

Sex and Relationships



An Easy Read Guide about sex, relationships and people with learning difficulties.

By York People First, May 2024.



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This **easy read summary** is about sex, relationships and people with learning difficulties.



It looks at dating, what **healthy relationships** are, safe sex, sexual health.



It also looks at sexual abuse, harassment and what **consent** means.



At the end it has some links to where you can find more **information**.

People with Learning Difficulties and Sex.



Sexuality is important to everyone. It is about **how you feel** about yourself and your body. It is about finding out and knowing what feels right for you.



People with learning difficulties can and do have **positive relationships** and sex.



People with a learning disability can be **lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender**.



But many people with a learning difficulty **don't get the right support** to express their sexuality and have loving and sexual relationships.



Because of this people with learning difficulties can be **at more risk** of abuse, sexually transmitted infections (STIs) or unwanted pregnancies.

Dating and Meeting Someone



There are lots of ways you can meet someone, through friends, family, colleagues or just by being **out and about**.



Dating is when you meet up or hang out with someone. It can be romantic or intimate. It should be about having fun and getting to know someone.



If **you like them**, and they like you, you might agree to meet again and who knows this might **develop** into a relationship.



Also, there are lots of **online dating** sites, including some specifically for disabled people.



When dating it is very important to **know what you want**. The right person will like you for who you are.



And always **be clear on consent**. Always ask before being intimate, this means touching or kissing or sex. Remember no, always means no.

Relationships



A romantic relationship is about finding a **meaningful connection** with someone.



It can involve **feelings of love**, intimacy, and attraction.

Here are some things that we think make a relationship **healthy**:



Respect: You feel safe and respected by the other person. They listen to you, value your opinions, and treat you kindly.



Honesty: You can be honest with each other, even when it's difficult.



Trust: You can rely on each other and feel comfortable sharing your feelings, needs, and wants.



Communication: You can talk openly and honestly with each other.

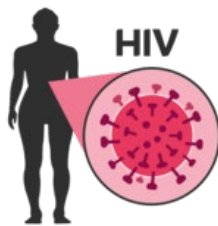


Support: You feel supported by each other in being who you want to be and feeling good about yourself.

Safe Sex



Safe sex means keeping yourself and your partner(s) **safe** from sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and getting pregnant.



A **sexually transmitted infection** (STI) is a health issue caused by having sex with someone that has one.



In York there is [YorSexualHealth](#). A clinic that can help you with sexual health and **staying safe**.



Condoms are the best way to prevent STIs and pregnancy during vaginal, anal, or oral sex.



There are many types of **birth control** available. Talk to a health worker or someone you trust about what's right for you.

Good Sexual Health



Sexual health is about more than just physical health. It's about feeling good about yourself and your body, and having **positive, enjoyable sexual experiences.**



Be Body Positive. Accepting and appreciating your body the way it is.



Good Communication. Talking openly and honestly about sex with partners.



Healthy Relationships. Building relationships based on respect, trust, and open communication.



Consent. Understanding and respecting what consent means.

Consent



Consent is **really important** and means that everyone involved freely agrees to be involved in the sexual activity.



Consent is **always required**. You cannot have sex with someone who doesn't explicitly say yes or who seems pressured or unsure.



You can change your mind. Even if someone initially agrees to something, they can change their mind at any point.



Saying nothing or not **saying no** **doesn't mean yes**. Don't think someone wants to have sex just because they're not saying no.



Consent **can't be given under pressure**. If someone is pressured, threatened, or intoxicated, their consent is not valid.



Consent is **specific**. Giving consent to one type of sexual activity doesn't mean consent to anything else.

Sexual Abuse and Harassment



Sexual abuse and harassment are **never okay**.

Sexual abuse is any unwanted sexual contact, including touching, groping or intercourse. **It can happen to anyone.**



It can include taking photos or videos that you don't agree to or forced viewing of pornography.

Signs of Sexual Abuse

- Feeling scared or unsafe around someone
- Physical injuries or pain in your genitals
- Feeling pressured or forced into sexual activity



Sexual harassment is unwanted sexual advances, comments, or requests. It can be verbal, physical, or visual.



Signs of Sexual Harassment

- Feeling uncomfortable, intimidated, or offended by what someone does.
- Unwanted sexual comments, jokes, or gestures.
- Being pressured to go on dates or have sex.



What To Do If You Experience Abuse or Harassment



If you experience sexual abuse or harassment, it's important to **do something about it**.

Talk to someone you trust.

Contact the police. If you feel unsafe or something has happened to you.



Call 101, or 999 if it is an emergency. You can also go to a **police station** or **report online**.



In York, you can contact **IDAS** who support people affected by domestic abuse and sexual violence.

<https://idas.org.uk/contact/>

More information.



[Mencap - Relationships and Sex](#)

Sexuality, friendship and relationships for people with learning disabilities.

[Mencap - Lets talk about sex](#)

Sexuality is a **human right**, but the needs of people with a learning disability are not acknowledged.

Web - mencap.org.uk



[YorSexualHealth](#)

Sexual health and contraception services in **York** and North Yorkshire.

Call - 01904 721111.

Web - yorsexualhealth.org.uk



[IDAS](#)

Supporting people affected by domestic abuse and **sexual violence**.

Call - 03000110110.

Web - idas.org.uk/



[North Yorkshire Police](#)

How and **where** to **report** rape and sexual assault.

Call - 999 or 101.

Web - northyorkshire.police.uk

About this Easy Read Summary.



This easy read summary is about sex, relationships and people with learning difficulties.

By learning difficulties we mean, **people who have** been told they have, or self define with the terms of learning difficulties', 'learning disability', 'autism', 'aspergers', 'neurodiverse' or other labels.



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Phone - 07951050153.

Web - yorkpeoplefirst.co.uk.



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