Talking about Sex with Trans/Gender Expansive Youth

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Workshop goal: Empower you to promote healthy sex and sexuality
- Consent & boundaries
- Positive body image
- Good relationships
- Trust & equal power
- Respect & kindness
- Asking for what you want
- Intimacy
- Pleasure
- Safer sex

“Sex education has to stop being gender binary.” Diane Ehrensaft, PhD - Gender Born, Gender Made

We’ve inherited a binary gender system
- Cultural belief that we’re either exclusively male or female, that all 7 billion humans fit in one of two boxes, and that bodies dictate gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation.
- In fact, bodies are sexed in unique ways but not strictly as one of two opposite sexes. Sexual biology does not determine gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation.

What if we taught that ...
- Most boys/men have penises and most girls/women have vulvas, but not all.
- There are girls/women with penises, boys/men with vulvas.
- Our genitals, gonads, hormones, chromosomes don’t define our gender identify, sexual orientation, or how we feel most at home expressing our gender.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics for 0 - 2 years old</th>
<th>Topics for 3 - 5 years old</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>Where babies come from (simple version)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love</td>
<td>Diversity of families, love makes a family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>Gender identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body exploration</td>
<td>Respect and kindness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private vs. public behavior</td>
<td>Boundaries and consent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics for 6 - 8 years old</th>
<th>Topics for 9 - 12 years old</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Where babies come from</td>
<td>Healthy relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More in depth answers</td>
<td>Sexual orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family diversity – more in depth</td>
<td>Masturbation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender equality</td>
<td>Puberty and blockers, Medical transition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consent, respect for others</td>
<td>Your expectations re: dating &amp; sexual activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puberty and “blockers”</td>
<td>Preventing STIs and unwanted pregnancy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive body image</td>
<td>Pornography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical transition – simplified</td>
<td>Reliable resources</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics for Teens</th>
<th>Preventative check ups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consent and boundaries</td>
<td>Masturbation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dating and disclosure</td>
<td>Pleasure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthy relationships</td>
<td>Social media and sexting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect, equality, kindness</td>
<td>Hook ups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual orientation</td>
<td>Pornography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STIs and unwanted pregnancy</td>
<td>Reliable resources</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Talking about Sex with Trans/Gender Expansive Youth

It’s never too early or too late to talk about sex.
- It’s not “The Talk” but many conversations over many years.
  - You can have values based discussions.
  - Don’t wait – you can easily initiate.
  - You can (and should) practice!
- It’s worth it.
  - Promotes healthy sexuality.
  - Reduces risky behavior.
  - Gets easier with practice.
  - Counters negative messages and misinformation (silence condones)

Being/becoming an “askable” parent is key
- Be a reliable source of good, age appropriate information.
- Talk about more than mechanics.
- Consider the child’s point of view.
- Be honest, direct, and specific.
- Practice! (yes, really!)

Initiating conversations in everyday settings is key
- Song lyrics, movies, social media posts, books, ads, news stories, video games ...
- To initiate conversations about healthy relationships, consent, family planning, safer sex ...

Talk about body positivity
- *Know and understand your body*
- *Find things you like about your body*
- *Appreciate what your body can do*
- *Be active and take care of your body*
- *Do whatever you need to do to feel comfortable in your body*

Talk about consent – for pre-teens
- *Your body is your own.*
- Modeling consent: “May I hug you?”
- Empowering, practicing “No.”
- Good touch, bad touch and touch boundaries.
- Respecting other people’s boundaries.

Talk about consent – for teens
- What is consent? Consent and tea [https://vimeo.com/126553913](https://vimeo.com/126553913)
- Discussing and respecting each other’s boundaries
- Every time – previous consent does not apply
- Hook ups or long-term relationships
- Ahead of time or in the heat of the moment
  - *Are you comfortable?*
  - *Is this okay?*
  - *Do you want to slow down?*
  - *Do you want to go any further?*
  - *Do you want to pause? To stop?*
Talking about Sex with Trans/Gender Expansive Youth

Talk about masturbation
- Touching your body and genitals for pleasure (in private) is natural and normal
- Desire typically increases with puberty
- Relieves sexual tension
- Helps us learn what we find pleasurable
- What do your friends say about masturbation? What do you think?

Talk about family planning
- Do you want to be a parent?
  - When is the ideal time for you?
  - What do you want to do in your life before becoming a parent?
- What have you heard about your options?
  - Pre transition
  - Post transition
- What are the pros/cons? What appeals to you?

Talk about sexual orientation
- Love is a many gendered thing! A spectrum of possibilities
- Youth may explore their identity and change how they label themselves over time
- Lots of identities other than straight or gay --- bisexual, queer, pansexual, asexual ...
- How would you describe your sexual orientation?
- Do your friends support you?

