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## Sexuality and intimacy support for individuals with IDD: A study of Ohio county services

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## Background

### Background:

- Sex is an ADL that contributes to overall health and life satisfaction
- The Occupational Therapy Practice Framework 4th edition (OTPF-4) defines sex as an occupation that brings meaning and purpose to life (AOTA, 2020, p. 30).
- Individuals with IDD face barriers to participation due to social stigma and limited access to sex education
- Quality of sex education and inclusion of individuals with IDD is variable between school districts in Ohio.
- Service providers can adjust strategies to deliver comprehensive sexual health information to accommodate for varying levels of cognitive and linguistic abilities
- Existing approaches and resources are available, but there are gaps in research regarding program implementation and local barriers for service providers and individuals with IDD
- An assessment of service availability and accessibility across Ohio is needed to support existing programs, analyze gaps in accessibility, and identify opportunities for future resource implementation. Service providers, advocates, and stakeholders of individuals with IDD would benefit from this assessment



### OT's Role:

- OT is uniquely suited to address and advocate for accessibility of sexual health information and services using occupation-focused models of practice
- OTs can educate parents and caregivers to support the sexual identity and development of individuals with IDD within their support system
- OTs can support skill development and collaboration with support systems to ensure appropriate expression of sexuality
- Skills include safe sexual decision making, communication and problem solving within relationships, and body awareness of self and others.

Sex is an ADL!



### Project development:

- **Purpose:** To explore the role of Ohio county boards of developmental disabilities in addressing sex and relationships.
- **Methodology:** Mixed-methods research study including a survey and in-depth qualitative interviews with participating agencies.
- **Aims:** Identify services provided, perceived role of the boards in addressing sexuality and intimacy, and barriers and supports for implementing such services.
- **Professional development:** Capstone experience included opportunities for professional development within the university setting, allowing insights into OT education, advocacy, and research.
- **Contribution:** Ultimately, the project aims to contribute to the development of effective interventions and services to support the sexual health and relationships of individuals with IDD.

## Student Bio and Portfolio

My name is Emmy Baldwin! I am an OTD capstone student with research interests in neurodiversity, sensory processing, and sex education. Inspired by a passion for disability rights and personal experiences with ASD, my therapeutic approach prioritizes strengths, body autonomy, and trauma-informed care. With a focus on empowerment and self-advocacy for clients, I hope to promote individuals' well-being using evidence-based interventions to improve functional outcomes and quality of life.



