

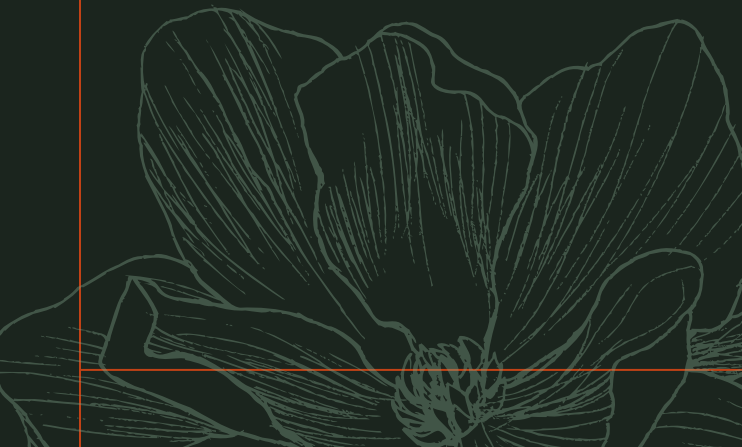


Sexual Wellbeing

Critical for Success in
Treating Teens Engaging in
Problem Sexual Behaviors

Jane Fleishman, PhD, MEd, CSE
MASOC Annual Conference
October 23, 2024

Dedication



“The practice of love is the most powerful antidote to the politics of domination.”

bell hooks
1952-2021

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My Plan for This Session

Why Sexual Wellness for Treating PSBs

Research Update

Conceptual Frames

Strategies for Success

Hope (for your clients and for you)

Jane Fleishman, PhD (c) 2024 Speaking
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A lifespan approach

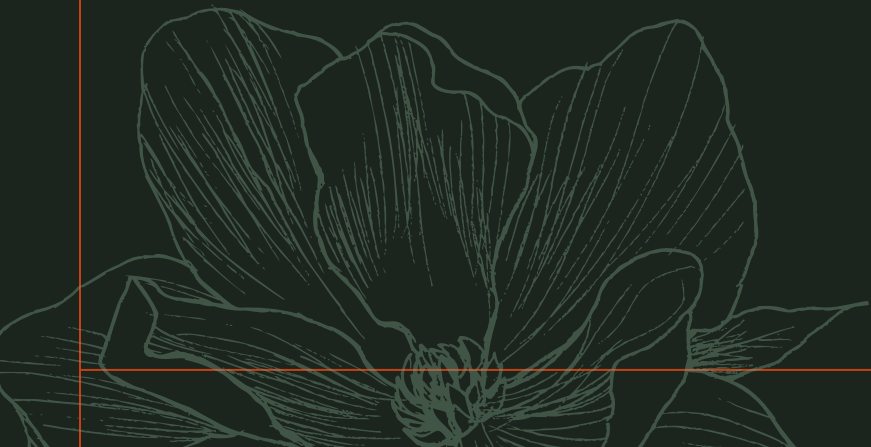


Words from a colleague

“People really don't talk with these folks about these things, and it's SO unusual for them when someone does, they're like a drowning person grabbing a life jacket. And then they just want more and more. And then word gets out that you are "askable." And then everybody approaches you. Even co-workers. I think many people working in this area are starving to have clients who are hungry for what they have to offer, rather than just clients who are resigned to attending a treatment program because they "have no choice." Maybe that's part of how you sell this. Tap into that desire to have motivated, inspired, excited clients who want to learn what you are offering. "Approach" goals rather than "avoidance goals". A better life rather than just staying out of prison.

And I can say from experience that as I've switched over the years to the lens you are describing, my groups are so much more successful and satisfying. They get to the productive stages of the group process much faster, because they are engaged and curious and motivated. They connect with each other and relate to each other because they're all more willing to ask questions and share their stories. And, as incongruent as this might sound for this type of group, we have FUN together. They get to experience that they deserve to have pleasure and don't have to spend the rest of their lives feeling like a piece of s**t.”

--Miranda Hughes, LPC, CSE, Former Sex Offender Program Coordinator
PA Department of Corrections, State Correctional Institution at Albion



Who's in the room



A thought experiment

A teen in your care wants to have a healthy sexual relationship in the future.

You'd like to begin working with them *now* on mutual, consensual, pleasure-based sexual relationships to help them in the future.

But your employer is not too keen on *sex ed* for clients.

Questions

- Your own comfort level?
- Your team/administration's response?
- Obstacles? Allies? Tools?
- Long haul?

A close-up photograph of a person with long blonde hair, wearing a blue and white plaid shirt, tending to a succulent plant. The person's hands are visible, gently holding the plant. The succulent has thick, fleshy, light blue-green leaves. The background is softly blurred, showing more of the person and other plants. A semi-transparent green rectangular box is overlaid on the center of the image, containing the text "Theory is at the root" in a dark, serif font.

Theory is at the root

What is social despair?

‘Down from hope’
The inability to imagine
a brighter future



Shanahan *et al*, 2019

What is erotic privilege?


Type of privilege
afforded only to certain
types of people

White
Cis het
Able-bodied
Thin
Tall
18-35



Fielding (2021)

Why sexual wellness for treating teens with PSBs?



- Helps frame issues
- Assists in conveying complex information
- Too often, stuck in “yes/no” binary
- Describes issues multi-dimensionally
- Includes issues of harm
- Speaks to the ethical nature of sexuality

A close-up photograph of a person's hands holding a small potted succulent plant. The person is wearing a blue and white plaid shirt. The succulent has thick, rounded, light blue-green leaves. In the background, other similar succulents are visible, some in pots. The overall scene is brightly lit, suggesting an indoor or outdoor garden setting. A semi-transparent green rectangular box is overlaid on the center of the image, containing the text "A Research Update".

A Research Update

Why teach teens about sexual wellness?

Lack of emphasis or research on key issues

Mostly concerned about prevention of pregnancy/STIs

Goldfarb & Lieberman, 2021



How is sex education part of prevention?

Comprehensive sexuality education integral to prevention with emphasis on:

- Health
- Wellness
- Pleasure
- Justice

Mitchell et al., 2021



Why can't we just leave it to the parents?

Sex education in schools woefully lacking

Parents unprepared/uncomfortable/wrong for the task

Importance of clinicians and educators

Irvine, 2004



What to teens want in their sex ed class?

Students want class more like Netflix series “Sex Education:

- Realistic and Controversial Topics
- Situations Relevant to Them
- Sexual Pleasure and Confidence
- Gender and Sexual Identity
- Falling in Love

Allen, 2023



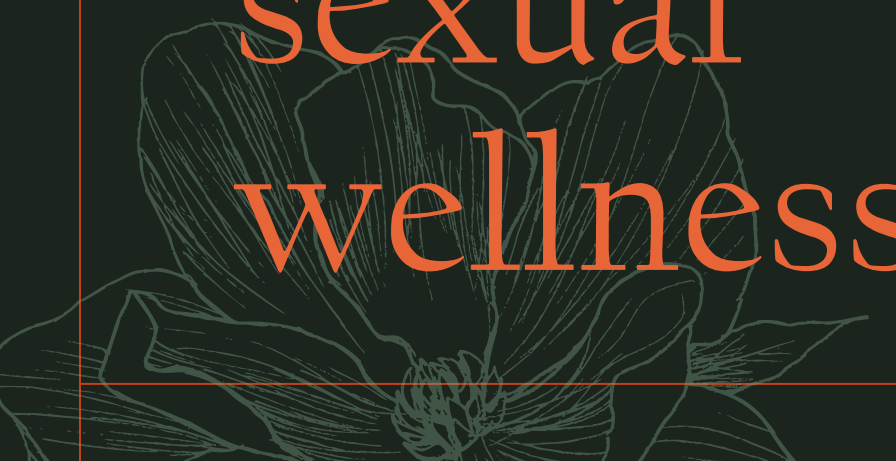
And
remember,
changing
social
norms



A close-up photograph of a person's hands holding a succulent plant in a dark pot. The person is wearing a blue and white plaid shirt. The succulent has thick, fleshy, light blue-green leaves. A semi-transparent green banner is overlaid across the center of the image, containing the text "Conceptual Models" in a dark, serif font.

