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SIECUS

REPORT

THE POLITICS OF SEXUALITY EDUCATION

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 1996

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ARTICLES

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE...

SIECUS IS THE COMMON GROUND ON COMPREHENSIVE SEXUALITY EDUCATION

Mac Edwards

I was rereading the articles for this issue of the *SIECUS Report* when I received a call from Elma Cole, a member of our Board and a respected sexuality education consultant around the country.

She said she had just finished reading a book called *Congregations in Conflict: The Battle Over Homosexuality* and was so impressed she wanted to write a review for the *SIECUS Report*. I said fine, and asked if she could get it to me right away for this issue. She agreed.

I was happy she called—for two reasons. I wanted to get to know her better, and I wanted her perspective on the current state of sexuality education in the United States. I had seen her at many SIECUS meetings and could see she was a sounding board for many people. She's open, caring, intelligent—with an insight that makes people see the big picture and say, "You're right! Why didn't *I* see that before?"

I wanted to talk because I was concerned about the articles. They showed that people are often too polarized and too confrontational about sexuality education. Certainly a difficult situation when your goal is the implementation of effective programs. Perhaps Elma could help.

THE STRUGGLE WE FACE

The articles in this issue on "The Politics of Sexuality Education" highlight the controversies in our country.

SIECUS staff members Ruth Mayer and Leslie Kantor write in the lead article, "1995-96 Trends in Opposition to Comprehensive Sexuality Education in Public Schools in the United States," that opponents are often not only defining the debate but are also moving it back to the single question of whether such education belongs in the schools *at all*.

Next, Kelly Nelson, a doctoral student at Temple University, writes in "The Conflict Over Sexuality Education: Interviews with Participants on Both Sides of the Debate," that the conflict is actually symbolic of a much larger cultural struggle over visions of morality, family, and gender.

Finally, Dr. Evonne Hedgepeth of Evergreen State College writes in "Not All Moral Visions Are Created Equal" that the conflict might be explained as one between those who use reasoning at different stages of moral development.

None of the writers hold out much hope that extremists will join in support of the comprehensive sexuality education that more than 8 in 10 parents want for their children.

ELMA'S INSIGHT

That's where I was when Elma called: trying to figure out some way to talk about those articles in the context of moving forward on sound sexuality education programs.

A few days later, she called and said she was going to drop by the review for SIECUS on her way to a meeting. We sat down to chat both about the book she had reviewed and our work at SIECUS. She pointed to some advice which the author, Keith Hartman, gave to ministers: gain confidence, encourage dialogue, seek truth (rather than debating issues), and find a common ground to bind people together.

Elma, who has helped to implement teen pregnancy-prevention, and HIV-prevention programs through the Salvation Army, said the key is not to focus on the extremes in a debate. We are fighting for comprehensive sexuality education because it is right and it is what the majority of Americans want, she said. Yes, they want their children to abstain from sexual intercourse, but they also want them to have information to protect themselves from unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases when they need it.

If you focus on the extremes, you're going to always feel the way you do, she said. But, if you look at the majority of Americans—those in the middle—then you realize that there is hope. The common sense of the *concerned people in America* (as opposed to the Concerned Women for America, she laughed) will prevail in bringing comprehensive sexuality education to our nation's youth. SIECUS' position on sexuality education is the common ground.

WHAT WE CAN DO

"You're right! Why didn't I see that before?" I thought to myself. Now I can give *SIECUS Report* readers some positive, practical advice. First, read the articles, but don't focus on the extremes. Then think about those *concerned people in America*—those in the middle—and figure out how you can help them understand the importance of comprehensive sexuality education in building responsible, respectful, caring adults.

By the way, if you want to read Elma's review of *Congregations in Conflict*, it's on page 25. It is very insightful and thought-provoking. Just like Elma herself.

1995–96 TRENDS IN OPPOSITION TO COMPREHENSIVE SEXUALITY EDUCATION IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN THE UNITED STATES

Ruth Mayer
SIECUS Community Advocacy Coordinator

Leslie Kantor, M.P.H.
SIECUS Director of Planning and Special Projects

Many communities expanded their sexuality education programs and successfully resisted the implementation of fear-based curricula during the 1995–96 school year. In fact, most communities that made concerted and thorough efforts to analyze fear-based education overwhelmingly rejected such curricula. Nevertheless, sexuality education continued to serve as a lightening rod for controversy in communities across the country and increasingly on national and state levels.*

ON THE FEDERAL LEVEL

On the national level, examinations of sexuality education were prompted by continuing concerns about teenage pregnancy and childbearing. As a result, President Clinton announced the establishment of a private sector initiative called the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, and the U.S. House of Representatives held oversight hearings which featured testimony by advocates of comprehensive sexuality education as well as proponents of abstinence-only programs.

A number of developments on the federal level threatened to negatively impact sexuality education in the United States:

- The welfare reform bill included $75 million in funding for abstinence-only sexuality education programs. (The bill was eventually vetoed by President Clinton.)
- Congressional hearings on "Parents, Schools, and Values" set out to examine whether schools across the country were "promoting" homosexuality. (Their impact was diminished, however, by the efforts of proponents of sexuality education and the unsubstantiated testimony of its opponents.)
- "The Child Protection and Ethics Act of 1995," which was introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives, attacked sexuality education and any organization that utilizes data from Alfred Kinsey's studies. (It is unlikely, however, that it will reach the House floor as a stand-alone bill.)

ON THE STATE LEVEL

Proponents of restrictive sexuality education programs remained active on the state level. However, none of these efforts were successful.

In Arizona, a bill (HB 2202) was introduced to require schools that provide sexuality education to include instruction on "abstinence from sex until marriage" and to prohibit the distribution or availability of contraceptives (including condoms) on school property. (The bill was defeated in the Senate Education Committee.)

In Colorado, a bill (HB 1022) was introduced to require schools providing sexuality education to offer two tracks—with one track providing abstinence-based education and the other an abstinency-only program. (The bill was defeated in the House Education Committee.)

In Georgia, proposed legislation (SB 392) required an opt-in policy (requiring parents to give explicit, written permission for their children to participate) for all sexuality education programs, and intended to prohibit coeducational sexuality education classes. (The bill was defeated in the Senate Rules Committee.)

In Kansas, a state mandate for comprehensive sexuality education survived a double assault. A bill (HB 2301) required sexuality/AIDS education courses to teach that "abstinence from sexual activity outside of marriage is the expected standard for school age children" and to teach the benefits of monogamous marriage. (It died in the Senate Education Committee.) A Board of Education proposal to gut the state's comprehensive sexuality education mandate was defeated by a 6–3 vote.

Negative impact of parental rights legislation. There was growing concern this year that "parental rights" legislation, currently under consideration nationally and in 28 states, could have a detrimental impact on health and sexuality education programs provided in schools across the country. "Parental rights" bills are designed to give parents the grounds to sue the government (such as school boards) for

**Information in this article was gleaned from newspaper accounts and personal interviews with community members. In some cases, the names of the communities are withheld at the request of community members who feared additional controversy.*

violating parents' rights to "direct the upbringing of their children." Advocates for sexuality education fear that these bills could unleash a wave of litigation that would prompt school boards to limit or remove sexuality education programs. These bills are heavily promoted by such groups as Eagle Forum, Concerned Women for America, and the Christian Coalition.

ON THE LOCAL LEVEL

While state mandates can have a critical impact on the kind of sexuality education provided in schools, decisions about individual programs are made on the local level. In monitoring community action on sexuality education during the 1995–96 school year, SIECUS tracked 131 new controversies, slightly fewer than past years. (In the past four years, SIECUS has tracked over 400 controversies in 47 states.)

Some of the current trends in controversies across the country include:

- Attacking sexuality education in elementary schools as harmful for young people.
- Insisting on the separation of boys and girls for sexuality education, particularly in elementary school.
- Attacking any balanced education about sexual orientation.
- Advocating for opt-in policies (requiring explicit, written parental permission) for participation for sexuality education or for changing courses from required to elective.
- Advocating for two tracks of sexuality education, with one track devoted to fear-based, abstinence-only education.

FEAR-BASED SEXUALITY EDUCATION CONTINUES

"Let's show them [middle schoolers] the uglies. We've told them the good stuff. Let's scare the hoo-hoo out of them. Show them pictures of the last stages of AIDS."[1]

This comment was made by a school board member in Largo, Florida, during a debate about sexuality education. She is not alone in her belief that public schools should scare young people into abstinence. In fact, debates about such strategies accounted for over 25 percent of all controversies monitored by SIECUS during the 1995–96 school year. Proponents of fear-based education often seek school board seats while hiding their views until they are in office. They frequently advocate for their programs by arguing that any information about birth control provides teens with a "mixed message" that they are unable to process.

Advocates for comprehensive sexuality education point out that most programs already stress abstinence as the most reliable means of preventing pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). They also indicate that programs including information about abstinence and contraception are the most effective in helping young people delay intercourse or protect themselves from pregnancy.[2]

There were encouraging signs in the past year that communities can successfully resist fear-based, abstinence-only curricula. Several communities have, in fact, improved the sexuality education offered in their schools.

In Vista, California, the school board voted to make important changes in the school district's sexuality education policy. It removed a provision prohibiting teachers from providing students with any information about contraception until the eleventh grade and struck language stating that "homosexual behavior in general is associated with a significantly shorter life span." This action continued to undo the work of a prior school board dominated by far right members.

In Tavares, Florida, individuals associated with a local church used a debate about proposed revisions to the sexuality education curriculum to attack the program's existence. "I think [the curriculum] stirs up desires,"[3] a local pastor told the school board. Despite this opposition, the Lake County School Board voted 3–2 to approve a program with most recommended revisions. The board drew national attention in 1992 when it approved an educational policy proclaiming that American culture is superior to all other foreign or historic cultures.

In Largo, Florida, the Pinellas School Board approved an important change in sexuality education provided to middle schoolers. The district had previously prohibited teachers from initiating conversations about condoms until high school. The board voted 5–2 to allow teachers to provide instruction, with parental permission, beginning in the eighth grade.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SEXUALITY EDUCATION

Many communities are increasingly debating sexuality education for elementary students. Even those communities that have well-established programs in lower elementary grades are facing pressure to move courses to higher grades. In fact, over 20 percent of the controversies which SIECUS documented during the 1995–96 school year involved attacks on elementary school sexuality education.

In Westfield, New Jersey, a typical controversy took place during the school year. Debates about proposed revisions to the Family Living and Health Education curriculum centered on information provided to elementary school students. A hot-button issue was HIV/AIDS education in the fourth grade. Critics charged that it would open the door to explicit discussions. One school board member told the local press she was "increasingly concerned about whether or not schools should get into areas of teaching sex education below the sixth grade." As a result of the controversy,

IN DUVAL COUNTY, FLORIDA: REFLECTING ON A LEGAL BATTLE FOR COMPREHENSIVE SEXUALITY EDUCATION

In 1992, six local families and Planned Parenthood of Northeast Florida sued the Duval County School Board for approving a fear-based sexuality education program—*Me, My World, My Future*—published by Teen Aid, Inc.

The suit charged that the curriculum was medically inaccurate and violated the Florida state law mandating comprehensive sexuality education. The plaintiffs dropped the lawsuit in April 1996 after the school board unanimously approved a new comprehensive curriculum that includes sexuality education from kindergarten through 12th grade.

SIECUS recently spoke with Linda Lanier, executive director of Planned Parenthood of Northeast Florida, about the struggle and its outcome.

How did the controversy begin? It began the day after the Teen Aid curriculum was adopted. The school board was supposed to adopt a curriculum for grades three through 12 that had been in process for two years. But it circumvented the regular process.

What were the biggest problems with the Teen Aid program? Its inaccuracy. On almost any page, you can find inaccurate information. It's also biased against girls and women and homosexuals and any kind of family that isn't made up of mommy, daddy, and children. The section on abortion and embryonic development is anti-choice.

On what did you base the claims against the Teen Aid program? The case was based on the fact that the curriculum violated the state statute that says medical information in a health curriculum shall be accurate. The suit was also based on the fact that the state statute calls for schools to provide a K-12 health curriculum.

In an effort to settle the dispute, a community task force was formed. How was it appointed and what recommendations did it make? I was a member of the task force. Its members were chosen by school board members and were representative of a wide spectrum of views in the community—medical groups, educational groups, PTAs, clergy, a nursing association. We had representatives from the Christian Coalition and Right to Life, as well as Planned Parenthood.

How did the Task Force come up with its recommendations? The group was run by volunteer facilitators trained in consensus building. We went through every grade level and discussed what young people should learn. We also worked on general policies. The school board voted 4–3 in August to accept the recommendations.

The new curriculum was approved 7–0. How did you get unanimous board support? The school board election two years ago was pivotal. It created the 4–3 majority that adopted our recommendations. The key election was in my neighborhood. A woman who had been on the board was known as the person who brought Teen Aid to Duval County. A candidate with a doctorate in education challenged her and campaigned door to door. She told me that 75 percent asked her about sexuality education. She said she supported comprehensive health education. Then they said, "You've got my vote." She won by a large margin. Without the makeup of the new school board, we would still be in court.

