

Supporting Individuals with Down Syndrome in Developing Skills Necessary for Developing and Maintaining Relationships

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The What.

Specific Topics for Healthy Relationships

- Social skills (etiquette, conversational skills)
- Social boundaries/Appropriate vs inappropriate behavior
- Conflict resolution
- Handling rejection
- Understanding emotions
- Dating skills
- Knowledge about consent
- Knowledge about intimacy
- Knowledge about abuse

Shared Experiences from Young Adults with DS

- Why I Want Good Social Skills!
 - “Helps me be successful at school and work.”
 - “Helps me make friends and get along with others including my family.”
 - “So I can meet someone to date.”
 - “Be polite and have good manners.”

Shared Experiences from Young Adults with DS

- Some Social Situations are Hard for Me
 - “It is hard to talk to people I do not know.”
 - “It is hard to be part of a conversation, especially when someone talks too fast.”
 - “It is hard for me to think of things to talk about.”
 - “It is hard for me to go places when I do not know what to expect.”

INTRODUCTIONS

Look in eye.

Smile.

Shake hand.

Say, "Hello my name is _____."



RESPONDING TO AN INTRODUCTION

Look in eye.

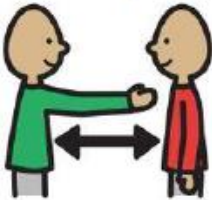
Smile.

Shake hand.

Say, "My name is _____. How are you today?"

STEPS TO HAVING A GOOD CONVERSATION

1. Maintain good personal space.



2. Greet the other person.



3. Make eye contact.



4. Take turns talking and listening to the other person.



5. Ask questions

- a. When something isn't understood
- b. To keep the conversation going



6. End the conversation

- a. Say "Good-bye."
- b. Say "See you later."
- c. Say "Have a nice day."
- d. Say "It was nice to meet you."
- e. Say "It was nice seeing you."

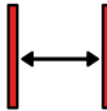


Personal Space

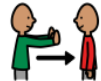
When I talk to other people I sometimes stand too close.



I need to remember to step back and leave some space between us.



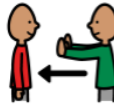
It is polite to respect others' space. I should leave an arm's length between myself and the other person when we talk. This makes me a good friend!



When I forget to give people personal space I can say, "I'm sorry" and take a step back.



Other people should respect my personal space as well. It makes me feel safe and happy!



Now I know what to do!



The How.

Parent Approaches

Planful Approach

- When a situation involving sexuality or sexual behavior arises, the parent or disability service provider takes the initiative and uses the opportunity to teach instead of punish or scold. Being planful creates a learning experience for both the parent and the child, leading to improved communication and knowledge.

Reactive Approach

- When a situation involving sexuality or sexual behavior arises, the parent or disability service provider responds to the situation by restricting, punishing or limiting the behavior or communication. This response contributes to a negative message about sexuality and sexuality education.

Example of a Planful Approach

A parent of an adolescent boy with DS is called by the principal because her son was found playing with his penis in the classroom. Mom tells the principal she will take care of it when he comes home.

At home, Mom talks to her son about the concepts of private and public. She mentions how the penis is a private body part and should be cared for in private. She reminds him that the bathroom at home and his bedroom are private areas and if he needs to touch his penis, he should do it in those areas. If he must touch his penis when he is at school, he should ask to use the restroom and then make sure he is in a locked bathroom stall.

Example of a Reactive Approach

A parent of a young adult with DS attended a sexuality workshop and wanted to know if she should consider arranging for her son to have a vasectomy because she was concerned he might get someone pregnant. She worried that he lacked understanding and could not make good decisions about sexuality. She believed a vasectomy would help prevent an unwanted pregnancy.

Strategies for Parents

- Awareness.
- Teach the skills that are important to you as a family.
- Help your child learn to generalize the new skills.
- Provide opportunities to practice the new skills.
- Maximize independence with the new skills.

Learning Styles

- Visual
 - these learners need to “see” the information or material in one form or another
- Auditory
 - These learners are likely to learn best when hearing the information
- Motor
 - These learners need to do an activity, practice a skill or manipulate material physically in order to learn most effectively

Learning Style Examples - Visual

- Visual supports like pictures or schedules
- Social stories
- Demonstration
- Movies
- Written materials with lots of graphics