Conceptual Models

Why use a conceptual model to talk about sexual wellness?



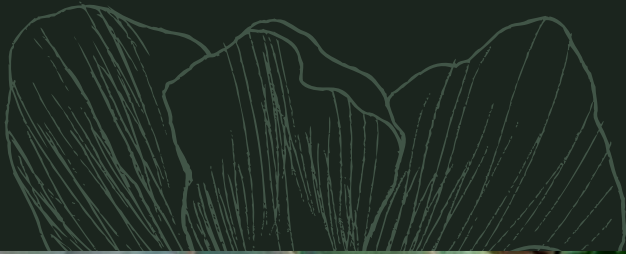
- Helps frame issues
- Assists in conveying complex information
- Too often, stuck in “yes/no” binary
- Describes issues multi-dimensionally
- Includes issues of harm
- Speaks to the ethical nature of sexuality

Comprehensive Sexuality Education Models

Circles of Sexuality (Dailey, 1981)

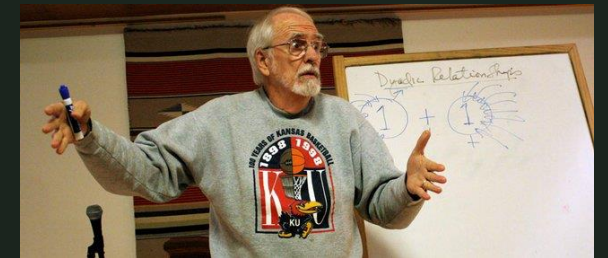
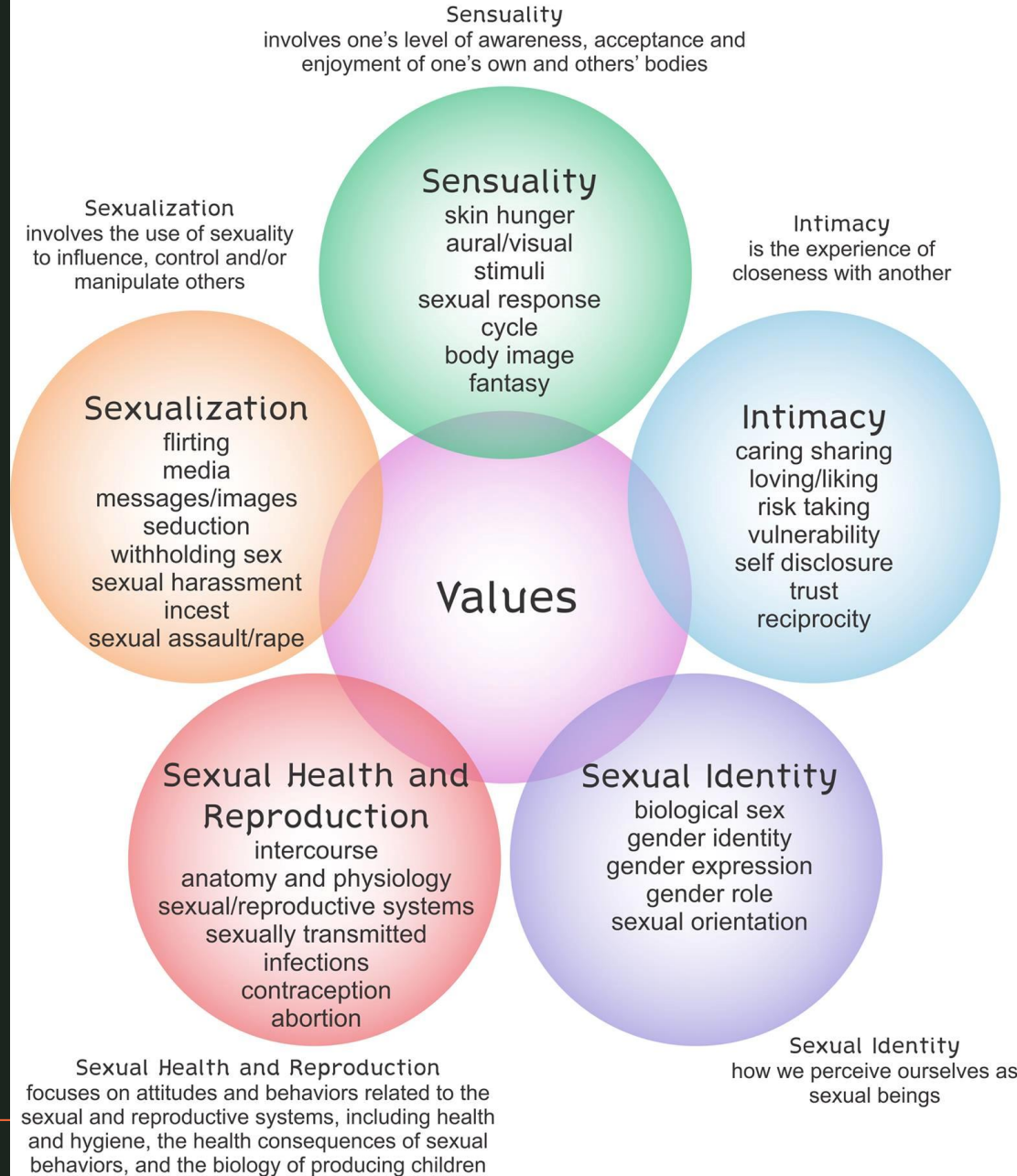
Circles of Sexuality revised (Badger, 2012)

Comprehensive Approach to Sexuality
(Mitchell et al., 2021)



