

*"I wish I had learnt to keep myself safe"*

## Sexuality and Relationships Education (SRE) for People with Autistic Spectrum Disorder or Asperger's Syndrome

### Background

- Limited amount of research into appropriateness of present SRE programmes for pupils with ASD or Asperger's Syndrome
- Impact of ASD or Asperger's Syndrome upon a pupil's social skills results in difficulties recognising social rules linked with sex and sexuality, including "scripting".
- Pupils with ASD or Asperger's Syndrome have highlighted a need for more specific work about relationships
- Increase in referrals to services relating to inappropriate sexualised behaviour potentially linked to lack of understanding about the subtle aspects of sexuality.

### Aim

One key question directing the research along with additional sub-questions:

### How effective is the present SRE programme in relation to pupils with ASD or Asperger's Syndrome?

- How is the programme implemented?
- Do they collect pre and post data on pupils' knowledge?
- Is there a need to adapt the present SRE programme for pupils with ASD or Asperger's Syndrome?

### Methodology

#### Participants

- Schools within London, Sussex and Surrey
- Schools catering for pupils with ASD or Asperger's Syndrome; primarily Autism specific, special needs and mainstream schools with autism specific units.
- Primary contact made with either head teacher or appropriate staff member who co-ordinates school SRE programme

#### Methods

- Online questionnaire completed by participating schools providing background information about the school
- Face to Face interview with primary contact person
- Analysis of interview transcriptions to identify specific themes raised.
- SPSS analysis of online questionnaire to provide background information.

### Progress

- Face to face interviews nearing completion.
- Transcription and analysis of interviews commenced with early indications that SRE programmes being used with pupils with ASD or Asperger's Syndrome are inadequate in meeting their needs.
- Main area of concern centres upon the more abstract areas of relationships and safety/vulnerability

### Next Steps

- Completion of analysis
- Development and piloting of a sex education programme suitable for pupils with ASD or Asperger's Syndrome.