Learning Style Examples - Auditory

- Verbal praise
- Verbal prompts
- Listen to a social story
- Reading out loud

Learning Style Examples - Motor

- Practice/Experiment
- Role play
- Model behavior
- Write
- Play a game

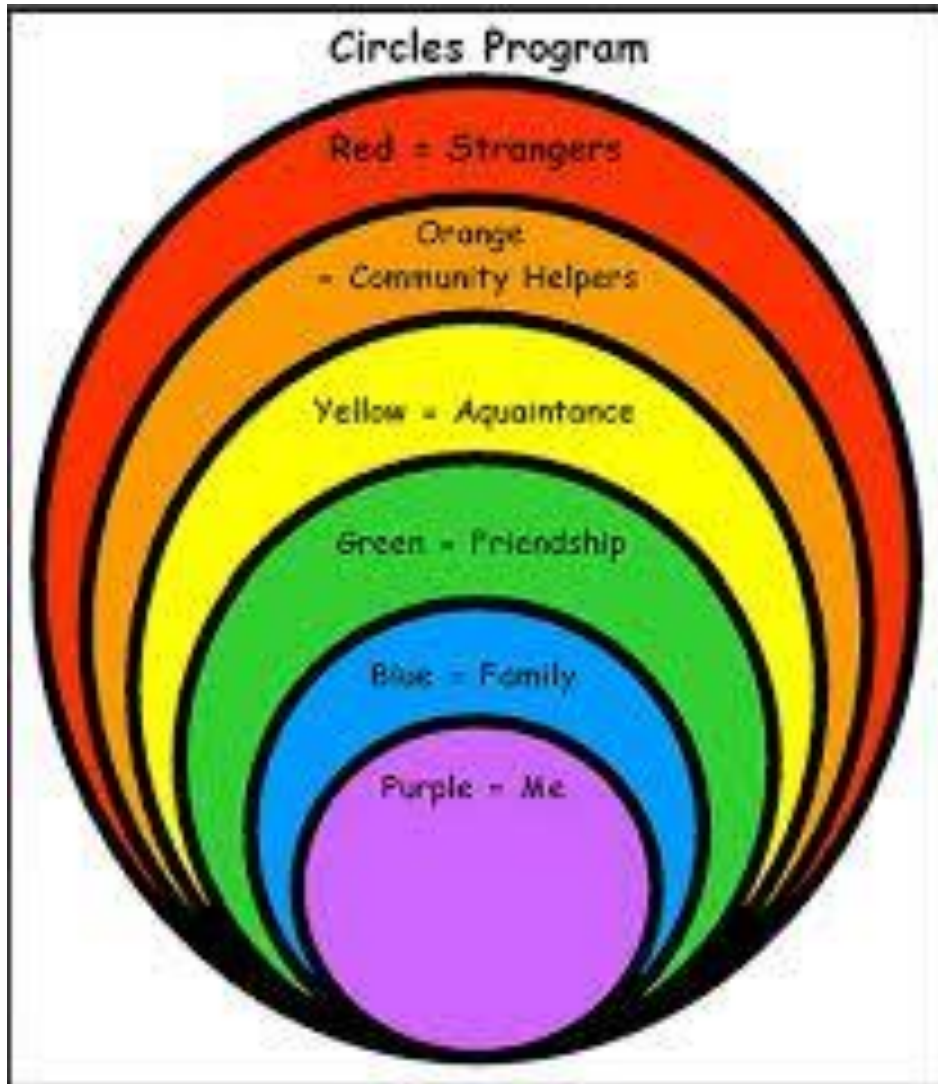
Case Study

At work, the supervisor is concerned that your young adult with DS is having trouble with personal boundaries and has been touching customers “inappropriately.” Basically your child is hugging repeat customers who are nice to him. The supervisor does not want your son to be fired for this behavior. You have recently noticed similar behaviors when you are with him in public.

Learning Strategies

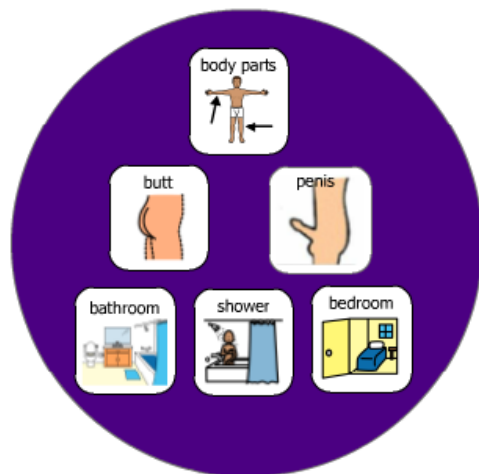
Visual	Auditory	Motor

What is the Circles Program?



Published by Stanfield Publishing
and created by Leslie Walker- Hirsch

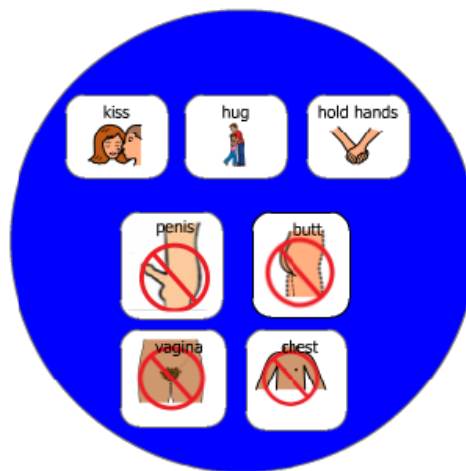
The ME Circle



I can touch all of my body parts.

