



Dr Peter Gerhardt is the Executive Director of the EPIC School in Paramus, NJ. Dr Gerhardt has nearly 40 years of experience utilizing the principles of Applied Behavior Analysis in support of adolescents and adults with autism spectrum disorders in educational, employment, residential and community-based settings. He is the author or co-author on a number of articles and book chapters on the needs of adolescents and adults with ASD and has presented nationally and internationally on this topic. Dr Gerhardt serves as Co-Chairman of the Scientific Council for the Organization for Autism Research and is on numerous professional advisory boards including the Cambridge Center for Behavioral Studies. He received his doctorate from Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey's Graduate School of Education.

Thursday 12th November 2020, Session 1 – 13:00-14:30

Individuals with ASD, Sexuality and Sexuality Education: What You Need to Know and Probably Don't

It goes without saying that individuals with ASD are sexual beings. Unfortunately, the biological, physiological and behavioral aspects of human sexuality remain significantly under-researched aspects of day to day living. Not surprisingly, there is even less research when it comes to sexuality and individuals on the autism spectrum. This knowledge gap, when added to that the social, cultural, religious and legal restrictions that often govern the display sexual behavior, results in an area of intervention about which we have limited evidence-based information as to 1) the content of instruction in sex education, 2) the process of instruction or intervention in sex education, 3) the timing of intervention in sex education or, 4) the development of effective interventions to prevent sexual abuse. This workshop will provide an overview of the many of challenges associated with sexuality and sexuality education in ASD and provide recommendations as to the role individuals with autism, their families, behavior analysts and other professionals who support them need to play in this complex and important area of adult life.

Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this event, participants will be able to:

- Discuss why the field of ABA is particularly well suited to address the challenges associated with sexuality education in ASD
- Discuss a minimum of three challenges to effective sexuality education in ASD
- Discuss some of the recent research on gender identity and ASD
- Discuss the importance of developing sexual safety skills in individuals starting in preschool
- Understand the role discrimination training has in the development of appropriate behaviour in this area