How would you describe the new curriculum? What is its scope and content? The curriculum was in line with what the task force recommended. It's very family focused, and it presents abstinence as the expected standard.

The media has made much of groups like the Christian Coalition and Planned Parenthood voicing support for the same curriculum. How did this happen? The media actually misrepresented what went on. The local chair of the Christian Coalition supported it; the chapter did not.

What curriculum was in place during these years of legal battle? The Teen Aid program has been in place since 1991. The new curriculum is ready. It's going to save the school system huge amounts of money. With the old Teen Aid curriculum, we had to buy $100,000 worth of supplies a year.

How critical was your lawsuit to getting the new program adopted? The public didn't know what was being taught until we filed the lawsuit. It educated the general public. Sharing the curriculum content was powerful.

What advice would you give to a community considering a legal case? I would say to exhaust every other means first before you consider the legal battle. I would also add that you have to have strong state laws to file a case like the one we did.

What would you have done differently? As far as strategy, nothing. We all agreed right up front that we would never speak about the other side in a demeaning way. We were fact-focused. I made a point not to pay a lot of attention to what the opposition was saying. I wanted to stay focused on health, accuracy, and family issues.

the school board voted 5–4 to reject revisions which would have updated and improved the curriculum.

In Schenectady, New York, elementary school sexuality education was also in the spotlight. Under a new policy, students will now wait until the fifth grade for lessons on human reproduction and puberty that were previously taught in the third and fourth grades. The board acted on recommendations made by the AIDS/Family Life Curricula Advisory Committee. A local group—Parents for a Healthy Education—attempted to prevent the district from scaling back the elementary school program.

Some communities did, however, successfully resist efforts to curtail elementary programs and, in some cases, have actually implemented more comprehensive ones. An example follows:

In Greeley, Colorado, members of the community attempted to derail a proposed program for students in kindergarten through fifth grade in the Greeley-Evans School District 6. The "Know Your Body" curriculum was recommended by a coalition of more than 90 citizens, including teachers, nurses, parents, administrators, students, and local health professionals. Officials from a local church released a flyer denouncing the curriculum as too explicit. The health coordinator for the district refuted allegations in public meetings and in the press, explaining the true content of the program. As a result of his efforts and widespread parental support, the "Know Your Body" curriculum was approved by a 5–2 vote of the school board.

SEPARATING CLASSES BY GENDER

Over 15 percent of the controversies documented during the 1995–96 school year focused on separating boys and girls for sexuality education classes. Even though the effectiveness of "co-ed versus single-gender" sexuality education classes has not been examined specifically by researchers, there are a variety of strongly held opinions about the benefits of providing some classes in single-gender environments. In fact, many districts separate young people for elementary school lessons on puberty. Overall, however, recent attempts to separate boys and girls for sexuality education are often political strategies rather than attempts to provide effective sexuality education. Such separation can threaten a program's existence because most schools do not have the resources to provide separate classes for each gender. School districts should view with caution attempts to separate boys and girls for all sexuality education classes because these efforts are often an attempt to dismantle existing programs. Such attacks are often the first step in a broader assault on sexuality education.

In South Carolina (community name withheld upon request), a newly elected school board member in one district introduced a resolution calling for the separation of boys and girls for all sexuality education lessons. The resolution states that teaching boys and girls together reduces the "natural modesty that exists between school-age girls and boys regarding...sexual reproduction." This proposal was rejected by the community's state-mandated Health Advisory Committee. The district's health and sexuality education coordinator is, however, concerned about future challenges.

In Fairfield, Ohio, a controversy erupted over proposed revisions to the K-12 health curriculum. Early in the debate, some parents objected to having boys and girls together for sexuality education. The school board quickly agreed to separate boys and girls in elementary and middle school classes. But opposition did not stop. Opponents of the full program began pushing the school board to implement two tracks of sexuality education, with one track offering a fear-based, abstinence-only curriculum and the other the comprehensive program. Although this effort was unsuccessful, the debate illustrates that efforts to promote gender-separated sexuality education classes are often part of a broader attack on sexuality education.

In Schenectady, New York, the school board decided not only that fifth grade sexuality education classes should separate boys and girls, but also that the students should learn only about their own gender's physiology. This leaves young people without critical information that they need to understand and feel comfortable with the other gender. One of the goals of sexuality education is to help boys and girls learn about each other and to interact with one another in appropriate and respectful ways.

The political strategy of fighting for single-gender classes has prohibited the teaching of sexuality education, at least temporarily, in many communities.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Few issues sparked controversy as consistently in the past school year as the inclusion of information about sexual orientation in sexuality education programs. Indeed, nearly 20 percent of all controversies that SIECUS documented involved this subject. Opponents of education about sexual orientation often argue that any information amounts to promoting an alternative lifestyle. In some communities, a single presentation or lesson caused heated community debates. Several examples follow:

In Solon, Iowa, a school allowed a presentation about sexual orientation during the 1994–95 school year. It was well received by staff and students and had positive results: Shortly afterward, students wrote a letter apologizing for harassing a gay couple living across from the school. The presentation was abruptly canceled, however, after a few members of the community, including the director of the American Family Association of Iowa, voiced opposition.[5]

In Framingham, Massachusetts, an anonymous letter to a local newspaper spurred a wave of publicity and controversy about a classroom exercise on sexual identity and orientation. Critics of this exercise on tolerance misrepresented its

goals. A newspaper editorial said that "public schools should not be in the business of promoting a lifestyle that for many is morally wrong."[6] The exercise, "The Heterosexual Questionnaire," substitutes the term "heterosexual" in questions usually asked of gay men and lesbians. For example, "How long have you known that you were heterosexual?" The exercise is similar to lessons designed to help young people understand racial and gender prejudice. Due to the uproar, the questionnaire is no longer used in Framingham.

In Montgomery County, Maryland, a heated debate erupted after the county's school board proposed including sexual orientation in its antidiscrimination policy. The board proposed the change after local surveys showed that high school students felt gay and lesbian youth experienced the most discrimination at school. Critics claimed the board had "sanctioned" homosexuality. It eventually approved the policy after stipulating that the school system does not "advocate, encourage, promote, or endorse" any particular sexual orientation.[7]

In Anoka-Hennepin, Minnesota, the issue of sexual orientation caused a volatile debate in the school district. A committee working on the district's health and sexuality education program was divided on how to address sexual orientation. Ultimately, it presented both majority and minority reports to the board, which accepted a committee "finding" that "thousands of gays/lesbians have changed and left gay lifestyle after dealing with the roots of homosexuality."[8] This statement was

VIDEO TERMED RACIST, DEMEANING

FAIRFAX COUNTY SCHOOL EXECUTIVE TALKS ABOUT *SEX, LIES & THE TRUTH*

During the 1995–96 school year, the Fairfax County (VA) School Board voted to remove a fear-based sexuality education video, *Sex, Lies & the Truth,* from the school district's curriculum after a heated controversy.

The board made the decision after members of the community spoke out against the video's racist and demeaning portrayal of minorities and its use of scare tactics to promote abstinence.

SIECUS spoke with Jerry Newberry, coordinator of family life education for the school district, about the controversy and its successful outcome.

Why did some parents and some school board members feel so strongly about the tape? An African-American board member spoke out about the tape's negative portrayal of minorities. This opinion was expressed by many African-American and Latino parents. Many parents were also concerned about the video's focus on fear as a strategy for promoting abstinence.

How did citizens become involved in replacing this tape? As a result of a 1993 attempt by the right in our community to censor a first-grade textbook, community members created a coalition to fight censorship and to keep accurate and factual information in the Family Life Education program. When the *Sex, Lies & the Truth* crisis occurred, this coalition took immediate action.

How did Focus on the Family, the makers of the tape, become involved in your local controversy? Focus on the Family was the first vendor to challenge our school board's right to choose materials for our students. They held a news conference in Reston, Virginia, and invited the press. They flew in three African-American physicians to speak about the video. They sent FAX messages throughout the United States asking supporters to pressure the Fairfax County School Board. They even sent a representative to our school board meeting to give interviews to reporters, telling them that our school district was censoring Focus on the Family's materials. On the day of the school board vote, James Dobson used his national show to encourage citizens to pressure the school.

What was their impact? Their efforts backfired. At the school board meeting, members of the community saw how they were interfering with local control.

How did the school board vote? The school board voted 9–2 to replace the tape. They were influenced by the negative racial stereotypes in the video and also by Focus on the Family's efforts to interfere with the school's decisions.

What are the most important strategies for dealing with such controversy? Educating reporters about the curriculum is extremely valuable. That means taking the time to build relationships, ensuring that they have the facts, and helping them understand the program.

How can a community build a coalition to support sexuality education? Begin small. Choose one or two people who will serve as contacts for the group you are forming. Define your mission. Write down why you exist and what your goals are. Decide in advance whether you want to become involved in local school board elections, whether you want to be partisan, and whether you want to have a nonprofit status. Work with the press. Call reporters to alert them to the issues. Write letters to the editor challenging the misinformation about sexuality education. Finally, stay motivated.

SUGGESTIONS FOR PREVENTING CONTROVERSY OVER SEXUALITY EDUCATION

There are numerous strategies that communities can employ to prevent controversy from erupting over sexuality education programs.* This brief list will highlight ways to avoid some of the landmines.

FOR ADMINISTRATORS AND SCHOOL BOARDS

- Establish a clear, written policy and guidelines for classroom speakers. Many local debates result because outside speakers are unfamiliar with district policy regarding the discussion of various issues. Make certain that outside speakers understand the parameters of their presentations and how to handle questions from students that go beyond what the district wants discussed. If speakers are not trained to work with specific ages, make certain that a teacher is available to work with them in advance to make the presentation age-appropriate. Also, arrange for a district employee (teacher, nurse, etc.) to attend the speaker's presentation.
- Develop clear policies on the selection and reconsideration of instructional materials. If controversy arises over a particular book, video, or other resource, make certain the district follows the process outlined in the policy. For assistance with developing these policies, contact the Freedom to Learn Project at People for the American Way, 2000 M Street, N.W., Washington DC 20036, 202/467-4999.
- Select participants for advisory committees from a broad segment of the community. Make numerous announcements regarding the formation of new committees so that those parents who are not already involved in school issues will have an opportunity to apply for positions. Establish clear ground rules at the first advisory committee meeting, including not going to the press during the materials selection process, and designating one individual as a public spokesperson. Early media involvement has disrupted many advisory committee meetings, turning them into political footballs rather than opportunities to examine and improve curricula. When holding meetings, use a majority rules (rather than a consensus) process to prevent one person derailing the session.

FOR TEACHERS

- Offer to meet with parents who have concerns about the curriculum. Make certain an administrator also attends these meetings. Remember that children and teens may misrepresent classroom actions or intent.
- Hold at least two different information forums near the start of the school year to allow parents to hear about the curriculum and view the educational materials. Again, an administrator should attend. Practice responding to concerns raised by parents so that you won't become defensive and will give a thoughtful answer.
- Ask parents to let you know what they think of the sexuality education program based on what they have heard from their children and from their own review of the materials. Individuals who support your work will stand with you when any debate arises over programs.

FOR PARENTS

- Support the sexuality education program by writing letters and making calls to teachers, administrators, and school board members. Most communication with school officials occurs because something has gone awry. School personnel will appreciate calls and letters confirming that programs are appreciated. If you are a professional working in the field *and* a parent, don't forget to mention both of your roles when writing in support of the program.
- Attend school board meetings and testify on the importance of providing a comprehensive approach to sexuality education.
- If the sexuality education program is under revision, consider going to the advisory committee charged with improving the program. Also participate in local coalitions dedicated to comprehensive health education.

—Leslie Kantor, M.P.H.

**SIECUS has developed a Community Action Kit on strengthening sexuality education programs and involving broad segments of the community in the planning process. Individuals can order the kit for $19.95 from SIECUS Publications Department, 130 West 42nd Street, Suite 350, New York, NY 10036-7802.*

followed by a resource list including Eagles' Wings, Outpost, and Homosexuals Anonymous. The recommendation, in effect, endorsed "reparative therapy," a treatment which the American Psychiatric Association (APA) says has no scientific basis.[9] In fact, the APA has determined that "gay men and lesbians who have accepted their sexual orientation positively are better adjusted than those who have not done so."[10]

In Merrimack, New Hampshire, a highly restrictive policy relating to sexual orientation helped to rid the school board of a far right majority. The policy, entitled "Prohibition of Alternate Lifestyle Instruction," was adopted by the board last summer to prevent teachers from providing any instruction to support "homosexuality as a positive lifestyle."[11] The policy forced a teacher to stop showing a film about Walt Whitman because it mentioned the poet was gay. Community opposition to the policy helped elect a new school board member in May. Within weeks, the new board voted to rescind the policy and replace it with the generic statement that "the Merrimack School District shall have no program or activity which is intended to promote sexual activity or any sexual orientation."[12]

In Salt Lake City, Utah, there were attacks on school-based gay and lesbian clubs. The Salt Lake City School Board voted to ban all nonacademic student clubs rather than allow gay students to form their own club and meet on school grounds.

In Glendale, California, the school board proposed requiring parental permission for students to join most school clubs. Critics contended that the board's move came in response to Hoover High School student plans to turn an informal gay and lesbian group into an official club. After considerable uproar in the community, the board opted to provide parents with information about all school clubs.