## Capstone activities

### IRB approval for mixed methods project:

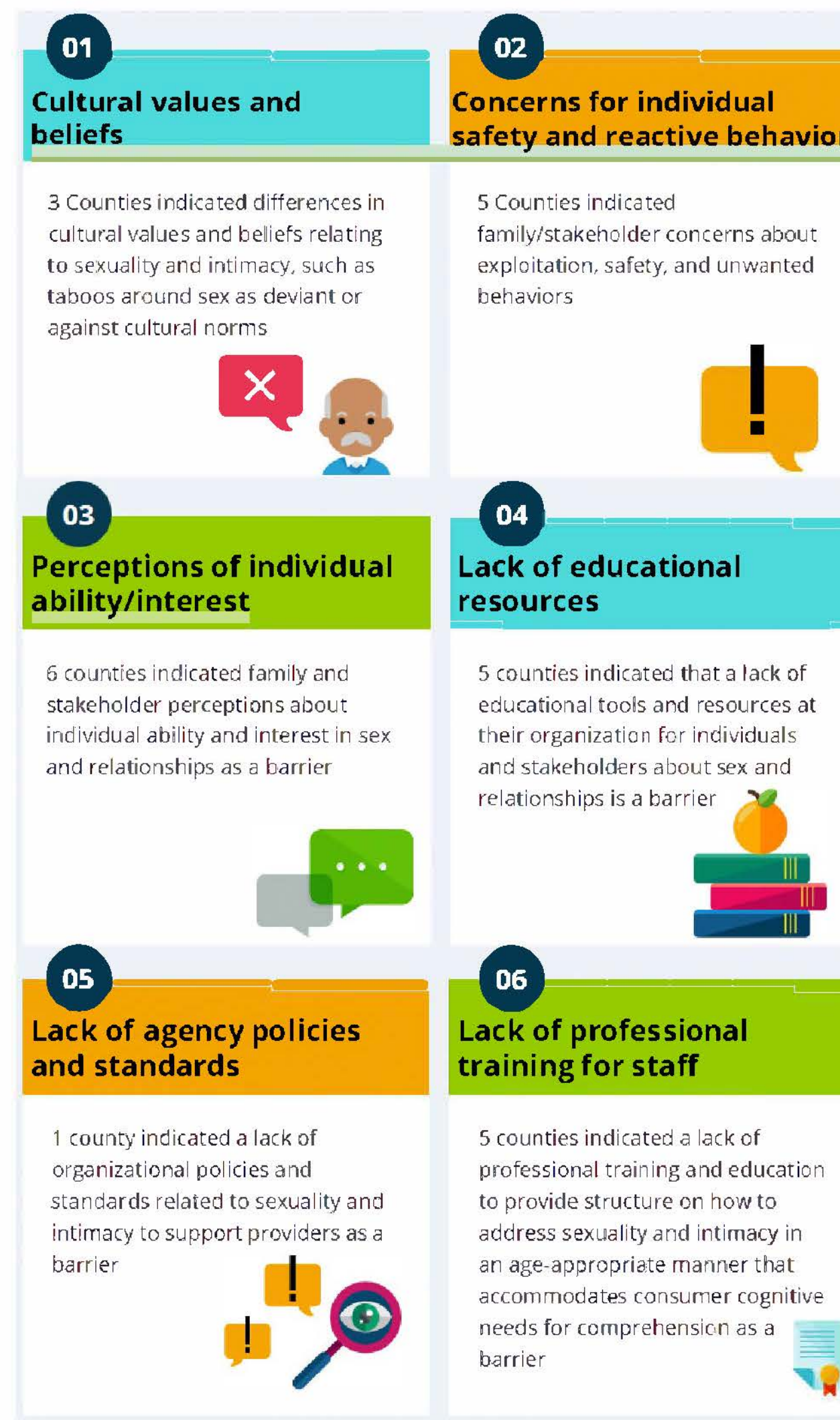
- Explanatory sequential research design
  - Quantitative phase
  - Qualitative phase
  - Integration phase
- Survey development
- Interview guiding questions
- Informed consent and consent to record
- Final approval



