

Celebrating Sexuality after Sexual Abuse

Sexual health is “a state of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being in relation to sexuality; it is not merely the absence of disease, dysfunction or infirmity. Sexual health requires a positive and respectful approach to sexuality and sexual relationships, as well as the possibility of having pleasurable and safe sexual experiences, free of coercion, discrimination and violence. For sexual health to be attained and maintained, the sexual rights of all persons must be respected, protected and fulfilled.”

(World Health Organization, 2006)

SEXUAL HEALTH

Sexual health represents all the ways people can embrace and celebrate sexuality. Sexual health is not just practicing ‘safer sex’. It is all about learning to take good care of yourself sexually in order to experience health and well being.

Child sexual abuse and sexual assault can cause serious harm and pain. Sexual assault counselors play a pivotal role in promoting sexual health and well being for people

who have been abused. Yet sexual assault counselors seldom receive adequate training and preparation to respond effectively when the subject of adolescent sexuality comes up with youth who have been abused. This technical assistance bulletin focuses on providing a foundation for positive youth development and sexual health with teens that have been sexually abused but may be applicable for many adult survivors as well. Even after terrible experiences of sexual assault young people can learn to celebrate their sexuality in ways that prevent harm to self and others.

A TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACH FOR ADOLESCENT SEXUAL HEALTH

A trauma-informed approach for adolescent sexual health is a way of addressing vital information about sexuality and well being for teens that takes into consideration adverse life experiences and their potential influence on sexual decision making.

The federal Office of Adolescent Health promotes a trauma-informed approach to sexual health for all young people, and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) provides guidelines



PENNSYLVANIA COALITION AGAINST RAPE

125 North Enola Drive • Enola, PA 17025

717-728-9740 • 800-692-7445 • TTY 877-585-1091 • pcar.org

© Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape 2016. All rights reserved.