Caring for Young People With Intersex Variations

ccessible Word version of Intersex otearoa’s slides. The original slides, and recording of the associated webinar, are available at [www.be-there.nz](http://www.be-there.nz)

# Caring for Young People With Intersex Variations

Talking about.... being your child's advocate, privacy + concealment, relationships, support & affirmation

# What is intersex?

Intersex is an umbrella term that describes those who have innate \*variations in their sex characteristics. Sex characteristics include a person’s chromosomes, genitals, reproductive systems, gonads, hormone sensitivity and production. Variations then can be considered as outside of 'normal' male and female bodies.

\*We choose to use the term 'variations' rather than 'condition' or disorder or defect'

Gonadal dysgenesis (partial & complete), Partial Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome (PAIS), Turner Syndrome, Clitoromegaly (large clitoris), Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome (AIS), Ovo-testes (formerly called "true hermaphroditism”), Congenital Adrenal Hyperplasia (CAH), 5-alpha reductase deficiency, Klinefelter Syndrome, Micropenis, Swyer Symdrome, Hypospadias, MRKH (Mullerian agenesis; vaginal agenesis; (congenital absence of vagina)

# “So, if intersex is a natural occurrence… what then is “normal”?”

As parents & caregivers, you have the unique opportunity to illustrate the world for your tamariki. You can create a "new normal" for all members of your whānau by providing resources and education to up-skill those around you and support your child.

# Being your child’s advocate in health

We all deserve supportive healthcare services.

Take your time before making decisions\*

Ask questions! And ask for a second opinion if you aren't given a good enough answer.

Seek a range of perspectives. Connect with other parents with a child with a VSC. Reach out to support organisations and connect with intersex adults.

# Concealment

The medical model is based on a concealment approach.

This approach can have harmful impacts on the growth and development of young people, with or without surgical interventions.

# Privacy

Children deserve privacy as much as adults. But how do we untangle the differences of privacy from shame & secrecy?

Communication is key. Talk to your tamariki in a way that works for them.

# Relationships and communication

Think of the terminology you use as a tool. Different terms can connect us to each other!

Diagram: Your Child is in a tallow circle in the centre, surrounded by a purple circle labelled ‘Your immediate family’. Four branches extend out to four different shapes labelled Healthcare, Intersex organisations/ VSC adults, whānau/ extended family & friends and Support groups.

# Support

Parents and caregivers, seek to balance your needs, with the needs of your child. These will change and evolve over time.

# Affirmation

"Intersex is taonga"

"All our bodies are different, and special"

"You are perfect just as you are"

“All bodies are beautiful!"

"Different is cool"

# Want to connect?

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Intersex Aotearoa