ALL ABOUT GROWING UP
**INTRODUCTION**

Sexuality is not just about the act of sex but about the values, beliefs, experiences and ideas a person has. Puberty is part of sexuality. It is the process of social, emotional and physical changes as we grow from a child to an adult. It can be a difficult subject to discuss, however sexuality is a part of us all regardless of age, illness or disability and we have the right to express it, as long as we do not harm others in doing so.

This workbook has been designed for young people living with mild to moderate intellectual disabilities. It is for them to work through with a parent, teacher or caregiver. It deals with pubertal change and public and private behaviour and uses a combination of information, pictures and activities. The inserted information section will help you progress through the workbook with the young person by providing extra information and recommended additional resources.
Ana and Peter are growing up and going through puberty. Their bodies are changing from children into young adults.
Ana has noticed that her body is different from the other females in her family.

Circle the body that is most like yours.
Ana has noticed that her body is starting to change and so are her moods.

Breasts develop

Sweat more

Hair grows under arms

May feel moody

May start to have crushes
Because Ana is going through puberty and her body is changing she needs to take care of it.

Ana needs to wash her body everyday, including her vulva, and use deodorant under her arms. Sometimes people may need help from a parent or caregiver to look after their body.
Ana has started to wear a bra to stop her breasts from jiggling about. Breasts come in all shapes and sizes so whatever a female has they are right for her.
Once a month blood comes out through Ana’s vagina for about 5 days and nights. This is called a period. This means that her body is healthy and working properly and that one day she may be able to be a mother.

When Ana has her period she wears a pad to stop blood getting on her underwear.

‘How to change a Pad sequencing activity’ – page 20 & 21.
Ana’s mum told her that boys also have body and mood changes when they go through puberty.

- Get more erections
- Hair grows under arms
- Eat more
- May get pimples
- May start to have crushes

Ana’s body belongs to her. Some parts of her body are private, this means they are just for her.

Ana covers the private parts of her body with underwear.

Draw/stick underwear on Ana’s body to cover her private parts.

If someone touches our private parts without us saying they can, it is important that we tell an adult we trust. Who is an adult you could tell?
If Ana needs help or has questions she knows she can talk to her mum or aunty.

Who can you talk to?
Peter has noticed that his body is different from the other males in his family.

Circle the body that is most like yours.
Peter has noticed that his body is starting to change and so are his moods. His mother has told him that this is part of growing up. He is going through puberty and his body is changing from a boy’s body into a young man’s body.

- Get more erections
- Hair grows under arms
- Eat more
- May get pimples
- May start to have crushes
Because Peter is going through puberty and his body is changing he needs to take care of it. Peter needs to wash his body everyday, including his penis, and use deodorant under his arms. Sometimes people may need help from a parent or caregiver to look after their body.
Peter has started to grow hair on his face and has decided that he wants to shave it off. Peter asks his dad to teach him how to shave. Peter could use a hand razor or an electric razor. Peter chooses to use an electric razor.
Sometimes when Peter is asleep his penis became hard and a small amount of fluid comes out of it. This is called a wet dream. This means his body is working properly. The fluid has sperm in it which means one day he may be able to be a father.
Peter’s mum told him that girls also have body and mood changes when they go through puberty.

Breasts develop  
Sweat more  
Hair grows under arms

May feel moody  
May start to have crushes

Peter’s body belongs to him. Some parts of his body are private, this means they are just for him.

Peter covers the private parts of his body with underwear.

**Draw/stick underwear on Peter’s body to cover his private parts.**

If someone touches our private parts without us saying they can, it is important that we tell an adult we trust. Who is an adult you could tell?
If Peter needs help or has questions he knows he can talk to his dad or grandad.

Who can you talk to?

ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

ACTIVITY – Which Body Looks Like Mine?
Ask the young person to circle/mark the person’s body that looks most like their body. Then ask them to circle all the people they think have gone through puberty. This is an opportunity to talk about the physical differences between people who have gone through puberty and those who haven’t, e.g. taller, hair under arms, breasts, hair on the face etc.

