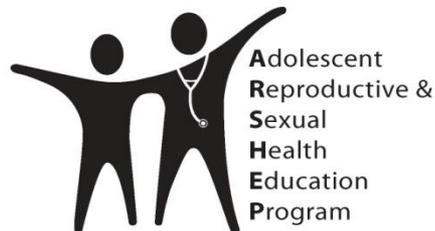


Beyond Abstinence and Risk: Sex Positive Approaches in the Care of Adolescent Females



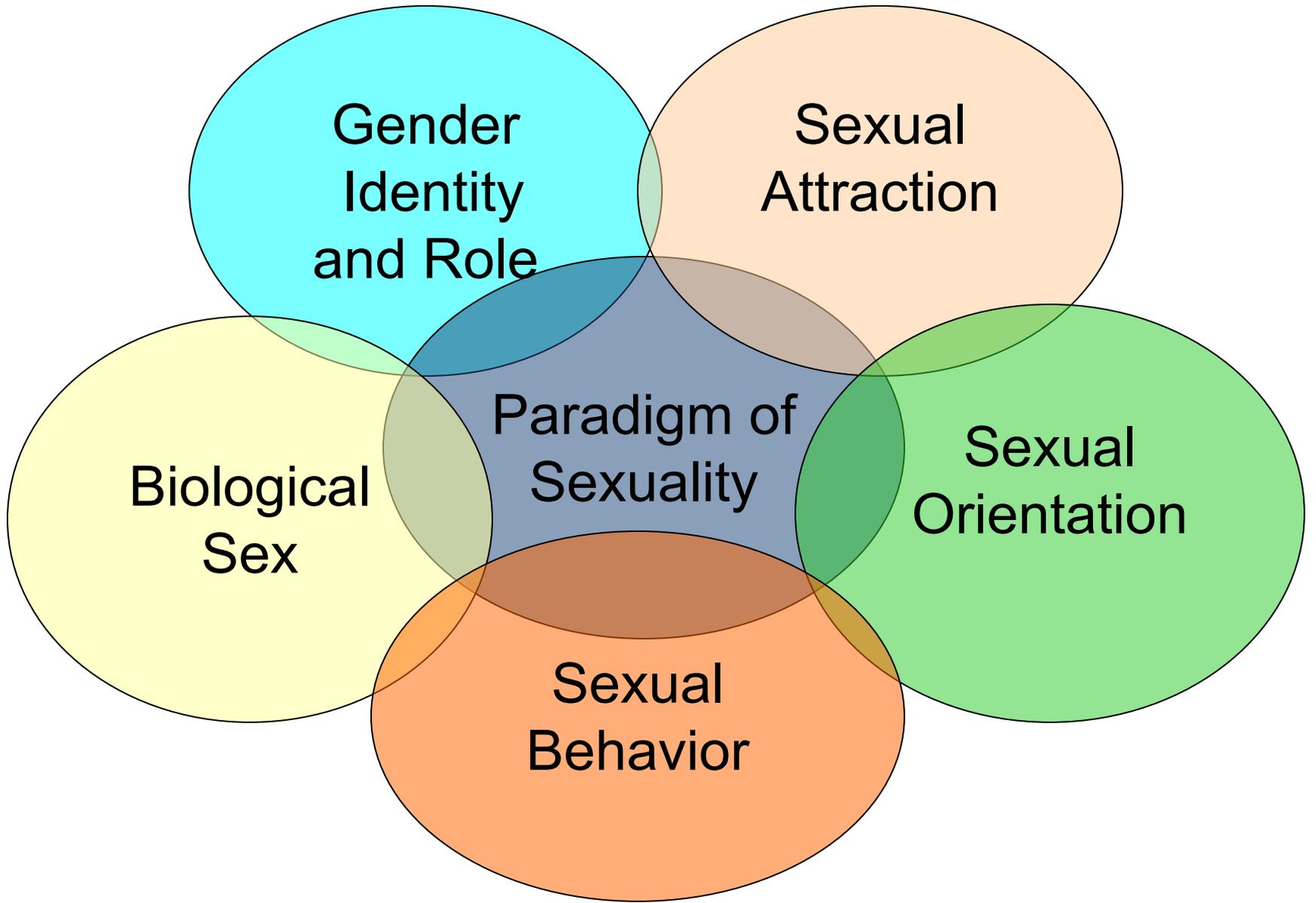
Veenod L. Chulani, MD, MSED, FSAHM
Section of Adolescent Medicine
Phoenix Children's Hospital

