

Education resource



# LOVE RIGHTS

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## Trigger warning

The following content discusses topics of a sexual and intimate nature, which may be triggering for some individuals. Please ensure the individual you are supporting feels safe and supported before continuing.

If the person you're supporting becomes distressed or triggered:

- Pause the session immediately.
- Ask if they'd like a break or to stop altogether.
- Use calming strategies or grounding techniques the person is familiar with.
- Validate their experience without pushing them to continue.
- Check-in again later and offer follow-up support, such as speaking with a counsellor.



## What is Love Rights?

The Love Rights Project is a multi-tiered initiative designed to reduce sexual violence against people with disability through education, early intervention and the promotion of supported decision-making.

This project is supported by the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) through the Sexual Violence Project Fund.

The grant addresses longstanding gaps in accessible sexuality and relationships education, empowering people with disability to explore their rights to intimacy, connection and safety.

The education guide is designed for people with disability with a focus on people with complex communication needs. As such, this resource has been designed to ensure comprehension of material is accessible to all.

It can be used alone or with help from a support person.

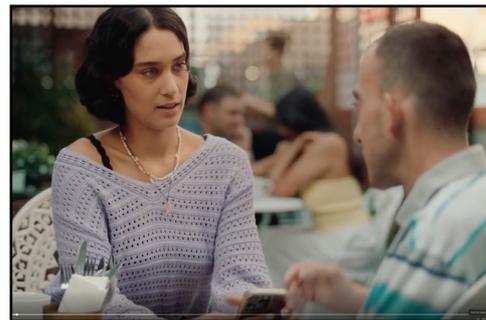
This resource is also for support workers, teachers and family members who want to help people with disability learn about relationships in a safe, respectful and inclusive way.

This education guide is intended to be used in conjunction with the **Love Rights** and **Specificity** films. These films were made to help people with disability explore topics about relationships, intimacy, and sexual health.

## What is the film, *Love Rights*?

The film tells the story of Oliver, a young man who wants to learn about sex and connection. Through Oliver's journey, we learn about healthy relationships, boundaries, support workers and safe ways to explore sexuality.

*Love Rights* was written by Angus Thompson and created in collaboration with Bus Stop Films.



## What is the film, *Specificity*?

The film, *Specificity* follows Nina and Liam, two young adults with intellectual disability, as they navigate intimacy, consent and first-time sexual experiences. Through their story, we explore self-discovery, supported communication and the importance of mutual respect and planning in relationships.

*Specificity* was written by Mark Rogers and directed by Steve Anthopoulos.



## Why this resource was created

People with intellectual disability often face significant barriers to exploring relationships, sex and intimacy. Traditional sexuality education often fails to meet their needs due to inaccessible formats, assumptions about capacity and lack of inclusive support. As a result, many individuals are left without tools or safe opportunities to learn about their own sexual rights.

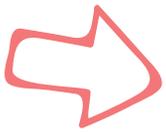
This resource addresses those gaps. It aims to reduce harm, promote autonomy and prevent behaviours of concern through clear, inclusive and judgement-free education. It encourages supported conversations about safe sexual expression, the importance of professional boundaries and the value of seeking help through trained disability-specialised sexuality and relationship counsellors.

By framing sexuality education through supported decision-making, this guide ensures people with disability can access information in a way that meets their communication style and cognitive needs.

For more information and to watch the films, visit the [Northcott website](#) and



[\[Youtube Link – Love Rights\]](#). [\[Youtube link – Specificity\]](#).



## How to use this guide

This guide works best when used in conjunction with each film. It is recommended to watch the films all the way through first. Then, use the guide to talk about the film, using the questions and key ideas. This helps people talk openly about sex, support, feelings and safety.

Some parts of the guide may include private or sensitive topics. It is important that people feel safe, supported and respected while learning.

**Please note:** The first film discusses the topic of access to sexual activity, specific to the individuals access to sex work services. This resource follows the laws specific to New South Wales (NSW) when discussing access and use of these services. The laws regarding sexual activity with a sex worker in other states might be different.

*It is important to stay informed on the laws relevant to your state. Please see below links for laws specific to your state or territory.*



## Legal Context: Sex, consent and disability - Summary by State/Territory

This section provides a summary of the legal frameworks relating to sex work, consent and supported decision-making in each Australian state and territory. It is designed to assist facilitators and support workers in providing accurate, state-specific guidance to people with disability.

**Important note:** This information is a general guide only. Laws can change. For the most up-to-date legal information, refer to each state's legislation or legal aid service.

### New South Wales (NSW)

- Sex work is decriminalised. Sex workers are free to operate independently or in brothels.
- The age of consent is 16 for sexual activity and 18 for sex work services.
- People with disability must have capacity to consent. This means understanding what's happening, being able to say yes/no and making the decision freely.
- Supported decision-making is encouraged.

<https://www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au/publications/factsheets-and-resources/sexual-assault>

## Victoria (VIC)

- Sex work was decriminalised in 2022 under the Sex Work Decriminalisation Act.
- People with disability can engage with sex workers if they are over 18 and have capacity to consent.
- The age of consent is 16.
- Guardians do not have the right to make decisions about sex or relationships on someone's behalf.

<https://www.justice.vic.gov.au/safer-communities/sex-work/sex-work-decriminalisation>

## Queensland (QLD)

- Sex work is legal only in licensed brothels or privately under strict rules.
- Soliciting in public is illegal.
- The age of consent is 16.
- Guardianship laws do not override the right to consent if the person understands the activity.

<https://www.qld.gov.au/law/crime-and-police/types-of-crime/sex-work-laws>

## Australian Capital Territory (ACT)

- Sex work is decriminalised. Private and commercial sex work is allowed.
- The age of consent is 16.
- Supported decision-making is recognised under guardianship frameworks.

