

# *Comprehensive Sexual Health Education Instructional Materials Review 2024*

## **Open Conversations**

**Year Published/Revised:** 2022

**Publisher:** Mad Hatter Wellness

**Website:** Mad Hatter Wellness

**Full or Supplemental:** Full

**Grade Level:** Preschool – Third Grade (ages 4-10)

**Student Population:** Students with Developmental Disabilities

**Duration/Number of Lessons:** 9 lessons

**Format and Features:** Spiral bound textbook, red/green cards, breathing sphere, boundaries flip book, printable handouts, cards, and video resources.

**Materials Provide Support for online or in-person learning:** Not indicated

**Available in Multiple Languages:** No

**Evidence-based/informed:** Not indicated

**National Standards Alignment:** Not indicated

**Consistent with WA Health Education Standards?** Yes

**Consistent with Comprehensive Sexual Health Education Law?** Yes

**Consistent with AIDS Omnibus Act?** N/A

**Inclusive Materials/Strategies:** Yes

**Bias-Free Materials:** Yes



## Primary Subject Areas and Topics Covered:

- ☒ Anatomy and Physiology, Reproduction, and Pregnancy (Pregnancy for Grade 6+)
- ☐ Growth and Development/Puberty
- ☒ Self-Identity (gender stereotypes, gender identity, sexual orientation, etc.)
- ☐ Prevention (general):
  - ☐ HIV/AIDS Prevention
  - ☐ Pregnancy Prevention
  - ☐ STD Prevention
  - ☐ Health Care and Prevention Resources
- ☒ Healthy Relationships (general):
  - ☒ Affirmative Consent
  - ☐ Bystander Training
  - ☐ Intrapersonal and Interpersonal Communication Skills for Healthy Relationships
  - ☒ The development of meaningful relationships and avoidance of exploitative relationships
  - ☐ Understanding the influences of family, peers, community, and the media throughout life on healthy sexual relationships

## Reviewer Comments:

### Reviewer 353

I thought the instructional materials were great! I liked how it was organized as one PDF, with easy links to videos that worked. I thought the flow of the lesson plans made sense. I liked how each lesson plan had check-ins, social stories, videos, activities, and questions for discussion. In terms of shortcomings, I think it would be helpful to have the instructional materials for students who are learning English/may be more comfortable with an alternative language. In addition, it might be helpful to have activities or discussions that can engage parents/caregivers.

### Reviewer 357

Open Conversations is a series of nine lessons designed to be an introduction to healthy bodies, safety, and relationships. This curriculum was created to encompass the wide demographic of students from pre-school through third grade. Although some lessons are developmentally appropriate and meet state guidelines for this entire intended population, such as the lesson on consent, some are only appropriate for the upper grade range. For example, the lesson on pregnancy and babies has content on reproduction which state guidelines suggest being taught no earlier than second grade, and the body parts lesson gives more detail than state requirements for the Kindergarten grade. It should also be noted that there are lessons or content in this curriculum that some families may feel uncomfortable with based on their family values, culture, or religious convictions.

Each lesson in this curriculum is designed in a predictable sequence of opening breathing

exercise, feelings check-in question, coloring story booklet, short video, activity, flip book, and reflection/relaxation time. Activities alternate between sorting or sequencing activities and circling worksheets. Students may become disengaged with the activities portion of the lessons due to lack variety lesson to lesson. The provided coloring books / group stories lack aesthetic appeal and, in some cases, could be seen as off-putting, particularly the line-art coloring pages of genitalia. Other images in this curriculum may be culturally insensitive, notably a Native American in historic cultural apparel when no other historic cultural apparel is depicted elsewhere. At the same time, this curriculum does appear to strive to be inclusive of members of protected classes. An additional strength of this curriculum can be found in the incorporation of a variety of family structures, such as those in multi-generational families or foster families.

