

ISAWP: Inclusive Sexuality a World of Possibilities

Investigation and diagnosis on affective-sexual education in Türkiye

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INTRODUCTION

This report aims to assess the state of affective-sexual education for people with disabilities in Turkey, analyzing the legislative framework, available resources, and barriers that hinder the effective implementation of inclusive and accessible programs. By focusing on these three key areas—regulations, resources, and barriers—the research provides a comprehensive understanding of the current challenges and opportunities in promoting inclusive education that addresses the sexual and reproductive rights of people with disabilities, particularly with respect to gender equality.

The importance of this study lies in its interdisciplinary approach, combining legal analysis, resource evaluation, and the identification of barriers. This multi-dimensional perspective is critical for understanding the complex factors that impact access to quality affective-sexual education and identifying actionable solutions for improvement. Throughout this study, the role of gender in both the regulatory framework and the accessibility of resources is emphasized, as gender-related perceptions and societal norms can significantly influence the inclusivity and effectiveness of educational materials.

PHASE I: Legislative analysis

The first phase of the research focused on evaluating the regulatory framework governing affective-sexual education for people with disabilities in Portugal. This phase examined existing laws, policies, and institutional frameworks to assess their adequacy in addressing the specific needs of this population. Through a detailed review of publications, expert interviews, and an exploration of gender perspectives in regulations, the study analyzed how well the current legislative landscape supports the rights of people with disabilities in the context of sexual and reproductive health. Key findings highlighted areas where the legislation needs improvement, particularly in terms of inclusivity, gender sensitivity, and the explicit consideration of the needs of people with disabilities.

PHASE II: Review of existing resources

The second phase of the research aimed to assess the available resources for affective-sexual education in Portugal, with a focus on their accessibility, gender inclusivity, and relevance to people with disabilities. This phase was divided into three key areas: the identification of existing educational programs and materials, an assessment of their accessibility for individuals with different disabilities, and an evaluation of how gender is perceived and represented in these resources. The review of existing materials revealed that while some progress has been made in terms of accessibility and inclusivity, significant gaps remain in providing tailored resources that meet the specific needs of people with disabilities and address the gender-related challenges they face.

PHASE III: Identification of barriers

The third phase identified the barriers that prevent the effective implementation of inclusive and accessible affective-sexual education. These barriers were categorized into cultural, social, economic, technological, and gender-related barriers. Cultural and social obstacles, including stigmatization of disability and misconceptions about the sexuality of people with disabilities, were found to be significant impediments. Economic constraints and a lack of technological infrastructure also hindered access to quality education, particularly in rural areas and for families with limited financial resources. Gender-related barriers were also prevalent, with distinct challenges faced by women and non-binary individuals with disabilities in accessing sexual education that is both inclusive and respectful of their needs and identities.

PHASE IV: Conclusions and recommendations

In the final phase of the study, the key findings were synthesized, and recommendations for improving affective-sexual education for people with disabilities in Portugal were formulated. Legislative reforms, improvements in educational resources, and actions to overcome cultural, social, economic, and technological barriers were proposed. The study emphasizes the need for more inclusive and accessible educational materials that are tailored to the specific needs of people with disabilities and promote gender equality. Additionally, the importance of addressing the cultural stigmas surrounding disability and sexuality, as well as ensuring that both teachers and policymakers receive proper training on these issues, was highlighted. The study concludes with a call to action for the implementation of the recommendations at political, educational, and social levels. The goal is to create a more inclusive and equitable educational environment where the sexual and reproductive rights of people with disabilities are fully recognized and supported. Through these efforts, it is hoped that people with disabilities will have greater access to the information and resources they need to make informed decisions about their sexual health and relationships, while also challenging the societal attitudes and barriers that hinder their inclusion and autonomy.

PHASE I: LEGISLATIVE ANALYSIS

The emotional and sexual education rights of individuals with disabilities are a crucial issue grounded in human rights, aiming to ensure their full participation in social life. Sexuality and emotional health education play a critical role in fostering personal development, self-confidence, and equality in relationships. Legal regulations and practices in Turkey provide a framework that is decisive in protecting and advancing these rights. However, the effective implementation of these rights depends not only on the adequacy of existing legal regulations but also on societal awareness, educational programs, and the presence of supportive policies.

This section aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of Turkey's legal framework and policies concerning the emotional and sexual rights of individuals with disabilities. Additionally, it seeks to examine the academic literature and civil society efforts in this area to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the current situation. National regulations will be assessed alongside international obligations, and recommendations will be offered to strengthen the rights of individuals with disabilities.

This section is divided into three parts:

1. Legal Framework will analyze the national and international regulations that protect the emotional and sexual rights of individuals with disabilities.
2. Literature Review will evaluate existing academic and applied studies in this field.
3. Conclusions and Recommendations will present concrete steps to improve the current state of these rights for individuals with disabilities.

This section goes beyond being merely a legislative analysis; it serves as a guide for steps that can be taken to ensure equal rights for individuals with disabilities. By taking a human rights-based approach, it aims to provide a scientific foundation for developing a more inclusive and supportive approach to emotional and sexual education for individuals with disabilities.

PHASE I:

A) Legislative Framework

1.1. United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)

In 2008, Turkey ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), committing to ensuring that individuals with disabilities enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms fully and equally. Article 25 of the Convention guarantees access to sexual and reproductive health services for persons with disabilities, while Article 23 emphasizes respect for family life and the rights to marry and found a family. In this context, Turkey's obligations regarding the emotional and sexual rights of persons with disabilities are established at the international level.

1.2. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)

CEDAW, to which Turkey is a party, aims to ensure equal rights for women in all areas. The emotional and sexual rights of women with disabilities fall within this scope, obligating Turkey to prevent discrimination in this domain.

2. National Legislation

2.1. Constitution of the Republic of Turkey

Article 10 of the Constitution states that all individuals are equal before the law and that the state is required to take measures to protect the rights of persons with disabilities. Furthermore, Article 17 guarantees the right of everyone to protect and develop their physical and spiritual existence. These provisions indicate that the emotional and sexual rights of persons with disabilities are constitutionally protected.

2.2. Law on Persons with Disabilities (Law No. 5378)

Enacted in 2005, the Law on Persons with Disabilities (Law No. 5378) introduces comprehensive regulations to ensure the full and equal participation of persons with disabilities in social life. Article 4 of the law mandates the prevention of discrimination in all services for persons with disabilities and compliance with the principle of accessibility. Additionally, Article 15 guarantees access to education and rehabilitation services tailored to the special needs of persons with disabilities. In this context, services such as sexual health and emotional education must also be provided within the framework of these rights.

2.3. Turkish Penal Code (Law No. 5237)

The Turkish Penal Code includes various provisions to protect individuals with disabilities from sexual abuse:

- Article 103 and 104: These articles address the sexual abuse of children, with specific emphasis on protecting the sexual integrity of mentally disabled children.
- Article 105: Sexual harassment crimes are addressed with particular sensitivity for individuals with disabilities, with the victim's vulnerability considered an aggravating factor.
- Article 122: Prohibition of discrimination encompasses all forms of discrimination against individuals with disabilities, supporting the principle of equality in access to sexual health services.

2.4. Ministry of National Education Regulation on Special Education Services

Educational services provided in institutions under the Ministry of National Education are based on the principle of equal educational rights for all students. Regulations concerning the education of individuals with disabilities include curricula and support services tailored to their specific needs. However, provisions regarding sexual health and emotional education are not yet comprehensively addressed, highlighting the need for further regulation in this area.

2.5. Health Services Law

Legislation and regulations related to healthcare aim to ensure access to sexual and reproductive health services for individuals with disabilities. The Basic Law on Health Services (Law No. 3359) enshrines the right to equal access to healthcare services and seeks to eliminate barriers faced by individuals with disabilities in accessing these services.

3. Strategies and Action Plans

3.1. Turkey Disability Strategy and Action Plan

Prepared by the Ministry of Family and Social Policies, this plan aims to ensure the full participation of individuals with disabilities in social life. However, it does not include specific strategies related to emotional and sexual rights.

3.2. National Action Plans

The Istanbul Convention, to which Turkey is a party, and its associated action plans aim to protect women from violence and promote gender equality. While the right of individuals with disabilities to access sexual health and emotional education is considered within the framework of gender equality, it has not been sufficiently implemented in practice.

This plan aims to ensure the full participation of individuals with disabilities in social life. While sexual and emotional health education is indirectly included among the goals related to equal rights in health and education, it is not defined as a direct objective. The need for a new strategic plan addressing this issue is evident.

3.3. Development Plans

The 11th Development Plan (2019-2023) includes various goals aimed at supporting the social and economic participation of individuals with disabilities. However, sexual health and emotional education are only addressed indirectly within this plan.

4. Regulations and Frameworks

4.1. Guidance and Psychological Counseling Services Regulation

Guidance and psychological counseling services offered in schools under the Ministry of National Education aim to support students' emotional and social development. However, sexual health education is not explicitly addressed in this regulation.

4.2. Ministry of Health Regulations

The Ministry of Health's Regulation on Reproductive Health Services outlines access to reproductive health services for individuals with disabilities. However, it lacks detailed provisions addressing the specific needs of individuals with disabilities.

4.3. Regulation on Inclusive Education Practices

Regulations on inclusive education aim to facilitate the integration of individuals with disabilities into the general education system. However, it is evident that sexual health and emotional education curricula are not included within this framework.

4.4. Gaps in Sexual Health and Education Regulations

While existing regulations in Turkey generally cover the rights and needs of individuals with disabilities, significant gaps persist in the areas of sexual health and emotional education. A regulation such as a Sexual Health Education Regulation for Schools has yet to be established. This absence indicates that the rights of individuals with disabilities to access information and education in these areas are not sufficiently supported in practice.

4.5. Child Protection Law (Law No. 5395)

Provisions aimed at protecting children, particularly those with mental or physical disabilities, from abuse and maltreatment are included under the Child Protection Law. However, this law does not provide an active framework for addressing sexual health education and emotional development. There is no specific emphasis on the emotional health needs of individuals with disabilities in the Child Protection Law.

5. Gaps and Areas for Improvement

The analysis of the current legal framework has identified the following gaps:

1. **Deficiencies in Sexual Health and Emotional Education:** In Turkey, sexual health education is not explicitly regulated as a right for individuals with disabilities. A dedicated regulation on this topic should be developed through collaboration between the Ministry of National Education and the Ministry of Health.
2. **Educational Curriculum and Regulations:** While the education system includes curricula and counseling services to support the emotional and social development of individuals with disabilities, these services lack a specific focus on sexual health and emotional education.
3. **Accessibility Issues:** Existing legal regulations theoretically guarantee the right of individuals with disabilities to access healthcare services. However, barriers to accessibility and inadequacies in service provision persist in practice.
4. **Lack of Societal Awareness:** Societal awareness of the sexual and emotional rights of individuals with disabilities is significantly low. This lack of awareness hinders the effective implementation of legal regulations.

6. International Best Practices

International examples can serve as models to improve regulations regarding the emotional and sexual rights of individuals with disabilities in Turkey:

- **Sweden:** Comprehensive sexual health education programs for individuals with disabilities are implemented in Sweden, supporting their emotional development. These programs are integrated into the educational curriculum and adapted to meet specific needs.
- **Canada:** Canada has a robust legal framework that protects and promotes the sexual health rights of individuals with disabilities. This framework encourages individuals to understand their own bodies and establish healthy relationships.

7. Recommendations

The following recommendations can be made to improve the current situation:

1. **New Legal Regulations:** A new law or regulation explicitly addressing the right of individuals with disabilities to sexual health and emotional education should be established.
2. **Collaboration in Education and Health:** Policies in the fields of health and education should be better coordinated, and programs specifically tailored to the needs of individuals with disabilities should be developed.
3. **Awareness Campaigns:** Public awareness campaigns should be organized to increase knowledge about the rights of individuals with disabilities.
4. **Adopting International Best Practices:** Policies similar to those in countries like Sweden and Canada should be implemented in Turkey by drawing inspiration from their practices.