Disclosures

- ▶ **I have no relevant financial relationships with the manufacturer(s) of any commercial product(s) and/or provider(s) of commercial services discussed in this CME activity.**
- ▶ **I do not intend to discuss any unapproved or investigative use of a commercial product or device in my presentation**

Objectives

- ▶ **Identify the influence of “Abstinence” and “Sex as Risk Taking” paradigms in clinical practice**
- ▶ **Describe the sex-positive ABCD paradigm of adolescent sexuality**
- ▶ **Discuss and explore applications of ABCD paradigm in the care of adolescent females, specifically in sexual socialization and sexual and reproductive health promotion**



Gender
Identity
and Role

Sexual
Attraction

Paradigm of
Sexuality

Sexual
Orientation

Sexual
Behavior

Biological
Sex

Two Narrow Approaches to Adolescent Sexual Development

- ▶ Two approaches have predominated in U.S. sexual health policy and practice:
 - ▶ Abstinence-only
 - ▶ Sex as risk taking
-

Sexual Socialization

- ▶ **Process through which an individual acquires an understanding of ideas, beliefs and values, shared cultural symbols, meanings and codes of conduct.**
- ▶ **Process by which knowledge, attitudes, and values about sexuality are acquired**
 - Ward, 2003



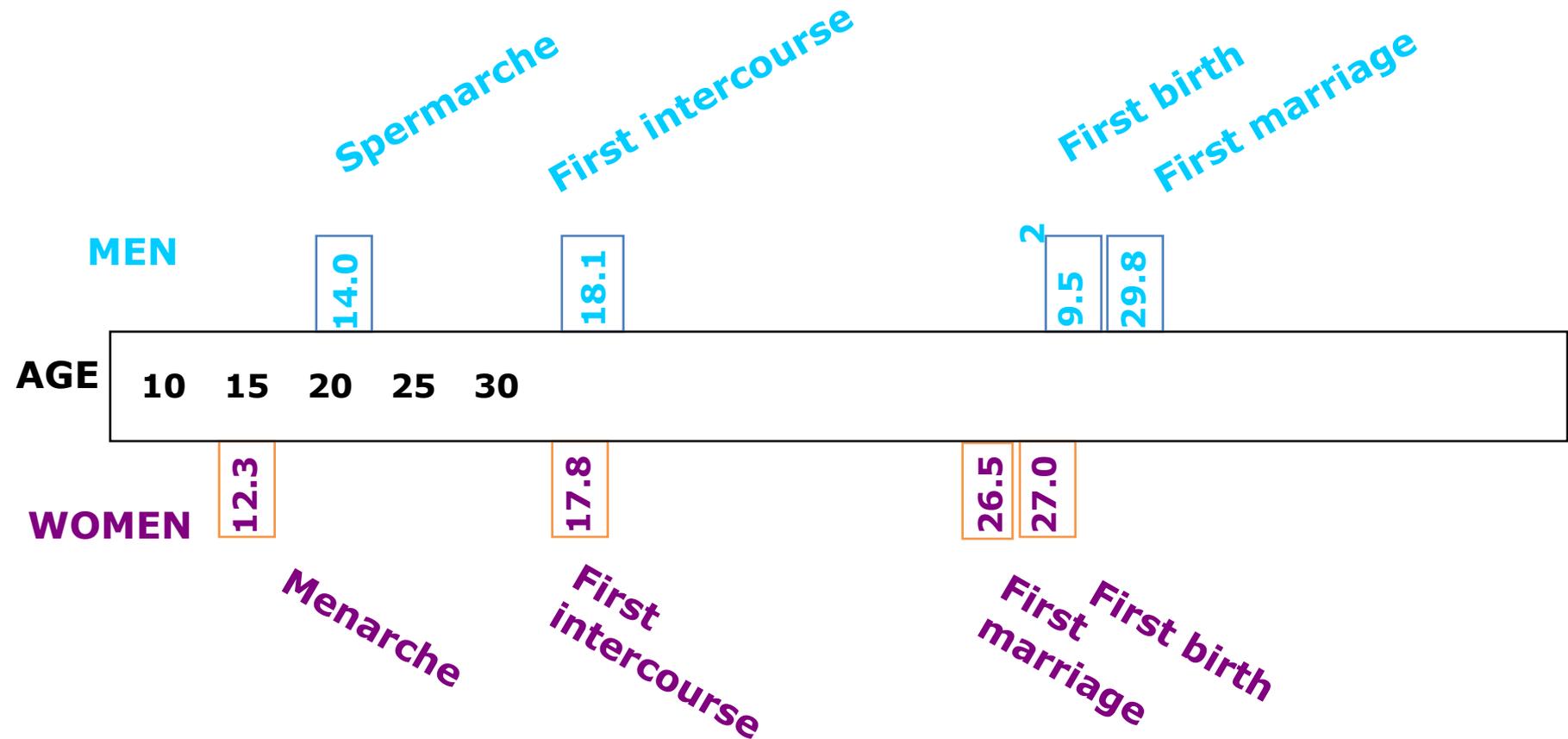


The Abstinence Paradigm

“You don’t need to know – unless in a committed carpooling relationship”

