



Primary Care  
Alberta

# Six Strategies for Stellar Sex Ed

Best practices for teaching sexual health

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[teachingsexualhealth.ca](https://teachingsexualhealth.ca)



Primary Care  
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***These slides are for building educator knowledge and skills regarding sexual health education. They are not intended for classroom use.***



# Indigenous land acknowledgement

**We begin by acknowledging that our work is conducted on the territories of Treaty Six, Seven and Eight and the homeland of the Métis.**

**We also acknowledge the Indigenous communities that have been forged in urban centres across Alberta.**

**We respect the Treaties that were made on these territories, we acknowledge the harms and mistakes of the past, and we dedicate ourselves to move forward in partnership with Indigenous communities in a spirit of reconciliation and collaboration.**

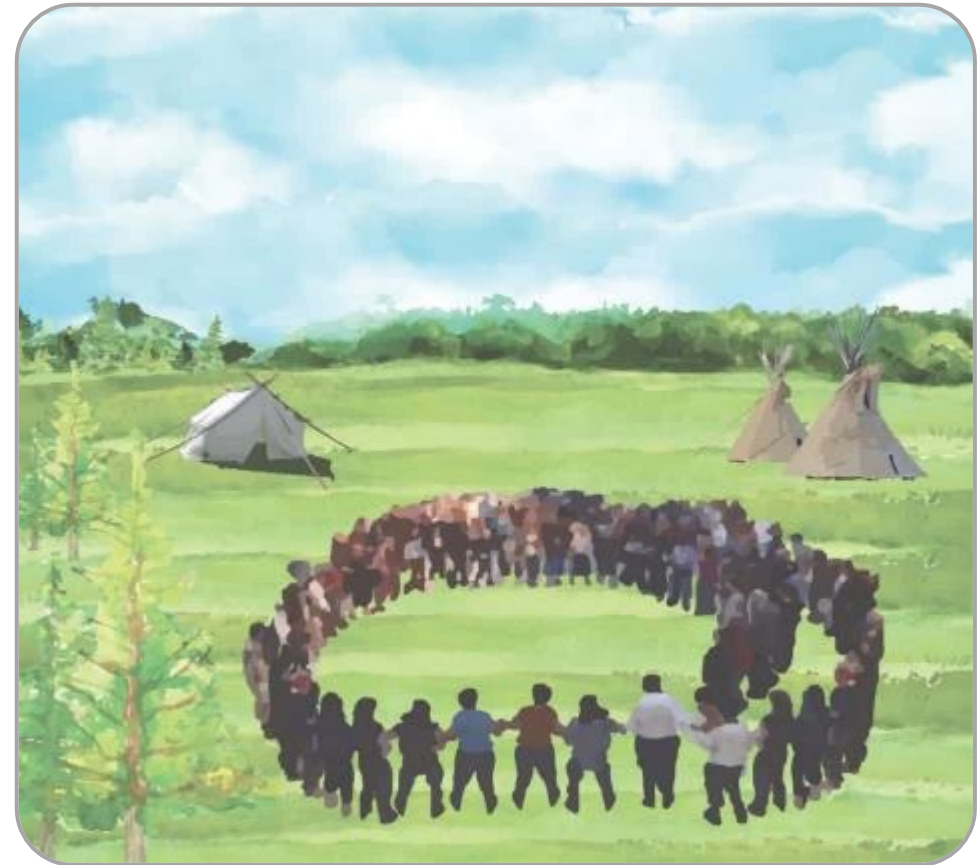


Image from the AHS Indigenous Health Commitments: Roadmap to Wellness: [Indigenous Health Commitments: Roadmap to Wellness \(ahs.ca\)](https://www.ahs.ca/indigenous-health-commitments)



# Learning objectives

1

Explore evidence to support sexual health education

2

Learn 6 best practices for teaching sexual health

3

Take your sex ed classes from good to great!





