# Creating a Program for Improving Romantic Relationship & Sexual Health Knowledge for Adults with Disabilities in Michigan

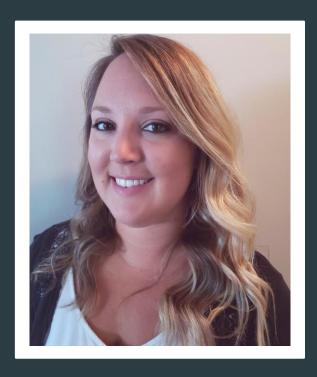
Rebecca Kammes, PhD

Maria Peak, Director of ASPPIRE of Mid-Michigan

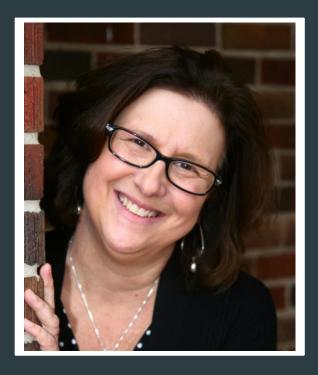
ESC 2019 Conference October 9, 2019

# Introductions

Rebecca Kammes



## Maria Peak



# Why is Sexuality & Romantic Relationship Education Important?

Intimate relationships and sexuality expression is a healthy component of adult life (Beckes & Coan, 2011; Moos, 2003; Robles, 2014)

Adults with IDD are often restricted from having intimate relationship experiences (Black & Kammes, 2019; English, Tickle & dasNair, 2018)

Sex education often "skips" relationships, leaving this issue up to parents, caregivers, staff, and siblings to teach (Foley, 2012)

High rates of abuse/exploitation within the population, and inappropriate relationships in adult programs (Hollomotz & The Speakup Committee, 2008; Stavis, 1991; Ward, Bosek & Trimble, 2010;

Concern that adults with IDD are being denied the right to experience romantic relationships and sexuality expression (Richards, Miodrag, & Watson, 2006)

## So What Did We Do About It?



COMMUNITY-BASED
PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH
PROJECT



CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT



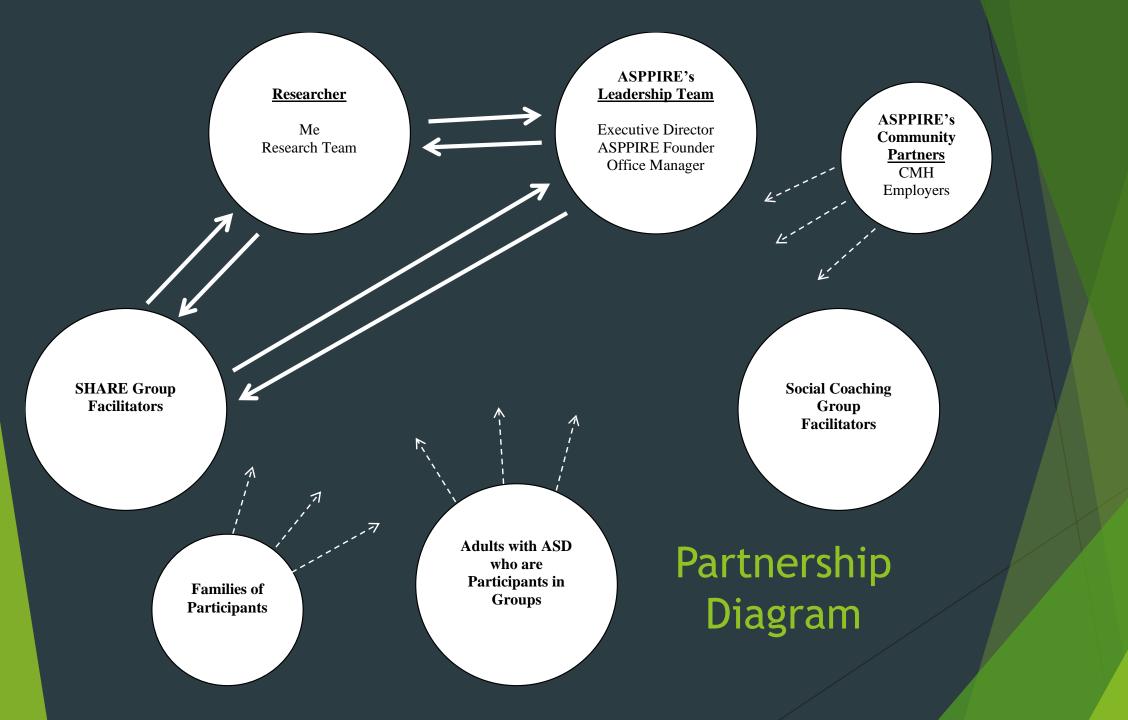
PROGRAM EVALUATION

## Overview of the SHARE Program

- ASPPIRE is a program in Mid-Michigan for adults with disabilities aimed at issues related to social coaching (including employment skills and sex ed)
- All participants are 18 and older and have a mild/moderate ID
- Majority of participants have ASD
- Small groups= more individualized
- Have a more self-determination structure to groups

