Sexual rights and Intellectual Disability
Exploring policy, attitudes and support initiatives

Date: Tuesday 8 September 2009
Venue: Marino Institute of Education, Griffith Avenue, Dublin 9, Ireland

Endorsed by ISEN
Sexual rights and Intellectual Disability
Exploring policy, attitudes and support initiatives

About the conference

With Ireland’s signing of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the rights of people with intellectual disabilities, including their right to respect for relationships and sexuality, have come increasingly to the fore. However, translating acknowledgement of rights into proactive support remains a key challenge, and people with intellectual disabilities have highlighted that they face many barriers in this area of their lives. For families and disability services, a crucial issue is how to empower people with intellectual disabilities with regard to relationships and sexuality, and yet at the same time, ensure that they are safe. Many have cited difficulties with Irish legislation in this area.

This inclusive conference brings together a number of Irish and international experts who will explore sexuality as a rights issue and look at support needs of people with intellectual disabilities, family members and staff. Presentations will also highlight a number of new and interesting support initiatives that aim to address needs in this area. This will be a practical, empowering day, encouraging debate and offering advice on how to tackle this sensitive, but important issue.

Key themes

- Consent and legislation
- Policy development within disability services
- Self advocates’ views
- Family perspectives and support needs
- Staff perspectives and support needs
- Sexual health strategies
- Supporting people with intellectual disabilities with regard to sexual orientation
- Supporting people with intellectual disabilities as parents

Aims of the conference

- To provide an update on the Irish policy and legislative framework concerning sexuality and intellectual disability, and to explore policy development in this area.
- To disseminate new research and explore support initiatives in this field.
- To provide a forum for debate and to enable participants to network with others who have similar concerns and to share examples of good practice.
- To empower people with intellectual disabilities to have their voices heard with regard to relationships and sexuality.

Who should attend?

It is hoped that this conference will attract a wide range of attendees, from people with intellectual disabilities and their family members, to those working to support people with intellectual disabilities in this area of their lives.

- People with intellectual disabilities
- Family members
- Policy makers
- Managers
- Frontline staff
- Sexual health service providers
- Researchers

About Irish Sex Education Network

The Irish Sex Education Network (ISEN) was founded in September 2002 and is an independent, non denominational, nation wide, multidisciplinary group. Currently our members come from voluntary and statutory disability services, persons with disabilities and their families. The Irish Sex Education Network aims to promote high professional standards and best practice in the area of sex education for people with disabilities with a special emphasis on people with intellectual disabilities. http://www.isenonline.com/.
Programme

9.00am  Registration

9.30am  Welcome and introduction
        Chair: Grace Kelly PhD student, Dept of Applied Social Studies, University College Cork

9.40am  Promoting safer sexual lives
        Professor Kelley Johnson Director, Norah Fry Research Centre, Bristol

10.10am Capacity and sexuality: The Irish policy and legislative framework
        Speaker TBC National Disability Authority

10.35am Sexuality and intellectual disability: Staff views and support needs
        Sharon Foley Independent Research Consultant, one2one Solutions

11.00am Refreshments

11.15am Supporting sexuality: Balancing stakeholder views in a disability service
        Grace Kelly PhD student, Dept of Applied Social Studies, University College Cork

11.40am Sexual health and intellectual disability
        Roisin Dermody PhD student, Equality Studies Centre, University College Dublin

12.05pm “Secret loves, hidden lives?” Exploring issues for people with intellectual disabilities who are gay, lesbian or bisexual
        David Abbott Senior Research Fellow, Norah Fry Research Centre, Bristol

12.30pm Lunch

1.30pm Parenting with intellectual disability: Advocacy and support
        Beth Tarleton Research Fellow, Norah Fry Research Centre, Bristol

1.55pm “Leaving Home” A Forum theatre interactive drama presentation about relationships for people with intellectual disabilities
        Clare Inclusive Research Group Brothers of Charity Clare

2.20pm Parallel workshop sessions
        A Developing relationship & sexuality policy
            Helen Crowley Co-ordinator, RUA, The Callan Institute, St John of God Hospitaller Services
        B “Who says we can, who says we can’t?” A relationships discussion group
            Irish Sex Education Peer Support Group Irish Sex Education Network
        C Supporting our sons’ and daughters’ relationship and sexuality needs: A parent’s perspective
            Dr Chrissie Rogers Parent & Lecturer, Brunel University

3.30pm Refreshments

3.45pm Feedback from the parallel sessions & Discussion

4.30pm Close

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