

Helping young autistic people interpret relationships and behaviours

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Introduction

There are many challenges that face young autistic people and their parents. Families and carers are often concerned about the growing sexual behaviour in autistic young people because it is generally not accompanied by a corresponding growth in the field of social understanding, which can lead to socially embarrassing behaviour.

Hannah *et al.* (2016) suggest that it is difficult and confusing for an autistic young person to experience and learn about sex and relationships. Furthermore, avenues of potential knowledge, such as peer groups, tend to be an inaccessible option for autistic young people without support. The participants in the study presented as vulnerable to the manipulation of others and in danger of breaking the law due to inappropriate behaviour.

In addressing social issues, we must not forget that sexual curiosity is a normal feature of childhood and therefore we need to provide young people with the information and tools that will enable them to deal with sexual content and behaviour safely and successfully. This includes children with a learning disability as well as autism. Providing young people with a set of realistic, non-exploitative representations of gender and sexuality would go a long way towards ensuring their healthy emotional and sexual development and promoting gender equality.

This contribution will provide guidance on what autistic individuals need to know and how to teach it and will also describe the complexity of challenges in this area for parents, carers and all those working with autistic individuals.

Why do we need education for Sex and Relationships?

There are building blocks to being able to have relationships and without them as a foundation for adult life, the relationships do not happen or they falter. Hatton and Tector (2010) interviewed young people at school when devising a Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) curriculum. All of the autistic children wished they had understood themselves better when they were younger; they wished they had known about their autism and learnt about its implications how people without autism are different. They particularly would like to have been taught something about relationships and how they worked.

- *‘I thought to get a boyfriend you had to agree to have sex with them and so I told the first boyfriend I had that I knew about this and would have sex.’*
- *‘I like things to be my way, I am not able to know what someone else is going to do so it seems better if I just masturbate on my own.’*
- *‘I wish I had learnt to keep myself safe and what is meant if someone asks you to go for a walk and then they want to touch you – I did not understand.’*

The legal context

The Department for Education introduced compulsory Relationships Education and SRE for secondary school pupils from September 2020. Relationships Education is to be introduced at primary level, “to put in place the building blocks needed for positive and safe relationships of all kinds” (DfE 2020). This will start with family and friends, how to treat each other with kindness, and recognising the difference between online and offline friendships.

Many primary schools choose to teach sex education (which goes beyond the existing national curriculum for science), and the government supports this, tailored to the age,

physical and emotional maturity of their pupils. Parents who may worry about the young age need to be aware that the average age for girls to start their periods is ten. I have always taught mixed sex groups as they learn from each other with very little embarrassment.

What needs to be taught and understood

For effective sex education, we are not talking about sexuality as a defining and human characteristic of all of us. You do not need to teach how to have sex. What needs to be taught are the rules around sex and the law for the most able groups. Sexuality and sexual feelings are very basic, so important, and yet, there is only very recent literature and research to enable the teaching of autistic people on how to behave appropriately, in terms of their own bodies and how to respect other people's needs (Jackson 2016; Reynolds 2014; Steward 2019). Those written by autistic adults can be very useful. This is not a discussion on how to or whether to, but rather, what every human being, autistic or not, should know about safe sexual and consensual behaviour.

The content of SRE changes with age. Knowledge of age-appropriate sexual behaviours that vary with situational and environmental factors can assist in differentiating sexual behaviours from sexual behaviour problems. Sexuality of individuals with ASD has been little studied. Human sexuality can be described as a developmental process showing different characteristics throughout the human lifespan resulting in stages and milestones consisting of biological and behavioural components. These are some of the key sexual developmental milestones throughout an individual's lifespan.

- Early childhood and gender identity

- Puberty
- Menstruation
- Masturbation
- Awareness of sexual orientation
- First sexual experience with another person
- Ongoing sexual relationship
- Pregnancy and becoming a parent
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Menopause

Most SRE curricula cover the early years but there is little information on menopause. There is increasing information on marriage and long-term relationships (Hendrickx 2008).

Gender

How someone feels about their gender is known as gender identity. Some people identify as the gender they were assigned with at birth, others do not. Recent research has suggested that gender identity and sexuality are more varied among autistic individuals than in the general population (George 2018). One study, for instance, reported that 15 percent of autistic adults in the Netherlands identify as trans or nonbinary (Walsh, Krabbendam and Begeer 2018). It is important that sex education with autistic individuals normalises attraction to both sexes.