ACTIVITY – Public/Private Bodies.
Ask the young person to cover up the private parts of the characters’ bodies. This is also a good opportunity to talk about private and public places and what behaviours are appropriate in both. You can define a private place as somewhere that a person can shut the door and know that they will not be interrupted e.g. bedroom, bathroom or toilet. A public place can be defined as somewhere that anyone can be e.g. movies, park etc. If the young person you are working with needs help when using the bathroom or toilet it is important that this is discussed in relation to private places.

ACTIVITY
How to change a pad sequence and How to shave sequence.
Photocopy or cut out the images. Ask the young person to place the steps of shaving or changing a pad in order. This activity can be used to reinforce what to do in these situations.
ACTIVITY – *Boys, Girls, Both.*
Photocopy or cut out the cards. Place the heading cards down. Ask the young person to go through the changes cards and decide which heading card they go under.

The purpose of this activity is to identify the physical and emotional changes that take place during puberty and recognise that a majority of changes happen to both girls and boys. It is important to acknowledge that while some people find puberty an exciting time other people can find it scary or confusing. It helps to think of an adult that they trust to talk to if they have any of these feelings.

A full list of definitions of the pubertal changes is included in the inserted information section for parents/teachers/caregivers.

This activity is adapted from Family Planning’s *The Sexuality Road (2009)* resource.

ACTIVITY – *Helping Hand.*
This activity helps to create a list of people that the young person can talk to if they have questions or something has happened that they don’t feel right about. This is an opportunity to talk to them about safety and reinforce that if someone touches or does something to them that they don’t like it is not their fault and they need to tell someone. “NO GO TELL’ can be a useful strategy to teach in relation to this.
No – be assertive. Go – go to a safe place. Tell – someone you trust and keep telling until you feel safe.
How to change a pad sequencing activity

Go to the bathroom and wash your hands.

Go into the toilet and shut the door, pull down underwear.

Pee or poo if you want to, remove the used pad from your underwear.
Wrap the used pad in toilet paper and place the used pad in the bin.

Take a clean pad from your bag, unwrap the pad from its wrapper and stick onto your underwear.

Wipe your private parts from front to back, and pull up your underwear.

Open the toilet door, go and wash your hands, leave the bathroom.
Ask an adult to help you shave. Go to the bathroom.

Wash and dry your face.
Turn on the razor and move it over your facial hair in a circular motion.

Clean the razor after you finish using it.

When you have finished shaving, use water to wash your face and then dry it. You may like to put on some aftershave to make your skin feel nice.
Boys/Girls/Both Cards

BREASTS DEVELOP

GET MORE ERECTIONS

EAT MORE

GET MORE HAIR ON FACE
EGGS ARE RELEASED

PUBIC HAIR GROWS
HAIR GROWS UNDER ARMS

HIPS GET WIDER

MAY START TO HAVE CRUSHES
MAY FEEL MOODY

START HAVING WET DREAMS

MAY GET PIMPLES

MAY HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT PUBERTY
MAY WANT TO SLEEP MORE

START MAKING SPERM

BEGIN HAVING PERIODS

MAY FEEL LIKE MASTURBATING
(TOUCHING SEXUAL BODY PARTS FOR PLEASURE)
Who can you go to if you need help or have questions? Can you think of a person’s name for each finger on the helping hand?

- Someone I live with
- Someone at work or school
- A friend
- Someone in my neighbourhood
- Someone in a public place
EDUCATION CURRICULUM

In New Zealand sexuality education is compulsory until year 10. However, many young people living with disabilities are on an Individual Education Programme (I.E.P.). I.E.Ps do not have to include a sexuality education component, but a sexuality component can be requested.

Parents/carers can be great sexuality educators and can talk to their children about sexuality issues from a young age. In particular, it is important to include in their learning public and private behaviour and recognising the difference between a stranger, acquaintance and friend. It is also useful to discuss the difference between secret and private.

Sexuality education is important as it can reduce the occurrence of inappropriate behaviour, such as public masturbation or indiscriminate affection. It can also give young people the skills and knowledge to keep themselves safe. Discussion about possible situations such as having a wet dream prior to their occurrence is important. You may want to see what the young person’s school is doing to look at education about these issues.

