

Disability and Sexuality Resources: My LEND Leadership Project



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Introduction

My name is Devon Bacso. I am a graduate student at Northern Arizona University, and I was an ArizonaLEND Trainee for the 2017-2018 school year.

Part of ArizonaLEND's fellowship requirements include the creation of a leadership project: mine was to create a website for disability and sexuality resources.

As someone with congenital hip dysplasia, I sought to incorporate physical and motor disabilities into my required leadership project. My past experience working in sexual education at places like Planned Parenthood and the Center for Sexual Pleasure and Health (RI), combined with my experiences as a queer person, made me want to address the gap in sexual education for those who fall outside society's norms. Ideally, this website will serve to fill some of those gaps.

Objectives

This project was started to create a platform for people with physical and motor disabilities who are in search of more information about navigating sexuality, relationships, and identity.

Methods and Features

To create this website, I first had to research what areas and what populations I wanted to cover. I consulted with my LEND mentor to help me solve some of these questions, and also meditated on what areas were most important to me.

Population: People with physical/motor disabilities

I decided on this population because of the scarcity of resources for those personally impacted by these disabilities who are trying to navigate their sexuality. I wanted a website that spoke directly to this population, and aimed for a less scholarly tone in order to make the website more approachable. I also made sure to include a comments section in order to gain feedback directly from my population.

Topics: Relationships, sexual education, identity

While I wanted to focus on middle school, high school, and young adults, I had to determine what core topics could apply across such a wide age range. I settled on relationships, ranging from crushes for middle schoolers to more serious partnerships for young adults; sexual education, from elementary concepts to more mature discussions; and identity, from basic self-concept to more advanced understandings of gender, sexuality, and so on.

Sources: Books, videos, and websites

To assemble this website, I did not discriminate with my sources. I used published journals, academic books, YouTube videos, viral articles, and so on, as long as the information was accurate and appropriate for my audience. In this way I aimed to present a blended and complex array of information from a variety of sources.

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Conclusions

This website was an eye-opening experience for me. I felt both validated, as articles that I read echoed my own experiences, and better educated, as I read personal stories very different from my own. I hope that this website can fill a gap for youth and adolescents who are searching for more information about the intersection of disability and sexuality. I also included brief information for parents, partners, and providers in order to better educate these groups as well. My goal is for this website to be an evolving project, growing from personal and professional feedback from a variety of sources in order to best serve its audience.

References and Resources

- *Taking Charge: Teenagers Talk about Life and Physical Disabilities*, by Kay Kriegsmann, Elinor Zaslow and Jennifer D'Zmura-Rechsteiner
- *Caution: Do Not Open Until Puberty! An Introduction to Sexuality for Young People with Disabilities*, by Rick Enright
- *Easy for You to Say: Q and A's For Teens Living With Chronic Illness or Disabilities*, by Miriam Kaufman
- *Sexuality and Chronic Illness: A Comprehensive Approach*, by Leslie R. Schover, Ph.D. and Soren Buus Jensen, M.D.
- *The Ultimate Guide to Sex and Disability, Second Edition*, by Miriam Kaufman, Cory Silverberg, and Fran Odette
- <http://www.uwyo.edu/wind/srh/resources/individuals-with-disabilities.html>
- <https://www.accessliving.org/index.php?download=1410gactf270>
- <http://www.sexualityanddisability.org/>
- <http://www.andrewgurza.com/home>
- <http://enhancetheuk.org/enhance/about-us/>
- <http://www.thecspn.org/the-cspn-resources/web-resources/sex-and-disability/>
- <http://www.sexedlibrary.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=page.viewpage&pageid=629>
- <http://www.uwyo.edu/wind/srh/resources/family.html>
- <http://www.sexandu.ca/>
- <https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2015/03/sex-and-disability/386866/>
- <http://www.cosmopolitan.com/sex-love/news/a39179/sex-talk-reality-how-i-have-sex-with-a-disability/>
- https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/gqk5bb/sexuality-with-a-disability
- https://broadly.vice.com/en_us/article/zmbegj/how-people-with-disabilities-have-sex
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