Ten years ago, children with gender dysphoria were treated with watchful waiting and I always recommended this alongside counselling and helping the young autistic person to enjoy their current life to the full. I suggest encouraging exploration of gender roles with a view to keeping options open and not having any pre-conceived ideas as the longer-term outcome. This was more easily achieved in a specialist setting where all staff understood and supported autism and peer support was fantastic. One young man I worked with wanted to

change gender because he believed that women were better communicators and so changing gender would help his communication. Arranging for him to have additional speech and language therapy helped to improve his all-round skills including learning to drive and he subsequently changed his mind about the gender reassignment. An autistic child or adolescent in distress is not reducible to one problem

Many autistic girls have a difficult puberty (periods, body changes, hormones) and they need to be supported through this. Wild (2019) describes her impressions as head teacher at a special school for girls and notes that puberty and the changes in the body can be a huge source of anxiety. She describes how girls often do not understand that puberty lasts for a few years and is irreversible., which can lead to controlling behaviours in an attempt to stop the process. Zaffy Simone, later in this chapter, talks about his horror when he realised his body was changing and how his anorexia started at this time.

Relationships

Building social relationships by developing the ability of first making friends and later resulting sometimes in becoming intimate partners is a key developmental life stage for young adults. How can you move onto a more intimate relationship if you have never had a friend? Social challenge does not mean no socialising. There is no known link between knowledge obtained from the SRE curriculum about sexuality and (inappropriate) interest or behaviours including young people with autism (Henault 2006). We must teach that sex is not compulsory. I have found that some autistic students are very relieved by this and we must also remember that some young autistic people are not interested in sex at all and regard themselves as asexual.

Although many autistic people report a desire for relationships, they may tend either to approach others in an inappropriate physical or verbal manner or to misread subtle social cues or body language. Furthermore, sometimes their actions are misread as sexual overtures, when that may not have been the intent. They may insist on imposing their views on a group which can lead to rejection (Hellemans *et al.* 2007).

Teaching the ‘hidden curriculum’ (Alsubaie 2015)

This is the set of unwritten rules that no one has been directly taught, but everyone knows.

Violations of these rules can make an individual a social outcast and increases vulnerability.

Jackson (2016) reports that he did not recognise the need for social rules and wishes now he had been taught them at a younger age. In his early teenage book (Jackson 2002) he frequently rejects the need to follow social mores.

Phrases associated with the ‘hidden curriculum’:

- “I shouldn’t have to tell you but ... “
- “But its common sense...”

This is the area that autistic students find the most difficult. Break down abstract concepts, avoid euphemisms but teach them too. Live ‘out loud’, describe what you and others are doing and why. Provide observational opportunities. Teach how to lie and pretend e.g. ‘do you like this dress?’ I have taught academic, autistic young men who were not aware that females have periods every month. We cannot assume that autistic people intuitively understand anything unless they have experienced it, read about it or been taught it, hence universities are using increasingly explicit preparation for even the most able group of students, such as Newcastle University (2020). Most students attend university for the social life and to make new friends as well as to study, but some autistic students become upset if

others do not follow the rules e.g. cheating in a French oral test which the tutor did not mind as long as it was in French.

Useful strategies

I have found that exercises which can lead to a discussion and a concrete answer work well.

- What age is the youngest person you can date? A student told me he was taught that you can date someone who is half your age plus seven years. This worked well to help avoid under-age partners but also led to querying the motives of much older people targeting you.
- How many times can you shake the drops from your penis before it is judged as masturbation? This query came from a doctor in a court case when an autistic person had been charged with masturbating in public toilets. The answer is three times.
- How many times can you ask someone for a date before it is harassment? This is important as these days many businesses discourage colleagues dating and you need to know the rules. The answer is three times.

A parent explained that she and the school nurse had prepared her autistic daughter well for the start of her periods. The first one started and her daughter was happy, but they had not told her that periods would happen every month from now on, they assumed she knew. She was devastated.

If you have a person who is a concrete learner, a black-and-white thinker, or thinks in pictures then you need to be visual, clear and literal. Do not put a condom on a banana and expect someone to be able to generalise this to their own bodies. Use realistic photos, real words (Attwood and Powell 2008; Davies and Dubie 2012). Keep the message simple and

repetitive. Because of inappropriate behaviours, the deficit in social skills is even more evident and isolating for the autistic person. Start early.

