Guide to Promote Reflection on Sexuality in the Adult Education Sector

Discussion for Adult Education Personnel

Québec ❦

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English version

This guide was prepared in collaboration with the following individuals:

Author	**Carmen Allison** Training Consultant
Orientation Committee	**Réal Bélair** Teacher Commission scolaire des Chênes
	Louise Denis Teacher Commission scolaire de la Capitale
	Francine Duquet, PhD Sexologist and Professor Département de sexologie UQAM
	Yves Hébert Counsellor in Academic Training Commission scolaire des Chênes
	Denise Héroux Graduate nurse CLSC Drummondville
	Cécile Pelchat Teacher Commission scolaire des Chênes
	Françoise Plante Education Consultant Commission scolaire de Montréal
	Hélène Robin Teacher Commission scolaire de la Capitale
Validation Committee	**Marie-Claude Gauthier** Teacher Commission scolaire du Lac-Saint-Jean
	Denis Lyonnais Education Consultant Commission scolaire des Navigateurs
	Francine Michaud Sexologist, programming and planning officer Direction régionale de santé publique de la Capitale-Nationale
	Jocelyn Veilleux Director Commission scolaire de la Beauce-Etchemin

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INTRODUCTION

In January 2003, the Direction de la formation générale des adultes (DFGA) published and distributed *Prevention of HIV/AIDS and other STDS: A General Guide to Implementing a Prevention Plan,* prepared in close collaboration with various social partners. This guide was intended to support the start-up of an intervention project for the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases; to allow adult learners and those working in adult education to orient themselves and take greater responsibility for this issue; and lastly, to encourage the development of an educational approach suited to the needs and resources of the community.

To follow up this process, the DFGA has published the *Guide to promote reflection on sexuality in the adult education sector*. The purpose of this guide, prepared with the collaboration of various social partners for adult education personnel, is as follows:

- **to initiate reflection on a comprehensive approach to sexuality**
- **to foster discussion and the sharing of information on situations that create, to varying degrees, discomfort for adult education personnel**
- **to support the organization of activities as part of a process of reflection suited to the needs of the community**

The proposed reflection process aims to create opportunities to discuss situations that may arise in the workplace. For example, people may feel the need to discuss criteria for an appropriate dress code; difficulties with responding to confidential information or conversations inadvertently overheard; on the content of written, oral, gestural or media messages conveyed in the school.

However, this process is not part of a professional development or training program on sex education. Nevertheless, some groups, following discussion, may decide they need to define training needs or to collaborate with resource persons in the public, parapublic or community sectors.

This guide is intended for all those working in the schools and in adult education centres (both education professionals and support staff), i.e. managers, teachers and counsellors alike. Personnel who intervene in the areas of social work, facilitation, psychological services, nursing or other professional support will act as resource persons in the organization of reflection activities.

This guide was developed to respond to specific needs. Using it requires sound judgment—it must be adapted to meet the specific needs of existing teams without changing its philosophy.

Part One, entitled *For Reflection*, suggests focuses of intervention in health and education and provides an introduction to the various dimensions of sexuality. It also outlines the major social changes that have occurred in Québec since the 1950s and the current context from the perspective of sexuality and media messages. In addition, this part suggests a process for the reflection on sexuality that adult education personnel can adapt to the reality of their community.

Part Two, entitled *For Intervention*, groups together intervention tools designed to carry out the steps in the process of implementing reflection on sexuality. It contains information on the reflection process, a sample questionnaire to obtain an overview of the intervention environment, a checklist for choosing themes, a model work plan and lines of action to follow up the reflection process that has been undertaken.

PART ONE

For reflection

1   FOCUSES OF INTERVENTION

The *Guide to promote reflection on sexuality in the adult education sector* adopts focuses of intervention as determined by ministerial orientations in the health and education sectors.

1.1 Health Sector

In 1997, the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux (MSSS) published *Stratégie québécoise de lutte contre le sida. Phase 4. Orientations 1997-2002;* and, in 2004, *Stratégie québécoise de lutte contre l'infection par the VIH et le sida, l'infection par le VHC et les infections transmissibles sexuellement. Orientations 2003-2009, Programme national de Santé publique 2003-2012. Document complémentaire.*[1]

The Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport (MELS) agreed to adopt the focuses of intervention and the prevention strategies cited in these documents, focuses and strategies designed to foster intervention before problems occur, in order to reinforce individuals' potential for action when dealing with life situations related to sexuality.

> **In a broader approach, in particular from the perspective of love relationships, pleasure, self-assertiveness, identity, sexual orientation, family planning and sexual relationships, sexuality derives its full meaning and in return, invests safe behaviours with greater meaning.**[2]

1.2 Education Sector

The *Declaration of the Fifth International Conference on Adult Education*, organized by UNESCO in Hamburg, in 1997, also adopts a position on sex education (commitment 13). It states:

> **[Develop] education programs that enable men and women to understand gender relations and human sexuality in all their dimensions.**[3]

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1. Québec, Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux, *Québec Public Health Program 2003-2012* (Québec: Gouvernement du Québec), 2003.

2. Québec, Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux, *Stratégie québécoise de lutte contre l'infection par le VIH et le sida, l'infection par VHC et les infections transmissibles sexuellement. Orientations 2003-2009, Québec Public Health Program 2003-2012*. Document complémentaire (Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 2004), p. 31[Translation].

3. *The Hamburg Declaration. The Agenda for the Future. Fifth International Conference on Adult Education. The Hamburg Declaration on Adult Learning* (Hamburg, UNESCO INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATION), 1997, p.12.

2   WHAT IS SEXUALITY?

Emotions and relationships form the core of sexuality. Sexuality must not be reduced to sexual practices alone. We all need to love and be loved. In fact, from childhood through late adulthood, many different events, experiences and life situations help us better understand what sexuality represents in people's lives and particularly in our own lives.

2.1 Dimensions of sexuality

Sexuality comprises the following dimensions:
- biological
- psychological and emotional
- moral, ethical and spiritual
- social and cultural
- communicative and relational
- legal

The first three (biological; psychological and emotional; moral, ethical and spiritual) most directly concern individual identity, whereas the other three (social and cultural; communicative and relational; legal) concern relations with those around us.

