

RELATIONSHIPS, SEX AND SEXUAL HEALTH

A COMPANION GUIDE FOR FAMILIES AND CARERS

(to be used alongside the workbook for people with learning disabilities)

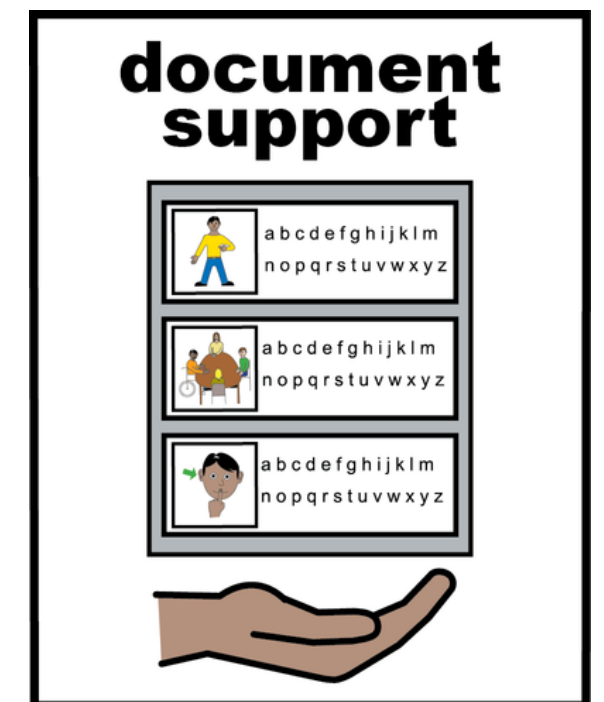
HOW TO USE THIS BOOKLET

This is the accompanying workbook for families and carers. It is to be used alongside the workbook which has been designed to help people with learning disabilities learn about relationships, sex and sexual health.

As you will see, it is in different sections so you can choose which bits the person wants to look at. Each section has a different colour coding.

This companion guide gives general support and advice to carers on communication and prompts regarding adapting the resource.

It then provides specific support and guidance on the different activities included in the main workbook, to give carers more direction on how to support the person, including the aims of each activity.



GENERAL ADVICE

It is important that you support the person as they require with the activities in this workbook. This may include helping them to understand the activity better, providing them with example answers, asking them follow-up questions, and/or writing down their answers.

Each section has a number of activities. Some of these are to provoke thought and some are quiz-type questions. These activities might be difficult for some people you support and you may need to be patient.

If a person has answered a question differently to how you expected they would, they may have misunderstood the question. If they are struggling to answer the question, talk with them about the different options, giving explanations for each one. Getting the answer wrong might mean that the person simply needs to spend longer being supported to understand this topic.

GENERAL ADVICE

Not all of the workbook sections will be relevant or appropriate for the person you're completing these activities with. You might need to think about which sections may be more or less relevant to work through for the individual.

However, it is important to remember that just because someone might not be having sex or be in a relationship, they still have a right to know about and might want to learn about sex and relationships and/or have questions.

Always remain non-judgmental, patient and kind. Allow the person time and space to share things with you; this topic may not be something they've had chance to talk about freely before. You are there to guide the person and support with education on this topic. If you ever feel uncomfortable, seek support from your manager or contact someone within the learning disability team for advice.

COMMUNICATION

It takes time and patience to support communication. Many individuals rely on non-verbal communication to support their understanding and expression; things like facial expressions, gestures, body language and using pictures/objects.

When completing this workbook, you can support people by:

- Giving them plenty of time to take in each piece of information.
- Giving them plenty of time to get their message across.
- Emphasising important words in sentences. You can point to a picture, symbol, or object.
- Repeating important words or pieces of information.
- Making sure you have plenty of time and are not feeling rushed.

