Health and Sexuality Education Standards in Oregon

The Human Sexuality Education Law (2009); the Healthy Teen Relationship Act (2013); and, the Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Law (2015) collectively contribute to the Oregon Department of Education's Comprehensive Sexuality Education policy framework. Approved by the State Board of Education in 2016, the Health Education Standards provide consistency in what is taught to students across Oregon to ensure equity in achievement and health.

Comprehensive Sexuality Education

The new Standards expand on the required knowledge and skills related to comprehensive sexuality education. They expand the notion of what sexual health is, treating sexuality as “a multidimensional process, intimately linked to the basic human needs of being liked and accepted, displaying and receiving affection, feeling valued and attractive, and sharing thoughts and feelings.” Thus, the standards cover broad areas including body image, media literacy, gender roles, relationships, and communication.

Building on the most current research and the National Health Education Standards, they do not promote sexuality or impose a set of values, but, rather, empower students to recognize, communicate, and advocate for their own health and boundaries. Many research studies have shown that this comprehensive approach works to delay sexual initiation, prevent unintended pregnancies, promote health, and reduce sexual violence and harassment. Although comprehensive sexuality education instruction is a challenge, it is required to replace the outdated model of abstinence-only education, which places young people at increased likelihood of pregnancy and STIs once they do become sexually active.

For additional resources, visit: http://www.oregon.gov/ode/ http://www.oregon.gov/oha/PH/HealthyPeopleFamilies/Youth/YouthSexualHealth/ http://oregonsatf.org/

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1 Blum RW. “Sexual health contraceptive needs of adolescents with chronic conditions.” Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med. 151: 290–297
4 http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/publications/publications-a-z/1487-publications
5 Santelli, JS; 2017 “Abstinence Only Until Marriage: an updated review of US policies and programs”

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