

Washington State University

College of Education

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Will defend the Thesis on

Date: June 27, 2022

Time: 11:00 A.M.

Zoom by request to gradstudies@wsu.edu

Faculty, students and the general public are encouraged to attend

**The Hidden Curriculum of Dating: Creating A Sexuality Interests
and Sources of Information Survey for Students with Intellectual
and Developmental Disabilities in Inclusive
Post-Secondary Education**

Co-Chairs: Holly Whittenburg, Lauren Bruno

Understanding the sexuality needs and interests of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) are essential to creating relevant curricula and learning expectations around sexuality topics. Surveying young adults with IDD on sexuality topics may better inform the creation of these materials. While there are no specific sexuality learning expectations for people with IDD, the seven core topics within the National Sex Education Standards (NSES) can be adapted based on the needs of students with IDD. However, limited information exists on how to adapt these standards and what standards would be relevant to emerging adults. Sexuality knowledge, behavior, and perceptions vary and are based on many factors; and even then, there are no guarantees a student with IDD will receive this information. People with IDD transition into emerging adulthood potentially not equipped with the knowledge to explore safe sexual experiences. The purpose of this thesis project was to create a sexuality interests survey that also aligns with the NSES to help narrow down what emerging adults with IDD want to know. Developing a survey that aligns with topics and learning standards from the NSES may determine if these standards could be adapted to fit the needs and interests of emerging adults in inclusive

post-secondary education programs (IPSE). A literature review of existing sexuality survey instruments for people with IDD was conducted to determine best practices in survey development and delivery for this population. Findings from this review show that survey development for people with IDD varies greatly across instrument purpose, delivery, topics of sexuality, and evaluation. Following an expert review process, the IPSE Sexuality Interests and Sources of Information Survey was created. There needs to be more research that measures sexuality interests and what people with IDD want to know. Students must have an opportunity to contribute to the development of sexuality content specific to their needs and interests to further promote their sexual self-advocacy.