



October 2011



Beyond the Birds and the Bees

The Sex Education Chronicles

Beyond the Birds and the Bees: The Sex Education Chronicles is an annual publication of Planned Parenthood of West and Northern Michigan (PPWNM), released in October to recognize National Family Sexuality Education Month. This newsletter is intended to: educate about the importance of evidence-based sexuality education; provide an update on current trends in sexuality education; assist families in dealing with various aspects of adolescent development; and inform readers about the educational services that PPWNM offers to the communities which it serves. We hope this newsletter will enlighten, educate, inform, and inspire you to become advocate for quality, comprehensive sexuality education!

The Basics of Bullying

What is bullying?

There is no universally accepted definition of bullying. Bullying has certain features which make it different from other types of violence or abuse. In general, bullying may be defined as:

- dominating or hurting someone
- unfair action by the perpetrator(s) and an imbalance of power
- a lack of adequate defense by the target and feelings of oppression and humiliation.

Bullying can take many forms. The *National Centre Against Bullying* identifies five types of bullying:

- 1. Physical bullying:** This is when a person (or group of people) uses physical actions to bully, such as hitting, poking, tripping or pushing. Repeatedly and intentionally damaging someone's belongings is also physical bullying.
- 2. Verbal bullying:** Repeated or systematic name calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks and verbal

abuse. This is the most common form of bullying.

3. Social (covert) bullying: Indirect actions, such as lying about someone, spreading rumors, playing a nasty joke that makes the person feel humiliated or powerless, mimicking or deliberately excluding someone.

4. Psychological bullying: For example, threatening, manipulating or stalking someone.

5. Cyber bullying: This is a method of bullying using technology, such as email, mobile phones, chat rooms and social networking sites to bully verbally, socially or psychologically.

Students can be bullied for a variety of reasons. Specific types of bullying may relate to:

- race, religion, or culture
- appearance or health conditions
- sexual orientation or gender identity
- home and family circumstances
- learning needs, disabilities, or gifts.



Check out page 2 for information on how to get your own copy of our new Parent Anti-Bullying Toolkit. The focus of this toolkit is on actions parents can take to respond to bullying behavior.

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LGBT Youth: Health at Risk

Critical new research demonstrates that lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) youth often experience disparate rates of:

- substance abuse
- depression
- suicidal thoughts
- harassment
- abuse
- sexually transmitted infections, including HIV
- teen pregnancy

This increased risk is often the result of the negative stressors these youth face in their schools, homes, and faith communities. Data from the Family Acceptance Project, familyproject.sfsu.edu, found that LGBT young people who were victimized in school because of their real or perceived identity reported much higher health and adjustment problems.

The good news is that studies also demonstrate that programs which promote inclusive education and foster safety at school can help young people stay healthy and successful.

What's New from PPWNM

Game Demonstrates Realities of Teen Parenting

You are 17 years old and a new parent. It is Saturday night and all of your friends are going out. You have to choose between spending \$30 on a night out, or saving it for baby clothes. This is the type of real-life scenario teens and pre-teens are faced with when they play Ready or Not? a teen parenting simulation game.

Ready or Not?, created by your friends at PPWNM, gives young people a realistic look at the challenges of raising a child as a teen parent. One complete trip around the board equals a month in the life of a teen parent. The "trip" illustrates the financial responsibility and hectic schedule of a

teen parent as players draw "Surprise" cards, lose and find jobs, make health care decisions, and maintain a safe home environment. This board game is ideal for a group of 4-8 youth in the classroom or a youth agency venue; or for a family with adolescents. Basic math and reading skills are required. For complete ordering information, please call PPWNM at 616.774.7005.



Sexuality Education Program for Teens Expands

PPWNM proudly announces the expansion of the Safer Choices Project. This teen pregnancy prevention initiative offers young people the information, skills, and support they need to develop healthy relationships; prevent early, unprotected intercourse and unintended pregnancy, as well as sexually transmitted infections (STIs) including HIV; and increase communication with their parents. Grant awards through the Michigan Department of Community Health, and PPWNM donor support, will enable us to provide the evidence-based Safer Choices curriculum to hundreds more

students ages 12-18 in Muskegon, Grand Rapids, and Wyoming.

