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Sexuality Education
for the Student with Deafblindness

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Texas School for the Blind & Visually Impaired Outreach Programs
Issues in Sexuality and Deafblindness

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Who are we addressing?

- Emerging communicators
- Need extensive support to successfully interact with others

Considerations with Deafblindness

- Societies perspective - strict unwritten rules about appropriate dress and behavior
- Habits for a lifetime
- Incidental learning

Primary Resource:
https://nationaldb.org/library/list/61
https://nationaldb.org/library/page/792

Which issues are addressed today?

- Modesty
- Appropriate touch
- Menstruation
Modesty

- Societies perspective - strict unwritten rules about appropriate dress and behavior
- Typical kids receive instruction in modesty as a part of growing up and children with deafblindness deserve and need the same.
- Honor the problem – communicate
- Incidental learning is easy for typical kids but not so for students with deafblindness.
- Children with deafblindness learn from concepts based on how they are treated.
- May not be concerned with social skills
- Build habits for a lifetime by building modesty into routines
- Hold each other to high standards mixed messages
- Avoid triggers that lead to disrobing (tags on back of shirt, all dressed up etc.,)
- Provide modesty vocabulary/concepts:
  - teach the sign for “private”,
  - make a list of private places for an individual consumer (e.g. his room, bathroom etc.)
- Wait means yes
- Don’t create a “stripper”
  - Stay calm if they start to remove clothing in public
  - Chronic stripping needs a behavior intervention plan
  - Complicated clothing is-difficult to remove
  - Communication rather than confrontation
- Summary
Appropriate Touch

- Non-contact society
  - Gathering information as a deafblind person involves touch or close viewing
  - Strategy: Remember that the way you touch them is how they will touch others
  - Strategy: Teach sign/concept of asking permission
- Proactive information
- Be an ambassador for the child
  - Strategy: How to get others attention
  - Strategy: Stay calm or you will teach "groping"
- Provide information so they don’t have to steal it by groping
  - Strategy: greeting rituals. additional characteristics
- Meeting strangers
  - Strategy: If you have a “groper”, develop an Behavior Intervention plan
  - Strategy: Hugs- start early with a variety of interactions, make lists of who you can hug
Menstruation

- Take the child’s etiology into consideration
  - Examples: CHARGE SYNDROME. Prematurity
- Medications can determine cycle
- May need more practice:
  - Introduce a pad before they begin to menstruate to get used to the pad.
  - Gives additional opportunities to learn how to dispose of pad
- Am I doing something wrong?
- Use the calendar to do advance planning with the child
- Language and concept development:
  - Teach the correct word and sign
- Gender identity - sort people by
  - Who has periods and who doesn’t
  - Who can help you?
  - This is normal.