

STDs/Pregnancy/HIV-AIDS

Adolescent health seriously endangered by sexual behavior

The CDC has reported that 85% of the most prevalent infectious diseases in the United States are sexually transmitted. *The rate of STDs in this country is 50 to 100 times higher than that of any other industrialized nation.* Each year, one in four teens contracts an STD/STI. The United States also has the highest teen pregnancy rate in the western world, despite rates of sexual activity that are not higher than in several European countries. Teens account for about 5% of all case of HIV/AIDS and that rate is increasing. African American and Latino young people are disproportionately represented in all three groups: more STD's, more pregnancies, and higher HIV rates.

Effective Prevention: accurate information, norm setting, skill building, personalization

Prevention research shows that accurate information, norm setting and skill building are all needed to change sexual behavior. NIDA has defined as a principle of effective programming that prevention interventions must be personalized. This means tailoring programming to reach diverse students, with their unique strengths, learning abilities, interests, histories and risk factors, while still taking into account community values.

No consensus on norms

Sexuality is a matter of public health, public safety, and private morality. Nothing is as apt to ignite controversy in a school settings as discussion of sex. Differences in perspective create a wide spectrum of perceived needs, mandates, local values and School Board policies. In diverse communities, there simply will not be consensus about what combination of information and skill training is best for every group, every student, every situation. No wonder most print curricula reduce things to the lowest common denominator – and still offend. No wonder sensitivity to community – and individual – differences, as well as most nuances, too often get lost in the process. No wonder fidelity to science-based information can get lost as well.

Ripple Effects software maximizes options

The "uncensored" version of Ripple effects software offers reading independent, accurate information, sensitively presented, about a whole range of topics related to sexual behavior. It offers dozens of skill-training tutorials that can strengthen a sense of self, while increasing sensitivity to others and building decision-making skills in the process. Teachers or administrators can delete any topics they consider inappropriate. Students can follow hyperlinks to a built in scope and sequence, explore an assigned set of tutorials, and/or follow their own interests. Ultimately any path will lead to training to stand up for their values, ensure their own safety and protect the safety of whomever they relate to.

Goals of intervention

Students will:

- Act in accordance with their moral beliefs
- Demonstrate good decision making skills
- Be able to control impulses
- Command respect for their decision to abstain from sex
- Understand the safety issues involved in sexual activity
- Know how to protect themselves and others from unintended consequences
- Manifest greater self-control (both feelings and behavior)

A suggested scope and sequence

SKILL TRAINING TOPICS

Knowing yourself

Identifying your values
Setting goals

Assertiveness

Standing up for your beliefs
Resisting pressure
Refusing sex

Impulse control

Practicing sexual restraint
Predicting consequences

Decision making

Managing feelings

Mixed feelings
Managing feelings

Using community resources

Getting help

CHALLENGE TOPICS

AIDS

HIV

Pregnant

Sexual diseases (STD's)

Abstinence (celibacy)
Abuse-sexual
Abusive relationship (dating abuse)
Acquaintance rape
Baby-yours (teen parent)
Birth control
Body image
Condoms
Date rape-drug
Date rape-victim
Fondling (petting)
French kissing
Gay (homosexual, lesbian)
Gender
Hormones
Intercourse
Kissing (making out)
Masturbation
Molesting-offender and victim
Period (PMS, cramps)
Prostitution
Puberty
Rape-victim and offender
Sexual harassment
Sexual safety (safer sex)