- Provides a code, not empowerment
 - Gives no tools for navigating relationships
 - Makes sex hard to discuss when it does happen
-

Adolescent Sexual Development





The “Sex as Risk-Taking” Paradigm

- ▶ How many times have you driven in the past 3 months? 6 months?
 - ▶ How many passengers have you carried?
 - ▶ Did you wear a seat belt during your last drive?
 - ▶ Front-passenger airbags?
 - ▶ Have you ever driven while under the influence of alcohol or drugs?
-

The “Sex-as-Risk-Taking” Paradigm

- ▶ **Sexual expression vs. sexual risk**
 - ▶ **Instills fear and not sense of mastery or control**
 - ▶ **Leaves out the relational contexts of sexuality**
-

History-taking Template

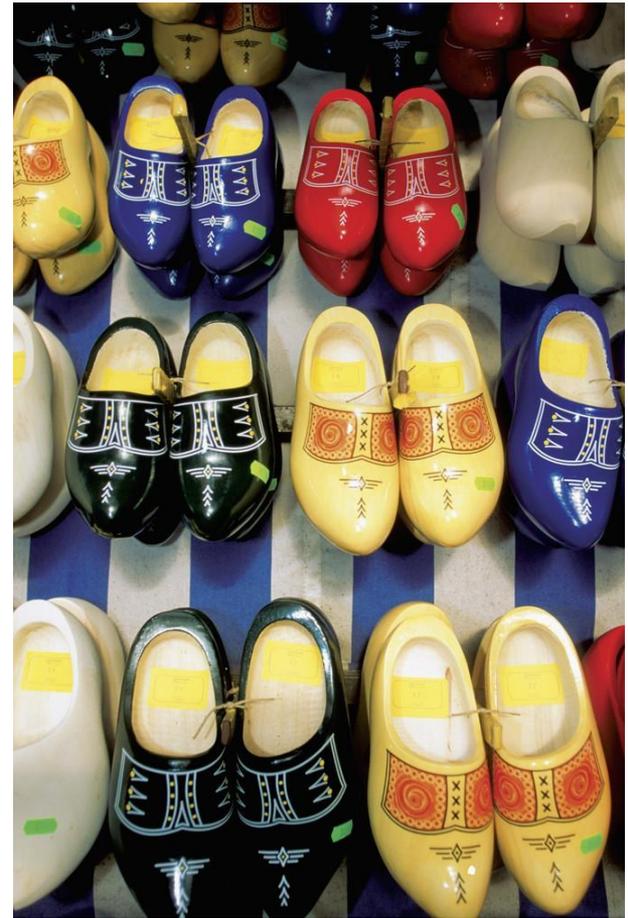
- ▶ **Sexual coercion and abuse**
- ▶ **Sexual orientation**
- ▶ **Sexual activity**
 - ▶ **Number of partners**
 - ▶ **Frequency**
 - ▶ **Sex practices**
- ▶ **STI history and risk assessment**
- ▶ **Pregnancy history and risk assessment**
- ▶ **Contraceptive behaviors**
- ▶ **Substance use**

“Sex as Risk” in Current Practice

- ▶ Medically-derived risk-assessment/prevention, screening, and treatment approach
 - ▶ Results in discussions that are based on:
 - ▶ Narrow definitions of sexual health
 - ▶ Focus on specific sexual behaviors as part of risk-assessment strategy instead of personal development and interpersonal relationships
-

What is Healthy Sexuality?