8. Legal Implementation and Monitoring Mechanisms

The effectiveness of legislation is measured not only by the existence of legal regulations but also by how they are implemented and the efficacy of monitoring mechanisms. In Turkey, the following factors are critical for the implementation of legislation related to the emotional and sexual rights of individuals with disabilities:

8.1. Monitoring Mechanisms

The main bodies overseeing the implementation of legislation in Turkey include the Ministry of Family and Social Services, the Ministry of National Education, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Justice. However, there is no specific monitoring mechanism dedicated to the emotional and sexual rights of individuals with disabilities. Suggestions to address this gap include:

- **Independent Monitoring Bodies:** An independent ombudsman mechanism should be established to protect the rights of individuals with disabilities.
- **Involvement of Civil Society:** Civil society organizations should be included in monitoring processes to enhance transparency.

8.2. Legal Sanctions

Current legal regulations impose various sanctions on individuals or institutions that violate the sexual rights of individuals with disabilities. For instance, relevant articles of the Turkish Penal Code (TPC) prescribe severe penalties for crimes such as sexual assault, harassment, or discrimination. However, some shortcomings in the implementation of these sanctions have been observed:

- **Insufficient Training:** A lack of training among judicial personnel regarding the specific circumstances of individuals with disabilities can lead to misjudgments in cases.
- **Lack of Experts:** The absence of experts capable of understanding the needs of individuals with disabilities during legal processes often results in further victimization.

9. Social and Cultural Dimensions of Legislation

The protection of the emotional and sexual rights of individuals with disabilities within Turkey's legal framework is closely linked to societal perceptions and values. Traditional cultural norms can create barriers to the implementation of these rights. For example:

- **Taboo Topics:** Sexuality is generally considered a taboo subject in Turkey, making it difficult for individuals with disabilities to assert their rights.
- **Family Pressure:** Families of individuals with disabilities often overlook their children's needs for sexual health and emotional education.

Proposed Steps to Overcome These Barriers:

1. **Public Education:** Awareness campaigns should be organized in collaboration with media, civil society organizations, and public institutions to emphasize the importance of sexual health and emotional education.
2. **Inclusive Policies:** Educational programs that include the families of individuals with disabilities should be developed to address their specific needs and concerns.

10. Summary and Conclusions

The detailed legislative analysis demonstrates that while significant regulations exist in Turkey to protect the emotional and sexual rights of individuals with disabilities, their implementation remains insufficient in practice. Developing inclusive, responsive, and effective policies for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities requires the following critical steps:

1. Regulations on Sexual Health and Emotional Education: Comprehensive legal regulations must be introduced in Turkey to address these areas effectively.
2. Accessibility and Implementation: Existing legal regulations should be made accessible and implemented effectively to ensure they benefit the target groups.
3. International Standards: Turkey should update its legislation in line with international standards and best practices.
4. Social Policies: Social policies that support the implementation of legislation must be developed to address the broader social and cultural dimensions of these rights.

PHASE I: B.1) Publication Review

Emotional and Sexual Education for Individuals with Disabilities

The emotional and sexual education of individuals with disabilities is a critical area that supports their human rights, personal development, and full participation in social life (Akbulut & Demir, 2022). Research in this field not only aims to improve the quality of life for individuals with disabilities but also seeks to enhance societal awareness and inclusivity. In the context of Turkey, although emotional and sexual education is a significant need for individuals with disabilities, studies in this area remain limited and are generally addressed within the frameworks of gender equality, disability rights, and human rights (Kaya & Başaran, 2020).

The literature highlights the gaps and challenges in this field, offering critiques and suggestions for improving current practices. Research on the emotional and sexual education of individuals with disabilities in Turkey typically focuses on three main themes:

1. Needs for Education and Awareness

Individuals with disabilities require education to understand their own bodies, develop healthy relationships, and acquire knowledge about sexual health (Erdem & Yıldırım, 2021).

2. Social Barriers and Prejudices

The knowledge and awareness levels of families, educators, and healthcare professionals about these topics significantly impact the accessibility and effectiveness of emotional and sexual education (Turkish Association for Psychological Counseling and Guidance, 2021).

3. Policy and Institutional Approaches

The inclusion of sexual health education for individuals with disabilities in legal, educational, and social policies is a critical area that requires attention (UNICEF, 2020).

This review includes not only academic studies but also projects conducted by non-governmental organizations and international reports. Analyzing the literature on emotional and sexual education for individuals with disabilities in Turkey reveals key issues such as the lack of educational programs, challenges in implementation, and societal prejudices (Akbulut & Demir, 2022; Kaya & Başaran, 2020).

This section provides a comprehensive analysis of existing academic publications, practical examples, and civil society initiatives in Turkey. Key approaches, theoretical frameworks, and application models found in the literature will be evaluated in detail.

1. Academic Publications on Sexual Health and Education for Individuals with Disabilities in Turkey

1.1. Current Status in Sexual Health Education

Sexual health education for individuals with disabilities remains a significantly underdeveloped area in Turkey. Akbulut and Demir (2022) emphasize that sexual health education has not been fully integrated into the curriculum, and tailored content for individuals with disabilities is notably insufficient. This gap restricts access to accurate information on sexual health for individuals with disabilities and increases the risk of social exclusion.

Additionally, the authors highlight the lack of knowledge among teachers and healthcare professionals, which limits the effectiveness of these education programs (Akbulut & Demir, 2022). They also stress the importance of raising awareness among parents to support this education. A major barrier in this process is the lack of accessible and simplified educational materials, which are essential for delivering effective and inclusive education.

Kaya and Başaran (2020) argue that sexual health education should not only focus on health but also address its social, psychological, and emotional dimensions. They highlight the lack of educational materials and counseling services tailored to the needs of individuals with disabilities. This deficiency, they emphasize, can lead to gaps in sexual health knowledge and the dissemination of misinformation among individuals with disabilities.

Erdem and Yıldırım (2021) underline that this education is critical not only for protecting individuals' physical health but also for helping them express themselves and build healthy relationships. They note that the lack of education increases the vulnerability of individuals with disabilities to sexual abuse and mistreatment, making the issue not just an individual but a societal concern.

A report by the Turkish Association for Psychological Counseling and Guidance (2021) states that sexual health education enhances individuals' ability to protect themselves and fosters the development of healthy social relationships. The report advocates for the widespread implementation of specialized educational programs tailored to individuals with disabilities.

1.2. The Role of Family and Society

Erdem and Yıldırım (2021) highlight the critical role of families and society in the sexual health education of individuals with disabilities. Their research indicates that a lack of knowledge among families, societal taboos surrounding sexuality, and overprotective attitudes towards individuals with disabilities significantly limit access to accurate information. These factors negatively impact both the ability of individuals with disabilities to express themselves and their capacity to protect themselves against sexual health risks (Erdem & Yıldırım, 2021).

The authors also stress the importance of awareness campaigns to educate society about the sexual rights of individuals with disabilities and to encourage support for these rights. They argue that such efforts are essential for fostering a more inclusive environment where individuals with disabilities can access the knowledge and resources they need.

The report prepared by the Turkish Association for Psychological Counseling and Guidance (2021) emphasizes that families lack sufficient knowledge and resources regarding sexual health education. The report particularly highlights that the lack of awareness among families of individuals with intellectual disabilities increases the risk of physical and psychological abuse. It calls for the expansion of guidance programs aimed at educating families.

Another study reveals that families of individuals with disabilities often adopt a "protective" attitude, which restricts their participation in social life. This not only negatively affects their sexual health but also hinders their emotional development (Akbulut & Demir, 2022).

On a societal level, taboos surrounding sexuality in Turkey contribute to a lack of understanding regarding the sexual rights of individuals with disabilities (Kaya & Başaran, 2020). The treatment of sexuality as a taboo subject leads to the neglect of the sexual health education needs of individuals with disabilities and perpetuates discrimination against them within society.

In Turkey, legal regulations regarding the rights of individuals with disabilities are defined by national and international obligations. However, awareness and practical implementation of these regulations remain limited. Kaya and Başaran (2020) note that individuals with disabilities often lack awareness of their rights, significantly affecting their access to these rights and services. This issue is particularly pronounced in rural areas, where awareness is even lower, exacerbating regional inequalities.

Legal and Institutional Frameworks

The rights of individuals with disabilities are outlined within the framework of Articles 10 and 17 of the Constitution and the Law on Persons with Disabilities (Law No. 5378). However, Erdem and Yıldırım (2021) point out shortcomings in the implementation of these regulations. For instance, there is no regulation or policy specifically governing access to sexual health education for individuals with disabilities. This absence leads to a lack of standards in the delivery of sexual health services.

Institutional Approaches and Practices

The report by the Turkish Association for Psychological Counseling and Guidance (2021) states that guidance and counseling services provided by public institutions for individuals with disabilities are often limited to general health services. The report emphasizes that topics such as sexual health education and emotional development are not adequately included in the service plans of these institutions.

Similar gaps are observed in education and health policies. The inclusive education programs implemented by the Ministry of National Education do not offer content specifically addressing sexual health and emotional education for individuals with disabilities (Kaya & Başaran, 2020). Additionally, reproductive health services provided by the Ministry of Health lack specific provisions tailored to the unique needs of individuals with disabilities (Akbulut & Demir, 2022).

International Perspectives and Adaptable Models for Turkey

The World Health Organization (WHO, 2021) report highlights that countries adopting comprehensive policies on sexual health and education for individuals with disabilities are more successful in improving their quality of life. Practices in countries such as Sweden and Canada demonstrate the importance of state-supported sexual health education integrated into national policies.

2. Contributions of Civil Society Organizations and Their Practices

2.1. Contributions of Civil Society Organizations

Civil society organizations (CSOs) in Turkey play a crucial role in advancing emotional and sexual education for individuals with disabilities. Awareness campaigns and educational programs led by these organizations are vital for protecting and promoting the rights of individuals with disabilities. For example, the Turkish Foundation for the Education and Solidarity of the Disabled (ÖZEV) conducts comprehensive activities aimed at supporting independent living, advocating for rights, and facilitating social inclusion for individuals with disabilities.

ÖZEV's services include awareness training for families, individual support programs, and rights-based advocacy initiatives (ÖZEV, 2021). These efforts contribute significantly to addressing the gaps left by institutional policies and enhancing the overall quality of life for individuals with disabilities.

Efforts of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) on Neglect and Abuse of Individuals with Disabilities

Several CSOs aim to raise awareness about neglect and abuse involving individuals with disabilities, making the forms of abuse they face more visible and contributing to the development of protective measures. For example, the Social and Mental Disabilities Community Center (SOMET) has developed guidance programs to reduce the risks of sexual abuse and neglect among individuals with intellectual disabilities. These programs focus on enhancing the ability of individuals with disabilities to express themselves and report instances of sexual abuse (SOMET, 2020).

Pioneering Efforts in Sexuality and Education

The Sexuality Education and Guidance Association (CERD) is an advocate for the sexual rights of individuals with disabilities and works to meet their sexual health and emotional education needs. CERD has developed specialized educational materials tailored for individuals with disabilities and prepared guides for teachers and families (CERD, 2021). Additionally, CERD's pilot program, "Sexuality and Me," presents a model aimed at addressing the sexual education needs of individuals with disabilities.

International Collaborations and Projects

Some CSOs, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), carry out comprehensive projects to protect and promote the rights of individuals with disabilities. One such project, the "Disability Rights and Awareness Campaign," aimed to raise societal awareness of the rights of individuals with disabilities and enhance their access to education, healthcare, and social services (UNDP, 2021).

