

Resolution on Sexuality Education

Whereas American youth are exhibiting behavior leading to increasing rates of life-threatening or health-compromising sexually transmitted diseases that in part reflect ignorance of sexual health promoting behaviors (National Guidelines Task Force, 1991);

Whereas youth infection with HIV/AIDS has reached an epidemic level, particularly among young gay men and ethnic minority youth (National Commission on AIDS, 1993), in part because of lack of knowledge and lack of training about protective behaviors;

Whereas children are becoming involved in sexual activities at younger ages (Ravoira & Cherry, 1992; Singh & Wulf, 1990);

Whereas over 1 million teenage women become pregnant annually (National Guidelines Task Force, 1991) and approximately 300,000 of these teenagers become homeless or runaways or both (Ravoira & Cherry, 1992);

Whereas the prevalence of sexual intercourse appears to be higher among youth who did not receive sexuality education (Furstenberg & Crawford, 1986);

Whereas youth whose sexual orientation or whose values, beliefs, and practices differ from those deemed acceptable by many in our society are subject to persistent, subtle, or overt harassment and violence which may lead to suicide (Schaecher, 1988);

Whereas youth with a physical or mental disability may be more vulnerable to sexual coercion;

Whereas stranger rape, date rape, sexual abuse, and other forms of sexual violence are traumatic events that have become increasingly prevalent (Koss et al., 1994);

Whereas sexual health, personal self-esteem, and the ability to participate in responsible, caring, and stable relationships, as well as to develop positive interpersonal social attitudes can be promoted through education (Gordon & Schroeder, 1995);

Whereas the American Psychological Association has a necessary and important role in influencing public policy to the benefit and protection of youth in particular and the society in general;

Therefore, be it resolved, That the APA supports access to information on sexuality as critical to healthy development. Such information should be positive, age appropriate, and culturally suitable, and should respect the choice of abstinence; it should acknowledge women's rights, should foster shared responsibility among males and females for sexual behaviors, and should promote tolerance for sexual diversity; and

Therefore, be it resolved, That APA public policy support the development and adoption, including research and evaluation, of such comprehensive sexuality education curricula and programs for the promotion of healthy sexual attitudes and behaviors and the prevention and mitigation of endangering and destructive behaviors. It is to be noted that this resolution does not endorse any particular curriculum, procedure, or site for instruction (DeLeon, 1996).

References

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