The U.S. vs. the Netherlands



Turning to the Research

Study: Examining Cultural Meanings of Adolescent Sexuality

For information on this study, see
Not Under My Roof: Parents, Teens and the Culture of Sex
(University of Chicago Press) or visit
works.bepress.com/amy_schalet



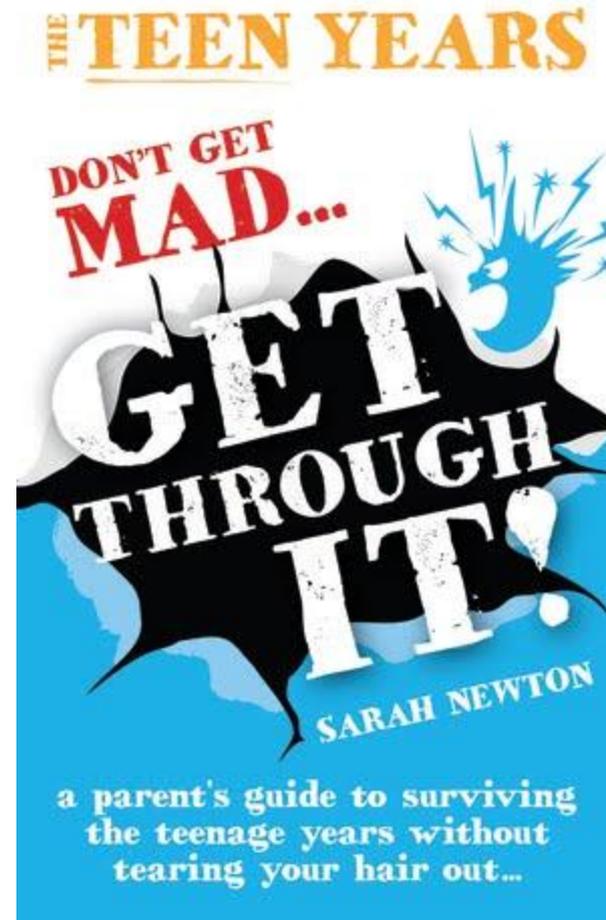
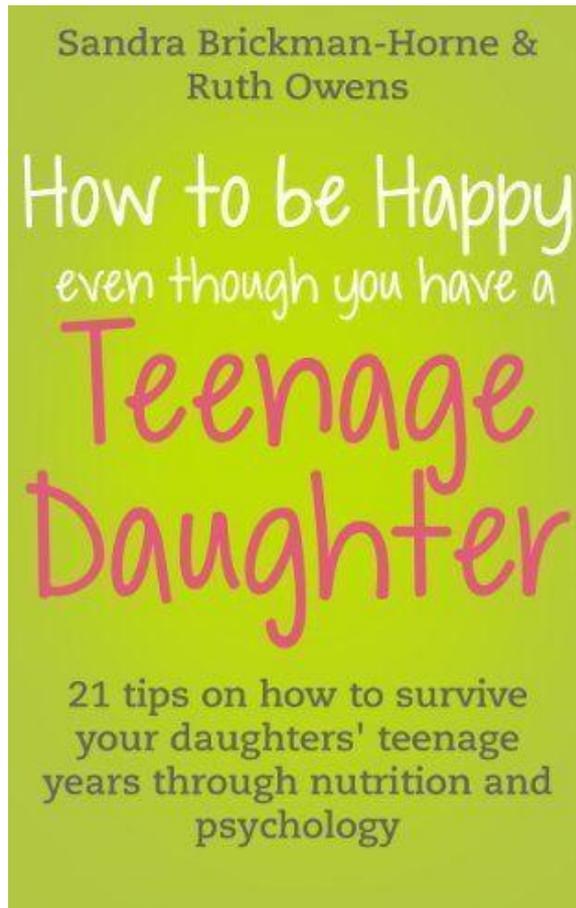
US and Dutch Cultural Approaches and Adolescent Sexuality