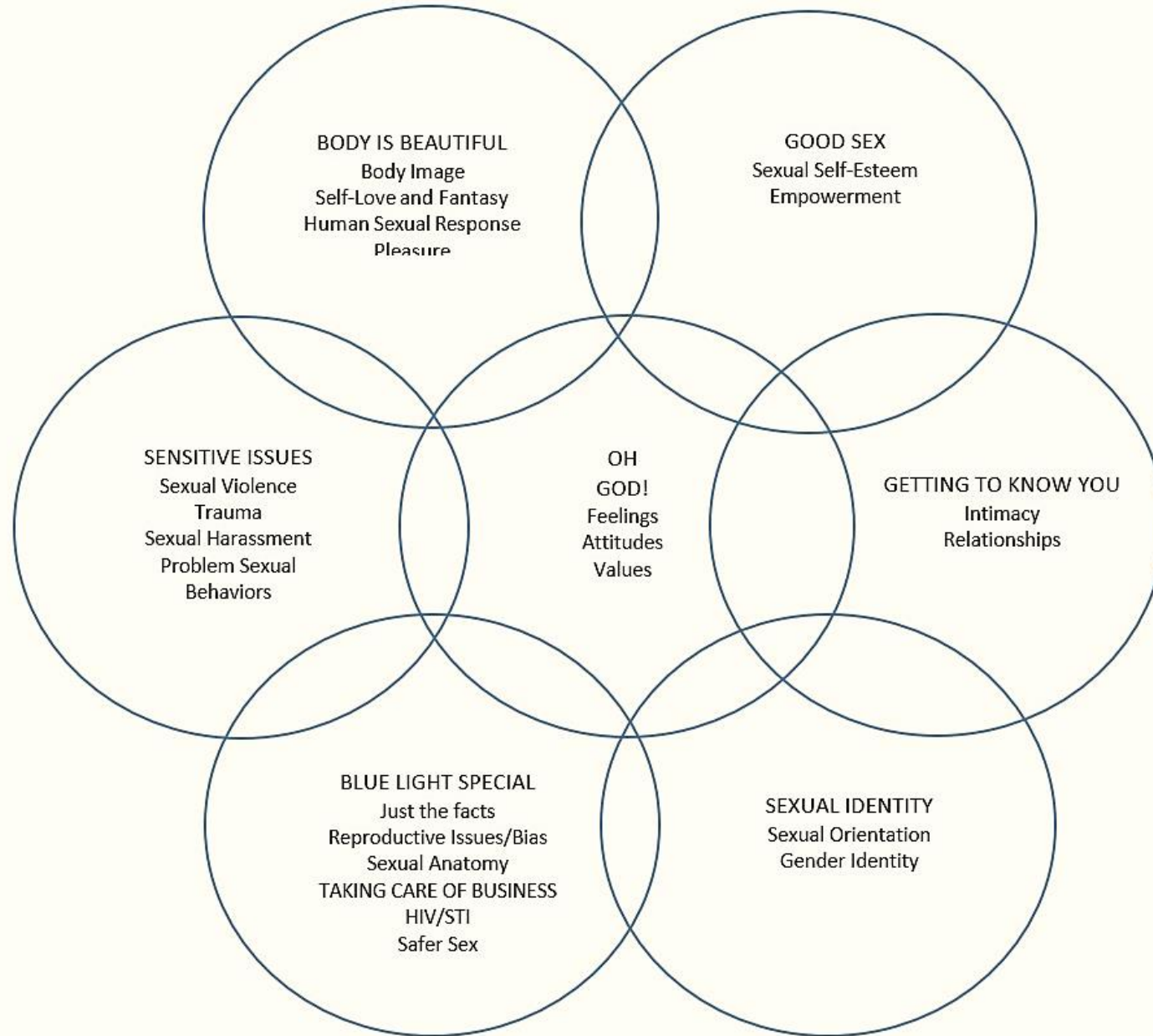
Circles of Sexuality

(1981)



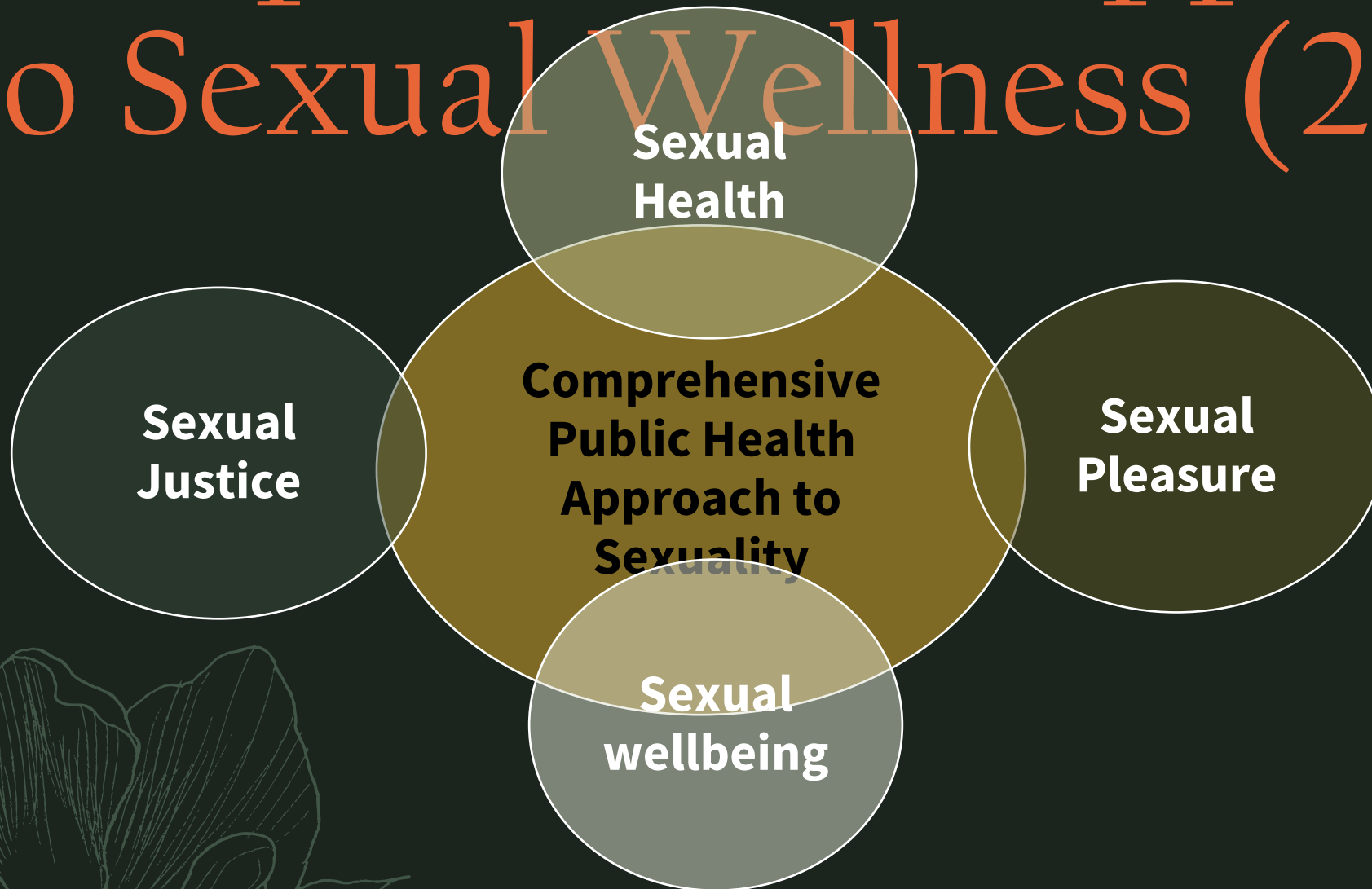
Dailey, 1981

Circles of Sexuality Revised



Badger, 2012

Comprehensive Approach to Sexual Wellness (2021)



Mitchell et al., 2021

Sexual Health

Fertility and regulation

Prevention and management of STIs

Sexual violence prevention

Sexual functions (desire, arousal)



