



Tips and Resources for Supporting Healthy Relationships & Sexuality

Information = Protective Factor

- **Ability to make informed decisions** – to self-advocate about what's right or not right for them
- **Sex ed leads to better choices** – delayed intercourse for teens, safer sex practices
- **Victim empowerment** – If bad things happen, they know how to get help and seek justice after the fact.

What If We Don't Talk About Relationships & Sexuality?

- Information from unreliable/harmful sources
 - Peers, porn, predators
- More vulnerable to being taken advantage, groomed, victimized
 - Low standards for partners, mistaking abuse for love, easily manipulated
- Risk of involvement with criminal legal system
- Under-age partners, child porn, transactional sex



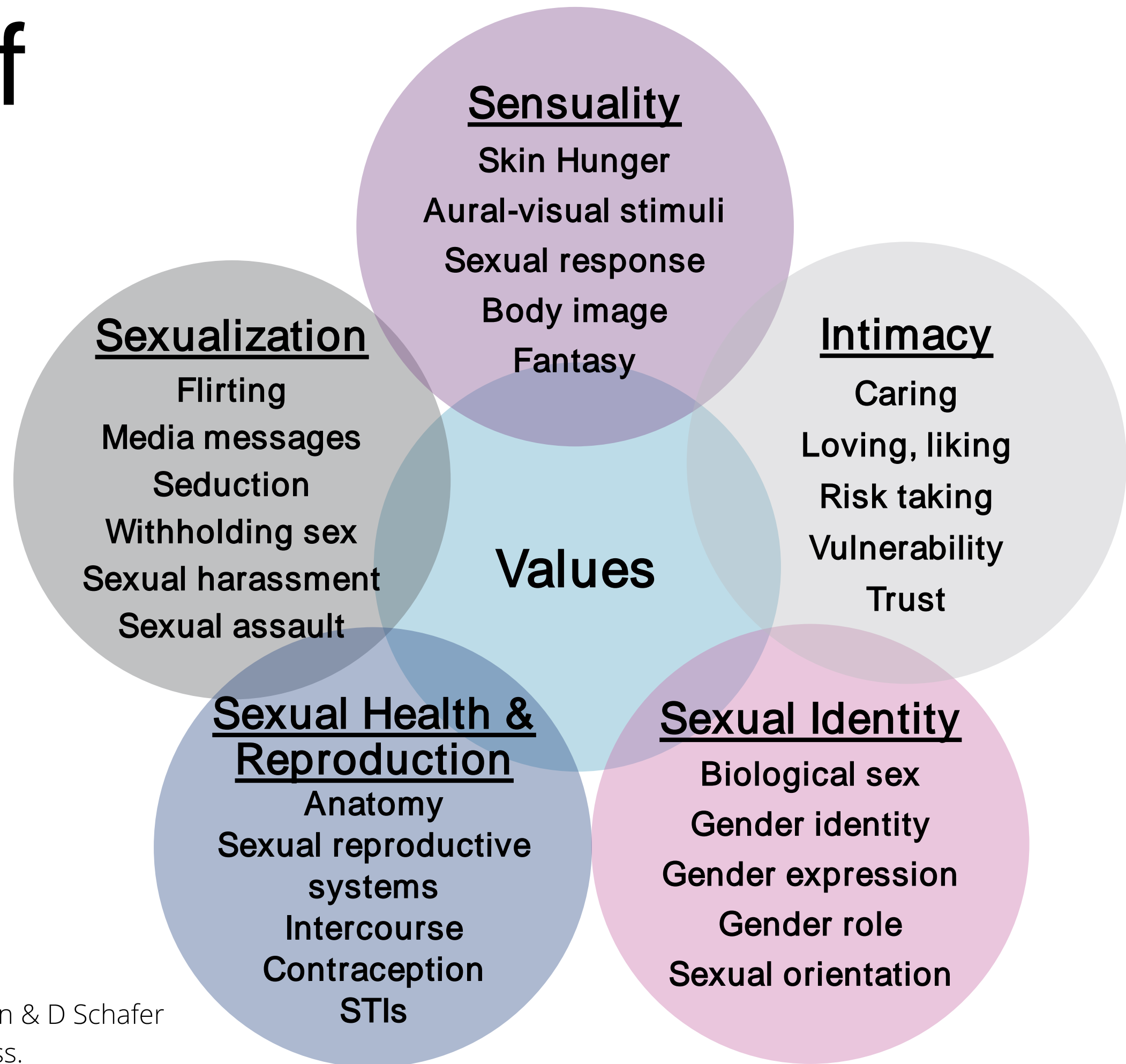
Baseline Information

- Child and youth sexual development stages
- Adolescent brain development
- Impacts of trauma
- Factual sexual health messages
- Healthy vs. Unhealthy relationship dynamics
- Online trainings, resources & tips sheets



5 Circles of Sexuality

A wholistic model of sexuality that encompasses all aspects of being and is influenced by the individual, family, culture, spirituality, science, profession, institutions, law, and politics.



Sexual Developmental Stages

Tweens / Early Adolescents

GROWTH	COGNITION	PSYCHOLOGICAL SELF AND SELF-PERCEPTION	FAMILY/ CAREGIVER RELATIONSHIP	PEERS	SEXUALITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secondary sexual characteristics appear • Voice changes and body odor increases • Growth rapidly accelerating • Menstruation may begin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concrete thought dominant • Less able to perceive long-range implications of current decisions and acts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preoccupation with rapid body change • Former body image disrupted • Concerned with privacy • Frequent mood swings • Very self-focused 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defining boundaries with strong dependency desires/needs while trying to detach • Conflicts may occur but relate to minor issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeks peer affiliation to counter instability generated by rapid change • Compares own normality and acceptance with same sex/age mates • Same-sex friends and group activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-exploration and evaluation • Limited dating, limited intimacy • Sexual fantasies common • Masturbation common • Sexual activity less common • Often highly content with nonsexual interactions such as flirting/texting/ social media contact with peers

Adapted with permission from M. Simmons, J. Shalwitz, S. Pollock, A. Young (2003). Adolescent Health Care 101: The Basics. San Francisco, CA: Adolescent Health Working Group

Sexual Developmental Stages

Tweens / Early Adolescents

TWEENS/EARLY ADOLESCENTS

Conversation Starters:

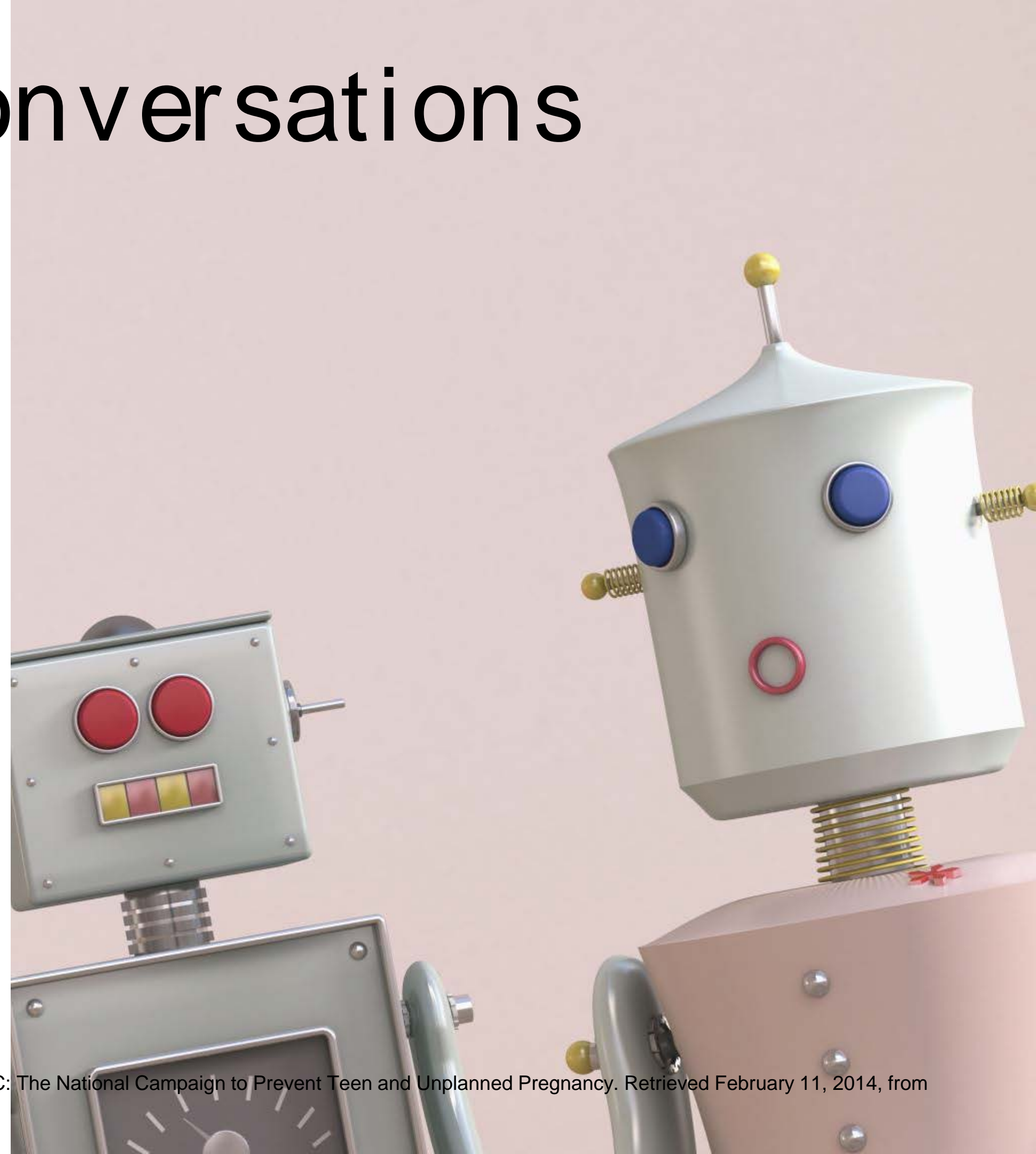
Related to their right to getting SRH information	<i>Everyone in foster care has certain rights- rights to an education, food, a safe place to live, and other rights too. You also have health rights, and as you get close to being a teenager (or "now that you are a teenager") I want to talk with you about your reproductive and sexual health rights, which can be very important as you get older. Lots of times young people have questions about how their bodies grow and change, relationships and sex, how people get pregnant, and how to prevent getting pregnant. Have you had classes at school about these things? I want to make sure if you need anything – information or help getting any services, that you know you can talk to me and I will help you.</i>
Related to their right to consent and confidentiality	<i>If you are thinking about having sex or are already having sex, you can go to a doctor or clinic for a pregnancy test or for birth control, and you can get this care on your own without asking permission from your foster parent, parent, group home staff, case worker, or court. If you go to a doctor or clinic, the things you talk about that have to do with sex, pregnancy, and birth control are between you and the doctor or clinic staff—it is what we call 'confidential.'</i>