Dramatization



- ▶ Raging hormones
 - ▶ Sex as risk taking
-

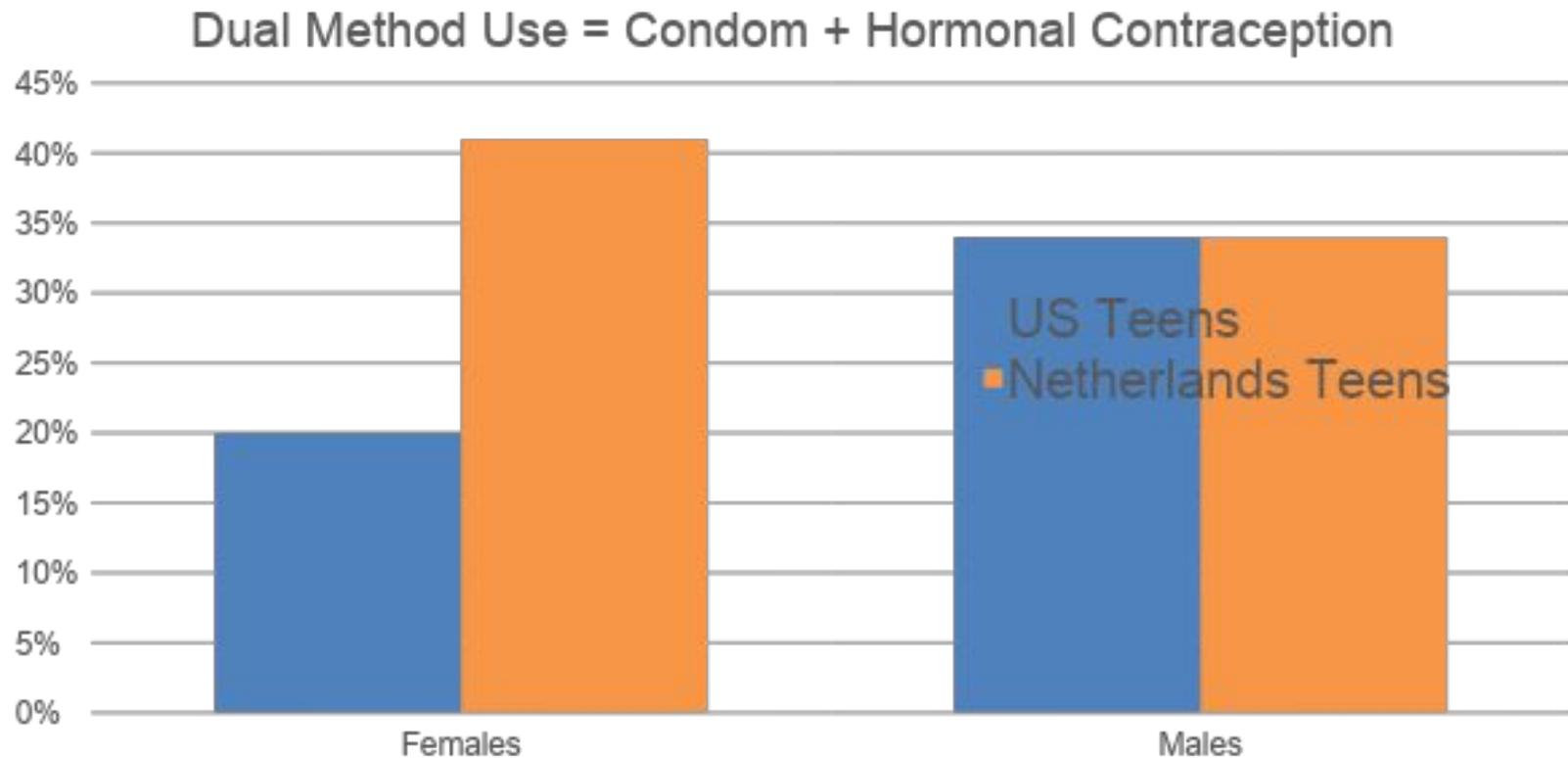
Dramatization



Normalization

- ▶ Readiness and self-regulation
 - ▶ Sex is preparation
-