Sexual Health

Sexual Pleasure

Self-determination

Consent

Safety

Privacy

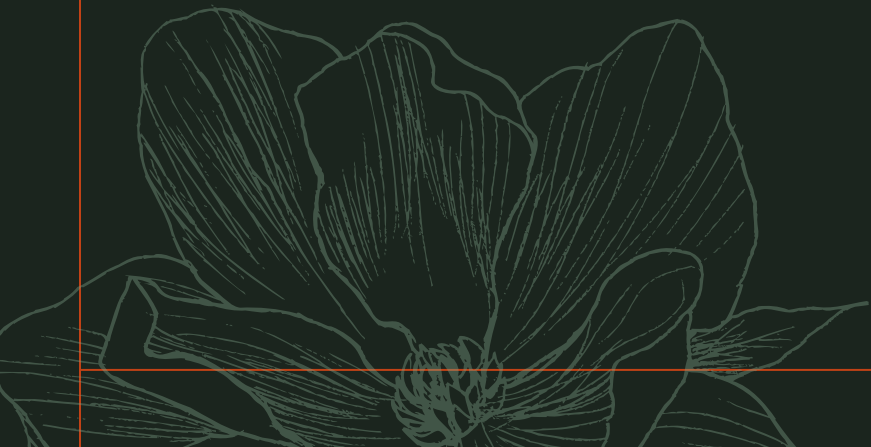
Confidence

Communications

Negotiations

Person-related and Event-related

**Sexual
Pleasure**



Sexual Justice

Sexual rights

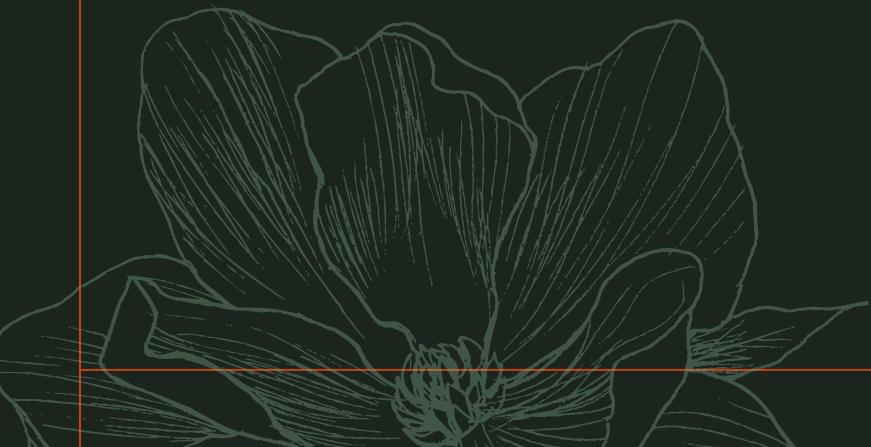
Sexual citizenship

Sex positive practice

Larger efforts to ensure equity



**Sexual
Justice**



Sexual Wellbeing exists
only in the context of:



Sexual Wellbeing

Sexual safety and security

Sexual respect

Sexual self-esteem

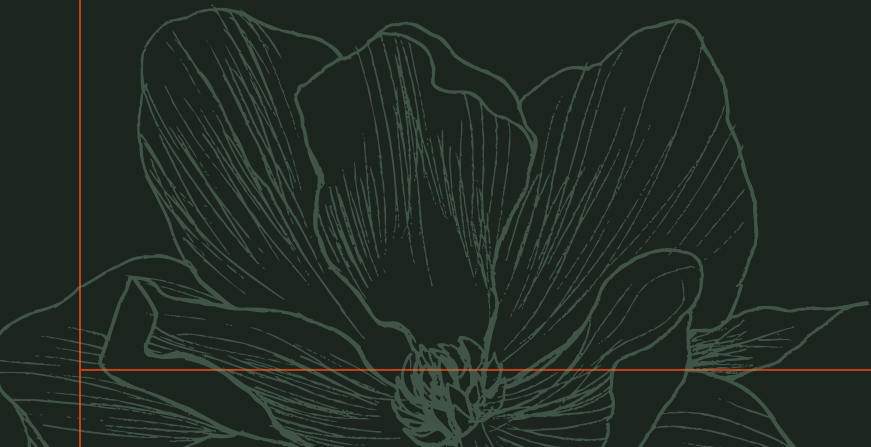
Resilience in relation to past sexual experiences

Forgiveness of past sexual experiences

Self-determination in one's sexual life

Comfort with sexuality

Sexual wellbeing



A close-up photograph of a person's hands holding a small succulent plant in a dark pot. The person is wearing a blue and white plaid shirt. In the background, there are several other succulent plants in various shades of green and blue. A semi-transparent green rectangular box is overlaid on the center of the image, containing the text "Strategies for Success".

