
Teen Pregnancy and How We Can Help Prevent It

Each year two million six hundred thousand teenagers become sexually active, which is about seven thousand a day. Three out of ten American girls will become pregnant at least once before the age of twenty. Only twenty two states are required to teach sex education in the United States. At the University of Washington they interviewed five hundred twenty three women and two thirds of the pregnant adolescents had been sexually abused. Maybe if kids were taught sex education and how to protect themselves in sexual abuse situations it would cause the amount of teen pregnancy to drop. The age in which sex education should be taught has been debated for many years. Eighty percent of parents want their kids to abstain from sexual activities until they are adults, but this often prevails the message of its ok to be sexually active as long as contraceptives are used. "Teenage sexual activity is costly, not only for teens, but society. Teens who engage in sexual activity risk a host of negative outcomes, including STD infection, emotional and psychological harm, lower educational attainment, and out-of-wedlock childbearing." This is saying that teens are not only affecting themselves but others around them when condoning to sexual activities.

Sex Education may not stop teen sexual activity but it lowers the amount of sexual partners and the amount of 'casual' sex. People who were sexually abused before the age of 18 have a higher chance of an unexpected pregnancy and an increased risk of HIV infections. Many people have poor self worth or self esteem after being abused increasing the risk of sexual activity. "We found that sexual abuse was strongly associated with adolescent pregnancy, primarily through the strong association between sexual abuse and high-risk sexual behavior." This is saying if you have been sexually abused you may have high-risk sexual behaviors including but not limited to unprotected sex. Sexual abuse is also not reported sometimes due to it involving a peer or someone you have to be around on an everyday bases. Even though on average the predators were around five years older than the victim.

Sex education often delays first intercourse and increases the use of contraceptives. Talking about sexual intercourse in a controlled environment can reduce the curiosity of sexual activities therefore reducing sexual activities overall. The message 'Choose what is best for you' were not as effective as 'always avoid unprotected sex'. Both give teens a choice but the second one suggests the safest route if teens were to choose to become sexually active. "Traditionally, sex education messages are targeted to one of two groups: those who are sexually active and those who are not. A study suggests that messages could be tailored to address four groups instead: those who do not anticipate having sex in the next year (delayers), those who anticipate initiating sex in the next year (anticipators), those who have had one sexual partners (singles), and those who have had two or more sexual partners (multiples)." By opening up the

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number of groups you can help focus lesson and education plans towards the right kind of audience.

There are many things that increase the risk of sexual activity. Some of those things are by choice while others are not. Sex education can help prevent teen pregnancy by teaching teens that contraceptives should always be used and should not be a scary thing or embarrassing at all. Sex education should be put in place so teenagers know what to expect if they are to choose to be sexually active. It shouldn't not be put in place to scare adolescents so much that they fear all sexual activities.

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