Challenges Faced by CSOs

CSOs in this field encounter various challenges, including resource limitations, societal taboos, and insufficient policy support. Despite these difficulties, their efforts make a significant contribution to protecting and promoting the rights of individuals with disabilities. By addressing critical gaps in education, awareness, and advocacy, these organizations play a vital role in fostering a more inclusive society.

2.2. Local Examples and Practices

In Turkey, the rates of sexual, physical, and emotional abuse experienced by individuals with disabilities are reported to be high, yet this issue remains largely invisible. Bulut and Karaman (2018) analyzed national news coverage from 2005 to 2015 and found that abuse of individuals with disabilities is widespread across many sectors of society. Their research highlighted that most abuse cases occur within families or under the supervision of caregivers, but these incidents are rarely reported. This underscores the lack of awareness about sexual health and abuse among both individuals and their families (Bulut & Karaman, 2018).

Neglect and Abuse of Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities

A study conducted by SOMET (2020) emphasized that individuals with intellectual disabilities are particularly vulnerable to sexual, physical, and emotional abuse. The research highlighted the critical need for educational programs that enable these individuals to understand their rights and protect themselves from abuse. It also underscored the importance of guidance services, suggesting that caregiver education programs could be effective in preventing abuse cases (SOMET, 2020).

Examples of Local Practices

- **Awareness Training:** The Ministry of Family and Social Services has launched a pilot program titled "Sexual Rights and Protection Program for Individuals with Disabilities" in select provinces. This program includes rights-based education for individuals with disabilities and awareness campaigns for their families (Ministry of Family and Social Services, 2022).
- **Civil Society Collaborations:** The Turkish Association for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry has developed an educational model called "Defending My Rights" to protect individuals with intellectual disabilities from abuse. This program aims to teach individuals their sexual rights and how to seek help in cases of neglect or abuse (TCGP Association, 2021).

Legal Support Programs for Individuals with Disabilities

The Union of Turkish Bar Associations has established units to provide legal support to individuals with disabilities. These units aim to expedite the legal processes in cases of sexual abuse and neglect and offer support to victims. However, the expansion of these services requires additional resources (Union of Turkish Bar Associations, 2020). These initiatives demonstrate progress in addressing the rights and protection of individuals with disabilities in Turkey but also highlight the need for broader implementation, more robust resources, and stronger collaboration between institutions and civil society organizations.

3. International Perspectives and Adaptable Models for Turkey

Successful International Practices and Examples

The World Health Organization's (WHO, 2021) report, "Sexual Health and Disability: A Global Perspective," provides a comprehensive examination of internationally successful models developed to address the sexual health and education needs of individuals with disabilities. The report emphasizes that sexual health education improves not only physical health but also psychosocial well-being. Countries like Sweden and Canada have implemented effective practices that significantly enhance the quality of life for individuals with disabilities.

Sweden

In Sweden, comprehensive sexual health education programs are built upon the rights and needs of individuals with disabilities. Supported by the Swedish government, these programs aim to help individuals understand their sexual rights and foster healthy relationships (Nordström & Svensson, 2019)

Canada

Canada's approach to sexual health education for individuals with disabilities is rooted in a framework that promotes social inclusion. The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) has developed tailored educational materials focusing on sexual health and reproductive rights (PHAC, 2020)..

Adaptability to Turkey

Both the Swedish and Canadian models demonstrate the importance of integrating sexual health education into broader educational and social policies. For Turkey, these practices could inspire the development of similar rights-based programs, customized educational materials, and integrated family guidance services.

To adapt these models to the Turkish context:

- **Curriculum Integration:** Sexual health education should be included in the national education curriculum, with content tailored to the needs of individuals with disabilities.
- **Government Support:** Programs must be backed by governmental policies that ensure accessibility and sustainability.
- **Collaborative Approaches:** Partnerships between educational institutions, healthcare providers, and civil society organizations can enhance the scope and effectiveness of these initiatives.
- **Family Involvement:** Education and awareness programs targeting families can help address societal taboos and create a supportive environment for individuals with disabilities.

By learning from these international practices, Turkey can develop a comprehensive, inclusive approach to sexual health education that addresses the unique needs of individuals with disabilities while promoting their rights and well-being.

Adaptable Models for Turkey

International examples can provide a roadmap for implementing similar programs in Turkey. The following elements could be adapted for Turkey:

1. **Inclusive Education Programs:** Inspired by the Swedish model, educational programs on sexual health and rights for individuals with disabilities can be integrated into school curricula. These programs would help individuals understand their rights and develop self-protection skills.
2. **Family Involvement and Support:** Following the Canadian model, guidance services and awareness initiatives targeting families of individuals with disabilities should be implemented. Family participation in the education process can enable individuals to engage more effectively in social life.
3. **Accessible Educational Materials:** In Turkey, educational materials should be tailored to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities, ensuring they can fully benefit from these programs. Materials designed specifically for auditory, visual, or cognitive impairments would be particularly impactful.
4. **Sexual Health and Rights of Women with Disabilities (In-Depth)**

Desexualization and Reproductive Rights of Women with Disabilities

Women with disabilities face dual discrimination stemming from gender inequality and their disability. Kaya and Başaran (2020) highlight that the sexual and reproductive health rights of women with disabilities are often disregarded, and they are frequently perceived as "genderless" by society. This perception has serious negative effects on their ability to understand their bodies, access healthcare services, and express themselves.

A report by UN Women (2020) reveals that many women with disabilities in Turkey face significant challenges in accessing reproductive health services and are often inadequately informed about these issues. The report emphasizes that, in addition to the lack of healthcare services, these women's rights to make decisions about their own bodies are frequently violated.

Rights-Based and Gender-Sensitive Approaches

Gender-sensitive rights-based approaches are critical for understanding and improving the situation of women with disabilities. A study by the Association for Women with Disabilities (ENKADER, 2021) highlighted the challenges these individuals face in accessing healthcare services and emphasized the necessity of specially designed support mechanisms. For instance, the lack of appropriate infrastructure for gynecological examinations for women with physical disabilities significantly limits their access to such services (ENKADER, 2021).

Additionally, awareness campaigns and education are frequently emphasized as essential for protecting and advancing the rights of women with disabilities. A report by the Federation of Turkish Women's Associations (2022) stated that raising awareness among families, healthcare workers, and society is necessary to improve these women's access to healthcare services.

International Perspective

A report by the World Health Organization (WHO, 2021) shows that the barriers women with disabilities face in accessing sexual and reproductive health are a global issue. Women-centered sexual health programs implemented in countries like Sweden provide a successful model for supporting the rights of women with disabilities. This model includes individualized counseling services and facilitated access opportunities.

5. Key Findings from the Literature (In-Depth)

The literature review highlights various deficiencies and needs related to the sexual health and emotional education of individuals with disabilities. In the context of Turkey, the challenges faced by individuals with disabilities in accessing their rights and services in this area require significant improvements not only on an individual level but also on societal and structural levels. The key findings and conclusions from the literature are detailed below:

1. Educational Deficiencies

Access to sexual health and emotional education is limited for both individuals with disabilities and their families. The educational deficiencies are concentrated in the following areas:

- **Lack of Customized Educational Programs:** In Turkey, there is a lack of sexual health and emotional education programs specifically designed for individuals with disabilities (Akbulut & Demir, 2022). Existing programs are often limited to general health education frameworks and do not adequately address the specific needs of individuals with disabilities.
- **Curriculum Deficiency:** The curriculum provided by the Ministry of National Education lacks sufficient content on sexual health education for individuals with disabilities. This prevents these individuals from acquiring essential knowledge (Kaya & Başaran, 2020).

2. Social and Familial Barriers

The attitudes of families and society play a significant role in the sexual health and emotional development of individuals with disabilities. However, several challenges exist in this regard:

- **Taboos and Prejudices:** Societal taboos around sexuality in Turkey hinder meaningful discussions about the sexual rights of individuals with disabilities (Erdem & Yıldırım, 2021). Similar hesitations are observed among families and educators.
- **Lack of Awareness Among Families:** Many families are not adequately informed about the sexual health and rights of individuals with disabilities. This lack of awareness leaves individuals unprotected and vulnerable to potential risks (Turkish Association for Psychological Counseling and Guidance, 2021).

3. Double Discrimination Based on Gender and Disability

Women with disabilities face double discrimination due to gender inequality and their disability status. Their access to sexual and reproductive health services is limited by both physical and social barriers (UN Women, 2020). The literature emphasizes the need for more inclusive policies to protect the rights of women with disabilities.

4. Legal and Institutional Deficiencies

Although legal regulations exist to protect the rights of individuals with disabilities, significant shortcomings in implementation remain:

- **Lack of Standards:** The absence of defined standards for sexual health and emotional education for individuals with disabilities in Turkey leads to inconsistent and inadequate practices in this area (Kaya & Başaran, 2020).
- **Institutional Capacity Deficiencies:** Public institutions lack the capacity to meet the specific needs of individuals with disabilities, resulting in gaps in service delivery (Akbulut & Demir, 2022).

5. The Leading Role of Civil Society

Civil society organizations play a vital role in addressing the sexual health and emotional development needs of individuals with disabilities. However, these organizations struggle to create widespread and sustainable impact due to resource and support limitations (SOMET, 2020). Strengthening civil society and fostering public-private partnerships are essential for achieving more significant progress.

6. Adaptability of International Perspectives

Models implemented in countries such as Sweden and Canada can serve as examples for developing similar programs in Turkey. These models are integrated with comprehensive and inclusive policies that support the rights of individuals with disabilities (WHO, 2021). It is recommended that Turkey adapt these international practices to its local context for effective implementation.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Findings from the literature highlight the necessity of a comprehensive and multidimensional approach to sexual health and emotional education for individuals with disabilities. Proposed solutions include:

1. **Development of National Policies:** National-level policies and standards should be established to support the sexual health rights of individuals with disabilities.
2. **Increasing Family and Societal Awareness:** Awareness campaigns should be organized to reduce societal prejudices regarding sexuality and disability.
3. **Expansion of Educational Programs:** Customized and accessible educational materials for individuals with disabilities should be developed and integrated into school curricula.
4. **Enhancement of International Cooperation:** Collaborations with international organizations such as WHO should be increased to adapt successful models to Turkey.

PHASE I: B.2) Interviews with Experts

Interview Analysis: Tutku Yıldız, Barrier-Free Life Youth and Art Association

Expert Information

- Name: Tutku Yıldız
- Position: President of Barrier-Free Life Youth and Art Association, Barrier-Free Life Sports Club
- Location: Antalya/Muratpaşa
- Date: December 7, 2024

Key Findings

1. Legislation and Legal Perception
2. Tutku Yıldız stated that current laws do not facilitate emotional-sexual education programs. Regulatory shortcomings in education and awareness pose significant challenges for individuals with disabilities. She particularly emphasized the need for psychological and psychiatric support.
3. Availability and Accessibility of Resources
4. Yıldız highlighted the insufficiency and inaccessibility of resources for individuals with disabilities. In addition to the limited availability of resources, she pointed out that individuals with intellectual disabilities struggle to comprehend written materials, making face-to-face individual support crucial.
5. Insufficiency of Technological and Digital Resources
6. She noted that digital resources could lead to misconceptions among individuals with intellectual disabilities, stressing the need for more tangible, face-to-face methods for delivering accurate information. Additionally, she emphasized that the government should expand individual awareness programs through expert teams.
7. Social and Cultural Barriers
 - Social prejudices and stigmatization create significant obstacles for individuals with disabilities in advocating for their sexual and emotional rights.
 - Overprotective parental control often limits the emotional and sexual awareness of individuals with disabilities.
 - Yıldız mentioned that the needs of individuals with disabilities, such as having a romantic partner or getting married, are often overlooked or misunderstood.
8. Barriers Related to Gender Perception
9. She observed that issues regarding gender perception are more pronounced in families where parents are separated. For instance, children raised solely by their mothers may face difficulties in understanding gender identity.
10. Most Critical Area for Improvement
11. Yıldız emphasized that sexual education and emotional awareness for individuals with disabilities should start at an early age. She advocated for the formation of specialized teams by the state to address this issue and stressed the importance of providing targeted training for educators in this field.

