

Be in the know: Understanding current issues related to teen sexuality

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Sometimes kids/teens have misinformation that isn't really funny and causes problems for them, i.e. minimizing risk – Because they can't get pregnant from oral or anal sex, they engage in those behaviors not recognizing other risks such as STIs or the emotional impact of engaging in sexual behaviors.

Something to think about:

How to talk to children openly, honestly, and soon enough to avoid misinformation that leads to poor decision making...Are we really doing right by children when we wait to have "the talk" or would it be better if we just included discussions about sexuality naturally from the beginning?



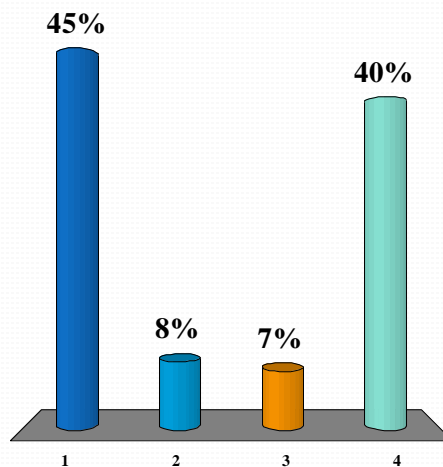
Do Parents Talk About Sexuality? Do Children Listen?

- Most parents think the appropriate age to talk with their child is “later”--or at an older age than their child’s current age.
- If parents want to impact their child’s sexuality education, they need to talk early and talk often.
 - Research shows...
 - Children whose parents talk to them are more likely than others to postpone sexual activity.
 - When they do become sexually active, they have fewer partners and are more likely to use contraceptives.

Who handled conversations about sex in your home?

1. Mom
2. Dad
3. Someone else
4. Nobody

Polling results from 200+ ISU students taking the course, Human Sexuality in Spring 2011. These results are pretty typical from semester to semester.

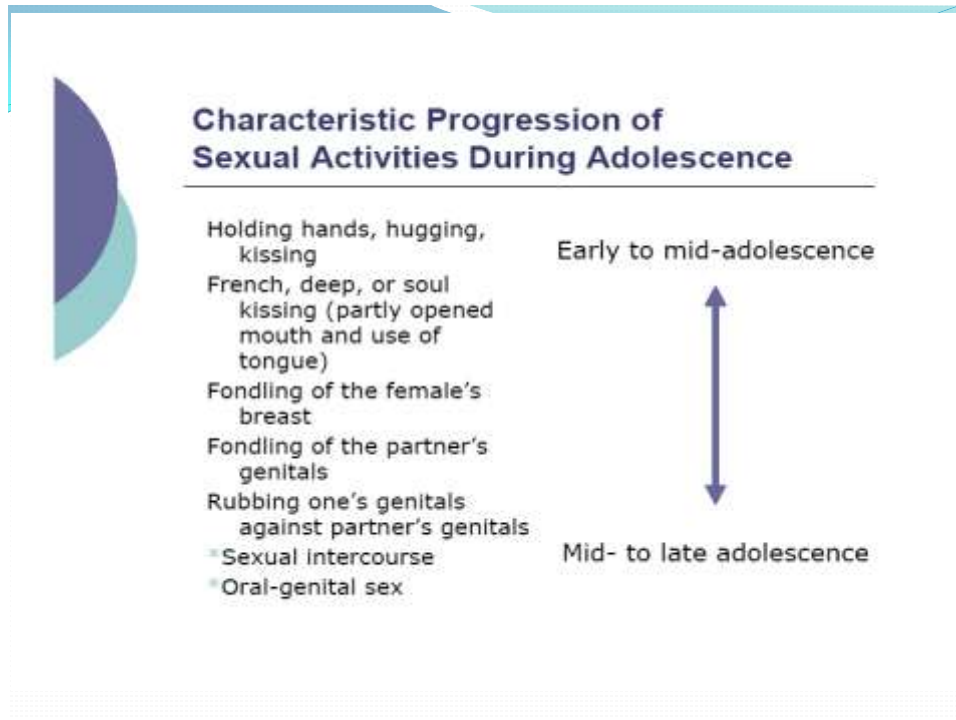


Sexual behavior during adolescence

- Questions among teens of what IS sex?? Am I ready??
- Sexual orientation and Sexual identity
- Teen Pregnancy
- Sexually Transmitted Infections
 - In a given year, roughly 14 million teens are infected with an STI.
- Dating violence: Start Strong, Building Healthy Teen Relationships <http://www.startstrongteens.org/resources>
 - Approximately 1 in 5 female high school students report being physically and/or sexually abused by a dating partner. *Silverman, Mucci, & Hathaway, 2001*

