

## LINKS AND RESOURCES ⓘ

- [sexuality](#) ➔
- [sexual education](#) ➔
- [diversity](#) ➔
- [sexual orientation](#) ➔

## #1

### GIVING WORDS WHERE THERE ARE NONE

*When it comes to sex education, we are sure that you know some of these reasons, but also that some of them are new for you, and that some of them are not even on your radar yet.*

We want to start our blog with a list of things that are close to our hearts. Because sex education is more than you might expect. What you perceive to be sex education is often blatantly different from the actual state of knowledge of young, young-at-heart and not-so-young people. And with this we arrive at our first reason:

Even though we may see breasts jumping out at us daily from billboards and internet pop-ups, we are still not always comfortable talking about sex. Up until the end of the 1960s, the theme of sex was avoided entirely in school textbooks, and even after this it was only mentioned occasionally. Since then it has been embedded in curricula, but many people—not only educators and parents—still find it very difficult to find the right words. Parents often feel left to their own devices with these themes:

- ▶ **What is the right time and how do I talk about it?**
- ▶ **How can I help my child to preserve his or her curiosity, trust and openness?**
- ▶ **How can I prevent my child from getting into dangerous situations, help him or her to get to know and to maintain his or her personal boundaries and in the best case to experience self-determined sexuality?**

Teachers have the difficult task of teaching taboo information that they themselves were not taught. This is not easy.

*When we discuss sexual education openly, we give encouragement to those who don't know what to say and how to say it.*

## #2

### NAMING OUR FEELINGS

It might come as a surprise, but the skill of being able to name one's feelings is one of the most important competences that people can have for their emotional health. When we have this skill, we can be aware of and set our own personal boundaries, which in turn lays the groundwork for prevention of sexual assault and the development of a healthy sexuality.

*If we learn to name our own feelings and the feelings of others from a young age, we will find it easier to create and maintain healthy relationships as adults, whether it be in a work-context, amongst friends, or in our romantic lives.*

Incidentally, this is our definition of consent:

- ▶ Defining and naming boundaries (knowing what I do and do not want)
- ▶ Accepting that I am allowed to have my fears and insecurities and that they will be taken seriously by others
- ▶ Being able to make decisions autonomously

## #3

### THE "BIRDS AND THE BEES" AREN'T EVERYTHING

How difficult can sex education really be? Penis and vagina and that's it, right? Not exactly. Sexuality and reproduction are not the necessarily the same thing. And besides that, children and young people are interested in topics like:

- ▶ The variety in their bodies and what it means
- ▶ When their bodies start to change (and if the changing ever ends!)
- ▶ How twins are made
- ▶ Why certain disabilities occur
- ▶ How a baby actually comes out of a body
- ▶ Etc.

*Simply the anatomy of the body and all of its processes related to sexuality can provide hours of discussion material.*

## #4

### WHAT'S UP WITH LOVE?

Can you remember the first time you felt butterflies in your stomach? The first time you were in love? The excitement and the mystery shared with the person you adore when you look into their eyes and your heart starts to pound? Those things have not changed. Young people experience these feelings just like we did when we were younger. Just like we did, they think about relationships and family and they decide which values are important to them and what they mean.

*Families are just as diverse as society is diverse. There are many different experiences and expectations, but often similar yearnings and desires.*

## #5

### RESPONSIBLE CONTRACEPTION

Did you know that there are around 25 different contraception methods? All except two (vasectomy and condoms) can only be used by women. Only three (condom, female condom and dental dam) prevent sexually transmitted infections. Some require medical interventions while others depend on a fair amount of personal responsibility. Some function reliably, while others do not work at all if combined with other medication. And a few help us to understand the menstruation cycle better. With every contraception method there is a lot to learn, lots of questions to ask doctors, and important tips for use that can help us to avoid mistakes. There is a different contraception method that works best for each unique situation and person.