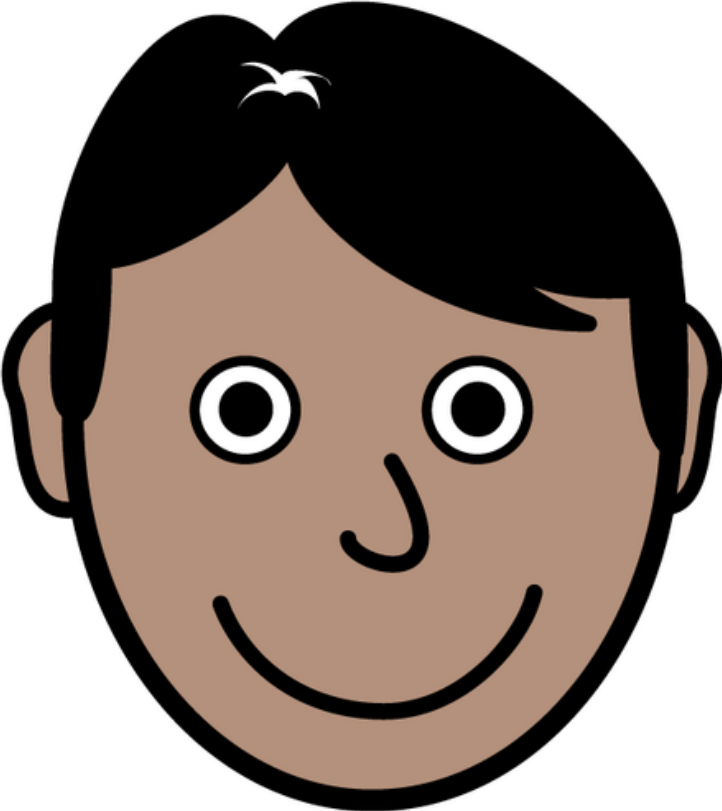
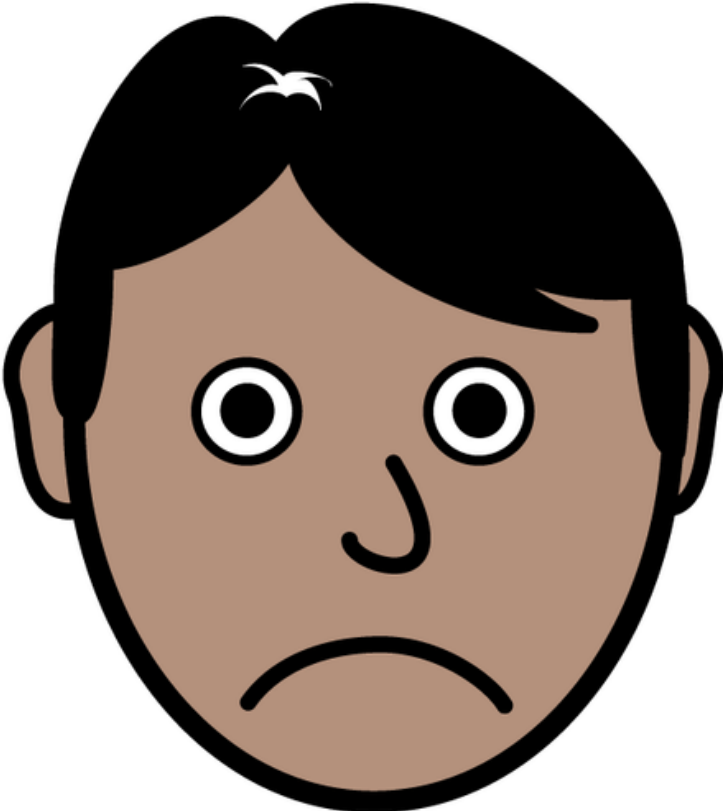
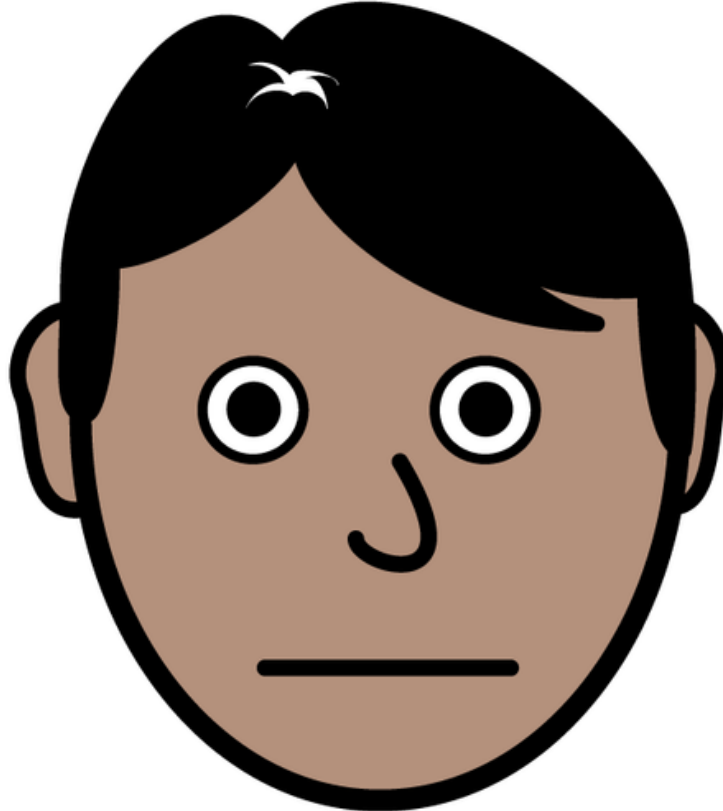
If verbal information is difficult, there are some symbols on the following pages that might be helpful when asking questions. You could print these off and have them on the table alongside you.

