Exploration Towards Pleasure

Knowledge About Sexuality Produced With And For People With Intellectual Disabilities

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**Abstract**
In both Western societies and academic research, the sexuality of people with intellectual disabilities is many times ignored or suppressed, often based on the assumption that people with intellectual disabilities are especially vulnerable and in need of protection. This study analyses the discourse produced by a Swedish sexual education material addressed to people with intellectual disabilities, that challenges this suppression by focusing on the role of the body and pleasure. The study shows that the alternative discourse addresses people with intellectual disabilities as being self-responsible for experiencing a pleasurable sexuality and is build upon two intertwined lines of argumentation: the importance of consent and the encouragement to embrace vulnerability. This thesis calls for more research that includes the sexual experiences and perspectives of people with intellectual disabilities to get a deeper understanding of the discourse’s development.

**Keywords**
intellectual disabilities, sexuality, sexual education, consent, pleasure, vulnerability
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To Julia.
Abstract

In both Western societies and academic research, the sexuality of people with intellectual disabilities is many times ignored or suppressed, often based on the assumption that people with intellectual disabilities are especially vulnerable and in need of protection. This study analyses the discourse produced by a Swedish sexual education material addressed to people with intellectual disabilities, that challenges this suppression by focusing on the role of the body and pleasure. The study shows that the alternative discourse addresses people with intellectual disabilities as being self-responsible for experiencing a pleasurable sexuality and is build upon two intertwined lines of argumentation: the importance of consent and the encouragement to embrace vulnerability. This thesis calls for more research that includes the sexual experiences and perspectives of people with intellectual disabilities to get a deeper understanding of the discourse’s development.

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1. Introduction

Saturday evening. Two young adults with intellectual disabilities are in the room at the group home where one of them lives. They sit on a sofa close to each other, not yet touching, surrounded by colourful cushions and blankets. They watch TV on a low volume and eat crispy chips. They have lighted red candles all around the room. The atmosphere is cozy and warm. They chat and laugh. They have known each other for some years now. They feel comfortable around each other. Both feel at home. Both feel they can be themselves around each other. They touch and kiss, cuddle and fondle. Their hands explore each other’s bodies. There’s pure, slow curiosity, joy, and pleasure. They realize how lucky they are with each other. This feeling spreads in their whole bodies, makes them soft and warm, and sexy. Their contacts, their being-together, their feelings are intense.

Outside the door’s room they put up a sign they have drawn on their own. ‘Please don’t disturb. We’re having a good time together and want to enjoy it on our own.’ The other residents and the assistants know this means that the two might have sex. Some might be a bit jealous, others are just very happy for them, most are both at the same time. They might make some comments, laugh at their noises, and ask how it was the next day – knowing they won’t get an answer, and actually not even wanting an answer. The two do not want to tell anything, but are nevertheless glad the others ask. They know, if there is something they want to know or need help with, they can either ask assistants or other residents. Even if that might feel a bit embarrassing, they know that they are supported in their relationship.

I have lived in a flat-sharing community all six years of my student life. Knowing and respecting when a flatmate has someone over, a partner, or just a random person from the bar last night, and expecting to meet the same attitude from all flatmates, has been usual for me. In the vision1 I describe above, this viewpoint characterised by accepting and respecting everybody’s sexuality is self-evident for everybody who lives together with others that are not family members, including assisted group homes for people with intellectual or other disabilities.

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1 I found the words to describe this vision after doing a meditation suggested by Nina Lykke (2014: 153ff.) in her guidelines of how to write an academic introduction that is pleasurable to read.
As I have learned from reading research in the field on (intellectual) disability and sexuality, this vision is however not the usual reality. The identities and capacities of people with (intellectual) disabilities as sexual, loving beings are invisible to others most of the time (Zitzelsberger 2005, p. 400). They face overprotection that restricts their independence and limits their social lives (Nosek et al. 2001). In assisted group homes and institutions, privacy is limited, at times to an extreme degree (Fish 2016). To mention an example situated in Sweden, assistants are not allowed to bring up private topics such as sexuality, the expression of sexual desires is ignored, and, in general, sexuality is not seriously and comprehensively discussed in relation to intellectual disabilities (Kulick & Rydström 2015, p. 79ff.). These strict rules are often justified with the assumed vulnerability of people with intellectual disabilities, but end up limiting their life quality to an extreme extent. Instead, “services should consider how to balance protection and risk” (Fish 2016, p. 654). Among people with intellectual disabilities and in the sexual education they receive, positive attitudes toward sexuality and sexual pleasure are developing slowly. As a result, misconceptions and a lack of knowledge are relatively usual among people with intellectual disabilities (Jahoda & Pownall 2014). Moreover, a “failure to develop a more balanced or positive view of their own sexuality might reduce young people’s sense of agency and control, making them more reluctant to seek out information they require or the confidence to express their own wishes for intimate relationships.” (Jahoda & Pownall 2014, p. 439). This diminished sexual agency is yet a fundamental part of human dignity. It is necessary to create discourses that counter the emphasis on protection, prevention, and increased vulnerability (Wilkerson 2002) in relation to sexuality and intellectual disability.

In this study, I analyse a sexual education material for people with intellectual disabilities produced by people that share this viewpoint and have the same vision as I do. Erika Gustavsson, Jos Rossling, Mia Bobzow, and Sheila Silvestre are members of a non-profit organisation situated in Gothenburg, Sweden, with the name forum SKILL who from a human rights perspective aim to work for inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities in different projects. forum SKILL is short for Samarbete (cooperation), Kompetens (competence), Intersektionalitet (intersectionality), Lärande (learning) and Lust (enthusiasm/ pleasure), but also carries the meaning of the English word skill. Gustavsson, Rossling, Bobzow, and Silvestre are the project group behind the sexual education material that is the subject of this thesis: Sex this is how it works (forum SKILL 2015a, 2015b, Om Sex). It was elaborated in cooperation with people with intellectual disabilities and addresses Swedish speaking adults
with intellectual disabilities who are interested in learning more about sexuality. It consists of a fact book in Easy Swedish, a fictional film, a guide book for teachers, assistants, or parents who want to lead a discussion about sexuality based on the material, and discussion cards with photos and illustrations to facilitate a conversation.

This thesis shall provide an in-depth and profound understanding of the discourse that is provided by the *forum SKILL*-material as an alternative to the prevalent discourse on intellectual disabilities and sexuality. The description of sexuality in this vision of pleasurable, respectful, and joyful perspective on sexuality for people with intellectual disabilities (to which I will refer to as people with ID from now on) shall be examined.

2. Aims and Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to analyze what in this alternative discourse produced with and for people with ID is perceived as sexuality, what is related to sexuality, and what is deemed relevant for sexuality as well as how these choices are argued for. The material is addressed to people with intellectual, neuropsychiatric and/or other cognitive disabilities or difficulties. I use the term ‘intellectual disabilities’ as an umbrella term for all disabilities or difficulties that limit the mental capacity and conceptual, social, and practical skills which may appear at any age. For this study, the cause of the disability is not of further relevance. I understand sexuality as a way to pleasurably and intimately relate to oneself and others in an embodied way. Furthermore, I intend to analyze the appraisal of sexuality and different facets of sexuality as well as the underlying argumentation. I understand discourse as the field of what is expressed and how it is expressed. In a discourse, a certain reasoning rules and decides what connections sound plausible and what conclusions can be drawn. A discourse, thus, presents a form of truth in a Foucauldian understanding, which “means that truth is always contingent and subject to scrutiny” (Graham 2012, p. 115) as well as depending on the social and geopolitical context. A discourse “reflected, creates, shapes, re-creates, and reifies meaning in the lifeworld.” (Strauss & Feiz 2014, p. 1). Consequently, it is important to highlight the connections between language and materiality.

Since both sexuality and intellectual disabilities are connected to embodied experiences, the latter are, likewise materiality, existential elements of the intervention. On the other hand, being able to speak about embodied experiences and materiality affects them in a substantial way and makes them ‘more real’. Language, materiality and embodied experiences constantly
influence each other and are, hence, entangled. As a consequence, to analyze the discourse on sexuality that is produced in this pedagogical material for people with ID is important to understand how sexuality is depicted. Since the material is framed as pedagogical and includes explanations as well as advice, it is powerful in its effects, because it enables the authors to “reveal something about how [they] perceive the world, […] and [to] guide others to see the world in various ways” (Strauss & Feiz 2014, p. 3). Moreover, the material is in written, printed and recorded form and, thus, prohibits direct responses. This renders the discourse relatively stable and consistent (Strauss & Feiz 2014, p. 65). Furthermore, to my knowledge, this material by *forum SKILL* is in this form the only existing attempt to create an alternative discourse in Sweden. This enhances its influence, and makes the material an important subject to analyse.

I aim to understand two aspects of this alternative discourse on sexuality. One aspect is *intersectionality*: I want to analyze how categorizations such as dis/ability, gender, class, race, age etc., are made relevant in the discourse and how they are made relevant as well as which meanings are assigned to them. Inspired by Lann Hornscheidt, a German scholar of Gender Studies and Scandinavian linguistics who at the time of the cited publication still used the birthname Antje Hornscheidt, I use the term categorization instead of category “to emphasize the continually ongoing active constructive action which occurs when using categories.” (Hornscheidt 2009, p. 41). The characteristics and impacts of categorizations are always changing in relation to the context. It shall be understood how the discourse connects these categorizations to sexuality. The other aspect addresses *norms around sexuality which the discourse produces*. The material is framed as being norm-critical in the meaning of being inclusive (*forum SKILL* 2015a, p. 14), but as every discourse the material supports certain phenomena by framing them as usual and devalues other phenomena either by not mentioning them or by suggesting they are unusual or to be avoided. These two aspects lead to a set of research questions that I will present in the following.

My overarching research question is: *How is the alternative discourse on sexuality and intellectual disability represented in the chosen material characterised?* I will address this question in several steps. I will start by posting the open question about which topics are deemed relevant in the discourse of sexuality and intellectual disabilities. How are they represented? To understand why these topics are represented, I ask how their relevance for the discourse is elaborated and justified. Moreover, since in a discourse, a certain reasoning rules
and decides what connections sound plausible, I ask how the different topics are related to each other.

I will then move on to the discourse on intellectual disability and sexuality as a practice, which is a central topic in the material. Which behaviours and experiences are framed as sexual? With asking how they are appraised, I want to understand the choices for these behaviours and experiences. For a deeper understanding, I ask which sexual behaviours and experiences are deemed as problematic or challenging. How are challenges and problems addressed? Who is deemed responsible for addressing problems? With these questions I want to understand where limits of sexuality are constructed.

Additionally, in order to analyze how categorizations such as dis/ability, gender, class, race, age etc., are made relevant in the discourse, I will look at the material and its alternative discourse with an intersectional lens: What categorizations are mentioned? In which contexts and how are they mentioned? To avoid producing a rigid understanding of categorizations, I ask how different categorizations are related to each other. To get an insight in power relations that shape the categorizations, I ask who is given a voice in the material. To whom are the included topics and practices addressed? Are certain topics depicted differently depending on whom they are addressed to?

Finally, I aim to understand the discourse’s underlying reasoning and shall, based on the abovementioned questions, analyse the norms related to sexuality that are (re)produced. By asking what is represented as vital and important in the discourse, I want to understand what is (re)produced as essentials of sexuality. On the other hand, I also ask what is (re)produced as the limits of sexuality. To gain a comprehensive understanding of the discourse, I ask how limits and essentials are related to each other.

This rich set of research questions guides my analysis and the thesis’ structure. To guide you as reader through the thesis, I will repeat the questions in the beginning of the chapter that will answer them. The overarching research question will be discussed in the concluding parts of the thesis.
3. Personal Positioning

“We are responsible for the world within which we live not because it is an arbitrary construction of our choosing, but because it is sedimented out of particular practices that we have a role in shaping.” (Barad 1998, p. 102). This quote describes how I understand my own role as a researcher in the scope of this thesis, the role of the empirical material, and the role of all actors who participated in the production of this material: everybody shares responsibility for the discourse on sexuality and intellectual disabilities that is produced. Though, in this particular research process, I am the one who is primarily responsible for the analysis and the written thesis. Throughout the analysis, the material and I shape each other, and the outcoming result, we ‘intra-act’ with US-american feminist theorist Karen Barad’s words, because “...” are inseparable (Barad 1998, p. 96, italics in original). Since “thinking, observing, and theorizing [are] … practices of engagement with, and … part of, the world in which we have our being” (Barad 2007, p. 133), I have to account for my analysis of the discourse on sexuality and intellectual disabilities. Thus, in the following, I shall situate myself towards the topic.

A rumour about a case of sexual abuse of a severely intellectually and physically disabled woman I have known all my life and the ongoing silencing of it shows me how important it is to talk about sexuality and intellectual disabilities. More space to discuss openly is indispensable. There are no clear-cut limitations between what is wrong and what is right, and the restricted abilities of some people to communicate their personal boundaries make the limitations even more blurry. I think it is this insecurity which leads to an overall denial, suppression, and tabooing of sexuality and intellectual disability. Yet, as this experience has shown me, the tabooing does not prevent harmful incidents, but makes it even more difficult to talk about it. It is created to prevent people from getting hurt, but in the end, it increases the harm.

I have been working with many people with ID of various kinds and degrees in both Germany and Sweden in several contexts, such as group homes, working places, or leisure activities. In all these places, sexuality was never a main topic, there were no general instructions from staff members or higher levels of how to deal with sexuality, apart from rules of not getting “too close” with the clients – which was mostly understood in an emotional sense because physical closeness was an unavoidable part of the care work, whereas physical closeness in a sexual way was too much of a taboo to even be thought. So, whenever sexuality was a topic, it
was because a client had brought the topic up (deliberately by asking something, or by doing something “wrong” which was considered as being too close). I started working with people with disability at the age of 18 and being insecure with my own body as well as with my sexuality itself, these situations often rendered me uncomfortable, even though I – theoretically – always had the opinion that sexuality is a topic that needs open discussions in safe contexts. Experiencing these situations and reflecting on them reinforces my conviction that there is a need for more open discussions about sexuality and intellectual disability to provide both people with disabilities and everyone around them with the ability to discuss and produce ideas and knowledge about sexuality in safe environments.

My experience in working with people with different intellectual disabilities in different places has shown me that there is a lack of policies about how to deal with the sexuality of clients. The only rules and regulations are about the extent in which staff should get involved. The only conversations that happen with colleagues are about problematic issues such as the endangered safety of clients or what is understood as their disrespect of privacy. Usually, heterosexuality is assumed and homosexuality is ignored or interpreted as harmless, even in cases in which behaviour of two people of the opposite sex that is perceived as sexual is interpreted as wrong.

I have personally experienced how a negative relation to my body and oppressive experiences suppressed my sexual pleasure. On the other hand, I have also experienced that pleasurable sexual experiences affect my self-actualization positively. That is why I am convinced that positive experiences can prevent negative experiences to some extent – either by preventing the actual act or by diminishing the psychological impacts. My personal positioning to the topic of sexuality and intellectual disability stems from a composition of personal professional and family experiences. All these experiences and the feelings they have unleashed have made me understand that the sexuality of people with intellectual disability is an issue that comes up, that cannot be suppressed, even though that is tried often. Instead, it is a topic that becomes inevitably relevant. In order to develop a handling that does not hurt anybody it is relevant to talk about it openly and to carefully listen to each other.

4. Previous Research

In the following chapter, I shall present an overview of both theoretical considerations and empirical studies conducted on sexuality and disabilities. Some sources focus explicitly on
intellectual disability and sexuality, whereas others address disability in a general way, and some focus on other forms of disabilities. Nevertheless, their conclusions are productive for this thesis and I will show how they can be related to intellectual disabilities. Much research on disability and sexuality is of recent date since research interests in this field have mostly grown in the last 20 years. Much of the early research was conducted by researchers who have physical disabilities, whereas interest for other forms of disabilities and sexuality arose later.

Tom Shakespeare, a British scholar of Disability studies and activist in disabled people’s network, is one of the researchers who early started to work on sexuality. In his article about the role of sexuality in disability movements, he argues that the “work around disabled sexuality should not be narrowly defined as a matter of sexual desire and physical entwining” (2000, p. 166). Instead, he sees it as an integral part of the fight for “identity and solidarity and rights and respect in every area of the lives of disabled people” (ibid.). I agree with him, that the “barriers to the sexual expression of disabled people are primarily to do with the society in which we live” (Shakespeare 2000, p. 161). Empirical support for this argumentation can for example be found in the final report of a US-wide survey study with women with physical disabilities which shows that overprotection, a restricted independence, and a lack of accessibility in public places are hindrances for developing a social life (Nosek et al. 2001, p. 17). These are problems that people with ID share. Moreover, Canadian scholar in Health Science Hilde Zitzelsberger shows in her qualitative study with women with physical disabilities that

“the participants were subject to heightened visibility and invalidation of their bodies in conjunction with invisibility of their selves and lives, as persons and as women. The women’s identities and capacities—as citizens, as workers, as lovers, as mothers—often were denied, invalidated and unnoticed by others.” (Zitzelsberger 2005, p. 400).

It can be assumed that for people whose intellectual disability is visible, the same problematic is relevant. In an ethnographic study, English sociologist Rebecca Fish provides empirical support for this assumption. Her study, conducted with women with ID who lived in institutions, shows that the women’s sexual life was strongly regulated for example by limiting private spaces. The justification for strict regulations that limited sexual expression was based on the presumed vulnerability of the women. However, the study also showed women’s great ability to resist the rules. Fish concludes that “the ability to have sexual relationships is important […] and services should consider how to balance protection and risk” (Fish 2016, p. 654) instead of restricting an important part of the women’s life.
Undeniably, as these research results show, the society and the environment a person with ID lives in influences their sexual life.

However, unlike Shakespeare, I argue that “how to do it” (Shakespeare 2000, p. 161) can also be a problem regarding the sexual life of people with ID. On the one hand, as Fish’s study has shown, societal norms that lead to strict regulations and, thus, to a lack of privacy, can directly lead to practical difficulties (Fish 2016, p. 648). Physical limitations might be another reason, as a Canadian interdisciplinary researcher team shows in their study with physically disabled women who for example speak about self-built sex toys (Morales et al. 2016).