*Comprehensive and neutral information about usage, risks and options for contraception can help people make their own personal decisions.*

## #6

### IS MY BODY NORMAL?

Once they have gotten over the hump of puberty, most people ask themselves sometime in life if this or that about their body is normal, if it is average, if it will grow more or go away again. Because what other people say about our bodies affects us. We compare ourselves and this comparison often leads to discomfort, shame, or hiding and covering. But we are all wonderfully different and diverse. Because of the oppressive nature of the media, we often forget about the diversity that exists in reality.

*In the framework of sexual pedagogy workshops, a reality check about our bodies is a core concept that can help us create healthy relationships with ourselves.*

## #7

### WHAT IS "BEAUTIFUL"?

We are not only concerned by how "normal" our bodies are, but also how our bodies are judged by others. And honestly, most people want to be seen as attractive to themselves and to others, to be desired and loved. This remains true across boundaries of age, gender, cultural background and disability. Love and sexuality are important in almost every life phase and so is this question of what makes someone beautiful. Over the course of history and throughout the different parts of the world beauty ideals are constantly changing, just like fashion trends.

*Furthermore, the tastes and preferences of people are just as variable as our bodies themselves. This is a theme that we can discuss well within the scope of sex education.*

## #8

### LEARNING TO DEAL WITH AWKWARD SITUATIONS

Not only is sexuality generally a taboo topic for many people, but it can also often lead to seemingly unmanageable situations. Bloodstains on clothing from menstruating people, erections in inappropriate moments, Freudian slips, the challenges for glasses-wearing kissing partners, unintentional farting in romantic moments ... There is so much that can happen that doesn't fit into either the Hollywood romance scene with candlelight and rose petals on the bed or the high tech porno scenes.

*Talking and laughing about these things can be extremely relieving. After all, we are all just people.*

## #9

### WE CAN'T NOT EDUCATE ABOUT SEX

The communication theorist Paul Watzlawick said “One cannot not communicate.” Because education is simply a form of knowledge transfer – or in other words a form of communication – we cannot not educate. It doesn’t matter if it’s about who should wear the color pink and who shouldn’t, what we think about the *#metoo* debate, whom we give compliments about clothing to, if we can say the word sex loudly in a cafe, which words we use with kids to describe their genitals or how we go about buying tampons and condoms. In each case, attitudes and values that have to do with sexual education arise, and we pass these opinions on, whether they are asked for or not.

*Sexual education is always present.*

## #10

### SEXUAL EDUCATION HAPPENS ALL AROUND US

Whether it’s in magazines, on YouTube, Instagram or Snapchat, in porn clips, on Netflix, in the movie theater, on Facebook or in the newspaper–relationship forms, love, sexuality, family, body image and beauty ideals can be found in different versions everywhere. They often reflect cliches, specific role models and ideals. It is not always clear for the consumers what is reality, what should be considered “fake news,” what could be considered child pornography and therefore illegal or what is disseminated for purely commercial interest. This also applies to the sending of naked photos as much as it applies to false interpretations of pornography, romance novels, or YouTube channels as “real, authentic” events without scripts.

*Where does the reality begin and end in a world where digital media is such a big part of our reality?*

## #11

### PEOPLE ARE ALL DIFFERENT

Sexual education doesn't just take into account people with different relationship forms, gender identities and sexual orientations. People are also different because they are different ages, they've experienced different things, they come from the countryside or the city, they went to different schools, or they've lived in different countries. Many bring history of escaping persecution, others look very different than the people surrounding them. In many families sex and love are discussed often and openly, in others not at all. Many people have physical and/or mental impairments and may never have consciously thought about sexuality and personal boundaries. On the other hand, others have thought a lot about these topics. The diversity of people provides both challenges and potential. We have fun with these challenges.

*We advocate for a sexual pedagogy of diversity.*

## #12

### STRENGTHEN RESOURCES AND PREVENT VIOLENCE

Sexuality should be something beautiful. But it isn't always. Therefore sexual education also means talking about boundaries, about violence, about weird feelings that are difficult to categorize, about traumatic experiences and above all about consent and prevention. How can parameters be created that prevent violation and how can we intercept when something happens anyway?

*How can we strengthen our resilience, pay attention to our personal resources and support those people whose boundaries are violated?*