✓ **The biological dimension**
This dimension concerns male and female anatomy and physiology, sexual maturation, reproductive capacity and genetics, as well as physiological responses to sexual stimuli.
✓ **The psychological and emotional dimension**
This dimension concerns psycho-affective aspects that are approached through perceptions, attitudes, emotions and feelings concerning oneself and others (self-esteem, body image, etc.). Sexual identity is at the core of human sexuality: as men and women, we all convey concepts of love, masculinity, femininity, seduction, romance, pleasure, conjugality, commitment, family, etc.
✓ **The moral, ethical and spiritual dimension**
This dimension is shaped by values, principles and beliefs. The moral, ethical and spiritual world can be based on a humanist or pragmatic view of sexuality, and also on religious beliefs.
✓ **The social and cultural dimension**
This dimension mainly stems from the society in which we develop. Attitudes and behaviours influence relationships between persons of the same gender and between persons of different genders. Thus, we receive various messages about sexuality from the family environment (peers, colleagues, spouses) and the overall environment (school, workplace, media, etc.). Sexuality also develops from knowledge, ways of thinking and various concepts that derive from social norms and cultural modes.
✓ **The communicative and relational dimension**
Because we are profoundly relational beings, this dimension concerns a vast number of attitudes and behaviours in which the imagination, desire and eroticism enter into play. Such codes, modes of communication and ways of being and engaging all convey our concept of sexuality.
✓ **The legal dimension**
All societies adopt norms and laws to define ways of living, to ensure there is a frame of reference that allows them to distinguish between what is acceptable and what is not, as well as to ensure the well-being of individuals and groups. As far as sexuality is concerned, the legal dimension may concern, among other things, sexual violence, child and youth protection, or the production of indecent sexual material.

All of these dimensions are interrelated. They form a whole. Integrating sexuality and finding fulfilment in sexuality is a lifelong process. All these dimensions shape our concept of sexuality. However, it is not always easy to distinguish among models of sexuality, i.e. those we are comfortable with, those we think mirror us and those proposed to us by others.

2.2 Social change

Sexuality affects the development of individuals in personal, family, cultural and social terms. Over the course of time, Québec society has experienced various social changes that have influenced the behaviour of individuals. We will discuss the behaviours that are involved in sexual activity.

Since the 1950s, society experienced three significant periods of change.

- **The 1950s and 1960s: modernity**
- **The 1970s and 1980s: questioning**
- **From 1980 to the present: preventive intervention**

The 1950s and 1960s

MODERNITY

During the 1950s and 1960s, Québec entered the modern era. During this era, marked by various social and technological changes, the living conditions of families improved. The spread of modern comforts, the arrival of television, the emergence of an urban culture, and the adoption of the American way of life, and so on, suffice to illustrate such improvements. The period was also marked by the calling into question of traditional values and the striving for greater freedom and autonomy. The influence of the Church, which until then had been of prime importance, began to wane. It was slowly relegated to the background.

The sexual revolution

Modernity also found expression in the sexual revolution. Many events altered relationships between men and women. Such events included, for example, access to birth control methods, the breakdown of traditional institutions, and the emergence of protest movements and State intervention.

Access to contraceptive methods

The arrival of the birth control pill revolutionized love and sex. Easily accessible, this contraceptive method spread rapidly. Little by little, a hedonistic culture emerged, focusing on pleasure, the present, and personal development.

The breakdown of traditional institutions

The breakdown of traditional institutions brought about the diversification of lifestyles. The nuclear family no longer reflected the only model of reality. Celibacy, widowhood, single-parenthood, and extended and blended families became accepted lifestyle options.

The emergence of protest movements

Québec experienced protest movements, including, for example, hippies and free love, the feminist movement and family planning. These influences led to new ways of viewing the place of sexuality in the lives of men and women.

State intervention

In 1969, the State intervened by passing the Omnibus Bill, which recognized the privacy of sexual activity between consenting adults. The bill led to many changes, notably the decriminalization of homosexuality. Soon after, the gay and lesbian movement emerged.

The 1970s and 1980s

CALLING INTO QUESTION

During the 1970s and the 1980s, men and women reflected on their love and sex lives. They showed concern for sexual health, and they condemned forms of violence, abuse and sexual harassment. It was a time of calling many aspects of sexuality into question.

On examining sexuality, people began to consider the darker aspects of this dimension of life, such as conjugal violence, pedophilia and sexual aggression. These aspects have serious consequences for self-esteem, body concept, desire, and the ability to trust and to trust in oneself, etc.

In addition, with the spread of AIDS, people began calling into question permissiveness, promiscuity and sexual practices, using more explicit language about sexual risk behaviours. Sexual encounters became associated with fear and shame; sexuality became associated with death.

Through this calling into question, sexuality became linked to fear. Many people began to fear having sexual relations. Others were offended by public disclosure of sexual risk behaviours, expressed without consideration for the sensibilities of many.

From 1980 to the present

PREVENTIVE INTERVENTION

Since 1980, preventive intervention has become increasingly visible. Such intervention was undertaken to educate the public of the importance of protection (for example, HIV/AIDS/STD prevention programs implemented by the MEQ, the MSSS and community organizations, as well as World HIV/AIDS Day.

Whether for anonymous sexual partners or partners in a love relationship, the importance of protecting oneself from sexually transmitted and blood borne infections and unwanted pregnancies was undeniable. Taking responsibility for sexual behaviours is part of managing risk and desire. Partners in a sexual encounter must demonstrate concern for protecting themselves and each other.

However, not everyone seems to have adopted the use of condoms for the following reasons:

- lack of awareness
- embarrassment
- thoughtlessness
- lack of skill
- fear of what the other thinks
- fear of losing an erection
- diminished sensitivity
- faculties impaired by alcohol, drugs or medication
- etc.

But magical thinking also enables some people to feel they are at lesser risk. Hence the importance of stepping up action with different groups in the public.

Here are some examples: *It only happens to others...*

- Occasionally, Steve has unprotected sex with a work colleague, and he feels safe. He knows the person well and sees her every day. He believes he is protected from the risk of infection.

- Nicole sometimes spends the night with a partner she has met during an evening. Often, she does not ask him to wear a condom because she fears he will refuse. She prefers to think that the people she meets at the places she goes to can be trusted: diseases only happen to other people.

2.3 Sexuality and media messages

The social changes experienced since the 1950s have altered perceptions and behaviours associated with sexual activity. In fact, the expression of sexuality is now considered to be one of the aspects to be integrated into the development of a healthy lifestyle. Although sexuality generally contributes to personal growth and development, it can sometimes be used to humiliate, dominate, impose suffering and even endanger human integrity and dignity. School personnel may encounter such behaviour and experience difficulty responding to it, particularly when it comes to confidential information they may receive, or conversations inadvertently overheard, inappropriate clothing or unacceptable gestures.

In order to better understand certain situations that may arise in the school, we suggest that you explore the influence of certain sexual messages transmitted by highly accessible vehicles of communication: television and the Internet.

