

Sexual Education for Adults with Disabilities



Tool 11

The Hermeneutic Circle



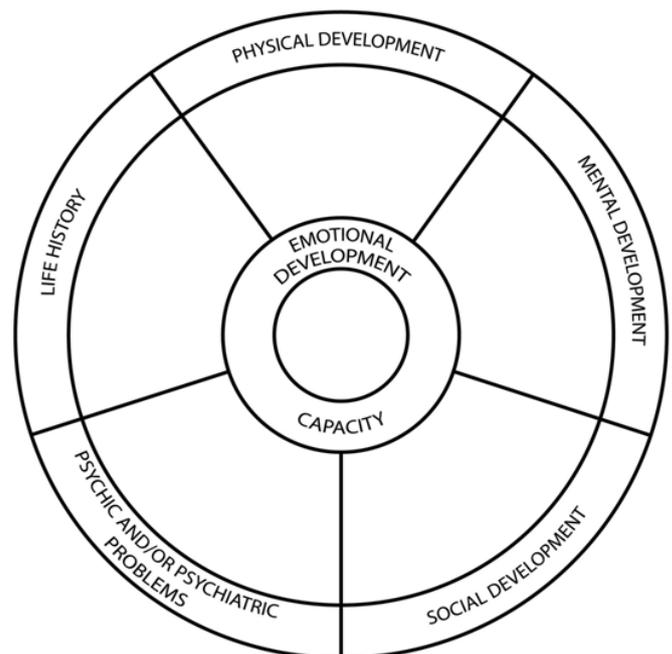
The Hermeneutic Circle

Initiating a conversation about sexuality and intimacy can be daunting. Below are some important things to consider before you start teaching sex education to your client:

- Establish what knowledge and skills the client already has.
- It is also important to have a clear picture of the client's social-emotional level, well-being and understanding of concepts and terminology. There is often a discrepancy between these three things.
- Clients with light intellectual disabilities and a 'normal' appearance and demeanour may give the impression that they have adequate social skills and are able to set and respect boundaries. People often jump to this conclusion too soon. It is especially important to gain insight into clients' perceptions on sexuality if they have never been confronted with sexual education as part of their upbringing or development.

The hermeneutic circle is a useful tool that can be used to assess the cognitive and emotional capacity, social development, skills, background and special circumstances in the lives of individuals with intellectual disabilities. The circle provides a total picture of the person, allowing you to understand them better and look beyond their physical or social limitations and accept them for who they are (E. Bosch, 2010).

The circle provides a method to look at the world from the client's point of view, allowing you to create a client-oriented programme and approach. It can also serve to make a client's request for help more concrete. (Suykerbuyk & Bosch, 2010)



Hermeneutic circle, (E. Bosch, 2010)

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