Adolescence: Sexual Orientation

- As in childhood, same-sex contact is common in adolescence, regardless of whether the individual goes on to have predominately homosexual or heterosexual relationships in late teen and adult years
- Part of the self-identification of adolescence
 - Often confused as a “phase” due to societal stigma
 - Many hide their orientation due to fear of being harassed, rejected
 - Gay adolescents are at a higher risk of suicide, substance abuse, and being victimized (Russell & Joyner, 2001)
- The number of Gay Straight Alliances (GSAs) in high schools has been increasing in recent years as LGBT students take pride in their identity and gain more acceptance from peers
- A great resource – It Gets Better Project: <http://www.itgetsbetter.org/>
- An article on coming out in middle school:
 - <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/27/magazine/27out-t.html?pagewanted=1>



Is this progression changing

- In 1995, 53 percent of teen males aged 15-19 said they had been masturbated by a female (an increase from 1988); 49 percent had received oral sex; 39 percent had given oral sex; and 11 percent had engaged in anal sex.

Gates GJ and Sonenstein FL. Heterosexual genital activity among adolescent males: 1988 and 1995. Family Planning Perspectives, 2000, 32(6). Data based on NSAM

- In 2002, data showed that 55% of boys and 54% of girls age 15-19 had engaged in oral sex. (National Survey of Family Growth)
- Problems to gaining access to do more current research...
- What do youth consider: Sex? More or less risky behaviors? Abstinence? Virgins? Are some of these behaviors really more common or just more openly talked about?

Questions among teens of what IS sex?? Am I ready??

An example of the differences in what is considered having sex or “losing one’s virginity”

The question below was asked of ISU students in the on-campus HDFS 276 class. Responses clearly indicate differences in opinions. This same question was asked in a weekly poll on the Kinsey Confidential website (<http://kinseyconfidential.org/>) Results were similar. So, if even college students and other adults are differing in their views on this topic, imagine how confusing it is for teens to try to sort it all out.

Would you consider having anal sex to be “losing your virginity”?

1. Yes – 65%
2. No – 35%

- Percent of 9th to 12th graders, by gender who have had sexual intercourse

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1991	57%	51%	54%
1993	56	50	53
1995	54	52	48
1997	49	48	48
1999	52	48	50
2003	48	45	47

*source: CDC Youth Risk Behavior Surveys

Most recent data...

- At any given point in time, most U.S. adolescents are not engaging in partnered sexual behavior. While 40% of 17 year-old males reported vaginal intercourse in the past year, only 27% reported the same in the past 90 days.

**National Survey of Sexual Health and Behavior (2010); Check the Kinsey Institute website for more info; largest national study since 1994; included 5,865 adolescents and adults ages 14 to 94

What is changing?

- Terminology
 - Hooking up and hanging out vs. going steady and dating
- Friends with benefits
- Sex and technology
 - Greater access to information but also greater access to pornography and other unmonitored information
 - Online communication
 - Sexting



Information about STIs

1. Approximately 1 in ____ Americans have an STI – (a) 5, (b) 10 (c) 15, (d) 20
2. One study of college students asked students to rate who would be more appealing -- potential partners with STIs or potential partners who were obese. What was the outcome??
3. STIs caused by viruses cannot be cured? True or False



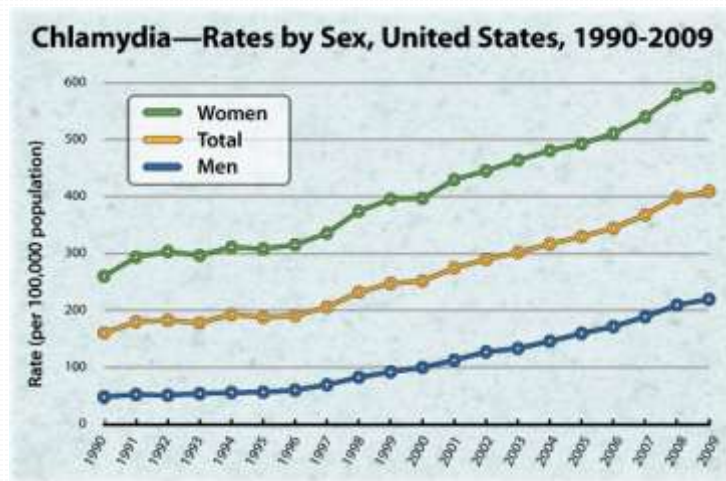
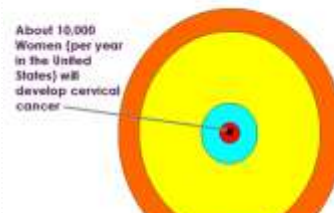
How'd you do?

