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Completing the Picture: Adolescents Talk about What’s Missing in Sexual Health Services

Have you ever wondered why teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted disease rates continue to rise? A study was conducted with students to talk about what’s missing in sexual health services for teens. The study included conversations about sexual health information and what could be done differently to teach the teens. The reason for this study was to allow students to give their opinions about sexual health programs. The study mostly talked about how students get sexual health information, gender differences, and their suggestions for sexual health services.

When you think back to K-12, everyone can remember at some point the sexual education class that had to be taken. The teens “agreed that little was taught beyond the basic plumbing of sexual health and that the focus was on the negative consequences of unhealthy sexual decisions” (DiCenso et al.). Teachers aren’t always the best when it comes to explaining sexual health. Students may feel weird when an adult they don’t know very well is explaining a sensitive topic. “Teens feared that teachers would tell their parents or give them poor grades if they learned they were sexually active” (DiCenso et al.). Knowing that teens feel this way it could give the educators a chance to step back and approach these situations more carefully, and have an understanding for the teens. The teens also got their information informally via social media or their friends. “Students thought that sex education classes offered the technical information and informal sources filled in the gaps or the important stuff” (DiCenso et al.). Since the teens were getting information informally this may be the result of them not understanding how to practice safe sex, which then leads to pregnancy and STD’s. In all, the students are not getting all the information needed to help with their sexual issues.

When teenagers are dealing with sexual education it can be very different between boys and girls. “Girls get a bad reputation for sleeping around, and not boys” (DiCenso et al.). This has always been this way; boys get rewarded for having sexual relations while girls will get called names and even get talked down upon. These situations are even claimed to be a joke, some people say “dads” are happy when their son loses their virginity but if it is their daughter they will get mad. Why can’t it be the same between both genders? “Males get frustrated because, they are known to be more into sex than females” (DiCenso et al.). The males claim that “their friends encourage them to have sexual relations” (DiCenso et al.). It’s almost as if their pressured into making a decision they won’t ever be able to change. “Some males even see sex as a game, so they could compete with each other” (DiCenso et al.). This is not considered to be okay in any way. Boys should be taught from their parents or even educators that sex is a big part of growing up. If they see it as a “game” they shouldn’t be having sex in the first place, because it is not a game to girls. For girls it is a bigger thing than just hoping in bed with someone, it’s letting another person into your whole life. If educators talked to both boys and girls about relationships and sex, maybe it can clear up some of the chaos that happens between genders.

During the study the teens gave suggestions for the sexual health services so they could learn and be comfortable at the same time. “the students stressed that they need to be informed about sexual education services in the community” (DiCenso et al.). It is hard for some of the teens to even make it to the offices because they don’t have transportation to any of the services. They also suggested that “they should be informed at least once a week in homeroom to remind them of the services” (DiCenso et al.). Dealing with other things they, might forget and have to be reminded of the services that are provided. For the sex education course the students have also made some suggestions about what should be talked about. Some of the topics were: “how STD’s are transmitted and prevented, accurate information about AIDS, sexual activities other than intercourse, pregnancy and birth control, relationship issues… etc.” (DiCenso et al.). The educators should now take this information into use and make lessons for the teens that will be beneficial. Some of the teens also expressed their feeling about “the teachers showing old films or not explaining everything correctly because they are embarrassed” (Dicenso et al.). The program needs to get adults that are comfortable with talking about the topic and they also need to find a way to talk to the teens in their “language”. If everything the teens are saying get put into consideration then they would have a better sexual education course for the students.

The study was very eye opening for many reasons. The teens talked about how they get their sexual health information, gender differences, and their suggestions for sexual health services. The teachers and sexual health educators should now be able to talk to the teens and inform them in a way that will benefit both parties.

Works Cited

DiCenso, Alba, et al. “Completing the Picture: Adolescents Talk About What's Missing in

Sexual Health Services.” *SpringerLink*, Springer International Publishing, 1 Jan. 2001, kkkkkk<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/BF03404840>.