

Possibilities

in Education and Training

Winter 2021



She Loves “Having her House”

By Mike Hoenig, *Project Director, Conner Training Connection*

“I appreciate life in any moment I’ve got it!
The stroke woke me up to realize that.”

So says Waterloo resident Mary Sue Adams, who moved from Harmony House, a residential facility serving individuals with traumatic brain injuries to her own home on July 31. A home which, I might add, she designed with the help of her sister—a realtor in Texas.

“I have a beautiful home,” Mary Sue proudly tells me. “It has the ultimate layout for someone in a wheelchair. It should, since I had all those years to lie in bed planning out my dream house!”

Mary Sue shared a great example of universal design. “People take doing laundry for granted. But when you have the use of only one arm and one leg like I do, you have to figure out how to build the closet so I can hang up all the clothes. Otherwise, I’m going down in a heap!”

Mary Sue is enjoying the “simple pleasures” of home. “I love to cook for myself, and even enjoy doing the dishes. After so many years of not being able to cook, I now have a beautiful kitchen to cook in! Just the other day, I made a big pot of beef stew. I bought myself a fire pit so I can go outside and relax when I want to. My cat bugs me sometimes, but I love him! Best of all, my daughter and four-year-old grandson come to visit!”



Mary Sue Adams in front of the home she helped design.

She Loves Having Her House



Personal independence is clearly important to Mary Sue's well-being. "It's all about choices," she explains. "I pick what I want to eat and drink and what clothes I wear. I get to change my mind. I love to go to the store and arrange my own transportation. I even found two workers who are going to help me out with things in my home."

Mary Sue is very grateful for the people and programs which have helped her reach her goal of independent living. She credits staff from Iowa's Money Follows the Person (MFP) program, an initiative which provides one year of financial support and intense case management services to eligible recipients moving from congregate to community-based facilities, with staying patient and helping her overcome hurdles along the way. Both she and MFP Transition Specialist Lori LaCarte have high praise for Home Care Assistance, the program which is providing and will continue to provide help with tasks around the house. They bestowed similar praise on Nino, the gentleman who completed all house renovations and continues to do leaf and snow



"Don't give up on yourself and your dream. Remember the past with joy in your heart and take that joy into your future."

removal, mowing, and electrical maintenance. "Nino built a very caring relationship with Mary Sue and her family—above and beyond the call," says LaCarte.

Just like everyone else, COVID has taken its toll on Mary Sue. She misses going to church and

singing. Ever the problem-solver, she's come up with a way to get her "singing fix." "Sometimes I go outside and sing to the four winds," she says. "I just let 'er rip!"

Mary Sue has some profound advice for those considering a move to the community. "Don't give up on yourself and your dream. Remember the past with joy in your heart and take that joy into your future."

As we wrapped up our time together, Mary Sue had one more moving thing to share. "A day living (on the) outside, living in this house, no matter how crazy things get, is better than living in a facility where I missed so much of my independence."

Puberty, Dating & Sex

Mitch DeFauw, *Disability Resource Librarian*

Questions about puberty, dating, and sex, are a natural part of growing up. However, discussing these matters can be especially challenging for parents when their child also has a disability. This month, the Disability Resource Library would like to share some resources on these topics to help parents guide their children through these important topics. All items are now available for check out.

If you have any questions, please contact Mitch DeFauw at mitchell-defauw@uiowa.edu. To find out more about the DRL, you can visit: <http://uichildrens.org/cdd/drl>, or search the online catalog at <http://uichildrens.org/drl-catalog>.

Taking Care of Myself: A Hygiene, Puberty and Personal Curriculum for Young People with Autism

Illustrated Edition by Mary Wrobel

Puberty can be especially tough when young people have autism or other special needs. Through simple stories, author Mary Wrobel teaches caregivers exactly what to say (and not say) and shows how you can create helpful stories of your own. Mary addresses hygiene, modesty, body growth and development, menstruation, touching, personal safety, and more. Young students can benefit from self-care skills such as using the toilet, brushing teeth, and washing hands. Parents and teachers should begin teaching these necessary skills as early as possible, even from ages three to five. The ultimate goal is to maximize the child's potential for independence and lifelong social success.

What's Happening to Ellie?: A book about puberty for girls and young women with autism and related conditions

by Kate E. Reynolds

Ellie notices that her body is changing. Hair is growing in new places and there are other changes happening too. Ellie's mum helps her understand that she has started growing into a woman.

Following Ellie as she begins to notice changes to her body, this simple resource helps parents and caregivers teach girls with autism and related conditions about puberty. It covers all the changes that they will experience, both emotional, such as new feelings, and physical, such as periods. This fully illustrated positive and entertaining book provides the perfect chance to talk about puberty with girls and young women with autism or related conditions.

What's Happening to Tom?: A book about puberty for boys and young men with autism and related conditions

Kate E. Reynolds & Jonathon Powell

Tom notices that his body is changing. Tom's voice is different and hair is growing in new places. There are other changes happening too. Tom learns that he has started growing into a man.

Following Tom as he begins to notice changes to his body, this

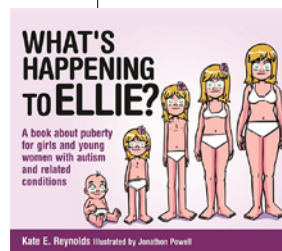
simple resource helps parents and caregivers teach boys with autism or other special needs about puberty. It covers all the changes that they will experience, both emotional, such as new feelings, and physical, such as wet dreams.

This fully illustrated positive and entertaining book provides the perfect chance to talk about puberty with boys and young men with autism or special needs.

Boundaries: A Guide for Teens

by Val J Peter and Tom Dowd

This book invites teens to examine their lives and relationships. It begins by helping you define what physical, emotional, and sexual boundaries are. Stories of other teens illustrate how personal space and feelings can be either respected or violated in relationships with others.



The journal format in this book encourages you to reflect on and record feelings about your own relationships. Do people respect your boundaries? Has anyone ever made you feel uncomfortable in some way? Have you ever felt manipulated, intimidated, or mistreated by someone you regarded as a friend? How can you get a friendship that has gone wrong back on track?

Use *Boundaries: A Guide for Teens* to help assess your relationships with family, friends, classmates, and new people you meet. Learn how to build close and satisfying friendships while guarding against being used or abused by others. Learn what it takes for you to be a good friend in return.

Decoding Dating: A Guide to the Unwritten Social Rules of Dating for Men With Asperger Syndrome (Autism Spectrum Disorder)

by John Miller

This is the ultimate guide to cracking the social code of dating! The rules of dating are difficult for many men, but for men on the Autism Spectrum, who often have difficulty understanding social communication, they can be even more challenging. This book breaks down the steps of dating, giving advice on the best places to meet women - whether on or offline, getting ready for the big date, where to go and what to talk about, and how to tell if a second date is in the cards. Written for those with little or no prior experience on the dating scene, the book discusses how to know if you are ready for

a relationship, what qualities to look for in a potential girlfriend, and if dating goes well how to make a relationship work.

Making Sense of Sex: A Fortright Guide to Puberty, Sex and Relationships for People with Asperger's Syndrome

by Sarah Attwood

Puberty is a time of huge change in the physical body, in emotional experience and in social relationships. Having an understanding of these developments and learning how to deal with them is essential, and for people with Asperger's syndrome it can be a challenge to come to grips with the social and emotional aspects of puberty, sex and relationships.

This book is ideal for those who need clear, detailed explanations and direct answers to the many questions raised by puberty and sexual maturity. Sarah Attwood describes developments in both the male and female body, and explains how to maintain hygiene and personal care, and to promote general good health. She examines emotional changes, including moods and sexual feelings, and provides thorough information on sex, sexual health and reproduction. She looks at the nature of friendship, how it changes from childhood to adulthood and its importance as a basis for sexual encounter. She also offers coping strategies



for different social experiences, from bullying to dating, and includes essential tips on the politics of mature behaviour, such as knowing the difference between public and personal topics of conversation.

Boyfriends & Girlfriends: A Guide to Dating for People with Disabilities

by Terri Couwenhoven

Everyone knows that dipping your toe in the dating pond can be a little intimidating without first seeking some expert advice.

And that's exactly what Terri Couwenhoven delivers in her new book

written for teens and adults with intellectual or developmental disabilities. *Boyfriends & Girlfriends* explains the do's and don'ts of dating and confirms their normal, age-appropriate desire for companionship and romance.

Growing Up! For Girls (DVD)

Growing Up! For Girls promotes self-confidence as girls face the challenges of change and growth. Clear, accurate information about the female reproductive system, the emotional and physical changes of puberty, and the importance of good health and hygiene is geared toward encouraging a positive body image and sense of personal worth. This upbeat program takes a realistic look at the responsibilities of adulthood and promotes dialogue with trusted adults along the sometimes confusing path to maturity.

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Time does not
change us.
It just unfolds us.
– Max Frisch

How to get in touch with *Possibilities*:

EMAIL: michael-hoenig@uiowa.edu

FAX: 319-384-6241 **PHONE:** 319-353-6448

MAIL:

University of Iowa Health Care
Center for Disabilities and Development
100 Hawkins Dr., Rm. S277
Iowa City IA 52242-1011

Disability Resource Library

PHONE: 800-272-7713

EMAIL: disability-library@uiowa.edu

WEBSITE: uichildrens.org/cdd/drl/

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