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Television

One need only sit in front of a television for one day to observe numerous situations with sexual connotations. Among the many examples, here are a few:

- Advertising uses sexuality and its components to sell a variety of products. One ad presents women having orgasms while washing their hair with such and such a shampoo; another shows a group of friends who are thrilled to have "done it as a threesome" (they bought eyeglasses together).
- Video clips increasingly refer to the codes of pornography (erotic lingerie, group sex, highly sexualized gestures, etc.).
- Documentaries, broadcast at prime-time, depict marginal sexuality (e.g. sadomasochism, lives of porn stars).
- Soap operas depict explicit scenes, where kissing has been replaced by explicit sexual behaviours.
- Reality TV shows show "real" people involved in artificially constructed romantic and sexual intrigues.
- Films of an explicit sexual nature are broadcast at night on certain channels; sexploitation films are available on pay-per-view networks.

The Internet

- E-mail serves the purpose of pursuing romantic relationships.
  The search for affection, the hope of attaining romantic attention and the dynamics of desire are limited, if not reduced to anonymous sexual chatting.
- The Internet also allows the global broadcasting of sexual and pornographic content and images with no direct means of control.

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On the other hand, media also propose broadcasts that condemn conjugal violence, permit better understanding of homosexuality and that inform viewers of the impact of aging on sexual response.

Currently, our western societies are awash with information of all kinds concerning sexuality. Some forms of promoting sexual activity may contribute to the emergence of models focused on **performance, sensationalism or artifice,** to the detriment of intimate love relationships.

Human beings do not live in a vacuum. They are both observers and actors in a society that is continually changing. Their ways of expressing sexuality inevitably change. Obsession with the perfect body, emphasis on being sexy, even hot, and a desire to please at all costs are ways of presenting sexuality that lead to its **trivialization** and that ultimately strip it of its emotional dimension, promoting a narrow view of sexual **seduction**.

If you want to further explore issues of sexuality, you can refer to the Bibliography on pages 61 and 62.

3   PROCESS FOR IMPLEMENTING REFLECTION ON SEXUALITY IN THE ADULT EDUCATION SECTOR

3.1 Implementation process

The process of implementing reflection on sexuality proposed in this guide comprises five distinct steps.

STEPS	TOOLS
1) Potential for action (p. 17) The purpose of this step is to situate the problem and evaluate the scope and the limits of an intervention activity with adult education personnel.	**Initiating reflection (p. 25)** "Initiating reflection" presents information on the reflection process. ➢ Point 5 in this document
2) Portrait of the school community (p. 18) The purpose of this step is to gather information in order to establish an overview of the targeted community.	**Sample questionnaire (p. 29)** The suggested example contains five parts: • reality of the school community • resources • interest • degree of openness • myths and beliefs ➢ Point 6 in this document
3) Choice of themes (p. 19) The purpose of this step is to make an inventory and choose reflection themes.	**Checklist for choice of themes (p. 41)** The proposed checklist contains four parts: • an inventory of potential themes • analysis of chosen themes • recommendations • approval ➢ Point 7 in this document
4) Carrying out activities (p. 20) The purpose of this step is to determine the organizational framework for the activities to be carried out.	**Model work plan (p. 47)** The model contains three parts: • preparation of the intervention • facilitation of the activities • evaluation of the activities ➢ Point 8 in this document
5) For follow-up… (p. 21) The purpose of this step is to determine, if necessary, follow-up to activities carried out as part of the process of the reflection on sexuality in the adult education sector.	**Potential lines of action for follow-up (p. 57)** This text suggests lines of action for the following areas: • administrative • training • community life in the training centre ➢ Point 9 in this document

3.2 Adapting the process to your environment

The following pages present data sheets for carrying out each of the five steps in the process. They contain suggestions for the following:

- objectives
- necessary conditions
- activities
- expected results
- useful documentation
- tools to carry out the steps

The entire process and the suggested tools will have to be adapted to the organizational reality of the school community, taking into account the community's receptiveness to the problems it faces.

3.3 Preliminary considerations

In order to facilitate managing the process of implementing reflection on sexuality, it is important to take the time to gather the support required from within the school community. Here are some preliminary activities to consider:

- become familiar with the entire proposed process
- present the guide for reflection to the administration of the training centre
- appoint a person to be in charge of the process

4   STEPS IN THE PROCESS

4.1 Step 1: Potential for action

Objectives	Necessary conditions
• Document the reflection. • Situate the problem in a reflection process. • Target the personnel groups. • Evaluate the scope and limits of an intervention activity in your school community.	• Secure the support of the administration for pursuing a process of reflection about sexuality with the targeted personnel groups. • Establish links with the school's success plan.

Activities

• Facilitation of a meeting whose purpose is to determine the potential success of an intervention activity (scope and limits). Content example:
  - concerns of the community
  - relevance of taking action
  - goals of the intervention activity
  - targeted personnel groups (administrators, managers, teaching personnel, education professionals, support staff, others)
  - preferred focuses of intervention (education, health, etc.)
  - existing resources in the school community (human, material, financial)
  - other relevant elements
 	
• Set up of a basic committee
  - Example: one person who is either a teacher or an education professional and one person representing the administration

Expected results

• Progress report (content example):
  - a summary of the community's concerns
  - objectives of the intervention activity
  - characteristics of the targeted personnel groups
  - success factors for the reflection process
  - focuses of intervention
  - inventory of resources: human, material and financial
  - identification of potential funding sources
  - list of members of the basic committee
  - other relevant elements
 	
• Links with the school's success plan
• Validation of the progress report by the decision-making bodies concerned (administration, governing board, others)

Useful documentation
• General documentation about sexuality, statistics (Internet), pamphlets from the health sector, etc. • Information about activities previously carried out in the community concerning sexuality (facilitation, courses, workshops, awareness-raising activities, etc.) • Directory of resources (public, parapublic and community agencies) • Other

Suggested tool
Initiating reflection (p. 25) The proposed process suggests six elements on which to base the reflection: using experience as a source of inspiration, exchanging viewpoints, highlighting causes and consequences, integrating relevant data, gaining awareness of the usefulness of the process and preparing the transfer of learning to concrete situations.

4.2 Step 2: Portrait of the school community

Objective	Necessary condition
• Obtain a portrait of the school community.	• Secure the support of the various decision-making bodies concerned (administration, governing board, school personnel, management committee and other personnel groups).

Activities

• Adopt an information-gathering strategy in order to obtain a portrait of the school community.
• Divide tasks among members of the basic committee.
• Prepare a questionnaire:
  - reality of the school community
  - resources
  - interest
  - the degree of openness
  - myths and beliefs
  - any other relevant information
 	
• Distribute the questionnaire along with a covering letter (goal, targeted personnel groups, scope and limits, etc.) and instructions for completing it.
• Remind targeted personnel groups.
• Collect the completed questionnaires.
• Compile information.

Expected result
• Portrait of the school community with a recommendation on implementing reflection in the community

Useful documentation
• Report from Step 1 • Others

Suggested tool
Sample questionnaire (p. 29) The example contains five parts: the reality of the school community, resources, interest, the degree of openness, myths and beliefs.