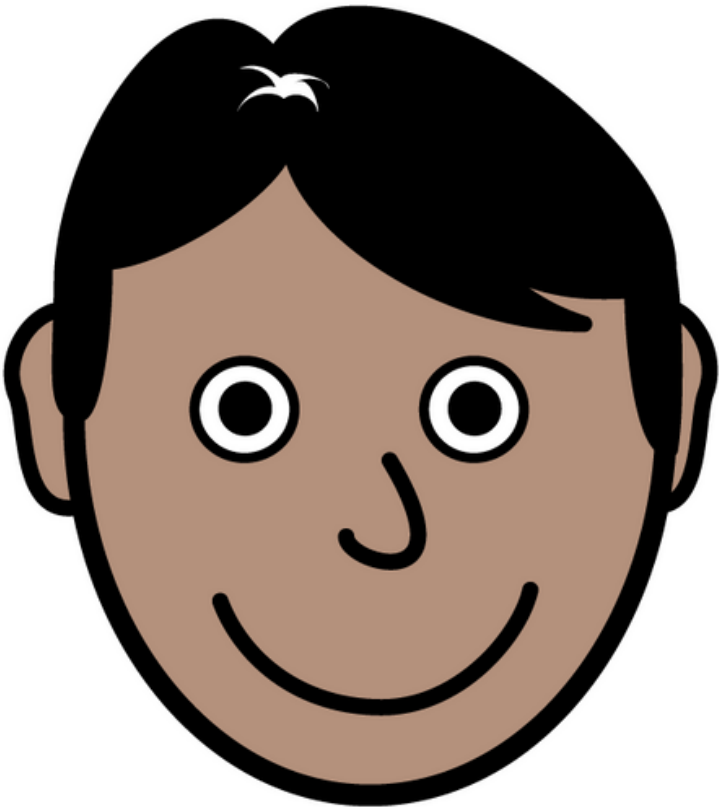
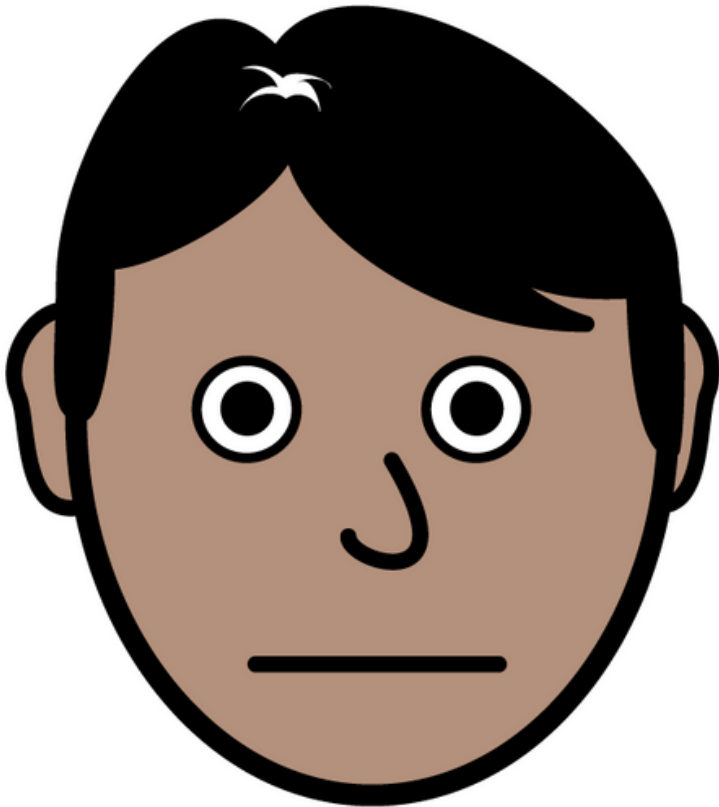
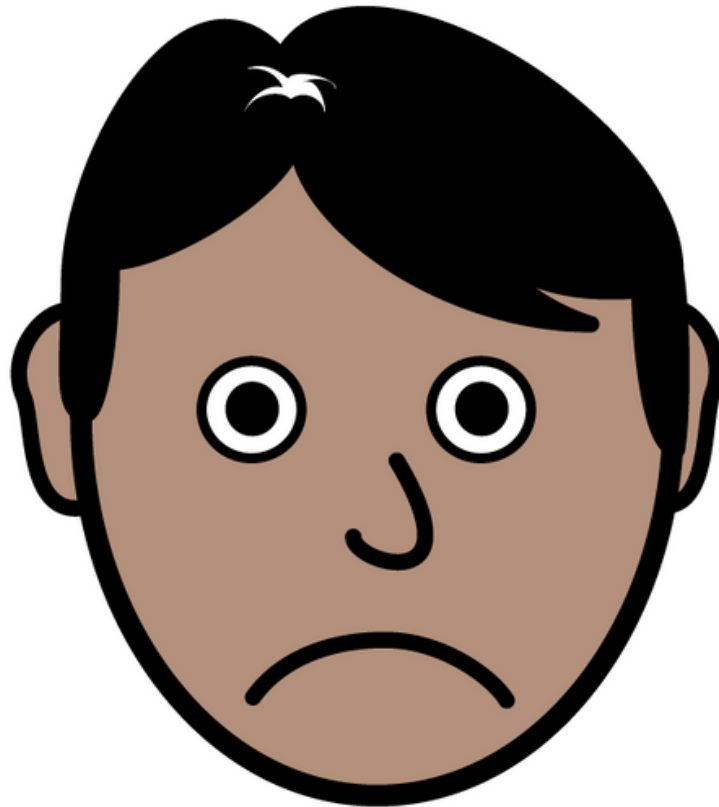


