

Uncomfortable Questions

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HON 301

Before We Begin

Take a moment to think about when you first learned about sex,
who it was that first taught you, and what they told you.



“Where do we begin?”

- The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has a list
 - Creating/maintaining healthy relationships
 - Influences on sexual risk behavior
 - STDs and pregnancy: transmission & prevention
 - Obtaining/using condoms & contraception
 - Benefits of abstinence and monogamy



“Are we all on the same page?”



- American parents are strongly in favor of sex education in schools (Kantor & Levitz, 2017)
 - Middle school
 - 93% overall, 82% of Democrats, 64% of Republicans
 - High school
 - 86% overall, 92% of Democrats, 77.2% of Republicans

“So...why are we talking about this now?”

- Sex education is relevant to modern social issues (*citation needed*)
 - Laws governing consent/sexual assault
 - Gender and sexuality
 - Prevention of STDs/pregnancy
- The U.S. has higher rates of teen pregnancy than other First World countries (Sedgh et al., 2014)
- STDs reached a record high in 2016 (CDC 2017)
 - Most diagnoses in young women aged 15 - 24
- Trump administration may cut funding for Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program (Belluck 2017)

“What’s going on here?”

- According to the NCSL, 24 states and D.C. require sex education (2016)
 - 20 states require medical/factual accuracy (definitions vary)
 - Of the 36 bills introduced in 2016, 26 failed to pass
 - 35 states (and D.C.) allow for parental opt-out
- Not a lot of schools are teaching everything (CDC, 2015):
 - Fewer than half of all high schools teach all 16 topics
 - Less than 20 percent of all middle schools teach all 16 topics
- And the substitutes are worse than not being taught
 - Frequent reliance on shame and fear to discourage sexual activity (Lynch, 2017)
 - Emphasis on abstinence-only sex education is positively correlated with rates of teenage pregnancy and HIV (Elliot et al., 2017)

“So, how bad is it?”

- In summary:
 - Sex education is a controversial topic covering several important fields
 - Trying to teach it runs afoul of questions in ethics and morality...
 - ...and current attempts omit important details in trying to influence behaviors
 - All to the detriment of teenagers who are experiencing higher rates of pregnancy and STDs



HOORAY!

“So, how bad is it?” (contd.)



Pam Stenzel

Source: https://www.salon.com/2013/04/21/no_one_has_ever_had_more_than_one_partner_and_not_paid/

Shelly Donahue



In case this breaks, go here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=enCIs-0IEbc>

"Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) goes far beyond sex ed, and is a dangerous assault on the health and innocence of children..." (American College of Pediatricians)

WATCH THE FILM!

THE WAR ON CHILDREN

Exposing the Comprehensive
Sexuality Education
Agenda



11:05



10 min. | 35 min. version
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SUBTITLES: Español | Français | العربية [Arabic] | 中文 [Chinese] | More

"Stop CSE!"

SIGN THE ONLINE PETITION

Please sign the petition calling upon teachers, school administrators and government bodies at the local, state, national, regional and international levels to immediately stop promoting and funding harmful comprehensive sexuality education (CSE). [READ PETITION >](#)

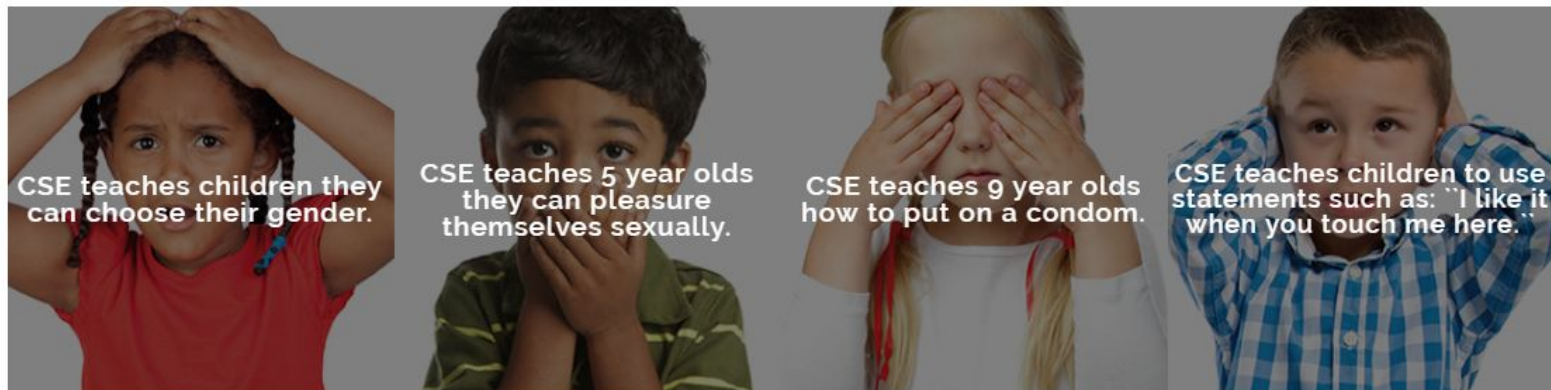
Full Name

Email

Your email address serves as your signature and will be kept private.