4.3 Step 3: Choice of themes

Objectives	Necessary conditions
• Make an inventory of the themes. • Determine priorities. • Recommend themes for reflection.	• Take the objectives and the targeted personnel into consideration. • Secure approval from the administration and other decision-making bodies concerned.

Activities
• Facilitation of a focus group to choose themes for reflection Example criteria for choosing themes: - what is relevant based on the objectives, the targeted personnel groups and the information gathered during Steps 1 and 2 of the process - what is feasible in terms of the human, material and financial resources required and available at the appropriate time - what is acceptable, taking into account the values in question, and the interest and degree of openness of the targeted personnel groups • Establishment of priorities (short-, medium- and long-term) • Formulation of recommended themes for reflection • Approval by the administration and the other decision-making bodies involved • Other

Expected result
• Progress report (content example): - inventory of themes - analysis of relevant, feasible and acceptable themes - recommendations - approval - any other element

Useful documentation
• Information gathered during Steps 1 and 2 • Directory of resources (public, parapublic and community agencies) • Other

Suggested tool
Checklist for choice of themes (p. 41) The checklist contains four parts: inventory of potential themes, analysis of chosen themes, recommendations, approval.

4.4 Step 4: Carrying out activities

Objectives	Necessary conditions
- Choose the activities. - Prepare and facilitate activities for the reflection on sexuality in your community. - Mobilize resources in a spirit of partnership. - Energize the community. - Evaluate how the activities were carried out.	- Follow up and supervise the preparation and carrying out of activities. - Progressively animate the school environment by creating interest and stimulating curiosity. - Secure the support of the administration and the other decision-making bodies/departments concerned.

Activities
- Preparation of the intervention: - choice and description of reflection activities based on the chosen themes (debates, public lecture, round tables, quizzes, talk, others)   - inventory of needs   - organization of activities and mobilization of human, material and financial resources)   - search for funding sources, if necessary   - others   - Carrying out activities taking the following into consideration: - the need to create and maintain a climate of trust   - rules for operating as a group   - other   - Evaluation of activities

Expected results
- Production of a work plan   - Activity report (example of content):   - objectives   - targeted personnel groups   - operation   - the materials used (texts, videocassettes, other)   - evaluation (attainment of goals, assessment by participants, organizing committee, etc.)   - recommendation   - any other element

Useful documentation
- Information gathered during Steps 1, 2 and 3   - Inventory of existing materials   - Directory of resources (public, parapublic and community agencies)   - Other

Suggested tool
Model work plan (p. 47) The model contains three parts: preparation of the intervention, facilitating activities, evaluation of activities.

4.5 Step 5: Follow-up…

Objective	Necessary condition
• Determine, if necessary, follow-up to reflection activities carried out as part of the process of reflection on sexuality.	• Secure the support of the administration and the other decision-making bodies concerned.

Activities
• Take into account the expectations and the needs of the personnel groups involved. • Establish priorities. • Present lines of action to the administration. • Others.

Expected result
• Lines of action for following up reflection activities carried out as part of the process of reflection on sexuality

Useful documentation
• Information gathered during the other steps • Sample memorandum of understanding with other organizations of the community • Examples of rules: dress code, others • Others

Suggested tool
Potential lines of action for follow-up (p. 57) The tool proposes lines of action in the following areas: administrative, training, community life in the training centre.

PART TWO

For intervention

5 INITIATING REFLECTION

The following text is associated with Step 1 of the process of implementing reflection on sexuality in the adult education sector: **Potential for action** (p. 17).

It presents information to facilitate reflection among personnel groups in the adult education sector. It contains information about the **reflection process**.

This information should be adapted to the characteristics of the school community concerned.

Note: **To situate the entire process for implementing reflection on sexuality in the adult education sector, refer to the table on page 15.**

The reflection process implies calm, prudent mobilization of an individual's internal resources. It helps the individual avoid making hasty judgments. The process proposed in this document is based on the following elements:

- using experience as a source of inspiration
- exchanging viewpoints
- highlighting causes and consequences
- integrating relevant information
- becoming aware of the usefulness of the process
- preparing the transfer of learning to concrete situations

√ using experience as a source of inspiration

Each personnel member has diverse prior learning experiences, particularly in terms of family, social, cultural, professional and personal aspects. In this context, the individual learns to put his/her prior experience to good use from the outset of his/her process of reflection. The experiential repertory is used here as a trigger and source of inspiration.

√ exchanging viewpoints

Group interactions are ideal opportunities for raising awareness, and structuring and organizing the different types of knowledge (knowledge, expertise and interpersonal skills).

√ highlighting causes and consequences

Taking into account causes and consequences helps to make reflection meaningful and motivating. The individual learns to:
- establish connections between old and new knowledge
- consider interpretative data
- change his/her frame of reference
- create interrelations
- clarify logical connections
- make his/her reflection process concrete and stimulating

√ integrating relevant information

The integration of relevant information allows the individual to recognize the difference between what he/she is able to do now (current situation) and what he/she could be able to do in the future (desired situation).

√ **becoming aware of the usefulness of the process**

Becoming aware is a cognitive and emotional exercise that requires free, voluntary commitment. Hasty judgments should be avoided in order to foster calm, prudent responses. In addition, projecting and sharing perceptions (values, beliefs, prejudices, stereotypes and so on) helps the individual personnel member to become aware of the usefulness of his/her process.

√ **preparing the transfer of learning to concrete situations**

The personnel member will be able to draw his/her conclusions and get involved, based on his/her choices, in the proposed activities for reflection on sexuality in his/her school community.

6   SAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire is associated with Step 2 of the process for implementing reflection on sexuality in the adult education sector: **Portrait of the school community** (p. 18).

Its purpose is to gather information to obtain a portrait of the targeted school community. The sample questionnaire contains five parts:

- **Part 1: Characteristics of the school community**

- **Part 2: Resources of the school community**

- **Part 3: Interest shown by the school community**

- **Part 4: Openness of the school community**

- **Part 5: Myths and beliefs in the school community**

This sample will have to be adapted to the characteristics of the school community concerned.

Note: **To situate the entire process for implementing reflection on sexuality in the adult education sector, refer to the table on page 15.**

GENERAL INFORMATION

Targeted personnel groups

- This questionnaire is intended for education personnel who have the opportunity to observe their school community (administrators, managers, professionals, teachers, support staff and others).
- If the questionnaire is intended for a specific personnel group or for any other group (students, external partners, etc.), it will have to be adapted accordingly.

Objective of the questionnaire

- Obtain a portrait of the school community in order to evaluate the relevance of implementing activities for the reflection on sexuality.

