DOWN

USE: This is a beginning level session

TIME: 30 minutes

OBJECTIVE:

- To distinguish between healthy and unhealthy relationships

MATERIALS:

- Flip chart and markers
- Masking tape
- Handout #1: Relationship Rights

PREPARATION:

- Copy Handout #1 for each participant
- Review Lesson

THE LESSON:

Talk to the participants about some of the qualities of safe, healthy relationships. You may want to have these on a sign or write them on a flip chart. The responses should include:

- People don't hurt your feelings or your body.
- People care about you.
- People respect you.
- People treat you like you are valuable.
- People make you feel good, not bad.
- People can be trusted.
- People treat you like an adult.
- People are honest with you, and you can be honest with them.
- People don't lie to you or play tricks on you.
- People help you stay safe and do not put you at risk of harm.

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Tell the participants that people do things in relationships that are both healthy and unhealthy. Slowly read the statements below. After reading each statement, ask the group to vote, using their thumbs, on whether the behavior in each statement is healthy (thumbs up) or unhealthy (thumbs down).

- A friend shares her personal feelings with you.
- Someone lies to you.
- A close friend gives you a back massage.
- A boyfriend hits you.
- A friend keeps calling you “stupid.”
- A family member throws a birthday party for you.
- Someone tells you they are proud of you.
- A boyfriend pressures you to have sex.
- A friend tells someone else a secret you shared with her/him.
- Someone keeps borrowing money from you and never pays it back.
- Your friend asks you to steal something from a store.
- A friend tells you that you look nice today.

Distribute the Relationship Rights handout (Handout #1) and remind the group that they each have rights in every relationship:

- You have the right to be respected.
- You have the right to be treated and spoken to like an adult.
- You have the right to be treated in a caring way.
- You have the right to be treated as a valuable person.

(Source: Adapted from PERSONAL SPACE: A Violence Prevention Program for Women developed by The Arc of Maryland, in partnership with The Arc of Southern Maryland and The Arc of the United States)

LESSON 3: WHO WOULD YOU DATE?

USE: Beginning level session

TIME: 15 minutes

OBJECTIVES:

- To define qualities in a healthy dating partner

MATERIALS:

- Handout #2: Green Flags
- Handout #3: Red Flags

PREPARATION:

- Copy Handouts #2 and #3.
- Review Lesson

THE LESSON

Pass out Handout #2, Green Flags to the participants. Read the list of characteristics. Ask the participants if these qualities sound like what they would want in a date. Does this list describe a healthy dating partner?

Next, pass out Handout #3, Red Flags. Ask the participants for feedback about this list. Does this list describe someone they want to date? Why not? Write their comments on the flip chart. Make sure the list includes items like; “this is someone who might hurt you,” and “it might not be safe to date this person.” Remind the group to be aware of red flag behavior and to trust their own instincts and judgment.

Tell the group that trust and communication are two very important elements in a relationship especially if the relationship becomes sexual.

Suggest that it is a good idea to ask the following questions when you are starting a relationship:

- Do I trust this person to respect what I do and don't want to do?
- How comfortable do I feel talking with them about safe sex and contraception?
- How comfortable am I saying no to them?

LESSON 4: DATING RELATIONSHIPS

USE: This is an advanced level session that should follow a session on healthy relationships such as lessons #1, #2 and #3 in this Section. This can be divided into several smaller sessions as needed.

TIME: 45 minutes

OBJECTIVES:

- To define goals of relationships
- To identify components of healthy dating relationships

MATERIALS:

- Flip chart, markers and masking tape
- Handout #4: Relationship Quiz

PREPARATION:

- Copy Handout #4 for each participant.
- Prepare two flip chart pages. One should have the heading “Healthy Relationships.” Another should have the heading “Respect.”
- Review Lesson

THE LESSON:

Explain to the group: People want different things from a relationship. Some want a casual relationship, some want romance, some want sex and others want someone to be close to. It can take time to find someone who wants the same things you do. Plus, sometimes there are pressures from family and friends about relationships. For example, friends may want you to like somebody that you don't like, or families may not want you to be in a relationship at all. With all these pressures, it's hard to work out what you want. Sometimes you might find yourself just going along with what other people want. Remind the group that it is okay to take your time at the start of any relationship to figure out what you want. It can help to ask yourself questions.

- What do I want from a relationship?
- What don't I want?
- What qualities do I like in a person?
- What don't I like?

