

## **Dinner, dating and relationships - Being safe and being sexual**

Emma Goodall

Sex education does not cover the myriad of hidden curriculum aspects to dating and sexual relationships, whilst the movies appear to suggest that dinner is a fair exchange for sex in many relationships. For autistics who want sex, as there are many who are happily asexual, being safe whilst being sexual is a minefield (not literally). How can we educate ourselves and/or our young adults in ways that facilitate safe and enjoyable sexual relationships? What is the difference between an exploitative encounter and a fun one night stand? Who benefits from a 'friends with benefits' relationship? Does this change if one of the people is married to someone (else)?

Sex education can be formally delivered at school, informally done by parents and friends through discussions, or discovered online or in books. The difficulty is when young adults don't have access to accurate or enough information it makes them more vulnerable to exploitation, abuse, sexually transmitted diseases and figurative heartbreak. This presentation shares some common misunderstandings around dating and relationships to avoid and highlights areas that need to be made more explicit for autistics to be empowered to make safe sexual relationship choices that bring them positive bene