



Abstinence-Only: Distorting the Facts about HIV/AIDS, Prevention, and Condoms

Many abstinence-only curricula provide distorted or inaccurate information about HIV/AIDS, disease prevention, and condom use. What exactly are they teaching adolescents and teens?

Abstinence-Only Curricula on Condom Use

- ☒ Federally-funded abstinence-only programs are only permitted to discuss the failure rates of contraceptive methods, including condoms. Even worse, many curricula cite inflated or invented rates. One curriculum (*Navigator Guide Book*) falsely claims that increased condom use correlates to an increase in sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

- ☒ Several curricula claim that HIV and other pathogens can “pass through” condoms, despite the Centers for Disease Control’s finding that latex condoms provide an impermeable barrier to particles the size of STI pathogens.

- ☒ A recent Congressional report found that several curricula cited information from a 1993 study on HIV prevention and condoms that was discredited by the department of Health and Human Services. These curricula claim that, in heterosexual sex, condoms fail to prevent HIV transmission 31% of the time.

“For condoms to be used correctly, over 10 specific difficult steps must be followed every time. This tends to minimize the romance and spontaneity of the sex act.”

--*Choosing the Best*, p.25

“The actual ability of condoms to prevent the transmission of HIV/AIDS even if the product is intact, is not definitively known.”

--*I’m in Charge of the FACTS*, p.111

Abstinence-Only Curricula on HIV/AIDS

- ☒ Some abstinence-only curricula present wildly inaccurate data on HIV exposure. One curriculum (*Middle School FACTS*) teaches teens that 41% of heterosexual female teens have HIV, and that 50% of homosexual males have HIV.

“How do you think you would feel watching someone you love get AIDS and die?”

--*Heritage Keepers*, Student Manual p.97

“What is at the root of HIV/AIDS? (Answers may include unfaithfulness, lack of character, or living outside the boundary for which sex was created: marriage).” --*No Apologies*, p.122.

- ☒ Rather than providing information about preventing HIV, many curricula focus on blaming individuals (especially gay men) for their “choices” and demonizing those with HIV/AIDS.
- ☒ Some abstinence-only curricula are widely used internationally, but they lack cultural relevance in the areas they purport to serve. Many use language reflecting only American culture and Judeo-Christian value systems and beliefs.