

SEX: Talk About It

Fall 2009

PROUDLY PROVIDING SEXUALITY EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN CHEMUNG, SCHUYLER, STEUBEN AND TOMPKINS COUNTIES

6 going on 26...

As summer winds down, millions of families across the country begin an annual ritual – back to school shopping. For parents of girls, that formidable task is made more difficult by the phenomenon known as “age compression.”

“Age compression” is a term used by media professionals and marketers to describe how children at ever younger ages are doing what older children used to do. The media, toys, behavior, and clothing once seen as appropriate for teens are now firmly ensconced in the lives of tweens and are rapidly encroaching on and influencing the lives of younger children.

I'm a Barbie Toddler.

Marketers of toys were the first to recognize this phenomenon, calling it KAGOY, an acronym representing the statement “kids are getting older younger.” For example, when Mattel introduced the Barbie Doll in 1959, her original targeted age group was 9-12. They are now sold primarily to 3-7 year-olds.

This trend eventually rolled over into other markets, such as fast food and fashion. In the fashion industry, age compression can be seen through age-ambiguous and sexualized clothing styles. This blurring of boundaries between children and adults is demonstrated by the similarities in clothing marketed to both groups by the fashion industry. At Abercrombie & Fitch last spring, girls were sold thong underwear tagged with the phrases “eye candy” and “wink wink” and ‘tween readers of the magazine



Seventeen discovered “405 ways to look hot” like Paris Hilton.

Age compression is especially disturbing when it involves sexual behavior. Sex is everywhere. From popular music, to advertising and television programming, children learn about sexual issues and behavior they do not yet have the intellectual or emotional ability to understand. Studies by the Kaiser Family Foundation and other research organizations show that sexual content aimed at children has increased steadily since the 1990s. These messages can be very confusing to children who are just beginning to construct their sense of self.

Why?

Why the increase in sexual messaging aimed at teens? Sex has always sold and today’s ‘tweens have plenty of disposable income. A new millennium survey estimates that children in the United States twelve years and under spent nearly \$30 billion of their own money and influenced the spending of \$248.7 billion by their parents (“School girls gone wild,” 2004). This potential profit, coupled with desire of marketers to create cradle to grave consumers, adds fuel to the age compression fire.

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Save The Date!

PPSFLs Annual Celebration

Thursday, September 10, 2009
Emerson Suites, Ithaca College

Featuring keynote speaker Marty Klein, author of **America's War on Sex!**

*and a special honor for Barb Van Dine, veteran Elmira health teacher!



Professional Development Workshops!

Making Sense of Abstinence

Thursday, October 8, 2009

9am—3pm

Hilton Garden Inn, Elmira

Young Children and Gender: When Blue and Pink Just Aren't Enough

Tuesday, November 3, 2009

9am—1pm

Holiday Inn, Ithaca

More info? education@ppsfl.org

The Sexuality Education & Training Center

Our mission is to ensure that sexuality is understood as an essential, lifelong aspect of being human and that it is celebrated with respect, openness, and mutuality.

Sex is a part of life.

Be prepared. Talk about it.

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Education is ON THE MOVE!

If you have ever stopped in to our old education department offices at 314 West State Street in Ithaca you know we were in pretty tight quarters! We just have too many great books and videos, too many fabulous birth control kits for rent, and way too many informative health and sexuality pamphlets to fit into a couple small offices! So, after looking around town for our new home, we happily chose 111 East Seneca Street (right across from Moosewood in the DeWitt Mall) and in late spring began planning for an early summer move.

As the new semester is about to start for colleges and schools across the region we are (mostly!) unpacked and ready to dive into an excellent fall filled with great sexuality education programming, advocacy, and outreach.

In addition to all of our exceptional sexuality education services that you already know about, we are also thrilled to be formally launching our lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) health and wellness project, Out for Health! This program provides outreach, education and information to LGBT people, their health care providers and the community at-large about the importance of inclusive, welcoming, and respectful care for LGBT people.



A few highlights and resources available from our Out for Health program:

- We Welcome You! Kits for health care providers about how to make their practice welcoming to LGBT people.
- Our quarterly Out for Health newsletter is available as a free PDF. Sign up at www.outforhealth.org.
- In-service workshops and continuing education about LGBT health on-location for health and human service providers.
- One-on-one consultations about how to make medical forms LGBT friendly, assessing the diversity and cultural competence reflected in the physical office space and making suggestions for LGBT friendly pamphlets and materials.

We're here to help! Please be in touch with questions or to schedule a technical assistance call or an on-site workshop! If you'd like to learn more, please check out our brand new website at www.outforhealth.org or e-mail us at: lgbt@ppsfl.org

What can we do?

- * *Bring media literacy lessons into your classroom*
- * *Teach students about healthy body image and the natural diversity of body types*
- * *As an educator, parent, grandparent, uncle or friend, advocate with your wallet, don't "BUY" in to gender stereotypes with toys that perpetuate stereotypes!*

6 going on 26...

What next?

Companies and the media need to take responsibility and put consumer health over profit. One company that's trying to help is *The Media Project*, a program from Advocates For Youth. *The Media Project* works with the entertainment industry to put more responsible sexual images and messages on television. They offer entertainment and advertising professionals the latest facts, research assistance, script consultation, and story ideas on today's sexual and reproductive health issues.

In addition, we need to combat this problem in our homes and communities. Use teachable moments to jump-start conversations about sexualization and the media. Teach 'twens to value themselves for who they are, rather than how they look. And finally, advocate with your wallet. No company wants to lose such a significant important market share.