Strategies for Success

Why sexual wellbeing is integral to your work

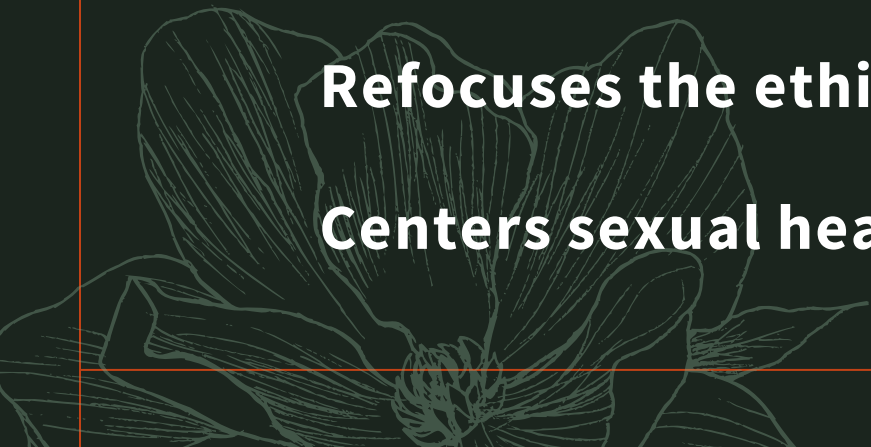
A marker of health equity for clients

A meaningful indicator of wellbeing overall

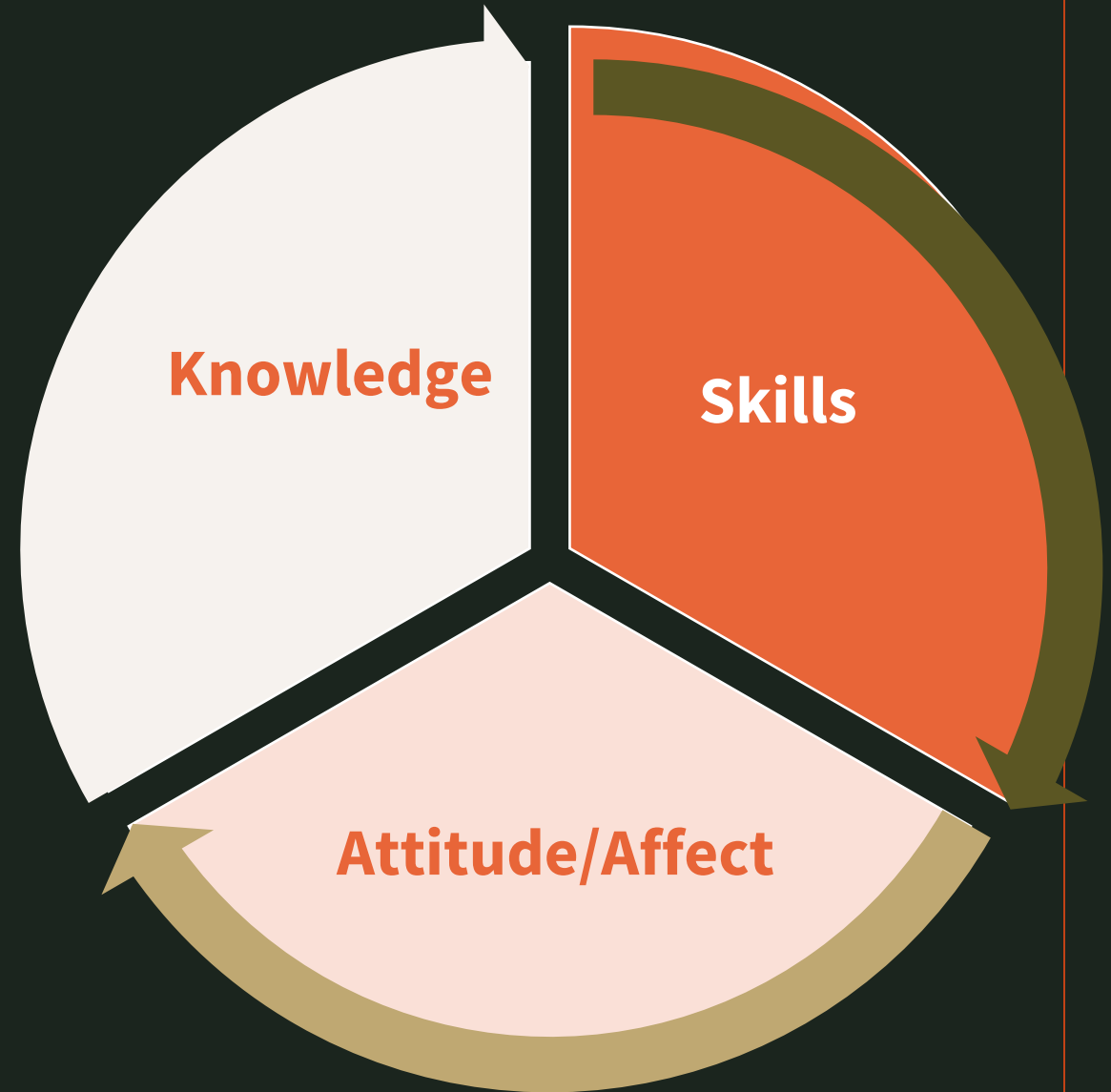
Refocuses the ethics, form, and practices of clinical work

Centers sexual health, pleasure, & justice in clinical work

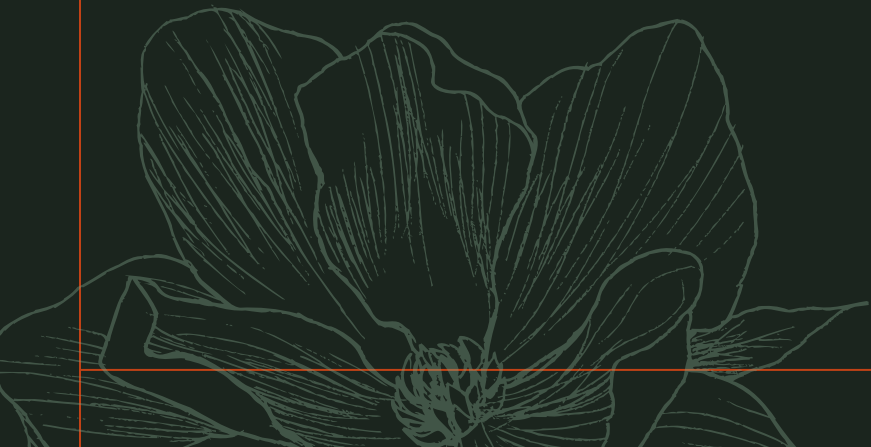
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Comprehensive Sexuality Education

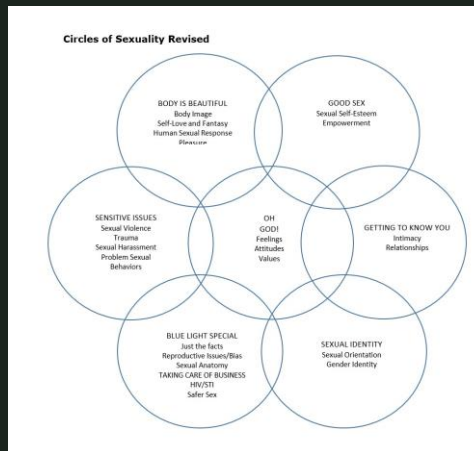
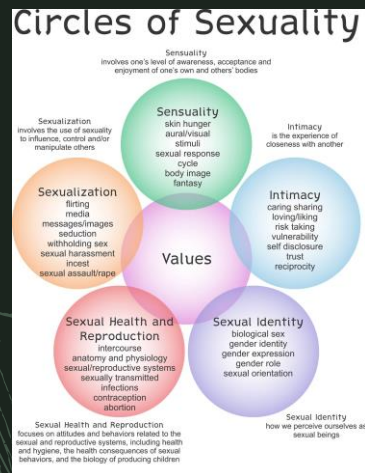


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Quick Activity

Activity: Consider and compare the three conceptual models. Note which suits you best.





“

Comprehensive sexuality
education can be daunting.

”

But you can do it!