OPT OUT VS. OPT IN

Over 10 percent of community conflicts and two statewide debates have focused on whether programs should have opt-out or opt-in policies. Most school districts have a policy (opt-out) to allow parents to exclude their children from sexuality education classes by notifying the school. Some opponents of sexuality education are now pushing schools to institute a policy requiring explicit, written permission from parents before students can participate in programs (opt-in).

Most school administrators support the opt-out approach because it places the least burden on parents and because it is the least costly in terms of paperwork. Districts that keep statistics on these policies report that fewer than 5 percent of parents remove their children from classes. School administrators have voiced concern that a policy requiring parents to give explicit written permission for their children to attend sexuality education classes may affect at-risk youth whose parents may be less likely to sign and return permission slips. Many school administrators also worry about the burden of extra paperwork resulting from an opt-in policy. A recent analysis of the Fairfax County, Virginia schools estimates that the processing of 133,588 forms generated by the 97.7 percent of parents who want their children to receive sexuality education would require two weeks of work by 50 employees working 40 hours a week.[13]

However, requiring explicit, written parental permission has not reduced attendance in every case.

In South Bend, Indiana, a group of parents took action in 1992 to ensure that the Penn-Harris-Madison school district change to an opt-in policy. The district reported last December that more than 99 percent of students were given permission to take the classes.

In La Cygne, Kansas, a recent change to an opt-in policy in the seventh and ninth grades did not change the number of students participating in the sexuality education program.

Communities should be wary, however, of attempting to "solve" debates about the implementation of sexuality education programs by switching to an opt-in policy as evidenced by the next example.

In Dexter, Michigan, a mandatory psychology course (of which the sexuality education section required parental permission) was the subject of heated controversy. The district superintendent proposed changing the class to an elective because of his perception that parents were not giving permission for their children to participate in all or part of the course. Members of the community objected sharply to the psychology course not being required. The health teacher noted that the vast majority of parents had signed their children into the entire course for the past ten years. The superintendent ultimately withdrew his proposal. His actions illustrate that opt-in policies do not necessarily protect health and sexuality education programs from attack.

TWO SEPARATE TRACKS

Opponents of comprehensive sexuality education are beginning to push school districts to implement two tracks of sexuality education, with one providing an abstinence-only curriculum. Although the number is small—currently 5 percent of all SIECUS-monitored controversies— it is a growing strategy worthy of attention. This push is often made by a small group of parents who realize they cannot change the current, more comprehensive curriculum.

In Westford, Massachusetts, Blanchard Middle School currently provides a health curriculum with an opt-in provision for lessons on human sexuality. Ninety-nine percent of the students are enrolled in the entire course. However, those parents who remove their children from the human sexuality instruction recently complained that their children were stigmatized by their removal and are demanding an alternative abstinence-only program.

Many school districts do not have the staff or funds to

COURTS RESOLVE CLAIMS AGAINST SEXUALITY EDUCATION

Groups seeking to prohibit schools from offering sexuality education, HIV/AIDS education, and condom availability used the courts during the 1995–96 school year to press their claims that the programs violate parental rights and familial privacy.

Several recent legal decisions have affected sexuality education in different parts of the country.

In Hemet, California, a two-year-old lawsuit, which was filed by parents against the Hemet (CA) Unified School District for violating state law requiring accurate and inclusive sexuality education, was resolved out of court this spring.

Under the terms of the settlement, the school district will implement a two-track system for HIV/AIDS education. Students can enroll in a basic course containing minimum state-required information, or an expanded course containing more information. Parental permission is required for both.

At the start, the parents filed the suit because the school board's fear-based sexuality education program did not meet state standards. The board subsequently eliminated all sexuality education and provided only HIV/AIDS education as mandated by state law. Last September, the parents suing the district amended their suit to include the HIV/AIDS education program, which they contended also failed to provide students with the type of information required by the state.

The lawsuit was filed on behalf of district parents by People for the American Way, Planned Parenthood, and the pro bono assistance of attorneys at the Los Angeles law firm McCutchen, Doyle, Brown & Enersen, LLP.

In Falmouth, Massachusetts, a court decision protected the district's condom availability program, which was challenged by a few parents and students. In January, the U.S. Supreme Court refused to hear an appeal of the court ruling. The Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts had held that the program was voluntary and that parents could counsel students not to participate.

provide two tracks of sexuality education. It is interesting to note that communities that have provided several options have found that only a small minority of students are enrolled in the abstinence-only tracks.

In Wilmington, North Carolina, controversy about sexuality education provided in the New Hanover County Schools led officials to implement two tracks in 1993–94. Students were given the option of enrolling in fear-based, abstinence-only programs (using the Sex Respect and Teen Aid, Inc., curricula) or a comprehensive program (stressing postponement of sexual involvement and providing contraceptive information). Since that time, more than twice as many students have been enrolled in the comprehensive program as in the other track, and the number of students switching from fear-based to comprehensive education has increased each year.

In Virginia (community name withheld upon request), a similar controversy led a school district to offer three options: (1) comprehensive health and sexuality education, (2) health topics not related to sexuality, or (3) the Teen Aid, Inc. curricula. Over 95 percent of the students were given permission to participate in the comprehensive curriculum. Moreover, only a small number have chosen the Teen Aid option.

Some controversies are still resolved through a two-track system.

In Hemet, California, a two-year-old lawsuit was resolved out of court this spring. Under the terms of the settlement, the school district will implement a two-track system for HIV/AIDS education. Students can enroll in a basic course with minimal, state-required information, or an expanded course with more information. (See the sidebar above.)

Communities experiencing an aggressive push for fear-based, abstinence-only programs should exercise caution when considering two tracks. As the communities above illustrate, school districts that offer several tracks are spending a great deal of time and money to provide alternative programs that only a few parents support.

LESSONS FROM THE 1995–96 SCHOOL YEAR

Despite four years of concerted efforts by the far right to implement fear-based, abstinence-only education across the country, most communities continue to provide broader-based programs. Opponents of comprehensive sexuality education continue, however, to scale back what is offered in the schools and, in most cases, to define the key arguments in the debate. Furthermore, by attacking the very structure of sexuality education (who teaches it, which students are present, how parents give permission), opponents are successfully moving the debate back to whether sexuality education belongs in the schools at all.

Battles over which type of sexuality education to offer cost communities a great deal of time, energy, and, in some

cases, money, while adults struggle to decide whether or not to include certain topics. Sadly, while struggles take place, young people are often deprived of any sexuality education from reliable sources and must look to the same inadequate sources of information upon which young people have relied for decades—peers and the media.

Despite the publication of numerous studies confirming that effective sexuality education requires information about both abstinence and contraception (as well as other components), far right organizations continue to promote programs that are educationally unsound and that fail to give young people the skills they need to resist premature sexual involvement.

If promoting abstinence is a key goal for school districts, they must implement programs that include information on both abstinence and contraception, which utilize experiential learning exercises, and which are taught by trained teachers.

Far right opposition to a number of well-evaluated, abstinence-based programs that have helped young people postpone intercourse reveals their broader goal of teaching ideology in schools rather than helping young people to abstain from sexual intercourse. Even the most recently published abstinence-only programs promoted by the far right contain sexist bias, racial stereotypes, and medical misinformation.

The trends in opposition to sexuality education illustrate that tactics are becoming more sophisticated. Rather than pushing solely for the implementation of a particular fear-based curriculum (which could be easily examined and debated in the community), opponents are utilizing a number of strategies that attack the structure and basis of sexuality education classes. These tactics are more difficult to resist because: 1) they are not recognized as outright attacks on the entire sexuality education program until well into the debate, and 2) proponents of sexuality education are not united in their position on issues such as gender-separation.

As long as the opposition is successful at identifying and targeting areas of discord among sexuality education proponents, they will likely succeed in scaling back quality sexuality education and in setting the terms of the debate.

The key to ensuring comprehensive sexuality education in the nation's schools is to mobilize mainstream parents and community members and to better articulate the need for a comprehensive approach.

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SIECCONN RECOGNIZES OUTSTANDING SEXUALITY EDUCATORS

The Sexuality Information and Education Council of Connecticut recognized six individuals for their advancement of sexuality education in Connecticut at the organization's first Annual Meeting and Awards Dinner.

Those recognized were Janet Spinner, M.S., "Sexuality Educator in the Health Care Setting"; Patricia Ricks, "Sexuality Educator in the Community"; Annie Cotten-Huston, Ph.D., "Sexuality Educator in the University Setting"; Barbara Beitch, Ph.D., "Sexuality Educator in the High School Setting"; Veronica Maschio Skerker, M.S., "Sexuality Education Advocate"; and Robert Selverstone, Ph.D., "Outstanding Leadership in Sexuality Education."

THE CONFLICT OVER SEXUALITY EDUCATION: INTERVIEWS WITH PARTICIPANTS ON BOTH SIDES OF THE DEBATE

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What are the issues that mobilize individuals to participate in the debate over sexuality education? Twenty-two interviews recently conducted with individuals in the mid-Atlantic states suggest that such curricula are symbols in a much larger struggle over visions of sexuality, and, by extension, morality, family, gender, and national identity.

BACKGROUND

The idea of sexuality education has stirred controversy since its introduction into public schools over a century ago. Such conflicts have recently increased in number and intensity, with opposing sides vying to influence public perception and school board policy.

Indeed, more than 400 grassroots conflicts have erupted in this decade alone, with 131 occurring during the 1995–96 school year.[1] Most are conflicts between advocates of comprehensive sexuality education and proponents of abstinence-only education.

Although polls consistently show that most respondents, regardless of religious affiliation, support sexuality education in the schools, each side has its own definition and says it has the support of parents and administrators. Consequently, questions concerning the definition of sexuality education continue to prompt debate and divide communities.

METHODOLOGY

This study involved 22 respondents—ranging from a retired school teacher to a high school student editor—from three school districts in the mid-Atlantic states involved in conflicts over sexuality education. They were selected for interviews because of their active, public involvement in the conflicts. They were selected either from newspaper articles or from recommendations by individuals in the districts.

All respondents were interviewed (1) about the issues and ideologies behind their decisions to participate in the conflict and (2) about their perceptions of sexuality education in relation to contemporary American society. All interviews were conducted one-on-one in the respondents' homes. Each interview, which was based on a schedule of identical questions, lasted approximately two to three hours.

The 11 respondents on each side of the conflict were concerned about the same issues. As a whole, they were unexpectedly homogeneous in terms of family and socioeconomic status.

ADVOCATES OF COMPREHENSIVE SEXUALITY EDUCATION

The advocates of comprehensive sexuality education were concerned about a number of issues which they perceived as under attack: public education, individual freedom, and tolerance for social and sexual difference. Overall, they saw abstinence-only education as a crucial component of a religio-political movement threatening to theocratize America. As one individual said:

> I do believe that I am dealing with an organized fundamentalist right-wing agenda that is about much more than sex education.

In particular, they felt that abstinence-only education censored content and replaced scientific fact with religious dogma and that it incompletely and erroneously covered homosexuality, masturbation, contraception, abortion, and premarital sexuality.

They were specifically upset at the curriculum's exaggeration of the dangers of premarital sexual relations (designed to frighten students into abstinence) and its discussion of contraception only in regard to its deficiencies—something they termed "life-threatening censorship."

> What alerted me, in particular, was that [proponents of abstinence-only education] made some statements I thought were medically inaccurate. One of the statements was that several years ago there were only five STDs and now there are over 20. I thought, "What are they trying to say? Have we had new mutations of bacteria or whatever?" I realized later that what they were implying was that our youth were so sexually free that these new STDs have just kind of cropped up out of nowhere and that they are just trying to scare kids: if you are promiscuous, this is what is going to happen.

The advocates of comprehensive sexuality education were concerned about censorship because of their belief in

the virtues of education and full disclosure. Above all, they felt that students needed to develop critical thinking skills and that sexual knowledge, in and of itself, was an admirable objective.

They criticized the premise that a program which critically discusses a behavior or idea implicitly encourages it. In fact, they viewed increasing rates of adolescent pregnancy and STDs as signs that students needed more—not less—sexuality education.

They also viewed abstinence-only education's censorship of medical information as essentially denying adolescents their right to make healthy sexual decisions. They felt adolescents must learn how to make decisions if they are to become autonomous adults.

> Certainly we want [sexuality education] to teach our kids to be responsible, and I do not advocate promiscuity, but I think they must have information available so that they can make their own choices because, obviously, we are not going to be there for them all the time, or with them, nor do we want to be.

> I think the basic goal gets lost—which is...knowledge, health-related knowledge.

The advocates of comprehensive sexuality education believed that sexuality comprises an essential aspect of a person's identity, that premarital sexual relations are not inherently wrong, and that adolescents are sexual beings. This has helped to explain their views on the necessity of extensive adolescent sexuality education.

> You have to give them information because they are sexual people. You can't deny that fact. To not realize that sex is a healthy part of growing up is ludicrous. It's insane.

They also felt that sexuality was largely a matter of personal choice and was contingent not upon religious or legislative proscriptions but upon the values and consent of the individual. They also believed that abstinence education's goal of total abstinence before marriage was unrealistic and dangerous.