The Project includes a two-hour program for parents/guardians of enrolled students, aimed at improving communication between adults and their kids on the topic of sexual health. Parents/guardians who complete this program receive a Parent Toolkit featuring information, games, and tips to help further parent/child communication at home.

Studies, national and state data, and adolescents themselves, document the need for accurate sexual health information, skill practice, safe

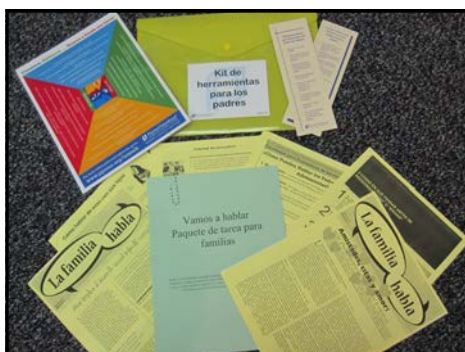
Parent Anti-Bullying Toolkit

Belonging is a basic human need. When a parent observes or hears that his or her child is being excluded, harassed, taunted, or shunned, the hurt and frustration can be overwhelming. The Parent Anti-Bullying Toolkit offers parents practical tips on how to address different situations, information on what to expect from schools, and resources to help children cope with the stress of being bullied. The toolkit includes the booklet, *Words Can Work: When Talking About Bullying: A Guide for Young People, Parents, and Other Caregivers*. Parent Anti-Bullying Toolkits are available for \$3 each plus shipping by calling 616.774.7005.

learning environments, and consistent access to caring adults and community services. Numerous studies show that comprehensive sex education is effective at promoting both delays in sexual activity and protective behaviors for teens who do become sexually active.

Call 616.774.7005 or log on to ppwnm.org for information on student enrollment in Safer Choices, or other PPWNM education programs.

Parent Toolkits Now Available in Spanish, English



Spanish Parent Toolkit

We know that parents and other trusted adults have a strong influence on young people's decisions on when to initiate first intercourse and whether or not to use protection. PPWNM, with the generous support of the Padnos Foundation, has created a Spanish language Parent Toolkit to help families open and improve lines of communication about sexuality and healthy behaviors. The toolkit offers information on how to answer questions about sex, what children and

teens need to know about their bodies and changes as they grow into adulthood, and sex and technology safety. The kit also contains a family homework packet with parent/teen interviews, word searches, and a tablemat of conversation starters.

Parent Toolkits, in English or Spanish language, are available for \$5 each plus shipping by calling 616.774.7005, or they can be purchased through any PPWNM health center.



“P” is for Parent

It's Not a Mixed Message: Teaching Critical Thinking Skills

Parents care about their children and want them to grow up healthy and safe. They want their children to avoid unplanned teen pregnancy, STIs, and HIV. Some want their children to avoid sexual intercourse or other sexual behaviors until they are old enough to make good, informed, and responsible decisions. Parents worry that, if they talk about both abstinence and contraception, then children will become confused, or will not hear the **a b s t i n e n c e m e s s a g e**.

A common technique in parenting is to give children choices about behaviors, with consequences to consider. Most of today's childrearing advice suggests that parents must help children to learn to make decisions beginning at a very young age. In order

to select the best choice and make a decision, children need to understand options, alternatives, consequences, and different values. Children are exposed to many different views and values when they go to school, belong to various clubs and activities, and play with their friends. They recognize which values and views their family supports, and which ones they do not.

This is all the beginning of critical thinking. Critical thinking is a life skill that all children and adults need to master in order to make decisions about the many challenges faced throughout life. There is no such thing as a "mixed message" if, as a child grows, she/he is taught to consider alternatives, to understand that there are different views/values, and to look at consequences of various decisions.

From *Can We Talk about Abstinence and Contraception OR Is It a Mixed Message?*,
Konstance McCaffree, Ph.D.

Characteristics of Parents of Sexually Healthy Teens

- Demonstrate value, respect, acceptance, and trust in their adolescent children.
- Model sexually healthy attitudes in their own relationships.
- Maintain a non-punitive stance toward sexuality.
- Are knowledgeable about sexuality.
- Discuss sexuality with their children.
- Provide information on sexuality to their children.
- Seek appropriate guidance and information as needed.
- Try to understand their son's or daughter's point of view.
- Help their daughter or son gain an understanding of their values.
- Set and maintain limits for dating and other activities outside of school.
- Stay actively involved in their son's or daughter's life.
- Ask questions about friends and romantic partners.
- Provide a supportive and safe environment for their children.
- Offer to assist adolescents in accessing health care services.
- Help their daughter or son plan for their future.