Talk about dating and disclosure
- Everyone has a right to privacy. It’s a personal decision only you can make.
  - Do you prefer to be not disclose when you start dating someone?
  - What are the pros and cons?
  - I support you and will help you make a plan.

Talk about pornography
- Average age of first exposure: 11 yrs old
- Defining pornography
  - Pictures and videos of naked people (having sex).
  - Created to make money; Hyper stimulating; Not a depiction of real life sex, sexuality.
- Curiosity about sex is normal and good.
  - But porn isn’t a very reliable source of information.
- Let’s find books, websites about sexuality and bodies geared to your age.

Talk about safer sex – avoiding sexually transmitted infections
- Sexually transmitted infections (STIs, aka STDs) usually spread via vaginal, oral, or anal sex.
  - Half of new cases – ages 15-24
  - Most cause mild or no symptoms. Regular testing is key.
- Safer sex: Condoms, dental dams, vaccines
  - Apps: CondomPro, iCondom, CondomFinder
  - How to put on a sock: youtube.com/watch?v=06kT9yfj7QE
  - How to make a dental dam out of a condom youtube.com/watch?v=IGerqhsxV2A
- Do you know where you can get confidential testing and treatment?
Talking about Sex with Trans/Gender Expansive Youth

Talk about contraception – avoiding unplanned pregnancy
- **What have you heard about preventing unplanned pregnancy? What do you think works?**
- Taking hormones is not contraception.
  - MYTH: “Trans boys/men can’t become pregnant while on testosterone.”
  - MYTH: “Trans girls/women don’t produce sperm while on estrogen.”
  - FACT: People CAN be fertile on hormones.
- Hormone-free contraception: Condoms, IUDs (ParaGard)
- Just in case: Plan B “morning after” pill

Talk about preventive health screenings
- Take care of the anatomy present while honoring gender identity
- We’ll talk to your doctor’s office ahead of time to make sure they use your name and pronouns.

Talk about having sex
- We all deserve love, respect, kindness, and great sex! ...when your body, mind & heart are ready
- There is no one way to have sex no matter what your gender or orientation or body parts.
- You don’t have to acknowledge certain body parts or have them touched.

Talk about transition options
- **What have you heard about social transition?**
- **What have you heard about blocking puberty?**
- **About hormone therapy?**
- **About surgery?**
- **What do you see as the pros and cons?**
- **What do you want to do with your body?**

Talk about hormone therapy and sexual functioning
- Testosterone (T) may...
  - Increase libido
  - Cause clitoris to grow
  - Change genital sensation
  - Decrease or increase lubrication
- Estrogen may...
  - Reduce libido
  - Affect ability to get or keep an erection
  - Cause testicles and prostate to shrink

Talk about gender affirming surgery and sexual functioning
- Can increase confidence and comfort with one’s body lead to improved sexual self-esteem.
- Affirming masculine gender identity
  - Chest contouring if breast tissue has developed. Can result in visible scars.
  - Metoidioplasty: Penis may be too small for penetration
  - Phalloplasty: Penis may need erectile device.
- Affirming feminine gender identity
  - Breast augmentation: After a year or two of development on hormone therapy
  - Vaginoplasty: Likely to be orgasmic. Not likely to self-lubricate. Likely to need dilation
Talking about Sex with Trans/Gender Expansive Youth

Help your child create a disclosure plan (more details provided on page 7)
- What do you want them to know about you?
- What do you want them to know about being trans?
- How could you “test the water” before disclosing?
- When and where would it be safe to disclose?
- Which questions are you comfortable answering?
- How do you want to respond to hard questions?
- Do you want to be prepared to suggest resources?
- Who do you have for support if it doesn’t go well?
- Let’s practice ahead of time.

Initiate conversations
- Opportunities: Song lyrics, TV shows, movies, ads, Social Media & YouTube, Magazines, News
- Potential Topics: Consent & boundaries, Trust & equal power, Respect & kindness, Sexism & double standards, Pornography, Safer sex & testing, Dating & disclosure, Family planning
- Find out: What do they know already? What would they like to know? What have they heard? What do they think? Do they know where to get good info and confidential testing, treatment?

Keep the conversation going
- Ask and listen.
  - What have you heard about _____?
  - What do you think about _____?
  - How do you feel about _____?
- Affirm and listen.
  - “I think I see where you’re coming from.”
  - “I understand what you are feeling. I often felt that way as a teen, too.”
  - “I know it can be awkward to talk about sex, but I’m so glad you are.”

Contribute to the conversation
- Be direct and specific.
- Keep your answers short and simple.
- If you don’t know the answer, look it up together.
- Check to see if you’ve answered their question.
- Ask if there’s anything else they want to know.

