

Sexual Health Information and Disease Prevention Program and Questioning Guidelines

Achieving healthy sexuality is a developmental process from birth to senior adulthood; so is learning about sexuality. In the early years, the foundation for mature adult sexuality is laid with such building blocks as healthy self-esteem, positive body image, good self-care, effective communications, respect for others, caring for family and friends, and a responsibility to community. As an individual matures, other essential elements are added such as understanding body changes, sexual intimacy and commitment; knowing and using health enhancing measures, such as health exams, abstinence and protection; and recognizing the joys and responsibilities of parenting. (Guidelines for Sexual Health Information and Disease Prevention, 2005).

Washington State's HIV/AIDS education (RCW 28A.230.070) and Bully and Harassment Policy (WAC 392-190-056) requirements are supported by the objectives of sex education.

The Edmonds School District adheres to the Guidelines for Sexual Health Information and Disease Prevention authored by the Washington State Department of Health and the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, January 2005. These guidelines include the following characteristics:

- √ Use information and materials that are medically and scientifically accurate and objective.
- √ Encourage and improve communication, especially around growth and development, with parents/guardians and other trusted adults.
- √ Enlighten young people to develop and apply health-promoting behaviors.
- √ Provide information about sexual anatomy and physiology and the stages, patterns, and responsibilities associated with growth and development.
- √ Promote the development of intrapersonal and interpersonal skills including a sense of dignity and self-worth and the communication, decision-making, assertiveness and refusal skills necessary to reduce health risks and choose healthy behaviors.
- √ Recognize and respect people with differing personal and family values.
- √ Promote healthy self-esteem, positive body image, good self-care, respect for others, caring for family and friends and a responsibility to community.
- √ Teach youth that learning about their sexuality will be a lifelong process as their needs and circumstances change.
- √ Encourage community support and reinforcement of key messages by other adults and information sources.

Guidelines staff receive for answering difficult questions

1. Be aware of your body language and tone of voice and what they communicate to the students about discomfort or disapproval you may be feeling.
2. Respond to or acknowledge all questions.
3. Affirm the questioner and legitimize the question, as appropriate.
4. If the question includes slang, paraphrase the question changing the slang to appropriate terminology.
5. If you don't know the answer, admit it.
6. Ask for questions in writing. The "anonymous question" strategy accomplishes two things simultaneously: (1) it is less intimidating, and (2) it will allow you time to reflect on difficult questions before answering.
7. Practice answering questions that make you feel uncomfortable in front of a mirror or a supportive friend.

Guidelines staff receive for dealing with value questions

1. Validate the student for asking the question (see #3)
2. Identify the question as a belief or value question (distinguishing it from factual questions)
3. Answer the factual part of the question, if there is one. Dispel myths or misinformation about the issue.
4. Describe a range of beliefs. "Different people believe different things about ____." Ensure that all beliefs are described in a fair and even-handed way.
5. Refrain from stating your own belief, unless it reflects a universal value of our society.
6. Refer the student to family, clergy, or other trusted adults.

These are the guidelines for dealing with difficult and value questions found in the [KNOW HIV/STD Prevention Curriculum](#). Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2003, 2005, 2006.

Teachers will receive an updated training on the sexual health information and disease prevention program each school year.

Glossary

Medically and scientifically accurate: refers to information that is verified or supported by research in compliance with scientific methods and published in peer-review journals, where appropriate, and recognized as accurate and objective by professional organizations and agencies with expertise in the relevant field, such as the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (<http://www.acog.org>), the Department of Health (<http://www.doh.wa.gov>), and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (<http://www.cdc.gov>).

Sexuality: is a significant aspect of a person's life consisting of many interrelated factors including but not limited to sexual anatomy, physiology, growth and development; gender, gender identity and gender role/expression; sexual orientation and sexual orientation identity; sexual behaviors and lifestyles; sexual beliefs, values and attitudes; body image and self-esteem, sexual health; sexual [thoughts and feelings]; relationship to others; [and] life experiences.

Sex education: refers both to teaching about sexuality and to the lifelong process of learning about sexuality.

School Board Approved Instructional Materials

KNOW HIV/STD Prevention Curriculum. Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2003, 2005, 2006.

Family Life and Sexual Health. Public Health Seattle & King County, 2004, 2005, 2006.



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