



Open Advocacy Meeting Report Relationships

Who was at the meeting?

In total, **42** people came to the open advocacy meeting.




This included:

- 23 people with a learning disability, including 5 members of the steering group
- 4 Speak Out staff
- 4 Speak Out volunteers
- 2 guests from other organisations
- 4 Brighton & Hove Councillors
- 5 supporters/carers

The meeting took place at the Brighthelm Centre, Brighton on Friday 8th March 2024.



Why did we talk about relationships?

	<p>Lots of people who come to Speak Out, have been telling us they want to talk about having relationships.</p> <p>This includes both friendships and romantic or intimate relationships.</p> <p>Only 3% of people with learning disabilities live with a partner (Mencap).</p>
	<p>There are barriers that stop people with learning disabilities from having a romantic relationship, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nowhere to meet people• Lack of education about relationships and sex• Lack of privacy at home (Mencap)
	<p>At the meeting, people learned about different types of relationships and thought about what it means to them.</p> <p>We hope this will help people feel more confident about finding a partner, if they want to.</p>

What happened at the meeting?

Morning Session



Gordon welcomed everyone to the meeting.



Councillor Leslie Pumm opened the meeting with a speech.



He spoke about his own journey as a gay man.

Cllr. Pumm encouraged everyone to be proud of who they are!



Danielle, Kirsty & Robert ran a workshop about **relationships & friendships**.

We learned about:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The differences between friendships and intimate / sexual relationships • Setting boundaries • Healthy and toxic relationships • Dating • Marriage • Consent
 	<p>We had a group discussion about romantic relationships during the workshop.</p> <p>Then people told us what they had talked about.</p> <p>The first question was: What does falling in love mean to you?</p> <p>People said: Getting to know each other well. Wanting to see each other a lot. Caring for each other.</p>



Feeling happy & excited.

Common interests.

Doing things together.

Helping each other.

Listening to each other.

The second question was:

What is a sexual relationship to you?

People said:

Being intimate with someone.

Being ready.

Private.

Meeting each other's needs.

Mutual fun.

Kissing and hugging.

The third question was:

What would your dating rules be?

People said:

No cheating.

Trust & respect.



No Tories.

Honest communication.

Mutual morals/human rights.

Not controlling.

Separate bank accounts.

Compromise.

There was also a **group discussion** about friendships.

The first question was:

What does a good friendship look like to you?

People said:

Trustworthy & reliable.

There for you and cares.

Common interests.

Loyal & honest.

Sharing feeling together.

Feeling safe.

The second question was:



What do you think a toxic friendship looks like?

People said:

Talking down to you.

Won't help you & don't care about your feelings.

Unreliable.

Smothers you.

Untrustworthy & lies to you.

Makes you feel bad.

Gaslighting.

Controlling.

Abusive.

Judgemental.


The third question was:

What could you do if a friend treats you badly?

People said:

Tell someone you can trust.

Stand up to them – you can get someone to come with you.

	<p>Stop seeing them.</p>
	<p>After the workshop, a relationship therapist answered our questions about relationships.</p> <p>People were able to talk about their worries and problems.</p> <p>They got advice that helped them work out how to manage their relationship problems.</p>

Afternoon Session



Gordon welcomed everyone back to the meeting after lunch.



Nathaniel & Isis ran a workshop about **LGBTQ+ relationships**.

We learned about:

- What LGBTQ+ stands for
- History of homophobia and gay rights in the UK
- Where LGBTQ+ people can get support with relationships



We did some **activities** during the workshop.

First, people were asked to think about **how many LGBTQ+ people they knew**.



Lots of people said they have **family and friends who identify under the LGBTQ+ umbrella.**

After that, people were asked **what they like about being the gender they identify as.**

People who identify as female said:

Wearing jewellery.

The curves of my body.

Playing in a women's sports team.

Wearing make-up.

Painting my nails.

Wearing flowy skirts and dresses.

Being part of the sisterhood.

Pink, fluffy slippers.

My hair.

Playing football.

Having periods.





**People who identify as male
said:**

Having a beard.

Not worrying about pregnancy.



Gordon gave a closing speech at
the end of the meeting.

**If you would like to find out more about
Speak Out, please get in touch!**



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