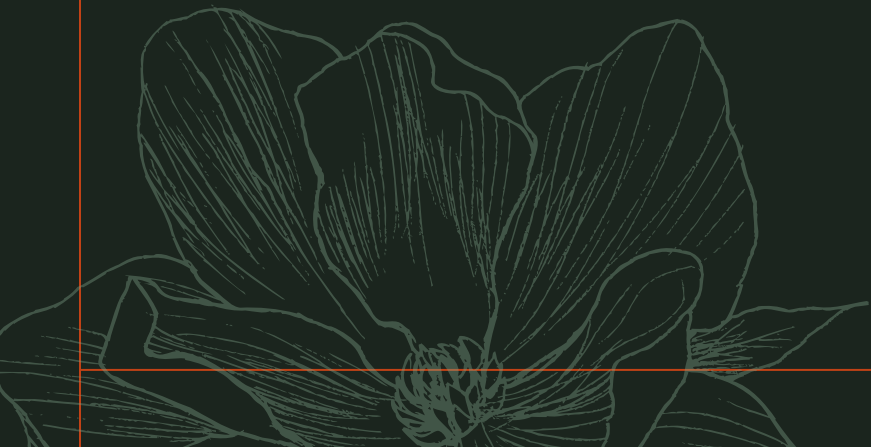
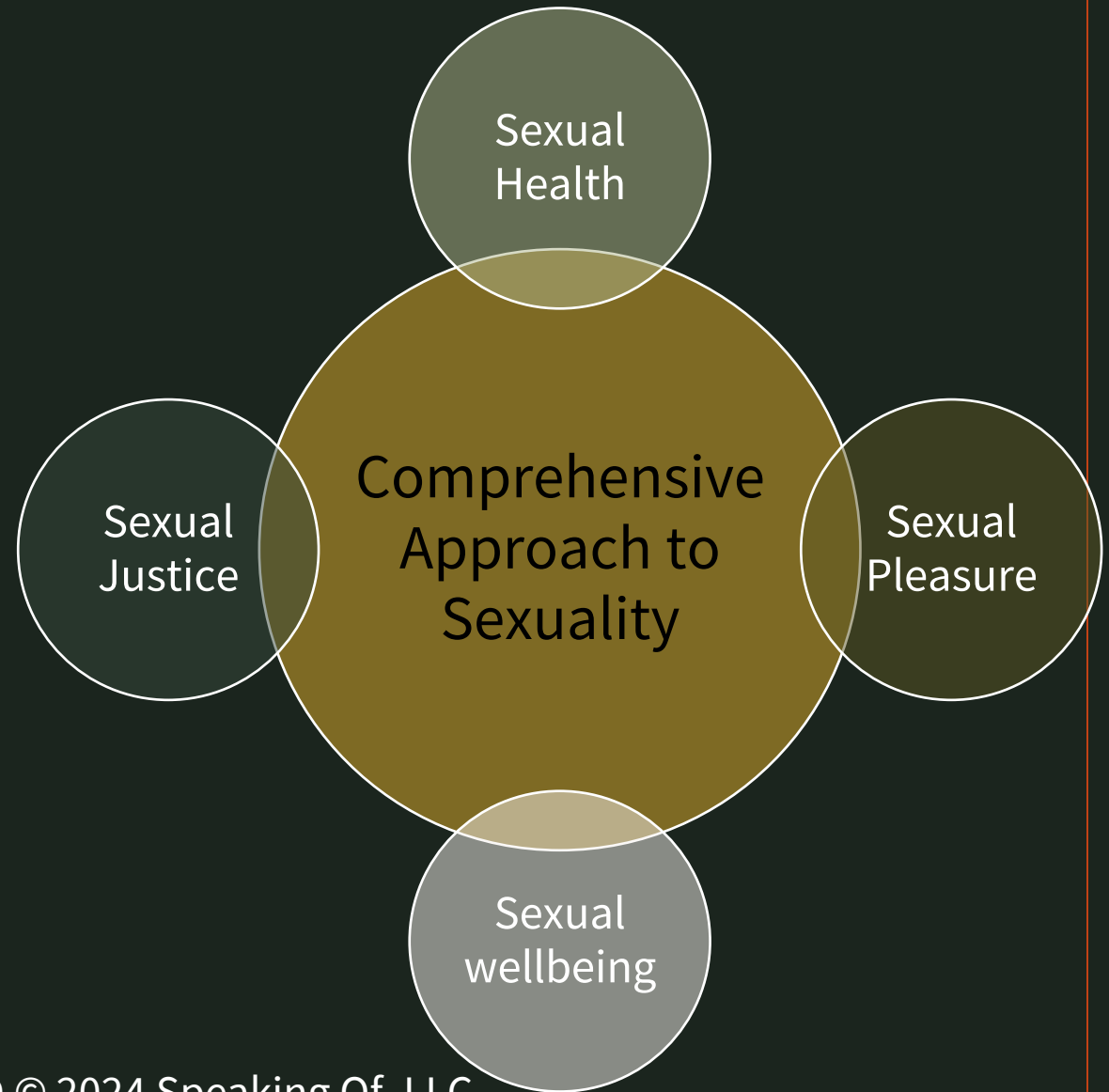


ACTIVITIES

to promote sexual wellness

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ACTIVITY 1: Comfort and Discomfort

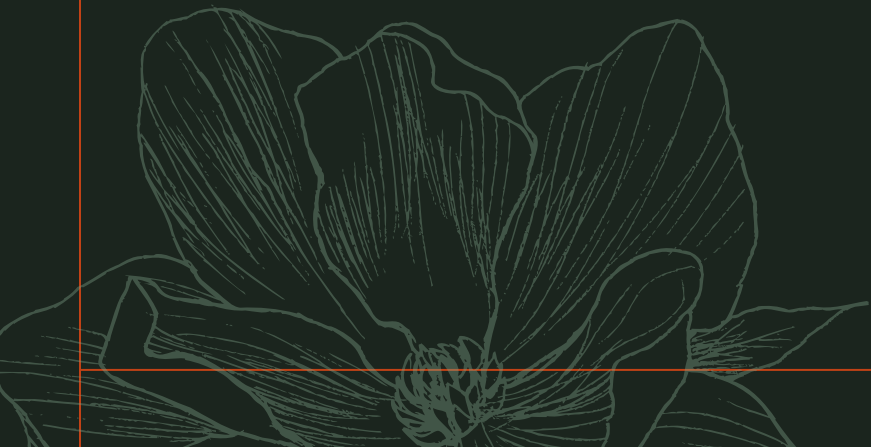


ACTIVITY 2: Sexual Consent



Vernaccio, 2014

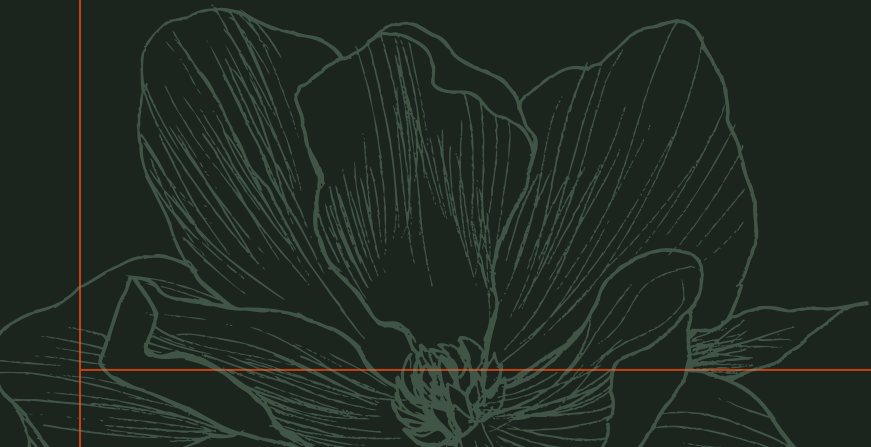
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ACTIVITY 3: Sexual Behaviors



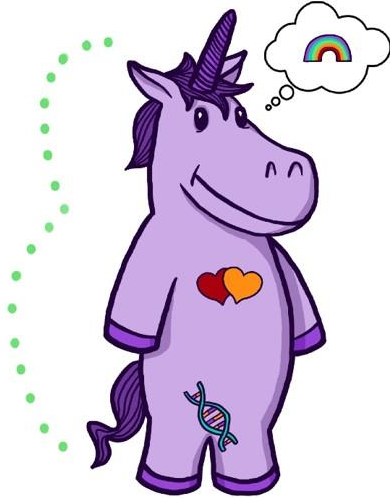
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ACTIVITY 4: Gender and Orientation

The Gender Unicorn

Graphic by:
TSER
Trans Student Educational Resources



Gender Identity

- Female/Woman/Girl
- Male/Man/Boy
- Other Gender(s)

Gender Expression

- Feminine
- Masculine
- Other

Sex Assigned at Birth

- Female
- Male
- Other/Intersex

Physically Attracted to

- Women
- Men
- Other Gender(s)

Emotionally Attracted to

- Women
- Men
- Other Gender(s)

