

# **Ask the Doctor: Healthy Sexuality, from Puberty to Adulthood for Autistic Youth and Adults**

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**Autism**ONTARIO

# Disclaimers & Statements

## General Disclaimer

- Opinions are of the presenters
- Make informed decisions

## Language

- Identity-first (e.g., autistic person)
- Person-first (e.g., person with autism)

## Professional Disclaimer

- Specific questions
- Additional Resources

# Agenda

- Autism Profile
- Issues of Development
- Puberty
- Love & Affection

# Multidisciplinary Team



# Autism-AS profile

- Social skills: free of social rules
- Communication abilities: verbal and nonverbal
- Theory of Mind: different ways of thinking?
- Consent
- Emotions: detecting, reading, expressing
- Routines
- Sensory issues
- Lack of information/education
- Co-occurring conditions

# Issues of Development

- Sexual behaviours:
  - self-stimulation
  - exploring sexuality
- Frustrations and inappropriate behaviours
- Gender identity & role definition:
  - ‘My way’
  - flexibility, conflict, and confusion
- Social imitation:
  - context, consent

# Factors Influencing Social & Sexual Development

(Griffiths, 1999)

- Information
- Limitations of the environment
- Gender segregation
- Internet & pornography

# Factors Influencing Social & Sexual Development

- Intimacy
  - Interests and limits
  - Private and public setting
- Exploration and positive experiences



# Puberty

- Physiological changes
  - Hormones levels (testosterone, estrogen)
  - Body changes: body hair, sexual function, reactions, periods, etc.
- Psychological changes
  - Emotions (mood changes, stronger, cycle)
  - Independence
  - Curiosity
  - Interests

# Puberty

- Recognition of abusive/unfriendly relationships
- Dangerous relationship
- Qualities of a healthy relationship
  - Sharing
  - Communication
  - Pleasure, interest
  - Respect, communication and much more...



# Exploring Affection



# Love & Affection

- Affection to repair feelings
- Frequency of affection
- Words & gestures
- Context



- Different ways to express empathy/ affection?
  - [Empathy Quotient](#)

A MANUAL FOR PROFESSIONALS

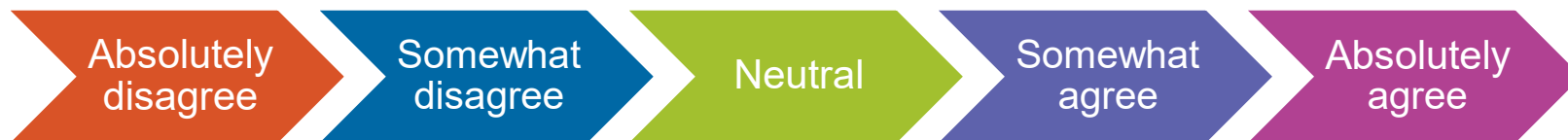


CBT to Help  
**Young People**  
*with Asperger's Syndrome (Autism  
Spectrum Disorder) to Understand  
and Express Affection*

Tony Attwood, PhD and Michelle Garnett, PhD

# Feedback Survey

- Please answer each question in the survey
- The questions include items with:
  - A Likert scale (i.e., a 5-point scale with a range of responses)



- Selecting only one answer (single answer)
- Selecting all answers that might apply (multiple selections)
- Text boxes where you type your answer



thank  
you



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