Suspending Judgments: A Sexual Health Dialogue Skill for Reproductive Health Professionals
What is Sexual Health?
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.
Comfort
Shared Values
Honest
Non-exploitive
Consent
Mutual Pleasure
Protected from STI’s, HIV and unplanned pregnancy
Sexual Health
Dialogue

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.

Journal of Behavioral Decision Making
Adhering to prior opinions leads to failure to take advantage of information contained in others' opinions

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

Exploiting the Wisdom of Others to Make Better Decisions

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.
Sexual Health Fundamentals contain client and professional judgmental reactions.
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.