Scope and limits of the questionnaire

- The questionnaire is designed to facilitate the implementation of activities for the reflection on sexuality. It does not aim to determine the following:
  - the training needs of students
  - the professional development needs of teachers and other personnel groups

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INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Introduction

- The questionnaire is divided into five parts.
- You must answer all the questions.
- For each statement, please circle the number or the answer that corresponds to your choice.
- Choose only one answer for each statement. Do not be surprised if some statements are similar.

Confidentiality

- Your answers will remain confidential and anonymous.

Return of completed questionnaire.

- Place the completed questionnaire in the box provided for this purpose at *(specify the location).*

Resource-person

- If you have questions, contact *(specify the person's name, office, location, telephone, e-mail address and office hours.)*

> **Part 1:**
>
> **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY**
> **Reflection on sexuality**

	1. Never	2. Sometimes	3. Often	4. Very often
1 Over the past year, in my training centre, people asked me questions about situations pertaining to the following:				
1.1 Violence or sexual abuse	1	2	3	4
1.2 Prostitution	1	2	3	4
1.3 HIV/AIDS, hepatitis and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs)	1	2	3	4
1.4 Sexual orientation	1	2	3	4
1.5 Unwanted pregnancy	1	2	3	4

Other situations of a sexual nature
(Please specify)

_____

_____

**2   I would like to know more about
ethics and confidentiality in the following areas.**

**2.1 The importance of keeping confidential information
received a secret, even to the possible detriment of
other individuals** ....YES   NO

**2.2 The information to be transmitted when an individual is
infected with a type of hepatitis or with HIV** ....YES   NO

**2.3 The right to school attendance
when an individual is infected with AIDS** ....YES   NO

**2.4 How to address sexuality
while respecting cultures and religions**.................................YES   NO

Other situations
(Please specify)

_____

_____

_____

_____

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Part 2:

RESOURCES OF THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY
Reflection on sexuality

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3 **In the area of sexuality,**
I know <u>at least one accessible resource</u>

    3.1 in my training centre .... YES   NO

    3.2 in my community .... YES   NO

    3.3 in my institutional environment (CLSC, etc.) .... YES   NO

1. Never	2. Sometimes	3. Often	4. Very often

4 **Over the past year, <u>I referred</u> students**
to a resource

    4.1 in my training centre 1   2   3   4

    4.2 in my community 1   2   3   4

    4.3 in my institutional environment (CLSC, etc.) 1   2   3   4

5 **I would like <u>to be better informed</u> about existing resources**
on sexuality

    5.1 in my training centre .... YES   NO

    5.2 in my community .... YES   NO

    5.3 in my institutional environment (CLSC, etc.) .... YES   NO

	1. Not important	2. Not very important	3. Important	4. Very important

6 I feel it is important to have access to a resource person <u>to respond to needs</u> in the area of sexuality

6.1 in my training centre 1   2   3   4

6.2 in my community.. 1   2   3   4

6.3 in my institutional environment (CLSC, etc.) 1   2   3   4

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Part 3:

INTEREST SHOWN BY THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY
Reflection on sexuality

</div>

	1. No interest	2. Little interest	3. Interested	4. Very interested
7 If reflection activities on sexuality were offered to me, <u>I would be interested in the following themes:</u>				
7.1 Indicators of a healthy love life 1	2	3	4
7.2 Condom use 1	2	3	4
7.3 Choosing effective, suitable contraception 1	2	3	4
7.4 Sexual health: management of risk and desire HIV/AIDS, hepatitis and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) 1	2	3	4
7.5 Sexuality of consumption (prostitution, pornography, eroticism, exploitation, *fuck friends*, etc.)..1	2	3	4
7.6 Psychological harassment, sexual assault 1	2	3	4
7.7 Stereotypes and social norms..1	2	3	4
7.8 Prejudices and the expression of sexual needs 1	2	3	4
7.9 Same-sex marriage..1	2	3	4
7.10 Relationships between couples in all their forms..............1	2	3	4
7.11 Abortion 1	2	3	4
7.12 Ethics and the right to confidentiality.................................1	2	3	4

Other themes
(Please specify)

_____

**8 If reflection activities concerning sexuality were offered to me,
I would participate**

    8.1 at lunch time .... YES   NO

    8.2 after 4:00 p.m. .... YES   NO

    8.3 during a pedagogical planning day .... YES   NO

    At other times convenient to me
    (Please specify)

    _____

    _____

    _____

	1. No interest	2. Little interest	3. Interested	4. Very interested
9 I would take part in the following types of activities:				
9.1 Public lecture and discussion	1	2	3	4
9.2 Debate	1	2	3	4
9.3 Workshop	1	2	3	4
9.4 Theme presentation and discussion	1	2	3	4
9.5 Film and discussion	1	2	3	4
9.6 Information kiosk	1	2	3	4

    Other activities
    (Please specify)

    _____

    _____

    _____

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Part 4:

OPENNESS OF THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY
Reflection on sexuality

	1. Very uncomfortable	2. Somewhat uncomfortable	3. Comfortable	4. Entirely comfortable

10 I feel comfortable, <u>if a student</u>

	1	2	3	4
10.1 talks to me openly about sexuality	1	2	3	4
10.2 asks me about my sexual life	1	2	3	4
10.3 confides in me about his/her sexual life	1	2	3	4
10.4 addresses topics that may trigger reactions that affect me emotionally	1	2	3	4
10.5 talks about sexuality in the presence of people of different nationalities, cultures or religions	1	2	3	4
10.6 confronts me with vulgar language	1	2	3	4
10.7 asks me for help concerning his/her sexual health	1	2	3	4

Other situations
(Please specify)

_____

_____

_____

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Part 5:

MYTHS AND BELIEFS IN THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY
Reflection on sexuality

</div>

	1. Never	2. Sometimes	3. Often	4. Very often
11 In my school community, <u>I have heard people say. . .</u>				
11.1 Abortion is a crime	1	2	3	4
11.2 Marriage between homosexuals should be prohibited	1	2	3	4
11.3 The relationship between a couple implies having a single partner	1	2	3	4
11.4 Talking about sexuality leads to sex.	1	2	3	4
11.5 A one-night stand justifies the break-up of a couple	1	2	3	4
11.6 Homosexuality is an illness	1	2	3	4
11.7 Most girls who are sexually assaulted provoked the situation	1	2	3	4
11.8 Contraception is the woman's responsibility	1	2	3	4
11.9 Condoms are not necessary as long as you are careful	1	2	3	4

11 *(Cont.)*

In my school community, <u>I have heard people say…</u>

	1. Never	2. Sometimes	3. Often	4. Very often
11.10 Contraception goes against nature.....................................1		2	3	4
11.11 If a woman asks a man to put on a condom condom, it's because she is infected………………………1		2	3	4
11.12 Working as an escort to pay for your studies is acceptable..1		2	3	4
11.13 Wearing a midriff-revealing camisole at school is acceptable..1		2	3	4
11.14 Demanding sexual relations from your partner to relieve your tension and help you relax is rape 1		2	3	4

Other myths and beliefs conveyed in your community
(Please specify)

_____

_____

_____

7 CHECKLIST FOR CHOICE OF THEMES

The checklist is associated with Step 3 of the process for implementing reflection on sexuality in the adult education sector: **Choice of themes** (p. 19).