Though, most important for this thesis is that the predominant negative discourse, which portrays sexuality as dangerous and risky for people with disabilities, impedes a comprehensive sexual education. Research conducted in Canada with middle-aged, well-educated women (Morales et al. 2016) and in South-Africa with girls and young women with ID living in a township, who were interviewed by Disability scholar Washeila Sait (2006, p. 82), point towards a significant lack of sexual education for people with different kinds of disabilities in various contexts. Furthermore, scholar of learning disabilities Andrew Jahoda and psychologist Dr Jaycee Pownall compared the knowledge about sexuality of young people with and without mild intellectual disabilities living in Scotland. In a structured interview, they asked about physical changes and puberty, reproduction, contraception, and sexually transmitted diseases (Jahoda & Pownall 2014, p. 432f.). Their statistical analyses showed that in all studied topics, people with ID know less than people without ID. Both groups expressed misconceptions about contraception and the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, but among people with ID these were even more common and they additionally expressed misunderstandings about sexual intercourse. Moreover, the study showed a gender difference: Boys with ID know more about all the included topics than girls with ID, whereas this gender pattern was reversed among the participants without ID (Jahoda & Pownall 2014, p. 435). Even though the results should be interpreted carefully because the sample consisted of 60 participants which is small for a quantitative analysis, they indicate that in relation to knowledge about sexuality, both gender and intellectual disability intertwine in meaningful ways. The many misconceptions about sexuality among people with ID point to the importance of a broad sexual education. As Jahoda and Pownall state, “[t]he development of positive attitudes towards sexuality and sexual pleasure has received little attention in this population.” (Jahoda & Pownall 2014, p. 439).
This is not the only case of a slow change of attitudes in the field of sexuality and intellectual disabilities. In a study about contraceptive decision-making of women with intellectual disabilities, British researchers Susan Ledger, Sarah Earle, Elizabeth Tilley, and Jan Walmsley (2016) show that a gap between policies that promote self-determination and practice exist. Divergent from the policies, in reality, doctors, parents, and staff often did not trust the women to make their own decisions and to follow them through. Only few women resisted to these experiences of being patronized. Both studies show that sexual self-determination has become a norm on a theoretical level that is far from realized for people with ID in real life.

Thus, people with disabilities might actually not know that they can have sex, how to ask for it, how to experience pleasure, or how to have safer sex. Moreover, bodily differences (which are acknowledged by Shakespeare) might make specific knowledge necessary, for example how to adjust sex toys (Morales et al. 2016). Shakespeare (2000, p. 162) concludes that “we have to have a position that recognises difference, and limitation, and the very real problems which disabled people may have with their bodies and their lack of function.” Furthermore, he argues that a discussion of disabled sexuality should aim to open up possibilities of experiencing sexuality for everyone. To deal with bodily limitations gives space for creating sexuality that is individually pleasuring instead of oriented on ‘normal’ forms of sexuality (Shakespeare 2000, p. 164f.). All in all, he pleads for a discussion of sexuality that includes everyone and criticizes efforts to standardize sexuality or specific ways of being sexual. Rather, he wants to open up possibilities for everyone to position oneself towards sexuality without presetting its importance or any right ways of experiencing sexuality. The norm-critical approach of the material (forum SKILL 2015a, p. 14) that I analyse in this thesis fits, hence, Shakespeare’s claims.

Sexuality is a crucial aspect of life quality. It “is a vital means of pleasure, interpersonal connection, personal efficacy, and acceptance of one’s body and of self more generally.” (Wilkerson 2002, p. 34). Abby Wilkerson, philosopher with a focus on disability studies, examines the power of the medical discourse in producing the tabooing of sexual practices, desires, and identities. She argues that the two contradictory stereotypes, asexuality and hypersexuality, with which people with disabilities are often confronted, lead to the denial of sexual agency and thus influence the general agency of individuals. One underlying reason is the infantilizing of people with disabilities: They are assumed to be “incapable of forming
substantive life preferences, learning the skills necessary to negotiate sexual choices, or making meaningful decisions in general.” (Wilkerson 2002, p. 44). She also points out differences between genders, since “‘protection’ for young women is more likely to involve coercive or paternalistic measures […] rather than serious efforts to transform the rape culture which targets young women.” (Wilkerson 2002, p. 42). This corresponds to the research results on gender differences that I presented above: Women with ID are perceived as being vulnerable and in need of restrictive rules in order to protect them (Fish 2016). Moreover, possibly as a consequence, they have less knowledge about sexuality than men with ID (Jahoda & Pownall 2014). What is needed, according to Wilkerson (2002, p. 52), is “the creation of powerful counter-discourses”. Even though sexual education for people with ID can be challenging, it is essential to understand “sexual agency as a basic aspect of human dignity” (Wilkerson 2002, p. 43) for everybody. Similarly, in conclusion to their qualitative case study about the subjective experiences with sexuality and romance of adults with ID, US-American sexuality scholars George W. Turner and Betsy Crane (2016, p. 693), argue that “a quality life is one filled with pleasure, not with overprotection.” Overprotection can easily become “a self-fulfilling prophecy, disabling adults with ID from becoming socially and sexually competent and making them more sexually vulnerable.” (Turner & Crane 2016, p. 679). For the participants in their study, sexuality and pleasure both in a physical and emotional sense was crucial. They suggest that increasing “the sexual literacy of adults with ID by acknowledging their right to pleasure may be a successful strategy for reducing sexual misuse of this community” (Turner & Crane 2016, p. 693).

15 years ago, Wilkerson argued in the above introduced article that “any public articulation of sexuality as an aspect of life to which everyone should be entitled, still remains almost unthinkable within mainstream discourse.” (Wilkerson 2002, p. 35) This situation has started to change. A lot of research on sexuality and disability has been published since then and it is widely accepted that everyone has the right to decide about one’s own sexuality. However, as I already mentioned, it takes more time to change the practices and every-day implications towards a lived reality in which everyone feels able and entitled to be self-determinant about one’s sexuality (Ledger et al. 2016). Furthermore, much of the research and practices still follows a “disaster, disease and dysfunction approach” (Turner & Crane 2016, p. 679). Yet, potentials exist and to highlight them more is important to strengthen the self-esteem of people with disabilities.
This approach is followed in an extensive comparative analysis of sexuality and disability conducted in Denmark and Sweden by anthropologist Don Kulick and gender studies scholar Jens Rydström. In a nutshell, they find that Denmark has developed a positive handling of sexuality and disability with clear and supportive instructions for care workers and people with disabilities, whereas in Sweden (as in many other countries) sexuality of people with disability is mostly silenced and handled as a taboo, since it is mostly understood as dangerous for people with disabilities. They find that care workers are not allowed to talk about private topics such as sexuality, the expression of sexual desires is ignored (Kulick & Rydström 2015, p. 79f.), the sexuality of people with disabilities is seen as “unnatural, but public” (ibid.), and “any serious discussion about sexuality” (Kulick & Rydström 2015, p. 81) is missing. The empirical material are interviews with people with disabilities, parents, care workers, sexual advisors or assistants and activists, historical material that includes publications of activist groups and archival material, and ethnographic research in Danish group homes. In order to follow their approach to focus on potentials for a positive dealing with sexuality, they, however, focus on the differences between Sweden and Denmark and show Sweden thereby in a negative light that at points seems to be oversimplifying. They barely present, discuss or analyse intra-national differences concerning gender, sexual orientation, age, different disabilities, nationality, class etc. Moreover, they very much focus on group homes and the work done there.

Another study that gives insight in the Swedish context is sexologist Lotta Löfgren-Mårtenson’s (2003) dissertation. In her dissertation titled “New Generation of Young People with Intellectual Disabilities”, she analysed the sexual expression of young adults with ID in Sweden and the ways in which this is influenced by societal norms, parents and care workers with an ethnographic observation of dance nights and interviews. She shows that leisure time and possible meeting places are restricted, well-structured and often surveilled for people with ID. Spontaneous and/ or private meetings are seldom experienced (Löfgren-Mårtenson 2003, p. 75ff.). Likewise, people with ID are often depending on others and their self-determination is limited in different ways, depending on the staff’s values (Löfgren-Mårtenson 2003, p. 107ff.). Furthermore, the sexual expression varies widely due to the intellectual disabilities, the environment and other individual factors, just as there are variations among people without disabilities. However, sexual intercourse is relatively unusual (Löfgren-Mårtenson 2003, p. 137ff.). Löfgren-Mårtenson found that many young adults with intellectual disabilities seek a relationship. When they go to dances to meet
potential partners, communication is a key. “The opportunity of finding a partner increases markedly if both parties express body language and/or communicate in the same way or at the same level.” (Löfgren-Mårtenson 2003, p. 237). Moreover, her study shows that gender plays a significant role, interestingly in a non-traditional way: the young women “appear to be more forward in their approach to young men with intellectual disabilities.” (ibid.). She explains this with the environment the young adults live in which is often shaped by control and disciplining in order to prevent sexual intercourse, unplanned pregnancies, and sexual violence. Staff and parents feel that they have to take responsibility to prevent young adults with ID from harm (Löfgren-Mårtenson 2003, p. 203). In addition to that, the staff is often mostly female, and female staff is, according to her study, more restrictive especially towards sexual expression of boys and men. This leads to insecurity and passivity among the boys and young men with ID, since they mostly learn what is not allowed in terms of sexual expressions. (Löfgren-Mårtenson 2003, p. 238f.). Also, insecurity appears when it comes to sexual expression between two persons of the same sex, because homosexual acts are framed as friendship, phase, or inappropriate behaviour. This makes it especially difficult for homosexuals with ID to understand their sexual identity.

To conclude, a lack of research exists in terms of a positive view on sexuality and intellectual disabilities and only few studies have been conducted in Sweden. But also masturbation and intellectual disabilities are studied too little. Morales et al. (2016, p. 310) showed in their study with women with physical disabilities the multiple benefits of masturbation which was described “as effective as medication, if not more so, to mitigate pain, promote sleep and calm their anxiety.” Moreover, research on men with intellectual disabilities is lacking. Many studies are conducted only with women, whereas others point towards gender differences in various forms.

Many studies have shown that people with ID have the same sexual desire as people without disabilities, but that they have less experience and less knowledge about sexuality. This means a considerable reduction of life quality for many people with ID. Everyone should have the possibility to explore their sexuality in a way that they feel comfortable with. As how the situation is nowadays, this is not actualized for many people with ID. This study focuses on a pedagogical material that aims to change this situation and will be presented in detail in the next chapter.
5. Presentation of the forum SKILL-material

The empirical material this study is based on is a Swedish sex education material titled “Sex this is how it works” which consists of an easy-to-read fact book (forum SKILL 2015b), the fictional film “About Sex” (Om Sex 2015), a guidebook with instructions (forum SKILL 2015a), and a box of 30 discussion cards with photos, illustration, and scene shots from the film that are supposed to invite discussions. The material is produced and purchased by the Swedish non-profit resource organisation forum SKILL that runs a variety of projects and activities concerned with human rights in Gothenburg. forum SKILL links research and practice and cooperates with associations, organisations, the municipality, the region, and the educational sector. Broadly speaking, the material covers the topics sex, relationships and sexuality and is primarily addressed to adolescents and young adults with intellectual, neuropsychiatric and/or other cognitive disabilities or difficulties. I refer to this group as primary target group or as people with ID. The purpose of the material is to encourage and facilitate discussions about sexuality in schools, group homes, work places or other places where the target group regularly meets.

The fact book “Sex This Is How It Works. A Book on Sex, Love and Relationships” (forum SKILL 2015b) is written in easy-to-read Swedish and 175 pages long. The font is big, the text consists of many short paragraphs, and the layout is simple to avoid any distraction. The texts include facts, personal narratives, and advice. Many photographs, scene shots from the film, and illustrations with explanations are added for those who have difficulties to read. This fact book is completely and in-depth analysed in this study.

The fictional film “About Sex” (Om Sex 2015) is calmly paced, 30 minutes long, and tells the story of Claudia and Oliver, both having an ID and longing for a partner. The film narrates the start of their relationship. They have both little previous sexual experience. However, Claudia has a friend and flatmate, Gabi, who is more experienced and gives her a lot of advice and obtains, thus, a central role in the film’s message. Oliver’s friends, Fatima and Tanja, who have both Down’s syndrome and have been a couple for a longer time, act important role models as well. Claudia and Oliver meet at a party for young people with disabilities, go on a date, become a couple and have sex at the end of the film. The guide book suggests discussion questions to facilitate a reflection about the film. The film is analysed completely in this study.
Cards about sex is a collection of 30 scene shots of the film, photographs, and illustrations which are all also included in the fact book. By shifting the concentration from subjective experiences and feelings, the cards are intended to support discussions and are therefore even accompanied by specific questions that are printed in the guide book. A selection of pictures is included in this analysis.

The guide book (forum SKILL 2015a) is addressed to the secondary target group of the material, namely potential discussion leaders such as care workers, teachers, or relatives of people with ID who are interested in leading discussions about sex, love, and relationships. The structure resembles the one of the fact book and it includes discussion as well as exercises such as free association, role-play, and games. It also provides some theoretical background information about the social construction of sexuality. For this study, the guide book serves as a background information to support and enrich the analysis of the other parts.

Additionally, I got access to the final report (forum SKILL 2016) that describes the production process and responses. It states that 250 copies of the material in the form that underlies this analysis have been sold and used in schools, group homes and other places. Moreover, the contents have also been distributed through a homepage, project days, workshops, and other events. In these forms, the material has reached about 890 persons with ID, about 2220 persons who belong to the secondary target group, as well as about 13400 people with unknown group affinity (forum SKILL 2016, p. 14f.). It can, thus, be noted that the material has a significant outreach on people with and without ID.

It has been crucial to the project leaders to include the primary target group in the whole process of production. The project was initiated because in an earlier project the need for accessible information about sexuality and intercourse among this group had been realised. So, people with ID have been participants in seminars and reflection groups to discuss sexuality. This has shown which topics are deemed relevant, and interesting to discuss and gain knowledge about. They have also proofread and commented the fact book’s text. Moreover, people with ID were actors and statists in the film, represented the material at public events, participated in workshops with the second target group, and took part in the publication. (forum SKILL 2016, p. 15).
6. Conducting Research on a Discourse on Sexuality

This thesis presents a case of a pedagogical fact book which includes photos and illustrations (which are partly also depicted on the discussion cards) and a fictional film about sexuality for Swedish speaking adults with ID. Thus, language and visual presentations play a crucial role. However, it is important to acknowledge that behind the texts and pictures, there are both practices and materialities that matter so that “a position that recognises difference, and limitation, and the very real problems which disabled people may have with their bodies and their lack of function” (Shakespeare 2000, p. 162) can be taken up. Without these practices and materialities, the texts and pictures would not exist in the way they do. Language and other forms of representations should not be given more power than they deserve (Barad 2007, p. 133). On the other hand, I argue that, without the texts and pictures, the practices and materialities would not be represented, which means that people would not at all, only little, or only subconsciously know about them. In a way, they would not exist. Barad expresses this intertwined relation of materiality and discourse with her notion of intra-activity. “The dynamics of intra-activity entails matter as an active ‘agent’ in its ongoing materialization. Boundary-making practices, that is, discursive practices, are fully implicated in the dynamics of intra-activity through which phenomena come to matter” (Barad 2003, p. 822). Especially the many personal accounts of experiences included in the fact book render this intra-action of materiality and discursivity in the discourse on sexuality and intellectual disability obvious since they are represented in direct quotes and, thus, give an insight in the lifeworlds of people with ID.

6.1 Methodology

In order to reach my purpose and understand what in this alternative discourse produced with and for people with ID is perceived as sexuality, what is related to sexuality, and what is deemed relevant for sexuality as well as how these choices are argued for, I conduct a discourse analysis. This discourse analysis is inspired by an approach presented by Linda J. Graham (2012), an Australian scholar in education, which is based on a Foucauldian understanding of discourse and truth as contingent. I follow three steps suggested by Graham: description, recognition, and classification. Description means “to trace the relationship between words and things: how the words we use to conceptualise and communicate end up producing the very ‘things’ or objects of which we speak” (Graham 2012, p. 117), which I do by conducting a close reading. With reading closely passages directly or indirectly related to
sexual practices, I “begin to think with the author[s]” (Kain 1998) about their reasoning. Then, I search for patterns in the material, such as repetitions, similarities, but also contradictions, and try to understand and explain these patterns to grasp the meaning behind them by moving between the chosen passages and the text as a whole (ibid.) as well as by relating it to previous research. As for any close reading, its contextuality and historicity is important to consider (Lukić & Espinosa 2011). Consequently, I substantiate this tracing with a theoretical framework based on biopolitics and crip theory, which will be presented in the next chapter, as well as with empirical studies that have been conducted recently and in a similar geopolitical context, if possible, in Sweden.

The second step is recognition which means “to trace the processes involved in [the] constitution” (Graham 2012, p. 119) of facts and circumstances. For that, I conduct a close reading from an intersectional perspective to understand the meaning-making processes that shape the discourse on sexuality based on categorizations. The close reading is strictly guided by my research questions and provides a good insight related to the material’s structure, which is particularly relevant because the material has an explicit pedagogical intention, and, thus, is consistently well-structured with clear captions and subtitles.

In the last step, classification, it becomes apparent that this type of discourse analysis based on a Foucauldian understanding of discourse and truth as contingent, focuses not so much on the features of which the texts consists, but on “what is ‘made up’ by the text itself” (Graham 2012, p. 120). Based on the understanding of how the text looks like gained in the first two steps of describing and recognizing, I now want to understand what the text produces. With “[i]dentifying and following discursive traces [I am directed] … to the knowledge-domain upon which the statement [=the essential of a discourse] relies for its intelligibility.” (Graham 2012, p. 119). Moreover, by following the discursive traces, more “statements from that particular discursive formation [are revealed] which together work to sustain the field from which they originate.” (ibid.). As a result, classification enables to understand how the discourse functions as well as how it constructs and sustains its plausibility. To accomplish that, I take inspiration from grounded theory, a methodology that was developed in the 1960s by the US-American social researchers Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss in order to formulate a systematic qualitative methodology that should counter the predominance of quantitative research in sociology in that time. To readers who are familiar with grounded theory my choice might be surprising, since this methodology is mostly applied for the
analysis of interviews, however the material analysed here is based on discussions and reference groups with people with ID as well. Moreover, as I will argue in the following, the purpose of this study fits to a grounded theory study. Furthermore, I will argue that it is a suitable methodology for a feminist and intersectional study and is a productive complement to discourse analysis. In the following, I will describe how I will adapt grounded theory to make it suitable in this study.