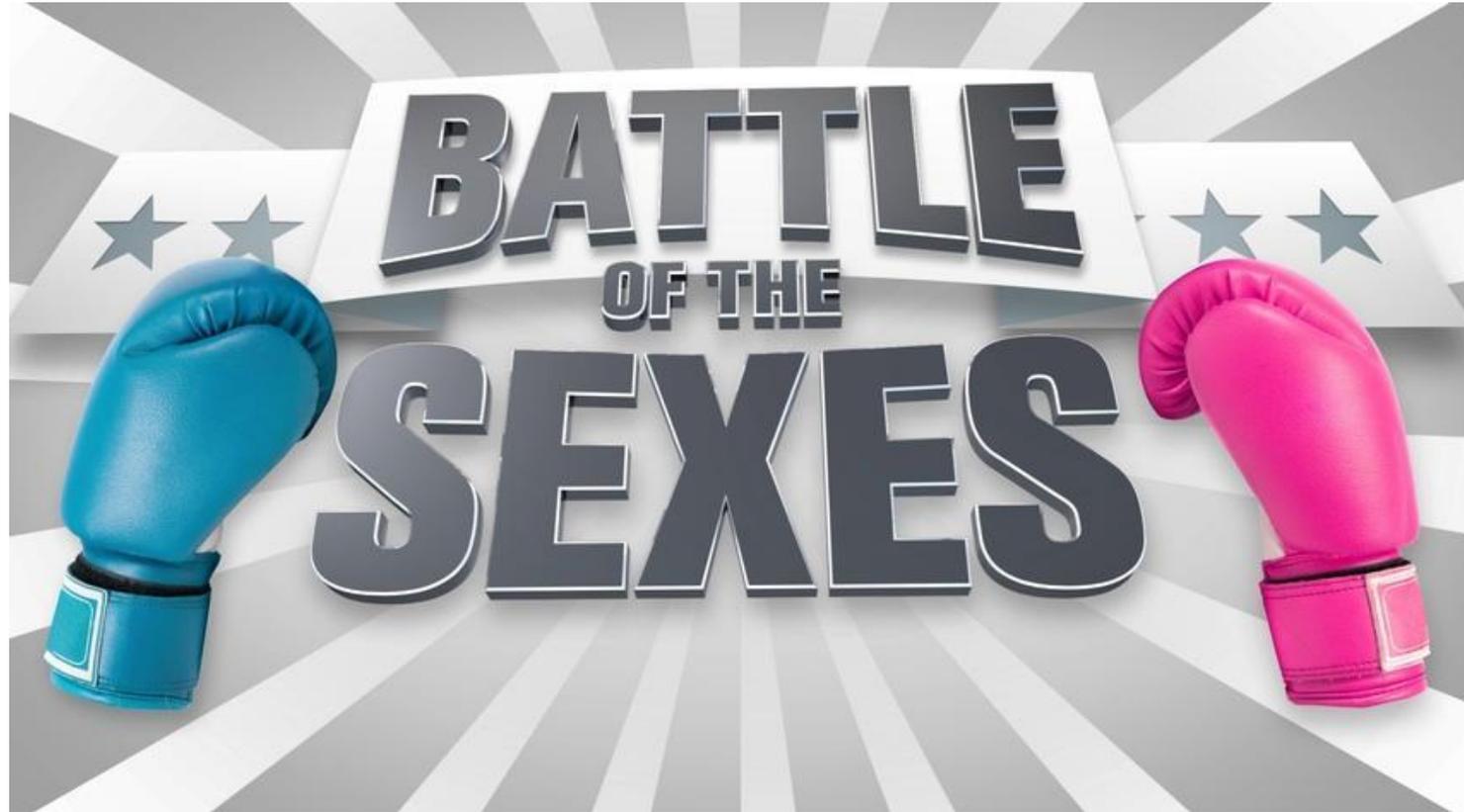
“Double Dutch”



2006–2010 NSFG. VHS 2011.

Rutgers WPF. January 2012

Battle of the Sexes



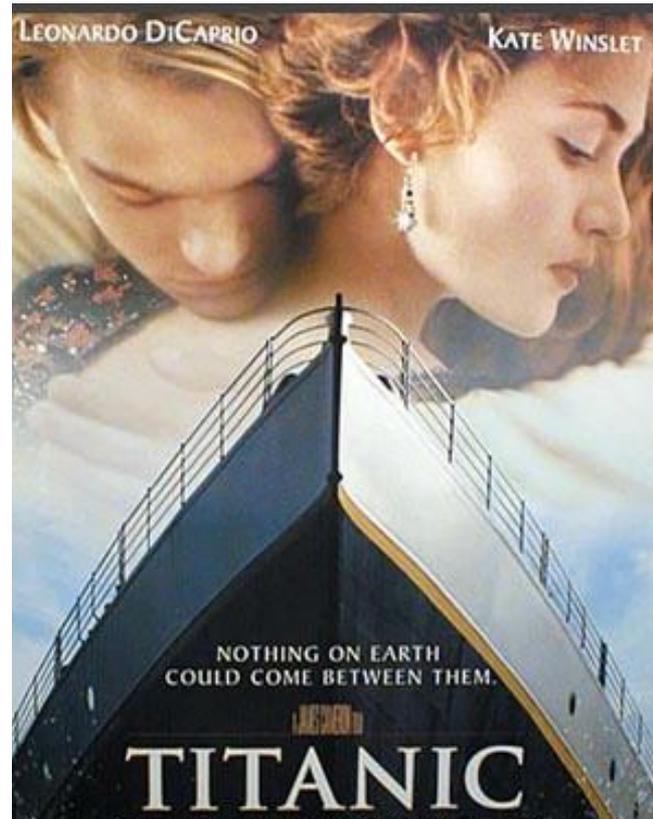
Schalet, A. Medscape General Medicine. 2004