7. Effects of Social Media and Pornography

Yıldız emphasized that social media and pornography negatively impact the sexual and social well-being of individuals with disabilities. She noted that such content, particularly for individuals with intellectual disabilities, could lead to misconceptions and misinterpretations.

Proposed Solutions

1. Development of Education Programs: Create customized sexual education programs tailored to the needs of individuals with disabilities.
2. Expert Support Teams: Establish state-supported teams of specialist doctors to provide guidance to both educators and families.
3. Legal and Social Reforms: Strengthen legal regulations on emotional-sexual education and organize awareness campaigns to inform the public.
4. Increased Accessibility of Resources: Disseminate resources designed to be comprehensible for individuals with intellectual disabilities.
5. Social Media Regulation: Implement measures to prevent the adverse effects of social media on individuals with disabilities.

Conclusion

This interview highlights significant gaps in emotional and sexual education programs for individuals with disabilities and the resulting impacts on both individual and societal levels. Education, awareness, and expert-supported solutions are critical for addressing these deficiencies.

Interview Analysis: Anonymous Expert

Expert Information

- Name: Requested anonymity
- Position: Not specified
- Date: Not specified

Key Findings

1. Legislation and Legal Perception

The expert noted the absence of a clear legal framework for emotional and sexual education for individuals with disabilities in Turkey, creating ambiguities in practice. The lack of detailed regulations on emotional and sexual education within the guidance services provided by the Ministry of National Education and the Ministry of Family and Social Services makes widespread and effective implementation difficult.

Recommendations

- Establish a national policy and standards for emotional and sexual education.
- Ensure that educational institutions provide guidance services aligned with these standards.

2. Availability and Accessibility of Resources

The existing resources for emotional and sexual education for individuals with disabilities are insufficient in both content and accessibility. The limited availability of materials tailored to the needs of individuals with intellectual, visual, and hearing disabilities negatively impacts their education process.

Positive Aspects:

- Some educational materials provided through projects supported by international organizations (e.g., UNICEF, European Union) are inclusive.
- Certain pilot programs developed by local civil society organizations have been successful.

Deficiencies:

- Content using simple language and visual explanations for individuals with intellectual disabilities is inadequate.
- Braille materials for visually impaired individuals and sign language-supported content for hearing-impaired individuals are limited.

Recommendations:

- Educational materials should be adapted to different types of disabilities, and their accessibility should be increased.
- Digital platforms and technological tools should be used more effectively in the education process.

3. Social and Cultural Barriers

Social perceptions significantly limit access to emotional and sexual education for individuals with disabilities.

- **Taboos Around Sexuality and Education:** Sexuality is generally a taboo subject in Turkey. The sexual rights of individuals with disabilities are perceived as an even greater taboo.
- **Stigmatization:** Individuals with disabilities are often seen as "genderless," which leads to the neglect of their rights.

Recommendations:

- Public awareness campaigns should be organized to increase societal understanding and reduce stigmatization.
- Educators and families should be informed about the sexual rights of individuals with disabilities.

4. Economic and Technological Barriers

- Economic Barriers: The high production costs of educational materials make them inaccessible to many families and institutions.
- Technological Barriers: Existing digital education resources are often inaccessible, particularly in rural areas or for low-income families.

Recommendations:

- Accessible digital platforms should be developed with government support and provided free of charge.
- The costs of educational materials should be reduced to enable widespread distribution.

5. Gender Perceptions and Discrimination

Perceptions about gender create more significant barriers for women, non-binary, and transgender individuals with disabilities:

- Women: Women with disabilities are often perceived as individuals who require greater protection, leading to the neglect of their sexual rights.
- Non-Binary and Transgender Individuals: These individuals face heightened discrimination due to both their gender identity and their disability.

Recommendations:

- Gender-sensitive education programs should be developed, and materials should be tailored to meet the needs of these individuals.

Proposed Solutions

1. National Policies and Standards: Create an inclusive and clear legal framework for emotional and sexual education programs.
2. Accessible Educational Materials: Develop materials suitable for all types of disabilities and provide them free of charge.
3. Public Awareness Campaigns: Increase awareness of the rights of individuals with disabilities and break societal taboos around education and sexuality.
4. Family Education: Expand guidance services to ensure families play an active role in the education process.
5. Technological Support: Integrate digital learning platforms, augmented reality (AR), and artificial intelligence (AI) into the education process.

Conclusion

This interview underscores the challenges individuals with disabilities face in accessing emotional and sexual education in Turkey. Addressing these gaps will require significant reforms at both the national policy and societal awareness levels. Implementing these recommendations would be a critical step toward protecting the rights of individuals with disabilities and enhancing their societal participation.

Interview Analysis: Nurettin Tonguç, Antalya Metropolitan Municipality Youth and Sports Department Head

Expert Information

- Name: Nurettin Tonguç
- Position: Head of Youth and Sports Department, Antalya Metropolitan Municipality
- Location: Antalya
- Date: November 15, 2024

Key Findings

1. Legislation and Legal Perception

Tonguç noted that while current laws generally address the needs of individuals with disabilities, there are areas where they fall short. As a public sector institution, they prioritize compliance with legal criteria and have developed projects to improve accessibility for individuals with disabilities.

Recommendations:

- Expand legislation to include more specific regulations.
- Establish standards that encompass all types of disabilities.

2. Technological and Digital Solutions

Tonguç emphasized that technology presents significant opportunities for individuals with disabilities, but existing solutions remain inadequate. For instance, he stated that while audio warning systems in public transportation were initially effective, they have proven insufficient over time. As a result, efforts are being made to focus on digital applications and individualized solutions.

Positive Aspects:

- The development of digital systems has facilitated greater independence for individuals with disabilities.
- Collaborations with platforms like Google have made bus and stop information more accessible, representing a significant advancement.

Deficiencies:

- Digital solutions are not fully integrated.
- Existing systems quickly become outdated due to the rapid pace of technological development.

Recommendations:

- Develop more accessible and user-friendly applications.
- Enhance collaboration on digital solutions at local and national levels.

3. Social and Cultural Barriers

Tonguç identified environmental and cultural unpreparedness as the biggest obstacles to implementing emotional and sexual education programs for individuals with disabilities. He also highlighted societal prejudices, particularly in rural areas, against the sexual rights of individuals with disabilities.

Positive Aspects:

- In tourist cities like Antalya, societal perspectives are more progressive, and awareness levels are higher.

Deficiencies:

- Awareness gaps persist in rural areas.
- Society's sensitivity to the emotional and sexual rights of individuals with disabilities is limited.

Recommendations:

- Organize awareness campaigns to educate the public.
- Expand education programs to both urban centers and rural areas.

4. Educational Needs

Tonguç emphasized that education is the most urgent need for individuals with disabilities. Education is essential not only for individuals with disabilities but also for society as a whole. Educating the public will help them understand and respect the rights of individuals with disabilities.

Recommendations:

- Train families, educators, and public employees on issues of sexuality and disability.
- Develop standardized education programs at the national level.

5. Social and Economic Barriers

- **Economic Factors:** Tonguç stated that economic constraints play a decisive role in access to education for individuals with disabilities. He highlighted that some families cannot access necessary materials or education programs due to financial limitations.
- **Social Media Literacy:** He emphasized the need to improve social media literacy, noting that uncontrolled use of social media and pornography could have negative effects on individuals with disabilities.

Recommendations:

- Increase financial support mechanisms.
- Organize training programs for safe and accessible use of social media.

Proposed Solutions

1. **National Standards:** Establish national standards to support emotional and sexual education for individuals with disabilities.
2. **Expansion of Digital Solutions:** Develop more accessible and effective applications.
3. **Social Awareness:** Increase societal sensitivity to the rights of individuals with disabilities through education and awareness campaigns.
4. **Development of Educational Programs:** Customize and expand educational content to include all types of disabilities.
5. **Economic and Technological Support:** Increase financial resources and make digital educational materials accessible.

Conclusion

This interview highlights that significant progress has been made for individuals with disabilities in cities like Antalya, but further improvements are needed at technological and societal levels. Education, awareness, and digitalization stand out as the most effective tools to address these challenges.

Legislative Analysis Results

Lack of Legal Framework:

Turkey lacks a comprehensive legal framework for the emotional and sexual education of individuals with disabilities. This absence creates ambiguities and prevents the establishment of clear standards for such education. Existing laws address general health and education rights but do not specifically emphasize emotional and sexual education.

- **Example:** The Ministry of National Education curriculum does not explicitly address these topics.

2. Insufficient Protection of the Rights of Individuals with Disabilities

The right to emotional and sexual education for individuals with disabilities is often addressed within the scope of general rights and is not specifically protected. This limits their access to education and healthcare services.

3. Accessibility and Implementation Issues

Guidance services and education programs lack regulations that address all types of disabilities. For example, the insufficiency of customized materials for individuals with visual or hearing impairments is a prominent issue.

4. Potential for Local-Level Development

Some municipalities and local governments are attempting to compensate for legal deficiencies with local solutions. For instance, the digital solutions developed by Antalya Metropolitan Municipality exemplify this effort.

5. Lack of Resources

Studies on emotional and sexual education for individuals with disabilities in Turkey are limited. Academic publications and educational materials in this area do not adequately address the needs. Educational materials and technological solutions are scarce and often inaccessible. In particular, materials designed for individuals with intellectual disabilities are neither practical nor easy to understand, reducing their ability to benefit from education.

6. Societal Barriers

The literature shows that societal prejudices and stigmatization often cause the emotional and sexual development of individuals with disabilities to be overlooked. This negatively affects their perceptions of gender and identity.

7. International Examples and Adaptable Models

Successful models from countries like Sweden and Canada offer adaptable solutions for Turkey. Programs in these countries take a comprehensive approach to sexual education and provide materials tailored to individual needs.

8. Common Points from Expert Opinions

The interviews revealed that the biggest obstacles to emotional and sexual education for individuals with disabilities are societal prejudices and regulatory deficiencies. Experts unanimously agreed on the need to establish standards in this area.

9. Educational Needs

The experts emphasized the necessity of educating both individuals with disabilities and society as a whole on this subject. Informing families, educators, and public employees was identified as a critical need.

Recommendations:

- Establish a clear legal framework regulating emotional and sexual education.
- Develop national standards and implementation guidelines.
- Promote academic research in Turkey and adapt international best practices to local conditions.
- Create comprehensive training programs for families, educators, and public employees.
- Define education standards to be implemented at the national level.
- Develop technological solutions and make them accessible to a broader audience.
- Launch awareness campaigns at local and national levels to shift societal perceptions.

Conclusion

Significant gaps and limitations exist in Turkey concerning emotional and sexual education for individuals with disabilities. These deficiencies are evident in the legal framework, societal awareness, and educational materials. However, both the literature review and expert interviews highlight substantial opportunities and potential for progress in this area.

- Education, awareness, and digital solutions are key to addressing the fundamental challenges in this field.
- A comprehensive legal framework to protect the rights of individuals with disabilities should be established, and practices should align with this framework.

By implementing the proposed steps, it is possible to improve the quality of life for individuals with disabilities and ensure their full participation in society. Education, awareness, and legal reforms, when addressed together, can build a more inclusive system.

PHASE II: A) EVALUATION OF PUBLICATIONS AND RESOURCES

Introduction

This section evaluates the resources, materials, and programs currently available in Turkey for emotional and sexual education for individuals with disabilities. The aim is to understand the current state and identify strengths and weaknesses in terms of accessibility and content. The evaluation will be conducted according to the following framework:

1. Documents and Guidelines: The scope of legal and institutional documents in Turkey.
2. Educational Programs: Programs supported by local governments and public institutions.
3. Resource Banks and Digital Platforms: Existing online and printed materials for accessing information.
4. Educational Materials: Assessment of physical and digital learning tools.
5. Courses and Training Programs: Practical training and guidance initiatives.
6. Audiovisual Materials: Videos, podcasts, and applications.
7. Awareness Campaigns and Presentations: Projects aimed at increasing societal awareness.

