



A newsletter on health, sexuality and family communication from the NEA Health Information Network

Summer 2003

What is Media Literacy and Why is it Important

As we enter into the 21st century our communications and information systems have become increasingly complicated and pervasive. Equally complex are the messages generated and sent over those systems. In addition to TV, movies and magazines, young people must now contend with the Internet, video games, and cell phones. How a young person views and interprets what they see and hear will go a long way to determining how they will respond.

Media literacy is critical because it creates the ability to sift through and analyze the messages that inform, entertain and advertise to us every day. It's the ability to bring critical thinking skills to bear on all media — from music videos and Web environments to product placement in films and virtual displays on NHL hockey boards (J. Tallim, "What is Media Literacy"). These skills are critical to young people as they navigate the complexities of the messages they are receiving on a daily basis. A recent study found that American children spend more than 38 hours each week using media (television, videos, music, computers, and video

games). (Roberts DF, Foehr UG, Rideout VJ, Brodie M. *Kids and Media at the New Millennium: A Comprehensive National Analysis of Children's Media Use*. Menlo Park, CA: Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation; 1999).

The impact of the media on young people can have potential negative consequences. According to two scholars who reviewed a number of studies, research implies that teens who watch sexual content on television are more likely to engage in sex; teens who watch a lot of television tend to have negative attitudes about being a virgin; and teens who see sexual content as being real are more impacted by the sexual content. Age and gender may also influence how teens select media, according to one study that found older teens were more likely to tune in to sexual content, and that females were more likely to learn about sex and relationships from sexual content in the media than from any other source (B. Greenburg and L. Hofschire, "Sex in Entertainment Television").

The media's impact on young people is also evident in their exposure to violence. It is estimated that by age 18, a U.S. youth will have seen 16,000 simulated murders and 200,000 acts of violence (American Academy of Pediatrics). According to the American Psychiatric Association, "The debate is over... For the last

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three decades, the one predominant finding in research on the mass media is that exposure to media portrayals of violence increases aggressive behavior in children."

In today's complex environment young people need to develop the skills to interpret the messages that are bombarding them. Parents, caregivers, or a trusted adult can go a long way in providing those skills to young

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Media Literacy Resources

Center for Media Literacy: www.medialit.org
Kaiser Family Foundation: www.kff.org

American Academy of Pediatrics: www.aap.org
Media Awareness Network: www.media-awareness.ca



News, Resources and Events

DC is Leading the Way in Parent Peer Educator Training

Research shows that teen pregnancy is less likely when boys and girls feel connected to reliable adults, like parents, with whom they can have comfortable conversations and receive accurate information about love, sex and relationships.

With generous support from the Consumer Health Foundation and the Gilbert and Jaylee Mead Family Foundation, the DC Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy trains parents in the District of Columbia to become Parent Peer Educators on teen pregnancy prevention. Through this program, parents participate in a free, one-day training and receive the curriculum and support needed to facilitate the workshop How to Talk to Teens About Love, Sex and Relationships.

For more information about the program visit <http://www.teenpregnancydc.org/>, or contact Jennifer Bissell, Director of Community Outreach & Parent Peer Education, DC Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, at 202-789-4666 extension 13.

Number of New HIV Cases Up Among Men Who Have Sex With Men; New U.S. AIDS Cases Up 2.2% Overall

The number of men who have sex with men who were newly diagnosed with HIV in 2002 rose for the third consecutive year last year, rising 7.1% from 2001 to 2002, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention announced at the 2003 National HIV Prevention Conference in Atlanta. The new

findings are "fueling fears" that HIV might be making a "major comeback" among MSM. The CDC also announced a 2.2% overall increase in the number of new U.S. AIDS diagnoses and a 5.9% drop in AIDS-related deaths. The data suggest an ongoing plateau in the progress made in the fight against AIDS following the introduction of highly active anti-retroviral treatment in the mid-1990s. The stability could be due to several factors, including treatment failure, difficulty in adhering to treatment regimens and late diagnoses delaying treatment initiation, CDC Director Jaffe said." (CDC release, 7/28).