A key asset of grounded theory is its focus on rendering the data production and analysis accountable – a feature that quantitative researchers often claim as lacking in qualitative research – which is why the method is very clearly described. Grounded theory has been developed further and has become a way to grasp the “understanding of the world [as] … socially constructed [in a] […] never completed process of construction” (Bryant & Charmaz 2007, p. 37) in which also the research process takes part. It is, thus, “consistent with the postmodern feminist epistemology in the recognition of multiple explanations to reality” (Wuest 1995, p. 127) as well as with Foucaults notion of contingent truths. Consequently, the theories that are produced with a grounded theory are always evolving since they are based on the subjective experiences of the research participants which are manifold, unstable and ever developing. This is visible in the many different subjective narratives included in the fact book.

I take inspiration from grounded theory because its focus provides an interesting perspective on my research purpose. As Juliane S. Oktay, a US-American social work-scholar, argues in her guide book on grounded theory, the main purpose of grounded theory is, as the name suggests, “to build theory” (Oktay 2012, p. 15) that is based on empirical data, often interviews. In the production of the analysed material, discussions with reference groups and other forms of participation of people with ID were fundamental. However, as I conduct my research, these discussions have already been processed in the shaping of the material. I, thus, aim to understand the small-scale theory that this material produces and the discourse that is based on it. Yet, grounded theory allows me to acknowledge the pivotal role of the empirical material that forms the very fundament for it.

Moreover, grounded theory with its firm foundation in the empirical is compatible to an intersectional research perspective. Brené Brown, as well an US-American social work-researcher who uses grounded theory in her own research on courage, vulnerability, shame,
and empathy, argues that “[o]ne important tenet of grounded theory is the idea that researchers should not assume the relevance of identity data, including race, age, gender, sexual orientation, class, and ability.“ (Brown 2006, p. 44). Instead of assuming the importance of certain identifications previous to the research, the analysis examines if identifications based on certain categorizations appear in the material. Analogue to the use of the term categorizations, I use the term identifications to emphasise its consistent construction. If certain identifications are made relevant in the material do, I continue to analyse how they are constructed and related to each other. This is a crucial tenet for an intersectional analysis of a topic so little researched on as sexuality and intellectual disability. There is only little knowledge about the ways in which identifications influence sexuality and intellectual disability. Consequently, it is beneficial to let the material guide the analysis to relevant identifications and grounded theory is one method to do this with.

6.2 Methods

For both the close reading and the grounded theory, being very familiar with the material is essential for the researcher. In this process, my first step to get familiar with the material is to translate it from Swedish to English, whereby I keep the chapter and paragraph structure. No translation is neutral or independent from the translator’s positioning, of which I am aware throughout the whole research process, but, to the largest possible extent, I take with me the specific, context-related notions of words and phrases. Nevertheless, I need to account for the translation being an intra-action between me and the text.

In line with Oktay’s (2008, p. 55ff.) guideline, I continue with an “open coding” of the whole text. The purpose is to trace themes and patterns in the text to understand their construction in the discourse. Open coding means rephrasing the text in own words, sentence for sentence, so that the researcher becomes familiar with the whole text and gains a deep insight into the themes and patterns in the text, and to develop first ideas of connections between the themes. Throughout the open coding, I stay in close touch to the translation of the original text. At this stage, close reading and grounded theory are very similar to each other, so I use this step as a basis for both parts of my analysis.

I then analyse the fact book’s structure, which is especially relevant since its genre is pedagogy. To pay attention to the material’s genre is particularly relevant in this form of discourse analysis that focuses on “what is ‘made up’ by the text itself” (Graham 2012, p.
120). Genre “associates discourse with function and purpose and practice” (Strauss & Feiz 2014, p. 52). Since the fact book belongs to pedagogy, its content is well-structured so that the message is conveyed clearly. After having understood the structure and its implications, I choose paragraphs especially relevant in relation to the whole material and to the research questions. In these paragraphs, I analyse the found themes and patterns with the help of my theoretical framework and empirical research results. With these close readings I trace the constitution of facts and circumstances that are made relevant in the fact book. This tracing will be presented in chapter 8.

Being inspired by grounded theory, I then continue by abstracting the codes, grouping together codes that fit together, and forming concepts first and then even more abstract categories – terms used by grounded theory and not to confuse with the term categorizations that I use in relation to intersectionality – that are central in the discourse and underlie the whole material. In this way, I understand how the discourse functions as well as how it constructs and sustains its plausibility. Comparisons are a relevant tool in grounded theory and become useful in this step. Given the nature of the material I cannot compare several empirical cases, but I compare the ways in which concepts – groups of codes – appear in various contexts in the material which provides me with a clear understanding of how they work. Based on this understanding, these concepts can be grouped together in categories – the discourse’s key elements – and explain the category’s functions and dimensions (Oktay 2012, p. 59ff.). The categories and inherent concepts of which the alternative discourse on sexuality exists will be presented in chapter 9.

The material does not only consist of the fact book’s texts, but also of illustrations and photos that are both shown in the fact book and on discussion cards, and a fictional film. The intention is to reach people with ID who have difficulties to read, understand texts or concentrate for a longer time, as well as to facilitate discussions about sexuality. Consequently, it is intended to convey the same messages in all parts of the material, but they are most clearly elaborated in the fact book. Thus, the presentation of my analysis will be guided by the close reading and the grounded theory of the fact book’s text, while the analysis of the illustrations and photos as well as the film will be added at relevant points.

Additionally, I pick a photo that speaks a lot to me and analyse it in depth. It is the only photo with a person with a visible disability and, thus, conveys the clearest message about disability
and sexuality. This analysis is inspired by gender and cultural studies scholar Redi Koobak’s close reading of a photograph as part of her doctorate thesis (Koobak 2013). I describe the colour, what the picture does, first and further impression, and details. I reflect on how the picture could work and what it does to me and why I chose this picture. Like Koobak, I get inspired by Mitchell (2005), a theorist of visual representation, and his invitation to explore what the picture wants from me. The detailed description contains the person in the picture, the setting, the person’s positioning, the facial expression, the relation to the viewer and, last but not least, the illumination. This analysis supports and enhances both the close reading of the chapter on bodies as well as the analysis inspired by grounded theory.

Additionally, I analyse the fictional film. I focus both on general aspects as well as on several important scenes essential for substantiating the discourse that I analyse in detail. In line with my general research questions to understand how sexuality is represented, which topics are addressed and how they are related to each other, I conduct a general analysis of the film’s story line, main characters, and atmosphere. After this more general analysis of the whole film, I choose five scenes that I consider being especially relevant for conveying the film’s message for an in-depth analysis to strengthen the general analysis. In these scenes, I analyse the shot size, the angles of the camera to the portrayed characters or objects, the sound, and the mise-en-scène, which includes the lighting, the setting, the costume and make-up, as well as the behaviour of the figures (Bordwell & Thompson 1990). Additionally, I analyse the shot lengths.

One important aspect is the mise-en-scène, which “can control not only what we look at but also when we look at it.” (Bordwell & Thompson 1990, p. 145, italics in original). Especially the setting and the figures provide clear clues about how the discourse on sexuality and intellectual disabilities is shown. However, also the technicalities have a significant impact on how the viewer experiences the discourse. What is specifically focused, is the light, its colour, its source, as well as its direction, because it is particularly important in guiding the viewers’ attention (Bordwell & Thompson 1990, p. 133ff.). Furthermore, I analyse the sound: Is it on- or off-stage, meaning is the source visible on screen or not? (Kuchenbuch 2005, p. 41). It is also interesting to analyse whether the sound is music, conversation, or thoughts, and what role silence plays. Sound effects have an important impact on the dramaturgy of a film. For the analysis of this film, it needs to be considered that the film is produced for a target group
with intellectual disabilities. Thus, the atmosphere has to be rather calm with low levels of
dramaturgy.

To determine the shot size, which is the closeness of the shot or the relation of the figure to
the frame, I use the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shot Size</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>big close up</td>
<td>head or parts of it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>close up</td>
<td>head and shoulders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>medium close up</td>
<td>just above waist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>medium shot</td>
<td>knees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>medium long shot</td>
<td>a tight full-length figure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>long shot</td>
<td>figure fills half the frame</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>very long shot</td>
<td>the set</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Barchfeld 1993 cited in Kuchenbuch 2005, p. 44)

The shot size is an evidence for what the camera focuses on, what is being ignored by it, and
what it shows from a distance. To analyse which objects or figures are shown when, how
often, how long, and from which distance provides many clues on what is deemed relevant.
As you can see in the table above, decisive for the shot size is the relation to the human body.
Thus, the shot size is also related to human behaviour. Most every-day conversations happen
in situations where the head, shoulder, and some parts of the upper body are in the field of
vision. This corresponds a medium close up or a close up. If another person is aggressive, we
usually try to keep a bigger distance. Smaller distances where just the face or parts of the face
are in the field of vision enter our privacy and mean either intimacy or a threat. This
 corresponds a big close up. (Kuchenbuch 2005, p. 42ff.). Especially in a film on sexuality that
concentrates a lot on intimate relationships between persons, the shot size is, thus,
illuminating to analyse.

Furthermore, I analyse the camera angles to the portrayed characters or objects as they are a
medium to capture the fictive involvement of the viewer in the scene. Similarly to the shot
scale, the camera angles are determined in relation to the characters or objects in the scene.
Camera angles carry “psychological secondary meanings” (Kuchenbuch 2005, p. 52; own
translation, A.G.). The horizontal angle can support the expression of submission and
domination. To describe the horizontal angle, I used the following terms:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Camera Angle</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bird’s-eye view</td>
<td>A shot in which the camera films a scene from above.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eye-level shot</td>
<td>The placement of the camera on the same level as the face of the shown</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
character (which is more precise than the height of an observer on the scene (as the term is explained in the quoted glossary))

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shot Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>high-angle shot</td>
<td>A shot in which the character is filmed from above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>low-angle shot</td>
<td>A shot in which the character is filmed from below</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Cardullo 2015, p. 275ff.)

Additionally, the vertical angle is often revealing, even though its connotation is less explicit. The vertical angle between the direction in which the object points or the character looks and the direction of the camera can be a sign for the degree on how direct the confrontation between the scene and the viewer is. If the angle is 180°, identification, concern, consternation, or confrontation can be expressed, while a lower degree can signify distance. (Kuchenbuch 2005, p. 54ff.). Since the film is part of a pedagogical material with a clear message to its viewers, the analysis of the camera angle is especially relevant.

The analysis of the three parts, fact book, pictures, and film, is brought together to describe one discourse of sexuality. The different parts of the material are constructed and used in completion to each other, in order to transmit one understanding of sexuality. Differences and incongruences in the material are perceived as different facets and aspects of the discourse on sexuality. Chapter 8 will be based on the close reading and present the description and recognition of the discourse whereas chapter 9 will be based on the grounded theory and present the discourse’s classification, but in both chapters the analysis of the pictures and the film will be included to strengthen and enrich the analysis.

7. Theorising Sexuality

In the following chapter I shall present the theoretical framework for this thesis. The general perspective with which I look at both theories and the material is intersectionality. In line with Scandinavian gender studies scholar Nina Lykke, I understand intersectionality as the intra-action of a variety of relevant social categorizations on the levels of identity markers, social interactions, and discourses. Social categorizations can be gender, dis/ability, sexuality, ethnicity, race, class, age/generation, nationality, mother tongue, and so on and are the basis for “historically specific kinds of power differentials and/or constraining normativities” (Lykke 2010, p. 50). They intra-act with each other, which means that they constantly shape each other, or as Lykke formulates it in her guide to feminism and intersectionality, they are “non-bounded phenomena which interpenetrate and mutually transform each other” (ibid.). As German scholar in gender and technology Gabriele Winker together with sociologist Nina
Degele argue in their overview on intersectionality as a theory and methodology, which social categorizations are relevant depends on the historical and sociocultural context as well as on the social phenomena the research process focuses on (Winker & Degele 2010, p. 15). As both Lykke as well as Degele and Winker have argued, intersectionality happens on different levels, such as structures or representations. For this study of a material about sexuality, I find the levels of identity construction, social interactions, and discourse important. These levels are, similar to the categorizations, intertwined with each other. In this case, since the analysed material is understood as the production of a discourse, the discourse level is central. However, in the discourse, the levels of identification and social interactions are significant.

A second aspect of intersectionality which will become relevant in the theoretical framework as well as in the analysis of the material is the potential to resist power differentials and normativities. Intersectionality allows to grasp “how individual subjects negotiate the power-laden social relations and conditions in which they are embedded” (Lykke 2010, p. 51). Here Lykke emphasises that individuals are active agents, who are not only influenced by surrounding structures, but also shape the world around them, with their everyday behaviour as well as in more organised political actions.

Intersectional research on disability as well as on disability and power relations is still rare. Yet, as Swedish sociologists Mårten Söder, Agneta Hugemark, and Lars Grönvik argue in the introduction to an anthology about intersectionality and disability, an intersectional perspective allows to grasp disability as a categorization based on power structures instead of as a given, predefined category (Söder et al. 2016, p. 25). Consequently, this thesis that analyses educational material on sexuality produced by and for people with ID examines which role intellectual disabilities play in the alternative discourse on sexuality. Intellectual disabilities might not be relevant at all, be relevant in some contexts, and not in others, become relevant in the intra-action with some social categorizations, or overall have a big impact.

In the following, I shall, coming from an intersectional perspective, present my theoretical framework which is based on biopolitics and crip theory. First, I present how these theories can be used to look at sexuality as a field where power structures and rights are active. Secondly, I present how these theories enable to see potentials for resistance in sexuality. Thirdly, I focus on theoretical perspectives on the distinction between the private and the
public sphere in sexuality. Finally, I discuss several approaches to vulnerability theory which will become relevant for my analysis inspired by grounded theory that aims to understand how the discourse functions and sustains its plausibility.

7.1 **Sexuality as a Field where Power and Rights are intertwined**

According to Michel Foucault, a French philosopher and social theorist, the mechanisms of power in societies since modernity aim to “foster life or disallow it to the point of death” (Foucault 1990, p. 138, italics in original). These power mechanisms appear in two forms: first, in disciplines that focus on the body. They regulate and improve bodily functions. Second, power appears in form of biopolitics that regularly supervise and control the population (Foucault 1990, p. 139). This broad, twofold understanding of power enables to understand the efficiency and ubiquity of power mechanisms that steer the everyday life, including sexuality.

Sex as “a means of access both to the life of the body and the life of the species” (Foucault 1990, p. 146) plays a central role in both disciplines and biopolitics. As sexuality is intertwined with disciplines and norms, it is also connected to what is perceived as relevant knowledge and to what is seen as the meaning of life. In Foucault’s understanding, sexuality is much more than sex, but it plays a significant role in constructing what sex is. Thus, sex is the “most internal element in a deployment of sexuality organized by power in its grip on bodies and their materiality” (Foucault 1990, p. 155). In fact, sex has become so central and meaningful for individuals because it enables them

> “to have access to his [sic!] own intelligibility (seeing that it is both the hidden aspect and the generative principle of meaning), to the whole of his [sic!] body (since it is a real and threatened part of it, while symbolically constituting the whole), to his [sic!] identity (since it joins the force of a drive to the singularity of a history).” (Foucault 1990, p. 155ff.).

Consequently, sex is defined as essential for an individual’s life. This understanding is so significant because sex is moreover understood as desirable. The desirability constitutes sex as something everyone should experience, yet it strongly links sex to the whole of sexuality, including the disciplines and biopolitics, and, thus exposes individuals to these power mechanisms. Consequently, Foucault argues that if one wants to reorganize the power of sexuality, one should shift the focus from sex-desire to bodies and pleasure (Foucault 1990, p. 157). This approach is, hence, fruitful for the analysis of the norms that the forum **SKILL**-material (re)produces and a useful tool to grasp the characteristics of the alternative discourse.
on sexuality. However, it does neither provide tools for understanding the possibilities of individuals’ resistance against power mechanisms nor for analysing inequalities, for example between people with and without ID.

The material is aimed to be as inclusive as possible (forum SKILL 2015a, p. 14) and thus wants to address everybody, regardless of one’s disability, sexual identity, gender, or other categorizations that may exclude people from experiencing a pleasurable sexuality. Thus, one can argue with social and political philosopher Margrit Shildrick (2007), the material with its alternative discourse on sexuality can be understood as a request for a sexual citizenship for people with ID. Consequently sexuality is a right, but also regulated by norms, regulations, and disciplines. She further argues that

“No one, whatever their form of embodiment, escapes the web of regulatory power that is directed toward all aspects of bodily identity, comportment, and behavior. To have a disability may be to invite more extensive surveillance, but it is a difference in degree, not in kind.” (Shildrick 2007, p. 62).

That the surveillance is not different in its occurring forms is a strong statement that is debatable depending on the geopolitical context. Are forced sterilisations as they were common for people with disabilities in Sweden in the 20th century, a sterilization after a deficient informing about its meanings, and strong recommendations to take the pill, just different in degree? One could argue that it is a difference in kind if pregnancies are avoided temporarily (with a pill) or permanent (with a sterilization). Yet, the following analysis focuses on the discourse on sexuality presented in the material, so instead of discussing if there are differences in degree or in kind in the ways people with disabilities are surveilled by doctors or care personnel, I shall examine if and how the material suggests differences between persons with and without disabilities.

However, there is more in the discourse on sexuality and intellectual disabilities than disciplines, biopolitics and resistance. Thomas Lemke, sociologist with a focus on biotechnology, argues that discussions on the development of Foucauldian concepts have reached a “new biopolitical level [that] […] is grounded in an expanded knowledge of the body and biological processes.” (Lemke 2010, p. 172). Now, the importance of knowledge production and processes of subjectification are included in the understanding of biopolitics. Lemke suggests a perspective on biopolitics “that takes account of the relational network of power processes, practices of knowledge, and forms of subjectification.” (ibid.). Since the analysis includes forms of subjectification that examine the influence of power mechanisms.
and knowledge practices on individuals, phenomena that Foucault described as disciplines are included. “Within this perspective biopolitics has more to do with techniques of (self-) government, going beyond practices aimed at corporeal discipline and regulating the populaces.” (Lemke 2010, p. 173). This understanding of biopolitics bridges, thus, the dialectic of disciplines that concentrate on individuals and biopolitics that focus on populations, that Foucault (1990) used in his work “History of Sexuality” which I cited above.

Consequently and especially from an intersectional perspective, in an analysis of biopolitics, one needs to examine what kind of knowledge is marked as relevant and by whom this knowledge is produced, or whose knowledge production is acknowledged. Moreover, power mechanisms produce and disseminate knowledge of life. It can be revealing to examine which problems are deemed so problematic that they are tried to be understood and solved and which problems seem to be less problematic. Since the aim of biopolitics, and, hence, also of the underlying knowledge production, is to surveil and optimize life, it is productive to examine who benefits from this optimization in which ways, and who experiences disadvantages. Finally, biopolitics lead to subjectification. It is important to examine how different people are addressed and encouraged to apply the knowledge of life, but also what they do with this knowledge (Lemke 2010, p. 177f.). These steps lead the analysis of the alternative discourse on sexuality and intellectual disabilities in order to examine the norms and regulations that are (re)produced in it.

7.2 Sexuality and Resistance

To gain a deeper understanding of the alternative discourse it yields important insights to examine where norms and regulations can be challenged. If we understand the material as a request for sexual citizenship, as I have argued before, the potential for resistance for people with ID is an important issue because citizenship with the usage of disciplines “lays hold of bodies, so long as they fit within normative standards. The consequence is that for nonnormative others to make a claim to citizenship is not a route to securing privacy in or personal control over bodily matters.” (Shildrick 2007, p. 62). Instead, sexual citizenship invites forms of disciplining, and regulations in the sexual life that, as one can see from an intersectional perspective, is different for different persons. As I have shown in the overview on previous research, the acknowledgement of a sexual life of people with disabilities also leads to regulations that prevent privacy or restrict self-determination. However, as Shildrick argues and previous research shows, individuals can resist these disciplining strategies to
some extent. In conclusion, it is worthwhile to look at the material as an “emergence of new forms of embodied self-hood that take account equally of the intersectionality of sociopolitical context, the meaning of intimacy and the erotic, and the psychic significance of the cultural imaginary.” (Shildrick 2007, p. 64). So, an analysis of the characteristics of a discourse about sexuality and intellectual disabilities needs to examine which disciplining strategies are involved, who they target, and which forms of resistance are practiced by whom, and against which disciplines.

These examinations can be guided by crip theory, which is a critical discussion of the dialectic distinction between the normal non-disabled and the abnormal disabled. The aim is to critically reflect on this dialectic from the entrance point of a reversed perspective that centres around the disabled and appropriates the stigma, which is expressed in the originally derogative term ‘crip’ as a short form for ‘cripple’. However, so far most studies on crip theory focus on physical disabilities, which motivated Löfgren-Mårtensson (2013) to write a review in which she examines if to look at intellectual disabilities with crip theory is productive. A crucial question to consider is whether people with ID are able to understand the meaning of ‘embracing the stigma’. Nevertheless, a crip perspective can highlight issues of visibility and agency that are relevant in the lives of people with disabilities. As Alison Kafer, a US-American scholar in disability studies and feminist and queer theory, puts it, crip perspective “means recognizing that our bodies are not separate from our political practice.” (Kafer 2013, p. 121). It also offers the possibility to grasp what is perceived as ideal life. I include crip theory in the theoretical framework in order to grasp the potential of resistance that is included in the alternative discourse on sexuality and intellectual disabilities. Crip theory serves thus as an addition to biopolitics, strengthening the analysis of resistance from the perspective of a critical understanding of ‘the normal’. It also helps understanding the relevance of the categorization of intellectual disability in the discourse on sexuality.

7.3 SEXUALITY AND THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SPHERE

One important aspect of sexuality and disability that yields important insights for an analysis with crip theory which is both highlighted by Löfgren-Mårtensson and Kafer, is the meaning of the distinction between the private and public sphere. As Shildrick (2007, p. 62) argues, even though the distinction between the public and the private sphere is often perceived as given or natural, it is in fact a socially constructed myth. The boundary is under constant discursive and material construction and, thus, sometimes appears as clear, whereas on other
times it is blurry. Both spheres are highly regulated. However, the illusionary distinction is effective in relation to sexuality. The sexuality of people with disabilities is often considered as unnatural and public, and unavoidable ‘abnormal’, while the sexuality of people without disabilities is perceived as natural and private, thus ‘normal’. In this context, the questions Kafer (2013, p. 9) poses in her call for crip theory “is disability political? How is it political? How is the category of disability used to justify the classification, supervision, segregation, and oppression of certain people, bodies, and practices?” become highly relevant in the context of sexuality. I apply these questions to examine from an intersectional perspective how intellectual disability and other social categorizations are understood in the analysed material.

7.4 Sexuality and Vulnerability

In the following chapter, I will present theories on vulnerability. While I use the theories I presented above to explain the functioning of the alternative discourse on sexuality and intellectual disabilities, vulnerability is used to examine what the discourse produces and how this production is made plausible. To introduce the understanding of sexuality that underlies this analysis, I want to quote social work-researcher Brené Brown who eloquently presented her research results on vulnerability (which I will present below in more detail) in a TED-talk:

Some people “fully embrace vulnerability. […] They didn't talk about vulnerability being comfortable, nor did they really talk about it being excruciating […]. They just talked about it being necessary.” (Brown 2010: 09:39).

Australian philosophers Catriona Mackenzie, Wendy Rogers, and Susan Dodds present an overview and critical discussion on vulnerability from a moral and ethical perspective. They start from the basic entrance point that “[h]uman life is conditioned by vulnerability […] because we are beings of flesh and blood.” (Mackenzie et al. 2014, p. 1f.). Moreover, as human beings we are conscious that we can experience pain and get hurt or even die at every moment of our lives. It is thus no wonder that vulnerability shapes and can help to explain human behaviour, emotions, and experiences. To put it in a general way, two approaches exist to understand vulnerability. The first approach understands vulnerability as an ontological condition and argues that “to be vulnerable is to be fragile, to be susceptible to wounding and to suffering” (Mackenzie et al. 2014, p. 4). As embodied beings, we are vulnerable to injury, sickness, and death. As social beings, we are also vulnerable to other people’s actions and
dependant on their help (ibid.). The second approach concentrates not on the ontological character of vulnerability, but on the inequality connected to it:

“Although everyone is potentially vulnerable to ... threats, what makes some persons or groups especially so is their lack of or diminished capacity to protect themselves. On this kind of view, then, vulnerable persons are those with reduced capacity, power, or control to protect their interests relative to other agents.” (Mackenzie et al. 2014, p. 6).

Margrit Shildrick who is one of the philosophers that understand vulnerability ontologically (2002, p. 82) observes that vulnerability is despite its existentiality perceived negatively as “a failure of self-protection, that opens the self to the potential of harm” (Shildrick 2002, p. 11). In her proposal for an ethics that “acknowledges both vulnerability to the other, and the vulnerability of the self” (Shildrick 2002, p. 12), Shildrick argues that in Western, modern societies (that are built upon binarial structures to ensure illusionary stability), vulnerability must be managed, covered over in the self, and repositioned as a quality of the other. Importantly, she notes that vulnerability is not denied, but subjects that are perceived as ‘normally functioning’ are able to conquer vulnerability (Shildrick 2002, p. 73ff.). While she understands vulnerability as “ontological uncertainty for all of us” (Shildrick 2002, p. 78) and thus according to the first of the two aforementioned approaches, she criticizes that in modern, Western societies, vulnerability is used to implement and reinforce boundaries and dichotomies between people (Shildrick 2002, p. 82) and is, hence, usually understood in line to the second approach that focuses on inequalities. Both approaches have been critically discussed. In the light of this thesis, I agree with Mackenzie, Rogers, and Dodds’ conclusion that both approaches offer fruitful aspects of an understanding of vulnerability. They suggest a taxonomy that integrates both approaches and distinguishes sources and states of vulnerability (Mackenzie et al. 2014, p. 7ff.).

Brené Brown is a social work researcher who has focused a lot of her research on, among other topics, vulnerability. Her research comes from a different angle than the above presented research since her academic background is in social work and sociology. Moreover, her entrance point into research has been shame which then lead her to the recognition that vulnerability is one important aspect of shame. Similarly to Shildrick, she argues for an acknowledgement of personal vulnerabilities. Her study shows “that women who experience shame in an area where they are aware of their personal vulnerabilities demonstrate higher shame resilience than women who experience shame in an area where they have not acknowledged their personal vulnerability or in an area where they perceive personal invulnerability.” (Brown 2006, p. 48). This quote expresses several aspects of how
vulnerability is understood: First, there are several areas of vulnerability. One can for example feel vulnerable regarding their health, their sexuality, their identity, or regarding all three of them. These areas might be related to each other, but they can also be independent. Second, one can relate differently to one’s vulnerability: with awareness, with ignorance, or with denial. Being aware of vulnerability leads to recognition, and the seeking and finding of protection and/or support, while ignorance and denial lead to overwhelming negative emotions. This understanding of vulnerability focuses more on how to deal with it instead of its origins, as the aforementioned taxonomy does. It is thus more helpful for the analysis of the forum SKILL-material with its pedagogical purpose.

8. Describing and Recognizing the Alternative Discourse on Sexuality and Intellectual Disability

In this chapter, I will present the part of my discourse analysis that is based on close reading. First, I present an overview of the entire fact book. By following Graham’s (2012) steps of describing and recognizing, I, then, trace the discourse on sexuality and intellectual disability to understand what is produced and in which ways with support of the theoretical framework and other research results which I have both presented above.

8.1 Preconditions for Sex

As an entrance point, I aim to show which topics are deemed relevant in the discourse of sexuality and intellectual disabilities. How are they represented? How is their relevance for the discourse elaborated and justified? How are they related to each other?

The table of contents in the fact book (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 3) provides a good first impression of how sexuality is presented, since it gives an insight into which topics are addressed, how extensively they are addressed (according to the number of pages dedicated to each topic), and how they are ordered. After a foreword, the book starts with a chapter on identity. This establishes a fundamental connection between sexuality and identification. The book then continues with a chapter on relationships and, thus, situates sexuality in relationships. The next, longer chapter is about the body and provides information and practical advice about the biology of the human body with a focus on sexual organs and bodily experiences. This clearly states that sexuality is embodied. What follows is a chapter on sex, which is the longest of the book and addresses topics such as consent, desire, and
different forms of sex. Again, information and practical advice are given. In a separate chapter, information about different forms of prevention is presented which is followed by a short chapter on sexually transmitted diseases. The last, shorter chapter of the fact book is about reproduction.

So, just from looking at the table of contents, the reader can see that sex and the body are crucial elements for sexuality. The two chapters mark the centre of the book and together, they span 86 pages, which is half of all pages in the fact book. The chapter on relationships is with 30 pages also quite long and signifies an important link between relationships and sexuality. The last three chapters on prevention, sexually transmitted diseases, and reproduction are considerably shorter. Especially the last two chapters can be seen as additional information that are not central to sexuality, which is already a radical shift to other discourses that focus mostly on contraception because people with ID are perceived as being potentially irresponsible and, hence, endangered to unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases (Ledger et al. 2016).

Since the material is based on the interests of people with ID, this might indicate that they are less worried about sexually transmitted diseases than usually assumed by others. This might rely on the fact that this knowledge does not seem relevant given that detailed explanations of how to prevent sexually transmitted diseases with the use of a condom or femidom is provided (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 140ff.). In the predominant discourse, based on infantilization of people with ID (Wilkerson 2002, p. 44), an irrationally strong fear of sexually transmitted diseases is spread and people with ID are not trusted to use contraceptives correctly. In contrast, the alternative discourse follows a more productive approach building on trust in people with ID’s capability to use contraceptives correctly. People with ID might also be less interested in founding a family than others think. Parents and staff can be concerned that especially women with ID have the wish to found a family without realizing the responsibility that comes with it. This concern implies an irresponsibility and inability to assess one’s own capabilities on the people with ID, which does not meet the reality. The findings of a study on surveillance of people with ID that was conducted by Irish scholar of social studies Michael Feely suggest that people with ID have a different view on founding a family since they compare themselves to peers who do not plan to have a family either (Feely 2016, p. 742).
Instead of being interested in which risks to prevent, the young people with ID primarily want to know how to have sex in the first place. In the following, I present the results of the close reading which focused on the topics identity, because it is the first topic in the fact book, and also the entrance point of the film, as well as relationships, and the body, because these two topics get a lot of space in the fact book and build the groundwork before sex as a practice is addressed.

8.1.1 Identity

The first chapter is about identity and titled “Identity about you and others” (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 9, own translation, A.G.). This title points towards three elements: First, identity is about oneself; second, identity addresses the wholeness of a person; third, other people’s identities matter as well. The chapter is introduced by questions that shall make the reader think about their own identity. “Have you thought about who you are? What do you like? Who do you want to have sex with?” (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 9, own translation, A.G.). The first question suggests that one can reflect about one’s identity but it is not evident that everybody has done that. The following questions mark that identification is related to one’s preferences, including sexual preferences. This message is even conveyed in the film’s introduction. While Claudia, one main character, and her friend Gabi enter a club, Claudia presents herself as well as her hobbies, her heterosexuality and Gabi’s transsexuality and attraction to trans people. This introduction is off-stage, meaning the source is not visible on screen, which means that only the viewers hear it, not the other characters. When the camera points at Oliver and his friends Fatima and Tanja, his voice presents his bisexuality, also from the off (Om sex. 2015: 00:24-02:29). From the very beginning, the viewer is informed about the sexual identities of the characters which clearly marks their relevance in this context of a film about sex. However, the characters do not have a conversation about their sexual identities. Consequently, identities including sexual identities can be relevant for individuals, but they do not need to be shared with others. As Oliver puts it: “I’m bisexual. But right now I really like the girl who was looking at me [=Claudia].” (Om sex. 2015: 02:12). It is for the individuals to decide which and how their identities matter.

The chapter in the fact book explains gender as well as sexual identities. Both cis- and trans-identities are explained and it is mentioned that everybody can choose the pronoun they want.

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2 While I myself translated the fact book from Swedish to English, the film has English subtitles, which are quoted here.
to be addressed with. Homosexuality, bisexuality, and heterosexuality are mentioned as the three most usual identities. It is stated that both gender and sexual identity do not have to be stable but can change throughout a lifetime and it is added that one does not have to decide for a sexual identity but “can just be” (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 14, own translation, A.G.). Already in the very first pages, the fact book fulfills its aim of being “as inclusive as possible” (forum SKILL 2015a, p. 14, own translation, A.G.). Likewise, the film introduces characters with different sexual and gender identities. Several different identities are explained and identity is presented as fluid. Furthermore, it is emphasized in both the fact book and the film that everybody has the right to decide on their own identity. Additionally, the illustrations that are included in the factbook and depicted on the discussion cards, show bodies of people with various gender identities, such as male and female breasts as well as scars from the removal of breasts (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 78f.). However, it is also mentioned that in the society in general, awareness about the diversity of identities is lacking which leads to the common assumptions that everybody is cis and heterosexual.

Struggles that can be experienced related to one’s identification are described as well. In quotes of a reference group’s discussion, both insecurity about sexual identity and its relation to emotions are expressed:

“‘How does one know if one likes girls or boys or both?’
‘Well, you don’t know that.’

In a personal story, the experience of coming out as homosexual is described as difficult and scary, but also as comfortable. The narrator tells about the fear of being rejected, ridiculed, or less appreciated by friends or family because of their homosexuality, even though most experiences have been positive (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 17). The vivid description of feelings related to coming out shows the meaningfulness of one’s sexual identity. Even though it is mentioned earlier that one does not have to define or make public one’s sexual identity, it is described as comforting and relaxing to be sure and to share it with others.

Without putting pressure on the readers to define themselves or to identify themselves as somebody, the meaningfulness of identification is described. Readers are encouraged to reflect about who they are and to stand by their identity, since self-assurance is an essential foundation for good relationships of any kind (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 22, own translation, A.G.). All practical advices are directed to the result that all involved people should feel comfortable, safe, and confident. This is formulated trenchantly in the context of staying safe
when coming out: “Let no one say mean things to you. You have the right to be who you are. No one else is allowed to tell you who you are or what to feel!” (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 17, own translation, A.G.).

8.1.2 Relationships and Love

The second chapter is about love relationships and covers the topics love, dating and internet dating, flirting, having a relationship, rejection, respect, and breaking up. In both the fact book and the film, relationships are presented as desirable and as a legitimate common goal in life for young adults. Repeatedly it is stated that relationships are supposed to be good. A good relationship includes trust and open communication about feelings (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 44) and sexuality (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 23) in which everyone can express own preferences, wishes and experiences. Thus, a necessity for good relationships is a stable self-assurance about own desires in a relationship (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 22), which is why identity is fundamental.

The important basis for a relationship is that everyone who is involved feels good and enjoys it (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 44f.). If that is not given, one should consider ending the relationship. Here the material’s aim to be inclusive becomes apparent: It is explicitly stated that one can have monogamous or polyamorous relationships, or have sex with others while being in a relationship if all partners agree to that. Being in a relationship can mean that the persons are in love with each other, or sexually attracted to each other, or both. “It is just you [in plural, A.G.] who decide how your relationship should look like and which rules you want to follow.” (ibid., own translation, A.G.). As a consequence to this openness, mutual respect is crucial. It is strongly recommended to end a relationship if one feels disrespected by a partner (ibid.).

Relationships are fundamentally characterized by feelings. The one that is prevalently described is love, as a strongly embodied emotion that can be felt in the whole body as a warmth (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 24f.). Other feelings can be happiness, desire, joy, anger, or jealousy (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 44). So, even though relationships are presented as worth striving for, they are described as complex phenomena, or as Claudia, one of the main characters expresses in the film: “Sex, love, relationships and stuff like that, I find it confusing sometimes.” (Om sex. 2015: 00:59; also cited in forum SKILL 2015b, p. 21). “For
sure you will get hurt” (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 39, own translation, A.G.), but hurtful experiences, such as rejection and break ups are also a possibility to grow as a person.

If one compares this view on relationships with how relationships between people with ID are mostly represented, meaningful differences appear. Usually, people with ID are considered being uninterested in relationships, and when they show interest, they are often discouraged, with the reasoning that they are unable to understand the commitment and responsibility that comes with it. Consequently, in institutions relationships might be forbidden in order to protect the residents from getting hurt, even though many are interested in having relationships (Fish 2016). As Turner and Crane show, people with ID may “hunger for connectivity on many levels, but mirror the larger social norm to have emotional bonding through dating and marriage” (Turner & Crane 2016, p. 687), which turns into a problem as long as they are regularly told they are not allowed or able to date and marry. Moreover, information and support for non-heterosexual people with ID is especially lacking (Löfgren-Mårtenson 2013; Fish 2016).

This material with its inclusive, encouraging and empowering view on relationships is highly needed, since people with ID are otherwise likely to uncritically adapt oversimplified and unrealistic representations of relationships in the media. Their socially marginalised status and more closed peer groups prohibit discussions about these representations with others and, thus, the development of own perceptions (Jahoda & Pownall 2014). In comparison to the prevailing discourse on relationships and people with ID, the information this material provides is radical.

Participants of the reference groups have experienced it as problematic when their trials to get to know partners were rejected many times. It is suggested to go to places where one can meet people with similar interests, for example special clubs or events and to approach people with small talk (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 25, 32). This shows the importance of identity: People who know their own interests, can actively search for partner that might fit to them. However, it is of course not guaranteed that one finds potential partners easily, but no suggestions how one could emotionally deal with rejections are provided. It is clearly expressed that being rejected is an experience many people make and usually do not get harmed too much by it, but nevertheless, it is everybody’s own responsibility.
8.1.3 Body

When talking about sexuality, bodies and embodied experiences obviously play a crucial role. Turner and Crane (2016, p. 685), who point out the centrality of pleasure in the sexual experiences of people with ID, argue that being aware of the role the own body or others’ bodies for experiencing pleasure is essential. Yet, in sexual education the body is more perceived as being vulnerable, and depicted as being susceptible to sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancies. The body is not understood as a tool to have pleasure with rather than a treasure to be protected. In line with this discourse, Jahoda and Pownall (2014, p. 433) focus on reproduction, contraception, and sexually transmitted diseases in their study about sexual understanding knowledge about physical changes. When it comes to research about sexuality and disability, logically, the body gets a significant role in research about physical disabilities. One example is a study conducted by Canadian health science-scholar Hilde Zitzelsberger (2005) on the visibility of women with physical disabilities that renders them invisible as sexual beings, partners, wives, and mothers. But in research about intellectual disabilities the body is strangely absent. This might rely on the very broad spectrum of bodies among people with ID which makes it hard to grasp. The more severe an intellectual disability is, the more likely and the more intensively it impacts bodily functions and the bodily appearance. However, less severe forms of intellectual disabilities can have severe impacts on the body, or none at all, and these impacts can be visible for others or not. Moreover, people with physical impairments often need a lot of support with intimate care in their daily life, which may result in a different relationship to one’s body than most people have. Yet, to reflect on that difference, and to even find words for this relationship with their bodies that can be understood by people with another perspective might be difficult or impossible for people with ID who do not know a life without daily intimate support. Consequently, the body as a site of pleasure and embodied sexual experiences is absent in research on people with ID.

Yet, the fact book dedicates 42 pages to talk about sexual organs, and other pleasurable spots on the body, such as breasts and the anus, discharges and menstruation, the menopause, genital mutilation and circumcision, and hygiene. Interestingly, sexual organs are described in an anatomical way, but also in form of a “discovery journey” (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 53, 65, own translation, A.G.), in which it is described where it feels pleasurable for many people to be touched or massaged. The chapter intertwines information about pleasure with biological and anatomical facts as explanations. One example is the description of the vagina as “a
fantastic organ” (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 55, own translation, A.G.) which includes the functions of a vagina while sexual intercourse or when giving birth. It is also described how it feels to insert a finger in the vagina and encourages the readers with vaginas to try that. Crucial is the conclusion that “the vagina is not just a hole. It can be opened and closed again. If one does not want to have intercourse or is scared and tense, the body can tense up and tighten the vagina. It is important to listen to the body and to not insert something in the vagina then.” (ibid.) Later in the book, the sexologist Suzann Larsdotter describes how her personal relationship to her “pussy” has changed over her life course and she concludes with her “best advice … [to] get to know your pussy.” (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 107, own translation, A.G.). For her, “[t]hat was the best thing I have done. In that way, I learnt about my own body. I experienced what was just nice for me.” (ibid.). Moreover, it is stated that one should listen to one’s body not only to experience pleasure, but also for health reasons. It is described several times that pain, itching, or a bad smell can be signs of an infection, so that one should consult a doctor when recognizing these symptoms (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 75, 81).

The fact book uses the chapter about bodies to enable the reader to develop a good relationship to one’s body. The reader is encouraged to listen to the body and to take responsibility both to experience pleasure with it and to preserve its health. Considering that people with ID usually are considered as being vulnerable, in need of protection, and as not being able to take adequate care of themselves, this approach conveys an essential empowering message.

The fact book’s chapter ends with the depiction of seven photographs of naked people (which are also part of the discussion cards), each with a statement of the person on the photo about their body. In the following, I shall analyse one of them. All pictures show the bodies on a black ground and background, and I chose to analyse the one that expresses most joy and pleasure in my opinion. It is the only photo in which the model has a visible disability.
A woman lies on the floor on her left side. Her length fills almost the whole picture, so that her belly is in the centre. She has a wholehearted laughter on her face. Her mouth is open and her laughter reaches the eyes. Her face is slightly blushed. She has short red hair. She expresses joy, energy, and openness. She does not wear any clothes or jewellery, but she has a black, round tattoo on the outside of the arm she is lying on, so that the tattoo is not recognizable in detail. She has a spasticity in her arms and hands. Her legs might have a spasticity as well. Her breasts are differently big and show stretchmarks. She also has a little scar above the navel and a stomach tube or a stoma next to it. Her body is slim, so that her upper hip bone is recognizable. Her genital area is barely visible but hidden in the shadow of her upper thigh. Her legs lie on top of each other and the lower thigh of the lower leg as well as the foot are not visible, but probably bended backwards. She might be in her 20ies. She has white skin. She says about herself: “I like my whole body, but I’m especially confident with the breasts. They are very beautiful! I would absolutely not want to change anything on my body. It is just perfect how it is.” (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 87f., own translation, A.G.).

“Pictures […] are (as philosopher Nelson Goodman puts it) ‘ways of worldmaking,’ not just world mirroring. […] The question to ask of pictures […] is not just what they mean or do but what they want – what claim they make upon us, and how we are to respond.
Obviously, this question also requires us to ask what it is that we want from pictures.” (Mitchell 2005, p. xivf.).

The photograph slightly puzzles me in a positive way. I think the woman is beautiful and her laughter seems to be contagious. Her disability is openly displayed. Neither her spasticity nor the stomach tube or stoma are hidden. In fact, the light, which stems from several sources from the front and from above, highlights not only her beloved breasts, the hip and the upper leg, but also the scar and tube/stoma on the abdomen as well as the upper arm and hand.

I lack the medical knowledge to determine if the woman has a stomach tube to insert food or a stoma, which is an artificial anus. I tried to find it out by asking others with medical knowledge and got contradictory answers. When reflecting about the answers, I decided I do not need to know. It is not relevant for my analysis of the photo. If the woman had thought it was relevant knowledge that others should generally know about, she would have shared the information. But she decided not to. It does not matter whether it is a stomach tube or a stoma or whatever the underlying condition is. Speaking with Mitchell (2005, p. xivf.), what the picture wants to convey is not related to that. Yet, it is interesting that when I started analysing it, I demanded the information about these medical details from the picture. I wanted to know the story behind it, I wanted to understand what this means for the woman. It took me hours to understand that the picture did not want me to know and that that is okay. Reflecting on why I did assign more meaning to it than the photo suggested, I realise that the picture can work as a tool to rethink ideas of how bodies should look like to show positive emotions. The picture invites to rethink bodily functions and their relation to ability to experience pleasure and happiness.

The picture displays disability, illness, laughter, and beauty at the same time. It also displays a loving self-acceptance and positive relationship with the body, that speaks from her statement of having a perfect body and is underlined by the lighting. Thus, the picture supports the message of the text and shows that it is possible for a person with a disability to maintain a caring and loving relationship to one’s body.

8.1.4 Concluding Thoughts

The fact book presents a self-assured identity, respectful relationships, and a good relationship to the body as fundamentals to a pleasurable sexuality, in which sex plays a central role. Without putting pressure to identify in a certain way, it is argued that reflecting about identity
is significant for good relationships which are described as a common goal in life. Self-assurance is crucial, especially as it is highlighted that relationships can be formed in any way one feels comfortable with. To have a positive, caring relationship to one’s body is presented as being crucial for a pleasurable, healthy sexuality. This message is even conveyed by the photos and illustrations that are included in the fact book. All depicted persons have a relaxed facial expression, often a faint smile and make a confident impression. When two persons are presented together, they seem to enjoy each other’s closeness. They show that being physically close to a partner means being relaxed or positively excited. Their eyes are friendly and open and they express care for each other. They seem to be confident in the situation and in their bodies, no matter if they are dressed or naked. All in all, people with ID, the target group of the material, are addressed as responsible, caring people, that are able to form long-lasting relationships, if they wish to, and to experience a pleasurable sexuality. This contradicts the common picture of people with ID as irresponsible and in need of protection.

The first three chapters of the fact book that present the fundamentals for the core, sex as a practice, point towards the assumption that this alternative discourse on sexuality and intellectual disability goes in line with Foucault’s argument that the “rallying point for the counterattack against the deployment of sexuality ought not to be sex-desire, but bodies and pleasure.” (Foucault 1990, p. 157). However, as Shildrick (2007) has argued, even this counterattack implicates new forms of regulations. With being empowered and encouraged to explore one’s identity, body and to form respectful relationships, people with ID are also requested to take responsibility, to learn and to explore their bodies.

8.2 Sexuality as a Practice

In this chapter, I shall focus on the practicing of sexuality, on sex, which has a main place in the fact book. In the film, the characters talk about sex openly, and at the end, Claudia and Oliver have sex. First, I will review the behaviours and experiences that are understood as sexual, secondly describe the appraisal of sexual behaviours, and thirdly address the problems concerning sex that the material describes. With these three steps, I aim to map sex how it is understood in the discourse produced by this material for people with ID and answer the following of my research questions: Which behaviors and experiences are framed as sexual? How are they appraised? How is the appraisal justified? What is deemed as problematic or challenging? How are challenges and problems addressed? What solutions are proposed? Who is deemed responsible for addressing problems?
8.2.1 The Broad Spectrum of Sex

Right from the beginning of the chapter, the variety of sex is pointed out.

“Sex can be soft or hard. Slow or fast. Sex can be funny, nervous, exciting, awesome, and much more. Sex can be to touch your body. Sex can be to lie next to someone and to touch each other. To hug, kiss, make out. Or to lick, suck and kiss each other.” (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 93f., own translation, A.G.).

Later, masturbation, kissing, making out, fondling and massaging, petting, frottage, oral sex, vaginal intercourse, and anal intercourse as different forms of how one can have sex are presented. Interestingly, when providing practical advice for having sex with another person, they address the reader and their partner(s) as persons with a vagina respectively with a penis. The text includes homo- and heterosexual sex, as well as sex with several persons and with trans persons. Moreover, a variety of sex toys is presented. Hence, the understanding of sex presented in the material is broad. The film presents a broad variety as well. Claudia, one of the main characters, and her flatmate and friend Gabi who is presented as being sexually experienced, visit a sex shop and look for sex toys. Before Claudia’s second date with Oliver, Gabi shows her different sex positions.

The material presents a holistic view on sexuality, that moves beyond a “heterosexual […], penis-centred, intercourse-based, goal oriented view of sex” (Wilkerson 2002, p. 47) which is, as Turner and Crane (2016) show, crucial to grasp the sexual experiences of people with ID. They show that experiencing pleasure, as well as physical and emotional closeness in various ways is most relevant for people with ID when they talk about their sexual experiences.

8.2.2 Enjoyable Sex

It is clearly stated that sex is supposed to feel good – “[b]oth before, during and after the sex” (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 94, own translation, A.G.). The main characteristic of sex, which is repeated several times, is that it is supposed to be enjoyable. As long as this is given, not only the sexual practices, but also the feelings aroused by it, can vary a lot.

Knowledge about own preferences makes it easier to have good sex. It is important to be able to communicate one’s preferences. Then, sex can feel easy, as Claudia resumes in the end of the film (Om sex. 2015: 28:12). For some, it feels facilitating to look at the other person’s face to be able to see if they enjoy the sex (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 117). Another advice is to masturbate to get to know one’s body (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 104) and to enjoy the foreplay
as a way to get ready for sex, relax, increase the excitement, lubricate the vagina and get to know each other’s bodies (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 123).

However, sex does not always feel good, and that is nothing to be ashamed of. But then it helps to talk about what feels wrong. In the film, Claudia says that she has had sex earlier that did not feel good because the other person did not understand what was pleasurable for her (*Om sex*. 2015: 16:36). In the fact book, a participant in a reference group tells that he was unsatisfied when he was not allowed to experience closeness with his partner who needed support (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 94f.). Another person tells that she has had sex even though she did not want to because she was afraid of her partner’s reaction (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 97). These experiences are not contextualized, explained, or justified. It becomes clear that they were unpleasant in several ways, but that the persons do not need to feel ashamed or regret how they acted. Moreover, these unpleasant experiences, even though they were not forgotten, did not necessarily shape the person’s further sexual experiences or, on the long term, influence them in any other way.

The chapter about sex shows that a variety of sexual practices is possible to experience. It does not matter how many people are involved. As the most usual form of sex, masturbation is mentioned (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 104), but also frottage is pointed out as a usual form (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 121). One can focus on the sexual organs or experience pleasure with other body parts. However, while the view on sex is not solely centred on genitals, on intercourse, or on heterosexual sex, the common view of goal-oriented sex that ends with orgasm is not challenged. Even though it is not stated that one should have an orgasm while having sex, it is also not pointed out that it is okay to not have an orgasm, and the description of orgasms as most enjoyable part of sex which is defined by its enjoyability, depicts orgasms as a central part of sex.

8.2.3 When Sexual Expressions Get Challenged

In order to gain a deeper understanding of the discourse on sexuality and intellectual disability, I focus now, inspired by Lemke’s (2010) understanding of biopolitics, on an examination of problems and challenges related to sexual practice that are deemed so relevant that they are explained. Moreover, I shall look at suggested solutions.
The fact book includes several practical advices and recommendations which are directed to render negative experiences less and positive experiences more likely. As I have shown above, the main characteristic of sex is that it always has to feel good. As a logical consequence, a problematic situation, which is described several times, occurs when sex does not feel good. As immediate reaction it is suggested to stop the sex and talk about what feels wrong as well as to try out other positions (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 94). But it is also highlighted that one can say no to sex at any time, and that it is crucial that the other person(s) respect that (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 97). A meaningful scene (Om sex. 2015: 22:51-23:29) in the film shows such a situation: On a date in Oliver’s living room, Claudia and Oliver start to kiss and touch each other. When Claudia has difficulties to relax and Oliver recognizes that, they stop touching each other and cuddle instead. It is clearly shown that this is okay for both of them. So the message is, when sex does not feel good, and someone wishes to stop or to try out something different, it is important to communicate that and to respect each other. Moreover, the importance of a foreplay before having sexual intercourse is emphasised. Not only does a foreplay enable to relax, prepare for sex and get to know each other’s bodies, it is also especially important that the vagina has time to get lubricated before vaginal intercourse (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 123).

Additionally, advices for more long-term improvement of sexual experiences are provided. The sexologist Suzann Larsdotter tells that “in many years it was just a little bit nice when I had sex. Not so very nice as when someone gets an orgasm.” (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 107, own translation, A.G.). She criticises that she did not learn about orgasms, masturbation, and sexual pleasure in sexual education at school. Therefore, she decided to learn about pleasure and to get to know her body and her sexual organs. As a result, she experiences sex as being more pleasurable and enjoyable now. The fact book argues that to be able to have good sex, and to know how one can experience pleasure, it is important to get to know the own body. Masturbation is presented as “a smart way to get to know one’s body” (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 104, own translation, A.G.). With this experience, it is easier to communicate one’s desires and preferences with the partner(s), which often improves the sex.

Other problems are related to the living conditions of people with ID. One personal narrative is about the need to schedule one’s sex life in accordance with the working schedule of the one assistant who was willing to help the narrator and his partner with having sex. All other assistants refused their assistance without giving an explanation (forum SKILL 2015b, p.
This narrative is not contextualized, so there is no information given about how usual these experiences are or how one could deal with them. The same person tells that he perceives it as self-evident to get the needed daily assistance. Nevertheless, he experiences issues concerning sexuality as sensitive to discuss with assistants, especially when one explores their sexuality. For example, he was curious about homosexual sex and sex with several persons, but for a long time did not dare to ask. He reflects upon if he did not dare earlier because he did not want to experiment or because he was afraid of his environment’s reactions (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 102f.). Again, no contextualization or direct advice are provided.

Another problem related to disabilities and sex is the functioning of sex toys. For people with physical disabilities – which often can come along with intellectual disabilities – sex toys that one can usually buy are not always useable. However, sexologists and occupational therapists can provide support with finding suitable sex toys or adapting sex toys. It is pointed out that these services have the same costs as other services that the region provides and that the sexologists have confidentiality (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 133f.). Firstly, this notion implicates that purchasing suitable sex toys should not involve financial problems, even though there might be inequalities between the regions. Secondly, it implicates that purchasing suitable sex toys might be seen as a taboo and cause problems for people with ID, otherwise confidentiality would not be needed. A narrative told by another member of a reference group points out this taboo when expressing the embarrassment caused by a vibrator that accidentally started while family members were around (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 129).

All these problems that are related to the living conditions of people with disabilities indicate power inequalities between people with ID and their assistants that become especially apparent when it comes to sexuality being a topic highly regulated by subjective values, norms, and taboos. As Löfgren-Mårtenson shows in her study on sexuality and love among young people with ID in Sweden, assistants set the frames and regulations for acceptable sexual behaviour. Spaces outside these frames are very small and hardly accessible in the worlds of people with ID (Löfgren-Mårtenson 2003, p. 224f.). With simple acts like refusing to lay two persons in the same bed, to drive one to a sexologist, or to answer questions about sexuality, assistants can prevent the sexual exploration of people with ID, even without having to vocalize concrete bans. The fact that even a material that is based on the argumentation that “it is a human right to be seen and respected as a sexual being and to have
access to understandable information about sex and living together” (forum SKILL 2015a, p. 10, own translation, A.G.) does not provide suggestions of how to deal with these problems, shows how difficult they are to address. This difficulty can be understood with the concept of intra-activity of materiality and discourse. It is necessary to understand that not only language and power, but also materialities can have powerful effects – and “no priority is given to either materiality nor discursivity” (Barad 2003, p. 825). In line with Barad, I argue that, in order to understand these problems that limit the sexual lives of people with ID, matter needs to be understood “as an active ‘agent’ in its ongoing materialization” (Barad 2003, p. 822), which is a process in which also “discursive practices are fully implicated” (ibid.). The power inequalities between people with ID and their assistants are deeply interwoven in the everyday life, since many people may need their assistance for basic activities, such as hygienic routines. The wish for a sexual life can, then, produce bodies or sex toys that become to obstacles, because they require special assistance that might be neglected – and it is important to note that this neglect is deemed legitimate, especially in regards to wishes that go beyond monogamy and heterosexuality. An underlying problem is that assistants, as Löfgren-Mårtensson has shown in her review on crip theory and intellectual disability, “see the sexuality of people with intellectual disabilities as different from their own.” (Löfgren-Mårtenson 2013, p. 419). The sexuality of people with ID is perceived as “unnatural and public, while their own is seen as natural and private.” (ibid.). This leads to paradoxical perceptions that render sexual expressions of people with ID inherently ‘abnormal’ because sexuality is seen as a private issue one should solve on their own without external assistance while people with ID are many times declined privacy.

Finally, I want to point out two aspects of sexuality that are not (clearly) described as problematic while they are often portrayed like that in other discourses (Bancroft 1989). The first aspect is the change of sexual desire over the life time, including the periodical or constant absence of sexual desire. It is stated that the sexual desire may develop as a teenager, later, or never, and can be expressed differently intense. The sexual desire as well as the sexual orientation might change throughout the life time. In older age, the sexual desire may be reduced (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 102f.). Especially the fact that it is no problem to not experience sexual desire is different to other discourses. Here again, the inclusiveness of the material becomes apparent. The language clearly portrays the variability of human sexual desire, and does not portray any form as more common than another. However, what is lacking, is the description of asexuality as a way to sexually identify oneself.
The second aspect that, in contrary to other discourses that depict a “goal oriented view of sex” (Wilkerson 2002, p. 47), the absence of an orgasm while sex is not described as a problem. It is stated clearly that one can interrupt sex at any time. Yet, orgasms are described as “the feeling that comes when you enjoy having sex with yourself or someone else a lot” (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 108f., own translation, A.G.) and, thus, as a usual part of sex. So, when one wants to stop the sex, the other person needs to respect this, since no one owes an orgasm to the other. Nevertheless, having an orgasm is seen as a normal part of sex, so when one wants to stop the sex before one or all partners have experienced an orgasm, this indicates a problem about which the partners should talk.

8.2.4 Concluding Thoughts
In this chapter on sex it becomes clear that in this discourse everybody who wants to should have the possibility to experience pleasurable sex, but also that one has an own responsibility to achieve that. Above, I showed that the readers are empowered and encouraged to explore their identity, body and to form respectful relationships. It is shown, how self-assurance, knowledge about the body, and relationships are useful for having pleasurable sex. In that way, forms of biopolitical regulations appear also regarding the sexual practice. People with ID are urged to get knowledge, to use this knowledge, and to communicate it while having sex. Furthermore, they should act responsible towards themselves and others. Hence, sex is presented as a form of self-governance of knowledge about the body. With suggesting masturbation as a method to get this knowledge, the responsibility is put on the person with ID. This is the new form of biopolitics grounded in an in-depth knowledge about the body (Lemke 2010, p. 172f.). This becomes especially powerful since sex is still presented as simple and uncomplicated, even though it not only comes with a lot of options because it is so broadly defined, but also with a lot of responsibility.

In the lives of people with ID, the private and the public sphere are intertwined. Often, help from assistants is needed even for private issues, such as questions about sexual practices, or sexual identity, which can feel uncomfortable for both sides. Sexuality, which is usually understood as private issue (where it is nevertheless regulated), becomes less private, which allows more and more open regulations. The consequence is a power imbalance, in which the assistant can refuse help based on personal grounds. The personal narratives have shown that this is perceived as disappointing, but legitimate. It is, thus, difficult to find forms of
resistance against the biopolitical regulations and power inequalities. In these cases, the disabilities are not conceived as a political, or empowering dimension that could, in a crip theoretical perspective, change how sexuality is usually perceived.

However, the emphasised fluidity of sexual desire over a life course which can include phases in which sexual desire is absent, fulfils Foucault’s (1990, p. 157) suggestions to change the discourse on sexuality through shifting the focus from sex-desire to bodies and pleasure. Instead of concentrating on the desire for sexual intercourse which allows external regulations that restrict privacy, assistance, various forms of sex, etc. the focus lies on the exploration of the own body and pleasure. Since these explorations can happen on own terms, external regulations lose effectiveness. Yet, as I have shown above, forms of self-government become actualized instead.

In this chapter, I have shown that the living conditions of people with ID are relevant in the discourse on sexuality and influence how sex can be experienced. The role of intellectual disabilities in itself has not yet been discussed. In the next chapter, this will be pointed out together with an intersectional discussion of the relevance about other identity categorizations.

8.3 Categorizations and their Impact on Sexuality

In this chapter I will analyse which categorizations, such as dis/ability, gender, class, race, age etc., are made relevant in the alternative discourse on sexuality produced by and for people with ID. I also ask how these categorizations are made relevant as well as which meanings are assigned to them. It shall be understood how the discourse connects these categorizations and sexuality by looking at the contexts in which certain categorizations are mentioned. How are different categorizations related to each other? Who gets to get a voice in the material? How are the different voices framed and related to each other? To whom are the included topics and practices addressed? Are certain topics depicted differently depending on whom they are addressed to?

Categorizations that are mentioned in the fact book’s texts are, as I have described above (p. 36ff.) sexual orientation and gender. Age is addressed in relation to a variation of sexual desire over the life course. Another categorization that is shortly touched upon is nationality in the context of circumcision and genital mutilation. The focus of this subchapter lies on the
mutation of sexual sensitivity caused by circumcision or genital mutilation, but it is also mentioned that the genital mutilation of a vagina is forbidden in Sweden and many other countries (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 75). This indicates that one’s nationality, interlinked with religious and cultural traditions that in this case impose genital mutilation, has an impact on the individual’s sexual experiences (but does not make sexual pleasure impossible). This points to an understanding of sexuality as being socially constructed, which however comes only into operation through the body. To put it baldly, it is the removal of the clitoris and/or labia that affects the sexual experiences, not the national, religious, or cultural norms behind it. The influence that the norms have is only efficacious through the body.

What matters in the discourse on sexuality presented in the fact book is the body since it has a direct influence on how we experience pleasure. The two paragraphs that start with “if you have sex with someone who has a pussy this can be nice” (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 117, own translation, A.G., emphasis in original) and “if you have sex with someone who has a dick this can be nice” (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 118, own translation, A.G., emphasis in original), which both include an extensive list of suggestions, express this plainly. Gender, sexual orientation identity, age, and societal norms do not have a distinct influence on sexual experiences. Yet, identity is presented as being important in relation to a pleasurable sexuality. However, it is relevant to be aware of one’s identity, not how – in relation to which categorizations – to define one’s identity. Interestingly, the opportunity to define oneself in relation to disability is not mentioned even though the target group is explicitly people with ID. Though, with mentioning characteristics that one is born with as a part of one’s identity, it opens up the possibility to define oneself as person with disability. However, none of the persons who share personal narratives or who were part of the reference groups mentions their disability as something relevant for their identification. A reason might be that many people with ID do not have the same opportunities to understand their disability, to identify with it, or to even embrace it, as a crip theoretical perspective suggests.

Nevertheless, there are reasons to produce a material targeted to people with ID. In the guide book (2015a, p. 22ff.) addressed to the second target group that consists of teachers, parents, care workers and others, the producers of the material explain these: Many people with ID do and have not received an adequate sexual education in school. Due to a lack of education, teachers and staff are often unsure how to talk about sexuality in an appropriate way and lack clear regulations and rules. Pedagogical material is rare, and the existing material often
addresses sexuality in a childish and heteronormative way. Consequently, when people with ID have questions about sexuality they search for information themselves, often in the internet. Internet sources can, however, vary greatly in their quality and aim; and for people with ID it might be difficult to recognize trustworthy, informative knowledge from other sources, which, as the authors have experienced, leads to misunderstandings, false knowledge, and anxiety. Furthermore, prejudices about the a- or hypersexuality of people with ID still exist. The result is a discourse on sexuality and intellectual disabilities that is characterized by negativity, risky behaviour, and vulnerability, and ignores pleasure and desire. This reasoning is in line with the bigger picture I have described in the review on previous research (p. 10). It is noteworthy that intellectual disability is not embraced, or highlighted in itself. The approach of the material is to provide people with ID the same information about sexuality as everyone else. It is not the aim to create a special sexuality for people with ID.

While the fact book focuses on bodily differences between sexes in terms of sexuality and sexual practices, the film depicts more differences in the behaviour and social interactions that can be related to categorizations. All main and side characters who have an active role are white, presumably Swedish, and in their 20ies. None of them has a visible, severe physical disability. The lesbian couple, Tanja and Fatima who are Oliver’s friends and work colleagues, have down syndrome. The viewers do not get to know more about the characters’ intellectual disabilities. This underlines the message of the rest of the material – an intellectual disability does not have to matter when it comes to sexuality.

The characters differ in relation to gender and sexual orientation identity. Claudia is a heterosexual woman, Oliver a bisexual man, Gabi a transsexual attracted to transsexuals, and Tanja and Fatima are lesbian women. Yet, the sexual orientation identity does not have an influence on sexual experiences. Tanja and Fatima are role models for Oliver because they have been in a long, happy relationship. For that function, neither their gender nor their homosexuality matter. Likewise, Gabi gives advice about relationships, sex positions, and communication during sex to Claudia unrelated to their gender or sexual orientation. However, the film offers some interesting entrance points for an analysis of gender differences in heterosexual relationships. While watching the film for the first time, I experienced a relationship between Claudia and Oliver, the two main characters, which was shaped by equality. I want to start by showing how this first impression was created in the film-making.
Claudia and Oliver are shown approximately equally much. The film consists of many eye-level shots, which results in a feeling of equality and closeness between the viewer and the characters, but also between the two characters. This is equally valid for both Claudia and Oliver. Oliver is taller than Claudia, but that becomes only visible when both are in the picture since the camera position is always adjusted to the eye-level of the shown character. When both are in the shot the camera is on a level between their eye-levels.

Now I want to turn from technicalities to an analysis of the content of the film and focus on aspects related to gender differences between Claudia and Oliver. In several scenes throughout the film, the main characters do not talk to each other but the viewer can listen to their thoughts off-stage. In that way, one learns about their thoughts and feelings more than the other characters do. Oliver describes himself as shy. When he sees Claudia for the first time, he wishes he would dare to talk to her, but she starts the conversation. Before he calls her, he trains what to say. However, he suggests that they could exchange telephone numbers as well as the time and meeting place for both dates they have. When he reflects about their relationship or his feelings for her, his focus is on her perspective, as can be seen in the following quotes of his thoughts: “Just imagine – Claudia wants to see me again. What if she wants to have sex with me.” (Om sex. 2015: 05:58) “What if she really likes me…” (Om sex. 2015: 20:24).

Claudia, on the other hand, is more straight-forward, but also receives more support and encouragement by her friend Gabi. She talks to Oliver first, suggests that they could meet sometime, and asks if they want to be a couple. When she is reflecting about their relationship, she focuses on herself, as the following quotes of her thoughts show: “I can’t stop thinking about Oliver.” (Om sex. 2015: 07:33); “I want to show him somehow that I like him.” (Om sex. 2015: 13:11).

Especially, I want to present one scene that is very telling for gender differences presented in the film. The following scene (Om sex. 2015: 22:51-23:29) is from the second date, which is at Oliver’s place. They started making out.

Claudia [off-stage]: “I want it to feel good with Oliver. But I’m having a hard time relaxing, and it’s making me a bit nervous”.
Oliver [off-stage]: “I wonder what it’s like for her. I want her to feel good. But it seems as if she stiffened up.”
Claudia [off-stage]: “I don’t feel like having sex anymore. Right, Gabi said it was important to speak up if you’re uncomfortable.”
Claudia [on-stage]: “I don’t want anymore.”

While Claudia thinks about herself being able to enjoy and experience pleasure with Oliver, Oliver thinks about how Claudia feels. So, when Claudia says that she wants to stop, Oliver agrees, but it remains unclear to the viewers, if he wants to stop because he feels uncomfortable himself or because he does not want Claudia to feel uncomfortable.

Throughout the film, both Claudia and Oliver think and talk about both having a relationship with each other and having sex. However, it seems as if for Claudia, a relationship and having sex is equally important, whereas for Oliver, sex is more in the focus. Claudia is the one who goes up to Oliver and starts talking to him. When she has to leave, she stops and thinks: “But it’d be nice if he came home with me. Or…? [smiling]” (Om sex. 2015: 04:24, off-stage) and then she turns, goes back to Oliver and asks if they want to meet sometime. So, she thinks about having sex with him at the evening, but decides that it is a better option to meet at another day, which could lead to a relationship. After Claudia’s and Oliver’s first date, Gabi, Claudia’s friend, asks her if they are together. Claudia decides to call and ask Oliver immediately and when Oliver says, he would like to be together, Gabi gives Claudia a high-five (Om sex. 2015: 16:21). Being in a relationship is, thus, depicted as an achievement and a success for Claudia. The viewer knows less about Oliver’s thoughts and he does talk less about his feelings than Claudia. But after they have had sex, he thinks with a proud undertone: “I’ve had sex with Claudia.” (Om sex. 2015: 27:58, off-stage).

To conclude, Oliver is less talkative, shares less of his thoughts, and focuses more on practicalities and on sex. He shares only few of his thoughts with his friends. Especially when it comes to sex and emotions, he focuses on Claudia’s wellbeing. Claudia is more straightforward and open about her emotions, thoughts, and dreams both with Oliver but also with Gabi. For her, sex and relationship are equally important, but she concentrates on her own perspective.

The gender relations depicted in the film can be related to Löfgren-Mårtenson’s study on sexuality, relationships and dating in the context of dance events for young people with ID in Sweden. She shows that women are, just like Claudia, more proactive whereas men are more passive and cautious, like Oliver is. Young men with ID in Sweden receive many messages to
be careful to not do anything against a woman’s will. Staff in group homes, schools and protected working places is often female and more restrictive especially against sexual behaviour which might be influenced by the stereotype of the vulnerable woman with ID. Restrictive rules and a lack of male role models lead to insecurity among young men with ID about if, when, and how sexuality is allowed (Löfgren-Mårtenson 2003, p. 221f.). This can explain Oliver’s focus on Claudia’s well-being, which becomes especially clear in the above cited scene (Om sex. 2015, p. 22:51-23:29). Often, young women with ID initiate contacts and dates with men, and then men dare to show interest as well. Likewise, Claudia starts talking to Oliver and is more open about her feelings while Oliver is more cautious at the beginning. However, he is not totally passive, but makes suggestions for dates as well. In this way, a certain level of equality is reached in their relationship.

8.4 Concluding Thoughts

In this chapter I have provided many insights in the characteristics of the alternative discourse on sexuality and intellectual disability presented in the fact book, a photo, and the film which are founded on a discourse analysis based on close reading. By examining the list of contents I have shown that reproduction and sexually transmitted diseases are side issues, while identity, the body, and relationships have an essential role for the central topic of sex as a practice. By following Graham’s (2012) steps of describing and recognizing, I traced the discourse on sexuality and intellectual disability to understand what is produced in which ways and started by addressing represented topics that have a central place in the discourse, such as identity. One key message of the material is that one has to know oneself – one’s preferences, interests, but also their body – to have a pleasurable sexuality. Moreover, to move further to another central topic, sexuality is represented as being closely linked to relationships: Most sexual relationships are based on having sex together, and most sex happens in relationships. That has the advantage that the partners know about each other’s identity and body. I then mapped the represented sexual practices to examine how they are understood in the discourse. A broad variety of sexual practices is represented. The large number of options makes a respectful and clear communication between the partners necessary. However, the options might be limited by assistants, which have, depending on the disability, the need of assistance, and the living conditions of the people with ID, many possibilities to limit the sexual experiences and regulate it based on their own values and norms. It is difficult to resist against these restrictions because embodied needs for assistance, material limitations, and practical difficulties intra-act.
With an intersectional perspective on the contexts of heterosexual relationships, only gender is a relevant categorization in the discourse the material produces. In the context of sex as a practice, body is central, so that categorizations such as disability, gender, age, nationality, culture, and religion become relevant if they have an impact on the bodily capabilities to experience pleasure.

So far, I have provided an in-depth description of the alternative discourse on sexuality and intellectual disabilities. In the next chapter, I want to provide a deeper understanding by moving away from the structure provided by the material and reaching messages that underlie the whole material. This will give insights in what is produced by the discourse.

9. Classifying the Alternative Discourse on Sexuality and Intellectual Disability

In this chapter, I will present the results of my discourse analysis inspired by grounded theory that let me classify the text and gives insight in what is produced by the text, and in how this production leads to an intelligible and plausible discourse both in itself and in relation to other discourses. I will present the categories, “that will make up the heart” (Oktay 2012, p. 60) of the small-scale theory that the forum SKILL-material produces and the discourse that is based on it, as well as the concepts that explain each category’s functions and dimensions. Looking at the discourse from the theoretical framework based on biopolitics and crip theory it becomes clear that the categories are related to “techniques of self-government” (Lemke 2010, p. 173) which encourage and urge individuals in the material’s target group, people with ID, to behave in a certain way. The categories and their concepts are norms and regulations, even though the material is explicitly norm-critical meaning that it is as inclusive as possible (forum SKILL 2015a, p. 14). This inclusivity is most clearly expressed by the pictures and illustrations printed in the fact book and on the discussion cards: They show people of various genders, sexual orientations, age groups, ethnicities and disabilities. The language is inclusive as well: Instead of talking about women and men “people with pussies” and “people with dicks” are addressed. Moreover, the texts consist of suggestions and possibilities instead of decisive statements. Nevertheless, norms that can be abstracted from these practical advices and recommendations are constructed in both the fact book and the film. In this chapter I aim to understand the discourse’s underlying reasoning and shall,
building on the above-presented analysis based on close reading, analyse the norms related to sexuality that are (re)produced and answer the following research questions: What is (re)produced as essentials of sexuality? What is (re)produced as the limits of sexuality? How are limits and essentials related to each other?