- Sexual Health and Relationship Education (SHARE)
- ▶ 12-week program
- Curriculum & materials developed by ASPPIRE staff based on previous experience teaching sex ed in special education classes





# Multi-Phase Project

Phase 1
Beginning
Engagement with
ASPPIRE

Examining scholarship,

expertise, & experiences

Phase 2
SHARE Card
Systematic Analysis

CBPR research activity

Phase 3
Restructuring the SHARE
Curriculum

Phase 4
Attending the
ASPPIRE Retreat

Phase 5
Implementation of SHARE 2 & New Evaluation

Phase 6
Evaluation Data
Analysis,
Feedback &
Next Steps

Generating new scholarship and tools in direct collaboration with community partners

Evaluation
Data for
ASPPIRE for
Future Grant
Writing

SHARE 2 Updated Curriculum

Evaluation
Data for
Research

## **SHARE Notecards**

What are mutual friends?
What category under relationships
Would they fall under:

Can you force a friendship to
become a romantic relationship?

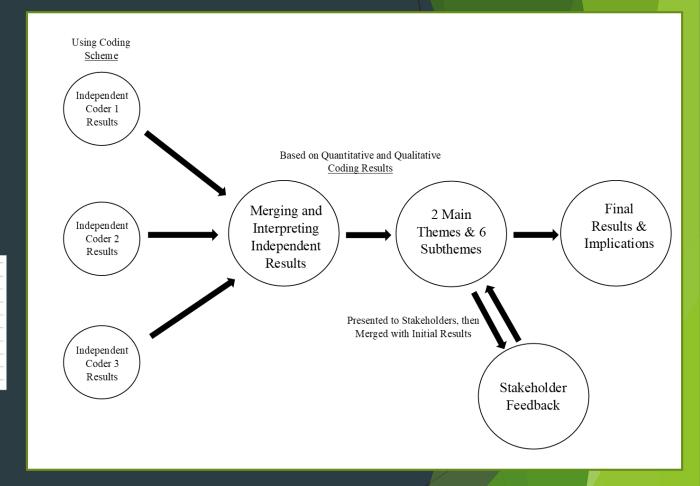
Ches the mother set scratures
When giving Birth by the taky?

During autation II how much obes
The womans temp. so up:

Are there natural Condoms

Burning question

Is it right to date symeone
at least 10 years older younger
than you?



# SHARE Notecards, Cont.

Relationship Experiences

Themes

Sexual Health Knowledge Relationships Overall

Social Norms

**Sexual Behaviors** 

Communication

Health & Hygiene

Anatomy & Physiology

# Decision to Split up SHARE

01

#### Sexual Health Education

- Anatomy & Physiology
- Health & Hygiene
- STI & Other Diseases
- Safe Sexual Practices

02

# Intimate Relationships and Sexuality Expression

- Finding Potential Partners
- Long-Term & Short-Term Relationships
- Sexuality Expression
- Safety Within Relationships

03

## Dating & Relationships in the Real World

- Online Dating
- Community Outings
- Putting Knowledge into Practice
- Discussions of Practical Knowledge & Experience

## SHARE Curricula

## SHARE 1

- 1. Intro to group
- 2. Anatomy & reproductive systems
- 3. Sexual life cycle\*
- 4. Sexual feelings
- 5. Sex
- 6. Sexual health\*
- 7. Sexual behavior
- 8. Exploring your sexuality
- 9. Final wrap-up

\*MSU nursing students as potential guest speakers

## SHARE 2

- 1. Types of relationships
- 2. Starting a relationship
- Sexual orientation & gender identity
- 4. Personal values & consent
- 5. Dating: Part I
- Dating: Part II
- 7. Dating: Part III
- 8. Long-term relationships: Part I
- 9. Long-term relationships: Part II
- Relationship problems: Part I
- 11. Relationships problems: Part II
- 12. Final wrap-up

## SHARE 2 Outcomes: What We Learned

### Curriculum Content

- Need more on starting a relationship
- Sexual orientation and gender identity as an important topic that needs to be explored further for participants
- Participants wanting to share more openly about disclosing disability within a relationship
- Talking about abuse and laws is difficult, need to find a more interactive way

## Group Format & Structure

- Importance of role plays and providing examples
- Pair & Share vs. Group Discussions
- Engaging activities
- Concerns with evaluation tools used

# Next Steps



□ Continue to refine the SHARE curriculum

Run SHARE 3 pilot

SHARE-PC