> This is just sticking your head in the sand. The numbers do not support an attitude that this is not happening.... And I just think it is some sort of odd right-wing experiment and that the test animals are our kids.

Underlying their criticisms of abstinence-only education as something that teaches students "what to think" instead of "how to think" was their belief that knowledge empowers and censorship controls. They felt the true purpose of abstinence-only education was to control attitudes and behavior.

> I think that they want to control the public and they want followers. They don't want independent-minded, free-thinking people....They don't give [students] the chance to think.

Advocates of comprehensive sexuality education also felt that many of the exclusionary models in abstinence-only education were designed to punish nonconformists and to promote a narrow theological agenda. Their objections to intolerance were perhaps best articulated in their views on social and sexual difference and the rights of individuals to lead their lives free from intrusion.

> I look at my little girl, and I think what if she turned out hating blacks, Arabs, gays.... And it's a horrifying thought.

They felt that abstinence-only education's emphasis on two-parent and heterosexual families (with the father as provider and the mother as homemaker) denigrated all other family types. They also objected to the contention that marriages between persons of different racial, cultural, or religious backgrounds were more likely to end in divorce.

> [They] are saying, "You guys are worth nothing, and you are not functioning properly..." It's very exclusionary.

Advocates of comprehensive sexuality education frequently and emphatically criticized what they perceived as abstinence-only education's depiction of women as inferior to men in every way except morally.

> I think it's a basic philosophy that children and women cannot be keepers of their own bodies, that they don't have the intelligence or the right to be their own keepers. It's just patriarchy....

They also viewed abstinence-only education as promoting the image of women as "moral gatekeepers," an idea that makes women responsible for regulating their own sexuality as well as male sexual behavior. They viewed this as restricting women and blaming them for any deviation—by male or female—from ascribed sexual roles.

> There has to be this punishment meted out to these awful girls. The girl always seems to be the scapegoat. It's her fault. It's her baby. Very little concern about the fathers paying child support. Punish that girl! And that offends me a lot.

In this regard, the advocates of comprehensive sexuality education viewed abstinence-only education as constituting religious indoctrination designed to return society to an age characterized by female subordination, closeted homosexuals, and moral absolutes—utilizing fear, guilt, and shame to ensure conformity.

It reverberates for me, I think, on a personal and emotional level...having grown up pre-Roe, pre-sexual revolution—where fear and shame were used to control, and D&Cs were common.

They believed that abstinence-only education was the starting point for a conservative Christian agenda threatening both public education and society itself. They spoke passionately of their fear that religious-based censorship and intolerance would result in replacing scientific fact with religious doctrine and history lessons with religion lessons.

And this is only a tiny tip of the iceberg....Where are they going to go next? To...the English classes? Are they going to have [the great literary works] removed? [To] the anatomy class? They might as well have the anatomy class removed.

Indeed, the advocates of comprehensive sexuality education were quite clear in what they perceived as the goal of the conservative Christian supporters of abstinence education: to indoctrinate a future generation and to translate their religious convictions into social mandates.

The far right [want] to take over....They said four or five years ago that if they couldn't take over the White House they would take over all local [governments]. And, if you control the school boards of the nation, what [is]...the need for a President...if you can control the minds of the future generation.

When asked why they were involved in the conflict over sexuality education, they said it was in protest to an encroaching religio-political movement that threatened their way of life and their beliefs.

I'm real worried....Somebody should put the brakes on these folks because a lot of what they're...doing is really based on this same kind of "don't talk about it and it won't be an issue" censorship.

THE PROPONENTS OF ABSTINENCE-ONLY EDUCATION

The proponents of abstinence-only education felt that comprehensive sexuality education promotes a secular notion of sexuality which violates parental authority and culminates in increased non-marital sexual behavior. More specifically, they felt such teachings were guided not by a moral framework (with a strict adherence to Biblical principles) but, rather, by one which judges all actions as morally equivalent. This criticism of relativism was at the heart of their opposition.

It is not a value-neutral approach. It values individual choice...that says there is no right and wrong. Anytime you take that, that's a value.

These respondents linked such increased tolerance to the nation's rejection of religion and its resulting moral decline. They spoke of "tolerance" and "individual rights" as code words for campaigns of relativism and secularism, of which sexuality education is an example.

[Sexuality education] seems to be a symptom of a philosophy that our society has swallowed, and...we have not done very well since [school prayer and abortion] decisions were made over the last 20 [or] 30 years...but they still think that "Oh, aren't we more tolerant. Aren't we more accepting. Oh, the gay[s] and lesbians, aren't we doing a good job in making them feel more secure in their sexuality." Well, I guess I take issue....

The respondents spoke passionately about their belief that this country's moral future rests on its ability to teach its children right from wrong based on moral absolutes. This included restigmatizing premarital sexual relations and out-of-wedlock births by utilizing guilt and shame. Their advocacy of shame and guilt was based on their belief that females need the threat of social ostracism to ensure their resistance to male pressure. A woman in her fifties discussed how shame protected her from engaging in premarital sexuality:

What is wrong with the old-fashioned ideas of sin and immorality if that's going to help the person make a conscious decision?... It protected me. It certainly protected me.

In this regard, proponents of abstinence-only education were particularly critical of what they perceived as the "values-clarification" approach to comprehensive sexuality education, where the teacher facilitates the students' decision-making processes by supplying them with information so they can reach a decision appropriate to their unique situation—not by instructing them on "right" and "wrong." They were particularly concerned with the approach's defense of a student's ability and right to make his/her own sexual decisions.

Part of the problem with the comprehensive education courses is that they're non-directive....They assume that students at these ages are able to make wise decisions and come up with their own values. I do not want my child coming up with her own values, thank you very much.

Interestingly, each of the participants related comprehensive sexuality programs to drug and alcohol programs and questioned why the former uses a nondirective approach and the latter a directive approach.

When somebody is drinking and driving...that's [a] really dangerous activity, that's risky behavior.... It's the same to me as with a kid who's sexually active.

The abstinence-only respondents also believed that comprehensive sexuality education violated parental authority by encouraging students to "choose" their own values. They typically described a scenario in which students, who had learned from their parents that premarital sexuality was morally wrong and physically harmful, were taught that sexual relations are plausible.

> [Comprehensive sexuality education] defies my parental authority.... It says you do not have to listen to your parents. This bugs me to death.... I invested 18 years...and you think you're going to take [her]...and tear her down to where she doesn't even have to listen to me anymore? That she's her own person....

All of the respondents felt that sexuality education should not be taught in schools at all and that it should be discussed only within the safe confines of the home or church. As a result of these and other related discussions, I concluded that their activism resulted more from their opposition to sexuality education than from their support for abstinence-only education.

They objected to the teaching of such subjects as abortion, contraception, homosexuality, and masturbation because: (1) their inclusion destroys a student's natural modesty and results in sexual experimentation; and (2) their discussion implicitly gives the students permission to engage in premarital sexual relations.

> I think that which promotes sexual activity gives the kids ideas that they never would have had in their wildest dreams. I think...it breaks down any moral scruples that the kids have by talking about it and exploring all the different ways of having [sexual relations].

Their criticisms were based on complex gender ideologies—including the belief that females are inherently less sexual and, as a result, are responsible for regulating both their own and male sexuality. For this reason, all the respondents viewed comprehensive sexuality education as feminist-inspired propaganda designed to teach females that their sexual desires are as important as a male's. The participants' sexual ideologies included their belief that sexuality comprises a God-given gift which is wonderfully natural under the "appropriate circumstances" and life-threateningly dangerous under others.

> Sex is a total giving of one person to another, the total giving of hearts, minds...bodies, of selves to each other...and that's exactly what marriage is, you see, and that's why the Lord wants it in marriage. Because once you take it outside of marriage...it's a lie.

The view of premarital sexuality as emotionally and physically dangerous is epitomized by a respondent who recalled what he told his son about consequences: "It's a tough decision to be abstinent...and if I don't, I'm going to fall and succumb and be like the rest. I'll end up dead or with herpes the rest of my life, or in some pregnancy, or somehow with my future ruined."

The respondents' second major criticism of comprehensive sexuality education is their belief that the discussion of homosexuality and birth control implicitly—and, at times, explicitly —gives students permission to engage in premarital sexual relations.

> Well, they say that they teach abstinence, but, when you say, "But look at this side of the fence and look at the condoms and look at what you're missing out on and look how much fun these people are having"....This is not teaching abstinence.

Each of the abstinence-only respondents spoke of the "myth of safe sex," which they said was developed by supporters of comprehensive sexuality education for financial and ideological gain. They felt premarital sexual relations were never "safe" because condoms are unreliable, difficult to use and don't actually prevent the transmission of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).

> You need to let the kids know that condoms don't protect them even against other types of STDs. I mean, there [are] some that will protect them...to a degree.... But even then...there are STDs that these condoms will not protect you from.

Similarly, because they don't think AIDS threatens students in their community, the abstinence-only respondents view HIV/AIDS education as a ploy to integrate a relativist sexual ideology into the public schools.

> I don't even think AIDS is a real danger to the kids here, percentage wise. Their dangers aren't contracting AIDS. There's a lot of other dangers—emotional, STDs, pregnancies. I think the information that we get on AIDS is distracting.

"It's all about an ideology...that says everything is relative." This statement exemplifies the abstinence-only respondents' belief that comprehensive sexuality education is part of a plot to promote "cultural relativism," generally, and nontraditional notions of gender and sexuality, specifically. They were clear about whom they believed was spearheading this push.

> This is not simply a course on family life. This is an ideology that they want to push on children so that they, by a certain age, will be indoctrinated with that ideology.

> The homosexual community...the radical feminists... atheists and agnostics.... They don't want any restrictions on anything.

When asked, only two of the abstinence-only respondents described themselves as "politically active." Most said they were acting out of a concern for America's moral future. In this regard, they clearly perceived themselves as part of a populist uprising in defense of morality.

> We're being challenged now to take our rightful place and to take our citizenship seriously. Don't just sit there and complain that things are going down the drain. We've been silent for too long. So, yeah, the silent majority—maybe now we'll become the unsilent majority, you know, the vocal majority, and I think that's liberty. Change is coming.

Finally, the abstinence-only respondents indicated that they feel comprehensive sexuality education is a threat to their most deeply held assumptions concerning the role of religion in dictating individual behavior.

> It's the battle of whether...there is a God or not and whether He has the right to legislate our behavior and our values.

CONCLUSION

My interviews with advocates of comprehensive sexuality education show a deep concern that abstinence-only education is part of a crusade to transform contemporary American society into an authoritarian theocracy.

Similarly, my interviews with the proponents of abstinence-only education suggest that their opposition is based upon a belief that comprehensive sexuality education is a component in "relativist" ideology where students will learn to choose their own sexual values.

The work of both groups stems not only from their desire to promote specific sexual ideologies and societal visions but also from their perception that the opposition represents a crucial component in a hostile and encroaching political movement.

As such, the debated curricula are manifest symbols in a much larger cultural struggle over which of the two group's visions of morality, family, and gender will predominate.

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NOW WHAT DO I DO? NEW SIECUS PUBLICATION HELPS PARENTS OF PRE-TEENS WITH TOUGH QUESTIONS

SIECUS has published a new resource—*Now What Do I Do? How to Give Your Pre-Teens Your Messages*—to assist parents of preadolescents in providing their children with their family values about sexuality and with the most accurate, honest and developmentally appropriate sexuality information.

After consulting an Advisory Committee of nationally-recognized professionals with expertise in preadolescent development, SIECUS developed this 44-page booklet that parents will find extremely helpful, supportive and non-threatening.

The booklet provides 15 situations dealing with sexuality issues. Topics include AIDS, puberty, love, dating, contraception, and masturbation.

A three-step process asks the parent to consider why the situation arose, how to respond, and what messages they want their child to receive. The "Remember" section for each topic includes helpful hints about pre-teens and sexuality, as well as some basic facts that pre teens need.

One parent said that *Now What Do I Do?* will "help keep my sanity while dealing with real—but tough—situations."

Now What Do I Do? was funded through a grant from the Moriah Fund. Copies of the booklet are $2.50 each and are available from the SIECUS Publications Department, 130 West 42nd Street, Suite 350, New York, NY 10036-7802.

NOT ALL MORAL VISIONS ARE CREATED EQUAL: KOHLBERG'S MORAL HIERARCHY APPLIED TO THE POLITICS OF SEXUALITY EDUCATION

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The "Culture War," as it is frequently called, is a conflict between two broadly defined and loosely affiliated groups of people—the "orthodox" and the "progressives"—who hold diametrically opposed moral visions for America.[1] Each sees the other as a threat: The orthodox fear a progression toward "state-supported, secular humanist, moral relativism" while progressives fear a slide toward an "authoritarian, nontolerant theocracy." (See related article, "The Conflict Over Sexuality Education: Interviews with Participants on Both Sides of the Debate," on page 12.)

This conflict is played out in many arenas that affect sexuality education: school reform; family planning and abortion rights; human rights for gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgenders; family-related policies; and school board politics, including whether or not sexuality education belongs in a curriculum. Caught in the cross fire is the "uncommitted middle," the majority of Americans whose opinions fluctuate depending upon which view they deem most reasonable.[2]

James Davison Hunter, in his book *Culture Wars: The Struggle to Define America* (1991), suggests that these two philosophical groups are well matched, promoting equally valid if divergent moral visions in an attempt to win over the hearts and minds of the middle. However, are they truly operating on the same moral plane?

A common refrain in the sexuality education debate, for example, is that progressives are not as "moral" as their opponents. Many have been intimidated into silence or retreat by accusations that they are "amoral," "immoral," "morally relativistic," "secular humanist," or even "atheist." On the other hand, some orthodox opponents to sexuality education have used tactics against programs and individuals that some progressives would say are not very "moral."

This article will present prevailing theories of moral development that suggest progressives, in general, use a more advanced level of reasoning than their orthodox counterparts. While one should be careful not to over generalize, the current conflict might be explained, at least in part, as one between individuals at different stages of moral development. In light of this fundamental difference, some specific strategies are suggested for advocating for effective, comprehensive school-based sexuality education.

> *"Seek first to understand, then to be understood."*
> Steve R. Covey
> *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*

THEORIES OF MORAL DEVELOPMENT

Moral reasoning is defined as one's beliefs about the obligation of self toward others, and of society toward self.[3] It provides a "lens" with which an individual views events of the community and the world, and his/her proper role in them.

Dr. Lawrence Kohlberg, in his groundbreaking work on moral development, asserted that the foundation of morality in a democratic society lies with an individual's developing universal principles of justice, not just acquiring simple virtues and vices. He says that individuals progress through three levels of moral reasoning—*preconventional, conventional,* and *postconventional*—with two stages within each level. (See, "Kohlberg's Hierarchy of Moral Development: In Brief," on page 18.) Individuals move through these stages at different speeds, with only about a quarter ever reaching the advanced stages (Stages 5 or 6). Most remain at the conventional level (Stages 3 or 4).[4]

Dr. Carol Gilligan expands on Dr. Kohlberg's theory, which was primarily focused on men. She adds that, while men's morality is centered around an ethic of justice, women's morality is oriented more toward an ethic of caring. In other words, when presented with a moral dilemma that involves competing individual needs, women are more likely to base their judgment on what works best for everyone as opposed to the rights of one individual over another.

Women advance through the three levels differently than men do. At the preconventional level, they are mostly self-centered. At the conventional level, they are focused on caring for others, even to the detriment of their own needs. At the postconventional level, they see the value of balancing the needs of others with their own needs. As with most individuals, the majority of women never advance beyond the conventional level of moral reasoning.[5]

Editor's Note: *This article is based on a year-long, interdisciplinary course titled "American Family Values" co-taught by Dr. Hedgepeth. It addressed, among other things, developmental psychology, personal values, and the Culture War.*

KOHLBERG'S HIERARCHY OF MORAL DEVELOPMENT: IN BRIEF

LEVEL 1: PRECONVENTIONAL

Stage 1: *Egocentric Orientation.*
Motivated by obedience to authority figures and avoidance of punishment. Doesn't consider the interests of others or see more than one point of view.

Stage 2: *Instrumental Orientation.*
Self-interested and exchange-oriented: "You scratch my back, and I'll scratch yours."

LEVEL 2: CONVENTIONAL

Stage 3: *Interpersonal Conformity.*
Does good deeds to gain approval and meet expectations of own social group: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

Stage 4: *Social Order Orientation.*
Rule and law-oriented. Conforms to maintain the status quo (social or religious). Fears a breakdown in the system "if enough people do wrong."

LEVEL 3: POSTCONVENTIONAL

Stage 5: *Social Contract Orientation.**
Respects others' rights and is aware that people hold a variety of opinions and values. Recognizes some universal rights like life and liberty. Realizes that law and morality sometimes conflict.

Stage 6: *Universal Principles Orientation.**
Follows self-chosen universal principles of justice, such as equality and dignity of all human beings. When laws violate these, follows the principles.

Adapted from L. Kohlberg, *The Psychology of Moral Development* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984).

*Kohlberg says there is little distinction between Stages 5 and 6.

A PLACE ON KOHLBERG'S HIERARCHY

Asserting that the orthodox and progressives are at different levels on Kohlberg's scale is not a new idea.[6] What is new, however, is the application of this observation to the politics and practice of sexuality education.

Most orthodox operate at Stage 4 Orthodox individuals, as described in the book *Culture Wars* typically hold beliefs highly consistent with Kohlberg's Stage 4 (and some elements of Stages 1, 2, and 3). In this belief system, God, the Bible, the Koran, Marx, or some other formal authority or dogma offers individuals the "one right answer" to all moral and political concerns. Issues are seen in terms of black and white, right or wrong. For these individuals, correct moral action is prescribed and is not subject to interpretation by individuals.

This view also embraces hierarchical relationships: God as head of the universe and man as the head of the church and family. Quite logically, such thought does not take kindly to feminism, which is seen as one of the driving forces behind movements for public school sexuality education, gay civil rights, and "abortion on demand."

Some orthodox who are religious fundamentalists believe they have a moral mandate to proselytize, or "witness," for their religion. Consequently, they cannot observe what they believe is evil or immoral (for example, "to stand by and let abortions happen" or "to allow schools to promote homosexuality") and not take action. Also, some of these individuals will do "good" deeds in part because they believe they will be punished otherwise (characteristic of Stage 1 thinking).

Some orthodox individuals believe that the development of critical thinking is risky because it implies a critique of authority, which could contribute to a breakdown in the system (characteristic of Stage 4 thinking). And although they benefit from living within a democratic society (and thus are at liberty to express and practice their beliefs), they often distrust the democratic process or are intolerant of those whom they perceive to be different (characteristic of Stage 1 through 4 thinking).[7]

Most progressives operate at Stage 5. Progressives acknowledge and celebrate the multiplicity of values in our pluralistic society, with its diversity of cultures, religions, family configurations, and lifestyles. They also see the shades of gray in many moral issues and, in fact, may operate on a different moral level as circumstances require. Some use scripture or other spiritual writings to guide them, but often view such authority as subject to interpretation. This contributes to the impression by the orthodox that progressives are "morally relativistic" (changing the moral code according to the circumstance). Progressives also believe that humans have the means to solve their own problems (the origin of the charge of "secular humanism").

Progressives welcome critical thinking and inquiry.

They worry that religious involvement in schools and public policymaking will lead to the restriction of both. They also support the rights of others—even groups or individuals they may find personally distasteful (such as the Ku Klux Klan's right to demonstrate or a murderer's right to a fair trial).[8]

The "uncommitted" middle operates at Stages 3 and 4. Most Americans are part of the "uncommitted" middle, which falls into Kohlberg's Stages 3 and 4. They usually align their opinions with those who are in authority and who are most credible. In surveys, they generally express tolerance for human rights and diversity yet consistently vote against such principles as the Bill of Rights when they are not labeled as such.[9] Typically not critical thinkers or well-informed on issues, these individuals are easily swayed by arguments from both progressives and orthodox but react against perceived "extremism" from any quarter.[10] (For example, most Americans agree that gays and lesbians should not be denied equal protection under the law, but they reject the notion of gay marriage as "going too far.")[11]

Dr. Kohlberg and other psychologists have provided additional insights on the subject:

- Individuals advance (but never regress) on the moral scale as a result of moral dilemmas (real or contrived) that challenge their thinking.[12] Since individuals naturally seek stasis, they are infused with a "need to know" to resolve such cognitive conflicts. Consider, for example, people opposed to school-based sexuality education who change their views after seeing statistics on sexual risk-taking among youth, or anti-gay parents who learn their own child is gay. This process can be promoted in learning activities called perspective-taking, role-practice,[13] or other personalization methods, such as teen theater, guest speakers, peer education, or introspective activities.
- A person's organized system of moral thought is generally consistent internally. It often has, however, competing values and beliefs that require prioritization in the face of a dilemma.[14] Consider, for example, the parent who values heterosexuality, yet loves his/her gay child, or the person who believes parents should educate their own children, but also worries about those who are not getting sufficient education at home. Likewise, many women considering an abortion value both the developing life of their unborn fetus and their own life as they have known or planned it.
- Religion does not equate with morality. Strongly religious people fall into all stages on the Kohlberg scale (and equally across all religions).[15] However, an inverse relationship has been found between orthodox religious belief and principled moral reasoning (the more dogmatic the belief system, the lower the moral stage).[16]
- Individuals operating at a higher stage of morality can understand the moral perspective of someone at a lower stage (because they have "been there"), but not vice versa.[17] This partially explains the frustration of many progressives who can comprehend and respect the beliefs of the orthodox, but do not receive the same understanding and respect in return.
- An individual's level of education is not a factor in morality (though Kohlberg maintains that a certain level of cognitive reasoning is required for higher stages).[18] This explains why highly intelligent and well-educated orthodox and progressive individuals can strongly disagree on moral issues.
- The method of an individual's education sometimes may be a factor in the development of moral reasoning. Some seminaries produce graduates, for example, who are highly educated, but within only one ideology. Similarly, some universities promote only certain "politically correct" views. Education that fosters moral development requires exposure to many different philosophical perspectives and value systems, within what Kohlberg calls a "just society" (in other words, a democratic classroom). Students advance their moral reasoning when they examine dilemmas with people who are higher on the Kohlberg hierarchy.[19]

APPLICATIONS TO SEXUALITY EDUCATION

This analysis of orthodox and progressive thought offers several implications for the work of proponents of sexuality education:

For effective classroom practice. It confirms that many sexuality educators are doing the right thing in the classroom. Such methods as role plays, critical thinking exercises, and collaborative learning, combined with a respect for diversity, a student-centered classroom, and nondirective teaching are, according to Kohlberg and others, the most likely to encourage moral and cognitive growth.[20] Sexuality educators should assertively reaffirm the value of effective classroom practices, citing existing literature that supports their use.

For effective advocacy of programs. The following strategies can be used to garner support for effective, comprehensive sexuality education and other progressive initiatives:

1. Pay attention to the middle on an issue and don't take actions that appear "extremist." Remember that long-term change happens slowly, in small increments; change that seems too rapid or radical typically results in a backlash and lost ground.
2. Use methods of educating the public that already have proved effective in increasing knowledge and changing attitudes

STRATEGIES FOR EDUCATING THE PUBLIC ABOUT YOUR ISSUE

These strategies will help individuals who are working on behalf of comprehensive sexuality education in the schools:

- **Help your audience personalize the issue.**

An example of effective use of this strategy occurred in a recent television debate between two senators about a bill that would outlaw "partial-birth" abortions. The progressive senator kept making the point, "But what if this was your daughter whose life was at risk?"

Remember that most people don't understand abstract principles of fairness and justice but can relate to self-interest.

- **Make certain your language is precise and accurate.**

Use "abstinence-based, comprehensive sexuality education," not "sex education" or especially "sexual instruction." Don't expect the average person to understand the complexities or scope of sexuality education. Teach them.

- **Present moral dilemmas as they truly exist.**

The abortion issue involves a set of competing needs: those of the fetus and those of the mother and her family. Give anecdotes that "put a human face" on the issue and demonstrate its moral complexity.

A poignant example is the recent P-Flag (Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) advertising campaign called "Project Open Mind," that some religious political extremists have tried to litigate out of existence.

The two advertisements juxtapose clips of virulent, anti-gay rhetoric by televangelists with scenes of a young gay man being chased and beaten up and of a young lesbian contemplating suicide.

These ads set up a moral dilemma that may force the competing values of an uncommitted individual to the surface. ("I don't agree with homosexuality, but gay-bashing and youth suicide are unacceptable to me.") The process of reconciling these beliefs can lead to moral growth.

- **Frame the issue in diverse ways to address the many moral perspectives of your audience.**

If you are appearing in a public debate or taking part in a media interview, emphasize several key points, each directed at a different moral level:

- Appeal to established authority or self-serving interests for *preconventional* individuals. ("Sexuality education has the support of the majority of the public and all major institutions" and "Failing to address the needs of youth for accurate information ultimately will cost everyone through higher taxes to pay for unplanned children and medical costs for people living with HIV.")
- Appeal to the Golden Rule or maintenance of the status quo for *conventional* individuals. ("If we want to promote healthy families and relationships, we have a responsibility to educate youth about sexual responsibility and parenting skills.")
- Remind *postconventional* individuals of universal principles. ("Everyone has a right to accurate information about health.")

- **Specifically address the likely concerns of women.**

Seek to involve women directly and tailor your message to speak to their concern for others.

Marian Wright Edelman's approach to welfare reform, for example, focuses on the needs of children, rather than their parents. Similarly, syndicated columnist Ellen Goodman, in a recent article, advocated a litmus test for every governmental policy decision: "What does this mean for children?"

Share research on negative consequences of sexual risk-taking (as well as the positive impacts of effective sexuality education) to focus attention on the well-being of children.

- **Know your facts so that you can effectively counter misinformation and exaggerations.**

Many opponents of effective sexuality education distribute misinformation about condom effectiveness, sexually transmitted diseases or abortions, in an attempt to "scare" youth into abstinence. Know and emphasize the facts. (Compare the 97–99 percent effectiveness rate of condoms to the much lower effectiveness rates of seat belts, smoke alarms, or vaccinations.)

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(methods that foster "perspective-taking"). (See "Strategies for Educating the Public About Your Issue," page 20.)

3. Avoid the use of "war language," personal attacks, and emotional outbursts, all of which frighten and alienate the middle. Take the high road in as calm, logical, and unperturbed a manner as possible. Give the other side plenty of opportunity to undermine themselves. Listen for opportunities to expose the full extent and consequences of their vision. ("Am I hearing you say that young people who have contracted HIV sexually deserve what they get?")

4. Don't waste your time trying to gain the understanding of extremists who represent a small, if outspoken, minority. Deeply entrenched, prejudiced individuals who feel morally justified in their actions are difficult, if not impossible, to affect because their core identity is often centered around their prejudice.[21] Such individuals are unlikely to listen to logical arguments. Focus your time, talents and energy on the group that is more likely amenable to attitude change—the majority of Americans.

CONCLUSION

Atticus Finch, in the classic story of social tolerance, *To Kill a Mockingbird,* tells his young daughter that "you never really know a man until you stand in his shoes and walk around in them." Progressives already have gained a wider, more socially inclusive lens by virtue of having "walked in others' shoes" on their way to Stage 5 and 6 reasoning. By contrast, orthodox individuals who are still operating at an earlier stage are unable to see beyond their own moral level.

Progressives must guard against becoming arrogant or self-righteous; on the other hand, they need not be silenced or intimidated by attacks on their moral character. From their unique vantage point, progressives have an opportunity, if not the obligation, to provide the kind of moral leadership that can promote realization of the democratic ideals of liberty, justice, and social responsibility. These guiding principles are embodied in the goals for effective, universal, and comprehensive sexuality education.

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FACT SHEET ON SEXUALITY EDUCATION

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 addresses the biological, sociocultural, psychological, and spiritual dimensions of sexuality from the cognitive domain (information); the affective domain (feelings, values, and attitudes); and the behavioral domain (communication and decision-making skills).[1]

HOW DO PEOPLE LEARN ABOUT SEXUALITY?

Parents are—and ought to be—the primary sexuality educators of their children. From the moment of birth, children learn about love, touch, and relationships. Infants and toddlers receive the beginnings of sexuality education through example when their parents talk to them, dress them, show affection, play with them, and teach them the names of the parts of their bodies. As children grow, they continue to receive messages about appropriate behaviors and values as they develop relationships within their family and the social environment.

Not only do children learn about sexuality through their observations and relationships with parents and families, but they learn from sources outside their homes. Friends, teachers, and neighbors; television, music, books, advertisements, and toys teach them about sexual issues. The process of sexual learning with parents and families can be supplemented by planned learning opportunities in churches, synagogues and other places of worship, community and youth agencies, and schools.

Recent polls indicate that most young people look to their parents as their most important source of information about sexuality. Friends are the second most important source, school courses rank third, and television is fourth. More than two-thirds of young people have talked to their parents about sexuality. Among the adults polled, a much smaller number learned about sexuality from their own parents (21 percent from the mother, 5 percent from the father), yet two-thirds of these adults have talked with their own children about sexual issues. In numerous studies, most parents report that they are uncomfortable discussing sexual issues with their children—and welcome assistance from more formal programs.

WHAT ABOUT SCHOOL-BASED SEXUALITY EDUCATION?

School-based sexuality education programs conducted by specially trained educators can add an important dimension to children's ongoing sexual learning. These programs should be developmentally appropriate and include such issues as self-esteem, family relationships, parenting, friendships, values, communication techniques, dating, and decision-making skills. Programs must be carefully planned by each community in order to respect the diversity of values and beliefs present in a classroom and community.

WHAT ARE THE GOALS OF SCHOOL-BASED SEXUALITY EDUCATION?

The primary goal of sexuality education is the promotion of adult sexual health. Sexuality education seeks to assist young people 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.

Comprehensive sexuality education programs have four main goals: (1) to provide accurate information about human sexuality; (2) to provide an opportunity for young people to develop and understand their values, attitudes, and beliefs about sexuality; (3) to help young people develop relationships and interpersonal skills, and (4) to help young people exercise responsibility regarding sexual relationships, including addressing abstinence, how to resist pressures to become prematurely involved in sexual intercourse, and encouraging the use of contraception and other sexual health measures.[2]

DOES THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT REQUIRE SEXUALITY OR HIV EDUCATION?

There is no federal law or policy requiring sexuality or HIV prevention education. Rather than dictating sexuality education and its content, the federal government has been explicit in its view that it should not control the content. While the statutes were not established solely in regard to sexuality education, four federal statutes preclude the federal government from prescribing state and local curriculum standards: the Department of Education Organization Act,

Section 103a; the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Section 14512; Goals 2000, Section 319(b); and the General Education Provisions Act, Section 438.

DO STATES REQUIRE SEXUALITY OR HIV EDUCATION?

Twenty-two states and the District of Columbia require schools to provide both sexuality and STD/HIV education (Alabama, Arizona, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Maryland, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, and West Virginia). An additional 15 states require schools to provide STD/HIV education (Arizona, California, Connecticut, Idaho, Indiana, Michigan, Missouri, New Hampshire, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Washington, and Wisconsin). Thirteen states do not require schools to provide either sexuality or STD/HIV prevention education (Arkansas, Colorado, Hawaii, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming).[3]

WHAT SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN SCHOOL-BASED SEXUALITY EDUCATION?

The National Guidelines Task Force, composed of representatives from 15 national organizations, schools and universities, has identified six key concept areas that should be part of any comprehensive sexuality education program. These are: human development, relationships, personal skills, sexual behavior, sexual health, and society and culture. The National Guidelines Task Force issued *Guidelines for Comprehensive Sexuality Education* in October 1991, which include information on teaching 36 sexuality-related topics in an age-appropriate manner.[4]

WHAT IS THE CONTENT OF SEXUALITY EDUCATION PROGRAMS?

The content of sexuality education varies greatly depending on the community and the age-level of the students in the program. The most commonly and thoroughly covered topics (in order) are body image, reproductive anatomy, puberty, decision-making skills, families, abstinence, STDs and HIV/AIDS, sexual abuse, and gender roles.[5]

Of the 26 states that require abstinence instruction, only 14 also require the inclusion of other information on contraception and pregnancy and disease prevention (Arizona, California, Delaware, Georgia, Illinois, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Vermont, Virginia, and Washington).[6]

Twenty-seven states and the District of Columbia require that schools provide family life education, include information about child development, dating, explanation of family responsibilities and interpersonal relationships (Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Louisiana, Maryland, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, and West Virginia).[7]

Thirty-one states and the District of Columbia require or recommend the inclusion of decision-making skills instruction, such as resisting peer pressure, setting limits during dates, teaching that it is wrong to make unwanted sexual advances, and encouraging personal responsibility and respect for others (Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Iowa, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Montana, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, and West Virginia).[8] Five states prohibit or restrict discussion of abortion (Connecticut, Illinois, Louisiana, Michigan, and South Carolina) and only Vermont and the District of Columbia require that discussions of abortion be included.[9] Eight states require or recommend teaching that homosexuality is not an acceptable lifestyle and/or that homosexual conduct is a criminal offense under state law (Alabama, Arizona, Georgia, Louisiana, North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas, and Virginia), whereas one state (Rhode Island) requires that schools teach respect for others regardless of sexual orientation.[10]

WHO DECIDES THE CONTENT OF SCHOOL-BASED SEXUALITY EDUCATION?

Many states have advisory committees. Thirty states have established a state school/community advisory committee to develop, review, or recommend appropriate sexuality education material and concepts taught at various grade levels. These advisory committees reflect the recognition by states that programs are best developed with diverse input from external agencies and representatives. Such input also helps to develop community support for programs and to minimize negative reactions from sectors unfamiliar with programs.[11]

IS SEXUALITY EDUCATION EFFECTIVE?

Comprehensive approaches to sexuality education have been shown to be successful at helping young people postpone intercourse and use contraception and STD prevention. Research shows that effective programs provide modeling and practice in communication and negotiation skills; reinforce

clear and appropriate values to strengthen individual values and group norms against unprotected sexual activity; focus on reducing sexual risk-taking behaviors; use social learning theories (that focus on recognizing social influences, bolstering health-positive values, changing group norms and building social skills); employ active learning methods of instruction to provide students with the information they need to assess risks and avoid unprotected intercourse; and include activities that address social and media influence on sexual behavior.[12] An international study of sexuality education programs found that the best outcomes were obtained when education is given prior to the onset of sexual activity and when information about both abstinence and contraception and STD prevention was given. The same study also found that sexuality education does not encourage sexual experimentation or increased activity.[13]

DO ABSTINENCE-ONLY PROGRAMS WORK?

Abstinence-only programs have not been found to be effective in helping young people to postpone sexual involvement. Three studies of abstinence-only programs have appeared in the scientific literature. The first study found no significant impact on the initiation of intercourse at the six-month follow-up. The other two studies examined post-test data collected only six weeks after the completion of the program. The post-test found that neither those young people who received the abstinence-only program or any members of the control group initiated intercourse during the six-week period. A review of the existing published literature on sexuality education in *Public Health Reports* concluded: "There is not sufficient evidence to determine if school-based programs that focus only upon abstinence delay the onset of intercourse or affect other sexual or contraceptive behaviors."[14]

CAN PARENTS EXCUSE THEIR CHILDREN FROM SEXUALITY AND HIV EDUCATION?

Yes. Whether it is for sexuality education or HIV/AIDS prevention education, states specifically provide parents with the option of removing their children from the classes or states defer to local decision makers to provide that option to parents. Nearly all local school districts have provisions for students opting out of sexuality education classes.[15] However, fewer than 3 percent of parents remove children from these educational programs.

WHO SUPPORTS SEXUALITY EDUCATION?

The vast majority of Americans support sexuality education. In every public opinion poll, more than eight in 10 parents want sexuality education taught in high schools.[16] Support for HIV/AIDS prevention education is even higher. Ninety-five percent of parents think public schools should have an HIV/AIDS prevention education program.

Moreover, many youth, community, and national organizations have adopted policies supportive of sexuality education. More than 90 prominent national organizations have joined together as the National Coalition to Support Sexuality Education committed to assuring that all youth will receive comprehensive sexuality education by the year 2000. (A *Fact Sheet* on the coalition is available from SIECUS.)

This Fact Sheet *was compiled and written by Daniel Daley, SIECUS director of public policy.*

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Congregations in Conflict: The Battle Over Homosexuality

Keith Hartman

Rutgers University Press
New Brunswick, NJ
195pp., 1996
$24.95

Keith Hartman, the author of *Congregations in Conflict*, states in the preface of this timely book that "homosexuality is the most divisive element facing the Church today.... [It] stirs up passionate convictions [and] threatens to turn members of the same faith against each other....It calls up basic questions about what it means to be a Christian [and] how to know right from wrong." He pointedly asks: "Does the Church reflect God's will... or the traditions of a society?" and "Are good Christians allowed to think for themselves on moral issues?"

Mr. Hartman seeks answers to these questions through case studies of nine church bodies in the Raleigh/Durham/Chapel Hill Research Triangle of North Carolina: two Southern Baptist, two Quaker Meetings, one Methodist, one Catholic, one Episcopal, one Metropolitan Community Church, and the Duke University Divinity School.

He found that each church approached controversy in a different way. How this plays out is at the very heart of the book. Several examples follow:

Fairmont Methodist Church

The members of an adult Bible study class at the Fairmont Methodist Church were shocked when their recently appointed minister marched with the local Gay and Lesbian Pride Parade to the tunes of "Just As I Am" and "Jesus Loves Me." As a result, they started a campaign to have him removed by the local bishop.

From the time of his appointment, the minister had made it clear that he believed the church should stand on the front lines seeking social justice. The church was pleased with his stance until he approached the issue of homosexuality. Following a long series of forums to help the congregation understand homosexuality, the young members of the church decided to support the minister.

However, he was eventually ousted by the older members of the church who controlled the budget. No other church in the Conference will risk taking him.

Pullen Baptist Church

The long-time minister of the Pullen Baptist Church also marched with the Gay and Lesbian Pride Parade. As a result, he and his wife were promptly fired from the faculty of the Southern Baptist Seminary.

Because this church had a long history of working for social justice in unpopular causes, its leaders decided to organize forums to discuss homosexuality in relation to the Bible, civil rights, and personal feelings.

They were soon put to the test when two respected male members of the congregation asked the minister to officiate at a blessing of their union. Finding no scriptural objections and understanding the denomination's belief in the autonomy of the local church, the congregation approved the request. It was, however, followed by an avalanche of protests of neighboring Baptist churches and individuals.

The church was eventually excluded from fellowship in the local, state, and national Southern Baptist Conventions. But the results were not totally negative. Only a few members left the church. And the congregation was soon welcomed by the American Baptist Churches U.S.A.

Quaker Meetings

Two Quaker Meetings report the process they followed as they sought the truth about homosexuality. In considering whether or not to bless a Ceremony of Commitment, the Chapel Hill Friends Meeting asked these questions: "Why do we celebrate marriage in the first place?" and "How do we judge whether a relationship is good or bad?" and "What does it really mean for two people to marry?"

