

Friendships and Beyond: Navigating Relationships and Sexuality in PWS

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Key Question

- Healthy relationships are a key factor in living a quality life. Disruptions in appropriate social skills, cognitive impairments and challenges in day-to-day living can impact a person's ability to form and keep relationships. Is a person less deserving of meaningful relationships simply because they need more support in creating and keeping them or should we, as families and caregivers, work to create an environment where relationships skills can be learned and improved upon with practice and support?

Types of Relationships

Friendships

Dating

Intimate Partners

What Gets in the Way?

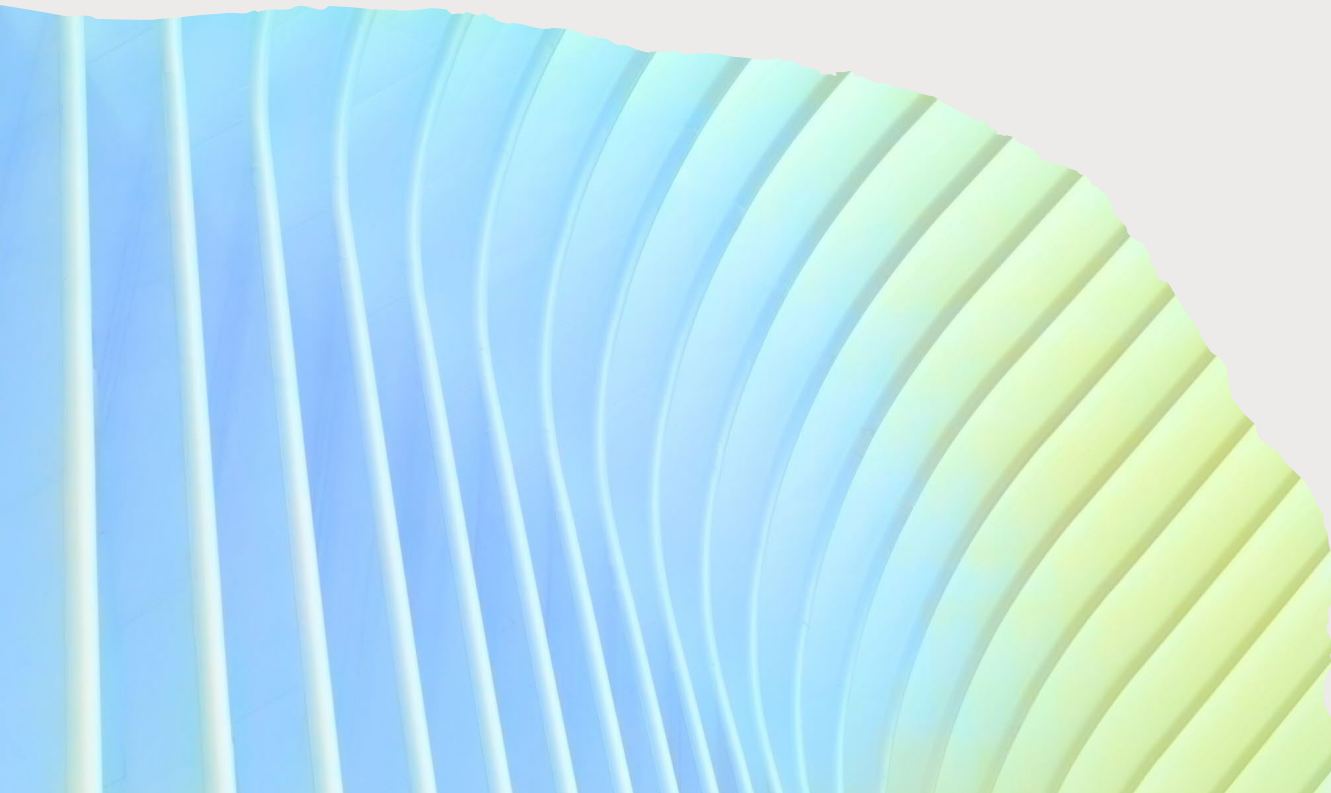
Executive
Functioning
Disorder

Sensory
Processing
Disorder

Impulse
control
challenges

Theory of Mind

What is a Quality of Life?



Meaningful
work

Meaningful
relationships

Leisure of
your choice

What is Our Role?

- Support the persons needs and wants
- Arrange for access to opportunities
- Facilitate relationships when they form
- Teach skills
- Understand the dignity of risk
- Intervene if necessary

- Celia became fixated on a peer in her school and stalked him in person, by phone and on social media. She lost interest in her favorite activities and did nothing but focus on where he was, what he was doing and who he was spending time with. She would text and email girls that he spent time with and threaten to kill them and burn their house down. She would stand on his lawn and yell for him to come outside. Soon she began throwing objects at his house and windows when he did not respond. We arranged a meeting between Celia and her peer with social workers and her family present. We met with the peer ahead of time and helped him with a script. This was similar to an intervention. He told her clearly that he was not interested in a relationship with her and that if she stopped stalking him, he would agree to still say hi to her when they passed each other in the hall. He explained that if she did not stop then he would not like her and he would never say hi to her again. Celia continued and her peer stopped saying hi causing an escalation in behaviors at school and a home.

Reminders and Take Aways

Act out of a
mindset of
inclusion and
opportunity

Be curious
about the
unmet needs

Your definition
of a
relationship is
not universal