Social Life

It is vital to try to encourage friendship skills at a young age. There have to be realistic expectations of acquaintances and friends. Later in this chapter, Zaffy Simone recalls, “I had no friendships and spent most of my time following around a boy who was a friend of the family. I attached myself to him. I don’t think he enjoyed that.”

What works is joining groups related to special interest (trains, astronomy, geocaching, Lego therapy). Support groups for other autistic children are vital, particularly for girls who may feel very alone in mainstream school. Mentoring, befriending and counselling should be available from a young age. Social skills training, including joining supportive groups like the Scouts or Air Cadets, Internet chatrooms and internet contacts – but it is important to monitor and know the rules.

What is normal in a relationship?

With the opening up of the internet nothing is ‘normal’ but my autistic students liked some facts. They could not tune in to “what would other people think if you did that?” Social facts such as the average age of losing virginity in England is 16 were welcomed. Healthy, long-lasting relationships are based on trust and kindness, not just sex/physical activity and it is fine not to have sex in a relationship. Relationships are private, the intimacy of which should not be shared with mates or on phones or networking sites.

For the question “What does a ‘normal’ body look like?”, it is useful to use pictures of both sexes including many examples of the variety of bodies and genitals. Ideas will be distorted by pornography.

Sexualisation

Sexual content in mainstream media has increased, and become more explicit in recent years, and sexual imagery has become more widely circulated within society more broadly.

Different people have different views on what counts as sexualised. UK children encounter some very diverse messages about sex including advertising (Buckingham *et al.* 2010). Most parents talked about childhood in terms of ‘innocence’; but interpretations of this varied.

Some saw experimenting with make-up, even imitating ‘sexy’ dance styles (and similar behaviour) as innocuous, natural, fun, and devoid of adult sexual connotations. For others, innocence meant play untroubled by concerns about the adult world, which made the same activities distasteful. There is pressure to imitate gender stereotypes from a younger and younger age although many autistic children do not notice. We do know that in the general population:

- 70% of all children aged 12 to 15 report unintended exposure to pornographic websites;
- 58% of all teenagers view pornography regularly;
- 1 in 10 view it every day;
- 60% of mainstream 13-17s think Sex and Relationships Education should start from age 8 at the latest;
- There is a dangerous lack of knowledge about Sexually Transmitted Infections [STIs] (Martellozzo *et al.* 2016; NSPCC 2020) in all young adults.

It is important to keep a check on what an autistic child has tuned into on the mobile phone or laptop. They may tell you it's only 'Thomas the Tank Engine,' but it might be the pornographic version. It seems that there are pornographic versions of many children's TV characters.

Parents and carers can lay the basic building blocks for a child's online life really early such as the fact that what we see on screen is not real. A non-autistic 5-year-old knows that Maggie Smith is a witch in the Harry Potter films and a nun in 'Sister Act' - and in the real world, she is neither of those people. The distinction between reality and fantasy can be blurred in autism. Computer games and films can be thought of as real and the news as unreal. Some primary schools are now using activities like photo manipulation to change pictures and to show how to evaluate digital content.

Although, for example, there is a correlation between aggression and playing violent computer games for autistic children (Mazurek and Engelhardt 2015), there is also a benefit from playing social co-operative games.

Behaviour towards other people

Many of my autistic students never thought about how other people saw them and what effect their behaviour had on others. One activity I used to start a group SRE session was to have the students describe themselves and their interests. At the end of the session the students had to feed information back about their peers. Many students found this quite emotional, no-one had listened to them before or remembered what they said. There are a number of books on behaviour which help autistic students look at and rate what they are doing (e.g. Buron and Curtis 2003).

Sexual Behaviour

SRE allows socio-sexual behaviours to develop in the areas of communication, emotions and interpersonal relationships by giving access to the sexual knowledge that autistic young people can manage. In the long-term, young people will understand interpersonal relationships better and be able to engage in appropriate behaviours. There is no doubt that sex and sexuality are areas of concern for parents/ /carers and all those who come into contact with young people in professional capacities. The problems of violence, harassment and coercion many young people will meet in their lives, as well as their sexual relationships, need to be rigorously addressed.

What constitutes “risky” sexual behaviour?

