



There's No Place Like Home...

FOR SEXUALITY EDUCATION

Myths about Teen Sexuality

Many adults believe different misconceptions about teenagers and teenage sexuality, revolving around a larger, more general myth of teenage irresponsibility and immaturity. The media, special interest groups, and a lack of direct communication between adults and teenagers about sexuality all help to create and spread such myths. Because they can prevent important sex education from taking place, some myths are very dangerous. In order to promote healthy and responsible behavior in their children, parents must take a more active role in separating fact from fiction.

Some parents believe they can prevent teenagers from having sex by forbidding sexuality education. This is not true. Sexuality is natural in humans and cannot be ignored.

From birth children explore their bodies and experience pleasure. During puberty young people attach feelings to pleasures without truly understanding them. This causes confusion for adolescents. Additionally, sexuality is everywhere and teenagers cannot be sheltered from it. If sex is not introduced by a reliable person, such as a parent or teacher, it will be introduced



Sakura Fuqua, age 18, peer educator in both Indianapolis and Bloomington.

through half-truths and lies from less reliable sources, such as other kids and the media. Education helps people understand sexuality and promotes sexual responsibility. Silence does neither.

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A sexually literate person:

- Has an accurate, well-informed, age-appropriate understanding of all aspects of sexuality - biological, cultural, social and ethical,
- Possesses a strong sense of personal values about sexuality and sexual health, and
- Demonstrates respect for the values of others.

Have a question? We have answers!

Planned Parenthood of Greater Indiana offers a **confidential** e-mail service for people looking for answers to hard to ask questions.

Concerns about gynecological exams? Want to know where to go for HIV testing? Confused about birth control methods? Email your question to: **Askme@ppin.org**.

Please note that this service does not offer immediate response. If you have an urgent medical concern, call Planned Parenthood at 1-800-230-PLAN.

Wanted: Peer Educators

Planned Parenthood of Indiana is looking for outstanding young leaders. Young people between the ages of 14 and 17, who are interested in the facts about sexuality and teen health issues, are needed to join our Peer Education Program.

The Peer Education Program has been running successfully through Planned Parenthood of Indiana since 1999 and is currently based in Bloomington, Indianapolis, Merrillville, Muncie and Paoli. We are currently recruiting for new classes. Interviews will take place in early September and the training starts in most locations during October.

The program seeks to train outstanding teen leaders in sexuality and other health issues, in order that they may serve as resources for their peers. Peer Educators are provided with factual, medically accurate information about sexuality, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and HIV/AIDS. In addition, they learn about the issues surrounding sexual orientation, age, ethnicity and gender. They learn about the social environment in which sexual decisions are often made and the factors involved in making responsible choices. Peer Educators are equipped with the knowledge to answer their peers' inquiries about sexuality and other important teen issues through a combination of informal conversations and group presentations.

All Peer Educators will be required to attend a 40-hour training/orientation hosted and organized by Planned Parenthood of Indiana. Once trained and approved, they work in a variety of settings which include community groups, churches, schools, summer camps and training workshops.

This is a volunteer position with stipends available for participation. To qualify as a Peer Educator, individuals must: be 14 to 17 years old, still in school or graduated, have three adult references, and successfully complete 40 hours of training. Applicants will be asked to submit an application and will be accepted based on this information, interviews and the successful completion of the training program. Previous knowledge of sexuality is not a requirement of the selection process. The consent of a parent or guardian is required. Applications are available at www.ppin.org/youth.cfm.

Call for more information	Bloomington & Paoli 812-336-0219, ext. 6
	Indianapolis 317-926-4662, ext. 148
	Merrillville 219-769-3500
	Muncie 765-282-8011, ext. 242

Are you 14 to 17?

Are you outgoing and good at public speaking?

Are you interested in the facts about sexuality and teen health issue?

Find out how to become a Peer Educator.

A Teen's Perspective: Communication

Communication is important because if you can't communicate with someone then there's no way you can talk and tell them things that they need to know. First of all, your friend is doing things and sleeping with every guy she meets. So you want to tell her

about how she's going down the wrong path. But if you can't communicate with her in a way that she would understand and listen and still know you're her friend, you're not trying to hurt her or put her down, you're just trying to let her know that is not cool.