Parent/Caregiver Conversations Make a Difference

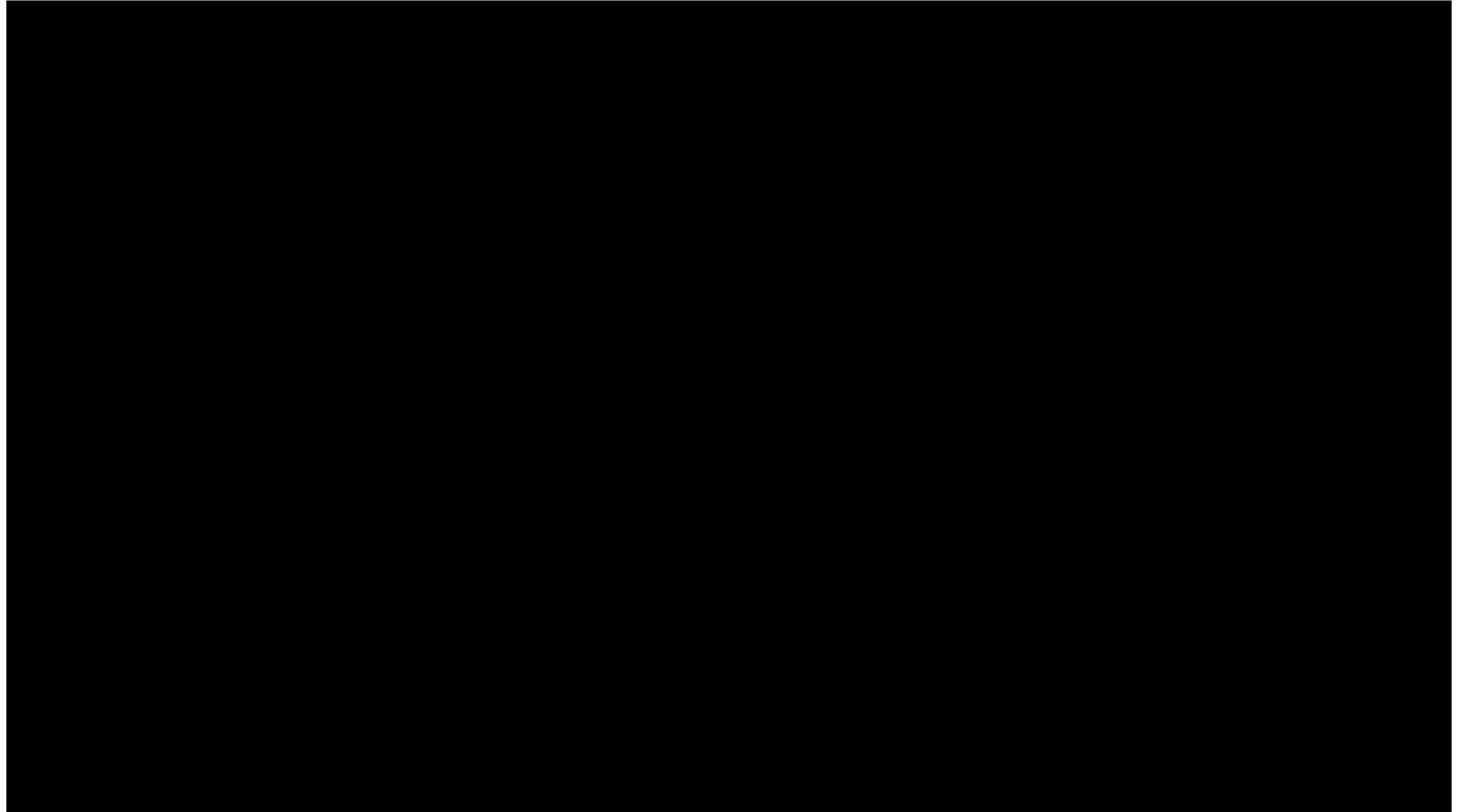
Parents have the greatest influence over youth's decisions about sex – more than friends, siblings, or the media

Factors that impact teen sexual behavior

- What is said
- How it is said
- How often it is said
- How much youth feel cared for and understood by their parent/caregiver

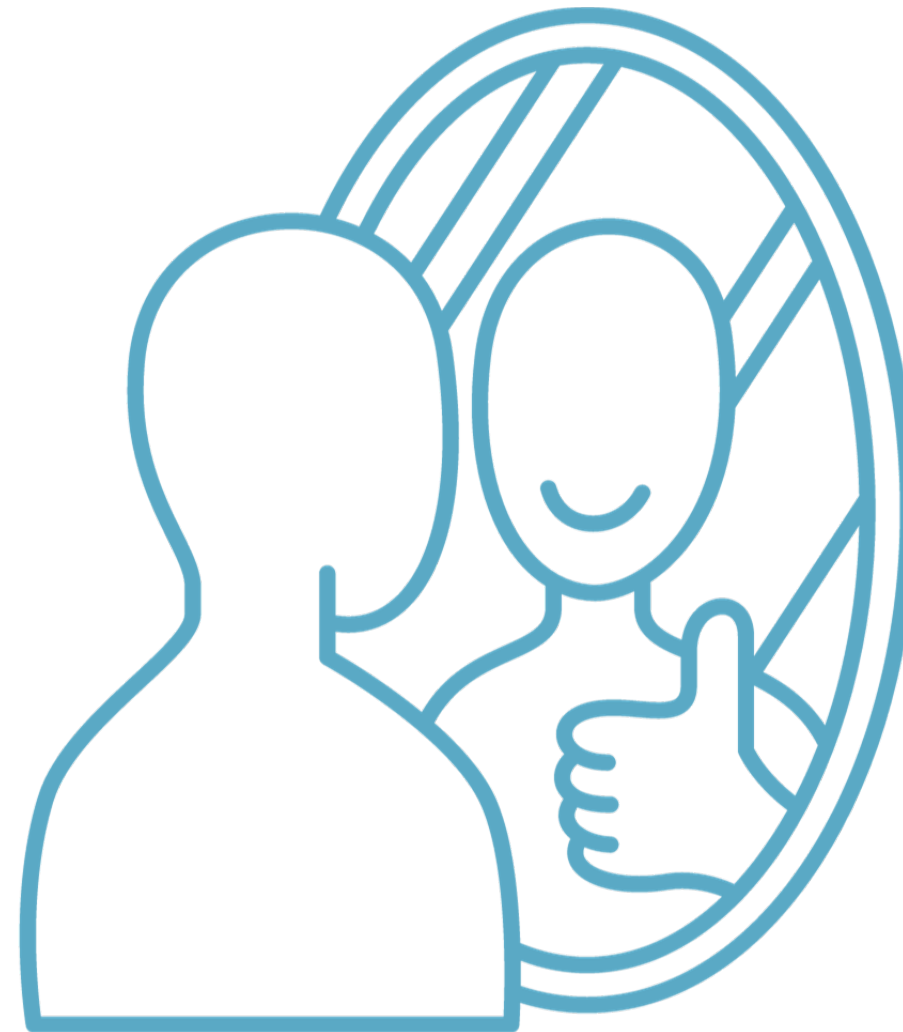


W H A T T E E N S W A N T



Self Reflection Check In

POLL



Attitudes, Beliefs and Values

- Subjective judgements about what is and what is not appropriate conduct for young people
- Shape the messages we give to our youth about sexuality
- It's okay to have differing values, and to discuss them respectfully
- ***The needs, health and wellbeing of our youth come before our own attitudes, beliefs and values***
- Seek support, if needed, to help navigate