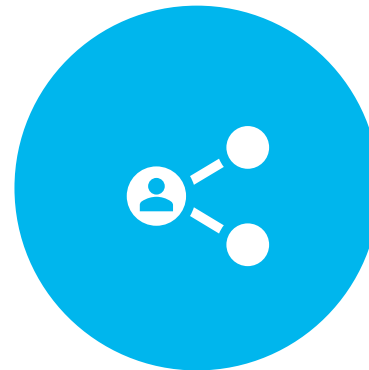
# Group agreements



Ask questions  
anytime



LOL



Participate as you  
are comfortable



Respect  
confidentiality

*TheSafeZoneProject.com*



teachingsexualhealth.ca



# The goal of sexual health education





# What is comprehensive sexual health education?

Comprehensive sexual health education is a **curriculum-based approach to teaching and learning about the cognitive, emotional, physical, and social aspects of sexuality.**

It empowers children and young people to:

- Realize their health, well-being, and dignity
- Develop respectful social and sexual relationships
- Understand how their choices affect themselves and others
- Protect their rights throughout their lives

[UNESCO: International technical guidance on sexuality education: An evidence-informed approach. Paris, France: United Nation Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization: 2018.](#)





# How do we achieve the goal?

Values & rights

Gender norms, roles & stereotypes

Autonomy and consent

Interpersonal relationships

Gender and sexual orientation

Bodies and development

Gender-based violence awareness & prevention

Reproductive health

Sexually Transmitted Infection prevention

Digital literacy

## Comprehensive sexual health education (CSHE)

Enhance sexual health and wellbeing





# Benefits of comprehensive sexual health education



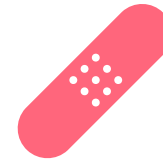
Delayed onset of sexual activity



Reduced risk of sexually transmitted infections



Increased contraception use



Prevention and reduction of gender and sexual violence



Lower number of sexual partners



Empowerment around sexual and reproductive health



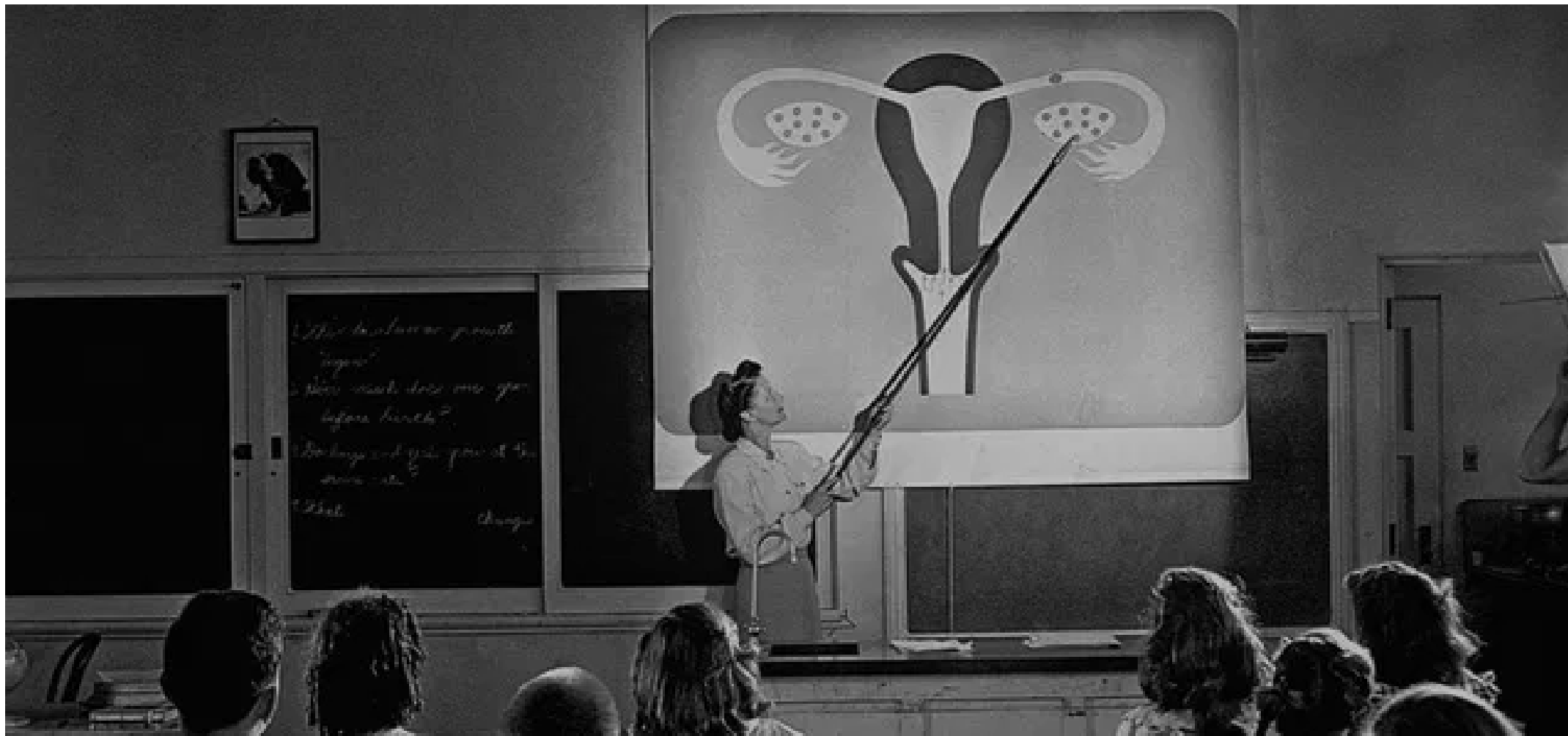
Reduced number of unintended pregnancies

