Presenter: Shanya Luther

- has been studying, writing, speaking, and coaching about intimacy and sexuality for more than twelve years
- owns and operates *Among Friends*; offering social-sexual behavior consultation across Oregon to individuals experiencing developmental disabilities and neurological variations
- also runs a private practice as a Coach specializing in conscious touch, gender and sexual identity, and emotional intimacy.
The Goal of Our Work

Helping keep someone’s behavior:
- Safe
- Healthy
- Legal
- Appropriate

Supporting the WHOLE person!!!
Encouraging a FULL human experience.
Improving QUALITY of life.
Why Social-Sexual Supports are critical...

- Risk of Abuse – sexual AND other forms
- Risk of Criminal Victimization or Perpetration
- Health and Safety
- Family Planning
- Legal Rights and Responsibilities
- Quality of Life
Potential Consequences of Sexual Perpetration AND Victimization

- Restriction of Rights
- Violation of Others’ Rights
- Social Stigmatization / Family Shunning
- Confusion, Shame, Embarrassment
- Police / Legal Actions
- Possible Criminal Record and Identification as Sex Offender or Sex Worker
- Loss of Services
You Should Know...

“Sex” ≠ All Sexual Activities ≠ Sexuality
Aspects of Human Sexuality

- Biological / Physiological
- Criminal
- Sociological
- Emotional
- Spiritual and Religious
Topics Related to Human Sexuality

- Self Esteem, Feeling Accepted and Loved
- Body Parts, Personal Hygiene, Body Image
- Consensual Touch, Public vs. Private
- Setting Boundaries, Healthy Relationships
- Meeting People, Making Friends, Dating
- Sexual Development and Health, Being Sexual, Alternatives to Sex, Safer Sex
- Getting Married, Parenting, Breaking Up
- Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity
“Problem” Behaviors

If someone is engaging in sexualized behaviors which are... **Unsafe, Unhealthy, Illegal, Inappropriate** ...they are likely trying to communicate something and/or get a need met.

Our job is to discern what their need is and how to help them get it met with a safe, healthy, legal, or appropriate **replacement behavior**.
Contributing Issues

- Trauma and Abuse (need to be addressed in a therapeutic setting such as: art, play, sand tray, or music therapy)
- Puberty vs. Adolescence
- Religious values and norms
- Social pressures / Media representations
- Questions of Gender Identity / Sexual Orientation / Relationship Model(s)
Please Remember...

- Recognize others will have differing sexual values, choices, and ideas.
- After someone turns 18 years old, they most likely have the same rights you do; guardianship has limits.
- Just because someone else doesn’t like a behavior, doesn’t make it wrong.
New Social-Sexual Evaluation Tool

Just because it’s legal / natural doesn’t mean it’s safe, healthy, or appropriate.

Among Friends has developed a new evaluation tool to assess the “big picture” of a person’s sexuality and sexual risk and to offer suggestions for how best to support someone’s sexual health and development while limiting or reducing risk.
Prevention CANNOT be over-emphasized!!

Long before there are problem behaviors, we can help prevent causes by managing known needs:

- Address Skin Hunger
- Promote Emotional Intimacy
- Develop a Sense of Belonging and Purpose … Feeling “Needed and Necessary”
- The desire to “be like everyone else”
A Call to Action

Please take this information and do something with it!

- Discuss it with your family / staff
- Invite us to present for your organization
- Start a dialogue about how to change your organization’s policies and procedures to better offer social-sexual supports
- Contact the Oregon Developmental Disabilities Coalition and advocate for addressing sexuality proactively
Contact Information:

Among Friends
Social-Sexual Support Services

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