



*Educational Webinar Series for Adults with  
Spina Bifida*

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# **Let's be Frank: Relationships and Intimacy for Men with Spina Bifida**

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*November 2020*

# Our panelists

- **Elizabeth Scriven, PsyD**
- **Jay Dashefsky**
- **Brian Malone**
- **Adam Sealscott**

# Send us your questions!



- **Click on the Q&A box in the Zoom webinar system**
- **Type and send your question**

**In your opinion...**

**What are the biggest challenges men face  
when making friends – romantic or not?**

# Know yourself and be true to yourself

- What do you like and dislike?
- Don't compromise what is important to you.
- Demonstrate that you are comfortable with yourself and your disability
- How to build your self-esteem and confidence

# Easy tips for good communication

- Be clear about the reality of how you live with Spina Bifida, and how Spina Bifida weaves into your life.
- Shared interests? Values?
- Expectations of the relationship / friendship?

# Is executive function involved?

- What *is* executive function?
- Recognize and acknowledge that your behavior may be / is different.
- What are social cues?
- What are tips and suggestions to start friendships and relationships when you have executive function problems?

# Spina Bifida and Relationships

- Being content with yourself and who you are projects confidence and confidence is attractive.
- Don't limit your circle of friends to others who have a disability.
- Look for safe and happy relationships – what brings *you* joy?
  - Having a soul mate or being in a relationship is not the end-all, be-all.
- Avoid conflict or drama.



# Q&A Panel

- What are signs that the other person is interested in more than commenting to your feed?
- How can you understand social cues?
  - Is it okay to reply to every post?

# Q&A Panel

- How can I make a long-distance relationship work (whether it's another state or across town?)
  - Long distance pros, cons, and unmovable (literally) facts.
  - Are you willing to stay connected and “give it a shot?”
  - What if you are not able to visit as often as you'd like, or move closer to them?

# Q&A Panel

- How do I tell an able-bodied love interest, or someone I'm interested in who also has Spina Bifida, that I have Spina Bifida?
- Expect and accept boundaries around personal questions.
- Is it easier/harder to connect with a person who has SB versus a different disability?

# Your Questions



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# Thank you!

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- **Visit the archive of this presentation and its resources at <https://www.spinabifidaassociation.org/education/sb-you/>**
- **Questions?**
  - **Judy Thibadeau, [jthibadeau@sbaa.org](mailto:jthibadeau@sbaa.org)**
  - **Juanita Panlener, [jpanlener@sbaa.org](mailto:jpanlener@sbaa.org)**

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