Relationship Between the Sexes



Schalet, A. Medscape General Medicine. 2004

Love Is Extraordinary



Schalet, A. Medscape General Medicine. 2004

Falling in Love Is Common

- ▶ Being in love is a common experience
- ▶ In national survey, 63% of Dutch youth say they are “very much” in love with their current sexual partner

Sex Is a Secret

- ▶ [My mother] hasn't asked me [whether I am having sex] and I haven't told her...I'd rather her not ask me straight out.”
—16-year-old American girl
 - ▶ Teens keep sex a secret
 - ▶ Some parents prefer “not to know”
 - ▶ Secrecy weighs especially on girls
-

Sex Is Negotiation

- ▶ “I wanted to tell my mother. I don’t know. It was on my mind. So I told her regardless of the consequences.”
—16-year-old Dutch girl
 - ▶ An open subject that is rendered negotiable
 - ▶ Parents may not always be completely comfortable with but they do not want it to lead to deception
-

Mit Liebe schenken.



**GIB AIDS
KEINE
CHANCE**

mach's mit.
machsmit.de

**If you're going to have sex,
don't get screwed.**



**STD. No matter how you do it, you can get it.
Protect yourself. Protect your partner. Use a condom**

Wie im 7. Himmel.



**GIB AIDS
KEINE
CHANCE**

mach's mit.

machsmit.de



**DON'T BE
STUPID**

PROTECT YOURSELF
CONDO.NSWOP.CH

Cultural Discourses on Sex

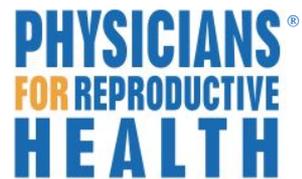
- ▶ Procreational
 - ▶ Sex should take place within a marital relationship for the purposes of procreation
 - ▶ Relational
 - ▶ Sex should happen within a loving, committed relationship
 - ▶ Recreational
 - ▶ Sex as a pleasurable and fun activity.
 - ▶ Sexual double standard
 - ▶ Sexual exploration is more acceptable for men than for women.
 - DeLamater, 1989
-

Cultural Discourses on Sex

- ▶ “You should enjoy being a female and not feel hindered by stereotypes and really enjoy your sexuality but do it *in secret*. Don’t be outward with sexual promiscuity.”
 - 21-year old student, on what her *female* friends told her about sex and relationships
 - Trinh, 2016
-

Cultural Discourses on Sex

- ▶ “If you aren’t having sex within the first month, he is going to dump you. Guys like you based on how much you pleasure them. Guys are going to talk about things and joke about things with their guy friends.”
 - 20-year old student, on what her *male* friends told her about sex and relationships
 - » Trinh, 2016
-



Can Cultural Approaches to Adolescent Sexuality Change?



Conceptualizing a New Paradigm: ABCD2

wards A New Paradigm:

Sexual Health is More Than the Mitigation of Risk and the Absence of Disease



A New Paradigm

- ▶ Adolescent sexuality development is a normal process encompassing interrelated biological and psychosocial aspects
 - ▶ Sexuality development lies on a continuum through which youth progress in the context of relationships
 - ▶ Adults play vital roles in providing resources and supporting the development of skills
-

A New Paradigm

A

Autonomy of Sexual Self

Own and control sexual decision-making
process

Recognize and articulate wishes and
boundaries

Knowledge, Skills, Attitudes

Autonomy of Sexual Self

- ▶ Research has found that:
 - ▶ Personal control and self-efficacy in sex negotiation are significantly associated with safer sex behavior
 - ▶ Adolescents with a sense of control over their lives (in general and in sexual situations) more likely to abstain from sex or to use condoms when they engage in sexual intercourse
-

Autonomy: Pearls for Practice

- ▶ **Facilitate knowledge building**
- ▶ **Normalize desires and arousals while emphasizing agency and ownership of sexual decision making**
 - ▶ **Examine their readiness for sex**
 - ▶ **Define and articulate boundaries**
 - ▶ **Promote preparation for sexual activity**
- ▶ **Acknowledge the pleasurable aspects of sexual contact**