What is Said

Messages to Avoid:

- Imposing your personal values
- Self-disclosures – Sharing explicit or inappropriate details from your past
- Focusing only on the consequences of risky sexual behavior
- Over-reacting, catastrophizing, or jumping to conclusions



Messages to Uplift:

- Their right develop and live by their own values
- They will be supported in their healing journey
- Sex-positive messages: Sexuality is an important, life-affirming aspect of personhood
- Bodies are amazing
- Relationships and sexuality are to be treated carefully & responsibly
- Their voice is important

How it is Said

- **Be open, approachable and available**
- **Establish yourself as a resource for honest, accurate, straightforward information**
- **Use respectful, affirming language**
 - Correct, straightforward terminology for anatomy and sexuality
 - Avoid euphemisms, ambiguity, crass terms
 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0_FnVMIE1ig
- *“That’s a great question. I’m so glad you asked. You’re not alone in wondering about that.”*
- *“I don’t know a lot about that, but I can find out.”*
- *“Let’s get some information on that.”*
- *“I’m here whenever you want to discuss these things.”*

How Often it is Said

- . Have frequent conversations, at natural intervals
- . Start small, continue over time, let conversations build on each other
- . Check in about mutually convenient time and place for bigger discussions
- . It is never too early or too late to start conversations about relationships and sexuality.

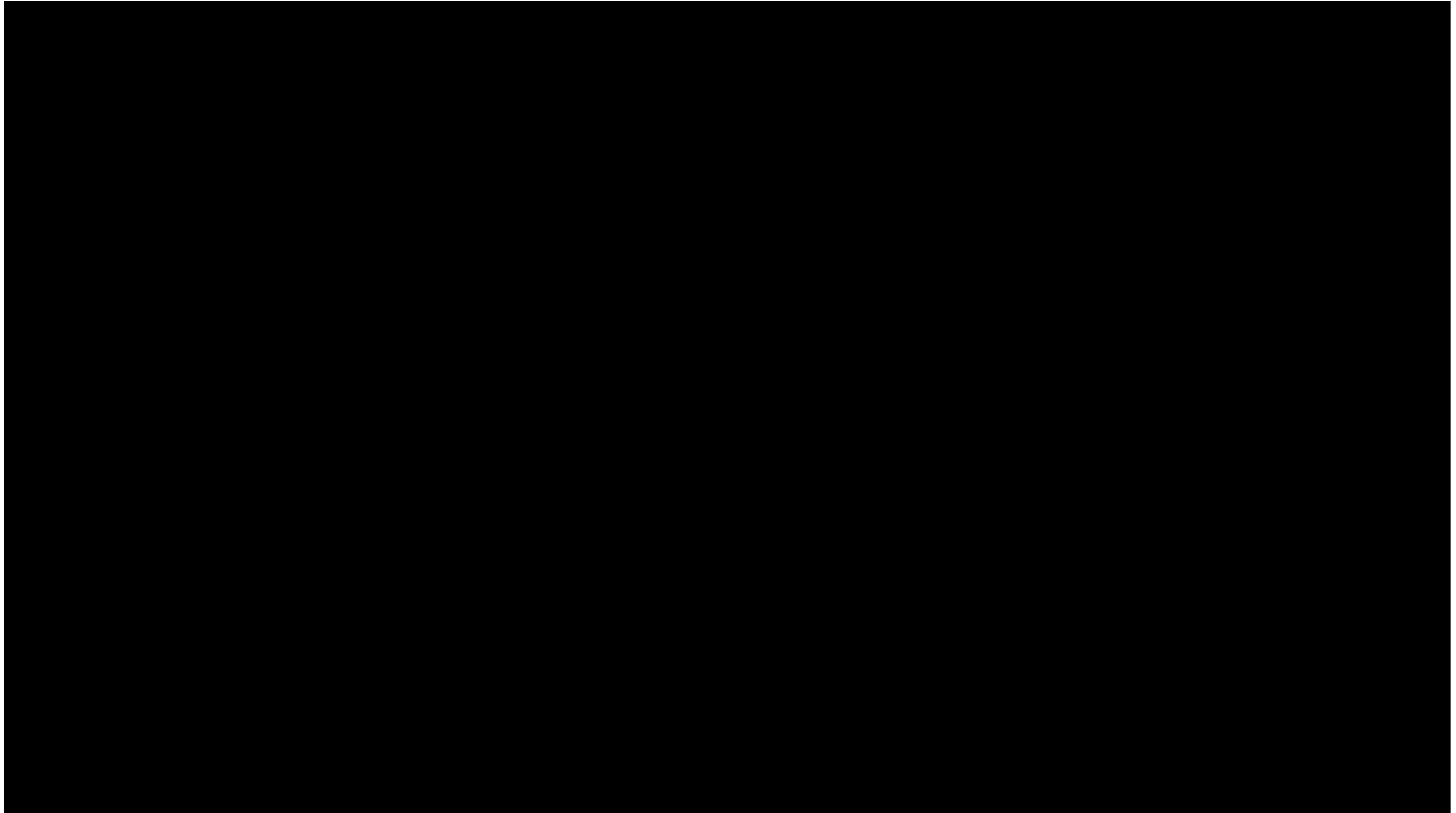
How Much Youth Feel Cared for and Understood

- **Acknowledge, Validate & Normalize Feelings** (yours and theirs)
 - Practice “I feel” statements: awkward, uncomfortable, embarrassed, shy, mixed-up?
 - *These things are hard for me to talk about. Bear with me.*
 - Check in and relate to how your teen feels – *“Your feelings are important. I get it. I can remember feeling that way.”*
 - *“I love you no matter what.”*
- **Listen**
 - Attentively
 - With body and ears
 - Without judgment

Find Opportunities for Conversation

- Take advantage of teachable moments / natural opportunities to connect
 - Unpack scenes from a show or movie, song lyrics
 - Shopping – swing by the personal products aisle
 - Talk in the car – private space; the teen can hear you but doesn't have to look at you
 - Dinner table conversations – use conversation cards
 - Engage via text messages – preferred communication for teens
 - Share Instagram memes – funny, inspirational, poignant
 - Ask what they are learning in school re sex ed, safe dating, cyberbullying, etc.
 - Ask for a lesson in the latest slang. (That guy's *rizz* is pure *sus*.)
 - Ask who's dating whom in their peer group. Or are most people in *situationships*?