<https://www.legislation.act.gov.au/View/a/1992-14/current/PDF/1992-14.PDF>

## South Australia (SA)

- Sex work is partially criminalised. Private sex work is legal, but brothel operation and soliciting are not.
- The age of consent is 17.
- Advocacy is growing for decriminalisation and disability-inclusive reform.

<https://www.legalaid.sa.gov.au/resources/fact-sheets/sexual-consent>

## Western Australia (WA)

- Sex work is criminalised under the Prostitution Act 2000.
- It is illegal to solicit, operate a brothel, or live off earnings of sex work.
- The age of consent is 16.
- Disability rights advocates have raised concerns about access inequality.

<https://www.legalaid.wa.gov.au/find-legal-answers/your-rights/sex-and-law>

## Tasmania (TAS)

- Sex work is legal in private settings, but brothel operation and solicitation are illegal.
- The age of consent is 17.
- Supported decision-making models are emerging under the Guardianship and Administration Act.

<https://www.womenstas.org.au/legal-information/sexual-assault/>

## Northern Territory (NT)

- Sex work is decriminalised under the Sex Industry Act 2019.
- The age of consent is 16.
- NDIS participants in NT can legally access services with sex workers, provided it is not funded.

<https://www.legislation.nt.gov.au/en/Legislation/SEX-INDUSTRY-ACT-2019>



## Key safeguarding notes for facilitators

- Legal age and capacity to consent must both be met.
- Never assume someone with a disability lacks capacity - assess with dignity and support.
- Sex work is never allowed for people under 18, even with consent.
- Always check current legislation before advising or supporting access.

### Supported Decision-Making resources:

[Easy Read Supported Decision Making Framework](#)

### Setting up a safe space

Creating a safe space is essential for the learning and delivery of the Love Rights Education Guide.

This means making sure everyone feels respected, supported and able to talk about big topics like sex and relationships. It also means helping people feel calm, seen and free to express themselves without fear of judgment or pressure.

Facilitators can support safe spaces by establishing clear ground rules together with the individual or group before beginning. These rules can help people feel more confident and comfortable, especially when the content may feel personal or unfamiliar.

Examples of ground rules you may wish to include:

- Respect one another
- Respect other people's opinions
- No personal attacks or teasing
- Take a non-judgmental approach
- If the discussion includes personal stories, do not use people's names
- People do not need to share or answer questions if they don't want to
- What is said here stays here - unless the information must be reported to keep someone safe.

## Support person responsibilities in a safe learning environment

Support people play a vital role in protecting and maintaining the safe space throughout the education session. This includes not only physical safety, but also emotional, cognitive and communication safety.

### Key responsibilities include:

#### Upholding confidentiality

Support workers must protect the privacy of participants at all times. This includes not repeating personal disclosures outside the learning space unless required by law or safeguarding policy. Respecting confidentiality builds trust and models safe communication.

#### Tailoring communication to the individual

The learning experience should be adapted to the person's communication and sensory profile. This includes considering:

- Use of plain or Easy Read language
- Communication aids or alternative formats (e.g. AAC, visuals, key word signs)
- Learning environment (e.g. lighting, seating, sound levels)
- Pacing (slower delivery, pauses for processing, repeating as needed)

#### Ongoing consent and emotional check-ins

Consent isn't a one-time event - it must be ongoing. Support workers should check in regularly throughout the session to confirm:

- The person is comfortable to continue
- They understand the topic
- They feel supported and safe
- They can pause or opt out at any time

#### Empowering autonomy and voice:

Support should be non-directive. That means encouraging the person to make their own choices, express preferences and ask questions without judgement. Support workers should avoid "leading" or answering on someone's behalf unless communication needs require it - and even then, the person's agency must remain central.

## **Role of a support worker**

Support workers play a big part in helping people with disability live fulfilling lives. This includes providing physical support and also encouraging independence, dignity and emotional wellbeing.

In the film Love Rights, Jen is Oliver's support worker. She helps him with everyday tasks but also listens to him when he wants to talk about relationships and sex.

She supported Oliver by identifying his desire for intimacy. Rather than judging him for the behaviour he directed towards her, she acknowledged that he had an unmet need for sexual expression and a desire for a relationship. They worked together to locate an appropriate counsellor who could support him in his sexuality and relationship goals.

## **Supporting sexuality, relationships and safety - best practice in action**

Support workers have a responsibility to uphold a customer's right to explore sex, relationships and emotional connection. In doing this, they must act ethically, maintain professional boundaries and create opportunities for customers to make informed, safe decisions. The film shows how this can be done well, even in complex situations.

Here are some best practices support workers can follow, drawn from Jen's role in Love Rights:

### **Affirm the right to sexual expression**

Acknowledge that wanting intimacy is normal. Don't shut down or shame expressions of desire.

### **Respond to inappropriate behaviour with insight**

If a customer directs sexualised behaviour toward you, consider whether it may reflect unmet needs - and respond with compassion, rather than judgement and punitive action.

### **Redirect to the right supports**

Help customers connect with sexuality and relationship counsellors, peer-led groups, or other specialised supports.

### **Maintain clear, respectful boundaries**

Avoid personal involvement, behaviour that can be interpreted as flirtatious, or emotional over-reliance. Be friendly, but not intimate.

### **Check your own biases**

Don't let personal discomfort or assumptions about disability limit a customer's access to sexual health and connection.

## Keep the focus on autonomy

Use supported decision-making approaches to ensure the person leads their own journey. Don't speak on their behalf unless asked.

## Protect confidentiality

Only share relevant information with the appropriate professionals. Respect privacy in every aspect of the customer's support journey.