And as always, we're here to help! Be in touch with your Planned Parenthood educator for more information, resources or tips!

Professional Development Workshops & events to know about!

Making Sense of Abstinence

Thursday, October 8, 2009

9am—3pm

Hilton Garden Inn, Elmira

With Bill Taverner, Director of the Center for Family Life Education at Planned Parenthood of Northern New Jersey

This training demonstrates what abstinence education would look like if it wasn't rigidly "abstinence-only," if it wasn't scared by the mere mention of sex, and if it didn't treat kids as if they were incapable of making important decisions for themselves!

Participants will gain a valuable, easy-to-use resource for working with pre-teens and teens. If you plan to be talking to kids about sex, love, relationships, or their dreams of adulthood, this workshop and the resources provided will expand your vocabulary, help you feel more confident, suggest lots of interesting questions to ask, make you more comfortable with the answers you get, and help you see kids' sexual and relationship curiosity in the larger context of their lives.

Young Children and Gender: When Blue and Pink Just Aren't Enough

Tuesday, November 3, 2009

9am—1pm

Holiday Inn, downtown Ithaca

With Catherine Tuerk, M.A., R.N., C.S. from the Outreach Program for Children with Gender Non-Conforming Behaviors and Their Families at the Children's National Medical Center in Washington DC.

Co-sponsored with The Advocacy Center in Tompkins County, this workshop will address what we can do to support young children, their families and schools as we all work together to create safe, affirming environments for children to learn, grow and be who they are...with all the diversity that comes with it!

More details and registration materials to come!

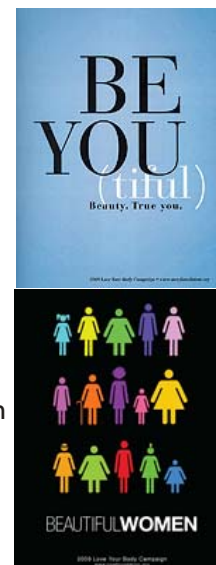
Questions? Contact education@ppsfl.org or call us at (607) 216-0021, ext. 134.

National Family Sexuality Education Month!

This national public education campaign, held annually in October, is an opportunity for community agencies, religious institutions, businesses, schools, media, parent groups and health providers to plan programs and activities which encourage parent/child communication about sexuality. We know that parents are the best sexuality educators for their children; year-round we provide programs, information and resources to parents and in October we provide special information packets and events.

Love Your Body Day!

Also in October, the NOW Foundation's Love Your Body Day campaign deals head-on with images and representations of women that are offensive, disrespectful and unhealthy. Participating individuals and organizations stand together on Love Your Body Day to demonstrate that it's okay to say no to dieting, smoking, cosmetic surgery and other harmful means of achieving an "ideal" look. From the simple act of raising your voices on this subject to planned activities like house parties, online chats, classroom discussions and speak-outs...there are many things you can do to make a difference!



World AIDS Day

Commemorated on December 1st, World AIDS Day is about increasing awareness, fighting prejudice, and improving education. World AIDS Day is important in reminding people that HIV has not gone away, and that there are many things still to be done. According to UNAIDS estimates, there are now 33.2 million people living with HIV, including 2.5 million children. During 2007 some 2.5 million people became newly infected with the virus. Around half of all people who become infected with HIV do so before they are 25 and are killed by AIDS before they are 35.

Thinking about planning an event on any—or all!—of these topics?

Give us a call to book a program or to request more information!

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Recent Studies Show...

Emergency Pills Not Replacing Birth Control

Women who use emergency contraception pills are also likely to later use highly effective contraceptive methods according to a March *AJPH* study. This finding refutes conjecture that access to such pills can lead to a decline in contraceptive use.

To Read More: See the March issue of the American Journal of Public Health.

Anti-HIV Vaginal Gel Shows Promise

An investigational vaginal gel intended to prevent HIV infection in women has demonstrated encouraging signs of success in clinical trials in Africa and the United States. This is the first human clinical study to suggest that a microbicide intended to prevent the sexual transmission of HIV and other STD's may indeed work. Women currently make up half of all people worldwide living with HIV.

To Read More: www.niaid.nih.gov

Adolescent Health Services: Missing Opportunities

Adolescents receive health services from a fragmented system that's poorly designed to meet their needs, according to a new report from two renowned medical research organizations. The researchers found that despite the relatively good health of most US teens, risky behaviors, unhealthy habits, and chronic physical and mental conditions threaten the future and well-being of many youth. In addition, un- and under-insured teens lack access to primary care.

To Read More: go to www.nationalacademies.org

On the Web...

National Sexuality Resource Center

Offering a comprehensive collection of the latest information and research on sexual health, education, and reproductive rights, this site targets advocates, researchers, and policy makers. It offers news, announcements of events, and free access to select sections of the center's Sexuality Research & Social Policy Journal.

To Read More: www.nsrc.sfsu.edu



The Healthy Teen Network

The Healthy Teen Network is devoted to making a difference in the lives of teens and young families. They are a national organization focused on adolescent health and well-being with an emphasis on teen pregnancy prevention and teen parenting.

To Read More: www.healthyteennetwork.org



Sex. Really.

SexReally.com is a site for 20-somethings focused on relationships, love, sex, and all the messy and wonderful stuff that goes along with these topics. Sponsored by The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy, the site is a place where people can tell stories, discuss relationships, and learn more about making wise decisions.

To See More: www.sexreally.com

SexReally