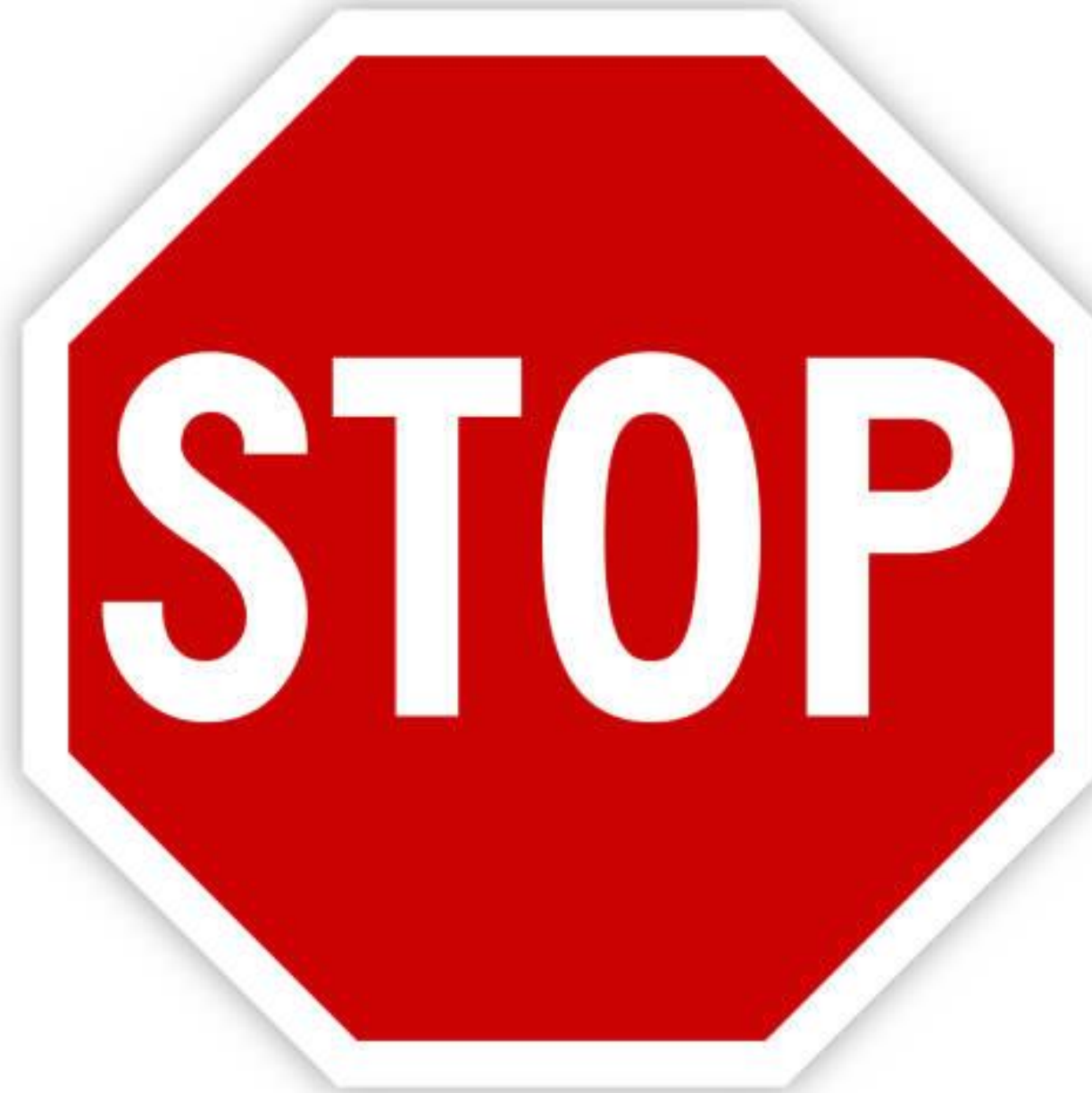
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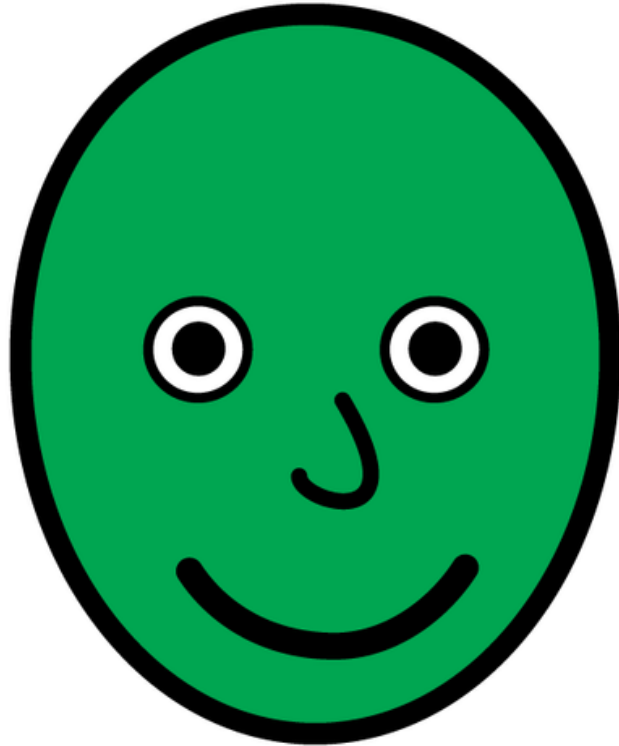
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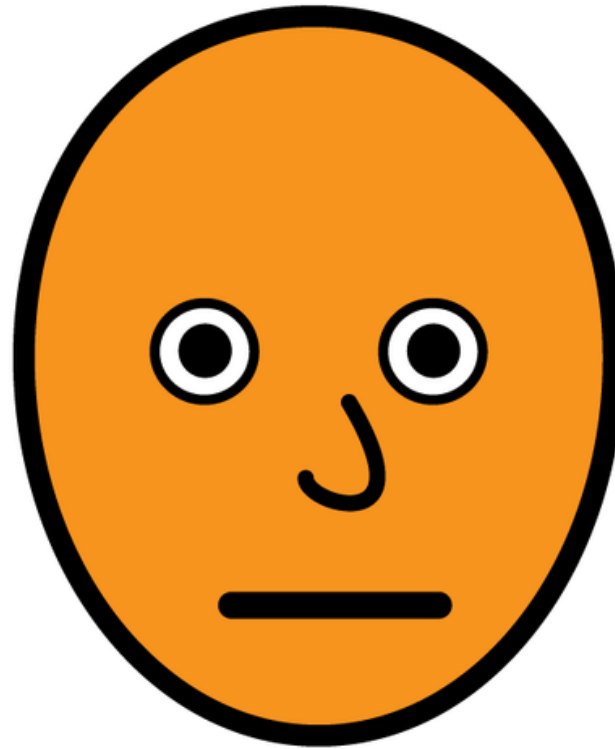
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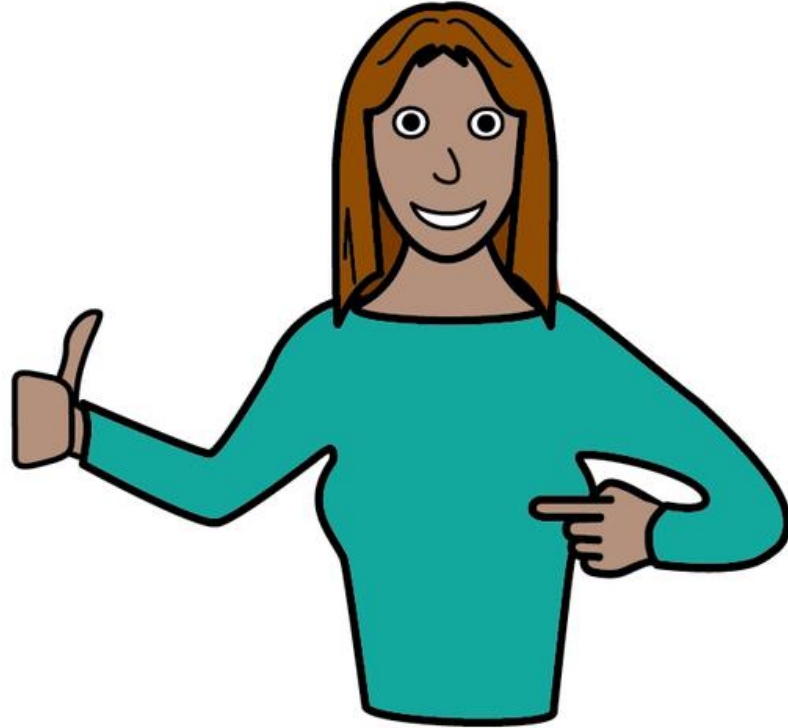
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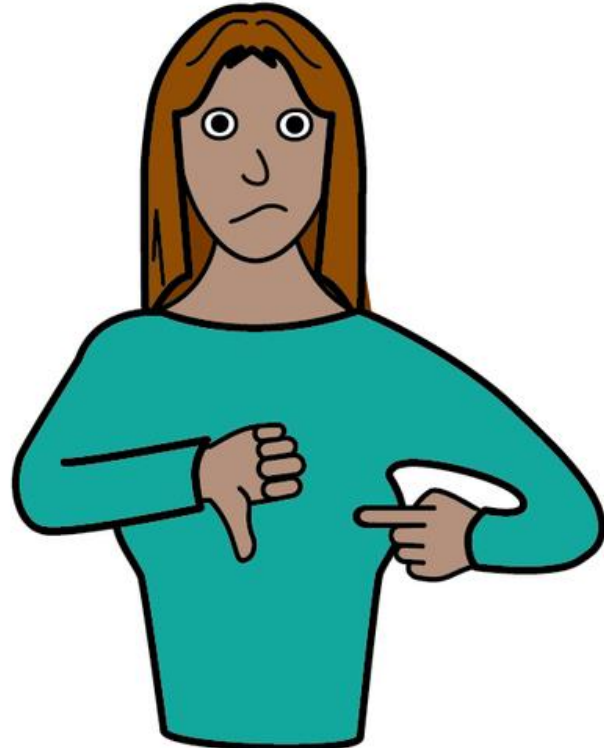
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dislike



