

Sexuality and the Spectrum: Lessons on Sex, Dating, and Love, Autism Style

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Simon Fraser University at Harbour Centre

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RUTGERS

Center for Adult Autism Services

Join the Conversation!

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❖ Slido QR code



Overview

- ❖ Myths & Misconceptions: Part 2
- ❖ Firsthand perspective of a woman with ASD
- ❖ Strategies & Resources
- ❖ Questions

More Myths vs. Truths About Autism and Relationships

- ❖ **MYTH:** Autistic people only date other autistic people
- ❖ **TRUTH:** Autistic people can and do date all kinds of people
- ❖ **MYTH:** Autistic people do not feel rejection the same way neurotypical people do
- ❖ **TRUTH:** Rejection hurts no matter who you are
- ❖ **MYTH:** Individuals with autism can't love
- ❖ **TRUTH:** Individuals with autism are FULL of love!

Age 19: First Boyfriend, Finally!

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- ❖ Learning how to be a “girlfriend”

- ❖ What was expected vs. what I was able to do

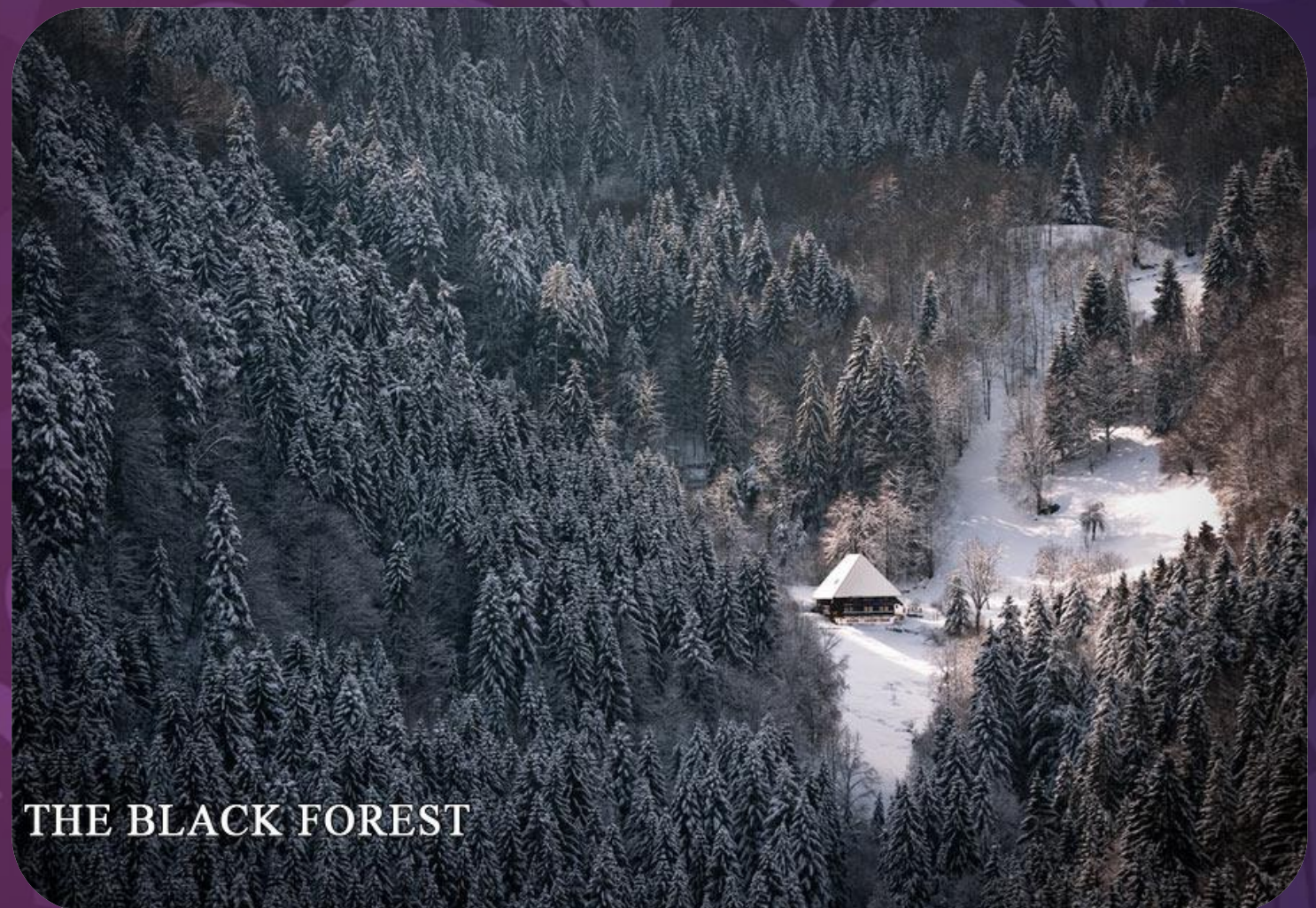
- ❖ Perils and pitfalls of a first relationship