9.1 Category One: Consent

The first category I want to present is consent. The fact book contains a short subchapter on consent in the chapter on sex. “When some have agreed that they want to have sex together that is called consent. That means that the persons want to have sex together just there and then.” (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 96, own translation, A.G.). This definition expresses consent as an agreement between all involved persons that is limited to the present time and place. But, as I will show in the following, the topic consent is present in the whole material and consists of three concepts that make it function. These concepts are knowledge, communication, and privacy and will be presented in the following.

9.1.1 Knowledge as Prerequisite

Given that the material has a pedagogical purpose, it is inherent that knowledge is essential. The material, and first and foremost the fact book – as the name suggests –, provides a lot of what I call theoretical knowledge. As I have shown in detail in the last chapter, sexuality-related facts about different forms of identification, as well as about body organs and functions are presented. Moreover, the functions of sex toys, as well as of contraceptives are explained. Especially the knowledge provided about the body is pivotal since the relevance of these facts to experience pleasure is clearly expressed by close links to practical advice. It is explained which spots are sensitive and how one can touch to stimulate them. Bodily reactions to getting aroused or to having orgasms are explained as well. Consequently, the material helps to understand the own body, and to minimize insecurity and fear. Knowledge about the body is also helpful to understand prevention for both sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancies, and symptoms for infections. As previous research has shown, many people with ID lack this knowledge because their sexual education has been focused on prevention solely. Thus, the knowledge imparted here has an important empowering impact. It addresses the readers as responsible people who are capable of making own decisions, not only in relation to their bodies, but also to their identities and relationships. The following

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3 I use the term ‘fact’ here to refer to circumstances that are in the current Swedish society widely accepted as truth and in the material presented as unquestioned realities. Nevertheless, I am aware that these facts are produced by certain discourses with their own underlying power structures.
example shows this especially clearly: “If you want to send naked pictures of yourself to someone else, it can be good to know that the pictures can be used in another way than you want” (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 33, own translation, A.G.), but no recommendation to not send pictures is given. In that case, the readers are, thus, addressed as being able to make their own decisions based on the given information.

However, in other cases recommendations and suggestions are provided, and at some points very explicit, for example about hygiene. It is explained that “it is important to keep oneself clean on the body and the sexual organ. Both for your own sake and for other’s.” (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 81, own translation, A.G.). It is not further explained how a bad hygiene might influence oneself or others. Instead, the chapter continues with suggestions on how to wash the body and the hair. Just the advice to wash one’s sexual organs with water only to avoid skin irritation is clearly related to sexuality. This is an example for what Shildrick (2007, p. 62) calls the “web of regulatory power” of which no one can escape, and which becomes more efficient if one – as it is done in the fact book – claims the right to experience a pleasurable sexuality. It is also an example for a “more extensive surveillance” (ibid.), invited by the intellectual disability, since in sex education material addressed to people without ID descriptions of how to take care of body hygiene usually are directly related to sexuality and less detailed.

Consequently, it becomes clear that sexuality is a field where power and rights are intertwined through knowledge about the body. As Foucault’s (1990, p. 155f.) perception of sexuality shows, the understanding of bodily functions is central and links individual sexual experiences to societal power structures. However, as Lemke (2010) has shown, it is necessary to additionally include the processes of knowledge production as well as subjectifications. In this respect, the material makes a strong point in encouraging people with ID to produce knowledge on their own.

One way to produce knowledge is by curious exploring as a way to learn about oneself. This is described most detailed in the chapters “Discovery journey in the pussy’s world” respectively “Discovery journey in the dick’s world” which both consist of exhaustive descriptions of the genital organs’ anatomy combined with descriptions of sensitivity and pleasure written in form of a guide of where and how to move the fingers (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 53ff., 65ff.). Moreover, masturbation is mentioned as a “smart way to get to know”
(forum SKILL 2015b, p. 104, own translation, A.G.) the own body. With a partner, it is suggested to go on a “discovery journey with hands and fingers” (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 117, own translation, A.G.) on each others’ bodies in order to find out where the partner likes to be touched before having intercourse. To try out various forms of sex and different positions as well as to explore one’s sexuality over the life course are other suggestions of how to be curious about own sexual preferences (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 94, 102f.). A further way to produce knowledge is being attentive to one’s feelings. This is articulated by a member of a reference group in a discussion about sexual identity: “‘How does one know if one likes girls or boys or both?’ ‘In the heart.’” (forum SKILL 2015b: 14, own translation, A.G.). But one should also be attentive to one’s feelings when it comes to relationships (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 46) and sex. The material portrays a lot of different ways to have sex, and thus, emphasises a lot that “it is just you who can decide what feels right and good” (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 94, own translation, A.G.).

Consequently, the discourse produces much knowledge about identity, relationships, the body, and sex which is based on anatomic and biological facts and partly stems directly from sexologists, occupational therapists, researchers, or midwives or is based on the personal narratives of people with ID and compiled by the authors. But people with ID are also encouraged to both choose knowledge relevant for them and to produce own knowledge. They are given the possibility and responsibility to learn about sexuality. Following Shildrick’s (2007, p. 62) argument that “for nonnormative others to make a claim to citizenship is not a route to securing privacy in or personal control over bodily matters” needs to be relativised. Even though neither privacy is totally secured, nor absolute personal control over bodily matters is provided, both is ensured to some extent. Since the discourse presented in the material does not explicitly make relations to intellectual disabilities, it cannot be determined if this extent is bigger or smaller for nonnormative others. However, since people with ID are used to be surrounded by information and ‘normalities’ represented in e.g. public media that do not include them, it might be easier for them to use the possibilities and responsibilities to produce own knowledge even in relation to sexuality.

9.1.2 Communication
Knowledge about one’s sexuality in itself does not lead to consent. The knowledge has to be communicated to possible and actual partners. It is not enough to know that, how, and with whom one wants or does not want to have sex, it is necessary to be able to express that, too.
On the one hand, communication is important concerning relationships. Already while dating, one should communicate the own interests as well as own ideas about relationships. In the beginning of a relationship, it is suggested to discuss its terms. Again, many possibilities, including polygamy and open relationships, are mentioned, which makes a clear communication essential. It is emphasised that “it is you who decides how your relationships shall look like and which rules you want to follow.” (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 44, own translation, A.G.). Again, feelings have a pivotal role. To communicate feelings – which do not all have to be positive – in a relationship is important and a sign of respect and mutual validation (ibid.).

On the other hand, communication about sexual preferences is important as well. “The sex is often better when you talk about how you want it. You can for example ask if what you do feels nice. Or if you should do something else. The more people involved, the more important it is to listen to each other and tell how you want it.” (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 116, own translation, A.G.) To be able to communicate what you like, knowledge is necessary: One needs to know how different body parts are called, and how one wants to be touched there. Both facts and knowledge produced through experiences are relevant here. As Shakespeare has argued, being sexually active “demands confidence [which is based on this knowledge] and the ability to communicate” (Shakespeare 2000, p. 161).

Of course, as the fact book emphasizes, communication is not only based on telling how you want it – the other partner(s) also need to listen and respect what is said. The following quote puts this in very clear words: “If you are not sure if the person you have sex with actually wants to have sex with you, you can commit an assault or a rape.” (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 97, own translation, A.G.) Furthermore, it is not only important to listen to what is said, but also to be attentive to body language and other signals. An example for this is the scene (Om sex. 2015: 22:51-23:29) in the film that I have already quoted earlier (p. 54). This scene takes place on Oliver and Claudia’s second date. Some days earlier they have decided that they want to be a couple, and they both have talked with their respective friends that they maybe would like to have sex at this date. But when they kiss, cuddle, and start to undress, Claudia is not able to relax. Oliver realizes that and starts to wonder if she feels comfortable. So, when she says that she does not want to continue, he agrees and immediately stops and they just hold each other. This is an example for “you can say no to sex whenever” (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 97, own translation, A.G.), no matter if you are in a relationship, if you wanted to have sex earlier, or what you are doing right now.
The encouragement to communicate one’s wishes clearly is another example for “techniques of self-government” (Lemke 2010, p. 173) that give the individual the possibility, but also responsibility to experience a pleasurable sexuality. It is thus important to notice that a great focus lies on listening, being attentive and mutually respecting each other’s articulations, whether they are vocally or not.

9.1.3 Privacy

The third concept that is part of the category consent is privacy. As Kulick and Rydström (2015, p. 124) have discerned in their ethnological study about sexuality and disability in Sweden and Denmark, “[t]he concern that occupies everyone who works with individuals with [intellectual] disabilities is how to get them to appreciate that sex is private.” This issue is difficult, “especially when people live in a milieu like a group home, whose structure and organization blurs the boundary between (private) home for the residents and (public) workplace for the stuff and assistants employed there.” (ibid.). It is often experienced as challenging to explain to people with ID that others can or have to be around when they use the toilet or shower, but not when it comes to sexuality. This difficulty leads to an understanding of the sexuality of people with disabilities as being unnatural and public, contrasted with the sexuality of people without disabilities as natural and private.

Given that this topic is of great relevance for assistants, who are included in the secondary target group, it gets remarkably little attention in the material. This may indicate a significant difference between assistants and people with ID: For the latter the blurriness between the private and public sphere is often natural, since they have been experiences for their whole life, whereas for assistants it is a reason for concern. In the material, this difference is bridged over by addressing privacy seldomly, but plainly: Sexuality is private. The argumentation behind is framed by consent. For example, most people masturbate when they are on their own. However, some like to masturbate with others, but then, when the privacy is disturbed, it is crucial to be sure that everybody consents (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 105). In the context of the distinction between public and private Kafer (2013, p. 9) asks in her call for crip theory “is disability political? How is it political? How is the category of disability used to justify the classification, supervision, segregation, and oppression of certain people, bodies, and practices?” The discourse presented here does not suggest disability as a political issue. By not giving the topic too much attention, it is expressed that an intellectual disability should not
be used to justify a certain classification or even segregation, specific supervisions, or even oppression of sexuality.

The film represents sexuality and the distinction between the private and public sphere as well. Oliver and Claudia, as well as Fatima and Tanja, kiss and hug in public, but cuddling, undressing, and sex only happens at home. The privacy is emphasised by the camera setting: In all scenes that are related to sexuality, the camera has a slightly vertical angle to avoid a direct eye-contact between the viewer and the characters. Moreover, the most intimate scenes end with the camera zooming out (Om sex. 2015: 23:37, 28:00). The viewers thus feel as if they were slowly withdrawing from the scene.

9.1.4 Concluding Thoughts
Consent how it is presented in this discourse has a strong connection to the norm-criticism: Everything is okay as long as everyone involved is okay with it. For that, knowledge is necessary to make informed choices; communication skills that involve both expressing oneself and being attentive to each other are necessary to be clear about each other’s consent, and privacy is important so that no one is exposed to things that they have not agreed to. Thus, self-governing, using one’s possibilities for having a pleasurable sexuality, and taking the responsibilities that come with it are fundamental.

9.2 Category Two: Embracing Vulnerability
As I have shown in the theoretical chapter (p. 32), vulnerability can be primarily understood as an issue of inequality. Even though everybody is vulnerable, some groups of people that are perceived as being especially vulnerable because of “their lack of or diminished capacity to protect themselves [are focused, A.G.]. On this kind of view, then, vulnerable persons are those with reduced capacity, power, or control to protect their interests relative to other agents” (Mackenzie et al. 2014, p. 6). Often, people with ID are seen as especially vulnerable persons regarding their sexual lives. Many assistants and parents have the opinion that people with ID have difficulties to take a stance against unwanted sexual approaches. Another common believe is that people with ID want to be ‘like everybody else’ without having the same capacities as others and, thus, are more likely to enter potentially dangerous situations. As a result, assistants and parents tend to be overprotective, and try to prevent potentially risky situations. (Löfgren-Mårtensson 2003, p. 195).
The discourse on sexuality presented in the material suggests another attitude towards vulnerability which follows the argumentation of Shildrick (2002, p. 73ff.), who criticises that often, vulnerability is not denied, but only subjects that are perceived as ‘normally functioning’ are seen as being able to conquer vulnerability. The discourse is based on an ontological perception of vulnerability and fits into an ethics that “acknowledges both vulnerability to the other, and the vulnerability of the self” (Shildrick 2002, p. 12). The message that is conveyed here, and that I shall present as the second category in the following is: Do not suppress vulnerability, but embrace it. The target group is encouraged to not only accept their vulnerability but take advantage of it as well.

This message structures, likewise consent, the whole text of the fact book, but also the film. Right at the beginning, Claudia states: “Sex, love, relationships and stuff like that, I find it confusing sometimes.” (Om sex. 2015. 00:59; also cited in forum SKILL 2015b, p. 21). That being said in the introduction, sexuality is depicted as being difficult to understand, unclear, complicated, a field in which one might get lost – short as a field in which one can feel vulnerable. It also expresses that sexuality consists of various areas, analogue to Brown’s (2006, p. 48) conceptualisation of vulnerability. These areas are sex as a practice, feelings such as love, and romantic relationships. Arguing with Brown, one can feel vulnerable in one or several of these areas. They can be related to each other, but also be independent. In the following, I present the different areas in which one can experience vulnerability presented in the discourse as the concepts that are at stage in the category of vulnerability.

9.2.1 Vulnerability in different areas

Being open for meeting new people and dating renders one vulnerable. It happens that one gets rejected which is painful and attacks one’s self-esteem (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 25, 30ff.). In a personal narrative one describes this in the following way: “I got very sad and felt foolish and stupid. I started to believe that I had imagined everything.” (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 32, own translation, A.G.). Furthermore, unknown people might have bad intentions and take advantage of others while being on a date. Therefore, it is suggested to meet at public places and tell friends about the meeting place (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 37). This advice is in accordance with Brown’s research results: Being aware of being vulnerable enables to recognize vulnerable situations and to seek protection and support.
But even in relationships, that are usually depicted as desirable and characterized by mutual care and love, one is vulnerable. Sometimes partners can show hurtful behaviour such as cheating, ambivalent signals, persuasion and force to do something, threads, or controlling behaviour. If one experiences that, the advice is to talk to friends, health centres, or women’s shelters (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 44f.). Again, this is according to Brown’s research results: Instead of ignoring that violence in relationships exist, it is acknowledge and complemented by concrete advice of where to search for help.

However, relationships can end even without one partner being (physically or psychologically) aggressive. People and feelings change, and maybe the relationship is not enjoyable anymore. In line with knowledge produced by feelings in the context of consent, it is emphasised that one should “listen to your feeling and be honest with yourself” (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 47, own translation, A.G.) also in terms of relationships. The end of a relationship can be sad and horrible, but also relieving. It “is a part of life and, actually, one becomes just stronger with time. The next time one maybe looks at relationships a bit differently and does not throw oneself in with expectations that we now shall get married.” (ibid.). This is again parallel to the knowledge produced in the context of consent: experiences help to produce knowledge and to get to know oneself and others better, even if these experiences are hurtful. To accept and recognize one’s vulnerability may, thus, lead to learning processes that can prevent getting equally hurt the next time. This is an example of how to take advantage of one’s vulnerability.

Being vulnerable in relation to one’s sexual identity is a reality especially for non-heterosexual people. As it is told in personal narratives, non-heterosexual people are afraid and scared of being less respected, or rejected by friends and family because of their sexual identity. It is suggested to talk to people one trusts and to seek support when coming out to others (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 17). Again, accepting one’s vulnerability allows to seek support and help.

Vulnerability can also be experienced in relation to sex. For people with disabilities care workers are often close and sometimes the only contact persons whose assistance might be needed before or during sex. In the blurry space between private sphere (the person with ID’s home) and public sphere (the assistant’s working place), talking about sexuality, especially when it is about to be explored, can be experienced as difficult, as it is told in a personal
narrative (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 102). But also talking about sex with a partner can be experienced as “embarrassing and tough” (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 23, own translation, A.G.) because the other person might react irritated or with ridicule. However, as it is expressed in another personal narrative, these conversations usually go very well and are the basis for trustful relationships in which one dares to be brave (ibid.). It is also recommended to stop sex that does not feel good in order to talk about these feelings, and maybe try out a different position (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 94). This shows how accepting and embracing one’s vulnerability is essential for good relationships and pleasurable sex.

9.2.2 Necessity to Embrace Vulnerability

The category of embracing vulnerability that structures the alternative discourse on sexuality and intellectual disabilities is based on an ontological understanding of vulnerability. As embodied and social beings, humans are vulnerable because of injuries, illnesses, and our dependencies on others. As the different areas of vulnerability, that I have described above, show, sexuality is a field in which vulnerabilities based on both our embodied as well as social being are relevant. However, there is one exception to the ontological understanding of vulnerability: In the area of sexual identity, non-heterosexual people are depicted as being more vulnerable than others to experience disrespect. Yet, the grounds for this discrepancy is not the sexual identity or the persons with a non-heterosexual identity and their (in)capability of dealing with vulnerabilities, but the lack of awareness for the spectrum of sexual identities in society (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 11).

According to the material, being in a relationship that involves sexuality is desirable. Many people strive for it, and when they manage to enter a relationship with another person it is a success. In the film this is expressed when Gabi, who is a friend of Claudia and described as sexually more experienced and functions as an adviser throughout the whole film, gives Claudia a high-five in order to mark her relationship with Oliver as a success (Om sex. 2015: 16:21). Likewise, Fatima and Tanja who are friends, work colleagues and flatmates of Oliver, and have been in a longer relationship, are presented as a happy, loving couple that care for and support each other and are, thus, a model for Oliver (Om sex. 2015: 20:15). Negative experiences are not shown, but the characters talk about having unsatisfying sex due to a lack of communication, the difficulty to express what one desires, being nervous before the ‘first time’, and being disappointed of being tricked by people in online dating. In this way,
negative experiences are represented as being a usual experience that many people share and that can and should be communicated and talked about, but that do not need to be dramatized.

The positive effects of an embrace of vulnerability are also conveyed by the photo number 17 that I have described in detail above (p. 42) and that shows a woman with disabilities lying naked on the floor. The photo displays disability, laughter, and beauty at the same time. It also displays a loving self-acceptance, which is underlined by the lighting and expressed by the added statement of the depicted woman: “I like my whole body, but I’m especially confident with the breasts. They are very beautiful! I would absolutely not want to change anything on my body. It is just perfect how it is.” (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 87f., own translation, A.G.) Moreover, she looks directly in the camera and, thus, in the viewers’ eyes. This direct connection supports her openness and self-confidence. The woman embodies the message that is both conveyed in the fact book and in the film: Being sexy and being vulnerable is not contradictory. To have a pleasurable sexuality means to embrace your vulnerability. It is necessary to open up, emotionally as well as physically and let the other partner(s), the sex toy(s), the own hand explore the body and let them be close. That is how you get to know your own body, each other, and your own sexuality. Embracing vulnerability is a precondition to experience closeness and connections. There is no need to try to protect some of this vulnerability – and no justification to do so based on whatever categorizations. The trial will fail, but nevertheless reduce life quality.

Life quality will not only be reduced by all restrictions and rules, but also by taking away the possibility to grow as a person from difficult experiences, such as break-ups: “For sure you will get hurt and you will continue and then learn something from every relationship” (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 39, own translation, A.G.). From a crip theoretical perspective, it becomes clear that the discourse’s message is to understand vulnerability as an asset. Being vulnerable makes humans grow and develop. Accepting vulnerability allows closeness. Embracing vulnerability is thus necessary for a pleasurable sexuality. From the ontological understanding of vulnerability that underlies the discourse, people with ID are not more or less vulnerable than others. The crip theoretical perspective shows us how it is, by actively countering the negative attitudes that are common towards sexuality and intellectual disabilities, possible to reframe the understanding of vulnerability in a general way and, thereby, eliminate boundaries constructed between people with and without ID.
9.3 Concluding Thoughts

The two categories, consent and embracing vulnerability, are related to each other. I already mentioned that different ways of knowledge production, such as through feelings and experiences, are relevant for both. But they are also related in another, fundamental way: consent makes it possible to embrace vulnerability. What is necessary, is as I have already shown in the previous research, a “balance [between] protection and risk” (Fish 2016, p. 654) – which means embracing vulnerability and taking the risk to get heartbroken, but feeling protected by having consent ensured. Consent makes vulnerability empowering, exciting, and prevents the worst pain of getting one’s integrity violated. This relationship between consent and vulnerability can be understood with the argumentation line of crip theory. By embracing what is usually understood as negative, a deeper understanding of vulnerability is gained which allows to deal with it with agency, to gain as much control as possible, as well as to accept the limits of this control.

10. Conclusion

This thesis analyses a sex education material produced with and for people with ID that focuses on pleasure and has the intention to counter the prevailing discourse on sexuality and intellectual disability. This prevailing discourse depicts people, and especially women, with ID as particularly vulnerable and in need of strict protection, which leads to restrictions, regulations, a lack of privacy and, in the end, inhibits a pleasurable sexuality. The purpose of this study is to analyse how sexuality is understood in the countering discourse, what is related to sexuality, and what is deemed relevant for sexuality. I aimed to understand this discourse from two different perspectives. On the one hand, an intersectional perspective should show which categorizations are made relevant in the understanding of sexuality and in what ways. On the other hand, a biopolitical perspective on norms should shed light on the ways in which the discourse regulates sexuality, sexual experiences and sexual behavior.

I showed that the central aspect of sexuality is sex, understood in a broad definition including every action that leads to sexual pleasure for everybody who is included. This fits to research results that have shown that the sexual expressions of people with ID vary a lot, and often do not center on or include sexual intercourse (Löfgren-Mårtenson 2003). In line with Wilkerson (2002), the connection between a self-assured relationship to the body and the self, relationships to others, and a pleasurable sexuality is emphasised. To experience pleasure it is
helpful to spend time thinking about one’s identity in order to develop a clarity about own preferences. Moreover, getting to know the body by learning about its functions, exploring the own body and learning to listen to the own feelings will increase the sexual pleasure. Topics that are emphasized in the prevalent discourse, such as sexually transmitted diseases, unwanted pregnancies, and prevention (see for example Jahoda & Pownall 2014), are mentioned as well and explained in a clear, undramatic tone, which shows that they are seen as relevant, but not central in the alternative discourse on sexuality.

Various scholars have formulated theoretical pleas to change the prevalent discourse on sexuality and (intellectual) disabilities. Shakespeare (2000) argues for the need to open up possibilities for everyone to position oneself towards sexuality without presetting its importance or any right, or disability-specific ways of doing it, Wilkerson (2002, p. 43) emphasises that “sexual agency [should be understood, A.G.] as a basic aspect of human dignity” for everybody, and Turner & Crane (2016) argue for the importance to increase the sexual literacy of people with ID by focusing on everybody’s right to pleasure. The alternative discourse sets a practice-oriented example to all of these appeals.

Since sex is understood in a broad way, numerous possibilities of what one can do are included in the discourse. The understanding of sex follows a bit of an anything-goes-approach – with one fundamental condition: Everybody needs to feel good. A biopolitical perspective shows clearly that this puts the individual in a position of freedom and responsibility and requires self-governance. Everybody is responsible for learning about the own body and the own preferences, but also for communicating them and being attentive to the wishes and desires of partner(s). This counters the common infantilizing of people with ID: While they are often assumed to be incapable of defining preferences, negotiating sexual choices and intimate relationships with others, or making reasonable decisions (Wilkerson 2002), the alternative discourse addresses them as mature, responsible, and capable of producing and using knowledge to have a pleasurable sexual life.

The body is central for sexuality. So central, that other categorizations such as age, disability, or nationality only become relevant through their effects on bodies and the body’s capability to experience pleasure. Neither has gender a direct influence on the experience of sex. But, as it is depicted in the film, gender has an impact in heterosexual relationships. The gender relations can be related to strong Swedish norms of gender equality, especially in the context
of the living conditions of people with ID who are often surrounded by mostly female staff with a restrictive attitude towards expressions of sexuality, particularly by boys and men. As a result, relationships are supposed to be characterized by equality. However, the restrictions towards their sexuality that boys and men experience and the lack of male role models lead to insecurity, whereas girls and women are more proactive. (Löfgren-Mårtenson 2003).

It is noteworthy that no gender differences are mentioned in the fact book. In order to be inclusive of transpersons, readers are addressed as persons with “pussies” and “dicks”. The fact book, thus, expresses clearly that the experience of sexuality is not set by the gender identity. Yet, this does not mean that gender does not have an influence on how one experiences sexuality and behaves in relationships. Gendered patterns of different experiences and interactions, as they are depicted in the film, may exist, but the fact that they are not described in the fact book shows that they do not have to be relevant.

The alternative discourse on sexuality and intellectual disability is characterized by a broad understanding of sexuality in which categorizations such as gender, disability, and age shall not matter. What is fundamental, though, is that everybody feels comfortable. This message is conveyed lucidly and throughout the whole material. I have carved out two branches that underline this message: consent, and embracing vulnerability. The alternative discourse follows the argumentation of Shakespeare (2000) and can be related to a crip theoretical perspective: By discussing sexuality of people with ID and creating an understanding of sexuality that centres around the individual pleasure, new possibilities of experiencing sexuality for everyone are opened up. Humans are vulnerable, and are especially so in close relationships. Sexuality being situated in relationships is, consequently, entangled with vulnerability. Disentanglement of sexuality and vulnerability is not a realizable option. But it is an option to embrace the vulnerability, and to acknowledge one’s resilience to deal with hurtful experiences. Based on the trust in the own resilience, one can also trust others and meet others with respect and consent.

As I have shown in my personal positioning, I am convinced that open discussions about sexuality and intellectual disability are necessary so that people with ID can experience a pleasurable sexuality and are supported in this as much as they need by assistants. Throughout the intra-acting process of analysing the material and writing this thesis, this conviction has been strengthened. In the material, situations similar to my own experiences were described in
personal narratives and theorised. Reading through the narratives and the material in general from a perspective stemming from my personal experiences, it became very clear that the taboos and ignorance around sexuality and intellectual disabilities do not prevent harmful incidents, but makes it difficult to talk about them, which increases the harm. The sexuality of people with ID is a relevant topic, and the material provides possibilities for learning how to make it a pleasurable and positive topic.

I also want to reflect on my role as researcher being a person without ID and lacking the experience of working intensively, for many years with the same people with ID. My analysis has been shaped by my own experiences which stem from working and spending time with people with ID for shorter periods or irregularly. Additionally, my analysis has been shaped by making connections to previous research, as well as by a theoretical perspective inspired by bio-politics, crip theory, and vulnerability theory. For further research, it would be worthwhile to analyse the material from a perspective that includes people with ID as well as assistants and other members of the material’s second target group that have more intense (working) relationships with people with ID. While this thesis focused on the fixed version of what has been published, the perspective of people with ID and assistants could give insight in the ongoing changes of the discourse. To study discussions of the material guided by assistants could give more insight in the pedagogical character of the discourse and the power dimensions that come with it. An inclusion of the perspectives of people with ID could also shed light on “[t]he questions … whether all people with intellectual disabilities have the same opportunity to understand what it means to ‘embrace the stigma’” (Löfgren-Mårtenson 2013, p. 420) and, thus, further crip theory.

The material is based on discussions with Swedes, published in Sweden, and on Swedish. In this way, it is firmly established in the Swedish context. Individuality and freedom of choices are values that are predominant in the Swedish and in the broader Western context and are an unchallenged basis for the material. I related the material to research produced in other Western countries and similarities and parallels have been predominant. However, as Kulick and Rydström (2015) have shown in their comparison of Sweden and Denmark, numerous meaningful differences can even exist between countries that are often depicted as very similar and share similar geopolitical and cultural backgrounds. What seems to be the most Sweden-specific aspect of this discourse is the gendered patterns in relationships that result
from an intra-action of gender and disability. These patterns could only be related to another study that was conducted in Sweden (Löfgren-Mårtenson 2003).

However, in general, there is a dearth of studies that include analysing gender in relationships between people with ID. While this study provides hints of how similar discourses could look like in other Western contexts – if they exist for example in form of comparable material or shall be created as counter-discourses to the predominant discourse – possible national differences need to be taken into account.

Therefore, more research on the understanding of sexuality that includes the perspectives of people with ID is necessary. It would also be interesting to examine how categorizations influence the experience of sexuality for people with ID. From a crip theoretical understanding it would be illuminating to see if the intellectual disability shapes the understanding of sexuality. Furthermore, to examine the relevance of the kind and degree of disabilities would be interesting to analyse. The material is addressed to people with intellectual, neuropsychiatric and/or other cognitive disabilities, and I use the term ‘intellectual disabilities’ as an umbrella term for all disabilities or difficulties that limit the mental capacity and conceptual, social, and practical skills which may appear at any age because I decided that for this study, the cause of the disability is not of further relevance. Yet, it would be important to analyse if and how people with intellectual, neuropsychiatric, and cognitive disabilities understand sexuality in different ways. The discourse I presented here provides inspiring examples of how feelings and experiences produce knowledge, but is nevertheless mostly accessible for people with rather mild intellectual disabilities. People who have extreme difficulties to communicate their feelings, or to build up relationships, might feel excluded by the material, and are, in general, often excluded by research.

In order to be able to conduct research that includes the perspectives of people with ID, we need creative and critical discussions of more methods to produce and disseminate knowledge in more inclusive forms. As both researchers in disability studies as well as people with ID that have participated in research state, people with disabilities can have problems to participate in research because of difficulties to understand the research design in general, or specific interview questions, find words to describe their experiences or to describe them in a way that is understandable for the researcher (Wermeling & Nydahl 2011, p. 21ff.). For a deeper and broader understanding of sexuality and intellectual disabilities we need to include
more various methods of knowledge production and dissemination into academia and society. A suggestion, described by two Swedish journalists Erika Wermeling and Erika Nydahl on behalf of Handikappförbunden, a Swedish umbrella organisation that aims to improve the accessibility of society for people with disabilities by influencing politics and research, in “From research object to mediator” (Wermeling & Nydahl 2011, own translation, A.G.), is the concept of “mediators”, persons with disabilities that participate in large parts of the research process. They report that people with ID understand interview questions easier when they have been formulated by people with ID (Wermeling & Nydahl 2011, p. 115).

This thesis has presented a discourse analysis of the forum SKILL-material and provides insight in how the alternative discourse on sexuality and intellectual disability is characterised both in relation to intersectionality and (re)produced norms. Being an in-depth study of a published, thus, unchangeable material with a focus on pleasure, I hope this thesis can serve as a productive and inspiring entrance point for further studies on sexuality and intellectual disabilities that do not follow a “disaster, disease and dysfunction approach” (Turner & Crane 2016, p. 679) and include the perspectives of people with ID.
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**Online References**


### Appendix

The quotes are ordered according to their appearance in the text. Repetitions are deleted.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Swedish Original</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Handledning</strong></td>
<td>Guide book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>så inkluderande som möjligt.</td>
<td>“as inclusive as possible” (forum SKILL 2015a, p. 14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Det är en mänsklig rättighet att bli sedd och respekterad som en sexuell varelse och att ha tillgång till begriplig information som rör sex och samlevnad.</td>
<td>“it is a human right to be seen and respected as a sexual being and to have access to understandable information about sex and living together” (forum SKILL 2015a, p. 10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Faktabok</strong></td>
<td>Fact book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Har du tänkt på vem du är? Vad du gillar? Vem du vill ha sex med?</td>
<td>“Have you thought about who you are? What do you like? Who do you want to have sex with?” (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Du kan bara vara den du är.</td>
<td>“can just be” (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Hur vet man om man tycker om tjejer eller killar eller bade och?’ ‘Ja du, det vet man ju inte.’ ‘På hjärtat.’</td>
<td>‘“How does one know if one likes girls or boys or both?’ ‘Well, you don’t know that.’ ‘In the heart.’” (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Låt inte någon få säga elaka saker till dig. Du har rätt att vara den du är. Ingen annan får säga till dig vad du är eller hur du känner.</td>
<td>“Let no one say mean things to you. You have the right to be who you are. No one else is allowed to tell you who you are or what to feel!” (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Det hör ju till att man kommer bli sårad och man kommer fortsätta och sen lär man sig något av varenda relation.</td>
<td>“For sure you will get hurt and you will continue and then learn something from every relationship” (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 39)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upptäcksfärd</td>
<td>“discovery journey” (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 53, 65)</td>
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<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slidan är en fantastisk skapelse.</td>
<td>the vagina as “a fantastic organ” (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 55)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitt bästa tips är fortfarande: lär känna din fitta.</td>
<td>“best advice … [to] get to know your pussy.” (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 107)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Jag gillar hela min kropp, men är särskilt nöjd med brösten. De är jättefina! Jag skulle absolut inte vilja ändra något med min kropp. Den är helt enkelt perfekt som den är.”</td>
<td>“I like my whole body, but I’m especially confident with the breasts. They are very beautiful! I would absolutely not want to change anything on my body. It is just perfect how it is.”” (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 87f.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex kan vara mjukt eller hårt. Snabbt eller långsamt. Sex kan vara roligt, nervöst, spännande, härligt och mycket mer. Sex kan vara att röra vid din kropp. Sex kan vara att ligga nära någon och att röra vid varandra. Att kramas, kyssas, hängla. Eller att slicka, suga och pussa på varandra.</td>
<td>“Sex can be soft or hard. Slow or fast. Sex can be funny, nervous, exciting, awesome, and much more. Sex can be to touch your body. Sex can be to lie next to someone and to touch each other. To hug, kiss, make out. Or to lick, suck and kiss each other.” (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 93f.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Både innan, under och efter sexet.</td>
<td>“[b]oth before, during and after the sex” (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 94)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under flera år var det bara lite skönt när jag hade sex. Inte sådär jättekönt som när man får orgasm.</td>
<td>“in many years it was just a little bit nice when I had sex. Not so very nice as when someone gets an orgasm.” (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 107)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ett smart sätt att lära känna sin kropp.</td>
<td>“a smart way to get to know one’s body” (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 104)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Känslan kommer när du njuter mycket av att ha sex med dig själv eller någon annan.</td>
<td>“the feeling that comes when you enjoy having sex with yourself or someone else a lot” (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 108f.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swedish Text</td>
<td>English Translation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Om du har sex med någon som har fitta kan det här vara skönt</td>
<td>“if you have sex with someone who has a pussy this can be nice” (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 117)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Om du har sex med någon som har kuk kan det här vara skönt</td>
<td>“if you have sex with someone who has a dick this can be nice” (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 118)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>När några är överens om att de vill ha sex tillsammans kan det kallas för samtycke. Det betyder att personerna vill ha sex tillsammans just där och då.</td>
<td>“When some have agreed that they want to have sex together that is called consent. That means that the persons want to have sex together just there and then.” (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 96)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Om du vill skicka nakenbilder på dig själv till någon annan är det bra att känna till attbilderna kan användas på ett sätt som du inte vill.</td>
<td>“If you want to send naked pictures of yourself to someone else, it can be good to know that the pictures can be used in another way than you want” (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Det är viktigt att hålla sig ren om kroppen och könsorganet. Både för din egen skull och för andras.</td>
<td>“it is important to keep oneself clean on the body and the sexual organ. Both for your own sake and for other’s.” (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 81)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>upptäcksfärd med händer och fingrar</td>
<td>“discovery journey with hands and fingers” (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 117)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Det är bara du som kan bestämma vad som känns rätt och bra för dig</td>
<td>“it is just you who can decide what feels right and good” (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 94)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Det är bara ni själva som bestämmer hur er relation skall se ut och vilka regler ni vill följa.</td>
<td>“it is you who decides how your relationships shall look like and which rules you want to follow.” (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 44)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Det blir oftast bättre sex om ni pratar om hur ni vill ha det. Du kan till exempel fråga om det du gör är skönt. Eller om du ska göra</td>
<td>“The sex is often better when you talk about how you want it. You can for example ask if what you do feels nice. Or if you should do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>något annat. Ju fler ni är som har sex tillsammans, desto viktigare är det att lyssna på varandra och att berätta hur du vill ha det.</td>
<td>something else. The more people involved, the more important it is to listen to each other and tell how you want it.” (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 116)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Är du inte säker på att den som du har sex med faktiskt vill ha sex med dig, kan du begå ett övergrepp eller en våldtäkt.</td>
<td>“If you are not sure if the person you have sex with actually wants to have sex with you, you can commit an assault or a rape.” (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 97)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Du kan säga nej till sex när som helst.</td>
<td>“you can say no to sex whenever” (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 97)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Jag blev jätteledsen och kände mig fånig och dum. Jag började tro att jag inbillat mig alltihop.”</td>
<td>“I got very sad and felt foolish and stupid. I started to believe that I had imagined everything.” (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 32)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lyssna på dina känslor och var ärlig mot dig själv.</td>
<td>“listen to your feeling and be honest with yourself” (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 47)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lite pinsamt och jobbigt</td>
<td>“embarrassing and tough” (forum SKILL 2015b, p. 23)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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