Talking More Comfortably



Parent Resources: Planned Parenthood



Tips for Talking to All Ages



Elementary School

Parent Resources and Guides:

<https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/parents>

Video Guides:

https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PL3xP1jlf1jgJbMnUV_oQZDJgppnQYBUbu&si=jZKaZpSRXmeQNZep

1. Explore by Topic

- Bodies
- Identity
- Pregnancy & Reproduction
- Relationships
- Personal Safety
- Sex and Sexuality

2. Explore by Age

3. Tips for Talking

Video Resource:

Amaze.org

For Parents:

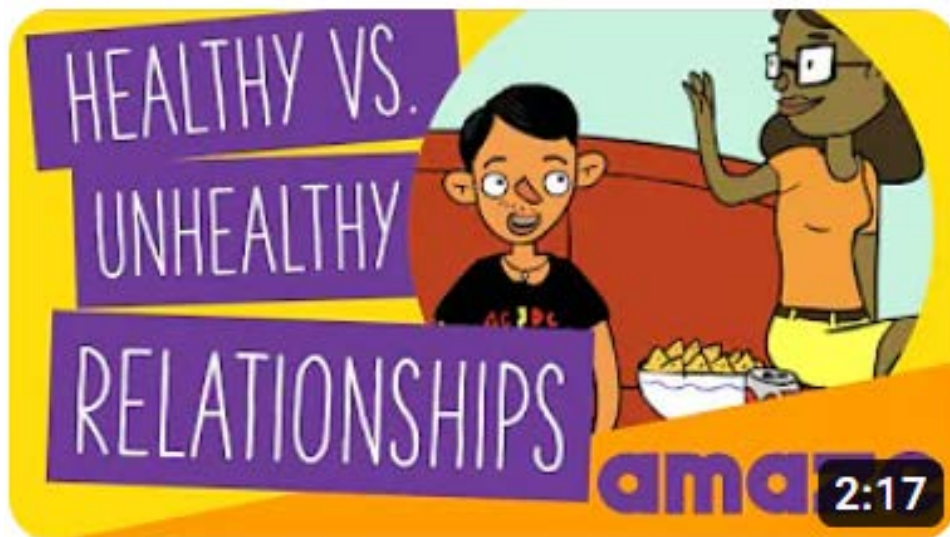
<https://amaze.org/parents/>

YouTube:

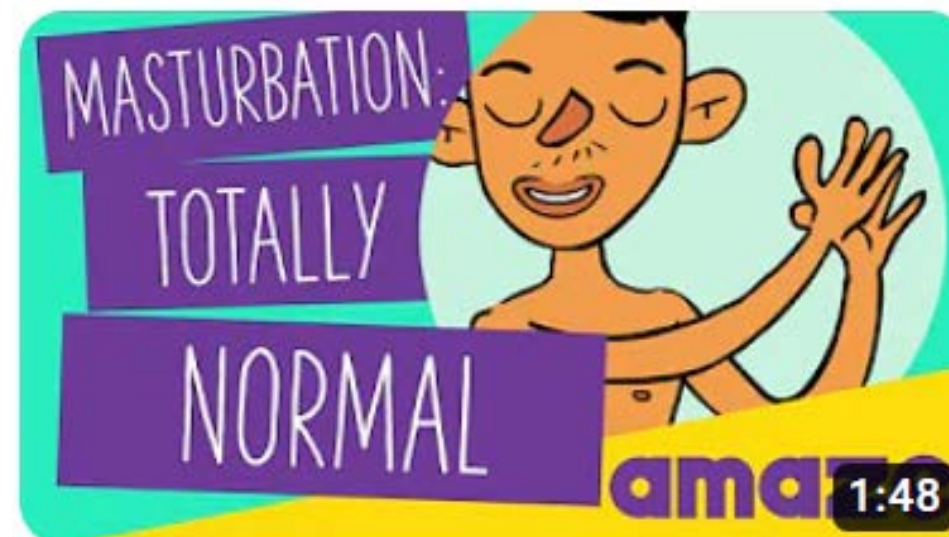
<https://www.youtube.com/@amazeorg/videos>



Being Safe on the Internet



Healthy vs Unhealthy Relationships



Masturbation: Totally Normal

- Having the Talks
- Personal Safety
- Consent
- Healthy Relationships
- Mental Health
- Rejection
- Puberty
- Pregnancy/Reproduction
- Masturbation
- Gender & Sexual Orientation

Healthy / Safe / Legal Framework for Conversations

- More objective than “that’s okay/not okay”,
- More nuanced than definitive yes or no
- Is it healthy, safe, and legal for the person? What are the concerns?
- Harm reduction contingencies:
 - Can it be healthier? Safer? Lower legal consequences?

- Ella wants to skip school with her boyfriend to spend the night at his family cabin out of town and celebrate her 16th birthday.

- Nelson has been masturbating to an ex

Important Legal Conversations

* Sexual Assault

Having sex with someone who doesn't want to have sex with you / does not give consent

- Forcing or threatening someone to have sex
- Sex with someone who is unconscious or unable to provide consent

• Age of Consent

By law, the minimum age a person is considered old enough to agree to sex, premised on the assumption that minors are incapable of giving informed consent to sexual activity.

- In Alaska, the age of consent is 16. Two people who are both 16 or older can agree to have sex with each other.
- **If sexually active, it's important to be very sure of the other person's age.**

* Statutory Rape

Having sex with a person who is under the age of consent, even if they want to

- No one 16 or over can have sex with someone 13 or younger
- No teenager can have sex with someone 4 or more years older (e.g. 15 and 19)
- No one under 18 can legally have sex with someone in a position authority over them (teacher, coach, minister, etc.)

• Sexting

Producing or distributing explicit images or messages

- In Alaska, you must be 16 to consent to sexual activity, but you must be 18 to take or possess naked pictures.
- Once a picture or text is on the internet, it is virtually impossible to erase.

* Child Pornography

Production, distribution or possession of indecent images of a minor

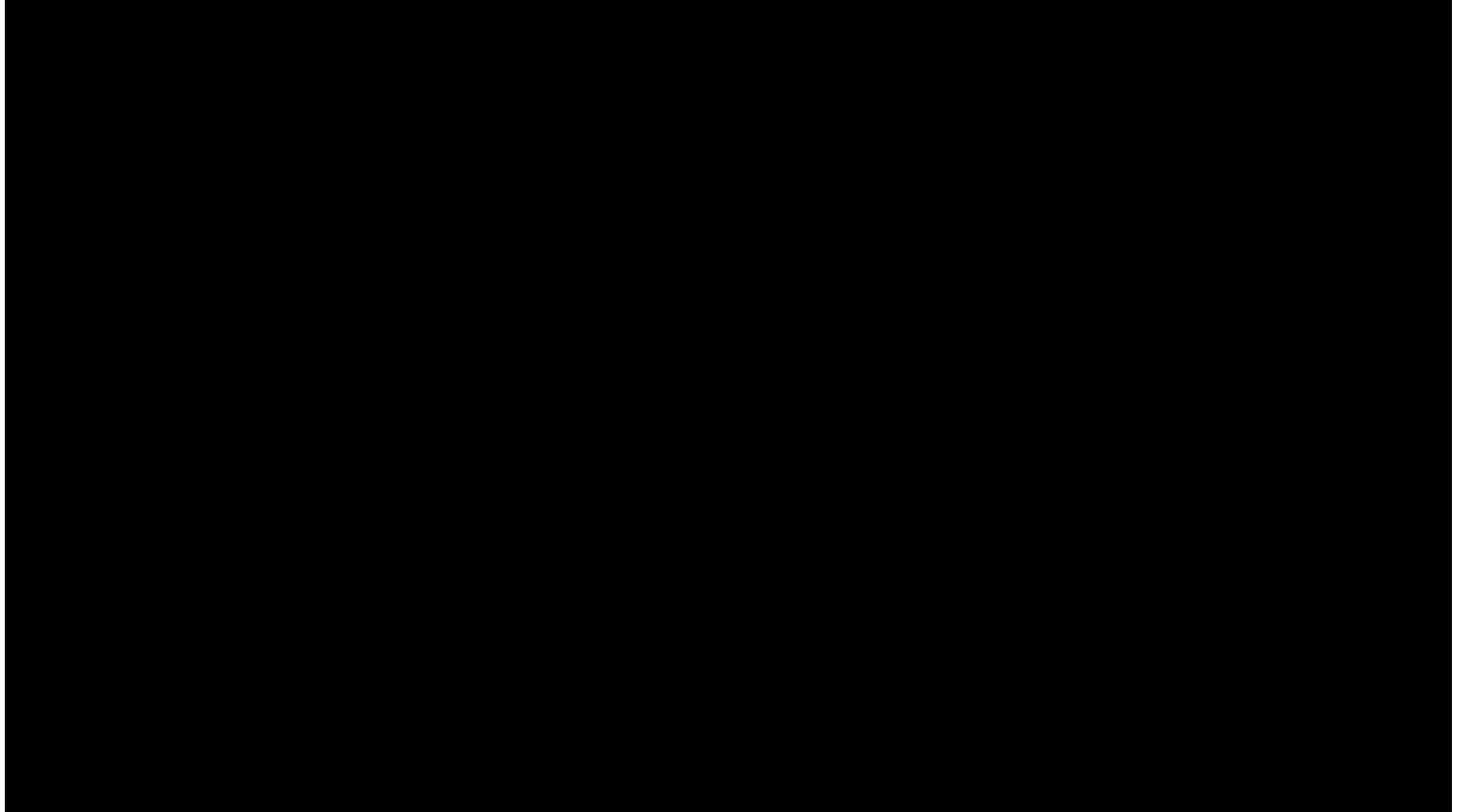
- Even if under 16, you can be charged with a crime for taking or passing along a photo of another teen.