From *Facing Facts: Sexual Health for America's Adolescents*, SIECUS, 1995.

Parents Advocate for Better Sex Ed in Schools

The Parent Protection Connection (PPC) is a group of parents, teens, and community stakeholders who support and advocate for responsible sexuality education in our schools.

PPC Goals:

- To work as advocates of responsible sexuality education within the community.
- To respond appropriately and vigorously to challenges to responsible sexuality education.
- To disseminate medically accurate, culturally sensitive, and developmentally appropriate information about sexual health.
- To monitor the status of health and sex education in school districts.
- To analyze the impact of legislation and other public policy on sex education.

Message to Parents:

You can be your children's best source of information about sexuality. You can help separate fact from fiction, talk about what sex means, and share your values about healthy sexuality and loving relationships. Even though conversations about sex may be embarrassing or uncomfortable, young people say they really want guidance from their parents as they are confronted with new feelings, partner problems, and body changes on their way to adulthood. Find out what your kids are learning in school, their youth program or faith community. Does it fit with your family values?

Questions? E-mail publicaffairs@ppwnm.org.



(Safety) and Justice for All

Stop Anti-Gay Speech By Talking About It

Pejorative, anti-LGBT speech in schools is prevalent across the U.S. Research from the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) suggests that phrases such as “you’re so gay” or “don’t be such a fag” and slurs like dyke, faggot, homo, and sissy are part of the regular vocabulary of the youth in our schools.

GLSEN’s most recent National School Climate Survey states that 63.7 percent of LGBT students reported being verbally harassed, and 72.4 percent heard homophobic remarks frequently or often at school.

“It takes courage to break the silence and have hard conversations”

Research also continues to support the troubling fact that the silence of educators helps perpetuate the injustice. The GLSEN study also says that 41.4 percent of self-identified LGBT students reported that staff members never intervene. Only 16 percent of students surveyed reported that staff members always intervene; although most educators believe that all students have the right to be physically and emotionally safe in school.

Robert A. McGarry, director of training and curriculum development at

GLSEN National Headquarters affirms that, “It takes courage to break the silence and have hard conversations about aspects of teaching practice that we otherwise tend to repress or ignore.”

His experience confirms that teachers want to fill gaps in their knowledge and skills in responding to hurtful speech.

What Teachers Can Do About Bullying

- Ask students about bullying. Survey students regularly on whether they are being harassed or have witnessed harassment. Make it easier for students to come to an adult in the school to talk about harassment by building staff-student relationships, and having suggestion boxes where students can provide input anonymously.
- Ask students about their relationships. Bullying is a destructive, asymmetric relationship. Know whom students hang out with, who their friends are, and whom they dislike and why. Connect with students who have no friends.
- Build democratic classroom and school climates. Identify student leaders who can encourage peers to stand against bullying. Assess whether student social norms are *really* against bullying.
- Train teachers to better understand and manage student social dynamics and handle aggression with clear, consistent consequences.
- Remember that bullying is also a problem of values. Implement an intellectually challenging character education or socioemotional learning curriculum. Teach students how to achieve their goals by being assertive rather than aggressive. Model civil conflict resolution and involve families.

From “How effective are school bullying intervention programs?” *School Psychology Quarterly*, 23, 26-42, Merrell, Gueldner, Ross, and Isava, 2008.

Tech Tips for Teens: It’s a Phone, Not a Weapon

- Don’t let anyone make you feel bad or embarrass, threaten, or abuse you through your cell phone. Don’t give your phone number to people you don’t know. Don’t answer any calls or reply to any texts unless you know the caller or sender.
- When does texting go from fun to annoying? If you are constantly interrupted when you are doing homework, spending time with family or friends, or even sleeping, don’t be afraid to turn off your phone.
- Don’t send or forward embarrassing, threatening, or abusive voice messages or texts to

anyone. Spreading rumors, being mean, or bullying someone with a cell phone is wrong. And secretly taking photos or videos of a person invades that person’s privacy.