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THE WORKBOOK

The next pages are now divided into sections.

Each section corresponds with each section of the workbook for people with learning disabilities and the activities included within that sub section. For each activity, there is some help for you to help the individual in completing these.

The help in the following pages includes:

- Answers to look out for that might signal understanding or misunderstanding.
- Prompts on how you might have conversations around topics that could feel a bit awkward or uncomfortable.
- Answers to the quiz type questions.
- Information on how you might support the individual with these activities if they get some questions wrong or have misunderstood.



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FRIENDSHIPS AND RELATIONSHIPS

This section on friendships and relationships is to help develop an understanding about the different types of relationships we can have in our lives and what may or may not be appropriate in each of these.

Activity 1

- Can you think of different examples for each type of relationship?
- You could ask what they think makes each of these relationships different and guide appropriately. For example, you could ask “what might you do with a friend that you wouldn’t do with someone you know from the corner shop?”.
- You could support their answers by encouraging thoughts about people in their lives, or people they know from films or television. “Can you think of anyone from a film that are boyfriend/girlfriend?”.

Activity 2

- Support the individual to think about each of the levels of the circle of friendship.
- Offer some correction/support when you think it’s necessary.

Activity 3

- Ask questions about why they have or have not chosen some of the examples.
- Some of these images do not portray romantic relationships. For example, the ill person and the nurse. If this one is chosen, use this as an opportunity to explain that romantic relationships should not happen between a patient and a staff member, or an adult and a child.
- If you think it’s appropriate you can also use these images as an opportunity to discuss lesbian or gay relationships.

Activity 4

- To help the conversation, you could ask a question like “Romantic relationships are meant to make us feel good and happy about ourselves. Which of these qualities do you think would/ would not do that?”
- You could encourage some thought about different qualities. For example, if animals were a particular interest of theirs, you could say “if you wanted a partner that is also interested in animals, you could do activities together like going to the zoo or watching films about animals”.
- If they choose some of the negative qualities, you could have a conversation around unhealthy relationships and the negative impact of these. For example, you might say, “If you choose a partner that is mean to you, that might make you feel quite sad. Relationships are meant to make us feel good and happy”.

Activity 5

- 1) Stranger. 2) Friends. 3) Dating. 4) Boyfriend. 5) Married.
- The purpose of this task is to get thinking about how relationships progress.
- It's important to remind people that, while it's important to be careful of strangers, strangers can turn into friends or romantic partners. It may be a good time to revisit the first task and look at different categories of relationships as a reminder.



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OUR BODIES

For individuals where their understanding may be at a lower level, it may be best to focus just on the binary – males and females.

If someone can understand the more nuanced nature of gender, then you can use the information / resources about being transgender.

Activity 1: Which parts are private?

- Once the individual has labelled the body, facilitate a conversation about which parts of the body might be private.
- Depending on ability and usefulness for the individual you can focus on one body or both.
- Some prompts: “Which parts of this body do you think are private?”, “How do you know this part is private?”, “Which part of this body do you think this person would cover with clothes?”.
- If appropriate to level of ability and usefulness, “Why do you think these parts are private?”, “Why do we have to cover these parts in public spaces?”.

Activity 2: Who might it be okay to touch my genitals?

- Opportunity to explore someone's understanding of when it might be appropriate for someone to touch their genitals and when it isn't.
- Discuss the consent part of this question – it is never okay for someone to touch their genitals if they haven't given their consent.
- If someone ticks a box which raises a concern, for example, 'The bus driver', discuss this openly with them, raise this to your safeguarding lead for some additional support if needed.
- When someone is completing this activity, continue the conversation by asking them questions about why they think that is appropriate or not.

Activity 3: Hygiene activity

- Support the individual by reading the question's together and noting down their answers.
- Prompt them to consider things they might use if the person is struggling.
- If it becomes clear that this person may struggle with their hygiene, consider a plan or intervention to help them with this alongside some education.

Activity 4: Label the gender

- Encourage the individual to label the pictures with what gender they think the person is.
- There is purposefully some more androgenous looking people to cause individuals to have to think more about how people can 'look' a specific gender.
- Once this person has done this activity, ask them how they knew each person was the gender that they thought they were. There is then the opportunity here to challenge this and think critically about what each gender 'looks like'.
- May get comments here like 'because girls have long hair or wear pink' or 'men have short hair or have beards'. If these comments based on appearance are used the next activity could be helpful.
- Acknowledge that the images may show how people don't have to 'stick to gender rules', for example, a girl who is muscular and a man wearing pink.
- Explore conversations around this if appropriate with the individual. For example, if they comment that a man is wearing pink, ask them what they think about a man wearing pink and ensure that you let them know that it is okay for a man to wear pink and that the gender you are doesn't define what you can/can't do or wear.
- At the end of both these activities, ask the individual how they think they might be able to find out someone's gender. Be curious with the answer that they give you E.g. - "Why do you think that?", 'Have you done that before?'. Guide them towards being respectful and asking individuals directly if they are unsure and it is deemed appropriate to do so.