PHASE II: A) Determination of Programmes and Materials

1. Documents and Guidelines in Turkey

1.1. Legislation and Legal Framework

While there is no specific legislation in Turkey regulating the emotional and sexual rights of individuals with disabilities, the following laws provide general support for the protection of these rights:

- Law No. 5378 on Persons with Disabilities: This law aims to ensure the access of individuals with disabilities to education, healthcare, and social life. However, it does not include detailed provisions on emotional and sexual education.

1.1. Ministry of National Education Guidance Services Regulation

This regulation governs the guidance services provided in schools but lacks explicit content related to sexual education or emotional development programs.

1.2. Roles of Local Governments

Some local governments provide specific education programs for individuals with disabilities:

- Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality: Conducts awareness campaigns and social support projects for individuals with disabilities.
- Antalya Metropolitan Municipality: Develops projects aimed at increasing access to education and social services, focusing on enhancing the rights of individuals with disabilities.

Recommendations:

- Fill the legal gaps regarding emotional and sexual education by creating a clear national framework.
- Expand local government projects and support them with national standards.

2. Educational Programs

2.1. Programs Supported by Public Institutions

Certain educational services are provided for individuals with disabilities in Turkey, but these programs predominantly focus on general education and rehabilitation needs, excluding materials on sexual and emotional development.

- Ministry of Family and Social Services: Organizes awareness campaigns, but the content does not comprehensively address sexuality or emotional development.

2.2. Pilot Projects and Local Examples

- Disability Rights Awareness Campaign: Some municipalities and non-governmental organizations have developed pilot projects aimed at increasing societal awareness.
- Ministry of National Education's Inclusive Education Programs: These programs aim to integrate students with disabilities into the general education system.

Recommendations:

- The Ministry of National Education should incorporate sexual education modules tailored to the needs of individuals with disabilities into the curriculum.
- Local pilot projects should be scaled up to broader implementations.

3. Resource Banks and Digital Platforms

3.1. Existing Resources in Turkey

Accessible resource banks and digital platforms for emotional and sexual education for individuals with disabilities are very limited in Turkey. Most available resources focus on general health or disability rights, with few platforms addressing emotional and sexual education specifically. Notable examples include:

- EBA (Education Informatics Network): Provided by the Ministry of National Education, EBA contains general educational materials but does not offer specialized emotional or sexual education content for individuals with disabilities.
- Ministry of Family and Social Services Online Portal: This platform provides information on the rights and social services for individuals with disabilities but offers limited materials related to sexual education.

3.2. Civil Society Organizations and Local Initiatives

Civil society organizations play a pioneering role in developing and disseminating digital resources in this area:

- Association for Women with Disabilities (ENKADER): Develops online resources on women's rights and sexuality education for individuals with disabilities.
- Community Volunteers Foundation (TOG): Focuses on projects related to the social rights of individuals with disabilities, but these projects rarely include digital sexual education materials.

3.3. Accessibility and Adaptability

Existing digital platforms do not fully meet accessibility standards for individuals with disabilities:

- For visually impaired individuals: There is a lack of Braille or audio-supported materials.
- For hearing-impaired individuals: Turkish Sign Language (TİD)-supported content is almost nonexistent.
- For individuals with intellectual disabilities: Content designed with simple language and visual elements is limited.

Recommendations

New Resources and Platforms:

- A dedicated "Emotional and Sexual Education Platform" should be developed for Turkey.
- This platform should provide accessible materials tailored to all disability groups.

Improving Existing Platforms:

- Enhance current platforms to include content that meets accessibility standards, such as audio descriptions, sign language support, and simplified materials for intellectual disabilities.
- Collaborate with civil society organizations to expand the scope and diversity of available resources.

- Sexual education modules should be added to platforms such as EBA and the Ministry of Family and Social Services' portal.
- Audio guides should be developed for visually impaired individuals, and Turkish Sign Language (TİD)-supported content should be created for hearing-impaired individuals.
- Pilot projects developed by civil society organizations should be integrated into state-supported platforms.

Local initiatives should be funded and expanded for digital content production.

4. Educational Materials and Resources

4.1. Educational Materials Used in Turkey

Educational materials for individuals with disabilities in Turkey primarily focus on general education, and materials related to sexual or emotional education are insufficiently developed:

- Ministry of National Education Materials: School materials do not include content on sexual health and emotional development or adapt to the specific needs of individuals with disabilities.
- Civil Society Materials: Some materials provided by NGOs offer more specific solutions tailored to the needs of individuals with disabilities. For example, the Turkish Spastic Children's Foundation has developed interactive learning materials for individuals with intellectual disabilities.

4.2. Deficiencies

- Age and Disability Appropriateness: Most materials are not suitable for the age groups or types of disabilities of the users.
- Lack of Emotional Focus: Existing content often focuses only on physical health, neglecting emotional development.
- Gender Equality Perspective: Materials do not adequately address gender equality or societal gender awareness.

Recommendations:

Material Development:

- Materials should be developed that are tailored to all age groups and types of disabilities.
- Content emphasizing gender equality and societal gender awareness should be created.

Technology Integration:

- Interactive and accessible materials should be developed using digital technologies.
- Multimedia tools should be utilized to enhance engagement and understanding.

Materials should be delivered to broader audiences through mobile applications and online platforms.

Guidance for Educators:

- Guidance documents should be prepared on how to use these materials for educators.
- These guides can be used in both classroom settings and one-on-one interactions.

5. Training Courses and Programs

5.1. Existing Training Courses and Programs in Turkey

Educational courses organized for individuals with disabilities in Turkey generally focus on general education and rehabilitation. However, programs that include sexual health and emotional development are very limited. Existing courses include:

- Ministry of National Education Inclusive Education Programs: Support the integration of individuals with disabilities into the general education system but do not cover sexual health or emotional development.
- Ministry of Family and Social Services' Training Courses: Provide awareness and guidance services for the families of individuals with disabilities but do not include topics such as sexual health education.

5.2. Special Education and Rehabilitation Centers

Special education and rehabilitation centers across Turkey provide services to meet the educational and developmental needs of individuals with disabilities. However, most of these centers do not offer education on sexual health and emotional development.

5.3. Deficiencies

- Lack of Educator Expertise: Educators lack sufficient knowledge and materials on sexual health and emotional development.
- Absence of Standardized Programs: There is no standardized or nationally implemented program for sexual health education.
- Access Challenges: Individuals with disabilities living in rural areas face difficulties accessing these courses.

Recommendations

Integration of Sexual Health and Emotional Development Modules:

- Sexual health and emotional development modules should be integrated into existing training courses.

Training Educators:

- Specialized certification programs on sexual health and emotional development should be organized for educators.

Improving Accessibility:

- Online courses and mobile applications should be utilized for rural areas and low-income families.

6. Audiovisual Materials

6.1. Current Status

Audiovisual materials are used as a potential tool for the education of individuals with disabilities in Turkey. However, specific videos, applications, or other visual materials related to sexual health and emotional development are very limited:

- TRT Educational Videos: Some educational videos provided by TRT include general education content but do not focus on the specific needs of individuals with disabilities.
- Ministry of Family and Social Services Public Service Announcements: The Ministry produces videos and short films as part of awareness campaigns, but these materials typically do not include sexual health topics.

6.2. Technological Innovations

- Mobile Applications: A few mobile applications have been developed for individuals with disabilities in Turkey, but they primarily focus on access to social services and guidance.
- Content for Hearing and Visually Impaired Individuals: Materials produced with accessibility features such as sign language or audio descriptions are very limited.

Recommendations

Development of Audiovisual Content:

- Videos supported by Turkish Sign Language, audio descriptions, and interactive applications should be developed.
- Awareness-raising public service announcements should be created in collaboration with TRT or private media organizations.

Accessible Mobile Applications:

- Mobile applications providing guidance on sexual health and emotional development should be developed.

Video Content for Public Awareness:

- Short, informative videos suitable for widespread use on social media platforms should be produced.

Program 1: Turkish Foundation for Education and Solidarity for the Disabled (ÖZEV)

Description: ÖZEV is a non-governmental organization that develops projects to support the education, social life, and independence of individuals with disabilities. It also contributes to awareness programs related to sexual health and emotional development.

Program 2: Community Volunteers Foundation (TOG) – Equality and Awareness Training with Youth

Description: TOG organizes workshops on gender equality, sexual health, and rights with young people. The program aims to include individuals with disabilities and offer tailored content to meet their needs.

Program 3: Turkish Foundation for Sports Assistance and Education for the Disabled (TESYEV)

Description: TESYEV organizes sports and education programs to facilitate the social integration of individuals with disabilities. Its projects aim to support the emotional and social development of individuals with disabilities.

Program 4: Barrier-Free Life Youth and Art Association (EYD)

Description: The association organizes workshops aimed at advocating for the rights of individuals with disabilities and raising awareness about sexual health and emotional development.

Program 5: Ministry of National Education – Inclusive and Integrative Applications

Description: The Ministry of National Education offers inclusive education programs to ensure access to general education for individuals with disabilities. Plans are underway to integrate sexual health and emotional education modules into these programs.

Program 6: Ministry of Family and Social Services – Disability Family Support Program

Description: This program provides guidance services to families of individuals with disabilities, supports societal awareness, and promotes the emotional development of individuals with disabilities.

Program 7: Cerebral Palsy Turkey (Spastic Children's Foundation)

Description: The foundation develops programs that support sexual health and emotional development for individuals with disabilities and provides guidance to their families.

Program 8: Turkish Education Volunteers Foundation (TEGV) – Awareness and Education Programs

Description: TEGV runs programs to meet the educational needs of individuals with disabilities and addresses topics such as gender equality and sexual health.

Program 9: Federation of Turkish Women's Associations (TKDF)

Description: TKDF works on gender equality and women's rights, organizing awareness programs on sexual health rights for women with disabilities.

Program 10: Turkish Psychological Counseling and Guidance Association

Description: The association organizes training for educators and psychological counselors focusing on the emotional and sexual development of individuals with disabilities.

PHASE II: B) Evaluation of Accessibility

This section will evaluate the accessibility of existing materials and resources for emotional and sexual education for individuals with disabilities in Turkey.

The aim is to understand the extent to which current materials and technological tools meet the needs of individuals with disabilities and to provide recommendations. The evaluation will be conducted under the following headings:

1. Resources Adapted for Individuals with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities

Adapted Materials:

Materials prepared for individuals with disabilities in Turkey are very limited and generally focus on general health or education needs. However, the following examples offer promising steps:

- **Visualized Content:** Some educational materials developed by the Turkish Psychological Counseling and Guidance Association (PDR) are supported with simplified language and visual elements.

Braille Materials and Audiobooks:

Resources provided by the Turkish Federation of the Blind are particularly suitable for individuals with visual impairments. However, these materials lack content related to sexual health or emotional development.

Deficiencies:

- There are no guides written in simplified language suitable for individuals with intellectual disabilities on sexual health education.
- Visual content is often designed for children and does not sufficiently address the needs of adult individuals with disabilities.

Recommendations:

- Develop guides in easy-to-read formats.
- Design materials supported by pictograms and simplified visuals.

2. Resources for Families

Current Status:

Resources for families of individuals with disabilities primarily focus on rehabilitation processes and general care. Specific content on sexual health or emotional development is very limited.

- Example: The Ministry of Family and Social Services provides psychosocial support programs for families of individuals with disabilities. However, these programs lack content on sexuality or emotional development education.

Deficiencies:

- There are no guides to help families discuss sexual education with their children.
- Awareness materials do not sufficiently address the specific needs of individuals with disabilities.