References:

Federal Centre for Health Education (2020). Comprehensive Sexuality Education – Factsheet Series. SIECCAN. (2020). Questions & Answers: Sexual Health Education in Schools and Other Settings. UNESCO (2018). Review of the evidence on sexuality education. Report to inform the update of the UNESCO International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education. UNESCO (2018). International technical guidance on sexuality education: An evidence-informed approach (Revised edition). Action Canada (2020). The State of Sex-Ed in Canada.



# Best practices for teaching sexual health





# 1

# Share facts, not opinions





# 1. Share facts, not opinions

Why

How

- Exploring values is more meaningful than being told what to believe.
- Personal opinions may make students feel their experiences are wrong.
- Respects group agreements.
- Parent or trusted adults instill family, religious, or cultural values.





# 1. Share facts, not opinions

Why

- Stick with factual information.
- Do not label things as “good” and “bad.”
- Avoid giving personal examples.

How



*Hey teacher, what type of birth control should I be using?*



**Aubrey, Grade 8**

**A** *“You shouldn’t think about birth control until you’re at least 18 years old.”*

**B** *“I recommend using the birth control pill. I’ve been on it since I was 16.”*

**C** *“My cousin who is your age, just got an IUD and seems to be happy with it.”*

**D** *“The best birth control is one that is used consistently. We’ll review some common options in class.”*





# 2

# Keep students together





## 2. Keep students together



- Builds empathy.
- Safer and more inclusive.
- Normalizes the conversation.
- Prepares students for the future.
- Reduces misinformation.





## 2. Keep students together

Why

How

- Gain comfort teaching students of all genders (i.e., boys don't have to be taught only by male teachers).
- If students are reluctant to ask questions in a mixed gender group, use an anonymous question box.





**3**

**Answer  
questions with  
confidence!**





### 3. Answer questions with confidence



- Asking questions helps students clarify and confirm the information being presented.