The Durham Friends Meeting discussed questions such as "Do we welcome same-sex couples?" "Do we support gay and lesbian members and their families?" "Do we appreciate the openness of gay men and lesbians as they share their lives with us?"

The case studies make fascinating reading. The reader has a sense of really knowing the people involved: who they are in the community, how their life experiences affected their opinions, how they truly felt about the specific situations.

Dealing with Controversy

Although the author recognizes the risk involved in giving advice, he proposes six ways to face such controversies:

1. Expect a split among generations.
2. A minister has a better chance of prevailing if he has served a long time and has gained the confidence of members.
3. A minister should seek the advice of the congregation before undertaking a controversial issue.
4. All parties should agree in advance to the details of the decision-making process.
5. Forums should serve as a search for truth as opposed for the place for a debate.
6. Participants should think of what binds them together as a community of faith.

A particularly interesting chapter is titled "Denominational Overview." It traces the actions of eight denominations as they develop an official policy on homosexuality. There are also helpful footnotes and a detailed index.

The issues in this book will reach the agendas of churches as gay men and lesbians are increasingly accepted by individuals and groups. In fact, polls show the majority of Americans believe in nondiscrimination in civic matters. Such beliefs will undoubtedly spill over into organized religions.

Many see this as a time for church leaders to search for the truth and to learn God's will in the face of major societal changes. Mr. Hartman's book provides extremely useful information for all of us who care about the relationship between organized religion and sexual orientation.

Reviewed by Elma Phillipson Cole, who is a sexuality education consultant for organizations throughout the United States. She wrote the chapter on "The Role of Religious Organizations" in the book The Challenge of Sexuality Education. *A member of the Board of Directors of SIECUS, she resides in New York City.*

A SIECUS Annotated Bibliography

Sexual orientation is an essential human quality. Individuals have the right to accept, acknowledge, and live in accordance with their sexual orientation, be they bisexual, heterosexual, gay or lesbian. The legal system should guarantee the civil rights and protection of all people, regardless of sexual orientation. Prejudice and discrimination based on sexual orientation is unconscionable.

This annotated bibliography presents a cross section of available resources on gay and lesbian sexuality and related issues. Readers are encouraged to seek out additional resources in bookstores, libraries, and by contacting the organizations listed at the end of this bibliography. None of the books listed in this bibliography are sold or distributed by SIECUS. They are, however, available for use at its Mary S. Calderone Library.

Copies of this bibliography are available for purchase from the SIECUS Publications Department for $2.00 each by writing to SIECUS, 130 West 42nd Street, Suite 350, New York, NY 10036. Phone: 212/819-9770. Fax: 212/819-9776. E-mail: SIECUS@siecus.org. Web site: <http://www.siecus.org.

This bibliography was compiled by Evan Harris, Amy Levine, Nikki Forlenza, and Mac Edwards.

GENERAL BOOKS

A More Perfect Union: Why Straight America Must Stand Up For Gay Rights

Richard D. Mohr

This book examines the American ideal of equal justice under the law and the belief that all people are created equal. Issues include equality, civil rights, and sexual privacy from a gay and lesbian perspective. 1994; 120pp.; $15.00; Beacon Press, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, MA 02108-2892; 800/631 8571.

Breaking the Silence: Human Rights Violations Based on Sexual Orientation

Amnesty International USA

This report from Amnesty International discusses instances of human rights violations based on sexual orientation, and offers recommendations for protecting the lives of lesbians and gay men. The booklet includes a "Universal Declaration of Human Rights," which outlines the position of Amnesty International. 1994; 53pp.; $6.00, plus $2.00 shipping and handling; Amnesty International USA, National Office, Publications, 322 Eighth Avenue, New York, NY 10001; 212/807-8400.

Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality

John Boswell

This comprehensive study of homosexuality traces changes in public attitudes through medieval history. It examines popular literature for and against homosexuality, as well as legal, literary, theological, artistic, and scientific historical evidence. It also provides insight into modern attitudes toward homosexuality. 1980; 409pp.; $19.95/paperback; University of Chicago Press, 5801 Ellis Avenue, 4th Floor, Chicago, IL 60637; 800/621-2736.

Conduct Unbecoming: Gays & Lesbians in the U.S. Military

Randy Shilts

This history of gays and lesbians in the U.S. military was written by Randy Shilts, the late author of the much-heralded book, *And the Band Played On*, a chronology of the AIDS epidemic in the United States. The strength of this more recent book lies in the personal stories of the many gays and lesbians who have served proudly in the military. He conducted over 1,100 interviews for the book, including military personnel, their families and their lawyers, as well as political activists and government officials involved with this issue. 1994; 811pp.; $16.00/paperback; Ballantine Books (A Division of Random House), 201 E. 50th Street, New York, NY 10022; 212/751-2600.

Gay and Lesbian Youth

Gilbert Herdt, Editor

Broadly based and comprehensive in scope, this book explores the identities, situations, and relationships of gay and lesbian youth in a cross-cultural context. The difficulties encountered by gay and lesbian youth are discussed. 1989; 355pp.; $19.95; Haworth Press, 10 Alice Street, Binghamton, NY 13904-1580; 800/342-9678.

Hearing Us Out: Voices from the Gay And Lesbian Community

Roger Sutton
Photos by Lisa Ebright

With a forward by writer M. E. Kerr and many photographs, this resource offers a positive, rich view of the gay and lesbian community. Each chapter of the book is devoted to the story of an individual with a unique perspective on the gay and lesbian community and the issues it faces. Although this book is designed for gay and lesbian youth, it is a valuable resource for parents, educators, and other concerned individuals. 1994; 128pp.;

$16.95; Little Brown & Co., 200 West Street, Waltham, MA 02254; 800/759-0190.

Homosexuality: Debating the Issues

Robert M. Baird and M. Katherine Baird, editors

The essays in this volume offer opinions on various issues relating to homosexuality. The book is divided into five parts: the philosophical debate, etiology, criminal law, the military, and religion. Each part includes writings from opposing viewpoints. 1995; 282pp.; $16.95; Prometheus Books, 59 John Glenn Drive, Amherst, NY 14228-2197; 800/421-0351.

Homosexuality in the Church: Both Sides of the Debate

Jeffery Siker, editor

A serious attempt to present discussion and debate, this resource offers viewpoints on the inclusion and recognition of gay and lesbian Christians within their churches. Issues addressed include the Bible and homosexuality, the ordination of gay men and lesbians, and heterosexism. The appendix to the book is titled "Selected Denominational Statements on Homosexuality." It includes the official statements of six churches on homosexuality. 1994; 211pp.; $16.99; Westminster John Knox Press, 100 Witherspoon Street, Louisville, KY 4202-1396; 800/227-2872.

Lesbians, Gay Men, and the Law

William B. Rubenstein

Part of the "Law in Context" series, this book offers comprehensive information on legal issues for gay man and lesbians. Topics include sodomy laws, coming out, censorship, workplace issues, legal recognition of gay and lesbian relationships, and parenting. The book makes use of court cases, ordinances related to gay and lesbian issues, and reprints from journals, books, and other sources. 1993; 568pp.; $30.00; The New Press, 500 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10110; 212/629-8802.

Looking at Gay and Lesbian Life

Warren J. Blumefeld and Diane Raymond

Encyclopedic in scope, this resource provides an overview on numerous topics including politics, culture, homophobia and its relationship to other prejudices, etiology, and human sexuality. 1988; 416pp.; $12.95; Beacon Press, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, MA 02108; 617/742-2110.

Out With It

Youth Communication

This anthology of articles by gay and straight teens on homosexuality is published by Youth Communication, a New York City–based writing program that has published teen writers since 1980. Articles are on such subjects as homophobia, coming out, and friends and family. Also included in this book is an extensive chapter on teacher resources. 1996; 115pp.; $8.00; Youth Communication, 144 West 27th Street, No. 8R, New York, NY 10001; 212/242-3270.

Permanent Partners: Building Gay and Lesbian Relationships That Last

Betty Berzon

This book offers clear, compassionate advice and counseling on the internal and external problems faced by gay male and lesbian couples as they try to create a life together. Real-life examples are drawn from the author's professional practice. It will help couples improve their communication and affirm their love and commitment. 1988; 354pp.; $13.95; Penguin Books, 375 Hudson Street, New York, NY 10014; 212/366-2000.

Report On the First Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender Youth Empowerment Speak Out

American Friends Service Committee, Bridges Project

This report documents the 1993 Youth Empowerment Speak Out (YES), a meeting of over 2,000 youths and youth supporters who gathered to discuss issues relating to lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and transgendered youth. The goal of the meeting was to open up lines of communication resulting in positive change. 1993; 15pp.; $4.00 plus postage and handling; Bridges Project, American Friends Service Committee 150 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102; 215/241-7133.

Setting Them Straight: You Can Do Something about Bigotry and Homophobia

Betty Berzon, Ph.D.

Whether a lesbian or gay person is facing religious prejudice, a relative's insensitivity, or outright hostility, this book shows them how to respond, how to take control of their feelings, and how to direct the outcome of the encounter. It includes sections on why people hate, the origins of prejudice, how to channel anger, the answers to the rhetoric of bigotry, and how to prevail in homophobic encounters. 1996; 262pp.; $10.95/paperback; Penguin Books, USA, Inc., 375 Hudson Street, New York, NY 10014; 212/645-3121.

School's Out: The Impact of Gay and Lesbian Issues On America's Schools

Dan Woog

Written by a journalist, this book examines gay and lesbian individuals and issues as they affect schools. Part One tells the stories of people including nurses, teachers, coaches, and administrators –who have worked for the inclusion of gay and lesbian issues in schools. Part Two looks at places where battles have been fought over gay and lesbian issues in the schools. Part Three details programs designed to address the issues of gay and lesbian students, gay-straight groups, curricula, and the student press. 1995; 383pp.; $11.95; Alyson Publications, P.O. Box 4371, Los Angeles, CA 90078; 213/871-1225.

Two Teenagers in Twenty

Ann Heron, Editor

An expanded version of *One Teenager In Ten*, this book is a collection of writings by gay and lesbian youth. The youth featured in the book come from all over the United States and describe a wide variety of experiences and feelings related to their sexual orientation and coming out. 1994; 186pp.; $17.95; Alyson Publications, P.O. Box 4371, Los Angeles, CA 90078; 213/871-1225.

Unrepentant, Self-Affirming, Practicing: Lesbian/Bisexual/Gay People within Organized Religion

Gary David Comstock

The words "unrepentant," "self-affirming," and "practicing" are terms that many religious bodies have written into their formal positions to describe the type of lesbians and gays who are *not* accepted in their congregations (rather, they must be "self-reproaching," "self-denying," and "celibate"). This book looks at 27 recent empirical studies of gays and lesbians in organized religion and another ten "religion-related studies." 1996; 329pp.; $29.95; The Continuum Publishing Company, 370 Lexington Avenue, New York, NY 10017; 212/953-5858.

BISEXUALS

Bisexual Politics: Theories, Queries, & Visions

Naomi Tucker, editor with Liz Highleyman and Rebecca Kaplan

This collection of essays examines the politics of bisexuality, placing emphasis on issues and advocates. The role of bisexuality as it relates to sexual orientation and identity is a theme of the collection. Appendices include an overview of bisexual activism in the United States. 1995; 358pp.. $14.95; Harrington Park Press, 10 Alice Street, Binghamton, NY 13904-1580; 800/342-9678.

An Annotated Bibliography

Robyn Ochs

This pamphlet lists nonfiction, biographies, and fiction that have bisexual content or themes. Most are English-language books. 1995; 5 pp.; $1.00; Bisexual Resource Center, P.O. Box 639, Cambridge, MA 02140; 617/424-9595.

Vice Versa: Bisexuality and the Eroticism of Everyday Life

Marjorie Garber

Drawing on a broad range of examples of bisexuality in history, literature, film, and contemporary culture, this book explores the subject from a cultural context and offers an expansive perspective on the role of bisexuality in society. 1995; 606pp.; $30.00; Simon and Schuster, 200 Old Tappan Road, Old Tappan, NJ 07675; 800/223-2336.

GAY MEN

Gay and Gray: The Older Homosexual Man

Raymond M. Berger, Ph.D.

Now in its second edition, this book builds on previous research to examine the depth and complexity of aging among gay men. Consisting of interviews and questionnaires, the book breaks the stereotype of older gay men as not well adjusted to the aging process. Chapters include "Age-Status Labeling in Homosexual Men," "Sexual Attitudes and Behavior in Midlife and Aging Homosexual Males," and "Older Lesbians and Gay People: A Theory of Successful Aging." 1996; 333pp.; $14.95; Haworth Press, Inc., 10 Alice Street, Binghamton, NY 13904-1580; 800/342-9678.

In the Life: A Black Gay Anthology

Joseph Beam, editor

This collection of writings by 29 black authors explores what it means to be a black gay male in today's world. It reflects the affirming power of coming together to build a strong community. 1986; 255pp.; $8.95; Alyson Publications, P.O. Box 4371, Los Angeles, CA 90078; 213/871-1255.

