

**Suspending Judgments: A
Sexual Health Dialogue
Skill for Reproductive
Health Professionals**



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What is Sexual Health?



**CDC/HRSA ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON HIV AND
STD PREVENTION AND TREATMENT(2011)**



.State of wellbeing in relation to sexuality across the lifespan that involves physical, emotional, mental, social, and spiritual dimensions.



Inextricable element of human health



Positive, equitable, and respectful approach to sexuality, relationships, and reproduction.



Free of coercion, fear, discrimination,
stigma, shame, and violence.



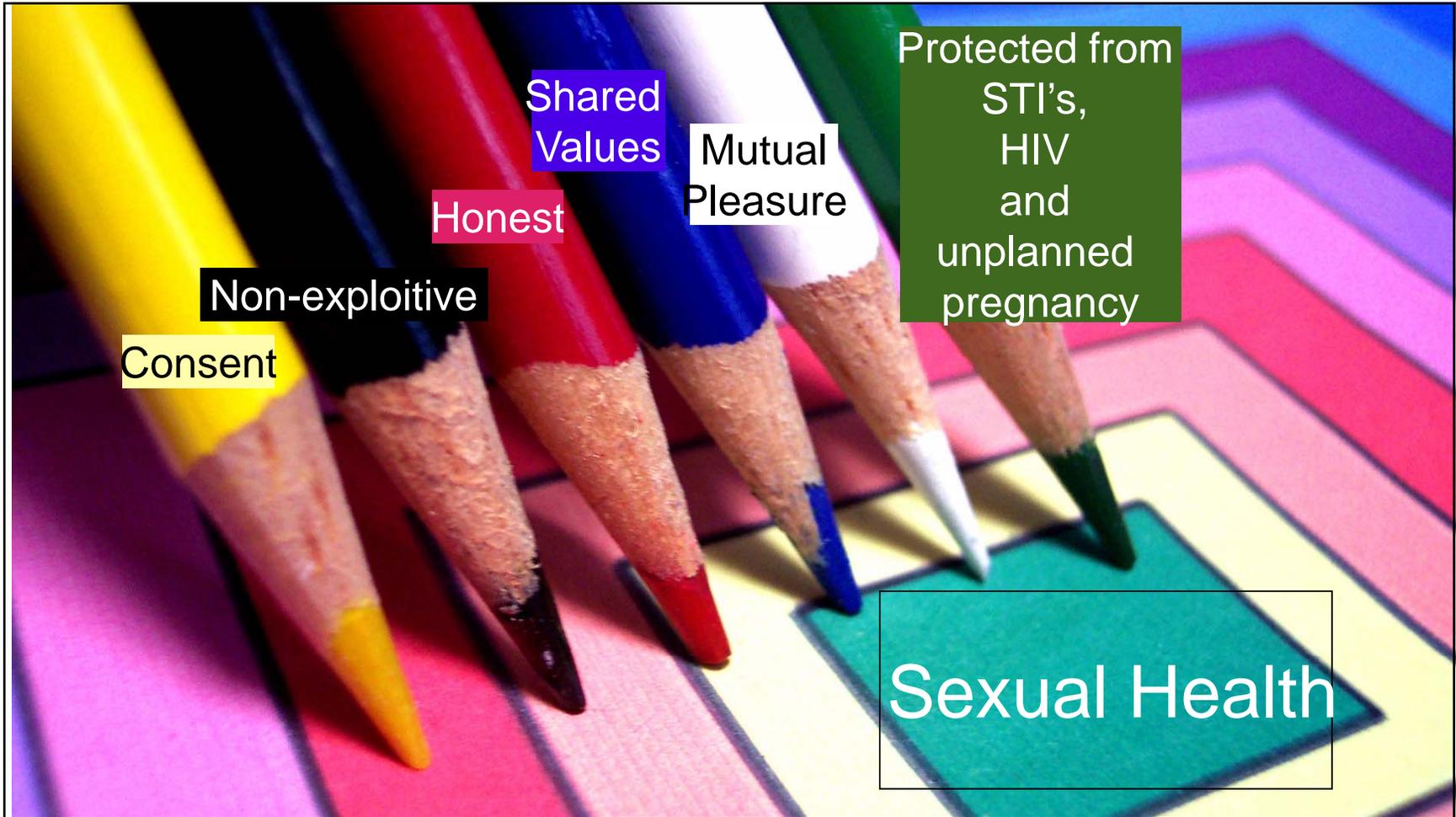
Includes ability to understand prevention of disease and other adverse outcomes; and the possibility of fulfilling sexual relationships