### 3. Answer questions with confidence

Why

How

Use an anonymous question box:

- Distribute identical papers
- Everyone writes
- Collect & review questions at home
- Answer next class





# 4 Use inclusive language






## 4. Use inclusive language

Why

How

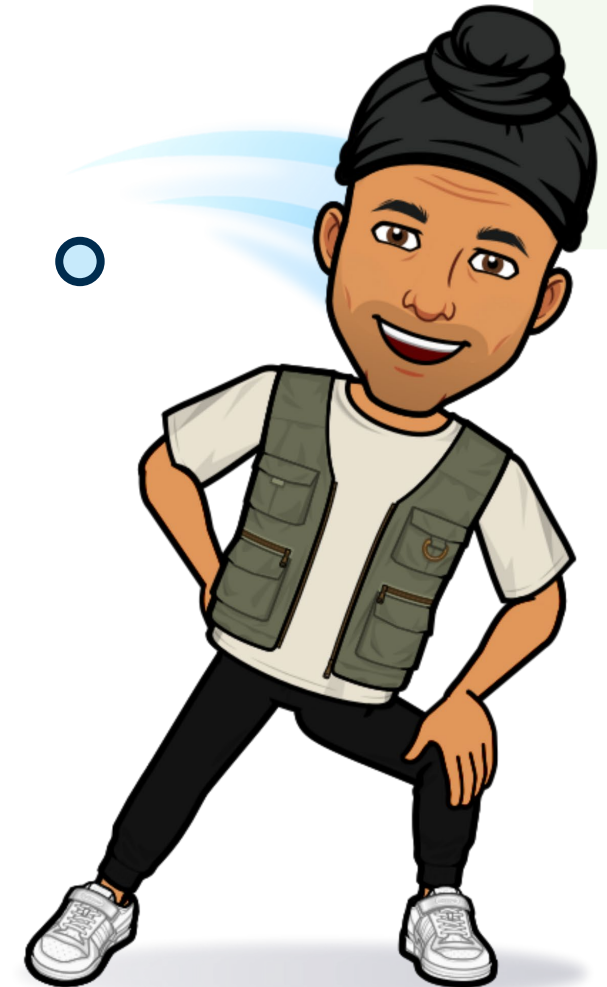
- Language matters!
- Learning is more accessible to all students.
- It leads to better learning and social outcomes for all students.





*“Boys and girls have different changes during puberty.”*

Fix this sentence to use inclusive language.





## 4. Use inclusive language

Why

- Remove gender labels from people, parts, processes and partners.
- Be inclusive of all lived experiences.
- Remember that not all relationships are heterosexual.