Some sexual behaviour displays more risk to a person than others. Certain sexual behaviours expose individuals to higher risk of pregnancy and/or STIs, such as not using condoms. Some of my students could not touch condoms because of sensory issues but they needed direct instruction and practice in how to use them. Polyurethane condoms are a type of male condom that is made from a type of thin, clear plastic, instead of rubber, which may be more tolerable for them. Vulnerability, especially in young autistic women who can become desperate for friendship, can be a real cause for concern as they might have difficulty understanding social cues and not recognise the difference between good attention and bad attention. Autistic girls may need explicit instruction and guidelines to ensure safe dating. They are at special risk of being taken advantage of because they may not understand when someone is harassing them or even abusing them (Steward 2013). Social stories can be written, or concrete examples broken into small parts or stories from TV ‘soaps’ so as to be sure girls understand the concepts you are trying to present. Again because of a lack of sex

education some may be coerced into early sexual intercourse. Some autistic women have written about becoming pregnant before they understood about sex.

Vaginal, anal, or oral sex without a condom, when a condom is not used correctly or having multiple sexual partners can lead to STIs. Many young autistic people will have heard about a 'blow job' but not understand what it is. One young autistic man was raped in his mainstream school lavatory but as he did not know that males can be raped did not immediately report it. The Brook Traffic Light Tool (2014) contains helpful information on these issues and outlines warning signs for problems developing. Behaviours identified in the tool are examples used to show the differences between healthy and unhealthy sexual development. Sex and relationship education is not a one-off experience, it needs repeating as the young person gets older and is ready for more information.

An autistic young person's psychological and social maturity does not keep pace with their physical maturity irrespective of ability and many do not receive the right teaching of boundaries on social and sexual behaviours. It is vital to keep thinking ahead to what needs to be in place five years from now. It may be acceptable for a 3-year-old to run around on a beach naked, but one needs to ensure that the same child is not doing that at 10. If an 8-year-old is touching himself in the classroom, he needs to be taught to understand that he cannot do that in public. Thus the rules on acceptable behaviour as a child grows older need constantly to be updated. Does the young person have a private place to masturbate? Once a young person reaches 14 years of age, masturbation in public is a criminal offence. Parents and carers may need to start teaching him or her about the appropriate time and place relatively early because the longer difficult behaviours go on, the harder they are to redirect.

Communication and Consent

Consent is active and willing participation in sexual activity. It means that both parties had the freedom and capacity to make choice.

You can talk to very young children about consent. Just because your daughter likes being tickled one day does not mean she would like it today. She can say 'no'. A child is allowed to say 'no' if they do not want to be kissed by a grandparent. There are many occasions in a young disabled child's life when 'no' is not an option because they are constantly reminded that they are supposed to do what a grownup tells them to do. However, they need to understand when saying 'no' is the right thing to do.

Whilst autism affects every person differently, difficulty with communication is one of the most unifying characteristics. Many able autistic people are anxious about whether they read body language, facial expressions and those subtle nuanced changes, correctly as Jackson (2016) recalls about his own experiences. He needed clarity and has had to practice flirting and an expectation to read body language is more likely to make him anxious. I had a student who understood the rule of consent but could not always interpret consent or understand people's intentions so he decided to let women make the first moves.

There is also the whole area of Theory of Mind, (Baron-Cohen 1985) the ability to put yourself in someone else's place. I have had young autistic adults tell me there are no victims in child pornography. A young autistic person's psychological and social maturity does not keep pace with their physical maturity irrespective of ability and many do not receive the right teaching of boundaries on social and sexual behaviours.

Unwanted touch

It is important to teach young people about unwanted touch. There are all kinds of reasons that friends sometimes do not want to be touched in various ways and physical touch can be a sensory difficulty in autism. If you do not want someone touching your leg or holding your hand, it is absolutely your right to have it stop. Friends do sometimes inadvertently violate the boundaries of friendship, and if they respect their friends, they stop when they find out it is not welcome.

When two people are having an argument, often the first thing one of them will do is move in close, invading the other person's personal space. This is interpreted by that other person as aggression. A popular term for this, in fact, is 'getting in someone's face'.