Activity 5: True or False

- Support the individual to write either true or false next to each statement. Encourage an open dialogue when the person is making their decision.
- If someone answers incorrectly rather than saying that is wrong, understand why they have put that answer down then explain the correct answer.

PERIODS (OR MENSTRUATION), PUBERTY & THE MENOPAUSE

This section on periods, puberty and menopause gives an overview of what periods are, information on period products and hygiene, what puberty is and what menopause is. Although the sections on periods and menopause may be more applicable to women or people with a vagina, the information could still be useful for all individuals.

Activity 1

- Offer prompts such as the emotions, pain or tiredness levels someone might experience. For example, by asking “Do you feel any pain when you’re on your period?” or “Are you ever more tired than usual?”.
- You could talk about activities that help them during this time e.g. going for a walk, using a hot water bottle, having a bath, watching a film, eating some chocolate, doing some exercise etc.
- You could ask if there are any they have or haven’t tried before? Any they are interested in trying? Any problems they are having?
- If the person is a man, you might want to complete this activity in relation to someone they know or may be in a relationship with or simply explain what this means for a woman.

Activity 2

- FALSE. TRUE. FALSE. FALSE. TRUE. TRUE.
- Not all people have periods. Usually men, or people that don't have a vagina, don't have periods. There can also be other reasons people don't have periods, like health reasons.
- Offer some reassurance that periods are a normal part of growing up and not something to be worried about. They can be different in everyone. They can vary in length, flow, how regular they are.
- Some people don't have any pain when they have their period. Some periods might be more painful than others. You might also add something like, "If your period feels very painful every month, you might want to talk to a doctor about it".
- Offer a reminder that period products don't go down the toilet, if they need to be thrown away, they go into a bin.

SEX

This section is on sex and covers information regarding what sex is, the different types of sex and sexual contact, orgasms, the stages of intimacy and deciding whether to have sex. Even if someone is not currently having sex, it might be something that they are interested in learning about so that they can make an informed choice. If certain acts of sex feels less appropriate for the individual, a focus can begin at the early stages of intimacy.

Activity 1

- It is okay for an adult of the opposite or same gender to touch each other's private parts if they both agree and feel ready for it. Perhaps encourage the person you are supporting to ask someone they trust about it if they feel unsure.
- It is not okay for someone under the age of 16 years old. This is because they are still a child and they are not able to give consent.
- A parent or carer should not touch private parts in a sexual way. It can be explained to the person you are supporting that a parent or carer may ask to see or touch their private parts if there was something wrong/something was hurting but if they don't feel comfortable with it, they can always say no.
- It is not okay for a random supermarket worker. This is because not just anyone can touch each others private parts.

- A doctor should not touch private parts in a sexual way, but if it is at a medical appointment, it might be okay if the problem concerns the private parts.
- It is okay to touch ourselves at our homes in private, but not in a sexual way in public. It can be explained that it is normal to have an interest in our own bodies and to enjoy touching private parts, but it is important for this to occur at home or in a private space.

Activity 2

- Sex can be for fun, to have a baby, to feel good and to feel close to the other person. It may be worth emphasising that one or more of the reasons could be true at anytime, but they don't need to all be true for all people at all times.
- Some people do have sex for money, but it is important to highlight that this can be unsafe and some forms of it can be illegal.
- Nobody ever has to have sex. It is important to emphasise that even if two people are in a relationship, neither person has to have sex and always has a choice. People can also change their mind at any point, even if they have started to have sex. If the person you are supporting has any concerns regarding this, encourage them to speak to you about it.



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PREGNANCY, ABORTION & CHILDBIRTH

This section covers information on how people get pregnant, what pregnancy can be like, how to test for pregnancy, options if people get pregnant and don't want to be, what miscarriages are and what's involved in childbirth. This can be a sensitive topic as some people can struggle to get pregnant, have experienced an abortion or have experienced a miscarriage, so it is important to approach the topic with care. Emphasis should be on informing and empowering the individual to make their own choice.

Activity 1

- These questions can aid discussions around whether the individual has thought about having a baby and considered all that comes with having a baby, e.g. practically, emotionally, financially.
- Other conversation questions you could consider together are: reasons why the individual might want a baby, what the individual thinks is involved with having a baby and being a parent, any worries or concerns around having a baby?

Activity 2

- FALSE. TRUE. TRUE. FALSE. TRUE. FALSE.
- Kissing doesn't lead to pregnancy, only vaginal sex (penis in vagina) can lead to pregnancy.
- A baby does grow in the woman's tummy (technically in her womb, may want to specify depending on individual's knowledge).
- If an individual is sexually active and misses a period (without contraception being the reason for this e.g. the pill) then it is recommended to test for pregnancy. It might be helpful to reassure that there could be other reasons for missing a period, e.g. stress, medical conditions, but it's always best to check.
- Nobody has to have a baby. It is important for individuals to know that it is always their choice if they want to have a baby or not, and that if they become pregnant, it is their choice whether to proceed with the pregnancy or not. If they answered 'yes' to this question, it might be helpful to explore where that opinion has come from.
- Abortions are a safe way to end a pregnancy if the individual is pregnant and doesn't want to have the baby. However, this can be a sensitive topic depending on individuals views and religious beliefs so keep this in mind.
- You can also give birth at home, although usually people give birth in a hospital. Here you could speak about other options, e.g. a birthing pool, and how you can work with a doctor to create a birthing plan.



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CONSENT

Consent is an important topic for everyone to have some understanding of, even if they might not be having a sexual relationship. The main takeaway points for individuals to know is that they must GIVE consent before someone touches them and they must GET consent before touching someone else.

