Sexual Health Model

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Talking About Sex – This is a cornerstone of the Sexual Health Model. It includes talking about one's own sexual values, preferences, attractions, history, and behaviors.

Culture, Values and Stereotypes – In order to understand a sense of sexual self, individuals must examine the impacts their particular cultural heritage has on their sexual identities, attitudes and behaviors.

Sexual Anatomy and Functioning – One needs a basic understanding, knowledge and acceptance of sexual anatomy, sexual response and sexual functioning. Sexual health includes freedom from sexual dysfunction and other sexual problems.

Sexual Health Care and Safer Sex – There are many components to this, including knowing one's body, administering regular self-exams and responding to physical changes with appropriate medical intervention. This also means engaging in safer sex practices such as using condoms.

Challenges and Barriers to Sexual Health - This element is about addressing past sexual abuse, substance abuse, compulsive sexual behavior and sexual offending behavior. These are often significant challenges and/or barriers to sexual health.

Body Image – This requires challenging the notion of one narrow standard of beauty/sexiness and encouraging self-acceptance. In order to achieve sexual health one needs to develop a positive body image.

Masturbation, Fantasy and Sexually Explicit Material – Masturbation, fantasy and sexually explicit material can each be healthy expressions of sexuality. It is important for individuals to clarify what is healthy and not healthy for them in each of the areas. What is healthy for one person may not be healthy for another person.

Positive Sexuality – Means pulling together all of the elements mentioned above in a affirming environment that is safe to appropriately explore and discuss sexual issues.

Intimacy and Relationships – Intimacy can take many forms and doesn't have to involve sexual activity. It is an universal need. Sexual health requires knowing what intimacy needs are important for the individual and finding appropriate ways to meet these needs.

Spirituality, Values and Sexual Health – When there is sexual health, there is a consistency between one's ethical, spiritual, and moral beliefs and one's sexual behaviors. Spirituality may include identification with a formal religion but it doesn't have to.

"Food for Thought"

Which elements of the Sexual Health Model are your strongest?

Which elements of the Sexual Health Model are your weakest?

Are there any of the elements of the Sexual Health Model that are confusing to you?

Are there any of the elements that you hadn't considered before?

Other comments/questions about the model?