

Programme enabling persons with disabilities to learn about sex and relationships

SINGAPORE / DISABLED PEOPLE'S ASSOCIATION (DPA) – DISORDINARY LOVE

In 2018 the Disabled People's Association (DPA), a Singapore-based NGO, launched DisOrdinary Love, a programme about sexuality targeted at persons with disabilities. Guided by a trained counsellor, persons with disabilities learn about such topics as online and in-person dating, sexual health, respecting personal boundaries, sexuality, and more. The programme is conducted as a series of quarterly workshops followed by individual counselling sessions, which have been attended by more than 300 people to date.

Problem targeted

There are few programmes for persons with disabilities to learn how to have safe and fulfilling sexual relationships.

Solution, innovation, and impact

DisOrdinary Love is a free programme covering topics related to sex, sexuality, and relationships through online workshops and one-on-one counselling sessions led by a qualified sex counsellor. The programme also caters to young people with disabilities and their parents.

DisOrdinary offers online services by putting the recordings from the workshops online and sharing resources on social media, thus reaching people who are not comfortable attending group sessions. The content shared by the programme is checked by an advisory committee, which includes persons with disabilities. Between 2019 and 2022, DisOrdinary Love has held six workshops with 14 to 93 attendees each and has provided one-on-one counselling to 303 people.

“Crafting paper flowers was a great way to meditate and reflect upon the issues surrounding LGBTQ+ and disability.”

DisOrdinary Love workshop attendee

Outlook, transferability, and funding

The budget of DisOrdinary Love is approximately \$21,000 per year, because it is held entirely online, and the counsellor works at a reduced rate. DPA received funding from two foundations for the first



Through in-person counselling and online workshops participants learn about sexuality and relationships.

year of the programme, covering the cost of three staff members, one counsellor, and marketing activities. In 2022 Majurity Trust (80 per cent) and Tan Chin Tuan Foundation (20 per cent) covered the entire budget. The NGO plans to produce more online content and add more topics to their workshops. DPA will also write a policy paper to advocate for changes to the sex education provided in Singapore's special education schools, which does not cover the social and emotional side of sex and relationships. DPA has been approached by other disability organizations to offer DisOrdinary Love to their members and by the State Courts of Singapore to provide it to offenders with disabilities.

FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 2019

- Between 2019 and 2022, DisOrdinary Love held six workshops with 14 to 93 attendees each.
- The programme is delivered by one qualified sex counsellor and three staff members.
- *A project of Civil Society.*



Dr. Marissa Medjeral-Mills

marissa@dpa.org.sg – www.dpa.org.sg