- And a word or two about sexting: sending, possessing, or forwarding sexually explicit photographs is against the law. If you receive any photographs that make you uncomfortable, tell a trusted adult.

Note to teens: If you think you might be in an unhealthy or abusive relationship talk to your parents, school counselor, or another adult you trust. Or, call the National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline, open 24 hours a day, at 866.331.9474.

What is Responsible, Respectful Sex Education?

The purpose of human sexuality education is to protect and promote health and to provide skills needed for caring, safe, responsible relationships. Sound programs of instruction address human development, healthy relationships, possible consequences of sexual risk behaviors, influence of alcohol and other drugs on decisions, and sexuality within society and culture. Education programs should address the needs of

all students: those who abstain from sexual activity, those who have engaged in sexual activity but are currently abstaining, and those who are choosing to engage in sexual behaviors. Programs should be age, developmentally, linguistically, and culturally appropriate and of sufficient duration for students to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to adopt healthy behaviors.



Sexual Health and Teens

Emerging Science on Adolescent Sexual Health

Almost 20 years ago, the remarkable Consensus Statement of the National Commission on Adolescent Sexual Health, endorsed by more than 50 national medical and policy organizations, defined adolescent sexual health: “Sexual health encompasses sexual development and reproductive health, as well as such characteristics as the ability to develop and maintain meaningful interpersonal relationships; appreciate one’s own body; interact with both genders in respectful and appropriate ways; and express affection, love, and intimacy in ways consistent with one’s own values.” The Consensus Statement additionally

“The sexual science that would allow us to understand and aid ‘responsible adolescent intimate relationships’ did not exist in the 1990s.”

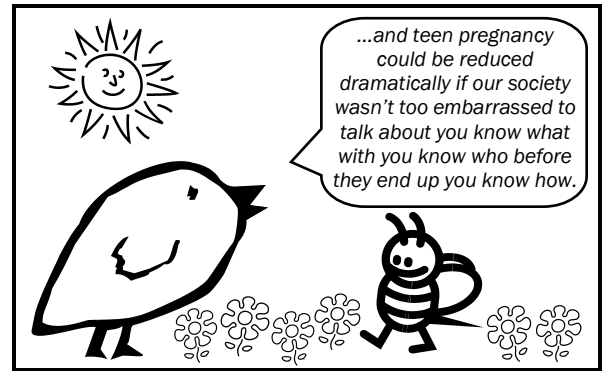
noted that “responsible adolescent intimate relationships” should be “consensual, non-exploitative, honest, pleasurable, and protected against unintended pregnancy and STDs if any type of intercourse occurs.” The Consensus Statement is remarkable for its vision, its affirmation of the developmental importance of sexuality, and its recognition that sex itself could be healthy for adolescents. Looking back, the boldness of the statement is even more remarkable when you take into account that most of the empirical evidence available to those crafting it was based only on wide-spread concern about sexually transmitted infections (including HIV)

and unintended pregnancies among adolescents. The sexual science that would allow us to understand and aid “responsible adolescent intimate relationships” did not exist in the 1990s. Instead, what we had was a largely uniform set of studies focused on “risk” and “risk behavior.” Sex for adolescents was so entrenched in this “risk” perspective that “adolescent sexual health” was an oxymoron. In fact, even as we moved into the first decade of the 21st century, there was very little science on which to base understanding of adolescent sexual health within the larger concept of healthy sexual development. However, that has begun to change, and there is evidence of an emerging science of adolescent sexual health that can support and hopefully advance the perspectives of the Consensus Statement.

From *The Science of Adolescent Sexual Health: Moving Beyond a Risk Framework*, J. Dennis Fortenberry MD, MS.

Good News Bears Watching

The teen birth rate in the United States declined six percent in 2009 according to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Rates declined among older and younger teens and among all racial and ethnic groups. According to Sarah Brown, CEO of the National Campaign, “The credit and praise goes to teens themselves for making better decisions about their lives today and their plans for the future.” Brown cautioned that “the U.S. still has the highest rates of teen pregnancy and births among comparable countries and we all need to continue helping teens postpone their families until they are older, through school, and in stable relationships.”



“P” is for Pleasure By Elizabeth Schroeder, CEO of Answer, Etc.

