




The Art & Science of Talking About Sex with Youth – Part 1

Alexandria Health Department
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What Did You First Learn About Sex?




Sex Ed by Default

Sex Ed by default occurs when we leave it to the “Ever” family...When, How, Whom, and What Ever.

As a result, it tends to be:


- ❖ Incomplete (not enough)
- ❖ Inconsistent (conflicting)
- ❖ Incomprehensible (confusing)
- ❖ Inaccurate (wrong)

Sex Ed: By Intention




- ❖ **Converse Freely**
 - Sex education is more than body parts and how to "do it"
 - To converse freely is to speak with your life
 - When we converse freely with our lives, opportunities are created for us to listen openly to youth

Sex Ed: By Intention




- ❖ **Listen Openly**
 - To listen openly is to listen without judgment
 - Listening openly sharpens our hearing
 - Listening openly shows respect and, in turn, earns us the right to be heard when it is time for us to speak frankly

Sex Ed: By Intention



- ❖ **Speak Frankly**
 - Speak frankly about sexuality and sexual behavior
 - To speak frankly is to be honest and direct
 - When you find the courage to speak frankly, you'll gain a client's trust

The Sex Talk: By Intention



- ❖ Advise Gently
 - To advise gently is to share your values and expectations while acknowledging that our clients will ultimately choose his or her own
 - To advise gently is to function more as an advisor than as an authority
 - To advise gently is to protect the "consulting" relationship between you and your client

Yeah, But What Do I Say?




TAKE F.I.V.E.


- ❖ Facts
- ❖ Information
- ❖ Values
- ❖ Expectations




Take F.I.V.E.



- ❖ Facts
 - Facts are the WHAT of the sex talk.
 - body parts
 - mechanics of sex
 - correct words



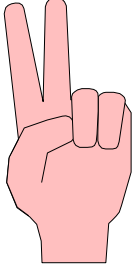
Take F.I.V.E




❖ **Information**

Includes the facts but focuses on their meaning, HOW they fit together.

For example: "What is a penis?" is a factual issue; "Why does it get erect?" is more informational.

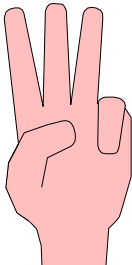


Take F.I.V.E




❖ **Values**

Values place the WHAT and HOW in an ethical context. It helps clients identify boundaries for sexual expression that makes it a healthy, positive, safe experience.



Take F.I.V.E



❖ **Expectations**

Expectations encourage and empower clients to respect their own and other's boundaries with regard to sex.

Some clients need the support of other's expectations in order to have their own.



Oh No! They Got Questions!



- ❖ Be askable.
- ❖ Be timely (don't procrastinate)
- ❖ Understand the question before you answer it.
- ❖ Use correct and appropriate language.
- ❖ Avoid over answering questions.
- ❖ If you don't know, don't fake it.

Seven Common Question Types



- ❖ Questions that ask for information.
- ❖ Questions that ask what is normal.
- ❖ Questions that ask permission.
- ❖ Questions about values.
- ❖ Questions to shock.
- ❖ Personal Questions
- ❖ "Cry for Help" Questions


Let's Practice!



- ❖ Volunteer.
- ❖ Identify the question by type.
- ❖ Give us a 60 second answer.



Sample Questions



Why do girls' nipples get hard?


Can you have sex with PMS?
If so, can you get pregnant?

What's the best kind of birth control to use?

When was the first time you had sex?

Why do you have to have sex to have a baby?

Sample Questions




How will you know if the boy you are dating doesn't have AIDS? And you have sex and he didn't tell you and you get it?

Does it hurt to have sex?

What do you say to the girl when they think you like someone else and when you tell them they don't believe you? Please answer my question.

For More Information





Advocates for Youth has numerous resources for professionals and parents online at: www.advocatesforyouth.org


Click on links to our "Publications", "For Parents", and "For Providers".

Advocates for Youth
2000 M Street, NW, Suite 750
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The Art & Science of Talking About Sex with Youth – Part 2


Give Permission To Act Different



Does one gender have more permission to act different from cultural expectations than another?

- ❖ Expose & name stereotypes when in operation
- ❖ Brainstorm safe alternatives
- ❖ Model non-stereotypical behavior


Debunk Sex Myths



What are some of the sex myths you've heard expressed by adolescents?

- ❖ Abstinence is celibacy (a lifelong decision)
- ❖ Good sex just happens...like in the movies.
- ❖ People got to have sex to live.
- ❖ Sex is no big deal -- you just do it.
- ❖ Sex is the norm for teenagers. (Or is it?)

Focus on Gender Specific Issues




Female:

- ❖ Physical (pregnancy)
- ❖ Often primary responsibility for parenting
- ❖ Subsequent reduction of life options

Male:

- ❖ Health issues (STD & HIV infection)
- ❖ Legal obligations
- ❖ Possible reduction of life options

Nurture Hope for Healthy Future




What hope motivates females?

- ❖ Typically, it is the hope for attaining educational, career, and other life goals.

What hope motivates males?


- ❖ It is not the same thing as females; Reality, males can have everything at once.
- ❖ Could the hope be.....connection (love)?

The Boy Code




- ❖ The STURDY OAK -- Men never show weakness -- they are stoic, stable & independent
- ❖ GIVE 'EM HELL -- From "boys will be boys" -- the idea that males are predisposed to be high energy, even violent, super humans.
- ❖ The BIG WHEEL -- Work for status, dominance and power, and avoid feelings of shame at all cost.
- ❖ NO SISSY STUFF -- Shut out feelings.

The Boy Code: The Results





- ❖ The STURDY OAK -- Males appear to be confident, sturdy & independent when they really feel afraid, shaky, & needy for love & support.
- ❖ GIVE 'EM HELL -- May encourage boys to dare one another to take greater and greater risks.
- ❖ The BIG WHEEL -- Males may push beyond reasonable limits for academic, physical or career success in an effort to repress feelings of failure or unhappiness.
- ❖ NO SISSY STUFF -- Since feelings are seen as "feminine" males who display them risk ridicule until they learn how to rein them in.


Even Worse



Herb Goldberg:
“...traditional male conditioning, and the unconscious defenses that underlie it, have heavily externalized men. Thus their personal and relationship capacities have been severely damaged.”


Teach Couples to TALK about sex before DOING it





Couples Talking About Sex


- ❖ **What do they talk about?**
 - Comfort Level – Mutuality of the decision
 - Sexual History
 - Testing & Health Issues
 - Protection
- ❖ **How do they talk?**
 - Lights On (in a sense, BEFORE anything happens)
 - Zipped (fully clothed)
 - Eye to Eye (face to face communication)
- ❖ **How are they motivated to talk?**
 - Sex is for mature people – and mature people will talk before they just rush into it.
 - Comfort – if you are NOT comfortable talking about getting naked and having sex, what does this say about your readiness to really have sex?



Define “Abstinence” and “Sex”

When does abstinence end – and sex begin?

Not the social marker but the actual behavior.



Encourage Both Postponing Sex and Protected Sex

Factors that make students resistant to postponement messages:

- ❖ Age
- ❖ Gender
- ❖ Life experience
- ❖ Developmental issues
- ❖ Perception of Loopholes

Build Skills for Creating Healthy Supportive Relationships



What are the skills/qualities we want them to take into relationships?

- The ability to set personal boundaries.
- The ability to enforce boundaries through assertive communication.
- A commitment to develop the kind of character that allows them to form relationships based upon honesty (integrity), respect, and trust.
- The ability to see relationships as deserving an investment from them.
- The willingness to see that relationship needs to precede sex initiation.

For more information



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