UB CAPABLE GIRLS:
A Capabilities Approach to the Sexual Rights & Resources of Young Women in Buffalo
Project Framework

• Philosopher Martha Nussbaum developed the Capabilities Approach as a way to pursue social justice.

• She argued that justice is not a matter of having “rights on paper,” but of ensuring that all individuals are equally able to actually access and exercise those rights (i.e., they are true capabilities).

• Using a Capabilities Approach means asking the general question: What are people actually able to do and to be?

• The current project specifically asks: What are girls in Buffalo actually able to do and to be when it comes to their sexual lives?
Using the Capabilities Approach as a framework, our project aims to:

1. Examine the sexual rights and resources to which girls in Buffalo are technically entitled;  
2. Assess the extent to which those rights and resources are actually accessible and to whom;  
3. Relay information to Buffalo providers and policymakers about the gap between girls’ sexual rights and resources on paper and those on the ground.
Project Phases & Timeline

Phase 1: Fall 2019
What sexual rights & resources do girls have on paper?
- Policy maps
- Service maps
  - Interviews with providers

Phase 2: Summer/Fall 2020
What sexual rights & resources do girls have on the ground?
- Video comments from girls
- Private Matters [policy brief]
- Between Rights on Paper & Capabilities on the Ground [journal article]
- Community presentations

Phase 3: Spring 2021
Information Relay
Project Team

Laina Bay-Cheng, MSW, PhD [Principal Investigator]
Studies the impact of social injustice on young women’s sexuality

Hannah Ginn, MSW, PhD student
Experience as a sex educator for people with intellectual & developmental disabilities

Jessica Mencia, MSW/PhD student
Experience advocating for reproductive justice and against gender-based violence

Honour Odigie, MSW, PhD student
Experience working at the intersection of gender, immigration, trafficking, & sex work
CONTACT:

(716) 259-1264