- ❖ The night on the stoop

Beginnings of Body Awareness and Self-Discovery

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- ❖ Pubic hair
- ❖ Becoming “connected” to my body
- ❖ Seeing myself as a sexual being for the first time
- ❖ Relationships as learning experiences



Stalking



- ❖ Man (who had autism) saw me at a conference and became obsessed
- ❖ Met in person
- ❖ Drove to friend's workplace (MA to PA)
- ❖ Aftermath
 - ❖ Understanding that this actually was stalking

Love, Autism Style

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- ❖ Age 22: Fell in love for the first time
- ❖ The process of saying “I’m in love with you”
- ❖ Preparing to lose my virginity



So here we have a young
autistic woman in love,
getting ready to have sex,
with no idea of what to
expect or do...

Sexual Intercourse Comment Card

**Thank You For Having Sexual
Intercourse with Me! If you
could, please take a moment
to fill out this**

Sexual Intercourse Comment Card!

**so that I may better serve your
needs in the future. Thanks
Very Much, and Please Come
Again Soon!**

...And the questions on the back:

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1. What did you enjoy most about this sex session?

2. What do you think could have been better?

3. What happened that you would like to have happen again?

4. What didn't happen that you would like to have happen in the future?

5. Please rate the following from 1 (horrible, awful, pathetic) to 5 (excellent, kickass, hot as all hell):

The outfit I initially had on, pre-intercourse ____

My facial expression(s) during intercourse ____

My vocal volume/the overall quality of my noises ____

My physical actions during intercourse (i.e., thrusting, clenching, etc.) ____

My ability to get you off ____

6. Is there anything I can do in the future to get you aroused more quickly and maximize your pleasure during our session?

7. Any other comments, thoughts, suggestions?

8. Finally, please rate this sex session on a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being the absolute worst, you'd rather have sex with a leper; 10 being holy crap I've reached nirvana amazing): ____

Thank You For Filling Out This Card! :-)

Heartbreak Hotel

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❖ My first heartbreak, a.k.a. “The worst pain ever”

❖ Being a “target” and keeping my head held high

❖ Learning how to move on

Seattle Saga: Epilogue

16

- ❖ New beginnings in New Orleans

- ❖ A different kind of closure

- ❖ Full circle moment



So, how can we help
autistic people learn
dating and sexuality
skills?

Adult Autism and Sexuality Kit (AASK)

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- ❖ Received \$25,000 grant for development of curriculum
- ❖ Curriculum focuses on sex and preparing for sex
 - ❖ Using guidelines set forth in National Sexuality Education Standards, Second Edition (NSES)
 - ❖ Adapting lesson plans from ANSWER
- ❖ Hiring autistic consultants to aid in feedback process
- ❖ A living document informed by the population we serve

Strategies for Parents

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- ❖ Be a safe space for your child.
- ❖ Discuss issues at an age/maturity-appropriate level
- ❖ Don't take it personally!

