You Didn’t Deserve That! Healthy Relationships for Adults and Teens with IDD

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Objectives

1. Participants will learn at least two practical strategies that can be immediately implemented to promote healthy relationships.
2. Participants will learn about initiating conversations about potentially unhealthy relationships with teens and adults with IDD in both face-to-face and online situations.
3. Participants will discuss future considerations to further promote positive outcomes for people with IDD and the staff who support them.
THANKS!!
Our agenda

• *Quick*: The scope of the problem
• *Quick*: The LEAP Intervention and it’s outcomes
• Teaching Teens about healthy relationships
• Lessons learned and Challenges moving forward
• Practical Tips
Everyone sees the world differently....
I have a problem saying no to my boyfriend because I'm afraid he's going to hurt me.
Unhealthy, Abusive, Maltreatment

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
  - bullying, exclusion, institutionalization
- Controlling access to family, friends, escape
- Engaging in sexual acts without consent
- Financial abuse
- Neglect
- MATE CRIME

This does not include all of the other ways that people are marginalized by lack of choice and opportunity.
Abuse, violence, neglect of people with IDD

90% women 86% of men

90% of women and 86% men have experienced abuse

Intellectual Disability

- People with intellectual disabilities had highest victimization rate among the disability types measured for total violent crime (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2017)

Children with Disabilities

Children with disabilities are at least three times more likely to be abused or neglected than their peers without disabilities (Jones et al., 2012), and they are more likely to be seriously injured or harmed by maltreatment (Sedlak et al., 2010).
Epidemic of Sexual Violence for people with IDD

83% of women and 32% of men are victims of sexual assault at some point in their lifetime. (Johnson & Sigler, 2000)

49% of people who are victims of sexual violence will experience 10 or more incidents (Valenti-Heim & Schwartz, 1995)

Sexually assaulted at a rate 7 times higher than the typically developing population. (US Dept. of Justice data by NPR, 2017)
Children with disabilities are

2x as likely
experience abuse in their lifetime

4x as likely
to be victims of crime

10x more likely
Children with behavioral health conditions who were maltreated before age 3 were 10 times more likely to be maltreated again

US Dept. of Health & Human Services

Sedlick et al., 2010

Jaudes & Mackey-Bilaver, 2008
Are we talking about Positive Behavior Support?
Findings of LEAP: Leadership for Empowerment and Abuse Prevention
Logistics

- 4 sessions, 90 minutes each
- Taught by a person with a disability + a co-trainer
- Designed to meet needs of people ages 18+ with mild, moderate and severe support needs
Core Concepts of LEAP

Trust
- You can change your mind about who you trust

Respect
- Everyone deserves respect

Boundaries
- Paid support
- Friend vs. Staff

Consent
- Permission to touch
- Choice
- Control

Everyone deserves respect.
THIS IS MY TRUST CARD

IF I NEED HELP, I CAN CONTACT THIS PERSON:

Name:

Or I can contact any doctor, nurse, policeman, firefighter, lawyer, social worker, teacher, or counselor.

POWER STATEMENT

I am strong.

My feelings are important.

I deserve to feel safe.

I deserve respect.
Evaluation: Pre, Post and 3 Month Postpost

1. Could the participant *discriminate* between healthy and unhealthy relationships?

1. Could the participant explain *why* a relationship was healthy or unhealthy?

1. If the relationship were unhealthy, could the participant suggest *what to do next*?
Results: Pre-test Yes/No Questions

Figure 1. Percent Correct at Pre-test & Post-test

- Healthy relationships: Pretest 88%, Posttest 87%
- Telling others: Pretest 87%, Posttest 90%
- Who to trust: Pretest 72%, Posttest 76%
- Abuse culpability: Pretest 75%, Posttest 75%
- Support respect rights: Pretest 71%, Posttest 71%
- Staff always friends: Pretest 39%, Posttest 60%
Results: Accuracy of “Why is the relationship healthy/unhealthy?” and Response of “What should the person do next?”
Why Teen LEAP?
TEEN LEAP

- Face to Face vs. Online
- Taught online with live trainers
- 3 sessions of 90 minutes
- Logistics
  - Materials need to be mailed to home
  - Trainers must have current technology
Healthy Relationships
We learned:

- Virtual sessions work!
- Family Life Education often excludes kids from Special Education Classes
- Healthy relationships are the foundation of sex education and violence prevention (mate crimes, bullying, etc)
- Teens may feel more anonymous without peer group present
- Teens can follow up with questions afterwards

We still wonder about:

- Who is participating with the teen?
- Can teens with more significant support needs manipulate technology without support?
- How can this be taught in school?
Challenges for the Future
Outcomes: Qualitative Responses

1. Agency to solve the problem
2. Unhealthy Relationship
3. Healthy Relationship
4. Staff are not always my friend
5. Blame the victim
Agency to solve a problem situation
Lesson learned: Increased Agency to Solve the Problem

- Confront the person. “Slap him.” “Tell him to back off. She doesn’t like it.”
- Leave the situation. “Run away.”
- Tell Someone. “Tell his supervisor (parents, police)”
- End the relationship. “Not everyone is going to be your friend. Some people will and some people won’t. And we can change our minds [about being friends]”
- Problem solve. “Hide in the back.” or “Hire another DSP”
Challenge: How can we promote agency to get out of dangerous situations?
Lesson Taught: Staff are not *Always* my Friend

- Situation depends on different factors. "*Sometimes staff can be friends.*"

- Staff have the ability to be bad/mean. "*They could break trust and not treat people as they should be treated.*"
Lessons Learned: Most people can identify an unhealthy relationship

- Bad, wrong immoral behavior. “He can’t do that!” or “He’s bad.”

- Injustice occurred. “That’s not fair. He told her to sit in the front seat”
Challenge: What are safe options to report unhealthy behaviors?
Lesson Learned: Blaming the Victim

General Victim Blaming. “She didn’t do anything to stop him from kissing her.” or “She should not have sat in the front seat.”

Tolerating Unhealthy Behavior. “It’s her fault she trusted him. She should just go to his house so that he can do what he wants with her.”
Challenge: How do we encourage victim blaming? How can we stop it?
Lessons Learned: Social Isolation promotes tolerance for abusive relationships
Challenge: How can we promote healthy community connections and relationships?
Behavior Changes that Support Healthy Relationships
What are rules are we taught to stay safe?
Using Fear and Punishment to Prevent Abuse

Ask open ended questions

Is there anything that made you uncomfortable?
How did you feel about that?
What would you like to do differently next time?
Some secrets were not meant to be secrets.
It’s my job to help keep you safe.
Let me know when you are ready to talk about it.

Avoid Silencing the victim

Don’t let anyone touch you there.
Don’t get in a car with anyone.
The bathing suit rule
Tell someone right away
Do you still love me? Are you still my friend?

“I am not your friend but I love working with you.

“You don’t know me well enough to hug me.”

“I’m not your boyfriend/girlfriend, but let’s talk about what you can do to find one.

“I love everyone in the world and you are part of that world.”

“Thank you. What a sweet thing to say.”
Body parts! They have names!
CAN'T I JUST SHAKE WITHOUT YOU MOVING IN FOR A MAN HUG?
Resilience
If someone discloses abuse
Do I have to go there with you?
Disclosing Abuse
Validate without minimizing

• “It’s not your fault. You didn’t deserve that”
• “You seem really upset about that.”
• “Tell me about why you are sad/mad/upset/angry?”
• “It doesn’t seem fair: what else could you do?”
• “It’s okay to be sad/mad/upset/angry”
Secondary Trauma: It’s real
THANK YOU!

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References:


