

# SIECUS Report

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Sex Information and  
Education Council  
of the U.S.

**PAST • PRESENT • FUTURE**

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*SIECUS HISTORY,  
SEXUALITY EDUCATION,  
RESEARCH,  
RELIGIOUS PERSPECTIVES,  
SEXUALITY AND SOCIETY*

# 30

*Years*

**1964-1994**

**ANNIVERSARY ISSUE**

April 1994

*Dear Reader,*

*In April 1994, SIECUS celebrates its thirtieth year.*

*Sexuality issues were very different thirty years ago. Contraception was not widely available, even to married couples. Abortion was illegal. No state mandated sexuality education in schools. The women's movement, the civil rights movement, and the gay rights movement were all in their nascent stages.*

*We have come a long way in these three decades. Yet, many of the issues that motivated SIECUS' founders continue to be salient today. America is still not a country that affirms sexuality as a natural and healthy part of life. Too many people — too many teenagers, gay men and lesbians, elderly people, people with disabilities — still do not have sexuality information, education, sexual health services and protected sexual rights.*

*This issue of the SIECUS Report celebrates both the accomplishments and the struggles of the past thirty years. We have chosen to reprint several significant excerpts from the SIECUS Newsletter, the forerunner of this journal, and the SIECUS Report during the past three decades. These articles have been selected to represent historical highlights, dominant social attitudes, and current events that shaped the sexuality fields and brought us to the present state of sexuality in America today. As you will see, the style, the tone, and even the footnotes have fluctuated considerably over the years. The merit of the ideas and the struggle to overcome challenges have not. It is hoped by the whole SIECUS staff that by remembering our history, we will become stronger leaders and caretakers of our present and future.*

*As I reviewed the following articles about SIECUS history, sexuality education, sexuality research, religious perspectives, and sexuality and society, I was struck by their relevance to the issues we face today. The following pages present a dramatic testimony to the victories of past decades and the obstacles we must still transcend. They offer insight into how the sexuality field has matured and how much remains to be overcome.*

*The SIECUS Report was first published in 1972. During these 22 years, many of the nation's leading sexuality experts have contributed to its pages. None of these authors has been paid for their submissions; all donated their talents to enrich and enlighten our readership. Only a few of these authors could be included in this special issue. However, we are grateful to each and every writer over the years who contributed to this journal.*

*We are also grateful to all those who have contributed to make the work of SIECUS a powerful reality for these many years, especially the wonderful scores of board members and leaders. During this celebration of our 30th anniversary, we rededicate ourselves to the proud legacy and courage of our founders. We honor our past and recommit ourselves to a future world where sexuality is affirmed and all people have the right and ability to make responsible sexual choices.*

*Sincerely,*

*Debra W. Haffner  
Executive Director*

**SIECUS HISTORY**

**30 years**

**PAST • PRESENT • FUTURE**

# WHY THE NEED FOR A SEX INFORMATION AND EDUCATION COUNCIL OF THE UNITED STATES AS A NEW, SEPARATE ORGANIZATION

by Wallace Fulton, M.P.H.\*  
 Excerpted from the *SIECUS Newsletter*  
 1965

....Why, indeed? The answers to these questions would be as numerous, and as varied, as the three-dozen directors of SIECUS. These directors selected for their professional achievements, are leaders who are associated with a wide number of fields and a variety of organizations already concerned with aspects of human sexuality. Why, then, have they chosen to lend commitment and personal prestige to SIECUS? Because it is their conviction that a new organizational approach — a council, a community of interests — is needed now “to establish man’s sexuality as a healthy entity...to dignify it by openness of approach, study, and scientific research designed to lead toward its understanding and its freedom from exploitation...”

Existing organizations — tick them off — have an established public reputation for a given point of view about sexuality...and with that point of view they contribute to public understanding. But, in every case, their program responsibilities necessarily focus around or go beyond human sexuality per se. SIECUS objectives focus sharply and directly on it. By the very nature of the SIECUS Board, unity results only from a common positive, open, scientific approach to human sexual behavior. There is advocacy not for a solution, but for more education and research, and for a climate of open dialogue that may enable solutions in time to be arrived at.

In effect, SIECUS holds, as a director has said, that “sex education, in the best sense today, means training people emotionally and intellectually to be able to make intelligent and well-informed choices among an array of competing alternatives.” This task begins with training the teachers themselves. And SIECUS is ready to supplement this important function of colleges, universities, and a wide number of organizations. But, for such education to win acceptance and implementation, broad-spectrum interests must join hands — in council— to document common concern and the capacity for united efforts. The interest in such a council has come not only from those who now convene as the SIECUS Board. Their concerns are echoed by almost countless responsible individuals who have said, in many ways — is not the time now to bring into the open the subject that has dwelt in shadow so long? The overwhelming number of speech and conference invitations coming in to the SIECUS office is a significant index of organizational, as well as individual, concern.

\*Throughout the text, an asterisk denotes past and present SIECUS board members.

## SIECUS: ITS PRESENT AND FUTURE

by Mary S. Calderone, M.D., M.P.H.  
 Excerpted from the *SIECUS Newsletter*  
 1965

The Sex Information and Education Council of the U.S. received its charter in May of 1964, and began its functions on July 1, 1964 with a total staff of one (unsalaried) Executive Director and one secretary. Its Board, multi-disciplinary in nature and enthusiastically committed to the basic purpose and goals of SIECUS, authorized acceptance of a private, non-interest, long term loan to cover the first year’s basic expenses. A few outside individuals heard of the project and spontaneously contributed.

In January, 1965 a press conference was held and public announcement was made. This received extraordinary nationwide press attention, and as a result requests for services have poured in. Between January 9th and May 19th almost 1000 were received as follows:

<b>Educational Institutions</b>	
Elementary, Junior and Senior High Schools	165
Colleges and Universities	139

Medical Schools	35
Nursing Schools	10

<b>Organizations</b>	
City, State, Federal Agencies	26
Religious Groups	31
Planned Parenthood Chapters	20
Other Organizations	50

<b>Individuals</b>	
Physicians	250
Professionals and lay persons	170
Students	47
International sources	25

**Total** 968

The newsletter, of which this is the second, has begun publication on paid subscription basis. Discussion Guides are in preparation (Homosexuality, Sex Education, Masturbation), and will be available shortly.

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## **SIECUS: WHERE NEXT?**

by **Mary S. Calderone, M.D.**

Excerpted from the *SIECUS Report*  
1974

### **The First Decade — Sexual Health**

In May of 1964, five persons chartered the Sex Information and Education Council of the U.S., with its stated purpose being "to establish human sexuality as a health entity." The five co-founders were quickly joined by others to form a Board of fifty, representing many disciplines and professions, including clergy of the three major religious faiths of the USA.

Now ten years old, under its acronym of SIECUS this organization is today known in many parts of the world for its integrity, its objectivity in examining usually over-emotionalized aspects of human sexuality, and its leadership in establishing a rational approach to sexual questions previously kept under cover by both society and its sexually troubled members.

In November 1972, the SIECUS Board adopted the position that freedom to exercise personal sexual choice is a fundamental human right. This statement was accompanied by a clear-cut charge laid upon each person to exer-

cise this autonomy in full responsibility to self, others, and society.... The social movements begun during SIECUS' first decade offered the concept of sexuality as integral to human health.

### **The Second Decade — Sexual Human Rights**

SIECUS' second decade may come to be known as the decade of sexual human rights, for the concept of the right to sexual autonomy is a logical next step. As with all rights it must carry with it the co-equal obligation of responsibility. Autonomy with responsibility in sexual matters could free human energies for other tasks in developing a more loving, more honest, more humane and therefore more humanly productive society.... Releasing energies from the yoke of fear, guilt, and ignorance about sex in order to rechannel these energies to productive purposes by people on behalf of people is one such goal — a challenging one for all of us.

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## **THE CHALLENGE FACING SIECUS**

by **Michael A. Carrera, Ed.D.\***

Excerpted from the *SIECUS Report*  
1979

In sexual health care the principal challenge facing professionals today is the application of the accumulated information, insights, and expertise to the interests, needs, and concerns of the masses of people throughout the United States, and indeed the entire world. Although professional preparation must, and will, continue in education, counseling, and therapy, it is critical that serious, concerted efforts be made at this time to facilitate the transmission of what we know about sexuality to the people who traditionally are not given access to such information in any primary or systematic way.

This means that we must first identify the extent to which people from all classes and groups understand the meaning of sexuality in their lives, so that our teaching methods can be developed in a manner that fits their

needs and aspirations, and enables them to fulfill their individual and unique sexual potentials. A further challenge is to achieve this within the variety of frameworks of their cultural and religious beliefs.

It is no longer enough to maintain the concentric-circular development of the human sexuality movement. It was absolutely necessary at the beginning for health workers to teach and train each other within the circumference of their own knowledge and techniques. But we have more than passed the time for this ever-broadening approach, and must now go beyond ourselves to our constituencies, and provide people with evolving opportunities to reflect and learn about themselves as sexual beings, just as we have been enabled to do in our own lives....

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## **SIECUS 1984**

by **Barbara Whitney, R.N., M.S.**

Excerpted from the 20th anniversary issue of the *SIECUS Report*  
1984

The present is only a tiny moving dot on the continuum of time — a dot marking the intersection between the past and the future. Thus, writing about SIECUS as I see it today is impossible without acknowledging the legacy of what has already been done and the potential of what is yet to come. When I look back on the five years I have served as Executive Director, it seems to me that there have been tremendous changes in the organization. And yet when I read through minutes from board meetings of

the early years, I am struck by the similarity in the expression of concerns then and now: What is the purpose of SIECUS? With what programs can it best address the needs of the public? What is the optimal structure for board and staff, together and independently? And, the bottom line, how do we raise money to make all this happen?

Thus, as I share some of my perceptions of SIECUS as it exists today, I do so with the hope that the reader can experience the thread between the past and the future,

emphasized by the other viewpoints shared by my fellow contributors to this 20th anniversary issue. Perhaps it would be helpful if I envision SIECUS as being somewhat like a jigsaw puzzle, with many interlocking pieces which together create a unified whole. Imagine the surface as a snapshot, frozen in time, giving us today's picture.

SIECUS' snapshot at the moment shows a collage of programs, constituents, and "enablers." Two gradations of color are present in each segment of the picture, one representing the collection and dissemination of information, the other representing advocacy in support of vital issues confronting our field — the two core functions of SIECUS.

The puzzle's program section has three primary components. Our Information Service and Library, housed at New York University's Department of Health Education (with which SIECUS affiliated in 1978), last year answered over 5,000 inquiries by phone or mail. The constantly expanding library collection forms the basis for information dissemination, and the library staff regularly updates bibliographies and other reference materials so that inquiries are responded to with current information, much of it not indexed in any other compilation.

The *SIECUS Report* is the star of the second component, our publications program, which was augmented

last year by *Winning the Battle for Sex Education* and *Oh No! What Do I Do Now?* (in English and Spanish). Our long-standing clearinghouse function, which the above two programs facilitate, becomes increasingly important as more individual resources are available in local communities throughout the country. SIECUS sees itself as providing a vital link in the flow of information to and from such communities.

The third program component is the development of model programs and materials for parents, assisting them to be the primary sex educators of their own children. Like all our programs, the parent learning project is a combination of both advocacy and information dissemination, and represents for SIECUS a way of moving from talk to action....

This is SIECUS 1984. Being a not-for-profit organization concerned with human sexuality issues is not perhaps the most secure position to occupy in a world concerned with survival. But as long as enough people recognize that, in our confrontation with today's realities, anything that can be done to learn more about living together as physical, emotional, and rational human beings is well worth the effort, SIECUS will find the support it needs.

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## SIECUS: 25 YEARS OF COMMITMENT TO SEXUAL HEALTH AND EDUCATION

by Debra W. Haffner, M.P.H.

Excerpted from the 25th anniversary issue of the *SIECUS Report* 1989

....The expansion of sexual rights that characterized SIECUS' first decade and a half changed dramatically in the late 1970s and 1980s. The Moral Majority was founded in 1979 and with Ronald Reagan's election to office in 1980 and again in 1984, attacks on sexual rights became more commonplace. Under the Reagan administration, there were countless attempts to restrict sexual rights — to restrict the right to abortion, to limit poor women's access to reproductive health services, and to restrict adolescents' rights to contraception. In 1986, the Supreme Court, in the case of *Bowers v. Hardwick*, further limited sexual rights by sustaining the constitutionality of the sodomy laws.

SIECUS continued to develop new projects and efforts during these years. In the early 80s, SIECUS developed the Parent Learning Project aimed at improving parents' abilities to provide sexuality education to their children. This project resulted in SIECUS' popular booklet, *Oh No, What Do I Do Now?* In the mid-1980s, SIECUS' Latino Family Life Education project developed new models and strategies for providing sexuality education to Hispanic families...

The first cases of AIDS were diagnosed in 1981. As we go to press, 87,188 people have been diagnosed with AIDS and 49,976 have died. [Editor's note: As of September 1994, almost 340,000 cases of AIDS and more than 200,000 deaths have been reported to the Centers for Disease Control.] There can be no doubt that the AIDS epidemic has changed sexual attitudes, values, and behav-

iors. The AIDS epidemic has led to a real rise in discrimination and violence against homosexuals. The reluctance of the government, and indeed of many health professionals, to become involved in fighting AIDS clearly has been related to the fact that it was first considered a gay disease. I remember one commentator wondering how much faster the response would have been if the new disease had affected first the titans of industry. Many groups seized on AIDS to promote an anti-sex philosophy. As one group put it: "Sex equals AIDS. AIDS equals death. That's all that anyone needs to know."

...The last few years have seen a renewed interest in sexuality education as a result of the critical need for information and education posed by AIDS. In 1986, Surgeon General Koop was eloquent about the need for sex education:

There is now no doubt that we need sex education in the schools and that it must include information on heterosexual and homosexual relationships. The threat of AIDS should be sufficient to permit a sex education curriculum with a heavy emphasis on prevention of AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases.

Responses from state legislatures and state offices of education have been swift: more than 13 states now mandate sexuality education and 29 mandate AIDS education.... There is more interest in sexuality education than ever before. We have a historical opportunity to make true many of the original goals of the organization:

To be committed to the positive goal of finding ways to incorporate sex meaningfully and with full acceptance into human living...to expand the scope of sex education to all ages and groups...to create a climate in which open dialogue...may take place.

SIECUS will continue to affirm that sexuality is a natural and healthy part of life and to advocate for the right of individuals to make responsible sexual choices. We will continue to promote comprehensive sexuality education for all people. At our 25th anniversary, we rededicate our commitment to sexual health and education.

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## ONE SIECUS VISION: THE FUTURE

by Board President, Peggy Brick\*

1994

The SIECUS mission affirms sexuality as a natural and healthy part of living and advocates the right of individuals to make responsible sexual choices. This is still a radical vision of crucial importance in today's world. It challenges powerful economic interests that manipulate sexuality for private profit. And it challenges powerful groups that would impose their doctrinaire sexual ideologies on an entire society. By denying education, information and services, these groups would exclude sexuality from the people's democratic right to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

As public discourse regarding sexuality becomes ever more intense, SIECUS' leadership will be critical in helping individuals, organizations, and policy-makers explore the full meaning of affirming sexuality. This is a time of sexual dis-ease. Virtually all traditional assumptions about sexuality have been challenged — by contraceptive and reproductive technologies, by the feminist and gay liberation movements, by media images of sex, and by everyday experiences. At the same time, few people have developed an approach to sexuality adequate for this complex and changing environment. Many people are confronted with difficult choices in their own lives. Many are concerned about how to prepare children for the realities they will face in the future. While some are determined to return to a traditional value system that never really existed, more seek a new understanding and ethics of sexuality.

SIECUS has a vital role in framing public discourse about these key issues. It seeks to develop a concept that integrates all of our knowledge about sexuality, appreciates our sexual diversity, recognizes sexual pleasures as well as dangers, and supports the ability of individuals to make positive sexual choices. Now, when people of all ages find their personal sexual behaviors in conflict with their stated values, a major SIECUS priority must be to articulate clearly its positions regarding sexuality in the media and public forums. SIECUS aims to empower individuals to examine their social milieu, understand their own bodies, question their assigned roles, and shape their own sexuality. The aim is to help people examine what they have been taught and develop a sexual morality congruent with their own experience and values.

How can SIECUS promote the conditions that will move this society toward a holistic and positive approach to sexuality? We have already begun by identifying questions central to thinking constructively about sexuality: What is a sexually healthy adult? A sexually healthy adolescent? What is a comprehensive approach to sexuality education? What public policies are needed to ensure the rights of every individual, female and male? In search of

answers, SIECUS provides opportunities for specialists from many disciplines to come together to develop guidelines that expand and redefine the way we think about sexual health. SIECUS position statements on controversial issues provide a framework for discourse that affirms sexuality in a modern, pluralistic society.

How else can SIECUS lead? SIECUS needs to encourage research on human sexual development, particularly in the early years, and on the role sexuality education can play in promoting sexual health throughout the lifespan. Educators need more than statistics on whether sexuality education delays intercourse and/or prevents disease. Educators need qualitative research on the personal meaning of various sexual behaviors. They need research showing the impact of various educational interventions on the future lives of individuals of various ages, backgrounds, and communities. They need research on how they can educate for prevention of disease while affirming sexuality in the context of pleasure and wholeness.

SIECUS also will continue to be a powerful catalyst, enabling professionals from many fields to implement comprehensive sexuality education in their own domains. SIECUS resource development, coalition-building and training for these professionals will aim at reaching diverse constituencies: people with disabilities that are physical, mental, and emotional; people of color; people in varied religious communities; gay and lesbian people; senior citizens.

In addition, SIECUS must address one of the most critical needs for the future success of sexuality education — the training of educators. There can be no question that, at present, many people expected to teach human sexuality education have had little or no training; they are uncomfortable, ill-prepared, and reluctant. Until we address this need in a major effort, neither passage of state mandates nor development of wonderful curricula will result in major progress toward meaningful sexuality education.

Finally, it's time for SIECUS to take on an international role. Nations around the world are turning to SIECUS to develop educational programs for their citizens. And it seems that the Cairo Conference on Population and Development will acknowledge this year the relevance of sexuality issues for worldwide family planning. So SIECUS faces new challenges as it initiates support for sexuality education among people with diverse sexual customs.

As recognition of the importance of sexuality education grows worldwide, the SIECUS vision of affirming sexuality as a positive part of human wholeness is more important than ever. Even after 30 years, SIECUS' work has only just begun!



**SEXUALITY EDUCATION**  
**30 years**  
**PAST • PRESENT • FUTURE**



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## COMMUNITY RESPONSIBILITY FOR SEX EDUCATION

by Frances Breed\* and Mary S. Calderone, M.D.

Excerpted from the *SIECUS Newsletter*,  
1967

In the *SIECUS Newsletter*, Winter 1966, the question of Community Sex Education Programs was discussed. In the months since then, SIECUS has been involved in consultation regarding many such programs, and certain patterns have emerged that would appear to have greater effectiveness than others, particularly in the important area of carry-through.

It is now apparent to all that sex education has — and merits — increasing public and professional attention as a hitherto somewhat neglected but highly important and integral part of family life education. However, it is too often discussed in a spectrum of points of view that is overbroad, from being advanced as a panacea for such social ills as illegitimacy, venereal disease and abortion, to the view point that it will itself be the cause of some of these difficulties, to the attitude that the home is solely responsible for doing it. But those who have taken the trouble to study some of the excellent source materials now becoming available are recognizing that teaching what it means and what it takes to be a man or a woman in the present day, with self respect and social responsibility, must be the whole community's job through all of its social agencies. How then does a community meet this responsibility?

In the United States the trend in all health services and at all levels is toward comprehensive planning for community action. The National Commission on Community Health Services had worked for two years on its comprehensive report. The 1967 National Health Forum explored how to plan for community health in such a way as to enlist the active cooperation of all interested parties. The same kind of careful comprehensive planning now needs to be applied to the field of sex education.

Because schools are the most logical means for reaching the primary target group — developing boys and girls — concerted action can support school efforts and dispel community misunderstanding. Once there is community-wide awareness of the need for sex education, how is it to be accomplished? Though each community must develop its own patterns to meet its special needs, no matter what the degree of readiness, certain basic principles can be followed:

- 1) Agree on long range goals. These are not quantifiable.
- 2) Define objectives. These are quantifiable. (For example, to establish a K-12 sex education course in the public school system.)
- 3) Plan program. (Step by step progression to achieve the objectives.)

For a community to develop a successful program, awareness of what others have done and evaluation of such efforts is helpful and can serve as a useful guide. A time lag will be inevitable between planning the program, developing support for it, and actually implementing it. It may take as much as two years to achieve tangible results. Even developing a consensus on what sex education means and how it fits into family life and health education programs may take months. Adequate teacher training must follow program planning and curriculum development. The wisdom of the old proverb, "Make haste slowly" applies to sex education. We have lived with our inadequacies and mistakes for a long, long time. Whatever is done must be well planned and carried out by those with experience and knowledge in this special field....

Many communities seek information and guidance from SIECUS, the resource agency in this specific health field. In the four months between January 1 and May 1, 1967, its Department for Community Services, established a year ago for the specific purpose of helping communities identify and move toward their own goals and objectives, has answered three hundred and seventy written and telephone requests, and has been directly involved in consultant services or in program participation in sixteen geographical areas. SIECUS can assist a community group to explore its potential, to help obviate false starts, to clarify the need for a continuing program and to provide data on experiences from other areas — from Oregon to Florida, from Connecticut to California. But SIECUS also emphasizes that it can act only in an advisory capacity, and that full and final responsibility for all planning, programming and decision-making must rest within the community itself.

It is noteworthy that action at the state level has also followed this pattern. In at least two states, Connecticut and Kansas, the Departments of Health and of Education have for some time been working together for the assistance of communities and in particular for developing within the framework of various university settings, useful patterns for programming and for training and orientation of teachers. Many members of SIECUS' Board of Directors have been participating in such programs through their own professional affiliations. SIECUS itself recognizes how many professional skills and how many organizations must be involved as we move forward in newer and deeper understanding in this important area of education. It stands ready to help to the best of its capacity, but in the end each community must identify its own resources, develop its own program, support its own school efforts — and accept its responsibility in this as in all other aspects of community life.

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## SPEAKING OUT

by **Mary S. Calderone, M.D.**

Reprinted from the *SIECUS Report*  
1972

The panic button type of approach to educational programs in sexuality has been evidenced in various educational institutions ever since the beginning of SIECUS. At first it was the "Sex education is the 'in thing' and we've got three months to write a K-12 curriculum, how do we do it?" type. SIECUS was flooded by these requests in spite of our continued warnings that such a project ought to take three years, not months, and involve the best minds in the entire community. Later the demands became the "Tell us how to produce sex education that will lower high school VD and pregnancy rates" type.

Then came the right-wing opposition smokescreen that sent high school programs temporarily underground, and attention shifted to the college level — but again in panic button fashion. At first interest centered on contraceptive information, then the abortion question. Then, as surveys revealed the abysmal ignorance among students of the most elementary facts of sex and reproduction, colleges and universities just becoming aware of the need began their planning. It centered around two types of programs: a three-day symposium or a series of weekly lectures with outside "experts" brought in for both types.

This year there is a new note being sounded: the "Let's meet the students where we think they're at" type. Often

planned by the office of student personnel and the counseling staff, rarely in consultation with behavioral science faculties, much less the students themselves, such a "course" might consist, as in one case, of a series of 18 weekly lectures that, in addition to the usuals of birth control, abortion and pregnancy, and homosexuality, also included such supposedly "with it" topics as vaginal politics, sex and racism, and aspects of male and female liberation.

Additionally, because this kind of program is built around lecturers (some of them deliberately chosen because they are regarded as "far out") who are "big names" that will supposedly "pull in the students," the lectures can be wildly disorganized as to sequence of topics — and decidedly expensive. I would liken this approach to offering an advanced course in Leninism and Marxism to incoming freshmen who have never had a course in world history.

In answering such requests, SIECUS points out two prime factors: how much homework needs to be done by all those concerned with planning — not just for the one year but on a continuing basis — and the necessity of involving students not only in the planning but in continuing interaction and small group discussions.

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## SEX EDUCATION: A BASIC HUMAN RIGHT

by **Lester A. Kirkendall, Ph.D.\***

Excerpted from the *SIECUS Report*  
1975

..."Free access" has an important meaning, particularly since sex education has so frequently been withheld or evaded as a consequence of taboos forbidding open and ready references to sexuality. The resulting reticence has confined discussions to particular circumstances and with or between certain individuals only. Thus children were to be taught only within the home, never in public, and best by their parents; any other person would be second best. If sex education occurred in schools, the sexes should be segregated. Once past childhood and youth the days of sex education were over, sex was no longer a fit topic for conversation. Still other restrictions should be added, but at all points to a still existent need — that of dispelling taboos hampering access to needed knowledge.

"Free" precludes the concept of force. Much was made of the idea of "forcing" in the recent opposition to sex education. The issue is clarified though by asking who felt forced, and how. Generally it was the young people, when they had opportunity to express themselves, who felt forcefully deprived of knowledge. The adults advancing the "forcing" argument were responding to a variety of motives, ranging from the fear that any knowledge of sex would demoralize children to using this as a sham issue to gain control of schools, libraries, and other community agencies....

....With life patterns becoming more fluid, with more openness in discussion, and with free intermingling of people there is a definite need to be aware of matters formerly pushed aside, such as transsexualism, homosexuality, abortion, and sterilization. Timing and readiness on the part of the learner is important, to be sure, but usually information has come after the time it was needed rather than prematurely....

No matter what human capacity is being discussed most everyone probably would feel it desirable that all individuals should know themselves as completely as possible. The only reservation would be that this capacity should be responsibly used. Over and over people are urged to develop their full intellectual, physical and creative potentialities and methods are devised to help them do this. Not only would people insist this knowledge was a basic right; they would argue that society would profit as individuals utilized their potentialities more fully.

Our society has been much less charitable toward sexual knowledge. However, by recognizing the "basic right" to know about sex, SIECUS insists that sexuality is an integral part of all life. This calls for an affirmative approach to sex education which our culture is far from accepting and which is a goal educators must work toward....

# NEEDS IN SEXUAL EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS WITH PHYSICAL DISABILITIES

by **Carla Thornton, R.N., M.S.**

Excerpted from the *SIECUS Report*  
1981

Children who have physical or mental disabilities have much the same concerns as those who do not. They must learn to cope with the same biological changes, for they too experience the intensified sexual feelings and new desires of early adolescence. Although individual disabilities and concerns may complicate resolution of the usual adolescent developmental tasks, students with disabilities can nevertheless greatly benefit from the quality family-life education designed to support the process of understanding these physical and emotional changes and of developing successful social and sexual relationships.

With young children the primary need is for social skills training, for without these skills it can ultimately be incredibly difficult to function at an optimum level of independence, to gain employment and, of concern in this paper, to develop social and sexual relationships. In the past, when both schools and families tended toward extremes of overprotection, most of the young disabled were isolated from able-bodied peers, and often given very low expectations for their future functioning. There is hope that, with the 1975 passage of PL 94-142 (federal legislation mandating free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment for disabled youth), those who are thereby "mainstreamed" will receive feedback about what is expected of them. It is, of course, more common for the disabled child to be the one "observed" rather than to have the chance to observe others. Since most people develop social skills by watching other people, lack of these opportunities can hinder the development of such skills in the young with disabilities...

Helpful in the children's development of positive self-esteem is positive reinforcement for things they do well,

with continuing exposure to older disabled children and adults who can act as positive role-models. (Over-praise or effusiveness can be counterproductive, however, by leading to unrealistic goals and expectations.) Only recently have disabled people themselves become teachers in special schools or classrooms and many, many more such programs are needed in as many settings as possible to allow young people to see how adults with disabilities function successfully and enjoy full lives.

Better quality sex education usually tends to improve self-esteem, for people tend to feel better about themselves the more they understand their own bodies and feelings. A small research study I conducted showed significant increases in both the sexual knowledge and the self-esteem of the disabled students in a semester-long family life education class.

Disabled youth need affirmation of the fact that they are sexual beings and certainly do have the potential to develop and maintain satisfactory sexual relationships. (This is where disabled role models can have positive impact on the students.) However, they also need to understand that such relationships will not magically appear. All individuals, disabled or not, have responsibilities in developing and nurturing relationships....

During the 1979 United Nations Year of the Child, many rights of children were examined and affirmed. The sexuality of all children, disabled or able-bodied, is an area that remains to be universally recognized and given the acceptance it deserves in order to assure children and youth their complete rights. The International Year of Disabled Persons 1981 is the appropriate time for this to happen.

## "SEX EDUCATION MUST BE STOPPED!"

by **Ann Welbourne-Moglia, Ph.D. and Sharon R. Edwards, M.A.**

Excerpted from the *SIECUS Report*  
1986

Since sex education causes sexual expression or, in the words of Phyllis Schlafly and friends, "promiscuity," this group feels that it must be prevented at all costs. According to Schlafly, teenage sexual activity, which is encouraged by sex education and available contraception, results in "incurable" VD, emotional trauma, and a forfeiture of opportunities for a lifetime marriage to a faithful spouse and for career and economic advancement (*The Phyllis Schlafly Report*, June 1986). The logic, or lack thereof, of those last few effects of teenage sexual activity is most perplexing. Isn't it unwanted and unplanned pregnancy that would prevent career development and economic advancement, and then doesn't it follow that available infor-

mation and contraception would prevent this result, perhaps even by encouraging the decision to delay sexual activity?

The evidence for this group's theories seems to be determined in the Mccese tradition: personal opinion and projection based on personal attitude. The Netherlands, which has available birth control in the high schools, has the lowest teenage pregnancy rate in the world, along with a very low rape and child sexual abuse rate. And Sweden, where sex education has been taught in the schools since 1956, rivals the low pregnancy rate of the Netherlands. There has not been any evidence of a breakdown of family values in these countries, nor a lack

of career development.

Researchers at Johns Hopkins University who designed and evaluated a school-based pregnancy prevention program for inner-city high school girls found a dramatic decrease in pregnancies. And, in direct opposition to the Schlafly theory of sex education promoting "promiscuity,"

they also found that girls participating in the program postponed intercourse longer than non-participating girls. So, as we can see, Schlafly's concern for the economic advancement of Americans is not only insincere, but also based on her personal opinion of who should be having sex, when, and with whom, rather than on research generated from evaluation of sex education programs....

Many people use the term "sex education." SIECUS first published an explanation of the preferred usage, "sexuality education," in 1991. Sexuality encompasses not only anatomy, physiology, and biochemistry (what people have come to think of as "sex"), but also gender roles, personality, thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. The term "sexuality" refers to who people are as men and women, and not to body parts, reproduction, or physical acts. To reinforce the desired comprehensive nature of this education, SIECUS prefers the usage of the phrase "sexuality education."

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## VALUE-BASED SEXUALITY EDUCATION CONFRONTING EXTREMISTS TO GET THE MESSAGE ACROSS

by Sol Gordon, Ph.D.

Excerpted from the *SIECUS Report*  
1992

...Sexuality educators have not made it clear that we also favor moral and ethically based sexuality education. When the opposition asks, "Whose morals and whose ethics?" The response must be a resounding "Ours." When school administrators receive such protests from parents as, "We don't want you to impose your values on our children," the average administration response has been, "Don't worry, Mrs. Jones, we have no values." In one sense, sexuality educators are to blame for this timid response. The idea that knowledge is not harmful is so obvious to us that we have not bothered to map out an effective strategy to combat the outrageous notion that if you tell kids about sex, they'll do it. Yet all the research reveals that the young people who are knowledgeable are the ones most likely to delay their first sexual experience. Furthermore, if they do have sexual intercourse, they generally are the ones who use contraceptives.

The crucial point that has not been conveyed is that sexuality educators firmly believe in values and morals. We endorse and represent the highest aspirations of the democratic society in which we live. We are against exploitation and rape. We are opposed to sexism and racism. We favor equal opportunities for men and women — equal opportunities for career choice, leisure, and decision-making, as well as equal pay for equal work.

There is a world of difference between a moral viewpoint and a moralistic one: a moralistic position favors a particular religious or personal viewpoint that cannot be taught in a public school because of the constitutional separation of church and state. There is a critical difference between encouraging teenagers not to impregnate or to become pregnant (sound moral advice) and proselytizing that if you have sexual intercourse before marriage, you'll go to hell (a moralistic view which has no place in

a public school but could legitimately be taught in a church or a parochial school).

In order for professionals in various related fields to come together in support of comprehensive values-based sexuality education, the confusion that exists in education circles about values, ethics/morals, and cultural diversity must first be cleared away. Educators need to commit to formulating ethical and moral goals and then working to achieve them. We must confront the opposition by maintaining and supporting a moral commitment to democratic ideals. Nor is it a matter of how a particular community "feels" about an issue. In the United States there are still communities that can be described as racist or homophobic. That does not mean a public school officer can offer a curriculum with a racist or homophobic bias. On the contrary, it is the responsibility of the public school to foster democratic values inherent in the Constitution...

There is nothing wrong with presenting the view that abstinence is the best way of dealing with sexually related problems, for example. But then one must add that others favor the view that if you decide to have sexual intercourse you should use contraception; there must be a discussion of safer sex, as well, and the fact that, though condoms are not 100% safe, not using them poses a 100% risk.

Where do we go from here? Certainly we have made progress in the area of attitudes. The overall views of family life educators are mainstream, and the influence of the women's movement on the mainstream has been tremendous. However, we have a long way to go, and none of us can be satisfied with the progress that has been made to date. Sexuality educators need to examine why our messages are not getting through, especially to the more vulnerable urban segments of our population: young people, for example, who do not use contraception,

among them males who rarely use condoms....

There is an old Zen expression, *When the mind is ready, the teacher appears*. Of course, there are many teachers and competing messages, ranging from rock music's "Do It, Do It, Do It Now!" to "Just Say No." Our sound bytes have to be: "If you are going to have sex,

plan for it" and "No sex without contraception and a condom." In addition, we must challenge all the myths about condom use. It's time to consider and reconsider why sexuality education has had little or no impact on the people who need it the most.

Time is not on our side.

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## THE FUTURE OF SEXUALITY EDUCATION: SEX TO SEXUALITY TO DIVERSITY EDUCATION

by Konstance McCaffree, Ph.D.\*

1994

For a moment let me fantasize a bit. An eager, relaxed, trained teacher walks into a classroom greeted by teenagers who themselves are excitedly awaiting another open discussion on a sexuality issue. The students are accustomed to sexuality discussions in all academic arenas, each year of their schooling. This particular teacher is openly gay, and his sexual orientation is respected. The class happens to be a discussion of the sexuality mores of a literary work. Similar education at home, in the community, and within their chosen religious affiliation is the norm. Sexuality education since the preschool years has provided them with knowledge appropriate and necessary for their age and experience; parents support the value of school where beliefs, experience and background is expected to be diverse and a positive form of learning.

I do believe this fantasy will come true.

It may just take awhile.

In its recent history, sexuality education has been influenced by the social norms of society. More than 40 years ago, "sex education," as it was called, was introduced into school settings as a way to reach all children, since schools were considered a place where social ills could be addressed. The family, community, and religious insti-

tutions wanted the schools to be involved. Those who were raised in the 50s will tell us that sex information may not have been presented in a positive light ("Don't you dare come home pregnant!"), but the message was reinforced outside the home, within the religious community, and within society.

Our future is calling upon these sources once again to help bring young people through the conflicting messages, motives, and mores to a positive, healthy sexuality. The future will need to rely not only on schools as a single source but the continued education of young people through their families, after-school groups, and religious communities. Parent education on healthy sexual development for children will be the norm. Through our younger generation, which already has a more accepting and positive attitude about the gift of sexuality, we will come closer to a healthy vision of sexuality.

A 17-year-old young woman in one of my high school classes said just the other day, "What's so wrong about being a sexual person and enjoying sexual behavior with someone you enjoy and care about? It doesn't have to be intercourse, and it doesn't have to be dangerous. I don't understand why it's so bad in adult eyes."

She is our future.

### 30 Years of SIECUS

SIECUS is proud to honor its Board Presidents and Chairpersons for their commitment, dedication, and vision:

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# The National Coalition to Support Sexuality Education

***The National Coalition to Support Sexuality Education (NCSSE) is committed to the mission of assuring that comprehensive sexuality education is provided for all children and youth in the United States by the year 2000.***

NCSSE consists of 80 national non-profit organizations, many of which are noted role models and initiators in promoting health, education, and social concerns for our nation's youth. These organizations represent a broad constituency of social workers, religious officials and lay people, educators, advocates, physicians, and other health care professionals, and child development specialists, whose combined work reaches more than 30 million young people.

**NCSSE Goals are to:**

- Advocate for sexuality education at the national and state level;
- Assist national organizations concerned with youth to establish policies and programs on sexuality education by the year 2000;
- Develop strategies for facilitating national and local implementation of sexuality education initiatives and efforts;
- Develop pro-active strategies to address the activities of those who oppose providing children with comprehensive sexuality education;
- Provide an opportunity for networking, resource sharing, and collaborating on a national level;
- Develop joint goals and objectives into the 21st century;
- Hold semi-annual meetings to discuss progress made toward achieving its mission.

Sexuality education is a lifelong process of acquiring information and forming attitudes, beliefs, and values about identity, relationships, and intimacy. It encompasses sexual development, reproductive health, interpersonal relationships, affection, intimacy, body image, and gender roles. Sexuality education seeks to assist children in understanding a positive view of sexuality, provide them with information and skills about taking care of their sexual health, and help them acquire skills to make decisions now and in the future.

Sexuality education programs should emphasize that sexuality is a natural and healthy part of life. School-based education programs are most successful in a balanced curriculum that provides factual information for adopting health-promoting sexual behaviors. In order for such sexuality education programs for adolescents to be inclusive, they need to address both sexual abstinence and safer sexual behaviors. Ideally, programs would be offered from kindergarten through 12th grade in the context of an overall comprehensive health education program.

Comprehensive sexuality education underscores and supplements the role of parents in the sexuality education of their children and reinforces the notion that responsibility and obligation for sexuality education must be shared on a community-wide basis.

*For more information about NCSSE, contact:  
SIECUS, Public Policy Department, 130 West 42nd Street, Suite 2500, New York, NY 10036  
212/819-9770, fax 212/819-9776.*

## Membership List

as of April 1994

- AIDS Action Council  
American Association for Marriage  
and Family Therapy  
American Association on Mental Retardation  
American Association of School Administrators  
American Association of Sex Educators,  
Counselors and Therapists  
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists  
American Counseling Association  
American Home Economics Association  
American Library Association  
American Medical Association  
American Nurses Association  
The American Orthopsychiatric Association, Inc.  
American Psychological Association  
American Public Health Association  
American School Health Association  
American Social Health Association  
Association for the Advancement of  
Health Education  
Association of Reproductive Health Professionals  
Association for Sexuality Education and Training  
Association of State and Territorial Directors of  
Public Health Education  
Association for Voluntary Surgical Contraception  
ASTRAEA National Lesbian Action Foundation  
Black Educating Blacks about Sexual Health Issues  
B'Nai B'Rith Women  
Catholics for a Free Choice  
Center for Policy Alternatives  
Center for Population Options  
Child Welfare League of America  
Children's Defense Fund  
Coalition on Sexuality and Disability, Inc.  
Commission on Family Ministries & Human  
Sexuality, National Council of Churches  
ETR Associates  
Girls, Incorporated  
Hetrick-Martin Institute for  
Gay and Lesbian Youth  
Human Rights Campaign Fund  
The Institute for Advanced Study of Human  
Sexuality Alumni Association  
The Latina Roundtable on Health  
& Reproductive Rights  
Midwest School Social Work Council  
National Abortion Federation  
National Abortion & Reproductive Rights  
Action League  
National Asian Women's Health Organization  
National Association of Counties  
National Association of County Health Officials  
National Association for Equal Opportunity in  
Higher Education  
National Association of School Psychologists  
National Coalition of Advocates for Students  
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National Council of State Consultants for  
School Social Work Services  
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Information Network  
National Family Planning and Reproductive  
Health Association  
National Gay and Lesbian Task Force  
National Information Center for Children  
& Youth with Disabilities  
National League for Nursing  
National Lesbian and Gay Health Foundation  
National Medical Association  
National Mental Health Association  
National Minority AIDS Council  
National Native American AIDS Prevention Center  
National Network of Runaway and Youth Services  
National Organization on Adolescent Pregnancy,  
Parenting and Prevention  
National Resource Center for Youth Services  
National School Boards Association  
National Urban League  
National Women's Law Center  
Planned Parenthood Federation of America  
Population Communications International  
Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice  
Sex Information and Education Council of the U.S.  
Society for Adolescent Medicine  
Society for Behavioral Pediatrics  
Society for Public Health Education  
Society for the Scientific Study of Sex  
The Alan Guttmacher Institute  
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United Church Board for Homeland Ministries  
United States Conference of Local Health Officers  
United States Conference of Mayors  
University of Pennsylvania, Graduate  
School of Education  
YWCA of the U.S.A.  
Zero Population Growth, Inc.

The breadth of the National Coalition to Support Sexuality Education reflects the widespread public support for the provision of sexuality education to the nation's youth. More than 8 out of every 10 parents support teaching sexuality education in high school. Forty-seven states have laws or policies that require or recommend teaching sexuality education in the schools. If your national organization is interested in joining this important coalition, please contact SIECUS at 212/819-9770.



**SEXUALITY RESEARCH**

**30 years**

**PAST • PRESENT • FUTURE**

## —THE MASTERS-JOHNSON RESEARCH — AN EVALUATION

by Harold I. Lief, M.D.\*

Excerpted from the *SIECUS Newsletter*  
1968

The publication of *Human Sexual Response* (Boston, Little Brown, 1965) whose authors are William H. Masters, M.D., and Virginia E. Johnson, of the Reproductive Biology Research Foundation in St. Louis, marks a turning point in sex research and education. Based on the results of eleven years of painstaking and thorough investigation of the sexual response cycle in 694 volunteer men and women, ranging in age from 18 to 89, this volume provides for the first time sufficiently documented information to put the anatomy and physiology of human sexuality on a firm foundation. Their data will aid greatly those engaged in teaching the fundamentals of human sexuality to professionals, and will eventually help all who are in the field of sexual education. Myths and half-truths can be eliminated only by facts; happily, Masters and Johnson have supplied us with a number of extremely important findings, based on direct observations of sexual responses.

There are some who may say that methods of direct observation are morally repugnant because they involve an invasion of privacy and a mechanization of sexual responsiveness. I would remind them that the subjects in these were all volunteers who knew what the research was all about and felt that they were contributing by vol-

unteering. Also it is difficult for us to realize that arrangements to have sex in private represent a cultural value, and that not all cultures have insisted upon nor even preferred it. At any rate, even if the research methods should offend some value systems, the observations recorded by Masters and Johnson have such tremendous potential for the improved medical treatment of sexual inadequacy, for sex education that would lead to mature personalities, and for future research, that this should outweigh any possible affront to some sensibilities.

As for the criticism of mechanization or of dehumanization of human sexuality, it is possible to marvel that one can compare that narrowing of the focus upon the orgasm for the purposes of scientific investigation, with the daily sexual bombardment and titillation by advertising, television and other mass media whereby every conceivable product is sexualized, or advertised with the aid of sex. If sex has become a commodity dispassionately bought and sold instead of a basic aspect of human feeling and interaction, the blame must be fixed on our culture and its institutions rather than on sober, scientific investigators of a vital but hitherto neglected area of human research. Before man can determine what is right, he must find out what is!

## —THE NOW OF THE KINSEY FINDINGS

by Wardell B. Pomeroy, Ph.D.\*

Reprinted from the *SIECUS Report*  
1972

There is no question but that sexual mores of 1972 are considerably different from what they were in 1948 and 1953 (the respective publication dates of *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* and *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female*). Hence it is appropriate to examine the significance that these two volumes still have for our understanding of the current sexual scene.

If one views, in context, our present attitudes and behavior regarding sex, one recognizes a marked increase in open discussion of all forms of sexual behavior, an increased acceptance about the sexual behavior of others, and a gradual increase in the incidences of masturbation and of premarital, post-marital and extramarital intercourse. We do not yet know whether this increase also applies to homosexuality. Regardless, the rate at which all of these increases have occurred since the 1920s seems to have been constant, and hence I would contend that we are experiencing a sexual evolution, not a revolution.

Thus the general base lines for sexual behavior as set forth in the two Kinsey volumes were essentially correct then and, with the changes indicated above, are correct now. For the most part, the reliability and validity tests of the Kinsey research were within acceptable limits, with the general observation holding that the greater the tabooess of the behavior, the greater the cover-up of the behavior.

Because we knew so little about people's sexual lives other than our own (except for a few published clinical cases), the knowledge gained from the Kinsey research of the enormous range of individual variation in the population at large came as a surprise and awakened many people to the fact that others could have sexual lives vastly different from their own and still be within "normal" limits. Obviously the same range of variation must exist today as 25 years ago.

The scale developed by Kinsey for measuring homosexual and heterosexual behavior (the 0-6 scale) was of prime value in breaking away from the confines of classifying homosexual and heterosexual behavior as two separate, compartmentalized types. This scale, by single number, can tell the whole story of the relation of one's homosexual to one's heterosexual behavior and/or psychic response. Therefore, although the scale has not caught on to the degree that it might have, I believe it should become more and more useful with time.

Another concept developed by the Kinsey research which has changed our thinking has been that of total sexual outlet. Some have objected that to add orgasms derived from masturbation to those derived from intercourse, for example, is like adding apples and oranges. However, to take into consideration only a particular form of outlet and to try to deduce from that the extent and na-

ture of an individual's sexual interest or drive can give an entirely false picture. Many people do exactly that, however, because we are so addicted to using orgasm from coitus as the sole measurement of sex drive.

The Kinsey data also identified certain external factors as being related to sexual behavior. For example, the research showed an inverse correlation between level of religious devoutness (as measured by church attendance) and sexual activity. Another important and today especially relevant contribution of the two Kinsey volumes was the information concerning the differences of sexual behavior and attitudes for different social and educational levels. These proved to be somewhat more striking for males but were nevertheless also true for females, and appeared to hold not only for the U.S. from its earliest beginnings, but to have their counterparts in Europe.... Because of today's greater communication about sex and the considerable increase in college attendance, I believe that these social class differences are becoming less marked but nevertheless remain real and important. Trying to base social policy on upper class mores without taking into account lower class behavior and attitudes can only throttle communication and thwart advances in alleviating sexual problems.

In our youth-oriented culture little attention or concern has been given to sex and aging. We noted that in the male there is an early upsurge of sexual activity, but that it begins to decline from the late teens onward. While this fact may seem obvious, it was known only superficially when our research began. In studying the female histories, we were surprised to find that the curve was different, reaching a peak in the twenties, then arriving at a plateau and beginning to taper off only in the mid-fifties,

more considerably after and not related to menopause. In both sexes, however, the longevity of responsiveness was astonishing: sexual activity was recorded up to age eighty and above, a finding amply confirmed by several subsequent studies, particularly those of Masters and Johnson.

Perhaps in the end the Institute for Sex Research itself will stand as a greater contribution than anything Kinsey published. It is the only one of its kind in the world, with resources that make it a repository without equal. More and more scholars are learning of this tremendous treasure of books, pictures, films, diaries, calendars, magazines, ephemera of every description, and superb art objects, and are using these facilities for research purposes.

When one looks at the history of sex research one is struck with the paucity of studies that are statistically adequate, replicable, theoretically sound and pragmatically important. There are considerably fewer than 100 such studies. I see the Kinsey reports as among these few, not only for having given us new facts and concepts of what people do sexually, but also because they were the first to succeed in creating the atmosphere of openness and objectivity about observing and talking about human sexuality that was so vital as groundwork for future research.

It has been said that if Freud were alive today he would be anti-Freudian; in other words, he would not have remained fixated at his own early Freudian position. I believe if Kinsey were alive today he would, quite incidentally, be pleased at the changes in openness and attitudes about sex, but primarily he would assuredly take the position of how much more there is to learn about human sexuality, "and so let's get on with the task."

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## **CORRELATES OF SEX EDUCATION: PROMISCUITY AND PREGNANCY OR CONTRACEPTIVE USE**

**by Elizabeth Rice Allgeier, Ph.D.**

Excerpted from the *SIECUS Report*  
1982

Riding on the crest of her participation in the victorious fight to defeat the Equal Rights Amendment, Phyllis Schlafly, president of the Eagle Forum, has decided to devote her energies to ridding the public schools of sex education. Claiming that "sex education is a principal cause of teenage pregnancy," she has begun appearing on talk show programs to promote her cause. Schlafly and her colleagues (who believe that sex education encourages adolescents to engage in sexual intercourse, thereby increasing the adolescent pregnancy rate) may be receiving aid from an unexpected ally: the economy. As school districts, municipalities, and counties look for "unnecessary programs" to cut, sex education and contraceptive education programs and clinics may begin to receive even less support than they currently receive. The county in which I reside has just closed its health clinic which has been providing low-cost examinations and contraceptives. When concerned community members met to discuss the feasibility of opening a branch of Planned Parenthood in order to reinstate the lost services, half a

dozen people disrupted the meeting, presumably operating on the belief that the provision of contraceptive education and devices encourages promiscuity.

On the other hand, there are those who believe that sexual and contraceptive education are largely irrelevant in determining the timing of first intercourse, but the provision of such information may help adolescents to protect themselves from unintended pregnancy. Thus we have two opposing claims and, given the power attributed to sex education and contraceptive education by the two groups, it is appropriate to examine the evidence.

Prior to this year, there were indications from a number of studies that the availability of contraceptives was unrelated to sexual decision-making, with many adolescents first seeking contraceptives after becoming sexually active and/or fearing that they had become pregnant (Bauman, 1970; Sorensen, 1973; Zelnik & Kantner, 1974, 1977; Settlage, Baroff & Cooper, 1973). The effects of sexual and contraceptive education, per se, however, have been elusive. Occasionally statistics have been pre-

sented suggesting an association between contraceptive education and reductions in adolescent pregnancy. For instance, the caption of a photo in Hyde's human sexuality text (1982) indicates that the teenage pregnancy rate in Jamaica dropped by 80% two years after initiation of a sex education program, but no references or details regarding how the study was conducted were provided. Unfortunately, several studies have also found that contraceptive knowledge does not always guarantee effective contraceptive use (Miller, 1975; Wagner, Fujita & Pion, 1978). These studies, like many others in the area, were based on small, not necessarily representative samples of young people.

This year, however, the belief that sex education does not increase the likelihood of sexual activity but may decrease the adolescent pregnancy rate among those who are sexually active has received support from data derived in a study by Melvin Zelnik and Young J. Kim published in the May/June issue of *Family Planning Perspectives* (1982). Zelnik and Kim reported the results of two surveys of samples of American women aged 15-19. The first was conducted in 1976 with a nationally representative sample. The second (1979) involved women living in metropolitan areas in the same states as those sampled in 1976. The 1979 study also included young men aged 17 to 21. In comparing the two samples of young women, the authors included only those young women in the 1976 sample living in the metropolitan areas from which they obtained the 1979 sample. In both the 1976 and the 1979 samples, about 75% of the respondents indicated that they had taken a course related to sex education. Of those who had taken such a course, 75% of the 1976 sample and 84% of the 1979 sample said they had been given information about different types of contraceptives. The authors examined the association between sex education and sexual intercourse, and the only statistically significant difference obtained by the authors was among 18- and 19-year-old white women in 1979. Specifically, those who did not receive sex education had a higher rate of sexual activity than those who did receive such education.

Zelnik and Kim also examined the relationship between sex education and the incidence of premarital pregnancy. Their conclusion? "There appears, then, to be fairly strong support for the argument that never-married, sexually active young women who have had sex education experience fewer pregnancies than those who have not [had sex education]." In addition, they found that teenage women in 1979 who had received sex education were more likely to have used some method of contraception at first intercourse than those who had not, but in 1976 sex education and contraceptive use at first intercourse were unrelated. In summary, according to the authors:

First, the data seem to provide overwhelming support for the claim that the decision to engage in sexual activity is not influenced by whether or not teenagers have had sex education in school. Second, young women who have had sex education appear less likely than those who have not to become pregnant if they are sexually active. Third, according to the 1979 data, young women who have had a course that included discussion of contraceptive methods are more likely to have used a contraceptive at first intercourse, but are not necessarily more likely to have used a prescribed method (p. 125).

In considering attitudes toward sex education, in Allgeier and Allgeier (in press), we drew an analogy between how our society handles socialization for sexuality and how our society deals with adolescents learning to drive a car. We could take a number of different approaches to handling the desire of young people to drive, including (1) prohibiting them from driving; (2) handing them the car keys with minimal instruction in safe and responsible driving; (3) wringing our hands and deploring the incidence of car accidents among untrained and unlicensed drivers; or (4) providing extensive classroom and practical tutoring on driving, and encouraging enrollment in these courses through giving course credit, reduced insurance premiums, and the like. In general, our society has taken the fourth of these alternatives with respect to driving.....

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**SIECUS has just been awarded a five-year cooperative agreement with the Centers for Disease Control to strengthen comprehensive school health programs and prevent health problems among the nation's youth. SIECUS looks forward to playing a role in this important undertaking.**

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## ATTACHMENT AND SEPARATION: HARMONIZING DIFFERENT VOICES

by Elizabeth Rice Allgeier, Ph.D.

Excerpted from the *SIECUS Report*  
1983

I recently devoted the weekend to reading Carol Gilligan's (1982) *In a Different Voice*....The central focus of her research has been on the bases of moral judgments made by women and men in various contexts. She discusses Freud's hypothesis regarding differences in the moral development of males and females. Males resolve the Oedipal conflict through intense identification with their fathers fueled by castration anxiety, thus acquiring a strong superego. Freud, however, believed that females' moral development suffered from the distinct disadvantage of the absence of castration anxiety resulting in what he believed to be their relatively weak superegos. Parenthetically, I might add that although it is popular to ridicule this set of Freudian constructs, and although they have failed to receive support from the Goldmans' (1982) important research, I believe that Freud should be credited for attempting to consider both genders in his model of personality development rather than to study male psychology and assume that it can be generalized to females as has been so common since Freud's time. Freud did, however, potentially commit another error, also common among researchers since his time, in using male psychology as the norm from which to judge female psychology. The pattern is continued by Kohlberg (1969, 1976), as gently outlined by Gilligan, his student.

In Kohlberg's structure, there are three levels of morality. Preconventional morality is egocentric and based on individual needs. Conventional morality bases judgments on shared norms and values that sustain relationships, groups, communities, and societies. Finally, postconventional judgment "transcends" the concern with social norms and values and bases morality on universal principles. Consistent with Freud's perspective, in response to Kohlberg's moral dilemmas, a larger proportion of males than females were able to reach the "highest" levels of morality. In contrast females tended to get hung up at the conventional level. Their:

construction of the moral problem as a problem of care and responsibility in relationships rather than as one of rights and rules ties the development of their moral thinking to changes in their understanding of responsibilities and relation-

ships, just as the conception of morality as justice ties development to the logic of equality and reciprocity (Gilligan, 1982, p. 73).

Rather than trying to account for the relative "failure" of women to reach the "highest" levels of morality, Gilligan suggests that it may be inappropriate to use a construct of moral judgment based on male psychology, to [then] test women on this model, and infer that they are developmentally inferior with respect to the bases on which they reach decisions in the moral domain. At this point, her argument is similar to that made by Hyde (1980) who describes the series of studies that led to the interpretation that, compared to men, women lack self-confidence. For example, when asked to estimate the number of correct answers they have on an exam they have just taken, men give higher estimates than do women. The interpretation of inferior female self-confidence, however, was challenged by subsequent research that examined the correspondence between estimated and actual scores. Females' estimates were more accurate than were those of males, which could lead to an interpretation that males exaggerate the quality of their own performance, although I think such an interpretation would be premature.....

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## SEXUALITY EDUCATION: IT CAN REDUCE UNPROTECTED INTERCOURSE

by Douglas Kirby, Ph.D.

Excerpted from the *SIECUS Report*  
1992

...[Recent] studies...are most encouraging. Evaluations of [sexuality education] programs, [which are] based upon social learning theory or its variations, demonstrated... lower levels of unprotected intercourse,...and...national

statistics on adolescent sexual behavior are changing in the desired direction. This is a very different picture from that...[of a] decade ago. In combination, all of the research provides reasonably strong evidence that programs



can have positive effects.

As impressive as some of these results are, we should not allow ourselves to become complacent; none of these programs reduced unprotected intercourse to an acceptable level. Thus, we should continue to search for more effective educational approaches to reducing unprotected intercourse. We should also recognize what Joy Dryfoos and others have pointed out:

No "magic bullet" has been developed that will help young people adopt effective fertility control....Young people must have access to an array of developmentally appropriate interventions, beginning in the earliest years and continuing through middle school and high school. No one-shot or one-component approach can have as strong an effect as stated, multi-component efforts.<sup>1</sup>

....The success of [sexuality education] programs, as wonderful as they are, also pose a dilemma for sexuality educators. Traditionally, sexuality educators have been concerned with far more than reducing unprotected intercourse; rather they have been concerned with sexuality broadly defined (e.g., sexual development, reproductive health, interpersonal relationships, affection and intimacy, body image and gender roles). The *Guidelines for Comprehensive Sexuality Education* well illustrate this breadth. And yet, the fourth generation [sexuality education] programs may have been effective, in part, because they had a more clear focus: that of delaying intercourse or increasing contraceptive use. Given limited time in the class-

room, to the extent that the goals of sexuality education are broadened, sexuality education programs may become less focused and may less effectively reduce unprotected intercourse. One possible solution to this dilemma is to prioritize all the important goals of sexuality education. As programs effectively achieve the most important goals, then they can be expanded such that they may achieve other goals. Another approach is to embed effective components in larger more comprehensive programs. Research needs to be conducted to determine whether this enhances or diminishes their effectiveness.

Finally, the demonstrated effectiveness of those programs means that we should now devote more effort to broadscale replication of these programs. The percentage of adolescents who receive effective programs is unknown, but small; currently, fewer than 10% of children receive comprehensive sexuality education.<sup>2</sup> Effective curricula must be adopted by schools; teachers must be trained; and sufficient fidelity must be maintained to assure effectiveness. Thus, an enormous effort is needed nationally to have effective programs implemented....

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## SEXUAL ABUSE, WOMEN AND RISK FOR HIV INFECTION

by Denise Paone, Ed.D. and Wendy Chavkin, M.D., M.P.H.

Adapted from the *SIECUS Report*  
1993

....Researchers have identified two primary risk factors for HIV transmission among women: unsafe injection drug use and unprotected heterosexual contact. Nationally, the CDC reports that unsafe injection drug use accounts for 50% of all AIDS cases among women, and heterosexual contact accounts for 36% of these cases.<sup>1</sup> In New York City, injecting drug use is identified as the major risk factor in 60% of all female AIDS cases, while sexual transmission through intercourse with men at risk accounts for 25% of such cases.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, it is critical that women's drug use and associated behaviors be addressed in order to curb the growth in HIV transmission among women.

This decade has witnessed substantial increases in women's drug use, marked by the use of crack as reflected in the mortality and morbidity rates.<sup>3</sup> New York State reported that women made up a larger percentage of this crack-addicted population than any other addicted population.<sup>4</sup> In New York City, maternal drug use (defined as the number of live births per thousand in which illicit drugs were mentioned on the birth certificate) increased from 7.4 per thousand live births in 1980 to 31.1 per thousand in 1989.<sup>5</sup> The associated high risk behaviors of drug use place women at higher risk for HIV infection. These behaviors include unsafe injection drug use

(sharing works, and not using bleach to clean works). High risk behaviors in drug-using women also include sex-for-drug exchanges and unprotected sexual intercourse. Sexual abuse rates among chemically dependent teenage and adult women are estimated to range from 28% to 56%.<sup>6</sup> Women sexual abuse survivors are found to be much more likely to engage in prostitution and sex-for-drug transactions.<sup>7</sup>

#### Data on Sexual Abuse Prevalence

Recent epidemiological surveys estimate that 20% to 25% of women in the general population have a history of sexual abuse.<sup>8</sup> A national study conducted in 1992 of 4,009 randomly selected women found that 61% of all reported rapes occurred before the victim reached age 18.<sup>9</sup> According to the survey, 29% of all rapes occurred when the victims were younger than 11 years old. The survey found that 683,000, or 0.7%, of adult American women were raped during the twelve-month period prior to interview. Significantly higher rates of rape are reported among chemically dependent women.<sup>10</sup>

Most women do not readily disclose histories of sexual trauma unless specifically solicited and unless a level of trust has been established with the clinician or researcher.

The stigma associated with sexual abuse often contributes to underreporting of sexual victimization. One study emphasizes that the tendency to conceal sexual victimization is particularly strong for those abused in childhood, especially if they have previously confided in a trusted person and were not believed...<sup>11</sup>

### Sexual Abuse as Risk Factor for HIV Infection

Preliminary epidemiological investigations identify sexual abuse as a risk factor for HIV infection. A history of sexual abuse in women has also been linked with the high-risk drug associated behaviors that place her at increased risk for becoming HIV-infected. This association between sexual abuse and subsequent high-risk drug taking and sexual behavior is demonstrated in our study of crack/cocaine dependent women reported in this article. Another recent study reports that women with sexual abuse histories are more likely to engage in sex work, to change sexual partners more often, and to have sexual intercourse with casual acquaintances than women who were never sexually abused. This research also indicates that children who were sexually abused at an early age, with greater frequency, and for longer durations, have higher rates of criminal incarceration, earlier drug use, sexual abuse by different perpetrators, and participation in sex-for-drug exchanges.<sup>12</sup> All of these factors are independently associated with an increased risk for HIV infection....

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## SIECUS: A 30 YEAR RETROSPECTIVE

1964 SIECUS chartered in Delaware

1965 Press conference introduces SIECUS

1966 Office of Education funds SIECUS

1967 SIECUS dinner features Margaret Mead discussing, "Is Sex Necessary?"

1969 John Birch Society campaigns against SIECUS

1970 SIECUS organizes first professional members

1971 SIECUS sponsors conference, "Sex, Love, and Intimacy"

1972 First *SIECUS REPORT*

1974 First SIECUS Position Statements published

1978 SIECUS affiliates with New York University

1979 SIECUS library opens to the public

1981 Parent Learning Project launched

1982 SIECUS publishes *Winning the Battle*

1985 Latino Family Life Project launched

1987 SIECUS computerizes library

1989 SIECUS convenes "Sex Education 2000," a national colloquium

1990 National Coalition to Support Sexuality Education formed

1991 SIECUS publishes *Guidelines for Comprehensive Sexuality Education*

1992 Public Policy Office begun

1993 SIECUS affiliates with University of Pennsylvania, Graduate School of Education

1994 International Initiative launched



**SEXUALITY AND RELIGIOUS PERSPECTIVES**

**30 years**

**PAST • PRESENT • FUTURE**

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## THE CHURCHES AND SEXUALITY

William H. Genné\*

Excerpted from the *SIECUS Newsletter*  
1968

Members of the various communities of faith are engaging in a vigorous dialogue among themselves and with the secularists in our culture regarding the meaning of human sexuality and fulfillment.

The positions held by individuals in this dialogue represent a wide spectrum, from those who are uncomfortable and somewhat negative concerning sex to those who rejoice in their sexuality as a God-given blessing. There are those who urge the clarification and enforcement of codes regarding behavior and those who insist that the governing concern in any relationship, regardless of form or marital status, is the motivation.

Some would insist that all sexual intercourse outside of marriage is contrary to the best use of sex as they understand it. Others are equally sure that the best use of sex is to fulfill persons and enrich relationships regardless of marital status. One English theologian, commenting on non-marital intercourse that has helped some men gain confidence in their manhood, has commented, "Wherever healing takes place, Christ is present, no matter what the church says about fornication."

The term "New Morality" is the source of much confusion in discussions of contemporary sex ethics. Secular hedonists have tried to appropriate the term and use it for their own purposes. These secular definitions allow it to mean anything from "permissiveness with affection" to "sex is fun, fun, fun." Some of these interpretations have led to the comment that the New Morality is neither new nor moral.

"The New Morality" as originally proposed by Bishop J. A.T. Robinson is a very rigorous, though not rigid, theological position. The term was first used as a chapter title in the Bishop's little book *Honest to God* (Westminster Press, 1963). Because it referred to the whole field of morality, in its implications for sexual conduct, it provoked a world-wide discussion within and without the churches. The Bishop later developed his position in another series of lectures published under the title *Christian Morals Today* (Westminster Press, 1964).

The theological new moralist, in contrast to the secularist, believes that the ultimate sanction for a system of values or morality rests above any person or groups of persons. Even the teachings of the churches as well as the acts of men and nations stand under the judgment of the Creator who is also Lord of History.

The judgment is God's evaluation of how well any act of a church, a nation, or a person fulfills God's purpose for the event. Both the Jew and the Christian are to "love God with all their hearts, mind, soul, and strength, and their neighbor as themselves." (Deut. 6:5, Lev. 19:18, Matt 22:36-39). When any church regulation, civil law, or personal act contravenes that criterion, it becomes an immoral act.

The "New Morality" as developed by Bishop Robinson and others challenges the attitude that tries to prejudge every act by whether or not it fits into certain prescribed codes without any examination of the motive and reason for the act. It was this challenge to the traditional legalistic moral codes in the name of a higher morality that Bishop Robinson called the "New Morality."

One illustration from a realm of morality other than the sexual may help to illustrate this position. Probably secularists and theists alike would agree that "Honesty is the best policy." Yet there were many Christians who lied a thousand lies with clear consciences in order to protect some Jews from the Nazis. Here was a basic moral value, namely Honesty, that was set aside when the supreme moral value, namely Love, required it.

The New Morality is no easy-going, pleasure seeking, fun morality. It demands a rigorous self-evaluation of every personal act as in the sight of God. It cannot accept the rightness of every sexual act that two mutually-consenting adults may do without evaluating this in the light of all we know about the ultimate meaning and purpose of sex as created by God. For those to whom the presence of the Living God is a reality, a sexual act is never a purely private act.

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## SEX AND THE RELIGIOUS-MORAL DILEMMA

No byline

Reprinted from the *SIECUS Newsletter*  
1968

Religious and scientific leaders in various parts of the United States might wish to consider engaging themselves in their own communities, in the kind of thought-provoking and stimulating confrontation about sexual morality described in the following paragraphs:

On April 30th and May 1st, SIECUS has the great privilege of co-sponsoring the Annual Meeting of the Academy of Religion and Mental Health, at the Hotel Roosevelt in New York City. A joint Planning Committee consisted

of Reverend George A. Anderson, Honorary President, and Charles C. Bergman, Executive Vice President, for the Academy and for SIECUS, Reverend William Genné, Father George Hagmaier and Rabbi Jeshua Schnitzer, all Board members, and SIECUS' Executive Director. The Conference theme was: "Sex and the Religious-Moral Dilemma." Attendance during the two days, estimated at over 900, included many members of various religious orders and professional workers from fields of psychiatry,

social work, psychology, and education.

The basic theme set the stage for eight two-hour sessions, each dealing with sex-related dilemmas as regards to marriage, the single person, cross-cultural sexual attitudes, theology, situational ethics, the deviate, the business world, and youth. The three faiths were each represented in every session, with additional discussants from psychiatry, sociology, or psychology where appropriate. This made for an interesting interplay of points of view, sometimes as between faiths, at other times as between disciplines. Dr. Mortimer Ostow, Sandrow Visiting Professor of Psychiatry at Jewish Theological Seminary in New York, put this interplay in focus:

Society ordinarily expects each individual to conform to social expectations and behavior. If he cannot do so, the psychoanalyst interprets this inability as a sign of mental illness, though it is not specific for any particular mental illness. He is then likely to recommend treatment. This is a clinical judgment, made only for clinical purposes and should not be endowed with ethical or moral significance. At the same time society will judge the patient to be unethical, or immoral, or possibly even criminal. These two separate judgments are not at all inconsistent. They are made in two different frames of reference.

This point was illustrated in a quite different session when Reverend Charles Curran, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Moral Theology at Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., remarked on the impossibility of exercising moral judgement on the homosexual "when the condition is irreversible. Then, a homosexual attachment may be the only way such a person can find a warm meaningful, human relationship. This is not ideal. But it is a case where we may have to compromise with the ideal." In still a third context, the discussion on the *Situational Ethics Dilemma*, Father Thomas Wassmer, a Roman Catholic serving as Scholar in Residence at Episcopal Theological School in Cambridge, Mass., said the same thing in different words: "All morality, properly understood, is situational, is aware of the increasing importance placed upon circumstances, motives, historical evolution,

the subjectivity of the moral agent." Then Father Wassmer went on with the following telling quote from Brian Wicker: "Real moral dilemmas are not cases to be analyzed but agonies to be lived through. The living of these agonies and the survival of them, is the moral history of mankind. And since...moral dilemmas have a sociological aspect, because they concern the gap between law and love as it is incarnated at a particular moment and at a particular place, morality has to do with the history of human social structures..."

There was a sense of immediacy to all the discussions, from the panelists who commented on the almost desperate search of youth for values that are more real and more relevant to them than those of their elders, to Dr. Margaret Mead, anthropologist, who saw the Columbia University demonstrations as marking the end of the long tradition by which students and their universities constitute a replication of the parent-child relationship. Her feeling was that in the future both faculties and students of universities will have to recognize and carry out new kinds of responsibilities and commitments for themselves and on behalf of each other...

A former SIECUS Board member Dr. George Packer Berry observed..."[At this meeting,] we saw the man of religion and secular man coming to grips in consideration of a deeper kind of morality, the morality of relevance to the new day, the morality by which the interplay of intellect trained in different disciplines serves to focus a light so harsh that previously accepted truth is revealed as half-truth."

If the meetings served to isolate a number of questions for further and deeper consideration, and thus to send away most people quite uncomfortable with the feeling of lack of resolution, then this was success. The pat answer, the easy formula, the childish identification of villains and heroes by the color of their garb — these are not the ways we must travel, as regards sex and morality or any other question today. Each one of us must be our own sounding board, our own scapegoat, our own whipping boy in order to free the scientist and the religionist to move us forward toward rational understanding of complicated man and his equally complicated sexual ways.

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## AN ECUMENICAL APPROACH TO SEXUALITY

by Rita Cotterly, SSMN, ME.d., MRE

Excerpted from the *SIECUS Report*  
1987

Is there a family in the United States that is not personally affected by one or more of the following issues: divorce, annulment, contraception, unwanted/unplanned pregnancy, abortion, adoption, date rape, incest, sexually transmitted diseases, domestic violence, cohabitation, homosexuality, homophobia, sexism, remarriage, stepchildren, fear of intimacy, nagging doubts about one's self-worth, sterile relationships, "performance anxiety," broken hearts and broken dreams, loneliness, alienation? I maintain that we are all involved in these issues because of our mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters, friends and lovers, ourselves.

... The word "ecumenical" pertains to "a theological attitude which is attentive to the experience and critical

reflections of other churches and traditions" (MacBrien, 1990). The churches have made great strides in ecumenism with regards to doctrine; it is now time for them to address sexuality theologies. I challenge the major American denominations, Jewish, Catholic and Protestant (henceforth referred to generically as "church"), to create a new leadership role with their own denominations by collaborating instead of defending. I urge the churches to assume an active role of preparation and enrichment for the 21st century instead of continuing a reactive role of remediation and treatment.

Pastorally stated, this article is about people's lives and what we as church can do to help people reclaim the joy, peace, and energy of their God-given sexuality and to al-

leviate the pain consequent to ignorance, misinformed decisions, and mismanagement of love relationships. But first, some background.

The above sorrows do not exist because we are a hedonistic and irreligious nation. The human condition is too complex for such simple and erroneous scapegoating. Reflection on the societal changes of the past forty years and on the myths of hedonism and irreligiosity will explain some of the turmoil and encourage us to prepare for the future....

### Progress in Ecumenism

The progress of ecumenism needs to be noted. A glimpse back to the 1940s and 1950s reveals a "fortress mentality" among the churches demonstrated by fear of proselytization, scorn of "mixed marriages," and an almost total lack of interfaith cooperation. Even visits to the synagogues and church buildings themselves were closely regulated by the denominations' leadership. The annual National Brotherhood Week initiated public tours of churches and synagogues and, eventually, some interfaith meals and services. In the 1980s, the churches' cooperation increased, ranging from social action concerns — soup kitchens, shelters for the homeless, sanctuary — to interfaith services with ministers exchanging pulpits. For the most part, the "mixed marriage" of yesterday is the interdenominational marriage preparation and wedding celebration of today. Seminaries are sharing professors and facilities across denominational lines. The respect, esteem, and affection that have evolved among church people in these endeavors and in officially sponsored theological dialogues have resulted in substantial agree-

ment on such profound issues as the nature of Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry. As illustrated, the churches have moved from an isolationist stance during the mid-20th century to an active, healthy ecumenism.

I believe that the demands of the American culture, the relational needs of individuals, and the abilities of churches to respond positively to our human longings to integrate our spirituality and sexuality have converged and portend ecumenical possibilities. Churches and synagogues have begun such programs as engaged encounters, marriage enrichment, parenting skills' sessions, day-care nurseries, singles fellowship, retirement clubs, and sex education classes, particularly for young people and their parents. This demonstrates that the churches have responded, but primarily to the needs of the nuclear family. However, "the traditional pattern is neither the reality nor the ideal for many" (Macklin, 1981). Nelson (1983) asserts that books, articles, pronouncements, caucuses, and movements have focused more attention on sexuality issues in American religious life in the past decade than perhaps ever before in history....

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## SEXUALITY AND SPIRITUALITY

by Robert T. Francoeur, Ph.D.

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1992

In recent years, the age-old association of sex with Adam and Eve's original sin in the Garden of Eden has lost its meaning as individuals increasingly accept sexual desire and pleasure as a natural good. Social turmoil, technological changes, increasing recognition of personal needs, and a sexual revolution have wreaked havoc with the meaning and relevance of the traditional Judeo-Christian sexual images, icons, and myths of the purpose of sex, monogamy and male primacy over female.

Because cultures draw their lifeblood from their myths and archetypes, human beings are searching for new myths and archetypes.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, Americans in particular are increasingly fascinated by the more sex-positive images of Eastern sexual philosophies. This article outlines two major Eastern sexual and spiritual traditions, Tantrism and Taoism, within the context of Hinduism and other spiritual traditions. After contrasting these Eastern views with Western values, some practical applications that complement Western sexology are discussed.

### Eastern Sources

Even when the hidden roots of Eastern sexual traditions can be detected, they are found to be far more tangled than the origins of sexual values in Judaism,

Christianity, and Islam. Archaeologists have found 8,000-year-old clay images of feminine power and fertility in the pre-Indus settlements on the northwest edge of India. Similar early expressions of a great Goddess who guarantees fertility have been found, with her subordinate male consort, in regions of ancient Egypt, the Aegean, the Danube, Asia Minor, and Western Asia. Between 1800 and 1500 BC, waves of migrating Indo-Aryan people moved from eastern Europe, over the mountains, and into the Indus valley of Western India. Their worship of a great Goddess intermingled with the fertility religions of pre-Aryan inhabitants they conquered in the Indus River valleys.<sup>2,3,4</sup> Historian Karl Jaspers calls this the pre-Axial period of human consciousness.<sup>5</sup> In this context, Jaspers is using the term Axial to mean turning point.

According to Jaspers and others, this striking transformation in human consciousness occurred in China, India, Persia, the Middle East, and Greece with the advent of Confucius, Lao Tzu, Buddha, Zoroaster, the Jewish prophets, and the pioneering philosophers of Greece. This opened the first Axial period. Everywhere male consciousness and power gained ascendancy over the female principle. In Christianity and Islam, phallic power virtually subdued the power of the female, except for the venera-

tion of Mary, the Virgin Mother of God. After a male God gave man dominion over nature in Eden and ancient Greece gave priority to analysis and objectification, nature became Western man's toy to control and exploit. Although feminine images of sexual power persisted in the East, they were subordinated to the phallogocentric male. But unlike the West, Eastern cultures maintained a respect for nature, emphasizing that health and spirituality are only achieved when humanity respects its place in the cosmos and places itself in harmony with nature....<sup>6</sup>

### ....Blending East and West

To understand the Tantric and Taoist sexual systems and appreciate their rich message, we have to go beyond the surface of sexual acts, rituals, and roles to get in touch with the cosmology, philosophy, and world view that frame these exercises. We also have to deal with Eastern erotics, the way the Taoists and Tantriks interpret sexual feelings, ideas, fantasies, excitements, and aesthetics — what is beautiful or ugly, luscious or nauseating, dull or titillating.<sup>7</sup> Unfortunately, too many manuals, especially those presenting Tantric sex, are exotic recipe books or tourist brochures for a sexual Shangri-La. Fang-fu Ruan rightly notes that many books on Oriental sexology, while useful, "...are limited by either concentrating on a specialized topic or presenting a popular treatment of their subject. Some, by treating sexuality as a domain of pleasure independent of the changing contexts of medicine, religion, family life, reproductive strategies, or social control, effectively reinforce stereotypes of exotic Oriental cultures."<sup>8</sup>

Complicating any effort to evaluate the extent to which Westerners, raised with very different, even opposing world views and erotics, can understand, practice, and incorporate these sexual systems into their daily lives, is the fact that, while some proponents rhapsodize about the potential for ecstatic and cosmic experiences in Tantra and Taoism, very little can be actually known about the subjective experiences of men and women who practice these systems.<sup>9</sup>

These ancient traditions celebrate the naturalness of sexual pleasure and the spiritual potential of sexual relations, a view that may fit well with many people's sensitivities and yearnings. They also accept female sexuality and women's unlimited sexual potential, a view that is congenial with contemporary feminist awareness. Contemporary sexuality can be enriched and broadened by a reawakening of the experience of sexuality as integral to whole-person connectedness. It also benefits from seeing sexual satisfaction as a fluctuating, non-goal-oriented, continuum of responses that includes pleasuring, orgasm, and ecstasy.<sup>10</sup> Can these ancient and yet very modern views be translated into our Western consciousness without being trapped by faddism? Advocates of yoga and acupuncture have succeeded in similar challenges.

In Western religions, spirituality refers to a loving, personal union of a human being with the Creator who has no gender or sex, although we are said to be created in "His image and likeness." In the Bible, sexual pleasure is commonly associated with an original sin — a fall from grace. Sexuality tends to be viewed as antagonistic to spiritual liberation. In the words of Joseph Campbell, in the West, "eternity withdraws, and nature is corrupt, na-

ture has fallen...we live in exile." Neither Hinduism nor Buddhism have a concept of an original sin or primeval fall. Tantric and Taoist sexual union is viewed as a way to spiritual liberation, a consciousness of and identification with the divine and cosmic, a way of becoming enlightened through one's embodiment and interaction with another. Can Western religious thought incorporate these sex-affirming Eastern views without scrapping much of our religious myths and beliefs? Can the spiritual and cosmic sense of sexuality be expressed in a Western world view without sanitizing or weakening sexual passion, or reducing its playful element?

Despite these questions and challenges, we need to remember that nuclear physicist Werner Heisenberg acknowledged that Indian philosophy helped him make sense of some of the seemingly "crazy" principles of Quantum Physics. And Western science and medicine increasingly acknowledges the value of ancient traditions, such as Ayurveda, the Hindu system of medicine, and techniques of acupuncture originating from China.

The life cycles of past civilizations clearly suggest that as they degenerate, their cultures tend to exaggerate the great primordial insights that led to their greatness. Western cultures have overvalued individualism at the expense of the environment, separated human nature from nurturing nature, and turned everything, including the human psyche, into objects to be manipulated, controlled, and exploited. The resultant technological superiority has given humankind dominance in our global village. It has given Western culture the leisure and affluence that has allowed women to regain some of the gender equality they experienced in the pre-Axial era. However, the violent, exploitative extremes of Western intellectual and moral assumptions contain the seeds of self-destruction. History suggests that Western culture may avoid self-destructing and transform itself in a new global consciousness if it can find in other great cultures values that can bring forth a more balanced culture that respects the unity and harmony of all reality. Jaspers and others see in this renaissance the possible advent of a second Axial Period...

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## MY FAMILY VALUES

by Debra W. Haffner

Excerpted from the *SIECUS Report*  
1992

I recently taped a national NBC television talk show on adolescent sexuality. After it was over, one of the other panelists came up to me and said, "I'm praying for you and your family." I said, as I usually do, "Thank you." She then continued, with a face contorted by hatred, "because you are all going to burn in hell." She proceeded to tell me that she prays nightly for the demise of organizations like SIECUS and Planned Parenthood. Trying to maintain a sense of respect, I answered that I hoped she would respect my values as I respected her own. She furiously responded "You have no values!"

I was stunned by her hatred and intolerance. I come from a religious tradition that teaches that every person has dignity and self worth, and that respects and accepts diversity in personal values. I struggle with how to maintain this respect in the face of such intolerance. In this situation, I simply excused myself. Only later did I think of the response, "I think Jesus would be very troubled by your hatred."

It may be naive, but it never ceases to surprise me when those who proclaim themselves as "Christian" and "pro-family" are so willing to express their hatred and intolerance. The far right agenda against sexuality education, reproductive rights, homosexuality, and women's rights, are often couched as "pro-family." Gary Bauer, the Director of the Family Research Council of Focus on the Family, wrote in a recent issue of *The Citizen*, "The fact is, some people out there are exploiting the fact that the words 'family values' by themselves, are just words. We, in the Focus on the Family community, know what we mean by them: the monogamous, permanent, two-parent family as God's choice for the upbringing of children and the building of society; and the values that undergird that institution, such as fidelity, self-giving, long horizons, hard work, and respect for life, especially as life is exemplified in God's most lovable and most vulnerable creatures—children."

We cannot allow the far right to define family values.

We must define and speak for family values. We are pro-family....

At a recent Congressional briefing SIECUS held on the "Guidelines for Comprehensive Sexuality Education," a

member of a Congressional staff asked me about the developmental messages about families that teaches early elementary school children, "A family consists of two or more people who care for each other in many ways" and "There are different kinds of families." I asked what he meant by the question, and he responded by asking, "Isn't it best to teach children that the best family has two parents?"

I responded that the best family is one that cares for and supports each other. We all know of so-called traditional families where there is domestic violence, physical or sexual abuse, and emotional poverty. We also know of one-parent families where there is great love and support and commitment. I pointed out to the staff members attending the briefing that part of our job in sexuality education is to increase young people's sense of self esteem and competency, and that it would be criminal to suggest to a seven-year-old that his or her family wasn't as good as mine....

I have just completed reading Forrester Church's new book, *God and Other Famous Liberals*. He writes:

In a pluralistic society, it is impossible to establish security by imposing standards of uniformity. If our security lies in cultivating strong families, every family is involved, not only those that fit a sentimental stereotype. Our goal should be to cultivate an ethic based on maternal values such as self-giving, generosity, compassion, and tenderness. As we discover the nature of our interdependencies—that when one suffers we all suffer, that we and our neighbor, even we and our enemy, are truly kin—a new family policy emerges, one that avoids moralistic rhetoric, honors differences, and meets existing needs.

We must not allow anti-abortion, anti-homosexuality, anti-sexuality education forces to define the dialogue on family values. Our country needs a strong family policy that supports all types of families. We need to lead the discussion about family values in our classrooms, offices, religious institutions, and homes. We need to speak out about our family values, and become the truly "pro-family" advocates.

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## THE FUTURE OF SEXUALITY AND RELIGION: UNENDING DIALOGUE

By the Rt. Rev. David E. Richards\*

1994

Somewhere — in every generation of religionists and theologians — there will be found those who feel that either the final answer has been discovered concerning the sex and religious/moral dilemma or that the final answer is just around the corner. Those who tend to occupy

these positions are sometimes labeled "absolutists" by critics. They in turn are often inclined to label their critics as "relativists" or "secular humanists." Once such labels are bandied about the dialogue regarding sex and religion becomes considerably less productive.



However, in spite of a tendency to settle all arguments simply by resorting to labels and reinforcing biases, it does not appear that many religious groups are struggling significantly with the sexuality and religious/moral dilemma more than ever before. The struggle is often painful, but one of the very important aspects of the current effort toward meaningful dialogue is the willingness on the part of some religionists to include reference to knowledge and experiential data generated by the work of behavioral scientists and sexologists.

This trend is illustrated by the effort presently under way to establish the Center for Sexuality and Religion. This agency "is being organized to provide an inter-religious and inter-disciplinary organization dedicated to supporting religious and scientific understandings and practices in human sexuality and to increasing the competence and integrity of religious leaders in regard to sexuality issues."

At the international level, plans are being made for the first annual International Conference on Sex and Religion. The intention here is to create "a new association or society for the reverential and celebrative study of sexuality from philosophical, scientific, and especially theological points of view."

As long ago as 1968, this trend to create dialogue regarding sexuality between religion and science was advanced when SIECUS co-sponsored with the Academy of Religion and Mental Health, a conference on Sex and the Religious/Moral Dilemma. According to the SIECUS Newsletter of October, 1968, the conference "sent most people away quite uncomfortable with the feeling of a lack of resolution." However, this was seen as a positive outcome since it reinforced the need for ongoing dialogue "in order to free the scientists and the religionists to move us forward toward the rational understanding of complicated man [sic] and his equally complicated ways." It is now clear that this statement made in 1968 was truly prophetic and points to the importance not of pat answers and simplistic solutions but of the value of unending

dialogue.

In the present generation of religionists and theologians there are now at least some who advocate strongly for ongoing dialogue between the fields of moral and pastoral theology and the various scientific disciplines which contribute to an informed understanding of sexuality.

It is interesting to note that over the years, study, research, and education have moved many religious groups and institutions away from a purely moralistic view of, for instance, alcohol addiction. Many religious bodies now have learned from the fields of medicine and psychology that an addicted person cannot be dismissed simply as a moral failure.

This is an instance of how scientific knowledge and insight can be accepted without being viewed as contradictory to religious moral judgments and how moral judgments can be modified in the direction of humanity and compassion. The world is now a better place because of a healthier understanding of this one aspect of human behavior exists. Reference to alcoholism is made here not because sexuality and alcohol-use are intertwined, but because they can be analogous to one another. The issue is simply how views and values change when new knowledge and disciplinary experience and insight are taken into consideration.

In this day and age family values are spoken about with deep appreciation and with great respect. The quality of family life is a matter of great concern to our society. Family life has always been important to most religious bodies, and the fact is that many churches and religions normally encourage their adherents to take advantage of those mental health services which reduce domestic conflict and enhance domestic harmony.

As we have learned to benefit from the sciences regarding the addictions and the improvement of the quality of family life, we will in the future learn to benefit more from the sciences regarding sexuality and the means available for advancing sexual health. The dialogue must be unending!

### BY THE YEAR 2000

Religious organizations have an important role to play in the sexuality education of children and youth. These institutions are well suited to discuss values about sexuality – a subject that is often difficult to discuss in school programs. Religious congregations have traditionally determined community ethical standards, and many families turn to their religious institutions for guidance and counsel. Religious institutions can present children with information about sexual values that relate to each institution's overall moral and ethical standards...

SIECUS calls on religious denominations to develop programs and policies for the sexuality education of all children and youth in their congregations by the year 2000. These programs should emphasize the religion's sexual values and ethics, as well as provide young people with both practical and spiritual guidance in regard to their sexuality. Organized religion can play a major role in promoting an understanding of human sexuality as one of the most affirming expressions of equality, mutual respect, caring, and love among human beings. Religious organizations can further the concept that in a pluralistic society, there must be tolerance and respect for a diversity of values.

National religious institutions should develop policy statements highlighting the importance of sexuality education as a component of religious education. Denomination-specific curricula should be developed with training programs available on a regional basis in order to develop qualified leaders. Community-based religious education leaders should receive ongoing training, materials, and resources from their national religious organizations.

—Excerpted from *Sex Education 2000: A Call to Action*, SIECUS, 1990.



**SEXUALITY AND SOCIETY**

**30 years**

**PAST • PRESENT • FUTURE**

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## IS SEX NECESSARY?

by Margaret Mead, Ph.D.

Excerpted from the *SIECUS Newsletter*  
1969

If I had been talking fifteen years ago, I would have said that we were in a transitional society, a society where people came from a great many different backgrounds and the backgrounds were so contrasting that we couldn't entrust sex education, or the lack of it, to any parent group. There were many forms of sex education, or non-education, that went very well as long as you had a homogeneous society. Mothers who had been scared-to-death-as-brides were perfect mothers of daughters who were going to be scared-to-death-as-brides. Each generation of girls learned how to be scared-to-death-as-brides, and each group of young husbands learned how to deal with girls who were scared-to-death-as-brides.

Any one of the many systems of sex education, however strange they may seem to us, worked as long as the society was a homogeneous one. It could be the kind of society where children are totally exposed to complete knowledge of sex from early infancy. It could be the kind of society where children were excluded from a knowledge of sex. It could be the kind of society where the children were lied to. We don't at present know whether the societies that were most open or the societies that were most closed worked better, so long as they were consistent, so long as, generation after generation, the education the children received prepared them to be the kind of adults *their parents were*.

But the minute you have a society like ours, complicated by great heterogeneity, plus the beginning of the application of science and the understanding of human behavior, then we are bound to have the sort of situation we've been wrestling with for the last fifty years: a situation of trying to overcome the styles of communication between parents and children. These styles were appropriate to other groups and other periods, but did not prepare children to be adolescents and young adults for the world they were going to have to live in. A world where their chaperoning parents either would no longer go with them or could no longer go with them; a world where the young people were exposed to seduction, courtship, and marriage with people who were extraordinarily different; a world where these young people were then in turn going to have to bring up their children in an unprecedented environment, an environment for which they had no appropriate behavior guidelines.

The communities that ask help from SIECUS today are still wrestling with the problems that were there fifteen years ago or twenty-five years ago. They are still wrestling with parents who, with the best will in the world, just didn't and still don't quite know what to say next.

Today, along with all these old situations, we're simultaneously facing something else. And we're facing it before we're ready for it, before we had figured out how to institutionalize and put into the schools, or into the church classes, or into other community groups, the teaching that is necessary for youngsters today: teaching

what their parents are no longer able to give them because parents can no longer expect their children to live in the world their own parents lived in. Before we had met this problem, or had begun to meet it, we were plunged into this new situation which is the result of the medical revolution, or the population explosion.

I prefer the medical revolution as a term; I prefer it for several reasons. It ties in the agricultural revolution; it was the agricultural revolution that freed men and the medical revolution, to a degree, that has freed women. Women are left in virtually the same stage they'd been at in a hunting-and-gathering society. They were left at this stage because every society had to keep its women working at reproductivity and the kind of family life that made for reproductivity, for fear that the society wouldn't have enough people. Therefore, it was very important to have most women, most of the time, engaged in family life. And *sex was necessary*. Whatever one might think about sex, however much one might dislike it or disapprove of it, or wish it wasn't there, it *was* necessary to have the children that were needed for the society.

Now we've catapulted in a very short period into a completely opposite position. We know now that we do not need more children; we need fewer children. We will be well off if we can reduce our population, not increase it. Suddenly, we're faced with a very odd situation in which sex isn't necessary in the same sense. Not only is it unnecessary to have a society that insists sex relations should be the way of cementing families together and producing more and more children, but we're also approaching the period when you don't need sex in the normal sense of the word at all to produce children.

We now have the means to produce children with no warmth and no touch. We will very shortly have the means of producing test tube babies. We have the possibility of probably determining the sex of the baby, which people have dreamed about for a hundred thousand years, but the cost may be no love-making to produce the baby, just a test tube operation. We are faced with some very extraordinary and strange new possibilities; and the question "Is sex necessary?" is going to raise quite different problems.

We're going to have to rethink how we want to bring up children, what sort of relationships we want them to have to their own bodies and to other people's bodies. We've had Dr. Harlow's experiments with his terry cloth and wire mothers and we've discovered what very strange creatures are produced if you rear infants to grow up without any warm, human reaction to other people. We've learned a great deal in the last fifteen years about how human beings are made into human beings: ties that are based upon a permanent sex relationship and the kind of complementary interdependence that we have used as the basis of marriage.

Throughout all of the human history these relation-

ships between a man and a woman, relationships that were first arranged and then finally institutionalized, have been the strongest tie between human beings. Through time, these relationships between a man and a woman have built up further relationships between large groups of people; and it has been one of the most important resources for keeping people together. This has always included children.

An institution like SIECUS that is trying to bring in the best thinking they can find, and the most experienced people and the most concerned people, is faced simultaneously with all the old discrepancies, old confusions, old difficulties as well as with the "shadow" of these things to come.

At present the United States has just gone on a binge. On the whole we've gone in for very simple reversals. We used to deal with sex as wicked; in fact, everything that looked as if it were connected with the body was pretty wicked. So, you never looked inside mother's handbag; and the insides of clothes closets were forbidden, and the inside of the icebox was horrible. Today people have bought plastic handbags, brightly lit refrigerators, and have clothes closets specially lit so that people who come to dinner can look in and see their hostesses' clothes. We've gone in for a tremendous illumination of all things that were once forbidden and dark. We've gone in, of course, for this Saturnalia of pronouncing four letter words. It was a gloomy period, I suppose, when people kept not pronouncing words that they thought they wanted to pronounce. My ninety-five-year-old aunt remarked recently, "I've been reading some of these new books and they have a lot of words in them that, well, I didn't expect to read — but I remember them!" Of course, all of this isn't going to last very long. We are in a temporary period when it is exciting to light up something that was dark to say words that were forbidden, exhibit all sorts of things that weren't allowed before this excitement is all going to wear out. It is going to wear out *if we don't overreact* to it and feel it is too terribly important.

One of the enterprises of an organization like SIECUS

is to keep a steady track; to realize the impact of the future which may be either welcomed or dreaded; to deal with changes as they come along, but not to be thrown off the track by these temporary excitements and aberrations. All that SIECUS can do is take a longtime view and say, "All right, this is going to settle down." The people who remember the words that couldn't be pronounced are gradually going to die and we'll have nobody left but the people who've pronounced them all the time: they will be bored to death and start doing something else and we won't have to worry about that any more.

The thing that is so difficult is what is facing parents of children in every controversial area, in this country today. While things are straightening out, a generation of children is growing up, and it is a generation of children who can only grow up once. A generation who can only learn something about themselves, who they are, who their parents are, and who they themselves are going to be, once. Any long-term picture of change, any long-term optimism, has to be tempered by the fact that this generation is here now. And we can't afford to let the things happen to this generation that are happening to them, even though we think they might weather it.

We're faced with a very serious problem in the whole sex education field. This problem is the tremendous shortage of people who by their background and training and experience are able to stand up in front of a mixed group of people: a diverse set of parents, a bunch of adolescents, and speak simply and clearly, without embarrassment, and with emotion, about sex relationships; those relationships which we split off so badly from the rest of life.

SIECUS is trying to develop mechanisms so that we can take the best we know — all the while living under the knowledge of the tremendous changes that are coming in the world and that have come, all the while being very conscious of today's generation who are growing up — and convert it into forms that can be managed by teachers, parents, clergy, social workers, and all sorts of people who weren't brought up to do the task they have to do. It is our main job to give them the material to do it with.

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## SEX AND RACISM

by Robert Staples, Ph.D.\*

Excerpted from the *SIECUS Report*  
1975

...Some years ago Calvin Hernton wrote that the race problem is inextricably connected with sex. He cited the finding by Gunnar Myrdal that white Southerners thought that what Blacks wanted most was intermarriage and sexual intercourse with whites. Hernton may have overstated his case since racism had a strong economic and psychological base which has kept the specter of racism alive long after the barriers to interracial sex and marriage were dropped. Yet, the relationship between sex and racism is not a spurious nor insignificant one. Even among

the most enlightened whites, the association of Blacks with an organic hypersexuality, and hence immorality lingers on in their collective consciousness. As with many cultural images of a group there is some validity to the white stereotype of Black sexual potency, if for no other reason than the self-fulfilling prophecy that if a group be repetitively treated or regarded in a certain way, its members eventually come to see themselves as others view them.

The image of Blacks as hypersexual beings is deeply rooted in American history, culture, and religion and is

too complex to delineate here. In the early part of the twentieth century respected scholars imputed a genetic basis to the alleged hotter sexual passions and richer fertility of the Black population. Subsequent research has done little to invalidate the earlier generalizations about Black sexual drives or to illuminate the sociocultural forces which differentiate between Black and white sexual behavior. Such false images serve to fuel the fears of those whites who remain psychologically wedded to America's puritanical view of sexuality and to galvanize their resistance to Black demands for equal opportunity in American life.

Any objective examination of Black sexual behavior would reveal that there are many variations in the type and frequency of sexual activity in this group; that any racial differences can be charged to cultural and class differences rather than to innate biological traits; and that changes in time and space have brought about a convergence in the sexual attitudes and behaviors of the two racial groups. Furthermore, it is instructive to note that the white fear of Black hypersexuality stems from a racism and sexism against which Blacks and women must constantly struggle. To be specific, the white group's resistance has been to Black male/white female sexual liaisons. Historically, white males had sexual access to Black women, through force or economic inducement. In this transaction Black women were often unwilling partners, whereas white women and Black men violated the taboo on their sexual union at the risk of their freedom or lives...

In light of commonly held white views of Black sexuality, it is of great interest that, in some circles, whites may

actually be engaging in more "permissive" sexual activity than Blacks. This is particularly true of white females who are beginning to unleash with a vengeance all of the pent-up sexual feelings they have had to suppress for years. The racist motivation behind the previous labeling of Blacks as sexually immoral is quite clear as we currently witness the redefinition of behavior that was once alleged to be peculiar to Blacks. More euphemistic terms are applied to the same behavior among whites. Sexual immorality becomes sexual liberation, "shacking up" is called heterosexual cohabitation or an alternative lifestyle, etc. This society tends to restructure its attitudes and practices when the sexually permissive are female members of the majority group. Hence, birth control and abortion are made more easily available, as are handbooks on how to improve one's premarital sex life. Thus while many of us can agree that sexual enlightenment and abolition of the double standard are marks of human progress, we must also agree that if the same kinds of sexual behavior were found primarily among the Black population, the result would most likely be the collective indictment of an entire racial group and a concomitant denial of its civil and human rights.

As the changes in sexual mores makes it increasingly difficult to make moral distinctions between racial groups, let us hope that cultural differences in sexual behavior will come to be recognized as no more than diversity in the spectrum of possible responses to the sexual stimuli that animate us all. Designations of racial groups as superior or inferior on the basis of their sexual values and behavior have no place in a rational and humanistic society.

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## WHAT DOES AIDS MEAN?

by Lawrence Mass, M.D.

Reprinted from the *SIECUS Report*  
1982

As currently understood, the recently characterized syndrome of acquired immune-deficiency (AIDS) is at once the first epidemic of immune-deficiency and the deadliest sexually transmitted disease in recorded medical history. Having already claimed more lives than the combined tolls of toxic-shock syndrome and the Philadelphia outbreak of Legionnaire's disease, it is also, according to Federal health officers, the most important new public health problem in the United States.

"New," emphasized Dr. James Curran, coordinator of the Task Force on Kaposi's Sarcoma and Opportunistic Infections for the federal Centers for Disease Control (CDC) in Atlanta. "This obviously doesn't have the proportions of such long-standing public health problems as hepatitis. At least not yet."

Thus far, a poorly understood disorder of cellular immunity is believed to be responsible for the more than 634 cases of Kaposi's sarcoma (KS), *pneumocystis carinii* pneumonia, and a rapidly growing number of other unusual, often fatal, opportunistic infections and other cancers that have been reported to CDC during the last two years. Lately, these reports have been accumulating at an

escalating rate of 2-3 new cases each day. Approximately 75% of the victims have been characterized as homosexually active ("homosexual or bisexual") men in their twenties, thirties, and forties. But CDC figures now include a growing proportion of heterosexual men and women.

Most of the nongay victims have histories of intravenous drug addiction. But other victim subpopulations include native and immigrant Haitians and several hemophiliacs. Although cases have been identified in 25 states and 10 foreign countries, nearly half of all reports have originated from New York City.

In many instances, there are treatments for infections and malignancies, but there is no known cure for the immunological abnormalities that appear to underlie them. Conversely, researchers don't seem to be much closer to detecting the cause(s) of this disaster than they were a year ago. While most observers believe a sexually and parenterally transmissible agent to be a critical factor in the epidemic, they have not yet identified a virus, drug, or other "smoking gun" that could explain all cases.

What does AIDS mean? For a growing number of

health care providers and medical researchers, AIDS is having to sell itself, more as an "unprecedented" opportunity to study the entanglements of immunity with infectious and malignant disease processes than as a human and public health tragedy. For victims of the syndrome, it has meant incomprehensible physical and spiritual suffering, intensified by cultural stigmata and extending to the probability of death. For their significant others, it means the experience of grief, intensified by bitter and unfocused recrimination. For those at risk, it means fear,

extending in some instances to panic. For the America of moral theologians, it means the wages of sin. And for what Wilhelm Reich called the sexual revolution, AIDS, like the herpes epidemic, could mean an unprecedented counterrevolution of preventive medical approaches to the control of sexually transmitted diseases. For better or for worse, it could also facilitate what John Money has called "the reconciliation of sexosophy and sexology as the two halves of one whole."

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## SEXUAL PLURALISM: RESOLVING AMERICA'S SEXUAL CRISIS

By Ira L. Reiss, Ph.D.

Excerpted from the *SIECUS Report*  
1992

We are the Western world's leader in AIDS, rape, teenage pregnancy, sexual abuse of children and virtually every other sexual problem that one can name. This unwanted leadership is convincing evidence that we must be doing something very wrong in the way we handle sexuality. Also, we cannot be fully aware of how we are producing these unwanted outcomes or we would change our actions. The challenge is to discover and then alter whatever is blocking our nation's understanding and ability to handle sexual problems.

Careful study of our sexual customs over the last few decades has convinced me that our major problem has been our society's inability to build a new sexual ethic to serve as a guide for the much wider range of sexual choices we make today. Many Americans think we have deserted too much of our restrictive sexual past but I believe we have kept far too many elements of this dogmatic sexual heritage. That is at the root of our sexual crisis....

We are so anxious about teen sexuality and so brain-washed about teenage abstinence that almost no one publicly questions whether encouraging high school students to vow abstinence is really a safe goal to pursue. Accordingly, we mistakenly equate vows of abstinence with the reality of abstaining from intercourse, and the logical error creates a lethal moral bias. As I will show, this promotion of "compulsory abstinence" actually increases rather than decreases the likelihood of both disease and pregnancy.