Strategies for Parents

- ❖ Create/respect boundaries that will carry over into the real world
- ❖ Consent
- ❖ “NO” is a complete sentence
- ❖ Focus on adaptive skills



Strategies for Teachers and Professionals

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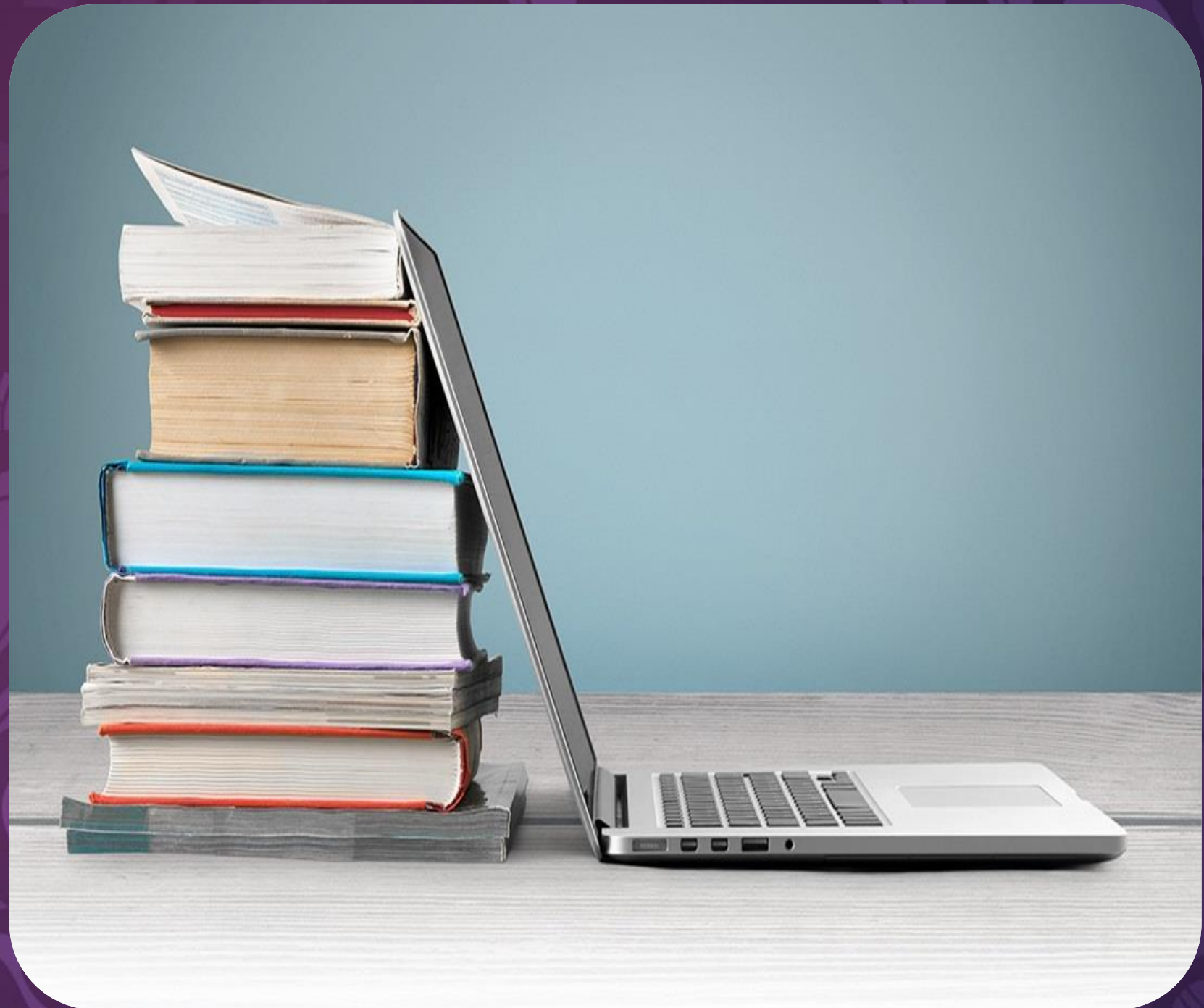


