

BEYOND THE CLASSROOM: PLEASURE IN SEX EDUCATION

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Pleasure in intimate relationships is a ubiquitous pursuit and is a defining characteristic of the human experience. In other words it motivates us all because we like it and for many it is key to our sense of connection and quality of life. Despite the fundamental truth of these statements, pleasure remains difficult to define; it means many things to many people. It is also not a well-researched topic and consequently rarely reflected as an important aspect of sex and sexuality education or clinical services. The presence of pleasure and how it can be enhanced is rarely part of mainstream conversation; however, the absence of pleasure is pathologised.

In addition, our understanding of pleasure in intimate relationships is often complicated by heteronormative social expectations and gender differences.

To redress this shortfall in health and education work, it is important to support our health and education professionals to make pleasure a part of the conversation. To achieve this we need an authorising, safe and inclusive environment to further research, develop policy and implement change.