Key topics included in a comprehensive sexuality programme could include:

• Public and private behaviours/body parts/places and conversations - e.g. when it is/isn’t appropriate to comment out loud, such as making personal comments.
• Relationships – different types of relationships and behaviour expectations within those. e.g. friendships, love relationships, sexual relationships.
• Appropriate and inappropriate touch.
• Masturbation.
• Puberty.
• Hygiene.
• Safer Sex – contraception / Sexually transmissible infections (STIs).
• Consent.
• Recognising and avoiding unwanted sexual contact.
• Feelings.
• Body Image.
• Reproduction/pregnancy rights and responsibilities.
TALKING ABOUT SEXUALITY

Talking to young people about sexuality can make some people a little nervous. It is not unusual to find this difficult. Sexuality talks can help build awareness and skills around sexuality issues for the young person.

Many people worry that if they tell a young person living with a disability about sexuality issues it will give them suggestions to try these things. Research shows that young people are more likely to delay sexual activity when they have received comprehensive sexuality education that gives consistent messages.

It is important to discuss the difference between public and private behaviours and the values of the family.

There are some disabilities and/or medical conditions that may affect sexual development or desire. The best person to discuss this with would be the young person’s doctor or primary medical provider. Most young people living with a disability will go through the same sexual maturation at the same time as their non-disabled peers. This means that while they may not be able in some aspects of life they will still experience the same attractions as anyone else their age, but along with it may come frustrations; this is another reason why information about sexuality issues is so important.

There is no ‘best’ way to talk about sexuality with a young person as this will be influenced by the young person’s personality and abilities. The following are just tips that may help you to get started.
TIPS FOR TALKING

• It is OK to be embarrassed or not know the answer to a question. Give yourself time to practise and prepare, this can help with the embarrassment. If it is getting too much for you, you could suggest another person that the young person could ask. If you don’t know the answer to a question, be honest, find it out together or get back to them on it.

• Try and talk about issues in a positive way. While it is important that young people know how to keep themselves safe, it is not necessary to use fear messages to make them understand when they need to get out of a situation.

• It can be helpful to use television programmes, friends’ pregnancies etc. to initiate conversations about sexuality in a casual way.

• Clear concrete examples are best; it can help to use visual aids, and check the young person’s understanding of your explanation.

• Remind the young person that they have the right to say no to anything that makes them uncomfortable and that other people have this right as well.

• Reinforce the information you give, frequently and in a variety of ways.

• Be honest about the implications of their disability (when you feel the time is right).

• As young people mature they feel the need for more privacy and independence. Try to allow this as much as possible.

• If you are discussing values with a young person ask them what they think about things as well as giving your own opinions and explaining why your family holds certain values.

• The way in which we react to a young person’s questions or behaviour can have a lasting impression on them. If you find a young person engaged in an inappropriate behaviour e.g. masturbating in the lounge, calmly and clearly explain why the behaviour is inappropriate and suggest an alternative. E.g. “It is fine for you to masturbate, but it is something that needs to be done in private. From now on if you feel like you want to masturbate you need to go to your bedroom to do it, as your bedroom is a private place.”

• Use the technical terminology for body parts e.g. “penis,” rather than “willy.” This means that the reproductive parts won’t be seen as different which sometimes translates into “naughty or dirty,” but do reinforce that they are private.

• Remember that our body language can at times say more than words.

• It is not possible to protect young people from sexual messages, they are everywhere and young people do pick up on them, so we need to talk about sexuality to be sure they have the best information.

• Professionals are a resource to assist you.
If you would like information and discussion starters on sexual relationships and safer sex Family Planning has produced a booklet titled ‘Safer Relationships, Safer Sex’ which is available from our website www.familyplanning.org.nz

PLACES TO GO FOR HELP

Family Planning– www.familyplanning.org.nz – information, resources and a list of clinics and health promotion services.

Family Planning, Auckland health promotion team (09) 522 0120 – information and support for Northern Region.


BOOKS THAT MAY BE OF INTEREST TO PARENTS...

From Birth to Puberty
Gill Lough & Max Saunders (2001)
A comprehensive and practical guide for parents and caregivers. This book is a great guide to helping your child develop a healthy sexuality.