## Seek supervision when needed

If boundary issues arise or situations feel emotionally complex, talk to a supervisor or clinical lead. Reflection is part of good practice.

## Role of a sexuality and relationship counsellor

Sexuality and Relationship counsellors are trained professionals who support people to explore topics such as sex, identity, intimacy, relationships, emotional wellbeing and personal safety. Their support is person-centred, confidential and free from judgement.

These professionals are skilled in disability-informed practice and work to address the systemic barriers that people with disability often face when it comes to sexuality and relationships. This includes adapting their support to meet individual communication styles, access needs and cultural or gender identities.

In the film *Love Rights*, Oliver is supported by a counsellor to explore his feelings around intimacy, relationships and the idea of seeing a sex worker. Rather than giving Oliver the answer, the counsellor helps him explore his own readiness and values.

In *Specificity*, Nina and Liam show how good communication, exploration and trust can be supported by what they've learned from education and media, another area where counsellors can offer important guidance.

Here are some ways a counsellor can help:

### Talking and communication

- Learn how to express thoughts and feelings clearly
- Practice saying yes, no, or maybe in a way that feels safe
- Build confidence to ask questions or talk with partners.

### Consent, safety and boundaries

- Understand what consent means and how it works
- Recognise personal boundaries and red flags in relationships
- Learn how to stay safe online and offline.

## **Sexual health and education**

- Understand how the body works, including anatomy and pleasure
- Talk about safe sex, Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD's), contraception and hygiene
- Learn how to use sex toys, masturbation aids, or dating apps safely

## **Identity and self-exploration**

- Explore gender identity or sexual orientation
- Talk about being LGBTQIA+ in a supportive, affirming space
- Get help accessing gender-affirming or inclusive care.

## **Intimacy and sexual expression**

- Talk about feelings of attraction, love and closeness
- Explore safe ways to express sexuality, including sex work or masturbation
- Discuss emotional or sexual connection in a way that feels right.

## **Trauma and past experiences**

- Talk through things that have been upsetting or confusing
- Get support around domestic, family, or sexual violence
- Learn strategies for feeling safe and in control again.

## **Types of relationships**

- Different kinds of connection we can have with other people
- People can have lots of different relationships in life. These include friendships, dating, work relationships and sometimes sexual or romantic relationships.
- Every relationship is different. Some are casual. Some are close. Some are private. Some involve strong feelings. Some don't.
- In both films, we see how important relationships can be, but also how tricky they can feel if you're not sure what kind of relationship you want, or how to build one.

## Friendships

A friend is someone you like spending time with. You talk, laugh and support each other.

Friends are people we choose to connect with socially. In *Specificity*, Nina and Liam start off as friends. Friends can offer emotional support, trust and shared joy, without being romantic or sexual. Some friendships stay the same for years. Others may change over time.

## Acquaintances

These are people you know, but you are not close with them.

Acquaintances might include housemates, people at your day program, or a neighbour you say hello to. These relationships can feel casual, polite, or distant. They're still part of your social world, but they may not include emotional closeness or trust.

## Professional relationships

These are people who support you as part of their job, like support workers, teachers, or therapists.

Professional relationships are based on support, not friendship. In *Love Rights*, Oliver has a professional relationship with Jen. Even if the connection feels warm, a support worker's job is to respect boundaries and ensure the person they support has independence, dignity and privacy.

## Romantic relationships

This is when two people like each other in a special way. They might date, hold hands, or kiss.

Romantic relationships can involve feelings of love, closeness and wanting to spend time together.

In *Specificity*, Nina and Liam begin a romantic relationship built on trust and shared consent. Romantic relationships can grow over time or start with dating.

## Sexual relationships

This is when two people agree to do something sexual together.

A sexual relationship might include physical touch, sex, or other forms of intimacy. Sexual relationships should always involve consent, trust and communication. Some people may have romantic and sexual relationships with the same person; others may not.

## Support workers

A support worker helps with everyday things. They are not a friend or partner.

Support workers are there to help with your goals, daily tasks and independence. In Love Rights, Oliver's relationship with Jen becomes confusing when his feelings grow. The film shows how important it is for support workers to stay professional, even when someone expresses interest or affection.

## Sexual services (Sex work)

A sex worker is someone who is paid to provide a sexual service. This is different from a partner.

Seeing a sex worker is a choice some people make to explore sexual expression. It is not the same as dating or being in a romantic or sexual relationship. The person is doing a job. They are not entering a personal or emotional relationship.

**Please note:** A sex worker is not a boyfriend, girlfriend, or partner. This is a paid service. Both people must agree to what will happen and consent must always be respected.

This will be explained more in the next section, Ways to explore sexuality.

# Ways to explore sexuality

*Different ways people can experience and express sexual feelings.*

Sexuality is a part of being human. People express it in different ways: through touch, imagination, feelings, or connection. For some people, this happens in a relationship.

For others, it may be private or supported in another way.

Everyone's experience of sexuality is different. Some people want sex. Some don't. Some people feel desire only sometimes, or not at all. Some people enjoy emotional closeness without touch.

Some ways people explore their sexuality:

## **Masturbation**

*Touching your own body to feel good or release stress.*

This is private and normal. Some people use their hands. Others use toys or aids. A counsellor or support person can help with safe ways to do this, especially if support is needed for setup or privacy.

## **Using sex toys or aids**

*Objects that help people feel good during masturbation or touch.*

This might include vibrators, sleeves, or other body-safe products. It's important to clean them and store them safely. Some people may need help understanding how to use or choose them.

## **Fantasy and imagination**

*Thinking about things that feel exciting or special.*

People might daydream, write stories, or listen to audio stories like erotic fiction. Fantasy is private and personal. It does not always mean someone wants to do something in real life - and that is OK.