### **Reviewer 361**

Although the instructional materials are easy to understand, I feel they are outdated and uninviting to staff and students. Furthermore, the curriculum does not have options for diverse learners within a classroom, nor does it provide different strategies to engage students with peer-to-peer, individual, and whole group. Also, one of the videos had teenager students engaging in conversation versus the K-3 age group the curriculum is intended for. I would not want to use this curriculum in my classroom.

### **Reviewer 370**

Included to review was what appears to be a teacher's manual for how to provide the lessons. It includes 5 main parts that I found to be a wonderful set-up for these lessons in a developmentally appropriate manner. It provided freedom for the teacher to explain the topics or a speech bubble that indicated an optional script for teachers that may not feel as comfortable with the material. Each lesson teaches an important component of sexual health and utilized appropriate language and amount of language for our students with IDD.

There are substantial visuals utilized throughout the curriculum to support students with IDD in acquiring each skill. The visuals are consistent with common assistive technology devices and communication systems used by students with IDD and/or who are non-verbal. Each lesson includes a social emotional breathing activity to assist in building important emotional regulation skills.

I would definitely use this curriculum with my students.

### **Reviewer 371**

Difficult to say that this is developmentally appropriate due to the age span. Curriculum states it is for Pre-K through 3rd Grade. Several parts seem like they would be too detailed or difficult for Pre-K and Kindergarten.

The Body Parts lesson has images that may be a bit much for K or Pre-K. No discussion on keeping this private, not discussing with classmates or others outside of family. Only privacy piece is the

start of the social story stating private parts are covered by the bathing suit. Lesson focuses on being able to identify correct names of private body parts but still uses words like “tummy” and “bottom” in the sorting activity.

Throughout the training, all the information is around verbal cues. There are very few scenarios or sorting activities that include how to say no or set a boundary if a person is nonverbal and it doesn’t talk about how to identify nonverbal cues in others. Consent video states that to give consent you both have to verbally agree. This is not inclusive to individuals who communicate without speech.

Overall, very little in the curriculum is inclusive of students with disabilities and does not talk about how emotions or body language play into communication.

Public and Private spaces is not until lesson 8. For younger ages this should be covered prior to body parts to reinforce that once we learn about body parts we keep them private and do not ask about or show to others. Teachers may want to review their class and teach the lessons out of order to ensure that students are prepared for each conversation and do not take questions and curiosities onto the playground.

Video for lesson 8 is about naming private parts and masturbation. Title of video in guide and in YouTube link do not match. Overall, watch closed captions on videos as they defaulted to a setting that made the audio not match the visual.

Guide doesn’t give much direction for how to handle questions that arise. No information on supporting kids who may have already experienced trauma in these areas. Only differentiation suggested is to do things as a group or allow kids to do independently and some suggestions on a video may be better for younger students. Uses a lot of follow up questions to check for understanding, again making it less useful for nonverbal students.

Each lesson has key concepts but there are not presented in a way that is easily measurable.

Does not have handouts or information for parents to give notice or help families help the students with questions.

## **Med/Sci Reviewer 367**

This age appropriate and medically accurate curriculum is inclusive and comprehensive. For example, in the anatomy and pregnancy lessons body parts are described in basic terms but are not assigned to a particular sex or gender. This is a curriculum that has a focus on accessibility, reflected in the use of simple but clear drawings and many activities that ask the participants to circle the response that best reflects the knowledge being assessed. The consistent use of mindfulness via simple visualizations and breathing techniques is a scientifically researched approach to helping ground and center students and teachers/caregivers prior to learning and exploring sensitive topics. Mad Hatter Wellness which produced this curriculum has been

recognized by SIECUS for their outstanding contributions for creating comprehensive sex education curriculum for students with disabilities.

### **Med/Sci Reviewer 368**

Feel that consent and boundaries are approached with medical accuracy, and current best practice. Private vs public places and actions is appropriate for this developmental age group. Appreciate the inclusivity and gender-neutral stance in pregnancy and babies.

### **OSPI Comment**

Washington State law (RCW 28A.300.475) does not require the provision of sexual health education in grades Pre-K – 3. Public schools may provide such instruction.