- ❖ Acknowledge sexual needs and desires of people with disabilities
 - ❖ What does this person want?
 - ❖ What is the best way to help them achieve that goal?
- ❖ Know what you don't know

Resources: Other Sex Ed Curricula 21

❖ Elevatus
Training
(Katherine
McLaughlin)

❖ HEARTS
Curriculum
(Boston
University)

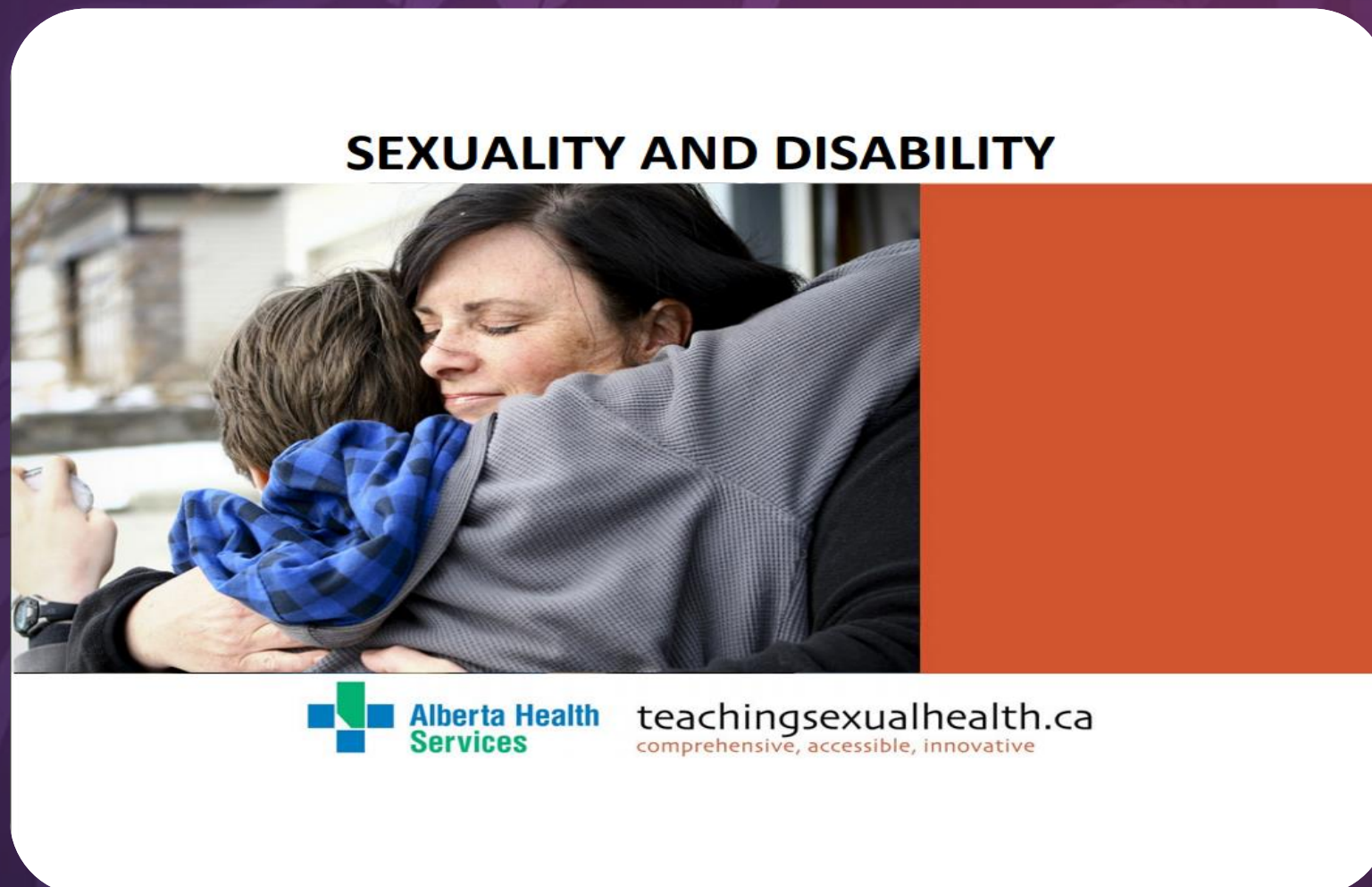


Resources

❖ Sex Ed. for Self-Advocates
(Organization for Autism Research)