It makes it possible to make an inventory of the choice of themes for reflection. The sample contains four parts:

- **Part 1: Inventory of potential themes**
- **Part 2: Analysis of chosen themes**
- **Part 3: Recommendations**
- **Part 4: Approval**

This sample will have to be adapted to the characteristics of the school community concerned.

Note: **To situate the entire process for implementing reflection on sexuality in the adult education sector, refer to the table on page 15.**

GENERAL INFORMATION

The checklist makes it possible to:

- prepare an inventory of themes likely to be suitable to the needs of the community
- analyze the chosen themes based on criteria
- recommend themes for reflection based on priorities
- secure the approval of the administration and the various decision-making bodies concerned

Here are some criteria for making choices that might be used:

- **Relevant:**   Based on the objectives, the targeted personnel groups and the information gathered during Steps 1 and 2 of the process
- **Feasible:**   In terms of the human, material and financial resources required and available at the appropriate time
- **Acceptable:** Taking into account the values in question, the interests and the degree of openness of the personnel groups involved

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE CHECKLIST

Part 1: Inventory of potential themes
- Become familiar with the inventory.
- Complete the inventory.
- Circle the number(s) that correspond(s) to your choice.

Part 2: Analysis of chosen themes
- Compose a data sheet for each chosen theme.
- Refer to the example on page 46.

Part 3: Recommendations
- Establish short-, medium- and long-term priorities.
- Take the objectives and the targeted personnel groups into consideration.
- Justify your recommendations.

Part 4: Approval
- Submit your recommendations to the administration and to any other decision-making bodies concerned.
- Obtain signatures of approval.

Part 1: Inventory of potential themes

1) Integral nature of sexuality The multidimensional aspects of sexuality (biological; psychological and emotional; moral, ethical and spiritual; social and cultural; communicative and relational; legal)	**In other words,** sexuality is not limited to genital functions or sexual relations
2) Body image and self-esteem The effect that stereotyped and idealized images of the body can have on the acceptance of one's own body image and self-esteem	**In other words,** recognizing the importance of being unique within diversity
3) Sexual roles, stereotypes and social norms Roles exclusively assigned to one or the other gender and their negative and positive impacts on individual and group development, the influence of media	**In other words,** what does being a man or a woman mean and involve (requirements, limits, beliefs, benefits)?
4) Emotional and love relationships The issues related to the desire to please, to attraction and to seduction (expectations of romantic consideration, obsession with pleasing the other, hypersexual seduction, etc.) The issues related to emotions (commitment, respect, intimacy, responsibility, etc.)	**In other words,** emotional life is full of wonder and delight, but it also poses challenges
5) Sexual health and the expression of sexuality Sexual activity and practices (management of risk and desire, well-being and pleasure, etc.). Sexually transmitted infections, sexually transmitted and blood-borne infections and AIDS Unwanted pregnancy Contraception and voluntary termination of pregnancy Drugs, alcohol and sexuality	**In other words,** sexual health is not a matter of luck or bad luck, but of personal and collective responsibility
6) Sexual violence The commercialization of sexuality (pornographic films, sex-telephone lines, prostitution, etc.). Conjugal and family violence: • sexual assault • exploitation by media	**In other words,** emotional life is subject to pitfalls and drama
7) Ethics and confidentiality Rights, duties, responsibilities, information to be transmitted, respect for cultures and religions, etc.	**In other words,** what we can do and what we must do
8) Other (…)	**In other words,** (…)

Part 2: Analysis of chosen themes

Theme title: (compose a data sheet for each chosen theme)
Description:
Objectives:
Targeted personnel groups:

CRITERIA (see page 42)
Relevant with respect to the objectives and the targeted personnel groups:

Feasible with respect to the community's resources:		
Human	Material	Financial

Acceptable with respect to the values in question, the interests and the degree of openness of the personnel groups involved.
NOTE: A completed sample of Part 2 is included at the end of the checklist (p. 46).

Part 3: Recommendations

- **Short-term priority**
  Theme: _____

  _____

- **Medium-term priority**
  Theme: _____

  _____

- **Long-term priority**
  Theme: _____

  _____

Justification for recommendations:
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Part 4: Approval

- **From the administration**: _____
  (Signature)
  Comments:
  _____
  _____

- **Other**: _____
  (Signature)
  Comments:
  _____
  _____

Sample of Part 2: Analysis of a chosen theme

Theme title: Sexual health and the expression of sexuality

Description:

Sexual activities and practices seem to be influenced by a *pleasure-comes-first* attitude. How can we decode the language and symbols of these practices? What are the emotional and relational issues?

Objectives:
- Situate the sexual practices in their context.
- Play down situations, beliefs and myths.

Targeted personnel groups:

All personnel groups in the training centre: administrators, managers, professionals, teachers, support staff, etc.

CRITERIA

Relevant to the objectives and to targeted personnel groups:

This theme makes it possible to do the following:

- to provide information about sexual practices
- to identify major impacts on the physical and psychological health of students
- to establish connections with learning disabilities
- to prevent trivialization

Feasible with respect to the community's resources:

Human	Material	Financial
• We will call on professionals and teachers to facilitate meetings in subgroups. • A lecturer will conclude the discussion (sexologist, nurse or other).	• We will use classrooms for meetings with subgroups. • The plenary session and the public lecture will be held in the cafeteria (microphone, video, arrangement of the room). • Posters are available at the MSSS.	• We will need a budget to cover the costs of a lecturer.

Acceptable with respect to the values in question, the interests and the degree of openness of the personnel involved.

The chosen theme is not sensationalist in any way and is therefore acceptable. We are targeting the most accurate and integral portrait of students' sexual practices possible, while taking care not to generalize.

Activities and discussion will be conducted with concern for the respect of everyone. The topics will be addressed in such a way that participants feel comfortable and respected when expressing their opinions. Participation in discussions will be voluntary.

8   MODEL WORK PLAN

The model work plan is associated with Step 4 of the process for implementing reflection on sexuality in the adult education sector: **Carrying out activities** (p. 20).

It makes it possible to determine the organizational framework for the activities that will be carried out. This sample contains three parts:

- **Part 1: Preparation of the intervention activity**
- **Part 2: Facilitation of activities**
- **Part 3: Evaluation of activities**

This model will have to be adapted to the characteristics of the school community concerned.

