

SB 856 (Sex Abuse Prevention Instruction)

In July of 2015, the Oregon Legislature passed SB 856 (Sex Abuse Prevention Instruction) which requires schools provide child sexual abuse prevention instruction kindergarten through grade 12. Subsequently, the Oregon State Board of Education passed changes to administrative rule 581-022-1440 (Human Sexuality Education): *As part of the comprehensive plan of human sexuality instruction, each school district board shall adopt a child sexual abuse prevention instructional program for students in kindergarten through grade 12 (OAR 581-022-1440).*

This includes:

- A minimum of 4 instructional sessions (equal to or greater than a standard class period) of sex abuse prevention instruction per year for grades kindergarten through 12.
- Sexual abuse instruction is integrated and part of required district comprehensive sexuality education plan and is aligned with state standards.
- Instruction is age appropriate, medically accurate, and is not shame or fear based.
- Instruction is culturally inclusive and is responsive to diverse students including race, ethnicity, gender identity and sexual orientation.
- A parental involvement component to inform parents about child sexual abuse topics.
- A professional training component for administrators, teachers and other school personnel.
- An evaluation component with measurable outcomes.
- Trauma informed instruction and services.

Comprehensive Sexuality Education and the Healthy Teen Relationship Act

OAR 581-022-1440 (Human Sexuality Education) requires that each school teach comprehensive, age appropriate, medically accurate sexuality education. In addition to sex education topics like growth and development; STD, STI, and HIV instruction; and abstinence promotion, Oregon's Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) law requires instruction on child abuse prevention, healthy relationships, and goal setting. In addition, CSE incorporates instructional requirements of the Oregon Healthy Teen Relationship Act (HTRA) passed by the legislature in 2013 and modified in 2015. HTRA requires schools to incorporate age-appropriate education into new or existing training programs in grades 7-12 about teen dating violence and domestic violence.

The Human Sexuality Education Law (2009); the Healthy Teen Relationship Act (2013); and, most recently, SB 856 Child Sexual Abuse Prevention (2015) collectively contribute to the Oregon Department of Education's (ODE) Human Sexuality OAR and sexual health benchmarks and standards¹. Aligned to national standards, Oregon's benchmarks support the health, wellbeing, and safety of students. In addition, Oregon law requires that: *Course material and instruction for all human sexuality education courses that discuss human sexuality in public elementary and secondary schools shall enhance students' understanding of sexuality as a normal and healthy aspect of human development.*² Schools districts can meet new student sex abuse prevention instructional requirements by implementing and maintaining already required CSE instruction per OAR 581-022-1440.^{3,4}

The Oregon Department of Education in partnership with over 20 community stakeholders specializing in child abuse and sexual violence prevention have developed the following guidance as a resource for school administrators. ODE would like to thank the participants for volunteering their time over the last year to support the health and well-being of Oregon students.

¹Sexual Health benchmarks are part of the ODE Health Education Standards.

²ORS 336.455 and OAR 581-022-1440

³ See ODE handout "Comprehensive Sexuality Education and Child Abuse Prevention Benchmark Alignment"

⁴ The Oregon Department of Education is currently in process of updating benchmarks to align with new requirements of SB 856. Expected completion of this update is September, 2016.

*ODE Sex Abuse Prevention Advisory Group 2015-2016
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PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE PREVENTION EDUCATION

In the article **What Works in Prevention: Principles of Effective Prevention Programs**,⁵ the authors used a review-of-reviews approach across four areas (substance abuse, risky sexual behavior, school failure, and juvenile delinquency and violence) to identify characteristics consistently associated with effective prevention programs.

The below characteristics have been adapted to infuse a trauma informed and racial equity perspective. Students experience disparities in outcomes based on race, and so **culturally responsive practices**, a **trauma informed lens** and an **emphasis on building positive, safe relationships** with adults must be incorporated into any prevention program.

1. **Comprehensive:** Prevention strategies should include multiple types of activities, affect multiple settings, and go beyond awareness-raising. Note: prevention is a component of a healthy sexuality education. There are several models of comprehensive prevention efforts, such as the [Socio-ecological Model](#) and the [Spectrum of Prevention](#).
2. **Positive Relationships:** At the foundation of all programming, is a deliberate nurturing of strong and positive relationships between students and adults. Factors that contribute to positive relationships include school staffs' ability to have compassion and empathy for students' lived experiences, including experiencing trauma, racism and other forms of discrimination.
3. **Culturally Responsive:** Prevention strategies 'recognize the diverse cultural characteristics of learners as assets. Culturally responsive teaching empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills and attitudes.'⁶ A culturally responsive prevention strategy recognizes that each school community, including those that have been historically oppressed, have powerful, and *often unrecognized*, sources of resiliency and protective factors that must be honored through dialogue
4. **Varied Teaching Methods:** Prevention strategies should include interactive, skills-based components, that are both culturally responsive and trauma informed. According to [Erin Casey](#), "Factors likely to contribute to engagement and interaction include personal relevance of information or presenters, and opportunities to critically evaluate and discuss the content of the presentation."⁷
5. **Sufficient Dosage:** Participants in your prevention programming need to be exposed to enough of the activities for them to have an effect. Prevention programming needs to be delivered over multiple sessions so that the programming impacts participants' knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, and skill acquisition. This acquisition can only happen with the context of positive relationships of the school staff, which also develops and grows over time.
6. **Theory Driven:** Prevention programming should be grounded prevention theory and research. Effective prevention programming should also be driven by research and knowledge of about cultural-responsiveness and trauma-informed practices.
7. **Appropriately Timed:** Program activities should be research-informed regarding the developmentally appropriate time to be introduced to specific topics.
8. **Well-trained Staff:** Programs need to be implemented by staff members who are empathetic, competent, and have received sufficient training, support, and supervision.
9. **Outcome Evaluation:** A systematic outcome evaluation is necessary to determine whether a program or strategy worked.

⁵ These nine components are heavily adapted from: Nation, M., Crusto, C., Wandersman, A., Kumpfer, K. L., Seybolt, D., Morrissey-Kane, E., & Davino, K. (2003). **What works in prevention: Principles of Effective Prevention Programs**. *American Psychologist*, 58, 449-456

⁶ Oregon Chief Education Office, Equity lens. www.ode.state.or.us/superintendent/priorities/final-equity-lens-draft-adopted.pdf

⁷ Heppner, Neville, Smith, Kivlighan, & Gershuny, 1999.