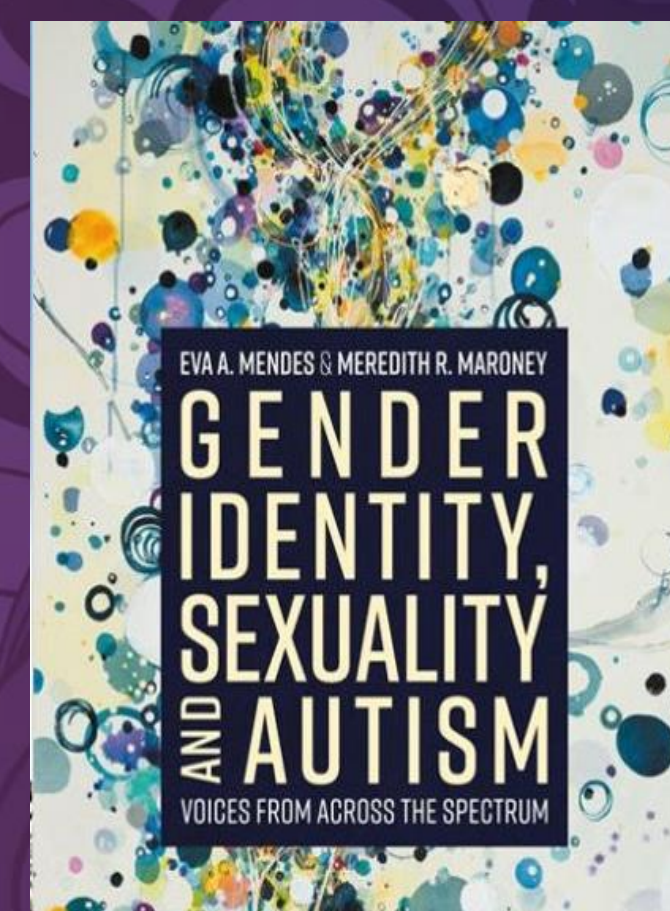
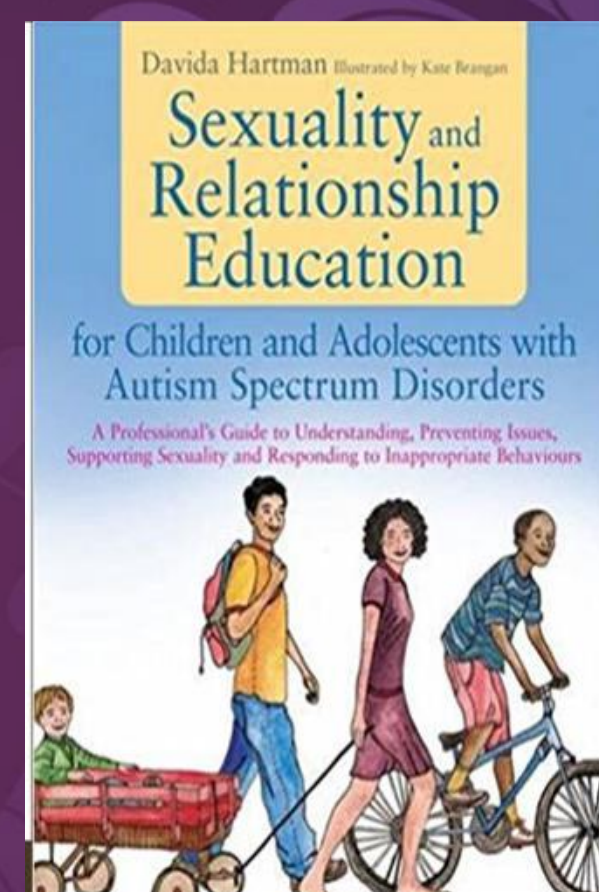
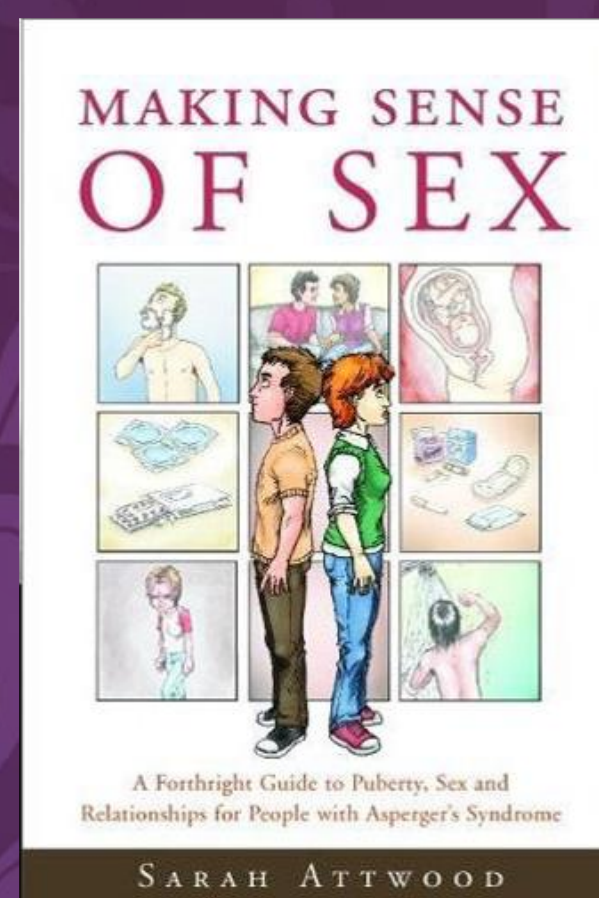
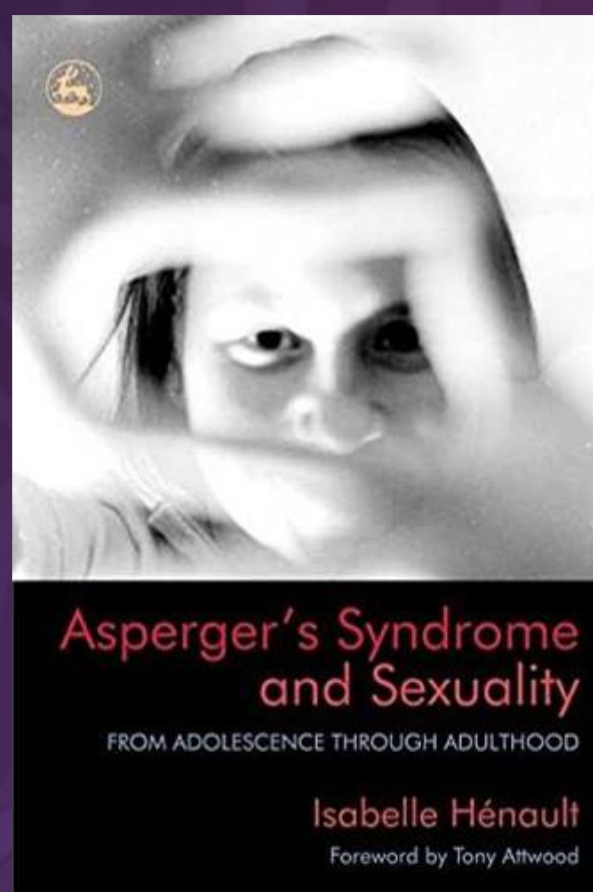


❖ Sexuality & Disability: A Guide for Parents
(Alberta Health Services)



Resources

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Dating Sites for Autistic Adults

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❖ AspieSingles



❖ Hiki



❖ Autism Date



❖ Uneepi



Remember...

- ❖ You can't stop life from happening.



Contact Information



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Social Media (Scan to Follow)



Questions

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ANY
QUESTIONS?