
Putting it to Practice: Sex-Positive Approaches for Adolescents of Color

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Objectives

- To define the term sex-positive and sex-positive approaches.
- To identify ways to use sex-positive approaches to reduce sexual health disparities among adolescents of color.
- To analyze the gap between sex-positive research implications and healthcare practice.

What is sexual health?



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.**”

**Why are we focusing on
adolescents of color?**

HEALTH DISPARITIES



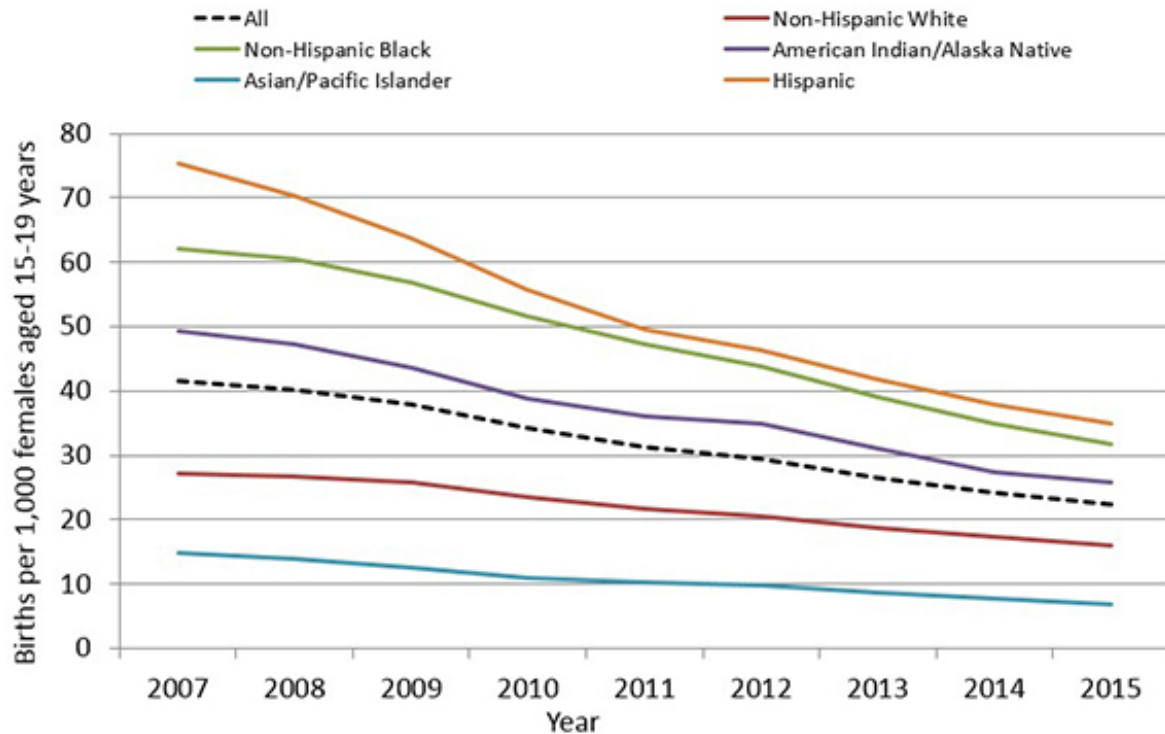
Health Disparities

- Teen birth rates & birth outcomes
- Sexually transmitted infections
- Sexualization & exoticism
- Sexual message framing

