The Challenges of Adapting Comprehensive Sexual Health Education for Special Education Students

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A Brief History of the P3 Curriculum

- **1999** – Positive Prevention HIV/STD Prevention aligned with California Ed Codes 51930-51939; by the Orange County Chapter of the American Red Cross

- More commonly used HIV/STD curriculum in California (CDPH STD Control Branch survey)


- **2010 – 2015** – evaluated in a federal OAH research project. (5yr. Study)

- **2016** – updated to comply with the California Healthy Youth Act (requiring CSHE in grades 7-12).
The California Healthy Youth Act

- Effective January 2016
- Requires all middle school and all high school students in California receive “comprehensive sexual health education” including special education and independent study students, English language learners.
- Requires “passive parental notification.”
The California Healthy Youth Act

Topics must include HIV/STI prevention, communication and assertiveness skills, decision-making, healthy relationships, relationship violence, sex trafficking, yes means yes, human trafficking, accessing reproductive health care, all FDA-approved contraceptives, adoption, abortion, parenting, pre-natal care, emphasis on abstinence, positive portrayal of all genders and sexual orientations.
Positive Prevention PLUS

P3 was recently added to the national list of evidence-based interventions (EBI), showing a statistically significant:

• *Delay* in the onset of sexual initiation

• *Increase* in condom and birth control use

• *Increase in accessing* reproductive health care services

• *Increase in communicating* with a parent or trusted adult regarding sexual health.

*(LaChausse 2016)*
P3’s Five Versions

- High School
- Middle School
- Upper Elementary
- Special Populations (Special Education)
- Independent Study (online)
Teacher Friendly Lessons

- All California-required contents (relationships, contraception, HIV/STIs, accessing resources, resistance skills, etc.)
- Animated introduction and ending stories (2018)
- Teacher PowerPoint interactive lesson slides
- Small and large group activities with activity cards
- Multiple learning styles (visual, kinesthetic, affective/emotional)
- Student worksheets and workbooks in Spanish and English
- Parent take-home assignment
- Online resources for students and teachers
Positive Prevention PLUS Emphasizes

- Students accepting **personal responsibility** for their sexual health, and the **health and safety** of others

- **Sexual abstinence** as the best way to **avoid an unplanned pregnancy**, and an HIV/STI infection

- **Normative class discussions** in which students are prompted by the activities to make **responsible statements in front of their peers** regarding sexual abstinence, avoiding risks, etc.*

- **Interactive large group learning activities.** *

* challenging in small group **Special Education settings**
Why implement sexual health education for special populations?

- A higher incidence of sexual exploitation and abuse
- A subculture of socialized vulnerability
- Limited opportunities for sexuality education
- Innate impediments to learning
- (-) Values and attitudes of parents and staff
Adapting Lessons for the Needs and Abilities of Special Education Students

Easy, right?

WRONG!
Many Lesson Topics Do Not Work…

**General Curriculum**
Getting Started Lesson
1. Life Planning
2. Healthy Relationships
3. Relationship Violence
4. Birth Control
5. Managing Teen Pregnancy
6. HIV Myths and Stereotypes
7. HIV/AIDS
8. Preventing STIs
9. Risk Reduction Strategies
10. Media and Peer Pressure
11. Accessing Community Resources
12. Steps to Success

**Special Pops Curriculum**
Getting Started Lesson
1. Understanding Sexual Development
2. Reproductive Structure
3. Personal Hygiene
4. Public and Private Behaviors
5. Friendships
6. Bullying
7. Sexual Aggression
8. Sexual Relationships
9. Pregnancy Prevention
10. HIV/STI Prevention
11. Being Understanding and Supportive
12. Making Healthy Choices
Additional Adaptations for Special Education

- Incorporate individual and small group (table top) discussions requiring tablet-based slides, or illustrated discussion cards.

- Use shorter simpler sentence structure and words.

- Stay concrete and avoid abstract concepts.

- Use icons and photos rather than words.

- Create instruction for two audiences: higher functioning (resource students with some learning challenges), low functioning (with developmental challenges).
Two Audiences

- **Higher functioning** – normal intelligence, but some learning challenges; may have social or behavioral issues; may be attending general education classes in addition to “resource classes.”

- **Lower functioning** (“moderate to severe”) – lower intellectual ability, impairments in speech, hearing, and/or mobility.

What does this imply for instruction?
Samples of Iconography

- Tell a Secret
- Have Sex
- Oral Sex
- Hug
- Kiss
- Anal Sex
More Samples

- kiss
- cough
- share a straw
- shake hands
- have sex
- touch blood

- Sanitary Napkin
- Tampon

DO NOT throw away in toilet.
DO throw away in trash.
Wipe front to back.
Wash hands when done.
Modified Worksheets

Example of High Functioning worksheet

Example of Moderate Functioning worksheet
Modified Mismatch Activity

Me, Life Partner, Wife, Boyfriend, Girlfriend, Parent, Helper, Community, Stranger
Learner Objectives

General education: “By the end of the lesson, the student will be able to…”

- **(Cognitive)** Identify the five fluids and four body openings involved in the transmission of HIV/STIs.

- **(Affective)** Commit to not bullying others because of their gender, sexual orientation, gender expression or gender identity.

- **(Positive)** Demonstrate the five steps in Refusal Skills when pressured to do something unhealthy or illegal.
Evidence of Achievement

Modified for Special Populations: “By the end of the lesson, the student will be able to…”

- (Cognitive) Point to behaviors that could spread germs from one person to another.

- (Affective) Agree that we should all be nice to each other.

- (Psychomotor) Turn away from (or brush away)
Lesson Content
Supporting Objectives

- “Point to behaviors that could spread germs from one person to another.” (What are germs? What is an illness? How are germs spread? What body fluids may contain germs? What body openings should we cover?)

- “Agree that we should all be nice to each other.” (Who is your friend? How do you show you like someone? What is hurtful/harmful behavior?)

- “Turn away from (or brush away) unwanted touch and say NO.” (What is public? What is private? What are the private parts of your body? How to turn away. How to indicate NO. How to call for help.)
Considerations for Special Education

- Provide **small group** instruction
- Provide **oral instruction and tests** for students with reading challenges.
- Provide students with **frequent progress checks**.
- Give **immediate feedback** to students.
- Make **activities concise and short**, whenever possible.
- Students need and should get lots of **specific praise**.
Considerations for Special Education

- For abstract terms and concepts - provide them with **concrete objects and events**—items they can touch, hear, smell, etc.

- For better understanding - offer information in both written and verbal formats

- To accommodate learning styles- utilize as many of their sensory modalities as possible.

- To clarify - Plan to restate or repeat
Resources

Advocates for Youth  http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/parents/179-parents

Teacher Vision  www.teachervision.com/special-education/resource/5347.html

Learning Disabilities Association of America  www.ldanatl.org

Center for Parent Information and Resources  http://www.parentcenterhub.org/repository/sexed/#content

Sexuality Education for Youth with Disabilities  http://www.med.umich.edu/yourchild/topics/disabsex.htm
Questions/Comments

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Positive Prevention Plus

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