1. 1 in 5 Americans have an STI. Up to 80% do NOT know they are infected!
2. A study of 400 men and women found that students rated potential partners with an STI as MORE appealing than partners who were overweight!
3. TRUE – an STI caused by a virus cannot be cured, although it can be treated.

It is estimated that by the age of 50, 80% of women will be infected with HPV (CDC, 2005).

- HPV is the most common sexually transmitted infection in the U.S.
- HPV can be transmitted via sexual intercourse, oral sex, vulva to vulva contact, and anal sex.
- Risk factors include: early age of first intercourse, more than 2 sexual partners within the previous year, having sex with a person who has had multiple sex partners
- HPV can lead to genital warts, abnormal changes in the cervix, and higher rates of anal cancer.

HPV and Cervical Cancer



Rates of chlamydia doubled between the years of 1990 and 2009.

SIECUS: Sex Information & Education Council of the United States <http://www.siecus.org>

- Founded in 1964 by Dr. Mary Calderone; director of Planned Parenthood Federation of America
- SIECUS is one of the leading organizations for education about human sexuality in schools and communities
- Supports comprehensive sexuality education; age-appropriate, K-12th
- **Primary goal—promotion of sexual health**
- **Discussion page for youth to learn about sexuality issues:**
<http://www.seriouslysexuality.com/>

Comprehensive sexuality education programs have four main goals:

- to provide accurate information about human sexuality
- to provide an opportunity for young people to develop and understand their values, attitudes, and insights about sexuality
- to help young people develop relationships and interpersonal skills, and
- to help young people exercise responsibility regarding sexual relationships, which includes addressing abstinence, pressures to become prematurely involved in sexual intercourse, and the use of contraception and other sexual health measures.

Do Sexuality Education Programs Make A Difference?

- There has been no empirical evidence reported that suggests sexuality education leads to early sexual experimentation among children and adolescents.
- We do know that Comprehensive programs can **increase knowledge levels, affect attitudes, and/or change the behaviors of students who take them; they develop their own skills and learn factual** information that can help them make their own sexual and health decisions in the future.
- The most effective sex education programs are those in which **parents and schools work together to provide** programs that combine contraceptive education with lessons on how to resist peer pressure.

What about virginity pledges?

- Most research shows that youth who take a virginity pledge do delay the age of first intercourse, however...
 - 88% of pledgers ultimately have sex before marriage
 - Teens who have taken a virginity pledge are less likely to use contraception when they do have sex.
 - They are also just as likely as their peers to contract STIs.

Preferences of parents and teachers versus what is actually taught in sexuality education courses

(Kaiser Family Foundation, 2000)

What parents and sex education teachers would like included in the curriculum:

- How to cope with pressure to have sex
- The emotional consequences of becoming sexually active
- How to use a condom
- How to use other forms of birth control
- Abortion
- Sexual orientation

What is actually offered:

- Information about HIV/AIDS
- Information about other STIs
- Information about reproduction
- How to use and obtain birth control
- Abortion
- Sexual orientation

Questions for us to pose to adolescents

- ▶ Do you feel comfortable with your sexual decisions?
- ▶ Have you made mistakes? Have regrets?
- ▶ Do you feel guilty or ashamed? Why?
- ▶ Is this behavior something you want to do?
- ▶ What sort of relationship with a partner do you need to feel comfortable sharing this activity?
- ▶ What if your partner wants to do something that makes you feel uncomfortable? Will you agree? If so why? If not, how will you handle it?
- ▶ If the behavior involves the risk of STIs or unintended pregnancy, how will you be sure you are protected?
- ▶ Will you be able to discuss your feelings about this activity with your partner?
- ▶ Do you have a trusted adult that you can discuss these things with?



How do you make a difference?

- Speak up for sexuality education
- Educate yourself
- Become an “askable” adult
- Respond in positive ways
- Educate parents

- A couple of great starting points:
 - “Beyond the Big Talk: Every Parent’s Guide to Raising Sexually Healthy Teens – From Middle School to High School and Beyond” by Debra W. Haffner (2001)
 - “My Teen Has Had Sex, Now What Do I Do?” by Maureen Lyon and Christina Antoniadis (2009)