Pleasure and its role in school-based sexuality education is among the hottest topics being debated among sexuality educators today. For some who read this, the idea of including pleasure within sexuality education is a no-brainer. For others, it is the forbidden subject — the Voldemort of sex ed that should not be named under any circumstance. But is the inclusion of pleasure necessarily an “all or nothing” issue?

Those who advocate proactively teaching about pleasure will ask, “How can one teach about sexuality and not acknowledge the pleasurable aspects?” After all, sexuality education is about providing medically-accurate information, and the medically-accurate fact is that sexual

behaviors can (and should) produce pleasure. But we also know that far too many people’s introduction to sexual behaviors is negative. If one’s baseline experience is coercive, assaultive, or negative in other ways, the expectations for future sexual relationships will reflect that baseline. Including pleasure in teaching sex ed can provide a more positive baseline and help to correct misinformation learned through negative life experience.

Unfortunately, sexuality education has always focused on the prevention of, rather than the promotion of, something — STD and HIV prevention, pregnancy prevention, and so on. This, along with decades of failed abstinence-only

Continued next page

“P” is for Pleasure, continued

-until-marriage programs, has hammered into young people's heads that “shared sexual behaviors only result in bad things, and therefore sex is bad.” It is confusing for a young person to receive a barrage of negative messages about sex accompanied by the reassurance that, miraculously, when one is in an adult, long-term, committed relationship sex will morph into something positive.

The age-old concern has been that if young people know that sexual behaviors are pleasurable, they will want to engage in those behaviors. But guess what? Most young people already know that sex is pleasurable, whether shared sexual behaviors or masturbation. Failure to acknowledge that sexual behaviors can produce pleasure can significantly reduce our validity with young people, which in turn can reduce the effectiveness of our work with them. In addition, research has shown that the more young people know about

sex and sexuality, the more likely they are to wait to be in a sexual relationship until they feel ready, and to practice safer sex with their partner.

What I am advocating for is that we think about the rationale behind what we propose teaching at particular age levels. Ideally, schools should both offer sex ed classes and integrate healthy sexuality messages throughout the entire school curriculum. Ideally, sexuality education should be about physical, emotional, and psychological health promotion, rather than about the prevention of pregnancy and disease alone.

Table Talk: What is the message you would give young people about sex and pleasure?



Abstinent But Infected?!

A recent study demonstrated that more than 10 percent of teens who self reported being abstinent for the past year tested positive for a sexually transmitted infection (STI). One hundred eighteen of the 3,000 teens, who said they practiced abstinence, tested positive for gonorrhea, chlamydia or trichomoniasis. Conversations with teens suggest that this discrepancy may be the result of 1.) how teens define abstinence and 2.) teen fear of being honest with any adult about whether or not they have had oral, anal or vaginal sex. Some young people may identify as abstinent and may have engaged in oral or anal sex and not realized these behaviors put them at risk for STIs.

Peer leaders at PPWNM offer this advice to other teens:

- Remember the most common STI symptom is no symptom.
- Get accurate information about the risks of each sexual behavior you choose.
- Be honest about your sexual behavior with your health care provider so you get the care you deserve.

Sexual Orientation, Love, and Justice

A student once asked me, if I could have one wish granted to reverse an injustice, what would it be? I had to ask for two. One is for world leaders to forgive the debts of developing nations which hold them in such thrall. The other is for the world to end the persecution of people because of their sexual orientation, which is every bit as unjust as that crime against humanity, apartheid.

This is a matter of ordinary justice. We struggled against apartheid in South Africa, supported by people the world over, because black people were being blamed and made to suffer for something we could do nothing about — our very skin. It is the same with sexual orientation. It is a given. For me this struggle is a seamless robe. Opposing apartheid was a matter of justice. Opposing discrimination against women is a matter of justice. Opposing discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation is a matter of justice.

It is also a matter of love. Churches say that the expression of love in a heterosexual monogamous relationship includes the physical — the touching, embracing, kissing, the

genital act; the totality of our love makes each of us grow to become increasingly godlike and compassionate. If this is so for the heterosexual, what earthly reasons have we to say that it is not the case with the homosexual?

I cannot keep quiet while people are being penalized for something about which they can do nothing — their sexuality. To discriminate against our sisters and brothers who are lesbian or gay on grounds of their

sexual orientation for me is as totally unacceptable and unjust as apartheid ever was.