* ***Felony crimes with serious punishments, e.g. jail and placement on the sex offender registry.***

Planning Healthy, Safe, Legal Masturbation

 <p>Where</p>	Private Spaces	Public Spaces
 <p>When</p>	Personal Time	Problematic Timing
 <p>How</p>	Personal Safety	Safety Concerns
 <p>Who</p>	Okay People to Talk with	Violating Boundaries of Others

Masturbation



Masturbation Discussion Resources



- Amaze: "Having the Talks," <https://amaze.org/video/having-the-talks-masturbation/#parents>
- National Council on Independent Living (NCIL) YouTube video series, Sex Ed for People with I/DD: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wZ6T8wrqjAE&list=PLuEvYNNQ-dHeVhbyeJHx9s8oqsvBk621v>
- Bedsider: <https://www.bedsider.org/sex-and-relationships/masturbation>
- Real Talk: <https://www.real-talk.org/topics/pleasure>

Love is Respect: Relationship Spectrum

Healthy

A healthy relationship means both you and your partner are:

- Communicating
- Respectful
- Trusting
- Honest
- Equal
- Enjoying personal time away from each other
- Making mutual choices
- Economic/financial partners

Unhealthy

You may be in an unhealthy relationship if your partner is:

- Not communicating
- Disrespectful
- Not trusting
- Dishonest
- Trying to take control
- Only spending time together
- Pressured into activities
- Unequal economically

Abusive

Abuse is occurring in a relationship when one partner is:

- Communicating in a hurtful or threatening way
- Mistreating
- Accusing the other of cheating when it's untrue
- Denying their actions are abusive
- Controlling
- Isolating their partner from others



- **Power and Control Wheel**
 - Create your own wheel together
 - Fill in the blanks with specific examples
 - <https://www.theduluthmodel.org/wheel-gallery/>
 - Picture credit unknown. Source: https://www.linkedin.com/posts/mubarak-mansoor-ali-11454b204_teen-power-and-control-wheel-is-a-tool-used-activity-7115591498175266816-32uU
- **Love is Respect website**
 - Warning Signs of Abuse
 - Quizzes
- **Videos**
 - Domestic Violence Educational Video, <https://youtu.be/QLgvbG0F2TM>
 - Amaze videos such as Intimate Partner Violence, <https://youtu.be/vK3RhRwMwlg>

Healthy Relationships Resource:

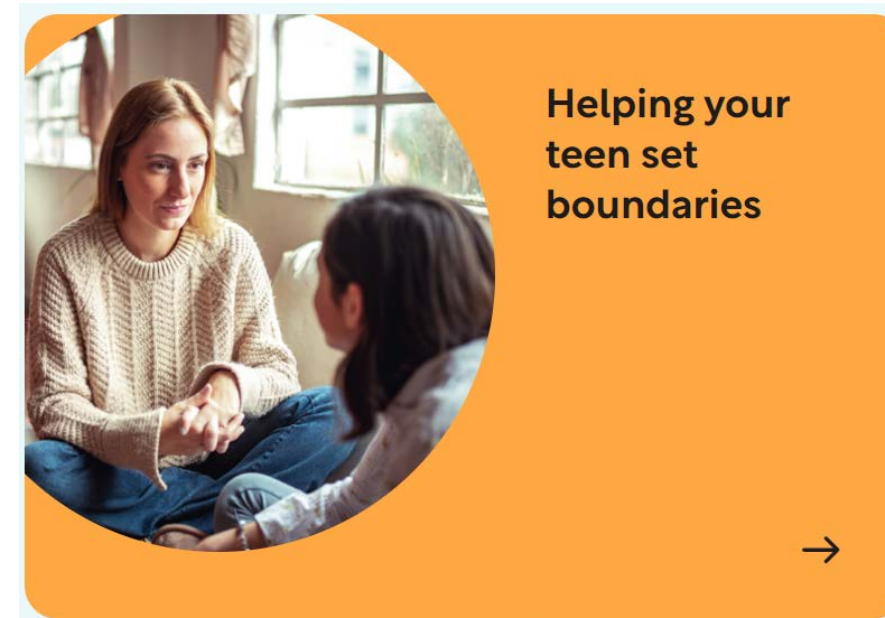
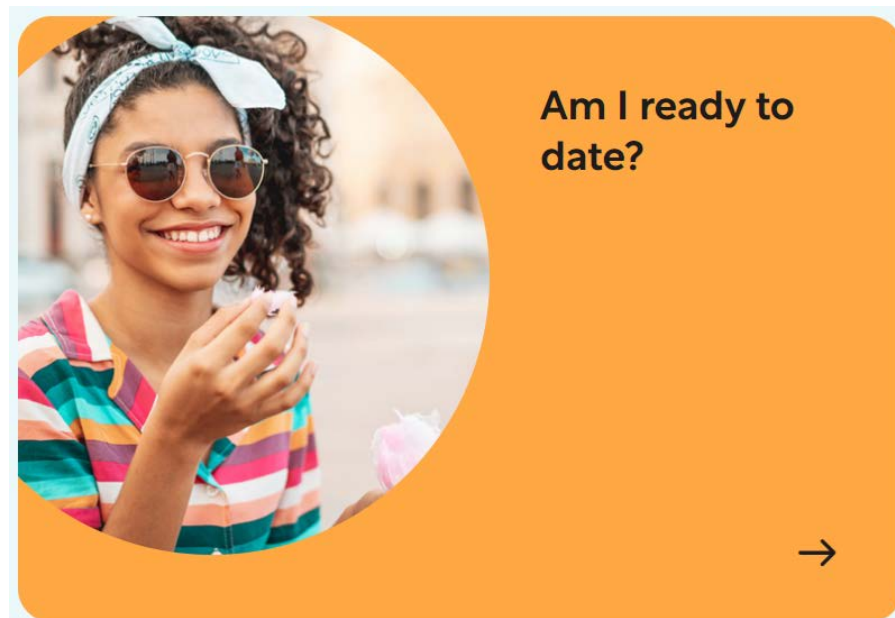
Love Is Respect

Quizzes:

<https://www.loveisrespect.org/quizzes/>

For Supporting Others:

<https://www.loveisrespect.org/supporting-others-dating-abuse/>



- Dating 101
- Recognizing Abuse
- Consent
- Boundaries
- Creating Safety Plans
- Ending Relationships
- Supporting Others
- Parent Tips
- Quizzes:
 - Am I a Good Partner?
 - Is My Relationship Healthy?
 - Am I Practicing Good Self-Care?

Consent is...