- Ask the group to brainstorm some qualities of healthy relationships. Write these on the flip chart. Make sure some of the following are included.
 - You have fun together.
 - You both feel able to be yourself.
 - You can have different opinions and interests.
 - You can listen to each other.
 - You can both compromise, say sorry, and talk about disagreements.
 - You don't have to spend all your time together but can also spend time with others.
 - You feel safe and comfortable.

Tell the group that a healthy relationship is based on **RESPECT**. Ask the group to brainstorm what they think respect looks like in a relationship. Write these on the flip chart. Make sure some of the following are included.

- You are free to say no to things you don't want to do.
- You feel safe and never scared.
- You feel free to see other friends and family when you want.
- You feel free to express your opinions and beliefs.
- You feel free to change your mind.
- You feel good about yourself.
- You feel supported to make your own decisions.

- You feel free to end the relationship if you want.

Invite the group to think about how they feel in their relationships/ friendships. Tell them that if they don't always feel like this, maybe they are not being treated with respect. Remind the group members that they each deserve to be treated with respect. How do you know if you are being treated with respect? Distribute the Relationship Quiz (Handout #4) to the participants.

Ask them to think of their boyfriend or girlfriend when doing this quiz. If they say they do not have a boyfriend/girlfriend, ask them to think about a previous relationship or a friendship. Tell them that you will read each statement to them. After you read each one, ask them to circle the number next to the statement if the statement applies to them. Encourage them to be honest, and remind them that nobody but them will see this. If they prefer, they can take the quiz home and do it later by themselves or with someone else.

Tell the group that the statements in italics are signs of love and respect. If you are being treated with respect, you should have circled all of these. If you have circled answers in bold, these are signs that you are not being treated with respect. You may want to consider talking to someone about this relationship and seeking help. Remember, if someone is mistreating you, it is not your fault. You deserve to be treated with respect and dignity.

LESSON 5: STARTING A NEW DATING RELATIONSHIP

USE: This is an advanced session that should follow a session on healthy relationships and general sexuality, like those offered in Lesson #1, #2 and #3 in this section.

TIME: 30 minutes

OBJECTIVES:

- To explore options for beginning new dating relationships
- To promote safety in establishing new dating relationships

MATERIALS: None

PREPARATION:

- Review Lesson

THE LESSON:

Tell the group members that this discussion is about getting involved in new dating relationships. Explain the following:

Sometimes we meet someone we like and we both want to spend more time together. There is no best way or best time to begin dating. Every person will be ready to start a dating relationship at a different time. The most important thing is that, when you decide to start a new dating relationship, it should be because you care about someone and not because you feel like you have to have a boyfriend or girlfriend, or because someone else wants you to have one. A dating relationship is a special chance to get to know someone, share your thoughts and feelings with each other, and do activities together.

Healthy dating relationships should have the same elements as healthy friendships, such as good communication, honesty and respect. Dating relationships are different because they may include physical affection, like hugging, kissing, or holding hands. As with all relationships, it may be tempting at first for you to spend all of your time with your new partner. But making special time to spend together and apart means that you will be able to work on having a healthy relationship with the person you are dating and with other people in your life, like your friends and family.

You should NEVER feel pressured to do something that you don't want to do. Your relationship partner should always respect your right to say no to anything that makes you feel uncomfortable. It is important that you are direct with each other about your values and your limits. By talking about how each of you feel, you may avoid situations where you feel pressured into making a decision on the spot about something important.

Now tell the group that we will discuss an example of a dating situation and see if we can come up with ideas for starting a healthy, safe relationship. Read the example below:

Anna and Jamal like each other. They met a few weeks ago on a group outing. They want to get to know each other and spend time together, but don't know what to do next.

Ask the group for ideas on how Anna and Jamal could start a relationship in a safe and healthy way. Write their ideas on the flip chart. Be sure that the tips below are included on the list:

- **Get to know a person** by talking on the phone or at school or work before you go out with them for the first time.

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- **Go out with a group of friends to a public place** the first few times you are spending time together. It is safer in a crowd than alone, and it is good for them to meet your friends. You may also be more comfortable in a group setting until you know the person better.
- **Plan fun, public activities** alone with the other person, like going to the movies, a picnic, the mall or a walk. It is safer to be in public with someone you don't know well until you are sure this person can be trusted.
- **Be clear with the other person** about what you feel comfortable doing and what makes you nervous or scared. Tell them any rules you have about going out, like what time you should be home and who they should meet.
- **Introduce them to at least one friend or family member** so they know that you have other people in your life who care about you and will protect you if anybody treats you badly. It is also a good way to get a second opinion on this new person in your life. It is healthy to share your relationships with others.
- **Let at least one other person know when you are with this person, where you will go, and when you will return.**

Tell the group that you now want to talk about sex as part of a healthy relationship. Having a good relationship doesn't mean you have to have sex. **But whatever you do, whether it is kissing, touching, or having sex, it should always be something that you both want to do.** Use flip chart notes to reinforce the following points.