TEEN BIRTH RATES



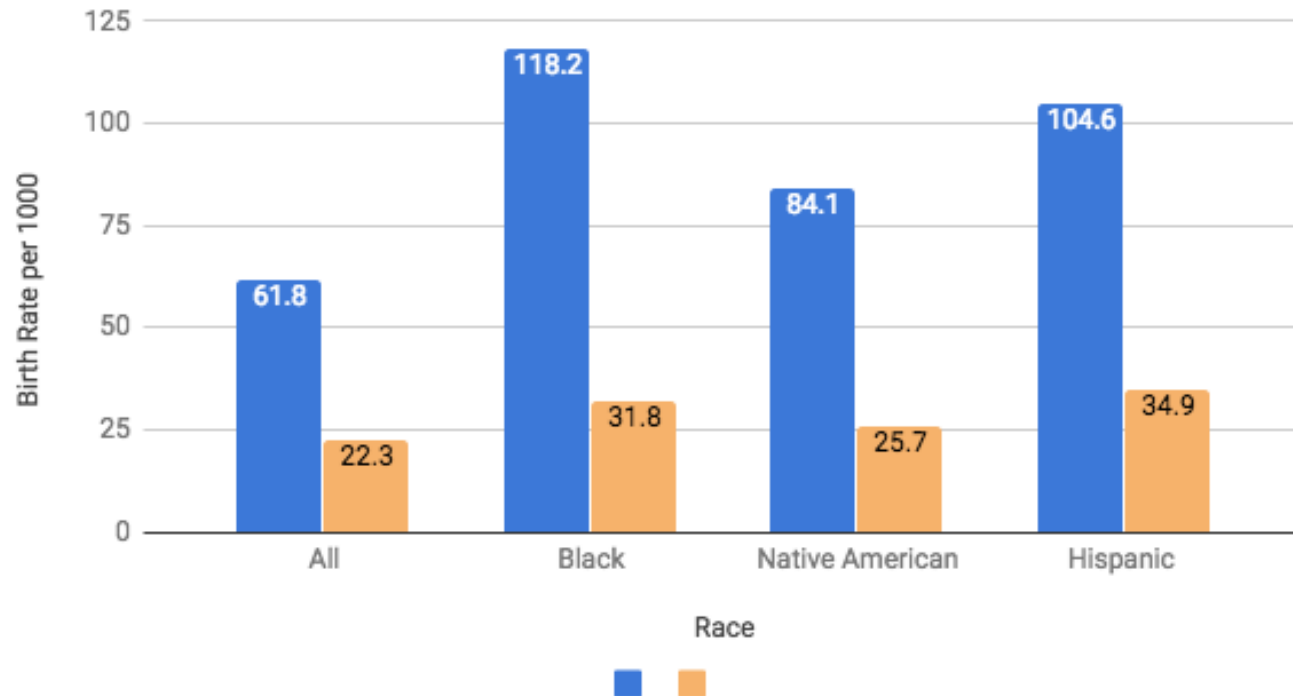
Teen Birth Rates



Martin JA, Hamilton BE, Osterman MJK, et al. Births: Final data for 2015. Natl Vital Stat Rep 2017; 66(1):1-70

Teen Birth Rates

Teenage Birth Rates (per 1000 live births) 1991 and 2015



BIRTH OUTCOMES

Birth Outcomes

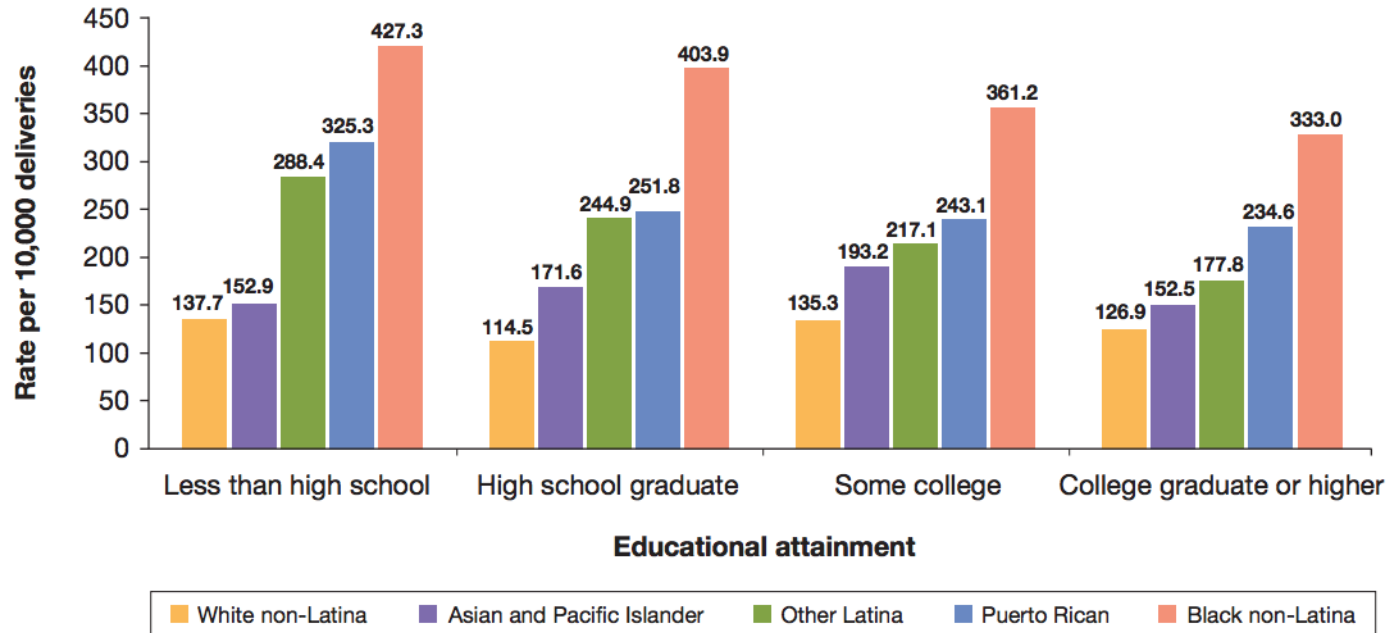
Black women are 243% more likely to die from pregnancy- or childbirth-related causes.

Black expectant and new mothers in the U.S. die at about the same rate as women in countries such as Mexico and Uzbekistan.

Regardless of education status, Black women still have the highest disparities.

Birth Outcomes

Figure 13. Severe Maternal Morbidity by Educational Attainment, New York City, 2008–2012

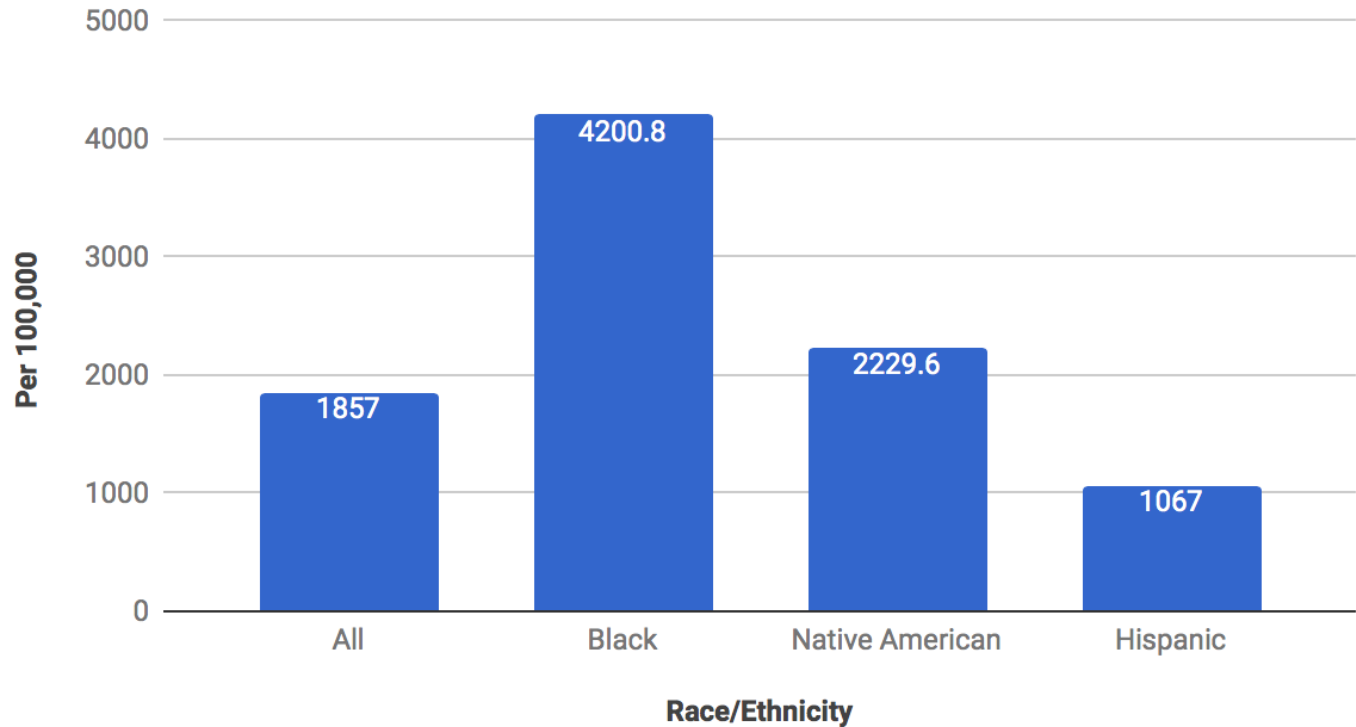


SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS

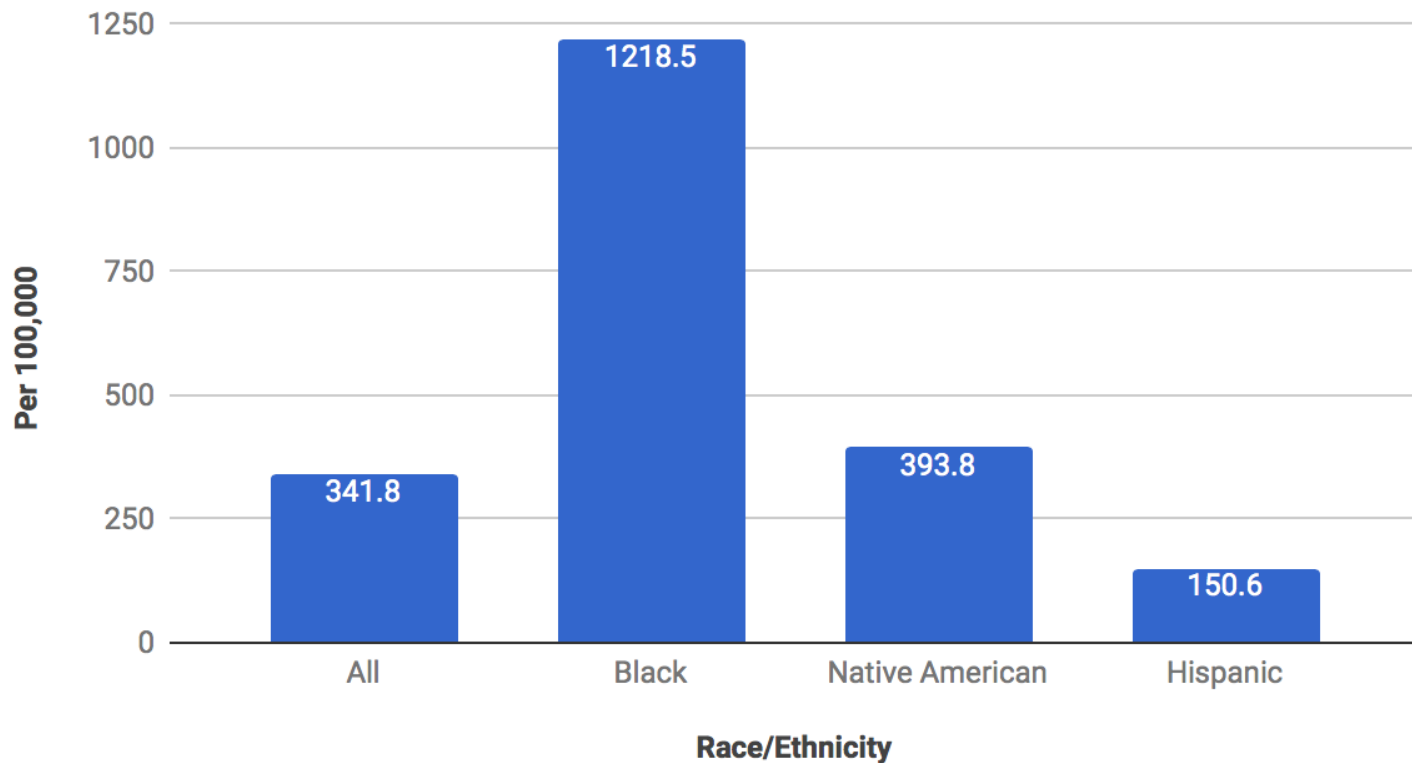


Chlamydia

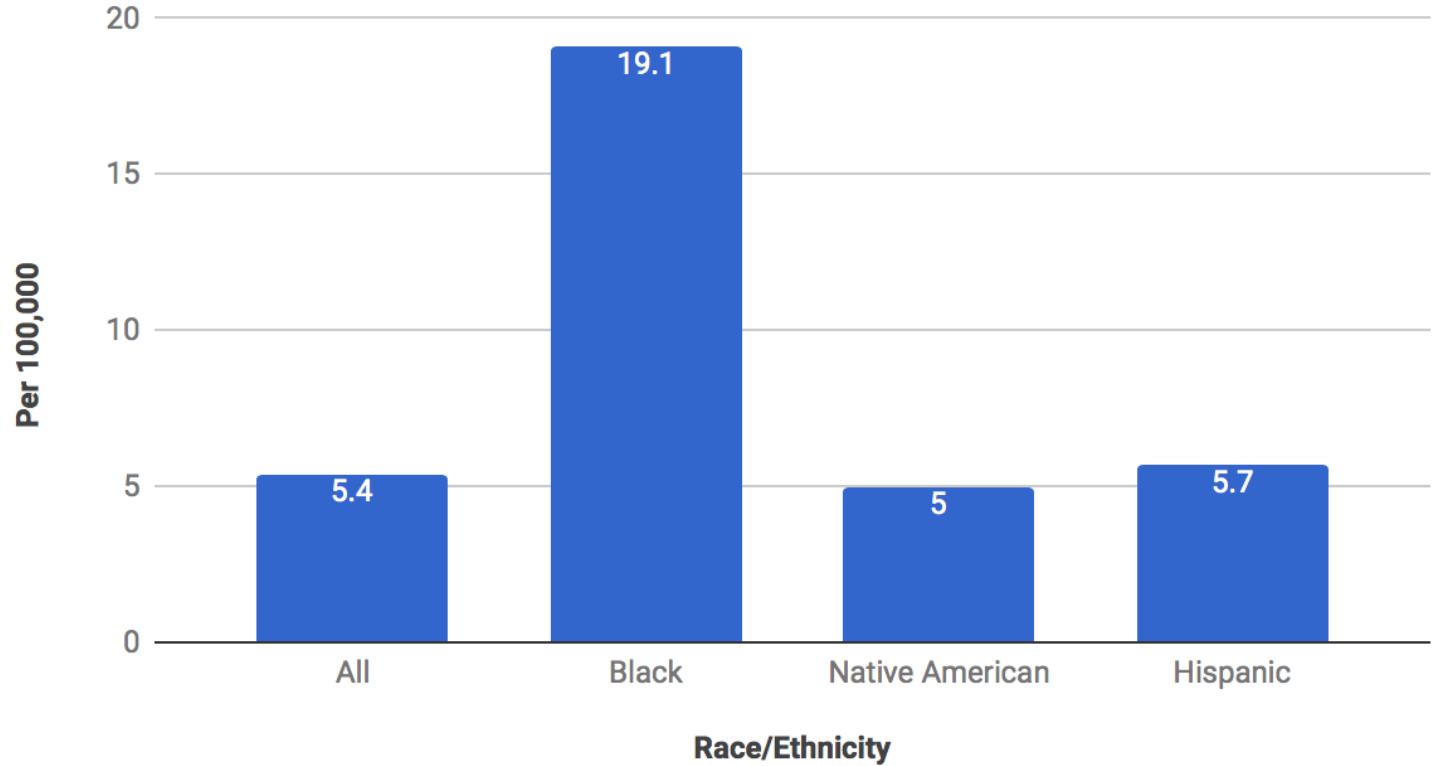
2015 Chlamydia Rates Among Teens 15 - 19 Years Old



2015 Gonorrhea Rates Among Teens 15 - 19 Years Old



2015 Syphilis Rates Among Teens 15 - 19 Years Old



SEXUALIZATION

Sexualization occurs when...

1. A person's value comes from their sexual appeal or behavior, to the exclusion of other characteristics.
2. A person is held to a standard that equates physical attractiveness with being sex.
3. A person is sexually objectified.
4. Sexuality is inappropriately imposed upon a person.

Sexualization & Exoticism

- Sexualization and exoticism are **NOT** a part of healthy sexuality and impact a girl's ability to have a healthy sexual self-image.
- Adolescents who are early bloomers are more likely to be sexualized.
- Adolescents of color who identify as Native American, Asian, etc. are more likely to be exoticized.
- Leads to negative consequences such as sexual assault, negative self-image, and feelings of shame and anxiety, eating disorders, low self-esteem and depression.
- APA Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls

We believe that sex-positive approaches can help us eliminate health disparities and achieve **sexual health equity**.

What does it mean to be sex-positive?



Having positive attitudes about sex and feeling comfortable with one's own sexuality and with the sexual behaviors of others.

Sex Positive People...

- Embrace sexual diversity
 - Accept various sexual orientations, lifestyles, and practices
 - Are open to learning & understanding their bodies and their partner's bodies
- Understand importance for safe sex for all parties involves
- Consider sex to be an enjoyable healthy part of life
- Understand that sex may not always be wanted

How can healthcare providers and educators be
sex-positive?

Sex-Positive Approaches...

- Avoid moralistic value statements
- Promote diversity in sexuality
- Support the ability of people to make personal choices
- Reduce stigma about sexual choices
- View sexuality as developmentally normal

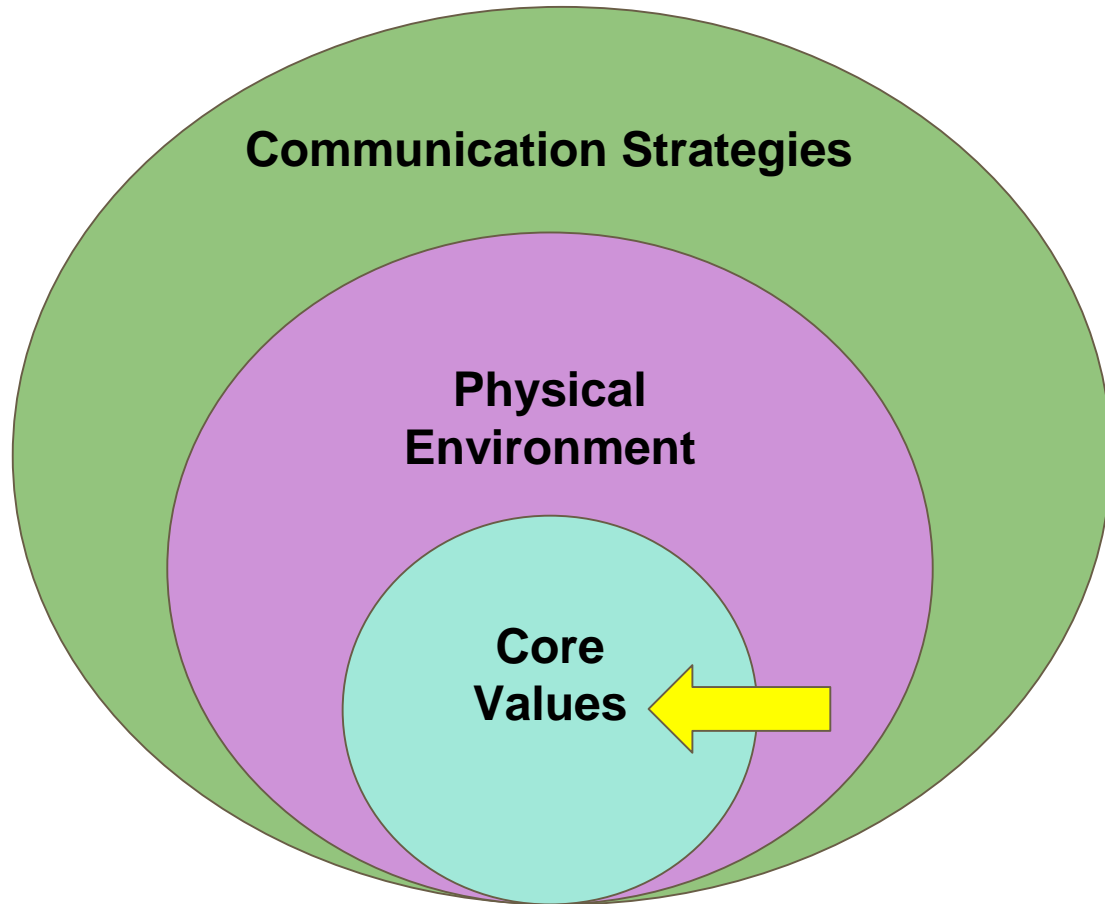


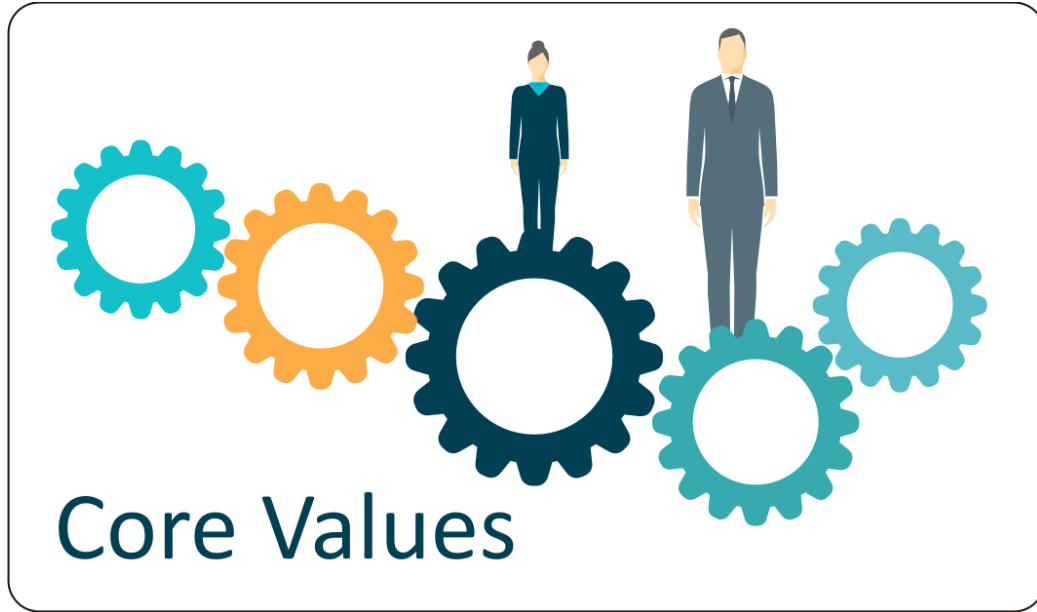
**LET'S TALK
ABOUT IT**

How can sex positive approaches improve patient-provider communication?

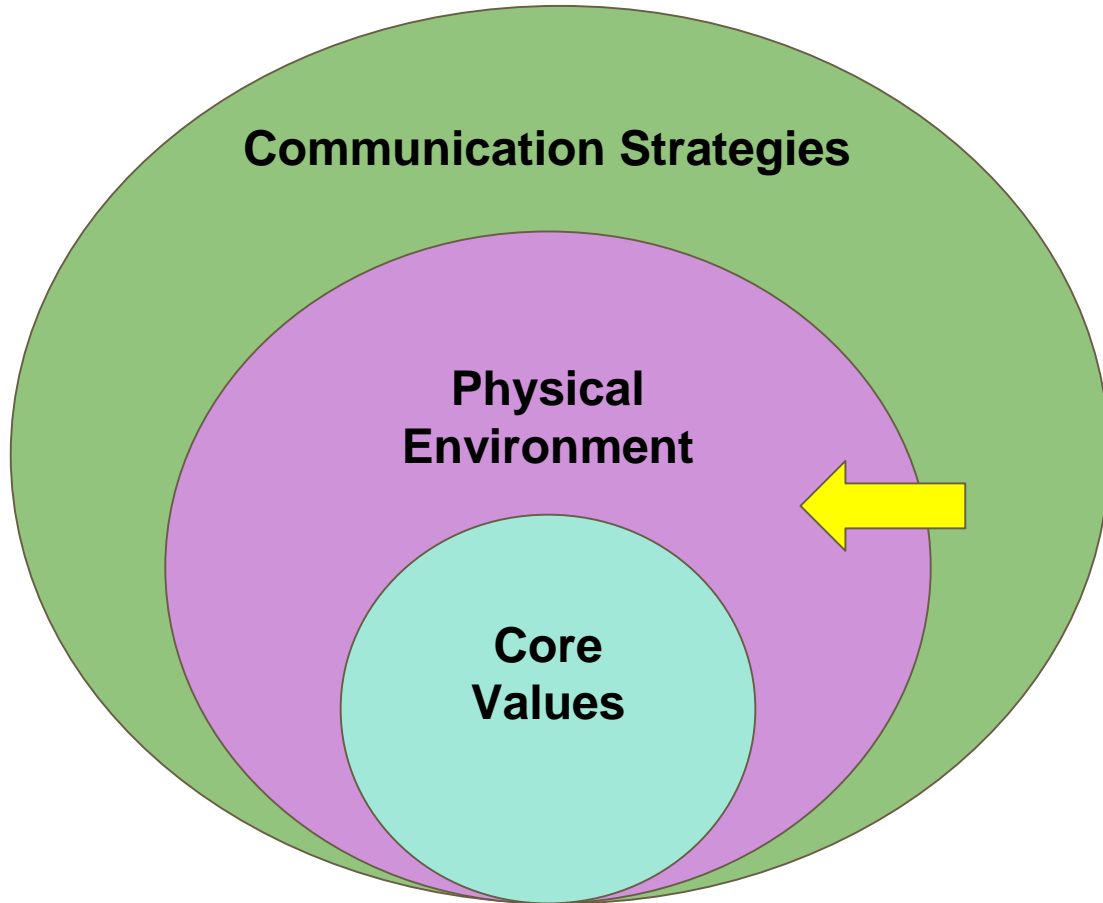
How can sex positive approaches reduce sexual health disparities among adolescents of color?