To learn more, go to:
www.transstudent.org/gender

Design by Landyn Pan and Anna Moore

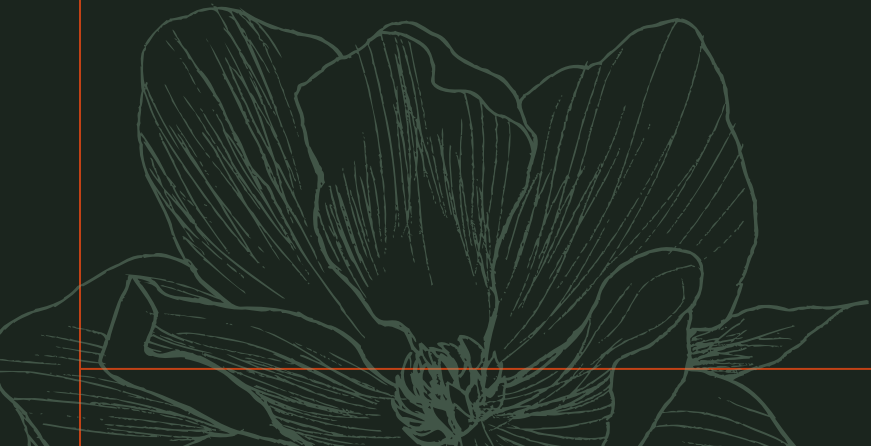
ACTIVITY 5: What the Closet Looks Like



ACTIVITY 6: A Sensual Feast



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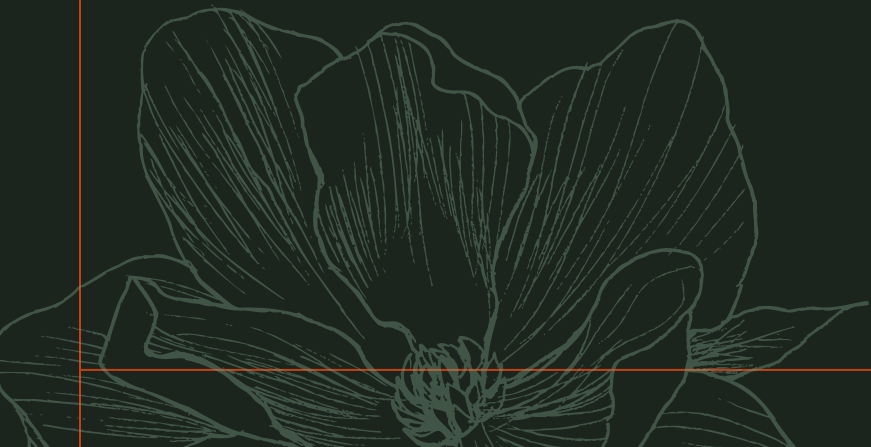
ACTIVITY 7: Etymology

Erotic

Sexuality

Sensuality

Intimacy



ACTIVITY 8:

Childhood Memories

What messages did you get about sexuality as a child?

- From whom?
- What did they say?
- Silences
- Secrets

ACTIVITY 9: The Hourglass

Consider the hourglass as a symbol:

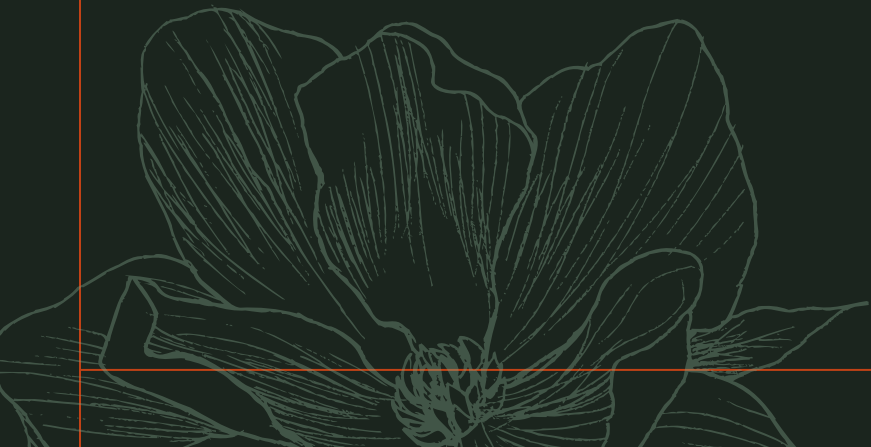
- What felt good on your body as a child?
- At the narrowing, what traumas occurred?
- In recovery, what pleasures are possible?



ACTIVITY 10: Sexual Pleasure

Consider an array of sexual behaviors

Note which ones you might want to offer/receive



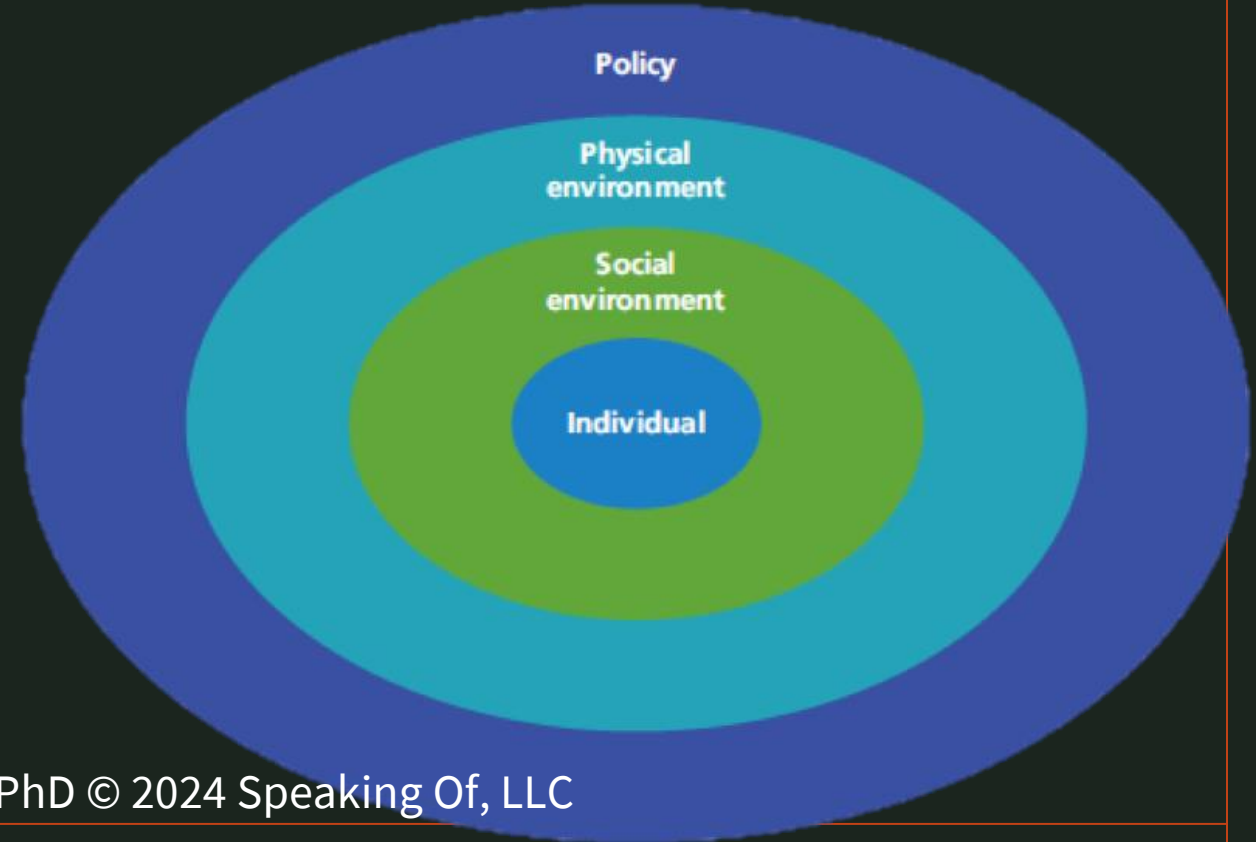
A close-up photograph of a person's hands holding a small succulent plant in a dark pot. The person is wearing a blue and white plaid shirt. In the foreground, there are several other succulent plants, some with blue-green leaves and some with green leaves. The background is slightly blurred, showing more of the person and other plants. A semi-transparent green rectangular box is overlaid on the center of the image, containing the text "Policy Lens".