Recommendations:

- Develop guides to support families in discussing sexual health topics with their children.
- Use visual materials and interactive applications to make resources more accessible to families.

3. Adaptation of Written Materials

Status of Written Content:

The accessibility of written content for individuals with disabilities in Turkey is limited. Adapted content in the fields of sexual health and emotional development is rarely available.

Deficiencies:

- Written content is often written in complex language, making it unsuitable for individuals with intellectual disabilities.

Recommendations:

- Written materials should be translated into simplified language and supported with alternative formats such as audio guides.

4. Evaluation of Audiovisual Materials

Videos and Educational Content:

TRT and some public institutions provide awareness-raising videos for individuals with disabilities. However, these often lack accessibility features such as sign language or audio descriptions.

Deficiencies:

- Videos generally do not offer content suitable for adult individuals with disabilities.
- Many videos lack sign language translations and simple explanatory texts.

Recommendations:

- Videos on sexual health and emotional development should be prepared with Turkish Sign Language (TİD) support.
- Videos should be presented in an accessible format with simple and clear language.

5. Use of Accessible Technologies

Websites and Platforms:

Many websites designed for individuals with disabilities in Turkey lack user-friendly designs. For example:

- EBA (Education Informatics Network): Does not include visual or auditory support and lacks content on sexual health and emotional development.

Deficiencies:

- Websites lack simple design and user-friendly navigation.
- Features such as text-to-speech and adjustable text size are not available.

Recommendations:

- Websites should be redesigned to be easily usable for individuals with disabilities.
- They should include audio guides, large text options, and interactive content.

General Recommendations

Adaptation of Materials:

- Written and visual materials should be supported with simplified language and pictograms.
- Videos and audio guides should include sign language and simple explanations.

Technological Accessibility:

- Content related to sexual health and emotional development should be added to national platforms such as EBA.
- Mobile applications should be designed to meet the specific needs of individuals with disabilities.

Support for Educators and Families:

- Guides on sexual health education should be prepared for educators.
- Awareness-raising materials and guides for families should be widely distributed.

AŞAMA II: C) Gender perception in sex education programmes

This section will examine the inclusivity of sexual education programs in Turkey from the perspective of gender perception. The analysis will focus on how the needs of women, men, and non-binary individuals are addressed in these programs. Additionally, the representation of gender, the use of inclusive language, and the inclusion of diverse sexual orientations in current materials and programs will be evaluated.

1. Gender Representation in Educational Materials

Sexual education materials in Turkey generally adopt a heteronormative perspective. Most materials do not sufficiently emphasize gender equality or the diversity of gender identities.

Materials for Women:

Some guides in Turkey focus on reproductive health and maternal-child health for women. However, these materials lack content related to sexuality and emotional development.

- Example: Brochures distributed at Family Health Centers are typically centered on biological and reproductive health.

Non-Binary and LGBTQ+ Individuals:

Sexual education programs in Turkey often overlook the gender identities and sexual orientations of LGBTQ+ individuals. The lack of content tailored to non-binary individuals prevents the creation of an inclusive educational environment.

Recommendations:

- Materials should be redesigned to reflect gender equality and the diversity of gender identities.
- Guides addressing the needs of non-binary and LGBTQ+ individuals should be developed.

2. Inclusive and Neutral Language

Materials used in Turkey often employ gender-biased language. Most resources communicate through traditional gender roles, with limited use of gender-neutral language.

Deficiencies:

- Most materials use binary gender terms like "woman" and "man."
- Family-Oriented Materials: Resources for families also lack gender-neutral language. For instance, comprehensive information on gender identity or sexual orientation is rarely provided.

Recommendations:

- Educational materials and guides should be revised to use gender-neutral language.
- Educators should be trained in the use of inclusive language.

3. Addressing Diverse Sexual Orientations

Current education programs often avoid addressing diverse sexual orientations. The sexual health and emotional development needs of LGBTQ+ individuals are neglected, and no specific content is provided for them.

Deficiencies:

- There are almost no materials or training programs that provide information on the diversity of sexual orientations.
- Social Perception: Social exclusion experienced by LGBTQ+ individuals in sexual education further restricts their access to health and education rights.

Recommendations:

- Develop materials and educational content that address the diversity of sexual orientations.
- Organize awareness-raising campaigns to increase societal understanding.

4. Findings and Gaps

Finding: Sexual education programs in Turkey exhibit significant deficiencies in terms of gender equality. Non-binary individuals and the LGBTQ+ community are particularly absent from educational content.

Gaps:

- Sexual health guides prepared for women and LGBTQ+ individuals are highly limited.
- There are no materials addressing the needs of non-binary individuals.

Deficiencies:

- Educational materials lack a gender equality perspective and fail to use gender-neutral language.

Conclusions:

To improve the gender perception in sexual education programs in Turkey, it is necessary to:

- Use inclusive language in materials,
- Emphasize gender diversity,
- Develop content tailored to LGBTQ+ individuals.

Inclusive materials and guides should be prepared for educators and families to raise societal awareness.

AŞAMA III: IDENTIFICATION OF BARRIERS

At this stage, barriers preventing the effective implementation of inclusive and accessible emotional-sexual education for individuals with disabilities in Turkey will be analyzed. These barriers may be legal (as analyzed in Phase I), social, cultural, economic, technological, or related to the training of educational personnel.

Our goal is to identify the key factors limiting access to quality emotional-sexual education, with a particular focus on gender-specific and disability-related barriers.

AŞAMA III: Results of Surveys

As part of this study, a comprehensive investigation was conducted to analyze the barriers to inclusive and accessible emotional-sexual education for individuals with disabilities in Turkey.

During the research process, surveys were conducted with participants from various groups. The total number of participants includes:

- 64 family members and/or caregivers,
- 58 young individuals with disabilities (aged 18-25),
- 49 professionals.

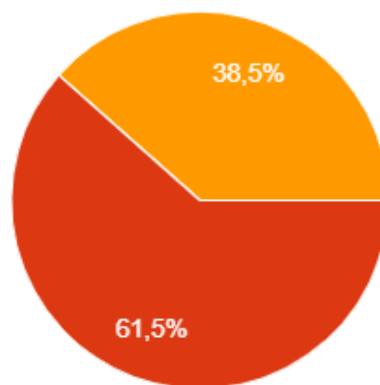
...participated in the surveys. This allowed for a comprehensive analysis of the subject through data gathered from different perspectives.

The survey results play a critical role in identifying barriers and developing potential solutions.

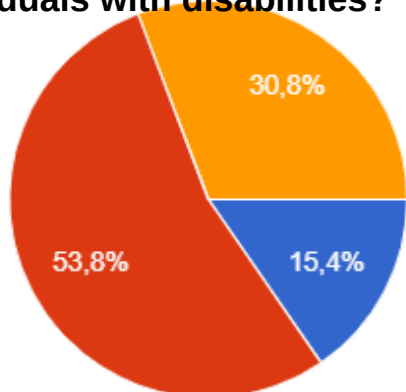
Survey for Family Members and/or Caregivers

- 61.9% of the 64 family members and/or caregivers surveyed believe there are no sufficient laws supporting emotional-sexual education.
- 38.5% are unsure whether such laws exist.
- When asked why, respondents emphasized their lack of knowledge on the subject.

1. Do you think there are sufficient laws supporting emotional-sexual education for individuals with disabilities?



2. Are you aware of any training programs or resources on emotional-sexual education for individuals with disabilities?



- Over half of the participants stated they were unaware of any resources related to emotional-sexual education.
- Only 15.4% mentioned being aware of paid online or in-person seminars and programs on the topic.

Topics Considered Most Important in Emotional-Sexual Education

Privacy and Sexuality Education – Categorized Responses

1. Privacy and Personal Development

- Privacy education: Teaching individuals how to satisfy their needs in a healthy and appropriate way.

- Understanding that sexuality is a natural need and providing education on how to manage it effectively.
- Educating on inviolability and appropriate behaviors in public settings as part of sexuality education.

2. Communication and Social Skills

- Establishing effective communication and developing patience in interpersonal relationships.
- The importance of maintaining healthy interpersonal relationships.
- Teaching the ability to express emotions rather than keeping them inside and to seek support when needed.

3. Family Education and Support Programs

- Organizing seminars, panels, or small-group workshops to raise awareness and educate families.
- Making family education programs comprehensive and accessible.
- Providing individual counseling services to families.

4. Education and Social Integration

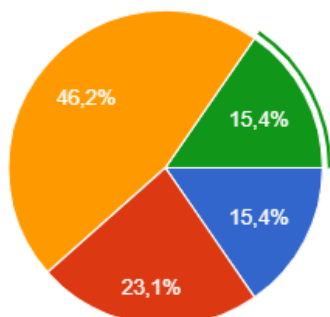
- Conducting initiatives for the adaptation and integration of individuals with disabilities into society, rather than promoting segregation.
- Preparing inclusive education modules that consider individuals with and without disabilities as equals.
- Adapting education programs according to age groups and education levels.

5. Adolescence and Sexual Development

- Focusing on the adolescent period and providing specialized education for this stage.
- Delivering comprehensive and detailed sexual education, including topics such as the structure of organs.

These responses clearly indicate that emotional and sexual education must be diversified to meet individual needs. They particularly emphasize the need to focus on privacy, communication skills, family education, and social integration. Participants highlighted the importance of developing inclusive education programs, facilitating the integration of individuals with disabilities into society, and raising awareness among families during this process. These findings provide guidance for making education programs more comprehensive and accessible in terms of both content and methods.

Do you think your family member with a disability accesses content related to sexuality and/or pornography on social media or the internet?



The responses highlight the uncertainty surrounding individuals with disabilities accessing content related to sexuality and/or pornography via the internet and social media.

- 46.2% of participants stated that they were unaware of such access.
- 15.4% believed access was possible.
- 23.1% believed there was no such access.

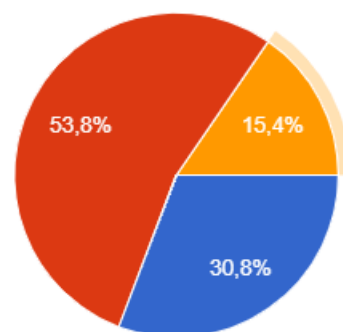
This indicates a lack of awareness on the topic and underscores the necessity for families to be more informed about potential access to such content.

The data emphasize the importance of conducting further research to understand the behavior of individuals with disabilities on digital platforms and the impact of such content. Additionally, it shows the need for guidance and informational programs to raise awareness among families.

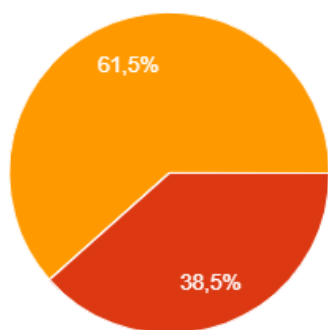
Do you have any control measures or rules regarding internet and social media use at home?

- 53.8% of respondents stated that they had no control measures or rules in place for internet and social media use at home.
- 30.8% reported implementing control measures.
- 15.4% stated they were unaware of such measures or did not provide a response.

These results indicate that a controlled approach to internet and social media use is not sufficiently widespread. They also highlight the need to raise awareness about ensuring the safety of individuals with disabilities on digital platforms.



Do you think the current educational resources on emotional-sexual education are accessible and suitable for individuals with disabilities?

