



Policy Statement on Sexuality

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this resolution is to affirm the right for all people with disabilities to make individual choices in all areas of human sexuality. TASH upholds that informed choice-making concerning all areas of human sexuality depends upon complex, accurate information and education being made available to all citizens. TASH believes that provision of supported living services should be offered in an atmosphere which respects privacy; and supports, rather than prohibits, the expression of one's sexuality.

TASH advocates for the development and implementation of legislation that protects the constitutional rights of people with disabilities in matters of consent, marriage, family planning and sexual identity/orientation, and that encourages agencies to institute policies consistent with this legislation. TASH promotes the development of a comprehensive research base to establish the need for further legislation and education in all areas of human sexuality. TASH also believes that individuals with disabilities should be empowered to advocate for themselves regarding health concerns, sexual expression, and prevention of abuse

Rationale

TASH supports the right to private sexual conduct, the right to family planning decisions and the right to express a sexual identity/orientation.

TASH believes that all people, including people with disabilities, should have the freedom and opportunity to express their sexuality, establish relationships and marry or co-habitate if they so choose.

Sexuality is a major life function that is an integral part of relating to others, building self-esteem and building social relationships.

Historically, families, professionals and policy makers have erroneously believed that people with disabilities are not able to make responsible choices in regard to sexuality issues and, therefore, they have been denied access to sexuality education, freedom to establish loving relationships and freedom of sexual expression.

Attempts by persons with disabilities to express their sexuality have often been interpreted as being socially maladaptive.

Decisions made by persons with disabilities in regard to medical procedures, birth control, sterilization and general health care have been discouraged, disallowed or made without appropriate individual consent.

Research has indicated a higher incidence of sexual abuse of people with disabilities and that the majority of sexual abusers are well-known to the victim.

An understanding of the prevention, testing and treatment of AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases first requires appropriate sexuality education.

Adopted 1991
Revised March 2000

About TASH

TASH is an international leader in disability advocacy. Founded in 1975, TASH advocates for human rights and inclusion for people with significant disabilities and support needs – those most vulnerable to segregation, abuse, neglect and institutionalization. TASH works to advance inclusive communities through advocacy, research, professional development, policy, and information and resources for parents, families and self-advocates.

Online: <https://tash.org/about/resolutions/tash-resolution-sexuality/>