**Sexuality and Women with IDD**

- Women with IDD want to have intimate relationships like other people. Women with IDD are often not given chances to date or have intimate relationships.

- There are many ways to have intimate relationships. Some women do not want to have sex. Some may want to be physical, like hugging and kissing, but do not have sex. Some do want to have sex.

- Many women with IDD do not get sexual health education from school or their parents.

**What We Learned from Hoosier Women with IDD**

- Hoosier women with IDD may see sexuality and intimacy as bad because they have been hurt or abused.

- They may not have the freedom to make choices about their sexual health.

- They have trouble saying “no” to things they do not want to do in relationships.

- Some had bad experiences with doctors and nurses about their sexual health.
“We are just like normal people. Just do things differently, you know, we need how to speak up for ourselves, we do the same things that you do. Like we can get married, we can have family, we can have a job.”

It is Important for Women to Advocate for Their Sexual Health

Self-advocacy is standing up for your rights, being independent, and making your own choices. Sexual self-advocacy means a woman can:

• Talk about what she likes and does not like in a close relationship.
• Make safer and healthier choices in her relationships.
• Be able to get better sexual health information and health care.

Recommendations

• Everyone has a right to intimate relationships.
• Women with IDD need healthy relationships. They should have a chance to try out different kinds of relationships.
• Sexual health education for women with IDD should talk about healthy relationships and sexual self-advocacy.
• Women with IDD need to know how to advocate for their sexual health in relationships and when getting health care.
• Women with IDD need people in their lives to support them to have healthy intimate relationships.