☒ Keep me informed about this and other issues from Family Watch International.

If you're interested: <https://www.comprehensivesexualityeducation.org>



CSE teaches children they can choose their gender.

CSE teaches 5 year olds they can pleasure themselves sexually.

CSE teaches 9 year olds how to put on a condom.

CSE teaches children to use statements such as: "I like it when you touch me here."

CSE Newsfeed

Follow CSE news coverage from around the corner and across the globe.



“What’s going on here?”

- Strictly speaking, abstinence-only education isn’t factually inaccurate
 - Abstinence *is* the best way to prevent STDs and pregnancy
- But by definition, it attempts to push students towards making certain decisions and discourages others
 - Think of the tape analogy, and the use of guilt/shame
 - Why teach teenagers how to do safely do something stupid?
 - Why not just teach them not to be stupid in the first place?
- It also draws more support from personal beliefs than statistics
 - i.e. abstinence-only education is abortion politics rather than tornado politics
 - It’s easier to convince people that a correlation is inaccurate than it is to convince them that their morals are wrong and shouldn’t be taught

“What’s going on here?” (contd.)

- Speakers like Stenzel and Donahue are preaching moral guidelines instead of giving a complete education
 - Issue Advocacy rather than Honest Brokership
- Whether or not you think this is a good thing depends on your personal views
 - Recall that quite a few schools don’t teach this at all
 - Parents (understandably) want a say in how their children are taught
 - Literally everyone has a different idea of what exactly should be taught

“What have I just walked in on?”

- Unanswered ethical questions about controversial issues
 - The big example - is abortion murder?
- The (justifiable) fear of what behaviors sex education might encourage in teenagers
 - Resurgence of HIV/AIDS in gay men following the widespread availability of effective treatment (Pilsani, 2015)
 - Note that only 36% of Americans think teenage sex is morally acceptable (Jones, 2017)
- The clash of personal views on what constitutes morally acceptable behavior
 - Note again the cultural differences between Democratic demographics (millennials w/ no religious affiliation) and Republican demographics (older Christians)

“What have I just walked in on?” (contd.)

- Democrats and Republicans have very different demographics (Pew Research Center, 2015)
 - Democrats
 - Millennials, people w/ no religious affiliation, college graduates or higher
 - Women
 - Republicans
 - Older generations, Christians, college graduates or lower
- Reflected in American morality (Pew Research Center, 2013)
 - 49% consider abortion unacceptable
 - 37% consider homosexuality unacceptable
 - 30% consider premarital sex unacceptable
 - Republicans are more likely to hold all of the above views

“What have I just walked in on?” (contd.)

- Nobody can dispute the facts in comprehensive sex education
 - That said, the facts aren't what people find objectionable!
- Parents are rejecting it based on the effects it might have on their culture
 - Opponents of comprehensive sex education tend to be white evangelical Christians
 - Recall again that marriage is a sacred institution and premarital sex a sin
 - Comprehensive sex education seeks to normalize sexual activity
 - Supporters tend to have more liberal views on sexuality
 - Also tend to support easier access to contraception
 - To its opponents, comprehensive sex ed does not seem objective/unbiased
 - It looks like liberals enforcing their views on sex in public education
- When trying to teach sex education, we have to be mindful of how our perspectives shape what we consider beneficial
 - Morality comes into play even if we try to be objective and rational!

“So, what do we do now?”

- Science cannot answer questions on ethics/morality
- So what can it do for us?
 - Provide factual, relevant information
 - Maintain objectivity through rational thought
 - This only works if we acknowledge our inherent biases
- And what can we do with that?
 - Provide information/assistance with confidentiality and as requested
 - Only give information if asked for it (i.e. no preaching to/at people)
 - Demonstrates respect for individual beliefs/morals
 - Give information anonymously, to sidestep social taboo
 - Make this information easily accessible to everyone
 - Hopefully, provide a platform for discussion of beliefs
 - Participants must accept that there isn't necessarily a right or wrong

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