

In an intensive process, the Gesellschaft für Sexualpädagogik (gsp) has, in consultation with its 300+ members, developed professional ethical standards that address the expected professional ethical attitude and provide criteria for transparent decisions in cases of conflict. They serve to focus awareness of ethical questions as a prerequisite for an ethically responsible practice, appropriate to the situation. These ethical standards are an important basis for professional work and can serve as a model for the further development of the professional field throughout Europe.



Professional ethical standards for sexual educators in the gsp

The following code formulates ethical standards for the professional behavior of Sex Educators in the gsp with the knowledge that self-examination allows for only an approximation of best ability, knowledge and conscience. This text serves as a critical-reflexive examination of the sexual education career practice and will be continually updated as developing experiences and findings necessitate.

In accepting membership, sex educators of the gsp will accept these standards as the guiding standard for their practices. The standards will be discussed by the ethics committee every three years at the member's meeting and updated if necessary.

1. Tasks and Self-Image

- 1.1.** Sexual educators of the gsp formulate their behavior on human rights, specifically sexual human rights and the right to reproductive health. Included are the rights of children and of disabled persons as per the convention of the United Nation. In addition, behavior is formulated on the German constitution and on those associated laws where implementation of sexual autonomy through sexual education play a role.
- 1.2.** Sexual educators of the gsp draw their social contract from the diverse challenges that arise from the constantly changing social conditions relating to sexual autonomy and from the participatory and educational interests of people in a pluralistic society. They work in early education, schools and other educational environments, including adult education, vocational schools and health settings.
- 1.3.** Sexual educators of the gsp professionally and respectfully support people of all ages throughout the development and shaping of their sexual identity, gender identity, sexual orientation, relationship forms and all physical, mental, social and moral competencies that are required in the formation of the individual's sexuality.
- 1.4.** Sexual educators of the gsp offer services to all people, regardless of national origin, age, ethnicity, gender identity, mental and physical state, socio-economic status, religion, worldview or sexual orientation. Educators will avoid all forms of discrimination and act against discrimination perpetrated by others.

- 1.5. Sexual educators of the gsp facilitate sexual education in all areas of education, social work and health care and assist in the training of specialists in those areas.
- 1.6. Sexual educators of the gsp advocate against all forms of sexual violence. They advocate for the end to all such violent conditions and work proactively to preclude them. A special focus is given to protecting children, those with special needs or any person who lives in a dependent relationship with others. Sexual educators of the gsp strengthen self-defensive abilities in their clients and flag those situations that might promote violence. They are aware that their clients might be affected by sexual violence.
- 1.7. Sexual educators of the gsp avoid indoctrination. They are critical and reflect on situations that might limit the right to self-determination. Educators support the development of self-determined lifestyles.

2. Sexual education in practice

- 2.1. Sexual educators of the gsp advocate for a worldview in which people have the choice to practice their sexuality in a responsible and self-determined way. They are also aware of the importance of those experts who might help to guide the formation of a client's sexual life. Depending on mental and physical condition, some people can be assisted to the point being enabled to live according to their self-determined sexuality.
- 2.2. Sexual educators of the gsp are aware of a range of negative and positive experiences that might occur in the discovery and living of one's sexuality. Sexual educators of the gsp understand their responsibility to respect their client's life choices, intimate interactive sphere, experiences with shame, the rights and individual goals of all people.
- 2.3. Sexual educators of the gsp understand the differences between the experiences and meaning of sexuality among children, youth or adults. They distinguish between a narrow and a wide definition of sexuality. They account for these differences when making educational evaluations according to age, competence and development-based knowledge.
- 2.4. Sexual educators of the gsp are aware of the specific curiosities, potential for risk taking and the desire for protection among adolescents. Responsible attention to this knowledge is evidenced by clear personal and situational proposals for safe learning experiences, the proactive guidance toward self-determined development and assistance offered in overcoming challenges.
- 2.5. Sexual educators of the gsp work in early-childhood sexual education in accordance with children's rights and children's welfare. On this basis, they will strive for an educational partnership with parents, guardians and other educators and will encourage similar encounters in parental involvement and family education.
- 2.6. Sexual educators of the gsp support people to autonomously live according to their sexuality. This includes a self-determined active and/or passive participation in sexual educational sessions. There are many situational factors that may have an influence on possible degrees of individual self-determination. Some factors include individual socialization, a developing group dynamic and peer pressure, as well as institutional frameworks such as an obligation to participate in sexual education in a school setting.
- 2.7. Sexual educators of the gsp must be aware of these factors and may not exploit the confidence placed in them by a client. For example, it must be explained at the beginning of their sessions that there is

no obligation to participate. Their task is to allow people to understand their right to access information relevant to sexuality. However, with judgmental caution and appropriate methodology, the educator will utilize both knowledge and experience to dispel any peer pressure or self-imposed pressure to actively pursue certain behavior patterns.

- 2.8.** Sexual educators of the gsp adhere to the data protection guidelines of the European Union, as well as to the legal regulations of confidentiality as far as they apply in their professional contexts. They may only share personal information when it is necessary for legal reasons or when they have consent of the client.
- 2.9.** The professionals in this field reflect upon the sexual cultures of the institution in which they function, for example the handling of power, eroticism and gender in that particular context, rules, conduct, language, rituals and fundamental values of the institution. Any abuses that are recognized in this process will be reported to the institution in question. Sexual educators of the gsp are aware of their influence and must reflect upon their boundaries. They understand that their practice is an opportunity for self-reflection and broadening of competencies when applying their own experiences and decision-making processes.

3. Profession of sexual educators

- 3.1.** Sexual educators of the gsp generally have an educational background in the humanities, specifically in pedagogy, as well as an integrated or externally acquired sexual education qualification. They work in all professional areas where sexual education is relevant and they promote interdisciplinary and interprofessional collaboration. They are familiar with modern insights in (critical) sexology.
- 3.2.** Through self-study, participation in training and workshops, as well as reputable evaluation of their work, sexual educators of the gsp participate in discipline-specific and methodology specific development of their discipline. They contribute to the continued development of sexual pedagogical theory and practice.
- 3.3.** Sexual educators of the gsp cooperate to the best of their abilities with higher education institutions, colleges, other educational institutions and with professional associations in social work and in the health sector. They also participate in self-help initiatives and activist groups.
- 3.4.** Sexual educators of the gsp are professionally active in the promotion of their profession and making it visible in society. They advocate for it across pedagogical as well as non-pedagogical professions.
- 3.5.** Sexual educators of the gsp use collegiate advice and supervision and/or take advantage of outside consultation and help when necessary — especially where there are conflicts or dilemmas within professional relationships.
- 3.6.** Sexual educators of the gsp participate professionally and ethically in the creation of sexual culture. They acknowledge that there are different positions as to what is accepted as appropriate. In enriching sexual culture, they are committed to a respectful engagement with these differing positions.
- 3.7.** Sexual educators of the gsp make colleagues aware when professional ethical foundations have been violated. If a collegiate discussion does not rectify such a situation, the Board or the Ethics Commission will be informed and a clarification sought. Non-members can also identify a violation of professional ethical standards by informing a member, who will in turn inform the Board. These reports will be presented to the Ethical Commission and examined in turn.