Create a Healthy Sex Ed Action Plan (worksheet on page 8)
1. Describe your values (in writing) in terms of healthy sex and sexuality.
2. Write down the messages you want to give your child.
3. Commit to talking with your child.
   1. List three topics you want to discuss.
   2. Describe how you might start each of the conversations.
   3. Set a deadline for these discussions.
   4. List the next three topics you’ll discuss.
Talking about Sex with Trans/Gender Expansive Youth

RESOURCES

BOOKS

- *What Makes a Baby* by Cory Silverberg: Ages **pre-school to 8**
- *Sex is a Funny Word* by Cory Silverberg: Ages **8 to 12**
- *Girl Sex 101* by Allison Moon: Ages: **Mature teens and up**
- *s.e.x - the all you need to know sexuality guide to get you through your teens and twenties* by Heather Corinna: **Ages: Teens+**
- *30 Days of Sex Talks* by “Educate and Empower Kids” **Ages: 3-7, Ages 8-11, and Ages 12+**
- *How to Talk to Your Kids about Pornography* by “Educate and Empower Kids” - **Ages 8+**

WEBSITES

- Advocates for Youth [advocatesforyouth.org/](http://advocatesforyouth.org/)
- Girl Sex 101 [girlsex101.com/](http://girlsex101.com/)
- Planned Parenthood [plannedparenthood.org/teens](http://plannedparenthood.org/teens)
- Scarlet Teen [scarleteen.com/](http://scarleteen.com/)
- Seventeen [seventeen.com/love/](http://seventeen.com/love/)
- Sex, etc. [sexetc.org/](http://sexetc.org/)
- Sexxie TV [www.sexxie.tv/](http://www.sexxie.tv/)
- Teen Source [teenssource.org/](http://teenssource.org/)

YOUTUBE VIDEOS (non erotic)

- Planned Parenthood Channel [https://www.youtube.com/user/plannedparenthood](https://www.youtube.com/user/plannedparenthood)
- How to put on a sock (condom instructions): [youtube.com/watch?v=06kT9yfj7QE](https://youtube.com/watch?v=06kT9yfj7QE)
- How to make a dental dam out of a condom (trans man) [youtube.com/watch?v=IGerqhsxV2A](https://youtube.com/watch?v=IGerqhsxV2A)

APPS FOR MOBILE DEVICES

- Sex Positive (by Univ of Oregon) [https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=edu.uoregon.sexpositive2&hl=en](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=edu.uoregon.sexpositive2&hl=en)
**Talking about Sex with Trans/Gender Expansive Youth**

**DATING AND DISCLOSURE PLANNING**

Talk with your child about the dating rules in your household
- Age, curfew, types of dates (group, couple), etc.

Talk with your child about their right to privacy and disclosure.
- What are the pros and cons of privacy and disclosure?
- What feels right for you? What do you want to do at this point? I will support you.

Help them with self-acceptance.
- You deserve to be loved for exactly who you are. Nothing less. There are people out there who will think you’re the most rad person on earth and want to date you. Be selective!
- Whether we are trans, nonbinary, or cis, dating almost always includes some rejection and trial runs before finding that special person. Be prepared by loving yourself first.
- If they reject you for being trans, that’s reveals their own fears. It’s got nothing to do with you.

Help them think about the disclosure conversation.
- What do you want to disclose?
  a. What do you want them to know about you? (as a whole person)
  b. What do you want them to know about being trans or nonbinary?
- What questions might they ask you?
  a. Which questions are you comfortable answering? What would you say?
  b. Which questions would you prefer not to answer? How could you respond?
  c. Which questions do you dread? How do you want to handle those questions?
- Do you want to be prepared to suggest resources? (websites, videos, books, friends)

Help them think about personal safety (emotional and physical).
- How could you “test the water” before disclosing?
  a. Could you bring up a related news story, movie, book, song, incident at school?
  b. What could you ask to better understand their initial comments and responses?
- How do you know whether the person will be respectful with your private information?
  a. Do they gossip? Share others’ private info? Make fun of sensitive info about others?
  b. Do they protect other people’s privacy? Are they respectful of personal information?
  c. Do you care if they tell other people about your gender history?
- When would you want to have the conversation?
  a. Do you want to disclose before you become invested? (to avoid investing in jerks!)
  b. Do you want to wait until you know them better before sharing personal info?
  c. Do you want to disclose long before things could possibly get physical?
  d. Do you want to disclose before anyone is under the influence?
- Where would you want to have the conversation?
  a. What might be the safest places? The least safe? Where would you feel best?
  b. Do you want to disclose when family or friends are present to support you?
  c. Do you want to have family or friends nearby, ready to join you if you text them?
  d. Do you want to have your own ride arranged so you can leave at any time?
  e. Do you want to invite the person here to talk at home? In private? With family present?

Help them think about self-care.
- Let’s practice so you can see try out what you want to say and how you want to answer questions.
- Who do you want to support you after disclosing, especially if it doesn’t go the way you hoped?
HEALTHY SEX ED ACTION PLAN FOR PARENTS

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