



# **Developmental Approaches**

## **Uncomfortable, Taboo, and Awkward Situations**

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Threshold Community Program  
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# Introduction

## Overview

- Taboo and uncomfortable topics
- Classroom intervention and education
- Family communication
- Questions and Discussion



# The Uncomfortable, Taboo, and Awkward

- Child and Young Adulthood Sexuality
- Toileting difficulties
- Hygiene
- Bullying, Hate Speech, Cursing
- Religion and Politics
- Drugs and Alcohol

# Can you give me some examples?

- Public masturbation
- *Women aren't as smart as men*
- There is fecal matter spread on the bathroom walls
- Strong body odor, loud farts, belching through tests
- *Democrats, republicans, conservatives, progressives, communists, libertarians are idiots*
- *Can you keep a secret?*

# What doesn't work?

- Making assumptions, getting angry, negative reinforcement
- Extinction methods, restraint
- Venting to colleagues
- Shame, embarrassment, singling someone out

# Safety, Respect, Empathy, Education

- **Safety**

- Situation assessment
- Curiosity first; stay calm
- Follow professional ethical guidelines

- **Respect and Empathy**

- Avoid shaming, embarrassment
- Use strength based language
- Maintain trust and positive connection

- **Education**

- Age appropriate
- Clear communication
- Explain the why



# Safety

- Situation assessment
  - Prioritize needs and basic functioning
- Curiosity before limit setting, stay calm
- Follow professional ethics guidelines



# Video: Safety

## Safety assessment

- Danger to themselves or others
- Reality based thinking





# Respect and Empathy

- Avoid shaming or embarrassment
- Stay open and non-judgmental
- Trusting connection