## Seeing a sex worker

*This is when a person pays for a safe and respectful sexual experience.*

In *Love Rights*, Oliver works with his counsellor to decide if this is right for him.

Seeing a sex worker is not a relationship. It is a service.

Consent, safety and mutual respect are always needed.

It is important to use legal and disability-friendly services and talk through feelings before and after.

## Sensual or emotional touch

*Not all touch is sexual.*

Some people enjoy hugs, cuddles, or hand-holding with people they trust.

These actions can be comforting or help people feel close.

In *Specificity*, Nina and Liam explore touch together in a way that feels respectful and safe.

## Exploring identity and feelings

*Some people explore their sexuality by learning more about themselves.*

This could include thinking about who they're attracted to (or not), what kinds of relationships they want, or how they want to feel in their body. Exploring identity is a valid and personal part of sexual expression.

# Things to think about before seeing a sex worker

## Planning for safety, comfort and support

Seeing a sex worker is one way some people choose to explore their sexuality. It is not for everyone and it is okay to have questions, mixed feelings, or uncertainty.

It is important to feel safe, ready and supported before making a decision.

In *Love Rights*, Oliver talks with his counsellor before making the choice to see a sex worker.

They explore his feelings, needs and what the experience might be like. These conversations are part of supported decision-making: making a choice that is informed, safe and based on the person's rights and values.

## Talk to a counsellor first

A counsellor can help someone understand why they want to see a sex worker and what they hope to get out of it.

They can support:

- Understanding consent, safety and expectations
- Working through worries, trauma history, or questions
- Exploring other ways of sexual expression if needed
- Preparing emotionally for the experience
- Planning aftercare: how someone might feel afterwards and what support is available

## Be clear about what you want

Before seeing a sex worker, it is important to know what kind of experience you are hoping for.

A counsellor or trusted person can help plan ahead and talk about:

- What the person wants to do or explore
- What kind of support they might need
- How to communicate these needs clearly and respectfully

## Understand consent

Consent means both people agree, freely and clearly.

Consent should be:

- **Informed** (the person knows what they're agreeing to)
- **Enthusiastic** (they want to say yes, not just feel pressured)
- **Ongoing** (it can change at any time for each person involved)

A sex worker also has the right to say no, change their mind, or set their own boundaries. Checking in throughout the experience is key to making sure both people feel safe.

## Think about safety

Feeling physically and emotionally safe is essential.

Support workers or counsellors can help someone:

- Choose a reputable, disability-friendly service
- Plan the meeting location (home, hotel, or safe venue)
- Decide how to communicate needs and check for understanding
- Have a backup plan if something doesn't feel right

Trusting instincts and having someone to debrief with afterwards is also important.

## Look after your health

Sexual health matters for both people involved.

This includes:

- Using condoms and protection to reduce the risk of STD's
- Understanding hygiene and safety steps
- Knowing where to get health advice if needed
- Respecting the sex worker's health, boundaries and safety as well

## Communicate clearly

Open and respectful communication is key.

This might mean:

- Asking questions before the session
- Checking what services the sex worker offers
- Clarifying limits, preferences, or things that feel uncomfortable
- Using Easy English, visuals, or communication aids if needed

A support person or counsellor can help roleplay or practice these conversations beforehand if helpful.

## Plan payment ahead

It is important to talk about money before the appointment.

Make sure:

- The full cost is known and agreed upon
- The payment method is organised
- There are no misunderstandings about time, services, or expectations
- The person has control over their money, or a trusted person helps manage it with them

## Think about privacy

Some people want to keep the experience private and that is okay.

Consider:

- Where the meeting happens and who else is around
- Whether the person lives in shared accommodation or needs support around scheduling
- Talking about how to clean up afterwards or store aids discreetly
- Who they trust to talk to if they want to debrief

## Prepare emotionally

Seeing a sex worker can bring up different emotions, like excitement, nervousness, curiosity, or even sadness.

These are all valid. It helps to:

- Talk through feelings in advance
- Understand what to expect
- Plan for quiet time or support afterwards
- Check in with a counsellor or support person

## Know the law

The laws about sex work are different in each state.

Make sure:

- The person is over 18
- The sex work service is legal in that area
- Support workers are aware of what they can and can't support

**Note:** See the Sex and the Law section of this guide for up-to-date information in each state.

# Love Rights – Learning questions with prompts and answers



## Film 1: Love Rights

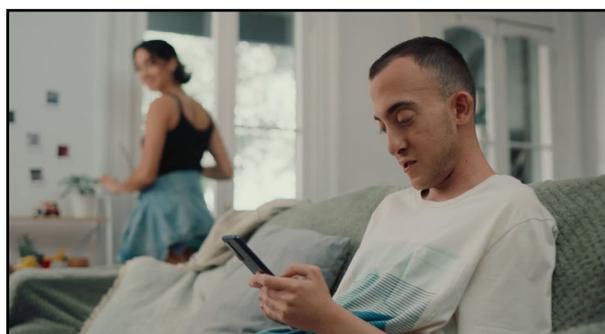
### Oliver – questions for discussion

1. What do you think Oliver was thinking when he tried to smell or touch Jen's hair?

*Prompt: Encourage discussion on non-verbal cues such as Oliver's body language, facial expression and his noticing of another couple in the café.*

2. Why do you think Oliver wanted to have intimacy or connection with Jen?

*Prompt: Discuss how it is normal to want closeness, especially when someone feels isolated or desires a romantic connection.*



3. Was it OK that Oliver wanted to be intimate with his support worker? Why?

*Prompt: Explore the difference between having feelings and acting on them. Encourage reflection on boundaries and roles.*
4. Oliver appeared uncomfortable when the counsellor suggested he might want to try seeing a sex worker. His response was, 'I guess so.' What do you think he was feeling?

