Sex, Sexuality, and boys’ schools

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Casual Sexism

• “You throw like a girl”
• Boys don’t read and girls don’t do math
• Female teachers referred to as “Miss” (Male teachers referred to as “Sir”)
• Only female teachers in the primary grades
• Assumption that boys will be interested in competitive sports
• Colours limited to certain sexes
• Misogyny and misandry
• Conflation of sex and gender
Headlines (all in the past year)

• Teacher asked students to complete ‘survey’ of their sex lives and fetishes (Australia)

• High school sex video shocks Durban school (South Africa)

• Sexual abuse of students by teachers, coaches an “epidemic” (USA)

• High school gym teacher jailed for two year relationship with male student (Canada)

• Figures reveal scale of ‘sexual misconduct’ in schools by children as young as five (UK)
Adolescent Sexual Behavior
• High school students in 2013
  • 47% have had sexual intercourse
  • 41% did not use a condom the last time, and 14% used no form of birth control
  • 15% had sex with 4+ people during their life
• Sexual risk behaviors
  • 24.5% used drugs or drank before last sexual intercourse
  • 10.5% of high school girls report being raped (but 50%+ of sexual assaults go unreported and 80% of rapes are between individuals who are known to each other) – UK has PSA entitled “This is ABUSE” for teen rape prevention, Australia has “Let’s Stop it at the Start”
The Problem

• Culture of Silence about Sexuality
  • Adults not comfortable in discussing the subject
  • Students do not know how to talk about sex, sexual expression or sexuality

• Double Standard
  • Behavior, dress, responsibility, sexual behavior

• Difference in emotional expression
  • Male – fight or flight, stress leads to action
  • Female – tend and befriend, stress leads to shutting down
Source of Misinformation

• Internet
  • Pornography – evidence that this is leading to lack of sexual competency in young men – increase in rape?
  • Dating sites have been linked to an increase in STDs

• Video games and movies
  • Many depict women as sexual objects and the targets of violent attacks

• Lives of media celebrities – sports figures, movie stars, cybercelebrities
  • Temporary nature of relationships is standard
Why comprehensive sex and sexuality education is essential

• Growing numbers of sexual predators in schools
  • Students are predators of other students
  • Some bullying is sexually based

• Increasing rate of sexual attacks both in and out of school, by students and on students

• Serious lack of knowledge and understanding of sex, sexual behavior and emotions, and the effect of sexual activity on boys and girls

• Concerns about non-binary, gender nonconforming, homosexual, and transsexual individuals

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Comprehensive Sexuality Education

• School needs to agree on what approach should be used that is consistent with mission and culture of school
  • Include students as well as parents and other stakeholders in determination of scope of course

• Basic biology – this should simply be included in the curriculum wherever it naturally fits

• Sex Ed Class – ages 9-11 (or at school entry)
  • Presentation of normal sexual development in both males and females, including conception, pregnancy, contraception, menarche, and menopause
  • Discussion of emotions, relationships, love, marriage, divorce, variations of sexuality, respect for others, sex in social media
  • Good role models by staff of respect, cooperation and equal treatment

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Atmosphere of Healthy Sexuality

• Discussion of sexual expression and sexuality in all aspects of the school
  • Students need to know that there are differences in beliefs about sexual expression, staff should be allowed to express their beliefs within reason
  • Abstinence education does NOT work
• All students need to be vaccinated against HPV by age 12, and know why
• Boys need to have the opportunity to work with girls on a regular basis in a non-graded, non-competitive environment - this is essential!

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How Prepared is Your School?

• Can you describe or discuss basic normal bodily functions such as digestion, elimination, metabolism, awareness of sensations
  • How about reproduction, contraception, STDs,
  • Is there someone in the school who is responsible for making sure students learn this information

• Is there someone in the school responsible for the emotional health of students
  • Would a student feel comfortable sharing information about his sexuality with that individual?

• Is there a sense of community and belongingness that encourages everyone to be a part of the school life?
School Policy

• The school has a comprehensive sexuality program which includes:

• A basic sex education program

• Educating students on the subject of sexting and other display of sexually explicit materials on social media

• A stated policy for students who are cissexual, transsexual, homosexual, non-binary, or have parents who fall in these categories

• A procedure for dealing with staff and students who may have PTSD or other psychological issues as the result of sexual battery

• Providing safe spaces or appropriate assistance for students who feel threatened by staff or other students
Conclusion

• Sources for information
  • www.Bedsider.org
  • www.StayTeen.org
  • www.plannedparenthood.org/teens
  • www.sexetc.org
  • www.scarleteen.com
  • www.ashasexualhealth.org
  • www.iwannaknow.org

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