See, this is why I say communication is important. If you're not communicating with someone about things that they need to know in the end you and that person will get hurt.
—T'Aunna Smith is 17 and is the mother of a one-year old son.

If you're not communicating with someone about things that they need to know, in the end you and that person will get hurt.

Peer educators are trained to facilitate educational sessions for community, church, and school groups. If you are interested in hosting a session, or if you know of a group that might be, please contact your local coordinator. Contact details are on page 2.

[Talking with your kids about sex] may be uncomfortable at first, but aren't a lot of things?

Myths about Teen Sexuality

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Many adults believe that teenagers are going to be wild and irresponsible with or without sexuality education and that teenagers are just going through a phase that they will outgrow. This is a very common myth, and if it causes less sex education to be taught, it can result in the spread of sexually transmitted diseases and increases in teen pregnancy. Everyone needs to learn about different ways to prevent pregnancy and the spread of STDs, because some of the consequences of irresponsible sexual behavior last a lifetime. That is why it is crucial for parents to talk about sex with their teens.

Another common myth is that boys and girls shouldn't learn the same things when it comes to sex. Have you ever noticed that schools tend to divide the boys from the girls for sex education classes?

In some schools only girls are taught about what sexually transmitted diseases you can catch and about teen pregnancy. Boys are taught how to put on and take off a condom —

if that much. Both genders should be able to learn the exact same things. Girls and boys both go through life and should know all about life. We all need to have the same knowledge.

Because of all the myths and misconceptions that are out there about sex, it's important for children and their parents to discuss issues surrounding sexuality. It may be uncomfortable at first, but aren't a lot of things?

If sex isn't talked about in the home, it will be discussed on the school bus, in the school bathroom, and in the media, where rumors and gossip arise. Of course sex will be discussed in all those places even if parents do talk about sex with their children, but at least then youth will have their parents' perspectives to help them make the right decisions.

Sometimes parents may come across as nosy or a nuisance when they ask about their teens' lives, but if sex, or any other topic, is spoken about casually, but seriously, then teens will be more likely to talk and listen.



Spring 2004 graduating class of the Indianapolis peer educators.

Sakura Fuqua took the lead in writing this article. She attends IU-PUI and has been a peer educator since 2002. She's knowledgeable, energetic and a great facilitator.

Brittani Edmondson is 16, goes to Perry Meridian, has a thoughtful, positive attitude, and is a talented singer.

Emily Gelfman is 16 and attends Brebeuf Jesuit. She makes inspired, conscientious contributions to peer education and recently passed her driving test.

Shardai Gray is 13 and goes to Shortridge Middle School. She was a great asset at the Black Expo 2004 Planned Parenthood booth.

Katrina Khitlik is 16 and attends Pike. She was also an important part of our Black Expo contribution.

Real Life Real Talk

There's No Place Like Home... for Sexuality Education is a publication for families by the staff of the Education and Training Department at Planned Parenthood of Indiana, Inc. This edition was written by the Peer Educators in Indianapolis.

Planned Parenthood strives to ensure that sexuality is understood as an essential lifelong aspect of being human, and that it is celebrated with respect, openness and mutuality.

 Planned Parenthood of Indiana
Protecting, providing and promoting reproductive health

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for educational information
1-800-230-PLAN
for medical appointments
www.ppin.org

Tips for Talking With Kids About Sex

Be receptive to your child's questions. You don't need to be an expert to be an effective sexuality educator for your children. In fact, you've been teaching them about sexuality since they were babies, by the way you interacted with them. Not knowing all the answers can be the perfect opportunity to spark discussions by looking for the answers together.

But don't wait to be asked. Not all children feel comfortable making

the first move. Sometimes they are shy or uncomfortable and are just waiting for you to broach the subject.

Seek teachable moments to share your values. Take the time to discuss sexuality when the moment arises instead of only having the "big talk." Use TV shows, music on the radio, or events that happen in your children's lives to begin a discussion.

Always use correct terms. By using correct terms for body parts, you give your child a vocabulary for

future discussions. This can begin early in the bath and during potty training, for instance.

Be askable. The more your children feel comfortable asking you questions about sexuality, the more often they will come to you with questions.

For more information, visit the Resource Center at Planned Parenthood of Indiana. Beginning the 2nd week in October, we will have a new location in downtown Indianapolis: 200 S. Meridian St., Suite 400.