



# Sexual Health, Personal Relationships, and Sexuality Guidelines

## The Objectives of These Guidelines Are to:

1. Promote an environment where individuals with disabilities have the right to pursue personal relationships and their sexuality and experience a life that is no different than that of individuals without disabilities, without being neglected, exploited, or abused.
2. Ensure that individuals with disabilities have the same opportunity to receive accurate sexual health and relationship information as individuals without disabilities.
3. Establish an expectation that provider agencies develop or review their policies on sexual health, personal relationships, and sexuality. The policies should support the concept of Everyday Lives and be consistent with the below considerations.



## Sexual Health, Personal Relationships, and Sexuality Guidelines (Applying Everyday Lives)

### Everyday Lives Values as They Apply to Sexual Health, Personal Relationships, and Sexuality

1. Individuals with disabilities are sexual human beings with their own cultural, religious/faith, ethnic, and family values.
2. Individuals with disabilities have the right to enjoy their personal relationships and sexuality in a safe, consensual, and legal manner, while respecting the rights of others.
3. Individuals with disabilities have the same basic rights as individuals without disabilities to self-identify their gender, sexual orientation, and sexual preferences.
4. Individuals with disabilities have the right to accessible and appropriate education, information, and resources that address their individual personal relationships, sexual health, and sexuality needs.
5. Individuals with disabilities have the right to privacy when accessing supports and have the right to have information about their personal relationships remain private unless they consent to a disclosure. Privacy covers all forms of communication. Information regarding an individual's personal relationships, sexual health, and sexuality should be considered private and must be treated with respect and dignity.
6. Individuals with disabilities have the right to enjoy relationships and to express their sexuality in a safe manner.
7. Individuals with disabilities have the right to have their sexual health and personal relationships supported by knowledgeable provider agency staff and a knowledgeable Individual Support Plan team.



## Sexual Health, Personal Relationships, and Sexuality Guidelines (Provider Recommendations)

### Recommendations for Providers That Are Consistent with Everyday Lives

1. Provide an environment where individuals with disabilities can live like individuals without disabilities and not be neglected, exploited, or abused.
2. Allow individuals with disabilities to access supports in a manner that ensures their privacy. Privacy covers all forms of communication. Information regarding an individuals' sexual health, personal relationships, and sexuality is private and must be treated with respect and dignity and handled in a professional manner.
3. Have a positive policy on sexuality that is consistent with the values of Everyday Lives. A positive policy is one that acknowledges and supports a person's right to have a healthy, consensual sexual life, such as hand holding, going on dates, etc., opposed to a negative policy that focuses on "no and can't" in terms of personal relationships. The policy should be reviewed annually by a cross-disciplinary team that includes administrators, direct support professionals, individuals with disabilities, and family members.
4. Provide accessible and appropriate education, information, and resources that address sexual health, personal relationships, and sexuality needs.
5. Ensure that organizational and managerial resources are available to staff to support individuals with disabilities that have issues related to sexual health, personal relationships, or sexuality.
6. Provide resources and training for all staff on understanding, supporting, and responding to sexual health, personal relationships, and sexual issues.