What We Found

Practitioners are faced with an overwhelming lack of comprehensive, adaptable and accessible sexual health curricula for students with intellectual disabilities.

Implications For School Psychologists
As mental health professionals with interdisciplinary training in education, program development, and consultation, school psychologists are uniquely poised to reduce the elevated sexual risk experienced by students with intellectual and developmental disabilities (SWIDD). Practitioners must have access to comprehensive sexuality curricula.

Contact: cfsp.research@du.edu

Department of Child, Family and School Psychology
Morgridge College of Education
University of Denver
The Importance of Sexuality Education

Individuals with Intellectual disabilities experience sexual abuse at a rate 2.2 times greater than the general population.

HOWEVER Direct Educational Intervention is proven to...

- Increase Consent Capacity (Sexual Knowledge in general)
- Increase Sociosexual Skills
- Increase Self Esteem
- Decrease Vulnerability to Sexual Abuse

...across levels of cognitive capability!

Barriers to Sexual Health Education

Stigma and Beliefs
Society tends to incorrectly view individuals with IDD as either asexual or hypersexual; In the first case, they do not need sexual health education. In the second, caregivers may fear that sexual health education would make the problem worse.

“Other Health and Learning Goals
Many caregivers feel that sexual health needs are secondary to pressing health and social needs associated with a student's disability.

Caregiver Confidence
Caregivers and particularly parents report feeling unprepared to teach their student about sexual health. Additionally, many fear that sexual topics will be beyond their child's comprehension capabilities.

Trends in Current Sexuality Education Curriculums

Accessibility
Most are easy to access online, however few are free or cost effective, averaging at $205 per curriculum.

Efficacy
Almost no curricula have peer-reviewed studies confirming their efficacy. Few have assessments to record student learning.

Adaptability
Most curriculums include directions for adapting learning based on student need. Few include alternative modes to present information.

Adhesion to National Standards
Curricula tend to include most but not all standards outlined by the NSHES. STDs, parenthood, and relationships tend to be the most overlooked.

Special Topics
Curricula rarely include special topics such as sexuality, gender fluidity, and porn. However, most curricula place an emphasis on consent.

Individuals with Intellectual disabilities experience sexual abuse at a rate 2.2 times greater than the general population.