From the Archbishop Desmond Tutu's new book, *God Is Not A Christian: And Other Provocations*.

Editor's note: Archbishop Tutu dissents from the official policies of most of the world's Anglican churches, which hold that gays and lesbians should be celibate; and in the years since his retirement as archbishop of Cape Town he has become one of the world's most prominent figures pleading for a change in the attitudes of religious institutions toward human sexuality.

“I cannot keep quiet while people are being penalized for something about which they can do nothing — their sexuality.”

~ Archbishop Desmond Tutu

**Planned Parenthood
of West and Northern
Michigan offers 3 free
condoms a day at any of its
eight health centers —
just stop in and ask!**

Youth Activism

Young People at PPWNM Have “Something to Say”

From the 2008 U.S. presidential election, to the social media movement, citizen uprisings globally, and the Occupy Wall Street effort, youth activism is making a huge difference in our country and around the world. Right here at home, PPWNM youth leaders are making a difference in our community.

Youth activists can, and do, take their health and rights into their own

hands, organizing awareness activities, lobbying policy makers, and educating their peers. At PPWNM, our Something to Say youth advocacy group is growing youth leadership skills while increasing the agency’s capacity to cultivate life-long supporters of Planned Parenthood’s mission.

Something to Say members act as program advisors, ambassadors to the community, peer educators, and role models. They promote inclusiveness and help other young people find and use their voices to impact justice issues.

“I really feel like I have become a leader for my peers, and I know that I will continue to work for reproductive freedom and education the rest of my life.”

~ Dionaté

In 2011, Something to Say members lobbied in Lansing and rallied in Washington, D.C., passed out condoms and information about safe sex in their communities, assisted PPWNM educators in the classroom, held fun and informational “House Parties” at PPWNM for their peers, organized and attended leadership trainings, and raised donations to assist battered women.

Teen members of the program say it challenges them to do things they never thought they could, like talking to elected officials about the importance of comprehensive sex education, or, talking to their parents about sex. Dionaté, 18, has been with the group since 2009, “My mom and I were on the brink a little bit when I first started at PPWNM. Now we are a lot more open about sex, and communicate a lot better. I think it helps parents to hear from their kids that we really do want them to talk to us, even though sometimes it might not seem like it.”

Parents Back Up Teens

This year the Center for Latino Adolescent and Family Health (CLAFH) partnered with PPFA to conduct a Let’s Talk Month Poll: Are Parents Tackling Crucial Conversations about Sex? The results of the nationally representative survey include:

- 82% parents have talked to their children about topics related to sexuality.
- 93% of parents feel confident about their ability to influence whether or not their child has sex.
- 94% of parents feel they are influential in whether or not their

child uses condoms or other forms of birth control.

- Parents overwhelmingly support sex education programs in high school and middle school, and believe that they should cover a range of topics, including abstinence and birth control.
- 43% of parents say they feel very comfortable talking with their children about sexuality and sexual health. However, 56% reported feeling only somewhat comfortable or uncomfortable talking to their children about sex.

Source: clafh.org

To learn more, e-mail publicaffairs@ppwnm.org.



April 2011: Something to Say rallies in Washington, D.C. to support Planned Parenthood and women’s access to health care.

African American Youth Speak Their Truth

The National Campaign and ESSENCE Magazine teamed up to survey 1,500 African-American youth ages 13-21 to better understand their attitudes about relationships, sex, dating, parents, the media, and the overall context in which they make decisions about these issues. Some findings:

- **Sex:** 45% report they’ve been pressured to do more sexually than they wanted to.
- **Contraception:** Almost half of black teens in our new study report using birth control inconsistently.
- **Media:** 72% of black youth say that the media sends the message that black girls’ most important quality is sex appeal.
- **Parents:** 91% of black youth feel valued by their parents. 47% of younger teens say their parents’ opinion matters most; only 17% of older teens say the same.