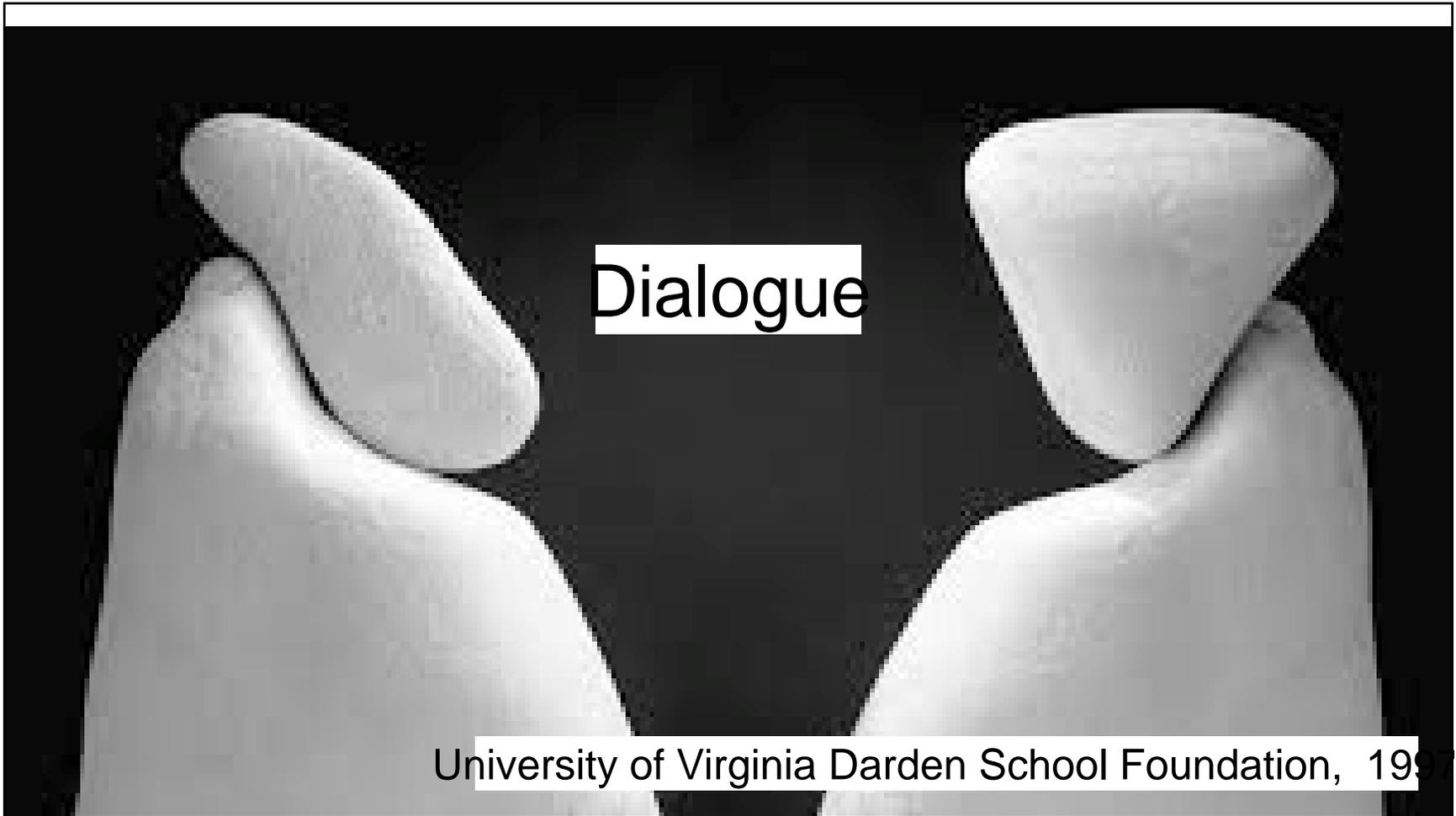


Includes ability to understand benefits, risks, and responsibilities of sexual behavior



Sexual health is impacted by socioeconomic and cultural contexts— including policies, practices, and services—that support healthy outcomes for individuals and their communities





University of Virginia Darden School Foundation, 1997

Suspending Judgment

Suspend

Stop something, make something ineffective ***for a short time***

Delay or defer an action or judgment ***until more facts are known***

Judgment

Formed opinion or decision about a disputed, controversial or doubtful circumstance

Ability to form sound opinions,
sensible decisions, or reliable guesses

Abandoning morals?

Rejecting personal values?

Suspending judgment **allows us to see things we usually can not see.**

Allows exploration of sexuality and sexual self.

One main obstacle
to **incorporating others' opinions efficiently**
is one's own opinion.

Yaniv & Choshen-Hillel, (2012). Exploiting the Wisdom of Others to Make Better Decisions: Suspending Judgment Reduces Egocentrism and Increases Accuracy
Journal of Behavioral Decision Making
Vol. 25 (5) pp. 427-434.

Adhering to prior opinions
leads to
failure to take advantage of information
contained in others' opinions

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How do we create a space for **unbiased** weighting of others' opinion?