How





**5**

**Avoid shame  
& stigma**





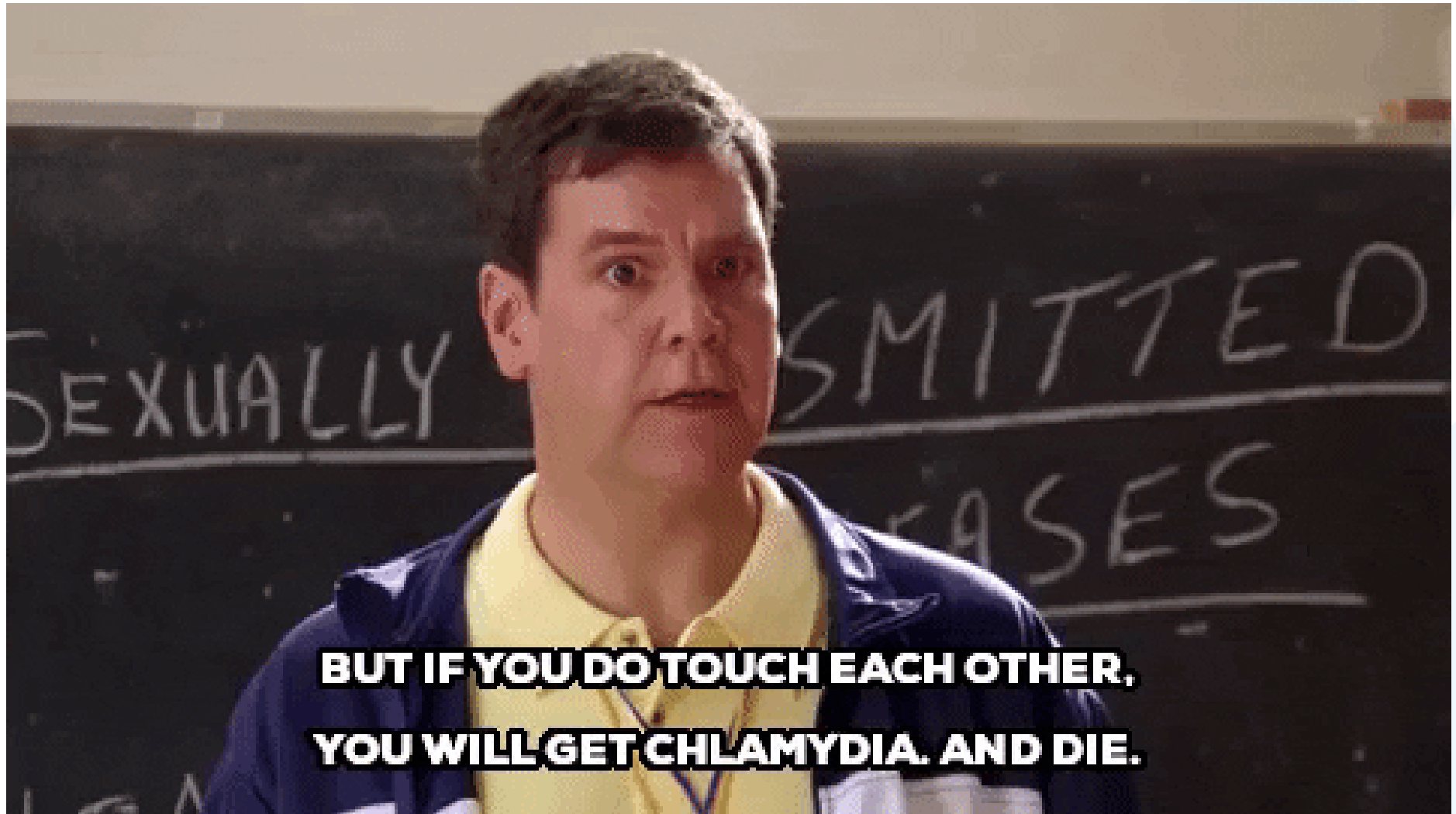
## 5. Avoid shame & stigma



- Ensures students get the facts.
- Prevents ‘other-ing.’
- Promotes testing, treatment and communication.
- Fear tactics are **not** effective.



How **not** to teach about Sexually Transmitted and Blood-Borne Infections and sexual health.





## 5. Avoid shame & stigma

Why

How

- Stick to the facts.
- Teach **prevention, testing and treatment of Sexually Transmitted and Blood-Borne Infections.**
- Assume all experiences are present in the classroom.





*Hey teacher, at what age is it ok to start having sex?*

**A**

*“You’re too young to be thinking about that.”*

**B**

*“When you’re married.”*

**C**

*“You can have sex whenever you want, as long as you’ve both consented.”*

**D**

*“That’s a values-based question that needs to be decided carefully with a trusted adult and is based on consent.”*



