

Introducing

Our Whole Lives Sexuality Education for Older Adults

UNIT ONE Exploring Ideas about Sexuality

Workshop One Sexuality and Values

This fun, engaging workshop sets the stage and creates a learning environment that is comfortable for all participants. Participants craft rules to promote positive group interaction and mutual respect, and they are introduced to the Circles of Sexuality -- a broad definition of sexuality -- that will be further refined and clarified throughout the program. They learn more about the content, format, and underlying values of Our Whole Lives and have offer input on how the program can meet their needs and expectations.

Workshop 2 Attitudes about Aging

This workshop helps participants explore their cultural and personal attitudes about sexuality and aging. It introduces the concept of age-related sexual privilege as the assumption that sexual expression, attraction, and choices are, at least within the predominant white culture in the US, outside the domain of older adults. The workshop explores where assumptions come from, offers suggestions to help protect older adults' rights to sexual expression; and offers encouragement and suggestions for reframing the discourse about older adult sexuality into a view of it as a positive, life-affirming experience.

Workshop 3 Examining Sexual Scripts

Sexual scripts are self-imposed guidelines for how we see ourselves as sexual beings. They address our sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, our desire and arousal patterns, the ways we are in relationship to others, and even the logistics of sexual activity, e.g., which sexual behaviors are acceptable and pleasurable. This workshop introduces the concept of sexual scripts, explores how they affect sexuality, and engages participants in thinking about the sexual scripts in their own lives, both personally and in their interactions with peers, or adult children or grandchildren.

UNIT TWO You, As a Sexual Being

Workshop 4 The Sexual Body

This workshop provides facts about age-related changes and addresses some of the medical methods available to manage changes that affect sexual function and pleasure. In addition, the workshop helps older adults accept and appreciate their changing bodies.

Workshop 5 Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

This workshop is appropriate for participants of all orientations and genders who seek to learn about their own and others' sexual identities -- including their family members'. Content includes comments from older adult LGBT respondents to a 2015 research study. Note: Required slightly more preparation time than other workshops in this program.

UNIT THREE Relationships

Workshop 6 Intimacy

Participants explore their expectations regarding love and refer back to the sexual scripts addressed in Workshop Three. They consider new ways to enjoy intimacy, regardless of their partnership status. The workshop does not assume that participants are in or want to be in romantic or sexual relationships.

Workshop 7 Sexual Consent and Boundaries

Participants learn that consent is an agreement between participants to engage in some form of sexual activity, while sexual boundaries are personal limits and rules people use to decide whether, when, how, and with whom to engage in sexual activity. This workshop addresses the need for communication about boundaries and includes discussion of consent in the context of diminished cognition.

Workshop 8 Family Matters

This workshop explores some of the challenges that can come up among the generations where sexuality is concerned. It offers ways to improve communication, establish boundaries, understand expectations, and work as an intergenerational team to promote healthy sexuality and family dynamics.

Please continue to page 2 for more workshop descriptions.

UNIT FOUR Changes and Challenges

Workshop 9 Sexuality and Loss

This workshop delves into the many types of loss and grief that can be experienced and helps participants find ways to accept their feelings and focus on remaining joys and pleasures in life.

Workshop 10 Sexuality, Disability and Chronic Illness

Whether a person is born with a disability or acquires one, or whether a person has a chronic illness, they will have unique sexual challenges when it comes to giving and receiving pleasure. Some of these obstacles are physical, but many are due to attitudes that cause disabled and chronically ill bodies to be viewed as broken or unable to engage in sexual activity. This workshop educates and empowers participants who seek to foster or maintain sexual enjoyment and to embrace their own and their partners' bodies. It helps participants consider how to work around perceived barriers and find adaptive ways to achieve sexual expression.

Workshop 11 Body Image

This workshop explores the concepts of body image, sexual self-esteem, and sexual self-efficacy. At the core of that discussion is the idea that more positive body image empowers older adults to make decisions in their best interests rather than to please others. The workshop helps improve body image through a series of reflective activities that encourage honest, yet compassionate views of the body as it has been sculpted by age and life experiences.

Supplementary Workshops

Workshop 12 Dating as an Older Adult

Dating has the capacity create memorable moments, lasting friendships, and, if one is fortunate, love. This workshop helps participants determine what qualities they seek in a partner, offers practice writing a dating profile, helps awkward conversations flow more easily, and enhances first impressions.

Workshop 13 Safer Sex

Longer lifespan, better general health, high divorce rates, and expectations of vibrant sexual lives may lead older people to have more sex partners than in years past. These factors, coupled with a lack of education about STIs and safer sex, puts many older adults at greater risk than their adult children and grandchildren who may have received more sexuality education. This workshop provides resources and opportunities for older adults to engage in dialogue about sexual activity, risk, and preventing STIs.

Workshop 14 Diversity in Sexual Expression

By the end of this workshop, participants have a better understanding of the adult pleasure products, assistive devices, and furniture that can enhance sexual expression as well as sexual activities typically defined as kink. The workshop introduces communication techniques that ensure that sexual experimentation is safe, sane and consensual.