SparkED
ignite excellence in sex education

What You Can Expect from a Planned Parenthood Educator

Thank you for inviting us to be a part of your education program. **We provide exceptional sex education and advocate for sexual health, wellness, and reproductive freedom – without judgment, without fear, without fail.** Our education programs provide medically accurate, age appropriate, comprehensive sex education that furthers understanding of human sexuality and promotes healthy behavior. The following guidelines are used by Planned Parenthood Educators when developing and facilitating education programs.

We promote the following values pertaining to sexuality:

- Sexuality is a natural, healthy, life-long part of being human.
- Every individual has a right to pursue sexual health information and services.
- *All people* have rights that need to be respected, and responsibilities that need to be exercised. This includes, but is not limited to, diversity in gender, race, culture, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, ability/disability, and/or religion/faith.
- In our pluralistic society, we must respect diverse sexual attitudes and behaviors, as long as they are based on such universal values as responsibility, justice, equality, consensual conduct, and non-violence.
- Information about becoming pregnant and about postponing, preventing, continuing, or terminating pregnancy should be easily available; the choice of whether or not to parent should be free and informed.
- Every child deserves to be wanted, loved, and cared for.
- Individuals and society benefit when young people are able to discuss sexuality with their parents and/or other trusted adults.
- Education empowers people to make informed and healthy life choices.

Elements of presentations:

- We promote **healthy sexuality** in all our presentations and programs.
- Information is factual, up-to-date, medically accurate and age appropriate.
- Content, teaching style, and activities are customized, as much as possible, to the needs of each audience.
- Overall delivery is welcoming, respectful, and non-judgmental.

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- Diverse learning styles are recognized through efforts to engage listeners, when feasible and appropriate, with a variety of strategies.

Controversial Issues -- Some issues discussed are controversial, taboo or value-laden (examples include masturbation, sex outside of marriage and abortion). When a participant expresses disagreement with the facilitator or with a fellow participant, we:

- Affirm the participant.
- Identify the core issue that is value laden.
- Provide factual clarification to the best of our ability.
- Acknowledge when the subject is outside of our expertise.
- Discuss with the group the range of beliefs about the issue.
- Invite participants to explore their personal values with other trusted individuals.

What We Expect from You

We greatly appreciate the opportunity to provide important programming to your students. We completely understand that programming with your youth would not be possible without your support and cooperation. While your physical presence is required for programming to occur, we humbly ask that you refrain from participating in the presentation itself. Your participation can influence how youth may otherwise respond to program information and participate in program activities. We understand there will likely be times where you must intervene during programming (i.e. classroom management), and we will respect your judgment. We thank you again for the opportunity to provide programming to your youth. Please find below a list of guidelines and suggestions for you to help make programming as successful as possible:

- Out of respect for privacy and due to misuse of recorded material, it is our policy to prohibit video or audio recording during educational sessions.

- "Outside observers" may not attend a presentation without prior notice and approval from our Education Department. "Outside observers" are defined to include representatives from other community organizations, other educators and/or trainers, reporters, as well as others who were not originally identified as being part of the audience.

- For reasons of liability and audience management, a designated staff person (i.e. the teacher or group leader) must be accessible by the Educator(s) at all times. This staff member will be responsible for responding to any disciplinary issues that may arise during program sessions. If applicable, the staff member will also be responsible for ensuring only students with parental consent/have not opted-out are present.

- If the teacher/group leader cannot be present and a substitute will be filling in, the Educator must be alerted as soon as possible. Because learning environments can radically shift in the absence of the teacher/group leader,

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alternate programming plans may need to be made, potentially including rescheduling the programming until the teacher/group leader can be present.

- Establish ground rules with the group prior to programming. Include *everyone* that will be in the room when developing group agreements for classroom behavior, including adults (i.e. the teacher/group leader, the Educator, other adults) who will be present during your programming. Because teaching sex ed and classroom expectations may differ from day-to-day classroom learning, please consider the following when developing group agreements with program participants:
    - **Students may behave differently when getting this information than they regularly do in class.** Laughter, crude comments, and explicit language, and even "testing" a presenter are not uncommon when discussing sexual health topics. Students who appear to be acting out may instead be using their behavior to deal with their overall discomfort with the topic. Educators do not perceive this as disrespectful, but part of the process of growing comfortable with what for some, is a taboo topic.
    - **Most language, except for comments that hurt, demean, or stereotype other people, is acceptable.** Many students have never had a chance to explore information about sexual health in other settings. This means that they may not be comfortable talking about these topics, and in some cases won't have the correct "medical" language to do so. Using the language students understand and connecting it to the "medical" terms provides a teachable moment and fosters dialogue.
    - **Reading questions as written and responding to all questions in an anonymous question box is a way of showing the Educator's value and respect for everyone in the room.** Taking the time to respond to all questions can also help an outside facilitator build rapport with an unfamiliar audience.
    - **Just because students are not talking doesn't mean they are disengaged.** Some groups react with complete silence. This does not mean that they are not listening or interested in the content; it might just mean that participants feel that talking openly in this setting is difficult. This is another reason Educators use an anonymous question box.

- We respectfully ask that all present adults (including the teacher/group leader):
    - do not volunteer answers to questions posed to the students unless the Educator specifically requests their input. Adults' answers can influence how a youth responds to questions.
    - do not participate in program activities unless the Educator specifically requests their participation.
    - keep all personal information that is shared by youth confidential, except in matters of safety and mandatory reporting. In order for youth to fully engage in programming, they must feel safe and secure in their environment and maintaining confidentiality is essential for this to occur.

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- do not make side comments or have side conversations with the youth participants. We understand that the program content can be very engaging, but any outside interference can impact how youth receive the program and be distracting for the Educator and other participants.

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