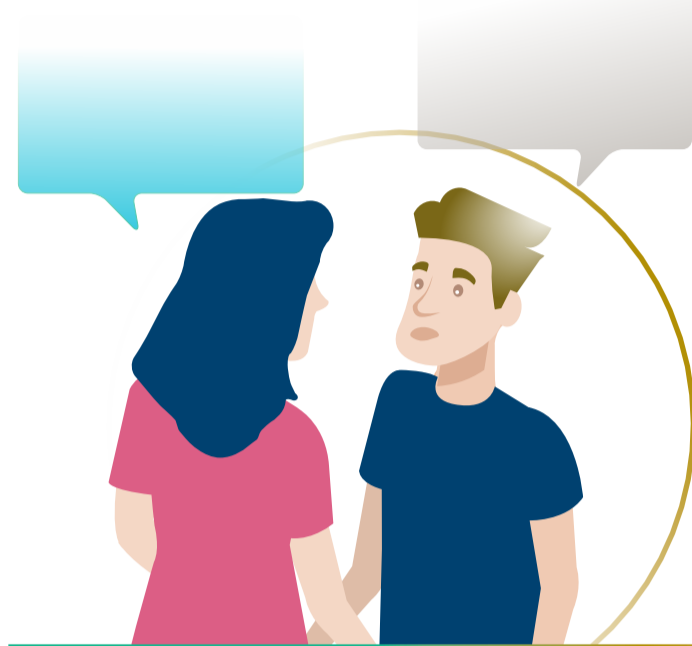


# Supporting sexual health according to relatives and support staff of people with mild intellectual disabilities

People with mild intellectual disabilities often depend on education and support from relatives and support staff for their sexual health. How do relatives and support staff view the sexual health of people with mild intellectual disabilities? What do they consider important in terms of support? And what role do they see for themselves? The Academic Collaborative Center Living with an Intellectual Disability has investigated this. This infographic presents the key results.

When it comes to the **sexual health** of people with mild intellectual disabilities, relatives and support staff think of:



## 1 EDUCATION AND SUPPORT Important according to relatives:

- Paying attention to the difference between healthy and unhealthy sexual behavior. For example: where and when it is appropriate to display sexual behavior.
- Making clear agreements together about sexual health and privacy.

### Important according to support staff:

- Providing sex education at the right time to prevent negative experiences.
- Discussing social rules. Such as what you can and cannot discuss with friends about sexual health.
- Giving room for sexual experimentation, be open, and show acceptance.

## 2 RELATIONSHIPS

### Important according to relatives:

- Realize that people with mild intellectual disabilities have the same (intimate) desires as others. Such as going out for dinner or a drink together.
- Realize the impact that an intellectual disability can have on sexuality. For example, it may be more difficult to connect with people of the same age.

### Important according to support staff:

- Support staff seem to consider relationships less important. However, they do mention sexual identity. This concerns whether you feel like a man, woman, or something else.



## 3 SEXUAL DEVELOPMENT Important according to relatives:

- Pay attention to experiences and feelings. To discover boundaries and learn to understand feelings and be able to express them.

### Important according to support staff:

- Pay attention to experiences and feelings. To discover one's own preferences and become aware of them.



We can promote the **sexual health** of people with mild intellectual disabilities by:

adopting a positive, accepting attitude towards sexual health by approaching it as a part of someone's development.

engaging in an open conversation with them about sexual health.

This infographic is based on the results of a sub-study from the doctoral research project "Healthy Sexuality and Its Support: Perspectives of People with Intellectual Disabilities, Their Caregivers, and Their Loved Ones." Wouter de Wit, MSc, from the Academic Collaborative Center Living with an Intellectual Disability (AWVB, Tranzo, Tilburg University) and Zuidwester conducted this study under the supervision of Prof. Petri Embregts (AWVB) and Dr. Diana Roeg (Tilburg University).

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