THE STATE OF STUDENT SAFETY

Healthy Sexuality Education in New Mexico Schools

NMCSAP

Planned Parenthood Rocky Mountains

Raíz New Mexico

Planned Parenthood Act. No matter what.

Planned Parenthood Votes New Mexico

EQNM

EQUALITY NEW MEXICO FOUNDATION









TODAY'S PRESENTERS

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WHY HEALTHY SEXUALITY EDUCATION?

- Student Health & Safety
- Teacher Support
- Parental Support
- Sexual Abuse Prevention
- Suicide Prevention

** Reminder, parents can opt out their child from sexual health education in school*

HEALTHY SEXUALITY EDUCATION IS VIOLENCE PREVENTION

2023 NM Youth Risk and Resiliency Survey (YRRS) data

Statewide rates:

- 9.5% of students report being sexually assaulted
- 9% of students report experiencing dating violence
- 8.8% report being forced to have sexual intercourse
- 18.9% report using drugs or alcohol before sexual intercourse

2023 New Mexico Youth Risk and Resiliency Survey

HEALTHY SEXUALITY EDUCATION IS VIOLENCE PREVENTION

Counties where comprehensive sexuality education is not present show increase in violence:

12.5% of students report being sexually assaulted

16.3% of students report experiencing dating violence

17.8% report being forced to have sexual intercourse

27.9% report using drugs or alcohol before sexual intercourse

2023 New Mexico Youth Risk and Resiliency Survey

HEALTHY SEXUALITY EDUCATION IS VIOLENCE PREVENTION

2026 national study of Comprehensive sexuality education shows that for programming to be associated with contributing to preventing adolescent sexual violence, it must be:

- **Rights-based**
- **Gender-transformative**
- **Skill-oriented**
- **Connected to safe institutional systems.**

(Hanifa et al., 2026)

HEALTHY SEXUALITY EDUCATION IS VIOLENCE PREVENTION

2021 systematic review of comprehensive sex education that was based on the national standards of health education was linked to:

- reduced reports of bullying and harassment,
- reduced homophobia
- reduced dating and intimate partner violence,
- improved life skills such as effective communication, empathy, respect for others and sense of self control and safety.

2023 New Mexico study identified that the presence of inclusive Healthy Sexuality Education in schools is associated with reduced sexual violence.

(Cruz et al., 2023; Goldfarb et al., 2021)

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT H.S.E. IN NEW MEXICO?

New Mexico law mandates H.S.E content to be taught in health education class required for graduation.

However, New Mexico law does not require H.S.E content to be comprehensive, nor medically accurate.

New Mexico-specific research has shown us:

- H.S.E. is often not medically accurate
- Educators/school staff are often not trained to teach H.S.E. content
- Educators/school staff have limited access to skills-based professional development, especially in rural communities.
- School climate can make it difficult to teach H.S.E. content
- New Mexico students have voiced that H.S.E. is necessary in school and needs to be improved for them to stay safe.

(Dickson et al., 2020; 2023)

WHAT MAKES HEALTHY SEXUALITY EDUCATION EFFECTIVE?

CDC's principles of primary prevention:

- Comprehensive
- Sufficient dosage
- Varied teaching methods
- Theory-driven
- Positive relationships
- Appropriately timed
- Socioculturally relevant experiences
- Evaluates outcomes
- Well-trained staff
- Evidence-based or informed

(Nation et al., 2003)

HEALTHY SEXUALITY EDUCATION IN ACTION *(EXAMPLES)*

Our Whole Lives - Created by United Universalist Association and United Church of Christ

7TH-9TH GRADE CURRICULUM OUTLINE:

- What is sexuality?
- Examining Values
- Language of Sexuality (terms and definitions)
- Anatomy and Physiology
- Puberty
- Body Image
- Gender Identity, Gender Roles, Gender Expression, and Stereotypes
- Sexual Orientation
- Sexuality and Disability

HEALTHY SEXUALITY EDUCATION IN ACTION

Healthy Relationships	Relationship Skills	Communication	Consent	Media and the Internet	Self-care
Bullying and Bystander Intervention	Abstinence	Anatomy and physiology	STI prevention	Pregnancy and parenting	Contraception

WHY WE NEED TO UPDATE OUR H.S.E. AND ENFORCE IT

1. To decrease the high rates of youth suicide and youth violence, including sexual abuse.

2. Our current law is outdated. Our law has not a comprehensive update for 20 years. Evidence, data, and research have provided important and life-saving information to demonstrate how H.S.E. can improve outcomes.

3. Updated curricula are available and the system continues to provide opt out for parents.

4. Structural changes are needed to support school-based H.S.E, to assure it is taught well, and to keep our children safe.

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