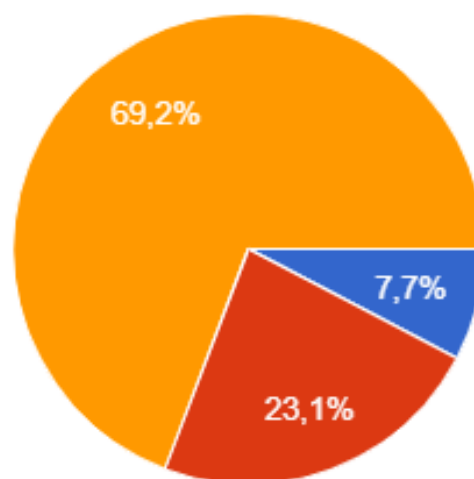


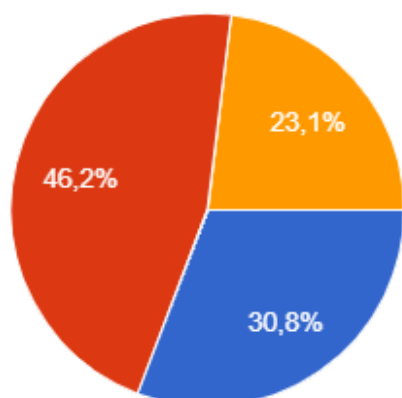
- 61.5% of survey participants stated that they were unaware of whether the current emotional-sexual education resources are accessible and suitable for individuals with disabilities.
- 38.5% said they believe such resources are insufficient.

This situation highlights a lack of awareness and knowledge about existing resources and their accessibility. It emphasizes the need for developing more comprehensive and accessible educational materials for individuals with disabilities.

Are the educational resources you are familiar with adapted appropriately for different genders?

- 69.2% of participants stated that they were unaware of whether the educational resources they knew about were adapted appropriately for different genders.
- 23.1% indicated that the resources they knew of were not adapted for different genders.
- Only 7.7% stated that they knew of resources adapted for different genders, emphasizing the need for the creation of gender-sensitive educational materials.





Have you observed any cultural or social barriers that hinder access to appropriate emotional-sexual education?

30.8% of survey participants stated that they observed cultural or social barriers hindering access to appropriate emotional-sexual education, while 46.2% indicated that they had not observed such a situation. 23.1% said they had no opinion on the matter or chose not to respond. These results highlight differing perceptions regarding the existence of cultural and social barriers and underline the need for greater awareness and further research in this field.

Participants' opinions on the barriers:

General Family Structure in Anatolia:

While the topic of emotionality is addressed to some extent, sexuality is largely ignored or covered up. This may lead to similar reactions and barriers in providing sexual education to individuals with disabilities.

Taboo Nature:

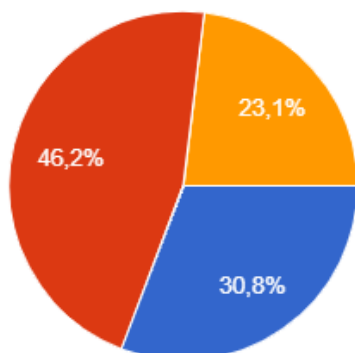
The perception of sexuality as a taboo topic in society has been identified as one of the primary factors preventing open discussions and the widespread implementation of educational programs.

Cosmopolitan Structure:

The country's cosmopolitan nature, with various cultures coexisting, makes it challenging to establish a common ground for education and awareness initiatives.

Tabooization:

The tabooization of sexuality in society is seen as a major barrier in itself. This situation demonstrates the need for more awareness efforts to normalize emotional-sexual education in society, the design of educational programs that consider cultural sensitivities, and long-term approaches to breaking these taboos.

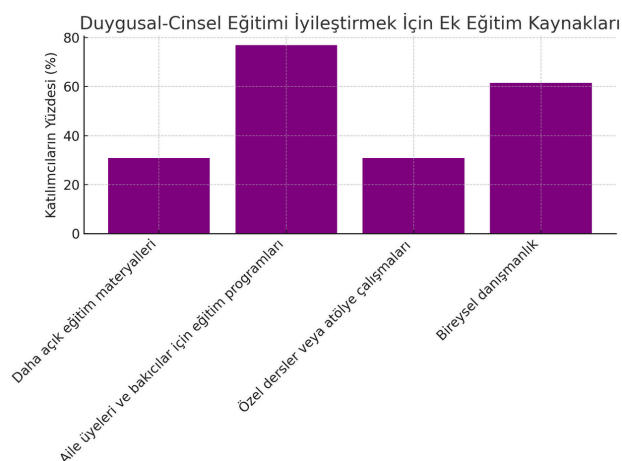
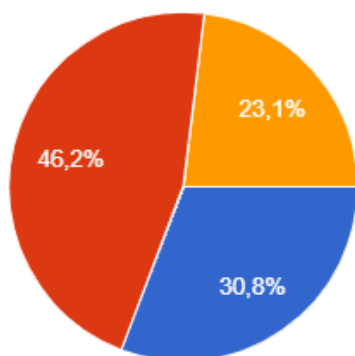


Do you think economic barriers affect access to emotional-sexual education for individuals with disabilities?

30.8% of participants stated that economic barriers were impactful, while 46.2% indicated that economic barriers were not an obstacle. 23.1% expressed that they had no opinion on the matter.

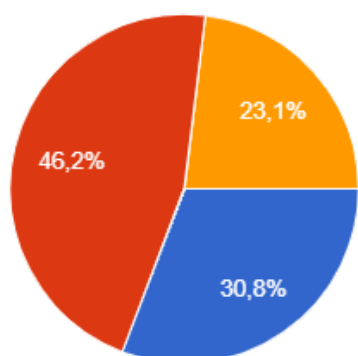
What additional educational resources do you think would be helpful to improve emotional-sexual education?

1. 76.9%: Training programs for family members and caregivers.
2. 61.5%: Individual counseling.
3. 30.8%: More explicit educational materials and private lessons/workshops.



Do you think the emotional-sexual education-related special needs of your family member or the individual you care for are adequately met?

69.2% of participants stated that special needs were not adequately met. This highlights the need for more comprehensive education and support initiatives tailored to special needs.



What changes do you think are necessary to improve emotional-sexual education for individuals with disabilities?

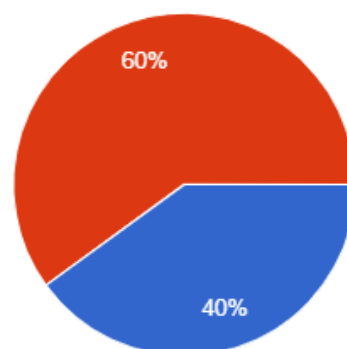
46.2% of participants stated that improvements in legal regulations are needed, while another 46.2% emphasized the need to increase the accessibility of resources. A smaller proportion, 7.7%, considered the reduction of economic barriers to be important.

These findings reveal the need for a multifaceted approach to make emotional-sexual education accessible, inclusive, and effective. Key challenges in this field include economic and social barriers, shortcomings in legal regulations, inadequate resources, and unmet individual needs. Solutions lie in developing comprehensive and sustainable education programs that prioritize families and individuals while aiming to break societal taboos. In this process, both private support mechanisms such as individual counseling and educational materials aimed at raising societal awareness play a significant role. Additionally, regulations supporting education legally should be implemented, and these resources should be made accessible to everyone.

Survey on Relationships and Personal Care for Young People with Disabilities (Ages 14-25)

Age Distribution:

A total of 58 young individuals with disabilities aged 14-25 participated in this survey. 60% of the participants were between the ages of 20-25, while 40% were between 14-20. This age distribution provides significant demographic insight into understanding the needs and expectations of young individuals with disabilities regarding relationships and personal care.



Question 1: Have you received information about how your body works and personal care?

40% of participants stated that they had received information about body care and body functions, while 60% said they had not. This indicates a lack of fundamental knowledge among young individuals with disabilities regarding personal body education and care. It is crucial to make educational programs in this area more accessible to address these deficiencies.

Question 2: Have you received information about making friends or having a partner?

80% of participants stated that they had not received information on this topic, while 20% said they had. This result highlights the lack of guidance young individuals with disabilities face regarding social relationships and partnerships. It is evident that social relationship education needs to be expanded.

Question 3: Would you like to learn more about how to take care of your body?

80% of participants expressed a desire to learn more about body care, while 20% said they did not feel the need for this. This data demonstrates the willingness of young individuals to learn in this area and the necessity of increasing educational opportunities.

Question 4: Do you have someone you trust with whom you can talk about topics like your body, emotions, sexuality, etc.?

60% of participants stated that they did not have such a person, while 20% said they did, and another 20% said they had no opinion on the matter. This indicates that young individuals struggle to find guidance and support in emotional and sexual matters.

Question 5: Would you like more classes or discussions on topics like the body, sexuality, and relationships with others?

100% of participants expressed a desire for more classes or discussions on these topics. This clearly indicates the need to increase education and address these topics more openly.

Question 6: How do you prefer information to be explained to you?

100% of participants stated that they preferred information to be presented through someone explaining it to them. This underscores the importance of individual support and guidance for young individuals with disabilities.

Question 7: Have you encountered content about the body, sexuality, and relationships on the internet or social networks (Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, etc.)?

60% of participants stated that they had not come across such content, while 40% said they had. This data highlights the need for more open and guidance-oriented content on these topics to be shared on social media platforms.

Question 8: Are you comfortable discussing these topics (getting to know your body, emotions, sexuality, social relationships, etc.) with your friends and family?

60% of participants indicated that they were not comfortable discussing these topics, 20% said they were comfortable, and 20% did not express an opinion. This demonstrates the need for these topics to be addressed more openly within families and peer groups.

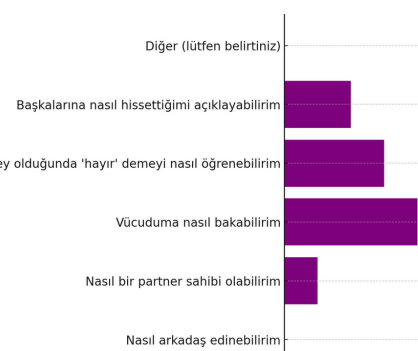
Question 9: Do you have access to educational materials, such as books or videos, on the body, sexuality, and social relationships?

80% of participants stated that they did not have access to such materials, while 20% said they did. This clearly shows the need to increase accessibility to educational resources.

Question 10: What topics would you like to learn more about?

According to the chart, the topic most participants wanted to learn more about was "How can I take care of my body?" (80%). This was followed by "How can I learn to say 'no' when I don't like something?" (60%) and "How can I explain my feelings to others?" (40%). "How can I have a partner?" was less preferred at 20%, while there was no demand for "How can I make friends?" or the "Other" option.

These results indicate that young individuals with disabilities have a greater need for knowledge about personal care and expressing their boundaries, while social relationships and partnership topics are of lower priority. It is clear that educational and guidance programs should be structured to focus on these priorities.



Survey on Emotional-Sexual Education for Professionals Working with Individuals with Disabilities

Question 1: Do you work with individuals with disabilities?

61.2% of the 49 participants stated that they work with individuals with disabilities, 20.4% said they work with them occasionally, and 18.4% indicated that they do not work in this field.

The majority of professionals actively work with individuals with disabilities, suggesting that the participant group can share insights based on their experiences and observations in this area.

Question 2: Do you have training or experience in emotional-sexual education?

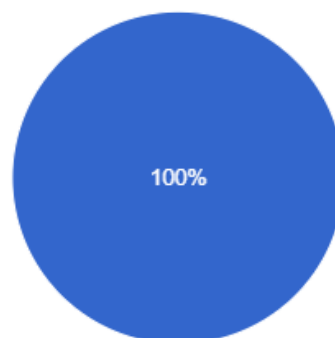
71.4% of participants stated that they have no training or experience in this area, while only 28.6% reported having experience.

The lack of experience in emotional-sexual education highlights the need for more training and information for professionals in this field, presenting an opportunity to develop educational programs.

Question 3: Do you think it is necessary to strengthen emotional-sexual education for individuals with disabilities?

100% of participants stated that strengthening this education is necessary.

This result shows that all professionals believe emotional-sexual education is an important and essential area for individuals with disabilities that needs to be developed. It is evident that any initiatives in this area would have the full support of participants.



Question 4: Do you think there are sufficient regulations supporting emotional-sexual education for individuals with disabilities?