Activity 1

- They should ask or give consent for all of these. If they are unsure, offer some reassurance that it's always helpful to ask for consent just to be sure.
- It might also be a helpful conversation to talk about times consent might be different. For example, by asking "would the answers change depending on who asked for a hug/ kiss/ sex?".

Activity 2

- Check that the individual shows some understanding that the individuals in this picture look happy (they are smiling) and their body language looks like they are leaning closer together. You could ask "Have you noticed they are leaning closer together? What might that mean?".
- You might ask a follow up question like, "What might happen if one person changed their mind?" It is also important to offer a reminder that changing your mind about being touched is okay. Their partner should respect their decision and not touch them.

Activity 3

- These people do not look happy to be touched (their facial expression looks uncomfortable, scared or unhappy).
- This is NOT okay and the person touching them should stop. You could ask a question like, “What might you do if someone was touching you when you didn’t want them to?”. Encourage them by saying that it is okay to tell the other person to stop and to ask for help if the other person persists.
- Sometimes it might be hard to tell. You could have a conversation around how difficult it can be to understand people sometimes. You could then say, “If you’re ever not sure if someone wants to be touched, it’s always better not to do it and ask (for consent) first”.

Activity 4

- It's very important for everyone to understand that there might be legal consequences if they have sex with someone under the age of 16, even if the person underage says yes.
- The purpose of this task is to help the individual feel more prepared and confident if they ever need to say no to someone. You could role play this or think of different answers the individual might give. For example, "No thank you. I don't want to have sex with you." Or "I'm not sure if I want to have sex. Please give me some time to make this decision." Offer a reminder that they are always allowed to say no.
- You could have a conversation about how to ask for help if someone touches them without their consent or is aggressive towards them when they say no. Make sure they know they are allowed to contact the police.
- It is important to make sure that they understand they can always say no and they are allowed to change their mind at any time.
- If a person under the age of 16 asks them to have sex, they **MUST** say no, even if the young person says they want to have sex. There are legal implications for anyone having sex with someone under the age of 16. If they do not appear to have understood this, refer back to the 'Age of consent' section. Once they have read it, ask them this question again and see if their answer changes. You should look for answers like "I will get in trouble with the police" or "It is against the law".

MASTURBATION & PORNOGRAPHY (PORN)

This part of the workbook can support with someone understanding more about masturbation and where/when this may be appropriate. This will also allow open conversations around pornography as well as the use of sex toys if appropriate for the person.

Activity 1:

- This activity is to support an individual to think about where might be appropriate to masturbate, specifically thinking about 'public' and 'private' spaces.
- Encourage the individual to think out loud with the first question, problem solve together if necessary. For example, if someone said the lounge, you could respond by saying, "That won't be a space where you could masturbate as there may be other people there. Where do you think you could go where you could be on your own?" (this will likely be dependent on a person's home).
- For the next activity, work through the pictures with the individual you are supporting and again encourage them to share their thinking process aloud. There may be some confusion during this activity as an individual may think it is okay to masturbate in a public bathroom. If this does come up explain that whilst your bathroom at home is a private space a public bathroom is not. This is a public space that others have access to, and it is actually against the law to masturbate in this space.
- If needed, you could then discuss that it is okay if you have thoughts about masturbating when out in public. However, it is important that you wait until you get home and can go to a private space to do this.

Activity 2:

- These are questions to get people thinking about porn and how they can/should use it if they want to.
- The first question is a tick box, you can encourage the person to think aloud when making their decisions. All of the options are potentially correct, however if the person ticks 'to learn more about sex', this might be a sign that they have lots of questions and want to know more. It would be good to have a conversation around how porn sex can be unrealistic and there are better ways to learn more about what sex is. This workbook has some resources. At this point, you could also offer your support by offering to be a person they can come to if they have any questions about sex.
- The second question requires the individual to think about which types of porn are illegal and what the impact of accessing this could be. If they are unsure, discuss together how accessing illegal porn could result in being in trouble with the police and even going to prison. You could flip back to the page in the workbook as a reminder and ask, "Shall we see if we can find the answer in the workbook?".
- The third question encourages individuals to think about where they may be able to access porn, again encourage open discussion around this.

Activity 3:

- Support the individual by helping them to think which would be more like sex in porn and which are more like 'real life' sex.
- Encourage the individual to talk aloud whilst making decisions.
- The descriptions that are truer for porn sex would be: Everyone removes their pubic hair, no one wears condoms, everyone enjoys anal sex and sex is always loud.
- If an individual marks one of the above as being true to 'real life sex', pause and explore this with them more. For example, you could respond by saying, "Actually, lots of people choose not to remove any or all of their pubic hair. It is a personal choice. I wonder where you learnt that everyone does remove their pubic hair?"

SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS (STI'S)

It is important that all people who are engaging in sexual relationships know the risks associated with this and how to protect themselves and their partners. These activities will challenge common held beliefs and open conversations about the importance of regular sexual health screenings.

Activity 1:

- Support the individual to circle symptoms that would mean they should go to the sexual health clinic.
- Encourage the individual to think out loud.
- All of the options are correct apart from bleeding during a period or a sore foot. Discuss however, that there are other potential causes of these symptoms and lots of people will have these symptoms and not have an STD. However, to be safe and look after our bodies it is important to check these symptoms with a nurse or doctor.

Activity 2

- Support the individual to tick the most common symptom of STD/STI's. The correct answer is no symptoms. Discuss with the individual why it is therefore important that they go for a sexual health screening after and before every new sexual partner. Support the individual to recall where their local sexual health clinic is and how they can book an appointment. If they're struggling to remember, you could say, "Shall we have a look back through the workbook to see if we can find it?". Revisit the materials if needed to help the person to answer these questions.



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CONTRACEPTION

It is important that everyone knows they need to use contraception if they are planning on having sex and don't want to have a baby or get (or spread) a sexually transmitted infection. However, some people (mostly women or people with a vagina) might be using contraception for other reasons (such as painful or heavy periods). Everyone should know about the different types of contraception and, where possible, make an informed choice about if they want to be on contraception, and which type they would prefer.