Note: **To situate the entire process for implementing reflection on sexuality in the adult education sector, refer to the table on page 15.**

GENERAL INFORMATION

The work plan aims to supervise reflection activities while remaining within the limits of the intervention activity defined in Step 1.

The chosen activities may be varied, but they will complement one another (debate, public lecture, round table, quiz, testimony, etc.). They will be prepared in such a way as to involve the maximum number of individuals among the targeted personnel groups.

The type of facilitation must be appropriate to the chosen themes and activities in order to make effective use of the content. A climate of trust must be created and maintained. Participation and taking the floor must be voluntary.

If there are external partners, they will be informed of the entire process so that they can tailor their intervention to fit the expectations of the community.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR DEVELOPING A WORK PLAN

- **Part 1:   Preparation of the intervention activity**

  - Prepare the intervention activity, taking the objectives, the resources to be mobilized and the various logistical aspects into account.
  - Refer to the example on page 54.

- **Part 2:   Facilitation of activities**

  - Facilitate activities by creating a climate of trust that is conducive to discussion and determine the rules for operating as a group.

- **Part 3:   Evaluation of activities**

  - Evaluate how the activities are carried out using an assessment sheet.

Part 1: Preparation of the intervention activity

- **Name of the event (theme):**

  _____

- **Person in charge:**

  _____

  _____

- **Objectives:**

  _____

  _____

- **Targeted personnel groups:**

  _____

  _____

List of activities	Brief description
1)	
2)	
3)	
4)	

Inventory of needs		
Human resources	**Material resources**	**Financial resources**

Organization of activities		
Tasks	**Logistics**	**Timeframe/person in charge**
✓ **Preparation:**		
✓ **Facilitation:**		
✓ **Evaluation:**		

Note: A completed sample of Part 1 is included at the end of this model work plan (p. 54).

Part 2: Facilitation of activities

A) Principles of facilitation for creating and maintaining a climate conducive to discussion

- **Avoid offending people's sensibilities.**

  - Take into consideration the context in which the information is delivered, because it may well be just as upsetting, or even as traumatic as the content.
  - Avoid superficial information or information that is not appropriate for the targeted personnel groups.
  - Transmit the information in a calm, unemotional way so as not to create confusion.
  - Maintain respect to ensure that viewpoints are freely expressed.
  - Reassure, demystify and make sure that individuals are not upset.

- **Use appropriate strategies**

  - Present varied examples.
  - Get involved in the discussion.
  - Accept that you may be surprised or taken aback by some comments.
  - Express your opinions clearly.
  - Humanize embarrassing situations.
  - Distinguish between facts and opinions.
  - Present various viewpoints while not personalizing the content.
  - Refer individuals to experts, if necessary.

B) Rules for operating as a group

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- **Be sensitive to and respectful of the reactions and feelings of others.**

    Listen attentively to what others have to say. Everyone has an opinion about sexuality, regardless of gender, age, sexual orientation, religion, community, etc.

- **Avoid heavy-handed comments or comments that shut down the discussion.**

    Do not ridicule or insult another person who has asked a question or made a comment that may seem ludicrous.

- **Depersonalize remarks or situations.**

    Avoid overly personal remarks and stick to discussion of the pros and cons, by referring, when necessary, to different points of view (social, moral, biological, emotional, legal, interpersonal, religious, etc.).

- **Keep a sense of humour**

    Do not forget that having a sense of humour means using humour with common sense. Mockery humiliates and discredits others.

- **Be discreet and respect confidentiality**

    The comments made during a meeting must not be spread throughout the school. Discretion is a sign of respect.

</td>
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- **Ask questions and make comments without criticism or discrimination**

    All questions are welcome and valid. Many people may be thinking about the same questions and have similar experiences. People should not fear the judgment of others.

    These activities make it possible to discuss issues related to sexuality and to share thoughts. Everyone should feel comfortable enough to ask the questions that concern them.

    A question that is not answered is not necessarily *unacceptable*. The question may simply not be of interest to everyone in attendance or perhaps the facilitator does not feel ready to launch a general discussion of the topic.

- **Speak for yourself and not for others**

    Use the pronoun *I* to express opinions and feelings.

- **Formulate dissatisfaction directly to the facilitator**

    This rule allows people to verbalize their dissatisfaction or their concerns. Criticism must be well received and those formulating it must not be reprimanded.

    Other rules when necessary

    (…)

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Source: Adapted from the text "Ten Ground Rules for Providing Sex Education," in *Sex Education in the Context of Education Reform*, Ministère de l'Éducation, Québec, Gouvernement du Québec, 2003, p. 39-40.

Part 3: Evaluation of activities

Assessment sheet

Date and location of the event: _____

	Unsatisfactory	More or less satisfactory	Satisfactory	Very satisfactory
1. Achievement of objectives				
2. Relevance of the content				
3. Variety of the activities				
4. Quality of the material				
5. Quality of the facilitation				
6. Interaction among participants				
7. Overall assessment				

Comments: _____

_____

_____

_____

Suggestions: _____

_____

_____

_____

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Sample of Part 1: Preparation of the intervention

</div>

- **Name of the event (theme):**   **Reflection day on sexual practices: risk, pleasure and desire**

- **Persons in charge:**   Denis and Ginette

- **Objectives:**
  - Situate the sexual practices in their context.
  - Defuse alarm about situations, beliefs and myths.

- **Targeted personnel groups:**   All personnel groups in the training centre

List of activities	Brief description
1) **Reading of an article**	The reading will serve as an ice-breaker to initiate reflection and discussion in small groups of 15 people. First, people are asked to react to what they have read. Then, the facilitator helps people to discuss the theme.
2) **Presentation of a video report on the evolution of sexual practices, taking into account the current reality**	Participants meet as a large group for the presentation. Plenary: open discussion of the main thoughts, ideas and questions raised.
3) **Public lecture-meeting**	A guest speaker summarizes the theme. He/She presents a general overview of the situation and illustrates, using examples, the consequences of practices on the overall health of individuals. He/She summarizes the main questions raised. Participants then make comments, exchange opinions, ask questions, ask for additional information, etc.

