Helping Parents become better sex educators

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Objectives

- Help parents recognize the importance of becoming their child’s sexuality educator.
- Summarize research on adolescent brain development.
- Help parents identify opportunities for discussing sexuality with their children.
- Illustrate “connectedness” to parents and suggest steps that can improve parent-child connectedness.

Teen Birth Rates
How Does the U.S. Compare?

- Sweden
- France
- Canada
- United Kingdom
- United States

Rate per 1,000 girls ages 15-19

Teenage Sexual Activity in Developed Countries

- Sweden
- France
- Canada
- Great Britain
- United States

% of women 20-24 who had sex in their teenage years
- By age 15
- By age 18
- By age 20

U.S. Teens are more likely to have had two or more partners.

- Sweden
- France
- Canada
- Great Britain
- United States

% of 15-19 year olds who had two or more partners

Teens and Sexual Behaviors

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<tr>
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CDC, 2005 National Survey of Family Growth
Sex Ed: Reality

- 46% males
- 33% females
- No formal instruction about contraception before they had sex

Sex Ed in Schools

- Abstinence 87%
- STD/Pregnancy Prevention 86%
- Condom Use 39%

Sex Ed: Reality

- Sexual content on TV > increased risk of having sex and involvement in teen pregnancy
- 55% 7-12th graders look online
  - About half of “health” sites with inaccurate info on contraception
- Parents, Peers, Media = important

Media Use = Sex Ed

New Media

- Web Exploration
  - search engines, websites
- Communication
  - email, chat rooms, discussion boards, blogs, instant messaging, text messaging
- Filesharing / Downloading
- Tech Accessories
  - desktop / screensavers, ringtones / digitones

School based programs are uncertain & insufficient

- Healthcare system doesn’t allow enough time

...so it’s up to YOU as parents
Normal Sexual Development
• 18-36 mo
  • Explore and name body parts
  • Masturbation
  • What is private?
• 4-5 yrs
  • Masturbation continues
  • Show and tell common
  • May ask questions about babies
  • Potty humor rocks!

Start Early
• Preschool
  – Body parts, masturbation, privacy, boys vs. girls
• Early Elementary age
  – Open dialogue, become the “go to” person
  – Birth
  – Privacy
  – Puberty
  – Curiosity is normal, great teaching moments

Late Elementary
• Curious about sex. Have THE talk!
• Boys seek “Victoria’s secret” ads, often find porn
• Girls fantasize about marriage, romance
• Modesty begins
• If unsupervised, sex play is predictable
• Some BF / GF behaviors

Take a Deep Breath

Developmental Goals

Greater Independence
  Separate from family
  Peer-focused relationships

Who am I?
  Am I normal?
  Am I lovable?
  Am I capable of loving others?
Normal Sexual Development

**Preadolescent (9-11 yrs)**

- Understand intercourse
- Worry about body and pubertal changes
- Sexual feelings
- Curious about opposite sex, but don’t encourage BF/GF behaviors
- Sex play is predictable if unsupervised

**Tips for Parents
They Know More Than You Think!**

- Be “askable”
  - Don’t freak out
- No need to be an encyclopedia
- Discuss pubertal changes

**More Tips
Preadolescent (9-11)**

- Sexual abstinence
- Importance of reporting any abuse
- Guidance for peer pressure
- Discuss ALL areas of sexuality

**TALKING POINTS**

- Body image
- Media messages
- Clothes & make up
- Dating
- Setting boundaries
- Joys of sexuality
- Family values
- Crushes vs. real love
- Desire

**Am I Lovable?**
**Brain Ch-Ch-Ch-Changes**

- Prefrontal Cortex = CEO = brakes
  - Planning
  - Impulse control, consequences
  - Abstract thinking
  - Natural acquisition in early 20s

- Limbic system = Emotion central
  - Amygdala:
    - fear & anger
    - “emotional charge”
  - Primary site of action
  - Hormonally sensitive

**Cerebral Construction**

Prefrontal Cortex

Limbic System

“Wiring” & Insulation

**Advances in Neuroscience**
Brain Ch-Ch-Ch-Changes
- Limbic system = Emotion central
- What does that mean for adults?
  - Help them to pursue a passion
  - Encourage “safe” risk taking
  - Explain emotional reactions
  - Don’t get into a yelling match

Brain Ch-Ch-Ch-Changes
- Pruning, Wiring and Insulation
  - Deleting old “files” = Use it or lose it
  - Establishing new connections
  - What fires together, wires together
  - Myelination = faster signals