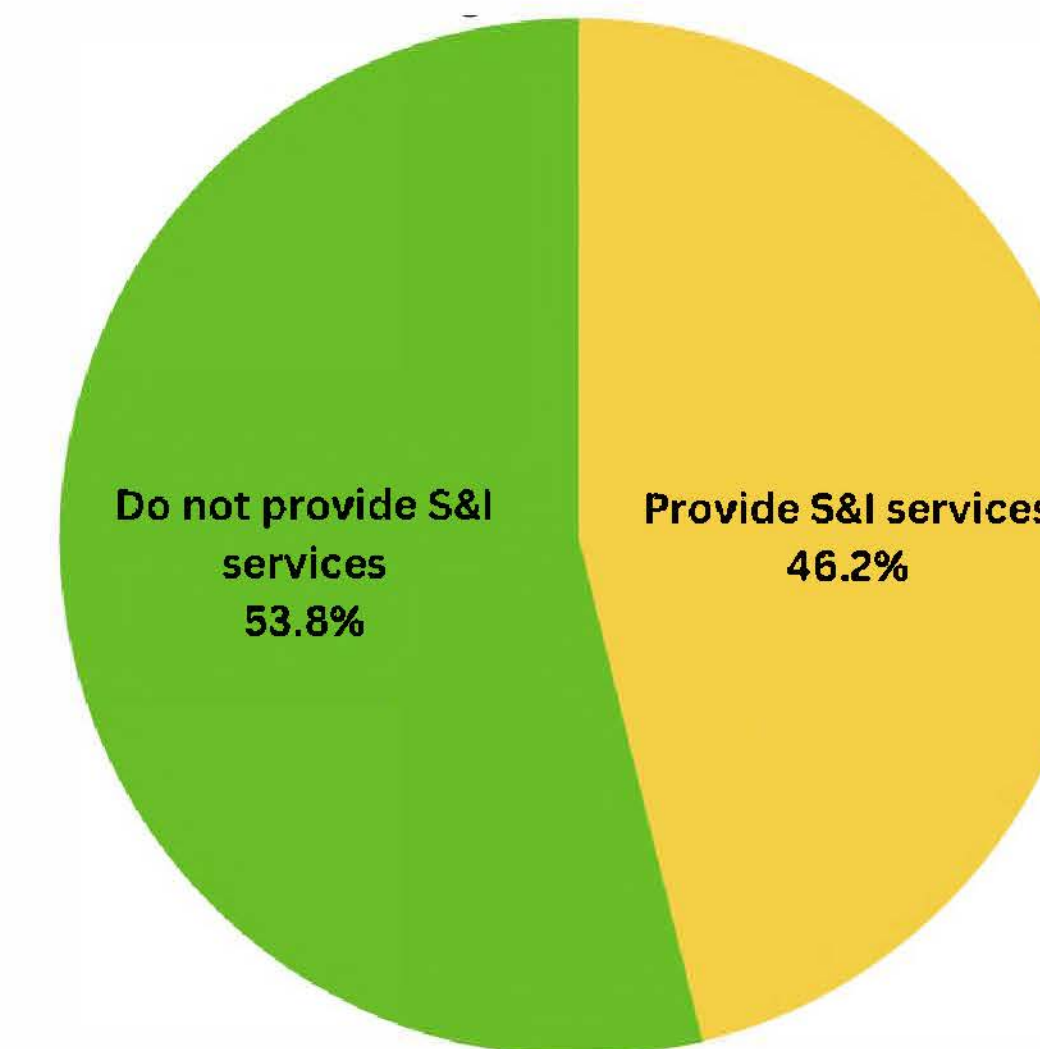
### Survey sent to all 88 Ohio county boards:

- Preliminary results from ongoing research:
- Responses from 13 counties across the state
- Study is continuing post graduation, with multiple counties indicating interest in providing qualitative data and receiving information about resources