Freely Given

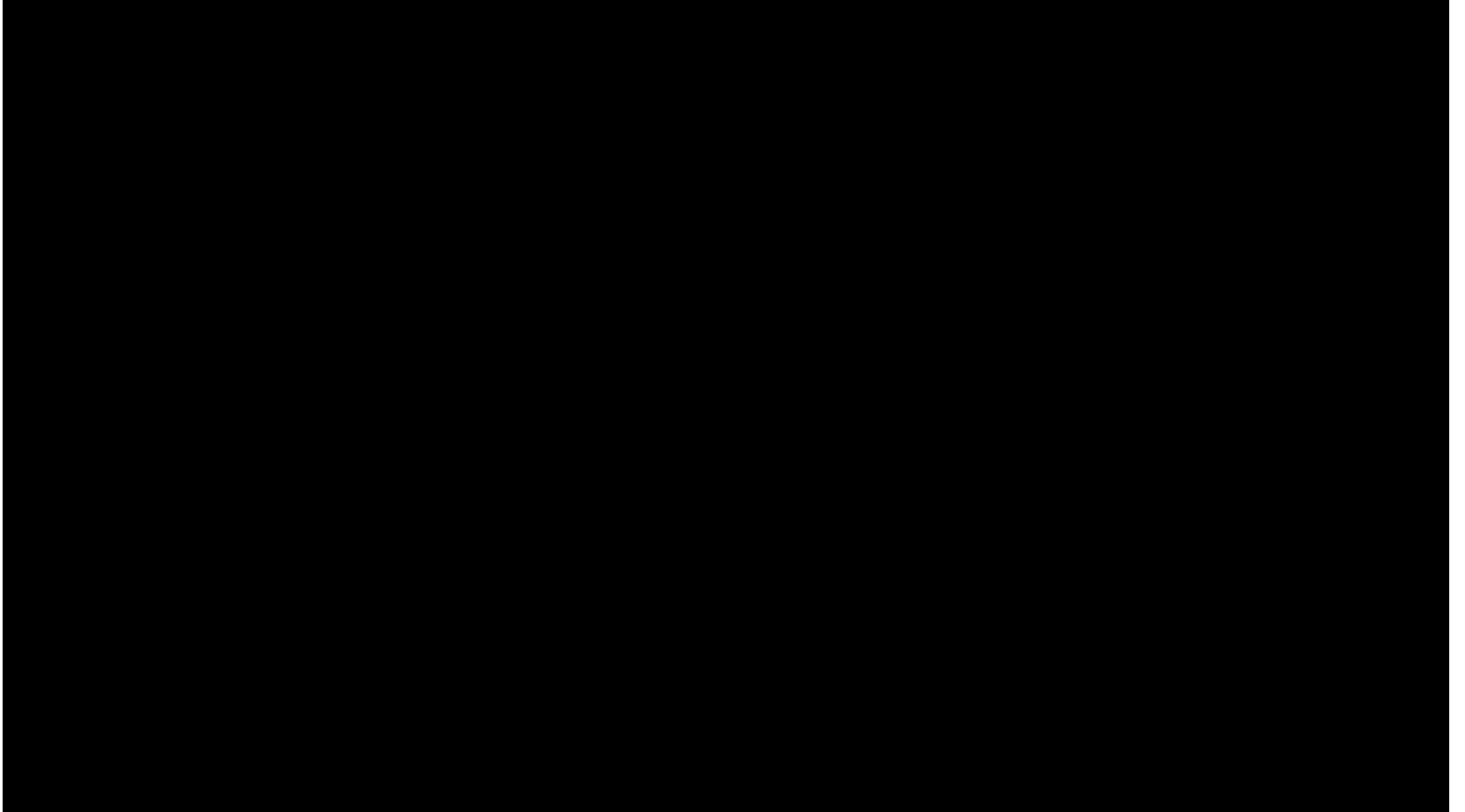
Reversible

Informed

Enthusiastic

Specific

Consent & Tea



Gender Identity & Sexual Orientation Resources:

Caring for LGBTQ Children & Youth: A Guide for Child Welfare Providers

https://calswec.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/hrc_caring_for_lgbtq_children_youth.pdf

Information and Resources for LGBTQ Youth in Foster Care

<https://youth.gov/youth-topics/lgbtq-youth/child-welfare>

Trevor Project

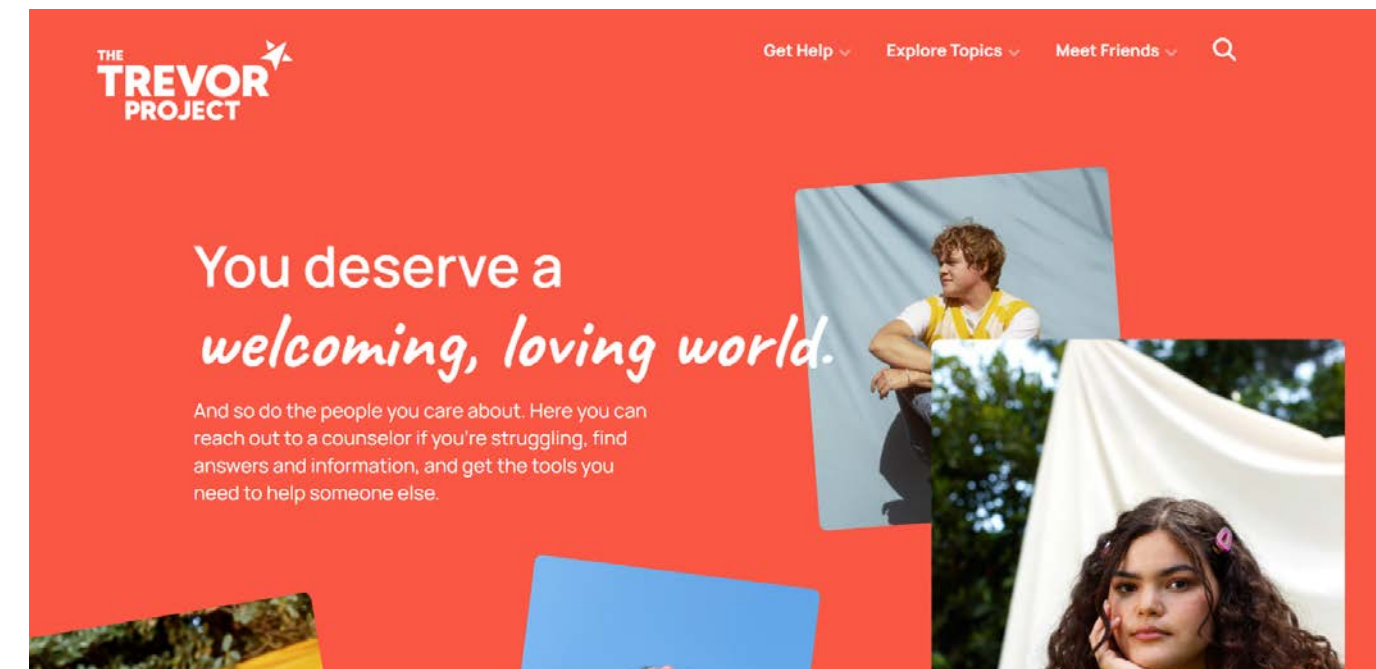
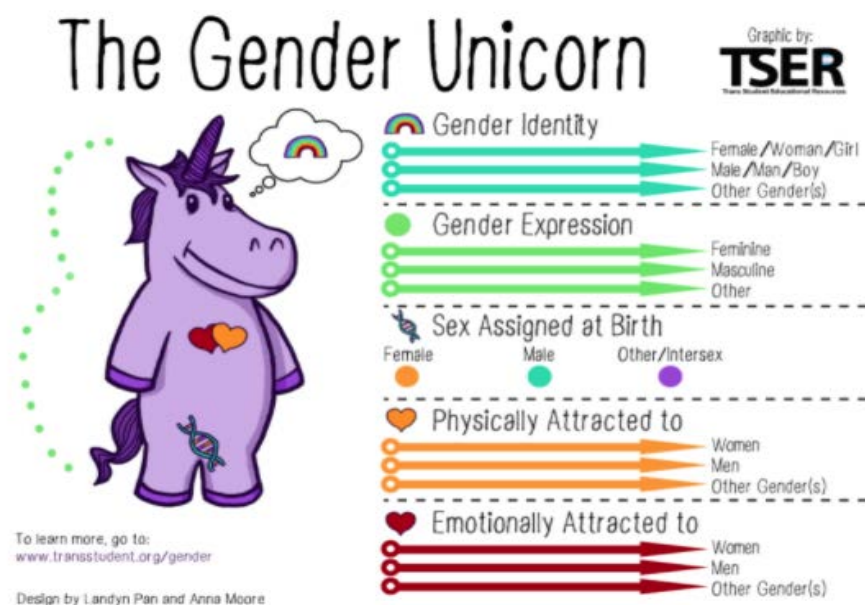
<https://www.thetrevorproject.org/>

Gender Unicorn

<https://transstudent.org/>

PFLAG

<https://pflag.org/>



Online and Social Media Resources:

Common Sense Media

Articles for Parents by age and topic:

<https://www.common sense media.org/articles/>

Social Media Test Drive:

<https://socialmediatestdrive.org/modules.html>

Teen Voices Video Series:

Common Sense Media YouTube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/@CommonSenseEducation/>

Example from series:

Teen Voices: Who You're Talking to Online:

https://youtu.be/Dil8Lj0_TGQ

1. Sort by Age
2. Sort by topic of type of technology
 - Cell Phones, Devices & Screentime
 - Social Media
 - Online Safety & Cyberbullying
 - Gaming, Books, other media
 - Parental Controls
3. Interactive Games
4. Teens Talking to Teens