Personal Space

Young autistic people need to learn that certain behaviours that were acceptable at an earlier age, like hugging everyone and anyone, or sitting in people's laps, may be inappropriate and send out the wrong messages as they become older. We need to teach where to stand/sit in public and social distancing. For academic young people, it may be useful to study proxemics, the branch of knowledge that deals with the amount of space that people feel it necessary to set between themselves and others.

Eye contact is important although it can be difficult (Jackson 2016). Teaching young people to look at a person's forehead instead of the eyes can be effective. Staring can be more of a problem and often makes other people feel uncomfortable so needs to be discouraged.

Stalking can lead to imprisonment (Stokes, Newton and Kaur 2007). Using examples of behaviour reported in the local press to emphasise the reality of the law can be helpful. This

can be used in many social circumstances which lead to criminal charges. For instance, an autistic young person may read too much into a friendly smile and follow a young woman home, thinking she wants to have a relationship with him. Furthermore, it is crucial to discuss a wide range of examples as differential responses may be required for even slightly different situations and, therefore, a young person may get into trouble for making a taught response if the situation is different.

Although there are many behaviours that can be considered inappropriate, none upset people quite like those behaviours that are sexual in nature. Because of inappropriate behaviours, the deficit in social skills can be even more evident and isolating for the autistic person. Children become aware at very young ages that it is inappropriate to touch other people in certain places; an autistic child does not have that built in control and if curious may try to touch a person's body out of curiosity. This is particularly common in adolescent boys attempting to touch a woman's breast. Dealing with these behaviours when a child is young is important so that they are not a problem when a child becomes an adult. Sexual offences tend to be associated with obsessions or lack of social understanding and the young person may be prosecuted as it is the victim that the law protects. Having a diagnosis of autism is not an excuse (Dubin 2014).

Sexual assault

The criminal law does apply to autistic people and other disabled people although some parents think otherwise and a young person who attacks his or her parents or carers or members of the public can be charged with assault. Sexual assault is a crime, it includes

unwanted touching, kissing, grabbing and rape. It is important to teach young people that they need to exit from any situation where they, themselves, are being treated badly.

Warning Signs That Someone May Become Abusive Within a Relationship

The abusive person attempts to cut the other person off from friends and family, including stopping the person from calling them or meeting them, or from attending events when they are present. They attempt to control lots of tiny details about the other person's actions and appearance, such as what they wear or eat. When they make a mistake, the abusive person is quick to criticise the partner rather than apologizing him/herself. He/she handles stress badly; the other person often feels like they are "walking on eggshells" (having to be very careful about everything said or done to avoid reactions) as he/she never knows what will make the person angry. An autistic person can be considered to be abusive in a relationship by insisting on control.

What skills do we need to teach?

The more an autistic person wants to be independent the more social rules we need to make them aware of. Many parents have suggested that using public toilets can be problematic. There are a number of examples of urinal etiquette on the internet and it is important for parents to provide information about appropriate behaviour when using a urinal.

Actual skills needed

It is important to teach both the correct names for private body parts and, as children get older, the meaning of common slang terms so that they do not get bullied for not knowing.

We must remember that actions have consequences, and we do our sons and daughters no favours by pretending that they can behave inappropriately without facing them.

In particular, teach:

No, not now/later, stop

What is public?

What is private?

There are many things that are acceptable in private but not in public and it is important they know the difference. Quizzes with pictures illustrating, for example, taking clothes off in various appropriate and inappropriate circumstances are useful.

One young man I worked with wanted to be a prostitute so he could have a lot of sex with women and be paid for it. When the reality was explained to him, that it would likely be men who wanted sex, he reconsidered his idea. In many cases it can be a basic lack of knowledge of the world that can lead to difficulties.

Masturbation

This is the most frequent form of sex for autistic people and for some the only form.

Strong *et al.* (2005) note that masturbation can teach people about their bodies and what is sexually pleasing to them. It can teach people how to move their bodies to become aroused and it has no harmful physical effects. It is a form of safer sex (as no body fluids are exchanged that could carry STIs) and as long as the person is not harming him/herself, it may be one of the few examples of physical pleasure the autistic person experiences. Occasionally it can be a form of obsessive or compulsive behaviour.

There are powerful hormones at work, so while a parent's response needs to be measured, calm and consistent, they need to be aware that they are also overriding some strong sensory feelings. It is always a good idea to rule out any medical issues. Some medication can dampen the ability to orgasm and cause excessive masturbation. Reynolds (2015) has written two books on addressing masturbation in autistic boys and girls.