Explain that sex is meant to be:

- something you decide to do when you're ready;
- something that makes you both feel good;
- something you can interrupt or stop; and
- safe (because you're prepared with condoms to protect you from sexually transmitted infections and unwanted pregnancy).

Now explain that sex is not meant to be:

- the only way to prove that you love someone;
- something you feel pressured or forced into;

- something you do because “everyone else is doing it;”
- something that makes you feel used; or
- something you do to get something.

Remember, if you’ve been kissing or touching but don’t want to go any further, that’s okay. Kissing is not a promise to do more. Explain that someone who loves you should respect your right to decide if and when to have sex.

Ask the group for ideas about how to say no. Give an example: You could say “*I do love you but I don’t feel ready to have sex yet.*”

Close by reminding the group members that dating relationships can be a fun and rewarding part of their life.

(Source: Adapted from Family Net Works, www.family-networks.org/relationships.cfm)

EDUCATION SESSIONS: HEALTHY SEXUALITY

The following education sessions provide basic knowledge women with disabilities need when thinking about or engaging in healthy sexual activities with a partner. This information prepares women to understand healthy sexuality and sexual behavior. This will enable them to identify sexual behavior they are comfortable with and to be able to respond to and report sexual violence. A cornerstone of sexual violence prevention education for women with disabilities is the recognition that they have the right to engage in sexual activity. Far too often, information on how to explore and express their sexuality in safe, positive ways has been kept from women with disabilities. Yet, this information is important to help women with disabilities understand sexual violence and the difference between healthy sexuality and sexual violence.

LESSON 1: KNOWING OUR BODIES

USE: This is a beginning level session

TIME: 30 minutes

OBJECTIVES:

- To identify different body parts of men and women
- To identify private body parts

MATERIALS:

Anatomically correct posters. These can be purchased, or you can draw them on flip chart pages. Anatomically correct models can be substituted. See the resources

section at the end of this module.

PREPARATION:

- Review Lesson

THE LESSON:

Post large anatomically correct posters of a naked man and woman, with removable bathing suits covering breast and genitals.

Use large, anatomically correct posters of a man and woman in bathing suits to discuss body parts. Begin by pointing to unclothed areas on the female's body and asking the names for the body parts. When the group has named most of the body parts of the woman, remove her bathing suit and ask for some names of these body parts. Ask them if they have ever heard these body parts called other names. If the group is hesitant, offer some slang terms to make participants feel comfortable in using slang themselves.

Talk about the difference between public language that you use around most people and private language that you may use with your closest friends or family. Note that it is important to know correct terms for body parts. Bring participants back to using appropriate public language.

Follow the same process for the male figure.

When this is completed, ask participants which parts are private. When participants identify private areas of the body, place the Velcro bathing suits back on the figures. Ask when it is okay for someone to touch your private parts. Possible answers include:

- Doctor visits
- When someone has your permission to assist you with bathing, dressing and/or toileting
- When you give permission for someone to touch you

Close by reminding group members about public and private parts and that nobody should ever touch their private parts without their permission.

(Source: Adapted from PERSONAL SPACE: A Violence Prevention Program for Women developed by The Arc of Maryland, in partnership with The Arc of Southern Maryland and The Arc of the United States)

LESSON 2: PUBLIC AND PRIVATE BEHAVIOR

OUR RIGHTS, right now

USE: This is a beginning level session

TIME: 20 minutes

OBJECTIVE: To distinguish public and private behavior

MATERIALS: 3x5 index cards

PREPARATION:

- Using 3x5 index cards, make a card that has “PUBLIC” and a card that has “PRIVATE” for each participant. To make this activity more accessible to women

“ I say if it’s going to be done, let’s do it. Let’s not put it in the hands of fate. Let’s not put it in the hands of someone who doesn’t know me. I know me best. Then take a breath and go ahead. ”

Anita Baker

who may not read, use two different color cards (e.g., red for private and green



NOTES:

NOTES: