



## PESTALOZZI TRAINING RESOURCES

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Sex – sexuality education  
Personal development for  
the prevention of discrimination  
and violence (SEXED)  
**How do culture and our  
belief system influence sex?**  
by

Author: Györgyi Séllei - Hungary

Editor: Carmen Becker

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This training unit has been developed in the trainer training course : « Sex and sexuality education - Personal development for the prevention of discrimination and violence » organised by the [Pestalozzi Programme](#) of the [Council of Europe](#) in cooperation with the Programme “[Building a Europe for and with children](#)”.

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## How do culture and our belief system influence sex?

### Brief description

This training unit consists of four sessions aimed at a group of between 20 and 25 teachers and youth workers. In Activity 1 they will discuss some words related to sex. In Activity 2 they will create a Time Line of Sex History in Europe using pictures. In Activity 3 they will discuss some views and beliefs prescribing “adequate” sexual behaviour that existed in Europe. Activity 4 aims at unearthing beliefs and messages inherited from the family. Through the exercises participants will do a lot of peer teaching and discussion regarding beliefs around sexual life.

### Expected outcomes

#### Participants

- ✓ start to achieve a fairly common understanding of some of the words that are used regarding sex
- ✓ get a glimpse into the history of sex history in Europe
- ✓ understand that beliefs around sexuality are not rigid but have changed a great deal over time
- ✓ can use and share their knowledge regarding the history of sexuality in Europe through a great deal of peer teaching
- ✓ practice a variety of ways of expressing opinions, arguing and discussing some views regarding sex life
- ✓ will understand the ways in which meanings of concepts are influenced by contexts and power relations (K\_EPIST\_2)
- ✓ will enhance their readiness to examine their behavior, language use and body language (A\_SELF\_1)
- ✓ will develop their capacity to elicit and respond to others’ beliefs, values, feelings and behaviors (S\_DIV\_2)

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## Activities

	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Methods used</b>
Activity 1 Warm-up: Words	<b>60 minutes</b>	Group work and peer teaching Cooperative learning
Activity 2 Time Line	<b>60 minutes</b>	Group work and peer teaching Cooperative learning Creating time line “Exhibition” method
Activity 3 Beliefs	<b>30 minutes</b>	Questionnaire and discussion
Activity 4 Whispers from the past	<b>60 minutes</b>	NLP technique - Changing Personal History -
Activity 5 Debriefing	<b>30 minutes</b>	Questionnaire

## Background and context

This training unit was developed by Györgyi Séllei and was originally piloted with secondary school pupils in Hungary in spring of 2014.

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## Activity 1: Warm-up: Words

Duration: 60 min

### Expected outcome

- ✓ to set the atmosphere and introduce the subject
- ✓ get a rough estimate for the teacher of what vocabulary participants know/use regarding sex
- ✓ to get participants to reveal their knowledge about sex and make them use sex-related words and explanations in a de-personalized context
- ✓ to check the meaning of some frequently used sex-related expressions
- ✓ to invite participants to share their knowledge of words regarding sexuality

### Methods / techniques used

- ✓ Group work and peer teaching
- ✓ Cooperative learning

### Resources

- ✓ give plenty of empty word cards for participants to work
- ✓ As many different colored fiber pens as there are groups, in number one for each participant (e.g. if you work with groups of 4, you'll need 4 greens, 4 reds, 4 blue etc.)
- ✓ whiteboard or an A5 size sheet to record the scores

### Practical arrangements

- ✓ A large open space for participants to work in a circle.

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## Procedure

### Step 1 (10 min)

- ✓ Explain that participants are going to work in groups of 3 or 4. Let them form their groups or help them divide the class into groups of 3-4. A method for that is: Tell people that they are going to form groups according to numbers that you will shout soon. Ask them to mingle in the open space of the room. Suddenly shout a number, for example 3. When people hear it, they quickly have to form a group consisting of as many people as the number they have just heard. When they are ready (not everyone will find a pair, but it's no problem), tell them to say good-bye and start walking again. Shout another number, say 7. People form groups of 7 now. Repeat it with 2 other numbers, and the last number should be the number you would like people to work in. So if you would like 4 people in a group, it will have to be the last number.

### Step 2 (5 min)

- ✓ Ask the participants to agree on a name for their group. On the board write the names of the groups. When the groups are done, give each group a set of cards and a certain colour of thick fibre pen. Each group should have its own colour; give one fibre pen of the same colour for each member.

### Step 3 (5 min)

- ✓ Tell them the following: "Think of 3 words that are related to sex, and write them each on separate cards. They must be clearly readable." Then invite them to show the word cards. Check if each group carried out the instruction correctly: i.e.: the words are each on a separate card and are clearly written. If not, correct or clarify what you want.

### Step 4 (5 min)

- ✓ When it is clear, tell them the following: "This is going to be a competition. As a group, you will have to collect as many sex-related words as you can. You will have 2 minutes for it. Write each word on a separate card. Remember that the words must be clearly readable." Start at the count of three. One ... two ... three, go!
- ✓ After 2 minutes stop the work and ask each group to count their word cards. Record the score next to each group's name on the board.

#### Step 5 (5 min)

- ✓ Next task: Making an “association cloud” by combining all the words. The instructions are as follows: “The game continues: You are going to make “clouds” out of the word cards. The groups will take turns. The first group reads out loud their first word card and places it on the floor. The next group thinks through their words, chooses a word card that in any way (by logic or by association) can be linked to the first word. They read out the chosen card loudly and place it next to the first one. The groups continue in turns placing the words on the floor so as to form “clouds”. The groups are allowed to add word cards to the existing clouds or start a new cloud. The aim of the game is to get rid of all the words. If more groups have the same word, the groups can get rid of their duplicate by placing it on the one that is on the floor or by starting a new cloud. The aim is to get rid of all the words in 3 minutes. After 3 minutes stop the game and let them calculate the number of words that they managed to put on the floor. The score is recorded on the board.

#### Step 6 (10 min)

- ✓ Challenge – Now the groups and the facilitator can challenge the words spread out on the floor. The groups take turns and can ask for clarification on the most difficult or not quite clear words in the following way: The first group chooses one word and reads it loud. The “owner” of the word – who can quickly be identified by the colour of the word – gives an explanation. The correct explanation is worth 3 points, and the other groups can also add any other, relevant ideas, further explanation, an interesting fact, etc. that is rewarded, I usually reward it by one more extra point. Each group records their own scores during the challenge, and the scores are finally recorded on the board. In this part the facilitator can also challenge any word that they consider important or dubious.
- ✓ By the end of the challenge calculate all points collected by the groups and announce the winner. Have everyone applaud all the groups one by one!!!

#### Step 7 - Debriefing (10 min)

- How did you feel when you were asked to explain these words publicly?
- Where does the feeling of shame come from?
- What is the purpose of shame?

#### Tips for trainers

- ✓ You may omit the competition style and arrange the Activity without it – but it is more fun with it.
- ✓ When the clouds are on the floor, take close attention that words that you consider dubious, will all be clarified.
- ✓ Be generous with granting points in the Challenge part – the aim is to maintain a high level of participation and excitement as well as the sense of achievement.

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## Activity 2: Time line

Duration: 60 min

### Expected outcome

- ✓ to bring together and summarize the overall knowledge of the group about the history of sex in Europe
- ✓ to show that sexuality-related assumptions are social constructs that change over time
- ✓ to invite participants to utilize their general knowledge and relate it to the issue of sexuality
- ✓ to make participants reflect on general beliefs about sex, where they come from and what their function is
- ✓ will understand the ways in which meanings of concepts are influenced by contexts and power relations (K\_EPIST\_2)

### Methods/ techniques used

- ✓ Group work and peer teaching
- ✓ Cooperative learning
- ✓ Creating time line
- ✓ “Exhibition” method

### Resources

- ✓ 10 pictures linked to sexuality, possibly referring to different times in history, e.g. paintings, sculptures, photographs, portraits etc.

### Practical arrangements

- ✓ A clean and clear space of wall or floor to arrange the pictures.
- ✓ Print out the set of pictures in A4 size at least so that they are visible to everyone during the Activity
- ✓ Blue tack to stick the pictures on the wall
- ✓ Do not work with too many images, (I usually work with 10) because it might become too long or difficult to arrange the pictures. As many pictures so that 2-3 people could work with one picture.

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## Procedure

### Step 1 (10 min)

- ✓ Spread the pictures on the floor and let people take their time to look at all of them.
- ✓ After one minute, ask people to let themselves feel drawn toward one picture. So that groups of 2-3 will gather around a picture.
  
- ✓ Explain that they are going to create a Time Line of Sex History. Allow a few minutes for the groups to discuss the following points:
  - What time/era do you think your picture relates to?
  - What did people believe about men's and women's appropriate sexual behavior at that time?

### Step 2 (10 min)

- ✓ Have them discuss and prepare a mini-lecture on the given picture.

### Step 3 (3 min/group)

- ✓ Final discussion: in plenary set up the Time Line in the following way: A first group sticks their picture on the wall and gives their "mini lecture" to the others, explaining their findings. When they finished, the other people (the listeners") can also add any additional knowledge that they know of regarding the given picture. The next group to present places their picture before or after the first picture and repeats the lecturing process. Continue until all pictures are displayed on the wall.

### Step 4 - Debriefing (10 min)

- How can we say that beliefs and assumptions around sexuality change over time?
- If we follow the beliefs back to their origin, where do they come from? (Are they God-given/a natural law?)
- What social function do the beliefs serve?

## Tips for trainers

- ✓ Be flexible about the order of the pictures and let participants give reasons why they think that is the appropriate place for the given picture.
- ✓ Encourage the others to add any extra information to any given picture, i.e.: any given era.
- ✓ You can also give any additional information that you think relevant to any picture/era

## Activity 3: Beliefs

Duration: 60 min

<p>Expected outcome</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ To critically review contemporary beliefs about sex</li><li>✓ To explore a belief's impact on our behavior</li><li>✓ To bring out opinions and views regarding sexual matters</li><li>✓ To enhance participants readiness to examine their behavior, language use and body language (A_SELF_1)</li></ul>
<p>Methods/ techniques used</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Questionnaire and discussion</li></ul>
<p>Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Papers, pens</li></ul>
<p>Practical arrangements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Prepare a big poster with a set of 7-8 beliefs that persisted in some time – or maybe they still exist? See ideas for Appendix_2_Beliefs</li></ul>
<p>Procedure</p> <p>Step 1 (5 min)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Ask participants to formulate the most remarkable of the beliefs mentioned in the previous Activity into sentences.</li></ul> <p>Step 2 (5 min)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Tell the class that in groups of 3-4 they will see a collection of beliefs - similar to what they have just said beliefs that persisted throughout the history in Europe. Ask them to reflect on whether these beliefs are still valid or whether they have changed over time. Which is the most revolting for them? Which is still in use?</li></ul> <p>Step 3 (10 min)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ In their groups let them collect their own “contemporary beliefs” that they record on their sheets.</li></ul> <p>Step 4 - Debriefing (10 min)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Ask the groups to freely choose three of the beliefs and come up with a sound that would express each of the beliefs. Have them produce the sounds.</li><li>○ What makes a society change their beliefs?</li><li>○ What makes you change a belief?</li></ul>
<p>Tips for trainers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Prepare the poster before the lesson</li></ul>

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## Activity 4: Whispers from the past

Duration: 60 min

### Expected outcome

- ✓ To bring some of the hidden messages to the conscious level
- ✓ To observe the effect of some beliefs on our body
- ✓ To try and test new messages that serve us better than the old ones
- ✓ To develop their capacity to elicit and respond to others' beliefs, values, feelings and behaviors (S\_DIV\_2)

### Methods/ techniques used

- ✓ NLP technique - Changing Personal History – adapted

### Resources

- ✓ Pens and papers

### Practical arrangements:

- ✓ Arrange group in pairs. Each pair needs 2 sheets A4 - paper and a pen or pencil

### Procedure

#### Step 1 (10 min)

- ✓ Tell the class that they will review limiting beliefs that they “inherited” from their family and try to exchange them with more resourceful beliefs.
- ✓ Ask them to form A/B pairs; Have the pairs face each other with two pieces of paper and a pencil. First “A” is a secretary and will note down what “B” is recalling.
- ✓ Ask “B” to think of some of the messages that they received from their mother or father and they think that influence their sex life. It is important that they think of messages that they received from the same sex – so men remember the fathers’ and women remember their mothers’ messages. The sentences could be anything that bears relevance, for example: “It is difficult to be a woman” or “Oral sex is disgusting” or “You are fat”. Some people might say that they never talked about sex in the family – no problem, because the hidden message will be: “We do not talk about sex”. Give “B” 2 minutes to think and dictate any message that they can remember and dictate while “A” notes everything down.

- ✓ After “A” has recorded the messages, “B” chooses 2 or 3 messages to work with. Then “B” instructs “A” how to read out these particular messages. The sentences will be whispered or said at a low voice but uttered in the tone that “B” hinted at – for example angrily, ironically or as-a-matter-of-factly – as they were originally uttered by their mother or father.
- ✓ When “A” “learnt” how to say the utterance, “B” turns his back to “A” and “A” reads the sentences to “B”’s ear from behind, from “B”’s back. “A” keeps repeating the sentences for at least a minute. While “B” keeps observing the effect the sentences have on their own body. IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO OBSERVE THE REACTIONS OF THE BODY DURING THIS ACTIVITY
- ✓ After one minute “B” turns around to share their observations “A” can share their experience too.

#### Step 2 (10 min)

- ✓ Tell participants that since now we are adults, we can change the messages so that they serve us better. This time “B” thinks of new messages that he thinks would have been more appropriate to receive, sentences that will be more helpful from now on. “B” thinks and dictates, “A” takes notes, then “learns” how the new sentences should be uttered. When they are done, “B” turns around again and “A” keeps repeating the new sentences for one minute. “B” observes bodily reactions to the new sentences.
- ✓ When they are done, both share their experience.
- ✓ “A” and “B” change roles and repeat the procedure from the beginning in their new roles. When the pairs are done, discuss the activity in plenary – giving time to express any reaction.

#### Step 3 – Shaking off the negativity (5 min)

- Invite participants to express with bodily movement what their body looked like or felt like (facial expression, body movement, walking style etc.) on hearing the “old messages”
- Invite participants to express with bodily movement what their body looked like or felt like (facial expression, body movement etc.) on hearing the “new messages”
- Ask participants to stand in a circle and ask them to step in place and shake – first slowly, then bring it to “craziness” – until people start laughing. Give a good example yourself!!

#### Step 4 - Debriefing (10 min)

- Why is it not very helpful to remain in a state of blaming parents for what they did in the past?
- What would be more useful behaviour?
- Who is responsible for your feelings?

#### Tips for trainers

- ✓ This exercise can bring out extreme emotional reactions – some people might even cry
- ✓ It is very important to close the exercise by stating that it is no use blaming parents for what they told us - they did the best they could – but that was the maximum. We cannot change the past but we can start today and change the future.

## Activity 5: Evaluation

Duration: 60 min

### Expected outcome

- ✓ To assess the aforementioned activities
- ✓ To make participants reflect about their own views about sexuality
- ✓ To make participants become aware about their own needs
- ✓ To make participants become aware about the needs of their pupils
- ✓ To make participants reflect how important it is what we say to children!
- ✓ To make participants reflect how important it is how we behave towards children

### Methods / techniques used

- ✓ Discussion
- ✓ Questionnaire
- ✓ Cascading

### Resources

- ✓ Assessment questionnaire (Appendix\_2\_final)

### Practical arrangements

- ✓ Draw a huge tree with as many big branches as there were activities today. Do not draw any leaves to the branches. Write the titles of the activities on the branches, one on each.
- ✓ Bring a lot of colored small size post-its and pens

### Procedure

#### Step 1 (15 min)

- ✓ Tell participants that they are going to assess the activities that they had done before. They will work first individually, then in pairs they will fill in the questionnaire, finally pairs will come together for cascading.
- ✓ Ask the whole group to think about their experiences and impressions about the activities. Ask people to write their impressions on the post-its. The posters will be the “fruits” on the “branches”. Let everyone stick their post-its on the appropriate branches. Allow enough time for people to write and place their remarks. Alternatively invite them to answer the following questions: “How did you feel?” and “What did you learn from the exercise?” or “What do you take from the exercises?”

- ✓ Cascading:
  - People fill in the questionnaire individually
  - then 2 people share their opinion in pairs
  - then 2 pairs come together and share
  - finally everyone comes together for the plenary.

Step 2 - Closing (2 min)

- ✓ Everyone stand in a circle and hold their hand towards the middle. The teacher asks them to think (not speak out loud yet!) of ONE word that best expresses their mood or opinion after today's work. When they are ready, on the count of three everyone shouts their word in the middle and throws their hand in the air

Tips for trainers

- ✓ None

## Appendices

### Appendix 1

#### Beliefs, beliefs ...

1	"Hysteria is caused by the wandering of the womb in the female body."		
2	"Suffragettes ought to be whipped!" Queen Victoria		
3	"Thou shalt not commit adultery!"		
4	"Not in front of the children!"		
5	"Masturbation causes several diseases, such as the weakening of the organs and nervous disorders."		
6	"A woman should go into marriage untouched."		
7	"The sexual act is only allowed for conceiving children."		
8	"Homosexuality is an illness that can be cured."		
9			
10			
11			
12			
13			

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## Appendix 2

### Questionnaire

**Answer the following questions then discuss it with your peers:**

1. What are the most important things you learnt from these activities?
  2. What would be the challenges of using this unit in your class?
  3. What would your pupils gain from such an exercise?
  4. How might you follow up these issues in your teaching?
  5. How might you follow up these issues in a whole school approach?
  6. What other issues/questions were raised that you would like to discuss?
- ...