The Global Down Syndrome Foundation is part of a network of affiliate organizations that work closely together on a daily basis to deliver on our mission, vision, values, and goals:

- **Global**: was established as a 501(c)3 in 2009 and is “Dedicated to significantly improving the lives of people with Down syndrome through Research, Medical Care, Education, and Advocacy”

- **Affiliates are**:
  - Established with a lead gift from Anna & John J. Sie Foundation
  - Must work closely together to benefit people with Down syndrome
  - Must be self-sustaining financially
Recognize myths and realities about people with Down syndrome and social/sexual relationships

Examine the barriers you may have in talking about sexuality/relationships

Identify the four types of boundaries and how they play into each type of relationship
MYTHS AND REALITIES
MYTHS AND MISCONCEPTIONS

- People with Down syndrome cannot form long-term relationships
- People with Down syndrome don’t want or need sex
- Talking to my child about sex will make them want to have sex
- Isolating people with Down syndrome will prevent abuse/exploitation
REALITIES: PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

- Puberty/physical development
  - Women
  - Men

- Fertility

- Contraception

- Trisomy 21 transmission

- Sexually transmitted infections
### REALITIES: SEXUAL DEVELOPMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age 0-8</th>
<th>Age 9-13</th>
<th>Age 14-20</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Body parts</td>
<td>Puberty and body changes</td>
<td>Sex, risks and protection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys vs. girls</td>
<td>Rules around masturbation</td>
<td>When to act on sexual feelings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All bodies are</td>
<td>Friendship vs. romantic</td>
<td>Inappropriate relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>good!</td>
<td>relationship</td>
<td>Consent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CONSENT!**
BARRIERS
What do you value...
- Cultural/Religious
- Family Values

How do your values shape how you respond to issues and questions related to sexuality and relationships?

What messages do you want to project about sex and relationships?
❖ It is okay to be embarrassed!
❖ You don’t need to have all the answers
❖ These conversations prevent abuse
What is a bias?

- Explicit bias
- Implicit bias
Poll Time!

Scale of 1-5

1 - I am comfortable with this statement.

3 - I am uncomfortable, but not too bad.

5 - I am very uncomfortable.
Did you have some discrepancies?

All people should be included in the first statements.

Allow yourself to be uncomfortable.
BOUNDARIES AND BASICS
WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO TALK TO PEOPLE WITH DOWN SYNDROME ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX?

- Foster healthy relationship
- Promote equality and civil rights
- Prevent abuse, STDs and unplanned pregnancies
- Curiosity killed the cat
Types of Boundaries

❖ Spatial
❖ Physical
❖ Emotional
❖ Communication
Stranger
  - Community Helper
    - Personal Community Helper

Acquaintance

Friend

Family

Sweetheart
Normalizing - people with Ds are sexual beings

Stop infantilizing their relationships

Consent and Mutuality

Your vocabulary / actions
TIPS FOR “THE TALK”

❖ Don’t try to do it all at once

❖ Start simple

❖ Provide accurate, concrete information

❖ Use books, social stories, or other visuals

❖ Be consistent

❖ Repetition and practice
THANK YOU!

QUESTIONS?

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