

Sexuality: Affection, Culture and Health

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Sexuality exists since childhood and undergoes changes throughout life.

One of the significant changes of adolescence is the attainment of reproductive and sexual maturity. As this emerges there is the emergence of the ritual of courtship and early sexual activity.

The understanding of human sexuality implies knowledge of the differing social, family and individual contexts and how individuals organize exchanges and sexual experiences. The way young people interact and relate sexually results of the models of behavior and attitudes prevailing in the family and social context.

If we consider universal prevention as the only way to change behavior on a continuous basis, the assessment of specific needs must take into account the importance of social norms and friends (peer group), the acquisition of cognitive and behavioral skills needed to implement and maintenance of change, and the assessment of vulnerability to risk, motivation to change, and also the situations that can influence the implementation of this change. But sex education, within the broad context of health education, also implies that the educational agents involved, directly and indirectly (families, schools, communities, institutions, nongovernmental organizations, municipalities, public institutions and organizations dedicated to leisure and entertainment) gain awareness of their importance in the development of young people.

The understanding of sexuality in adolescence is still essential for the study and analysis of some phenomena, such as teenage pregnancy, abortion and transmission of sexually transmitted infections, including the transmission of HIV / AIDS. Given the importance of knowledge, information and motivation on safe sex behaviors in young and considering a change of behavior an extremely complex process, the analysis of the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) study, which aims to study the lifestyles and behaviors of adolescents in various settings of their lives, including sexual behavior, becomes extremely relevant.

This book is intended as a guide for parents, educators and health professionals in the area of sexuality, is a systematic scientific analysis on sexuality of young people, addresses several issues related to lifestyle and risk, and through a multidisciplinary perspective proposes new approaches and strategies to solve different problems. Simultaneously, it provides clues to sex education in school context, presents the "state of the art" in several countries and reports on various experiences in the area, worldwide.

It ends with ideas for further investigations, according to the dynamic perspective, given the social implications of the theme and its proximity to the changes in other socio-economic, cultural and political contexts.