



## **OAR Releases Online Sexuality & Sex Education Guide**

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Contact: Saman Kamgar-Parsi, Senior Programs Associate  
703-243-3466, [skamgar@researchautism.org](mailto:skamgar@researchautism.org)

ARLINGTON, VA – OAR has released a new online resource focused on sexuality and sex education for teens and emerging adults on the autism spectrum. *Sex Ed. for Self-Advocates* is now available on OAR's website. Sexuality and sex education is an important subject in terms of personal growth, development, and safety, but it can also be a daunting one. OAR is excited to release a resource on this topic that is specific to the needs of people with autism.

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a complex disorder that presents numerous challenges with social communication and understanding, which is a key factor in how sex education topics are typically learned. This resource presents complex social skills and topics in a clear and understandable format for people on the autism spectrum.

Self-advocates can read articles and watch brief videos in each section before testing their knowledge and practicing new skills through interactive modules. The resource contains nine sections, each building on information from preceding sections within the guide. Each section is focused on a key topic in sexuality & sex education. They include:

- Public vs. private
- Puberty
- Healthy relationships
- Consent
- Dating
- Sexual orientation and gender identity
- Personal values and boundaries
- Sexual activity
- Online relationships and safety

Users can focus on sections they are interested in or navigate through the guide from beginning to end. While the guide was written for self-advocates age 15 and up, it also contains tips and lists of additional helpful resources for parents and educators of those on the spectrum.



“[*Sex Ed. for Self-Advocates*] is very well done, covers all the important topics, and will be a great resource moving forward. Congratulations on this guide!” said Katherine McLaughlin, CSE and founder of Elevatus Training. “Very clear and detailed. I will recommend the guide to all my clients and colleagues in the field of sex education,” stated Isabelle Hénault, M.A., Ph.D. and Director of the Autism and Asperger Clinic of Montreal.

OAR extends its gratitude to the community of sex educators, researchers, self-advocates, and parents who contributed to the writing and review process. OAR offers special thanks to the content experts who contributed their writing to this resource, including Jessica Penwell Barnett, Ph.D., Laura Graham Holmes, Ph.D., Katherine McLaughlin, M.Ed. CSE, Robin Moyher, Ph.D., John Strang, Ph.D., and Jiaqi Zhou and Joanne Davila, Ph.D. Further thanks goes to Peter Gerhardt, Ed.D. and Amy Gravino, M.A., for their consultation on the resource and work in creating the videos appearing throughout the site.

*Sex Ed. for Self-Advocates* is available online on OAR’s main website and can be directly accessed at <https://researchautism.org/sex-ed-guide/>. OAR continues to provide all its resources, including this one, free of charge to the community, and welcomes all donations.

If you have any questions or feedback about OAR’s *Sex Ed. for Self-Advocates*, please contact OAR at 703-243-3466, or [programs@researchautism.org](mailto:programs@researchautism.org).

**About OAR:** The Organization for Autism Research (OAR) is a national non-profit organization formed and led by relatives of children and adults with autism spectrum disorders. OAR is dedicated to promoting research that can be applied to help families, educators, caregivers, and individuals with autism find much-needed answers to their immediate and urgent questions. Learn more at [www.researchautism.org](http://www.researchautism.org).

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