*Prompt: Ask what body language or voice tone tells us. Was he confused, embarrassed, unsure, or nervous?*
5. Who else could Oliver speak with regarding his desire for intimacy other than a Sexuality and Relationships Counsellor?

*Prompt: Brainstorm safe adults, friends, or professionals who could provide trusted advice.*
6. What should Oliver consider before seeing a sex worker to ensure he has made an informed decision?

*Prompt: Talk about safety, communication, money, comfort and what he hopes to feel or learn.*
7. What are some other ways he could express his sexuality if he cannot afford a sex worker?

*Prompt: Include masturbation, online connections, or talking openly with a trusted person.*
8. What do you think Oliver found challenging about online dating?

*Prompt: Consider emotional regulation, communication differences, or confusing social cues.*
9. What support could he have received to make online dating more accessible and successful?

*Prompt: Discuss things like support workers helping with profiles, communication, or safety planning.*

## Jen – questions for discussion

1. What did Jen mean when she says 'Ollie, that's not appropriate' after Ollie tried to touch and smell her hair?

*Prompt: Encourage discussion on Jen's boundaries and why she needed to stop the behaviour gently but clearly.*

2. What do you understand the role of a support person to be?

*Prompt: Talk about how support workers are there to help with life, health and safety - not to be romantic or sexual partners.*

3. What are some tips you could provide Jen in how to handle the conversation with Oliver when he was inappropriate?

*Prompt: Discuss calm body language, kind but firm words and checking on Oliver's feelings after the boundary was set.*

4. What are some other ways Jen could support Oliver in his desire to have intimacy?

*Prompt: Consider referrals to sexuality services, helping him connect with safe peer spaces, or exploring other forms of closeness.*



5. What are some things you noticed about Jen's body language?

*Prompt: Encourage observation of her tone, distance, facial expression and the shift when she changed the topic.*

6. Do you think Jen's clothing or the environment (café setting) may have added to Oliver's confusion?

*Prompt: Explore how social cues, dress and context can sometimes be misunderstood, especially when relationships feel friendly or relaxed.*

## Love Rights – questions for discussion

1. What are some topics of conversation Oliver could have with his counsellor when he first begins his session?

*Prompt: Encourage ideas like asking about feelings, safety, consent, touch, or relationships.*

2. What are some things you may need to consider when trying online dating?

*Prompt: Think about safety, honesty, online scams and how to present yourself.*

3. What are some things to think about when going on a first date?

*Prompt: Meeting in public, telling someone where you are, knowing your boundaries.*

4. Would these same safety steps help if seeing a sex worker?

*Prompt: Explore communication, privacy, informed consent and legal safety.*



5. Do you think Oliver's counsellor needed his parents' permission to suggest sex work?

*Prompt: Reflect on age of consent (18+), supported decision-making and autonomy vs. guardianship.*

6. What steps are involved between deciding to see a sex worker and actually doing it?

*Prompt: Think about choice, planning, communication, arranging support, payment, aftercare.*

7. If Oliver didn't want to or couldn't see a sex worker, how else could he express his sexual desires?

*Prompt: Consider masturbation, safe conversation, online connection, emotional intimacy.*



## Film 2: Specificity

### Nina – questions for discussion

1. Why did Nina make a whiteboard to plan sex with Liam?

*Prompt: Explore the role of supported planning and visual communication for consent.*

2. What did Nina learn from watching videos or TV shows about sex?

*Prompt: Consider what ideas were helpful or confusing for her.*

3. How did Nina tell Liam what she wanted or didn't want?

*Prompt: Notice verbal and non-verbal consent cues.*

4. Why did Nina feel unsure about masturbation at first?

*Prompt: Talk about shame, myths, or lack of education.*



5. What helped Nina feel more confident exploring her body?

*Prompt: Think about self-discovery, media influence, or partner trust.*

6. Why did Nina thank Alessandra?

*Prompt: Talk about how seeing a sexologist on TV gave her language and permission.*



## Liam – questions for discussion

1. How did Liam respond when Nina said she wanted to have sex?  
*Prompt: Explore body language, humour and how he managed his nerves.*
2. What signs did Liam give that he felt unsure or excited?  
*Prompt: Discuss facial expressions, giggles, tone changes.*
3. What role did Liam play in helping Nina feel safe?  
*Prompt: Consider active listening, checking in and emotional regulation.*
4. What do you think Liam learned about trust and intimacy?  
*Prompt: Reflect on mutual respect, new experiences and learning together.*

## Specificity – questions for discussion

1. What is the difference between intimacy and sex?  
*Prompt: Talk about emotional closeness vs. physical touch.*
2. How can people learn what feels good for them?  
*Prompt: Discuss safe exploration, solo touch, or talking about likes/dislikes.*
3. Why is it important to talk about sex before it happens?  
*Prompt: Think about consent, communication and being prepared.*
4. What kinds of tools can help people with communication needs talk about sex?  
*Prompt: Mention whiteboards, visual charts, key words, or trusted support.*
5. What does feeling safe look like for Nina and Liam?  
*Prompt: Body language, mutual respect, laughter, planning.*

## Suggested answers – Film 1: Love Rights

**Note:** These are suggestions to help support discussion and reflection.

People may feel or think differently. All respectful answers are valid. Facilitators may refer to the Key Points and Learnings section to guide deeper conversation.