# Video: Respect and Empathy

- Open and curious
- Calm and person centered
- Maintain trust and connection

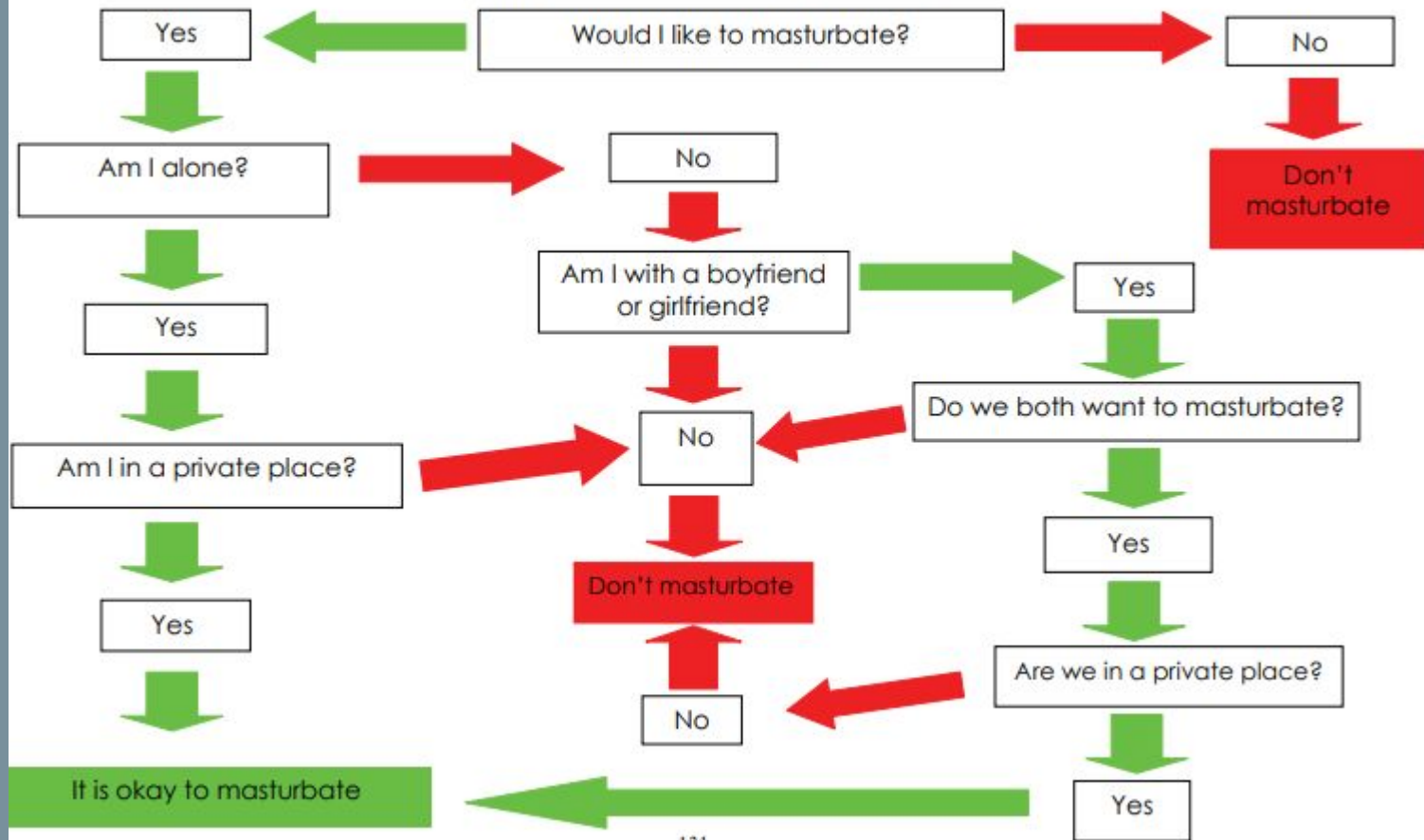


# Education

- Developmentally and Age appropriate
- Clear, relevant, review and repeat
- Explain the *why*
  - expectations, social norms, possible outcomes



### Activity sheet 7.3c: Masturbation Flowchart





Who Can I Kiss?



Kissing is touching



I can kiss my Mom



I can kiss my Dad



No kissing at school



I will not kiss  
my teachers



I will not kiss  
my friends



I will not kiss the  
girls at school

# Education

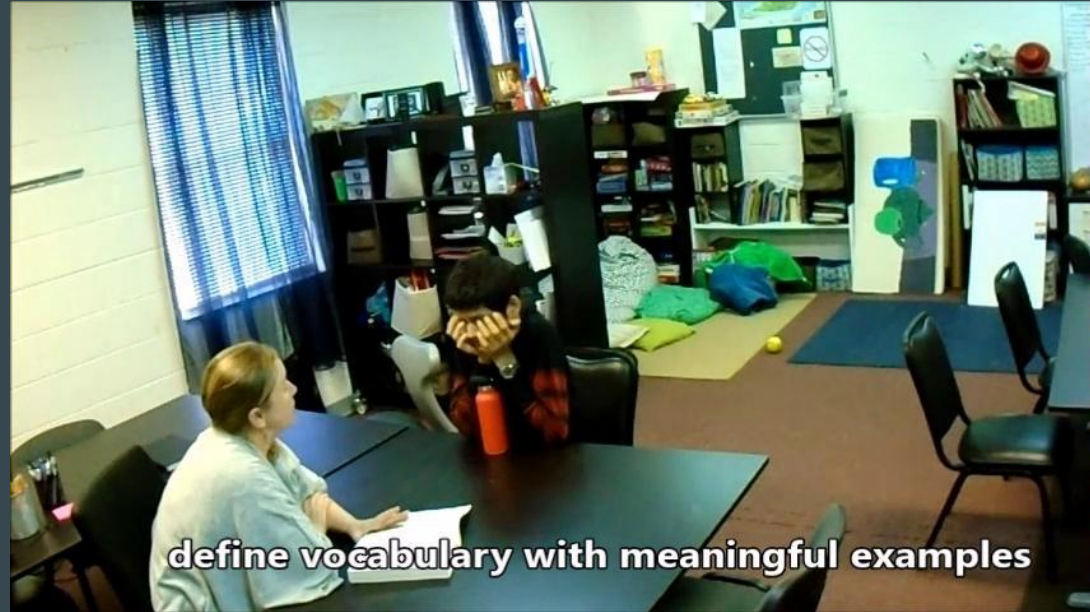
- Developmentally and age appropriate
- Clear, relevant, review and repeat
- Explain the *why*
  - expectations, social norms, possible outcomes





# Video: Education

- Check for understanding
- Define vocabulary
- Use meaningful examples
- State actions in the positive
- Reinforce efforts



# Summary

- Safety
  - Curiosity first, stay calm
- Respect and Empathy
  - Trusting connection, positive relationship
- Education
  - Clear communication; relevant, review, repeat





# Uncomfortable and Awkward Family Situations

- A parent relays they found pornography on their child's computer
- A student got into a fight and used hate speech
- A parent is speaking negatively about their child in front of their child
- A parent asks you to keep something secret
- You are filing a DFCS report

# Why is this uncomfortable?

- Lack of education or training for professionals
- Fear of shaming or embarrassing family and student
- Fear of reaction from family
- Not an expert on the child, family, or situation at hand
- Myths, generalizations and stereotypes of race, ethnicity, culture
- Personal values, morals, norms, and beliefs

# Safety, Respect and Empathy, Communication, Education

- **Safety**
  - Assess situation
  - Prioritize basic functioning and needs
  - Follow professional ethical guidelines
- **Respect and empathy**
  - Maintain a non-judgemental and positive regard
- **Communication**
  - Collaborate and be direct
  - Communicate frequently and clearly
- **Education**
  - Provide relevant and factual information

# Safety

- Situation assessment
  - Prioritize immediate needs
- Follow professional code and guidelines
- Utilize Crisis Resources
- Community Resources

## Who to contact?

- Local, Emergency Services
- State Crisis Hotlines
- National Suicide Hotline

# Respect and Empathy

- Non-judgemental and positive regard
- Curiosity, warmth, and empathy
- Meeting the family where they are
  - Individualized support



## Audio Clip: Respect and Empathy Vulnerability

Looking back personally, I needed a personal relationship, like for me, I felt like when you're on a different path with your kid, you know I came with there was more of a traumatic history, my son's being kicked out of places, you feel like you're kid's not being accepted in the world, you're very fearful for the future, that I needed—I think the parent is coming in very vulnerable, or at least for me, that's how I felt, and I felt my son was vulnerable. People coming to you in vulnerability, I think we have to feel that basic floortime level of self-regulating with you and feeling engaged warmth, so that it doesn't feel so clinical. I guess what I'm trying to say like that somehow there feels that it's a balanced relationship.