**Micah, Grade 6**



# 6

**Teach it  
yourself!**



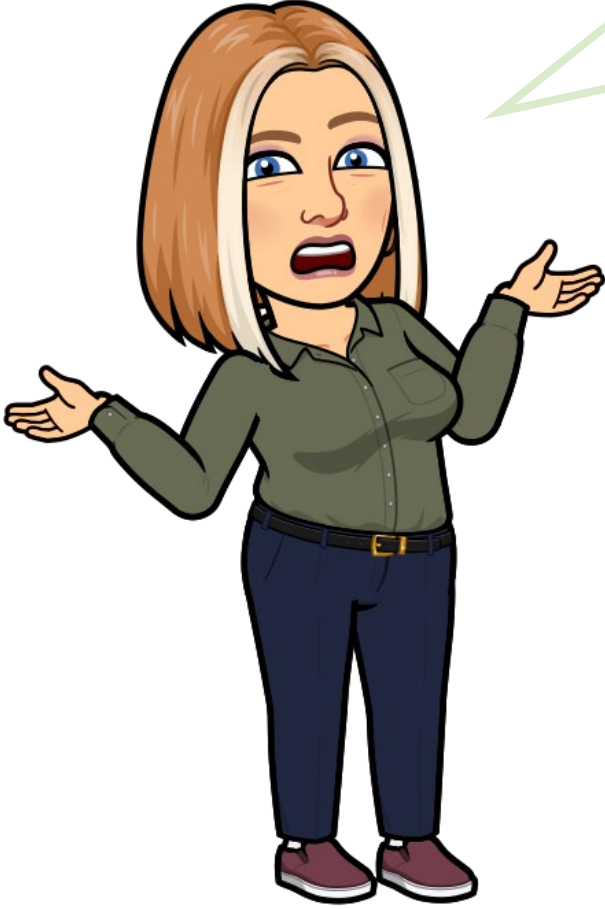


## 6. Teach it yourself!



- Students know and trust their teacher.
- Teachers can answer follow-up questions.
- Normalizes sexual health.





*The public health nurse can't come in to teach about STIs to my Grade 8 students. What do I do?*

**A** Skip the topic, they'll learn about it next year

**B** Find some images of gonorrhoea and genital warts and put them in a PowerPoint

**C** Use the approved learning activities and resources on [TeachingSexualHealth.ca](https://teachingsexualhealth.ca) and teach it yourself

**D** Tell the story about how your friend got treated for an STI and it really wasn't that bad



**Grade 8 Teacher**



## 6. Teach it yourself!

Why

- Use approved learning activities and resources on [TeachingSexualHealth.ca](https://teachingsexualhealth.ca).
- When challenging student questions come up, investigate the answer and respond at the next sexual health class.
- The more you teach it, the easier it gets.

How





# Teaching Sexual Health

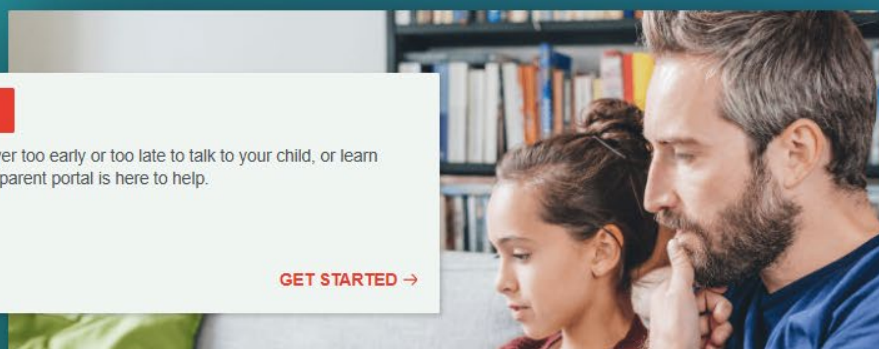
Parents & Teachers: Be Proactive. Be Prepared.



**For Teachers**

The teacher portal provides teachers and educators with evidence-based sexual health information, lesson plans, tools and resources.

[GET STARTED →](#)



**For Parents**

As a parent, it's never too early or too late to talk to your child, or learn more yourself. The parent portal is here to help.

[GET STARTED →](#)

Thank You!

Help us learn by completing the survey in the QR Code:



For more information, please contact  
**[TSH@primarycarealberta.ca](mailto:TSH@primarycarealberta.ca)**



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