

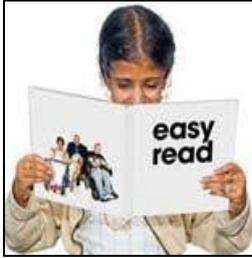
Love Care:fully

Sexual safety for adults with a learning disability-
Lessons from Canada and the USA



Sue Sharples
Churchill Fellow
2019

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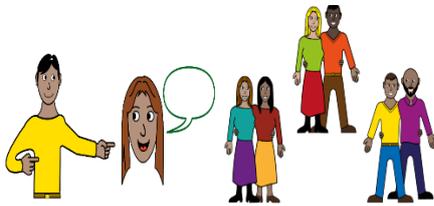
EASY READ SUMMARY

	This briefly describes what is in the report:
	<p>My name is Sue Sharples</p>
	<p>I am a Director of the U-Night Group.</p> <p>We work with self-advocates who have a learning disability, families and staff in the North West of England.</p> <p>We provide training about relationships and sex</p>
	<p>I am also part of a national network called Supported Loving.</p> <p>We campaign for people's right to have a relationship and to receive good support to make this happen.</p>
	<p>In 2019 I was given a grant by the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust.</p> <p>They give money to people to go abroad and find new ideas that will help us in the United Kingdom</p>

	This briefly describes what is in the report:
	<p>I went to America and Canada</p>
	<p>I wanted to find out what they do to prevent people with a learning disability being sexually abused.</p> <p>I was interested to know how they use education and advocacy to do this.</p>
	<p>I visited lots of people and groups.</p> <p>Such as self-advocacy groups, sexual health services, health and social care services, researchers and trainers</p>



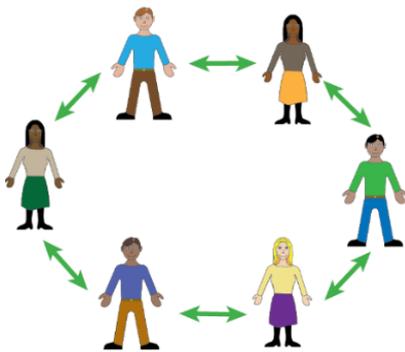
These are the things that I learned about:



1. Sexual self advocacy

This is the merging of self-advocacy and sexual information so that people's sexual rights are met.

I met self-advocates who are leading a movement to make sure that they and others have a chance to have healthy relationships

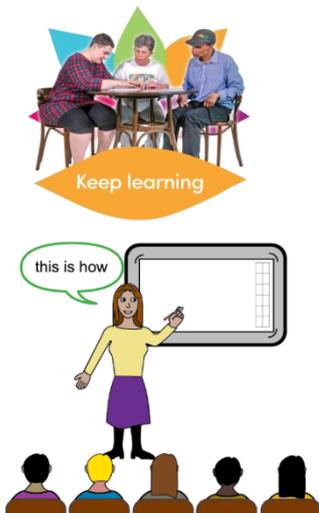


2. Working together

I found that when groups worked together to think about how to keep people safe from sexual abuse they got good results.

This was especially when they involved people with a learning disability and family members.

There were some great examples of learning disability services working with sexual health services.



3. Training

I saw some different ways of training people; in more ordinary places and using new methods like teaching self-defence.

People had found ways to involve family members and self-advocates in the training

In some places, providers must give 'staying safe in relationships' training to people they support.

In some areas, all staff in learning disability services must receive relationships and sexuality training



These are the things that I learned about:



4. Values

I found that the beliefs and attitudes of provider organisations affected the importance that they gave to relationships.



I learned about trauma informed approaches and a culture of gentleness. These are ways that staff and self-advocates can be supported using an understanding of their difficult past and present experiences. They focus on building safe, trusting relationships.



5. Particularly vulnerable groups

We know that there are some people with a learning disability who are even more likely to be sexually abused.