Brain Ch-Ch-Ch-Changes
- Pruning, Wiring and Insulation
  - What does that mean for adults?
    - Repetition, repetition, repetition
    - Role play (but NEVER call it “role playing”)
    - Guidance and limits are critical to wire thinking processes and behaviors

Normal Sexual Development
**Early adolescent (12-13)**
- Body hang ups (boys and girls)
- Privacy
- Sexual fantasies begin (may feel guilt)
- Increased curiosity about bodies
  - 33-50% with some sort of sexual play
  - 30% have attempted or mocked intercourse

Normal Sexual Development
**Early adolescent (12-13)**
- Normal struggles
  - When is sex right for me?
  - What matters in relationships?
  - How can I say no?
  - Desires and frustrations
  - Rejection and loneliness

Normal Relationships
**Early adolescent (12-13)**
- Still mostly same sex
- Girls friendships: emotional intimacy
- Boys friendships: actions and deeds
- Cross-sex
  - BF/GF “label” answers “Am I lovable?”
**Tips**

They Need You More Than They Admit

- Self esteem
- Open communication
  - Alternatives to intercourse
  - Boundaries
  - Consequences of Early Sex
  - STDs
  - Contraception & pregnancy prevention

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**They are NOT mini-adults**

although they may want you to believe otherwise

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**Normal Sexual Development**

**Mid adolescent (14-16)**

- Skin hunger
- Kissing > sexual desire
- Heavy petting common
- Mutual masturbation & oral sex
- “It won’t happen to me!”

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**Teens and Sexual Behaviors**

**Mid adolescent (14-16)**

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Normal Relationships

**Mid adolescent (14-16)**

- It’s easy to start “hardwiring” bad relationship habits
  - Attractiveness
  - How it looks to peers
  - Sexual gratification

- Emphasize emotional intimacy, nurture, unconditional love, integrating another person into their life

**Tips for Parents**

**Mid adolescent (14-16)**

- Supervision! Abstinence!
- Early, frequent dating older partner =RISKY!!
- Talk about it!
  - How to refuse unwanted advances
  - Reporting abuse or harassment
  - Emotional vs physical intimacy
- Be askable!!!

**Tips**

**Mid adolescent**

Then Talk some more!....

- Contraception
  - What, Where, When, How and WHY!
- Disease prevention
  - What, Where When, How, and WHY!

**Where exactly does ABSTINENCE end and SEX begin?**

**Talking with Teens**

- Use Teachable moments everyday
- Don’t preach
- Let them direct conversation
- “Did that answer your question?”
- Always answer the question
- Be clear about your values and expectations
- Discuss protection and safety

**TALKING POINTS**

- Body image
- Media messages
- Clothes & make up
- Dating
- Setting boundaries
- Joys of sexuality
- Family values
- Crushes vs. real love
- Desire
- Masturbation
- Homosexuality
- STDs
- Oral sex
- Abstinence
- Abortion
- Date rape
- When is it OK?
- Contraception
Conversation Starters

Prevention Studies

Your FAMILY
Your TEEN
Your Teen’s FRIENDS
Your Teen’s PARTNERS
Your COMMUNITY
Your Teen’s SCHOOL

Prevention Strategies

Your FAMILY
+ Knowledge of family values and behavioral expectations
+ Parents disapproval of premarital or teen sex
+ Communication about sex, condoms, and contraception before youth initiates sex
+ Parental support for contraception use if sexually active
+ CONNECTEDNESS

Connectedness

Quality * Mutual * Sustained
- Mothers claiming “good talk” 72%
- Teens admitting “good talk” 45%
- Highly connected teens delay sex

Impacts 30 specific risky behaviors

10 tips to connect with your teen

1. Get to know her world

2. Schedule protected time, let him guide the fun

10 tips to connect

3. Help her think through big decisions, don’t make them for her!

Still needs supervision
Help them understand expectations
Catch her being good
10 tips to connect
4. Give him a hug when it is OK with him, but always let him know you love him!

10 tips to connect
5. Be available and askable on her time frame

10 tips to connect
6. Don’t embarrass her in public

10 tips to connect
7. Be a parent more than a friend
   Create and maintain structure
   Build and maintain trust
   Consistent and appropriate discipline

10 tips to connect
8. Learn the art of active listening
9. Encourage safe risk taking

Most of all…
10.
Yearly goals to connect

6-7: Have fun, just want to be with parents
8-9: Start talking about puberty and sex
10-11: Body Image and Am I normal
12-13: Sexuality and safety issues
14-15: Who am I and where am I going
16-17: Help handling the new independence but still needing boundaries
18+: Fly safely but realizing they have a back up

Talk to Parents

Scare them (a little!)

Prepare them

Dare them

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