### Oliver - answers for discussion

1. What do you think Oliver was thinking when he tried to smell or touch Jen's hair?

Feelings:

- Curious
- Lonely or left out
- Wanting closeness or affection

Non-verbal cues and behaviour:

- Looked at Jen with interest
- Leaned in close
- Noticed a couple at the café and mirrored their behaviour

Thoughts or ideas:

- Might have thought Jen liked him back
- Might not have known what behaviour was okay
- Could have been copying what he saw others doing



2. Why do you think Oliver wanted to have intimacy or connection with Jen?

Feelings:

- Attracted to Jen
- Hopeful
- Wanting to be seen or chosen

Non-verbal cues and behaviour:

- Looked for cues in public settings (like the café couple)
- Reached for Jen when they were close

Thoughts or ideas:

- Might have felt that Jen was someone safe and familiar
- May have not known how to meet other people
- Could have confused care with romantic interest

3. Was it ok that Oliver wanted to be intimate with his support worker? Why?

Feelings:

- Unsure
- Embarrassed when corrected
- Curious about love and sex

Non-verbal cues and behaviour:

- Pulled back when corrected
- Became quiet

Thoughts or ideas:

- It's okay to have feelings. Everyone does
- It's important to learn about boundaries in relationships
- Jen's job is to support Oliver, not be in a relationship with him

Support workers can help someone learn how to meet other people

4. Oliver appeared uncomfortable when the counsellor suggested seeing a sex worker. His response was, "I guess so." What do you think he was thinking or feeling?

Feelings:

- Nervous
- Confused or surprised
- Unsure how to respond

Non-verbal cues and behaviour:

- Looked away
- Fidgeted
- Spoke quietly

Thoughts or ideas:

- Might not have known what a sex worker was
- Might have felt unsure if it was allowed
- Could have needed more time to understand the idea

5. Who else could Oliver speak with about his desire for intimacy, other than a counsellor?

Thoughts or ideas:

- A trained support worker
- A trusted adult or family member
- A friend who listens without judging
- A doctor or psychologist
- Through books, videos, or education programs with support

6. What should Oliver consider before seeing a sex worker?

Thoughts or ideas:

- What he wants the experience to feel like
- Is it safe?
- Is he ready?
- Can he give informed consent?
- How will he feel after?
- How will he pay and where will it happen?
- Does he understand what is legal and respectful?

See Key Points and Learnings for more on consent, safety and supported decision-making.

7. What are some other ways Oliver could express his sexuality if he couldn't see a sex worker?

Thoughts or ideas:

- Masturbation or using sex toys
- Exploring online dating, with support
- Talking to a counsellor about fantasies or feelings
- Watching adult content in a safe, legal way
- Joining inclusive social groups
- Writing or drawing to express feelings

8. What do you think Oliver found challenging about online dating?

Feelings:

- Frustrated
- Disappointed
- Unsure what to say or do

Thoughts or ideas:

- Did not get replies
- Found the app hard to use
- Wasn't sure how to talk to strangers

9. What support could he have received to make online dating more successful?

Thoughts or ideas:

- Help writing his profile
- Choosing clear and respectful photos
- Practicing messages together
- Learning about safety and privacy online
- Using dating apps made for people with disability

## Jen - answers for discussion

1. What did Jen mean when she said, "Ollie, that's not appropriate" after Oliver tried to smell and touch her hair?

Feelings:

- Surprised
- Uncomfortable
- Protective of personal boundaries
- Non-verbal cues and behaviour:
- Body stiffened
- Moved away gently
- Used a calm, firm voice

Thoughts or ideas:

- Wanted to teach Oliver about boundaries respectfully
- Knew her role was to support, not engage in intimacy
- Responded in a way that modelled clear but kind limits

2. What do you understand the role of a support person to be?

Thoughts or ideas:

- To assist with daily activities
- To promote independence and choice
- To help explore sexuality in safe, supported ways
- To model healthy relationships and respect boundaries
- To listen without judgement

See Key Points and Learnings for more on professional roles and boundaries.



3. What are some tips you could give Jen on how to handle the situation when Oliver acted inappropriately?

Thoughts or ideas:

- Stay calm and non-judgemental
- Use clear language to explain the boundary
- Redirect the conversation to what Oliver is needing or feeling
- Encourage Oliver to talk about his feelings with a counsellor
- Debrief with a supervisor for guidance

4. What are some other ways Jen could support Oliver in his desire for intimacy?

Thoughts or ideas:

- Help Oliver connect with a trained counsellor
- Talk to him about safe and legal ways to express sexuality
- Assist with learning about dating apps or social groups
- Offer information on masturbation or sex toys in a respectful way
- Support him to build confidence in relationships with peers

5. What non-verbal cues did Jen use in the film to help set a boundary with Oliver?

Non-verbal cues and behaviour:

- Moved her head and body slightly away
- Maintained gentle but serious eye contact
- Used a firm tone of voice
- Did not touch Oliver back

Thoughts or ideas:

- She used body language that matched her words
- She reinforced her professional role in a respectful way
- Her response helped keep Oliver safe and respected

6. Do you think Jen's appearance (clothing, makeup, behaviour) affected Oliver's understanding of their relationship? Why or why not?

Feelings:

- Oliver may have felt confused or attracted
- Jen may not have realised the impact

Thoughts or ideas:

- Support workers should dress professionally to avoid sending mixed messages
- It's important to talk about context (for example, being in a café with couples nearby may have added to Oliver's confusion)
- This does not mean Jen did something wrong, but that it is helpful to reflect on how environment and presentation influence learning

See Key Points and Learnings for more on professional roles and setting boundaries.

## Love Rights – answer for discussion

1. What are some topics of conversation Oliver could have with his counsellor when he first begins his session?

Thoughts or ideas:

- How he feels about sex, love, or wanting a relationship
- Questions about boundaries or what's appropriate
- Why he found online dating difficult
- Feelings he had about Jen
- Whether he feels safe or unsure about seeing a sex worker
- Any worries, questions, or hopes about intimacy

See Key Points and Learnings on supported decision-making and open conversations.