Putting it to Practice



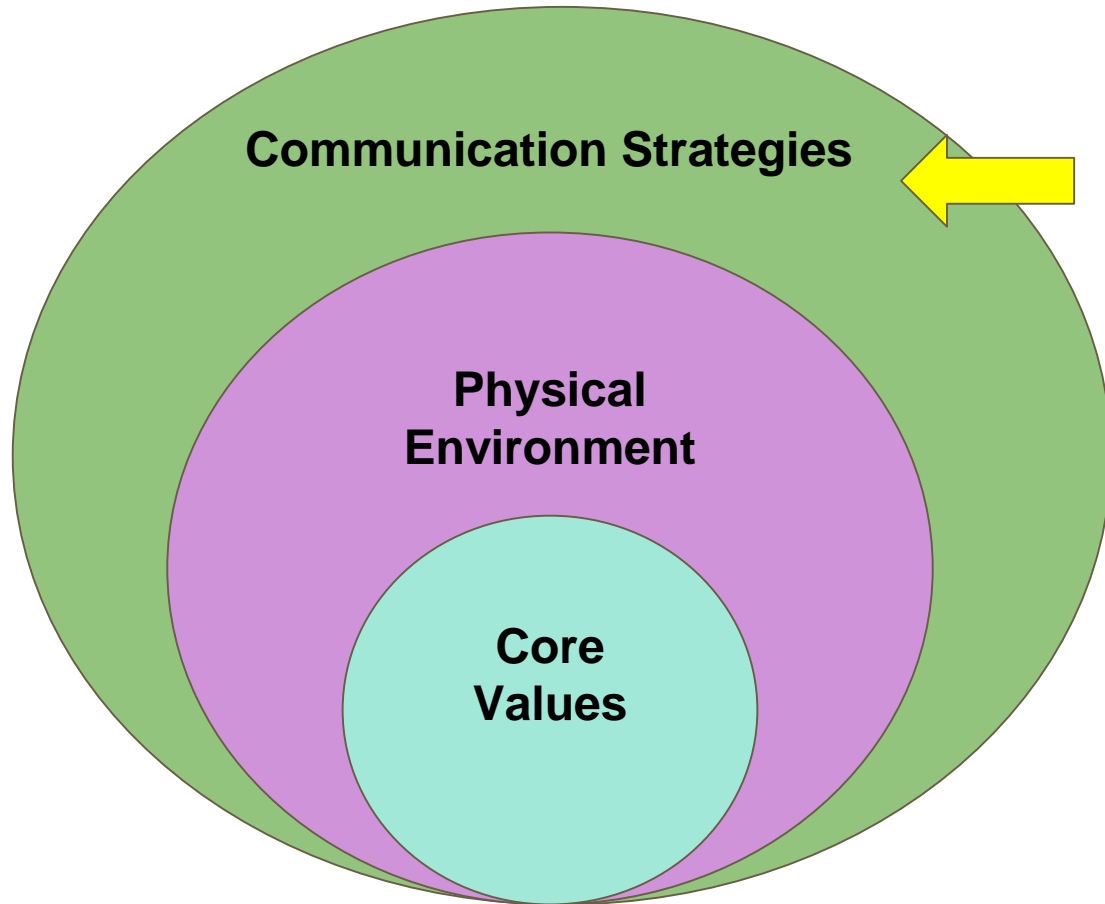


- Community
- Inclusivity
- Accessibility
- Agency
- Pleasure
- Normalization
- Holistic
- Health and safety



Physical Environment

- Open atmosphere
- Age-appropriate
- Easy to navigate
- Warm and welcoming



Communication Strategies

- Self Disclosure
- Listening, eye contact, and volume
- Humor
- Networking
- Figurative and descriptive language
- Person-centered
- Easy to understand/comprehend



What about your agency?



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