Boys, Not Abusers

How do you stop a 30-year-old from beating his wife? Talk to him when he's twelve. That's the message on a banner draped across the San Francisco Giants' ballpark. It is part of a new domestic violence prevention campaign called "Coaching Boys into Men," sponsored by the Family Violence Prevention Fund to give men the tools to teach boys that violence against women and girls is wrong. The coaching campaign is one of an increasing number of programs aimed at middle and high school boys in hopes of stopping domestic violence before it starts. For more information, go to the Family Violence Prevention Fund's website at <http://endabuse.org/>.

Teen Birth Rate at Record Low

The national teen birth rate continued to drop in 2002, the 11th straight year of declines, according to new figures released

by the National Center for Health Statistics. The teen birth rate fell to 43 births per 1,000 females aged 15-19 in 2002, a record low. These figures represent a five percent decline from 2001 and a 28 percent decline from 1990. (National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy)

Annie E. Casey Foundation's Strengthening Families to Promote Youth Development

This report synthesizes the Casey Foundation's roundtable discussions among practitioners, researchers and policy-makers and attempts to further articulate a family-based perspective

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Pointer's Dish

Summer 2003

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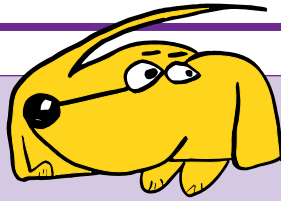
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NEA HIN welcomes your comments and suggestions. Contributing authors are encouraged to share ideas, program descriptions, or other experiences. Letters and articles may be forwarded by mail or e-mail to the Pointer's Dish Editor at info@canwetalk.org. Please include your name, mailing address and daytime phone number. NEA HIN reserves the right to exclude submissions or edit for length.

Funding News



The For All Kids Foundation, Inc.

Rosie's For All Kids Foundation, Inc. awards grants to help support the intellectual, social, and cultural development of disadvantaged children throughout the United States. The grants that have been awarded have helped support (1) child care and early education programs for inner-city youth, and (2) after-school and literacy programs. Rosie's For All Kids Foundation was founded in February of 1997 by Rosie O'Donnell. Since its inception, the Foundation has awarded grants totaling \$17 million to 1,000 charitable organizations across the United States. For more information visit www.forallkids.org

Healthy Youth Funding Database

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Division of Adolescent and School Health has developed a web-based database of potential funders. This

user-friendly database provides names of potential funding sources for supporting health and youth focused programming. Information provided includes the mission of the organization, application procedures, target populations and grant eligibility. www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dash/

The Foundation Center's Foundation Yearbook, 2003 Edition, Available Foundation Yearbook:

Facts and Figures on Private and Community Foundations is the premier resource on the nation's nearly 62,000 foundations. The Yearbook tracks the development of all active U.S. corporate, independent, and community foundations from 1975 through 2001. Part of the *Foundations Today* Series, this comprehensive report also ranks grant makers by their grant and asset dollars and provides a breakdown of regional growth and giving trends. View <http://fdncenter.org/> to learn more. ■

Program Updates

Can We Talk?—¿Conversamos? was a Huge Hit at the NEA Conference

The Can We Talk? — ¿Conversamos? Team attended the National Education Association Representative Assembly in New Orleans, LA in July. Over 10,000 NEA members were present and numerous people stopped by the Hall of Health exhibit to learn about Can We Talk? — ¿Conversamos? and to take a Sexual Health Quiz hosted by the NEA Health Information Network.

Can We Talk?—¿Conversamos? Coordinator's Meeting held in Washington, DC

On July 17, 2003 a cadre of coordinators from California, New Mexico, South Carolina, Florida and Rhode Island met with the National staff and Dominic Cappello in Washington, DC. They discussed the status of the program in their states, the Can We Talk?—¿Conversamos? evaluation, the new bullying and substance abuse modules, and developed state strategic action plans. If you would like to learn more about the meeting contact David Hoover at 202-822-7723. ■

Congratulations to Kandra Strauss Riggs!

We want to congratulate Kandra Strauss Riggs on her busy spring. She married Colin Riggs on April 26th in Rockville, Maryland and was promoted to Junior Project Coordinator for Teen Pregnancy Prevention in May. She can still be reached at 202-822-7796 and kstrauss@nea.org. Way to go Kandra!

