

D.A.S.H.I.N.G

Disability and Sexual Health Information and
Networking Guide

Family Planning Tasmania Inc.



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Background

- Family Planning Tasmania is a state-wide community based organisation providing sexual and reproductive health services through :
 - clinical services in Hobart, Launceston, Burnie and Devonport
 - a comprehensive range of health promotion and education services including the Making Choices program.

Introduction

The aim of the *Making Choices* program is to increase the options for young people in relation to **decision making about pregnancy and parenthood**.

Making Choices: Young People and Pregnancy in Tasmania (Coombes & Hinton, 2005).

The objectives of the *Making Choices* program are to:

- Provide young people with increased access to services and information to support them to make appropriate choices in relation to pregnancy and parenting;
- Develop effective and realistic strategies based on an implementation plan and to ensure collaboration between services; and
- Develop and foster a network of key stakeholders who have a commitment to increasing the support available to young people who are pregnant or parenting.

It is an integral part of the core business and services provided by Family Planning Tasmania Inc.

Stakeholders

- People with disabilities
- Family Planning Tasmania
- Making Choices Network
- Cosmos Inc.
- Speak Out Advocacy
- DHHS
- Department Of Education
- Parkside Foundation
- Relationships Australia
- ACD (TAS)
- Autism Tasmania
- Oak Enterprises
- Eskleigh
- Holyoake
- Polytechnic
- SASS
- Multiple Sclerosis
- Migrant Resource Centre
- Tas Aboriginal Community
- Tas Care
- Longford House

Consultation Process

To discuss:

- the key information to be included in the resource
- the most accessible format in which to present that information
- the dissemination process
- volunteers for steering committee

Key Information

- Specific issues
- Simple early intervention strategies
- Links with other services and resources
- Involving parents and relatives (if appropriate)
- Professional issues
- Legal issues

Format


The Resource Package

- User friendly
- Flexible
- Offer referral options
- A4 'loose leaf' fact sheets
- Maintained through *Making Choices* program
- Offered as 'read only' on-line.

Sample Fact Sheet

- **Inappropriate sexualised behaviours in the school/workplace can affect the health and safety of people with disabilities. They could result in personal injury, workplace discrimination and harassment charge, and possibly leave people with disabilities vulnerable to sexual assault, abuse and bullying.**
- Simply telling a client that certain behaviours are inappropriate, dangerous or unsafe after they have occurred, is often not enough to stop the behaviour from re-occurring, particularly in the event of sexualised behaviours. Your client/student will need support in:
 - Identifying the inappropriate behaviour
 - Understanding why the behaviour occurred (the trigger)
 - Learning an alternative behaviour

In the event of sexualised behaviours in the school/workplace, it is considered best practice to:

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- Address the sexualised behaviours as close to the occurrence as possible, this supports the client in identifying the behaviour.
 - Talk to the client about what happened leading up to the behaviour, assisting the client to identify any triggers that may have excited them, or worried, confused, coerced them into displaying the behaviour.
 - Model an alternative, preferred, behaviour in its place, ensuring that the client understands the alternative as appropriate.
 - Keep detailed records of any sexualised behaviours, the context in which they occurred and alternative models recommended. Review client behaviour.
 - Report any sexual assaults or offences and review risk management policies.

Diversionary strategies can also be used to divert clients away from displaying sexualised behaviors; however this strategy alone will not assist the client in learning alternative appropriate behaviour.

- ***Masturbation in the workplace***

Case study. Tom, 31, is reported to masturbate all the time. He often puts his hands down his pants while at the workshop, and has been seen in the workshop toilets rubbing his penis against the sinks. Tom has moderate intellectual disability and only speaks and understands a few words.

Masturbation is the main sexual expression and means of relief available to many people with intellectual disability. This is often seen as a problem, but it is a normal and natural experience for women and men of all ages. However a number of difficulties may arise including:

- 1. Masturbation in public places.
- 2. Very frequent or prolonged masturbation, often without climax.
- 3. Practices that may cause injury.

- Research has shown that people with moderate to severe disabilities may be taught to masturbate safely and effectively. Education to encourage masturbation only in appropriate places can be provided as part of a broader program to encourage appropriate behaviour.

Resources:

References

- *Sexuality. In Lennox N, ed. Management Guidelines: Developmental Disability. Therapeutic Guidelines Limited: Melbourne, 2005:183-189.*
- *Kaeser F, O'Neill J. Task analyzed masturbation instruction for a profoundly retarded adult male: a data based case study. Sex Disability 1987; 8 (1):17-24.*
- *Eastgate, G. Sexual health for people with intellectual disability. Instituto Nacional de Salud Pública 2009*

Training

Training of disability, health, education staff and community members

- FPT offers training statewide to mainstream service providers – and inexperienced disability workers
- Ensures each region has facilitators to train others
- FPT offers on-going training and refresher courses
- DASHING is linked with other training programs

Communities of Practice

- **Developing 'Communities of Practice'**
 - key to ensuring sustainability of the resource
 - enables regional interest group
 - forum for stakeholders to share experiences and resources

Review and Evaluation

- **Review and evaluation**
 - To include a self reflection and self auditing program
 - To identify the strengths and weaknesses of workplace practices
 - To enable ongoing internal review and evaluation
 - To offer an external forum for review and evaluation
 - To conduct 6 monthly reviews and an annual evaluation

Conclusion

- Any questions or queries can be directed to:
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