## Audio Clip: Respect and Empathy: Balance

I still think you have to figure out a way that a person feels they can be safe and not judged, and so that you can be open with each other, where are the struggles at home, so the parents don't have their defenses up, you know, we really want to be there to help you, from school to home, you have to—and I don't know if I have the answer on that, and maybe it's an individualized thing, maybe each parent needs it in a different way, but, yeah, I know for me from a parent perspective, if it feels too clinical, I could feel my own defenses come up, like why would I share about a really vulnerable hard moment if then all the teachers are going to sit around and talk about me. There's that feeling, so you want to feel like—we have to find a way to help parents just feel safe that this isn't about judging you, and that you're validating the parental experience, that yes it is hard, it is hard raising kids that have challenges.

# Communication

- Collaborative information gathering
  - Utilizing a team approach
- Accessibility
  - Direct and transparent
- Frequency
  - Consistent communication





# Video Clip: Communication

- Communication:
  - Respect
  - Providing context:  
good and bad
  - Transparency
  - Clear language



# Education

- Family Education
  - Providing appropriate resources
  - Coaching
- Growth oriented mindset
  - Professional should stay open and curious
  - Flexibility in understanding

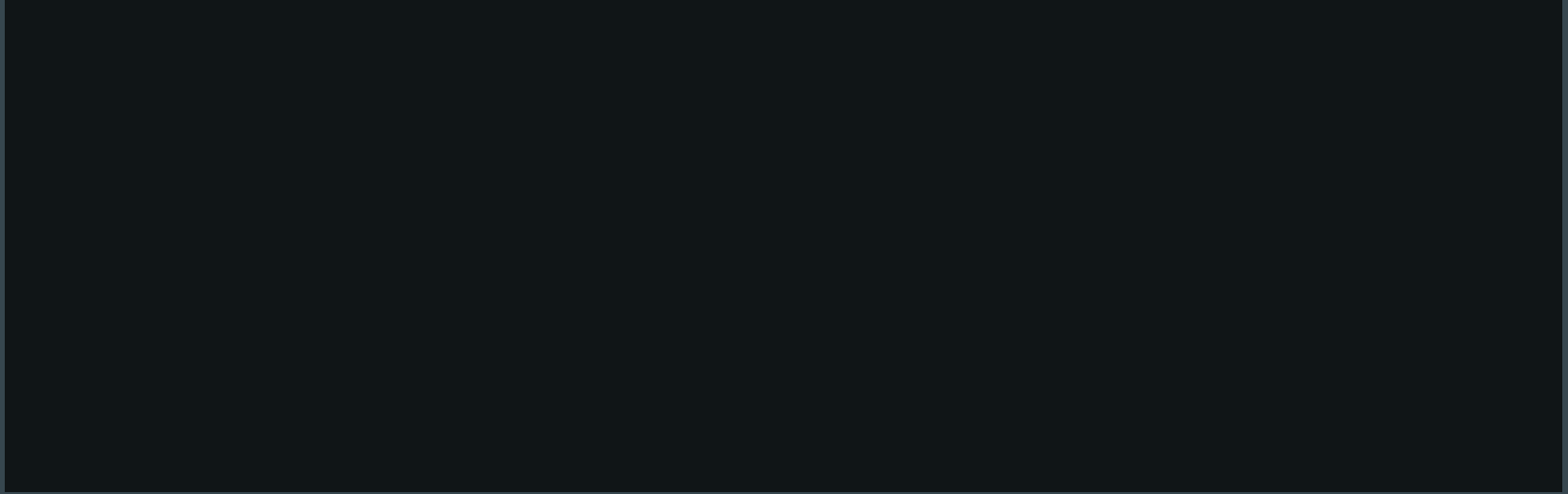


# Strategies and Summary

- Safety
- Respect and Empathy
  - Providing a space for the family
- Communication
  - Collaboration
- Education



# Questions?



# Resources

## Education:

- S.E.X. the all you need to know sexuality guide H. Corinna
- Taking Care of Myself M. Wrobel
- Navigating the Social World J. McAfee
- Sex is a Funny Word C. Silverberg, F. Smyth

## Websites:

- <https://thresholdcommunity.org/>
- <https://www.flexiblemindtherapy.com/resources.html>
- <https://asdsexed.org/>
- <https://www.disabled-world.com/disability/sexuality/>
- <http://www.sexualityanddisability.org/>