Inventory of needs		
Human resources	**Material resources**	**Financial resources**
• Organizing committee for the implementation of reflection activities (Denis, Ginette, Marie and Claude) • Facilitators for each group (8 individuals) • Speaker (sexologist)	• Newspaper articles or television shows dealing with this subject • Promotional posters, MSSS • Microphones and video equipment	• Budget for the speaker's fee ($350)

Organization of activities		
Tasks	**Logistics**	**Timeframes and persons in charge**
✓ **Preparation**		**October 4-28, 2005**
▪ Promotion of the event	Posters, internal memoranda	Denis
▪ Registration	Data Sheets	Ginette
▪ Reservation of premises	Classrooms, cafeteria	Marie
▪ Choice of facilitators	Teachers	Claude
▪ Finding a speaker	CLSC	Ginette
▪ Process with the administration to secure a budget	Request for funding	Denis
▪ Reservation of equipment (microphones, etc.)	List of the centre's materials	Marie
▪ Photocopies of the article	Original copy	Claude
▪ Preview of the video-report on the evolution of sexual practices	Tape and materials for viewing	Marie and Denis
▪ Preparation of a facilitator's guide	Instructions and rules for operating as a group	Claude
▪ Division of participants into groups		Ginette
▪ Putting up posters to publicize the event	MSSS posters	Marie and Claude
▪ Preparation of the lecture's content	Agenda	Ginette
✓ **Facilitation**		**October 31, 2005**
▪ Preparation of classrooms	Caretaker's services	Marie and Ginette
▪ Meeting of facilitators	Review of instructions and rules	Claude and Denis
▪ Procedure for activities	Facilitation and management of contingencies	Everyone
✓ **Evaluation**		**November 2, 2005**
▪ Summary report of assessment sheets	Assessment sheets	Ginette and Claude
▪ Comments and suggestions	Based on the summary report	All

9   POTENTIAL LINES OF ACTION FOR FOLLOW-UP

The proposed lines of action are associated with Step 5 of the process of implementing reflection on sexuality in the adult education sector: **For follow-up. . .** (p. 21).

These are examples of activities that may be held following a process of reflection on sexuality.

The examples provided are left to the discretion of the school community involved.

Note: **To situate the entire process of implementing reflection on sexuality in the adult education sector, refer to the table on page 15.**

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Potential lines of action for follow-up…

</div>

Several lines of action may be taken to follow up the activities carried out as part of a process of reflection on sexuality in the adult education sector. Here are a few examples:

√ **In administrative terms**
- Memorandum of understanding with reference organizations (CLSC, community organizations, etc.)
- Codes, rules, standards or operational measures in the training centre (dress code, ethics and confidentiality rules, etc.)
- Other

√ **In terms of training**
- Professional development workshop for targeted personnel groups
- Meetings with recognized experts
- Other

√ **In terms of the training centre's community life**
- **Information kiosks**
- Awareness-raising posters
- Other

√ **Other fields of application**

CONCLUSION

This document is intended to be a guide to help the adult education community create places for discussion of students' experiences concerning sexuality (more specifically, situations that may cause varying degrees of discomfort for education personnel).

It proposes a positive view of sexuality in all its dimensions to foster a better understanding of the interrelations involved in forming an integral view of sexuality and to prevent it from being trivialized.

Adult education personnel are free to adapt the discussion process and the recommended tools in order to work on real situations and thereby make well-informed decisions for the well-being of their community.

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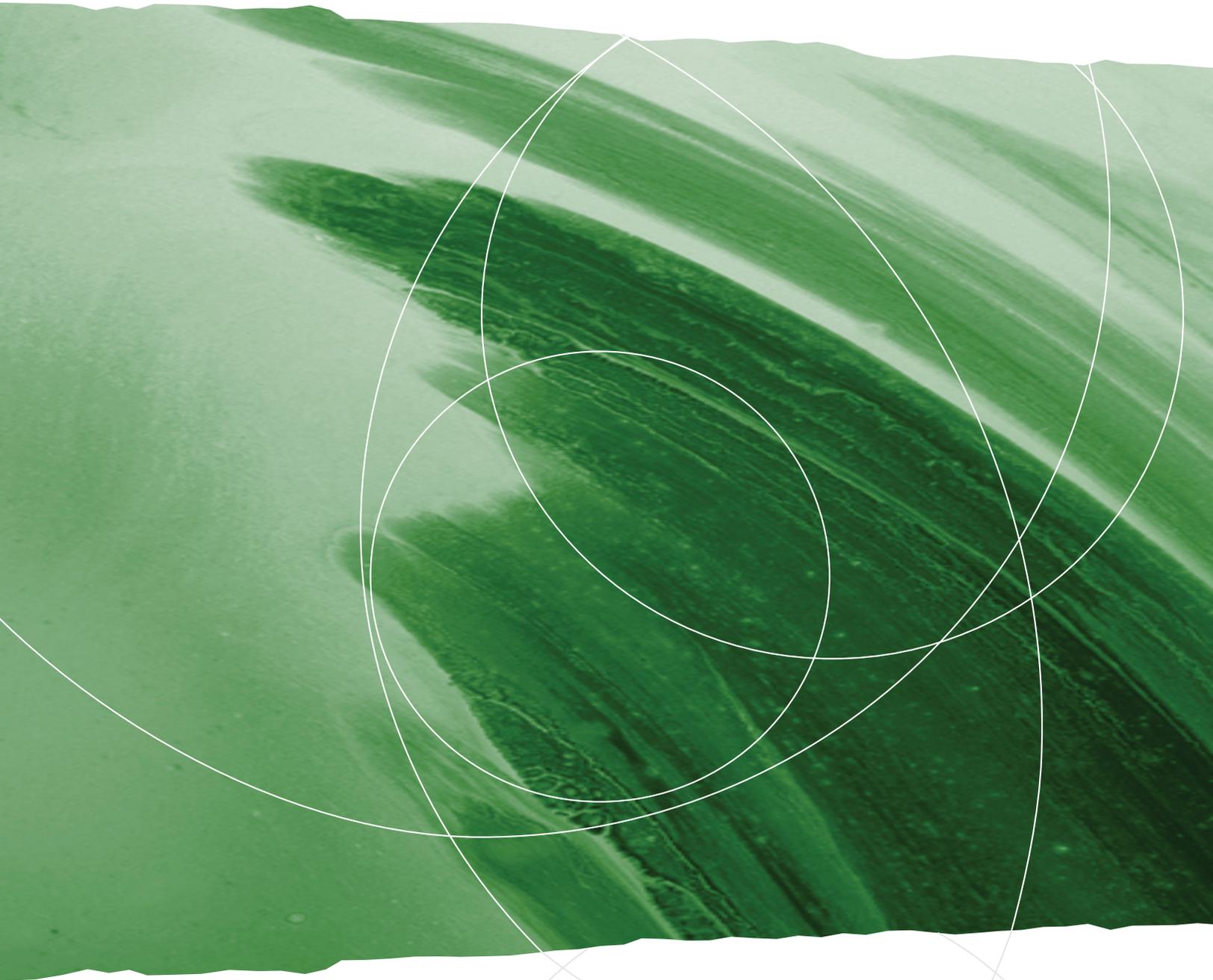
learning
throughout life

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