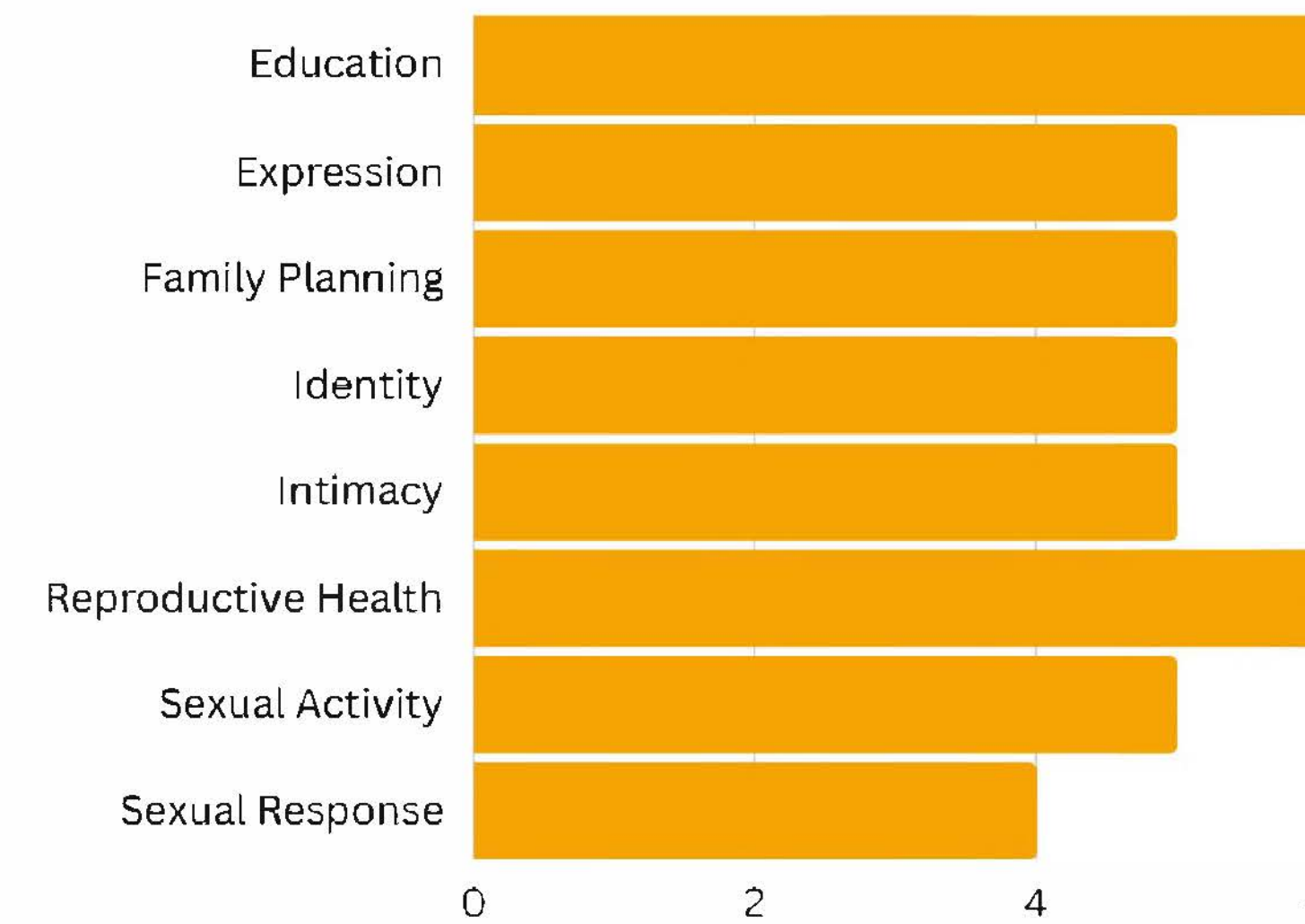
### Barriers to providing S&I services.



### Availability of S&I services. (n=13)

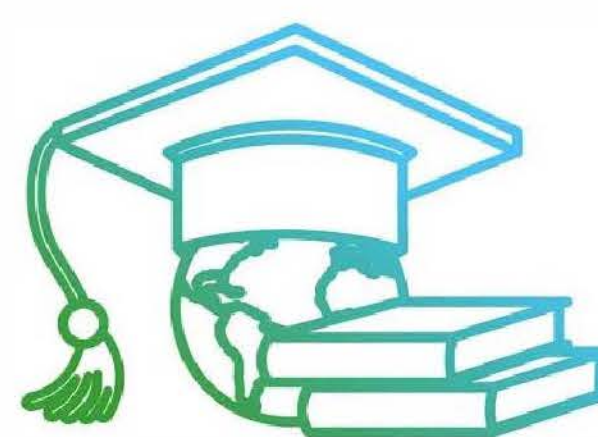


### Areas of S&I addressed by agencies' services



### Qualitative Interviewing: Case Study

- One qualitative interview was completed and transcribed with an Ohio county which is beginning the process of establishing sexuality and intimacy services.
- Greatest need: figuring out where to start to support individuals and stakeholders



### Exploring academia:

- Teaching graduate level lab
  - Writing case studies for roleplays for various diagnoses and behaviors
- Resource gathering and development
- Interdisciplinary collaboration observation within College of Health
- State of Sexual Health in NE Ohio