2. What are some things you might need to consider when trying online dating?

Thoughts or ideas:

- Making sure the app is safe and accessible
- Not sharing personal info too early (like address or phone number)
- Having help writing your profile or knowing how to chat
- Knowing what's okay and what's not okay to say online
- Watching out for scams or people pretending to be someone else
- Having a trusted person to check in with



3. What are some things you might need to consider when going on a date with someone new?

Thoughts or ideas:

- Meet in a public place, like a café or park
- Let someone you trust know where you're going and who you're with
- Have your own transport or exit plan
- Think about what you're comfortable doing on a first date
- Bring a support worker or friend if needed

4. Would the same safety tips apply if you were seeing a sex worker?

Thoughts or ideas:

- Yes, being safe, informed and supported is important
- Know the laws in your state
- Be clear about what you want and what you're paying for
- Have support before and after if you need it
- Make sure it's your choice and that you feel ready

5. Do you think the counsellor needed Oliver's parents' permission before suggesting he see a sex worker?

Thoughts or ideas:

- If Oliver is over 18, he can make decisions about his body and relationships
- A counsellor must follow the law and respect privacy
- Some people might have guardianship orders that affect this, but they still deserve supported decision-making
- Consent is about being informed, not about someone else giving permission for you

6. What are some things to consider before seeing a sex worker?

Thoughts or ideas:

- Your safety and comfort
- If the person is experienced with disability
- Whether you understand what will happen
- Using protection
- Where it will happen and how you'll get there
- What support you might want before and after
- Cost, communication and feelings

7. If someone didn't want to or couldn't see a sex worker like Oliver did, what are other ways they could explore their sexuality?

Thoughts or ideas:

- Masturbation or using sex toys
- Going on a date or meeting people in social groups
- Talking to a counsellor about feelings
- Watching or reading about sexuality in a safe and legal way
- Practicing self-touch or fantasy
- Creative expression like drawing, writing, or dancing

## Suggested answers – Film 2: Specificity

### Nina - answers for discussion

1. What do you think Nina was feeling when she asked Liam if he loved her?

Feelings:

- Nervous
- Hopeful
- Wanting reassurance

Non-verbal cues and behaviour:

- Looked at him gently
- Voice was quiet
- Waited for his response closely

Thoughts or ideas:

- She wanted to feel chosen and secure
- Might have felt unsure about where she stood in the relationship
- Could be checking if they were on the same page emotionally

2. How did Nina show she wanted to be close to Liam?

Feelings:

- Loving
- Excited or affectionate

Non-verbal cues and behaviour:

- Moved physically closer
- Touched him or leaned in
- Maintained eye contact

Thoughts or ideas:

- She wanted to feel connection
- Was trying to express that she liked and trusted Liam



3. Did Nina check that Liam wanted the same things as her? Why is that important?

Thoughts or ideas:

- Yes. She asked him directly if he loved her and wanted to do things together
- Checking in helps make sure both people feel safe and ready
- It shows good communication and care
- This helps with consent and healthy relationships

4. How do you think Nina would have felt if Liam said no?

Feelings:

- Sad
- Disappointed
- Embarrassed

Thoughts or ideas:

- It can be hard to hear no, but everyone has the right to say it
- She might have needed support from a friend or support person
- Consent includes accepting “no” without punishment or blame

## Liam - answers for discussion

1. How did Liam react when Nina talked about being close?

Feelings:

- Excited
- Possibly overwhelmed
- Caring

Non-verbal cues and behaviour:

- Smiled
- Nodded or leaned in
- Listened carefully

Thoughts or ideas:

- He was interested and wanted to be close too
- May have been figuring out how to respond kindly
- He showed comfort by staying connected

2. How do you think Liam felt when they started kissing or touching?

Feelings:

- Happy
- Excited
- Maybe nervous

Non-verbal cues and behaviour:

- Smiled or laughed
- Reached for her hand
- Stayed engaged

Thoughts or ideas:

- He was expressing connection
- He felt safe and close to Nina
- He may have had questions but trusted her



3. What did Liam do that showed he was checking Nina was comfortable too?

Thoughts or ideas:

- He asked questions
- Looked at her facial expressions
- Waited for her responses
- Didn't rush anything

## Specificity - answers for discussion

1. How do you know if someone is ready to have sex?

Thoughts or ideas:

- They say yes clearly and freely
- They seem calm and confident
- They don't feel pressured or scared
- They understand what is going to happen
- See Key Points and Learnings about consent.



2. What are some ways couples can talk about intimacy before it happens?

Thoughts or ideas:

- Ask what each other likes and does not like
- Say how they are feeling
- Talk about what will happen before doing it
- Use “yes” and “no” words, or communication devices if needed
- Have support people help them practice the words or ideas

3. What do you think helps make Nina and Liam's relationship healthy?

Thoughts or ideas:

- They listen to each other
- They respect boundaries
- They talk about their feelings
- They take things slow and check in often
- They have support from people around them

# About the organisations

## Northcott

Northcott is a leading disability service provider with more than 95 years of experience. Our Sexuality and Relationship Education service is the first of its kind to be offered by an Australian disability organisation. Developed following customer demand to lift the lid on taboo topics, our counselling and educational services have been created to support people with disability to achieve their sexuality and relationship goals and desires.



### Need more information or support?

Northcott's Sexuality and Relationship Education Service is for people with disability aged 16 years and over. It provides one-on-one counselling to explore relationships, educational workshops to build understanding about relationships, sexual health and sexuality and support to access safe and non-judgemental sexual experiences.

Contact Northcott on 1800 818 286 or [northcott@northcott.com.au](mailto:northcott@northcott.com.au).