The Puberty Book
Wendy Darvill & Kelsey Powell (1998)
Gives children and teenagers accurate and up-to-date information about themselves, their bodies and growing up. This book is based on frequently asked questions from children and teenagers. Also very informative for parents and teachers.
About Masturbation for Males
*Family Planning Queensland*
A booklet about masturbation, contains a simple language story for males living with a disability as well as notes for families and/or carers

**Special Girls Business**
*Fay Angelo, Heather Pritchard and Rose Stewart (2005)*
Written especially for girls with special needs. The book goes step by step through the process of managing a period using limited text and clear pictures..

There is also a *Special Boys Business* book in this series, check out [www.secretgb.com](http://www.secretgb.com)

**Hair in Funny Places**
*Babette Cole*
A picture book aimed at young children to help explain about the changes that happen at puberty.

**Mummy Laid an Egg**
*Babette Cole*
A picture book aimed at young children to help explain about conception and pregnancy.

**WEBSITES...**
*[www.itsmybody.co.nz](http://www.itsmybody.co.nz)*  Produced by Johnson & Johnson for girls. Lots of information on puberty & periods.

*[www.thehormonefactory.com](http://www.thehormonefactory.com)*  Aimed at 10-12 year olds. Information such as pubertal changes, looking after our bodies, how babies are made.

*[www.theword.org.nz](http://www.theword.org.nz)*  Website produced by Family Planning, answers a variety of questions on sex, life & relationships.
**ACTIVITY**

**Pubertal Change (GIRLS/BOYS/BOTH)**

This chart gives the answers for the girls/boys/both activity in the workbook as well as some extra information about the changes that happen during puberty.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>GIRLS</th>
<th>BOYS</th>
<th>BOTH</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Breasts develop</strong> – however some boys will store fat around the chest area as they go through puberty. This normally disappears as the shoulders widen and chest gets broader.</td>
<td><strong>Get more erections</strong> – Erections occur when the penis fills with blood and becomes hard. During puberty these are often spontaneous and not related to specific thoughts or actions.</td>
<td><strong>Sweat more</strong> – sweat glands become more active as we go through puberty.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Hips get wider</strong> – this happens so there is room for a foetus (baby) to grow.</td>
<td><strong>Get more hair on face</strong> – mainly boys (though some girls may have some facial hair).</td>
<td><strong>Hair grows under arms</strong> and <strong>Pubic hair grows</strong> – body hair is for warmth and protection but many people choose to shave it.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Eggs are released</strong> – Girls are born with all their eggs already in their ovaries. When they go through puberty these eggs are ripened and released as part of the menstrual cycle.</td>
<td><strong>Start having wet dreams</strong> – A wet dream is when a boy gets an erection while he is asleep and ejaculates.</td>
<td><strong>May start to have crushes</strong> – during puberty young people may start to feel attracted to the same sex, opposite sex or both. This is normal. It is also normal for some young people not to be attracted to anyone at this stage.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Begin having periods</strong> – refer to notes in booklet. Periods mean that a female is able to get pregnant.</td>
<td><strong>Start making sperm</strong> – During puberty the testicles start producing sperm, 50,000 per minute.</td>
<td><strong>May want to sleep more</strong> – all that growing can make young people tired so don’t be surprised if they want to sleep more.</td>
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<tr>
<td>GIRLS</td>
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<td>Voice changes – mainly boys - their voices will get deeper but before they do they often go up and down for a while. This is referred to as their voice breaking. Girls’ voices also deepen as they get older but it is not as noticeable.</td>
<td>Eat more – with all the growing and changes that are happening young people might have an increased appetite.</td>
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<td>May feel like masturbating – masturbation (touching private parts for pleasure) is normal and is a good way for people to learn about their bodies. People living with a disability may need guidance to know that masturbation is a private activity that should be done in a private place.</td>
<td>May feel moody – mood swings are caused by hormonal changes and are a normal part of puberty.</td>
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<tr>
<td>May get pimples – washing the face well can help with these but some people just get more than others.</td>
<td>May have questions about puberty – puberty can be a confusing time so there could be a lot of questions.</td>
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