

Positive Prevention: HIV/STD Prevention Education for California Youth

A Research Validated HIV/STD Prevention Education Curriculum For Use in Siskiyou County Schools (Grades 7-12)

Positive Prevention is a comprehensive curriculum, adopted by the Siskiyou County of Office of Education, that provides adolescents with the vital information and support they need to choose behaviors that reduce their risk of becoming infected with the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) that causes Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), and related STDs.

Positive Prevention was developed with support from the American Red Cross, Orange County Chapter of Santa Ana, California with funding from the California Department of Education and the California Department of Health Services.

The goals of American Red Cross HIV/AIDS education is to prevent the spread of HIV by

- Encouraging people to respond in informed ways to the risk of HIV infection, as well as to people who have HIV.
- Helping people to apply the facts about HIV to their own behaviour.

Positive Prevention complies with California State Bill 71 and California Education Codes 51930 – 51939 that govern HIV/AIDS and STD Education. The curriculum incorporates research-based principles of effective HIV/AIDS Education and has been reviewed by eleven (11) technical experts, and was pilot tested in six (6) school districts.

Positive Prevention is available in four (4) versions.

- Level A: Middle School, for students grades 7 and 8
- Level B: High School & Alternative School, for students grades 9 through 12
- Special Populations: for students who require Special Education and adults with developmental disabilities
- Independent Study: Home School and Independent Study students

All versions of Positive Prevention are age appropriate and include seven (7) interactive lessons:

- Intro: Getting Started
- Lesson 1: Stereotypes and Myths Regarding Persons with HIV/AIDS
- Lesson 2: The HIV/AIDS Pandemic; Effects on the Human Body; Transmission Myths and Facts
- Lesson 3: Sexually Transmitted Diseases
- Lesson 4: Recognizing and Reducing Risks, Condom Success/Failure Rates
- Lesson 5: Refuting Peer Pressure: Refusal Skills
- Lesson 6: HIV Antibody and STD Testing, Community Resources

Each curriculum includes:

- Masters for All Overhead Transparencies
- Student Activities and Worksheets
- Extensive Appendix Materials
- Guidelines and Resources for Teachers and Administrators

- Parent Education Outline and Resources
- Optional Materials for High Risk Youth
- Suggested Adaptations for Special Student Populations
- CD-ROM with information about selected STDs, along with student worksheets, and letters of parental notification

Outcome Objectives

The instructional objectives featured in these lessons target one primary goal: to prevent the transmission of HIV and STDs. In order to accomplish this important goal, the instructional objectives can be summarized as follows:

1. **To abstain from sexual intercourse.** Discussions outlining the potential negative consequences of sexual intercourse are included, as well as an exploration of replacement behaviors which can lead to healthy friendships and dating relationships.

For students who do not choose sexual abstinence, lesson 4 in the high school and alternative school curriculum recommends a reduction in the number of sexual partners and correctly and consistently using barrier protection (e.g., a latex or other approved condom) during each act of sexual intercourse. *These measures are identified as being "safer" than using no protection at all, but are not described as "safe" techniques and are not considered equal to abstinence.*

2. **To abstain for ALL drug use including alcohol.** Rather than limiting the discussion to injection drug use, the lessons warn of the potential of HIV/STD transmission during any form of drug use. The curriculum discourages the consumption of alcohol or any drug, which can alter a person's ability to make safer decisions, perform prevention skills and reduce risk.

For students who do not choose to abstain from injection drug use, the warning in the high school and alternative school curriculum is against sharing injection drug equipment. As outlined in the Center for Disease Control guidelines, if sharing occurs, the need to clean the equipment is discussed.

3. **To access resources and services.** The identification of school and community counseling services and "hotline" telephone numbers is discussed, as well as information regarding STD and HIV antibody testing (as required by California Education Code) and medical follow-up. Family and friends are identified as a primary source of support in dealing with such matters, as reflected in the "Family/Home" assignment(s) that accompany each lesson.
4. **To exhibit compassion for persons with chronic illness, including persons living with HIV infection and AIDS.** Classroom presentations with Positively Speaking presenters, help students see the impact this disease has on individuals, their friends and families, and their lives and careers. Stereotypes regarding infected persons are replaced with accurate information and, hopefully, a sense of compassion and understanding for all persons touched by this or any disease *regardless of how they became infected.*

Lessons and activities in Positive Prevention reflect and reinforce these themes through an exploration and emphasis on life plans and goals (included in Lessons 1 and 6), interpersonal relationships and responsibilities (in Lessons 1, 4, 5, and 6), risk recognition and risk reduction (in Lessons 2, 3 and 4), and the utilization of community health resources (in Lessons 3 and 6). The curriculum is also aligned with national and state standards for health education.