A New Paradigm

B

Build Good Romantic Relationships

Validate adolescents' need for intimacy

Assist in building egalitarian relationships suited to their
life stage

Teach about *healthy* relationships, not just the
avoidance of unhealthy relationships

Building Good Relationships: Pearls for Practice

- ▶ **Acknowledge the value of relationship-building and the virtues of intimate relationships**

- ▶ **Encourage youth to discuss:**
 - ▶ **Healthy relationship**
 - ▶ **Communication**
 - ▶ **Sex-related communication**
 - ▶ **Conflict resolution**

A New Paradigm

C

**Foster Connectedness Between Adolescents and their Parents and
Other Caregivers**

Connectedness: The Parent Role

- ▶ Parents usually not primary source of information
 - ▶ Many parents feel unsure about how best to approach the topic
 - ▶ “The Big Talk”
 - ▶ Communication about sex not very extensive
 - ▶ Parent-teen conversations about sex often one-way
-

Fostering Connectedness

- ▶ Parental Involvement vs. “Parentectomy”:
 - ▶ Encourage honest and open communication if possible between caregiver and teen
 - Perspectives of relationships
 - Barriers
 - ▶ Encourage parents to communicate their values and beliefs but recognize that their children may have different perspectives and experiences
-

Connectedness: Pearls in Practice

- ▶ Talking to adolescents:
 - ▶ Examine patient's perspective of relationship with caregiver
 - ▶ Examine barriers for conversation with caregiver about romantic/sexual relationships
 - ▶ Offer to be a resource to both parents and teens
-

Connectedness: Pearls in Practice

- ▶ Talking to caregivers:
 - ▶ Acknowledge to caregiver talking about relationships is difficult, but healthy
 - ▶ Help caregiver understand the importance of modeling healthy relationships
-

A New Paradigm

D²

Recognize Diversity and Disparities

Diversity and Disparities

- ▶ Poverty and lack of access to socioeconomic and health resources negatively affect many aspects of adolescent sexual health, including
 - STD/HIV rates
 - Pregnancy rates
 - Contraceptive use
 - Teens' feelings of self-efficacy
-

Diversity and Disparities in Practice

- ▶ Recognize interactions between A-B-C & D²
 - ▶ How do cultural, religious beliefs play into patient values around sexuality?
 - ▶ How do social determinants shape patients experiences with clinicians?
 - ▶ How do we create best practices for diverse populations?
-

ABCD²: Overall Practice Implications

- ▶ Normalize adolescent sexuality and normalize early
 - ▶ Promote affirming discussions about sexual feelings and arousal, decision-making, responsibility, and relationships
 - ▶ From “parentectomy” to parental involvement
-

Beyond Individual Practice

- ▶ Families
 - ▶ Schools
 - ▶ Media
 - ▶ Faith communities
 - ▶ Policy
-

Conclusions

- ▶ Sexual development is a natural part of adolescence
 - ▶ Traditional approaches in the U.S. narrowly define sexual health with gendered sexual socialization messages
 - ▶ New paradigm needed to recognize healthy sexuality beyond abstinence and risk and must be integrated in the care of adolescent females
-

FOAM



RUBBERS



SEAMEN



WEIGHT



SEX

**IT'S NOT
SO HARD
TO TALK
ABOUT**

PERIOD



References

- ▶ Finer LB, Philbin JM. Trends in Ages at Key Reproductive Transitions in the United States, 1951-2010. *Women's Health Issues*. 2014;24:e271-9
 - ▶ Santelli, John S. et al. Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage: An Updated Review of U.S. Policies and Programs and Their Impact. *Journal of Adolescent Health*. 2017; 61: 273 – 280
 - ▶ Schalet A. Must We Fear Adolescent Sexuality? *Medscape General Medicine*. 2004;6(4):44.
 - ▶ Schalet, Amy. 2011. *Not under My Roof: Parents, Teens, and the Culture of Sex*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
 - ▶ Schalet, Amy. "Sex, Love, and Autonomy in the Teenage Sleepover." *Contexts*. 2010; 9(3): 16-21
 - ▶ Trinh SL. "Enjoy Your Sexuality, but Do it in Secret": Exploring Undergraduate Women's Reports of Friends' Sexual Communications. *Psychol Women Q*. 2016;40(1):96–107.
-