

Orange County, Florida

Improving Sexuality Education Training to Better Equip Classroom Teachers

Problem Overview

More than 300 middle school teachers in the Orange County Public Schools (OCPS) who are not certified in health education were responsible for teaching human sexuality education benchmarks (as referenced in sub-bullets below*). According to CDC's 2008 School Health Profiles (Profiles) data for OCPS,

- More than 20% of lead middle school health education teachers reported that they did not receive training on HIV, STD, and pregnancy prevention.
- Among the middle school human sexuality education teachers,
 - *Between 16% and 20% did not teach how HIV and other STDs are transmitted, diagnosed, and treated; how to prevent HIV/STDs; the health consequences of HIV/STDs; and the benefits of abstinence.
 - *About 30% did not teach ways to access health information and services; the influences of media, family, and social and cultural norms; and negotiation skills.

Program/Activity Description

To increase the number of teachers providing instruction about HIV, STD, and pregnancy prevention, the OCPS (funded in part through CDC) initiated or changed many practices:

- Clearly identified and distributed the grade-level OCPS human sexuality education benchmarks to all middle school human sexuality education teachers.
- Wrote grade-level lesson plans to address each of the benchmarks.
- Revised teacher trainings to include more content about policies, student assessment, and strategies for teaching HIV, STD, and pregnancy prevention.
- Recruited and trained 19 additional classroom presenters from external agencies having expertise in adolescent sexual health education.

Program/Activity Outcomes

The 2010 Profiles results showed significant improvement—more than 89% of middle school teachers taught all of the required human sexuality education benchmarks. Local evaluation data also indicated that teachers felt more knowledgeable and comfortable with teaching these critical health topics. During the 2009–2010 school year, more than 17,000 middle school students received HIV/STD/teen pregnancy prevention education; more than 10,000 of these youth were students at schools in ZIP code areas having disproportionate rates of HIV, STDs, and teen pregnancy.