I can touch my private body parts in private spaces (like my bedroom and my bathroom at home).

The FAMILY Circle



I can kiss, hug, and hold hands with my family including my parents, siblings, aunts, uncles, and cousins.

I do NOT touch my family's private parts and they do NOT touch mine without my permission.

The FRIENDS Circle



I can side hug, fist bump, far away hug, high five, shake hands, and wave to my friends.

I do NOT kiss my friends or hug them closely.

I do NOT touch my friends' private parts and they do NOT touch mine.

Sample Video on Appropriate Touch

- [Appropriate Touch](#)
- <https://www.advocatehealth.com/health-services/adult-down-syndrome-center/video-gallery>

Resources

Resources

- ***Healthy Relationship Workbook*** by The Arc of Spokane-
<http://www.arcspokane.org/Resrg/Healthy%20Relationship%20Workbook.pdf>
- ***Sexuality across the Lifespan***-Florida Developmental Disabilities Council-
<http://www.fddc.org/sites/default/files/file/publications/Sexuality%20Guide-Parents-English.pdf>
- ***Family Life and Sexual Health*** by King County Dept. Public Health
<http://www.kingcounty.gov/healthservices/health/personal/familyplan/educators/SpecialEducation.aspx>
- ***Sexuality and Disability: A Guide for Parents*** by Alberta Health Services http://www.srcp.org/pdf_versions/Alberta.pdf

<https://www.advocatehealth.com/health-services/adult-down-syndrome-center/resources>

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Lutheran General Hospital > Health Services > Adult Down Syndrome Center > Resources



Adult Down Syndrome Center

Philosophy

Celebrating 25 Years

Insurance Accepted

Meet Our Staff

Resources

People with Down Syndrome

Families & Caregivers

Professionals

Video Gallery

Other Organizations

Make a Donation

Maps & Directions

Patient Forms

Resources

We offer a variety of resources for people with Down syndrome, their families and caregivers and the professionals who care for and work with them. Choose a section for a list of helpful websites, articles, educational materials and more. Useful videos about a variety of health topics can be found in our [video gallery](#)



People with Down Syndrome

This section contains resources created and written for adolescents and adults with Down syndrome. Resources include informational handouts and visuals on topics like exercise and nutrition, sleep and mental and social health.

[See resources ▸](#)



Families & Caregivers

This section contains resources created and written for families and caregivers of people with Down syndrome. Resources include informational handouts and websites and cover topics related to physical, mental and social health.

[See resources ▸](#)



Professionals

This section contains resources for health professionals, researchers and others who care for and work with people with Down syndrome. Resources include scholarly articles, information on best practices, guides and more.

[See resources ▸](#)

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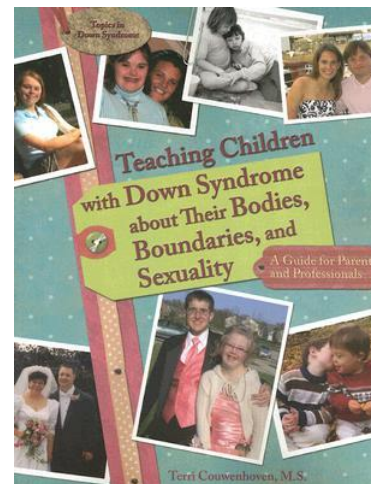
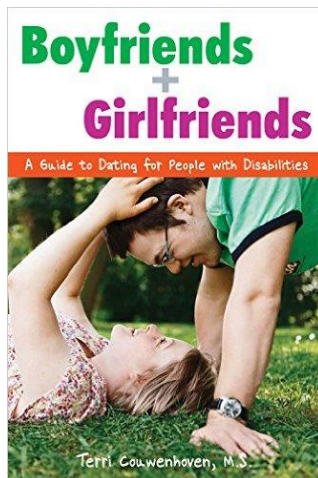
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Resources cont.

- **Boyfriends and Girlfriends** by Terri Couwenhoven
- ***Teaching Children with Down Syndrome about their Bodies, Boundaries, and Sexuality*** by Terri Couwenhoven



Next Steps

- Social skills groups through the ADSC
- Parent training workshops through the ADSC
- Continued trainings through Chicagoland parent organizations

Contact Information

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Advocate Adult Down Syndrome Center

<https://www.advocatehealth.com/health-services/adult-down-syndrome-center/>