Read the full report and get more information at: TheNationalCampaign.org/UnderPressure

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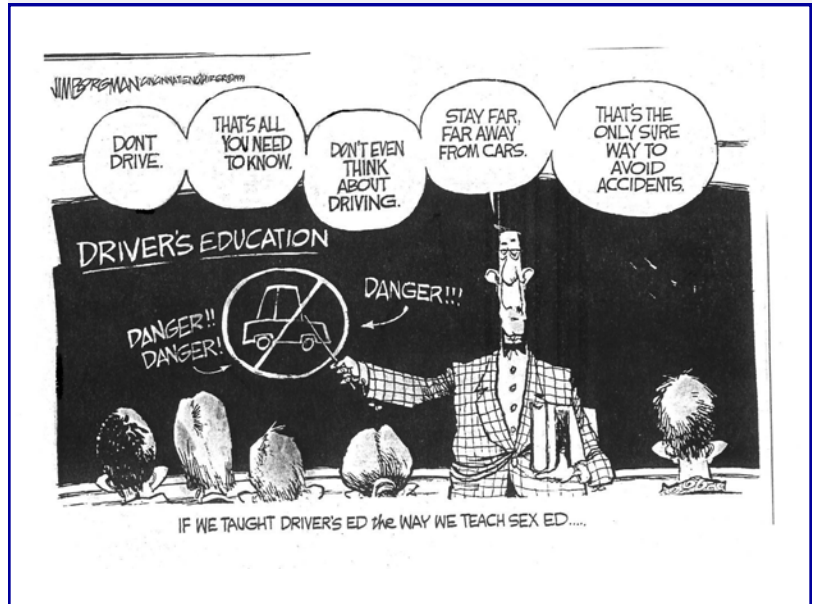
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***Our Mission: To promote and ensure
sexual health, responsibility, and justice.***



Scaring the Pants ON Them!

Across disciplines, teachers try to use scare tactics to achieve a desired behavioral response, despite any evidence that such approaches are effective. (Indeed, some research suggests that the use of scare tactics increases risk-taking behavior.) Still, students are routinely shown brutal car wrecks to prevent drinking or texting while driving; brain scans that look like Swiss cheese to prevent all drug use; and an array of sex-negative messages designed to prevent sexual activity, which they are taught becomes miraculously positive upon marriage.

Why do teachers use scare tactics? What are their functions? This resource describes some of the primary functions of scare tactics used in sexuality education.

Fear-based Educational Methods...

- Try to **scare** a person out of engaging in sexual activity.
- Try to make a person feel **guilty** about sexual behavior.
- Often provide **misinformation** about condoms, contraception, and sexually transmitted infections (STIs).
- Emphasize the **failure** rate of preventative methods, not the success rates.
- Focus on the **negative consequences** of sexual behavior,

not the positive benefits.

- Offer **distorted** views of sexuality, gender, and sexual orientation.
- **Discount** individual **choice** or **power** in decision-making.
- Often say that the **only acceptable reason** for engaging in sexual behavior is within the context of **marriage**.

Impact of Fear-based Educational Methods:

- Extreme, unhealthy fear of *any* and *all* sexual behaviors.
- Belief that one is immune from all negative consequences.
- Belief that one is healthy if they don't have symptoms such as those shown in class.
- Lack of knowledge on taking protective measures if one *does* decide to engage in sexual behaviors.
- Distancing oneself from the possible negative consequences, so that no protective measures are taken when sexual activity *does* begin.
- Developing the mistaken belief that STIs cannot be spread or contracted during marriage.
- Avoidance of health care, such as getting tested for STIs or going to the doctor for an annual checkup.

- Guilt and shame, which may lead to a lack of risk-reduction planning. (E.g., one does not plan to engage in behaviors that are supposed to be shameful; they "just happen.")
- Low body self esteem as one continues to receive negative messages about sexuality.
- Stigma on individuals who are already living with STIs.
- Feelings of further confusion, stigma, and shame related to sexual abuse and other trauma.
- Dishonesty with partner(s) about infection/disease status out of fear of stigma.
- Increased communication gap between youth and adults because youth know adults are not telling them the whole story about sexuality.
- Mistrust of teachers who pose unlikely, extreme scenarios.
- A missed opportunity for young people to develop practical critical thinking skills about sexual activity.

From DeFur, K. "Be Afraid! Be Very Afraid! Examining Fear-based Methods in STI Prevention," in Taverner, B. (ed.) (2011) *Teaching Safer Sex*. © Copyright 2011 by The Center for Family Life Education and reprinted with permission. For more information, please visit SexEdStore.com