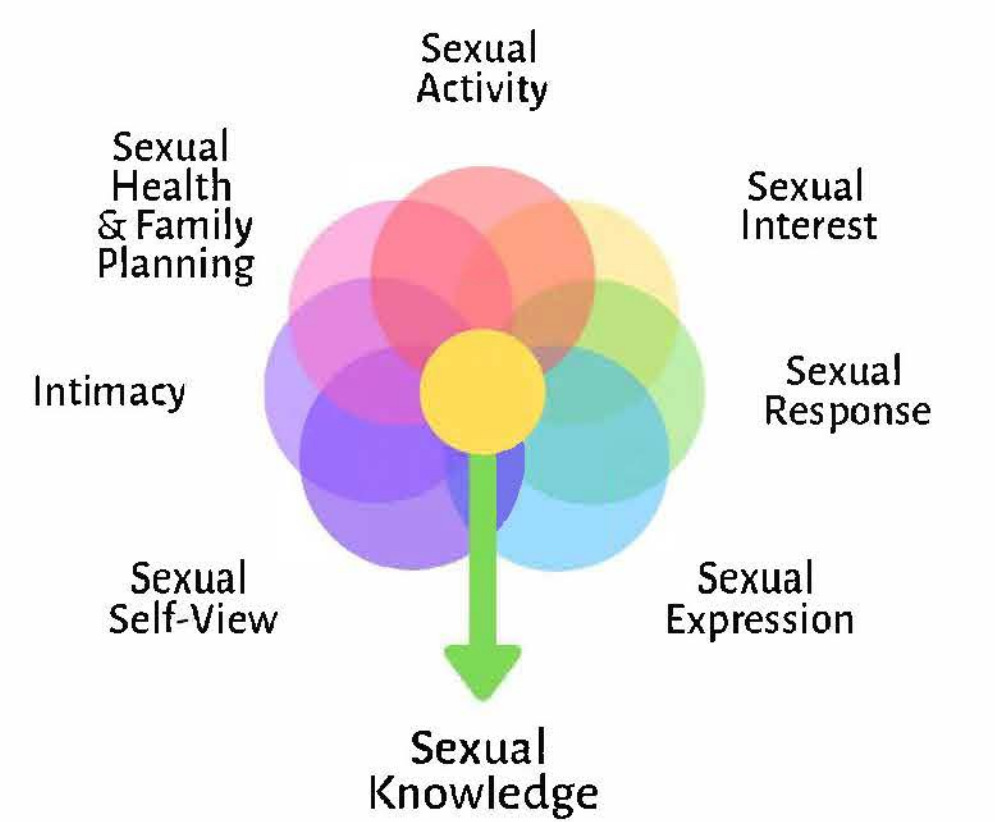
## Ideological frameworks

### Occupational justice

- Occupational justice is an evolving theory that links the concept of social justice and concerns for occupational rights. This includes the right to inclusive participation in everyday occupations for all persons in society, regardless of age, ability, gender, social class, or other differences (Nilsson & Townsend, 2010).
- The use of this model is to bridge the gap between individuals' with IDD sexual needs and identities, and the social and educational conditions that restrict what they can do and be.