Healthy Sexuality for Youth in Foster Care: An Online Training for Parents

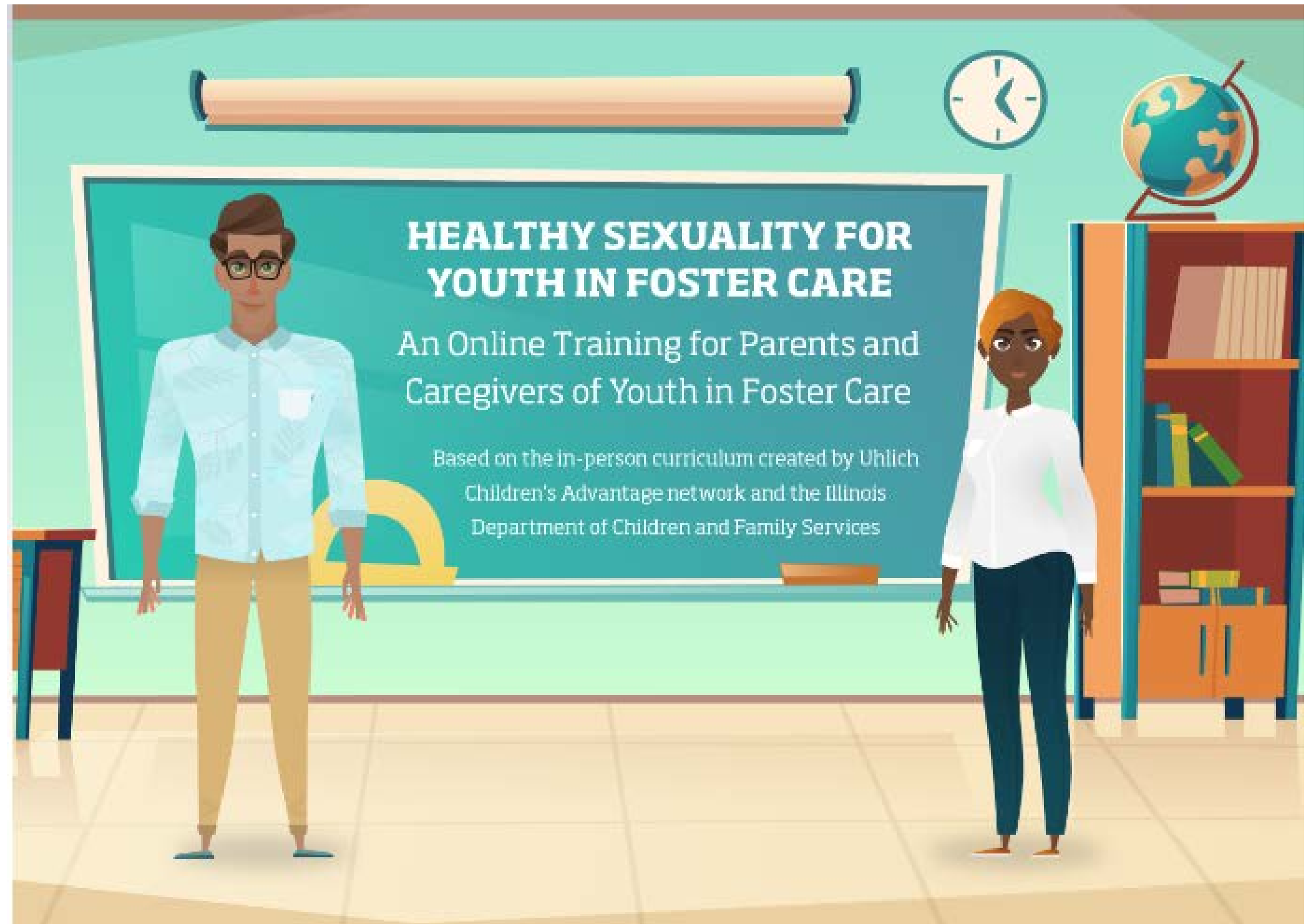
Free, On-demand Training

<https://www.fosterparenttalk.org/home>

- Designed for Foster Youth aged 10+
- Resources and Tip Sheets


Webinar Overview of Training

<https://teenpregnancy.acf.hhs.gov/resources/healthy-sexuality-youth-foster-care-online-training-parents>



Foster Parent Resource List





Practice
Scenarios

Break out Discussion

- What is your main concern?
- Cautions and special considerations?
- Health, safety, and legality?
- Options and Suggestions?

Scenarios

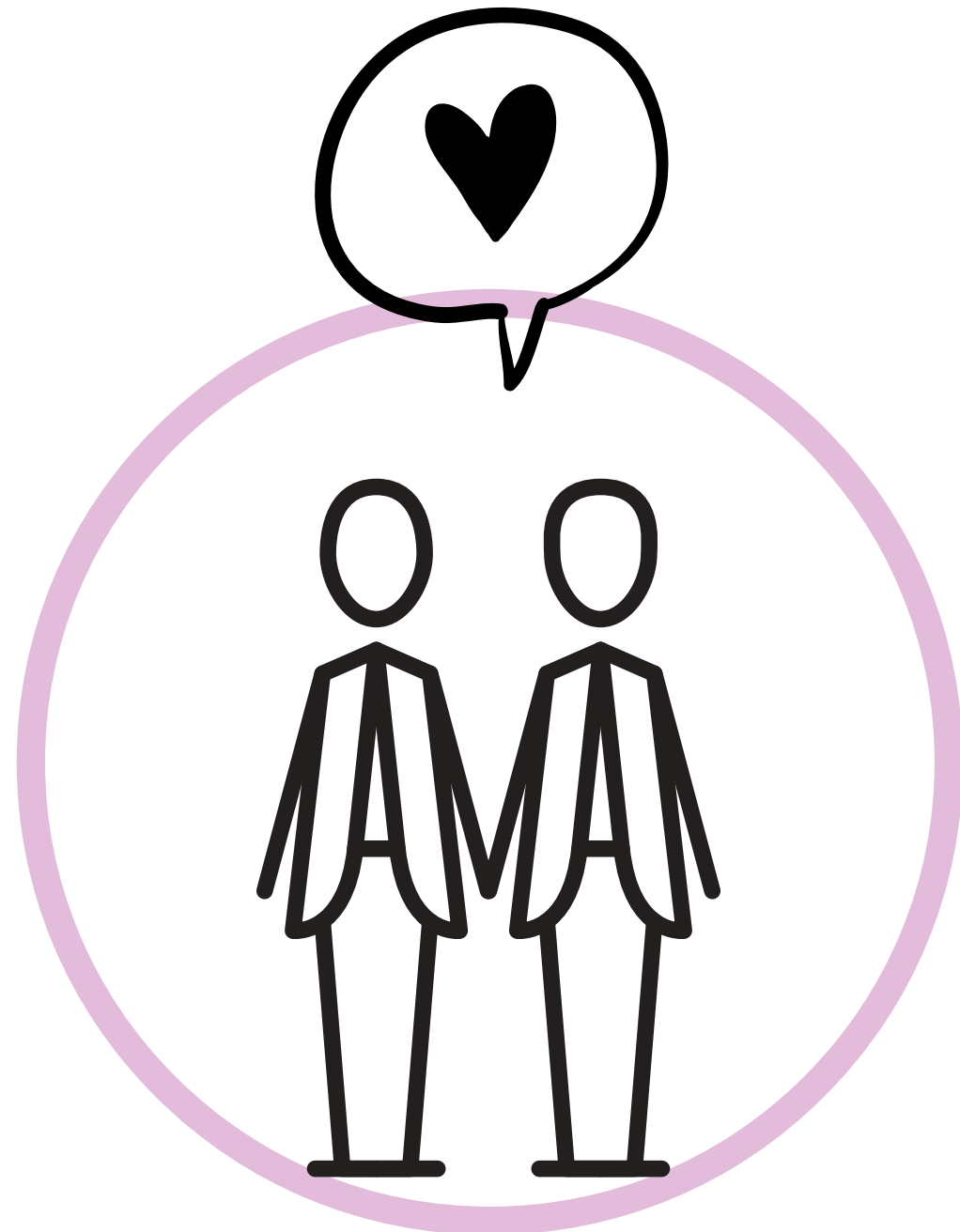
1. This kid told me they are gay but no one else knows because she said her mom would not be okay with it.
2. My 17 year old foster daughter came to me and said that she has been sexually active for years and is currently on birth control, but has a 21 year old boyfriend.
3. My foster son got beat up at school because they asked the teacher to use them/they pronouns.
4. My foster daughter wants to get on birth control and she's only 14 years old. The Bio parents are not in the picture.
5. My 9 year old foster son dresses and acts like a girl, but has not said he is gay or transgender. What can I do or should I do?
6. I think that my foster youth's best friend is a bad influence on them. I have noticed that this friend is skipping school, smoking weed, and has pressured them to shoplift.