## Bus Stop Films

Bus Stops Films is a not-for-profit organisation, teaching adults with disability and others from marginalised communities film studies. Bus Stop Films uses filmmaking and the film industry to change community attitudes globally around the rights and contribution to society of and by people with disability.



## Steve Wilson-Alexander

Steve Wilson-Alexander is a film and theatre-maker living on Dharawal land in Figtree NSW. He is a member of Re:group performance collective and cofounded FAST PRINCESS at Cerebral Palsy Alliance 2016-18. He performed Coil by Re:group at Sydney Opera House, PACT, Brunswick Mechanics Institute and Salamanca Arts Centre in 2022 which toured regionally in 2023. He directed Re:group's first short film SPECIFICITY in 2025, commissioned by Northcott for their Love Rights project. In 2025 he also worked with Re:group on developing Keep Your Head Up at Sydney Theatre Company, POV at Art Centre Melbourne and Auto-Tune at Melbourne Fringe. He works as a support worker with Northcott, Bus Stop Films and occasionally does freelance audio describing for theatre.

# Glossary (Easy Read)

## Aftercare

What someone might need after sex or after talking about something big. This could be rest, talking to someone, or being alone for a while.

## Boundary

A rule about what is okay and not okay for you. Everyone's boundaries are different. They help keep you safe and respected.

## Consent

Saying "yes" to something. You can say no or stop at any time. Both people must agree.

## Consent - FRIES

A way to remember what consent means:

- **Freely given** - No pressure. You get to choose.
- **Reversible** - You can change your mind at any time.
- **Informed** - You understand what you are saying yes to.
- **Enthusiastic** - You really want to do it.
- **Specific** - Saying yes to one thing does not mean yes to everything.

## Counsellor (Sexuality and Relationship Counsellor)

A person trained to talk with you about relationships, feelings, sex and your identity in a private and respectful way.

## Disability

When someone has a condition that makes it harder to do certain things. This guide was made for people with disability who want to learn about sex and relationships.

## Healthy relationship

A relationship where both people feel happy, safe and equal. People respect each other's boundaries.

## Intimacy

Feeling close to someone in a way that feels good and safe. This might be physical, emotional, or both.

## **Masturbation**

Touching your own body in a private way that feels good. It is normal and okay.

## **Masturbation aid / toy**

Something that helps someone touch themselves and feel good. These are used in private and should be cleaned after use.

## **Online dating**

Meeting people to chat with, be friends with, or date using the internet or apps.

## **Relationship**

A connection between people. This can be friendship, romantic, family, support, or sexual.

## **Safe space**

A place where people feel safe, supported and free to speak or ask questions.

## **Safety plan**

A plan to help keep yourself safe when dating, having sex, or going to new places. It might include who you'll call or how you'll get home.

## **Sexual expression**

The way someone shows their sexual feelings. Everyone is different. Some people might not want sex at all and that's okay too.

## **Sexual orientation**

Who you feel attracted to (for example, like men, women, both, or neither. This can be romantic or sexual)

## **Sex worker**

A person who is paid to give sexual touch or pleasure in a safe, respectful way. Some people with disability use sex work to explore their sexuality.

## **Support worker**

A person who helps someone with disability with everyday things, like going out, cooking, or learning new things.

# Relevant links and resources

## Sexuality, relationships and disability support

Northcott – Relationships and Sexuality Services

<https://www.northcott.com.au>

Provides counselling, workshops and support for people with disability exploring sex, sexuality and relationships. Includes help with access to sex work and decision-making.

## Touching Base Inc.

<https://www.touchingbase.org>

Supports the rights of people with disability to access sex workers safely and respectfully. Offers referrals and resources, including for support workers and clinicians.

## Sexual Lives and Respectful Relationships (SL&RR)

<https://www.slrr.com.au>

Peer-led education for people with intellectual disability on relationships, sexual health, rights and safety.

## Family Planning NSW – Disability and Sexual Health

<https://www.fpnsw.org.au/disability>

Resources, clinics and information tailored to people with disability, carers and educators on reproductive and sexual health.



## Consent, safety and supported decision-making

### **FRIES Consent Acronym (Planned Parenthood)**

<https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/relationships/sexual-consent>

Simple explanation of the FRIES model of consent: Freely given, Reversible, Informed, Enthusiastic, Specific.

### **Scope – Supported Decision Making**

<https://www.scopeaust.org.au/resources/scope-supporting-decision-making/>

Resources and guides for support workers to empower people with disability to make informed and supported choices.

### **1800RESPECT**

<https://www.1800respect.org.au>

Free, 24/7 counselling and support for people impacted by domestic, family, or sexual violence, including people with disability. Offers online chat and interpreter access.

### **NSW Ageing and Disability Commission**

<https://www.adc.nsw.gov.au>

Promotes rights and safety of adults with disability. Offers confidential complaints and guidance for abuse prevention.



## Online safety and healthy digital relationships

### eSafety Commissioner (Australia)

<https://www.esafety.gov.au>

- National online safety resource for young people and adults with disability. Includes:
- Reporting image-based abuse
- Staying safe when dating or sexting
- LGBTQIA+ safety online
- Tips on avoiding scams and catfishing

### What if I'm pressured to send nudes or my nudes are being shared?

<https://www.esafety.gov.au/key-issues/image-based-abuse>

Guides and videos on how to manage digital consent, unwanted content and sextortion.



## Inclusive dating and social connection

### Cliq Connect

<https://www.cliqconnect.com.au>

A dating and friendship platform made for NDIS participants. Designed to be safe and accessible.

### Glimmer

<https://www.glimmerdating.com>

An inclusive dating app that prioritises accessibility and connection for people with disability.

### Hiki

<https://www.hikiapp.com>

A friendship and dating app for neurodivergent individuals, including those with Autism and ADHD.

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