I found groups of people with a learning disability from the LGBT+ community who are working to raise awareness and support safe relationships.

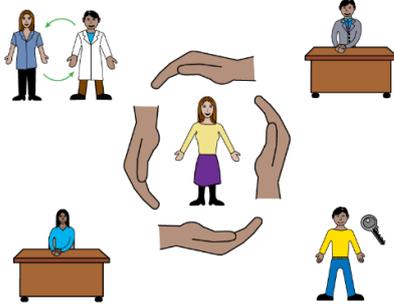
They were good at working with other disabled people and the wider LGBT+ community



It was the same with women. When they got together with other groups of women who are vulnerable to sexual abuse, they found they had much in common and together they could make more of a difference.



These are the things that I learned about:

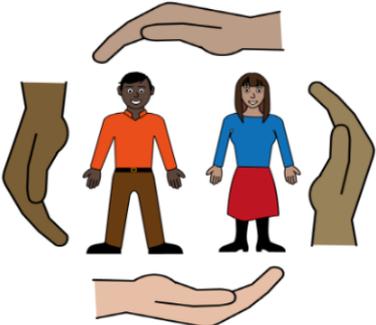


6. Safeguarding

I found that people did more about preventing sexual abuse. They did not just react after things had gone wrong.

Some places put time and money into trying to change the way people think about supporting safety.

They realised that having information, skills and people in your life is a big part of keeping safe.

	<p style="text-align: center;">Things that might be done differently:</p>
	<p>Prevention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We already have laws and guidelines that say prevention is important. These should be put into practice
	<p>Safeguarding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The way we think about adult safeguarding needs to be changed. We should not be waiting for harm to happen. We should be helping people to be their own first line of defence. • A lot of different organisations need to be part of this change, like the people who check up on providers -C.Q.C. • Each Safeguarding Board should be thinking about how they promote sexual safety for people with a learning disability in their area
	<p>Sexual self-advocacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-advocacy groups should be given information and training about sexual self-advocacy so that they can join together to overcome the barriers people face in having relationships • Creative ways, like drama and art, should be used to tell people about the importance of relationships

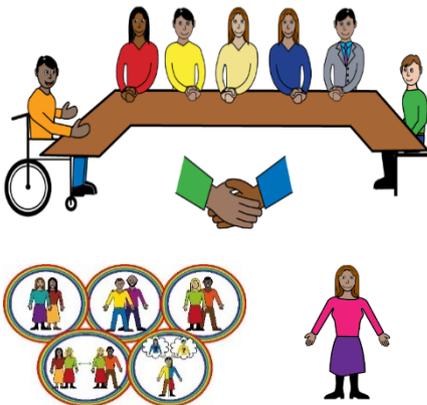


Things that might be done differently:



Training

- Resources and training materials from across the world should be shared.
- This will help people to think about other ways of doing training
- All training should be co-produced with self-advocates and family members
- Learning disability service staff should have to do sex and relationships training
- Sex and relationships training should be available for all people with a learning disability who want it. It should be in an accessible format and either in groups or 1:1.



Partnership

- Different services involved in sex and relationships support should work together with learning disability services. For example, Learning Disability Services should work with Sexual Health and Domestic Violence Services
- Learning disability groups should think wider, inviting other groups with similar experiences into their plans and activities
- This is especially true for women's and LGBT+ groups

	<p>Things that might be done differently:</p>
	<p>Values</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult learning disability services should learn about ways of supporting people who have had bad experiences in the past. • Adult services should learn about trauma informed approaches from children’s services • Providers, CQC and people who pay for services should promote the values and attitudes that are connected with safe and trusting relationships • People wanting to develop support for relationships should think about whether they have the right values and attitudes in their service. • We need to stop sex being a subject that no one wants to mention or discuss. We need to work together to open up the conversation and help everyone feel more comfortable to talk about it.

With thanks to Photosymbols and easyonthei for the illustrations