

## Sexuality and relationships - What Mencap thinks



People with a learning disability have sexual rights .

They should be free to express their sexuality and have safe, happy relationships .



Sexuality is your feelings about yourself, your body and your relationships.



There are different types of relationships including friendships, family relationships and romantic relationships.



All of these relationships can be very important to a person.



A romantic relationship is when two people have a close bond and care about each other a lot.

Not all romantic relationships are sexual.



A sexual relationship means both people want to be intimate with each other.

This means they might want to kiss, touch or have sex.



People with a learning disability have sexual rights just like everyone else.

### **For example:**



- Everyone has the right to understand their sexuality and have relationships if they want to.



- People with a learning disability have the right to choose their relationships.



- People with a learning disability have a right to accessible information.

This can help them make choices about relationships.



- People who are LGBT+ (lesbian , gay , bisexual , transgender and other identities) have the right to be treated equally and with respect.



- People with a learning disability have the right to learn about their bodies, sexual health and healthy relationships.



Mencap knows that a lot of people with a learning disability want to have relationships.



People with a learning disability should have good support to understand their sexuality and have relationships if they want to.



But this is not always happening.

For example, people with a learning disability may:

- find it hard to get out and meet people.
- not have the opportunities to have relationships
- not have the privacy needed to have a sexual relationship or explore sexual feelings.
- be worried or scared, which stops relationships from happening.





- not get the right information they need about sexuality, sex and relationships



- not be asked about their feelings on sexuality and relationships at all.



## **What Mencap wants**

We want the sexual rights of people with a learning disability to be respected.



We want people with a learning disability to have the support and information to explore their sexuality.



We want people with a learning disability to have the opportunities to make friends if they want to.



We want people with a learning disability to have healthy and happy relationships if they want to.



This means people with a learning disability should have:

- someone to talk to about their feelings on sexuality and relationships



- support to think about who they want relationships with and what type of relationship they want.



- opportunities to meet other people and support to keep safe



- good quality sex and relationships education for themselves and their families and support staff.