Policy Lens

Remember that thought experiment we did earlier?

Consider the barriers:

- Your own confidence or knowledge?
- Your role?
- Your employer?
- Something else?



Looking at Changes in Practice at Many Levels

SOCIAL ECOLOGICAL MODEL

INDIVIDUAL:

Factors in an individual's biological and personal history that increase the possibility of becoming a victim or perpetrator of violence.

Example: Attitudes or beliefs that support sexual violence, impulsive and anti-social behaviors, history of abuse or witnessing abuse, alcohol or drug abuse.

RELATIONSHIP:

Factors within an individual's closest relationships, such as social peers, intimate partners, and family members that increase their risk.

Example: Association with sexually aggressive peers, emotionally unsupportive, physically violent or strongly patriarchal family environment.

COMMUNITY:

Factors on the community level such as relationships with schools, workplaces, and neighborhoods that may increase the individual's risk.

Example: General tolerance of sexual assault, lack of support from police or judicial system, poverty, weak community sanctions against perpetrators.

SOCIETAL:

Societal or cultural norms that create an environment that accepts or condones violence or inequality.

Example: Inequality due to an individual's gender, religion, culture, sexual orientation, or race. inequality due to economic and social policies.

Bronfenbrenner, 1979

A photograph of several flamingos in a wetland environment. The birds are white with pinkish-red feathers on their wings and long, thin legs. One flamingo in the center is leaning its head back towards another. The background shows dark, leafy trees and a body of water. A semi-transparent, light green rectangular box is overlaid on the center of the image, containing the text "Teaching Sexual Wellness in MA".

Teaching Sexual Wellness in MA

COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Grades Pre-Kindergarten to 12



MASSACHUSETTS
Department of Elementary
and Secondary Education

Current

Standards
Recommendations
Not a single curriculum

Age-Appropriate

Vetted
Designed to give young people
tools
Skills-Based

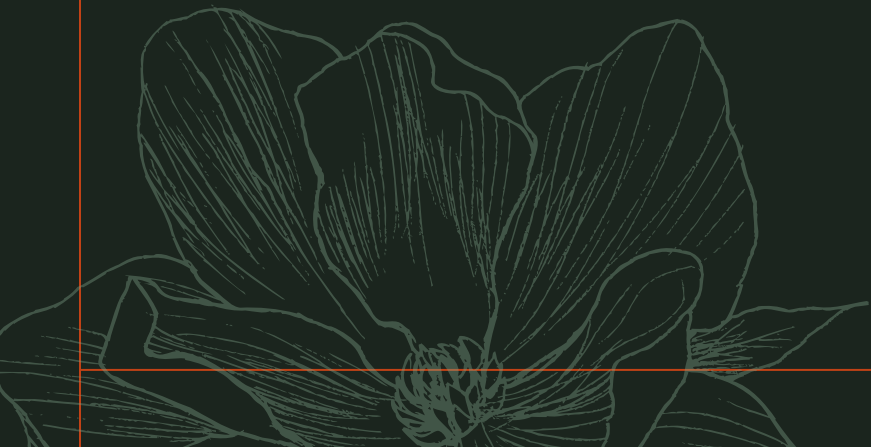
Controversial

LGBTQ Inclusive
Gender inclusive
language

Creating Comprehensive Sexuality Education in Your Program

To make this happen:

- What KSA's do you need as an individual?
- What do you need to discuss with your team?
- What does the facility need?
- What needs to change on a policy level?
- Other concerns?



Helpful Tips to Teaching Comprehensive Sexuality

1. Remind yourself that it's OK to feel uncomfortable.
2. Seek “teachable moments” to share your values.
3. Don't wait until your clients ask questions.
4. Be “askable.”
5. Consider the question behind the question.
6. Listen and be present.
7. Remember that facts are not enough.
8. Talk about the joys of sexuality.
9. You're talking about sex because you care about their happiness and well-being.
10. Pleasure is possible.

AASECT.org

[Advocates for Youth](http://AdvocatesforYouth.org)

cancer.org

collegesextalk.com

condomania.com

[Help Wanted, Prevention](http://HelpWantedPrevention.org)

fatherhood.org

[MedLinePlus](http://MedLinePlus.gov)

iwannaknow.org

www.ourbetterhalf.net

pflag.org

plannedparenthood.org

teenwire.com

thenationalcampaign.org

prochoice.org

Scarleteen.com

sexetc.org

siecus.org

[StopInNow!](http://StopInNow.org)

[Sylvia Rivera Law Project](http://SylviaRiveraLawProject.org)

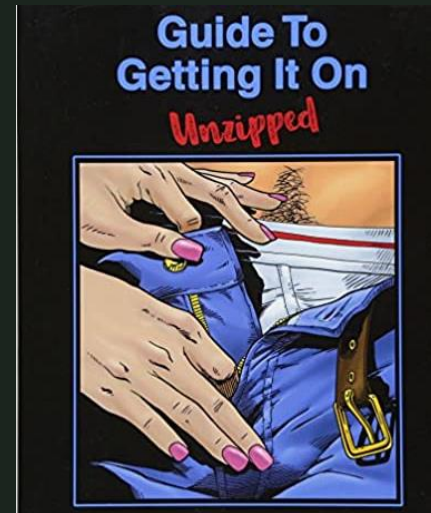
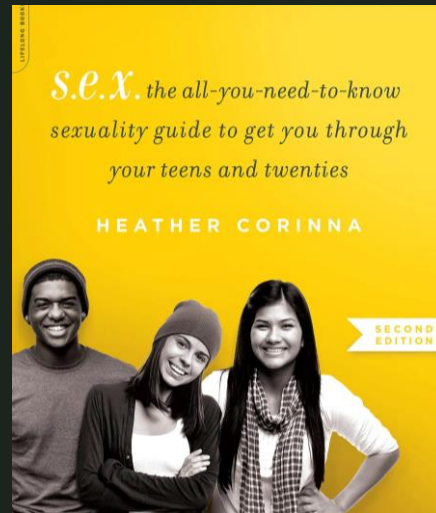
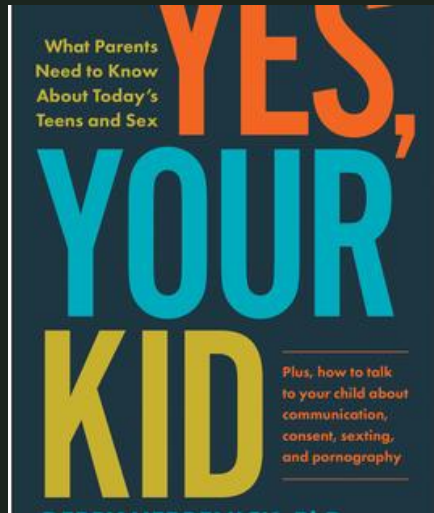
talkingwithkids.org

teenpregnancy.org

[What's OK?](http://WhatsOK.org)

Helpful Web Resources

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Resources



Best Practices

What ideas do you
have?

What KSA's do you
need?

Who can support
you?

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One last thought

What I am suggesting is daunting.

To live as fully healthy sexual beings, your clients deserve to learn about sexual wellness.

It's quite possible that no one has ever talked with them in this way.

Why not be the person who begins to change all of that?

Gratitude and Curiosity



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Feel free to
reach out
Jane Fleishman, PhD

www.janefleishman.com