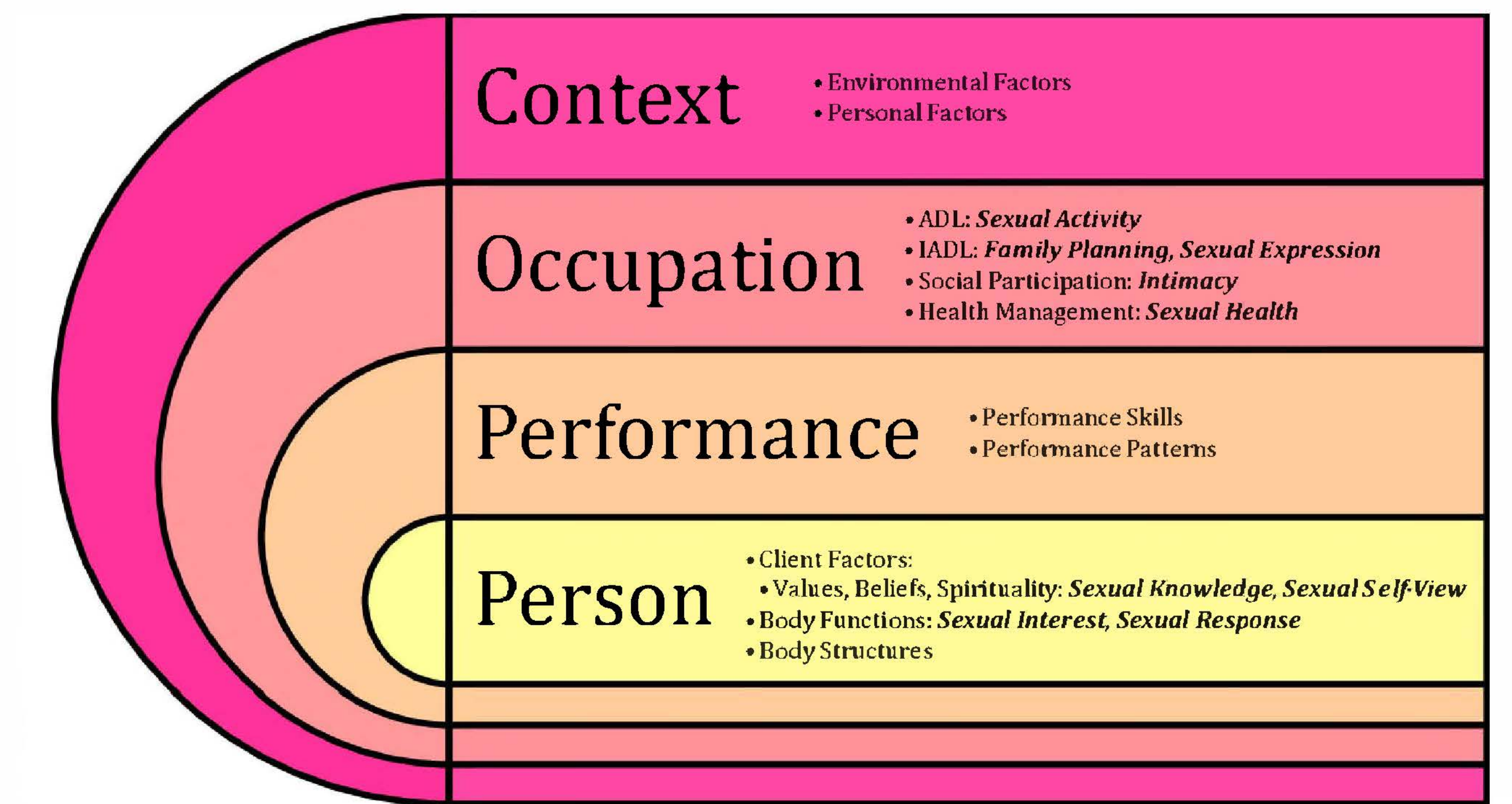


OT Sexual Assessment Framework



### Occupational Performance Inventory of Sexuality and Intimacy (OPISI)

- The OPISI was created to comprehensively screen, assess, and measure performance related to the complex occupational nature of sexuality and intimacy, based on categories that intertwine
- Connects to the OTPF4 (see below)



## Key references

Creswell, J. W., & Clark, V. L. P. (2017). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*. Sage publications.

Nilsson, I., & Townsend, E. (2010). Occupational justice—Bridging theory and practice. *Scandinavian journal of occupational therapy*, 17(1), 57-63.

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Walker, B. A., Otte, K., LeMond, K., Hess, P., Kaizer, K., Faulkner, T., & Christy, D. (2020). Development of the occupational performance inventory of sexuality and intimacy (OPISI): Phase one. *The Open Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 8(2), 1-18.

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