The Internet and the social network

It has not been established that any children under nine years old have the capacity to engage with the internet in a safe and beneficial manner in all circumstances (Byron Report 2008), especially when it comes to children socialising online, either within age-appropriate virtual worlds or as underage participants in sites intended for teenagers and adults, such as Facebook or YouTube.

It is vital to ensure that autistic children can understand how to access the internet safely and independently, that they understand the difference between appropriate and inappropriate sites and appropriate and inappropriate images on the internet. They need to know the law (Dubin 2014). It is crucial to teach age rules and the ability to recognise children including not playing with children even though they may be at that emotional level. For example, it is illegal to download or own pornography showing children (age 17 and under) or take or make any indecent photograph of a child. Owning pornography of adults who look like children is illegal. It is illegal for an adult to contact children on the internet and pretend they are a child as this is what a paedophile would do.

Mobile phone cameras

What are the pictures they are taking? Have they asked permission? Sexting is sending sexually explicit text or photographs from mobile devices. Sexting can lead to embarrassment and can also be a crime. It has become an increasingly popular and concerning pastime amongst young people. Autistic young people may be particularly vulnerable in this area as they may not be aware of the rules and the consequences.

Pornography

The NSPCC reports that mainstream secondary school pupils, especially boys, are viewing porn to learn about sex and they are developing very skewed views, (Martellozzo, *et al.* 2016). The average age for first viewing porn for mainstream boys is 7 years (NSPCC). We can offset this by conveying to young people early on that porn is fantasy. Pornography shapes young people's sexual knowledge but does so by portraying sex in unrealistic ways. The nature of online pornography is changing. It is increasingly dominated by themes of aggression, power and control, blurring the lines between consent, pleasure and violence (Haggstrom-Nordin, Hanson and Tydén 2005). There are non-confrontational ways of opening dialogue on porn. For instance, 'Have your friends started to look at this sort of thing?'; 'Have you got any questions?'; 'What things do you think people will worry about?'; 'Do you think that's what normal people do?'. For an adolescent, talk about how the body reacts to certain pictures: a certain excitement is normal. Talk about how the body works. Discuss what they've seen, without making the young person feel uncomfortable, sinful, dirty or ashamed.

Conclusion

Autistic children grow up to become autistic adults. As Gabriels and van Bourgondien (2007), state: "it is imperative that professionals working with children and adolescents with autism be alerted to sexuality issues in this population so preparations to address and teach

appropriate social boundaries and personal care can be made long before the child with autism enters puberty”.

It is important to provide knowledge that autistic adults need even if you do not like discussing it. Sexual awareness is normal. Sexual feelings are normal, and there are many ways of expressing them. If a person has a disability, it does not change any of this. What often changes is the different socialisation that provides the foundation for sexual identity. All autistic individuals need to learn as a minimum the basics of body parts, how they work and how to keep safe (Gill and Hough 2007). If their learning disability or autism is severe, the content may need to centre on masturbation and establishing a sexual identity in a solo manner (Cambridge and Forrester-Jones 2003).

Autistic people need a completely different and individual approach, including extra clarification. As an example, they need a specific set of rules for each type of risk; otherwise they often do not have the social interpretation skills to deal with slightly different situations. This explains why you may have repeat instances of concerning behaviour with different media, such as mobile phones, Skype, Facebook as well as with direct physical contact, despite the many hours of counselling and support received (Steward 2013). Adults with autism report starkly higher rates of sexual victimisation than do other adults, and the risk appears to rise with lack of sexual knowledge.

The most important thing to remember about autistic young people and sexuality is to provide an open, respectful environment where they feel comfortable asking questions. Autistic people should have the right to fulfil their sexual needs and have the right to express sexual impulses in a socially acceptable way. They need to receive training in socio-sexual

behaviour, to have access to the sexual knowledge they can understand and manage.

We must also acknowledge that we have a lot to learn from autistic individuals themselves and the problems and differences experienced by them. It is crucial that we respect individuals who develop their own values which may be different to ours.

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‘Sexualised Goods Aimed at Children’ report produced by David Buckingham et al. (2010) for the Scottish Parliament provides an excellent model of what work in this area can and

should look like it investigated what Sexualisation was, how it manifested itself and how it was interpreted and experienced by parents and young people;