Chapter 4
Teaching Individualized Sexuality Education to a Young Boy With Autism Spectrum Disorder in the Least Restrictive Environment: A Case Study

Laura J. Albee
Southern Connecticut State University, USA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Students on the autism spectrum who exhibit sexually problematic behaviors in a public school setting are often misunderstood, and over time lead restrictive, isolated, and lonely lives removed from their peers. How can we best address sexually problematic behaviors with students on the spectrum, while upholding the lesser restrictive tenets revered by public education? Unfortunately, without fully understanding the significance their anomalous behaviors serve, students on the spectrum are typically fast-tracked to out-of-district placements. The purpose of this chapter is to present a case study that illuminates the complexities of addressing autism, sexuality, and education in a public school setting. This case will provide a summary of the assessment and programmatic design process, using targeted and evidenced-informed interventions specific to autism. Finally, this case will stress the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration, including parent partnership for promoting positive outcomes within the less restrictive environment.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-7998-2987-4.ch004

Copyright © 2020, IGI Global. Copying or distributing in print or electronic forms without written permission of IGI Global is prohibited.
INTRODUCTION

There is not an adult among us who cannot recall making a bad decision. This is especially true during our ascent from childhood and adolescence into early adulthood. Fueled by raging hormones and a developing brain, tempering our teenage libido by suppressing our biological urges proved to be challenging. Having our peer group to share our most intimate thoughts with, especially without our parents’ knowledge, has been the preferred practice of many prepubescents and adolescents seeking advice and affirmation for generations. However, when our emotions eclipsed our voice of reason, we often had no choice but to seek the counsel of a trusted adult. Hence, our wrongdoings, no matter how consequential, likely served as our greatest learning.

Most researchers suggest that years of punitive disciplinary measures, including zero-tolerance policies, judicial referrals, and probation, have proven to be ineffective and disruptive. In fact, the consequences of penal and corrective measures include chronic absenteeism, increased disengagement, academic failure, and escalating dropout rates resulting in significant social and economic costs (Hammond, Linton, Smink, & Drew, 2007; Rumberger & Losen, 2016). Students with disabilities, and of color, are often disproportionality subjugated to teacher and administrator removal powers (Malloy, 2018). Conversely, a single out-of-school suspension can derail a student’s academic trajectory, making it impossible for the child to maintain their academic performance and expectations, let alone graduate (Balfanz, Byrnes, & Fox, 2013). Minority students often bear the burden of such punitive measures, as they are more likely to be suspended than their white counterparts, and thus, perpetuate the school-to-prison pipeline (Noltemeyer, Marie, Mcloughlin, & Vanderwood, 2015; Petrosino, Guckenburg, & Fronius, 2012).

It is especially disconcerting when a student with a well-known and complex neurodevelopmental disability, including those on the autism spectrum, exhibit sexually anomalous behaviors in a public-school setting. Mostly, they are labeled as social deviants, and over time become susceptible to being further distanced from their peer group resulting in restriction, isolation, and a lack of social belongingness. Therefore, the purpose of this chapter is to present a case study that will discuss the complexities of having to address autism, sexuality, and education in a public-school setting. This case will provide a summary of the assessment and programmatic design process, using targeted and evidenced-informed interventions specific to the ASD population. Case findings will suggest why interventions are not intended to change the individual per se, rather interventions are used as a means to promote pro-social behaviors for improved relational outcomes with friends, family, and community. Finally, this case will stress why interdisciplinary collaboration and strong parent partnerships are essential for promoting meaningful and lasting change in the least-restrictive environment.
Related Content

Preparing 21st Century Teachers: Supporting Digital Literacy and Technology Integration in P6 Classrooms
Salika A. Lawrence, Rupam Saran, Tabora Johnson and Margareth Lafontant (2020). Participatory Literacy Practices for P-12 Classrooms in the Digital Age (pp. 140-162).
www.igi-global.com/chapter/preparing-21st-century-teachers/237419?camid=4v1a

Complexities of Identity and Belonging: Writing From Artifacts in Teacher Education
Anna Schick and Jana Lo Bello Miller (2020). Participatory Literacy Practices for P-12 Classrooms in the Digital Age (pp. 200-214).
www.igi-global.com/chapter/complexities-of-identity-and-belonging/237422?camid=4v1a

Participatory Literacy and Taking Informed Action in the Social Studies
Casey Holmes and Meghan McGlinn Manfra (2020). Participatory Literacy Practices for P-12 Classrooms in the Digital Age (pp. 40-56).
www.igi-global.com/chapter/participatory-literacy-and-taking-informed-action-in-the-social-studies/237412?camid=4v1a

Can Everyone Code?: Preparing Teachers to Teach Computer Languages as a Literacy
www.igi-global.com/chapter/can-everyone-code/237420?camid=4v1a