We need to bear in mind that the great majority of the teenagers who eventually have intercourse also had been strongly encouraged by their parents and their schools to believe in abstinence and avoid sexual intercourse in high school. In addition, and of great importance, is the fact that those who preach abstinence as the "safest" standard to pursue often put down the safety of using condoms and, as is happening in Minnesota and elsewhere, object to such information being given to their children. Many Americans are anxious and timid about preparing their young people to make safer choices about sex by legitimizing the use of condoms. They feel more comfortable to simply seek to prevent sex. Accordingly, when our teenagers do engage in sex they are not likely to use condoms and thus are at increased risk for disease and preg-

nancy.<sup>1</sup> The fatal error in our approach to teenage sex is that we ignore the fact that vows of abstinence break far more easily than do condoms....

### Defining Sexual Pluralism: Democratic Sexual Morality

Pluralism in any area of life asserts that there is more than one morally acceptable way for people to behave. The heart of pluralism is to tolerate a broad range of choices by others and not try to impose one's personal choice on all others. As I have noted, pluralism is precisely the American approach to religion and politics, and also to the choice of marriage partners, and occupational and educational choices. We have freed ourselves from the narrow perspective of past centuries far more quickly in all these areas than we have in sexuality. In sexuality, as I have noted, many Americans still seem to carry strong traces of the view that there is but one moral path.

But let's be clear. Sexual pluralism does not assert that all forms of sexuality are legitimate — that anything goes — or that if it feels good, do it. No, not at all. Sexual pluralism is a moral concept and not an invitation to an orgy, as some would have you believe. For example, sexual pluralism totally rejects the use of force or manipulation in sexuality. Rape and sexual exploitation of children by adults are thus rejected. Other less extreme forms of sexual pressure are also unacceptable. The best way to ensure that pressure and deception are avoided is to encourage a concern for one's sexual partner. Pluralism promotes that concern for your partner by asserting that honesty, equality, and responsibility (HER) are essential ingredients for accepting any sexual relationship. Pluralism seeks to create this kind of moral requirement for all sexual relationships. Advising people to just say no does not do any of this. Pluralism gives choices to people, but it demands that you take responsibility for making that choice in line with these HER principles....

Pluralism asks that you make a personal choice that suits you and that you refrain from imposing it upon all others. You may accept very restrictive or very permissive views about sexuality, but if you don't impose them on others, then you are still a pluralist. Pluralism gives each of us room to grow and change during our lifetime as long as we abide by the HER principles. What we accept for ourselves sexually today may well not be what we

will accept ten years from now. Pluralism points out a legitimate broad area of choice within which we can personalize and enrich our sexual lives, and at the same time it discourages us from being oppressive to those who choose differently than we do....

### **Trends Toward Pluralism Today**

Many social forces in our society today are working toward sexual pluralism. Whereas traditional Victorian sexuality flourishes in a male-dominant society, sexual pluralism blossoms in a society that treats men and women more equally. One major reason for my prediction of the growth of pluralism is the movement in our country toward greater gender equality. As women gain more rights in American society they are being treated more equally in their sexual relationships. Greater overall economic and political equality for women means that they can be more honest about their sexual feelings and be more assertive about things such as objecting to forced sexuality and insisting on their partner's use of condoms to prevent transmission of disease or pregnancy. These surely are very important changes in any attempt to reduce our high rates of sexual abuse, pregnancy, and disease....

The economic cost of our conflicted attitude toward sexuality also had encouraged people to try a more pluralistic approach to sexuality. The financial costs our current high rates of teenage pregnancy, rape, AIDS and child sexual abuse are in the scores of billions of dollars every year. If instead of being obsessed with preventing sexuality, or being so conflicted that we cannot act, we work to prepare people to make sound sexual choices, then we will more quickly find a way to reduce the immense costs of our sexual problems.

Gross inequalities in our social and economic structures obviously make equality in any sexual relationship questionable. We have some 13% of Americans, 32,000,000 people, living in poverty. It is unreasonable to expect people living in poverty to be very concerned about the use of condoms or other precautions in their

sexual relationships. Poverty promotes a preoccupation with staying alive and just getting by, and things like contraception take a back seat to such pressures.

...But one thing above all else is clear. If we are to get a handle on our sexual problems we must resolve our own inner sexual conflicts by jettisoning the Victorian baggage so many Americans unknowingly still carry. In my book I spell out in much more detail the dire consequences of believing in the many sexual myths that mislead millions of Americans. Most of the other Western countries have moved much further towards sexual pluralism.<sup>2</sup> As we increasingly put our new sexual philosophy of HER pluralism in place, we can catch up and even surpass these other countries in our control of sexual problems. I fully believe that by the end of this decade America will be a leader in the promotion of sexual pluralism, and we will have learned far better how to contain the sexual problems that so disturb us today. That will be our sexual revolution of the 1990s.

Those of us who are strong in our pluralistic beliefs must no longer remain silent. We must let people know the vast support there is for democratic pluralism in sexuality. We must speak out in our schools, our churches, our legislatures, our universities, and our homes. Then we will be able to discard the somber dogmatism of our past and promote the joys of a more honest, equal, and responsible approach to sexuality. Instead of trying to prevent sexuality we will learn to make sexual relationships more moral by incorporating HER values. Is that not a mission worth working for? And is this not the time to pursue it?

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## **30 Years of SIECUS**

SIECUS is proud to honor its past executive directors  
for their commitment, dedication and vision:

**Mary S. Calderone  
Gerald Sanctuary  
Joyce Fleming  
Barbara Whitney  
Ann Welbourne-Moglia**



# PEOPLE ARE TALKING ABOUT SIECUS

Earlier this year, we asked SIECUS Members to comment on our 30-year anniversary.  
Here's what was said:

I want to extend my heartfelt congratulations to SIECUS in the celebration of their 30th anniversary. They have been pioneers in the field of promoting comprehensive sexuality education for our children. I appreciate their courage and recognize their willingness to be constantly pushing for the best for the most valuable resource we have — our children. Keep up the good work for another 30 years!" — **M. Joycelyn Elders, M.D., U.S. Surgeon General**

Congrats on 30 years. Keep up the good work, especially in educating adolescents. — **Mrs. Phillip W. Damon** • Continuing education courses I took from current members of the SIECUS Board inspired me to pursue a life in human sexuality education. Thanks Peggy and Bob — Ph.D. candidate, Human Sexuality, University of Pennsylvania • For 30 years on the barricades — and gaining power -- Congratulations! -- **Gina Ogden, Ph.D.** • Thirty years of increasing openness, freedom, and public support of sexual freedom. When will responsible behavior catch up to the flood of infotainment?" — **Dr. Raymond R. White** • Commendations for being the leader in promoting sexuality education and protecting sexual rights for thirty years! Those of us involved in HIV/AIDS education are deeply grateful to Carolyn Patierno and Debra Haffner for writing articles which provide excellent tools and immeasurable encouragement. Thanks SIECUS! — **Sandra Langston**, Director, HIV/AIDS Communications, Alabama Department of Public Health • Had I known where Debra's questions were leading, I would have answered them faster. — **Saul Haffner** • From a co-worker in a children's agency trying to provide workable homes for children whose parents were unable to care for them, "When I am President of these United States no child shall be born who isn't wanted." — **Genevieve McGray** • With the Mormons still advocating tying youngsters' hands to the sides of their beds, if necessary, to keep them from masturbating, SIECUS is urgently — for some, desperately — needed. — **Philip Harvey**, President, PHE., Inc. • Thank you for providing such a needed educational services. Your efforts are greatly appreciated. — **Mike Krause** • Reliable information — an educational necessity for these times. — **Shirley Fancher** • It is my pleasure and honor to be able to lend my support to SIECUS. — **Cynthia Lief Ruberg**, MSED, LPC, NCC • I'm proud to be considered a friend of so valuable an organization. Keep up the splendid work. We need you! — **Harriet Haffner** • I feel privileged to have been a SIECUS Board member in 1966. I saw some opposition to our goals, but saw the goals achieved. I am confident that in the next 30 years SIECUS will continue to meet the needs of youth and adults in a society facing new pressures relating to human sexuality. Right on! — **Helen Southard**, Psychologist and Author • The struggle against ignorance and prejudice needs the support of all Americans. — **Richard L. DeProspero** • SIECUS is still doing its urgent educational mission, as it is continuing to be needed even 30 years since its founding. I am proud to have been part of the organization since its beginning. — **Evalyn S. Gendel**, M.D. Former Director, Human Sexuality Program, University of California, San Francisco, School of Medicine. • For too many generations, sex has been a secret, forbidden subject. Millions of personal tragedies, most of them hidden, have resulted. Thanks to Mary Calderone and a few hundred other brave souls, the last 30 years have brought some overdue "glasnost." Best wishes! — **Richard Cross**, M.D. • In facing irrational attacks on education and services regarding human sexuality, each of us must step up and do more to protect our future generations from these threats to their right to know. — **E.J. McClendon**, Ph.D., Past President, American Public Health Association; professor emeritus, Department of Health Education, University of Michigan. • May you continue to enrich and protect our lives. — **Dr. Thomas Cottle** • Tight times notwithstanding, I'm moved to cough up \$100 for the originators of the very word "sexuality." Bravissime et Avanti! — **Lioness Books (Vivien Leone)** • For our children. — **James W. Parker** • What Mary Calderone did for SIECUS' past is honored by what Debra Haffner is doing for SIECUS' future — Anonymous • The nation is indebted to SIECUS for its efforts to encourage sexuality education for all. — **Norman Fertig** • I am grateful to have been a part of the birth of the sexual health movement. I reaffirm my commitment to guiding it, and myself as a sexual health professional, to maturity. — **Karen Comiskey Brash** • This is excellent work to counter — the insanity about sexual "abuse" hysteria. — **Quincey E. Fortier**, M.D., F.A.C.O.G. • Mary Calderone said it perfectly: "How people behave toward each other in all matters — including the sexual — is the most important thing in the world." — **Robert Selverstone**, Ph.D. • As Wallace Stevens said: "The greatest poverty is not to live in the physical world, to feel that one's desire is too difficult to tell from despair." — **Barbara S. Kane** • Honesty. Sensitivity. Responsibility. Accuracy. For thirty years, SIECUS' education and advocacy about sexuality have promoted all these values and more. Millions live happier and

healthier lives because of that legacy. Our best wishes for 30 more. — **Peter Scales, Ph.D.** and **Martha Roper** • SIECUS — seek us — all of us, to be lifted by reason and feeling to contribute to improving the world of today and tomorrow. Our anniversary is continued hope. — **Patricia Velloso** • When I quoted Dr. Mary Calderone in my newly developed 8th grade sex education classes in 1968-73, I never imagined I would be back eagerly reading every SIECUS publication as a Ph.D. candidate in the Human Sexuality Program at Penn. Now I expect the relationship with this invaluable and respected resource to continue. Thank you SIECUS. — **Sarah Conklin** • Those of us who have been involved in school health are always grateful to SIECUS for its ready and strong support and excellent materials to help students appreciate and achieve healthful sexuality throughout their lives. — **Mildred Doster, M.D. MSPH** • If SIECUS had not been around, we would have had to organize such a group now. Its services are essential. — **Vern Bullough, Ph.D.** • My Mother worked in the field of sex education and as a 73 year old grandmother of 13, I am so proud of her and relieved that my grandchildren are growing up in a world where some areas have improved. Thanks to Mary Calderone! — **Mrs. E.A. Dennison** • Thank you for the technical and emotional support for those of us out there in the field...on the streets...in the schools..working with youth. — **Elizabeth Rendeiro** • Population growth is the world's second biggest problem. The biggest is unwanted children. — **Mr. and Mrs. Carl Hays** • How sad we still need you. How wonderful that you're still there. — **May Vaughan** • You were there when nobody else was! In honor of Mary Calderone. — **Dr. Mimi Schneider** • During the 1970s and 1980s there were several times that SIECUS almost ceased to be! But the board — and especially Mary Calderone and Bobbie Whitney — kept this important organization whole. Now through the leadership of Debra Haffner and an excellent staff and Board, SIECUS is a stable, powerful, national and international sexuality education and advocacy force. Congratulations on your 30th! — **Michael Carrera, Ed.D.**, Director, National Adolescent Sexuality Training Center, Children's Aid Society and SIECUS Board Chair, 1979-1982 • As one of SIECUS' founders, I am delighted that the vision that a small group of us had 30 years ago has persisted, and grown, and enriched society beyond our dreams. — **Harold Lief, M.D.**, Professor Emeritus, University of Pennsylvania and SIECUS Co-Founder • To be associated with an organization that was so important to Mary Calderone is really an honor for me. SIECUS has made important contributions to education of both adults and young people in the area of human sexuality. I am especially pleased with the resource center. — **Ruth "Dr. Ruth" Westheimer, Ed.D.**, Sexuality Educator • SIECUS was, is, and always will be on the cutting edge of rational sexuality education. Mazel Tov on your 30th year of struggle and success. — **Sol Gordon, Ph.D.**, Professor Emeritus, Syracuse University • Adolescents are pressured into sexual involvement more strongly and at a younger age than ever before. Their risks are enormous. SIECUS is my constant counsel, encyclopedia, and resource for giving teenagers accurate and thoughtful information. — **Elizabeth Winship**, Syndicated Writer of "**Dear Beth**" • Thank you SIECUS for being an island of sanity and for keeping the path lit with grounded and unbiased information about sexuality in the midst of a culture replete with prejudice and fear. — **Lonnie Barbach**, Clinical Psychologist and Author • People have to feel comfortable about their own sexuality before they will welcome and support the sexual rights of others. Education is key — and SIECUS is leading the way! I am happy to lend my support as a member of the SIECUS Board of Directors. Happy 30th! — **Martina Navratilova**, Professional Tennis Player, SIECUS Board of Directors • This nation owes its people the right to knowledge about sexuality — so that all people can make intelligent decisions, protect themselves from deadly diseases, and view sexuality not with guilt or fear but with celebration. Thank you SIECUS for 30 years of leadership and information. — **David Mixner**, Gay and Lesbian Rights Activist • Thank you SIECUS for being there to encourage sexuality education. Maybe one of these days, because of your efforts, the confused kids who write to me will get the information and discussion they so desperately need, when they need it. Congratulations on your 30th. Here's to many more. — **Judy Blume**, Author.

## **A MESSAGE FROM SIECUS STAFF 1994**

**Thanks to all SIECUS supporters for the leadership, the support,  
and the encouragement to continue fighting.**

**We are pleased to be part of an inspiring 30 years of work!**

Mary Beth Caschetta • Elliot Cohen • Joseph DiNorcia • Alan Gambrell  
Debra Haffner • Danny Jacobs • Joanne Jurcic • Leslie Kantor • Valarie Morris  
Carolyn Patierno • Shelley Ross • James Shortridge • Betsy Wacker