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Media Literacy *Continued from page 1*

people. As shown by the 3rd workshop in the Can We Talk series Mixed Messages, addressing the issues of the media and its impact on youth can be a difficult and troubling subject. The following tips are helpful for parents to assist children in developing media literacy skills and for reducing the negative effects of media exposure:

Tips for Parents:

- Help to distinguish between reality and fantasy.
- Teach them that real-life violence and sexual activity has consequences.
- Watch television with children and discuss the acts and images that are portrayed.
- Ask children how they feel after watching a violent or sexually themed show, movie, or music video.
- Limit the amount of television time to 1 to 2 hours a day.
- Monitor what children watch and restrict viewing of programs that have excessive violent or sexual content.
- Monitor the music, music videos, websites and films that children see and listen to.



Dear Pointer

I live in a community with many Spanish-speaking parents. I want to run a workshop in Spanish. What resources are available?

To answer this question, we referred to ¿Conversamos? expert Maria Samaniego of New Mexico State University. Ms. Samaniego noted that at the beginning of each workshop she asks the parents what topics they want to talk about. She researches the topics at home on the Internet and then verbally reports back to them in Spanish. Ms. Samaniego often refers to local resources such as college/school counselors and the local Teen Pregnancy Prevention Coalition. She also listed the following online resources:

Soy Unica

<http://www.soyunica.gov/door.htm>

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has developed a bilingual initiative for Hispanic girls ages 9-14, and their mothers and other caregivers. This public education initiative, called "iSoy Unica! iSoy Latina!" is designed to help them build and enhance their own self-esteem, mental health, decision-making and assertiveness skills, and to prevent

the harmful consequences of alcohol, tobacco and illicit drugs. The iSoy Unica! iSoy Latina! project encourages cultural pride by emphasizing the strengths inherent in the Hispanic culture. They have several free materials that include posters, activity books, brochures and stickers. They also have an interactive Web site for 9-14-year-old girls. To request iSoy Unica! iSoy Latina! materials call 1-800-773-8546.

Planned Parenthood

<http://www.plannedparenthood.org/espanol/>

Planned Parenthood has numerous fact sheets in Spanish on Contraception and Sexually Transmitted Infections. They also have a web page titled "Sexuality Education Resources in Spanish" that lists several organizations with Spanish parent education materials on various topics.

National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy

<http://www.teenpregnancy.org/espanol/default.asp>

The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy offers a comprehensive Spanish overview of their materials. They have created a variety of pamphlets and public service announcements to address the unique teen pregnancy prevention needs of Latinas.

*Materials in Spanish from these organizations can make great prizes at parent workshops!

For more information on ¿Conversamos?, contact David Hoover at dhoover@nea.org or 202-822-7723. ■

News and Events *Continued from page 2*

for promoting youth development. The report examines "youth-family-community linkages" and emphasizes the need to develop a holistic framework that allows practitioners to work with youth, family and communities at the same time. 16 pages. Free online. www.omgcenter.org.

United States Conference on AIDS (USCA), September 18-21, 2003

USCA is the largest conference of AIDS workers in the United States. The seventh annual United States Conference on AIDS will take place September 18-21, 2003, in New Orleans, Louisiana. In the past, they have had more than 3,000 service providers, people living with HIV/AIDS, policymakers, public officials, funders and other leaders attending USCA, making it the largest AIDS-related gathering in the United States, in search of the latest tools and solutions for the challenges posed by HIV/AIDS. For more information visit <http://www.nmac.org> or call the National Minority AIDS Council at (202) 483-6682.

NOAPPP's Annual Conference, November 10-13, 2003

The National Organization on Adolescent Pregnancy, Parenting and Prevention, Inc. (NOAPPP) will be hosting *Blueprint for Success: Emerging Programs Themes & Policies* November 10-13, 2003 in Arlington, Virginia at the Hyatt Regency Crystal City. Call for proposals and Exhibitor Prospectus are available online at www.noapppp.org. For more information contact NOAPPP at (202) 293-8370. ■

Program Updates

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New Modules Coming Soon!

Development of "Can We Talk about Drugs?" and "Can We Talk about Bullying and Harassment?" are almost complete. The new modules are designed to offer more flexibility to trainers and can be used with parents of five to fifteen year-olds. These new modules continue the Can We Talk? series and our philosophy that young people's academic achievement is directly influenced by their emotional, physical and sexual health, and that outcomes can be improved through effective family education and community partnerships. The new modules should be available in October, 2003. Visit www.canwetalk.org periodically for updates on the new modules or to learn more about the entire program. ■