Activity 1

- This is a chance to check they have understood the information about contraception.
- The important messages are so the individual knows that contraception prevents pregnancy, and SOME contraception prevents spreading / getting sexually transmitted infections.
- You could discuss this by asking, "Who do you think needs to be responsible for contraception?". Both people that are going into a sexual relationship are responsible.
- You could also ask, "If you were going to have sex with someone, how would you talk to them about contraception?". This could make sure they understand how to talk to a partner about contraception.

Activity 2

- FALSE. TRUE. FALSE. TRUE. TRUE.
- This is a chance to check they have understood the information about the different types of contraception.
- It is important to offer a reminder that not all contraception protects you from sexually transmitted infections.
- You could also ask questions like, “If you had any questions about contraception, where might you go?” or ask them if they know where their nearest sexual health clinic is.

Activity 3

- 1) THE COIL. 2) PATCH. 3) CONDOM. 4) THE PILL. (Correct where needed).
- You could point out the unique T shape of the coil – acknowledge that the name is confusing because it doesn't look coiled.
- Note that the patch looks a bit like a plaster to make it easier to identify. Or ask, “Which one looks like it sticks on the skin?”.
- You could also ask, “How can you tell the difference between the pill and the emergency contraceptive pill?” Point out a difference like, “The pill needs to be taken every day so there are lots of them. You only need to take ONE pill for emergency contraception so there will only be one in the packet”. You could refer back to the previous pages to find the answers if the person is struggling.



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ABUSE

It is important that everyone knows what abuse is and that it is wrong for anyone to experience this. It is also very important that every person knows how to get support if they are a victim to this.

Activity 1:

- Encourage the individual to start to think about who their trusted people are. If they are struggling to think, you can ask questions such as, “Who makes you feel safe?” or “Who would you ask for help with a problem?”.

Activity 2:

- Encourage the individual to verbalise their thinking process.
- The secrets that are okay to keep are: what they have got a family member for their birthday and who they have a ‘crush’ on.
- If they select another option explore why they have made this selection, explain that in these instances we shouldn’t keep secrets if they or someone else needs help. Therefore, to get help they will need to tell someone they trust about what is happening.

Activity 3:

- The aim of this activity is to highlight that anyone can be an abuser. If this activity will cause confusion or distress, e.g the person might therefore think that all these people in their life are/will abuse them, then skip this activity.
- Following this activity, discuss how everyone could be an abuser and therefore no matter who the person is to us or how we feel about them, if they do anything that hurts, upsets, or makes us uncomfortable then we should tell someone about it.

Activity 4:

- The aim of the activity is to highlight what coercion is. This could be a good opportunity to illustrate the difference between coercion and someone requesting you to do something you don't want to, for example, cleaning your bedroom.
- Encourage the person to think aloud and discuss why they believe each example is or is not coercion.
- If any confusion remains following discussions, encourage the person to always talk to someone they trust if someone is asking them to do something that they don't want to do.

HEALTH SCREENINGS

Health screenings are available to everyone, checking our body parts for differences is also something everyone should be encouraged to do. Please select the activities appropriate for the person you are supporting, for example, cervical screening will only be applicable for people with vaginas.

Activity 1:

- Support the individual to identify which part of the diagram is where the speculum goes during a smear test (the vagina) and where cells are taken from (the cervix).
- If they are finding this difficult, you could flip back to the appropriate page in the workbook and say, “Can we find the answers on this page?”.

Activity 2:

- Support the individual to consider which symptoms they might go to the doctors about when checking their testicles.
- All the answers are correct, if any of the answers aren't selected, explore this with the individual and discuss again how all symptoms would need to be discussed with a doctor.

Activity 3:

- Support the individual to consider which symptoms they might go to the doctors about when checking their breasts.
- All the answers are correct, if any of the answers aren't selected explore this with the individual and discuss again how all symptoms would need to be discussed with a doctor.

SAFE INTERNET USE

This section focuses on giving information about being safe online with the internet and technology. It's important that individuals know the risks associated with sending personal information and meeting strangers they have met online in person.

Activity 1

- It's good to role model that these are conversations that can be had openly. Equally, everyone is entitled to a level of privacy so it's okay if they don't want to share everything that they do online.
- Naming someone they can go to if they felt uncomfortable online would be the most important point to cover. This could be a friend, family member, carer or other member of staff.

Activity 2

- The answers are thought to be: safe, not safe, safe, not safe, safe, not safe.
- It might be helpful to explore how they would feel if a friend called them, if a family member messaged them or if they spoke to someone about what they saw online. Though these things may usually be safe it may depend on the situation, and they may still not like it.
- It can be important to emphasise the idea of meeting someone in-person that you've met online can be dangerous as they might not be who they say they are, therefore, if you do decide you want to meet, it is best to do this in a public space initially.
- Even if someone sends a naked photo, you never have to send one back. It could also be a situation where the person doesn't want to receive the photo and therefore it may be helpful to speak about reporting the person or stopping speaking with them.
- It can be unsafe to share where you live online as the person may not be who they say they are so it's best to only give it out to people you know and trust.



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SEX AND THE LAW

This section explains what laws people need to be aware of. It is important that everyone is aware of these laws, even if they are not having sex. Services have a responsibility to adjust their support to the needs of people with learning disabilities, so it is important that this is understood.

Activity 1

- Encourage the person to think aloud when answering the true or false questions.
- The answers are true, false, false and true.
- If the person you are supporting gets a question wrong, explore this with them. Correct them gently and explain why the answer is incorrect.
- If the answer for consent is incorrect it may be a good idea to work through the consent section of the workbook together.
- If needed, you can return to the beginning of this section to revisit the content if the person is unsure of the right answer.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to Easy On The I, for use of pictures throughout this document. All Images/Resources copyright © LYPFT.

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We would like to thank the following for their contributions:

Forth Valley Trust

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