

Sexual Abuse

All individuals have the right to live free of sexual abuse and sexual harassment. All staff and persons with developmental disabilities will receive education and training regarding early identification of suspected abuse, abuse prevention, reporting, and accessing appropriate services.



Abuse Prevention Team, 2008

Mandatory Reporting of Abuse

All agencies recognize the status of employees as mandatory reporters.

Response to Sexual Misconduct

Persons with developmental disabilities who engage in sexual behavior that has potential of placing them in conflict with the law will receive information and counseling with the goal of eliminating risks and sustaining quality community life.

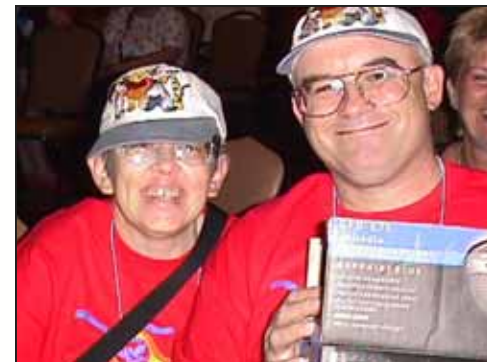
Drug and Alcohol Abuse Prevention

Persons with developmental disabilities will be provided with accurate information about the use of drugs and alcohol including signs and symptoms of abuse, health and safety risks, precautions, and treatment resources.

THREE PHILOSOPHICAL BELIEFS THAT GUIDED THIS POLICY DEVELOPMENT:

People with Developmental Disabilities have a right to:

- . . . grow into adulthood and grow into adult relationships
- . . . have a safe place to live and work
- . . . have information in order to be able to form healthy relationships



Susan and Ted Hess, 2004, Founding SAY Speakers

These policies were adapted from "Relationships and Sexuality: A Guide To Policy For Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities and Their Residential Service Providers," a project of the Regional Residential Services Society and the Nova Scotia Department of Health.

Healthy Relationships, Sexuality and Prevention of Abuse

POLICY STANDARDS

Introduction

The following policies regarding "Healthy Relationships, Sexuality and Prevention of Abuse" were developed in response to continuing issues, experiences and concerns expressed by people with developmental disabilities and their families throughout our area.

These policies are broad recommendations developed by an Advisory Committee of self-advocates, parents and community members, and were adopted by the Board of Directors of Far Northern Regional Center and Area 2 Developmental Disabilities Board.



*Michael and Benaye Cooke, 2002
Past Advisory Committee Members*

Each agency, vendor or entity serving people with developmental disabilities is encouraged to develop their own plan and protocols for implementing these policy standards.

No single set of policies can adequately address issues related to specific individual cases and situations.

S.T.D. Prevention

Persons with developmental disabilities will be provided with accurate information about Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) including risks, signs and symptoms, means of transmission, testing, treatment and recommended precautions.

Reproductive Health Care

Persons with developmental disabilities will have access to reproductive health care information and services.

Birth Control

Persons with developmental disabilities will have access to information, services and counseling to assist them in exercising their rights and responsibilities to make informed decisions regarding birth control methods.

Pregnancy

Persons with developmental disabilities will have access to information, services and counseling to assist them in exercising their rights and responsibilities to make informed decisions regarding pregnancy.

Parenting

Persons with developmental disabilities will have access to information, services and counseling to assist them in exercising their rights and responsibilities to make informed decisions regarding parenting.



Sherri Douglas and daughter Kyrsti, 2002

Marriage

Persons with developmental disabilities will have access to information, services and counseling to assist them in exercising their rights and responsibilities to make informed decisions regarding marriage.



*Steve and Valerie Sharp, 2004
Husband and wife*

Consent for Mutual Sexual Expression

Consent is integral to relationships and sexuality. Agencies will support people with developmental disabilities in increasing their knowledge, skills and ability to give and withhold their consent for sexual activities.

Mutual Sexual Expression

Mutual sexual expression, which is private and between consenting adults, is a healthy and pleasurable expression of affection, intimacy and sexuality. Sexual expressions are matters of individual choice and will be respectfully acknowledged.

Personal Sexual Expression

Personal values guide personal choices. Sexual self-stimulation is to be done in private and in a way which does not intrude on others. Adults who choose to have sexual materials will keep them in a private place and use them safely. Care providers and other staff will not impose their values on those they serve.

Persons who are minors, or adults who are conserved, will need unique considerations depending on parent involvement and the individual's legally defined status.

Implementation of these policies may need to be modified and adapted to each individual's unique characteristics, abilities, developmental capabilities and personal values.

Each agency will need to develop its own staff training schedule and competency evaluation to ensure that staff are adequately prepared to assist the persons with developmental disabilities that they serve.

POLICIES FOR ALL AGENCIES SERVING PEOPLE WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

Staff Training & Education

All agencies providing services to persons with developmental disabilities will provide training to ensure that their staff are competent in responding to the needs of persons with developmental disabilities in the areas of safety, health, relationships, self-esteem, and sexuality.



People First Peer Trainers, 2002

Education for Persons with Disabilities

Socio-sexual and health education will be provided for all persons with developmental disabilities, regardless of degree of disability. All such education will provide accurate information presented in a non-judgmental, sensitive and culturally respectful manner. Parents of minors will be provided education, support and resources so that they can exercise primary responsibility for this education.

Boundaries

All staff and persons with developmental disabilities will receive education and training to assure that professional and personal boundaries are established, maintained and respected.

Privacy of Socio-Sexual Information and Documentation

Any documentation concerning sexual matters in the file of a person with developmental disabilities will be limited to issues of health and safety. All communication and documentation will be respectful of the person's dignity and self-determination, and will be treated as confidential in nature. People with developmental disabilities have a right to access their files.

Privacy of Space

Privacy of space and time is presumed to be a need for all people, allowing for independent thought, relaxation, pursuit of personal relationships, or disengagement from social pressures. Individuals with developmental disabilities will have access to private space within their place of residence.

Privacy of Personal Care

Intimate personal care, such as personal hygiene, dressing and like activities, for persons with developmental disabilities will be conducted with the consent of the individual and in a manner that is respectful of dignity and privacy.

Relationships

Mutual social relationships such as friendships, dating, loving relationships and marriage are important components of human wellness. Agencies will support persons with developmental disabilities in developing and maintaining unpaid relationships.



*Kevin and Mary Kay Scott, 2003
Husband and wife*