69.4% of participants stated that the current regulations are insufficient, 24.5% expressed that they have no opinion on the matter, and only 6.1% believe the regulations are adequate.

This result highlights both the insufficiency of current regulations as perceived by professionals and a lack of awareness about these regulations. It indicates the need for improvements in legislation and its promotion.

Question 5: If yes, what regulations do you know that directly or indirectly support emotional-sexual education for individuals with disabilities?

Responses from participants revealed that very few were knowledgeable about such regulations. Among the answers, some mentioned that sexual education lessons provided to special education teachers are adapted to the level of special education students. Other participants indicated that they lacked information on the subject.

This underscores the need to raise awareness about these regulations and to introduce such practices to a broader group of professionals. Additionally, it is clear that regulations need to be made more effective and accessible.

Question 6: Are you aware of any training programs or resources on emotional-sexual education for individuals with disabilities?

57.1% of participants stated that they are unaware of any resources or training programs on this topic, while 22.4% indicated they are aware of some. 20.4% said they had no opinion.

This result reveals a lack of knowledge about emotional-sexual education and insufficient promotion of available resources. There is a clear need to make more training programs accessible and to increase their visibility.

Question 7: Please specify the programs or resources you know of (training programs, social media, or others):

Participants referred to various resources such as "special education and sexual education courses," "sexual education courses for students with special needs in universities," "academic articles," and "seminars." However, many participants indicated that they were unaware of or unfamiliar with any resources on this topic.

Comment: These findings show that while some academic and educational resources exist, they are not sufficiently disseminated. Moreover, there is uncertainty about the effectiveness of these resources in practice. There is a need to develop more comprehensive and accessible resources.

Question 8: What do you consider the most important topics to be addressed in emotional-sexual education?

Responses from participants highlighted key topics that should be the focus of emotional-sexual education:

- Understanding one's own body and distinguishing between good touch and bad touch.
- Developing awareness of sexual identity and the opposite sex, along with the ability to express oneself appropriately.
- Providing guidance on how to meet sexual needs.
- Teaching privacy and establishing personal boundaries.
- Educating about safe emotional relationships and conditions for safe sexual interactions.
- Promoting the conscious use of social media and other digital platforms.
- Conveying that sexuality is not a shameful topic and fostering a positive communication model.
- Educating families and raising awareness about sexuality.
- Helping individuals with disabilities learn to manage their sexuality in a socially harmonious manner.
- Awareness of the body, personal boundaries, and individual rights.
- Training on protection from harassment and abuse.
- Educating about the changes during adolescence and appropriate behaviors for this period.
- Adopting a widespread educational model aimed at breaking societal taboos surrounding sexuality.

These responses emphasize the need for a holistic and inclusive approach to emotional-sexual education, addressing both individual and societal dimensions.

The responses provided by participants emphasize the critical importance of fostering awareness about defining both emotional and physical boundaries, self-expression, and sexuality. Additionally, raising awareness among families and developing educational models to challenge societal taboos stand out as significant necessities.

Question 9: Do you think it is easy to access content related to sexuality and/or pornography on the internet/social media?

All participants (100%) stated that accessing such content is easy.

Comment: This result highlights the need for stricter regulations and access control measures to protect especially young people and children. Integrating educational content into these platforms and blocking misleading content is a critical necessity.

Question 10: Do you find the current educational resources on emotional-sexual education accessible and suitable for individuals with disabilities?

81.6% of participants stated that the current resources are not accessible or suitable, while only 18.4% found them appropriate.

Comment: This result reflects a widespread perception that the resources for emotional-sexual education are not sufficiently accessible or suitable for individuals with disabilities. There is a need to make these resources more inclusive and accessible.

Question 11: Among the resources you know, are the educational materials adapted appropriately for different genders?

63.3% of participants stated that they were unaware or had no opinion on this matter, while 18.4% indicated that the materials are appropriately adapted, and another 18.4% said they are not.

Comment: The need for gender-sensitive educational materials has been emphasized. Additionally, increasing awareness of such resources through more promotion and outreach efforts is necessary.

Question 12: Have you observed any cultural or social barriers hindering access to emotional-sexual education?

71.4% of participants stated that there are cultural or social barriers, 18.4% said there are no such barriers, and 10.2% expressed no opinion on the matter. Cultural and social barriers are seen as significant challenges to accessing emotional-sexual education. Awareness campaigns and educational programs are essential to overcome societal taboos.

Question 13: Do you think economic barriers affect access to emotional-sexual education for individuals with disabilities?

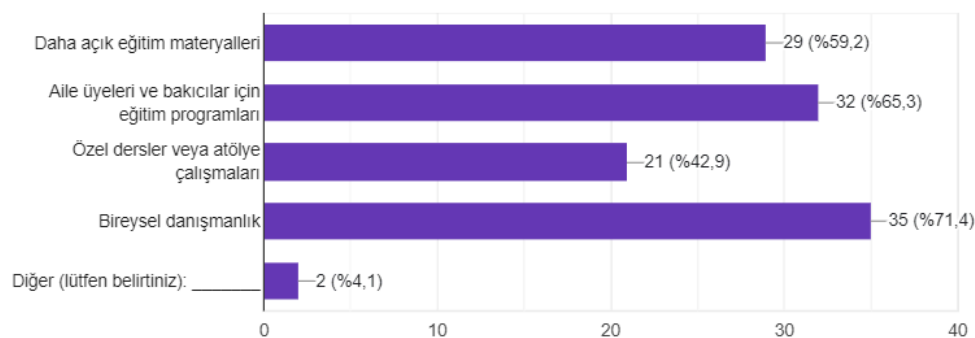
71.4% of participants indicated that economic barriers are impactful, 18.4% said there are no such barriers, and 10.2% had no opinion. Economic barriers are seen as a major factor in limiting access to education. Therefore, increasing the availability of low-cost or free educational programs is necessary.

Question 14: What additional educational resources do you think would be beneficial to improve emotional-sexual education?

The graph shows the perceived usefulness of proposed additional resources as follows:

- Individual counseling (71.4%): The highest percentage highlights the importance of personal guidance and support.
- Training programs for family members and caregivers (65.3%): A significant portion of participants emphasized the critical role of involving families and caregivers in the process.
- More explicit educational materials (59.2%): Participants expressed the need for more comprehensible and accessible materials.
- Private lessons or workshops (42.9%): Specific and targeted education sessions were also noted as effective by many.
- Other (4.1%): Only a small number of participants suggested alternative options.

These findings stress the importance of individualized support, family involvement, and accessible, clear educational materials to enhance emotional-sexual education.



These results indicate that developing individual counseling, family education, and clear educational materials are priority areas in efforts to improve emotional-sexual education. Particularly, involving families in the process and promoting individualized education models are essential steps forward

CONCLUSION

General Conclusion: Emotional and Sexual Education Framework for Individuals with Disabilities in Turkey

This comprehensive study examined various aspects of emotional and sexual education for individuals with disabilities in Turkey. The analysis included the legal framework, academic and practical literature reviews, expert opinions, and an evaluation of existing resources. It identified significant gaps, particularly in accessibility and gender inclusion, and proposed a roadmap for the future.

1. Legal Framework

The legal framework in Turkey is insufficient in addressing the emotional and sexual education needs of individuals with disabilities. Existing regulations primarily focus on general rights and access to education and healthcare but lack comprehensive guidelines specific to emotional and sexual health education.

Key Findings:

- There is no specific national legislation dedicated to emotional and sexual education.
- Municipalities and local initiatives partially address this gap; however, these efforts are neither standardized nor scalable.

This highlights the need for a robust, nationwide regulatory framework that explicitly integrates emotional and sexual education as a core component of disability rights and services.

2. Academic and Practical Literature Review

The literature review revealed that academic research and practical frameworks on this subject are limited in the Turkish context. Existing studies mainly focus on general education or social inclusion, with insufficient attention to emotional and sexual dimensions.

Key Findings:

- Academic research on emotional and sexual education is significantly limited.
- Practical frameworks specific to Turkey are not developed in alignment with cultural and societal norms.

Recommendations:

- Universities should encourage research in this area and integrate international best practices into local needs.
- Collaboration between universities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and local governments should be fostered.

3. Expert Opinions

Interviews with experts highlighted systematic barriers such as social stigma, insufficient training for educators, and limited resources for inclusive programs. Experts emphasized the urgent need for specially designed educational models.

Key Findings:

- Professionals lack adequate knowledge and materials on emotional and sexual education.
- Families are unsupported in addressing these topics with their children.

Recommendations:

- Develop comprehensive training programs for educators, healthcare workers, and social service professionals.
- Provide workshops and accessible informational materials for families.

4. Accessibility and Resource Limitations

An analysis of resource accessibility showed that materials meeting the needs of individuals with disabilities are severely limited. Existing content typically focuses on general education, with inadequate adaptations for individuals with disabilities.

Key Findings:

- Resources tailored for individuals with disabilities are scarce.
- Available content lacks sufficient customization for the unique needs of this group.

Recommendations:

- Create inclusive and accessible materials specifically designed for individuals with disabilities.
- Ensure that resources are widely distributed and available in multiple formats to accommodate diverse needs.

Key Findings:

- There is a notable lack of content tailored for individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities.
- Visual and auditory resources lack accessibility features such as sign language and audio descriptions.

Recommendations:

- Develop tailored resources for each disability group (e.g., Braille materials, pictograms, interactive digital platforms).
- Support videos with sign language and simple explanations.

5. Gender and Inclusion

Sexual education programs in Turkey demonstrate significant shortcomings in addressing gender equality. These programs often neglect the needs of women, LGBTQ+ individuals, and non-binary people, perpetuating inequalities.

Key Findings:

- LGBTQ+ individuals are entirely excluded from educational content.
- Materials rely on heteronormative and traditional gender roles.

Recommendations:

- Revise educational materials to address gender diversity and equality.
- Provide gender sensitivity training for educators.

General Findings:

Systematic Gaps:

- Turkey lacks a unified framework addressing emotional and sexual education for individuals with disabilities. Significant gaps exist in accessibility, inclusivity, and content development.

Cultural Barriers:

- Misconceptions about sexuality and disability restrict both legal frameworks and educational programs.

Opportunities for Change:

- Local initiatives, international best practices, and technological advancements provide a solid foundation for developing a comprehensive framework.

Recommendations for Future Actions:

Legislation and Policy Development:

- Establish a clear national policy on emotional and sexual education.
- Integrate standards covering these areas into the education system.

These steps can pave the way for a more inclusive, accessible, and impactful approach to emotional and sexual education for individuals with disabilities in Turkey.

Educational Framework:

- Design inclusive, accessible, and comprehensive educational programs.
- Include gender-sensitive and culturally adaptive materials for diverse populations.

Awareness and Training:

- Conduct public awareness campaigns to address cultural taboos.
- Provide professional development for educators, healthcare providers, and families.

Resource Development:

- Develop and disseminate accessible materials tailored to different needs, utilizing technology to enhance reach and effectiveness.

Resource Development:

- Develop accessible, culturally sensitive materials tailored to specific types of disabilities.
- Utilize technological tools such as interactive digital platforms.

Community Involvement:

- Conduct awareness campaigns to reduce stigma and foster understanding of the needs of individuals with disabilities.
- Engage families, educators, and advocacy groups in the design and implementation of programs.

International Collaboration:

- Adapt successful models from countries like Sweden and Canada to Turkey's social and cultural context.
- Seek funding, training, and resources from international organizations.

Research and Monitoring:

- Establish an institute dedicated to research on emotional and sexual education for individuals with disabilities.
- Regularly monitor whether implemented programs meet accessibility and inclusivity standards.

Conclusion

Emotional and sexual education for individuals with disabilities is not just an educational matter; it is a critical step toward equality, dignity, and inclusion. By addressing gaps in legislation, social awareness, and resources, Turkey can create a more inclusive society where the rights and needs of individuals with disabilities are fully recognized and supported.

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