

The Busy Youth Worker's Guide To Talking Sexual Health - Key Messages

Just the facts, thanks.

You don't have to know everything about sexual health to provide effective support to young people.

Sexual health and relationships information

- 1800Myoptions is great for Victorian information about about contraception, pregnancy options and sexual health.
- TAKE BLAKTION features Aboriginal ambassadors talking to young people about sexual health. By NSW Health
- Reachout.com provides great information about emotions, relationships, consent and sexual health.

STIs

- An STI is a Sexually Transmissible Infection.
- Most STIs don't have symptoms – you can't tell who has an STI.
- If the STI is not treated, you could end up with long term health problems.
- Getting STI tests is a good way to make sure you are treated for any STIs.
- People can get or pass on an STI from oral, anal and vaginal sex.

Condoms and dams

- Condoms are the best protection for STIs including HIV, because they provide a barrier.
- They can prevent pregnancy too if you are having penis-vagina sex.
- Use a water-based lubricant to reduce the chance of the condom/ dam breaking.
- Find out where to get them in your town, and have some handy.
- Use a new condom/dam each time you have sex (even if he didn't ejaculate). Never wash out a condom and use it again.
- Dams are thin plastic squares to hold over the genitals when a person has oral sex. They can be hard to get, unless you order them online.

STI testing

- Young people of all genders should be tested for STIs when they change partners or at least every year, even if they have no symptoms.
- STI testing is quick, easy, painless and usually free with Medicare.
- STI testing is confidential.
- Most STI tests are self-collected urine tests or swabs.
- Feel proud of your choice to get tested to take care of yourself and your partner(s).

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Pregnancy + Contraception

- Emergency contraception is best taken as soon as possible after unprotected sex, ideally within 24 hours (can be taken up to 4 days later).
- You can buy emergency contraceptive pills at a pharmacy without a prescription.
- Pregnancy only occurs when semen gets into the vagina.
- When contraceptives are implanted they are usually more effective because the person doesn't have to remember to take them every day.
- If a person thinks they are pregnant it's important to find out soon.
- If they want to continue the pregnancy, early health care makes a difference.

Abortion

- Abortion can be legally accessed in Victoria up to 24 weeks gestation, and in certain circumstances beyond this.
- There are a very limited number of services that provide abortions after 12 weeks.
- It's important to know that the longer the pregnancy progresses, the more difficult and expensive it can be to access abortion services.

Sex + Consent

- If you are in a sexual situation and you don't want to go further, it is your legal right to change your mind. It doesn't matter if you are drunk, if you've been going out for a long time, if they bought you a present, or if you asked them to have sex. It is always your legal right to change your mind.
- If you are in a sexual situation and your partner looks like they might want to stop, you have to stop and check. It is your job and your legal responsibility to check.
- Most sexual assault is done (perpetrated) by someone the person knows.

Confidentiality

- When you give information to a health professional, they are legally required to protect your privacy. This is an important part of being able to trust your health professional to look after you.
- A pharmacist or health professional can't give information about you to your mum, cousin or any other relative, a school teacher or neighbour.

References

NSW Health, Playsafe Pro – Key Sexual Health Messages. <https://pro.playsafe.health.nsw.gov.au/tools/key-sexualhealth-messages/>

1800myoptions – Are you considering abortion? www.1800myoptions.org.au