More Ways to Learn

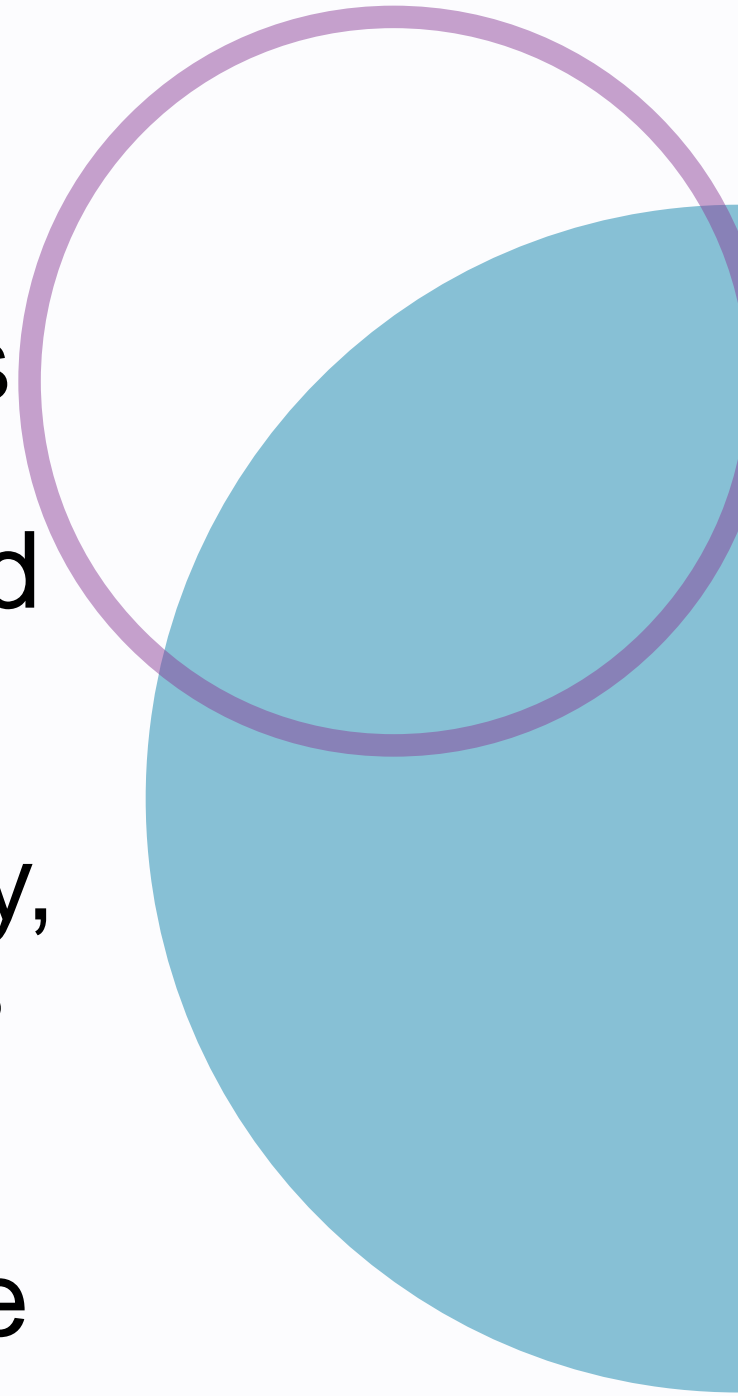




Friendships & Dating Program



- Evidence-based program that supports people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to create and maintain healthy relationships
- To teach social skills to develop healthy, meaningful relationships for individuals with I/DD
- To prevent interpersonal violence in the relationships of individuals with I/DD
- Launched in 2008



FDP Fundamentals

- **Positivity-based education**
 - Primary focus on the healthy, fun and fulfilling aspects of relationships.
- **Respect for the dignity of risk**
 - Relationships are inherently risky. Participants have the right to take this risk. Education helps to mitigate potential dangers.
- **Inclusive and welcoming**
 - Participants may have different values, different sexual orientations, may be questioning who they are or what they want out of relationships. FDP welcomes various experiences and views, and fosters communication about these issues throughout the program.
- **Focus on healthy, safe, and legal**
 - People experience different types³⁹ of behavior, communication, expectations, and activities in their relationships. The goal is not to fit your relationship into one specific outline, but to strive for a healthy relationship that makes both people feel supported, appreciated, and safe.
 - Understand social “rules” but recognize there are many pathways to healthy and safe relationships.

FDP Format & Structure

Format

- 20 sessions
- 1.5 hours length
- 10 weeks
- 2 sessions per week
 - Skill building/classroom setting
 - Community outings
- Adaptations possible for various environments
- Preventative; Non-Therapeutic Intervention

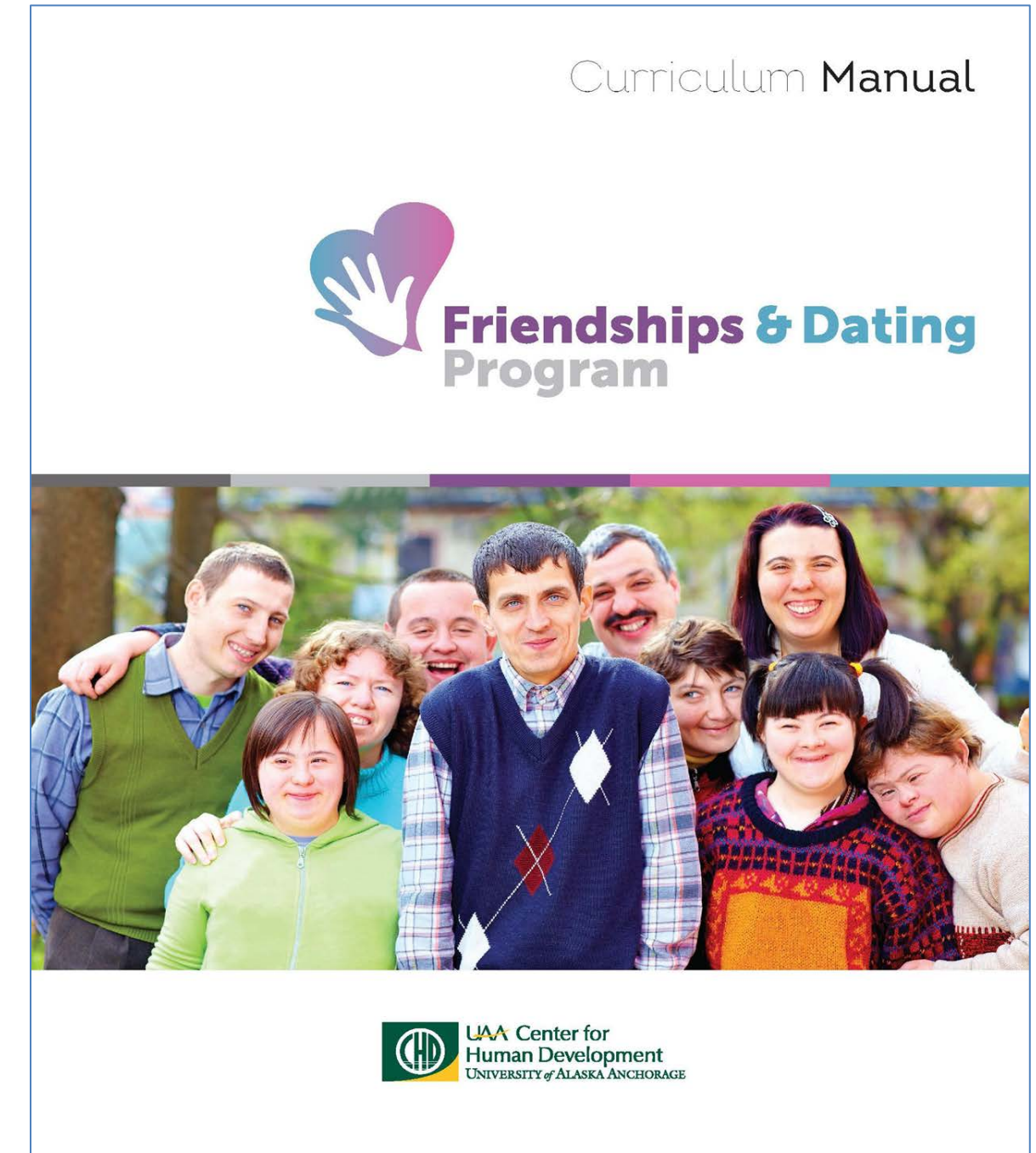
Structure

- Co-facilitated by 2 people
- 6-8 participants
 - Mixed gender, ages, experiences
 - Voluntary
- Multi-Modal Approach
 - Suits a variety of cognitive abilities and learning styles & keeps things interesting
- Supporting Participation
 - Support Network Orientation
 - Weekly Info Sheets

FDP Curriculum & Training

Facilitator Trainings

- Provider Agencies, Schools, API, Correctional Facilities, and More
- 2-Day Training, 3 Times Per Year
- Free for Alaskans
 - Thanks Mental Health Trust!
- Commercialization for Outside of AK
- Trained 150 New Facilitators Last Year!
- **Curriculum Manual, Online Resource Site & Ongoing Support**





UAA Center for
Human Development
UNIVERSITY of ALASKA ANCHORAGE

BECOME A FRIENDSHIPS & DATING PROGRAM FACILITATOR

Learn how your organization can implement this 10-week program for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. FDP is designed to support them in developing healthy interpersonal relationships.

Cost: Free for Alaskans!

*Thanks to funding from the Alaska
Mental Health Trust Authority*

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
scan to sign up for emails
visit www.fdprogram.org
or contact fdp@alaskachd.org



Thank You!

Contact Info

Caitie Jones
cmjones9@alaska.edu **knhartlieb01@alaska.edu**
(907) 264-6262 **(907) 264-6250**

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

scan to sign up for emails
visit www.fidprogram.org
or contact chd-fidprogram@alaska.edu