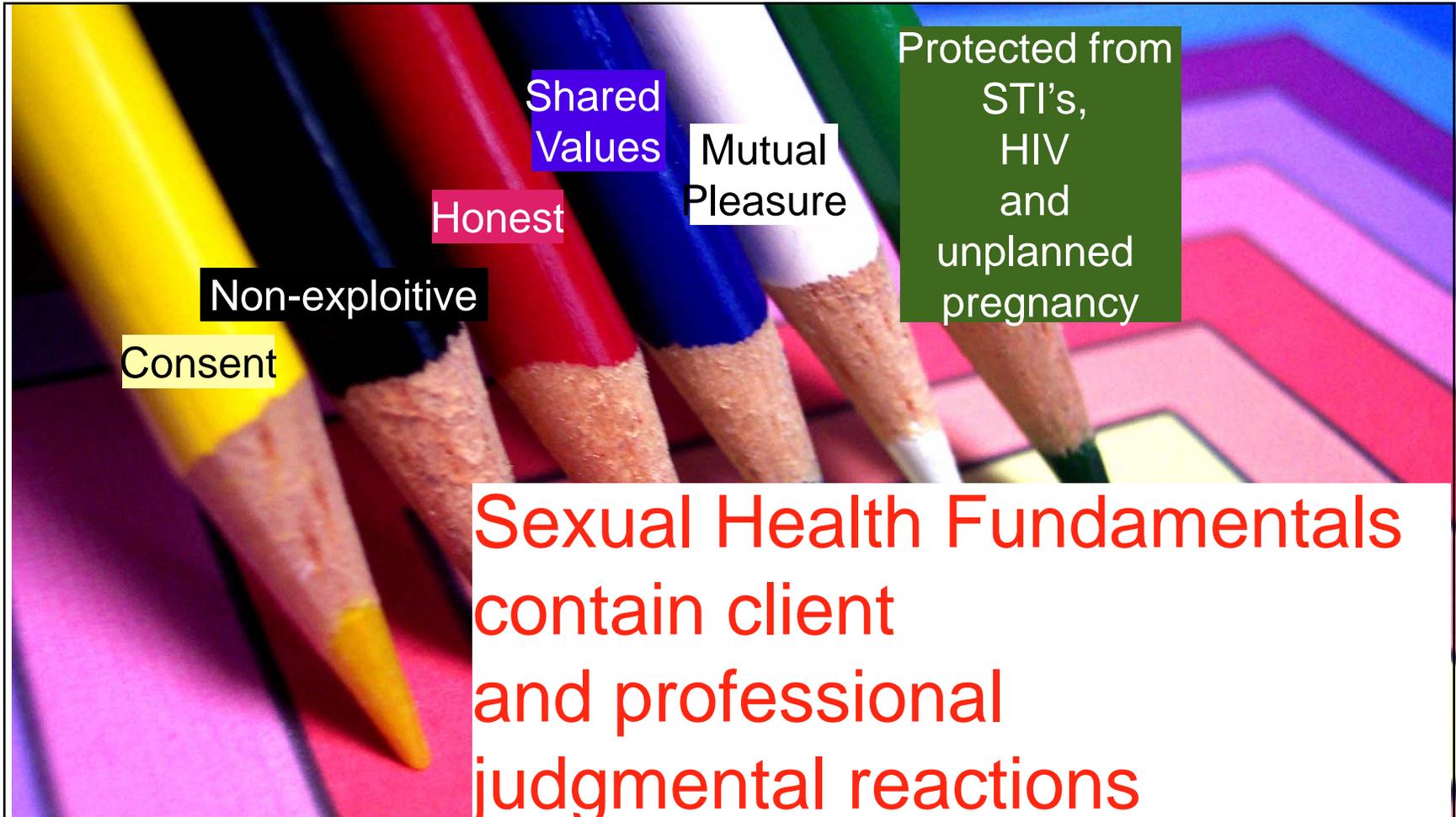
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Exploiting the Wisdom of Others to Make Better Decisions

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When counselors **stop**
and **regulate**
their immediate reactions
to sexual conversations,
they **reduce the clients' fear**
of attack, derision, or moralizing

Suspending judgment **interferes with
vehement criticism.**



Clients withhold sexual health worries
and problems from health care
professionals because.....

Clients fear their own judgments

Clients fear the judgmental responses
from the health care provider

Containing Mental Attitudes and Emotions

inability to regulate immediate emotional reactivity

The relationship will be disrupted by the unexamined judgmental response and accompanying instantaneous expression elicited by the counselor's dysregulated moment of judgment.

Fundamentals of sexual health organize unfamiliar emotional and behavioral experiences of client and the professional to increase listening and honest discussion of sexuality.

sexual health fundamentals contain client and professional judgmental reactions

curiosity

listening

mitigating fears

Suspension of judgment is in fact called for when no rational resolution of the issue is available.

Feldman, Richard. "Deep Disagreement, Rational Resolutions, and Critical Thinking." *Informal Logic* 25.1 (2005).