Reviving the Tribe: Regenerating Gay Men's Sexuality and Culture in the Ongoing Epidemic

Eric Rofes

This book creates an honest portrait of contemporary gay men's lives as the AIDS epidemic continues. The three major sections of the book are "Restoring Mental Health," "Reclaiming Sexuality," and "Regenerating Community." The author looks at the communal culture of the gay male and outlines ways for it to reorder its priorities and redirect its activism. 1996; 318pp.; $14.95/paperback; $29.95 hardcover; The Haworth Press, Inc., 10 Alice Street, Binghamton, NY 13904-1580; 800/342-9678.

LESBIANS

The Lesbian Almanac

The National Museum & Archive of Lesbian and Gay History

This reference was compiled by the National Museum and Archive of Lesbian and Gay History. It includes detailed information on lesbian participation in art, business, education, film, medicine, home and family, literature, the media, the military, the government, religion, and sports. It also includes detailed information on sexuality and health issues. 534pp.; $16.95; The Berkeley Publishing Company, 200 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016; 212/951-8800.

Lesbian Couples

D. Marilee Clunis and G. Dorsey Green

In describing the pleasures and challenges of being part of a relationship, this guide discusses stages of romance, conflict, commitment, collaboration, work, money,

time, coming out to family and friends, monogamy-nonmonogamy, separateness and togetherness. It pays special attention to differences in race, class, age, and physical abilities. 1988; 260pp.; $12.95; Seal Press, 3131 Western Avenue, Suite 410, Seattle, WA 98121; 206/283-7844.

The Lesbian Family Life Cycle

Suzanne Slater

An indepth examination of lesbian family life, this book identifies five stages of the lesbian family life cycle: "formation of the couple," "ongoing couplehood," "the middle years," "generativity," and "lesbian couples over 65." The book provides a close look at each stage. Also included is background information about lesbian sexuality, lesbian mothers, and the formation of lesbian families. 1995; 265pp.; $25.00; The Free Press, Order Department, 200 Old Tappan Road, Old Tappan, NJ 07675; 800/223-2336.

What Is She Like?

Rosa Ainley

Examining lesbian identities from the 1950s to the 1990s, this book explores numerous aspects of lesbian sexuality. Chapters include "History & Sexology: Definitions, Legislation, and Popular Notions," "Lesbian Looks: Butch, Femme, Kiki," and "Work & Leisure: Living the Life and Making a Living." Each chapter is followed by interviews which represent a range of opinions, styles, and experiences. 1995; 232pp.; $12.95; Cassell Publishing, 215 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10003; 212/971-7200.

PARENTS AND PARENTHOOD

Considering Parenthood

Cheri Pies

This resource is designed to assist lesbians considering parenthood. It explores issues such as building a family, single parenthood, adoption, reproductive technology, and legal and financial concerns. 1988; 274pp.; $9.50; Spinsters Book Co., P.O. Box 410687, San Francisco, CA 94141; 415/558-9586.

The Final Closet: The Gay Parents Guide For Coming Out To Their Children

Rip Corley

This book is intended to help gay and lesbian parents come out to their children. Psychological and emotional issues are addressed, and the well-being of both the parents and children is kept in mind. 1990; 176pp.; $8.95; Editech Press, P.O. Box 611085, North Miami, FL 33261; 301/940-4746.

Lesbian Mothers

Ellen Lewin

This book covers many aspects of lesbian parenthood, including legal issues, mother/father roles, and partner relationships. The book includes interviews with mothers. An index and bibliography are also included. 1993; 232pp.; $13.95; Cornell University Press, Sage House, 512 East State Street, Ithaca, NY 14851-0250; 607/277-2338.

Now That You Know: What Every Parent Should Know About Homosexuality

Betty Fairchild & Nancy Hayward

This challenging and enlightening guide for parents faced with the knowledge that a son or daughter is homosexual dis cusses the nature of homosexuality and its effects on the lives of children. It provides counsel on how to respond supportively to gay sons and lesbian daughters. 1989; 276pp.; $9.95; Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1250 6th Avenue, San Diego, CA 92101; 800/543-1918.

PROFESSIONALS

Bridges of Respect: Creating Support for Lesbian and Gay Youth

Katherine Whitlock

This is a resource designed to enable youth workers to understand the young gay males and lesbians who are part of their classrooms, recreational groups, and social service agencies. 1988; 97pp.; $7.50; American Friends Service Committee, 1501 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102; 215/241-7000.

Death by Denial: Studies of Suicide In Gay and Lesbian Teenagers

Gary Remafedi, Editor

This edited compilation of articles explores the difficulties faced by young people who are struggling with their sexual orientation and coming out. The risk of suicide and suicidal behavior among gay and lesbian youth is discussed at length, and intervention strategies are outlined. 1994; 203pp.; $9.95; Alyson Publications, P.O. Box 4371, Los Angeles, CA 90078; 213/871-1225.

Gay Issues in the Workplace

Brian McNaught

This book provides business people and corporate managers with a clear and concise look at how anti-gay bias impacts the entire work force and harms corporate productivity. Topics include: what gay people need from their employers to feel safe and valued; how to effectively educate heterosexual workers about gay issues; how to respond to the concerns of religiously conservative employees and members of the public; and how to help gay employees trust the company's commitment to create a productive work environment. 1993; 151pp.; $17.95; St. Martin's Press, 175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010; 212/674-5151.

Homosexuality: A Practical Guide to Counseling Lesbians, Gay Men, and Their Families

Helen B. McDonald & Audrey Steinborn

This books is for counselors and therapists who do not have extensive experience working with sexual minority clients. Issues include coming out, religion, gay and lesbian youth, parenting, HIV/AIDS, older lesbians and gay men, and alcohol and other drug abuse. 1990; 184 pp.; $17.95; Continuum

Publishing Company, 370 Lexington Avenue, New York, NY 10017; 212/532-3650.

Journal of Homosexuality

John P. DeCecco, Editor

Published quarterly, this journal presents theoretical, empirical, and historical research on homosexuality and includes sexual practices and gender roles. The articles explore the political, social, and moral implications of human sexuality, and include unique perspectives from the disciplines of law, history, and the humanities. $40 individuals, $95 organizations, $160 libraries. The Hayworth Press, 10 Alice Street, Binghamton, NY 13904-1580; 800/342-9678.

Lesbian and Gay Issues: A Resource Manual for Social Workers

Hilda Hidalgo, Travis L. Peterson, and Natalie J. Woodman, Editors

This is a resource manual for social workers to help increase their understanding of their lesbian and gay male clients. The first section is devoted to adolescents, couples, lesbian mothers, the disabled, and rural groups; the second focuses on institutional interventions; and the third addresses helping professionals examine homophobia. 1985; 220pp.; $16.95; National Association of Social Workers, 7981 Eastern Avenue, Silver Spring, MD 20910; 800/638-8799.

Lesbian and Gay Psychology: Theory, Research, and Clinical Applications

Beverly Greene and Gregory Mtterek, Editors

This volume is part of the *Psychological Perspectives on Lesbian and Gay Issues* series, which is sponsored by the Society for the Psychological Study of Lesbian and Gay Issues, a division of the American Psychological Association. The book presents research on a wide variety of subjects, including lesbians and physical appearance, internalized homophobia, and relationship quality of gay, lesbian, and heterosexual couples. 1994; 243pp.; $12.95; Sage Publications, P.O. Box 5084, Newbury Park, CA. 91359; 805/499-0721.

Lesbians of Color: Social and Human Services

Hilda Hidalgo, Ph.D., ACSW, Editor

This book is a collection of articles by lesbian women of color with particular emphasis on providing them with much-needed social and human services. Some of the articles are "For the White Social Worker Who Wants to Know How to Work with Lesbians of Color," "The Social Service Needs of Lesbians of Color," "Lesbian Latinas: Organization Efforts to End Oppression," and "Being Pro-Gay and Pro-Lesbian in Straight Institutions." 1995; 106pp; $19.95/hardback; $9.95/paperback; Haworth Press, Inc., 10 Alice Street, Binghamton, NY 13904-1580; 800/342-9678.

The Psychology of Sexual Orientation, Behavior, and Identity

Louis Diamant and Richard D. McAnulty

This collection of research on the psychology of sexual orientation has a broad scope. It includes work by contributors from a number of different fields including psychology, psychiatry, reproductive biology, sociology, and communication. It is divided into these parts: "Theoretical Explanations of Sexual Orientation," "Sexual Dysfunctions in Nonclinical Populations," "Clinical Disorders of Sexual Behavior and Identity," and "Sexual Orientation and Social Issues." 1995; 522pp.; $115.00; Greenwood Press, 88 Post Road, Westport, CT 06881; 203/226-3571.

Queer Science: The Use and Abuse of Research On Homosexuality

Simon LeVay

This book is a scientific and social analysis of research in the field of sexual orientation. It examines the work of early sexologists as well as more recent work in the fields of brain science, endocrinology, and cognitive psychology. It discusses the views of the scientific community and general public on gays and lesbians. 1996; 304pp.; $25.00; MIT Press, 55 Hayward Street, Cambridge, MA 02142; 800/356-0343.

Serving Gay and Lesbian Youths: The Role of Child Welfare Agencies

Child Welfare League of America

These recommendations, developed from a colloquium held by the Child Welfare League of America, respond to the need for strategies in implementing programs and services at youth serving agencies. Administrative policy, child welfare practice, and advocacy recommendations are included. 1991; 29pp.; $6.95; Child Welfare League of America, 440 First Street, N.W., Suite 310, Washington, DC 20001-2085; 202/638-2952.

Straight Talk About Gays In the Workplace: Creating An Inclusive, Productive Environment For Everyone In Your Organization

Liz Winfeld and Susan Spielman

This book provides suggestions on how to create a workplace free of discrimination against gays and lesbians. Domestic partner benefits, HIV/AIDS workplace policies, coming out, and sexual orientation education are discussed. The appendix includes additional information on domestic partner benefits and HIV testing policies. 1995; 216pp.; $21.95; American Management Association, 135 West 50th Street, New York, NY 10020; 212/586-8100.

ORGANIZATIONS

Asian AIDS Project

300 4th Street, Suite 401
San Francisco, CA 94107
Phone: 415/227-1589

Astrea Foundation

116 East 16th Street, 7th Floor
New York, NY, 10003
Phone: 212/529-8021

Bisexual Resource Center
P.O. Box 639
Cambridge, MA 02140
Phone: 617/424-9595
E-mail: BRC@paniz.com

Black and White Men Together
1747 Connecticut Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20009
Phone: 202/462-3599

Center for Research & Gay Education in Sexuality (CERES)
Psychology Building
Room 503
San Francisco State University
San Francisco, CA 94132
Phone: 415/338-1137

Gay American Married Men's Association (GAMMA) and the Gay Fathers, Lesbian Mothers & Straight Partners Coalition
Box 50360
Washington, DC 20004
Phone: 703/548-3238

Gay & Lesbian Advocates and Defenders (GLAD)
P.O. Box 218
Boston, MA 02112
Phone: 617/426-1350

Gay Men's Health Crisis
10 West 20th Street
New York, NY 10011
Phone: 212/807-6655
(HIV/AIDS information hotline)

Gayellow Pages
P.O. Box 533, Village Station
New York, NY 10014
Phone: 212/674-0120

Hetrick Martin Institute
2 Astor Place, 3rd Floor
New York, NY 10003
Phone: 212/674-2400

Human Rights Campaign
1101 14th Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20005
Phone: 202/628-4160

International Gay and Lesbian Archives
P.O. Box 69679
West Hollywood, CA 90069
Phone: 310/854-0271

Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund
666 Broadway, 12th Floor
New York, NY 10012
Phone: 212/995-8585

Lesbian Historical Educational Foundation, Inc.
Lesbian History Archives, P.O. Box 1258
New York, NY 10001
Phone: 718/768-3953

Lesbian Rights Project
1370 Mission Street, 4th Floor
San Francisco, CA 94103
415/621-0505

National Advocacy Coalition on Youth and Sexual Orientation
1711 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Suite 206
Washington, DC 20009-1139
Phone: 202/319-7596

National Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum
1219 S. LaBrea
Los Angeles, CA 90019
Phone: 213/964-7820

National Coalition of Black Lesbians and Gays
Box 19248
Washington, DC 20036
Phone: 202/537-0484

National Gay and Lesbian Task Force
2320 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20009
Phone: 202/332-6483

National Latino Lesbian and Gay Organization
1612 K Street, NW, Suite 500
Washington, DC 20006
Phone: 202/466-8240

Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (P-FLAG)
1101 14th Street, NW, Suite 1030
Washington, DC 20005
Phone: 202/638-4200

People for the American Way
2000 M Street, NW, Suite 400
Washington, DC 20036
Phone: 202/467-2338

Project 10
7850 Melrose Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90046
Phone: 213/651-5200

SAPPHEX
14002 Clubhouse Circle, No. 206
Tampa, FL 33624
Phone: 813/961-6064

Senior Action in a Gay Environment
305 7th Avenue, 16th Floor
New York, NY 10001
Phone: 212/741-2247

Sexual Minority Youth Assistance League
333 ½ Pennsylvania Avenue, S.E.
Washington, DC 20009
Phone: 202/546-5940

Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS)
130 West 42nd Street
Suite 350
New York, NY 10036-7802
Phone: 212/819-9770

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