

Conference Presentation Abstract

Title:

Sexuality, Safety & Smarts: Creative Sexuality Education Strategies for Youth with ABI

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Summary:

Youth with ABI may have challenges with sexuality because of losing previous knowledge, and difficulties with comprehension, assertiveness, and impulse control. Rehabilitation staff play a key role in supporting the development of health sexuality. This presentation describes a workshop for 16 to 25 year olds entitled *Sexuality, Safety and Smarts*. Participants were screened prior to attendance and the group was facilitated by four staff members from different rehabilitation professions. Eighteen clients with a broad range of cognitive and health issues attended. The group was started with identifying group guidelines and an ice-breaker activity. The group was focused on "Being Safe in a Relationship". This was discussed using a framework of Red Light, Yellow Light, and Green Light behaviours. Red Light behaviours were defined as not okay because they are illegal, non-mutual, uncomfortable, unsafe, or scary. Yellow Light behaviours were defined as sometimes okay depending on the situation. Green Light behaviours were defined as okay because they are appropriate, safe, comfortable, and mutually respectful. This tri-colour model was used to explore each of three stages of relationship development: Flirting, Dating, and Sexuality. The group was felt to be successful for a variety of reasons. All clients participated despite having very different levels of ability. In addition, pre and post questionnaires were administered to evaluate knowledge of and comfort with talking about sexuality. Scores indicated enjoyment and increased knowledge. As well, despite some statements by clients who had difficulties with disinhibition, facilitators were able to redirect the discussion and keep participants focused.

Learning Objectives:

Practical strategies for running a group for educating youth with ABI about sexuality will be provided.